



Boston Free Library



LONG-RANGE PLAN 2022-2027

Adopted by the Boston Free Library Board of Trustees, December 14, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Boston Free Library's Long-Range Plan (LRP) for 2022-2027 was created with the input of library staff and board members, as well as community members and stakeholders, including representatives from the town's educational and business communities. The objective of the plan is to identify and anticipate the current and future needs of the Boston Free Library, define the library's service priorities, and allow the library to continue to flourish as a center for knowledge, learning and entertainment. The long-range plan outlines the strategies library staff and administration will use to evaluate services and achieve the stated goals.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Boston Free Library is deeply rooted in the community: promoting partnerships and fostering the development of a literate and informed citizenry through free and equal access to cultural, intellectual, recreational and information resources. We strive to become increasingly integral to our community, and to serve that inclusive community with excellence.

MISSION STATEMENT

To connect our community with resources that educate, enrich, entertain, and enlighten all the people of Boston and Colden, and the surrounding areas of Hamburg, Concord, Eden, West Falls and Orchard Park through the resources of the Boston Free Library and the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System and to apply traditional expertise and technology to enable equal access throughout the community to quality library services, materials, and facilities.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The Boston Free Library, a member of the Buffalo & Erie County Library System, is located in Boston, New York, and is chartered to serve patrons from the Towns of Boston and Colden. As of the 2010 Census, the population of Boston was 8,023 while the population of Colden was 3,265. Boston Free Library Association owns the physical land and the building that houses the Library and the next nearest library is located nearly 10 miles away. The library's collection of 22,000 materials is currently kept in a single 3,300 sq. ft. facility. A collection of over 143,000 digitally accessible books and media is offered through the library's online catalog at www.buffalolib.org.

Uniquely located between four school districts and serving residents from more than five towns, the Boston Free Library is an essential and well-utilized community resource with over 23,000 items circulated in 2020. In addition to library materials, the Boston Free Library offers interlibrary loan, internet access, public computers, printers, copiers, laptops and iPads, 3-D printing, digital conversion devices, and a Library of Things as well as programming for all ages. The Boston Free Library is extremely efficient in its use of staff, space and energy.

THE BOSTON FREE LIBRARY WILL:

1. Provide open, equal and free access to information in accordance with the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights."
2. Deliver timely, confidential and customer-oriented service to meet the informational and educational needs of the community.
3. Promote lifelong learning by encouraging all children and adults to pursue their interests with the assistance of library resources.
4. Contribute to the region's economic vitality by assisting individuals, businesses and government as they pursue better jobs and economic growth.
5. Listen to the entire community in pursuit of the Library's Mission.
6. Manage resources effectively and be accountable to funding sources.
7. Pursue the private and public funding necessary to fulfill the Library's Mission.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Boston Free Library Board of Trustees and staff received input from the community to prepare the long-range plans taking the following steps:

1. The Boston Free Library Director met with community leaders and stakeholders in order to help define the library's service priorities.
2. The Boston Free Library Board of Trustees met, developed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of library services, discussed library and community needs, developed strategies and objectives for improving the library's services, and chose to establish service priorities based on these discussions.
3. Library staff developed a set of goals derived from the recommended service priorities, as well as specific strategies to achieve those goals and measurable objectives to help evaluate the library's progress toward achievement.
4. The Library Director drafted the first version of the long-range plan.
5. The Library Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the final plan.

SERVICE PRIORITIES, GOALS, STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

SERVICE PRIORITY #1: LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- I. Goal 1: Boston Free Library patrons will have access to programming that promotes life-long learning and emphasizes a feeling of connectedness.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. Programs will be offered that meet the community's personal, educational and creative needs.

