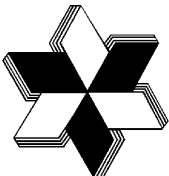


# Focus on Community

## Wichita Public Library's Strategic Plan 2011–2014



**WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
The Discovery Center  
[www.wichita.lib.ks.us](http://www.wichita.lib.ks.us)





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**W**ichita Public Libraries have undergone significant transformation in recent years. During the past decade, two new large branch libraries were created through consolidations of smaller facilities. A master plan has set forth a vision for additional facility changes intended to improve access and capacity to library services for our community's citizens. A "virtual branch" of online services and resources makes increasing amounts of information available to library customers from any place and at any time rather than only from within the walls of our buildings.

Use of public libraries in Wichita has never been greater. Statistics for circulation, library visits, computer use and program attendance continue to be on record pace.

Expectations of citizens are high, matched by the commitment of library staff and volunteers to deliver service at an equal level of quality. Customer preferences are varied. Some citizens appreciate the rich tradition of the public library, the printed word and spaces for quiet study and reflection. Others are increasingly technology-oriented and look forward to each new opportunity for information delivery.

This strategic plan provides a focus for the library's board and staff as we work together to maneuver the challenges of delivering a high quality, widely available, diverse service mix in these times of diminishing public resources.



Photo courtesy of Jaime Green

## MISSION

The Wichita Public Library provides collections and services that inform, entertain and enrich the quality of life in Wichita.

## VISION

The Wichita Public Library will be the community's preferred knowledge resource, providing inviting libraries, superb collections and excellent service.

## VALUES

Our commitment to **excellence** is uncompromising. We strive for quality services delivered to each member of the community.

Our commitment to **inclusiveness** includes defending the rights of all individuals to use the library's resources and services. We value our community's diversity and strive to reflect that by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the citizens we serve.

Our commitment to **integrity** ensures that our organization's activities will be conducted with fairness, openness and honesty. We will do the right things, not just the easy things.

Our commitment to **stewardship** guides us as we wisely utilize all resources to secure the best value for citizens.

Our commitment to **transformation** is achieved by embracing change rather than sustaining the status quo. We work to ensure that the knowledge, skills and abilities of our employees are relevant to the needs of our community.

## PRIMARY GOALS

To achieve our mission and vision, the Wichita Public Library has identified four areas of emphasis to which we will devote our collection, facility, policy, programming, staff and volunteer resources.

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**Satisfy Curiosity.** Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

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*The Library supports our community's desire for self-directed personal growth in all areas of interest. Investing in dynamic educational programs that span across all age levels is an important component of helping the Library to remain relevant to learners. The continual development of materials collections in a range of formats and topics allows the Library to contribute to the individual's learning as well as to the collective knowledge of our community.*



### **Service Response Activities:**

- ◆ Create tools to encourage use of Library collections and services
- ◆ Reinvent reference services to keep them relevant and efficient
  - Examine centralized staffing of reference desks
  - Investigate reference delivery through video chat
  - Implement reference service by text messaging

- ◆ Expand partnerships in order to maintain mutually beneficial presences in the community
- ◆ Designate a School Liaison to collaborate with local schools
- ◆ Enhance collection development through targeted selection
- ◆ Develop programs that encourage and enhance use of collections
- ◆ Evaluate need for creation of a test proctoring service

### Measures of Success:

- ◇ Number of people who indicate on a survey that they use the library for lifelong learning
- ◇ Number/percent of users who indicate that the assistance they receive when looking for information or asking about a topic of personal interest is very good or excellent
- ◇ Number/percent of users who indicate they have learned a new skill as a result of attending library programs
- ◇ Reference fill rates (number of questions asked in relation to number of questions answered)
- ◇ Number of programs and demonstrations presented
- ◇ Attendance at programs and demonstrations
- ◇ Circulation of adult nonfiction



**Connect to the Online World.** Residents will have access to the digital world without unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

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*Digital technologies have changed people's relationships to information and to each other. The Library's resources help bridge the digital divide through access, information, training and assistance. The Library is a source for learning about digital content, including finding, assessing and using information.*

