

Norfolk Public Library

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2019

Approved by the Citizens Library Board
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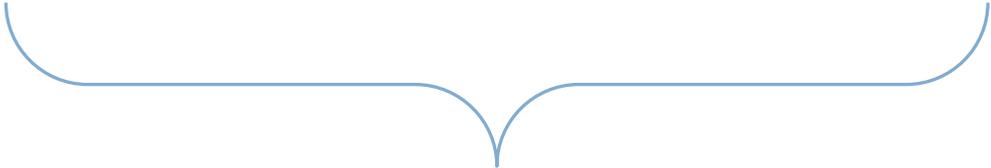


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Summary

This new strategic plan offers a blueprint to guide the programs and services of the library. The Strategic Plan describes the library's mission and main priorities, and also identifies goals and objectives that are linked to identified community needs. This document's primary purpose is to provide the library staff with a working plan to guide their decision making and allocation of resources. However, the Strategic Plan also provides the City Council and the citizens of Norfolk with a specific and concrete description of how the Norfolk Public Library plans to provide services and meet community needs over the next five years.

The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan was developed through a six-month, collaborative process that involved the Citizens Library Board, the Strategic Planning Team, and the library staff. Critical to this process was creating a vision for the community, conducting an analysis of our community's strengths and weaknesses, and developing of a list of community needs. An evaluation of the library's strengths and weaknesses determined which of those needs could be addressed by the library and a list of the library's main priorities was developed. Goals and objectives were created to turn the ideals of the priorities into actionable tasks that the library staff could carry out. This plan will continue to be a guiding document for the library's programs and services and will be evaluated and updated as necessary each year by the library staff and the Citizens Library Board.

City of Norfolk Mission Statement

The City of Norfolk Mission is to provide quality public services in an effective and efficient manner to enhance the common good and quality of life including citizen involvement.

Norfolk Public Library Mission Statement

The Norfolk Public Library provides innovative library services that give community members of all ages the means to fulfill their recreational interests, interact with others in the community, get information on a broad array of topics, access resources to help them learn to read and use information effectively, and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Community Profile

The city of Norfolk is located in Madison County in the Elkhorn River Valley. Norfolk is the economic center for an area encompassing six counties and the main employers come from manufacturing, farming (both livestock and grain), education, retailing, and wholesaling. Norfolk's population estimate for 2013 was 24,523, a 1.3% increase from the 2010 population. The median age is 36.2 years of age. The racial makeup of the city is 83% white, non-Hispanic. 12% of the population is Hispanic of any race, 1.6% of people are African-American, 1.4% are American Indian, 0.6% are Asian, and 2% are of mixed race.

Nearly 89% of the population has attained a High School degree or higher and more than 23% of those ages 25 and up have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, the Norfolk Public Schools graduation rate for 2011-2012 was only 78.8%, much lower than the state average of 87.6%. The median household income is \$39,836, well below the state average of \$51,381. Sixteen percent of city residents live below the poverty level, and, according to a 2013 study by Schmeeckle Research, 38% of those with children under five in the household are living in poverty. This number is approximately double that of the state and of the nation.

In Northeast Nebraska, 72% of the population has access to broadband internet at home. If this number holds true for the city of Norfolk as well, that would equate to 6,866 residents without broadband internet access in their homes.

Recent economic development success and a rising tide of updates and improvements in the city seem to have residents excited about the future of this small city in northeast Nebraska. Included in this excitement is the upcoming renovation and expansion of the Norfolk Public Library which was built in 1977.

Community Needs

- Identify the causes of our high poverty rate, and work to lessen their impact.
- Address transportation needs - railway/airport/expressway
- Recruit and retain young people
- Improve recreational opportunities for all ages, including cultural and arts experiences
- Provide educational support for kids 5 and under, especially the 38% in poverty, and follow through until graduation
- Support visionaries and entrepreneurs in our community
- Address the housing shortage
- Work to create a more skilled labor force
- Improve access to mental health care
- Work to raise wages to be competitive with the state by attracting new businesses and growing existing ones

Library Analysis

In looking at this list of community needs, the Strategic Planning Team and the library staff had to look critically at the strengths and resources of the library to see which needs the library could best address. The library is not suited to address the local transportation needs, housing shortage, lack of mental health care providers, or to identify the causes of the high poverty rate in Norfolk. However, it is perfectly situated to work towards lessening the impact that poverty has on families. By providing access to the internet to apply for government assistance programs, apply for jobs online, and numerous other tasks, the library helps keep those in poverty connected to the resources they need. Poverty often has a negative impact on school performance, and the library's early literacy programs and free resources provide help and support for those that can access these services.

