

Strategic Plan for Success 2010-2013

FLATHEAD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM



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Message from the Library Board Chair

24 March 2011

Dear Reader,

After nearly eight months of preparation, Flathead County Library System embarks on an exciting new course charted in this Strategic Plan for 2010 through 2013.

This document not only embodies an incalculable amount of work, but it also represents the tremendous amount of support our Library System received from our community and our phenomenal staff. Such a level of commitment reinforces that the services our Library System provides are not only important, but also critical to the future of the Flathead Valley.

We invite you to read this plan. It is a path toward a place where small children are prepared to begin kindergarten; where teenagers have ready access to materials they want to read, hear, and watch; where adults can get the newest books and explore personal interests; and where everyone has high speed access to the Internet and the resources found therein. We're prepared and ready to roll up our sleeves to make this a reality.

Sincerely,



Jane Lopp, Chair
Board of Trustees
Flathead County Library System

2011 Board of Trustees

Jane Lopp, Chair
Connie Leistiko, Vice-Chair
Michael Morton
Laura Long
Elana Weaver

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The FCLS Strategic Plan would not exist without help from the following individuals and groups. We would like to thank:

The **FCLS staff**, whose thoughtful contributions helped shape this plan and will ultimately ensure its success. Staff directly involved with the initial planning process included **Barbara Boorman, Brett Fisher, Becca Johnson, Joey Kositzky, Susan Larson, Annie Leberman, Deena Stacy, and Jane Wilkinson**

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The **members of the FCLS Board of Trustees**, especially **Elana Weaver**, whose encouragement and intelligent questions helped shape the plan along the way

The **FCLS Strategic Planning Team**, who spent enormous amounts of time in discussion as they crafted this plan and carefully considered the best services for our communities. The Strategic Planning team includes **Connie Behe**, Senior Librarian for Branch Services, **Rishara Finsel**, Public Services Librarian, **Martha Furman**, Public Services/Teen Services Librarian, **Lynn Kelly**, Children's Services Librarian, and Library Director **Kim Crowley**.

The **Mid-Columbia Library System** staff that provided us with guidance. Their willingness to share their experiences in creating their 2008-2010 Strategic Plan has greatly helped with our planning process.

Core Values

In October 2009, Library staff engaged in a multi-month process, with consultants Nan Russell and Ned Cooney, to create Core Values. Our Core Values describe how we do business at the library. In particular, our Core Values define expectations for staff behavior and communications and articulate the quality of services that the public can expect to receive from the Flathead County Library System.

Our Core Values describe the organizational culture the staff and Board will embrace throughout the course of the Strategic Plan.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED SERVICE

Welcoming the community with exceptional customer service

DIVERSITY

Acknowledging and accepting our differences

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Focusing on personal growth and taking responsibility for outcomes

COLLABORATION

Working together to succeed with fun along the way

ADAPTABILITY

Embracing change to remain relevant

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

Exchanging ideas with openness and trust

INNOVATION

Inviting creative solutions

The Planning Process

In August 2010, the Flathead County Library System Board of Trustees and Library staff began the 2010 Strategic Planning process with the help of June Garcia, a strategic planning consultant with over 30 years of experience in planning for public libraries. Our Strategic Plan will direct how we manage our resources over the next three years and guide us in providing high-quality and relevant library services to our communities.

We used the Public Library Association's Strategic Planning for Results process, which emphasizes community input and staff involvement. This process reinforces our belief that success is determined at the local level.

Our Community Planning Committee consisted of a diverse group of citizens from all over the valley. The group met in 2005 to discuss a vision for Flathead County that encompassed what the area will look like in 10 years, and identified reasons to feel proud to call the Flathead Valley home. From this meeting, the Committee recommended that the Library Board adopt five service responses for 2005 – 2010.

In 2010, the Library Board re-affirmed the service responses that were selected by the Planning Committee in 2005, with updated language from the Public Library Association.

After identifying our service responses, we developed our Strategic Plan with the following components: Goals and Objectives, Activities, and Organizational Competencies. These areas will help us evaluate our services and put our plan into action.

Service Responses

A service response is what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

The 2010-2013 service responses, adopted by the Library Board in response to community needs, are:

VISIT A COMFORTABLE SPACE: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support social networking.

