

OLEAN PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022
(Adopted 1/17/2018)

MISSION

The mission of the Olean Public Library is to provide equal access to materials in various formats, programs, services, and professional staff to assist all people with their educational, informational and leisure needs.

COMMUNITY

The Olean Public Library is a cornerstone of community life, providing a venue to gather and to connect with each other to build a strong, sustainable and livable community.

Goal: The Library will strengthen the community through services and programs for people of all ages, including outreach services and organizational partnerships, educational, recreational and cultural programs, and technology, facilities and services that are responsive to the needs of the community.

- **Objective 1:** The Library will provide opportunities for cultural and recreational enrichment that improve the lives of those in the Olean community and surrounding areas.

Strategies:

- Continue to provide materials and programs that stimulate thought, enhance knowledge of the world, and enrich leisure time.
 - Professional staff will continuously research and offer dynamic, high-quality services and programs that enlighten, inspire, and entertain.
 - Provide a safe and welcoming environment for library-sponsored and community-run support groups.
 - Continue to serve as a bridge over the digital divide for those lacking access to technology resources for learning, enjoyment, and overall improvement of life circumstances.
- **Objective 2:** Library staff will build relationships in the community and develop partnerships with local organizations and businesses. Connections forged with the community will assist us in nurturing awareness of Library resources, solidifying the perception of the Library as a necessity to the community, and will provide us with a deeper understanding of the needs and interests of our community.

Strategies:

- Networking and partnering with organizations, educational institutions, and businesses.
- Participating in community meetings and events.
- Providing equal access to all materials, programs, and services.
- Utilizing marketing techniques and advertising initiatives to promote the Library as an essential function of the community.
- Continue to foster loyal volunteers and maintain a robust corps of adult volunteers

- Offering offsite resources and services.
- Promoting the Library as a partner in education with the schools and as a partner for life-long learning.
- Identifying and engaging underserved segments of the community.
- Identifying local human resources to assist with advocacy efforts.
- Engaging users on social media.
- **Objective 3:** The Library will continue to develop and preserve its local history collections and provide citizens access to their common cultural heritage. Residents and visitors will have the resources and tools necessary to understand and appreciate local and family histories of the Olean area community.

Strategies:

- Ensure adequate and appropriate storage and preservation of materials.
- Continue to develop collections to meet the research needs of local citizens and visitors.
- Continue to assess collections for digitization to improve access and preservation. Seek out funding for digitization projects.
- Provide training in the use of these collections, through one-on-one tutoring and classes.
- Promote collections throughout the local community to create greater awareness of the value and use of the materials held by the Library; promotion will include displays, articles in the Library newsletter and in local news outlets, and on the Library's social media pages and website.
- Partner with local historical societies and other relevant local organizations and individuals to offer joint programs and/or to create new materials of value to the community.
- Recruit and train additional local history volunteers to assist with collection management and to provide research assistance to patrons.
- **Objective 4:** The Library will continue to provide meeting space for library programs as well as for nonprofit organizations to meet. With demand for meeting room space increasing, the Library will explore options to meet current and future demands for these spaces.

Strategies:

- Work with architects and make use of NYS Construction Aid and other potential funding sources to rework current space and/or to potentially add more space for additional meeting rooms.
- Continue to develop policies for fair access to Library meeting rooms.

FUNDING

Adequate funding is critical to the operations of the Library. In order to fulfill its mission, it is imperative that the Library continue to receive sufficient tax funding, so long as it is fair and has a positive impact on Olean area residents. The Library will also continue to pursue and advocate for additional sources of funding including state and federal aid, and public and private grants and donations, to help pay for capital improvements and to provide programs, services, collections, and technology that meet the needs of the community.

Goal: To secure sustainable funding for Library operations and capital improvements in order to provide Olean area residents with the maximum return on investment in educational and cultural resources.

- **Objective 1:** To maintain sufficient taxpayer funding that is fair and has a positive impact on Olean area residents.