- ii. The Library Director and staff will utilize formal and informal surveys to identify the topics of greatest interest or need in the community and prepare programming accordingly.
- iii. The Library Director and staff will work to provide programming that focuses on areas of interest to local residents of all ages, including topics related to education, technology, local history, cooking, crafts, fine art, nature and wildlife, gardening, and other identified interests.
- iv. The Library Director and staff will plan programs that utilize the library's outdoor spaces.
- v. The Library Director and staff will expand the Summer Reading programming to include adult patrons.
- vi. Programs will be continually evaluated for attendance, effectiveness, and community reception to determine future programming priorities.
- vii. The Library Director and Board will pursue private and public funding to supplement the library's programming budget and provide high quality program presenters and supplies.
- viii. All programs will be provided in the most inclusive manner possible to encourage participation among the community.

II. Goal 2: Boston Free Library will maintain a collection of books and materials, in a variety of formats that provide the community with reliable sources of information and entertainment.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director and staff will continue to monitor patron trends and circulation statistics to inform purchasing and weeding decisions.
- ii. The Library Director and staff will continue to purchase items for the Library of Things to provide the community with sustainable and affordable options for technological and recreational equipment as informed by community interests and demand.

III. Goal 3: The Boston Free Library will work to bolster the literacy rate in the Towns of Boston and Colden by providing access to high quality materials and programs that encourage early literacy and continue to support literacy at all ages.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director and staff will work in cooperation with Boston Valley Elementary and Colden Elementary schools as well as local daycares to encourage early literacy skills among students and to empower parents to support children in developing strong literacy skills.
- ii. The Library Director and staff will conduct outreach to schools, daycares, and childcare centers to encourage library usage and inform the community of the services and programs offered by the library.
- iii. The Library Director will work with local literacy groups to provide information on tutoring and a potential space for tutors and students to meet.

IV. Goal 4: The Boston Free Library will encourage the professional development of the library staff to meet the goals of the library.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director will conduct periodic review of job descriptions and performance appraisals of employees.
- ii. All staff will complete annual technology training appropriate to their job duties.
- iii. All staff will be encouraged to participate in workshops, meetings, and online educational opportunities to help them stay up-to-date on the latest professional practices, developments, and innovations.

SERVICE PRIORITY #2: CREATE LIFE-LONG LIBRARY USERS

I. Goal 1: The Boston Free Library will work to bridge the gap between young library users, families with small children, and senior citizens to offer services and programs that meet the needs of all ages in the community.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director and staff will utilize formal and informal surveys to determine barriers to library usage among young adults and young professionals.
- ii. The Library Director and staff will create strategies to remove these barriers wherever possible and meet library users at their point of need.
- iii. The Library Director and staff will create programming and services specifically aimed at meeting the needs of these age groups.

II. Goal 2: The Boston Free Library will expand Adult Programming.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director and staff will routinely survey library patrons and community members formally and informally to determine which programs are in greatest demand.
- ii. The Library Director and staff will expand adult programming to include book clubs, music clubs, genealogy workshops, and other topics identified in surveys.
- iii. Programs will be evaluated based on attendance, cost, and reception for continuation.

SERVICE PRIORITY #3: BEYOND BOOKS AT BOSTON

I. Goal 1: The Boston Free Library will create an inviting and inclusive Makerspace allowing the community to utilize technology that is not accessible on an individual level.

a. Strategies:

- i. The Library Director and staff will promote the current technology available for use in house and to check out at the Boston Free Library to ensure the community is aware of all available items.

- ii. The Library's Makerspace will be utilized for programming and included in promotional material to encourage community use.
- II. Goal 2: The Library of Things will become an integral part of the Boston Free Library's circulating collection.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director, staff and Board will continue to evaluate, update and expand the Library of Things to meet the needs of the community and adapt to changing technology.
 - ii. The Library Director and Board will pursue private and public funding to continue the expansion and maintenance of the Library of Things.
- III. Goal 3: The Boston Free Library will encourage creative expression within the community.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library will offer tools to foster creative pursuits including the 3D printer and Cricut Machine.
 - ii. The Library Director and staff will plan and conduct programs that encourage participants of all ages to engage in creative pursuits and will invite experts to present on artistic topics.
 - iii. The Boston Free Library will partner with other local organizations to encourage community-wide creative pursuits.

