



Superior
Public Library

Encouraging. Inspiring. Connecting.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2024

Superior Public Library Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Adopted January 8, 2020 by the Superior Public Library Board of Trustees

Mission and Values

As a cornerstone institution in our community, Superior Public Library's mission focuses our efforts as champions of reading, learning, and creating connections to inspire all to grow. The Library's values guide our daily work and commit us to serve everyone in our community.

Mission

The Superior Public Library helps people in northern Wisconsin achieve personal and community growth by encouraging young readers, inspiring imagination at all ages, and connecting citizens with one another and the broader world.

Values

Accessibility

The library is an accessible and welcoming place for all community members and visitors.

Objectivity

The library provides an up-to-date collection of resources which respects the many different views of the community.

Learning

The library fosters a lifelong love of learning for all ages.

Relevance

With thoughtful stewardship, the library is an essential resource that provides services which are important in the daily lives of community members.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal One: Community

The library will strengthen its role as a vital community resource and partner.

Objectives

1. Be a center for community services information and resources.
2. Collaborate with community partners to improve access to services and resources.

Goal Two: Services

The library will continue to improve its services with a focus on being inclusive of all members of our community.

Objectives

1. Develop services and programming that inclusively meet the needs of the community.
2. Increase access to and use of library resources by reducing barriers and enhancing collections.
3. Develop and implement new ideas to make the library a more accessible, exciting, and safe destination for all.

Goal Three: Communication

The library will increase marketing and communications of its services and offerings.

Objectives

1. Build capacity to expand the library's marketing and communication efforts.
2. Identify new marketing strategies to increase visits, new users, and awareness of library services and offerings.

Goal Four: Capacities

The library will work to increase available resources and capacities to best meet the library's mission and the goals of this plan.

Objectives

1. Identify staff capacities, positions, and development necessary to best serve the community and meet the vision of this plan.
2. Work with the city to empower the library within the library board's authority to allocate library funds.
3. Enhance partnerships with the Friends of the Library and SPL Foundation.

Overview

With our main library located in the heart of Superior's historic downtown and two branch libraries in the towns of Lake Nebagamon and Solon Springs, the library serves the city of Superior and the residents of Douglas County. Like the history of the Superior region displayed in the thirty-five mural panels in our newly renovated building, the library continuously moves forward by innovating and delivering services that grow and inspire our community.

This strategic plan follows the highly successful implementation of the library's last plan. The results from the last strategic plan exemplify the library's ability to effectively and efficiently use the investment made in the library to positively benefit the city and county. The following captures the higher-level changes and impacts of our efforts:

- A wonderfully renovated library with spaces that provides great flexibility to meet the needs of our community.
- The creation of the Superior Public Library Foundation focused on growing an endowment and developing partnerships and support to enhance the funding available to the library to better serve area residents.
- Increased programming and learning opportunities for children from birth through high school, including more outreach to area daycares and schools.
- New technology available for patrons to use along with the ability to get technology training from library staff.
- An increase in programming and learning opportunities for adults.
- Increased communication throughout the community to enhance awareness of all that is available and possible at the library.
- A realignment of staff positions and duties to support the achievement of the library's four priority goals.

“The Superior Public Library is a critical resource to our community. It provides a safe place for our children to study, learn, and grow as learners. It is also a great place for adults to continue to learn and keep minds active as we age.”

Community Survey Comment, September 2019

The input we received during the planning process was very clear that the library is vital to families and the community at large. The success of the library in reaching goals has also been clear, but there is more to do. Some of the goals in this plan are to build on what the community has already seen us advance, that we know they support and want to see continued. Other goals have new elements for us to serve our community even better. We are excited by the possibilities in front of us to continue to be a sound investment for the city and an even more important community institution and partner to help shape the future of Superior and surrounding region.

Goals and Objectives: Background and Details

The following goals and objectives were developed through thoughtful discussion and careful analysis of the information gathered; they provide us with a foundation for making decisions and acting to ensure that our community has the best library possible. This strategic framework has been crafted to provide the flexibility needed to adapt to the evolving needs of Superior and Douglas County.

Goal One: Community

The library will strengthen its role as a vital community resource and partner.

What we learned

“The library is one of our biggest sources of knowing what is going on in the community.”

