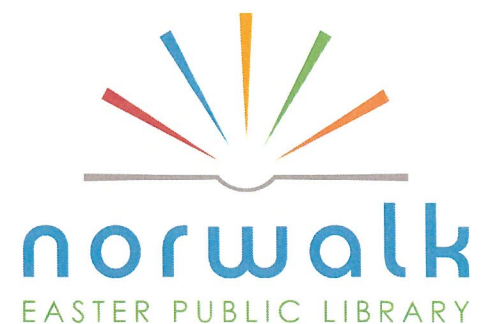# Norwalk Easter Public Library Strategic Plan

FY21-25

Approved by NEPL Board of Trustees,

December 9, 2019

norwalk
EASTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of the *Norwalk Easter Public Library Strategic Plan, FY21–FY25* and to those who will participate in its implementation.

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Mission, Core Values, and Focus Areas

What is our Mission?
Norwalk Easter Public Library seeks to provide exceptional service, foster community connections, value innovation, and encourage discovery.

What are our Core Values?
- *Community* – fostering and strengthening connections
- *Discovery* –connecting people with information, resources, and cultural experiences
- *Service* – providing quality service through welcoming and approachable team members
- *Innovation* – encouraging forward-thinking and responding to the changing needs of our community

What are our five Goal Areas?
- Create a thriving space
- Prepare for our Future
- Build digital skills and services
- Improve community value through collaboration and connection
- Deliver exceptional customer service

Why is this plan necessary?
Libraries across the country are in a time of flux and reinvention; therefore, this plan seeks to prepare and position the Norwalk Easter Public Library (NEPL) to adapt to these changing conditions. We continue to desire to meet the needs of our customers in an Information Age. The Library Board of Trustees and the library team embrace the opportunity to positively impact and improve the lives of our community members.

Who are we serving?

Our library community continued to rapidly grow and change over the last five years. According to the American Community Survey, the population for Norwalk has increased approximately 28% since 2010. The surrounding areas in Warren County increased approximately 10% in the same time period. According to the Norwalk Comprehensive Plan, we are expecting to continue this rapid growth. Norwalk has seen some great economic gains with the relocation of light-industrial businesses such as Windsor Windows and Michael Foods to our community. These business partners will also inspire growth in the greater Norwalk community.

According to the American Community Survey (2013-2017), the median age for Norwalk residents is 36 (an increase from the average of 32 in 2013). At the same time, approximately 25% of the population is under 19 years old or younger. In 2013, over 30% of the population was under 19. The average family size has three members, and around 35% of our total population have a bachelor's degree or higher. All this data indicates that the Norwalk community is comprised of young, professional families. It also indicates that families are choosing to stay (grow older) in our community, and new families are attracted to moving here for the many economic opportunities and positive school environment.

What was the process?

This plan was developed with input from NEPL team members, Library Board of Trustees, and Norwalk Easter Library Foundation members. We utilized an abridged version of the Planning for Results program developed by the Public Library Association (PLA) with facilitation from the State Library of Iowa. Through this process, each group reviewed demographic information provided by the State Data Center within the State Library of Iowa. We then merged our individual visions into a single common focus of a library seeking to provide exceptional service, foster community connections, value innovation, and encourage discovery

How does Norwalk compare?

Statistics are compiled from the 2018 State Library of Iowa Annual Survey Data –
https://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/a-b/statistics/publibstats/statsreportfy18.pdf)

The Norwalk community has seen huge growth since the 2010 census and as of 2018 has an estimated population of 11,517. With the upcoming 2020 census data, we expect to see our population inthe 12,000 – 13,000 range. This is significant for the library because we will move from an "E" classification to an "F" classification. Size codes are determined by population size and used by the State Library for distinctions; the higher the letter, the larger the population. Therefore, as we developed this plan, we found it interesting to compare ourselves with our current classification (E-sized - 5,000-9,999 population) as well as with the next classification size (F-sized: - 10,000-24,999 population) libraries.