SERVICE PRIORITY #4: SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE AND MARKETING

- I. Goal 1: The Boston Free Library will maintain and expand its social media presence to meet users' and community members' needs.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director, staff and Board will routinely examine the effectiveness of current social media accounts, posts, and platforms to determine the effectiveness of current methods.
 - ii. The Library Director, staff and Board will consider adding new social media platforms as they arise to meet the needs of the community and reach people in the formats that are most effective.
- II. Goal 2: The Boston Free Library will increase its focus on marketing to ensure that the wider community is aware of library services and programs, including working to reach community members who are not currently utilizing the library.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director, staff and Board will work to determine which parts of the community are not utilizing the library through formal and informal surveys as well as outreach.
 - ii. The Library Director, staff and Board will create marketing to reach these segments of the population to increase their awareness of library services.

SERVICE PRIORITY #5: OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- I. Goal 1: The Boston Free Library will increase the visibility of the library and its mission within the community beyond the physical walls of the library building.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director, staff and Board will routinely participate in outreach at local community events including events at the Boston and Colden Town Halls and the Colden Art Festival.
 - ii. The Library Director and staff will conduct outreach in local schools and daycares to ensure that the library's services and mission are visible in the community.

- II. Goal 2: The Boston Free Library will actively pursue the creation of community partnerships.
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director and Board will regularly reach out to community organizations to determine opportunities to collaborate on community-wide projects.
 - ii. The Library Director will maintain a record of community partnerships and work to expand those partnerships.

- III. Goal 3: The Boston Free Library will offer support to Small Businesses, Job Seekers and Work From Home Alternatives
 - a. Strategies:
 - i. The Library Director, staff and Board will work with the Boston-Colden Chamber of Commerce and local Co-working Spaces to provide information on the resources and programs available through the Boston Library and the B&ECPL to support local businesses and job seekers.
 - ii. The Boston Free Library will provide support to Job Seekers through resources provided by the B&ECPL and local professionals including resume building and interview technique workshops and webinars.
 - iii. The Boston Free Library will support Work From Home Alternatives by providing WiFi and computers for use during all open hours and Chromebook kits available for checkout.

SERVICE PRIORITY #6: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

- I. Goal 1: The Boston Free Library will support environmental sustainability efforts within the community by providing information, programs and will actively work to increase the efficiency and eco-friendliness of the library building itself.
 - b. Strategies:
 - i. The Boston Free Library will work with local Master Gardeners to create an educational garden highlighting the benefits of planting Native New York Plants and supporting pollinators.

- ii. The Boston Free Library will provide information to the community about the benefits of eco-friendly efforts including solar energy, composting, recycling and more.
- iii. The Boston Free Library will work to reduce waste and increase recycling efforts including reducing paper waste.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

As developed by the Boston Free Library Staff, Board of Trustees and Friends of the Boston Library

STRENGTHS:

- Location
- Friendly, Service-Oriented Staff
- Small and Personal
- Large Collection of technological devices and non-traditional library materials to lend
- Community Support
- Library System Support from the B&ECPL
- Programming for Children

WEAKNESSES:

- Limited Hours
- Funding Instability
- Accessibility – no public transportation or walkable route
- Size – physical building size limits the collection size and the programs that can be hosted
- Adult Programming

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Community Partnerships with schools, daycares, Boys & Girls Club, seniors groups and Bread of Life Outreach Center
- Outdoor Programming Space
- Social Media and Virtual Resources and Programming to reach people unable to get to the physical library building
- Homeschooling Groups
- Unique Collection and Services offered at Boston location only

THREATS:

- Budget and County-Level Support
- Ongoing Covid pandemic and restrictions
- Changing Habits and Schedules among all age groups
- Increasing use of e-books and downloadable/streaming content
- Duplication of Services among library branches