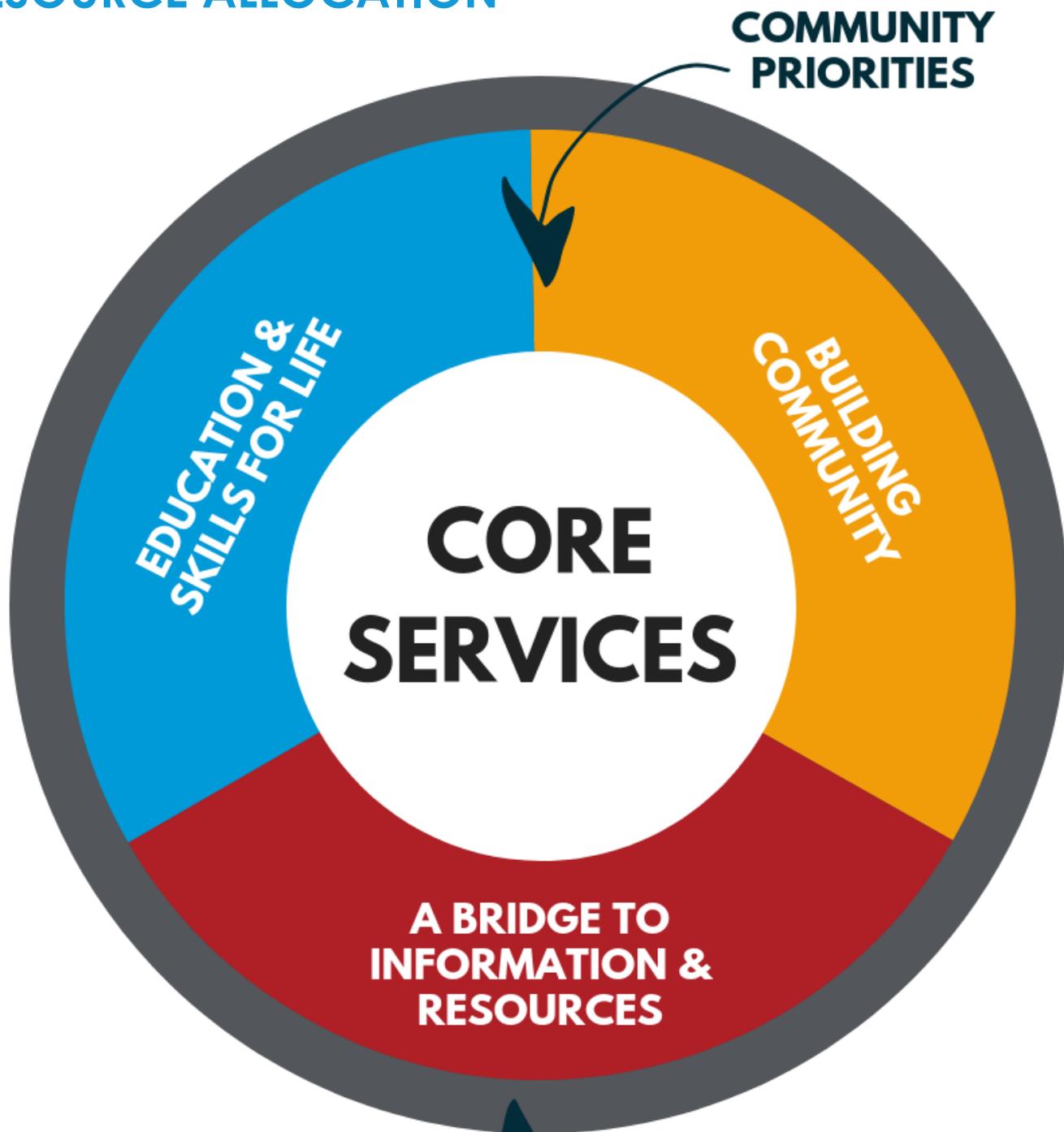




# Anchorage Public Library Strategic Plan 2019-2021

# RESOURCE ALLOCATION



Library resources—funding, staff and time—will be allocated first to core services and then to the three community priority areas, with a portion of time left open for opportunities and innovation.

## MISSION

Connecting people to education, information, and community.

