PATH TO EXCELLENCE

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2010 – 2012
Onondaga County Public Library

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Onondaga County Public Library
Path to Excellence

I.   INTRODUCTION

"The Onondaga County Public Library is poised to enter a period of increased energy and strong forward momentum. In the midst of a spiraling economy, OCPL must channel its resources to capitalize on an increased public need for information, education, and recreation at no cost to the patron – something that few other organizations can offer."
Gifford Foundation Lifecycles Assessment, Executive Summary by Margery Connor

The Path to Excellence is inspired and informed by several organizational initiatives: previous Strategic Plans that developed the library's mission and values; the OCPL Plan of Service 2008 – 2011; the KS&R Community Survey 2007; the Lifecycles Assessment 2008; the OCPL Staff and Managers Focus Groups; and the Community Focus Groups facilitated by Margery Connor in May and June 2009.

II.   Process and acknowledgements

In order to implement a key recommendation of the Lifecycles Assessment, the Onondaga County Public Library Board of Trustees, under the guidance of former Trustee William Fisher, chose the Public Library Association's Strategic Planning for Results process and retained facilitator Margery Connor for the first steps.

The results of that work, particularly the Community Focus Group sessions and the OCPL Staff and Managers Focus Groups, will be found throughout the Path to Excellence.

III.   Mission

The Mission of the Onondaga County Public Library is…To make a positive difference in every life we touch by putting the power of ideas and information to work for all.

IV.   Values

Libraries provide free access to information and materials for the enrichment, empowerment and enjoyment of individuals of all ages. Equity of access is paramount.

Freedom of information and confidentiality are essential elements of a democracy; protecting intellectual freedom protects a democratic society.

Libraries adhere to relevant legislation on copyright use and restrictions and educate the public on copyright restrictions.

Library collections and services, in a wide variety of formats, provide diverse points of view to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Library staff members are committed to expanding their knowledge of ever-changing technology and to applying that knowledge to make a difference in community members' lives.

Library staff members are committed to expanding their knowledge of "green" practices and applying that knowledge to make a difference in the community.

Library staff members support the civic responsibility of libraries to build community through services within and outside of the library.

Library staff members actively seek the community's guidance in setting library priorities and policies and in making decisions involving collections, programs and services.

V.   Organizational Effectiveness
     Over the next two years, OCPL will create or update those policies, plans and documents
     that provide the foundation of an organization that is continuously improving.

DOCUMENT:	PREPARED BY:
Board of Trustees By-Laws	Board of Trustees
Staff Utilization Plan	Personnel and Branch Administrators Central Managers
Customer Service Plan	Branch Administrator Central Managers
Collection Management Plan	Acquisitions Librarian
Facilities Improvement Plan	Director of Administrative Services
OCPL Financial Development Plan	Board of Trustees
Risk Management Assessment	Personnel Administrator Director of Administrative Services
Partnership Audit and PR/Marketing Plan	Executive Director Public Information Specialist
Technology Plan	Systems Librarian
Policy Manual	Executive Director
Plan of Service updates	Library Services Consultant
Strategic Plans for System, Central, Branches and Member Libraries	Various
Memo of Understanding between System and Members	Executive Director and member library boards

VI.   Key Influences

A. Complexity of OCPL's consolidation of service mandates and funding streams

The OPCL executive director and the OCPL Board of Trustees work within the laws, rulings and regulations of the State of New York, the Regents of the State of New York, NYS Civil Service and the Department of Education of NYS. Also, every aspect of operation conforms to the laws, regulations and procedures of the County of Onondaga, including the employee contract with CSEA. Federal laws and regulations relating to libraries are also applicable in some areas.

There are three service mandates and several funding streams:
1. As one of 23 public library Systems in NYS, OCPL receives funding from New York State to facilitate resource sharing among 18 member libraries; to expand the capacity of each member library and to equalize the access to library services for all residents of the County.

    Onondaga County Executive and Legislative branches administer the funds received for this purpose.

