



2020-2024 ACLA STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

We envision a healthy, engaged, and thriving community supported by libraries that welcome, inspire, education, and provide equal opportunities to all residents of Allegheny County.

MISSION

As a federated library system, ACLA provides and promotes the highest quality public library service possible for all residents of Allegheny County through collaboration, cooperation, and coordination.

CORE VALUES

- **Visionary Leadership:** We encourage visionary leadership committed to excellence, sustainability, and innovation.
- **Ethical Stewardship:** We promote ethical stewardship of both current and future resources.
- **Openness and Collaboration:** We promote a free and open exchange of information and active collaboration.
- **Respect:** We respect diversity of member library opinions and community needs.
- **Diversity:** We encourage diversity by recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of every individual.
- **Inclusion:** We foster environments in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and are empowered to contribute.
- **Equity:** We are committed to providing access, opportunity, and advancement by taking into account and recognizing that some groups were (and some continue to be) disadvantaged in accessing opportunities for advancement in society.

FOCUS

Our focus is the community we serve: the residents of Allegheny County and the libraries we represent.

- *We believe in meeting the community where it is, understanding its needs and collaborating on real solutions.*

- *We hold that the best solutions maximize internal resources and leverage the collective resources of external partners.*
- *We pursue possibilities rather than settle for status quo.*
- *We provide tools to support success.*

DIRECTION / PRIMARY GOALS

- I. **Promote the value of library service**
We actively promote the value of public library service to stakeholders and funders; we provide tools and information for libraries to advocate effectively; we coordinate communications and promote broad awareness of library service.

- II. **Strengthen library boards and staff**
We design and coordinate professional development opportunities for library staff and boards to encourage continual learning and best practice. We consult with library leadership about governance, resource development, and library operations. We secure and distribute public and private funds that further the mission of the system and our member libraries.

- III. **Support collaboration and resource sharing**
We provide administrative support services and leverage the strength of the consortium to benefit member libraries, allowing them to focus local resources on direct public service. We support shared services and collaboration among libraries to improve the patron experience countywide.

The success of ACLA, operating as a federated library system, is dependent upon the work of the System Board and the System staff as well as the reciprocal cooperation of the System Members. The plan, while outlining the work of the System Board and Staff, also sets Member Library expectations to help ensure successful outcomes. The Member Library Expectations reflect the general obligations established by the Member Library Agreement and/or the System Standards and an understanding that the Member Libraries will support the overall work of the System.

I. Promote the Value of Library Service

ADVOCACY:

- Increase focus on supporting libraries in successful local municipal advocacy.
 - ✓ Work with member libraries to engage more board members and Friends in advocacy efforts. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Develop tip sheets based on best practice for local library advocacy work. (2021)

- ✓ Develop member library profile sheets (incorporating local data, local stories, etc.). (2021)
 - ✓ Provide general talking points. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Develop and implement plan based on findings of Underfunding Municipalities Task Force. (2020-2022)
- Support libraries in community engagement work. (2020-2024)
- Continue building relationships with State and County legislators and Governor’s office. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Coordinate sharing of information with district offices concerning constituent libraries.
 - ✓ Identify opportunities to connect these legislators with constituent libraries.
- Track policy and funding issues at national level that might affect libraries.
 - ✓ Provide updates and calls to action to member libraries.
- Create value or ACLA services metrics for local libraries to use with municipal funders. (2021)
- Continue strengthening the relationship with the Allegheny Regional Asset District.
 - ✓ Work to educate the ARAD Board Members, Library Committee, and staff of the full cost of countywide library service obligations.
 - ✓ Celebrate and share the accomplishments of our 46 unique member libraries.
 - ✓ Work with RAD to clearly understand and implement its goals for library service and equity in Allegheny County.

Outcome: *Libraries will merit continued recognition as essential community partners. Funders will understand the value libraries provide to the community and the cost of creating that value.*

Member Library Expectation*: *Create and implement an annual plan for engaging with municipal stakeholders.*

Measure: *Survey of Members and review of engagement work.*

**From the System Standards: Governance requirement: “Meet a minimum of once annually with local funding bodies.”*

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- Develop high-level promotional pieces for local publication highlighting library services/resources. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Determine placement options both physical and virtual.
- Increase social media connections between library stakeholders and member libraries (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Use library stories gathered.
 - ✓ Feature stakeholders and community partners.
 - ✓ Create messaging that can be shared.