## VISION

Our vision for Anchorage is an educated and connected community where our Library is an essential center for learning, inspiration, and community pride for people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures.

## CORE SERVICES

As a vital city resource, the Library supports our community by providing:

- Access to a diverse collection of materials in various formats
- Knowledgeable and approachable staff
- Functional technology and connectivity
- Expert information and reference assistance
- Communal spaces for individual and group use
- Targeted programming that meets the needs of our community

## CORE VALUES

### ACCESS & EQUITY

- We ensure all people have free and equal access to information and library spaces
- We are committed to racial and social equity and a just society

### COMMUNITY

- We maintain a library that is safe, welcoming, and responsive to community needs
- We provide excellent service that is confidential, nonjudgmental and nonpartisan

### LEARNING

- We actively facilitate and promote literacy and life-long learning

## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & DESIRED OUTCOMES, 2019-21

**Education and Skills for Life:** Children enter Kindergarten with the foundational skills for literacy and are supported by the Library in their literacy progression through elementary school; the Library supports teens and adults in learning the skills they need to be successful in life.

**A Bridge to Information and Resources:** Anchorage is an engaged and well-informed community; the Library seeks to be the trusted institution that connects people to non-biased information, experts and materials, and adapts with the changing needs of our community.

**Building Community:** The Library brings Anchorage residents together to build a more inclusive and accepting community.



## PLAN OVERVIEW

Over the next three years, all APL activities will be centered around our core services and three community focus areas. Library programs and services will be developed with intentionality to ensure that all of our activities deliver outcomes that move the needle in the community priorities – **education & skills for life**, a **bridge to information and resources**, and **building community**.

As we drill down in these focus areas, we will also keep in mind the issues that our community identified as the most pressing: safety, addiction, homelessness, education, health care, mental health, and tolerance/community unity. While the Library cannot tackle all of these issues directly, it is important that we are attuned to the broader issues that are important to our community. To give us context as we plan new programs and services, we will give additional consideration to the following themes:

- Healthy lives
- Diversity, equity, inclusion
- The Mayor's Priorities – Welcoming Anchorage, housing & homelessness, public safety

## MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

If this strategic plan is successful, at the end of 2021 we will see:

- The majority of staff, volunteers, and partners can name our three community priorities
- Our programming is developed with intentionality to meet this plan's goals
- Core services maintained
- Staff and infrastructure levels maintained or increased
- Our collection is dynamic and responsive to community need
- An improvement in scores on staff culture surveys
- An increase in the community's ranking of the value of the Library in our patron surveys (85% of users and 67% of non-users in 2018 believe that the Library provides good value for the tax dollar invested)
- We are able to demonstrate to the community that we have focused in the areas that are most important to them.
- Even if faced with external challenges such as funding shortages, we are able to operate efficiently and make a difference for our community because this plan helps us focus on what is most important.

## PLAN UPDATES AND REVISIONS

The Strategic Plan Committee will meet in the fourth quarter of each year for a strategic plan review to track measurements of success and update the lens for the following year.

## Education & Skills for Life

**Desired outcome:** Children enter Kindergarten with the foundational skills for literacy and are supported by the Library in their literacy progression through elementary school; the Library supports teens and adults in learning the skills they need to be successful in life.

### Strategies:

#### Early Literacy

- Ensure high quality early literacy programs and materials are offered within the Library.
- Outreach to early learning centers showcasing library resources (materials and programs) to the children and staff.
- Support and educate parents, caregivers, and early childhood professionals on early literacy concepts and programs to help them create a toolbox to help the children in their care.

#### Elementary School Literacy Progression

- Offer literacy encouragement and resources for students during out of school time.
- Support education systems by expanding partnerships and interactions between the library and the staff and students.

#### Skills for Life

- Provide programming and resources to help teens and adults navigate life's milestones and challenges.
- Curate displays, reading lists and partnerships focused around defined milestones or skills.
- Focus on areas of need for our community
  - Household Skills- budgeting, cooking
  - Job Readiness- interviewing, how to apply
  - Future planning- health care, retirement



**“I want a city that loves its children and educates fairly and respectfully.”**



“I hope for a community where everyone is able to contribute to their full potential and everyone is seen as a valued member of the community.”

