

Chapter 26

Public Library Outreach

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The Possibilities

The goal of community outreach within a library is to develop library outreach programs for non-users, the under served, and people with special needs within the community. Communities are living things; they are constantly growing and changing. To meet the diverse needs of any community, libraries must keep in touch with these changes and tailor services to meet ever-changing needs.

In addition to providing needed service to community members, community outreach programs within a library provide a unique opportunity to improve public image within a service community and offers excellent collaboration opportunities with community leaders, groups and organizations that will enhance overall library service.

STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED

1. Determine your community needs and decide what populations you would like to develop and implement library services for. A variety of populations could be considered, including the following:

- · Adult Learners and Job Seekers
- · Adult New Readers
- · Ethnic Populations
- · Homebound Persons
- · Institutionalized Persons
- · Non-English Speaking Persons
- · Older Adults
- · Persons with Disabilities
- · Persons without Homes
- · Young New Readers
- · Young Adult Readers

2. Develop and implement staff training; provide support and guidance in community outreach; develop special collections targeted at the populations you are wanting to serve; and plan and implement programs.

3. Research and study the populations you decide to focus on. Determine needs and what the library can do to meet these needs.

4. Develop and implement programs outside of the library. Go where your targeted populations are, do not assume that they will come to you.

5. Develop relationships with other library leaders, community leaders, educational organizations, community groups and agencies. These collaborative relationships will lead to support and ideas for new and existing programming to meet the needs of your community.

6. Be patient and consistent, the benefits of programming outside of your library walls will impact overall perception of the library in a positive way by serving unmet needs and building relationships that were not present in the past.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

[A Librarian at Every Table \(http://www.cas.usf.edu/lis/a-librarian-at-every-table/\)](http://www.cas.usf.edu/lis/a-librarian-at-every-table/)

Librarians have an important role to play in building community in neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, states and the nation. The central focus of this website is to identify new tables at which librarians might take a place. At this site you may also sign up for the Librarian at Every Table mailing list.

[The Office of Community Outreach Services for the New York Public Library \(http://www.nypl.org/branch/services/cos.html\)](http://www.nypl.org/branch/services/cos.html)

The Office of Community Outreach Services coordinates community outreach services and develops programs and collections throughout The Branch Libraries of The New York Public Library. Here you will find a wealth of information on programming ideas that have worked, resources in hard and electronic format, and links to helpful web sites to begin building a successful library community outreach program.

[An Article from Ex Libris Titled Community Outreach as a Survival Strategy \(http://marylaine.com/exlibris/xlib80.html\)](http://marylaine.com/exlibris/xlib80.html)

This article describes the importance of community outreach within a library community and offers advice on getting started in your own community. In addition, the article offers a history of public service and why the effort of community outreach is needed in continuing library service.

[Outreach Services and Activities from the Tucson-Pima Public Library \(http://www.library.pima.gov/services/\)](http://www.library.pima.gov/services/)

This site offers a variety of successful community outreach programs that can be adapted to your library. Services are varied and target a large range of ages and needs.

[Public Librarians and Community Networkers: A Marriage Made in Cyberspace? \(http://www.tc.ca/libsnets.html\)](http://www.tc.ca/libsnets.html)

An article focused on community networks, community outreach, and the opportunities and advantages of improving technical opportunities within the community through the library.

American Library Association Office for Diversity
<http://www.ala.org/ala/diversity/diversity.cfm>

This site offers ideas for special collections and community outreach programming ideas. There is a wide range of information to meet the needs of diverse library populations. There are also links to helpful information related to community outreach in a variety of library settings.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Community Networking Handbook, by Stephen T. Bajjaly (Chicago: ALA, 1999). Surveys the process of community networking: planning, marketing, outreach, and evaluation.

Guidelines for Establishing Community Information and Referral Services in Public Libraries (4th ed.), by Norman L. Maas and Dick Manikowski (Chicago: American Library Association, Public Library Association, 1997). Classic criteria for librarians providing information and referral services.

A Place at the Table: Participating in Community Building, by Kathleen de la Peña McCook; foreword by Sarah Ann Long. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000). Focuses on community development, community outreach, libraries in society, and libraries and community.

Libraries Enhance Student Learning: A Guidebook of Innovative Library Programs for Youth, by Shirley Steele and Amanda Heim. (Washington, DC : U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Development : For sale by the U.S. G.P.O., Supt. of Docs., 1997). Information provided on library outreach programs, technology literacy, and library education.

Foundation Resource Guide: A Compilation of Major Foundations That Sponsor Activities Relevant to Community Outreach Partnership Centers / Office of University Partnership, prepared by Kevin Nelson. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1998). A resource that provides a guide to the Partnership Centers Program and development corporations.

