

# Free Public Library of Audubon Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

## Background

In 2018, the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Audubon, along with the Director of the library, met in order to review and revise the existing Strategic Plan that was developed in 2015. While many of the goals set out in the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan have been accomplished, there remain a number of internal and external forces which the library must take into account in order to fulfill its mission to the community it serves. The reality of ongoing budgetary constraints, the need to engage and educate the public on the existence and benefits of library services, and the rapidly changing technological landscape of library service provision are a few of the pressures that the library must balance if it is to be successful. It is our aim that this Plan will provide the library with a viable roadmap to ensure its success in the years to come.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Free Public Library of Audubon is to educate, entertain, and enrich the lives of the residents of the Borough of Audubon through the provision of quality materials, reliable information, up-to-date technology, and relevant cultural events.

## Value Statement

The Free Public Library of Audubon aspires to be the center of information and discovery in the community. Through innovative programming, relevant collections and responsive services, its goals are to support lifelong learning and the joy of reading, and to enrich, entertain and educate residents of all ages and cultures, in a financially responsible manner.

*To accomplish this mission/vision, the library provides:*

- current materials, technology and varied information resources.
- a well rounded program of community services.
- professional, knowledgeable and courteous services to all of its patrons.

## Notable Accomplishments

As part of the process of developing a revised Strategic Plan, the library assessed its progress across the goals set out in the 2015-2018 Plan. The Library is pleased to note the following major accomplishments:

***Free Public Library of Audubon – approved by the Board of Trustees 11/25/2019.  
Strategic Plan 2019-2022 / Page 1 of 6***

- The verification of compliance with all state library laws and regulations, which has resulted in the receipt of Library State Aid for the first time in the library's history.
- The implementation of a streamlined staffing model that utilized staffing more efficiently and reduced costs.
- The development of a Capital Purchase Plan which served to guide the library through a major renovation of the library's offices and created better access to the library's public restroom.
- The development of a Technology Plan which guided investment in the library's technologies, resulting in the establishment of a computer network linking all library computers, the installation of a new ILS, the establishment of back-up and firewall protection for the library's computer hardware and files, the purchase of a multi-purpose copier that has allowed the library to offer to the public fax and scanning as well as printing and copying services, and the purchase of a projector which has allowed the library to offer new programs such as Family Movie Nights and tutorials.
- The establishment of an encumbrance system in QuickBooks that has allowed the library to manage its budget in real time and to meet all accounting requirements set out by NJ Law.
- The establishment of a purchasing procedure which better safe guards against waste and abuse through the separation of tasks and the requirement of vendor signatures.
- The development of a number of new programs such as the aforementioned Family Movie Night as well as two Book Clubs, a monthly Saturday Story Time installment, an annual food drive, a visiting author series, and an adult educational lecture series, among others.
- Expansion of the library's museum passes through the addition of new passes.
- The ongoing assessment of the library's online resources which has resulted, following a period of concerted promotional efforts, in the elimination of underutilized resources and the addition of others that better suit the needs and tastes of the community.
- The development of a significantly increased community presence through participation in Borough events, partnerships with community organizations as well as through outreach to local schools.
- The expansion of the library's volunteer program.
- The development of a competent and caring team of staff members dedicated to the mission of the library.

## **2019-2022 Goals and Objectives**

As a result of the review of the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan and the assessment of major accomplishments over the last three years, it is apparent that the library has developed a solid foundation from which it can meet its mission and preserve its values in a fiscally responsible manner. In other words, the Board of Trustees believes that the library is well poised to expand its role as the community's "center of information and discovery" over

the next three years. To this end, the library has identified the following goals to be addressed within the scope of this plan:

1. Sustain Fiscal Strength
2. Keep Pace with Changes in Information Technology
3. Expand Marketing, Outreach & Partnership Opportunities
4. Continue Facility Improvements
5. Maintain & Enhance Staffing Improvements

### **Goal One:**

**Sustain Financial Strength:** Continue to maintain and to enhance the library's financial strength to ensure that it is capable of providing programs and services that respond to the needs of the community.

#### *OBJECTIVES:*

- 1.1 Continue to ensure library expenditures and improvements are made as cost effectively as possible.
- 1.2 Seek out alternative forms of revenue to support library programs, services, and initiatives.

