

Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: November 6, 2018
Date Submitted: October 22, 2018
To: Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Board
From: Dee Jackson, Interim County Administrator
Tabitha D. Washington, Director of Library Services
Subject: Approval of Library Strategic Long-Range Plan 2018-2023

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item seeks Board approval of the Gadsden County Public Library System's Long Range 2018-2023.

Background:

A long-range plan outlining library operations and development is one of the eligibility requirements to be awarded the State Aid to Public Libraries Grant.

During FY 2017-2018, the library system implemented a methodical planning process that included a public survey, staff retreat, collaboration between members of the Gadsden County Public Library Commission and Library Long-Range Planning Committee, library staff input, and an all-day planning retreat facilitated by a Florida Institute of Government, at Florida State University consultant. The end product is a community-driven plan that outlines services, goals, and potential activities for the next five years.

Analysis:

Approval of the Gadsden County Public Library System's Strategic Long-Range Plan 2018-2023 is the first step toward retaining eligibility for State Aid funding that is critical to provision of quality library services for County residents.

Fiscal Impact:

Approval of this plan does not commit the current nor future Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to expenditure of funds.

Options:

1. Approve the Gadsden County Library System Strategic Long-Range Plan 2018-2023.
2. Do not approve.
3. Board direction.

Interim County Administrator's Recommendation:

Option 1

Attachment(s):

1. Gadsden County Public Library System Strategic Long-Range Plan 2018-2023.

GADSDEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2018-2023



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Document Prepared by
Tabitha D. Washington, M.L.S., Director of Library Services
(October 2018)

Current Services and Service Environment

Members from the community as well as library staff assembled at the Havana branch of the Gadsden County Public Library on April 21, 2018, to create a 5-year strategic plan. The participants divided into small groups for the morning session to discuss the current status and needs of the library and its future.

The small groups were first tasked with creating a shared picture of the library's current reality by exploring services offered by the library and community needs the library seeks to meet.

The Gadsden County Public Library has a main branch in Quincy and two additional branches in Chattahoochee and Havana. A bookmobile serves outlying areas as well as making stops at public parks and recreational facilities, childcare facilities and schools, and apartment complexes.



In addition to traditional lending services and interlibrary loan services, the strategic planning session participants revealed that the library provides a variety of community outreach services, including:

- Computer classes at the 3 branches (currently Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint)
- Bible study
- Author talks and book signings
- Children's programs including book clubs and game nights
- Literacy program
- Free libraries (small book stands that residents can use to exchange books)
- Adult book club
- Provide tax and voter registration forms
- Genealogy and local history community corner

While these efforts demonstrate the many integral services provided by the library, there are pressing community needs that the library is a partner in addressing. Gadsden County ranks higher than state averages in the percentage of individuals (25%) and families (18%) living below poverty

levels and in the percentage of individuals age 25 and over without a high school diploma (21%).¹ The median income for county residents is \$38,533, nearly \$10,000 less per year than the statewide median income.²

Many county households do not have internet access, making the library an access point for paying bills online, applying for jobs online, or applying for SNAP and other assistance programs.

The Gadsden County Public Library contributes to workforce development by providing literacy classes to adults. The library also provides workforce development assistance (such as resume preparation), job skills training (such as computer classes), and professional etiquette and life skills classes.

The library helps ensure school success, a foundation for future economic development, by offering many school support services to children in the county's public and private schools. Students receive tutoring and homework help, help typing class reports, and testing assistance. The library also serves as a contact point for the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) TRiO program.³

Gadsden County ranks 64 out of 67 counties in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings.⁴ Gadsden County has higher than average premature deaths, reports of poor or fair health, and low birth weight when compared to other counties in the state. Adult smoking, adult obesity, physical inactivity, sexually transmitted diseases and teen births are also higher than state averages. Wellness is a focus of the Gadsden Public Library in terms of education and services offered. Adding books and other resources on wellness help educate the public. Yoga and other exercise classes have been offered in library meeting rooms. The library has also been a central point for HIV/AIDS and Sickle Cell Anemia testing as well as support for families dealing with dementia.



Approximately 10% of the county's population is Hispanic, creating a need for ESL services and bilingual staff to ensure individuals not fluent in English

¹ See the State of Florida Department of Health "Florida Health Report: County Profile: Gadsden County. <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.CountyHealthProfile>

² See again State of Florida Department of Health.

³ TRiO is a U.S. Department of Education program "targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs." <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

⁴ Data in this paragraph are from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings report. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2018/rankings/gadsden/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

have access to all of the library's services.

Library Trends⁵

Libraries across the United States face similar challenges in their communities. The demand for services is increasing, the scope of services offered is broadening, and funding is static or declining.

The profile of library users is changing. The U.S. population is aging, and life expectancy is increasing. More and more, individuals are able to age in place and enjoy more quality of life in later years. These individuals could drive changes in collections (e.g., more large print books) as well as services, such as the Social Security services already offered by the Gadsden County Public Library. Older adults could also expand the pool of volunteers or staff.