Libraries, Community, and Technology, by Andy Barnett. Jefferson. (N.C. : McFarland & Co., 2002). This title provides information on community outreach programs, libraries in the community and library automation programs.

Libraries are Valuable-- Prove It! : Prepared for the Public Library Association Pre-Conference, July 7, 2000. (Glen E. Holt ... [et al.]. St. Louis, Mo.: St. Louis Public Library, c2000). A focus on public libraries, libraries and community, and services to business and industry.

Library Advocacy: Influencing Decision Makers (Chicago, IL: American Library Association Illinois Library Association, 1999). This brochure focuses on the need for increasingly more sophisticated legislative advocacy on behalf of libraries and the millions of people who depend on them. It is designed to help library advocates be effective in today's volatile, bottom-line oriented, and complex political environment. The techniques and messages described can be used at the local, state, and national levels.

Source: <http://star61451.tripod.com/marketingthelibrary/id5.html>

National Discussion Lists for Library Outreach

Subscribe to the following open lists at <http://lists.ala.org/wws>

- Library Literacy (library-lit@ala.org)
- Bookmobiles Subcommittee (bookmobiles@ala.org)
- Aging Subcommittee (aging@ala.org)
- American Indians Subcommittee (amind@ala.org)
- Ethnic Caucuses (ecaucus@ala.org)
- Library Issues of Poor and Homeless People (olospoor@ala.org)
- Library Outreach (outreach@ala.org)

WHAT DOES LITERACY-READY LOOK LIKE @ YOUR LIBRARY?

According to the participants:

1. The library has a literacy program with dedicated staff.
2. The library has facilities to meet the needs of a literacy program.
3. The library has a literacy department.
4. Library staff receives training about adult literacy, adult learners, and library literacy.
5. The library has a book collection for adult learners, tutors, and teachers.
6. The library also has a collection of video and audio instructional and educational materials.
7. The library has resources and educational materials in native languages to support reading and literacy development of ESOL adults and their children.
8. The library has an outreach program that informs adult new and non-readers (and other underserved populations) about the range of library services available at the main and branch libraries.
9. The literacy program has visibility in the community.
10. The library collaborates and networks with other literacy providers and social service agencies in the community.
11. The library is "user-friendly". The library staff is cordial, willing to help, and takes the initiative to provide help and support.
12. The library director supports the literacy program.
13. The literacy program is integrated into the library.
14. The library staff understands and is responsive to the "needs" of adult learners.
15. The library supports the literacy program with funding and fundraising activities.
16. The library has a bookmobile to reach adult learners in rural and remote areas.
17. The library literacy program offers direct small group instruction for adult learners.
18. The literacy program staff is qualified and consistent.
19. The library offers a mentorship program for adult learners.
20. The library receives media support that showcases their literacy services and programs.
21. The library has signage that is appropriate for adult learners and others.
22. The library has developed multiple ways for adult learners to locate the literacy program.
23. The library has the resources and technology to meet the needs of adult learners.
24. The library and the community understand that libraries are not just for readers.
25. The literacy program has an assessment plan that measures learner progress and library usage.
26. The library has adult learners as spokespeople, mentors, tutors, and staff.
27. Literacy students interact regularly with library staff and patrons.
28. The library has greeters at the door!

29. The library finds an alternative to the word literacy!

We assume that schools are literacy-ready. They are prepared to teach children how to read. They have the tools and the teachers. We can also assume that libraries are literacy-ready. Libraries have the books. Libraries also have librarians. But it takes more than a library, a staff of librarians, and a collection of books to move from being literacy-ready to offering programs and services for adult learners.

Source: <http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/libraryoutreach.htm>

Promoting Early Childhood Literacy in Your Community

One of the best ways to promote early childhood literacy in your community is to use your Every Child Ready To Read (ECRR) kit. Each public library system owns at least one kit thanks to a Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) grant. The kit is a toolbox of 12 resources to help librarians train library staff, childcare providers, and parents to help young children become ready to read.

ECRR is a Train-the-Trainer Program designed to help put children ages one to five on the path to reading readiness. If your staff has not attended ECRR workshops, visit the program's official [website](#). There you will find:

- Parent workshop and staff training resources
- Information on how to incorporate research into storytimes
- Sample scripts to use with parents
- Booklists, handouts, free or inexpensive materials
- Brain development and early literacy materials
- Observation checklists
- The resources in Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish
- Help with funding your project
- Community partnership resources
- Product ordering information
- Access to the helpful ECRR [Wiki](#)

Eight Regional Round Tables for ECRR were conducted statewide between October 2007 and April 2008 to follow up on the 2007 workshops offered by the State Library. In addition to the kits, all public library districts and branch libraries received copies of "Early Literacy Storytimes @ your Library: Partnering with Caregivers for Success," from the State Library. The 2008 ECRR follow up also included eight Storytimes Applications Workshops held across the state.

