



2024 PLYMC Strategic Plan

Highlights

PLYMC's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan identifies four goals with corresponding action items to serve as a framework for the organization. As we move forward, we will evaluate our progress to ensure we remain on track to achieve our desired outcomes. These are the key highlights of the progress we have made.

GOAL

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

Foster Service Excellence Standards

- Refocused the Education Department and created the Employee Engagement & Experience Manager position as increasing engagement will improve customer service internally and externally.
- Trained specialists (Librarian 3s) who expertly guide system-wide programs and services, including the most recent additions to the team – the Community Wellness and Health Literacy and Youth Education Specialist.
- Created the Traveling Branch, which includes three staff members. They joined the Public Service Lead in TCC to serve as customer service champions, modeling excellent customer service and gleaning best practices as they work at all our locations.



Maintain and enhance accessibility throughout the system

- Added new hardware and software where needed. These additions keep staff and patrons familiar with the latest technology and stay up to date with what schools and organizations may have access to as well as provide patrons with a sense of pride that tax dollars are being used efficiently.
- Updated software security. When staff and patrons know they are protected from vulnerabilities, it gives them peace of mind to surf the web and be able to come to the library daily, weekly and monthly knowing they are protected.
- Physical accessibility improvements in progress at Sebring Library, including a new building door.



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

- Renewed focus on recognizing, listening to, and celebrating staff.
- Celebrated our staff during National Library Week rather than just generalizing that libraries are great.
- Conducted engagement meetings with branch staff at each location. The information has guided work and progress in several departments, including the new position of the Chief of Staff, responsible for fostering a more robust and efficient system for internal communication.
- Implementing a spirit of welcoming and a robust training system for all new employees, regardless of class.



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

- Continued development of the collection to meet the needs of the community. Examples are the Library of Things, the Foreign Language collection, and Hi-Lo items for emerging readers (adults).
- Further identified ways to meet the community where they are. For example, print readership, although still strong, is fading in favor of digital content. Increasing options in digital offerings has become more and more important for library service.

GOAL

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

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

- Joined the Population Coalition of the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber and other programs with the Chamber to both attract and retain workers in the area to create better opportunities for economic development and job training.
- Continued partnership with ACTION and the Mobile Market to bring affordable and healthier food options to low-income and needy families in Mahoning County. Select PLYMC branches serve as regular sites for the market each month.
- Partnered with the American Heart Association to place blood pressure monitoring stations at all branches.
- The OH WOW! museum continues to provide PLYMC with educational kits for check out.

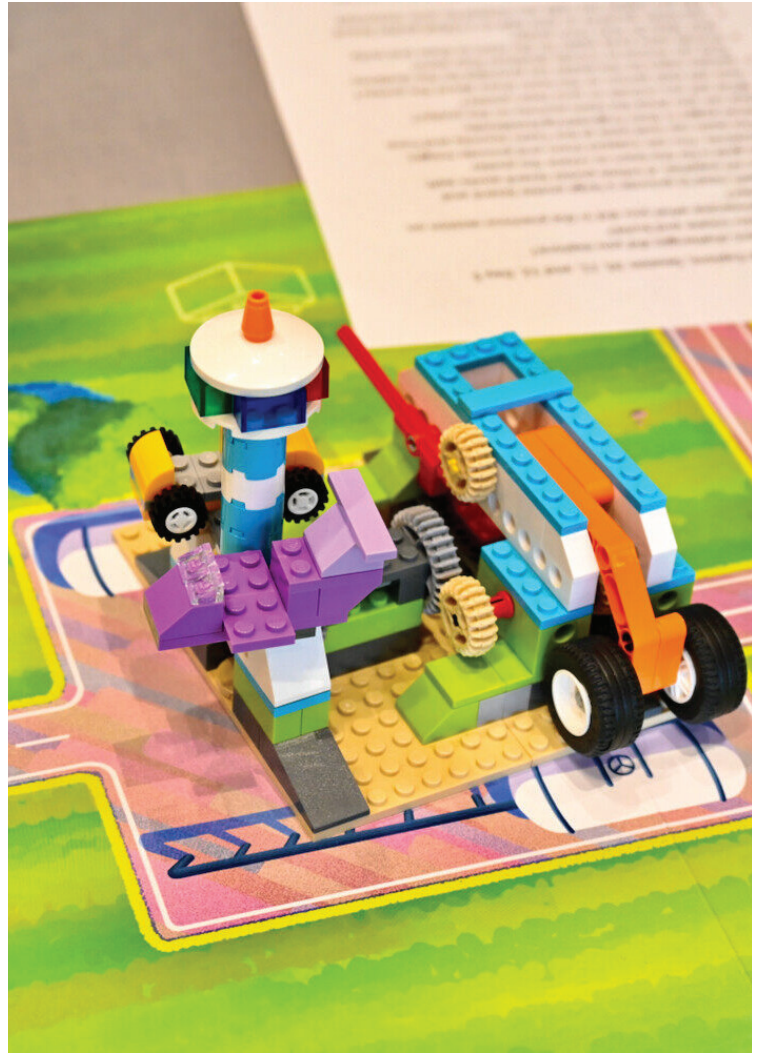


Establish a framework to support sustainable partnerships

- Investigated the American Library Association and other similar sized library best practices regarding outside partnership frameworks. We reviewed existing formal and informal partnerships to evaluate the efficacy of continuing to share library resources in an ongoing manner with these groups.

