



Newton Public Library Strategic Plan

Effective January 2019- January 2024

Newton Public Library

100 N 3rd Ave W

Newton, IA

<https://www.newtongov.org/90/Library>

Approved by the Newton Public Library Board of Trustees:

January 24th, 2019.

Thank you to all the participants from the Planning Committee, to the Library Board, and to the anonymous citizens who submitted feedback and helped create the Newton Public Library's Plan of Service.

Planning Committee

The Newton Public Library Board of Trustees invited residents & stakeholders of Newton, IA, as well as "connected" non-resident library users to participate in the 2019 Strategic Planning sessions. The following invitees comprised the Community Planning Committee:

- Stephanie Alexander
- Rita Baker
- Ben Breuer
- Chrissy Breuer
- Claire Breuer
- Ann Deegan
- Rod DePenning
- Danielle Dyer
- Mike Guinn
- Mike Hansen (Mayor)
- Fran Henderson
- Raven Hoen
- Lou Anne Hill
- Jessica Lowe-Vokes
- Zachary Lowe
- Matt Muckler (City Administrator)
- Krysten Osby
- Kimberly Powers
- Sue Robison
- Graham Sullivan
- Barb Tininenko
- Dean Ward

Library Board of Trustees

- Terry Townsend, President
- Tom Hollander, Vice President
- Juana McConnell, Treasurer
- Cindy Smith, Secretary
- Tiffany Thomas

Library Staff

- Nicole Lindstrom, Director
- Susan Beise, Assistant Director
- Becca Klein, Public Services Librarian
- Phyllis Peter, Youth Services Librarian

Maryann Mori, Central Iowa State Library Consultant

Introduction:

In October 2017, the Newton Public Library Board of Trustees initiated the Strategic Planning Process for the City of Newton Iowa. The Library Board wanted the plan to reflect the needs of the community as a whole, so they formed a Community Planning Committee of 21 individuals. The committee was widely represented with city residents, rural residents, and participants of all ages. This committee worked to envision the future of the city and provide direction for the library's operations for the next five years.

Throughout the planning process, Maryann Mori of State Library of Iowa facilitated committee and Board meetings and provided expertise.

During the Community Planning Committee meeting, the members discussed the current strengths and weaknesses of Newton and envisioned what they would like the city and library to be like in the future. This envisioning resulted in a list of needs and wants that would have to be addressed in order to attempt to fulfill these goals. After allowing the committee to review the list of needs they created, they discussed ways in which the Newton Public Library could provide services to fulfill those needs and wants. After a vote, the committee formed a consensus on four service areas where they thought the library should focus:

- **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**
- **Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces**
- **Create Young Readers: Early Childhood Literacy**
- **Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services**

The Trustees then used these service areas as the basis to create this strategic plan. A lengthy planning process for the Board was instituted to allow staff to compile community data and library statistics to aid in the creating of the plan. The Board of Trustees met to discuss objectives and goals that fell within the service areas selected by the committee. Library staff then created activities and measurements to reach those goals.

The Newton Public Library Strategic Plan is designed to accomplish the goals described by the community committee members.

Newton Public Library's Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Newton Public Library's Mission Statement:

Creativity. Curiosity. Community.

A community resource encouraging lifelong learning.

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Goal 1. Children and teens that seek opportunities to learn outside of school will have opportunities to stimulate learning and provide exposure to new ideas and broader thought processes.

Objective A. By January 2020, new outreach programs will be implemented by partnering with city parks and the YMCA to reach local teens and children.

Objective B. Staff will identify areas of interests for teens.

Activity 1. Staff will create an annual survey addressing books, programs, and interests of teens/young adults to be implemented by fall 2019.

Activity 2. A survey will be sent to teens who have attended library programs in the past and placed in the teen section to target those visiting the collection.

Activity 3. Youth Services staff will market and implement new teen/young adult programs targeting the interests specified in the survey by January 2020.

Activity 4. Annual survey will be reviewed each year and edited as needed. Results from survey will be tabulated and given to the Library Board each fall.

Objective C. Connect/partner with area middle and high schools libraries at the Newton Community Schools for outreach opportunities and support.

Activity 1. Depending on school and library staff availability, annual visits to the schools at the beginning of the year to market public library cards and/or at the end of the school year to market the Summer Reading Program will occur.

Activity 2. Youth Services staff will volunteer support for the annual Battle of the Books program at the middle school and high school.

