

Lincolnwood Public Library District

# Strategic Plan

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021

DRAFT v2.0

For Public Comment

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## Introduction

Strategic planning sets priorities, focuses energy and resources, ensures that we are working toward common goals, establishes agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assesses and adjusts the library's direction in response to a changing environment.

The previous strategic plan (FY13-FY17) addressed some very large improvements to the library, bringing our facility and services up to typical levels of service as compared to other north suburban Chicago libraries. The library is now at a new baseline, and is able to address forward-thinking initiatives. This plan focuses heavily on increased engagement with members of the community, with an emphasis on creativity and learning.

This strategic plan is meant to be used as a roadmap for meaningful change, helping LPLD continue to be a modern, thriving, and essential part of the Lincolnwood community.

## Background

The library last completed a full strategic planning process in 2012. That plan, effective from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016, was reviewed and extended through June 30, 2017. After the completion of the previous plan, there was a one-year strategic pause as the facility renovation was completed.

In August 2017, the library kicked off a new planning process. Library Director Su Bochenski facilitated the process, adapted from "Strategic Planning for Results" by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association. This plan will be effective from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021 (FY19 – FY21), and was approved by the library Board of Trustees in xxx 2018.

## Approach to Planning

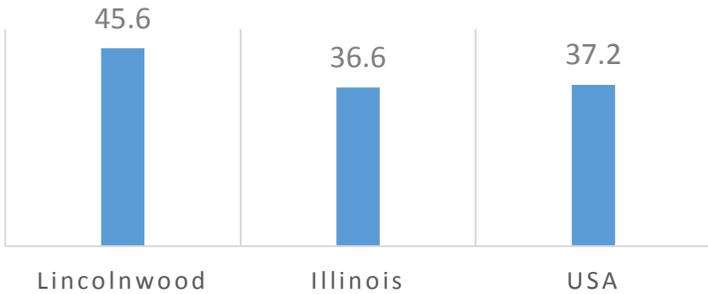
To ensure a thorough and positive planning experience, the library engaged in a collaborative, in-depth data gathering process with the community, community leaders, library Board, and library staff. These activities included:

- Community Stakeholders focus group to create a SWOT analysis, identify community needs, and determine how the library might meet these needs.
- Two Community Conversation meetings for residents to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the library and their vision of the ideal library for Lincolnwood.
- Board of Trustees input session to gain their perspective on the community's strengths and weaknesses and how they envision the ideal library for Lincolnwood.
- All-staff meeting to create a SWOT analysis and generate ideas for the ideal Lincolnwood community and library.
- Survey mailed to all Lincolnwood households (also available online), to determine the community's usage and perceptions of the library and its interest in potential new services. The completed survey sample was 704 respondents, which is about 15% of residential households.

## Community Profile<sup>1</sup>

There has not been a new census since the completion of the last strategic plan, so the community profile remains the same as in 2013. The next census should occur in 2020, and the next strategic plan should evaluate the new data as part of preparing the plan.

