PROGRESS REPORT

My Library 2020

JUNE 7, 2018

The Public Library
of Youngstown & Mahoning County
www.LibraryVisit.org

Aimee Fifarek, Executive Director

Executive Summary

The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County has undergone an enormous amount of change since the My Library 2020 strategic plan was put into place in 2014. Three libraries have been rebuilt or renovated, 28 staff members (or 14%) have retired from the system, and a new Director has come on board. Despite all of this change, PLYMC is going strong. The number of library card holders is up, overall circulation is down only slightly, and use of eBooks and other electronic resources has nearly tripled.

What Have We Accomplished?

Aimee Fifarek,
Executive Director

A lot! During this time approximately 47% of the Strategic Plan has been fulfilled and another 37% is actively being worked on. In addition to our new facilities we have expanded services to schools with our Pop-Up Library, upgraded the library's website and catalog, and kickstarted idea generation through our staff-led Innovation Space. PLYMC staff is making excellent progress given the size and aggressive nature of this 6-year plan.

More action items would already be completed if not for three major factors:

- High volume of construction projects – new construction and major renovation projects demand the time of key staff members who then are not available to do other important work. A considerable amount of time was required to complete three projects in the four years, and a fourth was added when the Campbell Library needed to be closed unexpectedly.
- Loss of institutional knowledge – average turnover during the Strategic Plan period was 9.5%, significantly lower than the national average of 18%. In an organization where careers routinely span 30 or 40 years, the retirement of 28 staff members represents an outsized impact due to their institutional knowledge. New people move into supervisory positions and need to be trained, procedures need to be updated, and the resulting ripple effects impact the entire organization. Every change is an opportunity to grow and improve, however, and we are fortunate to have been able to promote so many people.
- Operational technology to support staff development – The Strategic Plan identified the need to develop a robust training program to facilitate the changes already cited, however not having a staff intranet and other technology in place to help deliver portions of that training held the process back.
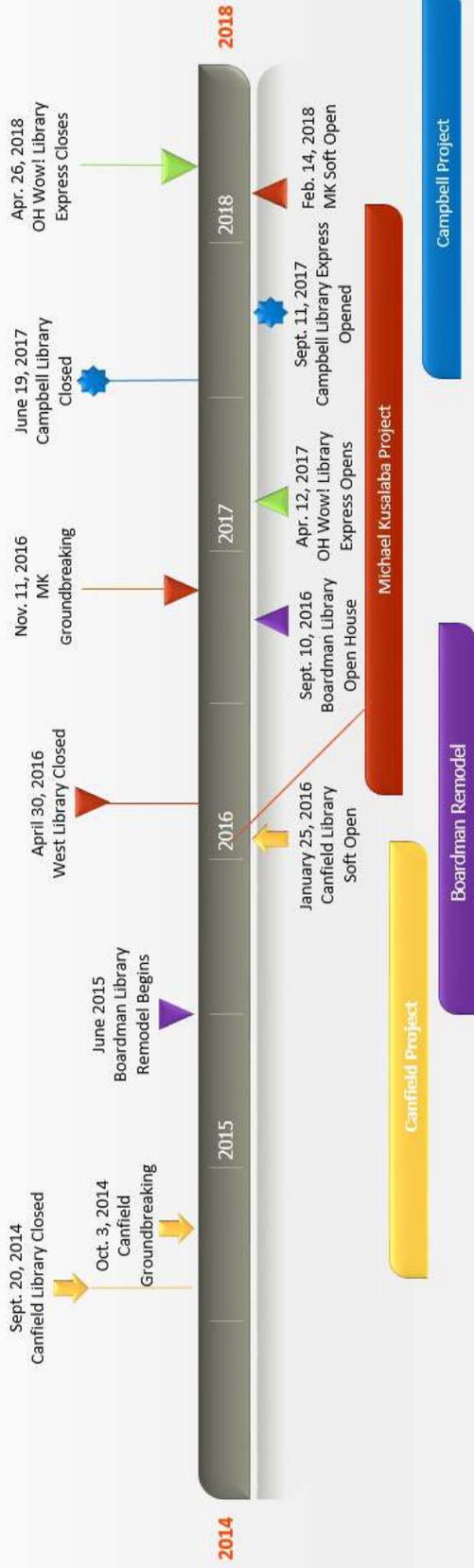
Recent changes have helped to resolve some of these systemic issues. With construction projects completed and additional staff coming on in new roles, operational technology projects are progressing. A number of positions have been adjusted and some added to provide the depth of support necessary for new initiatives. Although we will not complete every action item on the list by January 1, 2020, PLYMC is well poised to complete a significant amount of the existing strategic plan.

