

**A COMMUNITY VISION**  
2007-2009 Plan of Service  
for Bethlehem Public Library

BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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for Bethlehem Public Library  
Delmar • New York

### Executive summary

The 2007-2009 Plan of Service reflects Bethlehem Public Library's central role as the major information provider in the community and its commitment to the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community. It is based on the community-focused strategic planning process *New Planning for Results*, developed by library consultant Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association of the American Library Association.

The plan is a joint project of community leaders, trustees, and library staff. It exemplifies the spirit of the library's mission statement:

"Bethlehem Public Library values its responsibility to enhance the general welfare and quality of life in the community and region it serves. The library pursues excellence in its mission: to provide equal and uncensored access to resources and services that encourage lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and professional growth."

The plan focuses on five goals for our community, and how the library will help the community achieve these goals. The plan also includes objectives to measure the library's effectiveness in addressing the goals, and specific activities that support the goals.

The five goals build upon services the library currently provides. The library is committed to incorporating these goals into its services and resource allocations for the next three years. The library will check its progress in meeting the goals through periodic review and reports to the library board.

### The goals

The five goals are:

- The library will be a community gathering place and a center for public discourse.
- The library will help children, teens, and adults gain an awareness of different cultures.
- The library will support both formal and independent learning.
- The library will provide access to current and popular materials that afford satisfying recreational experiences for children, teens, and adults.
- The library will help children, teens, and adults learn skills to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

## The committee

The planning process began with a committee of twelve community leaders who reside in the library service area. The community leaders represented many interests within the community including education, business, economic development, government, health, religion, youth, recreation, media, and the arts. These leaders identified an ideal vision for the community's future. Next, they considered how the library could help the community move towards that vision.

Members of the community committee were:

Marty DeLaney	Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce
Mark McGuire	Times-Union Newspaper
Roberta Barstow	Perfect Blend
David Ksanznak	Bethlehem Central School District
Nancy Wooster	Former Key Bank Manager
George Lenhardt	Former Bethlehem Town Board member
Scott Lewis	Executive Director, Capital District YMCA
James Crucetti	Albany County Commissioner of Health
Dirk Gieser	Pastor, Delmar Reformed Church
Diane Buyer	Bethlehem Art Association
Ali Melcher	Student, Bethlehem Central High School
Nancy Smith	Faculty, Elsmere Elementary School

Library representatives on the community committee were:

Lisa Thomas	Staff, Bethlehem Public Library
Michael Zalob	Trustee, Bethlehem Public Library
Jeanne Biggins	Assistant Director, Bethlehem Public Library
Nancy Pieri	Director, Bethlehem Public Library
Sara Dallas	Plan of Service facilitator and Director, Southern Adirondack Library System

## The vision

The leaders envisioned a community that: is welcoming and safe for children and teens; is culturally diverse and accepting of all groups; offers access to educational assistance, job training, and mentoring opportunities; supports local businesses; balances economic development with a need for open space; offers community activities, continuing education, cultural events and religious choices; provides volunteer opportunities for retirees; provides access to programs and services that promote wellness and affordable housing for seniors; and gives support to families of all kinds in addressing life issues.

The committee identified current community strengths which support its vision. These include good schools, safe neighborhoods, an educated population, recreational programs for residents of all ages, musical and cultural opportunities, proximity to a variety of employers, and pride in the community and its history.

The committee noted several current weaknesses that pose obstacles to achieving a community vision. These include rapid growth, heavy traffic, high taxes, lack of cultural diversity, insufficient communication between school district and residents, and perceived elitism.

The committee considered how an educational and cultural organization like the library could help the community build upon its strengths, address obstacles, and move towards the ideal community vision. Committee members decided the library was uniquely positioned through its facilities, collections, and services to play a central role in the community vision.

The committee studied a range of library service options defined in *New Planning for Results*. The committee then selected a preliminary set of service options that would support the community vision.

As the work of the community leaders progressed, staff members met in several large and small groups to review the preliminary recommendations of the committee and identify current strengths and weaknesses of the library. The staff response to the preliminary recommendations was reported to the committee. The community leaders incorporated the staff response into their final recommendations.

The committee concluded that the library could support the community vision in these ways: provide a community gathering place and center for discourse, promote cultural awareness, support learning of all kinds, fulfill residents' desire for current and popular material, and help residents find and use information effectively.

Staff members continued their role in the planning process. They wrote specific goals based on the committee's final recommendations and developed several objectives for each goal. The objectives set target levels of performance to measure the library's effectiveness in meeting the goals. Next, staff considered specific tasks they would complete to support each goal. They identified a wide range of activities relating to collections, programming, and public service. The written plan includes a selected set of activities for each goal.

The work of the community leaders and library staff was reviewed by library trustees throughout the planning process.

## The plan

The library plan of service responds directly to the community vision through its five goals. Each goal incorporates two or more annual objectives that measure success by number of users, customer satisfaction surveys, and borrowing activity. Each goal lists selected activities with target completion dates and resource allocations.

## Goal #1

The library will be a community gathering place and a center for public discourse.

### Objectives

The number of people attending community meetings or events at the library will increase 50% in 2007, 20% in 2008, and 20% in 2009.

The number of people who participate in public discourse opportunities in the library or on the library website will increase 50% in 2007, 25% in 2008 and 25% in 2009. Public discourse opportunities are interactive discussions among community members about local and world issues, concerns, and events.