In addition, the so-called digital native generation, the children who have grown up with technology and may rely less on hard copy books will also have their impact on libraries. Services for these individuals may move more toward spaces to collaborate and learn together and opportunities to experience new technologies.

There is also a new trend in maturation, an extended adolescence that marks the phase between the teens and established adulthood. These are individuals who are still heavily influenced by their parents and who are delaying home ownership, marriage, and workforce entry. These individuals, too, may be a new niche audience for libraries (e.g., adulting and life skills classes).



Libraries have already seen changes in their users and demands in services due to technological advances. Individuals lacking technology skills go to the libraries to learn. Others go to try out new technologies. STEM/STEAM programs for youth are on the rise. Virtual reality, 3-D printing, robotics, and coding are popular. The internet of things is forcing people to rapidly improve their technical skills as well as develop a deeper understanding of

the impact of these devices on their daily lives. It is also creating more job opportunities for individuals with an interest in science and technology careers.

Technology is also changing how and what people read. The traditional bound book is a staple of libraries. However, electronic publishing is allowing publishers to market to a variety of readers. Short reading in the form of condensed newspapers, short-form fiction, and essays allow time-pressed readers to read a few minutes each day.⁶

⁵ The broad trends discussed in this section are based on research conducted by the Center for the Future of Libraries, American Library Association. <http://www.ala.org/tools/future/trends>

⁶ For example, apps like Amazon Rapids, <https://rapids.amazon.com/>, and Hooked provide stories in chat form.

Technology can also change how programs are delivered. Skype and similar apps allow for instruction to be carried across great distances so that class participants and the instructor can be separate locations.

While greater use and reach of technology is a definite trend affecting libraries, there is a bit of a push back that is also becoming a trend. Spaces where people can “unplug” are becoming more essential to quality of life. Libraries can offer such spaces for individuals in need of a respite from ever-present devices.

Maker spaces, though popular among those exploring technology, such as robotics or coding activities, are also being used for traditional arts and crafts. Sewing, quilting, and gardening are gaining popularity alongside more modern interests.



Changes in reading spaces are occurring as well. Many libraries are moving toward a more café feel, with cozy seating, decorative work tables, warm colors and softer lighting. This atmosphere makes the library a friendlier, more welcoming place to read, research or study.

There is also a resurgence in chess as many libraries are adding chess tables to their facilities. There are studies indicating a link between chess playing and improved academic performance.⁷ Playing chess requires concentration, memory, and the ability to see multiple courses of action and their consequences simultaneously.

The Gadsden County Public Library is noticing similar trends in requests for services. Health and wellness is a popular topic. Lending resources and exercise classes, as well as a past partnership to distribute seeds for gardens, are in demand.

Youth reading groups are better attended as more young people are finding the library a place to explore their interests. More youth programs, such as game nights and arts and crafts, offer young people the opportunity to interact with their peers and have fun while learning.

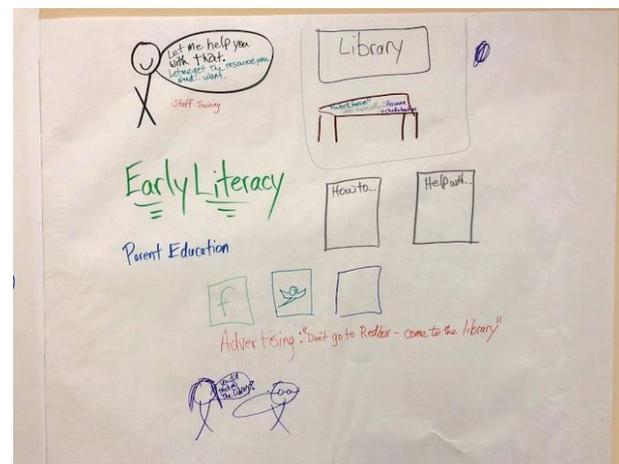
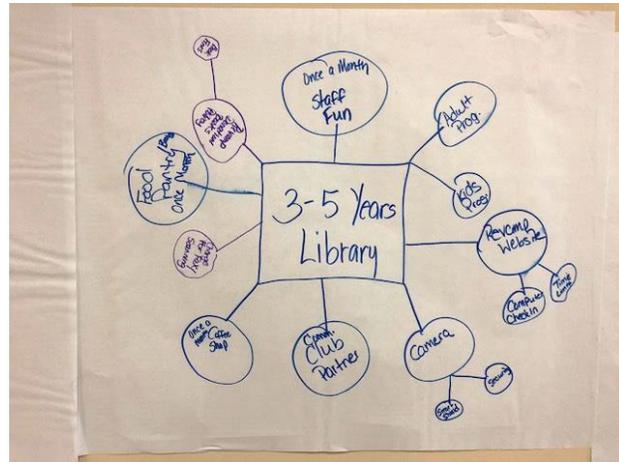
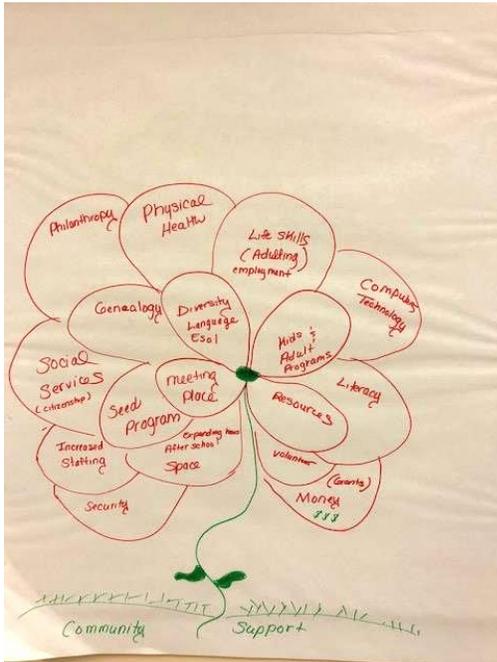
Library staff also noted that the library is a touchpoint for people new to the community. In addition to stops at the local Chamber of Commerce, new residents will often visit the library to find information on the community.

