ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY
FIVE-YEAR PLAN
2015-2020
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

With the unveiling of this five-year plan, the Alexandria Library is excited to embark on a new course toward a vibrant future.

Prior to drafting this plan, the Library completed an extensive data collection and needs assessment process. We spent months speaking with community leaders, residents, library users and staff. Based on this input we identified seven priority areas that will guide our work in the coming years:

- Support for Learners of All Ages
- Library Collections
- Technology Management and Access
- Library as a Community Hub
- Community Relations, Marketing and Branding
- Organizational Health and Development
- Fundraising and Advocacy

This direction will bolster our role as leaders in early literacy and lifelong learning, emphasize our collection of high quality materials, and empower our staff to navigate an ever-changing digital world. We are anxious to increase our engagement efforts and offer improved services to our diverse community. We are confident that this work will position the Library as a recognized contributor to the City of Alexandria.

I am grateful to those who contributed ideas, suggestions and advice to ensure that the Alexandria Library remains a vital resource in this community. We look forward to exceeding your expectations!

Rose Dawson, Executive Director, Alexandria Library
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1 Provide programming and resources for Alexandria’s families and young children to ensure school readiness.

Activities
1. Support relevant components of Alexandria City’s Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP) through programming and partnerships with City agencies and non-profit organizations.
2. Participate with local, state and national programs that highlight early literacy initiatives.
3. Develop programs that model the importance of parent-child interactions for building early literacy skills.

2 Provide programming and resources for Alexandria’s youth to ensure that every child is academically successful and career ready.

Activities
1. Develop and execute formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS).
2. Develop collections and align programming to support Science Technology Reading Engineering Arts and Math (STREAM) concepts and ACPS curriculum.
3. Increase Summer Learning participation.
4. Increase outreach to homeschoolers and homeschooling associations to raise awareness of relevant Library activities.

3 Support lifelong learning (L3) activities for adults and seniors through workshops, materials and electronic resources.

Activities
1. Establish a bi-annual community survey to determine customer program preferences to better direct and allocate staffing and satisfy customer needs.
2. Identify potential partners in the educational, nonprofit and business sectors along with guidelines, expectations and goals for Library partnerships.
3. Incorporate L3 efforts at each library location, with customization based on neighborhood demographics.

4. Establish programmatic goals for all Adult Services staffers to ensure that L3 programs are system wide, on-going and high priority.

5. Expand programming efforts targeted to senior citizens and their unique needs and interests.

6. Expand adaptive services programming to facilitate L3 for all ages and across various disabilities.

4 Increase support for English Language Learners (ELL) throughout the City by emphasizing onsite instruction and supporting materials.

Activities
1. Increase ELL instruction to ensure that there is ongoing programming at each location and at varying times, including nights and weekends.

2. Add conversational English workshops at each location.

3. Plan an annual open house for new immigrants and ELL community.

4. Incorporate citizenship/naturalization components into ELL programming.

5. Dedicate a portion of the materials budget to ELL materials and programming needs, with customization based on community demographics.

5 Prepare staff for new responsibilities related to their educational roles and examine the feasibility of establishing new positions to coordinate these efforts.

Activities
1. Revise competencies for Adult and Youth Services staff.

2. Benchmark other libraries regarding staffing models for coordinating adaptive services and lifelong and ELL activities.

3. Create a training plan for relevant staff to include annual development activities that support educational roles.

4. Reestablish the Early Literacy Outreach and Programming Coordinator.
1. Dedicate additional resources to the Library’s materials budget in order to align spending with national per capita averages for public libraries.

Activities
1. Review existing spending for redistribution of funds to align with circulation trends, community demographics and customer feedback.
2. Increase fundraising activities within the Alexandria Library Foundation specifically targeted to materials spending.

2. Implement strategic acquisitions processes in order to optimize spending.

Activities
1. Finalize a collection development policy and collection management guidelines.
2. Begin using market segmentation data to make smarter purchases that align with community needs and wants.
3. Obtain collection management software to monitor usage patterns and assist with collection maintenance.
4. Investigate centralized purchasing models for greater consistency in collections.

3. Implement centralized materials management practices for consistent access across all physical and digital platforms.

Activities
1. Improve access to the Library’s collections through upgrades to the website.
2. Review cataloging collocation rules and branch shelving policies for consistency.
3. Evaluate the benefits associated with leasing newly released and unpublished materials.
4 Evaluate and organize the Library's Special Collections for optimal access.

Activities
1. Create a comprehensive collection development plan with specific goals and objectives.
2. Conduct an inventory of the entire collection in order to enumerate archival materials, books, photographs, ephemera, etc.
3. Update and digitize collection indexes and research guides.
4. Create a collection maintenance and preservation plan.

Libraries are a vital way for our community to give everyone free access to a wide variety of services. In addition to the repository of books, access to job training information, test prep resources (LSAT, etc), language skills are more important than ever. - Brian P.