## A Bridge to Information and Resources

**Desired outcome:** Anchorage is an engaged and well-informed community; the Library seeks to be the trusted institution that connects people to non-biased information, experts and materials, and adapts with the changing needs of our community.

### Strategies:

#### Staff

- Ensure Library staff are knowledgeable in issues that are important to the community.
- Offer research assistance within library resources.
- Provide a Community Resource Coordinator.

#### Stuff

- Curate programs, displays, reading lists and partnerships that further meet the information needs of the community.
- Maintain a diverse collection of books and media, hard copy and digital.
- Maintain a comprehensive web-site at [AnchorageLibrary.org](http://AnchorageLibrary.org) that acts as a portal to information, resources and services.
  - Online learning tools
  - Ask A Librarian
- Provide access to computers and internet for community use and education.
- Maintain the Library’s Alaska Collection for active use.

#### Space

- Provide meeting rooms for community use.

# Building Community

**Desired outcome:** Connect Anchorage residents to each other to build a more inclusive and accepting community.

**Strategies:**

- Our collection will reflect our community through proactive selection while being responsive to purchase suggestions and language needs.
- Create opportunities for conversations and face-to-face interactions that promote community connections.
  - Anchorage Reads
  - Civic Dialogue and Civics Fair
  - Meeting spaces
- Promote acceptance, empathy, and understanding.
  - Staff training in mental health and cultural topics
  - Welcoming buildings
  - Municipal Language Access Plan
- Increase civic pride and ownership- we're all Anchorage.
  - Support Mayoral priorities
  - Welcome new residents
  - Provide volunteer opportunities to bring more people into the Library and engage as a team.



“I hope we can all learn to treat each other with respect and create a community where everyone can thrive.”

# INTERNAL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## Be a Great Place to Work

**Desired outcome:** Foster an internal culture that promotes inclusion, teamwork, accountability and opportunities for growth.

**Strategies:**

- Create a culture of inclusion and accountability for staff across all divisions and hierarchies.
  - Develop and maintain an internal communication plan that is efficient and effective for all staff
  - Develop internal and external customer service standards that emphasize caring, respect, and collaboration
  - Recruit a diverse staff and volunteers
- Develop competencies and train staff in order to reach APL's mission; foster learning and discovery for staff.
  - Create training modules for all positions
  - Create a staff training committee
  - Provide core service training (reference interview, readers advisory, AK Collection, customer service, and databases)
  - Mentor/provide opportunities for professional development; provide pathways for staff to advance in the organization

## Expand and Engage the Library Community

**Desired outcome:** Ensure that APL is a culturally responsive library that engages the community in our work.

**Strategies:**

- Promote racial and social equity and be open and inviting to all members of the community
- Increase public and private funding and support for programs and services
- Develop an enhanced volunteer program, ensuring that volunteers are well trained in order to represent APL
- Create ongoing marketing campaigns and initiatives that inform residents of programs and services
  - Continue to implement updated visual identity and brand standards across the system.

## Strengthen Our Operations

**Desired outcome:** Run an efficient system, continually look for areas for improvement, and engage all levels of staff in the process.

### Strategies:

- Assess workflows and processes to ensure the best service to the public.
  - Improve user experience and self-service options
  - Regular updates of policies
  - Look for opportunities for continual improvement, LEAN assessments
- Use data to evaluate our programs and processes.
  - Provide staff training in data collection and analysis
  - Look in to implementing an evaluation tool like Project Outcome or RIPL
  - Create standards and procedures for developing new programs
  - Assess how the public uses the Library through market segmentation, demographic studies, surveys and industry best practices
  - Implement Collection HQ



**“I use the library to get out of the house and feel like a part of the community.”**

# APPENDIX

## OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee spoke with over 500 people in person and received over 1,600 responses to an online survey. The committee heard from a broad range of voices that included teens, seniors, refugees, Millennials, and people with disabilities—ranging in age from 5 to 102.

Our outreach included tabling outside of Dave and Busters at 9pm, visiting talking circles at AK Child & Family, Stone Soup Group, Covenant House and Refugee and Immigrant Services (RAIS), observing an Alaska Public Media focus group on Millennials in the workforce, and visiting community meetings like the Bridge Builders Unity Gala and the Alaska Interfaith Council. We also interviewed the Mayor, Anchorage Assembly Members and leaders of organizations such as the Alaska Federation of Natives.