⁷ See, for example, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5322219/>

Defining the Vision

Working in their small groups, the strategic planning session participants were asked to discuss these questions:

- What is the role the library should play in the community?



- How should the library address community needs?
- How should the library address the needs of specific groups in the community?
- Where should the library focus its resources in the next 3-5 years?

Rather than write their ideas down or share them verbally, the participants were asked to draw a picture of the library based on their responses to the visioning questions.

Next, the session participants were asked to identify the common themes in the drawings.

Children and adult programs: the groups agreed that more and more variety of programs should be part of the library's future. Suggested programs included book clubs, chess club, cooking

club, paint with a twist, game night, movie night, rock painting and hiding⁸, and computer classes. Participants agreed that the library should be, and be perceived as, a fun place with lots of organized activities and hands-on learning experiences. The library should also be comfortable and inclusive, a place where everyone is welcome and there is something for everyone.



Embracing the notion that the library is a community center and touchpoint for new residents, session participants felt that the library should leverage partnerships with service agencies and community groups to provide an additional service access point or meeting place. The participants agreed that the library could not be a drop-off service, nor could library staff be representatives of the various agencies or groups. Rather, the library would facilitate connecting people to the services they need or to groups of interest.

In order to accomplish the vision of providing more programs and access to more services, additional community support for the library is essential. Session participants agreed that advertising and promotion will be necessary. The library has to tell the stories of the people who use the library to demonstrate the range of programming and diversity of needs being met. Public and community leaders should be engaged in the library and in the process of helping it grow. Additional public and private school outreach should be done (the thinking is that kids bring adults).

It was recognized that more programs require more people to help run them. Additional staff would be needed. In addition, more community volunteers should be sought to broaden programming and to help support library staff.

Some suggestions of internal streamlining were made by session participants. Equipment could be repurposed. As examples, computers could be set aside just for testing. A system of timed computer use could be implemented to allow more people to access the computers. A closed computer room, away from the activity of the main library areas, could be set up. Library staff agreed that the website could be updated to eliminate paper and reduce staff time.

⁸ Painting and hiding rocks for others to find is a current trend: <https://paintedrocklife.com/> Keeping pace with similar trends in the future will help keep libraries relevant and of interest to people of all ages.

The staff is seen as vital to the library's continued growth. Staff development should be a focus of the library. More training and offsite activities would help develop individual staff members as well as their ability to work together as a team. Reallocating existing resources could free up staff to do more service-oriented work. Leveraging staff talents and skills would be motivating to the staff members and result in more creative and trending programs.



Setting Goals

With a vision of the future in mind, the strategic planning session participants were asked, as a last step, to identify key goals for the library to accomplish in the next 5 years.

1. Children's programs. The desire is that the library be viewed as part of a lifestyle that improves family bonding, helps families in need, and increases the number of people served (library utilization).

Goal: Establish 3 new hands-on children's activities per year.

- Arts and crafts programs
- Life skills programs

Goal: Add five kits per location for parents to have learning and play materials at the library for parent/child activities.

- How to tie shoes
- How to zip jackets

Goal: Improve children's literacy based on pre- and post-survey results.

- Reading with service animal
- Reading mentorships
- Partner with teachers to measure student outcomes

Goal: Rejuvenate and improve successful programs at each location.

- Movie night with concessions
- Mother/daughter tea and father/son activity
- Homework assistance program with netbooks and jump drives
- Storybook carnivals

Goal: Establish 3 new enrichment programs for pre-teens and teens

- Budgeting and time management
- Interviewing and resume writing skills
- Health and self-care skills

2. Adult programs. Recognizing extended lifespan and extended retirement years, the library would like to add two new adult programs per year. Measurements of success would be based on utilization or pre-/post-surveys (skill-based or satisfaction).