### **Service Response Activities:**

- ◆ Provide opportunities to explore and learn digital technology
  - Provide information resources on new and emerging digital technologies
  - Equip Central Library and district branches for video chat
  - Designate staff for public hands-on assistance
  
- ◆ Enhance the Library's online presence to improve ease of access and use of resources
  - Increase the Library's online visibility
  - Improve usability of the web page
  - Provide content relevant to community needs
    - Create a gateway to government resources
    - Enhance the gateway to workforce resources
  
- ◆ Use current technology to communicate with customers
  - Implement notifications by text messaging
  - Embrace social networking as a way to engage users and promote activities and services
  - Explore opportunities to expand marketing through emails to customers

- ◆ Provide programs to improve customers' skill and confidence in the use of digital resources
  - Increase the number of technology programs presented throughout the Library system
    - Create an Introduction to E-Books program
    - Provide training on downloading digital materials
    - Create a program on consumerism and computer safety
    - Create programs that provide employment support
    - Expand training on social networking
    - Expand technology training for children and teens
  - Expand Hands-on-Help sessions
  - Maintain a commitment to computer basics instruction

### Measures of Success:

- ◇ Number of people who use library-provided computers to access the Internet
- ◇ Number of hits on library portal web pages
- ◇ Number of people who use the wireless connectivity provided by the Library
- ◇ Percent of time the public access terminals are in use
- ◇ Percent of people who indicate on a survey that they use the library to access the Internet
- ◇ Percent of users surveyed who respond that the assistance they receive from staff when using the Internet is very good or excellent
- ◇ Percent of users surveyed who respond that the Library's Internet service is very good or excellent
- ◇ Number and percent of specified users who increase their computer/technology skills
- ◇ Number and percent of specified users who use the Internet for personal, school or work purposes
- ◇ Circulation of downloadable holdings

- ◇ Number of technology-related questions received at service desks
- ◇ Number of technology training activities offered and attendance at these events



**Stimulate Imagination.** Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want, when and where they want them, and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

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*In an age when leisure time may be limited or seem just out of reach, the Library is an essential and convenient location for people to pursue reading, listening and viewing for pleasure. Through outstanding collections, exhibits and programming the Library fosters creativity and imagination, providing opportunities and resources to allow free rein of the inventive spirit.*

## **Service Response Activities:**

- ◆ Connect customers to the choices available to them through quality materials collections
  - Promote and recommend collections
    - Highlight critically-acclaimed materials
    - Showcase lesser known works
  - Use technology to allow citizens to access content in many formats in-house
  - Merchandize collections
  - Feature diverse topics and materials in a wide range of displays and exhibits
  
- ◆ Provide opportunities for citizens to move beyond the word on the page, the tones from the headphones, or the image on the screen
  - Expand discussion opportunities relating to Library collections
  - Provide programs that are educational and entertaining
  - Use interactive technologies to widen customer participation
  - Be a partner in the arts, literature and education community
  
- ◆ Recognize and respond to requests in a timely manner to keep customers satisfied and current with their interests.
  - Improve handling of customer suggestions for materials
  - Improve identification of in-demand titles
  - Catalog and process materials within 24 hours of arrival
  - Make cataloging changes for easier customer searching
  
- ◆ Provide collections that anticipate and meet citizens' leisure interests
  - Target forthcoming releases for acquisition
  - Use processes that allow the most highly anticipated titles to be available for use on the first date of their release by publishers
  - Acquire supplemental materials to support programming, exhibits and special events
  - Develop high-use collections in branch locations

