

# James Kennedy Public Library

Dyersville, Iowa

Strategic Plan 2022 – 2029



**JAMES  
KENNEDY**  
*Public Library*

Approved by the James Kennedy Public Library Board of Trustees

Original - March 15, 2022

Revised and updated - June 12, 2024

## **Original Planning Process (2021-2022):**

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.

## **Process for Update:**

In the fall of 2023, the Board discussed the strategic plan and decided it would be appropriate to review and update the document as a whole. It was agreed that Becky Heil would again facilitate the process and there would be community and staff involvement. On February 8, 2024, a special JKPL work session was held. Participants were members of the Board of Trustees, representatives from the community, city council and library staff with Becky Heil facilitating. The group reviewed the existing Strategic Plan item by item with discussion on what was complete, what should stay in a new plan, what should be removed, and what should be added. The group decided to blend the Library Service Responses (LSR) of *Know Your Community* and *Make Informed Decisions* into one Response – *Be Informed*. They also decided to include in the plan the *Literacy for All* LSR that was considered but not included in the original plan. The Library Service Responses were approved at the March 13, 2024 Board Meeting.

All library staff were involved in a brainstorming session on April 5, 2024, where they discussed the process, the LSRs, potential goals, objectives and activities. The updated Goals were approved at the April 10, 2024 Board meeting. Objectives were written by library director Shirley Vonderhaar with review and comment from Dawn Schrandt, Paul Zurawski, and Christa Palm. At the May 8, 2024 Board meeting, the policy committee members were appointed to review a draft of the proposed complete plan, prior to it going to the full JKPL Board at the June 2024 meeting.

### **Community Participants:**

Tiegan O’Hea  
Monika Steffen  
Amanda Wachendorf

### **City Council / Library Liaison:**

Tom Westhoff

### **Library Board of Trustees:**

Catherine O’Hea, President  
Alex Wiezorek, Vice President  
Danielle Will, Secretary  
Kami Droessler Boffeli  
Sue Engelbrecht  
Beth Gudenkauf  
Sally Kelly  
Raymond Kruse

### **Library Staff:**

Shirley Vonderhaar, Director  
Dawn Schrandt, Assistant Director  
Paul Zurawski, Librarian  
Christa Palm, Librarian  
Ann Boeckenstedt, Programmer  
Brian Alm, Clerk  
Jo Amunson, Clerk  
Samantha Burds, Clerk  
Deb Gudenkauf, Clerk  
Sarah Keffeler-Gibson, Clerk  
Audrey Maiers, Clerk

**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:**

**Be Informed** (Blending Information focused LSRs):

*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.

*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:** 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 2025.

*Objective:* As part of marketing strategies, the Assistant Director will investigate utilizing targeted emails or other direct messaging to share information about library services, programs and / or resources by December 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate offering free passes or otherwise supporting or providing access to local attractions, including but not limited to museums and parks by September 2024.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will research and revise the staff and board biographical information which is posted on the JKPL webpage by December 2024.

**Goal #2:** Residents will find information and resources about community organizations, services and businesses at the library.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will identify community resources and services (food pantry, churches, health care, etc.) and create or locate avenues (webpages, lists, fliers, etc.) to provide residents of the community with access to this information by July 2025.

*Objective:* The Assistant Director will work with other city organizations to provide information about community services and resources to new residents by September 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate offering free passes or otherwise supporting or providing access to local attractions, including but not limited to recreational businesses that are fee based or businesses that provide tours of their facilities by July 2025.

**Goal #3:** Those exploring careers are able to access information regarding businesses hiring locally.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming for teens and adults will investigate creation of programs, events, or activities featuring local businesses by December 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming for teens and adults will work with Workforce Development and local businesses to provide access to information about job openings by July 2025.

**Goal #4:** Job seekers have the skills they need to gain employment or advance their career.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will provide training on Brainfuse and other job skills and career related services available through the JKPL by January 2025.

*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 2025.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will investigate opportunities to partner with the schools and other education agencies to provide information about and / or access to job seeking skills by January 2026.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will work together to develop or provide access to employment and / or activities focused on job skills for job seekers of all ages by January 2027.

**Goal #5:** Community members of all ages will find programming and other resources for life events.

*Objective:* The 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:* The 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 2025.

**Goal #6:** Teens and adults will develop critical thinking skills for analyzing informational resources of all kinds.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming for teens and adults will identify and present programs to assist with developing critical thinking skills by January 2025.

***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:** Residents will experience diverse collections.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of collection development will develop a plan to ensure a diverse and inclusive collection by March 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of collections and marketing will develop a plan to ensure diverse and inclusive displays are offered for all ages by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of collection development will evaluate allocating a certain percentage of the collection budget to diverse and inclusive materials by July 2026.

**Goal #2:** The community will be enriched by celebrating and developing a greater understanding of diversity.

*Objective:* The 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 2026. Possibilities suggested at planning meeting include Diversity Day, Heritage Days, Multicultural Fair.



*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will schedule at least one program per year featuring diverse presenters by July 2027.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will plan at least one program or activity per year that celebrates diversity, equity and inclusion by December 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will investigate creating a human library of diverse experiences by October 2025.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will start a tween or intergenerational book club, which will include selections featuring a variety of diverse viewpoints, by September 2025.

