



Kitchigami Regional Library

Strategic Plan: 2009-2011

INTRODUCTION

Our Mission

Kitchigami Regional Library System provides quality library services and resources, responding to the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

Our Vision

Kitchigami Regional Library System

- will be a healthy organization with resources to fulfill ever changing goals
- will be the heart of a community that is invested in the importance of libraries
- will be viewed as the primary resource for ideas and knowledge
- will be innovative in bridging the information gap
- will strive to reach an appropriate match between community needs and library services

Our Values

We value:

- the freedom to read, to learn, to discover
- service to the public
- open access to information as fundamental to an informed population
- our responsibility as a public institution
- accountability to our cities, counties, and public
- innovation and creativity
- contributions of employees and volunteers
- our responsibility to appropriately remunerate our employees
- respect for each individual

Values Enhanced

The Kitchigami Regional Library Board reviewed and renewed its commitment to its Mission, Vision and endorsed an expanded statement of values to include:

- supporting local development of service plans
- seeking alternative service models within the consolidated structure
- local decision-making should be developed to the greatest extent possible while maintaining the quality and efficiency of regional system operations
- local partnerships should be encouraged for a range of items
- more communications should be directed to correct misperceptions that cities and counties may have about KRL.

Strategic Planning Process

Kitchigami Regional Library sought to gather and evaluate public input on the value of library services and future service needs in its nine branch library communities and the rural areas served by the mobile library.

To this end, KRL engaged Mark Ranum, Consulting Librarian and his team to advise the board and its management on strategic directions for KRL services and a preferred model for the organization of those services.

In Phase I of the planning process, Mark Ranum facilitated a series of public meetings in the nine cities with branch libraries in the region. These meetings attracted 112 members of the public and local decision-makers to discuss the library's services and changing community needs. In addition an online and print survey gathered 925 responses to a range of questions about the library and how it is organized.

The consultants developed a preliminary report from this information and , in phase II, held a second series of public meetings to discuss future directions and models for service goals.

In January 2008 the Kitchigami Regional Library Board held a retreat to discuss the survey and the regional priorities coming from it as outlined by the consultants. The record of this meeting and the Phase II Final Report of the consultants became the framework for discussions with the branch library managers and administration on strategic focuses for the region.

The input from the branch managers played a key part in filling out the information from the meetings and surveys – ensuring that parts of the community that may not have been well represented were still considered in any assessment of priorities. This strategic plan must also work in conjunction with our Technology Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011. The branch managers provide unique insight into the interrelationship between regional operations, technology and frontline public service.

A particular challenge to the development of this strategic plan has been the recognized need for a new joint powers agreement. This has not been easily achieved. The Kitchigami Regional Library Board can now see an end to that process, however, and the beginning of a new local/regional partnership that will work in conjunction with this strategic plan to develop better and stronger local library services.

Identifying Needs: Building on Strengths

The online and paper survey provided the regional library board with the following information:

- 91.9% said they were satisfied to very satisfied with library service
- 61.5% were between the ages of 18 and 64; 30.9% were over 64
- 58.7 said they use the library weekly
- 92.9% said they would be willing to pay additional taxes for improved library service

Suggestions on service areas where the library should focus its resources varied widely around the nine branch libraries, and the averages obscure the range of responses:

- 45.7% Print resources
- 47.7% AudioVisual resources
- 42.5% Technology improvements
- 46.3% Children's and teen services
- 37.0% Open hours
- 12.2% Speakers, programs and author visits for adults

The wide range of local needs and values and single library issues support the regional library board's value on local decision-making. At the same time, the survey reinforced the strong regional role in coordinating regionwide programs and services, technical services and technology, forging statewide partnerships, and communicating regionwide programs and services.

Strategic Plan Implementation

The eight **strategic focus areas** will guide the library's decisions about developing the regional and branch library annual budgets, entering into program partnerships and implementing specific initiatives from 2009 through 2011.

The library will continue to monitor the needs and priorities of our communities and adjust our services to meet changing financial, social and cultural needs.

The director of Kitchigami Regional Library has primary responsibility for leading the efforts to address these eight goal areas at the regional level, with library staff at all levels making significant contributions to regional and local branch library goal achievement. The Kitchigami Regional Library Board, which endorses these strategic goals and is the policy setting body for the library, has a crucial role to play in providing input into the programs, services and initiatives of the library as well as securing the necessary resources, adopting policy and providing oversight to Kitchigami's services. The regional library board also adopts and promotes Kitchigami's budget requests in support of the strategic and service goals.

Branch library managers and their local library committees have primary responsibility for their local action plans and strategic directions in support of the strategic framework established by the regional library board.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

1. Increase communication between the library and its service area

Residents of the five county area and their elected officials will gain a greater understanding of KRL's services, their value and relevance.

2. Enhance local participation in the delivery of library service

Local library advisory committees will receive support to participate effectively in decisions on local services.

3. Enhance organizational effectiveness

KRL will have an organizational structure that effectively supports the coordination and delivery of high quality, patron-focused library services.

SERVICE FOCUS AREAS

4. Provide collections that entertain, inform and connect

Patrons will have access to materials that are enjoyable, facilitate exploration of personal interests and independent learning, and enhance their experience of their community and world.

5. Promote a love of reading in young children

Children and their parents will benefit from programs and services designed to support every child's ability to enter school ready to learn, read, write and listen.

