NIAGARA FALLS
PUBLIC LIBRARY
4848 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 4C5 | 905 356 8080

Background: On September 20, 2023, the Niagara Falls Public Library Board approved the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan (Motion# 2023-65). On December 18, 2024, the Niagara Falls Public Library Board accepted the subsequent report entitled "2024-2028 Strategic Plan – Year 1 Progress Update" (Motion# 2024-155).

Dear Valued Stakeholders,

On behalf of the Niagara Falls Public Library Senior Management and Staff, we are pleased to present the 2024 Strategic Plan Progress Update Report. This report provides a comprehensive overview of our organization's achievements and progress since the approval of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan in September of 2023.

We recognize the importance of transparency and accountability in our operations. This report is designed to keep you informed about our strategic direction, key performance indicators, and the milestones we have achieved in the first year of our strategic plan implementation.

We believe that this report will be a valuable resource for all stakeholders, including our employees, partners, donors, and the community at large. We encourage you to take the time to review the report and learn more about our progress.

We are committed to continuous improvement and are always looking for ways to better serve our community. Your feedback is valuable to us and we encourage you to share your thoughts and suggestions with us.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Alicia Subnaik Kilgour
CEO / Chief Librarian

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PUBLIC LIBRARY
4848 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 4C5 | 905 356 8080

Subject: 2024-2028 Strategic Plan - Year 1 Progress Update

Background:

Goal 1: Position the Library as a vital, relevant, innovative, and forward-thinking organization in the community

Objective 1: Demonstrate the Library's economic and social value using evidence-based data
On Track - work ongoing

- Social Return on Investment (SROI) Research
  - Internal Research: Local History Survey ⬨ Collections Survey
  - Ministry Research: Valuing Ontario Public Libraries (VOLT)

Objective 2: Identify the Library's strengths and relevance to stakeholders
On Track - work ongoing

- Create reports for the public, staff, board, and council which tell the Library's story in an impactful and meaningful way through relevance to each audience.

Objective 3: Seek ways to increase the community's awareness of the Library's collections, programs, and services
On Track - work ongoing

- Identify target demographic groups unaware of or under-engaging with Library services through a variety of statistical evaluation methods.

Goal 2: Create effective, targeted outreach strategies to address the needs of the residents of Niagara Falls

Objective 1: Reassess current outreach practices to determine gaps and identify new approaches to connect with the community
On Track - work ongoing

- Develop engagement opportunities to highlight community voices by launching the Influencer Program. This program invites selected nominated community members to share their reading interests with the entire community.

Objective 2: Strengthen the Library's connection with teens, older adults, and newcomers
On Track - work ongoing

- Develop new ways to bring Local History content to the community, especially youth, seniors and VLS customers. Create a series of programs/presentations which can be taken to a wide variety of audiences - long term care facilities, schools, service organizations, VLS customers. Ensure content is flexible to accommodate different types of presentations - staff hosted, self-directed, website, video.

Objective 3: Prioritize how to support vulnerable and underserved communities given the Library's current resources and infrastructure
Completed - work continues as service grows

- Develop Bookmobile Service Plan, including considerations of offering full library service to outreach locations, prioritizing options to serve vulnerable and underserved communities.

Goal 3: Continue to develop a healthy work culture prepared to serve a growing and increasingly diverse population

Objective 1: Foster a positive and equitable workplace
On Track - work ongoing

- Reevaluate library service in Chippawa to enhance accessibility to all library programs and services.

Objective 2: Continue to support the health and well-being of staff
On Track - work ongoing

- Conduct stress and strain assessments across the organization and create employee wellness programs targeting identified issues.
- WSIB Excellence Program - NFPL started this program earlier in the year and is currently working with WSIB to improve upon topics such as wellness and health promotion, establishing health and safety responsibilities, hazard identification and first aid preparedness.

Objective 3: Build a sound and future-ready organizational structure
On Track - work ongoing

- Centralize information, documentation, processes and procedures; disseminate info into one accessible space on appropriate platform
- Implement cross-training, and technological training to expand the skills of the workforce

Goal 4: Build on the Library's technology strengths to showcase digital initiatives and opportunities

Objective 1: Develop initiatives to empower the community to use technology to learn, create, and innovate
On Track - work ongoing

- Improve Creator Space by improving access and support.

