

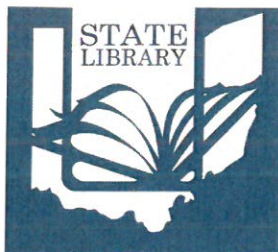
2022 – 2024

# Strategic Planning Report

Canal Fulton Public Library







## Overview

Based on evaluating statistical data about the library and community, reviewing community survey results, and conducting focus groups for Library Board members and the community, this report provides recommendations for Canal Fulton Public Library's next strategic plan. Four library service areas are suggested using a modified version of Sandra Nelson's ***Strategic Planning for Results*** process.

The service responses are only recommendations based on the information presented to the consultant. Institutional and community knowledge from the Board of Trustees and library management will be crucial in making final decisions to lead the library's strategic plan in the positive, forward moving direction.

Recommendations for potential partners are suggestions based on cumulative data assessed by the consultant, trends in similar libraries around Ohio, and local research performed by the consultant. Any questions and additional discussion regarding partnerships and programs are welcomed by the consultant.

Research collected to assist in selecting library service responses include:

- State Library of Ohio Statistics
- Community Survey
- Focus Groups

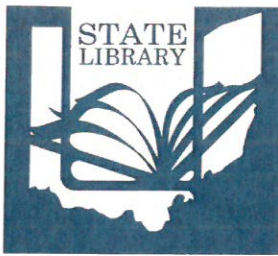
As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or for further conversation about the enclosed recommendations. I would be happy to discuss potential partnerships or provide other contacts to libraries that are doing similar initiatives across the state.

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### **Intergenerational Services and Programming**

"Kids, teens, adults, seniors, and families will have programs that integrate multiple age groups to community, understanding, and fun. "

## **Intergenerational Services and Programming**

The Canal Fulton Public Library is important to the community and residents are happy with the variety of programs the library offers. The library has robust programming for kids including Storytimes and craft programs, and engaging programs for teens like Anime Club and teen pizza and game nights. For the adults, survey and focus groups enjoyed book group programs.

**The community values the established partnerships with other local organizations and wants to see more collaboration.**

A common theme in focus groups and the community survey was a desire for community events and/or library events that bring people together. Participants love the small town, family feel of Canal Fulton but wished there were more events for families and the community as a whole. After a hard year+ of isolation, people are looking to connect and have opportunities to visit with their neighbors. **The Canal Fulton Public Library is in a unique position to fill that role.** The new building addition provides ample space for programs where shared learning and/or enjoyment can take place. Feedback from the survey and focus groups said there was a lot of programming for younger kids but not many programs available for adults that is not craft-focused or book groups. Many respondents said they were interested in technology and "maker" programs to learn new skills. Intergenerational programs and services can bring people together so they learn from one another and create a renewed sense of community.

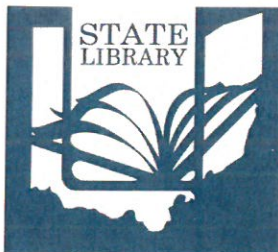
"Libraries that have done intergenerational programming often find that participants give positive feedback. The events give the different generations an opportunity not just to interact, but also to learn from each other. Above all, such programming increases the library's profile in the community and clearly demonstrates its ongoing value as an educational and cultural resource open to everyone."

**-Illinois Library Association**

## **Resources & Potential Partners**

- [Intergenerational Programming: Building Bridges Between Age Groups While Increasing Community Engagement.](#)
- [Permission to Play: How Intergenerational Art Space \(Re\)Teaches Creative Play to Young and Old.](#)
- [Bridges Together](#) (dissolved but resources remain online) and [Generations United.](#)
- [Intergenerational Programming at the Library: Connecting Generations for Healthy Communities](#) Webjunction Webinar.





### Emerging Technology

"Patrons will have the opportunity to engage with emerging technology through access provided by the library and/or its partners. Introduction to advanced types of software, hardware, and devices will expose library users to new learning experiences and inform future library planning"

## Emerging Technology

The Canal Fulton Public Library provides access to technology through programming, equipment at the library, and staff knowledge. **The library has always been a welcoming, friendly environment for patrons to ask questions about their devices and to try new technology they may not otherwise be exposed to.** Focus group and survey participants raved about the friendly and helpful staff.

