



LLNJ Community Workshop
Atlantic County Library, Hammonton
January 31, 2017

1. Context: What's happening in the world right now that is having--or will have--a big effect on libraries in New Jersey, their people and the people they serve? Consider all scales (global, national, local) and opportunities as well as challenges.

- Funding at the state and federal level.
- Employment rate is falling; employers are trying to keep employees...impact on career services at libraries.
- Long-term unemployed still exist.
- Need for a livable wage.
- Need for training to find a better job.
- A new governor next year.
- Libraries as a welcoming space—it's a more activist word
- Advocating for inclusiveness while balancing security issues.
- Civility is the key; to have discourse with each other.
- Budgets being cut; books becoming less important to students due to electronic sources; need to have our funding sources understand the importance of libraries. School librarians being considered unnecessary; Atlantic County leads the nation in foreclosures—affects the funding base—how to maintain.
- How to counteract inaccurate information on the Internet; develop critical thinking skills so that people question information being fed to them from various sources. Know the difference between information and data.
- Some of effects on the library, locally, are the loss of a branch, the economy in the county (we are leading the nation in foreclosures). At a more broad scale, since the advent of the Internet, some people feel there is no need for libraries anymore regarding information.
- Worried about current federal administration cutting library funding; easy gratification; don't worry about facts; opportunity to educate patrons about information literacy; opportunity to get county administration to believe libraries are relevant and support them; become more engaged with our communities and we are apolitical.
- Access to valid information.
- Worried about how current DC leaders are feeling about libraries.
- Staying open to all points of view.
- New willingness to engage in the process... to be active in the democratic process.
- Innovative activities in our libraries.
- World is shaken up on US politics.
- Suspicion we are not on Trump radar could be good, or bad.

- Libraries not being a wedge issue could be good politically.
- Labor and workforce development partnership grant; career connections and literacy.
- Consider populations we are serving and what their needs are; how they are using the library.
- We can improve libraries by following trends (yoga, for example). Offer opportunities for all stages of library users.
- Do we remain neutral? Or is it not possible to remain neutral?
- Facilitation training... the ability to talk civilly about difficult topics.
- Federal funding at risk; IMLS; NEH; NEA.
- Net neutrality.
- School librarians.
- Can provide community with information—personally being activists but at work "I am riding a unicorn."
- Collection development to provide a variety of viewpoints.
- Current political climate we serve with specific population in mind; cutbacks and unemployment create economic fallout; federal funding endangered as well as education; need to be more visible and vocal on every level; need to build "advocates."
- Be responsible for the community's needs (ie. climate change help, job fairs, health in general, retirement, etc.).
- Atlantic City tax revenues.
- Delivery-based Smart Cars.
- Information validity! Remain a safe place and voice of reason in our community.

Themes and further conversation: funding, federal, etc.; information validity and literacy; relevancy; community engagement; role in supporting the workforce; communicating the value of libraries to the community and funding stakeholders; unemployment; inclusivity; economic situation in Atlantic County; what is the nature of the modern public library? Moving from collections into different programming, information, education space; helping people learn to evaluate information... stuff on the internet; more computers; community partnerships and building advocacy; we do have to be champions of the written word and books; is it about reading or the books?

2. Envisioning our future: It's 2025 and libraries of all types are thriving hubs of their communities. Draw a picture describing what's happening. What do libraries look/feel like? Where are they? Who is in and around them? What are they doing? How are libraries connected to the rest of the community and the world? Who are our partners/collaborators? What services do they offer and for whom? What new skills do librarians have and what new roles do they take on?

[Link to photos on site here]

3. Strategic Analysis: Thinking about our conversation so far, what is working really well that we want to KEEP? What isn't working that we might do well to ABANDON? What might we INVENT or REINVENT that would make a big difference to our success?