Norwalk Easter Public Library compares in the following ways:
- Estimated 2018 Population at 11,517 is above the average 6,811 for E-sized libraries, but below the average of 14,458 for F-sized libraries

- Square footage at 11,500 is below the average of 14,549 for E-sized libraries and below the 19,534 average for F-sized libraries

- Total Income per capita at $62.35 is below the average of $64.43 for E-sized libraries, but is above the average $57.81 for F-sized libraries

- Total Expenditures per capita $502,123 is above the average of $424,217 for E-sized libraries, but below the average $792,855 for F-sized libraries

- Full time team members at 4 is below the average 5 for E-sized libraries and below the average 7 for F-sized libraries

- Part time team members of 9 is above the average of 6 for E-sized libraries and equal to the average of 9 for F-sized libraries

- Our combined physical and digital collection of 102,558 is below the average of 112,353 for E-sized libraries and below the average 122,248 for F-sized libraries

- Total circulation of 102,663 is above the average of 82,377 for E-sized libraries, but below the average 158,236 for F-sized libraries

- The average hours open at 57 is above the average of 54 for E-sized libraries, but slightly below the average 58 for F-sized libraries.

- Our annual visits to the library of 72,161 is above the average of 66,694 for E-sized libraries but below the average of 108,736 for F-sized libraries

- Programs and Attendance
    - Children's program average of 277 is above the average of 265 for E-sized libraries but below the average of 397 for F-sized libraries

    - Children's program attendance of 9,831 is above the average of 6,986 for E-sized libraries, but below the average of 10,786 for F-sized libraries

    - Young adult programs at 35 is above the average of 26 for E-sized libraries, but below the average of 64 for F-sized libraries

    - Young adult program attendance of 919 is well-above the average of 393 for E-sized libraries, but below the average of 1,154 for F-sized libraries

    - Programs for adults at 143 is above the average of 106 for E-sized libraries and above the average of 115 for F-sized libraries

    - Adult program attendance of 1,644 is above the average of 1,609 for E-sized libraries, but below the average of 1,773 for F-sized libraries

What do the comparison results mean for Norwalk?

These comparisons are showing us that Norwalk has outgrown its current library classification (as expected) in some areas, but is still far behind in the next classification area. However, it is surprising to see how close we will be to the average size of an F library, rather than on the

expected "small side" since we will be transitioning. We can also see from these comparisons that we do need to continue planning for our future as well as empowering our current team members while providing exemplary service to our current customers. Some of the items we will need to plan for are more space, more funding to add to our collection, and additional team members to meet the needs of a larger library.

GOAL AREA 1:

Create thriving, functional and versatile spaces where community members can connect and access library resources.

GOAL 1: ENSURE LIBRARY SPACES ARE FUNCTIONAL, VERSATILE, AND ATTRACTIVE

➢ *Activity 1*: The Library Leadership team will evaluate our current spaces and resources, including our children's play areas, individual and group study areas, and space for teens/young adults for usability and functionality by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership team will visit other area libraries to develop a list of spaces and resources that they would like to improve at NEPL by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership team and Library Board of Trustees will apply for a State Library Space Utilization Grant or seek out a space study consultant by June 2022.

➢ *Activity 4*: The Library Leadership team and Library Board of Trustees will develop a plan for implementing the changes suggested in the space study by June 2023

➢ *Activity 5*: The Library Director and Library Board of Trustees will work with City of Norwalk Leadership to identify the funding for the changes indicated in the space study by June 2024

➢ *Activity 6*: The Library Leadership team will implement the necessary changes to create a functional, attractive, and versatile library space by June 2025

Potential Impact on Resources:
- Time for Library Leadership team to travel and visit other libraries to identify a checklist of potential spaces and resources for NEPL
- Financial impact to hire a consultant for a space study and the potential need to purchase new items such as seating, tables, shelving, etc. to create the functional, versatile spaces

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be a reorganized, attractive, functional, and versatile library space that will grow with the NEPL until a new or expanded space can be developed.

GOAL AREA 2:

Prepare for our future through investigation and innovation where community members will have a plan for an expanded or new library facility.

GOAL 1: DEVELOP A PLAN AND NECESSARY STEPS FOR HOW TO REALIZE THE VISION FOR EXPANDED OR NEW LIBRARY SPACE.

➢ *Activity 1*: Library Leadership team will evaluate our current library location, space, and resources for usability and functionality by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 2*: Library Leadership team will visit other area libraries to develop a list of spaces and resources that they must have or would like to have in an expanded or new NEPL facility by June 2022.

