

Photo Credit - Bill Moehnke

Humboldt County Library

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024



Photo Credit - Carrie Grant

*Strengthening our community by educating,
inspiring, and connecting people*

From the Director of Library Services

I am enthusiastic about presenting the 2020 Humboldt County Library Strategic Plan that will guide us through 2024. The plan is based on our vision for Humboldt County – “a welcoming, healthy, and prosperous community where there are abundant opportunities for learning and creativity.” Community input drove the process, which was designed to leverage library resources to achieve this vision. Thanks to the community partners who contributed to the plan and who support the ongoing development and success of the Library.

The plan took shape with input from focus groups, surveys, and community conversations. It is both aspirational and flexible and can be revised and refined to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse county. In fact, revision began almost immediately after the plan was completed, when the COVID-19 pandemic led to a closure of library buildings to the public in March 2020. In the months since, our dedicated library staff has reimagined library services, and will continue to meet ongoing challenges both large and small.

Thank you to all the Library supporters, community members, partner organizations, and Library staff who contributed their thoughts, ideas, creativity, and excitement to the planning process. I have enjoyed working with you to chart the Library's future. Our plan is flexible, with attainable goals, inspired by collaboration and thoughtful discussions. Together we can build a dynamic and vibrant community.

Chris Cooper, Director of Library Services
County of Humboldt



From the President of the Humboldt Library Foundation

At the Humboldt Library Foundation, we share your passion for the public library, which is why we were proud to fund the development of the 2020 Humboldt County Library Strategic Plan. The plan charts a course to bring more kids, families, and new users to the Library, expand community partnerships, and improve connectivity. Guided by library staff and forged by community input, your aspirations have been woven into the document while it lays out measurable outcomes and includes flexibility to respond to changing needs.

Our motto at the Humboldt Library Foundation (HLF) is “Open the World.” Our mission is to support the Humboldt County Library system. Since 1997, we have contributed over \$1.4 million to help our libraries acquire books, audio and digital materials, upgrade technology, and support programming. At the same time, we've been building an endowment that will fund the Library in perpetuity. This could not have been done without the generous support of individuals, businesses, and organizations from across Humboldt County. If you've been a supporter, we thank you. If this is the first time you've heard of us, we welcome your support. Check us out at www.humboldtlibraryfoundation.org.

Elizabeth Murguia, Board President
Humboldt Library Foundation



Vision

A welcoming, healthy, and prosperous community where there are abundant opportunities for learning and creativity

Mission

We strengthen our community by educating, inspiring, and connecting people

Values

Community - Provide opportunities for people to join together and participate in the life of our community

Learning – Promote learning, literacy, and innovation

Enjoyment – Provide opportunities for playful, fun, relaxing, and entertaining experiences

Respect – Honor individual perspectives, the freedom of access to information, and the right to confidentiality

Inclusiveness – Make cultural and intellectual resources available in an environment that reflects the diversity of the community and individual learning styles and abilities

Collaboration – Work with partners toward a shared goal of strengthening our community

Accountability – Serve as a responsible steward of Library funding and the public's trust

