

# James Kennedy Public Library

Dyersville, Iowa

Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026



**JAMES  
KENNEDY**  
*Public Library*

Approved by the James Kennedy Public Library Board of Trustees  
March 15, 2022

**Planning Committee:**

The James Kennedy Public Library Board of Trustees invited residents and stakeholders of the Dyersville community to participate in the planning process.

**Community Participants:***Phone Interview Participants:*

Amanda Schwartz  
Sheila Tegeler  
Tina Gulick  
Jill Hageman  
Dave Buchheit  
Kayla Horsfield  
Mary Radloff  
Heidi Huisman  
Brittany Demezier  
Michelle Grover  
Jessica Pape  
Lucas Ingles

*Focus Group Participants:*

Marcus Ingles  
Carol Ruden  
Devin Werner  
Ian Hermsen  
Alex Werner  
Linda Hansel  
Monika Steffen  
Beth Lutgen  
Joan Hinerichsen  
Marcel Kielkucki

**Library Board of Trustees:**

Karen Kramer, President  
Catherine O'Hea, Vice President  
Danielle Will, Secretary  
Sue Engelbrecht  
Angela English  
Ray Kruse  
Marcus Ingles  
Karen Tieskoetter  
Alex Wiezorek

**Library Staff:**

Shirley Vonderhaar, Director  
Dawn Schrandt, Assistant Director  
Kimshiro Benton-Hermsen, Librarian  
Ann Boeckenstedt, Librarian  
Paul Zurawski, Librarian  
Brian Alm, Clerk  
Jo Amunson, Clerk  
Samantha Burds, Clerk  
Deb Gudenkauf, Clerk  
Sarah Keffeler-Gibson, Clerk  
Devin Werner, Clerk

**Facilitator:**

Becky Heil, Library Consultant,  
State Library of Iowa

In February of 2020, the James Kennedy Public Library Board of Trustees began planning to draft a new Strategic Plan. At that time, they decided to work with Becky Heil, District Consultant for the State Library of Iowa, to create a vision statement, review the mission statement, and update the existing plan. Due to Covid-19, the Board postponed working on the JKPL Strategic Plan as it would be challenging to get community involvement due to restrictions on gathering.

In April of 2021, Shirley Vonderhaar, Library Director, met with Becky Heil to develop a process for the JKPL to prepare a strategic plan. Becky met with the library board in August to outline the variety of methods that are currently being used and get their input on which model they felt would be best for Dyersville. Of the options presented, the Board concluded using both an in-person focus group and a series of telephone interviews would be beneficial.

The JKPL Board of Trustees identified community stakeholders for both the telephone interviews and the in-person meeting. Board members contacted selected potential participants until fifteen individuals had agreed to participate in phone interviews and an additional fifteen were scheduled for the in-person session. Representatives from the JKPL Board, Staff, Friends Group, Teen Advisory Council, and City Council were included in those invited to participate in the focus group gathering.

Telephone interviews with twelve individuals were conducted the week of November 1, 2021. The questions asked were intended to identify the best things about the Dyersville community, what needs and improvements interviewees would like to see, how the library might respond to or satisfy those community needs, and what the library is doing well.

An ad hoc Strategic Planning Board Subcommittee was formed. Committee members were Karen Kramer, Catherine O'Hea, Danielle Will, Angela English, and Shirley Vonderhaar. This committee was tasked with reviewing the eighteen PLA Library Service Responses, and narrowing them down to no more than ten priorities for the focus group to consider.

The focus group met on December 5. They answered the same questions as were posed during the phone interviews and reviewed the information that had been gathered at the phone interviews. They heard demographic information and statistics about library use and trends. At the end of the focus group meeting, participants voted on the top five Library Service Responses the JKPL Board of Trustees should prioritize. The results of the voting reflect the community needs identified by both the phone interviewees and the focus group attendees. The following Service Responses were selected:

**Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services (8 votes)**

Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

**Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness (7 votes)**

Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

**Make Informed Decisions: Life Choices, Information Fluency, Job and Career Development, Be an Informed Citizen (5 votes)**

Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

**Express Creativity: Create and Share Content (4 votes)**

Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

**Literacy for All: blending two Literacy focused responses (4 votes)***Create Young Readers: Early Literacy*

Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

*Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy*

Adults and teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers.

