



**CHICAGO
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



**BUILDING THE LIBRARY
OF THE FUTURE**

**2015-2019
STRATEGY**

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LETTER FROM MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL



Dear Friends,

From day one of my administration, I have worked to transform Chicago Public Library into 21st century centers of learning. Gone are the days where libraries were simply brick-and-mortar warehouses for books. At today's library, residents can learn how to use a computer, apply for jobs, receive help in starting a small business and take citizenship classes. Our children can go to their library to receive 24/7 access to homework help in English and Spanish, learn how to code and create digital media, and try out a 3D printer.

We have not only reshaped our libraries to meet the needs of the times, we have also improved core services. Chicago Public Library recently revamped its online presence, allowing residents to access digital materials, renew books and build communities online. We have built new libraries in Albany Park and Chinatown and launching new service models, like our Back of the Yards library co-located with the neighborhood high school.

Our efforts are getting noticed. In May 2014 CPL received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the country's highest award given to libraries for community service, from First Lady Michelle Obama. The Heinrich Heine University in Dusseldorf, Germany has ranked the CPL system as the best in the United States. CPL received a Social Innovator Award from the Chicago Innovation Awards due to the first-of-its-kind Maker Lab, which allows residents to learn about and experiment with 3D printing. And this past year, CPL was awarded the 2015 National Summer Learning Association's Founder's Award in recognition of its Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge.

Like parks, schools and playgrounds, our libraries are critical anchors in communities across Chicago. CPL is a global leader in providing innovative services and learning opportunities to residents of all ages, and through CPL's 2015-2019 Strategy, we look forwarding to building upon this success for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rahm Emanuel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rahm" being more prominent than the last name "Emanuel".

Rahm Emanuel
Mayor
City of Chicago

LETTER FROM
COMMISSIONER BRIAN BANNON
&
PRESIDENT
LINDA JOHNSON RICE



Dear Friends,

Since Chicago Public Library first opened its doors on January 1, 1873 with a collection of 3,157 volumes, it has been focused on providing free access to all, a departure from previous libraries that charged fees for membership. And it has worked to serve its patrons effectively, launching in 1874 a system of using horse-drawn carriages to deliver requested books to patrons at neighborhood storefronts.

A lot has changed since those early days in an abandoned water tower at the southeast corner of LaSalle and Adams. CPL's footprint, now 80 locations strong, reaches every neighborhood of the city. Books have been supplemented, over the years, with records and videocassettes, DVDs and CDs, and today, digital collections spanning all media. Research has migrated from card catalogs occupying countless drawers to an online directory with limitless potential. Throughout its 140-year history, CPL has demonstrated a remarkable ability to evolve with the changing times and the needs of Chicagoans. And it has always done so while maintaining its commitment to access for all and excellent patron service.

It is with that history as our foundation and that spirit inspiring this work that we present CPL's Strategy for 2015-2019. In the years to come, CPL's timeless mission will remain unchanged: Welcoming and supporting all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning, and striving to serve them well and effectively by providing equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs and other resources. But CPL will also respond to the current and evolving needs of patrons trying to learn, thrive and grow in the 21st century by nurturing learning, supporting economic advancement and strengthening communities.

Doing so will involve big initiatives, such as the launch of Wi-Fi hotspot lending intended to help close the digital divide, and more modest changes, such as the recent increase in the number of books and eBooks patrons can borrow at one time.

This document is intended to be an evolving roadmap for CPL's future. It will be powered by the efforts of the Library's dedicated staff, the passions of its patrons, and support from City leadership and the CPL Foundation. Join us, as we build the library of the future.

Best,



Brian Bannon
Commissioner
Chicago Public Library



Linda Johnson Rice
Board President
Chicago Public Library

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 21st century economy is a knowledge-based economy, an economy where innovation is prized, where the might of workers' minds trumps the mettle of their machines. And cities, dynamic, shifting, growing and nimble, are driving that economy. Already, half the world's population lives in cities. By 2050, that number will grow to two-thirds. This new economy transcends geographic borders. Globalization is accelerating innovation. And cities are becoming the incubators of that innovation. The most successful cities, in fact, supersede national governments as the economic engines driving our global economy.

To compete in this borderless economic frontier, cities must ensure that their residents are informed and creative, entrepreneurial and innovative, lifelong learners able to absorb and utilize new information.

That's where libraries come in. Libraries have always been, and continue to be, in the knowledge business. That does not, however, mean they have been static and unchanging institutions. Over the years, libraries have evolved to support knowledge creation and dissemination in relevant ways. In 1873, Chicago Public Library had a few thousand books housed in an abandoned water tank. Today, the institution has grown to 80 locations that offer 100,000 computer tutoring sessions, support 2.9 million computer sessions and draw 9.9 million visitors per year. CPL uses multimedia collaboration spaces designed for teens, Maker Labs that allow patrons to do 3D design and printing, and a website that allows patrons online access to a plethora of library materials, including eBooks, audiobooks and periodicals.

In a knowledge-based economy, libraries house crucial currency – knowledge in multiple forms – with books and literacy support as core assets. And they're more popular than ever. At a time when total annual attendance at all U.S. professional and college sporting events is 218 million, U.S. libraries are attracting 1.4 billion visitors per year. That popularity is not an accident. Throughout our 140-year history, as CPL has evolved, staff have always been innovative in finding new ways to serve changing patron needs. But that evolution is most successful when it is planned. And this strategy is intended to guide our evolution over the next four years. Our guiding principles – access for all and serving patrons effectively – remain constant and timeless. And they bookend the three strategic priorities that reflect Chicago's current needs, on which we will focus in the next four years:

NURTURE LEARNING

SUPPORT ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Our staff and leaders believe that by using those three priorities to guide their work, they will ensure that we support Chicago's position as a global city.

1 OF EVERY 4 PATRONS HAD USED THE LIBRARY FOR PROGRAMS

95%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID they had used CPL for books in the past

93%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID used Library building

91%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID used CPL website

79%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID they were very or extremely satisfied with CPL

90%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID they would be very likely to recommend the Library

72%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID the library was very important in their lives

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

DEDICATED TO THE CURIOUS

Chicago Public Library Foundation is dedicated to awakening curiosity and expanding knowledge in all Chicagoans.

For 30 years, the broad-based support of individuals, foundations and corporations to the Library through the Foundation has helped placed Chicago Public Library at the forefront of the field. Over time, the Foundation has invested more than \$70 million in the crucial and successful programs that span the Library's 80 locations and provide lifelong learning and enrichment for patrons of every age.

Gifts from the Foundation support innovation at the Library and fund fresh ideas and provide additional resources to increase the Library's impact. This public/private partnership is among the key ingredients that make Chicago Public Library truly exceptional.

Over the next four years, CPLF's robust partnership with the Library will continue to support the Library's ambitious program strategies: to provide access for all, nurture learning, support economic advancement,

strengthen communities and serve patrons effectively. With the Foundation's support, the Library will continue to pilot new programs and services and sharpen its focus on innovation, while maintaining its commitment to open access and patron-centered outcomes.

