



WESTERN ALLEGHENY COMMUNITY LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2027

*Approved by the Board of Directors 2022

Western Allegheny Community Library
181 Bateman Rd.
Oakdale, PA 15071

Amy McDonald, Director
mcdonalda@einetwork.net



History and Background

Founded in 1990, Western Allegheny Community Library serves the communities of Findlay Township, North Fayette Township and Oakdale Borough, with a combined population of 24,014, covering 59 square miles. Data from the 2020 census shows that the largest population in the community is aged 19-64 (66%), followed by 18 years and under (21%), and then 65 years and under (13%). 43% of those 25 years or older hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

November 17, 1990, the Western Allegheny Community Library opened the original facility at 8042 Steubenville Pike in Oakdale, PA. It was strategically located within a mile of the high school and centrally located to all three municipalities. With an initial collection of 3,400 books in a two-room space, the library was a place for community members to gather and foster a love of learning.

In 1999 a building expansion gave the library increased space to offer computers and videos, but it was clear more was needed. In the early 2000's the library board and staff began to strategize a way to expand the library again to meet its growing community's needs. With the support of the local municipalities, the library acquired its current facility at 181 Bateman Road. The new building offered not only a much larger space with room to grow, but a beautiful, more accommodating atmosphere. With multiple meeting spaces, newer technology, and a constantly growing collection of both traditional and non-traditional items, the library became a destination point for the community.

History and Background (continued)

In 2015 the library partnered with West Allegheny School District and Monark Student Transportation to create a mobile library called the Book Bus, which takes literacy programs outside the library walls and into the community.

In 2017, WACL became the first library in Allegheny County to be awarded the PA Forward® Gold Star designation by the Pennsylvania Library Association, which showcases WACL as a high-quality learning provider, offering programming and services essential for early literacy and life long learning alike. The library also launched a new website and redesigned email, and opened its newly renovated outdoor space, the Backyard.

Still striving to lead the way and in response to the unique challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 WACL successfully piloted the county's Library Cards For All Program, which issued every student in the West Allegheny School District a free library card.

Today, the library continues to adapt and grow in an effort to meet the ever-changing needs of the expanding and diversifying community.

Mission

The mission of Western Allegheny Community Library is to provide a safe, inclusive, and accessible community-centered library that is free to the public and empowers its residents' personal, educational, and professional growth through our collection, programs, and services.

Vision

Our vision is for West Allegheny to be a vibrant, inclusive, connected, and informed community that is committed to lifelong learning.

Values

Community Partnership

We understand the importance of collaboration to support a strong and growing community through teamwork, partnerships, and shared success.

Equity and Inclusion

We appreciate cultural diversity, varied lived experiences, and unique individual needs. We are committed to fair and inclusive access, a sense of belonging and dignity, and the reflection of all voices.

Excellence and Integrity

We respect the need for integrity and are committed to informed planning and responsible stewardship.

Intellectual Freedom

We believe in intellectual freedom and uphold the right to privacy as well as the right to seek, access, and express diverse points of view.

Literacy and Lifelong Learning

We recognize the importance of literacy and understand that the desire to learn and grow is lifelong.

Respect

We treat all patrons, staff, and community members with kindness and respect.

Strategic Goals & Objectives

This section covers a set of goals and objectives that Western Allegheny Community Library's leadership, staff and stakeholders will pursue to support future action toward the mission, vision and values outlined above.

Strategic Goals & Objectives (continued)

Goal 1: Residents view WACL as a community hub and primary source of information as well as a center for collaboration and education in the community.

- ▶ Expand, grow, and develop community connections with local business and organizational leaders.
- ▶ Library connects patrons with presenters for enrichment of all ages.
- ▶ Library continues to build relationships with schools to work together to help students.
- ▶ Hire a part time Marketing Director.

Goal 2: WACL is funded at a level that reflects the needs and expectations of the community.

- ▶ Continue to engage the municipalities, keeping them abreast of all the programs and services the library provides.
- ▶ Actively seek out grant funding.
- ▶ Create a comprehensive fundraising plan.

Strategic Goals & Objectives (continued)

Goal 3: WACL leadership develops, supports, and appreciates staff.

- ▶ Provide a robust on-boarding training for new hires.
- ▶ Provide ongoing training and professional development for staff (procedural, customer service, best practices, reader's advisory).
- ▶ Identify new ways to show appreciation of staff.
- ▶ Improve functionality, ergonomics, and workflow in staff areas.

Goal 4: WACL's physical space accommodates the current and future needs of its users and is welcoming to all. Create the best space for library programs, services, and collections.

- ▶ Create the best space for library programs, services, and collections.
- ▶ Create a welcoming lobby for patrons that will serve as an introduction to the library
- ▶ Ensure library seating, flow, and signage is accessible and welcoming to all.
- ▶ Annually evaluate the building condition and need for continuing maintenance.