The library could be well situated to help recruit and retain young people in the community by providing the services and programs needed by this audience. A quality library is an important factor for many people when they make a decision to move to a new community, or, to stay in their hometown. However, the aging facility makes a negative impression on many young people. The need for more space for children and young adults is a major barrier to providing increased services to these audiences, which is important to young families looking to relocate in Norfolk. A renovation and expansion of the library will address both of these issues.

Improving recreational opportunities and providing educational support are also community needs that the library has resources to address. Additionally, the library helps create a more skilled labor force through access to print and electronic resources for job training and certification courses. Supporting visionaries and entrepreneurs is something that the library can do by better marketing its business resources and by reaching out to local business owners. Currently, there is not space or resources to create an area for small businesses or a makerspace for entrepreneurs, but conversations are happening in the community about how to support and encourage this important group.

The library won't be able to completely meet these community needs on its own. Other area agencies will need to work on these needs as well, and several are already doing so. Many of these needs connect to long-standing priorities of the library: providing information, encouraging lifelong learning, and connecting people with resources. That reinforcement of the library's mission gives it even more reason to focus on the core library services that are truly needed in northeast Nebraska.

Priorities, Goals, Objectives and Activities

Priority Area 1 - The Library fulfills the community's appetite for satisfying recreational experiences by providing new, popular, and socially relevant materials and programs.

This long-standing priority for the library is reflected in the size and diversity of our print and digital collection as well as our program offerings. The library strives to be responsive to patron requests and community interests in the development of its collections and services.

- **Goal 1-1: Young adults in their 20's and 30's will find programs that are interesting and relevant to their age group.**
 - **Objective 1:** At least one new young adult program will be created to serve this demographic.
 - **Activity 1:** Investigate what kinds of programs young adults want through interviews and possibly a survey. Depending on the outcome of that investigation, develop the needed program(s).
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Supervisor/Librarian I
 - Timeline: January 2015 - January 2016
- **Goal 1-2: Library programming will reflect the diverse interests and hobbies of our community members.**
 - **Objective 1:** A wide variety of subjects will be presented in library programming to include a broader spectrum of hobbies and interests.
 - **Activity 1:** A Programming Team will be formed, consisting of all staff involved in library programming. This Team will investigate what kinds of programs patrons want through interviews and possibly a survey. Using the results of that investigation, the Team will coordinate their individual programming efforts to create a wide variety of programming for patrons. Complementary library collections will be promoted at each program offered. The Programming Team will meet quarterly, or as needed, to ensure coordination and effective planning of library programs.
 - Responsibility: Programming Team
 - Timeline: ongoing, Fall 2014-Fall 2019
- **Goal 1-3: Community members will find new, innovative ways to connect with the library.**
 - **Objective 1:** Provide an app for the library so users can access library services and collections easily on mobile devices.

- **Goal 3-1: The library will work with the local community college and other educational entities to cross-promote rather than duplicate services.**
 - Objective 1: Annual communication will be made with all educational institutions in Norfolk.
 - Activity 1: Each fall, packets will be delivered to the K-12 schools and community college, with information on our journal subscriptions and other pertinent information for teachers and students.
 - Responsibility: Reference Department
 - Timeline: ongoing each fall
 - Activity 2: Monthly communication with Preschools will be made via email, promoting relevant programs and services.
 - Responsibility: Youth Services Supervisor
 - Timeline: ongoing each month

- **Goal 3-2: The library will provide more user-friendly computer services to make the best use of our patrons' time.**
 - Objective 1: Obtain a Print Management station for patron use at the library, to maximize efficiency for their computer time and to protect their privacy.
 - Activity 1: Compare vendor options, evaluate, and purchase. After installation, develop procedures for staff and patron education.
 - Responsibility: Library Director, Reference Staff, IT Staff
 - Timeline: Spring - Fall 2015

 - Objective 2: Include electronic resources and ebooks in the results of all patron catalog searches.
 - Activity 1: Investigate the inclusion of e-Resource Central, or a similar product, that offers federated searching features. Select most appropriate product, include in the budget, and purchase.
 - Responsibility: Library Director, Reference Supervisor, IT Staff
 - Timeline: Fall 2014 - Summer 2015
 - Activity 2: After installation, develop procedures for staff and patron education.
 - Responsibility: Circulation Staff
 - Timeline: Fall 2014 - Summer 2015

