



**2019
PROGRESS
REPORT**

January 2020

Anchorage Public Library Strategic Plan 2019-2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2019-21 Strategic Plan focuses APL on core services and three community focus areas – **education & skills for life, a bridge to information and resources, and building community**. To carry out this plan, in 2019 the Library committed to a more intentional development of programs and services to ensure that all library activities strengthen core services and deliver outcomes in the three community focus areas.

The first step, which took up most of 2019, was to improve internal practices and infrastructure to ensure that we are adequately positioned to address the goals of the plan. This was accomplished by forming cross-departmental work groups to tackle projects such as internal communications, policy reviews, and staff training and development. Nine work groups undertook projects in 2019 and four formed late in the year to work in 2020; 35% of staff (32) have participated in a work group.

2019 Highlights

The focus on internal improvements led to improved staff satisfaction scores, an organization-wide commitment to professional development and personal growth, and the achievement of many new practices that make APL a more efficient and enjoyable place to work. The Library now has a strong, cohesive, and well-trained staff that consistently delivers high quality programs and services.

While our main focus was on internal improvements, we also made strides in our public-facing work, most notably realigning our community partnerships to more directly address our community focus areas, eliminating overdue fines as part of our equity, diversity and inclusion lens, and improving communications and promotions to ensure that more people take advantage of the great things APL has to offer.

2020 Goals

In 2020 we will focus on continuing realignment of our public-facing programs around the three community focus areas, improving our use of data and analytics to make decisions and measure success, and continuing to institutionalize our internal improvements.



MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

Metric

Results as of December 2019



Majority of staff, volunteers & partners can name our community priorities

65% of staff named the priority areas correctly on Fall 2019 staff survey; board survey scheduled for 2020



Our programming is developed with intentionality to meet this plan's goals

Departments conducted reviews of current programming and are in the process of redesigning. Examples of changes include additional bilingual storytimes at Loussac, a mindfulness meditation series at Mountain View, sustainability activities & workshops at Girdwood, and financial literacy workshops at Loussac



Core services are maintained

With no major budget cuts in 2019 and a budget increase for 2020, we've been able to maintain and improve our core services



Staff and infrastructure levels are maintained or increased

- No cuts to staff, budget, hours or facilities in the 2020 budget
- Received overwhelming support from the Assembly and Administration for 2020 budget
- Got two positions upgraded and reinstated a position that had been unfunded for 2020



Our collection is dynamic and responsive to community need

- Received frequent positive mentions from patrons excited to find exactly what they were looking for
- Responded to each Suggest a Purchase request within 30 days
- 88% of the collection circulated within the past two years



An improvement in scores on staff culture surveys

- 63 staff took the survey in 2019 over 54 who took it in 2018
- Improved in 20 categories, two stayed the same, six had slight declines (no more than ↓4%)
- Biggest score increases: internal communications ↑36%, understanding of mission, vision and values ↑22%, and communications with supervisors ↑17%



An increase in the community's ranking of the value of the Library in our patron surveys

No update in 2019. In 2018, 85% of users and 67% of non-users believed that the Library provides good value for the tax dollar invested; will resurvey in 2020



We are able to demonstrate to the community that we focused in the areas that are most important to them

Yes! Launched several new programs and refined existing programs focused within the community priorities of education & skills for life, a bridge to information and resources, and building community. See highlights section on next page for details



Even if faced with external challenges, we are able to operate efficiently and make a difference because this plan focuses us on what is most important

This plan helped us get through an earthquake, a flood in a facility, a summer staff shortage, and the local economic recession without losing ground on our efforts



Communications with the public are developed with intentionality to meet this plan's goals

- Increased marketing budget and focus around strategic plan issues, including health care navigators and Job Lab
- Reached out to new audiences with KENI talk radio, Sol de Medianoche, Senior Voice, and more
- Cross-promoted services with other municipal departments, including Police, Health, GIS and Mayor
- Presented the Strategic Plan at Assembly work session – will provide annual updates

HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Education & Skills for Life

- Formed new partnership with YWCA to expand Job Labs
- Increased library tours and outreach to schools for Summer Discovery
- Partnered with WIC and Head Start to promote early literacy

A Bridge to Information and Resources

- Grew Community Resource Coordinator program to coordinate with local social services for library patrons
- Offered civics programs, including Civics Day and teen civics workshop

Building Community

- Eliminated overdue fines in 2020 to be more equitable to low income patrons
- Responded to Suggest a Purchase Requests from the community to build our collection
- Successfully advocated on behalf of patrons to restore a bus route to Loussac Library
- Reclassified on-call librarian positions to broaden scope of applicants by removing the master's degree minimum requirement
- Mountain View Library worked with partners to bring free lunch for kids on Saturdays; hosted community dialogs with Alaska Humanities Forum and formed support group to help people re-entering after incarceration with job search and other needs

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

Be a Great Place to Work

- Launched a new internal communications plan and increased staff satisfaction with communications by 36%
- All supervisors participating in a leadership training series
- Standardized new employee orientation to ensure everyone has access to the same resources and information; re-oriented existing staff
- Incorporated trainings, professional development and learning opportunities into many ongoing departmental meetings

Expand and Engage the Library Community

- Held Equity Diversity and Inclusion staff workshops: ground rules for discussions, Indigenous Land Acknowledgment, fine elimination implications, and a Racial Equity Social Justice evaluation tool
- Updated volunteer policy and laid foundation to expand the program and make it easier to apply and engage in volunteer work
- Friends of the Library donated \$92K and Anchorage Library Foundation donated \$211K to Library in 2019

Strengthen our Operations

- Created a master policy list and set a calendar for future review and updates; updated several policies to be more inclusive and less punitive
- Created and distributed customer service materials and staff recognition pilot project
- Formed work groups for statistics & data and simplifying processes
- Cleaned up shared digital workspaces such as our shared drive and Canva folders

CORE SERVICES

- Cross-trained staff on help desks and locations to offer broader coverage and more support for patrons with questions
- Rejuvenated book displays; updated help desks and signage at Loussac; updated signage at all locations
- Updated public access technology (new computers, new self-check module, and infrastructure upgrades)
- Offered a broad array of programs for multiple ages and interests
- Adopted Collection HQ software for automated collection management reports and increased efficiency of materials management
- Promoted and increased use of room rentals
- Upgraded to Automated Materials Handling at Chugiak-Eagle River