KEEP

- Delivery
- DVDs/Audiobooks

- Interlibrary loan
- LL discounts
- Webinars
- Vendor discounts
- Access to a variety of materials and resources (local and global); partnership and shared collaboration between LLNJ and NJSL; reputations as welcoming places in our communities.
- Delivery!!
- Reading to dogs and calm cats
- CE
- LLNJ Database discount
- LLNJ Training
- Super Supervisors
- Inclusivity and non-discrimination; open door policy
- Maker spaces
- Library Link training
- Physical materials
- ILL delivery/shipping
- Educational/cultural programs, community focus, ILL professional development stipend on site, state-wide delivery services, access to materials

ABANDON

- Programs that we keep doing even if they are not popular
- Due dates
- Fines and punitive measures
- Begging
- Time-track
- Mistrust of staff in their abilities
- DIVISION
- Stereotypes, fear of the unknown
- Proprietary services

INVENT

- Paraprofessional certification
- Marketing/PR training for library staff
- Auto check out
- Better outreach

- Sharing of library instructed programing—sharing curriculum for courses provided by librarians
- Embedded librarians
- Marketing that works
- Staff training days
- Open source resource sharing similar to LibGuides
- Partnerships working together for the common good

REINVENT

- ILL Awareness
- Professional development opportunities
- Discounts—broader selection
- State library funding that allows individual library opportunities
- Professional development training, especially in South Jersey!!!
- Communication to librarians and library staff

- Digital resource sharing
- Teen services
- Keeping library network review board with our funding for public library resources
- Programming Perceptions and Expectations for Staff and Patrons. What is the Value?
- Staff training
- Promote nonfiction topics using experts in the field
- Train the trainer!
- Partnerships; borrowing policies and fines; digital library: borrow iPad, laptop
- Bookmobile
- Website
- Shared databases
- Find better ways to reach the non and under-served
- More funding for LLNJ
- Ideally create a statewide library card... no boundaries.
- Customer service
- Better ways to do outreach programs, gathering statistics, and utilize our library space

4. Thinking about what we've learned so far, what is an action step/project/initiative that we might start today to create the desired future for LLNJ and its members and stakeholders? Include a 5-6 word catchy title and 50 word description of the project.

1. **Libraries Transform:** promote a simple marketing for these for a year. Have flyers that could be edited. Adaptable to all types of libraries. Let people now what libraries do from day to day. Maybe a collaboration between NJSL and LLNJ/and library associations?
2. **Reinventing discounts.**
3. **NJ Library Associate Training Institute:** 12 month training period (blend of online and in person) sponsored by LLNJ and NJLA together; provides training in core competencies related to public service; modeled after DE and MD; PR/marketing focus as well; benefit is that we could build on existing curriculum in other states; lots of training for librarians (directors/supervisors/leaders) but not as much for non-librarians; possibly collaborate with other statewide and national groups serving these staff; benefit to southern part of the state because there may be fewer MLS staff (but open to entire state: build on established curriculum but adapt to NJ based on our standards, laws, budgets, types of libraries, etc. Perhaps develop a partial program if the entire program cannot be offered.
4. **Project Imagination:** engage our community and nourish it by spreading the word and allowing people to rediscover the library. More outreach with other libraries to build a statewide community.
5. **Campaign to highlight and champion libraries and librarians.** Local celebrities and state officials publically praising the value of libraries and the positive influence on their success.
6. **"NJ Advances"** (borrowed from "PA Forward"): promoting the Five Literacies: Basic, Civic and Social, Financial, Health and Information.

7. **Ask The Library Experts!!:** knowledge-based resources for broad range of concerns, ie. administration, purchasing, funding construction and technical, created by contributions from libraries throughout the state hosted by LLNJ.
8. **Community Conversations; Build a Better World:** public information series that includes book discussions on current topics, facilitated by author/community organizations/mediator. Classes (with sharable curriculum) to support content. Information tabling displays and resources, pop up sessions and outreach in community. Collection drives.