 - Objective 3: The Norfolk Daily News microfilm will be digitized and made easily accessible to the public through a keyword-searchable digital platform.
 - Activity 1: Continue the digitization process already begun and work with the City IT staff to set up an internal server for easy patron access.
 - Responsibility: Library Director, Reference Supervisor, IT Staff

- Timeline: Fall 2014 - Spring 2017
- Activity 2: After installation, develop procedures for staff and patron education.
 - Responsibility: Reference Staff
 - Timeline: As needed throughout Fall 2014 - Spring 2017
- Objective 4: The historical information in the pamphlet file will be digitized and made accessible to the public through a digital platform.
 - Activity 1: Continue the digitization process already begun and work with the City IT staff to develop a platform for patron accessibility.
 - Responsibility: Reference Staff
 - Timeline: Fall 2014 - Fall 2016

Priority Area 4 - The library supports community members learning to read, as well as those attaining the needed skills to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

Whether it is encouraging the development of early literacy skills in children, or increasing the digital literacy skills of seniors, the library teaches, encourages, and provides access to many resources to attain the needed skills to perform essential daily tasks.

- **Goal 4-1: Adults will find increased opportunities to learn digital literacy skills.**
 - Objective 1: Investigate providing tablets and e-Readers for patrons.
 - Activity 1: Research other libraries providing this service and talk to patrons about what services and devices would be most wanted.
 - Responsibility: Circulation Staff
 - Timeline: January 2016
 - Activity 2: Determine what, if any, services should be provided in this area and include in the next fiscal year budget.
 - Responsibility: Supervisors
 - Timeline: April/May 2016
 - Activity 3: If it is decided to proceed with providing tablets and e-Readers for patrons, develop policies, procedures, and staff education to support it.
 - Responsibility: Circulation Staff
 - Timeline: October/November 2016
- **Goal 4-2: Adults seeking basic education programs will find the information they need to be successful learners.**
 - Objective 1: Support materials for those seeking Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, or GED programs will be developed, referring them to existing community resources.

- Activity 1: Contact Northeast Community College and other area agencies to find out what programs already exist to support this.
 - Activity 2: Create or display materials for our patrons highlighting what community resources are available.
 - Responsibility: Technical Services Staff
 - Timeline: March/April 2016
 - Objective 2: Ensure our library collection is meeting the needs of those seeking basic education.
 - Activity 1: Research current materials used in the ABE, ESL and GED programs by interviewing teachers and reading basic education literature. Evaluate any new materials for possible inclusion in our print or electronic collections.
 - Activity 2: Create marketing materials on our resources, to display in the library and to deliver to outside agencies providing this service.
 - Responsibility: Reference Staff
 - Timeline: ongoing
- **Goal 4-3: Children and families will find resources to help children become successful readers.**
 - Objective 1: Ensure our library collection and programming adequately support early literacy by a critical evaluation of the current collection and programming.
 - Activity 1: Continue to provide parent education programs and materials to help get young children ready to read.
 - Activity 2: Explore the possibility of additional literacy enrichment programs for youth.
 - Responsibility: Youth Service Staff
 - Timeline: ongoing

Priority Area 5 - The Library provides opportunities for self-directed personal growth and development.

Lifelong learning is at the heart of the library's collections and programs, and this priority can be seen in the kinds of offerings made available to the public.

- **Goal 5-1: The community will be aware of the wealth of recreational and educational materials and programs available at the library.**
 - Objective 1: Eight to ten small, targeted messages about programs and services will be created and promoted over the five year period.
 - Activity 1: One to two target resources or collections will be identified to highlight on an annual basis. When creating these messages, special attention will be given to the list of Community Needs in the Strategic Plan. The resources

or collections selected will be promoted through print, electronic and the multimedia outlets. Community outreach programs will be planned to promote these resources or collections in person whenever possible.

- Responsibility: Selection Team
- Timeline: Ongoing, January 2015 - Fall 2019

Plan for Evaluation

This plan will be evaluated and updated by staff annually each fall. Updates will be included for goals that have been completed or begun. Changes will be noted as needed as the timeline of activities takes shape. Although timelines have been included in the plan, it is difficult to assess how long some of the activities will take and there will necessarily be adaptations during the five-year time frame. This plan is intended to be a working document that can respond to changes in the library's and the community's environment. Additions, deletions and changes will be made during this annual evaluation and will be taken to the Citizens Library Board for their input and approval.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our Strategic Planning Team members, who helped to formulate the vision and direction of the library and to the Citizens Library Board for their support of the Strategic Planning process.

