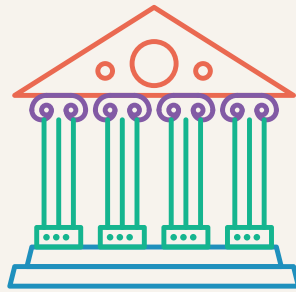




STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Mission
Priorities
Excellence
Beliefs



About the Library

Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library (CHPL) has been cultivating curiosity from the moment we first opened our doors in 1853. Since then, we have evolved into one of the biggest and busiest libraries in the country: supporting minds of all kinds who seek to unlock their full potential. With 41 neighborhood branches, a vast range of programming and ever-growing collection of resources, we're proud to be a place where everyone can learn without limits.

Creating a Strategic Framework

In March 2022, CHPL embarked on a strategic planning process to clarify its direction as it comes out of the 2020-2022 period, during which CHPL pivoted to new services to meet new needs that arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the strategic planning process was to take stock of CHPL's diverse activities and services; decide which ones were still a priority for the community, and which had outlived their purpose; and make other strategic adjustments in light of social, economic, and technological trends.

This planning effort drew upon previous projects that generated multiple concepts for communicating the Library's strategic direction. In addition to CHPL's longstanding statements of mission, vision, and values, CHPL had also crafted "brand beliefs" to guide its marketing, principles to guide the Facility Master Plan development, and temporary organizational priorities to focus staff during the pandemic. For more information about the strategic planning process undertaken by CHPL, see the "Our Process" section at the end of this document.

Rather than create yet another set of constructs for staff to learn and apply, we have leveraged the investments CHPL has made in its strategic thinking and to consolidate some of these core documents and statements mentioned above into a coherent framework to guide the organization's future.

Our Strategic Framework

Affirming our Core Purpose & Values

Our Mission

CHPL's **mission statement** is, "Connecting people with the world of ideas and information." Over many years, the mission itself has not changed, even as CHPL's means for advancing the mission have.

Traditionally, libraries have been repositories of information and ideas contained in books and other printed materials. Today, information and ideas appear in many formats – print and digital – and libraries provide not just storage of materials but also a space for consuming, sharing, and creating with those materials.

At the same time, libraries are leveraging both their position as a community hub as well as their expertise at finding and curating information to help community members in need get information about essential services available within the community, such as social services, nonprofit programs, and employment assistance.



As the external environment has changed, CHPL has evolved with the times to

"Connecting people with the world of ideas and information."



Our Beliefs

CHPL's specific approach to embodying this mission is captured in its **beliefs**. These were initially developed to guide CHPL's marketing efforts but they actually capture values reflected throughout the entire organization. By elevating them within CHPL's strategic framework, we invite staff to see how their individual behaviors align to the beliefs expressed by the organization as a whole.

- **Community** – We believe libraries are the incubators of community.
- **Enjoyment** – We believe there is no prescribed path to knowledge – so why not make the journey fun?
- **Connection** – We believe we go farther, together.
- **Empathy** – We believe in everyone's innate value and potential.



Community



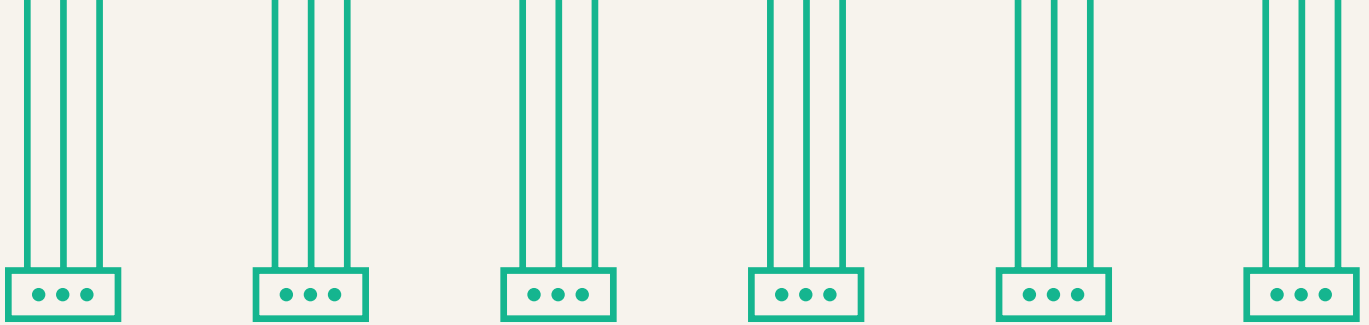
Enjoyment



Connection



Empathy



Pillars of Excellence

As an entity holding the public's trust, CHPL must live up to requirements not always expected of organizations in other sectors. These "must-have" values and behaviors comprise CHPL's pillars of excellence.