Are We Having an Impact?

Yes we are. Of the indicators of success we are examining to measure the impact of our work, a majority of them are meeting with partial success or better. However, we have found that a number of the indicators are not able to be measured, so they will need to be replaced with other criteria. This will happen as we focus on the remaining set of action items that have been consolidated into the matrix at the end of this report. In addition to the remaining items to be completed, this matrix also indicates new items (like the new Campbell library project) that are in the works now but could not be anticipated when My Library2020 was created.

PLYMC has a superb staff, and I am proud to be working with them to achieve Mahoning County's library goals.
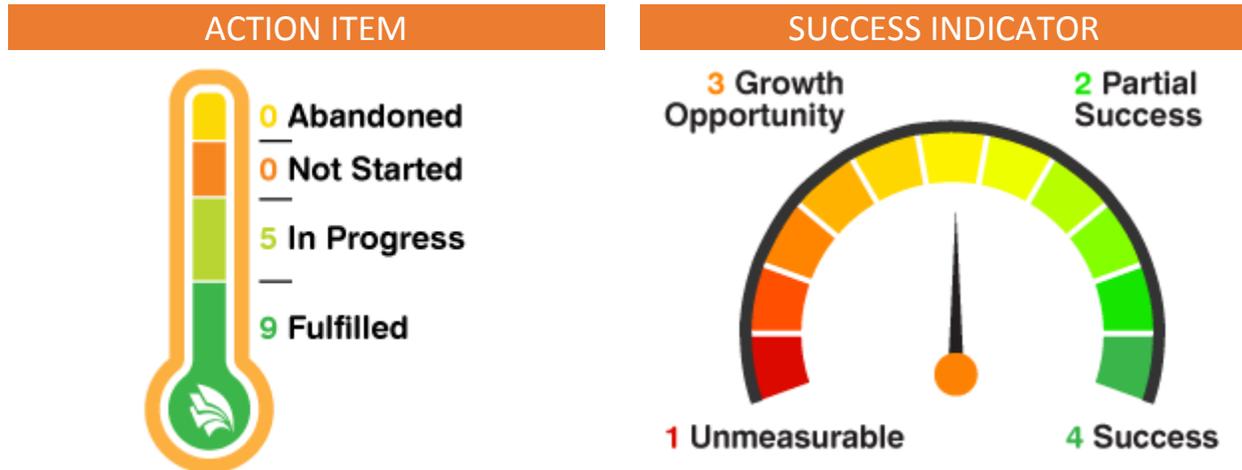
PLYMC Building and Projects Timeline

2014

2018

| 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |

Sept. 20, 2014
Canfield Library Closed

Oct. 3, 2014
Canfield
Groundbreaking

June 2015
Boardman Library
Remodel Begins

April 30, 2016
West Library Closed

January 25, 2016
Canfield Library
Soft Open

Nov. 11, 2016
MK
Groundbreaking

Sept. 10, 2016
Boardman Library
Open House

Apr. 12, 2017
OH Wow! Library
Express Opens

June 19, 2017
Campbell Library
Closed

Sept. 11, 2017
Campbell Library Express
Opened

Apr. 26, 2018
OH Wow! Library
Express Closes

Feb. 14, 2018
MK Soft Open

Canfield Project

Boardman Remodel

Michael Kusalaba Project

Campbell Project

Summary of Goals

There were 4 goals, 16 Action Items, and 10 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to update our preschool programs and increase support for families, older adults, and students.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR

0 Abandoned
0 Not Started
5 In Progress
9 Fulfilled

3 Growth Opportunity
2 Partial Success
1 Unmeasurable
4 Success

Accomplishments

Early Literacy

- Early Learning Specialist hired – the first made great strides in improving the relationships with the schools
- Department of Education program approval – the DOE determined that PLYMC's Every Child Ready to Read Story Times already reflect early learning concepts that contribute to kindergarten readiness. All youth services staff have been trained in these concepts.