Each year, thousands of donors – generous individuals, foundations and businesses – provide funding for many of the initiatives highlighted in this four-year strategy, including homework help, One Book, One Chicago, CyberNavigators, YOUmedia, the award winning Summer Learning Challenge, and Maker Lab. These highly valued programs are all made possible because of private support.

The Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization which has consistently earned the highest rating of 4-Stars from Charity Navigator, based on its outstanding accountability, transparency and dedication to its mission. In 2016, the Foundation will provide more than \$9 million in support to CPL, helping it reach patrons in every neighborhood, and set a standard of service admired the world over.



OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In late 2013, we embarked on a highly collaborative strategic planning process. We performed a mission check, identified areas of intended impact and conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Library's programs, services and operations. We involved users through surveys, interviews, and observation. The strategy team engaged our staff through group meetings, surveys and focus groups. Finally, the team did a multi-layered external environmental scan with a focus on emerging technology trends. This scan included local, national and global library experts and experts in public, private and non-profit institutions, including other civic organizations and libraries. The resulting, first-ever Strategy articulated a clear set of principles and priorities for leaders, staff, partners and supporters, capitalizing on the Library's unique strengths.

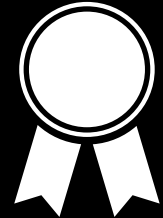
The Strategy was intended to be a living document, providing a continuing touchstone for staff and flexible enough to change as the environment around our city evolves. This 2015 update is a reflection of just that. While reconfirming the underlying principles and priorities, it takes into account new assessments of learning opportunities and the impacts of ever-advancing technological advances on those learning methods while aligning with the most current City of Chicago priorities for residents.

Chicago Public Library is World Class

Chicago Public Library has long been one of the premier library systems in the world: a world-class institution for a world-class city. In just the past two years, we were:



Awarded the 2014 National Medal for Museum and Chicago Library Service, "the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to the community," according to the White House



Ranked the best library in the United States and the 3rd best in the world by the Heinrich Heine University in Dusseldorf, Germany



Awarded the 2013 Social Innovator Award from the Chicago Innovation Awards for its Maker Lab, which expanded the ways in which the library was able to provide access to ideas and information



Awarded the 2015 National Summer Learning Association's Founder's Award in recognition of its Summer Learning Challenge aimed at eliminating summer learning loss

Our employees are proud of these honors. But excellence is not a one-time achievement. Rather, it is a continuing effort that requires adjusting to both the changing needs of patrons, and the varying resources available to the library. The ability to meet Chicagoans' shifting needs with the resources at hand requires thought, foresight and planning.

OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC VISION

Chicago Public Library works to ensure that it is a resource for all Chicagoans. In the next four years, we will work – both internally and in partnership with other cultural, civic and educational institutions in Chicago – to create and implement innovative solutions that meet changing patron needs. This Strategy maps out how we will be able to do that.

At the highest level, CPL will continue to ensure that we provide access to knowledge and information to all Chicagoans through our facilities, content and programs. And we will work to serve patrons effectively by providing an enjoyable and welcoming environment, a staff that is responsive to their needs and robust digital resources while ensuring good stewardship of its budget, facilities and other assets. These priorities remain constant and have been foundations for CPL's work throughout our history.

As CPL evolves, we will also need to strategically concentrate its work in areas that meet the current needs and priorities of the city and its people. Specifically, we will work to:

NURTURE LEARNING
SUPPORT ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT
STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES





ACCESS FOR ALL

Why This is Important

Providing every Chicagoan with access to knowledge, information and experiences is fundamental to Chicago Public Library's mission, and the foundation of a functioning democracy. Our commitment to open and free access is central to all programs, services and operations. Broad access empowers patrons to explore their interests, support their love of reading, engage them with new ideas, achieve their learning goals, find employment, start new businesses and improve and contribute to their communities.

In order to provide broad access, we are committed to minimizing barriers to use. Chicagoans – from every neighborhood, of every background – should feel welcome at any CPL branch, able to learn, experiment and immerse themselves in knowledge. That access strengthens the core of Chicago's democracy, connecting every patron with the information he or she needs to participate in all aspects of society. When Chicagoans can access high-quality resources and are empowered by knowledge, learning and experience, the city will prosper.

How We Do It

CPL makes knowledge and information available and accessible to every Chicagoan through high-quality:

- Books, print & digital materials
- Programs, information & referral services
- Facilities
- Technology
- Helpful staff

We provide access by offering relevant collections, driven by patron needs and interests, in a convenient and usable format and offering substantial digital content, like electronic books and online research tools. The Talking Books Center provides additional access to Chicago residents of all ages who cannot read standard print materials comfortably due to visual or physical limitations. In addition to content, we provide patrons with access to world-class, unique and engaging classes, workshops, events and programs in neighborhood branches, regional libraries and the Harold Washington Library Center.

We facilitate access by ensuring that our buildings are safe, clean and welcoming. Whenever we build a new library branch, we ensure that the facility's design and layout reflect community needs. As the type and format of relevant knowledge changes, we will continue to respond with services and programs that make that knowledge accessible for all Chicagoans. Within each library location, we strive to provide access to relevant technology to meet local patrons' needs. In order to maintain and expand those efforts, we will continue our leading role in providing free public computing and cutting-edge technology and experiment with new initiatives like lending Wi-Fi hotspots, programmable Finch Robots and Launchpads, pre-loaded tablets that expand access to curriculum-based apps. We will create engaging digital environments through our flexible website, where patrons can access content, explore interests, share ideas and strengthen skills.

To Ensure Access, We Are:

01

Designing programs, services and collections based on Chicagoans' evolving needs and interests by efforts that give people access to new technology. Examples include:

- The Maker Lab, where patrons access 3D design, scanning and fabrication technology.
- Internet to Go, which allows patrons to check out Wi-Fi hotspots enabling them to access information anywhere.
- A new Software as a Service website and phone app to ease access to content for patrons anytime, anywhere and with any device.
- Digitized special collections, including municipal records, allowing users to access specialized information online.
- Programmable robots, to help kids any age learn computer programming, and can be borrowed from any branch.
- Upgrading photocopiers to digital scanners.
- Offering homework help in every neighborhood branch and online every day.

02

Delivering services, not only within the walls of our libraries, but also in patrons' homes, schools and workplaces through our online presence. Examples include:

- Zinio for Libraries, a distribution service that delivers digital magazines to the patron on their favorite digital device.
- Hoopla, a service that allows libraries to offer patrons access to movies, television, music and audiobooks.
- Electronic books.
- Online homework help with a library card that also offers paper reviews and test preparation.

03

Deepening the impact of the Library's extensive physical assets in every neighborhood in the city. Examples include:

- Launching the first-ever Master Plan for the flagship Harold Washington Library Center, focusing on maximizing economic and educational impacts and cultural enrichment.
- Preparing for similar, localized Master Plans for Woodson and Sulzer Regional Libraries and neighborhood branches to ensure all locations are contributing as fully

04

Harnessing innovative approaches to improving operations and services through and redesign of library spaces and operational systems. Examples include:

- Opening the architecturally significant Chinatown Branch, with its reimagined early learning space and YOUmedia Center.
- Creating a new active learning center within the Children's Library at Harold Washington Library Center and expanding the new model to the fifteen additional branch and regional libraries.
- Making extensive facility improvements to the Carter G. Woodson and Conrad Sulzer regional Libraries.
- Redesigning spaces at branches throughout the city to better meet patron needs.

