
East Brunswick Public Library

— **2023 - 2026**
Strategic Plan



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Introduction

The purpose of East Brunswick Public Library's 2023 to 2026 Strategic Plan is to create concrete, actionable goals based on community feedback gathered via surveys, focus groups, and conversations.

EBPL began working with the Bloustein Center at Rutgers University in 2022 to create the surveys, host the focus groups, and ensure adequate community feedback was gathered in order to guide the future of the library.

Additional surveys were launched in 2023.

The plan was written in June 2023 and approved by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees on September 19, 2023.



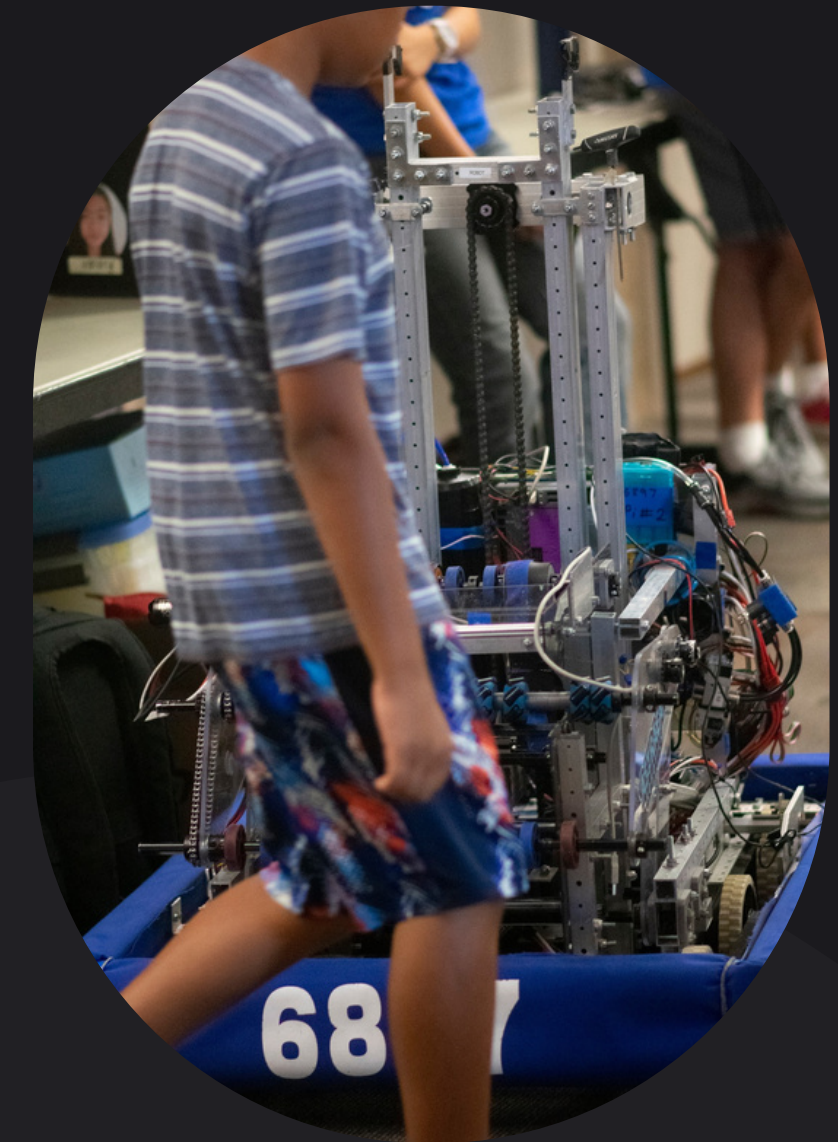
Methodology

Surveys were offered in Arabic, Chinese, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Spanish, and Urdu. These are the most common languages spoken in East Brunswick according to EB Public Schools data.

In total, 826 people responded to the surveys. Approximately 70 more people attended focus groups held at the library and the Senior Center. A staff focus group, a teen focus group, focus groups specifically for Senior Citizens, and focus groups for parents of young children were all held.

Data from surveys conducted in 2022 helped to create shorter, more focused surveys in 2023. All of this data and all of these conversations were taken into consideration when drafting this plan.

The goals included in this plan are designed to be measurable—by the end of 2026, the plan will be considered a success if the budgetary and service increases noted can be clearly demonstrated.



Vision and Mission

Vision

— EBPL: A place where you can dream, create, be your authentic self, and explore freely, without judgement.

Mission

— As the information center of the community, EBPL strives to deliver the highest level of timely service to all, as it promotes literacy, lifelong learning, personal fulfillment, creativity, and the principles of intellectual freedom.





Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

For EBPL to truly serve the entire community, its collections, programs, services, and staff must be representative of the diversity found in East Brunswick and Middlesex County, the most diverse county in New Jersey, and one of the most diverse in the country.