Student Support

- Increased services to schools, including development of a Community Read event for Campbell, regular visits by staff to Youngstown elementary schools through the Pop-Up Library and the United Way's Imagination Library programming, and regularly scheduled visits to Newport Library by Valley Christian Schools.
- LEGO-based coding and other STEM programs are now being offered regularly, and PLYMC's first 6-week Girls Who Code program successfully graduated 10 (ten) 13-15 year olds.
- PLYMC now offers educational programs during the day.
- All youth services librarians conduct regular visits to schools to promote books, library resources, programs, and Summer Discovery.

Adult Programming

- Opened the Career and Job Center in Main Library to support Job Skills training; one member of staff will be certified career counselor by year's end.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ohio Means Jobs to provide employment assistance to job seekers
- Increased regular interactive programming that is attractive to seniors, including expanded awareness of Book-a-Librarian opportunities. Seniors report thinking of the Library first when seeking out new activities.
- Collaborated with multiple agencies to develop the Valley's first Digital Advantage week, to help parents, job seekers, and seniors improve their practical technology skills.

Lessons Learned

Partnerships in this area are key to successful program delivery. PLYMC needs to develop standards and policies that codify partnerships and other types of relationships with external groups in order work to develop formal relationships with expectations and measurable outcomes.

More progress could have been made if more than one person had been involved in signature activities. PLYMC needs to develop a comprehensive assignment and training strategy so that the one person becoming unavailable due to promotion or health issues doesn't impact the delivery of key service.
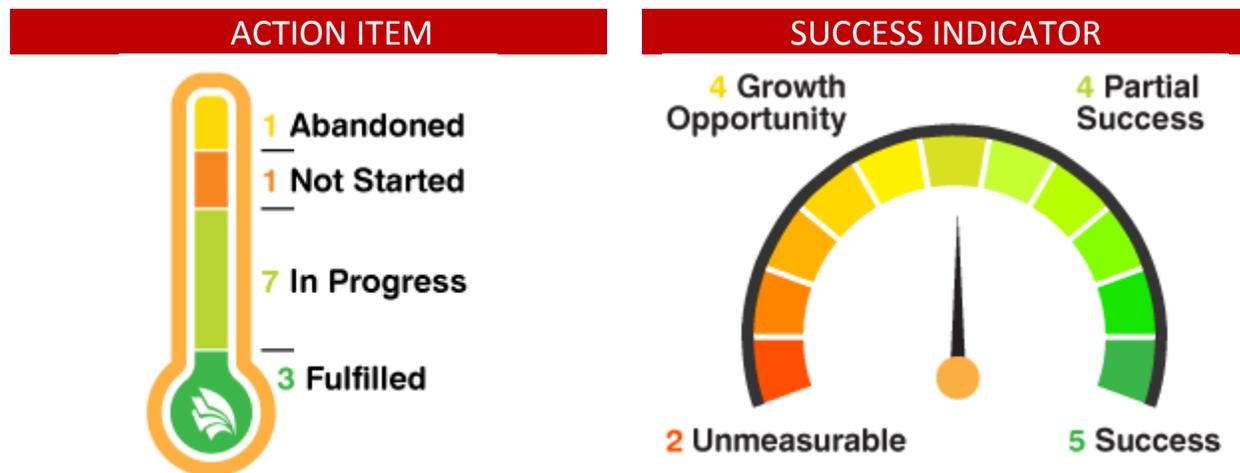
Next Steps

- Work closely with State Support Region 5 (ODE) to provide training to community teachers and library staff for updated kindergarten readiness methodology.
- Formalize partnerships with organizations serving older adults or parents and children to strengthen programming.
- Add adult programming and training specialist to ensure high quality services for adults.
- Work with Ohio Means Jobs and the Digital Inclusion Initiative to enhance effectiveness of workforce programming by targeting specific needs.

SUCCEEDING

Focus Area: COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Summary of Goals

There were 4 goals, 12 Action Items, and 15 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to take library services out into the community, communicate our value, and improve the number and quality of our partnerships.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR
1 Abandoned	4 Growth Opportunity
1 Not Started	4 Partial Success
7 In Progress	2 Unmeasurable
3 Fulfilled	5 Success

Accomplishments

The mobile Pop-Up Library has been a great success, conducting 496 visits, issuing 37,377 library cards, and checking out 49,729 items since its launch in August, 2014.

Three data analytics tools are now available to library staff for more effective collection management, targeted marketing, and community service delivery.