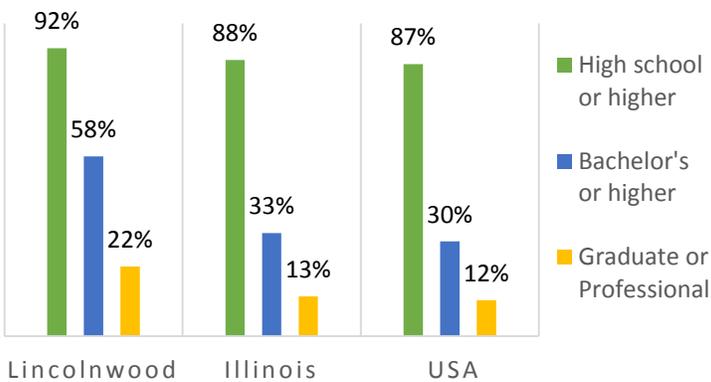
**MEDIAN AGE**



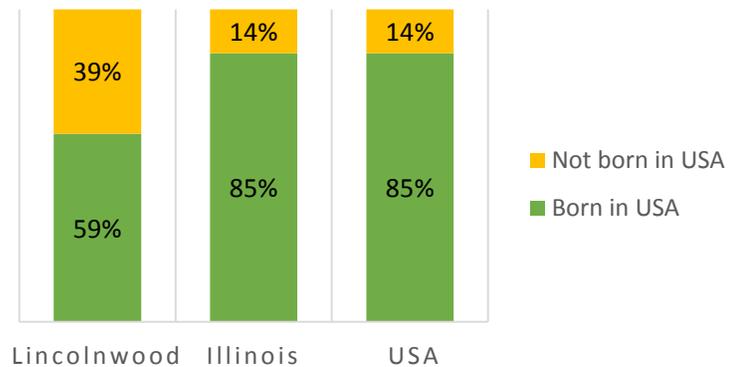
**MEDIAN INCOME**



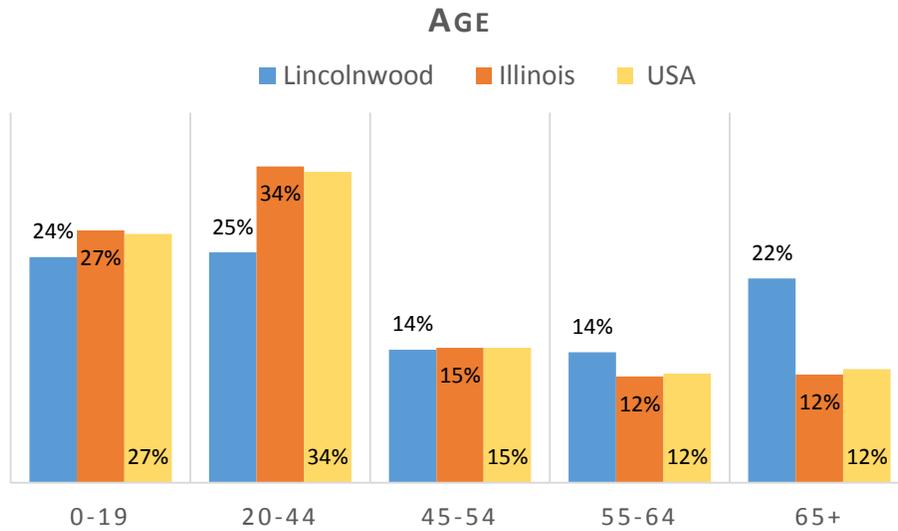
**EDUCATION LEVEL**



**DIVERSITY**



<sup>1</sup> American Fact Finder, <https://factfinder.census.gov/>. Accessed 3/15/2018.



## Assessment of the Library

The vast majority of participants have a Lincolnwood Library card, and are frequent users of the library. Overall, the opinion of the library is extremely positive, with over 90% of respondents stating they either “loved” or “liked” the library.

The top strengths of the library are the access to materials and information, friendly and helpful staff, and the renovated building for its design and cleanliness. A consistent theme throughout the data gathered is that respondents want “more.” More books, more movies, more downloadable materials, more programs, more space, more open hours, and more parking. This is heartening to hear, because it means we provide services they like and want to use more. However, additional funds to provide more staff, materials, and space are limited, and so we have to be creative with our strategies and solutions.

In regard to future services at the library, there is broad interest in services supporting young children, lifelong learning opportunities, creative outlets, and meaningfully engaging with other community members.

## Budget and Revenue

The library’s fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. The FY17-18 budgeted operating revenue is \$2.5M. Local property taxes account for approximately 99% of the budget. The balance comes from grants, gifts, and income generated by fines, copy machines, and bank interest. Although overwhelmingly dependent on local property taxes for its fiscal well being, the library is responsible for only a small percentage of residents’ annual property tax bills (4.6%).

## Initiatives, Goals, Activities, and Impact

The strategic initiatives, goals, activities and impact are the outcome of the data-gathering process, and comprise the core of the strategic plan.

### Strategic Initiatives

The strategic initiatives guide our actions in allocating financial resources and staff time. They do not eliminate efforts in other areas, but they receive the most focused attention of all the activities we undertake for the next three years. These initiatives are based on the data gathered through the focus groups, input sessions, and community survey.

