

DOWNINGTOWN LIBRARY COMPANY PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE 2023-2028

The Downingtown Library Company Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 will guide our efforts to create and deliver enhanced value to our patrons, donors, volunteers, and community partners. By working to achieve our goals, we can educate and empower our residents, enrich our community's quality of life and support the growth of a strong and vibrant community.

Our Vision

The Downingtown Library Company (DLC) is a welcoming center of knowledge, inspiration, resources and opportunity for all residents. The DLC contributes to a healthy, safe and economically vibrant community.

Our Mission

The mission of the DLC is to ensure that every resident of our service area has access to exceptional opportunities to read, learn, create, connect and contribute to a better quality of life.

Our Guiding Principles

ACCESS: We deliver fair and open access to all Library system resources.

COLLABORATION: We work together in partnership to achieve the best results for our Library and the Downingtown Library community.

PUBLIC SERVICE: We provide reliable and extraordinary customer service for the public, which includes all of our patrons, donors, volunteers, and community partners.

LITERACY: We believe all forms of literacy are a fundamental right that enables every person to participate fully and equitably in our community, and realize their life's potential.

RESPECT: We appreciate, and strive to respond to, the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and capabilities of our entire community regardless of ethnic origin, race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, creed, or capabilities.

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2023-2028

The Six Strategic Goals as described in this plan are: Knowledge and Inspiration, Access, High Quality Products and Positive Patron Experiences, Community Engagement, Sustainability and Plan For Growth and Building Expansion

GOAL 1: KNOWLEDGE AND INSPIRATION

The DLC will provide a center of knowledge, resources and inspiration that offers meaningful and relevant opportunities to read, learn and create.

Key Objective # 1 Select and promote relevant content in accordance with evolving usage trends.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Monitor and respond to usage data and trends.
 - Promote use of content by our community.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Content relevance as evidenced by usage statistics.
 - Responsiveness to patron interests and requests as evidenced by feedback and usage rates.
 - Increased collection usage and circulation rates.
 - Increased funding based on Libbyⁱ usage.

Key Objective #2 Build literacy skills as outlined in the PA Forward Star Programⁱⁱ to help people achieve personal, educational and economic goals.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Continue to enhance our Library's support for groups and individuals to build their basic literacy (including reading, writing, math, job application, life and digital skills).
 - Continue to enhance the digital literacy skills of all staff members so they can be competent in assisting patrons.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Increased number and diversity of program offerings to build basic, information (how to access and assess information), civil and social, health, and financial literacy.
 - Program relevancy and effective promotion as evidenced by feedback and attendance statistics.
 - Staff participation in digital literacy skills training.

Key Objective #3 In partnership with local pre-schools and other learning organizations, help children enter school ready to learn.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Maintain the activities and programs as initiated by the Family Place Grantⁱⁱⁱ.
 - Continue high-quality, relevant pre-school readiness programs.
 - Identify, develop and maintain relationships with local pre-schools and other learning organizations to promote school readiness.

- **Success Measures:**
 - Program relevance and effective promotion as evidenced by attendance statistics.
 - Survey feedback from local pre-schools and other learning organizations indicating that our Library's readiness programs complement/supplement their efforts.

Key Objective #4 Inspire lifelong learning through engaging educational programs for children, youth and adults. These programs will encourage reading enjoyment as well as develop skills to acquire information and knowledge.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Identify, develop, maintain and promote diverse and engaging program offerings for children, youth and adults.
 - Monitor and respond to program interest and attendance.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Program relevance and effective promotion as evidenced by attendance statistics.
 - Program surveys indicate that the programs reflect the community wants, needs and diversity.

Key Objective # 5 Increase access to the arts and opportunities for creativity.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Identify, develop and maintain diverse partnerships with cultural and educational groups to spur creativity in the arts.
 - Continue to provide, maintain and promote the use of Library spaces that enable individual and collaborative creative learning experiences for patrons of all ages.
 - Continue to promote our Library's cultural and creative programs and services including craft and writing workshops, author and artist events, and garden and museum passes.
 - Elicit and respond to patron requests and feedback.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Increased number and diversity of arts/creative events and participants.
 - Increased number and diversity of active partnerships with cultural and educational entities.
 - Program relevance and effective promotion as evidenced by attendance and participants' feedback.

GOAL 2: ACCESS

The DLC will enhance in-Library and online access to library programs and services and continue efforts to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Key Objective # 1 Improve the promotion of digital resources and library information available through DLC website.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Continuously enhance the DLC website and continue to update the use of social media tools to promote access to the Library's programs and services.
 - To enable accessibility for patrons with disabilities, continue efforts to ensure our Library and its website are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)^{iv} and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act^v, requiring public libraries to adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (U.S. best practices for websites).
 - Develop and maintain our communication systems to educate the public on library services and access.
 - Elicit feedback on patron satisfaction with in-Library and online library access.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Patron satisfaction with in-Library and online access as evidenced by website and social media metrics and patron feedback.
 - Effective promotion and effective access education as evidenced by program attendance as well as by website and social media metrics and patron feedback.