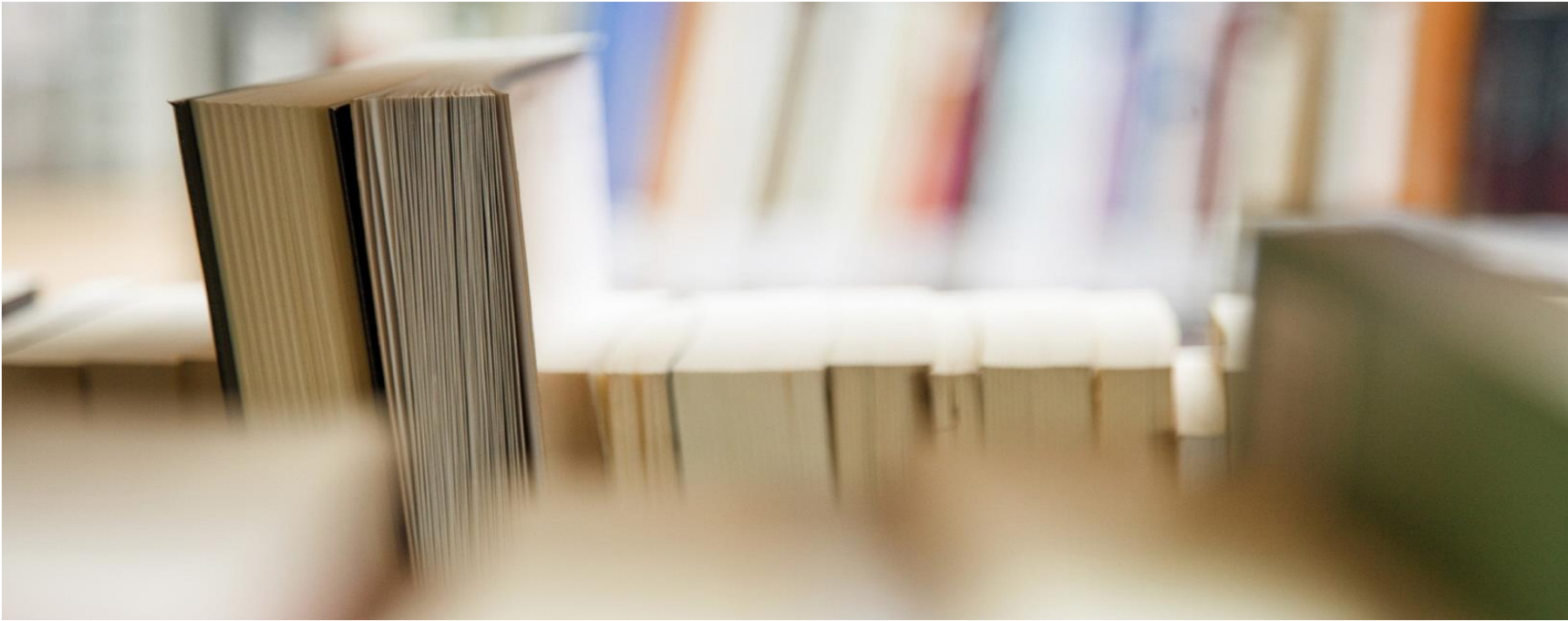
Strategic Goals & Objectives (continued)

Goal 5: WACL provides access to an evolving variety of collections, programs, services, and technologies.

- ▶ Create regular system for evaluating the collection and comparing it to what our patrons are requesting from other libraries.
- ▶ Offer a variety of diverse programs that meet the needs of the community.
- ▶ Annually evaluate new formats by which materials can be accessed.
- ▶ Explore the option of going fine free.

User Needs Assessment

In Summer 2022, a survey was conducted by the library to seek the opinions of the community. The survey questions inquired about services, programming, staffing, location, and the facility. Of the 137 respondents 29 (21.1%) were Findlay residents, 81 (59.1%) were North Fayette residents, 16 (11.6%) were Oakdale residents, and 12 (8.2%) reside outside of West Allegheny. 129 (94.2%) reported being regular library users while 8 (5.8%) self reported as non-library users. Respondents identified the staff/customer service as being the library's greatest asset, followed by the location and the programs and services. Many noted they are seeking improvements in collection development, parking, communication, and program offerings.



Concluding Statement

The library has grown and changed quite a lot over its 32-year history. Not content to rest on our laurels, in 2022 we are launching a new 5-year Strategic Plan. With these goals and a clear direction in mind, the library will keep moving forward to further serve its community, now and in the future. We view this plan as a living document and recognize that it may need to be adjusted, as we keep abreast of the changing role of public libraries. This plan will be reviewed at least quarterly by the Leadership Team and the Board of Directors.