- A. Lifelong Learning
- B. Early Childhood Learning
- C. Community Engagement
- D. Express Creativity

### Goals

Goals are designed to focus on what the community receives, and not on the resources the library needs to deliver the service. Goals include the identity of the target user, and how that user will benefit from the services identified.

### Potential Activities

Potential activities are meant to illustrate possible actions the library will complete in order to meet the goals of the plan. These potential activities are not intended to be absolute or inclusive, but rather realistic suggestions that reflect the current library environment. As the environment changes, and more information is discovered during the research phase of each activity, changes are possible. The aim of the activities is to meet the identified goals. All potential activities include research, evaluation, and making recommendations prior to implementation.

### Impact

Results, or impact, for patron-facing activities will be measured by using a series of surveys and a process for measuring and analyzing outcomes, provided through the Project Outcome toolkit (<https://www.projectoutcome.org/>). While the library already collects statistics about our programs and services, what is lacking is the data to indicate the benefits we are providing the community. Measuring outcomes will help us answer the question, "What good did we do?" An outcome is a specific benefit that results from a library program or service. Outcomes can be quantitative or qualitative, and are often expressed as changes that individuals perceive in themselves. Using the Project Outcome method will help us measure four key patron outcomes (knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness) in our four strategic initiatives.

There are a few goals that will still be measured by traditional statistics, and those are included in the impact section of each goal.

## Strategic Initiative A: Lifelong Learning

**Goal A1:** Residents will have the opportunities they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

### Potential Activities

- A. Create programs, events, or clubs on a variety of topics of interest to various age groups in the community, designed to “satisfy curiosity,” and “learn life skills.”
- B. Create “work skills” programs that support local small business owners, professionals, and young residents entering the workforce.
- C. Create services and programs to satisfy the community’s desire for author visits.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Digital Learning and Education/Lifelong Learning Project Outcome surveys.

**Goal A2:** Residents will have the resources they need to support their interests and hobbies.

### A. Potential Activities

- B. Analyze and update collections, focusing on non-fiction, to ensure residents have access to materials that support their interests and hobbies.
- C. Create circulating “special collections” to respond to resident’s leisure time needs. This could include a physical “library of things,” individual “hobby kits,” technology devices, or a “human library.”

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Digital Learning and Education/Lifelong Learning Project Outcome surveys.

## Strategic Initiative B: Early Childhood Learning

**Goal B1:** Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to talk, sing, read, write, play, and listen.

### Potential Activities

- A. Expand storytime programs to meet the needs of the residents, including content, frequency, levels, and program facilitators.
- B. Establish a reading program for 0-5 year old children that fosters the skills and abilities young children need to become successful readers and writers.
- C. Create intergenerational activities and programs designed to provide learning opportunities between young children and other generations.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Early Childhood Literacy Project Outcome survey.

**Goal B2:** Parents of children from birth to five will have access to materials, and programs designed to provide early childhood literacy/development learning concepts and practices.

### Potential Activities

- A. Improve our parenting materials, including content and location of materials.
- B. Provide a series of programs targeted to parents of young children to provide early childhood learning/development information and implementation techniques.
- C. Provide documents, information, and materials for parents to take home to support their efforts at early childhood learning.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Early Childhood Literacy Project Outcome survey.

## Strategic Initiative C: Community Engagement

**Goal C1:** Residents will have the opportunities they need to become involved in the library in ways that positively affect their well-being.

### Potential Activities

- A. Conduct a library card campaign designed to put Lincolnwood Library cards into the hands of as many residents as possible.
- B. Create a mini-orientation for new and existing resident cardholders, designed to highlight library services, programs, and materials.
- C. Evaluate current library policies to identify and remove barriers to library usage, which could include removing expiration dates on library cards and removing fines.
- D. Improve our outreach services, which could include delivery for homebound residents, pre-schools, and senior living facilities, or other identified audiences.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Civic/Community Engagement Project Outcome survey.

