



Pioneer Library System

SIMPLY STRATEGIC NYLA – 2015

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LIBRARY PLANNING OUTLINE

This page offers a menu of activities that can be used to complete your library's strategic plan.

1). Intro to Library Planning

This is a strategic conversation that focuses on deciding what activities will contribute to the plan, who will be the project manager, who will take on the various tasks, and what the timeline will look like.

2). Planning Survey

This step focuses on developing a simple, 5-10 question survey that address a specific scope or research question. This can be one survey sent out to the community or a suite of surveys that are released at different points throughout a designated timeline.

3). Focus Groups

Holding 2-3 community focus groups can give a great deal of insight on the perspectives of your community. They should include 5-8 community members and run for 60-90 minutes. These are facilitated conversations.

4). Interviewing Community Leaders

It's important to talk with community leaders to see how the library fits into their plans. To help start these conversations you can ask questions pertaining to the decisions, challenges, and aspirations the leaders must think about over the next two to three years.

5). Board Priorities

Library boards have ideas too! In order to help your board think through their goals, ideas, and needs, we recommend a facilitated conversation that helps boards think about what they would like to see the library accomplish and what changes are needed to get there.

6). Making Sense of all the Data

After compiling all of the data from the activities above it's time to set priorities. We recommend setting rough priorities with the information gathered from the board and fitting in the rest of the data from there.

7). Plan Template

Once you have a rough idea of your priorities it's time for another strategic conversation. This time the board will finalize priorities and develop goals that will help move the library forward.

SAMPLE PLANNING SURVEY

1. On average, how often do you visit the [LIBRARY] in a typical month?

- Less than one visit per month
- 1-2 visits per month
- 3-4 visits per month
- 5 or more visits per month

2. In general, what is the main reason you visit the [LIBRARY]?

- Books/Audiobooks (browse, checkout, pickup holds, etc.)
- DVDs (browse, checkout, pickup holds, etc.)
- Computers/WiFi (use library computers and/or wifi)
- One-on-One Help/Training with Staff (research, computers, technology, etc.)
- Programs (attend adult, teen, or children's programs)
- Space (use of tables/chairs and workspaces)
- Other: (Open ended response)

3. In general, how satisfied are you with the service you selected in the previous question?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

4. In general, how satisfied are you with the overall customer service you receive when visiting the [LIBRARY]?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

5. In your opinion, what is the one of the most important services, programs, or benefits that the [LIBRARY] offers to the community?

6. In your opinion, what is one change that you would like the [LIBRARY] to make?

7. In your opinion, what is one service or program that the [LIBRARY] should offer to the community that they currently do not?

8. Additional Comments:

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Community Focus Group Questions

Goal: To discover the services, resources, and atmosphere focus group attendants desire in their community.

1. Think about your goals, aspirations, hobbies, interests, and role in the community. Keep these things in mind as you answer the following questions.
2. In your opinion, what is the most important service that your library currently offers?
3. How could the library improve that one service?
4. What are your main frustrations when using the library?
5. If you could design a new library for your community, what programs, services, and/or resources would you include?
6. Why are those things important to you?

Staff Focus Group Questions

Goal: To review the internal successes and struggles of the library through the staff's perception.

1. What is one thing your library did extraordinarily well in the last 12 months? What circumstance(s) allowed this to happen?
2. What is one thing your library did very poorly in the last 12 months? What circumstance(s) would need to change to allow success?
3. If tomorrow was your first day as the new director, what would be your first priority in preparing the library for the next 2-3 years?

Board or Committee Questions

Goal: To aid in the development of attainable goals by ensuring realistic expectations when evaluating priorities, measures of success, and timelines.

1. What are 2-3 aspirations you have for your library?
2. What upcoming challenges will we be facing in the next 2-3 years?
3. What goals would we like to accomplish as an organization?
4. What does success look like for each goal?
5. What concerns do you have about these goals?
6. What circumstances, if any, need to change in order to successfully complete these goals?

Three Questions

Goal: To discover the goals, aspirations, and challenges faced by community leaders.

1. What challenges does will your organization face in the next 2-3 years?
2. What major decisions will you need to make in the next 2-3 years?
3. What aspirations would you like to see come to fruition over the next 2-3 years?

PLAN TEMPLATE

[LIBRARY] PLAN

[DATES OF PLAN]

SECTION ONE: PLANNING SUMMARY

[THIS SECTION IS A BRIEF (ONE PARAGRAPH OR LESS) SUMMARY OF WHAT THIS PLAN CONTAINS. THE SUMMARY SHOULD EXPLAIN WHERE YOU COLLECTED YOUR DATA, HOW LONG THE PLAN WILL BE IN PLACE, AND WHO IS THE PRIMARY CONTACT FOR ISSUES REGARDING THE PLAN.]

SECTION TWO: MISSION STATEMENT

[INSERT YOUR LIBRARY'S MISSION STATEMENT.]

SECTION THREE: GOALS

[THIS SECTION SHOULD INCLUDE THREE TO FIVE GOALS THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED AS ESSENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS OVER THE TIME PERIOD OF THIS PLAN. THESE PRIORITIES SHOULD BE BROAD AND FOCUSED ON ACHIEVING THE MISSION OF THE LIBRARY. EACH GOAL WILL HAVE ACCOMPANYING ACTION STEPS. ACTION STEPS ARE THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS THAT WILL YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS. THEY ARE BEST WHEN THEY ARE SPECIFIC AND REALISTIC.

1) GOAL/PROJECT/PRIORITY

PROJECT LEADER: [WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS GOAL?]

PURPOSE: [WHY IS THE LIBRARY FOCUSED ON THIS GOAL? WHAT WILL THIS GOAL LOOK LIKE WHEN IT IS COMPLETE?]

MEASUREMENT: [HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN THIS GOAL/PROJECT IS COMPLETE?]

ACTION STEPS: [WHAT ACTIONS OR ACTIVITIES WILL ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?]

- ACTION STEP ONE-
 - [WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIS ACTIVITY?]
 - [WHAT IS THE DEADLINE/TIMELINE?]
- ACTION STEP TWO-
 - [WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIS ACTIVITY?]
 - [WHAT IS THE DEADLINE/TIMELINE?]
- ACTION STEP THREE-
 - [WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIS ACTIVITY?]
 - [WHAT IS THE DEADLINE/TIMELINE?]

ADD 3-4 "GOAL/PROJECT/PRIORITY" SECTIONS ALONG WITH THEIR LEADERS, PURPOSE, MEASUREMENTS, AND ACTION STEPS.