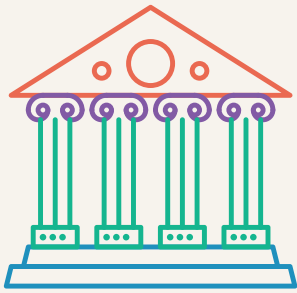
Access – The Library values free, open, unrestricted access to its collections and services. We are committed to connecting our customers to the ideas, information and materials they wish to explore in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner. We strive to offer materials, programs and services that represent the needs of our diverse population.

Customer Focus – The Library values all customers and is responsive to their service needs. The customer's opinion and input is welcomed in all initiatives and undertakings. We consider the impact on the customer in all decisions.

Integrity – The Library values competence and accountability in our personal and professional actions. We strive to earn the trust and confidence of all customers.

Innovation – The Library values continuous learning and innovation in the pursuit of excellence. We respond actively to present situations and anticipate future needs to serve as a dynamic force in our community.

Stewardship – The Library values responsible stewardship of all the resources with which we have been entrusted. We are accountable for ensuring the proper use of public funds. We take seriously our responsibility to maximize the efficiency of staff time and talent making the best use of all our resources in the delivery of quality library service.



Mission Priorities Excellence Beliefs

Previously, CHPL referred to these attributes as a “vision” and “values,” but we believe “pillars of excellence” better captures their importance as fundamental standards for CHPL to maintain, that cut across every part of the organization and its work. Further, the previous value of “excellence” has been changed to “integrity” to emphasize the role of individual staff member competence and accountability in CHPL’s success.

CHPL’s existing vision statement largely recapitulates the ideas expressed in these pillars. Thus, the vision statement itself has been removed from the strategic framework and any content not already reflected explicitly in these pillars has been added.





Strategic Priorities

Positioning CHPL for Success

The foundational concepts described above last longer than any particular strategy or priority that might be used to advance them. Strategic Priorities are inherently bounded by the time period and context for which they are devised. This section lists the Strategic Priorities identified by CHPL throughout this process as critical to the organization's success in the coming 3-5 years. These items will form the basis for ongoing planning, adjustment and monitoring.



Promote learning and enjoyment for minds of all kinds and people of all ages.

- Maintain and curate physical and digital collections of books, media, devices, and items that spark learning, growth, imagination, and fun.
- Offer fun and engaging programs for all ages that stimulate learning and foster connection.



Act as a trusted source of high-quality information on key issues in the life of the community.

- Help community members find and discern the accurate information they need as people, consumers, and citizens.
- Convene community members about broader social issues.



Connect community members to services and support they need to thrive.

- Serve as a community hub that provides basic services, technology, training, and support that community members need to succeed in their daily lives.
- Partner with external organizations that offer services and support to community members, particularly to those in need.



Provide safe, welcoming, and accessible spaces where people from all backgrounds and circumstances can meet, work, learn, create, and connect.

- Implement the Facility Master Plan, with emphasis on creating safe, welcoming, and accessible spaces for all.
- Strive for greater diversity of staff and collections to meet each community's particular needs.
- Provide access, independently or through partnerships, to materials and services in areas not currently served by a brick-and-mortar library.



Foster a supportive, inclusive, and enjoyable workplace that empowers staff to leverage their strengths and creativity to serve the community.

- Invest in staff by providing opportunities for career development and prioritizing staff safety and wellbeing.
- Address racial and other disparities through consistent work to advance equity in policies, structures, and processes.
- Engage staff at all levels in conversations and problem-solving by soliciting input and feedback and by communicating decisions transparently.

This infographic shows the consolidation of some of CHPL's existing core documents and provides a clear depiction of the Library's direction going forward.