The JKPL Board of Trustees held two work sessions, also facilitated by Becky Heil, in January 2022. One session focused on writing new Vision and Mission Statements. At the second session, the Board discussed the selected Service Responses and drafted relevant goals. The Subcommittee took the results of these two work sessions and crafted statements and goals to recommend at a full Board meeting. At the February 2022 Board meeting, the Board approved the Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Library Service Responses, and Goals included in this document. The Literacy for All Service Response was removed from the plan and the goals relating to those needs were included elsewhere.

Following these Board decisions, the JKPL Library Staff held a special in-service, facilitated by Heil, to develop objectives. The Library Director reviewed the objectives proposed by the staff, the previous plan, and the notes from all of the planning meetings; and used that information to draft objectives that met the format of including a responsible staff member, measurable task, and time frame. Proposed objectives were shared with librarians and the Strategic Planning Subcommittee prior to discussion at the Board level. The final document was reviewed, edited, and approved by the full Board of Trustees at their March 8, 2022 meeting.

**Motto / Tag Line:**  
Discover – Connect – Inspire

**Mission:**  
The James Kennedy Public Library enriches the Dyersville community by providing equal access to creative resources for entertainment and education.

**Vision:**  
The James Kennedy Public Library helps create a thriving community to inspire curiosity, creativity, innovation, and connection.

**Selected Service Responses, Goals, and Objectives:**

***Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services***

Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

**Goal #1:** Residents are knowledgeable about the services and resources available at the library.

*Objective:* The Librarian in charge of social media will research current, new, and popular social media options to determine if there is a need for the JKPL to modify resources used to provide information to the community by July 2022.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will develop a process where members of the public can ask questions and receive responses; and / or make suggestions about library services by December 2022.

*Objective:* The Librarian in charge of social media will investigate utilizing targeted social media ads to share information about library services and resources by December 2022.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will send notifications to patrons based on targeted interest by June 2023

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will investigate digital and / or print advertising on the front library windows by December 2023

**Goal #2:** Community organizations work together to promote events and services.

*Objective:* The Library Director and library staff involved with marketing will investigate the possibility of utilizing a mobile app or other online service to provide information to community residents about community and library services and programs (Community Calendar of some kind) by October 2024

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will partner with local businesses and organizations to distribute library information and / or services (materials to read) at their locations by January 2023.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will develop partnerships with local businesses and organizations to jointly promote community events and services by January 2023.

**Goal #3:** Residents will find information and resources about a variety of community organizations, services and businesses at the library.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will work with the Dyersville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Dyersville Alliance, and other community businesses and organizations to identify opportunities for partnering and collaboration in providing access to local information and resources by September 2023.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will investigate and identify community resources and services (food pantry, churches, health care, etc.), create print and / or online resource lists, and provide residents of the community with access to this information by December 2024

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will investigate the possibility of posting information on the city pillars by July 2022

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will provide community organizations and businesses with information about the library services, programs, and facilities by July 2023

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will collect pamphlets from community businesses and organizations and make them available for the community to access at the library by January 2023

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will work with other city organizations to provide information about community services and resources to new residents by July 2024

***Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness***

Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

**Goal #1:** Children will experience diverse presenters, programs, and collections.

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will provide children with the opportunity to attend performances and / or events celebrating different cultures by January 2026

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will share stories from around the world on the JKPL Facebook and YouTube channels by Sept of 2023

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will schedule at least one program per year featuring diverse presenters by July 2023

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will start a tween or intergenerational book club, which will include selections featuring a variety of diverse viewpoints, by June 2024

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will complete a collection diversity audit by March 2024

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will evaluate allocating a certain percentage of the children's collection budget to diverse materials by July 2024

**Goal #2:** Library staff will recognize and appreciate diversity in the community to ensure that every patron receives excellent service

*Objective:* Library staff will create a resource list of "difficult" topics so that patrons can locate information without having to ask staff for assistance if they prefer not to by September 2023

*Objective:* All library staff will have the opportunity to participate in Spanish for Librarians training by December 2023

*Objective:* Library staff will have access to a print or online Spanish - English guide to assist with basic communication with Spanish language speakers by June 2024

*Objective:* The Library Director will develop a plan to provide dedicated, paid staff time for training for all staff on a regular basis by July 2022

*Objective:* The Library Director will develop a plan to offer diversity training for all library staff by July 2023

**Goal #3:** The community will be enriched by celebrating and developing a greater understanding of diversity.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming at all levels will research, plan, and schedule performances, activities, and / or events for all ages celebrating different cultures by January 2024.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of collection development and programming will investigate creating a human library of diverse experiences by October 2024

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate the possibility of offering a multigenerational or adult book club featuring books with diverse viewpoints or characters by September 2022