#### *ACTION PLAN:*

- Continue to maintain compliance with all NJ Laws and Regulations regarding fiscal management of the library as well as with the standards for public libraries established by the NJ State Library to ensure continued receipt of Library State Aid.
- Continue to evaluate library expenditures and vendors in order to explore means whereby costs may be reduced.
- Continue to evaluate staffing model to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate and reflective of the needs of the library.
- Review and Revise Capital Purchase and Technology Plans in order to ensure sustainable development of larger-scale improvements to the library.
- Explore grants relevant to public libraries and the possibility of establishing a Friends of the Library organization.
- Explore the possibility of allowing individuals to provide donations to the library online.

## **Goal Two:**

**Keep Pace with Changes in Information Technology:** In light of cost considerations, maximize the library's technological capabilities by offering an array of information technologies that broaden content, and make library services more accessible to users and/or more efficient for library staff.

### *OBJECTIVES:*

- 2.1 Maintain an up-to-date technological infrastructure.
- 2.2 Maximize patron usage of available technology resources.
- 2.3 Ensure cost effectiveness of technological investments through periodic review.
- 2.4 Ensure staff competence with library technologies.

### *ACTION PLAN:*

- Identify and employ new technologies, evaluating each by their usefulness to staff in the completion of job-related tasks and/or their relevance to patron information needs.
- Review and revise the library's Technology Plan and a Capital Purchase Plan to ensure the sustainable development of the library's technological infrastructure.
- Ensure each staff is adequately trained in the technologies relevant to his or her position, whether for the completion of library duties or for the provision of library services to patrons who wish to utilize the library's technology resources.
- Provide patrons with point-of-need assistance on the usage of the library's technological resources.

## **Goal Three:**

### **Expand Marketing, Outreach & Partnership Opportunities:**

### *OBJECTIVES:*

- 3.1 Increase public awareness of services available at the library.
- 3.2 Expand outreach to underserved populations.
- 3.3 Expand opportunities for strategic partnerships and collaborations.

### *ACTION PLAN:*

- Through the development of a new logo and website, build the brand of the library as the community center for information.
- Through the development of a new website, increase ease of access to the library's online and remotely accessible resources.
- Conduct study of local organizations and initiate efforts to attend meetings and events in order to promote library services and membership.

- Confer with local schools regarding the possible implementation of supplemental resources not available through the district.
- Conduct study to identify underserved populations within Audubon and to develop plan for outreach to these populations.
- Explore additional low cost means of communicating with the public regarding library services, news, and events.
- Expand types of programming to target populations historically overlooked by the library, including seniors and teens.

#### **Goal Four:**

**Continue Facilities Improvements:** Ensure the library maintains an up-to-date, accessible, and welcoming environment to its patrons as well as an optimized work environment to library staff.

*OBJECTIVES:*

- 4.1 Refurbish the library parking lot, which has fallen into disrepair.
- 4.2 Refurbish library shelving and furniture to maximize space and update appearance.

*ACTION PLAN:*

- Employ architect to develop plan for the repaving of the library parking lot, including cost estimates. Employ library consultant to assist with assessment of the library interior, future collection needs, and opportunities to maximize space utilization, including cost estimates.
- Assess the above in relation to library’s financial resources and incorporate into the library Capital Purchase Plan and Capital Purchase Schedule for the sustainable and responsible implementation of any changes made.
- Work with the Borough of Audubon to ensure that all laws and regulations are followed.
- Solicit and employ contractor, or other relevant service provider, in compliance with all relevant open bid laws, to perform the work needed.

#### **Goal Five:**

**Maintain & Enhance Staffing Improvements:** Continue to develop and support a knowledgeable, technically competent, and customer-focused staff dedicated to the mission of the library.

*OBJECTIVES:*

- 5.1 Maintain sufficient and appropriate staff needed to address patron demand for evolving services.

5.2 Continue to commit sufficient resources for providing staff training and the development of professional skills, reflective of the library's focus on customer-service, outreach and information technology.

5.3 Attract the most competent candidates in the marketplace and retain valued employees.

5.4 Initiate the creation of a succession plan for management in order to ensure continuity of key functions within the library.

*ACTION PLAN:*

- Offer as competitive a compensation package as possible.
- Be mindful of those areas that improve employee morale in the development of library policies.
- Foster an open dialogue between employees and director, and employees and the Board of Trustees.
- Continually evaluate the amount and type of staffing required in order to provide high quality service.
- Make staffing decisions based on the needs of the library, the capabilities of the employees, and, especially, the needs of the patrons.
- Offer staff development opportunities in the form of webinars, conferences, in-person training, and expanded duties.
- Create a succession plan and provide training to relevant staff regarding key library functions.
- Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for all library procedures.