

# Ottumwa Public Library

## Strategic Plan

### 2022-2024



"120 YEARS"

Nicki Wyldes

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Process History</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Vision Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Space Utilization Report</b>	<b>4</b>

## Goals & Objectives

<b>Goal 1:</b> Residents and Newcomers are Educated About Housing Through Library Programs and Events.	<b>5</b>
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<b>Goal 2:</b> Teens Will Find a Welcoming Space that Meets Their Social Needs	<b>5</b>
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<b>Goal 3:</b> The Library Will Connect Lifelong Learners with Resources and Opportunities to Expand their Horizons and Increase their Knowledge	<b>6</b>
--	----------

<b>Goal 4:</b> Everyone feels part of the community through library programs and services.	<b>6</b>
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<b>Goal 5:</b> Citizens have a library facility in a suitable location that is sized for the community.	<b>7</b>
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<b>Goal 6:</b> Residents are made aware of mental health resources in the community.	<b>7</b>
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<b>Goal 7:</b> The needs of underserved communities will be met by removing barriers and increasing access to library services.	<b>8</b>
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<b>Planning Calendar</b>	<b>9</b>
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# PROCESS HISTORY

The Ottumwa Public Library prepared this strategic plan through the assistance and oversight of the State Library of Iowa and their District Consultant, Becky Heil. The Board took a different approach from 2017 both because they had done it that way already and also because the community was still finding a new normal after the COVID 19 pandemic. For this strategic plan the board utilized Heil's experience with various strategic processes and took a two pronged approach. They had a space utilization report compiled and had Heil do 15 stakeholder phone interviews about the Ottumwa community and the Ottumwa Public Library's role in it.

For the Space Utilization Report the library applied for and received a \$3000 grant from the State Library of Iowa for that purpose. They then hired Shana Stuart, PhD of Stuart Consulting and she compiled and shared a report with the board. An overview of this report is included in the strategic plan.

Becky Heil then conducted approximately 15 interviews by telephone with stakeholder suggestions from the library staff and Board of Trustees. She presented the results of these conversations to the Board and those were used to formulate the goals of the strategic plan.

In June, 2022 Heil met with the Board of Trustees to develop and brainstorm 7 goals and a review of the library's mission and vision statements. From those 7 goals the staff at the library then met and broke the goals down into 38 objectives for the library to accomplish in this newest strategic plan.

At the September 12, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting, the Director shared a draft strategic plan and at the October 10, 2022 meeting it was approved.



# OTTUMWA PUBLIC LIBRARY VISION STATEMENT

The Ottumwa Public Library strives to provide wide-ranging opportunities, space, services and resources for all members of the community to expand their knowledge, increase understanding and gain perspective about our diverse and amazing world.

# OTTUMWA PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The Ottumwa Public Library serves the residents of Ottumwa and Wapello County by:

- \* Providing resources to educate and entertain all patrons throughout the community and stimulate their imaginations;
- \* Offering a safe, comfortable place for the individual to enjoy and for the community to gather;
- \* And endeavoring to inform patrons about their community and the resources it offers.



# Overview of Space Utilization Report

## by Shana Stuart, PhD of Stuart Consulting

Ottumwa Public Library's collections, services, and operations are limited by the 12,000 square foot existing building. There is very limited space in the building for a growing collection of materials, and for most of the desired programming. That the building neither feels crowded or unusable is due to the constant efforts of the staff who work very hard to keep the collection to a size that fits in the existing areas.

Ottumwa Public Library requested a Space Needs Assessment which is based on the library's own service trends, peer comparisons, and a description of national library trends. A visit was made to the library on February 2 and 3, 2022, and interviews were conducted with the Library Director, the staff. The Board of Trustees was consulted on March 14. The data from their input is incorporated throughout the report. This report provides recommendations regarding the technical space needs which are based on the Wisconsin Division of Library Services.

It is important to note that library statistics for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 through FY21 have been impacted by COVID-19, which necessitated library closures and fewer in-house uses of libraries. This situation brought to a standstill many of the rising statistics on usage. It is also important to note that statewide library statistics are only available through FY20.