**Goal C2:** Residents will have opportunities to engage meaningfully with individuals in the Lincolnwood community.

### Potential Activities

- A. Create a local oral history project (modeled after StoryCorps) that allows Lincolnwood residents to share their life stories. Evaluate opportunities for in-person and future access of the stories.
- B. Create partnerships with community organizations that traditionally have not engaged with the library, focusing on providing library services to these slices of the community.
- C. Create opportunities for residents with shared interests to socialize, share experiences, learn, explore, and discuss.
- D. Create a community-wide reading event such as “One Book, One Village.”

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Education/Lifelong Learning and Civic/Community Engagement Project Outcome surveys.

**Goal C3:** Residents will have the information they need to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to participate fully in community decision making.

**Potential Activities**

1. Provide regular voter registration opportunities, serve as a polling place for elections, and encourage residents to vote.
2. Host open forums with elected officials (local, state, and federal) and make the discussions available as downloadable digital material.
3. Create opportunities for adults, teens, and children to learn their rights and responsibilities as a resident of Lincolnwood, and how to interact with public officials regarding issues that matter to them.

**Impact**

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Education/Lifelong Learning and Civic/Community Engagement Project Outcome surveys.

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## Strategic Initiative D: Express Creativity

**Goal D1:** Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating physical content.

### Potential Activities

- A. Provide opportunities and support for the “maker” culture, which could include a 3D printer and other equipment and supplies.
- B. Provide programs, events, or other resources and materials to allow residents to create and display original works, such as art, writing, music.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Education/Lifelong Learning Project Outcome surveys.

**Goal D2:** Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating digital content.

### Potential Activities

- A. Provide circulating equipment to residents to support the creation of original digital content and supplement the Digital Media Lab resources.
- B. Provide programs, events, or other resources and materials to allow residents to create and share original digital content.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Digital Learning and Education/Lifelong Learning Project Outcome surveys.

**Goal D3:** Residents of all ages will have access to temporary or permanent public art at the library to engage the senses, interact with their neighbors, and spark discussion.

### Potential Activities

- A. Produce an event that transforms the library into a temporary art installation that allows participation from all members of the community.
- B. Evaluate opportunities for temporary or permanent indoor or outdoor public art on the library site or within Lincolnwood.

### Impact

- Measure knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness using the Education/Lifelong Learning and Civic/Community Engagement Project Outcome surveys.

## Organizational Competencies

Even the best-run libraries may have challenges in certain operational areas, and these can make it difficult to provide services regardless of the library's priorities. Organizational competencies are what the library must do in order to improve the ability to provide the desired services articulated in the goals, and are meant to increase the library's effectiveness and efficiency. Several organizational competencies were selected for inclusion in the plan based on the strategic goals identified and management's understanding of the current library environment.

## Training and Staff Development

1. Professional Development for Board and Staff
  - a. Provide opportunities for Trustees and staff to participate in training that supports the initiatives in this plan, as well as general library skills training.
  - b. Provide opportunities for staff to learn specific early childhood development information in support of the "Early Childhood Learning" initiative.
  - c. Provide intermediate to advanced level training for staff on all hardware and software in the Digital Media Lab.

## Policies

1. Evaluate, make recommendations, and update the library's policies to support strategic initiatives.

## External Partnerships

1. Explore collaborating with local colleges and universities for the purpose of creating and maintaining practicums or internships.
2. Explore opportunities for volunteers, at the library or in the community, possibly partnering with other agencies.

## Operational Efficiencies

1. Research and make recommendations on creating a new website and other virtual resources that are up to date and easy to use.

## Grants

1. Research and apply for appropriate grants to support the strategic initiatives.

## Organizational Structure

1. Evaluate current staffing model and make recommendations to provide increased Early Childhood Learning support and activities.

## Evaluation Process

This plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to changes in the economic, demographic or political climate. The strategic initiatives and goals are broad enough to allow for necessary modifications to the activities that are carried out. All of the activities are defined as “potential” in order to allow changes to the plan as needed. Library management will work closely with the Board of Trustees prior to finalizing and implementing all activities over the next three years.

Reporting progress toward meeting the goals should be a regular part of library Board meetings. In order to aid this progress, an implementation plan will be utilized. The implementation plan is the document that will be regularly updated to allow for changes in the potential activities and timeline.

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