Chester County Commissioners

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Christopher M. Fiorentino, Earl Baker
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The Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed during the spring and summer of 2009. Library Consultant Gail Griffith ably guided the Steering Committee through the extensive planning process. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee was assisted by other groups within the library system and had input from all library staff. The residents of Chester County contributed to the process through a variety of focus groups and a two-day Search Conference retreat. The process included:

- Internal examinations of the system’s strengths and weaknesses through the use of an online survey and focus groups of library staff from across the county.
- External examinations of the library system using focus groups of targeted populations: teens (digital natives), educators, local government representatives, library users, and business professionals.
- The compiled results of the surveys and focus groups became the raw material to be processed in the Search Conference retreat, a gathering of community leaders from all walks of life.
- A separate survey, completed by library staff, identified the values of the organization as a whole.

One of the clearest messages from the strategic planning process is that technology and changing lifestyles have drastically affected the way library users interact with the library and vice versa. One underlying theme that threads through the Plan that follows is the need for the system to continually adjust to the changing needs of the community, constantly analyzing our services and the needs of our existing and potential users.

Value – We provide equal and unfettered access to all regardless of individual abilities or differences.
Members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Earl Baker, CCLS Library Board President
Jeanne Concitis, CCLS Administrative Assistant
Marguerite Dube, Chester County Library Director
Dr. Christopher M. Fiorentino, CCLS Board Member
Buck Jones, CCLS Board Member
Dennis Leeper, System Advisory Committee Representative
Agatha Lyons, CCLS District Consultant
Ken Pienkos, Oxford Library Director
Alan Silverman, Easttown Library Director
John C. Venditta, CCLS Executive Director
Peggy Wadsworth, CCLS Staff Development Coordinator
JoAnn Weinberger, CCLS Board Member
Gail Griffith, Consultant

Value - We provide targeted services for customers of different ages.
Our Vision
The Chester County Library System provides materials and information for life, work and pleasure.

To make this vision come to life, CCLS has five primary goals during this planning period:
1. Increase convenience for library customers.
2. Technology is an essential component of the services the System provides.
3. Provide state of the art community spaces that attract residents to use the library’s resources.
4. Engage in community outreach so that the county’s diverse population knows what the library can provide for them.
5. Strengthen organizational competencies so that excellent library services are sustainable.

Values – Our collections, programs, and services are innovative and creative.
Increase convenience for library customers

Library customers are served by staff who are knowledgeable, friendly, and proactive.

- Residents of Chester County will receive outstanding customer service, delivered by knowledgeable, friendly and professional staff who continually make library services easier and more convenient to use.

- Library customers will use technologies and services designed to increase their convenience in finding and obtaining the resources they want.

- Library customers will report that their library experiences throughout Chester County are consistent.

Value -
We respond quickly to the requests and concerns of all our customers—both internal and external

Technology is an essential component of the services the System provides

Residents of Chester County will have library experiences that are enhanced by technology.

- The library’s software, hardware, and network capabilities will meet the needs of customers and staff.

- Library customers will be served by staff who can assist them to understand and use emerging technologies

- Staff will increasingly use technologies to improve the library’s productivity and effectiveness.
Provide state of the art community spaces that attract residents to use the library’s resources

Residents of Chester County will find inviting physical and virtual environments that support both personal enrichment and the development of community connections for a multigenerational and multicultural population.

- Library customers will experience the library as a comfortable place to engage in community interaction. (Physical)

- Chester County residents will attend on-site programs, meetings, and community gatherings sponsored by the library and its partners.

- Library customers will report they are very satisfied with the library's web site and catalog. (Virtual)

Engage in community outreach so that the county’s diverse population knows what the library can provide for them

Residents of Chester County will find that the library meets the needs of the diverse population of Chester County.

- Members of targeted groups will learn about and use library resources to support their learning and recreational needs.

Value -

We design policies, programs and services based on what residents actually want and need rather than on staff or library competencies or convenience.
Strengthen organizational competencies so that excellent library services are sustainable

Residents of Chester County will be served by a library system that can garner adequate, sustainable funding over the life of the plan.

- Increase the amount of funding for core library services available through public sources.
- Increase the amount of funding for enhancing library services available through private sources.

Residents of Chester County will be served by a library system with the organizational competencies needed to meet the library system's goals.

- Partnerships and Alliances: CCLS establishes and extends reciprocal and sustainable alliances and partnerships to serve the libraries’ respective communities. Such relationships are key to funding, programming, serving diverse groups within the community, serving students, etc.
- Marketing and Visibility: Staff at all levels are proficient at telling the library’s story so that residents know what the library has to offer them.

Value -

We continuously assess the changing requirements of the community and respond with innovative approaches supported by current technology.
The CCLS Environment

Demographics

Founded in 1682, Chester County covers 760 Square miles of Pennsylvania. The county is made up of 15 boroughs, 57 townships, 1 city and 14 school districts. In 2000, Chester County's population was 433,512. 2010 estimates are 505,095, a ten-year growth rate of 16.5%. The County growth rate is projected to eventually slow to a rate of 6.3 percent between 2010 and 2020. Despite the slowing growth rate, the projected change in the population is an additional 80,000 residents between 1995 and 2020.

There are 25,541 students enrolled in six higher education facilities in the county. In the 2007 American Community Survey, Chester County had the second most educated population among all Pennsylvania counties.

The Chester County Library System is a federated system made up of 18 library facilities and is overseen by an appointed Board of Directors. The Chester County Library, a county-owned institution with one branch, serves as the system headquarters and is also designated as the District Center for a state-defined library district congruent with the county borders.

System member libraries maintain their own Boards of Trustees and in many cases receive direct funding from the municipalities in their service area.

Value -
Inclusion, multiculturalism, and engagement are hallmarks of the library’s collections, programs, and services.
CCLS Funding

CCLS member libraries receive funding from a variety of sources. In 2008 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provided $3.4 million that was processed through the System/District Headquarters using a formula created by the member libraries. The County of Chester funded member libraries by way of $5.65 million for the Chester County Library, the Henrietta Hankin Library and support for the District Center, and $851,000 distributed directly to the 16 member libraries. Total municipal funding for the member libraries was $2.76 million and the individual libraries raised $2.5 million from other sources.

Successes for 2008

- **1,886,224 visits**
- **242,298 registered users**
- **244 full-time-equivalents**
- **3,740,930 items checked out**
- **277 computers**
- **379,384 in-house computer usage**
- **175,000 reference requests**
- **8,300 programs**
- **31,215 program attendees**
- **13,443 children in summer reading clubs**
- **897 hours/week**
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