



# IOLA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan  
2022-2024

Board Approved March 7, 2022

## **Vision Statement**

The Iola Public Library: A welcoming destination that inspires our community

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Iola Public Library is to provide resources, services, and programs to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs and interests of the people of the community. The staff strives to give people what they want when they come to the library.

## **Core Values**

The Iola Public Library embraces these values:

- Serving the community - ***Service***
- Engaging with families, teens and children - ***Engagement***
- Being a welcoming place for all - ***Destination***
- Supporting the needs of readers - ***Literacy***
- Being a dynamic, fun place - ***Participation***
- Being a trusted community partner - ***Collaboration***

## **Strategic Directions, Goals, and Action Steps**

### **1: The Library as a Destination**

Goal: Become the destination for the community.

#### Objectives

1.1: Develop programs, spaces, and staff training to be a welcoming place.

Responsibility: Director with Staff

Deadline: Year 1

#### Action Steps:

1. Host a seed and plant exchange at the shelter by June of each year
2. Arrange existing furniture to create comfortable seating areas
3. Develop an accountability and support program to reinforce positive customer service interactions
4. Install a self-check machine and investigate self-service holds

1.2: Tour libraries that excel as destination places (Lawrence, Topeka Olathe-Indian Creek, Johnson County-Lenexa City Center, as well as other destination libraries available online).

Responsibility: Director

Deadline: Year 2

Action Steps:

1. Develop a list of new libraries in eastern and central Kansas to preview online
2. Work with the SEKLS Consultant to organize a tour, inviting interested member libraries to join IPL staff
3. Create a virtual idea board to share, highlight, and store ideas and inspiration from the destination libraries identified

## **2: Communications and Outreach**

Goal: Ensure that the community is aware of the library and its service offerings.

2.1: Actively utilize the *Iola Register* to publicize the library.

Responsibility: Rotating among Director and Staff

Deadline: Ongoing

Action Steps:

1. Submit a monthly "Library Corner" article that highlights programs, events, news, and new materials at the library

2.2: Engage in the full range of social media.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 1

Action Steps:

1. Provide training and a checklist for adding informational and event posts to [iolapubliclibrary.org](http://iolapubliclibrary.org) that can feed into social media
2. Scan/poll the community to see what social media sites are most used, for example through the school district and extension
3. Investigate using a social media management dashboard
4. Add and actively post to two (2) new social media accounts

2.3: Expand library outreach into the community.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 2

Action Steps:

1. Identify opportunities for expanded outreach, such as farmer's market, outdoor concerts, Fair, and parades

- a. Develop a comprehensive calendar of events
  - b. Contact event coordinator to participate
- 2. Identify on-site opportunities for outdoor events, such as an open house, block party, ice cream social, or family festival
- 3. Investigate purchasing an external digital sign
  - a. Work with the City for permits
  - b. Develop a policy

2.4: Develop a marketing plan.

Responsibility: Director, Staff, and Board

Deadline: Year 3

Action Steps:

- 1. Research library marketing, such as the SCKLS Marketing Plan page (<https://www.scls.info/pr/toolkit>)
  - a. Identify continuing education on library marketing
  - b. Work with SEKLS for training
- 2. Convene a work group of staff and Board to develop a marketing plan

### 3: Building and Grounds

Goal: Provide the community with an excellent and welcoming library facility.

3.1: Identify new uses of existing or new spaces.

Responsibility: Director, Staff, and Board

Deadline: Ongoing

Action Steps:

- 1. With the Family Engagement in Public Libraries (FEPL) grant, create a Family Place center in the children's department
- 2. With the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant, complete the Shelter project by installing cameras, lights, and extended wifi

3.2: Assess the existing building and grounds.

