CUMBERLAND COUNTY

LIBRARY SYSTEM

**Strategic Plan
2022-2026**

Vision: Equitable access to high quality library services and information

Mission:
The Cumberland County Library System enhances the capacity of member libraries, encourages lifelong learning, and facilitates access to information and technology, all to improve the quality of life in our communities.

Values:

- **Community**
- **Efficiency**
- **Empowerment**

Objectives of this Plan

Share Resources

Increase Access

Secure Funding

Support Staff

Continue Innovation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Cumberland County Library System (CCLS) consists of seven (7) federated local libraries, one (1) branch facility, a system headquarters office and an associated non-profit Cumberland County Library System Foundation. The library system provides service to more than 253,500 people in Cumberland County and a small portion of Franklin County.

This plan represents the overall strategy for the CCLS over the next five years and was presented to the Cumberland County Library System Board (CCLSB) for approval on December 20, 2021.

Throughout the life of the plan, library system staff will develop an activity plan to support the overall strategy. Staff will regularly review progress toward meeting plan goals and report to the CCLSB and the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. The activity plan will evolve as we work toward each objective, taking into account the strategic plans of our member libraries, as well as industry, environmental, and economic changes on local and global levels.

The CCLS strategic planning process was inclusive and enlightening. We remain committed to our customers – both the member libraries and the residents of Cumberland County – and to our core services. We are excited about the focus this plan will bring through 2026 and hope this plan inspires growth and change over the next five years that lead to increased impact in our community and our member libraries.

BACKGROUND

The strategic planning process allowed a steering committee of community and member library volunteers to review planning documents and data to bring focus and direction under one plan. CCLS engaged in this planning process under the direction of a Board-selected consultant using both traditional planning elements, and processes such as Appreciative Inquiry, to determine what is working and what is possible to become the kind of organization we determine we want to be.

Jim Weischedel of HR Enhancement Solutions, a strategic planning consultant for PANO, helped guide the planning process. The planning team included:

- **Stephanie Andrejack**, Cleve J. Fredricksen Library

- **Carolyn Blatchley**, CCLS Executive Director

- **Jairee Counterman**, CCLS Advancement

- **Manal El Harrak**, Bosler Memorial Library

- **Jessica Howard**, Waidner-Spahr Library (Dickinson College) and CCLS Futures Task Group

- **Blair Lawrence**, New Cumberland Public Library

- **Megan Mancino**, Jeffrey W. & Jo Anne R. Coy Public Library of Shippensburg

- **John McCrea**, John Graham Library and CCLS Board

- **Cindy Mortzfeldt**, Joseph T. Simpson Public Library

- **Linda Willis**, Joseph T. Simpson Public Library and CCLS Foundation

The planning team met regularly starting in November 2020 to design, manage, and execute the planning process. Work was completed in December 2021.

PLANNING PROCESS & DATA HIGHLIGHTS

In order to create a cohesive, actionable plan, we provided educational sessions for the steering committee, surveyed a variety of user groups, conducted targeted interviews, and solicited information from focus groups.

In terms of education, the consultant provided background on three concepts used in the process: *Appreciative Inquiry,* Hildy Gottlieb's *Pollyanna Principle* and Simon Sinek's *Start With Why.* The library system's executive director also provided an overview of the federated library system structure in Pennsylvania, the funding structure for CCLS (including the distribution formula) and documents such as 2019 Edge Assessment Results and member library strategic plans.

The steering committee developed a Community Stakeholder Survey which addressed the profile of the individual completing the survey, the respondent's perception of a library system, the perceived strengths of the library system, dreams that the respondent has for the future of CCLS, and an open-ended section for sharing anything else. This survey was pushed out with targeted emails to library cardholders (active and inactive), contacts at schools and other educational facilities, CCLS and member library board members, Friends and CCLS Foundation members, staff, and the Cumberland County Commissioners. 365 people responded to this survey.

Our profile questions in the survey helped us to identify the groups we wanted to further explore using Focus Groups. The member library directors, the County Commissioners and the CCLS Board were selected. We also determined that one-on-one interviews were needed with member library Board Presidents and the executive directors of five Pennsylvania library systems we admire.

We used targeted questions during the focus groups and interviews to increase our understanding of the concerns these groups had, and how the library system could best respond. We specifically asked about:

- Thoughts on drafted vision, mission and objectives

- Aspirations they have for member libraries

- Challenges they think libraries and library systems will be facing in the next 2-3 years

- Concrete goals they thought the library system should achieve, and what success looks like

- Opportunities for growth over the next 5-10 years

- Tasks or processes that could be given up in the future

Participants provided a wide range of comments, including current library activities and possible activities and areas of focus for the future. Supporting documentation such as survey responses and notes from focus groups and interviews are on file at the library system headquarters office.

The planning team used this information to narrow down the vision, mission, and five strategic objectives. Each objective was assigned three goals, with a listing of possible activities to be reviewed no less than annually throughout the life of the plan.