Strategic Planning Team

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Appendix - Planning Process

Community Visions - Looking at Where We Want to Be

Utilizing the pre-existing vision statement for the City of Norfolk, and augmenting that as needed, the following vision statements were created:

- Norfolk is a community of strength that takes pride in being a clean, safe, friendly, prosperous, united city with modern municipal facilities.
- Norfolk is a healthy community with a state of the art medical facilities, abundant water resources and environmentally friendly practices.
- Norfolk is a vibrant, growing community offering shovel ready industrial sites, a network of transportation corridors, abundant low cost utilities, diverse education opportunities and quality workforce.
- Norfolk is an oasis of recreational, entertainment and cultural opportunities.
- Norfolk is a family-friendly community rich with educational opportunities.
- Norfolk seeks to offer economic development that leads to opportunities to support families and improves the quality of life.
- Norfolk is a culturally rich community with a variety of religious and ethnic groups.
- Norfolk provides a supportive environment and adequate housing for all demographic groups, and the means to access support.

Community Analysis - Looking at Where We Are

Information considered in the analysis:

- Norfolk/Madison County Early Childhood Community Assessment, prepared by Schmeeckle Research Inc. for the Norfolk Area Child, Youth and Families Coalition, August 2013
- Community Survey for Norfolk Public Library, conducted as part of the Space Needs Study done by Alley Poyner Macchietto, Inc., October 2013
- U.S. Census Bureau Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2010
- Norfolk Area Community Foundation Fund Visioning Sessions Summary, 2013
- Household Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A follow up study, Nebraska Broadband Initiative, April 2014

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

Strengths (internal, positive):

- Strong educational opportunities for K-12 and beyond
- NECC and its program expansion and partnerships
- "Right size" community
- Increasing in diversity

- Family oriented
- Good leadership in the City and Chamber of Commerce
- Good healthcare/Excellent medical facilities
- High number of people willing to get involved
- Strong sense of community
- People are friendly
- Strong support from churches/religious organizations
- Good economic development and strong retail hub
- Low property taxes
- Strong trails system and recreational opportunities
- Lots of youth activities
- Strong community organizations - service clubs, Sports Council, Arts Center, events at Divots
- Good library and City services
- Good public safety and fast response times

Weaknesses (internal, negative):

- Need a 4 lane highway/expressway
- Housing shortage
- Skilled labor shortage
- Lacking in mental health care
- Lack of entertainment options (especially for teens)
- Affordable early childhood education lacking
- Median household income significantly lower than state
- Not on major rail line or interstate, no commercial airport
- Not too many recreational opportunities for young people
- Distance from metro areas
- High number of children under 5 in poverty
- Lack of vocational training
- Trouble retaining medical professionals
- Very limited public transportation options
- Lots of youth activities, but are often expensive
- Lack of quality hotel facilities/affordable places to hold events
- Lack of support services for the elderly who are still living on their own, especially with accessing available services and coordinating those
- Low graduation rate compared to state
- Sometimes hard to communicate effectively across the community

Opportunities (external, positive):

- Spread of broadband internet availability
- Low unemployment rate compared to nation

- Low housing cost/cost of living compared to nation
- Environmentally, good air quality and strong water resources
- Natural gas supply coming
- Awareness of the importance of early education rising nationally

Threats (external, negative):

- Aging of population
- Young people leaving rural areas
- State-wide high taxes compared to other states
- Changes in health care laws and rising health care costs
- National economy/national debt
- Federal decisions impact local programs and funding

Community Needs - What is Standing Between Where We Are and Where We Want to Be

Our community needs to:

- Identify causes of high poverty rate, and work to lessen their impact
- Address transportation needs - railway/airport/expressway
- Recruit and retain young people
- Improve recreational opportunities for all ages, including cultural and arts experiences
- Provide educational support for kids 5 and under, especially the 38% in poverty, and follow through until graduation
- Support visionaries and entrepreneurs in our community
- Address the housing shortage
- Work to create a more skilled labor force
- Improve access to mental health care
- Work to raise wages to be competitive with the state by attracting new businesses and growing existing ones

Needs the Library Can Address

After an analysis of the resources the library currently has or would potentially have access to, it was determined that the following needs are ones that the library is situated to address:

- Work to lessen the impact of poverty
- Recruit and retain young people
- Improve recreational opportunities for all ages, including cultural and arts experiences
- Provide educational support for kids 5 and under, especially the 38% in poverty, and follow through until graduation
- Support visionaries and entrepreneurs in our community
- Work to create a more skilled labor force

Library Priorities

Taken from the "Library Service Responses" in The New Planning for Results: a streamlined approach by Sandra Nelson, 2001.