Promoting fully inclusive policies that support our principle of free and open access. Examples include:

- Lending Wi-Fi hotspots in an effort to mitigate the digital divide.
- Allowing residents the ability to apply for an e-card online, giving them the ability to check out materials, stream music or movies, access resources and place holds, all online.
- Accepting state-issued “Not Valid for Identification” ID’s when applying for a library card.
- Allowing renewals of overdue materials as long as the outstanding fine is less than \$10.
- Waiving replacement card fees for children receiving cards through library card campaigns with local schools.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

In the next four years, our strategy will revolve around three initiatives to help patrons of all ages and from all walks of life thrive in a rapidly-changing world:

By leveraging our unique assets – including our reach into every community in the city – we aim to meet Chicago's critical needs, support the city's strategic priorities, and do so in an effective cost-efficient manner.



**NURTURE
LEARNING**



**SUPPORT
ECONOMIC
ADVANCEMENT**



**STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITIES**

NURTURE LEARNING

Why This is Important

Chicago Public Library has always been a key educational resource for Chicagoans. Everyone from toddlers to seniors use the library as a place to learn and discover. And indeed, as the need for continuous, lifelong learning becomes more pronounced and the ways in which people can learn evolve, we have the opportunity to support that learning in a variety of ways: workshops, labs, peer to peer connections, online and through other self-directed activities.

In a time when learning has become more personalized, CPL, in collaboration with leading educators, supplements traditional education with high-quality programs and resources.

How We Do It

We nurture learning for patrons of all ages. Library staff support early childhood and pre-kindergarten educational goals through family and caregiver engagement and support children, teens, and adults through late life. We leverage our deep professional knowledge and resources to help patrons build literacy and foster additional 21st century skills: digital, cultural and information literacy; critical thinking and problem solving; creativity and innovation; and communication and collaboration. And we do so through children's classes and story time; the Summer Learning Challenge, designed to combat summer learning loss and increase student excitement for learning science, technology, engineering, math and the arts; YOUmedia, mentor-led teen learning spaces in twelve library locations that foster creativity and collaboration while exposing and supporting teens to explore career pathways related to their interests; and the Maker Lab, which offers patrons access to 3D design and fabrication. We also strive to provide patrons resources and support to facilitate adaptive, personalized learning, and continue to make new investments to maintain our best-in-class collections, buildings and technology.

In sum, CPL nurtures learning in different ways for four groups of patrons: families with young children, school-aged children, teens and adults.

For Chicago's Families with Young Children, We Are:

01

Focusing on professional development for children's librarians to ensure a well-trained staff with early-childhood development expertise.

02

Explicitly communicating staff expertise and skills to patrons and external partners to ensure that they are utilized maximally.

03

Providing best-in-class programs and services that advance early-childhood and pre-kindergarten learning. Examples include:

- Maintaining and expanding strong programs that utilize staff expertise, like story time, and the Rahm's Little Readers component of the Summer Learning Challenge.
- Using Reader's Advisory skills to offer individualized, developmentally appropriate book recommendations to caretakers, families and educators.
- Equipping staff to understand evolving early-childhood research and build innovative services that support the multiple ways children learn. For example, the Summer Learning Challenge includes reading goals, hands-on science experiments, and interactive art and making activities to engage families with young children.
- Collaborating with early-childhood organizations, Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services to scale effective programs and deliver enhanced services.

04

Focusing on engaging parents and caregivers to help their children build a foundation of literacy to underlie future success. Examples include:

- Sharing evidence-based resources that support early literacy skills for children that parents and caregivers can practice at home and that help celebrate the power of parents in a child's life.
- Modeling effective practices for parents and caregivers through story time and other family focused programs in library branches and in community-based early childhood centers.
- Hosting workshops for parents and caregivers on child-related topics (e.g. special needs resources).
- Incorporating a parental engagement component of Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge which promotes family engagement and STEAM learning.
- Providing family field trips to museums to promote learning opportunities.

05

Offering relevant, supportive resources including a current, diverse and responsive collection of books, toys and age-appropriate digital materials that support learning. Examples include:

- Using patron data and staff knowledge to further develop our book collection and other content to support learning (e.g. blocks, games, play materials and age-appropriate technology, such as tablets).
- Bringing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) learning to families with young children (e.g., I STEAM Trucks, Rahm's Little Readers Summer Learning Challenge, and Science Connections programming, including Mini Mad Scientist programs).
- Referring families to high quality online tools and resources that support learning.

Creating a family-friendly environment, using design and research to develop spaces that support how children, play, discover and learn. Examples include:

- Designing spaces to encourage play and discovery at new branch libraries and retrofitting existing libraries with new, dynamic early learning spaces.
- Providing STEAM and early learning activities at early Head Start centers and other educational sites where children, families and caregivers gather through I STEAM Truck teams of library staff equipped with fun and age-appropriate learning activities.



For Chicago's School-Aged Children, We are:

01

Maintaining welcoming, safe and technology-enhanced spaces for learning and exploration. Examples include:

- Ensuring locations and hours are accessible for youth.
- Providing access to technology in every community.
- Providing safe spaces for studying, exploring ideas and learning.
- Redesigning spaces, where feasible, to support the ways that kids learn both alone and in groups..

02

Providing expert staff, who are trained to support learning, who will instill a love of reading and engage children's curiosity and exploration.

03

Offering an array of evidence-based programs and services in partnerships with schools and cultural institutions that advance learning throughout the school year. Examples include:

- Offering engaging, award-winning summer programs that can help prevent summer learning loss and support students to start or return to school each autumn better prepared to learn.

Offering out-of-school time experiences to advance literacy and 21st century skills (e.g. science programming in partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry).

- Coordinating with partner organizations to scale effective programs and enhance learning opportunities that meet children's learning goals..

04

Offering STEAM-focused materials, workshops and interactive learning opportunities that encourage school-aged children to become involved with science, technology, engineering, arts and math learning early. Examples include:

- Sharing evidence-based resources that support early literacy skills for children that parents and caregivers can practice at home and that help celebrate the power of parents in a child's life.
- Modeling effective practices for parents and caregivers through story time and other family focused programs in library branches and in community-based early childhood centers.
- Hosting workshops for parents and caregivers on child-related topics (e.g. special needs resources).
- Incorporating a parental engagement component of Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge which promotes family engagement and STEAM learning.
- Providing family field trips to museums to promote learning opportunities.

05

Pursuing opportunities to support adaptive and self-paced education, allowing school-aged children to actively participate and learn in a personalized way. Examples include:

- Using patron data and staff knowledge to further develop our book collection and other content to support learning (e.g. blocks, games, play materials and age-appropriate technology, such as tablets).
- Bringing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) learning to families with young children (e.g., I STEAM Trucks, Rahm's Little Readers Summer Learning Challenge, and Science Connections programming, including Mini Mad Scientist programs).
- Referring families to high quality online tools and resources that support learning.

