



**PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY
2020 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

WHAT WE LEARNED

POWER OF PLACE

In 2015, Providence Public Library developed a Strategic Plan, entitled “Think Again.” In part, this bold, ambitious plan set in motion a massive undertaking - transforming the downtown location. The renovated facility includes innovative spaces for education, learning, and exchange for teens, small businesses, families, and adults.

Through our information gathering, we learned that the next chapter of the Library is also linked to online and statewide networks, where Library programming is offered in digital formats as well as communities across the state. We learned that ensuring equitable, welcoming access to all of the places where we have presence, in-person and online, will continue to be critical as we move ahead.

STAFF AS A CRITICAL STRENGTH

The planning process reinforced the powerful relationship between Library staff and those they serve. Their skills, welcoming nature, helpfulness and interest in serving the community rang out loud and clear in the listening effort. The construction project, as it comes to end, also challenged the staff to continue their efforts under difficult circumstances. As we look ahead, the opportunity to continue to invest in the staff of the Library and ensure that they are well-equipped and supported is critical to ensuring that staff is prepared to positively maximize their impact on the community.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN COHESION ACROSS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Libraries across the country are in the process of reinvention, reimagining, and redesigning their approaches, being responsive to both community needs and changes in technology. In addition, libraries are increasingly creating intentional spaces for convening for learning, dialogue, and enrichment. The information gathering and reflection efforts of the planning process yielded a recognition of the opportunity to strengthen the alignment and cohesion of the Library’s programs and services in order to increase our positive impact and better direct our resources and efforts.

COLLABORATION MATTERS

Through our listening with partners and community members, we continue to recognize the critical nature of collaborative partnerships to support our aspirations. We learned more about what matters to our partners and what types of shared, collective ways that we could work together in order to collaboratively have a deeper and more significant impact on our community. We also learned that there remain opportunities to clarify how the Library is partnering with the Providence

Community Library and others to bring programming and opportunities to the city of Providence and beyond. The transformed space and innovative programs also increase our opportunity to both cultivate and strengthen our relationships with our partners.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION (DEI)

PPL has recognized the opportunity to strengthen our practices and invest in DEI throughout our organization. The Board and staff recognized that the institution is in the early stages of the journey to more deeply focus on DEI across the work of the Library. Although individual staff and Board members may be in different places in their personal DEI journey, the institution is in the early stages. We learned that increasingly partners and collaborators are also undertaking these efforts and there is an opportunity to create opportunities for shared learning and evolution. There is also the opportunity to develop an organization-wide approach to this work moving forward.

OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

We learned that increasing awareness of the opportunities and resources available with target audiences as well as creating deeper opportunities for co-creation and engagement will better inform our work and decision-making going forward. Beyond traditional marketing, there is an opportunity to create customized messaging strategies for communication channels that work best for our service communities. The Library can also consider innovative strategies to build awareness of the Library’s offerings.

ROLE OF OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We learned that our Board of Trustees has the opportunity to more actively engage in the work of the Library. Increasing cohesion and engagement, strengthening Board education, and monitoring progress against key organizational goals are opportunities for the Board moving forward.

IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The transformation of our physical space required a substantial investment of our resources and will require a range of new staff roles to support both expanded programming and administrative infrastructure. We have recognized building a diverse, portfolio of revenue sources will be needed to ensure the future financial sustainability of the institution.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

OUR MISSION & TAGLINE

Providence Public Library inspires Rhode Islanders to be lifelong learners by engaging their curiosity and offering access to extraordinary experiences, resources, and ideas.

Engage. Learn. Thrive.

OUR VISION

OUR VISION FOR OUR IMPACT

All Rhode Islanders are engaged, informed, enriched, and thriving. Libraries across our state are viewed as essential catalysts in increasing opportunities for all.

OUR VISION FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

PPL will...

CATALYZE the aspirations and dreams of our community.

RESPOND to our community by engaging them in our decision making and creating innovative approaches to respond to changes and opportunities.

BE AN ACCESSIBLE, WELCOMING HUB of activity, offering innovative educational offerings and cultural experiences.

CONNECT our community to information, knowledge, and resources...and each other.

PARTNER with organizations and systems across the state and be known for our collaborative culture.

BE A JOYOUS SPACE for our community and our staff, who are supported with opportunities for continuous learning.

DIVERSIFY and celebrate our engaged and committed staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees.

Be a **FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE** institution able to deliver on our mission for decades to come.

OUR VALUES

ACCESS: We believe in removing barriers to information and service access and creating spaces that are open to all, with a focus on those who traditional systems have failed to reach.

AGENCY: We believe all people can create positive change in their own lives through the power of connection and knowledge.

EQUITY: We believe inequities, specifically racial inequities, in our systems and society keep people from reaching their full potential. To address these inequities, we incorporate a deep and holistic focus on diversity and racial equity in both our work and our workplace.

CURIOSITY: We believe that inspiring curiosity sits at the foundation of nurturing learning and developing new skills. We believe continuous, lifelong learning enriches people's lives and increases opportunities.

EXTRAORDINARY: We believe that enacting our mission requires us to provide welcoming, outstanding customer service, to bring bold new ideas to fruition, and to deeply listen and respond to community needs.

JOY: We believe in sharing joy and happiness in all of our interactions. We love our work and share our positive energy.