➢ *Activity 3*: Library Leadership team and Library Board of Trustees will seek out a potential architecture firm or consultant to begin developing a plan, which should include community and city input, for an expanded or new NEPL facility by June 2023.

➤ *Activity 4*: Library Leadership team and Library Board of Trustees will develop a plan and necessary steps for moving forward by June 2024

➤ *Activity 5*: The Library Leadership team and other library stakeholders will begin advocacy efforts for implementing previously-identified steps by June 2025

Potential Impact on Resources:
- Time for the Library Leadership team to travel and visit other libraries to identify their checklist of priorities for an expanded or new NEPL facility.
- Financial impact of hiring an architect or consultant to develop a plan for an expanded or new NEPL facility. This may also include the necessity to purchase land
- Community support and potential need to investigate a library levy project that will support the funding for an expanded or new NEPL facility

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be a detailed plan on whether we will expand the current library facility to meet our needs for the next 20 years or to begin developing a capital campaign process for building a new facility including working with City Leadership to identify a location and potential costs.

GOAL AREA 3:

Build digital skills and services where community members will discover a wide variety of resources and programs that meet a variety of interest areas.

GOAL 1: CONTINUE TO EVALUATE, DESIGN, AND PROVIDE USABLE, ROBUST VIRTUAL SPACES.
➤ *Activity 1*: Library Leadership team will evaluate all our current virtual spaces and create a plan to enhance or expand for new virtual spaces to meet the needs of our growing community by June 2021.

- ➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership Team will implement a new library-specific website by June 2022.

- ➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership Team will create a plan for evaluating and maintaining virtual spaces, including online databases, website, social media, etc., by June 2023.

- ➢ *Activity 4*: The Library Leadership Team will implement the maintenance of virtual spaces by June 2024.
- ➢ *Activity 5:* Library team members will continue to monitor and update resources on an as needed basis and as funds become available.

Potential Impact on Resources:
- ● Financial impact: Team members attend training opportunities on the new website. Additional financial impact to maintain library domain purchase annually and the purchase of different online resources. Finally, there may be a financial cost to hiring additional team members or staff hours to meet the upkeep maintenance of online resources.

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be a new virtual space and resources to meet the needs of our growing community members, including but not limited to a new, library-specific website design, new online databases/resources, etc. Additionally, we may see increased usage statistics of the library's website and online resources.

GOAL 2: ESTABLISH TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR OUR GROWING COMMUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT AND USE OUR DIGITAL RESOURCES

- ➢ *Activity 1*: The Library Leadership team will evaluate what we currently have in place for training, marketing, and other resources provided to community members regarding library digital resources by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership team will work to begin updating resources for our current databases by June 2022.

➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership team will develop and implement a plan to maintain updated print and other training materials by June 2023.

➢ *Activity 4*: Library team members will begin to integrate learning opportunities into our program options for community members to learn about and train on using digital resources by June 2024.

➢ *Activity 5*: Library team members will continually evaluate online resources and materials to ensure they are meeting the needs of our community members by June 2025.

Potential Impact on Resources:
- Financial impact to purchase new online resources, marketing costs to update print materials and market resources, potential budget increase to allow for additional team members to meet these goals
- Time will need to be allotted for team members to create new materials or add program opportunities to help meet these goals

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be new print and virtual resources to help community members learn of our online resources as well as additional program opportunities to train individuals on the use or existence of these resources.

GOAL AREA 4:

Improve community value through collaboration and connection where community members will engage in outreach and programming opportunities

GOAL 1: PROVIDE RESOURCES AND PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL USERS

- ➢ *Activity 1*: The Library Leadership team will evaluate what resources and program opportunities we currently provide for all types of learners, including those with special needs by June 2021.

- ➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership team will identify and implement ways to include resources and programs for sensory-impaired community members by June 2022.

- ➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership team will identify and implement ways to include resources and programs for visually-impaired community members by June 2023.

- ➢ *Activity 4*: The Library Leadership team will identify and implement ways to include resources and programs for hearing-impaired community members by June 2024.

- ➢ *Activity 5*: The Library Leadership team will create a plan for continuous evaluation and addition of new/necessary resources to meet needs of diverse community members by June 2025.

Potential Impact on Resources:
- A potential financial impact to purchase resources or materials to meet the needs of various types of community members, including screen readers, specialty keyboards or mice for patron computers, etc. There may be a need to provide additional staff hours to meet the needs of additional program opportunities

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be physical resources or devices to meet the needs of a diverse community as well as additional program opportunities.