The five objectives were shared with the CCLS Board in the Executive Director's October 2021 Board Report, and two drafts of the plan were shared with member library directors and library system headquarters department heads. The plan was adopted by the CCLS Board on December 20, 2021.

For questions on the CCLS Strategic Plan, please contact the library system's executive director at 717-240-6175 or ccls@cumberlandcountylibraries.org.

THE CCLS STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision

The vision of the Cumberland County Library System is equitable access to high quality library services and information.

Mission

The mission of the Cumberland County Library System is to

- o   enhance the capacity of member libraries,

- o   encourage lifelong learning, and

- o   facilitate access to information and technology,

all to improve the quality of life in our communities.

Values

Community

The library system connects and empowers member libraries to serve as community hubs, places where people can meet to discuss issues and ideas in a welcoming, friendly and safe environment.

Efficiency

The library system provides support to the member libraries to achieve efficiencies that could not be attained by one library alone with a focus on sustainability and access to materials, technology and services.

Empowerment

The library system helps people create positive change through the power of connection and knowledge by providing places and opportunities for lifelong learning, and respecting the dignity of all individuals.

Objectives

This strategic plan contains five Objectives, each with potential measures of success, and fifteen Goals (three per objective) along with possible activities which are subject to change throughout the life of the plan based on the assessment of the Board, system headquarters staff and member library directors.

Potential measures of success are the possible indicators of achieving success for the objectives.

The objectives of this strategic plan fall into five distinct areas:

- Share Resources

- Increase Access

- Secure Funding

- Support Staff

- Continue Innovation

1. SHARE RESOURCES

Objective 1: Share Resources

The library system will seek to maximize shared resources to take advantage of economies of scale, increase efficiency and improve collaboration.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Improvement / containment of operational costs
- Allowance for shared job specialists
- Expedited delivery of popular titles

Goal: Seek opportunities to share staff positions between/among libraries and/or the library system.

Possible Activities:

Traveling IT staff member to work with patrons who have technology questions

Library-based staff member who can be regularly contracted out to other libraries (such as Finance, Development or Human Resources)

Centralize marketing to bring marketing in house with representation from each of the member libraries and the library system

Utilize the County Communications department for larger-scale project promotion

Centralize human resources tasks such as background checks, required clearances, annual training requirements, etc.

Goal: Encourage consolidation of purchases for popular materials to ensure expedited delivery at the best price.

Possible Activities:

Develop a methodology for the shared purchase of best sellers and popular authors

Explore options to receive best sellers most efficiently

Goal: Explore the options of utilizing economies of scale to enhance member library value in insurances and other services.

Possible Activities:

Investigate group purchase programs and legality of the process

Joint purchase of insurances and services such as healthcare, workers' compensation, unemployment, etc.

Progress Report on Objective 1: Share Resources

ADOPTED ACTIONS AND PROGRESS (TO BE EDITED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PLAN)		
Action:	**Year:**	**Progress:**

Summary of Completion		

2. INCREASE ACCESS

Objective 2: Increase Access

The library system will work to reduce or eliminate institutional barriers to library services.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Increased engagement with school and municipal community leadership to build strong working relationships
- Deliberate engagement with targeted populations to gather data that motivates change
- Improved services and collections that reflect diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

Goal: Redefine our role in the community to be more welcoming and inclusive, and ultimately increase participation

Possible Activities:

Determine barriers that make it difficult to join or use the library

Find out why former users do not return to the library

Explore the use of auto-renewal for library materials

Encourage member libraries to use the tools such as the PA Forward platform or Turning Outward program to increase reach

Consider opportunities for Library of Things (lending hotspots, cake pans, fly-fishing rods, nature backpacks) and associated catalog and marketing needs

Goal: Strengthen partnerships with volunteers, schools and community agencies.

Possible Activities:

Identify potential constituent groups with needs that libraries are not currently serving

Identify potential partner organizations in the community to assist us in meeting these needs (examples: Talk Tank mental health services at Ephrata Public Library with Wellspan Health; pick-up lockers in community locations)

Provide access to community services such as payment of parking tickets, purchase of dog licenses, and serving as polling places

Utilize library space to provide County information and services, and utilize County office space to provide library information and services

Partner with schools to provide easy library card registration and access to library services

Continue to grow the STAR program through modernization of offerings and increased partnerships

Outreach to municipal and school leaders through County Municipal Leaders Forum and written communications

Goal: Provide leadership for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives.

Possible Activities:

Ensure web site services continue to meet ADA requirements

Collect data on the cultural, language, physical and socioeconomic barriers of our constituents and work with member libraries to ensure spaces are inclusive

Provide opportunities for staff professional development around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

Progress Report on Objective 2: Increase Access

ADOPTED ACTIONS AND PROGRESS (TO BE EDITED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PLAN)		
Action:	Year:	Progress:
Summary of Completion		

3. SECURE FUNDING

Objective 3: Secure Funding

Through advocacy, education and strong fiscal management, the library system will ensure member libraries and the library system remain well funded institutions.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Increase advocacy efforts with elected officials at all levels
- Secure funding from additional sources to maintain or increase local financial effort
- Adoption of a new funding formula

Goal: Develop advocacy skills and tools that can be used by all staff, board members, Friends, and volunteers to increase funding to libraries.