Goal 2. Adults who continually seek learning and exposure to new ideas will find unique, informative, and stimulating programs and services offered by the Newton Public Library.

- Objective A. Increase interactive programming that builds on education/recreational skills
- Activity 1. Program staff will survey program attendees throughout 2019 to identify potential areas of growth and offer an online survey to target those that may not currently be attending programs.
 - Activity 2. Program staff will use insight gained from surveys to reach out to area businesses, non-profits, etc. to work collaboratively in offering new programs that build on educational/recreational skills.
 - Activity 3. A minimum of 5 adult educational/recreational kits will be created for check-out and replaced as needed according to the public's interests.
- Objective B. The library will implement 5 outreach programs specifically targeting adults and seniors by June 2023.
- Activity 1. Program staff will reach out to Newton senior facilities, area agencies supporting seniors, and businesses where seniors visit, to determine opportunities for outreach program/services by January 2021.
 - Activity 2. Using staff responses and insights gathered from senior facilities, program staff will brainstorm outreach ideas during the winter/spring of 2021.
 - Activity 3. Program staff will implement outreach programs by June 2023.
- Objective C. Monitor how adults use the physical and digital collections within the library and from outside the library to maintain an adequately funded collection that takes patron's interests and needs into account.
- Activity 1. Library staff will develop new opportunities for marketing digital resources to patrons to increase awareness and use.
 - Activity 2. Administrative staff will increase the current funding levels for the library's digital, technological, and physical materials by 15% by fiscal year 2023.
 - Activity 3. Administrative staff will annually increase the library's book budget by 3% for adult materials to include the cost of inflation to maintain current acquisition levels.
 - Activity 4. Administrative staff will create a digital collections budget to allow for acquisition of eAudio and eBooks that are in high demand by fiscal year 2021.
 - Activity 5. Administrative staff will develop an annual budget request during the last quarter of the calendar year taking into account the insights from annual statistics and changing usage of library collections and technology.

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Places

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have an open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Goal 1. Patrons of all ages will access library resources and services in the way they find most comfortable and convenient, in person and virtually.

Objective A. The Library Board will consider the community's request of more library hours and research the library's foot traffic and usage by July 2021.

Activity 1. Administrative staff will research patron traffic within current library hours, survey patrons on desired hours, and consider budgetary needs for adjusted hours by May 2020.

Activity 2. Administrative staff will use the information and insight gained in Activity 1 to budget for change of hours in November 2020 with any changes starting by July 2021.

Objective B. The Library Board will consult with an architectural firm for preliminary design to increase its meeting room space and a drive-up book drop addition to meet the needs of its community.

Activity 1. A consultant/architectural firm will be hired by the Library Board to develop a project scope and cost estimate for a larger meeting room and drive-up book drop by August 2021.

Activity 2. The Library Board, Friends, Foundation, and library staff will collaborate with the City of Newton to enact a building expansion plan and find funding sources for the expansion by 2023.

Objective C. The Library Board will add a Patron Privacy Policy which ensures patrons have a safe virtual space when accessing library equipment and electronic services.

Activity 1. Library staff will evaluate current services' privacy policies to create a data privacy inventory by December 2019. The data privacy inventory will then be evaluated annually by the Library Board.

Activity 2. Library staff will investigate and implement options for browsers, software, and devices to aid the public in maintaining privacy while using library physical and virtual resources, by March 2020 and ongoing.

Activity 3. Library staff will provide educational materials (e.g., links, posters, and programs) directed toward the public to learn about personal privacy issues, by April 2020 and ongoing.

Activity 4. Library Board will review and revise Patron Privacy Policy annually.

Goal 2. Spaces within the library will inspire creativity and learning in a safe and comfortable environment.

Objective A. The children's area will allocate more space and furnishings for parents/caregivers and children to play and learn.

Activity 1. Youth Services staff will develop recommendations of furnishings in the children's area that provide opportunities to play and to learn by January 2021.

Activity 2. Administrative staff will allocate funding for new furnishings which will be purchased to replace worn out items in the children's area by July 2022.

Objective B. Library furnishings will meet the needs and expectations of the library's community and fall within ADA standards.

Activity 1. Library furnishings will be evaluated for condition and those items deemed necessary for replacement will be placed on a replacement schedule.

Activity 2. Administrative staff will request funding for furnishing replacements as part of annual budget requests.

Activity 3. Administrative staff will evaluate current library furnishings and prioritize replacement needs and create a replacement schedule as part of the Building Maintenance schedule for the Library Board to review annually.