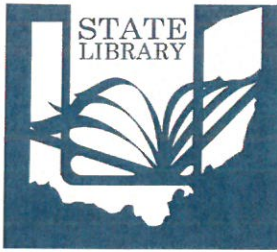
David Lee King, Digital Services Director at Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library suggests prioritizing active learning: "A modern library needs to help customers learn about emerging technology that they might have read about in the news but haven't yet experienced for themselves. This might mean purchasing a Google Nest Mini and an Amazon Echo Dot and introducing customers to them in a show-and-tell day at the library. It might mean buying simple robots or other more tech-oriented learning devices to share with customers. No matter what you focus on, the main idea is to have some learning by doing, instead of just by reading." ~TechSoup, 2020.

Currently, the library offers "Book a Tech" sessions with a staff member for one-on-one help with any and all technology questions. Expanding this to include more technology programs or appointments could further fill this need. The Guiding Ohio Online program is an LSTA-funded initiative to get a tech trainer into the library. The tech trainer or current staff could also introduce programming on "maker" technology or creative technology (3D pens, recording equipment, etc). There are small grant opportunities through the State Library of Ohio to start such an initiative. Pursuing partnerships with local schools or universities, extension offices, or local businesses could help broaden the scope of the project and widen the knowledge of what the library has to offer. Focusing on emerging technology can provide access to technology and prepare residents of all ages for future jobs and opportunities. The library can continue to be regarded as a welcoming place to ask questions, learn, and discover.

## Resources & Potential Partners

- [Guiding Ohio Online](#)- 2021-2022 application period will open in January with information sessions held to answer questions.
- [NEO-RLS Circulating Emerging Technology Kits](#)- a low cost way to try out this initiative.
- [Programming Librarian- A Small But Mighty Makerspace](#)
- [Northstar Digital Literacy](#)- new training program provided by ARPA Grant to OPLIN for staff and the community.
- [How Libraries Can Use Discord and Twitch](#)





## **Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services**

"Library users will have central sources for information about the wide variety of programs and activities provided by community organizations. Library staff will be knowledgeable of partnerships with the library, as well as those community offerings that stand alone."

## **Know Your Community**

The Canal Fulton Public Library has services a population of over 13,000 people and has approximately 10,000 cardholders. The library serves as a central hub for information both for the library and community. The library uses social media, their website, and newsletters to keep the community informed of library events/services.

The library is also a trusted place in the community and its members look to the library to provide up-to-date information about the community and its resources. **The library can use existing community partnerships and foster new partnerships with local organizations and businesses to distribute and promote local information more widely.** Renewed partnerships with the local schools and senior center is a good place to start. Amplifying and curating the library's role as a central hub for community information can also help accomplish a goal of bringing the community together after a hard year and a half.

Partnerships may need to be reinvigorated or restarted after the pandemic has caused programs, policies, and/or relationships to be put on hold or to stop. Doing a community outreach initiative to local organizations and businesses could be a way to introduce library services and establish the library as a potential partner. In addition to bolstering community partnerships and providing a central resource to community-wide resources, the library may investigate ways staff may feel more empowered to engage with all patrons who enter, through professional development on mental health first aid and trauma informed approaches in the library.

## **Resources & Potential Partners**

- [Rethinking Rural ALA](#)
- [Library as a Social Assistance Office Webjunction webinar](#)
- [The Power of Small: How Rural Libraries Help Their Communities Thrive Webjunction webinar](#)
- [Librarian As A Verb: Activate your Rural Community- Webjunction webinar.](#)
- [Public and School Libraries: Creative Ways to Build Successful Partnerships- webjunction webinar.](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Informed Approaches for Libraries webinar](#)



### **Satisfy Curiosity**

"The community will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. The library can surprise and delight residents with programs and resources on new topics in an ever-changing world."

## **Satisfy Curiosity**

As we continue to wade through the ups and downs of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the library can be a source of connection (virtual or in-person) and access to materials to help patrons learn, create, and relax. Canal Fulton Public Library continues to be a place for library users to gain access to materials for leisure or information needs. Prioritizing the community's desire for lifelong learning and satisfying their curiosities through engaging programs and enticing collections will continue to serve the community in a way that benefits all who choose to enter or access it.