I visited the library today to study and do my homework. It’s important to me and my family because you get a lot of new information you don’t know about. I belong to this library because I can get books I want at any time. My favorite services at this library are that the librarians are happy and open to help us. What I love about this library is that it’s quiet and it’s big and there are a lot of references and books. - Bethlehem C.
1. Effectively manage and evaluate existing and new technology offerings.

Activities
1. Evaluate current technology infrastructure, policies and procedures and compare with industry best practices.
2. Create a visionary technology plan indicating how technology resources will evolve at the Library.
3. Implement Urban Libraries Council EDGE Benchmarks to assess progress in meeting the community’s technology needs.
4. Establish standards for service responsiveness in order to efficiently handle technology concerns.
5. Devise a system for tracking trends in emerging technologies and their application in libraries.

2. Provide the community with a highly skilled staff, capable of training customers on the use of all technology the Library provides.

Activities
1. Update technology competencies for all staff, across all departments.
2. Provide staff with consistent access to technology equipment, including hardware and software.
3. Create technology goals for all staff members’ annual performance evaluations.
4. Implement mandatory and ongoing technology training for all staff.
5. Update job descriptions to include technology components.
6. Investigate the feasibility of creating a new position of Digital Services Librarian to coordinate staff training, monitor trends and assist with developing public training.
Provide community members of all ages with access to innovative technology and the opportunity to participate in training.

Activities
1. Identify community partners to assist with training for staff and customers.
2. Survey community to determine specific technology training needs in the following areas: emerging technologies, Office suite, research portals and social media.
3. Incorporate digital literacies into youth services programming.
4. Ensure that each facility is offering at least one special event every month that highlights technology training for adults.
5. Establish guidelines for the types of technology that the Library acquires for public use.
6. Enhance and utilize the Library website as an information resources portal.
7. Explore the possibility of adding Maker Spaces and Digital Media Labs throughout the Library.

I came to the library for the book sale. Books are a huge part of my family for entertainment and information, and the library provides that service in a way the bookstore doesn’t. We’ve always loved the library and have gone to it since we were children. It provides entertainment where imagination is required unlike video games and TV. It’s obviously cheaper to borrow books than to buy them. It gives my family the opportunity to be exposed to a large range of materials and if there are materials we like, we’ll buy them. So everybody wins. We love our library. - Joshua M.
1. Provide safe, clean and comfortable facilities and spaces.
   
   Activities
   1. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the City’s General Services Department to ensure that regular maintenance is included in the Capital Improvement Budget.
   2. Conduct facilities assessments/space evaluations at all locations.
   3. Update signage for consistent way finding at all locations.
   4. Conduct security assessments at all locations.
   5. Investigate options for installing kiosks to serve growing neighborhoods throughout the community.

2. Support consistent policies and procedures that emphasize exceptional and efficient customer service.
   
   Activities
   1. Conduct a thorough audit of policies and procedures.
   2. Develop a new customer service plan and guidelines for staff.
   3. Expand self-service options and service points.
   4. Restore operating hours to meet community needs and preferences, including Sundays and evening hours.

My family and I live very close to the library and it is far and away one of the most important aspects of our lives. From weekly visits to check out books, to being able to vote, having the library is an incredible asset to our community. We also like the book sales and being able to donate our used books and media here. - Jake G.
3 Provide community programming that is diverse, dynamic, educational and supportive of community concerns.

Activities
1. Create a programming taskforce to guide future Library programming.
2. Identify a list of partners for ongoing programming.
3. Identify additional partnership opportunities with local businesses, civic groups and non-profit organizations.
5. Investigate opportunities to work with organizations such as, the National Dialogue Network, to facilitate community conversations at libraries.
6. Support local business owners and entrepreneurs by providing relevant programming and resources.

I came here today to study at the library. I am currently trying to complete my Master’s degree thesis which is a huge task. At home, I do not have enough quiet time and too many things around me that will distract me. I therefore choose to come to the library (for the most part every Saturday) to be able to do research and enjoy the quiet work environment. The library is conveniently close to my house which is another plus besides being able to study in a quiet environment, with Internet connection and a table to myself. I can also access most books right away which definitely makes my research a lot more efficient. I would recommend going to the library to anyone even if it is just for the sake of having some private and quiet time to relax. - Stephanie R.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS, MARKETING AND BRANDING

1. Increase the Library’s visibility in the community through outreach and civic engagement efforts.

   Activities
   1. Conduct an audit to identify current Library partnerships.
   2. Identify community events and opportunities for a Library presence.
   3. Create annual outreach goals for all staff members.

2. Create and implement a comprehensive marketing plan.

   Activities
   1. Create a comprehensive marketing plan for the Library.
   2. Redesign the Library’s online presence through updated web and social media campaigns.
   3. Investigate ways to supplement the Library’s Communications Office.