OUR MISSION

Connecting people with the world of ideas and information.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Useful Resources

Connect community members to services and supports they need to thrive

Limitless Learning

Promote learning and enjoyment for minds of all kinds and people of all ages

Reliable Information

Act as a trusted source of high-quality information on key issues in the life of the community

Healthy Culture

Foster a supportive, inclusive, and enjoyable workplace that empowers staff to leverage their strengths and creativity to serve the community

Welcoming Spaces

Provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces where people from all backgrounds and circumstances can meet, work, learn, create and connect

PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE



Community



Enjoyment



Connection



Empathy



Conclusion

Throughout this process we have actively engaged internal and external stakeholders to tap into their insight and expertise on CHPL's greatest opportunities to impact the community and to uphold the reputation for excellence it has built over the years. Rather than starting from scratch, we have built upon previous efforts to articulate CHPL's strategic intentions by incorporating existing constructs – mission, beliefs, etc. – into a coherent strategic framework that can engage CHPL staff in all functions and at all points in their careers to see how their own efforts contribute to the success of the organization as a whole.

Implementing this strategic framework will require three tracks of activity:

- The first is to institute the strategic framework as a guiding force within the organization. Leaders, managers, and supervisors should help their direct reports map their own activities to the mission and brand beliefs and should articulate performance standards that align to the pillars.
- The second is to identify concrete actions for moving forward on the strategic priorities. Each priority suggests specific initiatives that can be scheduled for implementation during the term of this 3-5-year framework. Further, some activities that have no connection to these priorities can be sunsetted, and the corresponding resources can be reallocated elsewhere. CHPL's leadership can use these priorities to track the progress of implementation.
- The third is to engage in institutional learning to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the framework successfully, particularly with respect to areas where CHPL has less experience.

The framework, based on rich input from multiple stakeholders and staff members, will support CHPL as it continues to serve the community of Cincinnati and Hamilton County at a high level of excellence and with faithful stewardship over the public funds with which it is entrusted.

Over the next three to five years, all CHPL activities will be centered around our five Strategic Priorities. Library programs and services will be developed with intentionality to ensure that all of our activities deliver outcomes that help our community thrive. As we drill down in these areas, we will also keep in mind the issues that our Hamilton County officials have identified as priorities via their Policy Agenda. While the Library cannot tackle all of those issues directly, it is important that we are attuned to the broader issues that are important to our community, such as advancing equity and inclusion, fostering a strong workforce, helping all families thrive, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

How We Created this Framework

From the beginning, CHPL's leadership insisted that the strategic planning process provide ample opportunity for staff in all functional areas and at all stages of their careers, as well as external stakeholders, to contribute their input and ideas. We accomplished this as follows:

Month	Audience	Activity
April	Stakeholders	conducted 12 interviews with internal and external stakeholders
April	Board of Trustees	introduction to the strategic planning process
April	Senior Leadership Team	introduction to the strategic planning process
May	All Staff	online survey to hear from staff their thoughts on CHPL's current direction and gather ideas for increasing our impact
May	Staff & Community Leadership	1.5 day workshop to dive into staff survey results and identify themes with SLT, Tomorrow's Managers, SPICE Team, Community Advisory Council
June	All Staff	virtual information session to get feedback on draft strategic priorities
July	All Staff	virtual information session to get feedback on draft strategic priorities
July	Community Leadership	meeting of Community Advisory Council to review & react to draft strategic priorities
August	All Staff	departmental brainstorming to inform implementation of the strategic framework
September	Staff Leadership (SLT & Agency Managers)	provide feedback on the draft framework
October	Board of Trustees	review and accept the strategic framework

Other Related Plans

Facility Master Plan

CHPL spent 2019 working on our Facility Master Plan, we held community listening sessions at every Library location and heard from over 3,000 residents and library users. Our Facility Master Plan is serving as a roadmap to our Building the Next Generation Library initiative, providing the Library with recommendations and a strategic direction for upgrading our facilities over the next 10 years. We've never undertaken such a comprehensive plan as this, which is enabling us to make informed decisions and maximize the dollars given to us by the taxpayers. All 40 branches and the downtown Main Library will receive improvements over the next 10 years.

Learn more at [CHPL.org/next](https://www.chpl.org/next)



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