   Possible Activities:

   Provide orientation information for Board and library directors that addresses library funding

   Develop an advocacy toolkit specific to Cumberland County libraries

   Provide training and marketing materials for advocates

   Host legislative events and a communication campaign

   Participate in state and national advocacy events

Goal: Develop creative ways to secure private funding from the community.

   Possible Activities:

   Develop a reporting / tracking system for fundraisers by member libraries / Friends groups

   Continue to support a donor database, including training and National Change of Address checks

   Provide training to directors, development staff and board members on how to secure major gifts and endowments

   Support the Foundation in developing an endowment to provide grant opportunities to member libraries

Goal: Modernize the funding formula for distributions to member libraries to focus on quality library service measures.

Possible Activities

Conduct a review of the funding formula and recommend essential changes that will facilitate collaboration among member libraries.

Progress Report on Objective 3: Secure Funding

ADOPTED ACTIONS AND PROGRESS (TO BE EDITED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PLAN)		
Action:	**Year:**	**Progress:**

Summary of Completion

4. SUPPORT STAFF

Objective 4: Support Staff

The library system will plan and implement initiatives to attract and retain a high quality staff and develop leaders in the field.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Increased staff retention rate
- Increased levels of employee engagement
- Opportunities for professional development

Goal: Coordinate the sharing of employee attraction and retention data among member libraries.

> Possible Activities:
>
> Conduct a compensation and benefits analysis to ensure a competitive total rewards program at all member libraries
>
> Examine all aspects such as salary scales, retention information, exit interview data, employee engagement, etc.

Goal: Develop and implement a staff recruitment and retention strategy that can be utilized by member libraries.

> Possible activities:
>
> Develop a local mentoring program for new staff at member libraries, and encourage lead administrators to participate in state or national level mentoring programs
>
> Host events (such as welcome gatherings for new staff in key roles at member libraries) to orient new staff
>
> Conduct an engagement survey
>
> Conduct exit interviews
>
> Participate in anti-harassment training
>
> Provide appropriate software and adequate training (such as Office and ILS)
>
> Ensure professional development opportunities for all staff
>
> Incentivize length of employment within/across libraries in the system

Goal: Establish an intentional leadership development process for key staffing areas to strengthen operations and decision making at all levels.

Possible activities:

Provide leadership development training

Create staff leadership development plan processes and templates

Utilize system-wide teams for decision making

Modernize the staff intranet for organization of information and communication

Provide orientation for staff and Board members

Facilitate mentoring opportunities within member libraries or with other libraries in the Commonwealth

Progress Report on Objective 4: Support Staff

ADOPTED ACTIONS AND PROGRESS (TO BE EDITED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PLAN)		
Action:	**Year:**	**Progress:**
Summary of Completion		

5. CONTINUE INNOVATION

Objective 5: Continue Innovation

To ensure sustainability and continuity of operations, the library system will continue to focus on the future and adjust strategies to best serve our community.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Demonstrated awareness of change in the world around us
- A functional continuity of operations plan communicated to leadership
- Improved scope of services that meets demands

Goal: Revise and implement a continuity of operations plan for the library system and all member libraries.

Possible activities:

Prepare for remote work (hardware, software, policies) in case of disaster

Document common processes

Re-establish partnerships with member libraries for the temporary rehousing of the system headquarters in the face of disaster

Develop an enhanced strategy for security of our computer network and software programs that includes frequent changing of passwords and multi-factor authentication

Consider revisions to the computer use policy for staff and public

Goal: Maintain and adjust levels and offerings of services to meet consumer expectations in a rapidly changing world.

Possible activities:

Maintain a modernized catalog and patron database software (ILS) with affiliated customer services such as patron access catalog, text notifications and a mobile app

Continue to modernize the library system website and affiliated customer services such as event calendars and database offerings

Explore and implement RFID enhancements

Provide support to a summer learning program app

Continue and enhance curbside pickup

Enhance streaming video / eBooks offerings or platforms

Identify our competitors and assess their strengths and offerings

Identify potential partnerships with competitors to prevent duplication of services

Provide safe and welcoming spaces

Consider utilization of spaces and facilities outside the library for the delivery of library services

Goal: Embrace and utilize strategic plans of the library system and member libraries to shape annual goals, budget priorities and grant opportunities.

Possible activities:

Utilize the work on the Futures Task Group, possibly reforming with more member library involvement

Utilize benchmarking tools to measure success

Conduct regular reviews of strategic plans to provide ongoing input for future plans and budgeting, including the enhancement of possible activities

Progress Report on Objective 5: Continue Innovation

ADOPTED ACTIONS AND PROGRESS (TO BE EDITED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PLAN)		
Action:	**Year:**	**Progress:**
Summary of Completion		