Objective 2: Leverage technology to improve access to collections, programs, and services

Slightly Off-Track - work ongoing

- Improve customer access to collections by adding hoopla and Kanopy records in the catalogue
- Improve the user-experience through the creation of how-to guides in clear language or pictograph format for printers, scanners, and other library offered technologies.

Objective 3: Continue to support staff efforts to establish internal data reporting systems to inform operations

On Track - work ongoing

- Enhance internal communications to improve information sharing across all levels of the system and departments to create a more aware, engaged and informed staff team.

Objective 4: Identify the resources required to achieve the library's technology goals

On Track - work ongoing

- Evaluate and enhance cybersecurity measures, including but not limited to network security, Cyber Insurance, and meeting all PIPEDA legislation and related regulations.

Next Steps:

Prepared by:

Senior Management Team

- Cathie Lee, Laura Martin, Ashleigh Dronyk, Carrie Bosco, Tony DeGiorgio

Strategic Plan Progress Update

Year 1 / 2024

2024-2028 Strategic Plan

Vision and Mission Statements

Vision

To empower communities and inspire the pursuit of discovery, knowledge, and creativity.

Mission

A gateway to information – through awareness, connection, service, and access to technology – fostering community enrichment for all.

Institutional Values

Equity Empowering all through equitable access and opportunities.

Respect Embracing everyone with courtesy and dignity.

Inclusivity Cultivating a nurturing and non-judgemental environment.

Accountability Ensuring transparency, public trust, and responsible stewardship.

Empowerment Enabling lifelong learning, igniting potential, fostering growth, and creativity.

Intellectual Freedom Subscribing to an open exchange of information and ideas in a democratic society.

Loro
Cultural Resources

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

Position the Library as a vital, relevant, innovative, and forward-thinking organization in the community.

Goal Champion:
Laura Martin

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

Position the Library as a vital, relevant, innovative, and forward-thinking organization in the community.

1. Demonstrate the Library's economic and social value using evidence-based data.
2. Identify the Library's strengths and relevance to stakeholders.
3. Seek ways to increase the community's awareness of the Library's collections, programs, and services.

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 1
Demonstrate the Library's economic and social value using evidence-based data.

PROJECT

Social Return on Investment Research

TASKS

Internal Research

Local History Survey ⬨ Collections Survey

Ministry Research

Valuing Ontario Public Libraries (VOLT)

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing



Bookmark Collection Use Survey Results:

407 Surveys Returned by readers who checked out books in a library location

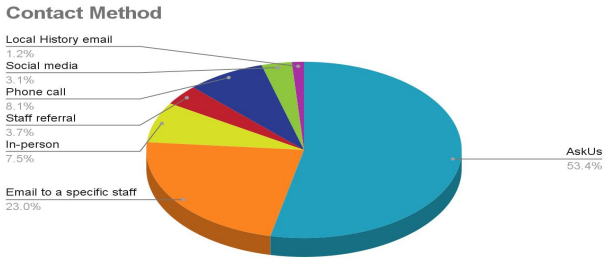
51% Read eBooks
43% Listen to eAudiobooks
95% Agreed that the Library has or sometimes has what they want to read

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing

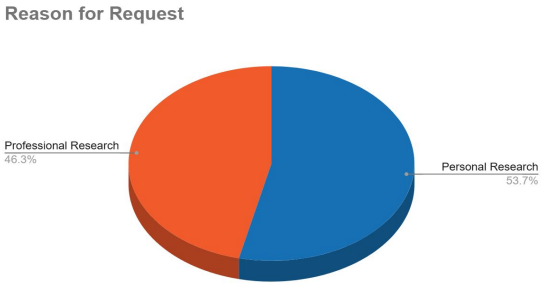
Local History Survey: Contact Method

53 % AskUS
24 % Email to a specific staff member
8 % Phone Call
8 % In-Person
4 % Staff Referral
3 % Social Media
1 % Local History email address



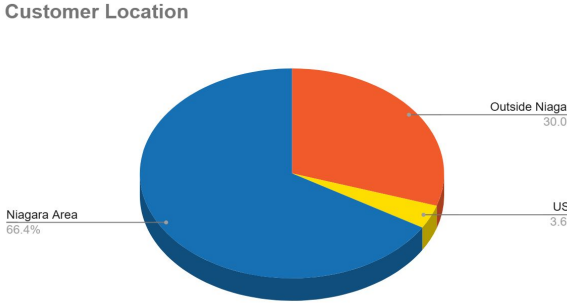
Local History Survey: Reason for Request