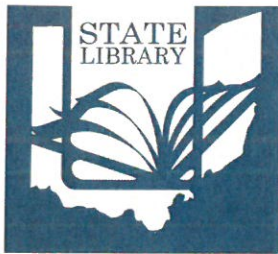
It is recommended that the library continue pursuing community partnerships to deliver programs centered around beloved events such as Christmas on the Canal or other community events. Traditional book lists, recommended reads and read-alike flyers, emails or internet posts can increase engagement online with patrons who may not come into the library at this time.

The library should also consider passive and virtual programming and services to engage with the community through other means when to make programs accessible to all kinds of learners/participants. Communicating what types of things the library offers through social media and the library's website will continue to be needed.

## **Resources & Potential Partners**

- [Online Programming Database for Ohio Public Libraries](#)
- [What's Happening in Ohio Public Libraries](#)
- [Knowing Your Community: What it Really Means for Programming Librarians- The Programming Librarian](#)
- [Fostering Knowledge and Discovery - toolkit from Rural Libraries and Social Wellbeing project.](#)
- [Resources for Wellbeing: Toolkit Tour for Rural and Small Libraries- Webjunction](#) webinar with information on a Storywalk, and Walking Classroom.
- [The Library as Social Connector: Forging Community Connection- Webjunction](#) webinar.





## Additional Notable Findings

### *Other considerations for future plans.*

#### **Make Marketing Improvements**

- Super Library Marketing is a great resource for ways to market and communicate your message about the library's offerings.

#### **Bolster School Partnerships**

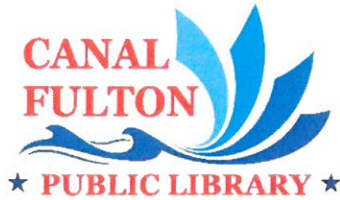
- Regularly publish information and disseminate it to the schools so they can push the materials home.
- Cultivate relationships with teachers in the schools who may benefit from library services. Ask if an educator newsletter or email would help inform them of what the library may offer them or their students.

#### **Programming Partnerships**

- Future Farmers of America
- Stark County Extension Office- <https://stark.osu.edu/>
- Historical Society
- Schalmo Family YMCA

#### **Staff Morale and Support**

- Create "Sunshine Committee" or involve Friends of the Library group to boost staff morale after a challenging time.
- Provide staff training and support for tough customer service situations and trauma-informed care.
  - Webjunction
  - Ryan Dowd's Homelessness Training (training and topical webinars)
  - Continuing Education Roundup



### **Local History and Genealogy**

"Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community."

## **Local History and Genealogy**

A library that offers Local History and Genealogy service addresses the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage.

The library will provide a significant collection of materials and other resources that chronicle the history of the community. Family histories and genealogical research tools will be provided. The library will provide the equipment required to read, print, and copy all formats in which information is supplied.

The library will maintain special collections of historical interest including photos and archival materials. The library will digitize these collections and provide computer access to them. Staff knowledgeable in genealogical and historical research methods and in archival and records management will be available to assist library users with their research.

### **Services and Programs**

- Continue to collect books, articles, and other materials about the community.
- Store local records and artifacts in an organized manner that will balance conservation with intellectual access.
- Find a computer program that can be used to organize and document local history in a digital format.
- Develop and maintain a web page with links to sites of interest to genealogists and people interested in history.
- Provide access to online genealogical resources.
- Plan and present classes on how to do genealogical research.
- Provide one-on-one genealogical tutoring and/or form a genealogical interest group.
- Collect and make available local family histories and genealogical records.
- Record, collect, and make available oral histories from local residents.
- Digitize and index local photographs and documents.
- Present programs about various aspects of the community (local architecture, neighborhoods, etc.)
- Hire personnel to implement the above, and research grants that could help fund these objectives.

## **Resources and Potential Partners**

- Local and state archives including the State Library of Ohio, and the Ohio History Connection
- Historical societies and museums such as the Canal Fulton Heritage Society, and the Massillon Museum
- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- The Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA)
- Intermuseum Conservation Association
- Clubs & organizations
- Professional genealogists