The Ottumwa Public Library provides important services to the community and it should serve as a "third space" for many. The concept of "third place" (developed in 1989 by Ray Oldenburg) is distinguished from the home ("first place"), and the workplace or school ("second place") as an environment that allows for the creation of a sense of community. Research has shown that when people frequented a third place, they often experienced strong feelings of attachment to that place as well as to the community at large. Public libraries are perfectly situated to fill the need of a "third place" for every demographic in a community, and in Ottumwa, and as expressed in the Mission Statement, it may be particularly important to have a free and "a safe, comfortable place for the individual to enjoy and for the community to gather."

The Wisconsin Standards provide an overview of the essential space needs. However, there are other space needs not included by the assessment that should be incorporated in calculations made in consultation with an architect. This report recommends that at a minimum, the Ottumwa Public Library should plan for a building with a minimum calculation of 21,051 square feet or for 25,731 square feet at a moderate calculation to provide for the services and needs of the community expected through the year 2042. It should be noted that the FY20 average library building size for a Class G library is 34,620 square feet.

# Goals and Objectives

## **Goal 1: Residents and Newcomers are Educated About Housing Through Library Programs and Events.**

### Objectives:

1. Offer information or programming on tenant rights (September 2023)
2. Partner with the Legacy Foundation on newcomer classes (June 2023)
3. Offer Transparent Language classes (January 2024)
4. Partner with schools to offer Spanish or other language storytimes (March 2023)
5. Build a Spanish language Facebook page (March 2023)
6. Provide and distribute information on local homeless, substance abuse and food insecure resources (December 2022)

## **Goal 2: Teens Will Find a Welcoming Space that Meets Their Social Needs**

### Objectives:

1. Start a Tik-Tok to interact more with teens (January 2023)
2. Teens and tweens will have subscription bags available. Monthly bags will contain 2-3 books, a dvd and treats based on a monthly theme. Library material is returned, but teens and tweens get to keep the treats. (September 2022)
3. Start a teen and tween computer lab. Laptops from the Legacy Foundation grant will be used for this. (September 2022)
4. Start a Roblox Club (May 2023)
5. Decorate the teen area. Add in things like photos, art, and twinkle lights to make the space more teen friendly. (April 2023)
6. Offer crafting classes for teens including things like painting, knitting, drawing, and comic drawing classes through hybrid formats. (June 2024)



## **Goal 3: The Library Will Connect Lifelong Learners with Resources and Opportunities to Expand their Horizons and Increase their Knowledge**

### Objectives:

1. Start a senior group, Coffee and Conversations. The goal of this group will be to have a speaker each month discuss something of interest to the senior community and provide time for socializing. (October 2022)
2. Connect seniors with kids through programming, possibly a senior storytime or a storytime at a nursing home and/or connect seniors with teens through an oral history program. (June 2023)
3. Continue the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. (September 2022)
4. Continue the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. (September 2022)
5. Complete digitization project in the genealogy room. (May 2024)

## **Goal 4: Everyone feels part of the community through library programs and services.**

### Objectives:

1. Expand the Library of Things beyond the garden tools to potentially include: tables and chairs, party supplies, craft supplies like sewing machines or Cricuts, musical instruments, etc based on research and ideas from other public libraries and feedback from the Ottumwa community. Funding will be sought from outside groups and grants. (February 2023)
2. Implementation of classes taught on topics like Introduction to the Internet, Computer Basics, Email Basics, and Working with Files & Folders. Equipment and lesson plans will be used from those created prior to the pandemic. (January 2023)
3. Provide a routine set aside time for help with set up and use of phones, laptops, and notebooks for basic issues and tutorials. (December 2023)



## **Goal 5: Citizens have a library facility in a suitable location that is sized for the community.**

### Objectives:

1. Celebrate and promote the 120th anniversary of the OPL. (September 2022)
2. Complete video tours of the library as well as exploring hiring a virtual tour company to post 360 pictures online with information on the library to the community. (January 2023)
3. In an effort to show what OPL could do with more space, the library will share posts from other libraries about programming, collection sizes, and services that are space prohibitive in Ottumwa and/or release space utilization report to the public. (July 2023)
4. Have on hand a wish list of items, services, etc. to share when asked for funding needs or discovering a grant opportunity has become available. (August 2023)
5. Apply for funding (through grant or contribution) to fund the purchase and installation of outdoor musical instruments in the shaded garden at the library. (September 2023)
6. Staff and Board will begin to tour other libraries to start a building project kick off. (October 2022)