53.7 % Personal Research
46.3 % Professional Research



Local History Survey: Customer Location

66 % Niagara Area
30 % Outside Niagara
4 % USA



Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing

VOLT (Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit)

Based on an analysis of the impacts made by the library in 2023, across more than twenty unique indicators in seven unique domains, including education, culture, inclusion and wellbeing, entertainment and leisure, economic development, civic engagement, and physical space,
the Niagara Falls Public Library has calculated its **overall economic benefit to the community** as standing at **$36,503,438**

This works out to **$387 per permanent resident** or **$966 per household.**

For **every one hour** that we are open to the public,
the Niagara Falls Public Library generates **$1,682 of economic benefit**.

For **every $1 invested** into the library,
the Niagara Falls Public Library **generates $6.80**, or a **return of 680%**

ONTARIO LIBRARY SERVICE
Stronger libraries. Stronger communities.

Ontario

Algoma UNIVERSITY

NORDIK INSTITUTE

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 2
Identify the Library's strengths and relevance to stakeholders.

PROJECT

Create reports for the public, staff, board, and council which tell the Library's story in an impactful and meaningful way through relevance to each audience.

TASKS

TD SRC Impact report ⋄ Monthly use statistics ⋄ Strategic Plan report
Visual Multi-Year Comparison report ⋄ Monthly Media reports

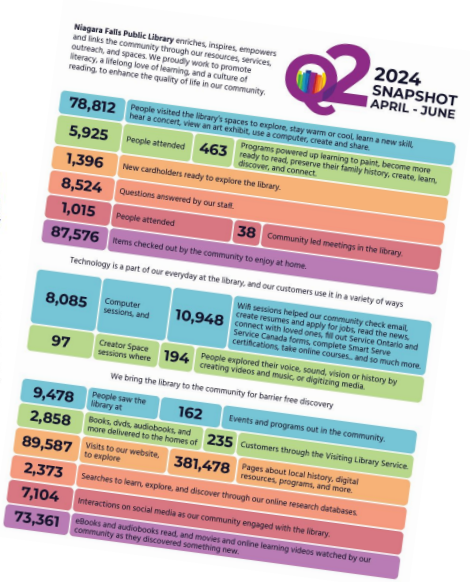
Post reports to the Wiki for the staff to easily access

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing







Lorc
Cultural Resources

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 3
Seek ways to increase the community's awareness of the Library's collections, programs, and services.

PROJECT

Identify target demographic groups unaware of or under-engaging with Library services through a variety of statistical evaluation methods.

TASKS

Products and Activities completed to increase awareness include:
NovelBranch move to Chippawa Arena ◦ Evergreen Accessibility Enhancements
Welcome Guide ◦ Digital Collections promotions ◦ Newcomer Job Fair

Local History: Digital Puzzles, Outreach programs
Community Presentations with groups such as Niagara Local Immigration Partnership, Rotary Club

Bookmobile: Summer Street Shelter stop, Canada Day/Mother Earth Day, Regional Wellness Event, St. Ann's Adult Learning centre

School Outreach: Wrap Around project, Summer Reading Blitzes, EarlyON collaboration

Goal 1:
Positioning and Awareness

On Track! Work Ongoing



Welcome Guide
Given to every new card holder!



Learning Express Electronic Resources signage posted throughout library stacks - scanned over 115 times in 2024



Local History Digital Puzzles: Accessed over 3,700 times in 2024

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

Create effective, targeted outreach strategies to address the needs of the residents of Niagara Falls.

Goal Champion:
Becky Dixon

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

Create effective, targeted outreach strategies to address the needs of the residents of Niagara Falls.

1. Reassess current outreach practices to determine gaps and identify new approaches to connect with the community.
2. Strengthen the Library's connection with teens, older adults, and newcomers.
3. Prioritize how to support vulnerable and underserved communities given the Library's current resources and infrastructure.

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 1
Reassess current outreach practices to determine gaps and identify new approaches to connect with the community.

PROJECT

Develop engagement opportunities to highlight community voices by launching the Influencer Program. This program invites selected nominated community members to share their reading interests with the entire community.

TASKS

The Influencer Program soft launches December 16!