Humboldt County Library

By The Numbers

Data from July 2018 - June 2019



1

10

1

Central Library + Branch Libraries + Bookmobile



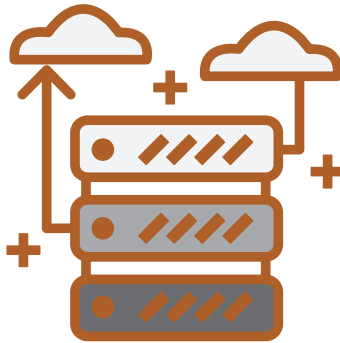
110,026

Humboldt residents
with library accounts



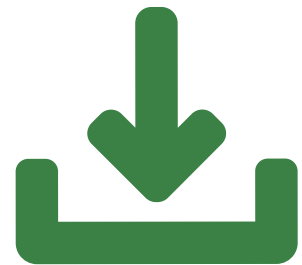
489,936

physical items
checked out



52,757

times the databases
were accessed/used



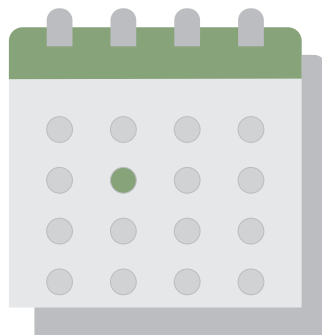
44,757

items downloaded
from Libby or Overdrive



22,873

visits to the library
each month



1,060

library programs



20,563

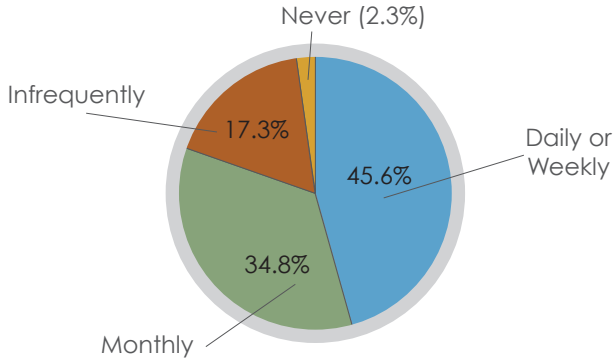
attendees at
library programs

Survey Results

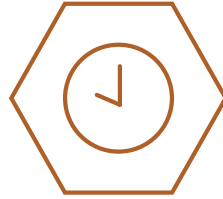
Online Survey Participants: 374 | Paper Survey Participants: 305 | Total: 679

Conducted in October 2019

How often do people visit the library?



Suggestions for Improvements:



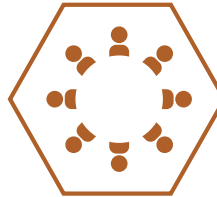
286 requested more open hours.



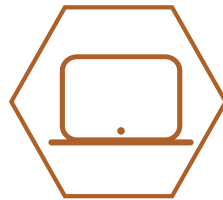
133 would like more materials (print & online) including Spanish-language materials.



101 requested more security & safety measures at library locations.

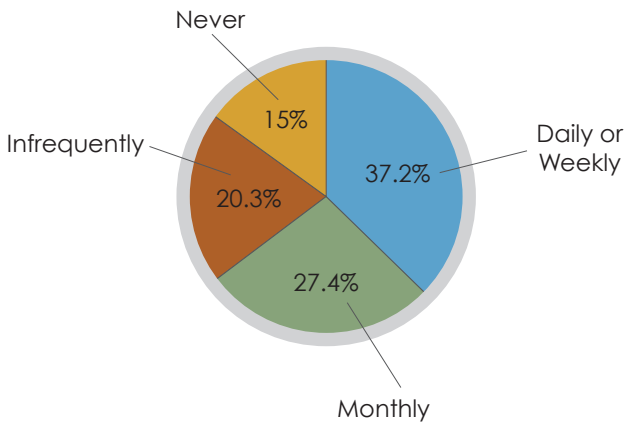


63 would like more programs, including programs in Spanish.



59 would like improvements to online & in-person computer services.

How often do people use online or website resources from the library?



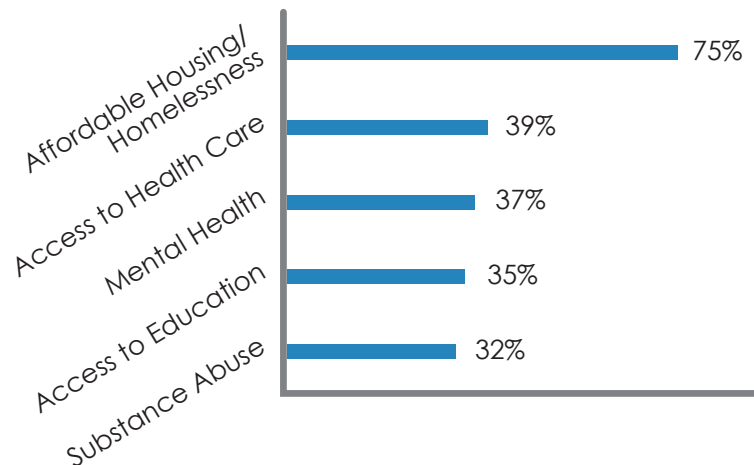
87% of survey participants are able to find what they were looking for.