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of young adult and adult collection development will complete a collection diversity audit by March 2024

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of young adult and adult collection development will evaluate allocating a certain percentage of the collection budget to diverse materials by July 2024

***Make Informed Decisions: Information Fluency, Job and Career Development, Be an Informed Citizen***

Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

**Goal #1:** Those exploring careers are able to access information regarding businesses hiring locally.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will investigate opportunities to partner with the schools and other education agencies to provide access to local business information by December 2022

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will work with local businesses to identify their needs and to develop programs and services to support those needs by December 2023

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming for teens and adults will investigate creation of programs, events, or activities featuring local businesses by December 2022

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will investigate methods to support matching business and organizational needs with potential employee skills by July 2023

**Goal #2:** Job seekers have the skills they need to gain employment or advance their career.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming will provide training on Brainfuse and other job skills and career related services available through the JKPL by January 2023

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will partner with Workforce Development to identify skills needed by local employers by May 2023

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will investigate opportunities to provide job seekers with volunteer or internship style opportunities that will increase their skills and employability (look good on a resume) by July 2023

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate partnerships with Iowa Workforce Development by December 2022

**Goal #3:** Community members of all ages will find programming and other resources for life events.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming will develop events, activities and programs focused on current issues and life events of interest or concern to the Dyersville Community by June 2025.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of collection development will evaluate physical materials and online resources focused on life events and consider expanding and / or updating the library's collections in those areas by September 2023.

**Goal #4:** Teens will develop critical thinking skills for analyzing informational resources of all kinds.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will evaluate print materials and online resources focused on critical thinking and information literacy and consider expanding and / or updating the library's collections in those areas by December 2022.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will identify and present programs to assist teens with developing critical thinking skills by January 2024

**Goal #5:** Adults will develop critical thinking skills for analyzing informational resources of all kinds.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will evaluate physical materials and online resources focused on critical thinking and information literacy and consider expanding and / or updating the library's collections in those areas by December 2022.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of adult programming will identify and present programs to assist adults with developing critical thinking skills by January 2024

***Express Creativity: Create and Share Content***

Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

**Goal #1:** Students have resources to support and develop their writing skills.

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will investigate starting a summer creative writing group by June 2022.

*Objective:* The Youth Services and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will investigate creating a "NaNoWriMo" style event for youth by September 2023.

*Objective:* The Youth Services and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will explore incorporating writing into the typical summer reading program activities by March 2023.

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will offer writing skills support (ex. grammar review, proof reading, etc.) on a monthly basis by December 2023

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will research Brainfuse and other online services to identify and, if appropriate, offer training in their use for developing and improving writing skills by June 2023

*Objective:* The Youth Services Librarian will encourage area students to submit writing, memoirs, etc. to be bound into a book to add to the library collection by December 2023

**Goal #2:** Members of the community have access to an environment that nurtures creative thinking.

*Objective:* The Youth Services and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will evaluate the needs of children and young adults for programs, events, activities and collections that nurture creative thinking by December 2023

*Objective:* Librarians developing programs for adults of all ages will work together to create programs and activities where adults in the community may showcase their special skills and talents by January 2024.

*Objective:* The librarian in charge of social media will provide an opportunity for local citizens to share their talents and skills on the JKPL Facebook and YouTube Channels by December 2023

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming will plan and host a bi-annual Create-a-thon event (festival of art, music, etc. where people can explore various creative interests) by January 2025

*Objective:* The Youth Services and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will partner with the local schools to provide an opportunity for students in debate, speech, theatre, etc. to demonstrate their skills in a public setting, prior to the actual performance or competition by July 2023.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming will work together to develop and host an annual STEAMfest event for all ages, highlighting items available in the JKPL Creation Station and Library of Things by January 2024

**Goal #3:** Students are provided with S.T.E.M. focused opportunities to supplement their learning and bridge gaps in their knowledge.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Librarian will partner with local experts and establishments (schools, colleges, other libraries) in order to provide access to S.T.E.M. equipment and expertise by December 2023.

*Objective:* Library staff in charge of S.T.E.M. programming will investigate best times and topics and develop a plan for S.T.E.M. programming by August 2022

*Objective:* Library staff in charge of S.T.E.M. programming will partner with local schools to provide a venue for youth to teach and demonstrate skills and talents by January 2023

*Objective:* The Youth Services and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will partner with the local schools to identify and fill gaps in S.T.E.M. learning by May 2023

*Objective:* The Library Director will explore removing restrictions on circulation of hotspots and S.T.E.M. items included in the Library of Things.