



COUNCIL BLUFFS
Public Library



Strategic Plan FY 2025 – FY 2029

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CBPL

Library Director's Foreword

We are pleased to present Council Bluffs Public Library's FY2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

This document and the plan that it outlines were created through an intentional process of internal and external feedback on how the library is currently serving our community and how the library can continue to serve our community into the future. A public library is a resource for all and must reflect the needs of our patrons, whether those needs are informational or recreational. The community of Council Bluffs is a vibrant part of the Omaha Metro which is poised to grow and expand as economic development continues to blossom. We are ready to serve our current community and our future community members. This plan highlights some of the ways we intend to adjust and grow while continuing to provide the wonderful and essential services for which CBPL and public libraries are known for.

You can expect to continue to receive top-notch customer service, books and materials, technology access, and programming for all ages at the library. In addition, you can look forward to expansions in technology in our public meeting spaces, additional support and access to our genealogy resources, and expanded programming offerings through the introduction of community-led programming. Internally we will transition to data-driven decisions in all that we provide to continue to ensure we are a fiscally responsible and a trusted resource for educational support, self-directed learning, cultural development, literacies, and well-being.

This ambitious five-year plan will require numerous structural changes that take time to implement but will fundamentally strengthen the library for the long term. I invite you to take a moment to learn more about how the Council Bluffs Public Library plans to provide our community access to enrichment, connection, and discovery well into the future.



Antonia Krupicka-Smith
Director

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to these individuals who have contributed their valuable insights, energy, and leadership to Council Bluffs Public Library and this strategic plan.

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Images, as marked, were donated by Buck Christensen in memory of his grandmother, Betty Fields Majeski, an avid reader whose entire life was shaped by her love of the Council Bluffs Public Library.

Images marked 'CBPL' are photographs taken by CBPL staff.

Library Insights



To shape our strategic plan, the library embarked on an extensive community listening process. This began with personal interviews with government leaders, Library Trustees, Library Foundation leadership, community leaders, and library leadership. We expanded our outreach by conducting surveys to capture the priorities of our community, community partners, and library staff. Focus groups were conducted with representatives of these groups to delve deeper and get clarity on the themes that surfaced. Additionally, directors from aspirational peer libraries, similar to CBPL in size and structure, were surveyed for their most impactful tactics and perspectives on future trends in the library sector.

Nearly 350 individuals shared their ideas about the library and its contribution to the Council Bluffs community. Here are the major themes that emerged:



Patron Satisfaction

Patron satisfaction of the CBPL is strong as confirmed by a high Net Promotor Score®. Satisfaction is highest from families (youth to teen) which aligns with the exceptional ratings the library received for its youth and teen programming.

Library stakeholders believe there are opportunities to improve service to non-English speakers, immigrants, and various ethnic groups.



Outreach

Serving patrons outside the CBPL walls of the library is becoming increasingly important due to aging populations, increasing diversity, increasing non-English speakers, transportation limitations, school library reductions, digitalization, etc. Many other libraries across the U.S. are experiencing this too.

To better serve all groups, peer libraries are widely expecting to increase their outreach activities over the next five years.



Low Library Awareness

“Visiting the library doesn’t cross my mind” is the primary reason why people don’t visit the library more frequently. This issue is common among libraries and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. A combination of social media use, extensive outreach, and partnerships are key to connecting non-users to the library.



Partnerships

Partnerships, particularly with schools, are recognized as a strength of CBPL. Mission-driven organizations, schools, and community leaders all hope the library will further expand its partnership efforts. Existing partners expressed their willingness to cooperate on event and program promotion. Strong partnerships are critical if increased outreach services are to succeed.



Social Services

As a community hub, the library is welcoming to all. However, some patrons face challenges related to mental health, homelessness, and family well-being. Disruptive behavior can deter others from visiting the library.

Partnerships with various social service agencies, equipped to support a spectrum of circumstances, would create a more inclusive and supportive library environment.



Library Hours

Patrons have expressed a desire for extended library hours. The library's current hours compare favorably with many other libraries. Further inquiry revealed a desire for evening youth (kid) programming allowing working families to participate more easily. Late-night teen activities were also suggested.



Makerspaces

A high percentage of library users do not take advantage of the library's extensive makerspace. Many users are unclear on how they would use the makerspace and some have asked for training (or classes) to help them with their first endeavor.



Larger Collection

Traditional library materials (e.g., books, eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, etc.) continue to be the largest service provided by the library. The public is generally happy with the library's collection and the ability to get a book of their choice. Regardless, patrons indicated that an expanded range of materials and larger collections would increase their use of the library.

Strategic Plan Design

This Strategic Plan was developed by the CBPL Leadership Team in a series of collaborative workshops. After reflecting on the Insights, the Leadership Team updated the Mission and then set the Priorities, Goals, and Projects to accomplish the Mission over the next five years.

The plan aims to sustain the library's existing strengths while fostering thoughtful innovation for the future. The Goals of the plan are the focus of where time and resources will be expended. The scope and timeline of the Projects have flexibility so the library has the latitude to adjust to tactics as need to accomplish the Goals in response to ever-changing conditions.