PLYMC continues to receive excellent press coverage of library events and news, with free coverage in print and online that has a value of $285,560 (if paid) for 2017. The library's mentions in print and online are estimated to have about 30 million views in 2017.A revised website launched in 2015, integrating PLYMC's various social media accounts and encouraging the community to share Library experiences. PLYMC staff created nearly 600 posts in 2017 that were seen more than 2M times, resulting in the equivalent of thousands of dollars in free advertising.

PLYMC upgraded both its catalog and website since the start of the strategic plan. LibraryVisit.org had 950,000 user sessions in 2017.

Lessons Learned

Staff are hesitant to insert themselves in community affairs without clear guidance or mandate. Library Administration needs to provide more structure for embedding to be effective, as well as the expectation that it will happen across multiple levels to offset the effects of staff turnover.

PLYMC staff continue to learn to navigate the available technologies, but it can be very difficult to integrate new tools into regular routines. The same is true for PLYMC patrons. It is difficult to cultivate a culture where people share ideas online in ways similar to when they are face-to-face in book clubs or other programs. It is appropriate and sometimes necessary to discontinue use of wonderful tools if they are being underutilized.

Next Steps

- Bring on a second pop up vehicle to expand mobile services to serve multiple school districts and community organizations, and provide more than just books.
- Develop community profiles that will assist staff in their efforts to embed themselves in their communities and provide targeted and effective programming.
- Develop a feedback method for partner organizations and individuals that helps gauge the strength of the Library's contribution to a partnership.
- Work with Struthers school and community leaders to coordinate services to city residents.

LAGGING

Focus Area: COLLECTIONS and SPACES

Summary of Goals

There were 6 goals, 20 Action Items, and 20 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to make our buildings, as well as the materials housed within them, cost effective and responsive to community needs while still honoring our rich traditions.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR

0 Abandoned
3 Not Started
9 In Progress
8 Fulfilled

3 Growth Opportunity
8 Partial Success
2 Unmeasurable
7 Success

Accomplishments

- Created a new Collection Access Manager position to ensure that collection management is efficient and fiscally responsible.
- Began using new analytics tools to assess turnover of library materials and better understand the counterintuitive "less is more" collection management philosophy.
- Expanded the number of electronic resources offered to support the community's needs for enjoyment and modern methods of learning.
- Identified or hired staff who focus on key service areas, including youth and adult materials selection, genealogy, business, grants, and digital services.

Lessons Learned

Major building renovations can cause major interruptions in service. Canfield and West Libraries were both closed for over a year while being rebuilt, and there was a significant impact on service during the Boardman renovation. It will take some time for usage to recover at these locations. In addition, opening new buildings draws the attention of key staff away from ongoing projects like staff training and technology development.

The Library Express downtown at OH WOW! ended after one year due to low use of the services. Some reasons for lack of success likely include scarcity of parking, confusion caused by locating free services in the lobby of an institution that charges admission, and the proximity of the Main Library. OH WOW! and PLYMC share a similar mission so will look for new and more successful ways to partner.

The consolidation study focusing on Brownlee Woods and Struthers branch libraries did not produce a suitable location for a larger, consolidated facility. It was difficult to find a central location that met the requisite criteria, and the few locations that did meet the needs were either not available or required extensive renovation. The strategic plan stated that it was more effective to renovate facilities already owned by PLYMC, and that philosophy was borne out in this case.
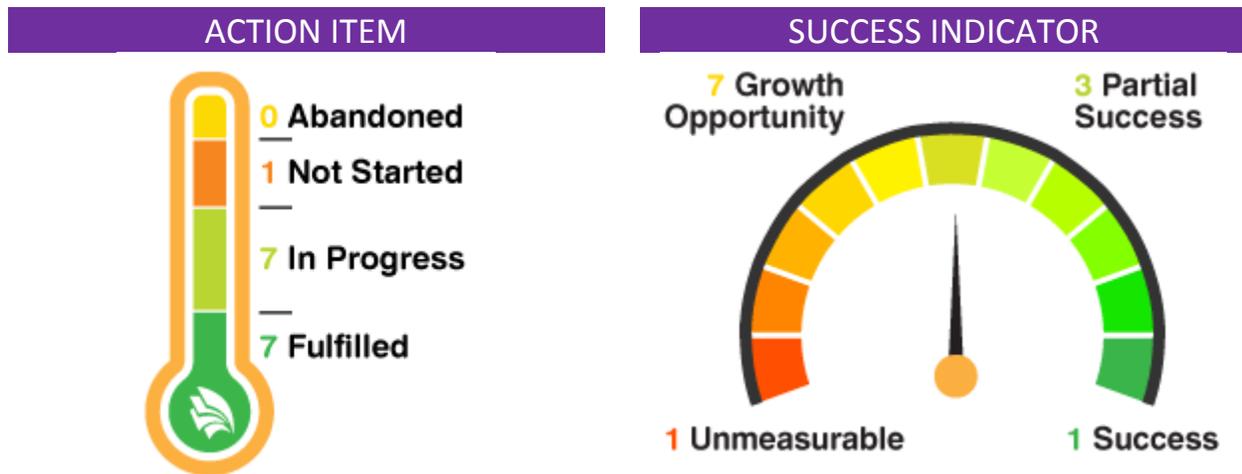
Next Steps