Strategies:

- Consider the need for additional taxes, within the allowable property tax cap, annually (tax appropriation requests are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees).
 - Remain transparent through annual budget presentations and literature, including materials that demonstrate taxpayers' return on investment.
- **Objective 2:** To maintain adequate annual federal, state, and local aid for library operations and improvements.

Strategies:

- Actively participate in political advocacy to protect and to increase levels of aid to libraries at the federal, state, and local levels, through attendance at advocacy events, meetings with government officials, participation in letter writing and phone call campaigns, and creation of educational materials to increase community awareness of the importance of government aid to libraries.
 - Where applicable, apply for federal, state, and/or local aid that helps to offset the costs of capital improvements, technology upgrades, energy efficiency projects, Internet services, etc.
- **Objective 3:** To increase the number of grant applications written annually by the library director and department heads.

Strategies:

- Individually and collaboratively write grants for specific projects to benefit programs, services, collections and/or facilities. Communicate openly about grant-writing plans to avoid potential duplication of effort.
 - Professional staff will be encouraged to attend grant-writing workshops and will be reimbursed for registration and travel costs.
 - Professional staff will regularly research funding opportunities in the Foundation Directory Online database and other resources.
- **Objective 4:** To encourage increased charitable and planned giving, and fundraising efforts that benefit the Library.

Strategies:

- Provide support to the Friends of the Olean Public Library for fundraising activities, and continue to request financial support from the Friends that benefits programs, services, collections, and facilities.
 - Encourage planned giving through publicity including creation of a specialized brochure that will be placed at local attorneys' and financial planners' offices, and funeral homes.
 - Encourage increased gifts and donations to the Library through publicity of Memorial donation opportunities, and raising awareness of Library needs to local donors, including service organizations, businesses and corporations.
- **Objective 5:** To launch a capital campaign to raise local funds and community buy-in for major capital improvements including a partial expansion.

Strategies:

- Conduct studies to determine the feasibility of running a successful capital campaign in the local community.
- Reconvene the Fundraising Task Force to assist in fundraising efforts and activities associated with the capital campaign.
- Plan and run promotional events and talks at the Library and at outside locations to raise awareness of the capital campaign and the associated building project.
- Invite politicians, business and corporate leaders, educators, and other stake holders to events and discussions to gain political and financial support for capital campaign and the associated project.

RESOURCES

The Olean Public Library is a core resource of the Olean community, providing access to highly qualified staff, services, and collections that meet the informational, recreational, social and educational needs and interests of its residents.

Goal: The Library will continue to provide high quality resources, including collections, services, and staff, that meet the changing needs of the community, and that allow for the full use and enjoyment of the Library’s facilities, collections, and offerings.

- **Objective 1:** Because staff is the greatest asset of the Library, providing every form of service offered, the Board of Trustees will provide whatever resources deemed necessary and within reason to ensure that the Library hires and retains the most highly qualified employees.

Strategies:

- Maintain adequate staffing levels of both professional and support staff.
 - Develop cost-effective and/or nonmonetary ways to motivate employees, in addition to reasonable merit-based wage/salary increases that correspond with the annual performance evaluations implemented in 2017.
 - Maintain competitive benefits packages for full-time staff, encouraging highly qualified professionals to apply for and remain in positions at the Library.
 - Provide adequate resources and time away from work to ensure staff has regular access to professional development that allows them to do their jobs well and provide excellent customer service.
 - Continue to provide in-house trainings at monthly staff meetings and at the annual staff development day.
- **Objective 2:** The Library will continue to build and maintain collections of value and interest that are current and relevant to patrons’ needs and that are readily accessible. The Library will increase overall usage of these collections.

Strategies:

- Allocate adequate funding for popular, high-demand collection areas to ensure plentiful materials for patrons to choose from, including multiple copies where needed.
- Ensure materials are available in a variety of formats to meet the needs of all of our patrons.
- Maintain up-to-date collections that are relevant to patrons’ needs and interests.