2. As a result of consolidation in 1974, Onondaga County took over the administration of the Syracuse Public Library consisting of the Carnegie Library on Montgomery Street and the City Branch and satellite libraries. The City continues to fund the branches and satellites.

3. The County Executive with approval of the County Legislature funds the Robert P. Kinchen Central Library for the benefit of all County residents.

4. Some Federal funding is received; it is tied to specific grants, such as e-rate, which subsidizes connectivity.

5. Other revenues are received in the form of competitive grants and also gifts to the library. The most significant gifts to date have been from the Friends of the Central Library in support of the library's book budget and programming. There is also a small but constant stream of contributions from users of the Local History/Genealogy collections.

6. The OCPL Foundation incorporated in 2000, has adopted a Strategic Plan for 2009-2011 to meet their mission of 'advocating for an ever-improving library system and generating resources to support the mission of OCPL".

B. Today's economic climate and funding uncertainties

Planning in the near future is dominated by the overall condition of the economy. For libraries there are two major components of this. One is the budgetary adjustments as costs increase and funding is stagnant or decreasing. The other is significant program adjustments as our library users respond to the economic hardships in their own lives by seeking expanded services and materials.

C. Libraries transition from information centered to community centered
Globally, nationally and locally libraries are in a transition propelled by the needs and expectations of 21st century library users. Libraries have been enlisted not only to serve individuals but also to improve their communities by providing the information and the training needed in an on-line world.

VII.   Society-wide future trends that will impact library services and their delivery.

A. Recognition of the dire consequences of illiteracy and poverty and desire for increased civic activities to make a difference.

B. Increasing reliance of government on the Internet for online, broadband delivery of services and interaction with citizens such as filing income taxes or applying for unemployment.

C. Increasing reliance of libraries on the Internet for online delivery of information and services (Virtual Branch **[and Virtual Outreach]** concepts).

D. Government (and citizen) quest for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of social services.

E. Need for destinations or places that are not home or work (the Third Place), for children, teens and adults.

F. Increasing use of text messaging and access of the Internet by wireless multipurpose devices which are lessening the "digital divide".

G. Increasing digital content and growing popularity of e-readers such as the Kindle.

H. Increasing availability of media to download, including new movies and music.

I. Increasing availability and cost savings of "distance" learning and education for undergraduate and graduate degrees and professional certifications.

J. Increasing signs of a more verbal society including voice recognition rather than keyboards and video rather than text.

K. Increasing pursuit of "experiences" rather than "things".

L. Intensive parenting (Baby Einstein)

M. Lack of parenting and demonstrated need for Universal Pre-K.

N. Faster paced lifestyles still the trend. Increasing demand for efficiency and 24/7 services.

O. Desire for excellent user-centered customer service.

P. Increasing importance of global systems at the same time local sustainable movements are gaining momentum.

Q. Increased competition from commercial and online bookstores and Internet cafes that provide immediate customer satisfaction.

R. Trend towards "just in time" satisfaction of customer needs rather than "just in case", exp. print or download a book that the customer wants rather than having it sitting on a shelf in case of need.

VIII.   Our Goals

    A. Demonstrate responsiveness to community needs. Provide people with services where they need them…in libraries, at home and work and virtually.

    B. Include our six priorities in everything we do. Continuously improve and evaluate services, materials and our role in the community.

    C. Be known for our partnerships and collaborations and for leveraging resources to benefit all Onondaga County residents.

IX.   Our Six Priorities

    A. *Ensure that every child enters school ready to learn.

    B. *Ensure that every resident has the broadband connectivity and technology training needed to access the online materials and services that they need.

    C. *Provide lifelong learning opportunities to support adult literacy, continuing education, changing employment, good health, good consumer decisions and cultural enrichment.

    D. Ensure that every resident has needed information about community resources, including programs and services of governmental, educational and non-profit organizations.

    E. Provide a welcoming community destination that is home to collaborations and encourages individuals to become engaged with the community.

    F. Provide diverse library programs and sufficient print, media and electronic materials for the enjoyment and learning of all children, teen-agers, adults and seniors.

*These three priorities were identified by the Community Focus Groups facilitated by Margery Connor in May and June 2009.