EBPL is committed to allocating resources toward purchasing books, resources, and hiring performers and speakers from a diverse array of backgrounds that represent the many cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and religions of the community, offering resources in a wide variety of languages, making digital and physical collections accessible to all, and celebrating and amplifying marginalized voices.

Goal #1

Assess print and digital book usage and budgets to inform the library's budget process

Objective:

Provide increased access to both print and digital books, reducing wait times and providing a wider variety of materials.

Basis:

Survey responses indicated that the top way we can increase library usage was larger collections with shorter wait times.

Method and Timeline

Assess circulation trends within East Brunswick Public Library and other communities to determine appropriate budgets for various genres, languages, and amounts to be spent on physical items vs. digital. By July 31, 2024, library staff will finalize this collection development plan in order to include it in the 2025 budget. Continue to assess and adjust the budget accordingly on an annual basis.

Results

Maximize the impact of every dollar spent on books and other circulating materials, with a target of increasing material circulation by two percent annually. Reduce the need for holds by having more of the items patrons desire available on demand, thus increasing library usage and reducing the need for patrons to seek resources elsewhere.





Objective:

Provide substantially increased services for all ages in non-English languages.

Basis:

42.6% of East Brunswick residents speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census). Survey responses and focus group discussions both indicated a demand for services in a wide variety of languages.

Method and Timeline

By July 31, 2024, work with library staff to develop budgets for collections and programming in a wide variety of languages commonly spoken in East Brunswick, to be included in the 2025 budget. Continue to assess data, trends, attendance, and usage on an ongoing basis to seek additional funding, grants, and budget for services appropriately.

Results

Increase usage of non-English language resources and attendance at programs conducted in non-English languages by ten percent annually throughout the course of the strategic plan. Continually work to ensure that all members of the East Brunswick community are represented in the collections, programs, and classes offered at the library, thus increasing engagement with the community, improving the lives of all who use the library, and creating a welcoming, inclusive environment.

Goal #2

Increase budgets for materials, services, programs, classes, and events in non-English languages

Goal #3

Form an exploratory financial committee to secure additional, consistent funding and a launch a successful initial capital campaign in order to open a branch library, bookmobile, or both if funding allows

Objective:

In order to make library services more accessible to a larger part of the community, the library will seek steady sources of funding that can keep either a library branch or bookmobile open and staffed indefinitely.

Basis:

Survey results and focus group discussions showed that respondents have an interest in both a bookmobile and a branch library, and that having library services located in more convenient locations is important. A branch also allows the library to meet other goals, such as increasing collections, programming, and meeting spaces.

Method and Timeline

Form a committee consisting of board members, staff, and members of the Friends of the Library and Foundation to study the feasibility of a library branch or bookmobile. Develop an estimate of financial needs by August 31, 2024, to be presented to the East Brunswick Township Mayor, Council, and Administration as needed to determine the availability of funding. By November 30, 2024, determine whether plans for opening a branch or bookmobile is feasible in 2025 or 2026.

Results

Determine whether a branch library, bookmobile, or both will be opened in 2025 or 2026.



Goal #4

Provide increased opportunity and funding for staff development and growth

Objective:

Increase budgets for staff learning and development each year. Provide peer training and mentoring opportunities more frequently. Bring in more experts to offer more professional development opportunities.

Basis:

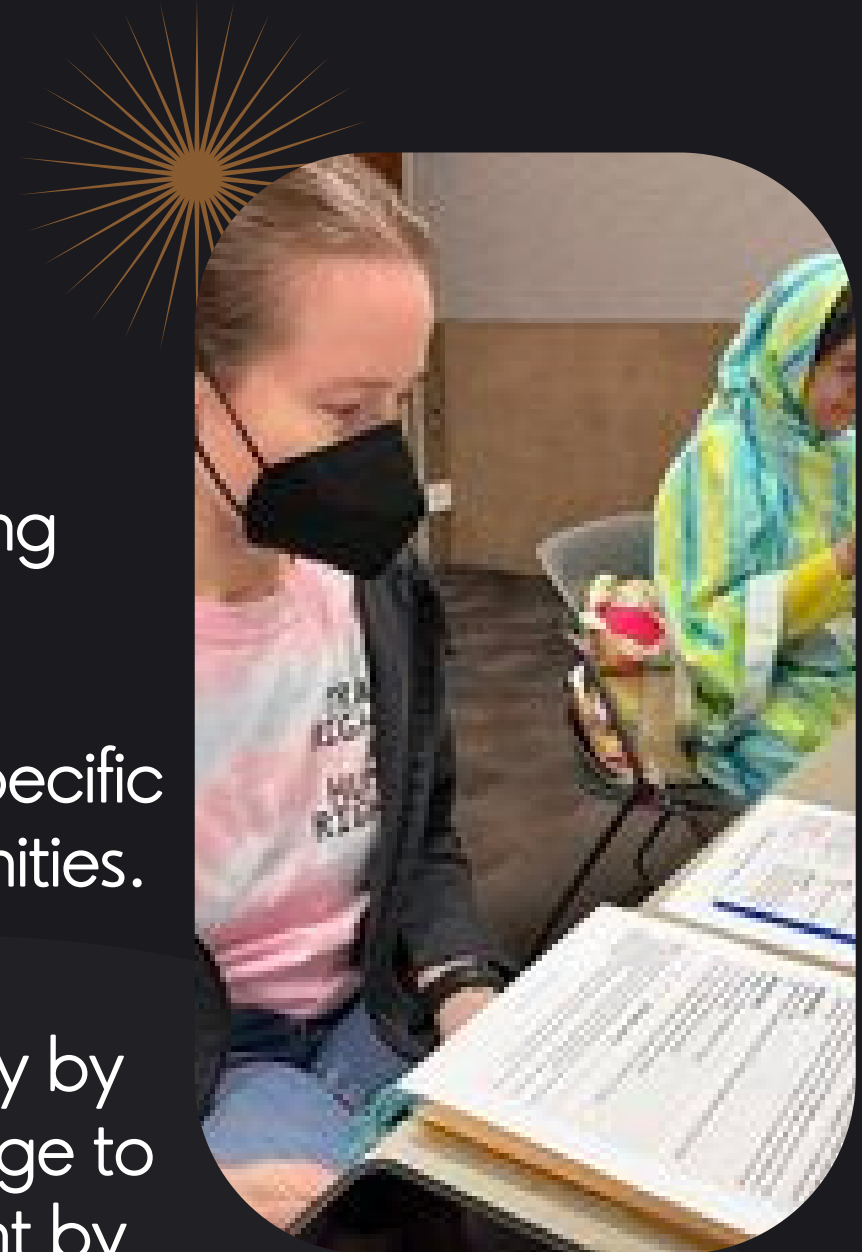
All of the other goals listed in this plan could not be possible without a dedicated team of information professionals. Staff surveys revealed a need for greatly increased learning & development opportunities.

Method and Timeline

By February 28, 2024, survey and discuss with library staff what training topics are desired and needed in order to best spend the 2024 professional development budget. Continue this process annually, adjusting the professional development budget as needed. Assign specific staff members to lead organizing professional development opportunities.

Results

Increase the amount of in-person trainings offered for staff at the library by ten percent annually. Ensure sufficient desk and programming coverage to increase the number of hours staff spend on professional development by an average of ten hours per year for full-time staff and five hours per year for part-time staff.





Goal #5

Offer more large-scale events

Objective:

Increase the amount of large-scale weekend events for all ages. Allocate resources to ensure staffing levels needed to support these events on an ongoing basis.

Basis:

Both survey results and focus group discussions indicated that increasing large-scale weekend programming for all ages would increase library usage.

Method and Timeline

Establish a staff working group by December 31, 2023. By July 31, 2024, establish a plan for large scale events (defined as events meant to attract 300-500+ people to the library) to determine budgets and schedules for 2025 and beyond.

Results

Hold a minimum of four large scale events in 2025 and six in 2026, attracting more visitors to the library and working to establish deeper connections with all members of the community.

Goal #6

Create a Strategic Plan for Just For the Health of It!

Objective:

As Just For the Health of It! continues to grow and expand, it will be beneficial to plan for both the short-term and long-term, ensuring that this nationally-recognized initiative continues in perpetuity.

Basis:

Just For the Health of It! is often cited by patrons as one of the most unique and important offerings at East Brunswick Public Library.

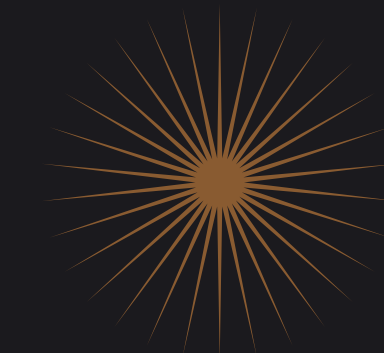
Method and Timeline

Library staff, patrons, and healthcare providers will first be surveyed. These surveys will be completed by April 2024. Librarians will also conduct research into health literacy initiatives throughout the world. Combining these surveys and research, a five year plan for Just For the Health of It! will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees in the summer of 2024.

Results

Create a strategic plan for Just For the Health of It! that can be shared with potential grant funders or sponsors and which will drive the continued growth and support of this resource for years to come.





Objective:

Connect more people with library resources.

Basis:

The library offers a vast array of services which all members of the community should be aware of.

Method and Timeline

We will work to identify services that are underutilized and on methods of communicating services to reach more members of the community, developing a written strategy by May 2024 and immediately putting it into action.

Results

Attract more members of the community to use the library in whatever way best suits them, whether it is the library's digital resources, books, recording studio, Just For the Health of It!, museum passes, or any other service. Our goal is for overall library usage to increase by 5% per year in 2024, 2025, and 2026.

Goal #7

Increase overall library usage and expand the library's user base

The Teams



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Library Staff Members at the 2023 Staff In-Service Day