Plan Highlights



Our Vision

The Council Bluffs Public Library is recognized as a trusted primary community resource for educational support, self-directed learning, cultural development, advancing literacies, and building public well-being.



Our Mission

Council Bluffs Public Library provides our community access to enrichment, connection, and discovery.



Our Values

The Council Bluffs Public Library:

- ❑ Offers superior patron experiences
- ❑ Encourages learning and discovery
- ❑ Is inclusive and provides access to all
- ❑ Cultivates collaboration and innovation
- ❑ Believes in the freedom to know
- ❑ Fosters a positive work environment
- ❑ Provides wise stewardship of public resources



Strategic Priorities, Goals and Projects

Spaces

Libraries are vital community builders. They provide a space where individuals can come to explore, interact, imagine, and pursue their goals. When libraries are attractive and functional, they invite the use of a wide array of services.

CBPL enjoys a beautiful library building that has consistently had a high number of visitors since opening 25 years ago. How people use their library has naturally evolved as our societal and personal needs have shifted. After 25 years, it is necessary to update how our existing space can best be utilized, provide an outreach vehicle to support those who cannot easily get to the library, and establish long-term plans for another location.



Goal

Improve the built environment to be reflective of the things our community wants to do and learn inside and outside the library locations.

Projects

- Fund & purchase an outreach vehicle
- Research and create a DIY memory lab
- Conduct a workspace analysis
- Makerspace assessment
- Update and upgrade meeting room AV options
- Research and update Special Collection storage & implement display enhancements
- Conduct a library landscaping master plan



Collections

A large and well-rounded collection of books and materials is essential for a library to effectively serve its community, support education and research, promote literacy and learning, represent cultural diversity, and preserve knowledge. Access to such a collection both empowers and entertains.

As personal needs, preferences, and demographics shift, CBPL needs to adapt and refresh our collection to better meet these changing needs. Our efforts will begin with a thorough analysis of the community's collection needs and preferences for consumption including AV materials and eMaterials. Based on the analysis, the library's collection policies will be updated to better align with the specific needs of the CB community.



Goal

Adapt and enhance the collections of the library to be reflective and relevant to the needs of the community.

Projects

- ❑ Conduct a collection analysis
- ❑ Implement researched collection best practices
- ❑ Research and introduce alternative format collection for those formats that are outdated or inaccessible
- ❑ Develop a multi-language collection



Community

Libraries play a crucial role in the social fabric of the communities they serve. With limited resources and budgets, libraries are faced with challenging decisions about which initiatives will yield the greatest benefit for the communities they serve.

At the time of this plan, the library is rolling out a kiosk on the west side of Council Bluffs. The library is currently marketing this kiosk and anticipates it will need to refine the materials and promotion methods in response to actual consumer behavior.

Furthermore, the library is committed to forming partnerships with other institutions, such as schools, social services, and senior living facilities, to create new pathways for bringing high-impact services to these institutions.

Goal

Be a conduit for community resources and services.

Projects

- Expand outreach offerings and establish high-impact exposure in the communities we serve
- Build upon the social service partnerships to continue to grow onsite service access
- Develop and implement a kiosk marketing/communication plan
- Grow LIT account usage among students



Institutional Success

A challenge for all libraries is creating an awareness of the library's offerings and keeping them top-of-mind across the community. The insights gathered from our surveys and focus groups highlighted opportunities for CBPL to better connect with community members.

To be a trusted community resource, the library must have an objective way to measure the success of our offerings. The library will develop a methodology and process to evaluate our offerings and how they can be improved. This effort is expected to result in a positive impact on programming for years to come.

Like all organizations, libraries need to continuously improve their operations so they can efficiently deliver services, and without disruption. To this end, the library will develop a long-term plan for establishing an additional new location. A new location will provide convenient access to our services elsewhere in the city and introduce new services that can't be accommodated in the existing facility.



Goal

Ensure the Library has the right resources and services to serve our community.

Projects

- Develop and implement a staff and leadership development and cross-training plan
- Conduct a community master plan for library services and the locations that are needed
- Review and evaluate systems to ensure efficiency
- Develop and implement a community awareness marketing plan
- Complete a disaster plan for the library facility
- Establish a library evaluation and assessment tool





Programs & Services

Library programs play a crucial role in literacy, cultural enrichment, education, and fostering diversity and inclusion. By providing a wide selection of program topics, libraries empower patrons to engage more deeply in the world around them.

CBPL's youth and teen programming events are well-attended and highly regarded. The extensive adult programming ranges from skill-based classes (sewing, soldering, etc.) to gaming, book clubs, author visits, musical events, etc.

The current program offerings are shaped by historical preferences, demand, and the suggestions that organically emerge from patrons and staff. However, surveys and conversations indicate the community has an appetite for program topics beyond what is currently offered.

Goal

Focus programs and services at all levels around designated literacies and demand.

Projects

- Introduce a programming model at all levels that includes four main agreed-upon literacies
- Develop a process and procedure for community-led programming
- Grow off-site programming for all ages
- Establish tween and emerging adult programming and services





COUNCIL BLUFFS Public Library



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