As more and more librarians are trained and more libraries promote ECRR in their communities more Indiana children will be reading ready when they enter school. If you have questions about ECRR, contact Michele Farley (mfarley@library.IN.gov) in the

Professional Development Office at pdo@library.IN.gov; (317) 234-5650; (800) 451-6028; fax – (317) 232-3713.

Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® is a program of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children, divisions of the American Library Association. Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® is a registered trademark and is used with permission.

Delivery of Materials

Homebound Delivery is offered to individuals who for some reason are not able to visit the Library. Additionally, Outreach Services makes regular visits to area facilities. We bring all types of material, selected according to the patron's preferences. If a patron is not sure what s/he wants, we select items for them.

Books By Mail is a program for homebound patrons who require 10 or fewer items per month and prefer this method of delivery.

Library Pick-up is a service offered in conjunction with the Library's Adult Circulation Desk. Patrons may choose to send someone into the Library where their items will be held for them at the Adult Circulation desk.

The Paperback Exchange: maintenance of paperback collections at certain facilities.

Special Services for Special Situations

Visual Impairments:

- Special Collections – large print materials
- Special Tools – and assistive devices
- [Audiobooks](#) on cassette and compact disc
- Downloadable digital and audiobooks and equipment
- Magnification of the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog)
- Assistance with establishing contact with Talking Books, through [Voices of Vision](#)
- [At Large...news for large print readers](#), (<http://www.vovtbc.org/index.html>) published quarterly, is a newsletter specifically for the visually impaired.
- Audio versions of the **Kane County Chronicle** - one week's worth of news is recorded and mailed.
- Audio versions of the Library newsletters **Info to Go** and **At Large...news for large print readers**, as well as the City of St. Charles newsletter, **From the Den**.

Mobility Impairments:

- [Delivery of materials](http://www.st-charles.lib.il.us/outreach/outreach_deliv.htm)(http://www.st-charles.lib.il.us/outreach/outreach_deliv.htm) with a variety of options
- Wheelchair available for use in the Library
- Accessible building with [elevators to all levels](#)

Hearing Impairments:

- TDD line 630-584-0961 for direct communication or message relay
- TDD available to borrow for home use
- Closed captioning on videorecordings, wherever available
- Books for youth in Signed English
- Sign language interpreter for programs, available with advance request
- Use of hearing aid compatible amplification system in the Meeting Room, with advance request

Source: <http://www.st-charles.lib.il.us/outreach/index.htm>

Daycare and the Public Library

Daycare outreach, library fieldtrips, and summer reading programs

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The importance of the public library and your daycare program

Good reading habits start early. Introducing children in daycare to the local public library is important because it supports school readiness and promotes early literacy. While building a reading library is important, it can become rather expensive.

Introducing the children in your day care to the library is an inexpensive way to encourage a love for language and reading. As well it allows children to be exposed to a wide range of library resources such as books, films, magazines, and software.

There are several ways to incorporate the public library into your daycare program:

Daycare outreach and bookmobile visits

Daycare outreach and bookmobile visits support school readiness by bringing library resources and storytime training to child care providers and parents.

Bookmobile visits

How it works:

A bookmobile is a mobile library. Usually it is a large van or bus with bookshelves, computers, and a space for reading or storytelling. A library will send a bookmobile and a children's librarian to the daycare center on a regular basis. The librarian will usually provide story time and introduce the children to literature.

The librarian may also provide songs, flannel board stories, games, and finger plays related to a particular theme. Children can also check out a limited number of books. Contact your local library and ask to speak to the director of children or youth services to find out if they have a bookmobile and to discuss the addition of your daycare to their rotation.

Daycare Outreach

How it works:

Much like bookmobile services, a librarian will visit the daycare and provide resources, storytime and programming. Although a bookmobile is not involved, daycare outreach will also introduce children to literature and to the appropriate behavior and skills necessary for storytime.

Your local public library should have an outreach program that includes daycare outreach by librarians. If this is not available, speak to the library director and make a request. You will find that most libraries are enthusiastic and would love to help/

Library Fieldtrips:

Arrange to take the children in your daycare to the library regularly. Call ahead and ask to arrange for a tour and orientation. As well, arrange for a story time where the librarian can introduce the children to the best and most appropriate literature and resources. Many libraries have a new and exciting theme every month. Children can explore the library, get a library card, and get acquainted with the friendly librarians who are there to help them grow.