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

- Supported staff development through Pride training program. The training gave staff the opportunity to refresh their fundamental library skills as pertains to censorship and their customer service skills to support the varied information needs of our community.
- Transitioned the roles of the Public Service Managers (PSMs) to better meet staff training and communication needs.
- Completed two Ohio Department of Education grants that supported First Lego League programming and kitchen literacy skills development.



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

- Continued to utilize social media and patron feedback to host programs on popular topics. For example, programs around gardening and plants are well received so we brought more of those experiences to the library.

GOAL

Create a healthy and sustainable organization that builds for the future

Expand healthy living programming

- Amy Spencer, PLYMC's Culinary Literacy Director, earned a certificate for completing a Food as Medicine Course offered by the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. Continuing education for staff helps us add more free cooking programs that support a healthier lifestyle.
- Continued to work with Mercy Health to offer healthy cooking programs on a regular basis.
- Ohio State University Extension Office will return to PLYMC in January 2025 to offer their interactive nutrition education program. This 9-week program is for families with children, birth to 18 years, families who are pregnant, caregivers OR young adults (18-26 without children).
- Provided cooking program at Austintown Library for students who visit there after school. Micro-sessions included kitchen fundamentals such as proper sanitation, measuring ingredients, recipe literacy, flavor profiles, and budgeting for grocery shopping. Some students reported being more mindful of sanitation and hand washing and that they made the yogurt parfait at home.



Enhance our disaster preparedness, safety protocols, and related equipment

- Continued to invest in safety and security infrastructure which includes updating and standardizing end of life CCTV systems.
- Reached out to community groups, including local jurisdictions (police/fire), schools and other community partners, to participate in emergency response procedures at larger more realistic levels.
- Investigated mass notification system across the organization to improve communication during emergency situations.
- Introduced incident command training to leadership and included incident command scenarios in emergency preparedness drills. This will help develop better response plans for large scale emergency events and will also improve communication with community partners during these types of events.

Enhance environmentally and fiscally sustainable practices

- Implemented HVAC temperature control to reduce energy consumption. Achieved through programmable thermostats and programmed controls.
- Installed water bottle refill stations to promote personal water bottle usage instead of plastic disposables.
- Sold building materials from previous projects to the public through Starr Supply Youngstown's retail store.
- Partnership with Green Team Recycling Division of Mahoning County to have recycling hubs at Newport, Austintown and Poland along with bulk containers for paper and cardboard. Battery recycling is also available at all locations. Overall, this partnership helps to encourage the recycling of white paper, newspaper, cardboard, envelopes, shredded paper (bagged), magazines, phone books, batteries and computer equipment.



Create a long-term facilities plan

- PLYMC contracted Bialosky as well as Library Strategies to engage with internal and external stakeholders and deliver a ten-year Master Facilities plan. This plan will provide an assessment of facilities and major systems at each building and a synthesis of major economic data to help PLYMC target future investment of capital dollars.

GOAL

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

Continue to develop services based on literacy-based initiative

- Staff training and story times were created with Every Child Ready to Read framework developed by PLA and ALSC. Continued to teach parents and other caregivers how to support the early literacy development of their children with the basis of Every Child Ready to Read.
- Kindergarten Readiness Stations in every branch provided activities to support school readiness that could be done by a child with their caregiver whenever they visit the library.
- 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program encouraged families to read together. Reading with your baby, toddler or preschooler is one of the best ways to prepare your child for success in school.
- Storytrails located throughout the county from April through December each year provide an opportunity for families to read together while in the community.
- Collection continued to provide resources such as Early Learning Backpacks that provide books and activities that include specific school readiness skills tied to Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards.
- Next steps are to expand support for school-age struggling readers.



Develop a plan to support adult literacy

- Coordinated with other Ohio Metro Libraries to discover best practices in programming and collection development with an adult literacy focus.
- Developing a collection to support adult literacy at the Newport Library.
- Created MOU with Mahoning County Career and Technical Center as the Fiscal Agent for Aspire to provide adult literacy classes.
- Offering English Language classes in collaboration with the English Center of Youngstown.

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

- Hosted programs such as book clubs and STEM-based programs, including First Lego League. Teens participated in the Teen Advisory Board.
- Continued partnerships with PBS and local schools to enhance programming.
- Offered support through the collection by providing access to books, eBooks, audiobooks and STEAM to go kits. Computers and Makerspace equipment were also used for schoolwork. Additionally, the Pop-Up Library continued to take the collection directly into schools.
- Staff provided ongoing assistance by recommending resources and providing research and citation instruction and support.
- Next steps are to grow connections with classrooms.