



Earlham
Public Library

Strategic Plan

Effective March 2020-2025

Approved by the Earlham Public Library
Board of Trustees on February 17th, 2020

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Introduction

Earlham is located in Madison County in Southwest Iowa and has a population of 1,523 (2016 census). The Earlham Public Library recently completed the Edge Assessment to evaluate its public access technology services and responses.

This assessment showed our library in the context of other libraries of similar size. Earlham Public Library belongs to the “very small” library peer group and scored 465 out of 1000 total points. The average score for libraries in this peer group was 406-540, although scores ranged from 125-815 in a representative sample. In a community survey taken via the online website Survey Monkey (written surveys were available and entered into online results), the library was shown as both adept at providing programs for the public and also less adept at advertising all of their many resources to the general public. The public also wanted to see more of a variety of programming for adults. The Trustees decided to devise a list of goals to meet within the next 5 years both to help increase usage by the public and also to raise the library’s score within their peer group. These are the goals the Trustees found fitting:

- A Comfortable Place, both Physical and Virtual
- Responsive Community Resources and Services
- Lifelong learning
- Information Access

The Trustees used these goals, the results of our Edge community resource evaluation, and the results of a 2019 Community survey as the

foundations for the strategic plan. This plan outlines goals, objectives, and activities that will help library staff meet the needs identified. The Earlham Public Library Strategic Plan is submitted as a written endeavor to accomplish the goals set forth by the Board of Trustees.

Needs Assessment

Earlham, Iowa's demographics in race, age, education, and economic ability are shown below in order to help describe the needs of the community. This data is from the 2016 United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) and was put together by the site <http://areavibes.com/earlham-ia/demographics/>.

Earlham, IA has a population of 1,523 people with a population density of 1,574 per square mile, which is 2662% higher than the Iowa average. The median age in Earlham is 36 and 64% of the population over 15 years of age are married. 99% of the community speak English and 1% speak Spanish.

The income per capita in Earlham is \$27,033, which is 6% lower than the Iowa average and 9% lower than the national average, but the median household income is \$65,893, which is 21% higher than the Iowa average and 19% higher than the national average. The unemployment rate in Earlham is 2%, which is 52% lower than the national average. The poverty rate in Earlham is 7% which is 56% lower than the national average.

Earlham is a charming small community about a half hour drive from Des Moines, which means that especially for small children and the elderly, the Earlham Public Library can be a great place to go for programming that does not require a long drive or much preparation to

attend. The poverty rate is low, but the library is the best place for information, entertainment, social atmosphere, and education to go to outside of the school. The town is growing, especially as Waukee (the nearest bigger city) is growing and with that, we have many young new families in the area as people look for cheaper homes near where they work.

As the location suggests though, people have a wide variety of competing entertainment options available at a close distance. The Board of Trustees would like the Earlham Public Library to help the community of Earlham to be a great place that people want to stay and invest in their own community when it comes to consumerism and will therefore respond by using the library to promote local events as well as providing educational and fun programming to the public.

Mission Statement:

The Earlham Public Library will provide physical and virtual spaces that are welcoming to patrons of all ages. Lifelong learning will be encouraged through access to the online world, quality materials collections, and innovative library services.

Goals, Objectives, Projects, Activities

Goal #1: The library will be a comfortable place to visit, both physically and virtually.

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

Objective #1: Patrons will have enhanced physical spaces in which to enjoy all services the library has to offer.

Activities:

- Create a contract with a floor cleaning service for regular cleanings (2020)
- Investigate improving front desk area to allow for handicap access (2025)
 - Pricing a new desk versus modifying the current layout
 - Self-checkout on lower countertop?
 - Acquire funding

- Explore making bathroom family-friendly by adding a fold down changing table (2020)
- Create a way to showcase STEM kits won through grants that can be checked out or used in-house (2021)
- Explore expanding the library or purchasing new property
 - Written Space Needs Assessment (2022)
 - Review Stella Hoadley Trust requirements (2021)

Objective #2: Patrons will have enhanced awareness and access to current and new virtual services.

Activities:

- Promote existing virtual services (Bridges, Gale, Credo, website, Facebook, Instagram, Transparent Languages) (2020)
- Start a monthly newsletter promoting one aspect of our online services each month as well as in-library services (2022)
- Partner with schools to offer mock job interviews and resume help for seniors (2021)

Goal # 2: Responsive 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.

Objective #1: Patrons will have access to a community hub of information

Activities:

- The library will post community events on their bulletin board, Facebook page, and website (2020)
- Partner with Bricker-Price to co-advertise/co-plan community programming (2020)
- The library will make an effort to help promote all local events, therefore becoming the place in which people look to find town happenings (2021)
- The library will adapt to community needs by providing programs for age groups as the population fluctuates (2020-2025).

Goal #3: Lifelong learning

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

Objective #1: Young patrons will be actively engaged in a variety of literary and creative opportunities.

Activities:

- Promote and revamp 1,000 books before Kindergarten program (2020)
- Offer Monthly STEM programming (2021)
- Initiate LEGO club which meets at least 4 times per year (2022)
- Offer beginning sewing classes which take place at least 4 times a year (2022)
- Offer at least 4 lapsit story times each year (2023)
 - Supplies: shaker eggs, colorful scarves, CD player
 - Training for a backup person if director cannot be there

Objective #2: Adult patrons will have access to new literacy opportunities and the support needed to create their own content.

Activities:

- Offer book club that meets at least 6 times per year (2020)
- Offer a space for quilters/crocheters to gather and socialize while working on individual projects at least 4 times per year (2022)
- Offer instruction on specific crochet or knitting projects at least 4 times per year (2022)
- Advertise VHS to DVD converter services (2020)

Goal #4: Information Access

Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options. Residents will also have high speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the internet.

Objective #1: Patrons will have resources to help assist in their selections.

Activities:

- Staff Monthly Picks will be posted as suggestions from various categories throughout the collection, featuring staffer first names

in order to familiarize the public with the particular book tastes of each staffer (2020)

- Newly added books will be listed, so they can be reserved when checkout out by other patrons (2021)
- Websites that help with Readers' Advisory will be linked to on staff circulation computers to better assist patrons (2020)

Objective #2: Patrons will easily be able to find materials after selecting.

Activities:

- Library sections will be more visibly labelled (2021)
- New materials will be identified in the computer as such, so patrons can be directed to the new area rather than the general section (2021)

Objective #3: Patrons will have access to high speed internet within the library.

Activities:

- Perform regular updates 6 times each year on public desktop computers (2020)
- Provide new laptops to replace aging technology currently provided, as well as offering a public charging station. (2025)
 - Purchase 2 new public laptops or computers per year
 - Investigate grant money for a laptop charging cart
- Office computer will be replaced with a laptop in order to mobilize more easily for programs and meetings, while the current computer can be wiped and used as a public desktop (2025)

- Investigate options for faster public desktop computers, either by investing in better quality computers or software to make them last longer
- Purchase adaptability screens so that computers can be used by those with impaired vision