Providing a full complement of relevant resources and reference services including a current and diverse collection of books, digital content, games and technology to advance learning and promote the joy and importance of reading for children and their caregivers.

Offering programs and workshops for parents and other caregivers to enhance caregivers' ability to support their school-aged children. Examples include:

- Creating Best of the Best, an annual day of review of the best books and media for children.
- Promoting hands-on learning for parents and educators in STEAM and other workshops.
- Providing on-site early learning programs in pediatric clinics, in partnership with Reach out and Read, connecting parents and caregivers to Library resources and teaching them effective early literacy practices.



For Chicago's Teens, We are:

01

Providing knowledgeable, well-trained library staff with the expertise to support teens' social development, interests and learning. Examples include:

- Equipping staff to serve as mentors for teen patrons.
- Invigorating program design with peer-learning and peer-sharing practices.
- Implementing evidence-based practices for supporting teens' success in school and life, promoting civic engagement and providing pathways for post-secondary education and career planning.

02

Creating engaging and welcoming spaces to support teens' learning and discovery in a social setting. Examples include:

- Expanding YOUmedia, which CPL has now scaled to twelve locations, serving teens throughout the city.
- Networking youth through CPL's engagement in the virtual space created by Hive Chicago's connected learning initiatives.

03

Offering interest-based projects, activities and mentorship to develop teens' 21st century skills, supporting academic needs and fostering personal growth. Examples include:

- Empowering teens to create and design activities at the library.
- Giving teens resources and tools to explore their interests, create new things, and work collaboratively on projects that inspire them through YOUmedia and Maker Labs.

- Partnering with world-class organizations for collaborative programming and to expose teens to a broad range of experiences, like our Community Telescope Ambassadors Initiative with the Adler Planetarium, Teen Lit Fest with Columbia College and Hive Chicago partners, Summer Internships through One Summer Chicago and After School Matters.
- Offering opportunities for teens to grow and learn while they serve as mentors for younger children through near peer STEM mentoring.
- Engaging teens in creating cultural programming (e.g., Teen Lit Fest, STEAM Studio).

04

Facilitating access to relevant and engaging materials, including state-of-the-art technology and digital resources. Examples include:

- Developing engaging collections (books, eBooks, graphic novels, etc.) based on teen interests and feedback.
- Providing access to an array of production resources including industry-grade design software, photo and audio equipment, makerspaces, and gaming systems.
- Optimizing dedicated teen content discovery areas in all locations, including online.
- Providing access to technology, resources and collections that inspire exploration, creativity and learning (e.g. vinyl cutters, robotics kits, 3D printers, etc.).

05

Providing connection to college and career pathways, including structured career exploration opportunities such as experiences with special emphasis on digital media, arts and technology careers. Examples include:

- Leading the field in open micro-credentials (or "badging") that allow teens to showcase the skills they learn.
- Working with educational institutions like Chicago Public Schools to provide career development experiences and service learning opportunities.

NURTURE LEARNING

Providing a full complement of relevant resources and reference services including a current and diverse collection of books, digital content, games and technology to advance learning and promote the joy and importance of reading for children and their caregivers.

Nurturing learning is not a single act, but rather, a series of decisions made to provide patrons of all ages and backgrounds with the support and services they need to learn and grow throughout their lives. Our efforts to nurture learning extend to our youngest patrons and their families. In recent years, we have made heavy investments in early learning through programs like Storytime, which uses picture books, finger plays, songs, dramatic play and other activities to engage babies and toddlers; and Rahm's Little Readers, a wildly-successful extension of the Library's summer-learning program. We have also created enhanced music and movement programming for early learners.

For school-aged children, nurturing learning focuses on bringing education to kids year-round. Over the last several years with private support through CPLF, we have revamped our summer learning program, Rahm's Readers, turning this program into an innovative STEAM experience that includes books, science experiments, games, artistic efforts and online digital literacy building, and aligns with Common Core educational standards. We have also designed, using evidence-based guidelines, to reduce the "Summer Slide," the learning loss routinely suffered by students while out of school during the summer. In 2015, the revamped program drew record participation, with more than 99,000 kids engaged in reading and learning. And in addition to the countless science experiments attempted and artistic endeavors completed, Chicago's kids collectively read more than 2.7 million books (equaling 66 million minutes of reading), exceeding the citywide goal set by Mayor Emanuel.

For teens, nurturing learning also means expanding YOUmedia, a 21st century teen learning environment created in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, where mentors facilitate learning and development with media creation tools and software, from five locations to 12. YOUmedia allows teens to learn and apply digital media skills to creating digital products – from songs to podcasts and 3D printed products. Chance the Rapper, who hails from Chatham and was discovered through YOUmedia's open mic events at Harold Washington Library Center, not only extols YOUmedia in interviews, he immortalizes YOUmedia in the lyrics to his track "Acid Rain."

Finally, nurturing learning expands beyond children and students to adults for economic, cultural and interest-based learning and skill-building. Programs such as Peer to Peer University peer learning circles facilitate collaboration, learning, and accountability while using free online education courses. Additionally, we are working with partners to build a digital skills curriculum that support adult and senior citizen learning for the 21st century.



For Chicago's Adults, We are:

01

Maintaining a well-trained staff that provides reference and research guidance, including referrals to outside organizations. Examples include:

- Equipping and training staff to refer patrons to relevant, high-quality resources throughout the city and bring those resources to the library as needed.
- Provide staff with the tools and training they need to create personalized recommendations based on patron interest.

02

Stocking current, diverse and engaging books and digital content that meet the needs of Chicago's adults and are responsive to their interests. Examples include:

- Creating and implementing a plan to build upon the successful patron driven acquisition pilot.
- Supporting and expanding availability of digital content such as books, movies, music, magazines and audiobooks.
- Making available new, non-traditional resources for circulation.

03

Designing and offering programs and services to build digital literacy and 21st century skills. Examples include:

- Developing and designing Digital Learn, a free, online computer skills learning tool for adults in partnership with the Public Library Association.
- Expanding the CyberNavigator program, a cadre of computer tutors funded by CPLF to help patrons build digital literacy and technology skills, to all CPL locations by early 2016.
- Training staff to support current and future patron technology needs.

04

Designing and offering programs and services to enable social learning, such as programming that supports patrons to fully utilize online open educational resources. For example:

- Partnering with organizations such as Peer-to-Peer University to offer Learning Circles, community-based learning opportunities in topics as diverse as Computer Programming, Creative Writing and Public Speaking in neighborhood libraries.

05

Designing and offering programs and services to build cultural literacy. Examples include:

- Making unique cultural events accessible at the Harold Washington Library Center and neighborhood locations in partnership with world-class cultural institutions.
- Bringing engaging cultural events to neighborhood branches in support of the City's Cultural Plan.

