



Literacy Plan

Statement of commitment to literacy:

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) has a commitment to “promote lifelong learning by encouraging all children and adults in the enjoyment of reading and discovery” as included in our Mission Statement. This Literacy Plan seeks to define the strategy the B&ECPL will employ to support this principal of service. This Plan was developed with the guidance of local teachers, public librarians, school librarians, reading specialists, adult literacy specialists and other professionals with area specific education or lived experiences.

The result is a Literacy Plan that infuses intentional literacy positive practices to areas of service already provided by the B&ECPL. The areas of service are Collections, Programs, Space and Staff. Our goal is to support our population in the obtaining of Functional Literacy.

Collections:

Our collection best supports literacy by providing quality materials that inspire the act of reading. B&ECPL will strive to encourage the development of literacy and motivation to practice literacy by providing engaging materials to patrons of all literacy abilities. Our staff will keep abreast of developing trends and popular titles for the demographic totality of readers and developing readers within Buffalo & Erie County.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library acknowledges that access to collections is paramount to the success of our goals of our Mission Statement, especially that of literacy. To encourage literacy, we move to eliminate barriers between our patron and our material. Removing the barriers of access is at the forefront of our minds as we seek creative solutions to issues of limited transportation, digital inequality, and accessibility. Current innovations to help improve access are our Fine Free policy, digital collections, and Library by Mail.

We are cognizant of the rising costs of materials and have made efforts to expand access to a variety of titles and materials through services like our interconnected holds service between branches and Interlibrary Loan. For our holds service, we have removed the fee

previously associated with the service. The majority of Interlibrary Loan interactions are also free of charge for patrons.

Our vast collections and resources can be overwhelming to patrons. Finding aids will be created and made available to help connect patrons with pertinent materials. These aids will be shared with staff, and patrons alike in various formats. As technology advances and more tools become available our methods may change but the finding aids will always be put forward.

Programs:

Within the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System, it is the privilege and responsibility of local Library Staff to provide programs specific to their population. Throughout the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System, there are a number of programs for all ages that support and celebrate literacy. Types of programs that accomplish this goal include, but are not limited to: Storytimes based on developmental milestones (Lapsits, Toddler Times, Preschool Storytimes), all ages Storytimes, Family Reading Events, School-Aged Book Clubs, Adult Book Clubs, Summer Reading Programs, Contests, Reading Logs, and Raffles.

Dynamic, community-minded, and literacy-supportive programs can be difficult to plan and enact. In an effort to support programming endeavors with the various Library Branches, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Services departments will provide support. This support includes shared materials, programs, and funds that are utilized across the system. These support systems shall be decided upon by a combination of surveys, committees, and management input.

Space:

Our various locations offer spaces that are conducive to study, reading, meetings, and tutoring. These are free to use by patrons of all ages, provided they abide by the various Codes of Conduct and Meeting Room Use policies throughout the County. The Library does ask that tutors check in so that we may utilize their efforts in our New York State Statistics, please check with your library location for their tutoring policies.

Some of our locations provide private study spaces that can be used by the public and non-profit organizations. These include: Audubon Branch, Central Library, Cheektowaga Branches (Anna Reinstein Memorial Library and Julia Boyer Reinstein Library), Crane Branch Library, Isaías González-Soto Branch Library, Grand Island Memorial Library, Kenmore Branch, and West Seneca Public Library.

Additionally, every location has a specific area for children. Our collective children's spaces are equipped with developmental activities and materials that encourage literacy at all ages and stages. Literacy is based on fundamental concepts learned in childhood, and our children's spaces are set up to be reflective of this principle.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has worked to create spaces that meet the standards requested by the ADA. Despite that effort, some locations do have areas that are inaccessible. Expanding accessibility where possible remains a goal of our institution.

Staff Continuing Education:

Staff members at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library are an important resource. To best support them in their efforts to aid their communities in Literacy initiatives, System Services will provide Continuing Education resources specific to this endeavor. These opportunities will follow current pedagogy supported by institutions of education in the area. Literacy-minded continuing education for populations that are considered vulnerable will be prioritized.

Continuing education events sponsored by System Services shall be recorded and archived for 3 years on the Staff Intranet, where allowed by presenters. After 3 years, items will be removed to ensure material presented stays current.

Vulnerable populations:

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is aware that vulnerable populations have a higher percentage of people who struggle to obtain Functional Literacy in the United States. We therefore share a commitment in our mission of equity to pursue programs and material that supports those who fall within that population base. This includes adults with low to no literacy, persons with learning disabilities, and persons who live in areas of high poverty. Additionally, while the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library acknowledges that there is no official Language of the United States, the Library System will endeavor to pursue partnerships with outside organizations to help populations learning English to become literate in English.

Literacy Plan and Library Policies:

This Literacy Plan is beholden to the parameters set within previous policy documents on a system and local level and at no point seeks to contradict them. These policies include, but are not limited to, the nationally adopted American Library Association's Bill of Rights, the BECPL system wide Collection Development Policy, various location specific Rules of Conduct, Meeting Room Policies, and Procurement Policies.