Summer Reading Programs

Another way to introduce your children to the library is to register the children in your daycare in your local library's summer reading program. [Research](#) shows that children who participate in summer reading programs (or who read during the summer) perform better in the fall when they return to school.

How it works:

Many public libraries list age appropriate books to read throughout the summer. Children then read a set number of these books and describe the books they have read by writing a summary, completing an easy form, or sharing verbal summaries. Many times prizes and/or certificates are awarded to those who complete the required number of books. You may also choose to imitate a public or school library's summer reading program.

To recap:

The benefits of introducing children in daycare to the library:

- Introduces children to the library and supports its value as a community resource.
- Supports school readiness by improving literacy and listening skills.
- Supports life-long appreciation of literature and reading.
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Source:

http://day-care-activities.suite101.com/article.cfm/daycare_and_the_public_library

Jail Services

Section 52.1 of the American Library Association (ALA) Policy Manual covers Service to Detention Facilities and Jails. It states that: “The American Library Association encourages public libraries and systems to extend their services to residents of jails and other detention facilities within their taxing areas. ALA instructs its Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) in cooperation with the Public Library Association, (PLA) the American Library Trustee Association, (ALTA) and other interested units to design a plan to assist public libraries in extending their services to local jails and detention facilities.”

ASCLA provides publications and an electronic discussion list for ALA members only. **Their Library Service to Prisoners Forum has this charge:**

To raise the consciousness level of people within the library and correctional communities regarding the urgent and particular library and information needs of all prisoners; to encourage and assist librarians to begin, expand, and improve library service to prisoners and correctional staff; to serve as a clearinghouse for information, ideas, materials, programs, and human resources for correctional agencies and organizations; to initiate and support pertinent legislation; and to contribute to and promote the adoption and improvement of standards for correctional library service.

These statements are included to provide public librarians with a basis for providing services specifically for the incarcerated in their communities or counties. The reality is that many former offenders are being released into Indiana communities regularly. When they come into the library and are aware of your services because you have been to the facilities where they were incarcerated they'll be more apt to use their time there safely and wisely. You won't always know who they are when they visit and offenders are visiting libraries daily. Jail populations are more transient by nature than prison populations. However, a well constructed plan of action will allow some if not many offenders to be touched by a library experience. Refer to chapter 1 for information on services to the State Library's institutional libraries.

Outreach to jails and prisons can encompass activities such as:

- Donation and distribution of books
- Reader's advisory and special request services
- Storytelling or book sharing at a facility
- Changing Lives Through Literature Programs
- Interlibrary loans – thereby increasing circulation
- Assistance with GED and re-entry resources
- Visiting to promote the library as a resource when incarceration ends

Check with other Indiana libraries that have successful jail or prison outreach programs to find out how their programs work. Libraries such as Anderson Public Library, Monroe County Public Library, Morrison-Reeves Library, and Putnam County Public Library

have all done successful outreach to this population. Lebanon Public Library's program is tied to a 2006 Library Services and Technology Act Diversity Grant. Do research at the local level for information on jails, work-release, detention centers, etc. For library connection contacts at the state run Department of Correction Facilities, contact Marcia Smith-Woodard at mwoodard@library.in.gov or (800) 451-6028.

For more information on serving the incarcerated population, visit these sites:

ALA's Office for Literacy Outreach Services (OLOS):
www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/libraryoutreach.htm

Webjunction's Survey to Prison Library Staff Assessing Services to Spanish Speakers:
<http://www.webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=17272>

"Public Librarian in Prison," American Library Association, December 04, 2006.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/ascla/asclapubs/interface/archives/contentlistingby/volume26/publiclibrarianinprison/LibrariansinPrison.cfm>

Library Outreach Services to Underserved Populations:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/servicesincarcerated.htm>

A Jail Librarian's Thoughts: <http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/exoff.htm>

Jails Librarian Blog: <http://jailslibrarian.blogspot.com/>

Directory of State Prison Librarians
<http://ce.msde.state.md.us/library/Directory04/dirlistingh08.htm>

New York Public Library, Internet Resources of Use to (Ex-) Inmates
www.nypl.org/branch/services/correctional.html

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm

Additional Information

Shirley, Glennor (2003) Correctional Education, Library Standards, and Diversity. In: Journal of Correctional Education, Special Edition. Diversity Issues in Correctional Education, Vol. 54, Issue 2, pp. 70-74

(Initiated and scripted by) Shirley, Glennor (2002) MSDE Discovering the Internet@your library. Interactive CD-Rom featuring employment, housing, consumer information, library web sites. Contact: Glennor Shirley, Library Coordinator
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