## **Goal 6: Residents are made aware of mental health resources in the community.**

### Objectives:

1. Hire or partner with an organization in the community to provide a social worker in the library for service to the patrons of the Ottumwa Public Library. (April 2024)
2. Provide information in book, brochure or handout formats that will be in a private area of the library via a display for teens and those in need to discreetly be able to retrieve and take. (November 2023)
3. Partner with groups like the Be The Light Walk to participate in activities with the aim of reducing rates of suicide and providing support for victims of it. (September 2022)





## **Goal 7: The needs of underserved communities will be met by removing barriers and increasing access to library services.**

### Objectives:

1. Create a document to have on hand at the various service desks which has commonly asked questions or requests of patrons translated between English and other commonly used languages in the Ottumwa community. (April 2023)
2. House a drop off location for those wanting to donate coats, mittens, hats, etc for distribution in the community. (October 2023)
3. House a collection and distribution location for those in need of women's hygiene products, diapers, new socks and undergarments which will be donated by members of the community. (February 2023)
4. Partner with IWD to offer classes and job searching opportunities which assist them in their job searches. (May 2024)
5. Add a phone charging station and purchase phone chargers for patrons to use. (May 2023)
6. Partner with 10/15 Transit to provide free one way travel to and from the library. They will also attempt to create a bus stop closer to the library entrance. (October 2022)
7. Participate in more community events with Library information displays. (November 2022)



# Calendar of Proposed Action 2022

## September

1. Teen Subscription Bags
2. Afterschool computer lab
3. Continue DPIL
4. Continue 1000 Books before Kind.
5. Celebrate 120th Anniversary
6. Partner with Mental health groups

## October

1. Start Coffee & Conversations group
2. Staff & Board tour other libraries with recent building projects.
3. Partner with 10/15 Transit for bus passes

## November

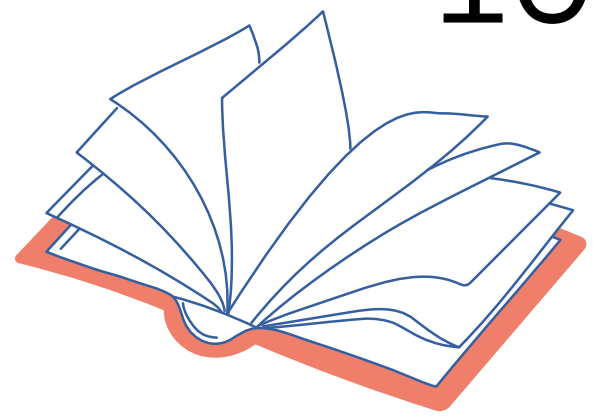
1. Participate in more community events with Library info distributed

## December

1. Homeless/ Substance Abuse/ Food Insecure information shared



# Calendar of Proposed Action 2023



## January

1. Start Library Tiktok
2. Start computer classes.
3. Virtual tours of library

## February

1. Expand Library of Things
2. Distribute women's hygiene/diapers/other needed products

## March

1. Spanish Facebook
2. Spanish Storytimes

## April

1. FAQ cards at desks in other languages
2. Decorate Teen Area

## May

1. Start Roblox club
2. Add phone charging stations

## June

1. Partner with Legacy for Newcomers classes
2. Connect seniors/children through storytimes



# Calendar of Proposed Action 2023

## July

1. Share posts on other libraries/Space usage

## August

1. Wish list accessible

## September

1. Tenant Rights Program

## October

1. Become Winter coat/mitten/hat distribution hub

## November

1. Teen brochure information distribution to begin

## December

1. Start Device Assistance hours

# Calendar of Proposed Action 2024



## January

1. Offer Transparent Lang. Classes

## February

1. Apply for outdoor musical instrument funding

## March

1. Partner with IWD for classes/job searches

## April

1. Apply for funding for Social Worker

## May

1. Complete Genealogy Digitization Project

## June

1. Offer Teen Crafting classes