Designing and offering programs and services to build vital economic literacy, including understanding of financial, legal, healthcare and citizenship topics, in partnership with community groups, financial institutions, government agencies and schools. Examples include:

- Hosting Affordable Care Act Navigators and informational programs in neighborhood libraries throughout the city.
- Hosting “Complete the Degree” to assist adults through the process of going back to school and completing a degree.
- Delivering tax return preparation and financial services help in partnership with organizations like Ladder Up and IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA).
- Facilitating workshops and information on becoming a U.S. citizen, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of New Americans, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services through the CPL Cities for Citizenship program at 10 branches designated as Citizenship Corners.
- Delivering financial literacy programming (e.g., Money Smart and FINRA/Smart investing@ your library financial literacy events).



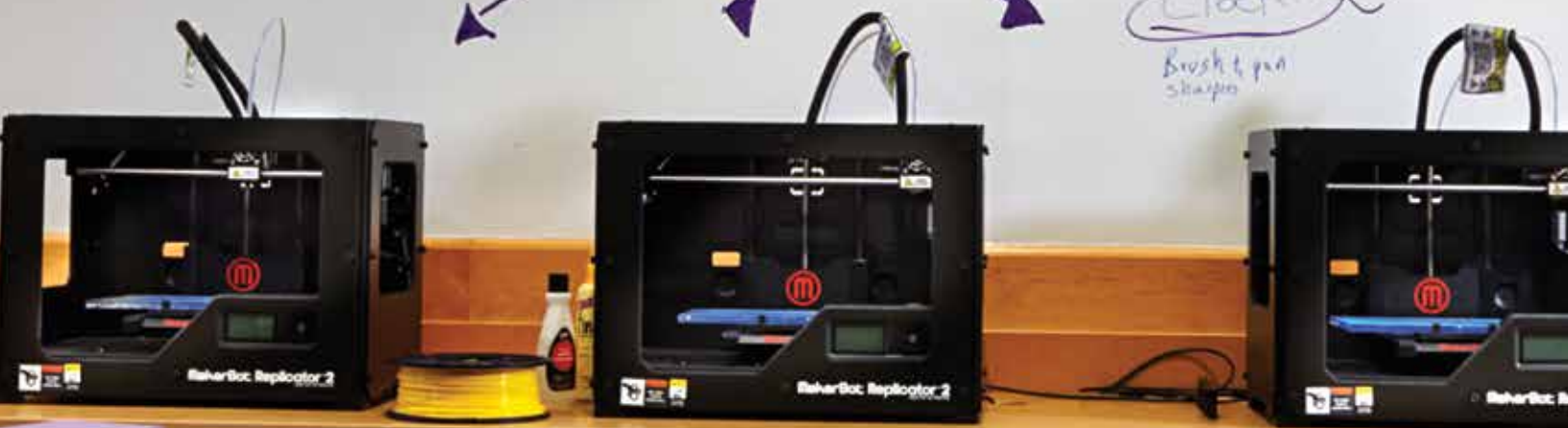
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SUPPORT ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

Why This is Important

Chicago, along with other major global cities and urban centers, is undergoing rapid transformation. Once a base for manufacturing and service industries, it is quickly becoming a hub for the growing information and idea industries. As this happens, the necessary workplace skills, the preferred business and service models, the essential local-to-global networks and the definitions of what makes a place an attractive business hub are also undergoing dramatic transformation. Given these changes, Chicago is evaluating its assets and development strategies to ensure that it is able to succeed in this changing and fluid economy.

Chicago Public Library is a key partner for Chicago's economic development initiatives that focus on people and quality of life. Chicago's "Neighborhood Small Business Growth Strategy" focuses on maintaining a vibrant base of small businesses, a major source of local job creation. Similarly, the "Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs Strategies" and the "Chicago Technology Plan" focus on creating a competitive, mobile and globally-focused entrepreneurial environment within the city. These strategies focus on building on local strengths, with a mix of residential, commercial and cultural activities to create a vibrant city with a high quality of life. We take our role in the City's plans and strategies very seriously. The Library provides a broad range of information services and support for diverse constituencies throughout the city. We are exploring innovative ways to support Chicago's economic vitality by leveraging those resources.

How We Do It

CPL plays a key role in providing tangible support to Chicagoans who are looking for a new job, seeking to advance in their current job, start a new business or grow their existing small business. In many communities, we can help build economic opportunities by supporting people in acquiring basic skills, getting job referrals, finding employment and developing their businesses. We can do this through programs (like CyberNavigators in every branch and resume workshops hosted in the library), services (like research assistance), partnerships with workforce development organizations and other local networks, and the investments we make to maintain and improve our best-in-class collections, buildings and technology that support patron needs. Our staff – with their unique talents and expertise – supports all Chicagoans in their quest to achieve their economic and life goals. We help job seekers, entrepreneurs and small business owners build skills and knowledge to achieve their economic goals.

For Chicago's Job Seekers, We are:

01

Supporting the development of technology skills. Examples include:

- With support from CPLF, offering one-on-one CyberNavigator support for patrons to develop basic technology skills (e.g. email set up, internet search) that enable them to participate in today's labor market. This program will expand to all library locations in early 2016.
- Helping patrons understand and master a set of standard digital skills that will help them fully engage in their chosen career path.

02

Creating an efficient process for connecting job seekers to high-quality resources and services. Examples include:

- Providing access to computers with industry standard software and leveraging technology (Wi-Fi, public computers, printers) to support job search.
- Providing referral services that connect job-seekers to best-in-class career services provided by workforce development organizations and educational institutions throughout Chicago.

03

Offering professional online and in-person assistance in the form of trained, experienced staff and digital experts. Examples include:

- Partnering with leading workforce organizations to provide additional assistance and best-in-class training for staff and digital experts.
- Increasing librarians' familiarity with workforce development partners so they can best inform and refer patrons to the most appropriate services.
- Providing online tools that help patrons achieve their career objectives.

04

Hosting workshops and services to advance career skills and employment in partnership with best-in-class workforce organizations. Examples include:

- Partnering with expert workforce organizations to deliver training on additional skills (e.g. interview prep, resume writing and industry-specific skills).
- Publicizing our services to other organizations and business leaders to raise awareness (e.g. Aldermen and local Chambers of Commerce).

05

Designing and offering programs and services to build cultural literacy. Examples include:

- Making unique cultural events accessible at the Harold Washington Library Center and neighborhood locations in partnership with world-class cultural institutions.
- Bringing engaging cultural events to neighborhood branches in support of the City's Cultural Plan.

For Chicago's Small Business Owners, We are:

01

Providing research services and relevant materials and collections delivered by expert staff. Examples include:

- Assisting patrons as part of reference services in finding the materials they need to support their business goals (e.g. patent information).
- Providing current, diverse and responsive books and other content that support small business needs.

02

Offering guidance and referrals to organizations throughout the city that have small business-focused resources and relationships. Examples include:

- Guiding patrons in navigating the range of information and organizations available throughout the city.
- Referring patrons to organizations with small-business-specific resources (e.g. zoning maps).
- Connecting patrons with valuable relationships (e.g. Women's Business Development Center or local Chambers of Commerce).

03

Providing space for working and collaboration, including meeting and networking space, for small businesses and supporting organizations. Examples include:

- Providing space for local entrepreneurs, small businesses, Aldermen's offices and other City departments, local Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations to meet, collaborate and work together.