Goal: Provide workforce development assistance.

- Passive workforce stations with sample resumes and other learning tools.
- Partner with professional groups like Rotary and Lions Club who can support workforce development (e.g., interview skills and preparation, mock interviews, resume review).

Goal: Increase the number and variety of adult programs.

- Book club based on patron interest
- Arts and crafts (e.g., cake baking and decorating)
- Stress management classes
- Parenting classes and support group
- End of life care and estate planning
- Financial management (e.g., budgeting, saving and investing, debt consolidation, couponing)

Goal: Increase programs for seniors.

- Technology assistance
- Tax assistance

Goal: Rejuvenate and improve successful programs.

- Movie night
- Exercise/wellness classes (chair yoga, hair and make-up)
- Game night

3. Promotion/advertising. Getting the word out about the services the library offers and the many ways people use the library is important to making the programming successful.

Goal: Establish a quarterly newsletter to be distributed via website, social media, email, and printed flyers in library locations.

Goal: Collect and distribute patron success/human interest stories to demonstrate value of library to use in advertising, newsletter, and library promotion.

- Success stories
- Patron of the month
- Capture tangible benefits to the community
- Connect library programs to community needs

4. Community partnerships. The library functions as part of the larger community and as an arm of the county government. Being a partner in the community is a key part of the library's identity.

Goal: Continue existing partnerships.

- Police department
- Public and private schools
- Civic/social organizations
- Local Community Churches
- Greensboro Community Library

Goal: Establish new partnerships.

- Corporate (e.g., Publix, banks)
- Local/small businesses
- Private schools
- Individuals (donations and volunteers)
- Civic/social organizations (Kiwanas, Rotary, Lion's Club)

5. Technology. The trends in adding technology-based programs to assist students with STEM and to teach young and old new technologies is increasing the demand on libraries to keep pace with technology.

Goal: Improve internal technology to automate book checkout, self-checkout, and computer check-in, and add card reader at each location to streamline processes and free staff resources.

Goal: Add technology to augment adult and children's programs using innovation grants.

- 3D printer
- VR equipment
- Laptop computers, E-Readers, and other mobile devices to loan.

Goal: Improve Bookmobile services using LSTA and other grants

- New Bookmobile
- Wireless Internet
- Laptop computers and printer

6. Security. The library is a place for all, and all are welcome. Everyone who goes to the library, including the staff who work there, should feel safe.

Goal: Improve physical security so patrons and staff feel safe.

- Improved lighting
- Install cameras on outside of buildings
- Install mirrors to reduce blind spots in buildings

Goal: Improve digital security and privacy.

- Ensure computers are secure
- Ensure patron data is secure
- Educate patrons on how they can keep their data secure and protect their privacy

7. Funding. Each goal comes with a price tag. The library's funding plan should include budgeted amounts for each goal above the baseline operational budget. Various funding sources should be explored to help support the library in reaching its goals.

Goal: Create budget and funding plan to fulfill goals.

Goal: Seek donors.

- Security company for building security
- Donations to underwrite program costs for materials, fees, and crafts
- Collections donors

Goal: Seek additional grants.

- Technology
- Security

Goals: Explore fees for services.

- Faxes and scans
- Meeting space rental for non-library related events

Goal: Explore additional funding sources.

- Kickstarter or similar platform
- Friends of the Library resources

Plan Implementation and Evaluation

Approval of this plan by the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) does not commit the current nor future Board to expenditure of funds. After the plan is approved by the BOCC, the document will be submitted along with the State Aid grant application for FY 2018-2019. Services will commence on December 1, 2018. Stakeholders were informed of planning stages through mail correspondence, Facebook, publicity via the director's weekly newspaper columns and signage in each library outlet. The final approval will be formally announced by press media releases. Planning Committee members will receive personalized letters of appreciation accompanying copies of the plan in both print/electronic formats.

