

Attleboro Public Library Long Range Plan FY2023-FY2027

Mission/Vision Statement

Mission: The Attleboro Public Library serves as a learning and educational center providing access to resources and services for the information, recreation, intellectual development, and enrichment of our community and its members.

Vision: The Attleboro Public Library contributes to the health and strength of our community by continuing its role as a connector, providing patrons with access to information, ideas, individuals and organizations.

Library Values

The staff, board, and volunteers of the Attleboro Public Library value access, excellence, service, inclusion and collaboration. These values guide decision making in our daily work and future planning.

User Needs Assessment:

Attleboro is a city located between Boston and Providence, directly on the MBTA commuter rail. According to 2020 census data, our population is roughly 46,000 with just over twenty percent under the age of 18 and about 17 percent aged 65 and older. The average age is 41.5 years. Of those 25 and older, almost 91% have a high school diploma. 30% of that population has a bachelor's degree or higher. Attleboro is 87% white, with 6% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Black and 4% Asian.

Attleboro residents are diverse. Some are lifelong residents, and others have come here from nearby cities to escape expensive rent. Some are well educated, well traveled and accustomed to working with the latest technology. Others know only our community and struggle with using a mouse and checking email. Library staff are familiar with these disparities and know how to meet patrons where they are.

The library has a reputation for being a reliable resource in the city. The APL is known for excellent customer service and a willingness to partner with local organizations. This regard has served us well through recent challenges. In addition to closing due to the pandemic, the library has also undergone a year long, seven million dollar renovation, and the unexpected departure of its director. Despite these challenges, the library has continued services, such as local history research, a summer reading program for all ages and an increased online presence, along with the addition of a bustling curbside takeout option.

Based on the services that the community considers most important at this time, we know the local population values library materials, programs and the welcoming, personal service we provide. The library receives regular requests for meeting and work space, internet access with printing services, and for social service providers. This was true before the pandemic hit, and remains to this day. Changes in local work culture tell us to expect more of these requests in the coming years as more people work from home and others continue to look for ways to help support their families.

Top areas for improvement according to those that took our survey are increased hours and programs. While programs will increase once health concerns are minimized, hours will have to remain the same without an increase in staff.

The last 18 months has shown us the marked difference in access to technology in the community. In our work with the public school system, the Council on Aging, the local housing authority and The Literacy Center, we know how many people struggle with little or no internet access. We also understand how crucial that access is to school, work and life success, prompting us to increase our collection of hotspots and to diversify the way patrons can access them.

Goals

Life Long Learning - From board books to the classics, we will continue to offer the most comprehensive, relevant **collections** we can, in a variety of formats for every reader, watcher and listener to enjoy. We will offer a wide variety of **programs** for all ages with the understanding that

workshops and presentations are an invaluable way to learn and be entertained by both experts and friends.

To forward this goal we will continue to be responsive to the community's requests for information and entertainment by purchasing materials and scheduling programs based on patron requests and borrowing habits. Yearly circulation and program attendance statistics will let us know if we have realized this goal. We intend to increase these numbers each year.

Community Connecting - Library staff will engage with the community in formal and informal ways by attending community events, visiting local organizations, inviting partners to offer programs in and outside the building and to introduce patrons to local organizations by promoting their events, information and services. The library will continue to take part in events that bring the community together in civil discourse on timely topics.

To reach this goal we will monitor our slate of programs to ensure library partners are included as well as continue to market the events of local organizations via social media and our newsletter. Staff also sit on community wide committees that further the library's mission and vision. We intend to increase partnerships each year by adding 3-5 partner organizations or by adding 3-5 partner events.

User-Friendly Facilities - The library will continue updating the building's physical space post-renovation by continuing to improve our computer equipment and internet, reconfiguring public spaces to allow for more patron work space, promoting the local history room and its contents with displays, and utilizing new and existing meeting room space to better serve the community.

This goal will be accomplished through current design research as well as events promoting lesser known library services and collections, posts on our website, articles in our newsletter and other library marketing. We intend to have inclusive learning aides catalogued and able to circulate by the end of FY23 and our new meeting room available by the end of FY25.

Meaningful Marketing - The library will rejuvenate unified library marketing efforts to local papers and media outlets. We will also fine tune

internal communication to better disseminate information to the public. We'll work to tailor our messages to specific audiences through targeted emails and seek to promote programs, services and collections to wider audiences through a variety of channels, both traditional and innovative.

The goal is to have a more consistent presence in the community and to be sure we are promoting the wide variety of library offerings available to the public. We will also feature the resources we are promoting via internal communication to ensure that staff act as continuous marketers. We intend to increase our newsletter subscriptions by 5% by the end of FY23.

Planning Methodology

The staff, board and volunteers of the APL distributed an online survey to the community at large through our own newsletter and through more general platforms, including community Facebook pages, advertising the survey using local media and through word of mouth. We had hard copies of the survey available for the public while we were open. We also surveyed community partners citywide and staff, whose voice is often overlooked.

Due to our building being closed for renovations and the pandemic, getting survey questions out to the general public was extremely challenging. We received under 300 completed surveys. We relied heavily on staff to encourage people to take the survey using word of mouth. Despite sending the survey to as many people as possible, we feel it did skew heavily towards library users. While we acknowledge that we were working in a challenging time, we are also planning more ways to gather community feedback now and in the future.

Approval

Board of Trustees voted to approve 1/12/22

Approved by MBLC 2/15/22