CREATE YOUNG READERS: Early Literacy

Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

STIMULATE IMAGINATION: Viewing and Listening for Pleasure

Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

SATISFY CURIOSITY: Lifelong Learning

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

CONNECT TO THE ONLINE WORLD: Public Internet Access

Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Goals describe the benefit our community or a target population within our community will receive because the library provides a specific service response. Each goal names the audience being served and describes the benefit the audience receives.

Objectives help the Library measure its progress toward reaching a goal. Objectives define how the Library will measure its progress. We selected three different types of objectives for this purpose: how many people are served, how well a service meets the needs of the people served, and the number of units of service, such as circulation of materials, used by community residents.

In order to implement our new plan, we also identified the activities that would support our goals. These activities are the tasks that staff actually perform to serve the public or maintain library operations. A committee of managers and staff from different departments and locations worked together to identify our current activities. Then the Strategic Planning Team evaluated the effectiveness of our activities in order to identify which activities to continue, discontinue, change and/or add.

The activities included in this plan provide examples of the services we will provide to help us meet our objectives and realize our goals.

1. Everyone in Flathead County will have attractive, safe, and welcoming places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read.

- 1.1** By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 333,000 people will visit the library annually.
- 1.2** Annually, at least 45,000 people in Flathead County will have a valid library card.
- 1.3** By June 30, 2013 (FY13), 90% of users surveyed will say that the services they received from library staff were very good or excellent.
- 1.4** By June 30, 2013 (FY13), 90% of library visitors surveyed will indicate that the library was an attractive, safe, and welcoming place.

Activities:

- Provide convenient hours of service
- Create comfortable and inviting spaces
- Continue fundraising and planning for a new facility in Columbia Falls
- Reassess space allocation and provide age and activity appropriate zones
- Improve signage
- Provide new furniture in Bigfork

2. Everyone in Flathead County will have access to the ever-growing resources of the Internet and will be able to use the latest technologies.

- 2.1 Annually, the number of PC sessions will be a minimum of 133,000.
- 2.2 Annually, a minimum of 9000 people will connect to the Internet via the library's Wi-Fi access.
- 2.3 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% of users surveyed will indicate the library's technology services are very good or excellent.
- 2.4 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% of users surveyed will rate the library's web site as very good or excellent.

Activities:

- Offer reliable, high-speed WiFi access in all library facilities
- Update and enhance the existing webpage
- Offer classes on how to use the latest technologies
- Provide highly trained staff to assist library users in finding information and services online

3. Young children (age 5 and under) in Flathead County will discover the joys of reading and learning.

- 3.1 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 89,000 easy, picture books, and board books will circulate annually.
- 3.2 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 8,800 young children (age five and under) will attend a program in the library annually.
- 3.3 Annually, a minimum of 300 young children (age five and under) will attend a program at a non-library location.
- 3.4 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% of parents and caregivers surveyed will indicate that the Library's services for young children are very good or excellent.
- 3.5 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), the number of children (age five and under) registered for the Summer Reading Program will increase from 367 (FY10) to 500.

Activities:

- Present Early Literacy Programs (at the library and offsite) for ages 3-5
- Offer Early Literacy Programs for ages 0-2
- Develop and merchandise collections to highlight items of interest for young children and their parents or caregivers

- Provide computers and age appropriate software designed to foster readiness for school
- Create child friendly spaces
- Offer a Summer Reading Program that encourages parents or caregivers to read to young children

4. Children (ages 6-10) in Flathead County will have programs and materials that stimulate their imaginations and satisfy their curiosity.

- 4.1 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 41,000 juvenile fiction titles will circulate annually.
- 4.2 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 30,000 juvenile nonfiction titles will circulate annually.
- 4.3 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 40,000 juvenile media items (CDs, videos, DVDs, etc) will check-out annually.
- 4.4 Annually, a minimum of 500 children will attend a library sponsored or co-sponsored program.
- 4.5 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), the number of children (ages 6 -10) registered for the Summer Reading Program will increase from 695 (FY10) to 900.

