

WASHOE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

FY 2014/15-FY 2018/19 STRATEGIC PLAN

BACKGROUND

STATE AND FEDERAL DEFINITIONS OF “PUBLIC LIBRARIES”

The Washoe County Library System (WCLS) operates under the parameters established for public libraries by the Nevada legislature and by the federal Institute of Museums and Library Services.

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 379.002: Goal of public libraries and information centers. It is the goal of the State’s publicly supported libraries and information centers to provide the resources and trained staff to meet the informational needs of all citizens.

NRS 379.0057: “Public library” defined. “Public library” means a consolidated, county, district, city or town library, a group of libraries which have entered into an interlocal agreement or any other library predominantly supported by public money.

According to the U.S. Institute of Museums and Library Services, a public library is established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district, or region, and provides at least the following:

1. An organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof;
2. Paid staff;
3. An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public;
4. The facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule, and
5. Is supported in whole or in part with public funds.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WCLS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Washoe County Library System has experienced a nearly 43% reduction in its General Fund revenues since 2007, with an equivalent reduction in staffing. The outlook for the next several years is for flat or only slightly increasing revenues. Library Expansion Fund expenditures—currently just over \$2.3 million per year, including \$700,000 that has been transferred from the General Fund—must, by the year 2025, either be allocated back to the latter fund, or else eliminated. Given these conditions, over the next several years WCLS faces the challenge—and the opportunity—to work smarter with its available resources in order to provide the benefits of library service to as much of the County as possible, while also exploring options to gain additional sustained funding. WCLS must plan for and deliver the services that best align with both community needs and the Library’s resources—financial, human and organizational.

To be successful, the strategic plan must:

- Align with the WCLS mission: To connect people with information, ideas and experiences to support an enriched and engaged community, one person at a time.
- Serve as a blueprint for progress towards the WCLS vision: All Washoe County residents benefit from the Library's support of literacy and self-education.
- Lead to meaningful outcomes that translate into benefits desired by both individual users and the community as a whole

The plan also needs to be consistent with the values that were developed with the input of all levels of staff within the Library System:

Learning and Literacy

We uphold lifelong learning as the core foundation of our service, and promote reading as a fundamental life skill.

Inclusiveness

We make enriching cultural and intellectual resources available to all.

Customer Service

We deliver high-quality, personal service based on appreciation of diversity, respect for individual privacy and support of intellectual freedom.

Community

We believe in the power of coming together, and provide opportunities for people to meet, exchange ideas, and participate in the life of their community.

Staff

We recruit and retain qualified employees, provide them with timely training and development opportunities, and recognize that they are our most valuable resource.

Fiscal Responsibility

We manage the human and financial resources entrusted to us in a cost-effective manner, and support only those facilities and services that are sustainable within the realities of our financial limits.

Adaptability

As a forward-thinking organization, we are responsive to our users' needs and interests, continuously adapting what we do and how we do it.

Collaboration

We believe in the power of coming together, and expand our impact in the community through appropriate partnerships with individuals, public and nonprofit agencies, educators, community groups and businesses.

As in any planning process, the Library System is choosing among alternative paths. When implemented, those selected paths should lead to meaningful, responsive, changes in how WCLS meets its mission and make progress towards its vision. A useful way in which to view these potential changes is by considering the following four dimensions of library service, and where WCLS needs to position itself within each one in order to continue providing high value to as much of its user community as possible:

1. Physical ↔ Virtual: What types and levels of library service will the Library System provide: (a) within buildings and through face-to-face interactions and a collection of tangible materials; and (b) online via a web site, social media, and related methods?
2. Individual Focus ↔ Community Focus: To what degree will WCLS cater to the needs of: (a) individual users; and (b) groups and the community-at-large?
3. Collection ↔ Creation: To what extent will WCLS: (a) continue to collect and make available content produced by external sources (library as supermarket) and (b) facilitate the creation of content by its own user community (library as kitchen)?
4. Archive ↔ Portal: How much content will the Library System provide that is owned and controlled by: (a) the System itself; and (b) external entities?

In broad terms, WCLS is currently more:

1. Physical than virtual
2. Focused on individuals than on the greater community;
3. Collection- than creation-oriented; and
4. Archive- than portal-oriented.

To enable WCLS to better respond to patrons' needs (as those are currently understood), the plan outlined below will move it more towards the center within each of the above four continuums, so that it becomes:

1. Somewhat more virtualized, but retaining a strong physical presence
2. Focused more on serving groups and the community, while maintaining personalized service to individuals
3. Somewhat more creation-facilitating, while still offering a substantial collection of externally produced books, media and digital materials
4. More portal-based than at present, providing greater access to externally controlled content while fine-tuning the types of material that it archives

The plan as presented below maintains the same overall strategic objectives that are in place during the current fiscal year. The strategic objectives are listed here for convenience.

Customer Perspective

- Reach more people through alternative methods of service delivery (in the current year's plan, "expanded" was used instead of "alternative")
- Deliver resources and services that meet individual and community needs
- Make libraries the "third place" (after home and work)

Organizational Perspective

- Build a healthy, engaged, sustainable Library organization
- Foster open, two-way communication between the community and the Library

WASHOE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM – STRATEGIC PLAN, FY 2014/15-FY-2018/2019

Notes: “(T)” denotes initiatives that are included in the WCLS Technology Plan

“2016” means Fiscal Year 2015-16, “2017” means Fiscal Year 2016-17, etc.