OUR GOALS 2020 – 2025

GOAL 1: EVOLVE THE PPL EXPERIENCE BY EXPANDING PATHWAYS FOR OPPORTUNITY, LEARNING AND ENRICHMENT

We will be a center for opportunity, learning and enrichment, guided by our community and partnerships, maximizing our new space and statewide presence.

GOAL 2: EMBED DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN ALL THAT WE DO

We will develop and implement an organization-wide approach to practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of our organization.

GOAL 3: IGNITE AND ACTIVATE OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

We will ignite and activate our community and invite them into opportunities to amplify our message and support our efforts.

GOAL 4: INVEST IN OUR STAFF AND OUR SYSTEMS

We will strengthen our internal systems and practices to ensure all staff are inspired, empowered, and valued.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

We will strengthen our financial planning tools and explore new opportunities to diversify funding sources through earned income opportunities and new partnerships.

GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN OUR BOARD

Our Board of Trustees will actively partner to enact our mission as ambassadors and will bring their expertise and passion to support our efforts.

KEY RESULTS

Implementation Approach: The Strategic Plan is a living document that is a road map by which the Executive Director and Board of Trustees should be held accountable. The plan should be used to create annual goals for the Executive Director and the Board. Progress against annual goals can be monitored by ensuring regular updates at Board meetings and consistent reporting on desired key results noted below. In addition, a detailed implementation plan will be used to track progress against the selected strategies and tactics for the first year and then updated accordingly for each successive year.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan is envisioned to enact the following key results:

GOAL	KEY RESULTS EXPECTED
Goal 1: Evolve the PPL experience by expanding pathways for opportunity, learning and enrichment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of in-person and digital users in terms of number of users, frequency of use, and user retention. • Increase in demographic diversity of library users and geographic reach once targets are set. • Increase in user satisfaction and net promoter score. • Program participant completion rates. • Range of formal partnerships established (relationship strength, diversity, and reach).
Goal 2: Embed diversity, equity and inclusion in all that we do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and approval of DEI roadmap. • Completion of audit of current practices, collections, and programs and implementation of recommendations. • Achievement of key milestones/targets/objectives set-out in DEI roadmap.
Goal 3: Inspire and engage our supporters and partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics for deepening board, donor, funder, and staff engagement in fund development efforts. • Increase in meaningful donor and funder data collection, data accuracy, and data analysis. • Increase in number and diversity of donors, and donor retention. • Increase in individual giving at all contribution levels (including measurable shifts in giving). • Increase in general operating support and multi-year grants. • Increase in federal and state grants. • Increase in multi-organization and cross sector fundraising campaigns (number of campaigns, donor participation, dollars raised).
Goal 4: Invest in our staff and our systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in professional development opportunities (training hours/year, number of participants, and participant outcomes). • Increase in overall employee satisfaction. • Improvement in staff perception of ease and efficiency of financial reporting. • Strengthen information management infrastructure. • Improvements in security protocols and risk management (tracking of security incidents).
Goal 5: Develop and implement a financially sustainable business model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting and achievement of targets set for each level of funding on annual basis, though financial planning. • Increase in financial stability through improvements in agreed-upon financial indicators.
Goal 6: Strengthen our board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in board engagement and cohesion. • Increase in board professional development opportunities (training). • Successful board recruitment efforts.

OUR PROCESS

A Design Team comprised of members of the Board and staff leadership was formed in November of 2019 to develop a three-year strategic plan for Providence Public Library. Fio Partners, a consulting firm that works with libraries and nonprofit organizations, was selected to support the process.

The strategic planning process began with the design of the information base for planning. The design included opportunities to gather observations of the organization from a variety of perspectives, including staff, community partners, and industry experts. The information base, which was gathered from November 2019 – February 2020, included:

Organizational Insights

- A Board survey to assess the effectiveness of board interactions and functions, and solicit input into PPL's strategic planning priorities
- A 5-year historical analysis of financial ratios and trends
- A financial trends projection
- An assessment of management systems with the administrative team
- Program Profiles that were developed to guide consistent and relevant information gathering about each program's audiences, capacity, characteristics, outcomes, relationships, competition, trends and future opportunities, and financial model.

Staff Insights

- A staff climate survey was conducted to gather insight and perceptions of staff about the functioning of PPL and the climate of the organization.
- The above insights were complemented by interviews with senior leadership of the organization to ask their input into the strategic direction of the organization.

External Insights

- Stakeholder interviews gathered feedback
- Focus groups with partner organizations and patrons solicited input regarding the future of PPL and perceptions regarding the quality of its services and relationships.
- A community perception survey collected information about priorities identified by the community along with perceptions of the Library.

The Design Team convened every four to six weeks to review and discuss completed analyses and oversee activities relative to the information gathering. In early February, the Board of Trustees and members of the Design Team met to review the information base, offer input into the strategic direction of the organization, and shape priorities for the next three years.

The strategic plan's framework is anchored in the information base and the strategic direction articulated during the retreat. Staff leadership then used the framework as a starting point for a structured conversation and collaborative revision process. The resulting strategic plan will inform the annual goal setting for the Executive Director and Board, who will also jointly track implementation progress by monitoring the plan's agreed upon key results over time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals and organizations helped us create this new plan for the Library. Special thanks to the Library's Board of Trustees and the staff for their steadfast attention in creating and designing both the outreach and the culminating retreat. Also, none of this would have been possible without the individuals and organizations who contributed to the extensive information gathering process that took place in Fall 2019. Your opinions and ideas fully informed the creation of our new plan, and we are fully indebted to you for your help. Thank you!