95% of survey participants would recommend the library to others.



What are the biggest challenges facing Humboldt County?



Goal #1: Offer Outstanding Customer Experience

Positive and helpful services are the Library's top priority. We offer welcoming, personalized service to everyone who visits us in person or online, as well as those who engage with us in the community. We will focus on the following objectives in the next few years.

► Provide intuitive and easy-to-use services

- Implement wireless printing capability and user-friendly online credit card payment system
- Revise website and virtual services to be as intuitive as possible
- Determine feasibility of implementing self-checkout equipment

► Explore additional and/or modified service hours

- Determine if additional/modified hours could be possible with current staffing levels
- Develop, implement, and monitor plan for additional staff and resources for increased hours and services

► Improve our system for adding materials to our collection across all formats

- Evaluate our practices for material selection to ensure they are responsive to community needs, changing demographics, and customer interests
- Identify collection areas to be enhanced, diversified, and/or reduced
- Develop sustainable plan to ensure a rich variety of materials

► Improve accessibility for differently-abled customers

- Develop and implement a plan to provide services for senior/homebound individuals



Goal #2: Provide Learning Opportunities & Recreational Experiences

Learning occurs at every stage in life. We provide educational and recreational experiences and materials people need to succeed as citizens, students, and parents. Objectives in this goal support Humboldt County's priority for healthy and safe communities and will be accomplished with community partners.

- ▶ **Continue to provide and improve engaging programming for all ages**
 - Measure the impact and effectiveness of programming and modify programs to best suit community needs
- ▶ **Continue to provide and improve reference and research services**
 - Offer reference and research services in a variety of ways, such as chat, email, and text
 - Expand selection of online databases and services
- ▶ **Provide information literacy support**
 - Develop and implement training to enhance library users' skills in finding and evaluating information
- ▶ **Provide access to health information**
 - Provide programming on health issues, such as the state of health care in Humboldt County, effective strategies to engage with medical professionals, and other timely topics of interest
- ▶ **Leverage the Library's Humboldt Room to support community interest in local history**
 - Expand relationships with local history organizations in Humboldt County and serve as a convener of local history interest groups
- ▶ **Partner with Humboldt County school districts to enhance student access to library services**
- ▶ **Promote literacy training, with a focus on English as a new language and family literacy**



Goal #3: Support Workforce & Economic Prosperity

A strong economy is critical for a successful community. We promote a competitive workforce by providing spaces, resources, and training to support employment-seekers, entrepreneurs, and innovators in our community. Objectives in this goal support Humboldt County's priority for a resilient and thriving economy.

- ▶ **Partner with Humboldt County Economic Development Department and other organizations to determine the gaps in workforce training that the Library is well-suited to address**
- ▶ **Work with partners to engage and support members of the public, including job seekers, entrepreneurs, individuals, and families**
- ▶ **Present training on appropriate topics, which may include**
 - Digital literacy
 - Resumé preparation and job interview practice
 - Workforce skills
 - Computer skills
 - Financial literacy
- ▶ **Develop plan to support business start-ups with office space and equipment**



Goal #4: Build Community Connections

Bringing people, organizations, and ideas together creates a stronger community. We build and maintain strong partnerships throughout the community to help meet the needs of Humboldt County residents.

► **Deepen relationships with partners whose missions are most closely aligned with Library priorities**

- Identify and engage with new and existing partners
- Cultivate information-sharing alliances
- Determine feasibility of sharing space in Library facilities with partners

► **Strengthen the role of the Library as a community hub and convener**

- Expand the Library's responsibility in disaster preparedness and response
- Position the Library as a vital partner in community and civic engagement



Photo Credit - Carrie Grant

Goal #5: Commit to Sustainability & Accountability

As a publicly funded agency, the Library ensures that funds are managed in an effective, efficient, and strategic manner. Fiscal and environmental sustainability are essential to provide library services for a strong community.