- Making spaces available to the greatest extent possible (e.g. time limits and space use guidelines).

04

Facilitating access to supporting services including mentorship and workshops. Examples include:

- Partnering with organizations like SCORE to provide one-on-one help in crafting a business plan.
- Hosting Goodcity Chicago to provide assistance in starting non-profit organizations, nonprofit businesses or social good businesses.

We are well positioned to support Chicagoans' economic advancement. We help adults navigate job searches with tools, tips and referrals to high quality career development and training providers. We host workshops and classes to support career development and learning. But it doesn't stop there. We are working to connect library branch managers to City College leaders, so that branch managers can guide education and job seekers to the appropriate educational supports. Our branch managers are also building relationships with local Chambers of Commerce to connect them with and support small businesses. Additionally, we are working with existing incubators to support entrepreneurs and business planning and development. Finally, we have modified some policies to make the library a friendlier place for patrons to work, including making more space available for collaboration, offering better access to computers and printers, including starting to offer free digital scanners, and banishing the ban on beverages.

SUPPORT ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

BACK TO SCHOOL



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Why This is Important

Chicago Public Library locations serve as community anchors, spaces where people come together for civic and community activities. Our system acts as an artery that allows cultural and civic assets to flow throughout the city. Every library location can be leveraged to increase civic and community awareness, engagement and activity. We know that engaged and empowered residents generate optimism about the future, produce good decisions on high-need community challenges and contribute to both economic growth and individual well-being. Because of our broad footprint, we are highly visible in every community in the city. Library branch managers are trusted neighborhood leaders, engaging with local organizations, City departments, schools and more, in shaping and leading discussions, decisions and strategies that foster active and purposeful civic engagement and community building. In Chicago, each community library is unique and represents the spirit of that neighborhood. The democratic nature of Chicago's libraries allows for diverse people to come together and exchange ideas in a safe environment.

How We Do It

We thoughtfully examine the ways that our library locations support the neighborhoods where they are located. This includes our locally-relevant collections, programs like One Book, One Chicago, book clubs and services tailored to community needs. Increasingly, strengthening communities means creating flexible physical spaces for community engagement by creating more open spaces and transparency in our buildings which, increases the richness of interactions among patrons and between patrons and their local communities. It continues to mean providing space to host civic activities like polling and community meetings ranging from neighborhood organizations to Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS).

For us, strengthening communities means that every library location works to foster community collaboration and help its neighborhood discover its potential. Individual branch managers build relationships with a number of city and local organizations to connect patrons with relevant resources. We serve communities in two broad categories: neighborhoods and groups whose shared interests bring them together to form a community.

For Chicago's Neighborhood and Communities, We are:

01

Providing meeting space for Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and neighborhood groups to convene, host activities and offer information and services to patrons. Examples include:

- Making study and community rooms more accessible through a new, online reservation system.
- Empowering managers to creatively and effectively use space, such as "The Shift", a space created in the Bezazian Branch to allow patrons to discuss local business development initiatives, and a new teen space in the West Town Branch.

02

Providing a safe haven and welcoming environment for all programs and services. Examples include:

- Updating the Library's Guidelines Governing Use to ensure safe and welcoming libraries for all visitors.
- Working with partners in the City's Fleet & Facility Management Department, local law enforcement, schools and other community stakeholders to foster general community safety.

03

Hosting programs and resources that foster civic engagement. Examples include:

- Supporting Citizenship Hubs at relevant branches and partnering with the Office of New Americans to provide resources and services based on patron needs.
- Hosting community meetings that foster civic engagement (e.g. CAPS).
- Displaying materials on civic engagement during civic events such as early voting.

04

Housing celebrations of neighborhood and cultural history through partnerships with local organizations. Examples include:

- Featuring rotating exhibits at Harold Washington Library Center that celebrate Chicago and make the most of the Library's archival and special collections.
- Encouraging all locations to develop ways, through programs and content, to celebrate their local communities.
- Partnering with neighborhood institutions for outreach at local events.

05

Fostering connections to resources throughout the city, especially for underserved patrons, with needed community resources (e.g., DFSS and other city services). Examples include:

- Hosting Affordable Care Act Navigators in neighborhood libraries.
- Providing citizenship services in neighborhoods in partnership with the Mayor's Office for New Americans.
- Distributing food for children in partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository.
- Bringing STEAM programming to families with young children across the city through I STEAM Trucks.

06

Facilitating connections among patrons and neighborhood and community groups. Examples include:

- Allowing groups to reach interested patrons at the library.
- Referring patrons to sources of interest-specific information and resources.

07

Highlighting interest-based collections and relevant materials to support patron interests in physical and digital spaces. Examples include:

- Featuring showcases to cultivate patron interests and foster awareness of our collections.
- Partnering with local institutions and organizations to provide interest-based collections and topic-specific displays (e.g. Office of New Americans and DCASE Chicago Artist Month).
- Expanding foreign language collections (i.e. Chinese books at the Chinatown Branch and Korean texts in the Albany Park Branch).
- Empowering patrons to create interest-based collections online through creating lists and rating materials.
- Expanding the reach and access to the library's special collections by including our collections with regional and national organization (e.g. DPLA and Chicago Collections Consortium via the Explore Chicago portal).

08

Connecting neighborhoods to cultural, learning and civic activities across the city. Examples include:

- Linking the Architectural Biennial to city-wide One Book, One Chicago programming.
- Partnering with the Lyric Opera of Chicago to bring programming into the neighborhoods.
- Providing digitized versions of key municipal and historical neighborhood documents.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Strong communities are connected communities, engaged communities and inspired communities. And we are offering a variety of services, programs and resources – some high profile, others less well known – that, taken together, make our libraries the hub of many of the communities they serve.

Some resources – like learning challenges, concert and theater performances and tech and citizenship classes – are widely known, used and loved by many patrons.

Others are hidden gems that provide crucial support in strengthening communities. For example, the Library's special collections on Chicago neighborhood history, contains a wealth of information for those interested in Chicago community history. These collections help to illustrate through primary source materials how Chicago is truly a city of neighborhoods. Similarly, the Municipal Reference Collection is a vast trove of information on community and civic statistics, data, ordinances, budgets and annual reports housed at the Harold Washington Library Center, and staffed by passionate, deeply curious librarians. These staff members can supply a neighborhood advocacy group with demographic numbers to support a grant application for a community program. They can help an aspiring business owner better understand a neighborhood's need. And they can help neighborhood historical societies understand the histories of local buildings and institutions.

Whether hosting a program or helping to interpret and utilize data from the Municipal Reference Collection, engagement with our patrons and their worlds allows us to play a key role in strengthening communities.



SERVE PATRONS EFFECTIVELY

Why This is Important

We are driven by the belief that the better we understand our patrons, the better our service design decisions will be. Our institution's service and program design efforts are driven by a deep curiosity about our users and how they experience services in the library, outside the library and online. In order to satisfy that curiosity and increase our understanding of our patrons, we must invest in the people who create those services. We will also use data and evaluation tools to hold ourselves institutionally accountable for improving programs and services that meet patron needs.