Community Survey Comment, September 2019

We are incredibly fortunate to be located in such a beautiful area, on the shores of Lake Superior and next to the St. Louis River. The opportunities for our community are substantial. In recent years we have seen growth and development with new businesses starting up and existing businesses improving and expanding. This investment, both public and private, is a key component to Superior’s future. Equally important is investment in people. Respondents to a strategic planning questionnaire highlighted this need by sharing their aspirations for the community which included:

- Addressing community health and homelessness issues,
- Developing a community approach to improving access to quality child care,
- Providing more education and opportunities for all ages, and
- A community that continues to work together for positive change and embraces new ideas.



The respondents also shared how they believe we can best reach these aspirations with the library playing a critical role. Their ideas included improved community education and communication and bringing community organizations together to leverage the impact of all.

Objectives

Objective 1

Be a center for community services information and resources.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Educate staff to improve their understanding and knowledge of the services and resources available in the Superior and Douglas County area.
- Connect community service organizations to communicate with each other and work together to develop a shared resource guide for the community.
- Provide space and opportunities for community members to connect with area service providers to learn about available community services and resources (i.e. hold a community service organizations and nonprofits fair at the library).

Objective 2

Collaborate with community partners to improve access to services and resources.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Collaborate with the school district and area home school families to identify and implement ideas to facilitate easier use of the library by students and to best support students with space and resources.
- Identify and implement feasible outreach service opportunities to provide services and collections to senior adult community members outside of the library, focusing on partnerships with the Senior Center and area senior housing locations.
- Partner with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) to enhance learning opportunities and programming for library users.
- Collaborate with the Douglas County Historical Society through programming and digitization support.

Measures for Success

- Number of educational opportunities provided for staff regarding local resources and services.
- Increase in collaborations with area partners.
- Number of events and meetings held at the library to connect community partners with each other and with community members.
- Increase in services and resources provided outside of the library.

Goal Two: Services

The library will continue to improve its services with a focus on being inclusive of all members of our community.

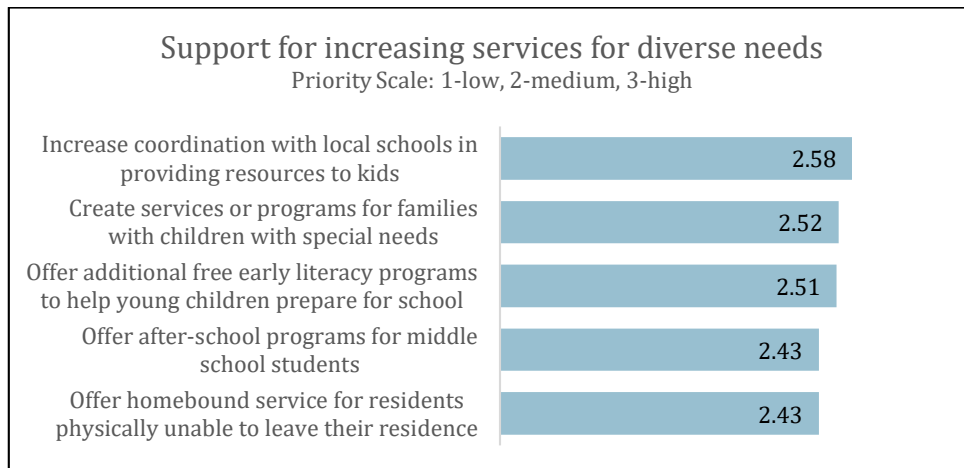
What we learned

“The Library has done a phenomenal job adapting to the changes in our community.”

Community Aspirations and Challenges Questionnaire Response, October 2019

The members of our community are not all the same and therefore have different needs from the library. We know some members of our community have significant economic challenges based on data showing Superior has lower average incomes and higher poverty rates than the county and the state. Also, ten percent of our population is non-white and within that percentage, the makeup of race and ethnicities is changing. Lastly, resource and learning needs differ greatly among the different age groups we serve.

Factoring in all of that information, we learned from our survey that there is broad support for the library to increase services to serve the diverse needs of our community.



We are happy to know that the perception in the community is we have “done a phenomenal job adapting to the changes in our community.” However, we know there is more we can do to ensure everyone has an opportunity to access the resources and services they need.