*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 2026.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of book clubs will include selections featuring a variety of diverse viewpoints, characters, or authors by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Storywalk<sup>®</sup> will feature at least one story per year that reflects diversity, equity and inclusion by April 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will plan at least one program per year that celebrates Hispanic Heritage by July 2025.

**Goal #3:** Library staff will recognize and appreciate diversity in the community to ensure that every patron receives excellent service

*Objective:* Library staff will create or provide access to 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 February 2025.

*Objective:* Library staff will have the resources, knowledge and training to assist Spanish language speaking patrons by June 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will develop a written plan to provide dedicated, paid staff time for training, including diversity training, for all staff on a regular basis by August 2024.

*Objective:* Library staff will have the resources, knowledge and training to appropriately serve neurodivergent patrons by April 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate ways the JKPL can better serve the mental health needs of community residents by April 2026.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate ways the JKPL can provide support to caregivers residing in the community by April 2026.

***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 Children’s Librarian will investigate starting a summer creative writing group or other programs to help children develop writing skills by March 2025.

*Objective:* The Children’s Librarian will investigate creating a “NaNoWriMo” style event for youth by November 2024.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarian will investigate creating a “NaNoWriMo” style event for teens by November 2024.

*Objective:* The Children’s and Young and Emerging Adult Services Librarians will explore incorporating writing into the typical summer reading program activities by May 2024.

*Objective:* The Children’s 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 2025.

*Objective:* The Children’s Librarian will encourage area students to submit writing, memoirs, etc. to be bound into a book to add to the library collection by December 2024.

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

*Objective:* The Children’s 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 2024.

*Objective:* The 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 2025.

*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 2024.

*Objective:* The 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 2026.

*Objective:* The 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 2025.

**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 2025.

*Objective:* Library staff in charge of S.T.E.M. programming will investigate best times, topics, and potential grant resources for S.T.E.M. programming by August 2025.

*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 2026.

*Objective:* Library staff in charge of S.T.E.M programming will partner with other organizations and businesses to develop and present programming connected with Engineering Week, Public Works Week, National STEM/STEAM Day, or other national events connected with S.T.E.M. by May 2025.

*Objective:* Library staff in charge of S.T.E.M programming will plan programming that demonstrates what a career in S.T.E.M. may look like by May 2025.

*Objective:* The Children's 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 2026.

**Literacy for All** (blending Literacy focused responses):

*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.

**Goal #1:** Children will have access to the programs, collections, and services they need to enter school ready to learn.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will offer regular and special story times throughout the year to support early literacy by August 2024.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will investigate expanding OutReads, the JKPL outreach story time program, to serve additional ages and / or daycares by May 2025.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will develop and offer resources for families to aid them in modeling reading and literacy by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will investigate modifying or expanding the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program to include preschools and / or daycares by December 2027.

*Objective:* Library staff will investigate opportunities to help families grow their home libraries by December 2026.

**Goal #2:** School age children will have access to the programs, collections and services they need to succeed at school.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming for youth will develop a plan to visit schools and classrooms to engage with youth regarding reading and literacy by September 2026.

*Objective:* Librarians in charge of programming for youth will develop a plan for youth to visit the library in person or virtually (tours, video tours, etc.) by September 2027.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will provide opportunities for children to practice their reading skills in a safe, supportive environment by October 2025.

**Goal 3:** Teens and adults will have access to the programs, collections and services they need to support their learning goals.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Librarian will work with the teen advisory council to identify educational topics and skills of interest to teens by November 2024.

*Objective:* The Young and Emerging Adult Librarian will launch a series of programs designed for teens focused on educational topics that prepare them for adulthood by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming for teens and adults will identify gaps in learning opportunities and develop programs to fill those gaps by April 2027.

*Objective:* The Library Director will evaluate electronic services and online databases to identify and provide access to those that support adult and teen learning goals by January 2028.

**Goal #4:** Neurodivergent individuals and those with special needs of all ages will have access to appropriate services and resources.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of collection development will develop collections to support neurodivergent residents by December 2024.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will develop programs and activities to meet the needs and interests of neurodivergent adults by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will develop programs and activities to meet the needs and interests of neurodivergent youth by October 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate ways the JKPL can support the adult daycares in the community and those that use their services by September 2024.

*Objective:* The Library Director will identify resources for services to the neurodivergent by January 2025.

*Objective:* The Library Director will work with members of the neurodivergent community to identify barriers to accessing library service by August 2024.

**Goal #5:** Adults will have access to collections, programs and services to support their health and wellness needs.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will investigate partnering with the Dyersville Parks and Rec Department to offer collections and services related to fitness, health and wellness by April 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will work with older adults in the community to identify, plan and offer programs related to health and wellness by December 2024.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will investigate offering programs on nutrition and meal planning by June 2025.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming for adults will investigate the need and develop a plan to offer services for those with dementia (memory care services and programs, dementia friendly, etc.) by January 2026.

*Objective:* The Librarians in charge of programming will investigate expanding programs to include gardening and culinary literacy (cooking) programs for all ages by May 2026.

**Goal #6:** Residents who are not native English speakers will have access to programs, services and collections in their native language.

*Objective:* The Children's Librarian will investigate offering a bilingual (Spanish / English) Story Time at least quarterly by September 2025.

*Objective:* The Assistant Library Director will investigate what services the JKPL could offer to support the ESL and tutoring programs already available in the community by October 2024.

*Objective:* The Library Director will investigate providing access to materials for non-Native English-speaking patrons by October 2025.