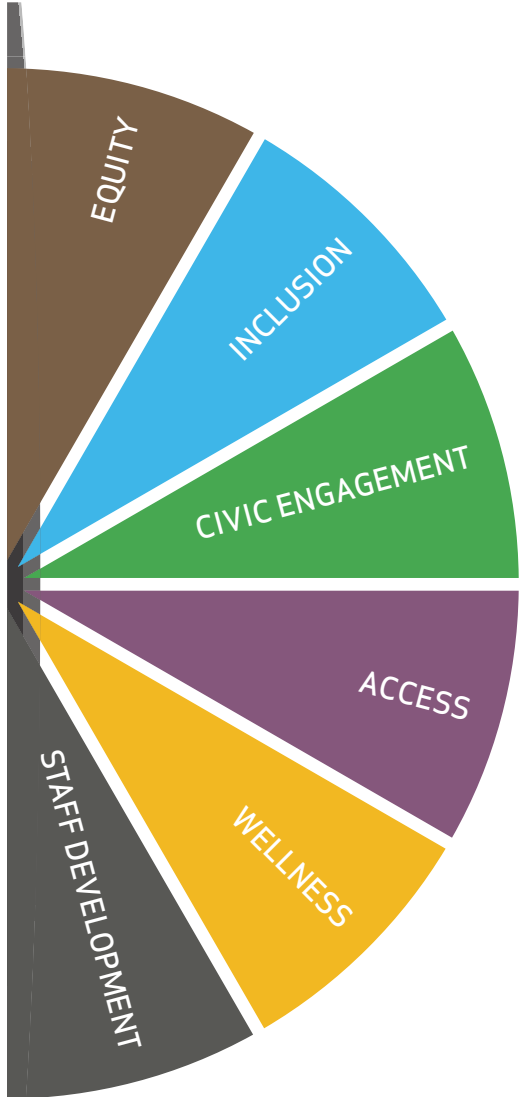




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PUBLIC LIBRARY

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2020-2024 Strategic Plan



About the Strategic Plan

In the fall of 2019, Ames Public Library staff began a year-long process of developing a Strategic Plan to guide us through the next several years. We gathered staff and community input, analyzed data, reviewed library best practices, and looked at overall societal trends.

Although the pandemic has forced us to think creatively about how we connect and serve our community, our commitment to providing responsive and relevant collections, programs, and services has remained the same.

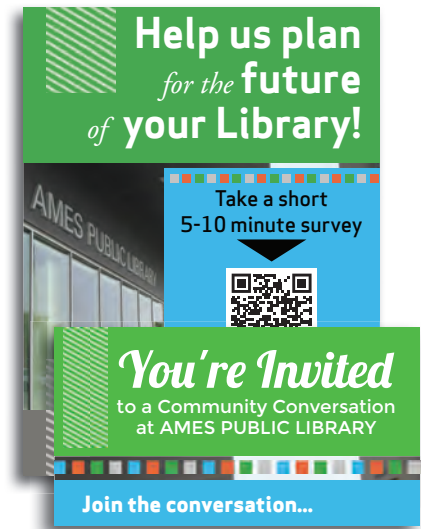
We are excited to be launching a new strategic plan in 2020 to guide us through the next four years.

The Process

The goal was to have an open and inclusive process where staff, volunteers, board members, the broader community, and key stakeholder groups would have the opportunity to help inform our service priorities—and roadmap for achieving them—over the next four years.

To achieve this, we set up teams of Library staff to gather key information and organized input sessions with a variety of community groups.

After gathering and analyzing this wide range of staff and



community input, data, and best practices, clear themes and trends emerged. These themes form this plan's six strategic priorities.



Bringing It Together

The Strategic Plan is intended as a guide to help us focus on key areas of growth and development rather than an exhaustive list of every program and service offered by the Library. Tried and true programs and collections will continue, but resources and training will be directed to support the strategic priorities.

This plan is paired with more detailed documents, including a timeline of activities chosen to achieve the goals, measurement metrics, and an in-depth operation plan.

Our evaluation will be ongoing, and we will check in regularly with staff and our Board of Trustees to track our progress and adapt as needed. We will celebrate successes and share updates annually with the broader community.