Responsibility: Director, Board, and City

Deadline: Year 1

Action Steps:

- 1. In coordination with the City, research firms that provide architectural consulting and space planning services
- 2. Contract for a Reserve Study and/or Assessment of existing facilities, including the Flewharty Annex
- 3. Review the findings and determine a course of action
  - a. For Flewharty Annex, involve Bowlus and School District

4. Pursue grant funding for roof, HVAC, and lighting, if feasible

3.3: Refresh the library space while assessing further changes.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 1-2

Action Steps:

1. Tour the library and brainstorm potential cosmetic changes
  - a. Seek bid to repaint walls
  - b. Consider how to reconfigure circulation, if possible
  - c. Utilize new, contrasting carpet squares for way-finding and to refresh worn areas
2. Repaint exterior signage for contrast
3. Repaint the exterior trim in a vibrant color and update landscaping

3.4: Explore opportunities to take library services outside of the library location.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 3

Action Steps:

1. Review Homebound services and develop a plan for sustainable growth
2. Investigate mobile library service options (book trailer or bike)

## **4: Partnerships**

Goal: Become a hub to meet community needs.

4.1: Highlight community assets through partnerships, including with Allen Community College, displays, interactive exhibits, and programs

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Annual

Action Steps:

1. Develop a series of three (3) programs that are given by local community members
2. Investigate hosting an exhibit from the Historical Society
3. Connect and collaborate with Student Activities at Allen on at least one (1) activity or event

4.2: Cultivate strategic partnerships.

Responsibility: Director and Board

Deadline: Year 1

Action Steps:

1. Meet with leadership of the School District, Historical Society, Bowlus Center, and Thrive Allen County
2. Investigate becoming a KANSASWORKS site
3. Identify potential partners for community technology classes

4.3: Seek partners for a community calendar.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 2, Ongoing

Action Steps:

1. Identify and add organizations to the Community Links page of the website (<https://iolapubliclibrary.org/community-links/>)
2. Investigate and identify successful community calendars to serve as models
3. Develop criteria for a participation agreement
4. Work with SEKLS Technical staff to create a shared community calendar
  - a. Identify best online location for calendar

4.4: Serve as a forum for community discourse.

Responsibility: Staff, with Director

Deadline: Year 3

Action Steps:

1. Identify potential partners, such as Thrive, the league of women voters or national issues forums (<https://www.nifi.org/en/nifi-materials>)
2. Identify potential topics of interest, such as housing, community health, or redistricting
3. Connect with Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library to learn more about deliberative forums (<https://tscpl.org/conversations>)
  - a. Investigate starting a Socrates Café or “Front Porch” chat

## **5: Funding and Staffing**

Goal: Secure adequate funding for staff, services, and programs.

5.1: Assess needs for service hours and staffing.

Responsibility: Director and Board

Deadline: Year 1

Action Steps:

1. Survey residents about existing and expanded hours

2. Develop a budget proposal to meet needs for 2023 budget

5.2: Grow the library endowment fund.

Responsibility: Director and Board

Deadline: Year 1

Action Steps:

1. Review and revise existing Annual Appeal piece
2. With the Board, set goals, donor recognition, and appeal focus

5.3: Advocate for sufficient budget to meet service needs.

Responsibility: Board and Director

Deadline: Year 2

Action Steps:

1. Review tax rate trends
2. Meet with City leaders about Iola's financial situation
3. Present Strategic Plan to City Council with budgetary impact information

5.4: Seek alternative funding sources.

Responsibility: Director and Board

Deadline: Year 3

Action Steps:

1. Identify and research family foundations located in southeast Kansas
2. Review or develop a planned giving brochure for distribution

## **Acknowledgements:**

The Iola Public Library thanks Jim Minges, minges & associates, for facilitating the development of this plan and for the assistance of the Iola Public Library Board, staff, and Planning Committee: Mary Ann Regehr, Marilyn Logan, Tim Stauffer, Matt Rehder, Marcia Davis, Melissa Frantz, Lesa Cole, and Sharon Moreland.

The Library also acknowledges Humanities Kansas for funding this project with a Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) grant provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This grant was intended to assist cultural institutions affected by the coronavirus as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) approved by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Joseph R. Biden. NEH is providing funds to Humanities Kansas specifically for redistribution as grants to cultural organizations in need in Kansas.