- Work with the Campbell School District to complete the Community Literacy and Workforce Cultural Center which will house the new Campbell Branch Library.
- Begin plans to renovate Main Library.
- Continue efforts to improve the cost effectiveness of collection development by identifying underutilized resources through cost-per-use and other mechanisms and repurposing those funds to purchase in-demand materials in all formats.
- Finalize 5-year Facilities Plan and support it by properly contributing to the Building & Repair Fund.
- Finalize a 5-year Technology Plan and support it by properly contributing to the Technology Fund.
- Determine if library kiosks in combination with Pop-Up Library visits are appropriate for areas of the County without library buildings.

PROGRESSING

Focus Area: TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Goals

There were 4 goals, 15 Action Items, and 12 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to create a robust technological infrastructure to support the digital needs of students, workers, and those exploring new forms of communicating.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR

ACTION ITEM:
0 Abandoned
1 Not Started
7 In Progress
7 Fulfilled

SUCCESS INDICATOR:
7 Growth Opportunity
3 Partial Success
1 Unmeasurable
1 Success

Accomplishments

- Launched a new library website, mobile app and updated online catalog that will allow more staff to contribute reader's advisory and other content.
- Upgraded all libraries' technology infrastructure by securing nearly $170,000 in Federal E-Rate reimbursements.
- Started to use online tutorials for staff training through an online portal that will allow us to create and deploy similar training for public as well.
- Opened the first PLYMC Makerspace at the Michael Kusalaba (MK) Branch Library in February 2018.

Lessons Learned

All of the burden of strategic and innovative technology falls on the IT Director, in addition to significant operational responsibilities. Consequently, important projects requiring long-term work, such as the development and launch of the Library's Intranet site – get delayed when his attention is required for other high-profile projects, like building construction/renovation.

Demand for reporting and services other related to the Sierra ILS have increased, due in part to the improvements to collection management being made by the new Collection Access Manager.

Developing a robust modern staff training program is difficult without online infrastructure already in place mechanisms already in place.

Having the makerspace technology at the MK Library is very popular, however the amount of staff training and customer support needed to provide adequate service is greater than anticipated.
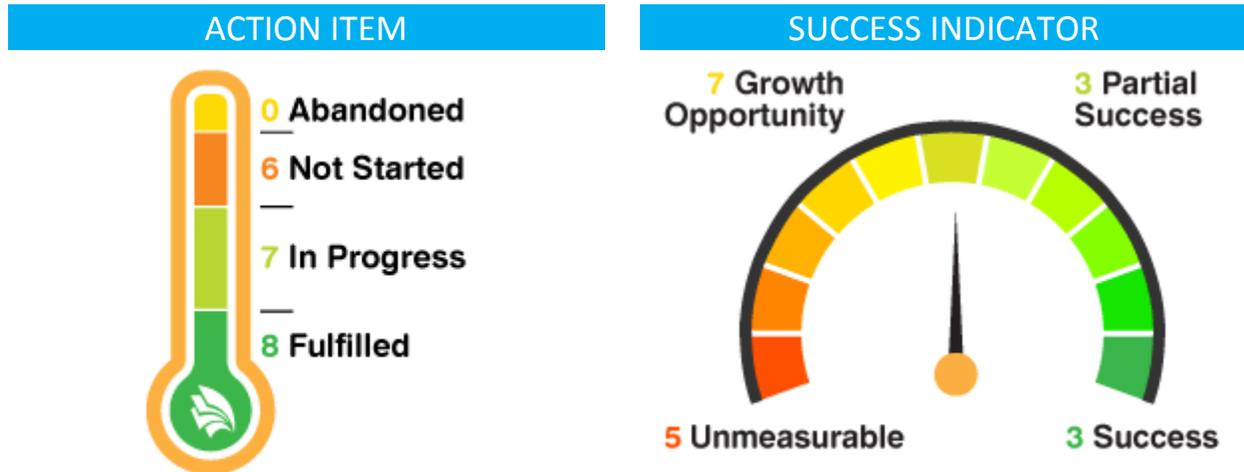
Next Steps

- Prioritize the development and deployment of the staff intranet to facilitate staff communication and training.
- Hire an ILS administrator to support IT Manager and Collection Access Manager.
- Update and finalize the Library's 5-year technology plan, and develop an associated budget that will form the basis for contributions to the Technology Fund.
- Identify technologies appropriate for mobile makerspace services, as well as any additional items needed for service delivery at MK or other libraries.
- Formulate strategy for digitization of historical materials, including identifying an online system for processing and hosting the items and Identifying community partners who may be interested in collaborating with PLYMC.

PROGRESSING

Focus Area: STAFF

Summary of Goals

There were 5 goals, 21 Action Items, and 18 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to make PLYMC an employer of choice for members of the community and Library professionals.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR

ACTION ITEM

0 Abandoned
6 Not Started
7 In Progress
8 Fulfilled

SUCCESS INDICATOR

7 Growth Opportunity
3 Partial Success
5 Unmeasurable
3 Success

Accomplishments

- Developed a robust new hire training program to ensure all new staff are fully trained with excellent customer service skills.
- Used the Harwood Institute's methodology to create the Innovation Space process where interested staff can meet monthly to share ideas and problem solve.
- Improved hiring practices by introducing scenario questions to assess personality and job fit.
- Work closely with the Union to address issues and get feedback on proposed changes in order to encourage communication and avoid conflicts.

Lessons Learned

The retirement of long-time trainers led to gaps in ongoing staff development which undercut some of the progress made with new hire training program.

Showing staff appreciation in a way that is meaningful is difficult to do, and must vary based on the personality of the individual. For any program to work there needs to be a variety of recognition options.

High-profile profile projects, like as new library construction often take precedence over ongoing work, like staff training in technology and leadership programs.
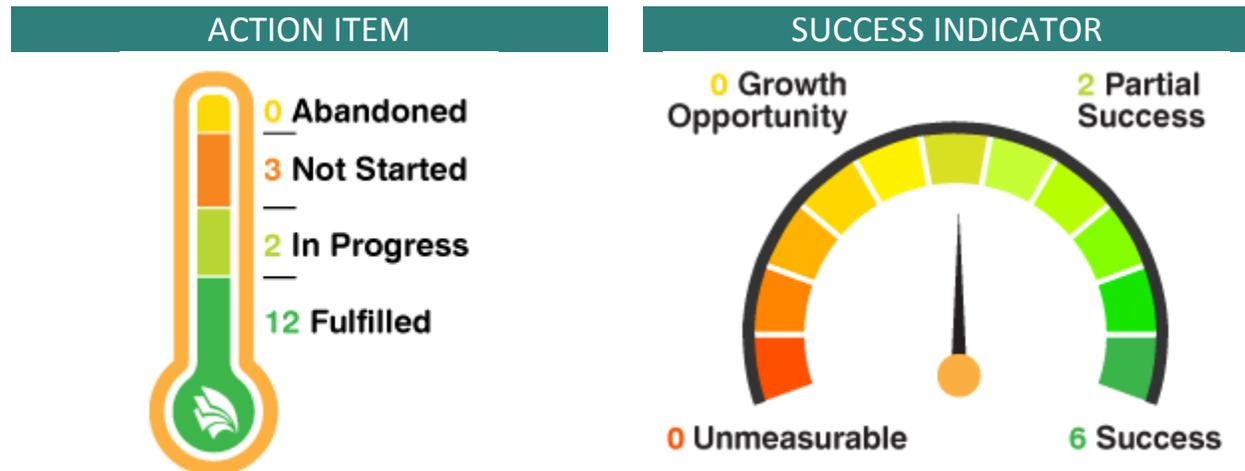
Next Steps

- Deploy streamlined performance evaluation forms currently in development.
- Formalize a training committee in order to maximize use of resources and share the work of training development
- Institute annual staff satisfaction survey

LAGGING

Focus Area: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Summary of Goals

There were 6 goals, 17 Action Items, and 8 Indicators of Success regarding our efforts to ensure that PLYMC remains a good steward of public funds while engaging in responsible development efforts.

ACTION ITEM	SUCCESS INDICATOR

ACTION ITEM
- 0 Abandoned
- 3 Not Started
- 2 In Progress
- 12 Fulfilled

SUCCESS INDICATOR
- 0 Growth Opportunity
- 2 Partial Success
- 0 Unmeasurable
- 6 Success

Accomplishments

- The 2014 levy campaign was successful with a 59% approval rating.
- Budgets and investments remain sound.
- The Library's Annual Report now includes budget infographics to help communicate the Library's fiscal management strategy.
- PLYMC received a $1.68M donation from the Kusalaba Family via the Youngstown Foundation which enabled the West (Now Michael Kusalaba) Library to be rebuilt.
- Development will be implementing Donor Perfect software to manage donations.
- The Friends of the Library have been creating new events, like the Brew Ha Ha and Mah Jong tournament, to attract new members.

Lessons Learned

Defeat of some recent local levies reinforces the need to plan an active levy campaign in 2019, despite the successful passage of all Ohio library levies so far this year.

The current financial management system is out of date and does not allow flexible reporting.

PLYMC has not been making sufficient contributions to its Technology Fund. Although money is added annually, it has not been accompanied by a multi-year plan that accounts recurring reinvestments (ex. replacement public access computers) or new technology systems.

The Youngstown core is home to a great many non-profit organizations that are all competing for donations. As a result, we need to reassess the role of fundraising in library operations.

Next Steps

- Start planning for 2019 levy process.
- Review available financial management systems in order to estimate costs and time to transition to a new system.
- Develop a budget to support the 5-year Technology Plan and goals for annual contributions to the Technology Fund.
- Create a multi-year plan for the new annual campaign.

SUCCEEDING

	Connecting with the Past	Enriching the Present	Inspiring the Future
In-Library Patron Services	• Establish specializations in historical resources for Main library staff. • Digitize historical resources.	• Create responsive print and online collections, including school support in collections. • Test new service models . • Offer mobile tech and 3D Tech for in-house use. • Develop plan for technology-enabled roving reference and circulation. • Develop a social service program where needed.	• Create Kindergarten readiness kits for pre-K & K parents and students
Programs		• Expand digital learning services for adults including locally created online tutorials. • Expand offerings to older adults. • Continue to offer family literacy programs. • Create mobile-compatible online services. • Circulate tablets/eReaders.	• Embed Kindergarten readiness skills in storytimes; • Create kindergarten readiness informal learning programs and handouts. • Develop target marketing for programs
Community Focus		• Create formal partnerships with agencies serving older adults. • Create formal partnerships with agencies serving children & parents • Create formal partnerships with agencies that serve parents and children in home settings county-wide. • Create partnerships with family literacy agencies. • Bring library services to areas without a library (via kiosk, bookmobile, etc). • Facilitate staff participation in community activities. • Work with Struthers school and community leaders to coordinate services.	• Create partnerships with Kindergarten readiness agencies
Facilities	• Develop a renovation plan for Main Library, restoring historical elements	• Create flexible library space where possible. • Assess and address technology infrastructure in each building. • Complete a low-cost facelift to Struthers Library to support renewed programming efforts.	• Renovate Main Library. • Build CLWCC. • Create 5 year facilities plan linked to the capital fund.
Funding		• Develop annual fundraising campaign, including public, staff and Board. • Develop fiscally-responsible collection practices.	• Create 5-year technology plan linked to the capital fund. • Successfully plan for and pass a levy in 2019.
Staff Development		• Create embedded librarianship policies and training. • Create an intranet. • Survey staff on quality of working relationships. • Formalize staff appreciation process. • Develop a comprehensive staff training program.	• Become a digitally fluent organization
Administration		• Develop partnership evaluation methodology. • Develop a public advocacy campaign. • Develop a social media plan. • Implement RFID-based inventory system for collection assessment. • Develop feedback mechanism for staff to help improve services and staff satisfaction survey. • Create an effective performance measurement process. • Develop suite of public feedback mechanisms and a way for staff to use that feedback. • Conduct collection analysis.	• Become an innovation organization • Develop an organizational leadership program

Items in RED are new to the plan