- ▶ **Continue to adapt the use of Library spaces to meet changing needs**
 - Determine feasibility of implementing dedicated study and start-up incubator spaces
 - Identify opportunities for joint-use of Library facilities by other agencies for enhanced customer convenience
- ▶ **Develop a long-term plan for increased financial support for the Library**
 - Present menu of opportunities for cities and/or other funders to provide revenue to support supplemental operating hours and/or services
 - Pursue alternative sources of revenue to support new or targeted initiatives
 - Consider generating revenue by sharing Library spaces with County departments, non-profits, and others
- ▶ **Improve sustainability by increasing the use of environmentally-friendly products, processes, and materials in Library facilities**



Measurements of Success

This is an aspirational plan, to be adapted as necessary during implementation. The Library will provide annual progress reports, available online and at all Library locations.

The success of this strategic plan will show:

- Core services are strengthened
- Staff and infrastructure levels are maintained or increased
- Programs are designed to address community needs and interests
- The collection is dynamic and responsive to the community
- The Library demonstrates a focus on community priorities
- The Library operates efficiently and makes a difference for the community

“

Bad libraries build collections,
good libraries build services,
great libraries build communities.

- R. David Lankes

”

Helping Your Library Grow

Our vision is to create more than just a collection of books and services. Our vision throughout this strategic plan and in the work we do every day is to foster a greater sense of community throughout Humboldt.

We can't do it alone.

Here are some simple ways you can get involved with the Humboldt County Library.

Participate in Programs

Whether virtually or in person, each library branch offers programs for all ages and interests. See the Library's online calendar to learn about upcoming events.

Volunteer

Volunteers are vital to the Library. Volunteers act as docents to assist patrons in the Humboldt Room, shelve books, assist with programs, prepare materials for book sales, staff the Serendipity Bookstore, and help with a variety of special projects. For current needs, visit our website.

Become a Library Donor

Do you feel particularly passionate about making the vision in this strategic plan come to life? You can donate money in a variety of ways to help our plans come to fruition – in person, online, by mail, or by supporting your local Friends of the Library or the Humboldt Library Foundation. Learn more about the various ways to donate to the Library on the Library, Friends, and Foundation websites.

Keep in Touch

We welcome your feedback. Explore your library and let us know how we're doing!

Library calendar - <https://humboldt.gov/calendar.aspx>

Volunteer - <https://humboldt.gov/711/Volunteer>

Donate - <https://humboldt.gov/478/Support-the-Library>

Humboldt Library Foundation - <http://humboldtlibraryfoundation.org/>

Friends of the Library - <https://humboldt.gov/301/Friends-of-the-Library>

Acknowledgements

Library Planning Committee

Chris Cooper, Director of Library Services
Rachel Harwood, Adult Services Librarian
Ana Jordan, Executive Secretary
Jeanine Lancaster, Youth Services Librarian
Michael Logan, Acquisitions & Technical Services Manager
Susan Parsons, Arcata Branch Manager
Nick Wilczek, Former Library Director
Ronda Wittenberg, Operations Manager
Cinden Zuspan, Senior Library Assistant

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

Joanne Asbury, McKinleyville Branch Manager
Corin Balkovek, Adult Services Librarian
Jennifer Budwig, Redwood Capital Bank
Patrick Cleary, Lost Coast Communications
Chris Cooper, Director of Library Services
Tricia Hamill, Friends of Redwood Libraries
Susan Hildreth, Project Consultant
Elizabeth Murguia, Humboldt Library Foundation
Alison Talbott, Humboldt Library Foundation
Nick Wilczek, Former Library Director

Thank you to the following organizations for their contributions:

Access Humboldt
California State Library
College of the Redwoods
First 5 Humboldt
Friends of the Arcata Library
Friends of the Blue Lake Library
Friends of the Ferndale Library
Friends of the Fortuna Library
Friends of the Garberville Library
Friends of the Kim Yerton Memorial Library
Friends of the McKinleyville Library
Friends of the Redwood Libraries
Friends of the Rio Dell Library
Friends of the Trinidad Library
Friends of the Willow Creek Library
Hoopa Valley Tribal Council
Humboldt Area Foundation
Humboldt County Administrative Office
Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services
Humboldt County Economic Development
Humboldt County Office of Education
Humboldt Library Foundation
Humboldt Literacy Project
Humboldt State University
Rose Perenin Foundation