## GROUPS CONTACTED

The committee prioritized groups who are not always heard from for our in-person outreach and relied upon recent community surveys and data to gather broader community information.

### Groups Targeted for In-Person Outreach:

- Refugees/immigrants/ESL
- Cultural groups/People of Color
- Alaska Native groups and individuals
- Teens struggling in high school/dropouts, in treatment, homeless, foster care
- South End residents
- Military/veterans
- Religious groups
- Individuals with disabilities and their caregivers
- Historical societies and researchers
- Anchorage Assembly members and Mayor
- Artists: grassroots and organizations
- Millennials: not in college/career

### Community Data Assessment:

- Gallup State of American Well-Being Report, 2017 (AK data)
- OCLC Voter Perceptions of Libraries Report, 2018
- Mayor Berkowitz Priority List
- Anchorage Public Library: 2009 Community Plan, 2013 Loussac Library Facility Master Plan, and 2017 Patron Survey
- Anchorage Talks Transit Plan, 2016
- Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC): Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Millennial Workforce Reports, 2018
- Anchorage School District: 2020 Plan and 2017 Annual Report
- Foraker Group Nonprofit Economic Report, 2018
- Mountain View Neighborhood Plan, 2016
- Welcoming Anchorage Roadmap, 2017
- Anchored Home: Strategic Action Plan to Solve Homelessness in Anchorage: 2018-2021
- Urban Library Council, statistic on Veteran use of libraries, 2015
- Anchorage Library Foundation and Library Advisory Board Aspen Plan Work Sessions, 2017&18

## OUTREACH METHODS

The committee spoke with over 500 people in our target audiences through 31 outreach events, using a variety of methods and placing high priority on meeting people where they are at and having conversations in places they feel comfortable.

- Online survey shared with APL cardholders and our target audiences (1,600 responses)
- Presentations at community meetings (community councils, coalitions, etc.)
- Tabling at community events and high-traffic locations (Dimond Mall, Fred Meyer)
- One-one-one interviews with community leaders
- Focus groups (Covenant House, Pioneer Home, First Alaskans Institute)
- Online survey to staff and follow-up one-on-one interviews of staff
- Strategic Plan work session with staff at annual staff day

## QUESTIONS ASKED

We asked everyone the following questions:

- What are the most critical issues facing your community/organization today?
- What do you see happening in the next five years that will impact your community/organization considerably?
- What skills will individuals and communities need to thrive as Anchorage changes?

If time and format allowed for additional questions, we also asked:

- What are your hopes and dreams for your community?
- What are barriers to achieving the aspirations we envision for Anchorage?
- What do you feel are unique characteristics of the Municipality of Anchorage?/What words come to mind when you think about your community?
- What do you think Anchorage should prioritize right now?

The online survey also asked library cardholders questions on what library services they use/ value how they rank the library's services and if the library is a good value for the tax dollars spent.

## IMAGES AND QUOTES

The quotes shared in this report were gathered from patron responses to our online survey. The photograph on page four is from Pixabay; all other photographs are from the Anchorage Public Library collection.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Jo Torgeson, **Director**  
 David Adkins-Brown, **Mountain View Library**  
 Nancy Clark, **Chugiak-Eagle River Library**  
 Jacob Cole, **IT & Patron Services**  
 Bill Fowler, **Facilities**  
 Stacy Gordon, **Technical Services**  
 Audrey Jo Malone, **Administration & Budget**  
 Virginia McClure, **Assistant Director**

Stacia McGourty, **Adult Services**  
 Kristie Nelsen, **Virtual Services**  
 Misty Nesvick, **Community Relations**  
 Elizabeth Nicolai, **Youth Services**  
 Erika Nielsen, **Patron Services**  
 Sarah Preskitt, **Adult Services**  
 Clare Ross, **Planning & Development**

This plan was adopted by the Library Advisory Board  
on February 20, 2019

Nancy Hemsath, Chair  
Jamie Lang, Vice Chair  
Cristy Willer, Secretary  
Jonathan Bittner  
Wei Cheng  
Lucy Flynn O'Quinn  
Barbara Jacobs  
Lourdes Linato-Crawford  
Sarah Switzer

Loussac | Muldoon | Mountain View | Chugiak Eagle River | Scott & Wesley Gerrish



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