Activities:

- Develop and merchandize collections to highlight items of interest for children ages 6-10
- Offer a Summer Reading Program that encourages children to continue to visit the library and to read throughout the summer
- Designate computers for use in the Children's area
- Present Children's programming (at the library and offsite)
- Provide services to help children and their parents or caregivers identify titles and authors they will enjoy

5. Teens (ages 11-18) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide enjoyable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

- 5.1 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 19,000 YA materials (fiction and non-fiction) will circulate annually.
- 5.2 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% of teens attending a library sponsored or co-sponsored program will evaluate the program as very good or excellent.
- 5.3 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% teens surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the Library.
- 5.4 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), the number of teens registered for the Summer Reading Program will increase from 369 (FY10) to 500.

Activities:

- Develop and merchandize collections to highlight items of interest for teens
- Enhance teen spaces with appealing furniture, display spaces, and interactive elements
- Present a Summer Reading Program that encourages teens to visit the library and to read throughout the summer
- Provide services to help teens identify titles and authors they will enjoy
- Present teen programs (at the library and offsite)
- Enhance online Teen-friendly spaces

6. Adults in Flathead County will have timely access to materials and services that respond to their current interests and enable them to continue learning throughout their lives.

- 6.1 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 130,000 adult fiction books will check out annually.
- 6.2 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 86,000 adult non-fiction items will check out annually.
- 6.3 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), at least 135,000 adult media items (CDs, videos, DVDs etc) will checkout annually.
- 6.4 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), the use of downloadable media will increase from 7,000 (FY10) to 14,000.
- 6.5 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 90% of adults surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the Library.
- 6.6 By June 30, 2013 (FY13), a minimum of 75% of adults surveyed will indicate that they received the material they reserved in a timely manner.

Activities:

- Develop and merchandize collections to highlight items of interest for adults
- Provide services to help adults identify titles and authors they will enjoy
- Increase downloadable collections
- Participate in offsite events and festivals

Organizational Competencies and Initiatives

Organizational competencies address the Library's infrastructure and operations. They describe the conditions that the Library must achieve or enhance in order to deliver effective services. These are systemic issues that would need to be addressed regardless of the service responses selected for inclusion in the strategic plan.

Organizational competencies will help the Library achieve its goals stated in the Strategic Plan. While service goals provide direct benefit to community residents, organizational competencies provide indirect benefit to community residents by improving the Library's effectiveness and efficiency.

Organizational competencies have been identified in 8 key areas:

- External partnerships
- Finance
- Measurement and evaluation
- Operational efficiencies
- Organizational structure
- Policies
- Technology
- Training and staff development

Two or more initiatives accompany each organizational competency. These initiatives are projects that must be completed if their respective organizational competency is to be achieved. Each initiative has a date during the strategic planning period by which the initiative should be completed.

1. External partnerships

The Flathead County Library System will actively seek partnerships with organizations and institutions to enable the Library to better serve its customers and achieve its service goals.

- 1.1** By November 1, 2011, identify current partnerships and the obligations that the Library has as part of those partnerships.
- 1.2** By January 1, 2012, distribute board approved criteria that will be used to assess partnership opportunities.
- 1.3** By January 1, 2012, review current partnerships and implement an approval process for the establishment of new partnerships.

2. Finance

The Flathead County Library System will operate in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner.

- 2.1 By April 1, 2011, implement processes and procedures to provide management staff with the financial information necessary to be informed decision makers.
- 2.2 By June 1, 2011, implement a process to provide all staff with a basic understanding of the Library's budget.

3. Measurement and evaluation

The Flathead County Library System will incorporate measurement and evaluation into its operational practices.

- 3.1 By April 1, 2011, review processes by which library use data is collected, compiled and distributed, and revise processes as necessary to provide relevant management data.
- 3.2 By May 1, 2011, develop methodology to regularly update Library Board on progress on all objectives and initiatives included in the strategic plan.
- 3.3 By June 1, 2011, develop and implement a process to use the gathered data, including surveys, to evaluate and improve services and operational practices.
- 3.4 By July 1, 2011, provide staff training on data collection procedures.

4. Operational efficiencies

The Flathead County Library System will utilize technologies and processes that improve access to information, enhance customer service, and maximize efficient service delivery.

- 4.1 By November 1, 2011, implement a process to improve committee meetings by focusing on action agendas and action minutes.
- 4.2 By January 1, 2012, a minimum of 10 procedures will be revised to improve customer service and increase productivity.
- 4.3 By July 1, 2012, implement revised service hours approved by the Library Board.
- 4.4 By July 1, 2012, review and update staffing models at all library facilities.
- 4.5 By September 1, 2012, consistently merchandize collections in accordance with established merchandizing guidelines.