Key Objective # 2 Creatively use our internal and external spaces for reading, working, creating, and gathering, as well as for Library programs and community activities.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Continue efforts to ensure our library spaces are ADA and 508 compliant, to increase accessibility for patrons with disabilities.
 - Maintain the interior and exterior as flexible spaces to accommodate patron reading, working, creating, and gathering, as well as Library programs and community activities.
 - Monitor noise levels so that our Library can identify and execute solutions to address excessive noise levels.
 - Identify, execute, and maintain storage solutions.
 - Audit current technology and equipment, and identify areas for upgrading.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Ratio of library space used for patron experience versus collection storage.
 - Enhanced ADA accessibility to interior and exterior spaces.
 - Increased accessibility from all parking areas.
 - Increased use of our library and its resources by patrons with disabilities.

- Decreased concerns regarding excessive noise levels.
- Additional storage provided and maintained.

GOAL 3: HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS AND POSITIVE PATRON EXPERIENCES

The DLC will deliver high-quality programs and services to create positive experiences for the public, which includes all Library patrons, donors, volunteers and community partners.

Key Objective #1 Provide excellent service to the Public.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Make educational programs and workshops (especially those presented by the Chester County Library System (“CCLS”)) available to our Library’s staff. Facilitate staff participation.
 - Identify, acquire and implement additional resources for staff to improve their technological and customer service skills.
 - Continue to develop Staff Resource Experts in priority technological skill areas.
 - Use diverse media to increase awareness of in-library and CCLS systemwide programs, services, and collections (including the availability of museum passes, hot spots, and other items in the Library of Things).
- **Success Measures:**
 - Increased participation in CCLS workshops with evidence of application of skills learned.
 - Increased positive feedback from patrons regarding staff interface.
 - Increased public satisfaction regarding patron usage of services, collections and programs as demonstrated by usage statistics and patron surveys.

Key Objective #2 Cultivate and engage the next generation of library patrons, donors, staff and volunteers.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Continue to engage in partnership with schools and higher education institutions within the library service area.
 - Increase the diversity of programming, materials, and services, as well as Library volunteering/community service opportunities for teenage and young adult patrons.
 - Continue to engage future patrons, donors, staff and volunteers with in-house and outreach endeavors.
 - Increase social media coverage of our Library’s programs for children, teenagers and young adults.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Increased number of children, teenagers and young adults who contribute, connect and engage with our library.

- Increased number and diversity of high-quality programs, materials and services for teenagers and young adults.
- Increased number of library cardholders and active patrons.
- Increased number of next generation donors, staff and volunteers.

GOAL 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The DLC will maintain our library as a hub for community engagement and transformation.

Key Objective #1 Empower families and individuals to gain knowledge to improve their health, wellness, financial stability and civic participation.

- **Strategic Initiative:**
 - Increase partnerships with service organizations to promote access to library and community-based resources, information and support for basic, information, civic and social, health and financial literacies.
 - Brand DLC programs to align with at least one of Pennsylvania Library Association's PA Forwardⁱⁱⁱ five key literacies to increase public knowledge of the purpose of our Library's services, leading to recognition as a "STAR Library."^{vi}
- **Success Measures:**
 - Statistical data and documented survey evidence of residents utilizing library programs, materials and services that relate to improved health, wellness, financial stability, civic participation, professional skills and/or entrepreneurial activities.
 - Expanded partnerships within the community to enhance basic, information, civic and social, health, and financial literacies.
 - Achieved status as a PA Forward "STAR Library".

Key Objective #2 Maintain visibility within the community to publicize DLC services and serve community members outside of the library building.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Continue to participate in and make connections at Outreach events like municipality community days, local school events, and other community events.
 - Continue to develop and participate in Outreach to community organizations.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Documentation of continued Outreach activities to provide services to community members unable to visit the DLC.
 - Increased participation in local Outreach events like municipality community days, local school events, and other community events, as well as Outreach to community organizations.

GOAL 5: SUSTAINABILITY

The DLC will build the capacity of our public library to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Key Objective #1 Increase sources of revenue from government, corporations, and individuals to ensure our Library's long-term financial stability.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Maintain and expand relationships with municipalities and business organizations in DLC's service area.
 - Identify and pursue potential government, corporate and foundation grants.
 - Maintain and expand relationships with individual donors and sponsors.
 - Maximize the use of DLC website and social media tools to promote ongoing fundraising efforts.
 - Enhance the branding and marketing of DLC.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Balanced annual budget that includes a reserve fund for future needs.
 - Evidence of increased income as a result of government, corporate and individual donations, grants, sponsorships and support.
 - Increased connection/engagement at community events and on social media as evidenced by attendance, new library cards, donations, sponsorships, and social media statistics (views, visits, shares, likes, followers, etc.).