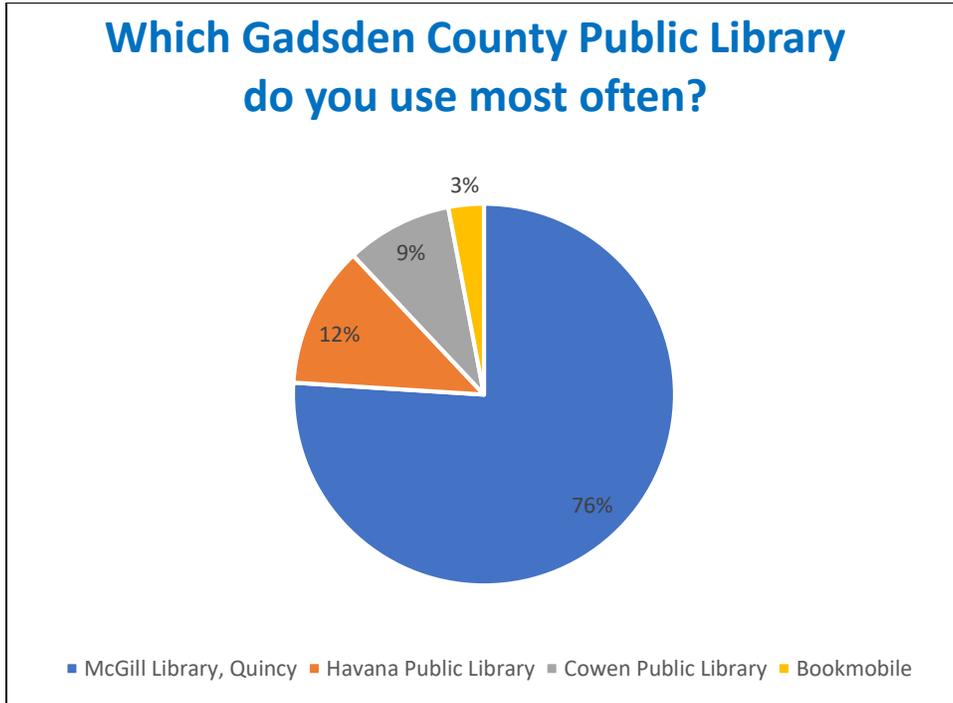
It is the intention of library administration to address some aspects of each of the seven goals every year. Some, but not all, of the objectives will be met annually according to availability of personnel, funding, and County directives. Activities are subject to change and will be outlined specifically in the Annual Plan of Service documents.

Library staff and the Gadsden County Public Library Commission advisory board will review the plan yearly to track accomplishments, refine objectives, and update activities. Consideration will be given to the following sources as appropriate measurement tools for evaluation:

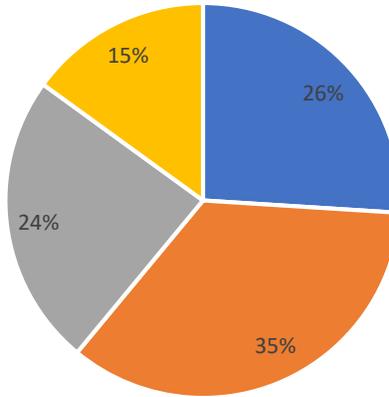
- Library Monthly Reports
- State Annual Statistical Report
- Digital resources usage data
- Program participants' class/workshop evaluations
- Budget revenue and expenditures projections
- Friends of the Library supplemental funding support
- Periodic surveys of library users and non-users

Appendix A: Planning Survey Results

*Gadsden County Public Library System Planning Survey FY 2017-2018
(96 respondents)*

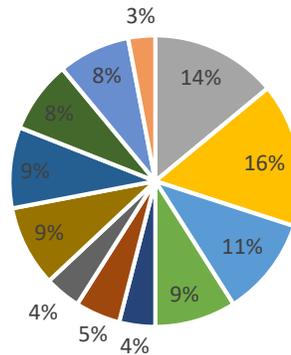


How Often Do You Visit a GCPL



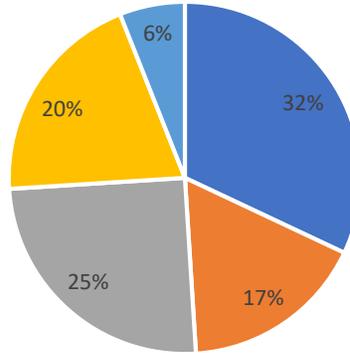
- About once a week
- More than Twice a week
- About once a month
- A few times A year

What Do You Do At The Library



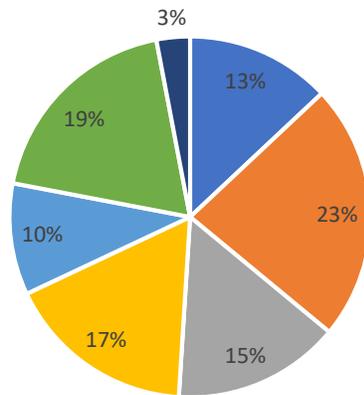
- What Do You Do At The Library
- Check Out Books or Audio Visual Media
- Print or Photocopy a Document
- Play Games
- Use The Social Security Kiosk
- Use wireless internet (Wifi)
- Study at a table
- Use A Computer
- Read a book, Newspaper, or magazine
- Enjoy A Comfortable place to Sit
- Ask for information or referral
- Attend a meeting, program, or workshop
- Socialize and meet friends