We are proud of an inclusive process and an ambitious plan, and we are excited to work together to continue to respond to our community's needs and interests in impactful and meaningful ways!

Reading the Plan

In this document, you will find definitions of our strategic priorities. Each priority has big-picture goals followed by selected example of activities that will help us achieve those goals, as shown to the right.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Definition

- **Goal**
Example Activities

EQUITY

Create an intentional plan to address barriers in Library systems, and actively work to create equitable services and access.

- **Remove systemic barriers to Library use**

Evaluate and address the impact of fines to ensure equity of access

Audit policies, hiring process, procedures, and staff training for inequities affecting staff and patrons

- **Reduce language barriers to service**

Review points of access for language barriers and readability

Provide Travis Translation devices at public service points to offer immediate assistance to non-English speaking customers

- **Create welcoming and inclusive spaces for community members with intellectual and physical disabilities**

Identify proactive ways to provide assistance to customers with intellectual and physical disabilities at all service points

Identify ways to provide equitable access to programming in person and virtually

INCLUSION

Create a welcoming and comfortable place for all community members. Develop best practices for collaborative partnerships in order to amplify a diversity of ideas, cultures, and experiences and foster community understanding.

- **Provide programming and collections that reflect and engage specific communities, with involvement from those communities**

Amplify Black voices and experiences

Amplify LGBTQIA+ voices and experiences

Provide programming and meaningful support for the multi-lingual and multi-cultural community



- **Intentionally represent the diversity of our community in Library services, collections, and programming**

Complete a diversity audit of Library collections and displays to ensure Library materials represent a diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability

Complete a diversity audit of Library programming to ensure traditionally marginalized perspectives are being represented



- **Provide programming that fosters community understanding**

Develop and implement civil discourse programming

Plan programs to foster an environment that is welcoming to community members of all abilities and backgrounds



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Provide opportunities for community members to connect with accurate information, be involved in their community, and better understand and be prepared to participate in the institutions of representative democracy.

- **Provide opportunities for community members to increase knowledge and preparation to be active participants in their community**

Develop and implement programs to increase knowledge about active participation in local government

Build out virtual resources, like the Civics Center, for adults and youth to provide reliable information related to civic engagement and media literacy on the Ames Public Library website

- **Make the Library a recognized space for discussing and addressing key community issues**

Foster dialog around key community issues such as child care, housing, and emergency preparedness

Foster partnerships with other City departments in order to cross promote City and other relevant information

ACCESS

Connect community members to needed information and resources.

- **Increase discoverability and access to Library information**

Enhance online readers' advisory through personalized reading lists and updated website content and resources

Target marketing to specific communities to increase use of Library resources among underserved communities



ACCESS

- **Provide access to information and online resources patrons need to make informed decisions**

Expand computer/technology assistance to reflect community needs

Develop media literacy programming

- **Serve community partners as a hub for information and coordination as a trusted community resource**

Convene community resource fairs

Connect childcare providers with training and resources

WELLNESS

Foster a thriving community through promotion of physical, mental, and socio-emotional well-being.

- **Support community mental health efforts**

Explore hosting a social work intern or partnership with Iowa State University

Update and promote referral resources for support services in the community

Promote awareness of trauma and mental health service supports available in the community

- **Connect community members to health and wellness supports**

Connect Library users with accurate and current health information through online resources and meaningful programming

Partner with social services agencies to provide opportunities for in-reach services



WELLNESS

- **Support community members experiencing temporary or long-term housing insecurity and/or unemployment**

Provide job/resume help through partnerships with community organizations

Develop street cards to readily share community resource information with the public

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Ensure excellent customer service as our community needs evolve through proactive staff development and training.

- **Identify and provide opportunities for deliberate staff growth**

Evaluate and reinvigorate onboarding, training, skill development, and mentorship opportunities to meet the needs of 21st century libraries

Offer training in Library advocacy so all staff can speak to the importance of the Library in the community



- **Hire and develop staff who are inclusive and welcoming to all**

Actively pursue diverse candidates when filling open positions

Offer staff training opportunities to support strategic initiatives
- **Develop staff tools for assessment and planning**

Train in and employ future casting techniques to ensure the Library is aware of broader nationwide trends

Develop a Library-wide system for evaluating programming based on intended outcomes