- Continue to promote countywide incentives. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Increase public awareness around Love Your Library campaign, Summer Learning, Children’s Choice.
 - ✓ Add Love Your E-Library campaign (2021)
- Improve access to key information and documents through the wiki, website, SharePoint or other resources. (2021-2022)

Outcome: *Connections with the public around the value of libraries will increase.*

Member Library Expectation*: *Help spread the word about the value of libraries through social media and other channels.*

Measure: *Tracking of public relations efforts and reach, participation by libraries in countywide initiatives, and LAC survey.*

*From the **Member Library Agreement:** *“WHEREAS, the Association and the Member Library desire to assist in the growth, improvement, and development of public library services...” the Library will “Cooperate with the Association in providing information that will further the development and improvement of public library services throughout Allegheny County.”*

II. Strengthen Library Boards and Staff

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Build defined on-boarding process for new directors.
 - ✓ Design orientation pathway incorporating key agencies (e.g., District Services, eiNetwork). (2020-2021)
 - ✓ Help identify and support mentors. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Convene informal discussions for new directors to ask / share / learn. (2020-2024)
- Support local library trustees in best board practice.
 - ✓ Design a quarterly board “curriculum” – focusing on key topics, supplying tools and resources for individual boards to access. (2021)
 - ✓ Create targeted training for library boards (e.g., Board Services 101, What Makes an Effective Board, Implementing Compensation Systems, Creating Succession Plans, etc.). (2020-2024)
 - ✓ Identify on-demand video training options. (2021-2022)
- Assist libraries in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work.
 - ✓ Follow-up on DEI action plans. (2021)
 - ✓ Provide training in specific DEI areas. (2020-2024)

- ✓ Build network (talent bank) for board recruitment to help increase diversity on local boards, identifying at least 20 candidates in first year of implementation. (2020-2021)
- ✓ Identify ways for libraries to increase diversity among their staff to better reflect the communities they serve. (2020-2021)
- Provide training to youth services personnel.
 - ✓ Summer learning best practice. (2020-2024)
 - ✓ STEM/STEAM in programming.
 - ✓ Maker.
 - ✓ Outreach.
 - ✓ Online programming (2020-2021)

Outcome: *Expertise at the Board, staff, and leadership levels will increase.*

Member Library Expectation*: *Meet standards for staff continuing education. Share opportunities with staff and Board members and encourage attendance. Increase diversity on boards and staffs.*

Measure: *Program evaluations and year-end surveys. Data on BIPOC representation on boards and staffs.*

***From the Member Library Agreement:** *“Achieve and maintain standards as established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”* From the **System Standards:** *“Every Member Library will operate in compliance with standards as may be established by Commonwealth Libraries.”*

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:

- Identify sponsor(s) for countywide summer learning program. (2023-2024)
- Support libraries interested in exploring referenda (with EveryLibrary.org). (2022-2024)
- Secure grants for countywide initiatives that build library capacity or support library services, programming, and outreach.
- Continue to assist in coordination of Love Your Library campaign. (2020-2024)
- Identify and/or provide opportunities for increasing local library fundraising expertise (workshops, share & learn sessions, how to engage Friends effectively, etc.). (2020-2024)

Outcome: *Libraries will be better resourced to accomplish their goals.*

Member Library Expectation*: *Libraries will track and report participation in Love Your Library campaign and other countywide programs/initiatives.*

Measure: *Track participation, funding realized.*

***From the Member Library Agreement:** *“File in a timely fashion with the Association those annual reports, audits, and other reports as may be required by the Board of Directors.”*

III. Support Collaboration and Resource Sharing

SUPPORT SERVICES AND CONSORTIUM BENEFITS:

- Develop resources to assist libraries in adapting and responding to the pandemic. (2020-2021)
- Develop resource list of partners, programs, and community agencies that can be accessed by local library youth and adult services staff. (2021-2022)
- Investigate group healthcare options. (2021)
- Investigate retirement fund options for local libraries. (2021)
- Investigate contracted HR opportunities to benefit local libraries (depending on the outcome of The Hill Group work). (2021-2022)
- Investigate legal support for local libraries. (2023)

Outcome: *Libraries will be able to access more opportunities and benefits as system members.*

Measure: *Track new programs and participation.*

SHARED SERVICES:

- Work to ensure adequate funding for existing shared and opt-in services (eiNetwork, shipping, eResources, accounting services, cataloging). (2020-2024)
- Work to ensure that shared services are clearly defined in Service Level Agreements and that costs of services are regularly updated and communicated. (2020-2024)
- Support implementation of Library Fellows pilot projects (online training, fine elimination, public technology assessment). (2020-2022)
- Continue to support work of The Hill Group / RAD in building shared services models. (2020-2024)
- Investigate opt-in web management services if not in the top priorities of the Hill Group report. (2022-2023)
- Further strengthen accounting services program. (2020-2024)
- Explore models for shared staffing arrangements among libraries (e.g., technology support, outreach, programming, youth services, etc.). (2022-2024)
- Expand on children's programming and resource kits for local library use. (2020-2024)
- Continue to target mobile services to underserved populations. (2020-2024)

Outcome: *Shared services and participation in those services will increase. Costs will be monitored and projected so that libraries can best determine their level of participation in those services.*

Measure: *Track programs and participation. Gather cost analysis data from service providers.*