What New resources or Programs would you like the library to Offer



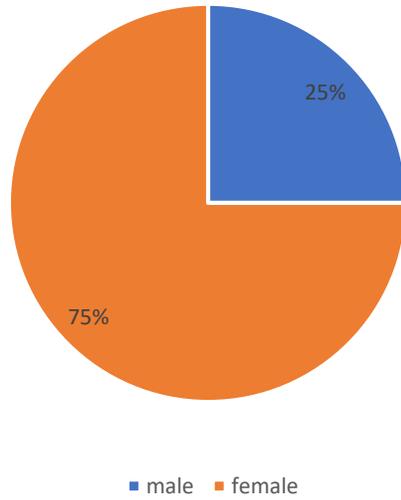
- Laptop computers, E-readers, or other mobile devices to loan
- Career Webinars
- Programs for Job Search and application assistance
- Programs for seniors and those with physical limitations
- Immigrant and citizenship classes, or other: College Admissions support

How can the Library improve services to meet community needs and interests

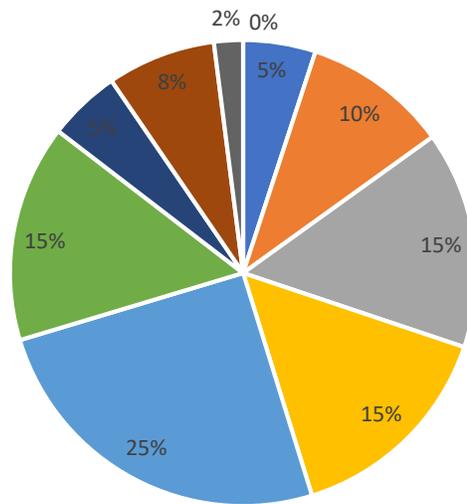


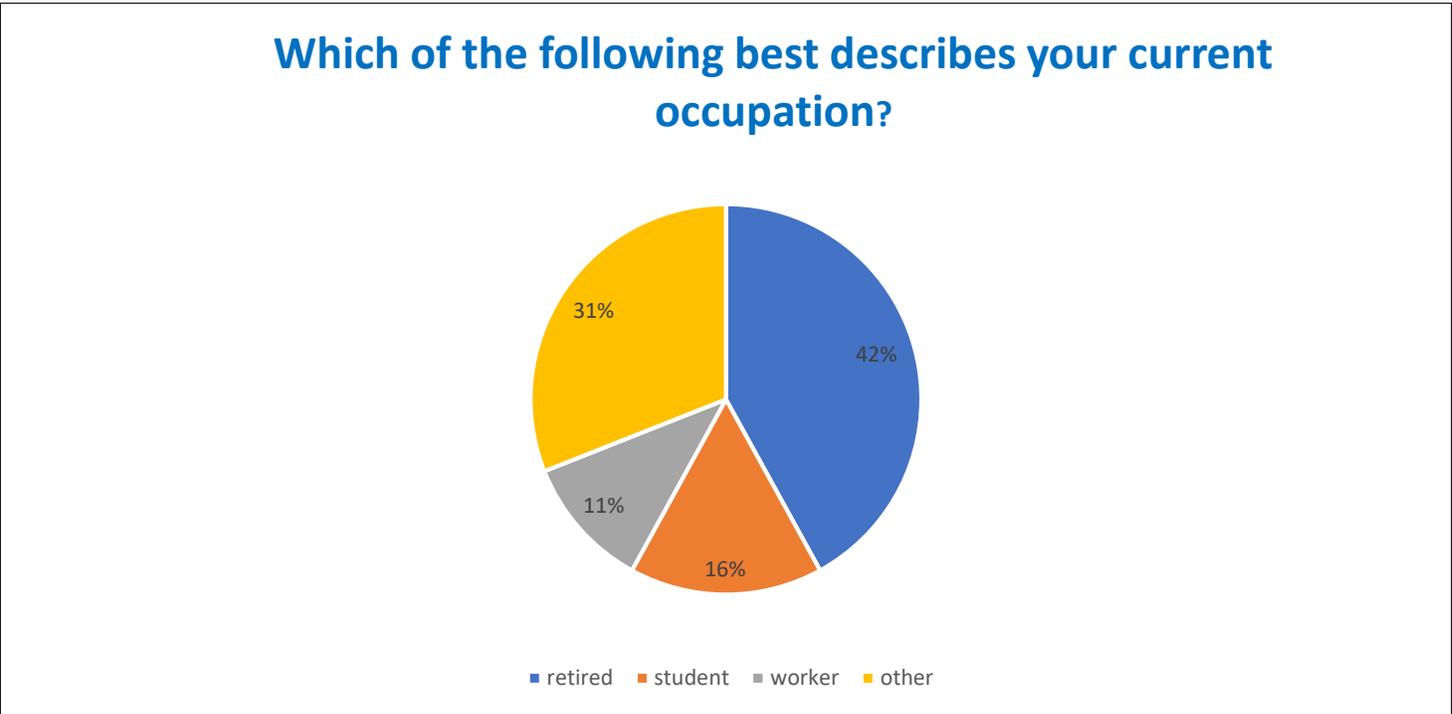
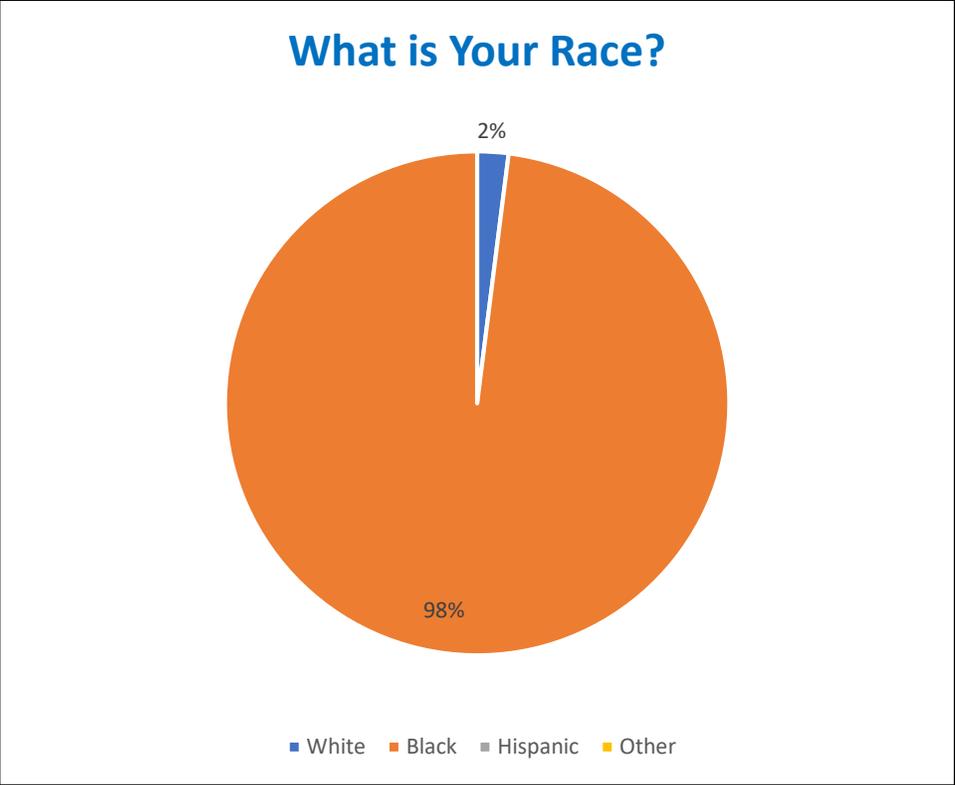
- Sponsor book talks by local authors
- Offer tutoring to help struggling readers
- Host Outreach Events
- Host speaker programs on community issues
- Sponsor book clubs to discuss current titles
- Provide lifelong learning and continuing education activities