Objectives

Objective 1

Develop services and programming that inclusively meet the needs of the community.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Complete the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Inclusivity Assessment to identify areas for improvement.
- Develop and promote programming and collections that are reflective of the diverse perspectives and populations of the community and world at large.
- Develop new strategies and programming to promote and grow the love of books and reading among children from birth through high school graduation.
- Identify and implement programming ideas to provide tweens and teens with opportunities to connect with each other related to their interests that fall outside of opportunities they have at school.
- Continue to develop adult programming with a focus on areas including civic engagement (voter registration, census information, etc.), marquee author talks, and community discussions related to community aspirations and challenges.
- Develop regular methods to gather input and feedback from patrons and the community.

Objective 2

Increase access to and use of library resources by reducing barriers and enhancing collections.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Investigate eliminating fines by researching the experiences of other libraries and seeking alternative funding support to offset potential revenue loss.
- Identify feasible options to add digital content by exploring other vendor/platform options.

Objective 3

Develop and implement new ideas to make the library a more accessible, exciting, and safe destination for all.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Study data and gather information to consider a reconfiguration of the hours that the library is open.
- Identify and experiment with opportunities to draw people to the library by utilizing outdoor spaces.
- Implement safety measures including adding lights for the parking lot and exploring options to add security staff.

Measures for Success:

- Increased number of cardholders
- Increased circulation
- Increase in the size of digital content collections
- Increased programming attendance
- Increased visits

Goal Three: Communication

The library will increase marketing and communications of its services and offerings.

What we learned

“I was unaware the library had a social media site (I certainly look for it!) but being as active on it as possible and posting events there would be very important.”

“I love how active the library social media has been in the last couple of years.”

Community Survey Comments, September 2019

These two comments sum up what we know about our communications. On the one hand, through the efforts of our last strategic plan we have made great strides in our library communications. On the other hand, we know from our survey results that there is much more we can do. Only 21% of survey respondents were aware we offer access to free online courses. Just 31% know there are free passes to local museums they can use. These are just two examples of important resources and services the library provides that we know many in our community could benefit from using. We will use this to help us better craft and target our communications to ensure the library’s resources and services are known to those that need them.



Objectives

Objective 1

Build capacity to expand the library’s marketing and communication efforts.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Increase both the amount of staff time committed to marketing and communication and the number of staff doing this work.
- Establish consistent branding and messaging with common tools and templates to aid the effectiveness and efficiency of staff doing this work.
- Develop a budget for marketing with an initial focus on funding the costs of printing marketing materials.

Objective 2

Identify new marketing strategies to increase visits, new users, and awareness of library services and offerings.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Develop a “welcome” routine for new users/cardholders.

- Identify effective communication channels and develop messages to best reach different audiences.
- Implement easy ways to market the library, including having a sandwich board to promote events and services and communicating “Did you know” snippets to build awareness and word-of-mouth campaigns.
- Develop mutually beneficial promotional relationships with local businesses.

Measures for Success:

- Additional staff and staff time dedicated to marketing and communications
- Increased library usage statistics
- Funds dedicated to library marketing and communication needs

Goal Four: Capacities

The library will work to increase available resources and capacities to best meet the library’s mission and the goals of this plan.

What we learned

“I love our library. More weekend hours please!
Kids and adults in our community will be better for it!”

Community Survey Comment, September 2019



Our ability to provide necessary resources and services, including when our library is open, is dependent on our capacities. The work from our last strategic plan did an amazing job providing us with new spaces and the SPL Foundation to provide us with the necessary platforms to do more. A vital component of our success is based on people, our staff.

Data gathered during this planning process compared our library to similar sized libraries. We learned that we are open fewer hours than most libraries our size across the state and we have significantly fewer staff. To address this, we plan to work with the city, SPL Foundation, Friends of the Library, and other partners, along with gathering best practices and additional data, to identify how we can increase our resources and capacities to do even more for Superior and Douglas County.

Objectives

Objective 1

Identify staff capacities, positions, and development necessary to best serve the community and meet the vision of this plan.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Perform an internal staffing study including gathering information from peer libraries to learn about best practices regarding staffing models.
- Establish priorities for staff changes or additions related to security, volunteer coordination, outreach, marketing, and maintenance.
- Identify and support the professional development needs of staff to best serve the community with a focus on safety training and inclusive services education.
- Develop other opportunities to enhance staff capacity, including creating a volunteer coordinator staff position to recruit and utilize volunteers and/or interns.
- Identify internal improvements that will increase efficiency, such as increasing use of self-check machines.

