How do you know if Your Library meets the needs of its patrons?

Community Needs Assessment as an Integral Part of Strategic Planning
Initial Information Gathering:

Community Assessments By Others & Census Data

What other local groups have done a community needs assessment/survey recently?

- Town Plan? Town Department Effort?
- Another Nonprofit, Civic, or Religious Organization?
- What did they learn that you can build from?

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nwplanning/30130854111/
Census Data

- Michael Moser – UVM Center for Rural Studies
  - 802-656-0864
  - Michael.Moser@uvm.edu

- American Community Survey: 5-year Increment Sampling of Census Data (for smaller towns): https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

The Importance of Turning Outward:

Expert Knowledge vs. Public/Community Knowledge
How Do You Find Out Your Community’s Needs?

- Focus Groups?
- Surveys? – How administer? Where administer?
- Go out into the community? – grocery, coffee shop, farmer’s market, community events, etc.
- Go to community meetings? – Rotary, PTA, Church Groups, etc.
- What questions do you ask, how do you ask them, and who does the asking?
Meeting Community Needs

• How do you assess the current and future needs of your community? Why is this important to do?
• Which of these needs should (and can) be addressed by the library, given the library’s limitations?
• Should the library partner with other organizations to meet certain needs? (Create library advocates)
• How does the library’s mission statement/vision help guide you to an answer? Strategic Planning?

Community Needs & Strategic Planning

• Harwood Institute Turning Outward Tools: http://theharwoodinstitute.org/tools/
• VT Department of Libraries Professional Collection
Advocacy: Community Connections

• Talking up your library & getting others to talk up your library

• Talking Points you can use & get others to use on your behalf.

• Solicit Patron Stories to Share: How has the library changed your life? What do you love about the library?

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/volunteermatch/27677155485/

Ideas for Working Together

Community Needs Assessment

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/airbnb/13915193802/
Ideas for Working Together

Community-Wide Initiatives

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/niallkennedy/9587071278/

Ideas for Working Together

Research Assistance & Information Dissemination

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/pamwood707/5646757752
How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries serve as a Community Hub - bringing the entire community together

Source: Burnham Mem. Lib. Facebook Page

How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries are vital to a functioning democracy

Varnum Memorial Library, Cambridge
How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries provide a space for educational, social, cultural, and recreational engagement.

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/sanjoselibrary/31234520260

How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries help your taxpayers connect with local government.

South Burlington Public Library
How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries are the ultimate renewable resource

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/awesomelibraryservices/16393118653

How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries Offer a Fantastic ROI*

*Library Value Calculator http://www.ala.org/advocacy/library-value-calculator

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/143843618@N03
Advocacy: Community Connections


• Turning the Page Library Advocacy Training: http://www.publiclibraryadvocacy.org/

• Tribute: Library Patrons Expressing Love – Pierson Library: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFwS4_cllJo

Contact Me

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