How We Do It

We are focused on providing patrons the best programs, services and facilities to fit their needs. Serving patrons effectively is at the heart of our team's commitment to Chicago and all its residents.

To do that, it is critical that we look at how our staff and facilities meet patron needs. This includes staff development, policies that affect the patron experience and the design and use of library space.

For Chicago's Neighborhoods and Communities, We are:

01

Continuing to equip staff with best-in-class leadership, technical and customer service skills to foster patron-focused innovation and creative-problem solving throughout the Library system. Examples include:

- Engaging our staff in human-centered design thinking and to be more responsive to patron needs.
- Testing new ideas for serving patrons and then scaling them successfully.

02

Performing annual strategic planning and external environmental scans leading to clear work plans and metrics-based evaluations for priority initiatives. 03

03

Using data to regularly review and improve programs, services and operations to better serve patrons. Examples include:

- Using data surrounding Library content to understand how to best use our collections.
- Developing a dashboard to track metrics and learn how to improve our programming.
- Analyzing patron data to understand emerging patron needs and better meet those needs.

04

Harnessing the power of evolving technologies to improve our services for patrons. Examples include:

- Reducing hold times through improvements to the supply chain and materials handling system.

- Increased utilization of Smart Machine technology, including bar coding in automated materials handling systems.
- Using cloud computing to allow patrons to access resources online (e.g. offering ability to pay fines online).
- Bringing advanced material checkout technology to the branches, including self-checkout and roving mobile checkout.
- Utilizing beacon technology to understand traffic flow and service patterns.

05

Developing increasingly engaging patron-focused libraries and digital spaces. Examples include:

- Investing in a comprehensive digitization strategy, allowing digital access documents, artifacts and other materials and exploring ways in which patrons can engage with special collections in digital spaces.
- Improving current physical technology infrastructure (e.g. replacing photocopiers with digital scanners).
- Continuing to engage in construction and capital projects to build and enhance patron-centered buildings.

06

Growing our strong brand and driving more comprehensive awareness across all potential patrons and stakeholders. For example:

- Using digital marketing to improve service to patrons, including monitoring what is being viewed, how often, for how long, and what content works or doesn't for patrons.

07

Engaging patrons through surveys, observation and interviews to learn about their needs and interests, and proactively designing collaborative approaches with relevant organizations to meet those needs. works or doesn't for patrons.

Partnerships with Chicago Public Library

Chicago Public Library is a nationally-recognized institution, and we are made even better by our valuable partnerships throughout the city. By forming strong alliances, we can enhance our programs and services and carry out our mission even more effectively. We are able to broaden our reach and expand our offerings by working with government agencies, non-profit and civic organizations, small businesses, foundations and large companies. Partnerships with CPL are mutually beneficial; when our organizations work together, we are better able to serve the people of Chicago.

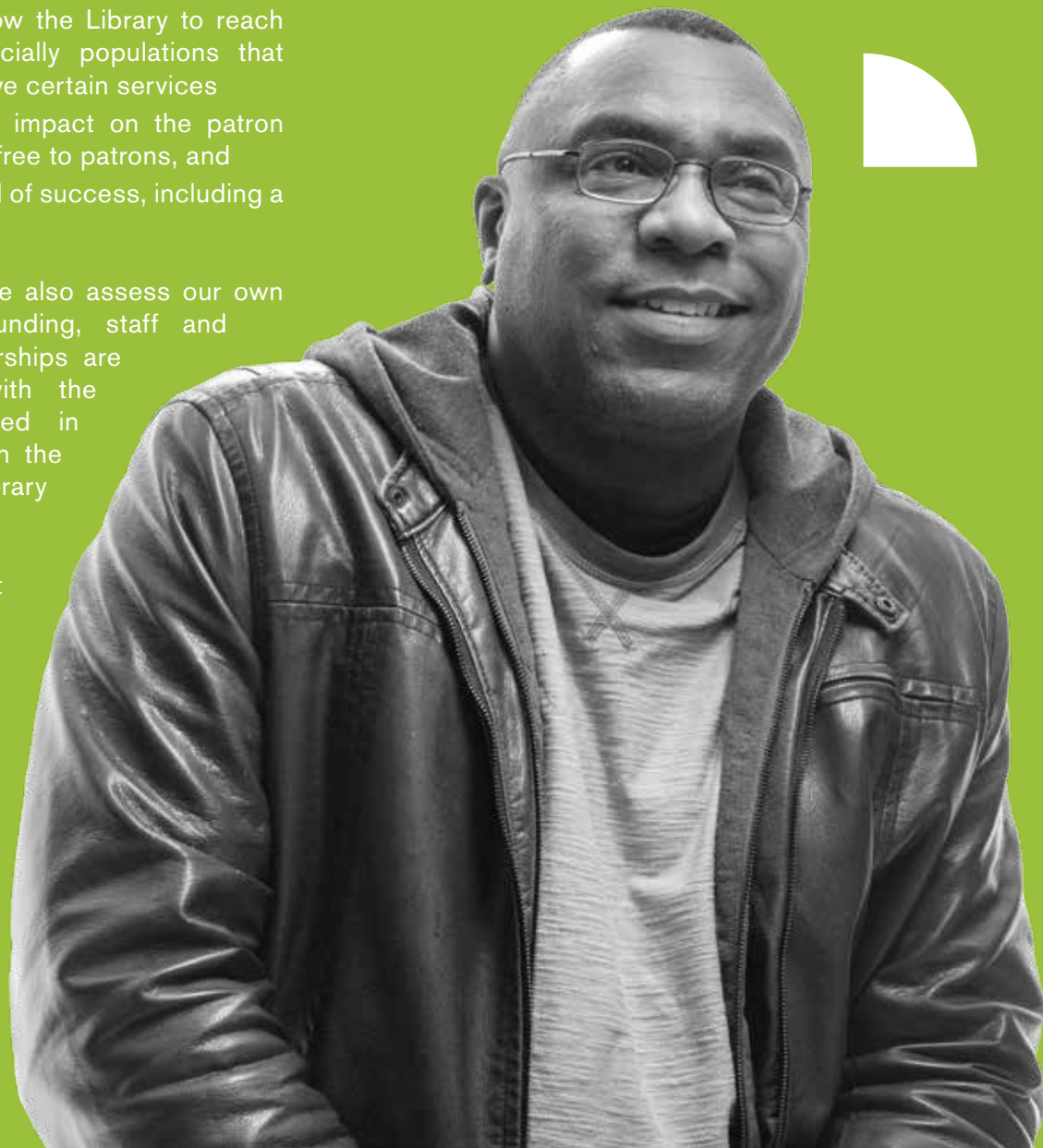
We welcome collaborations at varying levels of engagement, seeking partners that:

- Align to the future goals and strategic priorities of the organization as defined by the strategic plan
- Maximize access and allow the Library to reach target populations, especially populations that might not otherwise receive certain services
- Generate a high level of impact on the patron experience and would be free to patrons, and
- Have a strong track record of success, including a stable or strong brand

When evaluating partners, we also assess our own capacity, including time, funding, staff and space to ensure the partnerships are successful. Partnerships with the Library are often developed in conjunction with and through the support of Chicago Public Library Foundation and its funders.