## Measures of Success:

- ◇ Number of people who indicate on a survey that they use the library to find something to read, view, or listen to for pleasure
- ◇ Percent of users surveyed who respond that:
  - They find something to read, view, or listen to for pleasure
  - The collection of materials to enhance their leisure time is very good or excellent
  - The assistance they receive from staff when requesting help to locate an item to read, view or listen to for pleasure is very good or excellent
- ◇ Number and percent of specified users who read and enjoyed a book by a new author or on a new topic for the first time
- ◇ Circulation of:
  - New books
  - Spoken audio books
  - Music compact discs
  - DVDs
- ◇ Turnover of items in the new book collection
- ◇ Average number of days between placing an item on reserve and notification that the item is available for pickup
- ◇ Reader's advisory fill rate  
(number of questions asked in relation to questions answered)
- ◇ Reading, listening and/or viewing programs offered and their attendance



**Create Young Readers.** Children from birth to age five, along with their parents and caregivers, will have programs and services designed to develop a love of reading that will help ensure they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

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*The foundations of educational success begin at birth, long before children enter school. Caring adults who read to, discuss stories with and give children hands-on experiences with literature plant the seeds for future reading, writing and listening. By supporting the book and media interests of young children and their caregivers, the Library opens the door to lifelong learning.*

### **Service Response Activities:**

- ◆ Promote early literacy through the use of technology
  - Provide early literacy computers
  - Explore offering online books for young readers
  - Expand downloadable book offerings for young readers
  - Use technology to enhance early literacy programming
  
- ◆ Expand partnerships
  - Develop a “Born to Read” program
  - Partner with the early childhood community to promote library services to parents
    - Coordinate library card drives
    - Offer parent workshops at outreach sites
  - Create more opportunities for child care sites to participate in library programs and events
  
- ◆ Increase parent training on early childhood literacy
  
- ◆ Develop and present programming which integrates strategies from the Every Child Ready to Read research.
  
- ◆ Increase collection materials that focus on early childhood education

### Measures of Success:

- ◇ Attendance at preschool programs in the library
- ◇ Attendance at library-sponsored preschool programs at locations outside of library facilities
- ◇ Number of preschool children participating in the summer reading program
- ◇ Number of parents and caregivers trained in early literacy techniques
- ◇ Percent of people who indicate on a survey that they use the library on behalf of their preschool child or children
- ◇ Percent of parents and caregivers surveyed who respond that:
  - The Library plays an important role in helping children to develop a love of books, reading and learning
  - The Library plays an important role in helping children enter school ready to learn to read, write and listen
  - The Library's services for preschoolers are very good or excellent
- ◇ Number of presentations made by library staff at preschools, day care centers, etc.
- ◇ Circulation of materials for preschool children
- ◇ Number of items circulated to preschools, day care centers, hospitals, etc. through the bulk loan program
- ◇ Number of preschool programs presented in the library
- ◇ Number of preschool programs presented outside of library facilities



## SUPPORT GOALS

The following activities are necessary to ensure that the appropriate resources and skills sets are in place to allow the Library to fulfill its primary service response initiatives.

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- ◆ Enhance service by strengthening staff expertise
  - Improve the staff's skill and confidence in the use of digital resources
  - Promote online training
    - Create a portal gateway to online learning
    - Be a host site for virtual conference and symposiums offered by professional library organizations
  - Provide training to help staff achieve technology competencies
    - Create a training program dedicated to adding new staff tutors for Hands-on-Help sessions
    - Enhance staff training programs on computer troubleshooting with emphasis on public computing services
  - Develop collections advisory competencies
  - Offer staff training on copyright compliance for public library service delivery
  - Enable staff to have basic knowledge of the programs, services and collections
  - Improve opportunities for part-time staff to attend training and achieve competencies
- ◆ Improve processes to ensure best use of resources
  - Consolidate operational plans
  - Expand initiatives that promote and market Library collections, programs and services
  - Develop additional methods to help customers with fees to return their accounts to good standing
- ◆ Complete activities in support of Library Technology Plan
  - Stay abreast of new and emerging technologies
  - Enhance shared file access for staff
- ◆ Complete activities in support of Library Master Plan for facilities

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Wichita Public Library expresses appreciation to the following people who were involved in creation of this strategic plan.

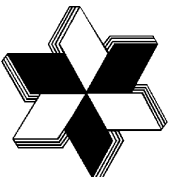
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*Adopted by the Library Board of Directors, May 17, 2011*



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