

Strategic Redirection Effort – 2013

Most library systems across our nation are consistently tasked with reviewing services, staffing and resources to ensure that they are meeting the changing needs of their customers. Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) is no different. Our most recent review of services coupled with a climate of budget constraints necessitates creative approaches that will fortify our presence in the community and our relevance in the hearts and minds of Fairfax residents. The vision set forth in the Strategic Plan and outlined within the Workforce Plan intends to address those needs while allowing FCPL to meet its financial obligations. The vision captured within the Strategic Plan and the resulting initiatives are based on a study by consultant Eleanor Jo Rodger; professional literature; discussions with other library systems; consultation with county professionals; and feedback from library users as well as staff surveys and discussions. The initiatives include:

System and Technology

Floating, Comprise, and Holds Label Solution offer opportunities to streamline and standardize processes within the branches and give customers additional self-service options. In May 2013, FCPL began **floating** (materials remain where they are returned) its collection. Floating reduces the amount of materials in transit and delivery-related workloads while increasing the availability and variety of items on the shelves. The upcoming implementation of **Comprise** -- a revenue and print management software package -- will allow self-service options for payment of fines, fees and book sale items, as well as printing and copying needs. Complete implementation is expected in 2014. The **Holds Label Solution** will streamline the steps necessary to process a customer hold and will reduce staff time and supply costs. The "sticky" removable label is placed on the book as it is pulled from the shelf and remains with the book until the customer retrieves it at the destination branch.

Single-Service Desk

The Single-Service Desk was a suggestion brought forth at the request of the staff at Burke Centre Library (BC) with the intention of enhancing the user's experience and making the library a community destination. Based on customer requests as well as staff preferences, a team charter was written and in fall 2012 Burke Centre became the library's test site for combining information and circulation services at a single desk. While experiencing the expected growing pains of a changing customer service model, the adaptability and early success of the BC staff made the single-service desk a viable system initiative that would certainly enhance delivery of services. A single desk with cross-trained staff can serve customers with fewer staff and create an opportunity for significant budget savings during a time of continued budget restraints. Expanding on the single-service desk model, support tasks such as delivery, supplies, pick lists, and phones would be the responsibility of the workroom staff (see page 2) enabling the majority of branch staff availability to consistently focus on and support library users at their point of need within the branch.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library



Workroom

FCPL has and will always be focused on the needs of our customers. Throughout our great history, we have continued to evolve to meet the changing needs of the library user and keep pace with technology. Focusing a portion of the staff on workroom tasks such as delivery, supplies, pick lists, and phones will allow remaining staff to assist customers more efficiently at the single service desk and out in the stacks.

Programming

The changes to programming staff within the branch represent an effort to increase the number of programs offered inside the library and in the community. Additional programs and outreach visits will strengthen the library's link to education, fortify our partnership in education and solidify our role in the community by cultivating additional partnerships. Increased programming will build customer loyalty and visibility which helps to attract new users and assists in reaching non-users and the underserved. Currently, there is disparity in programming and outreach between branches. This model will provide more consistency across the library system while using fewer programming staff who will now be able to focus on planning and presenting programs for all age groups with limited responsibility at the customer service desk. Programmers will have the flexibility to tailor and schedule programming activities to meet the demands of their particular community and ensure programs are available in all service areas.

Library Customer Services Specialist Class Series (LCSS)

The LCSS class series supports the Single-Service Desk model by allowing for a cross-trained staff that can assist library users with information and circulation inquiries. Customers will likely not notice -- except as an enhancement to their visit -- and will continue to have access to staff who can respond to complex reference and/or specialized readers' advisory inquiries. As mentioned above, support duties will be assigned to the workroom staff. With a self-checkout rate nearing 80%, it is apparent that customers use the self-service options offered and adapt quickly to technology enhancements. Library users not comfortable with self-service options will always have staff available to assist them.

It has been said that the LCSS class series represents the "dumbing down" of our library system and removes all librarians from the system. While the Masters in Library Science (MLS) degree would no longer be a minimum qualification, for a number of positions within the LCSS series the MLS degree would be preferred. Removing the MLS requirement from some positions allows FCPL to expand the opportunities for current library staff as well as broaden the pool of expertise with new staff with degrees in education, business, languages, communication, technology, etc.

The Future of FCPL

In our rich 75 year history, FCPL has become a trusted and valued asset within the communities of Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax. Library users and non-users enjoy the traditions we represent and all residents can benefit from the growing number of services we offer. From the turning of a page to the swipe of an eReader, from homework help to computer help and children's programs to chess clubs, we have built a cherished organization. These strategic initiatives are intended to offer pro-active solutions that will serve to strengthen our presence in the community and fortify the library tradition for future generations.