GOAL 2: CONNECT WITH OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO ENHANCE LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

- ➢ *Activity 1*: Library team members will identify our current community organizational partners by June 2021.

- *Activity 2*: Library team members will assess and evaluate the additional needs, wants, and interest areas of potential partners by June 2022.

- *Activity 3*: Library team members will create a plan and begin contacting potential partners by June 2023.

- *Activity 4*: Library team members will begin to implement additional program and partnership ideas by June 2024.

- *Activity 5*: Library team members will continuously evaluate current and potential community partnerships and resources, programs, etc. become available by June 2025.

Potential Impact on Resources:
- Possible financial impact of needing to hire additional programming team members or provide additional staff hours to develop these partnerships and program ideas

- Additional time may need to be allotted for team members to meet the demand of additional programs or partnerships.

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will include new programs and partners, customer attendance records and comments, as well as Project Outcome survey resources.

GOAL 3: EXPAND RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OF THE LIBRARY THAT BUILD COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT THE LIBRARY'S MISSION
- *Activity 1*: The Library team members will identify current outreach opportunities by June 2021.

- *Activity 2*: The Library team members will identify potential partners or places that we could provide outreach within the community by June 2022.

> *Activity 3*: The Library team members will develop a plan to implement additional outreach opportunities by December 2023.

> *Activity 4*: The Library team members will begin implementing one to two outreach opportunities per year by June 2024.

> *Activity 5*: The Library team members will continually evaluate outreach programs/opportunities and refine as necessary/needed by June 2025.

Potential Impact on Resources:
- A financial impact of additional team members or staff hours to meet new program opportunities, as well as potentially having to add program resources to take materials outside of the library.
- Team member impact will continually be additional time to implement the new program opportunities and resources

- The need to have community buy-in from organizations wanting to partner with the NEPL.

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be a list of added outreach opportunities and impact statements from community partners or library users

GOAL AREA 5:

Deliver exceptional customer service for a growing community where community members will find friendly, welcoming, and knowledgeable individuals.

GOAL 1: ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE ON-BOARDING TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NEW LIBRARY TEAM MEMBERS

➢ *Activity 1*: The Library Leadership team will evaluate our current on-boarding program and identify areas of strength and weaknesses by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership team will begin to develop a plan for a new on-boarding training program by June 2022.

➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership team will implement the new on-boarding training program by June 2023.

➢ *Activity 4*: The Library Leadership team will continually assess and improve on-boarding program as needed by June 2024.

Potential Impact on Resources:

- Financial Impact: The cost of maintaining Niche Academy for an effective on-boarding program, as well as potentially purchasing additional resources. Possible additional staff hours necessary to implement a successful training program or team member to lead the program. Other potential costs will include continuing education courses for team members through the State Library of Iowa's Public Library Support Staff Certification (PLS) and training webinars

- Part-time team members would need to buy-in to the on-boarding program and would potentially assist in creating the necessary tools.

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence would be a new, on-boarding program for library team members. We would also have attainment of PLS certification by interested library team members.

Goal 2: Empower team members to develop a commitment to the library's mission and shared values with effective communication, training and resources

➢ *Activity 1*: The Library Leadership team will evaluate, assess, and survey current library team members to areas of effectiveness and areas of weakness in current communication, training, and staff resources by June 2021.

➢ *Activity 2*: The Library Leadership team will develop a plan to integrate better communication, training, and staff resources to help empower team members by June 2022.

➢ *Activity 3*: The Library Leadership team will implement the previously-designed plan for better communication, training, and staff resources by June 2023.

➢ *Activity 4*: The Library Leadership team will continuously evaluate, and implement changes through communication, surveys, and other team empowerment resources by June 2024

Potential Impact on Resources:
- A financial impact may occur through the purchase of resources or staff hours to provide training opportunities to all team members.
- Team members will need to buy into and feel encouraged to share opinions and frustrations without fear of consequences
- A slight community impact may be felt through additional closure time for in-service training of library team members

Measurable Evidence: Our measurable evidence will be trained, knowledgeable team members that are able to serve our diverse, growing community. We will also have training resources available for all team members to refer to when necessary.