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

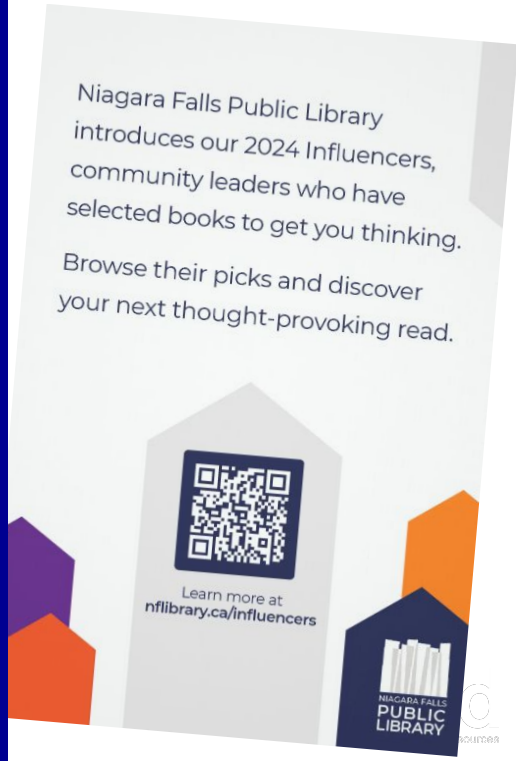
On Track! Work Ongoing



Our Influencers:
Brian Kon, Celeste Turner, Imam Asad Mahmood

Purpose and Outcomes of the Program: To highlight the voices of community leaders, offering Influencers a platform for recommending books they think are important for everyone in the community to read. These reading recommendations will spark conversation, foster understanding of different perspectives, and present people with information they might not otherwise have known to seek out on their own. Also, it will ideally allow a wider diversity of people in the community to see themselves represented in library displays and initiatives, and will enrich the library's collection with a broader diversity of books.

The Books: Displays will be at each location containing four copies of three titles for each Influencer. In addition, a longer list of titles are available on the webpage.



Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 2
Strengthen the Library's connection with teens, older adults, and newcomers.

PROJECT

Develop new ways to bring Local History content to the community, especially youth, seniors and VLS customers. Create a series of programs/presentations which can be taken to a wide variety of audiences - long term care facilities, schools, service organizations, VLS customers. Ensure content is flexible to accommodate different types of presentations - staff hosted, self-directed, website, video.

TASKS

Local History activities completed include:

Summer Memories program ◦ Displays at library locations ◦ Made in Niagara Falls traveling program ◦ Judges at a local Grade 6 Heritage Fair ◦ Black History Month display ◦ Local History Minute videos ◦ Digital puzzles ◦ Throwback Thursday posts

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

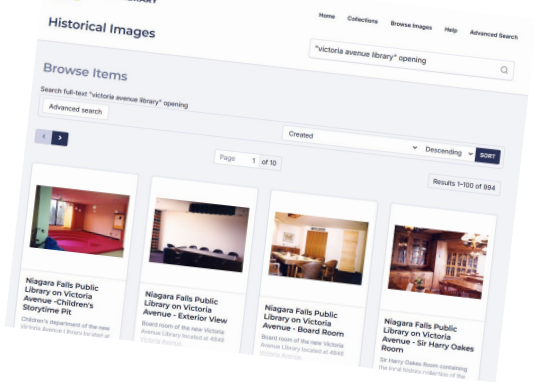
On Track! Work Ongoing











Local History Use

57,443 pages of the Digital Collection Viewed

163 questions answered

74 hours of research provided

3922 digital puzzles completed

27 displays across all locations

240 customer uses of the Microfilm collection

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 3
Prioritize how to support vulnerable and underserved communities given the Library's current resources and infrastructure.

PROJECT

Develop Bookmobile Service Plan, including considerations of offering full library service to outreach locations, prioritizing options to serve vulnerable and underserved communities.

TASKS

Bookmobile launched in April 2024

Stops and Outreach to support vulnerable and underserved communities Outreach Stops and Community Events: Summer Street Shelter stop, Canada Day, Mother Earth Day, Regional Wellness Event, St. Ann's Adult Learning Centre Community input for Stop Requests Chippawa community stops 3 x week

Goal 2:
Outreach and Connection

On Track! Work Ongoing

Bookmobile

On the Road: May 2024
Visitors: 3,415
Circulation: 2,904
Stops: 318
Service Hours: 587 hours
Card Registrations: 239



Feedback from the Summer Street Shelter staff:

"We have clients we didn't know were readers until you started visiting. Now they've got something to talk about – they can talk about books!"