We thank our past and current partners and funders for their innovation, collaboration and support, and invite other organizations to consider opportunities to partner with us in the future.

SERVE PATRONS EFFECTIVELY





CONCLUSION

Chicago Public Library is the largest and most visited cultural institution in Chicago, a place woven into the lives of countless Chicagoans. Since our founding in 1873, CPL has strived to provide access to all and to serve patrons effectively.

But we are not a static, unchanging institution. Over the past 140 years, we have evolved nimbly, staying ahead of the curve to serve the changing needs of our patrons.

That evolution continues today. Working alongside Chicago Public Library Foundation, the Mayor's Office, the City Council and like-minded partners to adapt to the fast-paced, innovation-centered, 21st century knowledge economy, CPL has, in fact, become a model for other libraries. Systems around the country are borrowing from our work in human-centered design, outcomes measurement and partnership building.

Within the industry, we have received recognition locally, nationally and internationally for our innovative, patron-focused evolution. And our efforts have been recognized by our patrons, 79 percent of whom say that they are very or extremely satisfied with CPL.

This strategy details how we will build on our recent successes. We will maintain our focus on our foundational mission of providing access to all, and serving patrons effectively. And we will implement Mayor Emanuel's vision of transforming libraries into centers of learning that help Chicagoans thrive in the 21st-century economy by nurturing learning, supporting economic advancement and strengthening communities.

We will continue our evolution while being sure to delight, innovate and represent the best that Chicago has to offer. We will not work alone, but collaborate with other cultural institutions as we move forward. And we will be powered in this work by our greatest asset, our people.





THANK YOU

Chicago Public Library would like to thank and acknowledge the generous organizations and individuals who worked with us on this strategy on a pro bono basis. We also want to acknowledge the important support the Chicago Public Library Foundation (CPLF) has provided through their own time and by engaging consultants to work with Library on critical areas.

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We owe an equally huge thanks to Civic Consulting Alliance for coordinating the overall project and securing pro bono support from Bain and Company, who provided a Bain Fellow, Alice Lee, to support the project and The Greatest Good (TGG), who completed a deep analysis of the library patron survey and created tools for CPL staff to mine the current and future patron survey data.

Finally, we would like to thank the entire CCA team for taking the early work funded by CPLF and adding considerable resources to turn this work into the final strategy. We are especially grateful to the CCA project staff that included Melanie Halvorson, Avani Patel, Elizabeth Glerum, Cynthia Nguyen, Allyson Laackman, Dan Reisner, Brian Hanessian, and Paul Bourdillon for their masterful planning and project management that resulted in the final strategy. We would also like to thank Brian Battle, Haley Sonenthal, Mark Van Grinsven, and Aliza Warwick who did a second deep dive to refresh our overall strategy for 2016.

Thank you to advertising agency FCB Chicago for updating the CPL brand identity and bringing it to life through a redesign of this strategy document.

Chicago is fortunate to have such creative, dedicated, and generous private individuals and businesses that support the Chicago Public Library mission. This support is critical to our current and future success.



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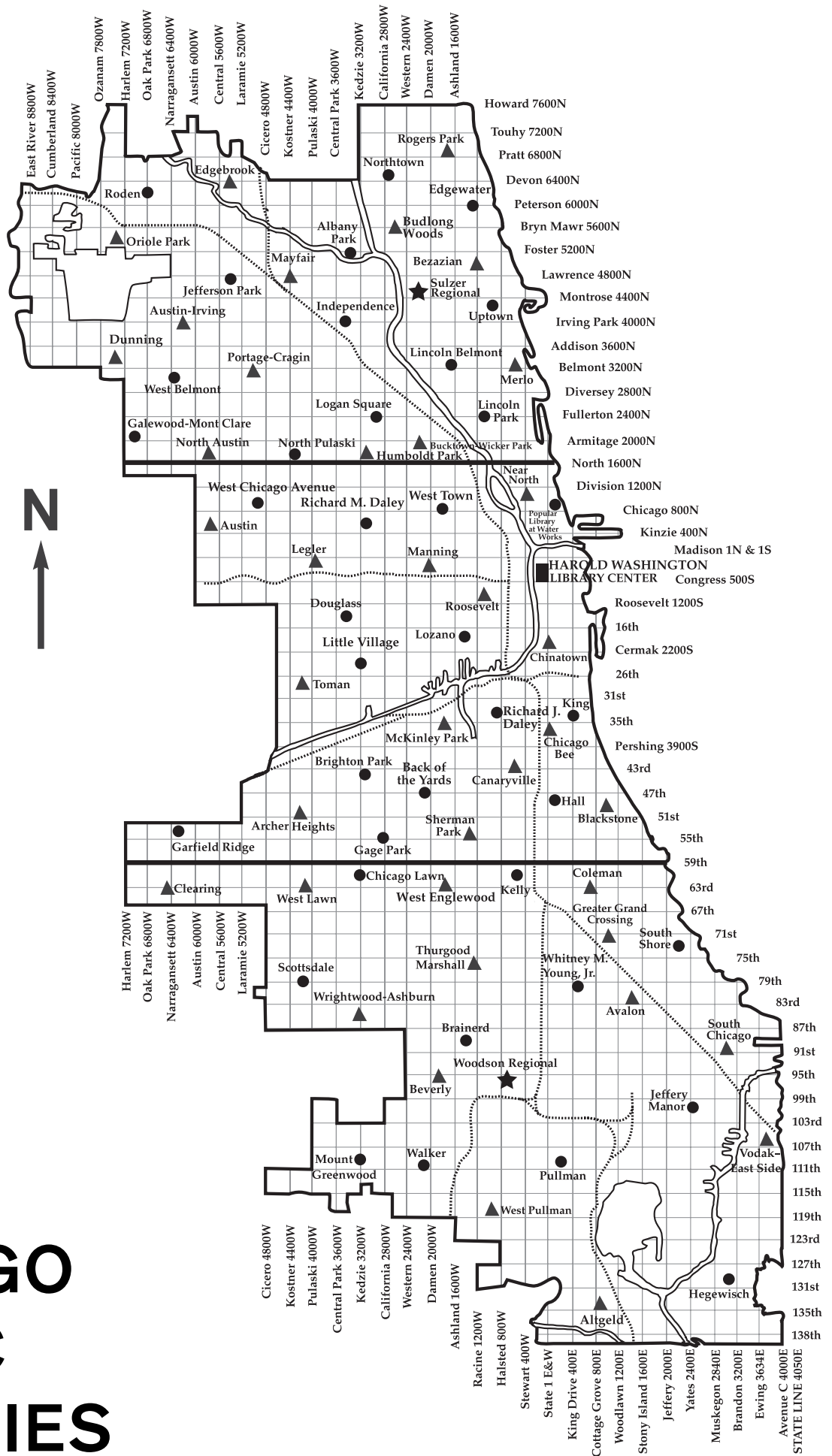
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