



# **Strategic Plan**

## **FY2018-2021**

## **Our Strategic Aspiration**

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**Cuyahoga Falls Library is an experience and a destination.**

Cuyahoga Falls Library embraces our unique identity as the community leader in providing innovative services and learning opportunities to residents of all ages. Cuyahoga Falls Library is a place that represents innovation, teamwork, community engagement and customer service excellence. The community recognizes that free library service is essential. We will be the model for high quality library services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, strengthening the cultural, civic, economic and social fabric of our community.

## **Our Mission**

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Cuyahoga Falls Library connects people with the world of ideas, information, and imagination, to inspire, enrich, and support our community.

## **Our Vision**

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Cuyahoga Falls Library is exciting, innovative, and fun – where anything is possible.

## **Our Passion**

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We love the library, we love Cuyahoga Falls, we love knowing the work we do each day impacts and enriches the community.

## Our Values

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### **Community**

The library builds community by connecting people, organizations and agencies with ideas and each other. We build strategic relationships and community partnerships to maximize resources and services. We are “the place” for the community to satisfy its curiosity, discover ideas, experience stories.

### **Customer service**

The community views the library as a transparent, responsive organization focused on customer needs and convenience. The library creates standout user experiences. We create and maintain a culture of excellence by supporting and inspiring our staff, Board of Trustees, Friends, and volunteers. We offer something of value for everyone.

### **Lifelong Learning**

The library elevates and expands user experiences, programs, products and services to support 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. We promote learning and literacy in all forms by offering classes, workshops, seminars and events for all ages that reflect the diverse needs and interests of the community and by adapting to emerging technologies. We support the entrepreneurial spirit of the community.

### **Inclusive**

We relish the library’s role as a convener, collaborator and village green. We foster community inclusion by offering equal access to information and technology making rich cultural and intellectual resources available to all for personal, educational, career and economic achievement.

## Our Future: Strategic Goals

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- 1. Expand avenues of lifelong learning for all ages.**
- 2. Embrace customer-centered service excellence.**
- 3. Maximize physical and digital accessibility and services.**
- 4. Promote continuous organizational development.**

## Introduction

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On August 28, 2017 the Cuyahoga Falls Library implemented its first strategic planning process in order to prepare for its future. Cuyahoga Falls Library has a long tradition of connecting people to resources that support learning, entertainment and enrichment. The new strategic plan reaffirms the library's commitment to lifelong learning with increased emphasis on customer-centered excellence and accessibility for all. The plan also stresses the importance of continuous organizational development fully embracing 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies and implementing 21<sup>st</sup> century best practices.

The strategic plan is organized around four strategic goals, each supported by strategic objectives and action items. The plan serves as a guide for decision-making and the effective allocation of resources. Above all, the plan reinforces the Cuyahoga Falls Library's commitment to its values, vision and mission, creating an environment in which anything is possible.

### The Process

The Cuyahoga Falls Library gathered input from the community through an online survey (318 responses) and through the facilitation of one community stakeholder focus group (4 attendees). In addition, staff input was gathered via an online survey (36 responses).

The information acquired from the surveys and focus group was shared with the Board of Trustees and the library's management team. Feedback from the surveys and Focus Group indicated the Cuyahoga Falls Library is valued for its role as a place for education and information in support of lifelong learning, and as a provider of vital tools and services such as computers, scanners and public awareness programs. Respondents spoke highly of the use of library meeting rooms and the visual appearance of the building. Some respondents recommended the need for more services and programming for all ages, but especially for those in the 20-30 year old range and those 55 years and older.

During a half-day retreat in November 2017 the Board of Trustees reviewed and revised the current mission statement and created a new vision statement and a set of shared values. In addition, the Board of Trustees utilized the knowledge gained from the surveys and focus group in the context of a SWOTA (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Aspirations) analysis which was essential to the creation of the new strategic goals.

The Board of Trustees' retreat was followed by two All-Staff Planning Sessions, each comprised of half of the staff. The staff worked in small groups to consider ideas around the themes of relevancy, healthy solutions, diversity and inclusivity and failure and innovation. Ideas were compiled and provided to the Library Leadership Team. A four- hour Library Leadership Team retreat was then held to consider the strategic goals through five library-specific perspectives (Customer, Staff, Internal Processes, Financial Resources, and Non-financial Resources), thus resulting in objectives to be employed in achieving the stated goals. The information from that retreat was compiled together with the ideas generated in the All-Staff Planning Sessions and used by the Library Leadership Team and staff to create the action steps identified in this plan.

The themes from the surveys are carried throughout the plan and are supported by objectives and action steps that propel the library into the future.