Goal 3:
Organizational Strength

Continue to develop a healthy work culture prepared to serve a growing and increasingly diverse population.

Goal Champion:
Tony DeGiorgio

Goal 3:
Organizational Strength

Continue to develop a healthy work culture prepared to serve a growing and increasingly diverse population.

1. Foster a positive and equitable workplace.
2. Continue to support the health and well-being of staff.
3. Build a sound and future-ready organizational structure.

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 1
Foster a positive and equitable workplace.

PROJECT

Reevaluate library service in Chippawa to enhance accessibility to all library programs and services.

TASKS

Programming moved to Chippawa Arena December 2023

Chippawa Library closed in April 2024

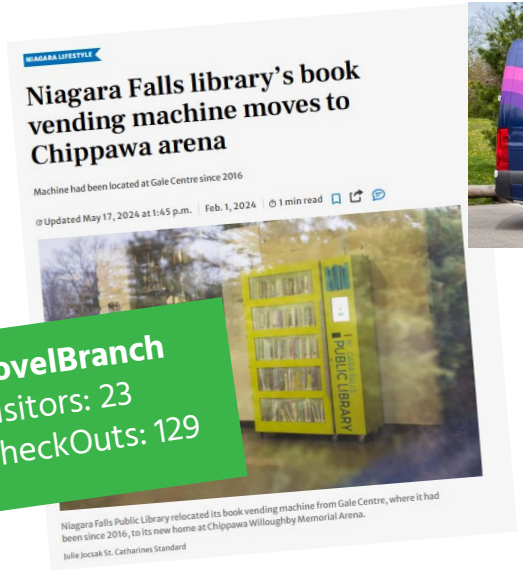
NovelBranch relocated to Chippawa Arena May 2024

Bookmobile service in Chippawa community 3 x week May 2024

Special Board meeting in July 2024

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing


NIAGARA LIFESTYLE

Niagara Falls library's book vending machine moves to Chippawa arena

Machine had been located at Gale Centre since 2016

Updated May 17, 2024 at 1:45 p.m. | Feb. 1, 2024 | 1 min read

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Niagara Falls Public Library relocated its book vending machine from Gale Centre, where it had been since 2016, to its new home at Chippawa Willoughby Memorial Arena.

Julie Joccak St. Catharines Standard

NovelBranch
Visitors: 23
CheckOuts: 129



Bookmobile Service in Chippawa
Stops: 88
Visitors: 796



Programs at Chippawa Willoughby Memorial Arena
Programs: 89
Attendees: 821



These numbers represent use from April-November 2024. There is not enough data to compare to 2023 as Chippawa Arena is only open M-Th evenings, Friday - Sunday all day during the winter and closed May-September. as compared to the Gale Centre which is open all day every day.

Totals are down compared to 2023:
Programs -38%
Attendees -42%

Attributable to arena access compared to the library - very little access over the summer due to no A/C and for one month August/September due to softball tournaments.

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 2
Continue to support the health and well-being of staff.

PROJECT 1

Conduct stress and strain assessments across the organization and create employee wellness programs targeting identified issues.

TASKS

Wellness Survey completed

Wellness Committee launched - activities include weekly RAPIDS posts, BBQs, Movie night

PROJECT 2

WSIB Excellence Program

TASKS

All five health and safety related topics have been completed and received validation from WSIB

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing

Employee Wellness Survey
44 employee survey responses

This participation rate represents the first Employee Wellness Survey launched in February of 2024. In 2025, we anticipate 2 launches of Employee Wellness Surveys for comparative data.

WSIB Excellence Program
Completed HSEP topics: 5
Standards implemented: 5
Initiatives launched directly in relation to the program: 29

Health and Safety Excellence program Member
wsib ONTARIO 2023

Overall Benefits
Recognition by WSIB
Total rebate of $10,000
($5,000 for completing 5 topics, doubled for "Small Business" bonus
Develop and review practices to meet OHSA standards
Create awareness for health and safety in the workplace.

The WSIB Hsep program ran for 1 year and impacted all branches and employees of the NFPL.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE



Wellness Committee
Meetings: 8
Initiatives Launched: 19
Psychological/Social initiatives: 15
Physical wellness initiatives: 4

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 3
Build a sound and future-ready organizational structure.