- Weed collections of materials that are no longer used or that are in poor condition to make room for new materials.
- Promote collections through the Library newsletter, social media, website, the Olean Times Herald, in-house displays, outreach programs, and other methods.
- Continue to provide and expand opportunities for customer-driven collection development, such as request forms and surveys.
- **Objective 3:** The Library will continue to employ professional librarians and other well-trained staff to effectively and efficiently assist Library users of all ages with their information needs, whether in-person, by phone or by email.
 - Strategies:**
 - Provide reference services at a single-service desk in order to simplify the process for patrons.
 - Cross-training of staff to provide high-quality, efficient service to patrons, including in the use of technology resources.
 - Provide technology training to patrons, including in the use of the Library catalog and electronic databases, so as to empower them to locate resources on their own.
 - Utilize collection development strategies that maximize access to resources sought by our patrons, while using interlibrary-loan services to meet the need for rarely used materials.
 - Continue to explore and assess new reference delivery models that may benefit our patrons.
- **Objective 4:** The Library will continue to provide access to ample, current technology resources and to develop the skills of staff and patrons needed to use them.
 - Strategies:**
 - Continue to ensure an adequate number of publicly available computers that meet the evolving needs and interests of patrons, including hardware, software, and connectivity.
 - Assess need for and provide training to staff in the use of new technologies so as to maintain high quality service to patrons.
 - Build and expand digital and digitized collections to best meet demand.
 - Ensure virtual access to reference services and collections by providing a responsive website.
 - Ensure that equipment such as printers, copiers, scanners, etc., are used to their full potential to benefit patrons and to increase budgetary efficiencies.
 - Explore new technology resources that may improve services to patrons.

EDUCATION

The Olean Public Library is committed to its role as the “People’s University,” advancing the educational aspirations of our community by offering programs and classes for people of all ages, including story times, STEAM-based programming, digital literacy instruction, technology tutoring, craft classes, writing workshops, lectures, and more.

Goal: The Library will continue to provide and explore high-quality and high-demand educational programs that support the formal and informal needs of people of all ages, and that serve as a catalyst for lifelong learning and civic engagement.

- **Objective 1:** To support parents and caregivers in their role as their child's first teacher.

Strategies:

- Continue to offer and to explore programs that are developmentally appropriate for children of various ages and their families.
 - Incorporate current and emerging technologies into program offerings to children.
 - Continue to maintain and build a collection of developmentally appropriate, high-quality fiction and nonfiction materials in a variety of formats.
 - Continue to maintain and build a high-quality collection of parenting resources in a variety of formats.
 - Continue to provide and assess the need for parenting-skills classes and workshops.
- **Objective 2:** To support the formal and informal educational and informational needs and interests of people of all ages through collections, programs, services, technology, and staff assistance.

Strategies:

 - Continue to provide children and adults with access to current information and technologies, including reference services.
 - Continue to maintain and build a collection of high-quality fiction and nonfiction materials in a variety of formats.
 - Continue to run the annual Summer Reading Program for all ages, promoting it widely in the community to achieve maximum participation.
 - Collaborate with local educational institutions (Pre-K through college) to offer resources, services, technology, and programs that help students achieve their educational goals.
 - Offer programs and classes that promote local cultural memory and that help build a sense of shared community.
 - Continue to offer and explore additional means of offering homework help assistance to children and teens.
 - Provide access to services and resources offered by the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) and the New York State Talking Book and Braille Library. Collaborate with CCLS and other agencies in providing services to people with disabilities.
 - **Objective 3:** To maximize opportunities for people of all ages to increase digital proficiency and nurture next generation skills.

Strategies:

 - Offer programs featuring innovative technologies that foster creativity and expression.
 - Offer classes and one-on-one instruction (tutoring) in a variety of technologies and digital literacy skills including online resources to people of all ages.
 - Incorporate technology into programs for all ages where beneficial and appropriate.

INNOVATION

The Olean Public Library will continue to be a leader in innovation by providing state of the art facilities and technological resources that meet the changing needs of the community.