The following Service Responses were considered during the selection of the library's priorities:

Basic Literacy

Addresses the need to read and to perform other essential daily tasks

Business and Career Information

Addresses a need for information related to business, careers, work, entrepreneurship, personal finances, and obtaining employment

Commons

Helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues

Community Referral

Addresses the need for information related to services provided by community agencies and organizations

Consumer Information

Helps to satisfy the need for information to make informed consumer decisions and to help residents become more self-sufficient

Cultural Awareness

Helps satisfy the desire of community residents to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others

Current Topics and Titles

Helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences

Formal Learning Support

Helps students who are enrolled in a formal program of education or who are pursuing their education through a program of homeschooling to attain their educational goals

General Information

Helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life

Government Information

Helps satisfy the need for information about elected officials and government agencies that enables people to participate in the democratic process

Information Literacy

Helps address the need for skills related to finding, evaluation, and using information effectively

Lifelong Learning

Helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities

Local History and Genealogy

Addresses the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage

Through discussion and a voting process, the following 4 priorities were selected:

Current Topics and Titles

Commons

General Information

Lifelong Learning

Discussion about Basic Literacy and Information Literacy produced the following priority that combines basic literacy, information literacy and digital literacy:

Literacy

Addresses the needs of community members learning to read, as well as those attaining the needed skills to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

Goals and Objectives

After the needs of the community were defined and the priorities for the library were identified by the Strategic Planning Team, the library staff worked on the goals and objectives to create actionable items that they could work on and the Citizens Library Board could evaluate and measure. As can be seen on the Goals and Objectives Timeline below, there is not much being addressed in the 2017-2019 years. This is intentional for several reasons. First, in any planning attempt, it is difficult to put exact timeframes on certain activities. Leaving space in the later years gives the library staff the flexibility to address needs as they come up and to extend deadlines if necessary without having too many projects occurring simultaneously. It also provides flexibility at the annual review to add new projects to the goals and objectives that may not have been thought about at the beginning of the planning stage. Lastly, with the library expansion and renovation ballot issue passing in the November 2014 election, it leaves flexibility for the disruption that construction work will potentially cause.

Appendix - Goals and Objectives Timeline

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Goal 1-1: 20's & 30's Program | | <u>Jan-March</u> Survey/Interviews <u>April</u> Budget | <u>January</u> Begin Program | | | |
| Goal 1-2: Programming Team Assembly | <u>November</u> First meeting of team | Meet quarterly | Meet quarterly | Meet quarterly | Meet quarterly | Meet quarterly |
| Goal 1-3: Obj. 1 - App | | <u>April</u> Installation and Education | | | | |
| Goal 1-3: Obj. 2 - Credit Card Payment | | <u>Feb-May</u> Research and setting up merchant <u>August/Sept.</u> Begin accepting payments at Circ Desk <u>Oct/Nov</u> Work with 3M for self-check | <u>Jan/Feb</u> Complete self- check installation <u>April/May</u> Work with Sirsi on online payments | | | |
| Goal 3-1: Communication with schools | | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Goal 3-2: Obj. 1 - Print Management | | <u>March</u> Communicate with vendor and evaluate products <u>August</u> Install and educate | | | | |
| Goal 3-2: Obj. 2 - ebook integration in OPAC | <u>Sept-Nov</u> Evaluate and select product | <u>Jan-Feb</u> Install and educate as available | | | | |

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|--|--|--|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Goal 3-2: Obj. 3 - Microfilm Digitization | <u>Nov-Dec</u> Temporary server access for public | <u>February</u> Send second batch for digitization <u>May</u> Purchase new server <u>August</u> Installation of new server if possible | <u>February</u> Send final batch for digitization | | | |
| Goal 3-2: Obj. 4 - Pamphlet Digitization | Digitization Ongoing | Digitization Ongoing | Digitization ongoing <u>June</u> Provide patron access via internal server | | | |
| Goal 4-1: Tablets and eReaders for patrons | | | <u>January</u> Begin investigation of options <u>April/May</u> Make decision on service and include in budget <u>Oct/Nov</u> Begin service and education | | | |
| Goal 4-2: Obj. 1 - Materials for Basic Ed. | | | <u>March/April</u> Contact NECC and others make display | | | |
| Goal 4-2: Obj. 2 - Collection for basic ed. | | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Goal 4-3: Early Literacy | | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Goal 5-1: Targeted promotions | | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |