



PLYMC Strategic Plan

2024-2026



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026



Aimee Fifarek
Director and CEO



The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (PLYMC) kicked off a strategic planning process in the Winter of 2023 with a focus on listening to our community—both internally and externally. From February to April, we traveled to every branch to listen to and learn from our 200+ employees, and throughout the summer, we went back to every community with a Library branch to listen to and learn from our patrons. We also received more than 850 survey responses from patrons and community members—all of which helped to shape this Strategic Plan, which puts PLYMC on a path to learn from and with our communities.

Inscribed above the entrance to PLYMC's beautiful Main Library are the words: "For the People." We believe in the power of knowledge and the importance of access to information for all members of our community. Our Library has always been, and will continue to be, a cornerstone of the Mahoning Valley, serving as a hub for learning, enrichment, and connection.

"For the People" is more than just a motto; it's a promise that we take to heart. We are dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive,

and welcoming space where individuals from all walks of life can explore the world of books, digital resources, educational programs, and more.

In embracing the "For the People" ethos, we aim to be a dynamic resource that empowers you, our community members, to learn, connect, and grow. Our doors are open to everyone, and we encourage your feedback and suggestions as we evolve and improve our services.

If you have any ideas, concerns, or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to serve you and the entire community, and your input is invaluable.

Thank you for being a part of our library community. Together, we can make a difference "For the People."

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aimee Fifarek".

Aimee Fifarek
Director and CEO

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Timeline

PLYMC will be pursuing the following action items over the next three years. In year three (2026), we will evaluate our progress and determine how to move forward based on what we have accomplished. We expect the goals stated here, along with our Mission, Vision, and Values, to serve as a framework for new actions we will take as our communities and our libraries change.



OUR MISSION

We share. We create. We grow.



OUR VISION

PLYMC is a vital contributor to a thriving Mahoning County, providing access to high-quality information and creating opportunities for every person to take the next step in their journey.



OUR VALUES

We value...



People

We welcome every person and help them build the skills necessary to achieve their goals and reach their potential.



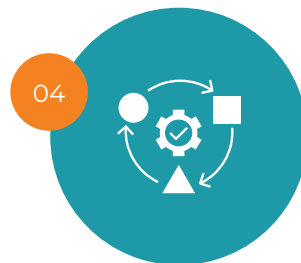
Community

We actively engage with our community to foster relationships and connections to create a greater sense of belonging for all.



Integrity

Honest action is at the center of every decision we make, from our use of public resources to the information and services we provide.



Adaptability

We learn and grow with our community to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Goal

Provide a consistent, high-quality, and accessible service experience in-person and online

How we take action



Foster service excellence standards



Maintain and enhance accessibility throughout the system



Uphold the highest professional standards for intellectual freedom and information across all services



Enhance staff training and development opportunities that outline the responsibilities of every position



Evaluate and update organizational priorities and tools to meet changes in public service expectations

Desired Outcomes

Increase positive interactions through tools and resources that allow everyone to feel welcomed, respected, and heard

Continue to provide materials representing various points of view on a wide variety of subjects, including religious, political, and controversial issues



Maximize equitable access of Library materials, programs, and services

Deploy a project management system that will allow us to prioritize and assess the resources needed to pursue new service models

Goal

Be a beacon for developing and supporting literacy and critical thinking in the community

How we take action



Develop a plan to support adult literacy



Expand services to support a broader range of school-age learners

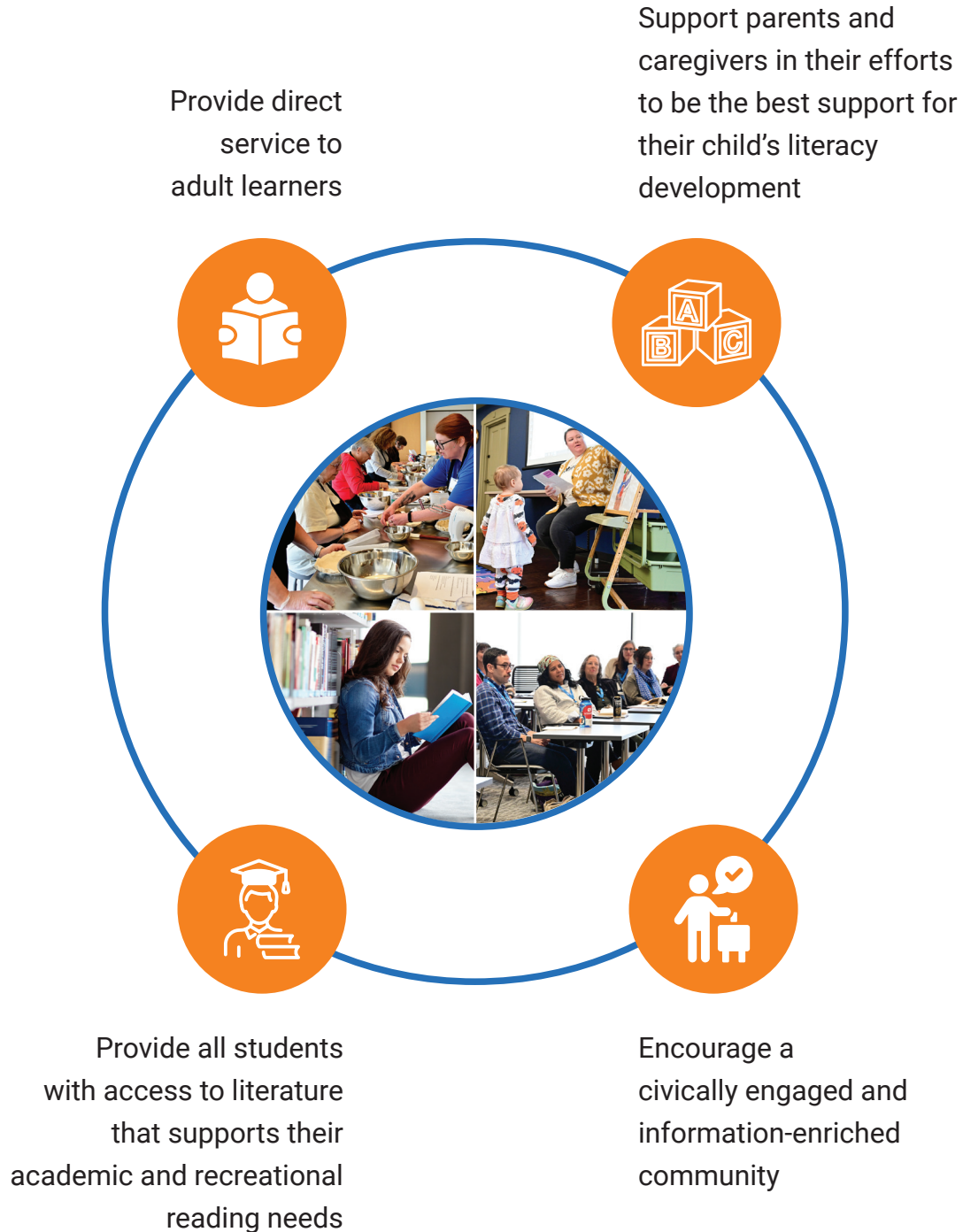


Offer programs and services encouraging the development of critical-thinking skills



Continue to develop services based on literacy-based initiatives

Desired Outcomes



Goal

Intentionally expand our reach to develop partnerships and create a broader community impact

How we take action



Engage with a diverse group of coalitions to represent the Library throughout the community



Support all levels of staff in connecting with their communities and identifying potential partnership opportunities



Use feedback to create opportunities for people to discover their community through new experiences



Establish a framework to support sustainable partnerships

Desired Outcomes

Expand the public's understanding of the range of services available at PLYMC

Streamline our strategy to strengthen our community impact



Provide community-driven programming and services

Seek targeted opportunities for outside funding to support our mission

Goal

Create a healthy and sustainable organization that builds for the future

How we take action



Create a long-term facilities plan



Enhance our disaster preparedness, safety protocols, and related equipment



Expand healthy living programming



Enhance environmentally and fiscally sustainable practices

Desired Outcomes

Ensure sufficient
capital investment
in our communities

Create measurable
ways to impact healthy
living throughout our
communities



Create secure
spaces and be prepared to
protect people, collections,
and facilities in the event
of the unexpected

Eliminate waste
and choose
eco-friendly options
where applicable

Overview of the process

The Strategic Plan spoke with more than 200 people in person and received over 800 responses to an online survey. We heard from a broad range of voices that included teens, seniors, Millennials, and people with disabilities. Our outreach included conversations at Springfield's National Night Out, a community day at East Library with nearly a dozen local social service organizations, a booth at the Greenford Fireman's Festival, and visits to every Library branch to hear directly from patrons visiting our branches. We spoke with elected officials, community leaders, school administrators, emergency service officials, Friends of the Library members, as well as our valued patrons.

OUTREACH METHODS

The Library's Director and CEO and Strategic Communications Officer spoke with more than 200 people in our communities, engaging them as they visited the Library or community events.



200

People in our community

We created an online survey that was shared with PLYMC cardholders and patrons in our branches (800+ responses).



800+

Cardholders & Patrons

We held townhalls in every branch with more than 200 staff members.



200

Staff members

Questions asked

In the survey, we asked patrons about their Library habits, how often they visit the Library, whether they utilize our digital services, what branches they visit, as well as:

- 1 Do you have any suggestions to improve the Library's services that you use?
- 2 Are there specific improvements or changes you would like to see in the Library's buildings and physical spaces?
- 3 What are the most important issues when it comes to your community, and do you think the Library plays a role in those issues?

In our individual community conversations, we asked:

- 1 Is the Library doing a good job providing services to you?
- 2 Is there anything we could do better?



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