What is Your Gender?

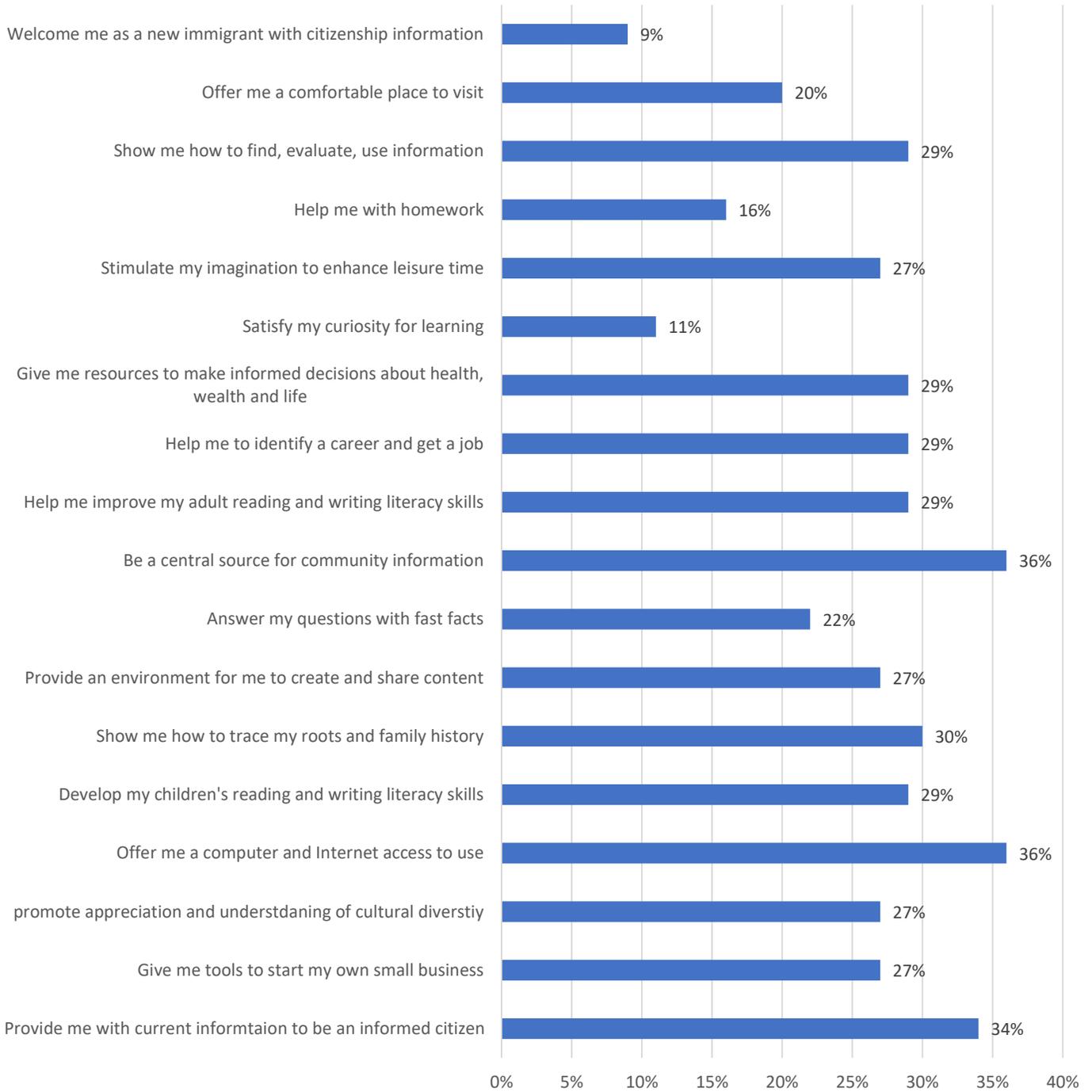


What is Your Age?





Survey Questions



Appendix B

5 Year Plan timeline

October 2017

Library Director attended Florida Public Library Director's in Tallahassee, FL and attended a training session on Rapid Results Planning.

October 2017

GCPL staff attended a retreat and workshop to kick off the 5 year PLAN with facilitator with Linda Bruno. The retreat was funded by the Panhandle Library Access Network.

December 2017

Library Director contacted the Florida Department of State Bureau of Library Development plan for assistance with the planning process

Panhandle Library Access Network located a facilitator, Dr. Dena Hurst to assist with the 5 Year Plan

January 2018

Invitations were mailed to Library Commission and the Friends of the Library to join the planning committee

March 2018

A committee was formed and list of stakeholders were developed from each library branch and surrounding areas.

The committee reviewed survey and made revisions

Save the dates notices were mailed to stakeholders, and promotional material was placed in newspaper, on Facebook/social media. Patrons could sign up for the plan as well. Additional mailings were given out mid-March

April 2018

Director met with the facilitator via teleconference to go over logistics of the planning retreat Follow up emails and phone calls were made to planning participants.

5 Year Plan retreat was held at the Havana Public Library. Library staff, patrons, Friends of the Library, and Library Commissioners participated in a 6 hour retreat

August 16 2018

The committee met for the review of the first draft of the 5 Year Plan

September 2018

The committee met for the second review of the 5 Year Plan

The committee met for third and final review of the 5 Year Plan

Appendix C: 5 Year Plan Committee Members and Advisors

- Thomas Brown, Reference Librarian
- Shirron Cannon, Library Assistant
- Monica Clay, Friends of the Library
- Carol, DeMent, Panhandle Library Access Network
- Carol Edwards, Library Commissioner
- Gail Faircloth, Lead Librarian
- Karle Gordon, Literacy Center
- Virginia Green, Branch Librarian
- Dr. Dena Hurst, Facilitator
- Sonja James, Interlibrary Loan Librarian
- Connie Kummer, Friends of the Library
- Diana Ledbetter, Library Patron
- Charles Mayberry, Panhandle Library Access Network
- Kristine Odahowski, Youth Services Librarian
- Amy Rooks, Library Patron
- Melissa Sykes, Former GCPL Reference Librarian
- Raneceia Thomas, Branch Librarian
- Tabitha D. Washington, Library Director

Appendix B: Library Staff

- Shannon Allen-Powell, Outreach Librarian
- Kimberly Alvarez-Estrada, Part-Time Library Assistant
- William Blake, Bookmobile Driver
- Thomas Brown, Reference Librarian
- Shirron Cannon, Library Assistant
- Gail Faircloth, Lead Librarian
- Brittany Green, Library Assistant I
- Virginia Green, Branch Librarian
- Lashon Harden, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Tonisha Harper, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Sharron Jones, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Kristine Odahowski, Youth Services Librarian
- Marie Parker, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Shavaria Pride, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Amethyst Pugh, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Lashon Harden, Part-Time Library Assistant
- Raneceia Thomas , Branch Librarian
- Marisa VanLandingham, Adult Literacy Coordinator
- Tabitha D. Washington, Library Director
- Angel Williams-Bush, Library Assistant



(Staff at 2017 Training Retreat, Seminole Reservation)