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Goal 1. Parents/caregivers will have access to learning resources necessary to contribute to the preparation of their children for school.

Objective A. Children will have access to learning kits that encourage STEAM & STEM activities and motor activities that will prepare them for school.

Activity 1. Youth services will create a minimum of 5 kits that can be checked out by January 2020.

Activity 2. Kits will be analyzed annually for use and to incorporate new STEM & STEAM trends.

Objective B. Current educational materials for children will be marketed to Parents/Caregivers by Youth Services and Circulation staff to increase participation and use of these services and to aid in the education of parents/caregivers and their children.

Activity 1. An annual 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Celebration night will be instituted by January 2020 that celebrates kindergarten readiness skills and highlights the importance of daily reading with children.

Activity 2. Increased advertising of the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten will result in an annual 10% increase of participants.

Activity 3. Starling Word Counters will be marketed in story times and on the library's Facebook page resulting in a 20% increase in checkouts and use by parents/caregivers.

Activity 4. Youth Services staff will include skills into story times and ensure the physical library collection supports the learning of those skills by July 2021.

Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services

Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

Goal 1. The library will ensure all patrons have access to materials and services provided.

Objective A. In order to ensure access is provided to materials and services, the library will offer ways in which patrons can eliminate or minimize their accrued fines.

Activity 1. Youth Services staff will investigate strategies in which young adults and children can eliminate fines and present strategies to the Library Board by December 2019. Within six months of Library Board approval, Youth Services staff will implement new strategies to minimize or eliminate fines for young adults and teens.

Activity 2. Library director will continually research strategies and technological advances that assist in preventing fines for patrons, eliminating fines on collections (if not eliminating fines altogether), and create in-house procedures that allow patrons to ask for and obtain fine forgiveness to lead to an overall 25% decrease in library fines by 2022.

Activity 3. An annual presentation will be given to the Library Board on the fine elimination strategies along with a status report detailing total amount of fines due and how many patrons are barred/blocked in the Library's system due to fines.

Objective B. The library will recognize not all patrons have a permanent address or a safe place to bring library materials to and therefore create areas where patrons can leave materials for continued use.

Activity 1. By January 2021, library staff will create a space and a policy that enables patrons, who are unable or unwilling to take library item(s) out of the library, to leave their "in-house checkouts" for continued use.

Goal 2. The library will develop and strengthen relationships with area businesses, organizations, and non-profits to offer materials, education, and outreach to patrons.

Objective A. Seek opportunities to collaborate with 5 local organizations and non-profits to offer a safe space for programs and events to educate our patrons and connect our patrons with needed services.

Activity 1. Library staff will develop and broaden a searchable database of nonprofit community organizations discoverable through the library catalog and update it annually.

Objective B. Annually collaborate and continuously seek opportunities with the local Goodwill Career Connection Center to offer up-to-date job resource materials and a space for job seekers to use the Internet outside the Center's business hours.

Goal 3. The Library will annually evaluate and update communication and marketing in order to raise awareness of library resources and services to new and current residents of Newton.

Objective A. The library will keep its online presence up to date and in conjunction with how patrons prefer their library information.

Activity 1. The library will update its New Card Member brochure annually to incorporate new technology, services, and resources offered.

Activity 2. The library's website will be updated monthly to market the library's programs and services.

Activity 3. The library's newsletter subscribers will increase from 150 to 300 by July 2021.

Objective B. The library will identify local organizations whose mission is to welcome/greet new residents to Newton and ensure library marketing materials are offered within those materials by January 2021.

Goal 4. The library will provide a safe, respectful space for diverse voices and perspectives.

Objective A. The library will work to address any policies, structures, and biases within the library that may prevent inclusion of individuals in the community.

Activity 1. The library director, in conjunction with the Library Board, will review its policies and procedures annually and revise as needed to incorporate the values of all members of its community.

Activity 2. The library will offer professional development opportunities to staff that address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion by 2022.

Objective B. The library will maintain a physical and digital library environment that provides the best possible access to materials and resources for patrons of all cultures and abilities.

Activity 1. Collection development staff will annually update collections in the languages represented in its community to remove linguistic barriers to access.

Activity 2. Collection development and programming staff will recognize patron's needs to see and learn about people like and unlike themselves in the materials they access from the library and the programs they attend at the library and offer both collections and programs that incorporate multicultural differences.