Strategic Objectives	Guiding Strategies	Goals in 2014/15	Goals: 2015/16-2018/19
<p>Reaching more people through <u>alternative</u> methods of service delivery</p> <p><i>Supporting the County Objective of: Safe, secure and healthy communities</i></p>	<p>(1) Serve people where they are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing outreach plan (developed in FY 13/14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue plan implementation; modify as needed (ongoing)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete responsive-design work on website (makes site scalable to any device) (T) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue modifying website content and links in response to identified needs (ongoing)
	<p>(2) Offer more do-it-yourself services at library facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully deploy mobile devices for staff (T) • Lend tablets & e-readers (T) • Enable online payments (T) • Evaluate effectiveness of initial pick-up locker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand use of lockers-2016 (T) • Consider off-hours reference service-2016(IM/phone) • Expand Self-Service Kiosk (SSK) capabilities: other County services, etc. - 2017 (T) • Develop and implement plan for off-site SSK’s- 2017 (T)
<p>Delivering resources and services that meet individual and community needs</p> <p><i>Supporting the County Objective of: Economic development and diversification</i></p>	<p>Maintain a well-used mix of print, digital and other types of resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/implement plan to expand content-creation services (cont. from FY 13/14) • Integrate e-books & data-bases into Koha catalog (T) • Evaluate options for offering music & movie downloads (T) • Consider substituting tablets for certain public PCs (T) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lending of “non-traditional” items--tools, equipment, etc. (2015→) ▪ Multimedia computers for “MakerSpaces” (2015→) (T) ▪ Collection-management software (2016)
	<p>Enhance technology training and assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue classes on basic computer skills; continue drop-in help for patrons owning mobile devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training lab at SC lib. (2016) (T) • Develop focused training for seniors (2016) • Offer classes for iPad, Android (2016) (T)
	<p>Build collaborations with community organizations to help meet other needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support WCSD’s “Striving Readers” grant • Investigate having Social Services worker on site at an urban library • Explore collaboration options to better serve job seekers and small business owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting WCSD grant • Move forward with Social Services project (if a go) (2016) • Move forward with economic-development collaborations (ongoing) • Explore libraries as satellite sites for other Co. services (ongoing)

<p>Making libraries the “third place” (after home and work)</p> <p><i>Supporting the County</i> <i>Objective of: Safe, secure and healthy communities</i></p>	<p>Maintain safe, welcoming environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advanced safety training to staff • Continue revamping layouts to reduce safety risks and enhance users’ experiences • Work with Co. staff on security “audits” of selected libraries • Obtain updated Facility Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out security-improvement plans based on audit recommendations (ongoing) • Implement recommendations from the Facility Study relating to security and the “user experience” (2016→)
	<p>Continue delivering programs that support reading, and that educate and enrich</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-or-no decision on presenting an exhibit of national or state interest • Participate at agreed-upon level in Nevada’s 150th anniversary celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure General Fund line-item funding for programming (in place by FY 2017)
	<p>Expand usage of meeting rooms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer after-hours use to students, other groups • Reevaluate reservation fee 	

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<p>Build a healthy, engaged, sustainable Library organization</p> <p><i>Supporting the County Objectives of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability of our financial, social and natural resources Public participation and open, transparent communication Valued, engaged employee workforce 	Provide well-trained, motivated staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing training plan (created in FY 13/14) • Include new topics as needs are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify training plan as needed • Increase training & travel budgets within the General Fund (beginning in FY 2016)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct another all-staff meeting focused on training (everyone given the chance to participate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct all-staff meetings once a year (ongoing)
	Improve the long-term health of the Library's tax-based funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request above-base General Fund dollars to absorb Expansion Fund expenditures; and/or • As opportunities arise, move Expansion Fund expenditures into the General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue requesting above-base dollars to absorb Exp Fund expenditures (ongoing) • Work toward a new ballot measure to extend the Exp Fund (2016→)
	Achieve a sustainable mix of branches/hours supplemented by other service points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain an updated Master Facilities Study • Draft a plan to implement the Study's recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify service-point configuration pursuant to Study recommendations, staffing changes and service needs (2016→)
	Use comparative statistics as a guide for planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine ranking of WCLS within recognized national indices (during FY 2014/15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use rankings as baseline for future strategic planning (in FY 2015/16 and beyond) • Revise WCLS's relative rankings as indices are updated (ongoing)
	Plan for future workforce-development needs, e.g. succession planning, new required job skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin drafting a workforce-development plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete final plan by 6/30/15; begin implementation in 2015/16

Strategic Objectives	Guiding Strategies	Goals in 2014/15	Goals: 2015/16-2018/19
<p>Build a healthy, engaged, sustainable Library organization [continued]</p>	<p>Use information technology to help improve service and operate more cost-effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate alternatives to existing public-PC/printing-management software • Improve network performance between libraries and Data Center • Create staff wi-fi networks in large branches (for tablets) • Investigate thin-client workstations at circulation desks and for public catalogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new management software (2016) (T) • Investigate Radio Frequency ID technology for materials management (2015-16→) (T) • Evaluate feasibility of building security gates in-house (2017)(T)
<p>Foster open communication between the community and the Library <i>Supporting the County Objective of: Public participation & open, transparent communication</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver consistent messaging incorporating mission, vision, values • Gather and apply public feedback • Build relationships with library users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement communications plan (with possible assistance from a PR/marketing firm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue communications-plan efforts