PROJECT 1

Centralize information, documentation, processes and procedures; disseminate info into one accessible space on appropriate platform

TASKS

Content created and added to the Wiki includes:
Our Collection: Maintenance and Merchandising Manual ◦ Employee Wellness Resource Guide
Employees' health and safety responsibilities ◦ Fire Plans for each Library location

PROJECT 2

Implement cross-training, and technological training to expand the skills of the workforce

TASKS

CSP staff trained on: Indexing for Local History, Creator Space services, Microfilm use Wiki training for all staff

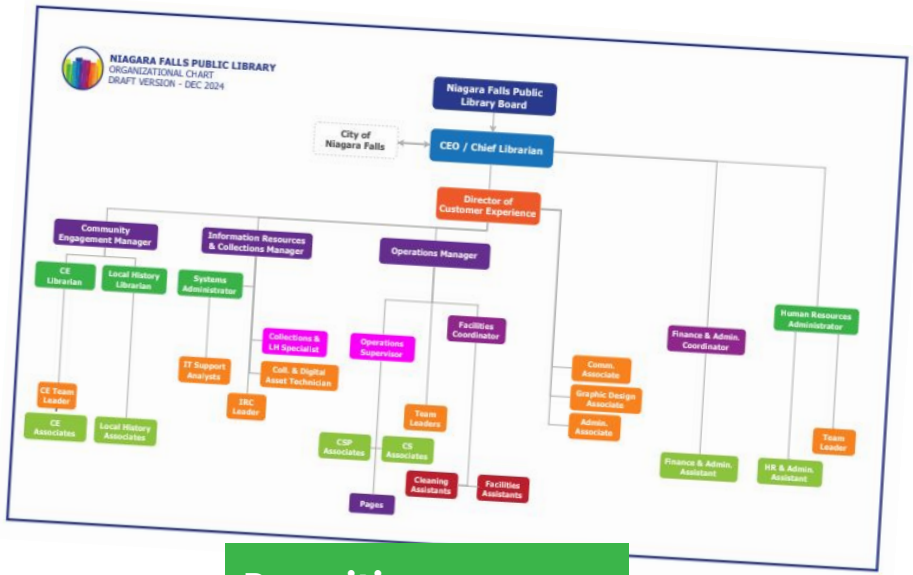
Loro Cultural Resources

Goal 3: Organizational Strength

On Track! Work Ongoing

Health & safety documents uploaded to the WIKI: 18

- **Health and Safety**
  - Montly Inspection Form
  - Reporting a Workplace Injury
  - Lockdown/Hold Procedures
  - Fire Safety Plans
  - Hazard Identification Registry
  - Health & Safety Roles & Responsibilities
  - Sharps
  - First Aid Program
  - Joint Health and Safety Committee



Recruiting
Positions filled: 27
New roles created: 6

Cabinets

Number of documents uploaded to Mayan: 400+

Label
Accessibility Reports
Bylaws
Incident Reports
Job Descriptions
Policies
Position Statements
Procedures

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

Build on the Library's technology strengths to showcase digital initiatives and opportunities.

Goal Champion:
Ashleigh Dronyk

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

Build on the Library's technology strengths to showcase digital initiatives and opportunities.

1. Develop initiatives to empower the community to use technology to learn, create, and innovate.
2. Leverage technology to improve access to collections, programs, and services.
3. Continue to support staff efforts to establish internal data reporting systems to inform operations.
4. Identify the resources required to achieve the library's technology goals.

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 1
Develop initiatives to empower the community to use technology to learn, create, and innovate.

PROJECT

Improve Creator Space by improving access and support.

TASKS

Staff training to expand the number of staff comfortable with the equipment

Open Hours sessions started

Evening and weekend Open Hours added Appointments implemented

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing



Creator Space Use

Open House Attendance: 152
Appointments hosted: 62
Space Bookings: 471



Goal 4:
Access and Technology

Slightly Off Track
Work Ongoing

Objective 2
Leverage technology to improve access to collections, programs, and services.

PROJECT 1
Improve customer access to collections by adding hoopla and Kanopy records in the catalogue

TASKS
Workflow for uploading records is complete and successful.

Still sorting out workflows for full collection maintenance.

PROJECT 2
Improve the user-experience through the creation of how-to guides in clear language or pictograph format for printers, scanners, and other library offered technologies.

TASKS
Content has been created - waiting for software updates to finalize instruction and implement.

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 3
Continue to support staff efforts to establish internal data reporting systems to inform operations.

PROJECT

Enhance internal communications to improve information sharing across all levels of the system and departments to create a more aware, engaged and informed staff team.