Key Objective #2 Strengthen the governance of the DLC.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Maintain an up-to-date Library binder of structural documents (corporate notebook).
 - Continued development, review and updating of governance policies and documents.
 - Ensure Director and all staff are up-to-date and familiar with DLC governance documents, including the current Strategic Plan.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Ongoing maintenance of Library binder (corporate notebook).
 - Director and staff have necessary knowledge and understanding of policies created by the Governance Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees as evidenced by their functioning within those guidelines.
 - Policies and governance documents are reviewed for updates, additions and amendments as needed.

Key objective #3 Strengthen the DLC Board of Trustees.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**

- Increase the number of Trustees up to the maximum permitted (19) under the DLC By-Laws.
- Increase the diversity of the Board to reflect the demographics of DLC's service area.
- Seek new Trustees who are involved in the community served by DLC.
- Utilize the **Chester County Library System Trustee Essentials** document to strengthen governance.
- Ensure all Trustees are up-to-date and familiar with DLC governance documents, including the current Strategic Plan.
- **Success Measures:**
 - An expanded and diverse Board of Trustees with ties to the community.
 - Increased number of Trustees attending CCLS governance workshops.
 - A Board of Trustees with necessary knowledge and understanding of DLC policies, governance documents and Strategic Plan.

Key Objective #4

Ensure that all new DLC employees are onboarded to maximize their integration for successful growth.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Create a system for onboarding potential new Director and other key employees including:
 - Chester County Library Services onboarding training covering CCLS resources and tools.
 - Review of critical DLC- and CCLS-related policies, governance documents and Strategic Plan.
 - Designate appropriate individuals responsible for onboarding the Director relative to Personnel, Financial and Community Interaction.
 - Designate appropriate individuals responsible for introducing Director and other key employees to representatives of CCLS and its member Libraries, community leaders, and representatives of municipalities served by DLC.
 - Establish regular meetings between the Board of Trustees and Director to:
 - Assure expectations are being met and questions/issues resolved.
 - Ensure momentum; maintain the Director's and other key employees' focus on DLC's mission and goals as well as execution of Strategic Initiatives.
- **Success Measures:**
 - The Director and other key employees have been provided the necessary resources and information to help ensure their success and long-term employment with DLC.
 - Demonstrated productive interactions and collaborations between the Director and the Board of Trustees, CCLS, representatives of municipalities served by DLC, DLC patrons and Staff.

- Observed adherence by Director and employees to DLC policies and procedures.
- Execution of Strategic Initiatives as appropriate for Director's and key employees' positions.

GOAL 6: PLAN FOR GROWTH AND BUILDING EXPANSION

The DLC will create a **Five-Year Growth & Building Expansion Plan** that addresses current limitations on space and the projected increased demand for services.

- **Strategic Initiatives:**
 - Within six months of adoption of this **DLC Strategic Plan for 2023-2028**, the Board of Trustees will establish a committee that includes the Trustees, Director, Staff, and Community to create a **Five-Year Growth & Building Expansion Plan**.
 - The committee will analyze and project:
 - Structural capabilities relative to predicted growth.
 - Staff capabilities relative to predicted growth.
 - Service capabilities relative to predicted growth.
 - Sources of funding through grants, corporate support and capital campaign.
 - The Committee will report on progress at each meeting of the Board.
 - The Committee will provide a summary of their work and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in January.
- **Success Measures:**
 - Demonstrated progress on developing the **Five-Year Growth & Building Expansion Plan**.
 - Identified sources of funding to implement plans for growth.

Endnotes:

i. **Libby:** The Chester County Library System's collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks.

ii **PA Forward 5 Literacies:** "This initiative redefines the library's role in our Commonwealth within the context of five essential literacies that Pennsylvanians must attain in order to succeed as citizens, parents, students, employers, employees, and consumers." The 5 literacies are basic, information, civic and social, health, and financial.

From <http://www.paforward.org/Portals/0/Docs/The%20Five%20Literacies.pdf>

iii **Family Place Grant:** "Family Place builds on the knowledge that good healthy early learning, parental involvement and supportive communities play a critical role in a young child's growth and development. The overall goal of Family Place Libraries is to develop and institutionalize a family friendly environment by transforming libraries into community centers for literacy, early childhood development, parent education and engagement, family support and community information."

From <https://www.familyplacelibraries.org/what-family-place-library>

iv Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): “Disability rights are civil rights. From voting to parking, the ADA is a law that protects people with disabilities in many areas of public life.”

From <https://www.ada.gov>

v Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act: “Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended in 1998, is a federal law that requires agencies to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to electronic information and data comparable to those who do not have disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency.”

From <https://www.regulations.gov/accessibility>

vi STAR Library: “The PA Forward Star Library Program showcases and recognizes libraries that incorporate PA Forward and the **five key literacies** into their programming activities, displays and events. The program celebrates the success of PA Forward libraries and their abilities to create new partnerships, develop broader community support, and ultimately establish influence and credibility as a unified, collective, powerful voice for the benefit of all libraries.”

From <https://www.palibraries.org/members/group.aspx?id=11729>

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