

Fairfax County Public Library

LOB #94:

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ADULTS

Purpose

The Lifelong Learning for Adults LOB demonstrates Fairfax County Public Library's commitment to providing free services, resources and events for adults to meet educational, informational and recreational needs. These services and programs reflect the interests, activities and concerns of FCPL's customers and enhance their daily lives. The mission of this LOB is twofold: 1) to provide trained staff to assist with informational needs of customers on a range of topics, and 2) to provide system opportunities to draw audiences to the Library and provide recreational and educational opportunities.

Description

This LOB is comprised of two discreet programs; Information Services (in-person at library branches) and Program and Educational Services (which includes large scale programs and special events.) These two programs are bundled together based on their adult focus.

1. Information Services. Information Services staff perform varied job duties including: providing technology assistance, language tutorials, readers' advice to assist customers in selecting materials, assistance with public computers, research support, expertise at programs and outreach events, and print and online resources they need for educational, vocational or recreational pursuits. Customers range in age from older teens (after high school age) through seniors, and present with a variety of needs, proficiency levels and skills. Staff must be aware of a multitude of information sources, community resources, and technological advances. In some cases, staff are members of community-focused project task groups.

This program is performed at 22 library branches all hours when the Library is open, including daytime, evening and weekend hours.

The program is performed by library staff and volunteers and has been operational since the founding of the Library in 1939.

2. Programming and Educational Services. The Programming and Educational Services staff coordinate special events for adults as well as provide frequent support and resources for staff members who plan and host events for adults at library branches. Large scale events may include presentations by bestselling authors, book club conferences, political speaker panels, health talks, book festivals and other events that contribute to the quality of life in the County. Support and assistance to branch staff may include help with planning and presenting eBook and technology workshops, presentations by local authors, book clubs, writers' groups, English conversation classes and workshops focusing on consumer, job hunting, and health information. In addition, this program area is where Fairfax County Public Library performs the management of other library programming countywide.

The tasks involved in planning and coordinating events include forming community partnerships, securing presenters and venues, purchasing supplies, assisting with marketing and communicating with customers. Events often take place during evening or weekend hours when more adult customers are available to attend. Events occur in meeting rooms at library branches or larger spaces including auditoriums and theaters at locations such as Fairfax County Government Center, George Mason University, Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) Annandale, the McLean Community Center, Inova Fairfax Hospital and the Reston Community Center.

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Benefits

This LOB allows for free access to information, recreational reading, research sources, programs and expert assistance for pursuing creative, career, and intellectual goals. According to a Pew Research Center study (2013), Americans ages 16 and older believe borrowing books, having reference service, and providing free access to computers are very important services for libraries to provide. As identified in the “Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County,” superior libraries help give Fairfax County the reputation as a place where people want to live, work and play. Libraries provide free opportunities for community engagement that enhance quality of life and helping adults stay intellectually active. Life-long learning and high quality information services keep older adults engaged and knowledgeable about evolving technology, current events and social media.

The Lifelong Learning LOB supports the following Vision Elements: Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities, Building Livable Spaces, Connecting People and Places, Maintaining Healthy Economies, and Creating a Culture of Engagement.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Trends: The County population is increasing in diversity, information technology is rapidly changing and significant parts of the community are “aging in place.” More people stay at home and alone, disconnected from other people except through programming that provides opportunities to engage and stay active. Librarians are acting less like gatekeepers of information and more like facilitators or guides, or even interpreters as research resources become more accessible. As customers embrace e-books and technology, many still find they need assistance with their devices, along with the need to find reliable information. While self-service is a trend across varying outlets, FCPL recognizes there is a need for personal assistance too.

Challenges: The LOB challenges include budget and staffing challenges, changes in the way residents want to access information and changes in the way information is delivered. In order to provide the products and services that customers want, funding is needed for new technologies including 3D printers, editing software, and video conferencing. An additional challenge is the unknowns related to the publishing industry, including what materials are available for libraries to purchase. These changes and developments challenge the notion of what the public library needs to be in the future.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,344,130	\$2,344,059	\$3,744,351
Operating Expenses	175,995	192,390	221,288
Total Expenditures	\$2,520,125	\$2,536,449	\$3,965,639
General Fund Revenue	\$178,650	\$194,620	\$180,378
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$2,341,475	\$2,341,829	\$3,785,261
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	65 / 50	65 / 50	65 / 50
Total Positions	65 / 50	65 / 50	65 / 50

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Adult Program Attendance	33,482	31,818	41,259	43,118	44,400
Percentage of Total Circulation by those 18+	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
Number of Information Questions Addressed	2,286,534	2,185,650	2,108,216	2,110,000	2,105,000
Staff Expenditures Associated with Providing Information Technology Assistance to Customers	\$455,162	\$532,136	\$527,389	\$524,775	\$524,000

The library provides a variety of programming for different audiences. Lifelong Learning has been one of the library's long-term goals for several years as well as a key strategic initiative. In FY 2015 more than 41,000 adults attended library programs (not including the popular author events hosted by the library's Center for the Book). Lifelong Learning for Adults is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge either for personal or professional reasons. It not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability. Nearly three out of every four residents in Fairfax County is an adult. In 2013, 60 percent of residents ages 25 and older were college graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher education. By providing a variety of program offerings for adults such as book discussion clubs, writer's workshops, technology and research instruction, and English conversation classes, to name a few, the library is able to help keep residents of Fairfax County challenged and engaged. The volume of attendance at adult library programs is expected to increase over the next several years.

In FY 2015 78 percent of the library's circulation was completed by adult customers age 18 and older, consisting of nearly 9.5 million items. The percentage of the library's collection that is checked out by adults has remained constant since FY 2013 and is expected to remain so over the next several years.

Library staff address information questions asked by library users on a daily basis. The library's information and reference desks are intended to provide customers with an easy and obvious way to interact with staff in order to receive answers to their many questions. In FY 2015 it is estimated that library staff addressed more than 2 million information questions asked by customers. Since the advent of the Internet, the volume of these questions has decreased while their complexity has increased. Customers no longer rely as heavily on staff to provide information they now find readily available themselves online. Consequently, the information questions staff address tend to be more complex and more detailed, requiring more staff time to answer on average than ever before. Complicating this basic library service are two factors that are only going to increase in coming years; constantly changing technology and the diversity of County residents. Advances in technology have demanded that library staff not only be experts at finding information, but also at accessing that information through an ever expanding array of electronic devices, as well as being able to sift through the avalanche of data retrieved by these devices. In an increasingly diverse Fairfax County, library staff navigate language and cultural hurdles that provide barriers to service. More than 170 different languages are spoken in the homes of FCPS children complicating library staff attempts to assist with homework help and answering basic information questions. The library expects the volume of information questions addressed by staff to continue to decrease over the next several years, a trend that is reflected nationally.

Technology is one of the library's cornerstones of service. It is pervasive, whether troubleshooting one of the library's public Personal Computers (PCs) or helping customers navigate personal handheld devices, technology is everywhere in the library. Technology has changed and is continuing to change the way the library does business. Library staff expenditures associated with providing information technology assistance to customers in FY 2015 amounted to more than \$500,000, or about 3 percent of the library's total personnel expenditures. As technology continues to evolve and become more prevalent, it is expected that these expenditures will remain high over the next several years.