Facilities

Goal: The Library facility will be a safe, comfortable, accessible, responsive, and environmentally sustainable cornerstone of the community.

- **Objective 1:** The Library will explore the feasibility of expanding space for programs, meetings, study areas, and quiet reading locations, in addition to providing adequate space for collections and for staff offices and work rooms.

Strategies:

- Work with architects to develop plans for adding at least 7000 square feet to the existing facility to provide adequate additional programming and meeting room space that will be flexible for multiple uses and attendance numbers.
 - Investigate other local facilities that could serve as an annex or an addition to the existing building as an alternative to expanding the existing facility.
 - Work with architects to repurpose existing space for new or changed uses, including additional staff offices, a technology maker space, a new computer lab, expanded teen room, a dedicated local history room, a café area, quiet reading and study areas, an enclosed play area for children, and additional storage space.
 - Hire a consulting firm to assist in exploring the feasibility of conducting a capital campaign to raise some of the funds for a building project.
 - Research other funding possibilities including state aid, public and private grants and donations, and corporate sponsorship. Consider offering naming rights to major donors.
- **Objective 2:** During each year of the plan, the Library will maintain the interior and exterior of the facility while controlling energy costs, including properly maintaining and updating equipment, and ensuring safety of patrons and staff.

Strategies:

- Regularly monitor the condition of the building and grounds, and conduct regular maintenance of the HVAC system, roof, landscaping, driveway and parking lot.
- Continue to explore new or additional energy conservation options for lighting, equipment, technology, and building components.
- Investigate, evaluate, and recommend replacement options for critical equipment needed for operating a comfortable, up-to-date library facility and for delivering optimal library services.
- Review and conduct safety procedures annually, including emergency evacuations, testing and maintenance of fire and security alarm systems, and adding emergency exits to meet building code recommendations.

- **Objective 3:** To provide equal access to Library materials, programs, services, staff assistance, and facilities to people with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Continue to ensure that all areas of the facility are accessible to people with disabilities and explore opportunities to upgrade the facility to increase the safety and comfort of all patrons including those with disabilities.
- Continue to provide and explore emerging adaptive materials and assistive technologies including hardware, software, and online resources.
- Provide annual training for Library staff in the delivery of services and the creation of a supportive environment for people with disabilities.

Technology

Goal: The Olean Public Library is a hub of technology access for the community, providing computers and Internet access for public use. The Library will continue to work towards identifying those in the community without access or the needed level of skills, and provide them with modern technologies, information, and classes to keep everyone up-to-date with skills necessary to succeed in today's society. The Olean Public Library will use technology as a social equalizer.

- **Objective 1:** Utilize technology to strengthen digital presence and bridge the digital divide.
Strategies:
 - Connect people and services creatively through free access to information and resources.
 - Continue to find new ways of promoting the Library's digital resources to people throughout the community.
 - Engage with the local community and beyond using digital communication and social media.
- **Objective 2:** To ensure that everyone in the community has access to technology resources and the skills to use them.
Strategies:
 - Adopt and adapt to changes in technology and to new and emerging technologies to address community interests and needs.
 - Provide opportunities at the Library for people to interact with and learn to use new and changing technology resources.
 - Develop an understanding of the community's technology needs and a capacity to support them through Open Tech hours, workshops and classes, and investing in appropriate equipment. The Library will develop an understanding of needs through an assessment of requests received for technology tutoring, as well as through needs surveys distributed to patrons and members of the community.
- **Objective 3:** To offer up-to-date technologies.
Strategies:
 - Analyze options to improve the current wireless infrastructure, including working with CCLS and its broadband initiative.
 - Analyze current bandwidth for adequacy, and continue to do so every year of the plan.
 - Ensure that technology (hardware and software) is used to its full potential for the benefit of patrons and staff, and to increase budgetary efficiencies.
 - Maintain adequate financial resources in the annual operating budget to ensure that the Library is able to offer the latest technology resources to the community.