

Providence Community Library

2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan

Introduction

This Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with the Strategic Planning Committee, Board members, the staff of Providence Community Library (PCL), and with facilitation and research by The Capacity Group. At the outset of planning, The Capacity Group had individual confidential conversations with 25 Board members and senior management, and facilitated a conversation with 40 front line and management-level staff. The findings from these in-depth conversations set the agenda for the planning process.

Planning was also informed by extensive research into community needs and opportunities, including 12 Board led community conversations, 9 in our libraries and 3 with targeted groups including the arts community, Spanish-speaking artists, and small business owners. The Strategic Planning Committee created and disseminated a bilingual survey that was conducted online and in person.

The Capacity Group interviewed 7 key outside stakeholders, including members of City government and funders, assessed trends in funding and services provided by PCL, including the strengths and challenges, as well as promising practices and trends nationally.

Further, there were two in-person Board/staff retreats and one online discussion group for gathering input and feedback as the plan was developed. Finally, there were five Strategic Planning Committee meetings to finalize this Strategic Plan.

PCL has many strengths to build on including a dedicated revenue base from state and city funds and growing local grants; a diverse, highly committed, engaged, and experienced staff providing unique, highly mission driven programs; and recognition for excellence in programming in the areas of youth literacy and immigrant services. PCL has a Board of Directors committed to ensuring all Providence communities have welcoming, accessible libraries focused on meeting the unique needs of each neighborhood.

PCL faces a number of challenges. Its current funding sources are inadequate. Presently, PCL generates insufficient revenue to support and expand its facilities, staffing, and operations to fully meet the information, literacy and learning needs of the city's residents. There is need to improve communications across the organization and to clarify the roles of the Board, executive leadership, and library administration. The organization has been operating without a clear, guiding strategy. This Strategic Plan, adopted by the PCL Board of Trustees in May 2018, will guide and support the organization in addressing these challenges and building on its strengths.

Mission

Providence Community Library serves the culturally diverse people of Providence by adapting to their evolving reading and information needs with a staff that delivers relevant resources and programs, cultivates meaningful partnerships, and promotes vibrant neighborhoods.

Vision

Providence Community Library will provide a welcoming and safe physical and intellectual space for a diverse population through its network of nine neighborhood libraries. These essential community hubs will provide free and relevant educational and cultural resources and programming for individuals and groups that meet their needs for reading, literacy, lifelong learning, exploration, discovery, and enjoyment.

Three-Year Cycle Goals

Revenue Goals

- Build on existing strong relationships with the city and state to enter into a sustaining and growth phase including appropriate yearly increases in revenue
- Demonstrate clearer value for the city and state to capture additional revenue through RFPs and contracts
- Identify clear benchmarks and set strategic, far-reaching, and forward-thinking approaches for fund Development
- Capture significant operating and program revenue through wide and deep corporate, non-profit, arts, and collegiate strategic partnerships that meet community needs and have strong revenue potential
- Update the Capital Improvement Plan with short and long-term goals that build on prior strengths, seek new alliances, and sustain community goals
- Explore the feasibility of a capital campaign, revenue re-capture strategies, and the use of loans and business planning for capital improvements to create sustainable facilities.

Community Services Goals

- Assess child, teen, adult, senior, and caregiver preferred use of libraries to improve literacy, community relations, and life-long learning, with a goal of enhancing engagement and a continued focus on meeting the unique needs of each neighborhood
- Assess and develop a plan for incorporating technology to enhance management, programmatic and service goals of the library

Capacity Building Goals

- Improved communication among Board members, management, staff, and Friend's Groups
- Improve and unify messaging to patrons and community
- Transition Board Members to a growth and sustaining role
- Sustain existing organization strengths
- Create and implement a detailed staffing plan with short and long-term goals connected to program and services, community commitments, and revenue generation goals