6. Support adults and their changing interests through their senior years

Senior patrons will find literature, information and answers to questions related to cultural, civic and personal life in order to be intellectually and socially engaged in their communities.

7. Facilitate information identification and fluency

Patrons of all ages will find the tools and skills to find, evaluate and use information resources that support their daily lives.

8. Provide access to library services using appropriate locations and technologies

Residents of all ages will have the opportunity to access a variety of services through branch libraries, outreach services and service partnerships.

Goals for Strategic Focus Areas

1. Increase communication between the library and its service area

Residents of the five county area and their elected officials will gain a greater understanding of KRL's services, their value and relevance.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Develop targeted methods of communicating KRL's plans for services, programs and facilities
- Develop an "news bulletin" section of its website for timely information on board activities, reports on meetings and highlights
- Participate in statewide and regional activities that bring the library and its issues to the attention of political decision-makers
- Develop guidelines and templates for regional and branch use for public information, bulletins, posters and other items
- Provide branch library managers and their local advisory committees with timely information for local media coverage

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Provide information for the branch activities section of the website
- Utilize regional communications guidelines for local publications and programs
- Increase local library committee participation in advocating for KRL

2. Enhance local participation in the delivery of library service

Local library advisory committees will receive support to participate effectively in decisions on local services.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Review all policies and identify those that would benefit from local decision-making and identify regional considerations
- Prepare guidelines for policy development and best practices where appropriate and distribute these to local library advisory committees
- Provide local workshops on policy development where these are requested

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Develop local policies in the areas identified by the regional library board
- Provide these policies to the regional library board for retention

3. Enhance organizational effectiveness

KRL will have an organizational structure that effectively supports the coordination and delivery of high quality, patron-focused library services.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Improve board efficiency and effectiveness through review of timetables, support materials and agendas
- Review and implement a job evaluation process that ensures rational staffing
- Develop formal local input tools for local library committees
- Review its financial processes to support higher efficiency and accountability
- Develop model partnership agreements for use at the regional and branch library levels
- Allocate branch hours within the city/county financial requirements that support local usage levels

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Communicate their service needs and concerns to KRL
- Conduct local surveys and information review for decision-making
- Support other local stakeholder groups such as Friends and foundations in their efforts to align their priorities and activities with those of the library
- Establish branch open hours
- Work effectively with volunteers within the framework of KRL policy

Goals for Service Focus Areas

4. Provide collections and programs that entertain, inform and connect

Patrons will have access to materials and programs that are enjoyable, facilitate exploration of personal interests and independent learning, and enhance their experience of their community and world.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Support branch library acquisitions of high-demand popular and informational materials in a wide range of formats
- Explore funding opportunities that will enhance regionwide collections and programs

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Build collections of high-demand popular and informational materials in a wide range of formats
- Develop annual selection plans that provide for a wide range of materials serving broad interests
- Implement and support programs that enhance the relationship between people and reading and their community
- Extend staff skills in providing personal support to individuals looking for materials and programs

5. Promote a love of reading in young children

Children and their parents will benefit from programs and services designed to support every child's ability to enter school ready to learn, read, write and listen.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Coordinate Summer Library Program and other region-wide programs that support branch services to children and their families
- Extend staff skills for children's services

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Develop annual materials selection plans that include appropriate levels of expenditure on high-interest materials for young children
- Present and coordinate with community partners to present a range of programs and learning opportunities for young children, their families and caregivers
- Provide welcoming and comfortable areas for materials and programs for young children
- Support training opportunities that will enhance local staff skills in children's services

6. Support adults and their changing interests through their senior years

Senior patrons will find literature, information and answers to questions related to cultural, civic and personal life in order to be intellectually and socially engaged in their communities.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Develop new approaches to library services that respond to the needs of the aging population, active older adults and the homebound
- Coordinate rotating collections of large print and audiovisual materials for seniors
- Investigate and inform branch managers on best practices for outreach to older adults

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Cooperate in the development of annual purchase plans for region-wide rotating collections of large print and audiovisual materials for seniors
- Develop annual local materials budgets plans that incorporate materials for older adults
- Coordinate local outreach to seniors and the homebound within the framework of the best practices
- Provide facilities and technologies that are welcoming and enhance access by older adults
- Develop local programs and activities that enhance the experience of literature and community living

7. Facilitate information identification and fluency

Patrons of all ages will find the tools and skills to find, evaluate and use information resources that support their daily lives.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Select appropriate electronic resources for region-wide access
- Extend branch library staff skills in helping people find and use the best information resources for their needs
- Develop promotional and teaching materials for region-wide information services
- Invest in efficient region-wide systems to connect people with the materials they request and the information they need.

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Develop locally appropriate classes and presentations in cooperation with community partners to help older adults, homeschoolers and others improve their skills and abilities in using online services and electronic resources
- Distribute promotional and educational support materials to the public

8. Provide access to library services using appropriate locations and technologies

Residents of all ages will have the opportunity to access a variety of services through branch libraries, outreach services and service partnerships.

To achieve this goal, Kitchigami Regional Library will:

- Review mobile library routes and stop times to optimize resources
- Support local branch library outreach programs through coordination, software and training
- Develop partnership agreement templates for local and region-wide programming
- Explore service agreements with other library agencies to expand access to KRL services that do not impact approved budgets with KRL signatory cities and counties

To achieve this goal, branch libraries will:

- Establish open hours that respond to quantified public need
- Work with community groups and individual volunteers to provide outreach programs
- Develop local service partnerships within the framework of KRL's goals and services