TASKS

Lightdash Dashboard for ILS data evaluation.

Updated Shortlinks App (nfpl.info) with a more accessible and secure interface with improved access to performance data for individual links.

Streamlined Design job submission workflow

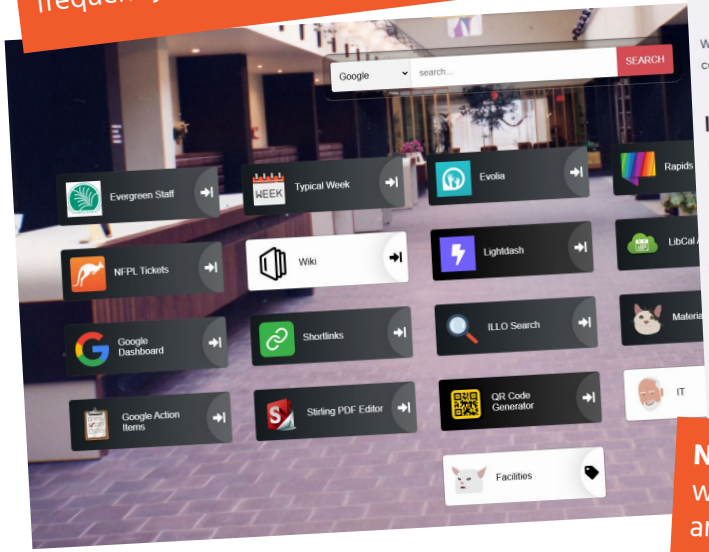
Created a Report Library in the wiki to build a repository for including annual reports, quarterly reports and monthly statistical and strategic plan reports.

“In the News” blog posts and Rapids posts to raise awareness of the Library in the media.

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing

IT designed **"Start Page"** on staff workstations help staff find links for frequently used resources quickly and easily.



HOME / LIBRARY BLOG

NFPL in the News: October

We were busy in October talking about new collections, upcoming programs, our amazing yearbook collection and, of course, our celebrations for our Victoria Avenue location's 50th anniversary!

Interviews

- We chatted with Steph Vivier on Newstalk 610 CKTB about all the different kinds of horror books you can read. You can find all the titles we mentioned on air in our blog post here.

Articles

- Our Local History team talked to the *Niagara Falls Review* about our yearbook collection, what books we're still looking for, and what it means for the community. (Read)
- It's important that our community's voice is heard so we talked to the *Niagara Falls Review* about the City of Niagara Falls' budget survey. (Read)
- Two outlets shared the details about our upcoming celebrations for our Victoria

NFPL In The News summaries are shared with staff and the public to raise awareness and transparency.

IT has created an **Evergreen Data Dashboard** using the Lightdash platform. The source is refreshed every evening, providing near-real time data on circulation, collection use, and many other Evergreen data points.



Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing

Objective 4
Identify the resources required to achieve the library's technology goals.

PROJECT

Evaluate and enhance cybersecurity measures, including but not limited to network security, Cyber Insurance, and meeting all PIPEDA legislation and related regulations.

TASKS

Cyber Insurance in place for January 2024 ⋄ Enforcing Microsoft Security Baselines on client machines

Programs registration has seen a complete makeover on the website. The DNS (Domain Name System) has been moved to Cloudflare to take advantage of geographical CDN(Content Delivery Network) caching in accessing data faster.

Two-factor authentication keys for staff ⋄ Cyber Insurance training for IT staff

New offsite data backup workflow.

Goal 4:
Access and Technology

On Track! Work Ongoing

Lightdash Statistics Platform

Charts Created	Top 10 Charts Accessed	Staff Contributors
67	3682x	21

Notable Incidents

Bot Incident	Requests (DDos)	Post Remediation
September	1.1m/day	20k/day
October	500k/day	21k/day

Geographical Content Delivery Network

Past: 3.5 seconds
Today: 0.77**ms**

Security Rule Benchmark	OS	Score 2024	Score 2023	Category
CIS Microsoft Windows 10 Enterprise v1.12.0	Win 10	83%	32%	Clients
CIS Microsoft Windows 11 Enterprise v1.0.0	Win 11	83%	32%	Clients
CIS Microsoft Windows Server 2022 Benchmark v2.0.0	Server 2022	40%	NA	Servers
Center for Internet Security Debian Family Linux Benchmark v1.0.0	Debian Linux	50%	NA	Servers