Objective 2

Work with the city to empower the library within the library board's authority to allocate library funds.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Gather information from peer libraries to learn about best practices regarding library-municipal relationships.
- Support library board development for them to build relationships with the city and county and engage more deeply with their legal roles.
- Develop advocacy messaging to inform the community of all that is unique and remarkable about the library, what it provides to the community, and the values of the library.

Objective 3

Enhance partnerships with the Friends of the Library and SPL Foundation.

Action Opportunities and Strategies:

- Grow Friends of SPL membership to both increase annual membership revenue and the pool of volunteers for the library to utilize.
- Create a memorandum of understanding between the library board and SPL Foundation to establish how the two can work together to best support the library.
- Create a prioritized list for the SPL Foundation to seek funding for the library beyond the endowment, including library programming and event sponsorships, new equipment and technology purchases, security costs, new collections, supporting the library to go fine free, and/or marketing needs such as printing.

Measures for Success:

- Increased staffing
- Increased funds and volunteer capacity
- More staff training opportunities
- Increased engagement of the library board with city and county leaders

Implementation, Communication and Assessment

The Superior Public Library Director and staff, in consultation with members of the Superior Public Library Board, will prioritize service goals and coordinate activities from the strategic plan to develop annual action plans. Decisions regarding implementation will be made by the director, staff, and board members based on potential impact; available resources, including funding and staff time; and future changes which may arise from ongoing efforts to listen to the community and local, state, and national trends in library service.

On an annual basis, the library will regularly communicate and assess the progress of implementing the strategic plan as follows.

Monthly

- Review Strategic Plan progress as a regular agenda item at management team meetings.
- Review Strategic Plan progress as a part of library staff meetings.
- Discuss Strategic Plan progress as a regular agenda item at library board meetings.

September

- Compile progress indicator data for annual review.

October – December

- Hold annual “Strategic Plan Review” session with board and staff to review implementation successes and challenges, revise strategies, and project budget needs.
- Library management / staff develop action plans for the next year of implementation.

About the Strategic Planning Process

The Superior Public Library Board formed a Strategic Planning Committee that included members from the library board, library staff, Friends of the Library, Superior Public Library Foundation, and Superior School District. The Committee used the following sources of data and information in creating the plan:

- Annual report library data submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the years 2008-2018
- Results of a community survey conducted between September 9, 2019 and October 6, 2019 that garnered a total of 539 responses
- Responses to a Community Aspirations and Challenges questionnaire completed by selected community members
- Responses to an Issues and Needs Questionnaire completed by members of the Strategic Planning Committee

- Results of a Library Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results analysis with members of the library staff
- Information from a Library and Community Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results conversation with the library board
- Demographic data from the American Community Survey and the 2000 and 2010 US Census
- Previous Strategic Plan

Acknowledgements

The voices of Superior and Douglas County are reflected in this plan from more than six hundred people that contributed their time and ideas as part of this process by responding to our community survey and questionnaire. The library sincerely thanks those that offered their ideas and time. Your feedback was invaluable to the process.

The Library Director and Board thank the Strategic Planning Committee for its commitment to the Superior Public Library and the development of this plan. In addition, special thanks to the staff of the Superior Public Library. Their knowledge of the community they serve and the library not only helped shape the plan, but will be vital to its successful implementation.

Finally, the library thanks Melissa McLimans and Bruce Smith from WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) for providing planning process management and facilitation services.

2019 Strategic Planning Committee	2019 Library Board of Trustees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mike Almond - Library Board, Vice President ● Rick Arnold - Library Board, President ● Maggie Bare - Friends of the Library Executive Board, Library Board ● Sue Hendrickson - Douglas County Board, Library Board, Northern Waters Library System Board ● Sue Heskin - Library Director ● Andrea Moreau - Superior School District ● Leslie Mehle - Library Staff (Program Librarian) ● Jim Purvis – Superior Public Library Foundation ● Nicole Teasley - Library Board ● Kelly Wiisanen - Library Staff (Manager, Youth Services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mike Almond - Vice President ● Bill Anderson ● Rick Arnold - President ● Maggie Bare ● Warren Bender ● Sue Hendrickson ● Mary Klun ● Ron Leino ● Erin Schilling ● Nicole Teasley