## Planning Team

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### ***Board of Trustees***

Wes Johnston, *President*  
Mike Dunton, *Vice President*  
Rick Rubin, *Secretary*  
Deborah Ziccardi, *Treasurer*  
Cheryl Bruce  
Robert Heydorn  
Sandra Krueger  
William Maki  
Tammy Richardson  
Richard Smith  
Don Tolliver

### ***Administration***

Valerie Kocin, *Director*  
Susan Finley, *Fiscal Officer*

***Strategic Planning Facilitator:*** Northeast Ohio Regional Library System

## Strategic Goal 1

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### **Expand avenues of lifelong learning for all ages.**

*Outcome: Community members have materials, programs and services that meet their informational, educational, cultural and lifelong learning needs.*

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### **Strategic Objectives and Action Items**

#### **1. Identify and respond to community needs, interests, and preferred modes of delivery for lifelong learning.**

- ❖ Survey patrons, schools and stakeholders about lifelong learning needs and preferences, and current trends of interest.
- ❖ Use evaluations and feedback to measure outcomes, effectiveness and relevancy of programs and assure that all ages and diverse needs and interests within the community are represented.
- ❖ Offer programs without social, economic and educational barriers and at days, times, locations and languages as indicated through evaluations and feedback.
- ❖ Experiment with different delivery methods including in-person, online, and off-site.

#### **2. Expand the library's infrastructure in support of lifelong learning.**

- ❖ Offer a mix of programs conducted by staff, paid presenters and volunteers.
- ❖ Continue to cultivate partnerships with schools, businesses and other non-profit organizations.
- ❖ Examine the need for new hardware, software or equipment to support programming.
- ❖ Share, expand and market website resources.
- ❖ Build staff capacity by identifying and communicating best practices and trends.

#### **3. Invest in a physical environment conducive to lifelong learning.**

- ❖ Identify and modify existing library spaces keeping in mind staffing, content, training, equipment and expansion for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacies (technology, health, finance, ESOL, literacy).
- ❖ Assure Children's and Teen areas are separate, safe and secure.

## Strategic Goal 2

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### **Embrace customer-centered service excellence.**

*Outcome: The community views the library as a transparent, responsive organization focused on customer needs and convenience.*

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### **Strategic Objectives and Action Items**

#### **1. Develop a culture committed to teamwork focused on the customer.**

- ❖ Establish customer service values and customer engagement practices to ensure consistent, high quality service. Build new service models and excellent processes.
- ❖ Continually explore new customer conveniences such as wireless printing and auto-renewals.
- ❖ Align staff size, skills and scheduling to support customer service priorities.
- ❖ Foster teamwork by cross training, building respect and collaboration, cooperation and compromise.

#### **2. Heighten customer-centered service with excellent external communication.**

- ❖ Elevate marketing presence with special attention to web presence, broader social media reach and refreshed digital displays.
- ❖ Seek and build strategic partnerships to strengthen advocacy and create a successful and sustainable organization.

## Strategic Goal 3

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### **Maximize physical and digital accessibility and services.**

*Outcome: We are relentless in our efforts to better understand our users. We adapt to the community's changing facilities and technology needs. Non-English speakers and persons with disabilities can use our library services. We are free and open to all. We treat everyone with respect and compassion. We track technology trends that will impact future library services.*

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### **Strategic Objectives and Action Items**

#### **1. Inspire a physical and digital perception of the library as welcoming, accepting and innovative.**

- ❖ Offer creative “experience spaces” by maintaining up-to-date, pleasant, safe and secure, building, grounds, parking lot, equipment and customer service areas.
- ❖ Increase training for customers by using library technology and makerspace equipment, computers, webpage, and mobile app.

#### **2. Reduce barriers to access.**

- ❖ Train and empower staff in proactive problem solving to resolve problems and minimize inconvenience.
- ❖ Balance human engagement with technology in customer interactions.

#### **3. Make accessibility the priority.**

- ❖ Provide outreach services to individuals and groups that cannot get to the library.
- ❖ Eliminate cultural and physical/ADA barriers with welcoming attitude, effective way- finding signage and appropriate equipment.
- ❖ Develop user friendly software, procedures and policies that ensure access.

## Strategic Goal 4

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### **Promote continuous organizational development.**

*Outcome: We want our customers to perceive our librarians and staff as enthusiastic, highly-skilled and committed to satisfying their needs.*

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### **Strategic Objectives and Action Items**

#### **1. Become a culture of continuous training and professional development.**

- ❖ Hire enthusiastic, skilled and innovative staff and ensure all staff members understand the Library's mission, shared values, policies and procedures through new employee orientation and ongoing, planned staff training.
- ❖ Staff members attain OLC core competency baseline skills for each position and maintain a level of technical expertise, education and training necessary to use effectively all library resources.

#### **2. Encourage creativity and innovation.**

- ❖ Seek operational efficiencies to reduce costs without negatively impacting services.
- ❖ Create a culture of accountability and trust; recognize purposeful innovation and risk taking and celebrate staff accomplishments.
- ❖ Cultivate and model leadership at every level of the organization.