I visited the library in order to have a quiet place with internet access where I could complete assignments. The library is a place that hosts many different community events that allows me to interact with others in my community. I belong to the library so I may benefit from the programs and events offered here. I am also a teacher, avid reader, and movie buff, so I belong to the library so I can find resources for myself and my classroom. - Kristen B.
3 Develop a consistent brand with complementary marketing materials for the Alexandria Library.

**Activities**

1. Develop, execute and publish a consistent logo/brand that represents the Library’s mission, vision and values.
2. Create a tagline that speaks to the Library’s mission, vision and values.
3. Increase visibility of the new brand.

I visited the library today to study and ready myself for an exam, and to see news and information. The importance of the library is vital to my life. I belong to the library because I haven’t seen places as good as the library to read, do research papers, and learn knowledge and information.

- Getachew T.
Effectively manage Library staffing, retention and succession planning.

Activities
1. Thoroughly review job titles, job descriptions, responsibilities and organizational structure.
2. Assess staffing needs for all facilities and job classifications.
3. Evaluate current committees/working groups.
4. Ensure that employees receive training in areas that will prepare them for potential promotions.
5. Promote employee retention and loyalty through recognition programs.

Promote staff commitment to the Library’s strategic initiatives by enhancing communication throughout the organization.

Activities
1. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan.
2. Redesign the staff Intranet to allow for improved communication.
3. Provide management with expectations and training for improved and consistent communication with their teams.

The library offers many classes that I enjoy. There is something for every age group. The books and DVDs are a great resource for learning with my children. - Sonny D.
3 Develop a comprehensive training program to increase performance, accountability, job satisfaction and retention.

Activities
1. Standardize basic training requirements and onboarding activities.
2. Review and update staff competencies for all departments.
3. Update the Library’s Intranet to include online access to approved professional development activities.
4. Explore a job shadowing or formal mentoring program to improve skills and build collaboration.
5. Cross-train staff across departments and facilities to improve skills and address performance deficiencies.

I visit the library to do research on several projects I’m working on. The library is a great place! I came with my children to get access to books and to nurture my love of reading. I belong at the library simply because my tax money paid for it. I have both a financial and educational investment in it. I need and like all the services. This library is a ONE-STOP SHOP for all my educational and family needs. - Andrea B.
1 Clarify roles and responsibilities of the Library Board, Foundation and Friends organizations and create an infrastructure for advocacy and fundraising.

Activities
1. Develop guidelines, policies and/or memoranda of understanding that will provide a framework for fundraising and advocacy responsibilities for the Library Board, the Foundation and Friends organizations.

2. Create a fundraising and advocacy plan based on best practices that will guide the efforts of Library Administration, the Board, the Foundation and the Friends organizations.

3. Create a development position within Library Administration to act as a liaison between the Board, the Foundation, the Friends organizations and the community.

2 Develop a fundraising committee that will devise and implement a capital campaign.

Activities
1. Institute training/development activities regarding advocacy and fundraising for key Library staff, Board members and Friends organizations.

2. Conduct a feasibility study for a capital campaign.

3. Begin quiet phase of capital campaign with key leadership gifts that will establish endowments to support Library programs and activities.

I’m working on my dissertation. The library is a wonderful for resources and quiet atmosphere. Anywhere I move must have a library. The ability to check out books and have quiet workspaces is a great resource. - Melanie D.
3 Develop partnerships that will increase advocacy and grant-seeking capacity.

Activities

1. Develop and cultivate relationships with key community advocates identified in the feasibility study for a capital campaign.

2. Library staff, Board members and Friends organizations actively engage community and solicit gifts that support funding goals and projects.

The library provides the atmosphere necessary for studies being it individual or group. Also, the help or support necessary to find the materials for my school project. The technological support by way of the internet is free, which saves me money. The location is also accessible by way of public transportation. And also, the staff support is excellent.

- Selikem K.
FIVE-YEAR PLAN GOALS

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS OF ALL AGES
The Alexandria Library will provide increased support for learners of all ages through enhanced workshops, materials and staff development.

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS
The Alexandria Library will provide additional resources for customers and enhanced access to special collections through strategic budgeting, acquisitions and collection maintenance.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS
The Alexandria Library will be known as a technology leader within the community by providing innovative services and access to technology and training.

LIBRARY AS A COMMUNITY HUB
The Alexandria Library will be recognized as a community gathering space through its welcoming facilities, excellent customer service and diverse programmatic offerings.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, MARKETING AND BRANDING
The Alexandria Library will increase its visibility throughout the community through comprehensive outreach, updated marketing materials and consistent branding.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT
The Alexandria Library will retain dedicated and engaged staff members, committed to the Library’s mission and their roles in implementing strategic initiatives.

ADVOCACY AND FUNDRAISING
The Alexandria Library will increase its visibility in the community and create alternate funding streams through a comprehensive advocacy and fundraising plan that will align the staff, Board, Foundation and Friends organizations in a successful capital campaign.
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Thank you!