### Selected activities

- Assist community groups who use library facilities to expand public participation. Strategies include: host websites for community groups; produce a searchable online directory of community organizations; distribute PR how-to kits to groups; encourage use of TV-18.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Conduct a direct mail campaign inviting community organizations to book library facilities, including the two public meeting rooms, the library green, and the Borthwick lawn. Use listings of community organizations in *Community Contacts*, the *Spotlight* community events calendar, and other sources to generate these mailings.  
2007  
Resource allocation: current staff; one additional part-time custodial worker @ \$2500 per year to assist with increased use on weekends
- Purchase upgrades to meeting room equipment, including audio and video equipment and presentation aids.  
2007  
Resource allocation: \$10,000 estimated expenditure from allotted 2007-08 budget
- Host annual public discussion series on topics of local interest and stories in the news; cablecast on TV-18. Invite series partnerships with town and school officials.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff; speaker fees
- Host a quarterly opinion poll and a community forum on the library website and at the library information desk.  
2007  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Evaluate safety, accessibility, and capacity to accommodate more handicapped parking and increases in pedestrian and vehicular traffic. FY 2007-08.  
Resource allocation: expenditure for traffic and safety consultant.

## Goal #2

The library will help children, teens, and adults gain an awareness of different cultures.

### Objectives

The number of residents attending programs promoting cultural awareness will increase 50% in 2007, 25% in 2008, and 25% in 2009.

The number of participants in cultural awareness programs or exhibits who rate the event "good" or "excellent" will be 90% or above in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

The number of items loaned from designated cultural awareness collections will increase 10% in 2007, 20% in 2008, and 20% in 2009.

### Selected activities

- Observe the cultural heritage months identified by the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies: Black History Month (February); Women's History Month (March); Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May); Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15); American Indian Heritage Month (November). Activities will include public programs for children and adults, exhibits, loan of museum passes to related museum exhibits, and publicity in the library newsletter, library *Spotlight* column, and TV-18.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Expand purchases and increase promotion of designated cultural diversity collections, including materials relating to heritage, customs, languages, world travel, and world music.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: \$3000 in 2007; \$3000 in 2008; \$3000 in 2009
- Produce a searchable online directory of regional cultural societies and related organizations as a resource for educators, community groups, and libraries.  
2007  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Offer annual staff development workshops in cultural awareness, diversity training, and communication skills.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff; \$350 expenditure per year
- Invite programming and exhibits partnerships with diversity clubs from the middle and high schools, and cultural heritage groups.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff.

### Goal #3

The library will support both formal and independent learning.

#### Objectives

The number of residents who use library resources for formal or independent learning will increase 50% by 2009.

The number of interactions with school personnel relating to curriculum support will increase 50% by 2009.

#### Selected activities

- Increase purchase of materials related to school curriculum and school reading lists.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: \$3000 per year
- Offer librarian assistance by appointment for student assignments, adult learning projects, and distance learning.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Schedule semi-annual visits with school personnel at elementary, middle school, and high school levels to identify strategies for curriculum support and partnership opportunities.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Conduct one staff development workshop in adult learning concepts.  
2007  
Resource allocation: \$1000
- Offer an after-school mobile laptop computer lab in the library for student access to homework resources.  
2008  
Resource allocation: current staff; \$3000
- Upgrade public computer workstations with multi-media functionality to facilitate learning projects.  
2008  
Resource allocation: \$10,000

## Goal #4

The library will provide access to current and popular materials that afford satisfying recreational experiences for children, teens, and adults.

### Objectives

Circulation of all library materials will increase 20% by 2009.

Eighty per cent of library users will report satisfaction in obtaining materials, either on a visit to the library or by making an online request.

The number of children, teens, and adults participating in reading programs will increase 50% by 2009.

### Selected activities

- Purchase additional multiple copies of in-demand items.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: re-allocate materials expenditures
- Present "Ask Me" marketing campaign inviting customers to ask staff about finding materials.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Celebrate Teen Read Week, a national literacy initiative administered by the Young Adult Library Services Association of the American Library Association. Offer programs and a month-long display during October to encourage teens to make time to read for fun, and to welcome teens to the library.  
October 2007, October 2008, October 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff; \$1000 annual programming expenditure.
- Establish special shelving areas and display units to market popular materials.  
2007  
Resource allocation: \$2000
- Offer a summer reading program targeted to middle school level.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Offer online option for summer reading programs.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Offer online book discussions for children, teens, and adults.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff

## Goal #5

The library will help children, teens, and adults learn skills to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

### Objectives

Staff assistance will include instruction in information skills and use of library technologies in 50% of patron transactions.

The number of participants in group and individual instructional sessions related to accessing and using information in print and other media will increase 25% by 2009.

### Selected activities

- Offer one-on-one instructional sessions for students, parents, and adults in Internet access to information resources.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Present a community technology fair to inform residents about information technologies, and to highlight the library's central role as a user of information technologies.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff
- Model a wide range of technologies in delivering library services to residents and community groups. Examples include webcasting, videoconferencing, videostreaming, online electronic forms, interactive reference assistance, access to distance learning sites, and downloading of collection materials.  
2007, 2008, 2009  
Resource allocation: current staff; re-allocate automation and database expenditures

### Approval and periodic review

The 2007-2009 Plan of Service plan was approved by the Bethlehem Public Library Board of Trustees on December 11, 2006.

A copy of the plan is available at the library and on the library website, [www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org](http://www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org)

Trustees and staff will conduct periodic reviews of the plan's objectives and activities.

Activities may be modified or expanded as necessary to meet objectives.

Comments on the plan may be made in person to the trustees during the public comment period of any monthly board meeting, or by email to [bpitrustee@uhls.lib.ny.us](mailto:bpitrustee@uhls.lib.ny.us)

A schedule of board meetings is available at the library and on the library website, [www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org](http://www.bethlehempubliclibrary.org)