5. Organizational structure

The Flathead County Library System will establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports its service priorities.

- 5.1 By January 3, 2011, finalize relocation plan for the staffing, materials, equipment, and services currently housed at the Whitefish Branch Library.
- 5.2 By January 3, 2011, begin implementation of approved relocation plan for the staffing, materials, equipment, and services currently housed at the Whitefish Branch Library.
- 5.3 By January 3, 2011, implement revised process and tools for performance appraisals.
- 5.4 By April 1, 2011, implement approved job descriptions.
- 5.5 By April 1, 2011, complete a classification and compensation study that compares library positions to comparable positions in the County.
- 5.6 By June 30, 2011, cease operations at 9 Spokane Avenue, Whitefish.

6. Policies

The Flathead County Library System will operate within a policy framework that reflects the organization's core values and promotes effective and efficient service delivery.

- 6.1 By February 1, 2011, implement a new policy on the confidentiality of library records.
- 6.2 By February 1, 2011, implement a new Internet access policy.
- 6.3 By September 1, 2011, implement a process to review all policies on a regular basis.
- 6.4 By December 1, 2012, implement a policy on the co-sponsorship of library programs.

7. Technology

The Flathead County Library System will utilize cost effective technology to provide access to the library collection, electronic information and enable library support operations.

- 7.1 By March 1, 2011, present a public PC management recommendation to the Board for approval.
- 7.2 By April 1, 2011, present a cost-effective approach to customer self-checkout of materials to the Board for approval as part of the FY12 budget.
- 7.3 By April 1, 2012, implement approved guidelines for the development and maintenance of the Library's web presence.
- 7.4 By November 1, 2012, launch a new library web site.

8. Training and staff development

The Flathead County Library System will recruit, train, and recognize staff who exemplify FCLS core values.

- 8.1** By December 1, 2011, develop a staff recognition program that reinforces the library's core values.
- 8.2** By April 1, 2012, provide reader's advisory service training for designated library staff.
- 8.3** By December 1, 2012, initiate an on-going program that develops the skills of library supervisors and enhances their ability to hire, manage, and evaluate staff.

Organizational Competencies & Initiatives

Timeline for 2011-2012

	2011												2012											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1.1 Identify Current Partnerships																								
1.2 Partnership Criteria																								
1.3 Approval Process for Partnerships																								
2.1 Budget training for managers																								
2.2 Budget training for staff																								
3.1 Review Data Collection Process																								
3.2 Board Update Methodology																								
3.3 Data Usage Process																								
3.4 Data Collection Training																								
4.1 Committee Meetings																								
4.2 Procedure Revision																								
4.3 Realign Service Hours																								
4.4 Staffing Models																								
4.5 Merchandizing Guidelines																								
5.1 Finalize Whitefish Relocation Plan																								
5.2 Implement Whitefish Relocation Plan																								
5.3 Performance Appraisals																								
5.4 Job Descriptions																								
5.5 Classification Study																								
5.6 Cease Operations in Whitefish																								
6.1 Confidentiality Policy																								
6.2 Internet Access Policy																								
6.3 Policy Review Process																								
6.4 Co-sponsorship of Library Programs Policy																								
7.1 PC Management Recommendation																								
7.2 Self-checkout Process																								
7.3 Launch New Library Website																								
7.4 Library Web Presence																								
8.1 Staff Recognition Program																								
8.2 Reader's Advisory Training																								
8.3 Supervisor Training Program																								

What's Next

The Library Board and staff are committed to achieving the goals and objectives in our Strategic Plan. We will take the following steps to make it a success:

- Distribute the Strategic Plan to key stakeholders, including but not limited to, all Library staff, Friends of the Library, Library Associations, local media and partners.
- Post the Strategic Plan on the Library's website and make a user-friendly brochure to make the Plan accessible to all community residents.
- Develop action plans that identify what will be done to accomplish each goal.
- Reallocate resources to ensure that the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan are achieved.
- Report regularly on the progress that has been made in achieving the goals and objectives and the organizational competencies and initiatives.