ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGY 2022

Navigating innovations in service and success

Anne Arundel County
Public Library
Educate. Enrich. *Inspire*

MARGARET SULLIVAN STUDIO

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Introduction

For almost 100 years, the Anne Arundel County Public Library, a system of community branch libraries, has been a much-loved part of our area. To fulfill the Library's purpose at the start of its second century of service, the Board of Trustees committed to a thorough and thoughtful study of the Library's role in the health and growth of Anne Arundel County. This knowledge informed the development of the vision and strategies to address our community's needs while meeting the public's expectations for library services.

The resulting Strategy 2022 will serve as a roadmap to respond to the evolving ways users depend upon their Library in the 21st century.

Strategy 2022 will guide planning and providing resources for innovative library services while preserving the core hallmarks upon which our county relies.

Strategy 2022 defines the Library's values, vision, purpose, and goals for the next four years. It will enable library planning and resource allocation so that the needs of the county are met through effective and efficient library services.

The Process and Components

The Process

Strategy 2022 is the result of a five-month process to develop a thorough understanding of Anne Arundel County, its people, places, and challenges, and the Library's role in serving that broad community.

In May 2018, the Library engaged Margaret Sullivan Studio for consultant services and support in developing this strategy. Three distinct advisory groups were formed. These included:

*   The *Steering Committee,* comprised of Board of Trustees leadership, provided important insight into the governing body's goals and served in an advisory capacity.

*   The *Strategic Thinking Group*, made up of senior library staff, performed much of the background research and crafted initial concepts for exploration.

*   The *Staff Working Group*, comprised of front line staff, headquarters staff, and branch managers, conducted critical customer interviews, met several times to discuss ideas and analyze information, and provided real-time perspective.

THE PROCESS
The strategy development process involved four distinct but inter-related and iterative phases.

Phase I: Information Gathering, Planning, and Outreach
The Library explored the needs and stories of customers to develop a strong understanding of community needs and expectations. This work included:

*   In-depth review of community demographics developed as part of the December 2017 Facilities Master Plan Study[1]

*   Extensive examination of the results and implications of the November 2017 library user and non-user surveys conducted by the Anne Arundel Community College Center for the Study of Local Issues[2]

*   Relevant professional readings and research; in particular, the Aspen Institute's October 2014 report, Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries[3] , which provides a nation-wide strategic context for the role of the modern public library

*   Library staff values and internal program surveys

*   Review of the success and shortcomings of the most recent strategic plan

*   Community leadership forums

*   One-on-one interviews with customers, using directed storytelling, journey mapping, and personal ecosystem mapping

*   Observations of customers using the Library

*   Strategy Development Workshops with senior Library leadership and staff at all levels and from all locations

Phase II: Developing Strategic Priorities

In this phase, the Library evaluated the studies in Phase I to identify the critical areas of need and to develop priorities to meet those needs. This work involved extensive, iterative consensus-building with all stakeholders to articulate the Library's values, vision, and purpose to align the Library's work to meet those priorities. In developing these priorities, the process focused on three key questions:

1. ***Who do we serve?*** – The Library developed a clear picture of the wide range of people who make up Anne Arundel County. The research revealed a vast span of economic situations and needs in the county, many of which lie unseen and under-appreciated. See Appendix for details on this study.

2. ***Why do we do what we do?*** – The research highlighted the Library's work in fulfilling needs in the community, spanning the urgent and life-changing to the purely entertaining and enriching. Simply put, it all comes down to people – the Library exists to serve their customers' needs whether simple or complex

through education, enrichment and inspiration. See Appendix for details on this study.

3. ***What is our role in the community?*** – The Library is one of many agencies working to improve the quality of life in the county. The Library's traditional role in literacy development was underscored during the strategy development process but newer, innovative roles were also identified. These areas of possible influence included the Library's contributions in developing the educational, economic, and civic health of the community. See Appendix for details on these roles.

Phase III: Developing Strategic Goals

The Library developed strategic goals to meet the needs identified in Phase II and the Strategic Thinking Group engaged key stakeholder groups in an iterative prototyping exercise to develop the five strategic goals identified in this document (see "Our Goals").

Phase IV: Creating the Strategy
During this phase, the Library, working with Margaret
Sullivan Studio, developed this document and the
associated implementation toolkit.

Components

Our Strategy features four major components:

1. **Our Values** – *"What We Believe"* – form the foundation on which we work for the community and conduct ourselves. The values underpin our work, how interact with each other, and which tactics we use to fulfill our purpose. They are the practices we use every day in everything we do.

2. **Our Purpose** – *"Why We Exist"* – defines the Library's "mission" – our role in the life of our community.

3. **Our Vision** – *"How We See the Future"* – describes the outcome of our work in the community. It articulates the desired future for our community as a result of our efforts.

4. **Our Goals** – *"Where We Will Focus"* – spell out the specific goals for this strategy. These are the areas where we will concentrate resources to ensure the best outcome for our community.

Library leadership and staff at all levels take these four components together to develop operational (quarterly to yearly) and tactical (monthly to day-to-day) plans to meet community needs and expectations. These plans are informed by, and take their direction from, this strategy forming the basis for long-term resource requests and allocations.

Strategic Environment

Overview of the Library

Anne Arundel County[4] , Maryland, is a jurisdiction of approximately 573,235 residents.[5]   It stretches across 588 square miles and is part of the larger the Baltimore-Washington, DC metropolitan area. The county also boasts a diverse population. Its dynamic economic, historical, and social setting includes urban, suburban, rural, maritime, and recreational features as well as the state capital, Fort Meade, the U.S. Naval Academy, and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI).

The Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) responds to this highly diversified environment with an array of sixteen community libraries. These branches are organized into three regions; there is no central library. Administrative offices are in a separate building. The operating budget for FY-2019 is $26.2 million, with a materials budget of $4.0 million. In FY-2018, the Library circulated 5.1 million items and was visited 2.0 million times.

An independent philanthropic arm, the AACPL Foundation, was chartered in 2006. Through its work in engaging the community, the Foundation builds relationships that bring public advocacy along with financial and other support from individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations to enhance the Library's strategic goals.

The Library's physical plant consists of 267,037 square feet in 16 buildings constructed between 1965 and 2004. Two branches have been scheduled and funded for replacement. In 2018, the existing Annapolis Library was demolished and construction began on a 32,500 square feet replacement. In 2019, the 10,500 square feet Riviera Beach Library built in 1971, will be demolished and construction will begin on a 20,000 square feet replacement. The Mountain Road Library has operated in a leased, 8,900 square feet storefront since 1994. The newest branch, Discoveries, opened in 2018 in a 3,100 square-foot storefront in the Westfield Annapolis Mall.

The Library's Strategic Environment

The strategic development process validated a singular, overarching theme that has been at the core of contemporary professional library literature: libraries in general – and AACPL in particular – need to meet new expectations for service in the 21st Century.

Traditionally, library services have been valued on outputs or transactions, such as the number of items circulated, the number of questions answered, and the number of books on the shelf. However, modern libraries are valued in terms of the impact the library has in the lives of people. The modern library achieves transformative outcomes – learning experiences – in its customers and with its partners, such as improvements in skills, knowledge gained, changes in status (employment, educational achievement), or change in life conditions (better health, quality of life). Accordingly, the Library plays a key role in the educational, economic, and civic health of the community.

Our work:

- **Supports parents in preparing their children for school;**

- **Enriches the primary and secondary education experience for all students through enhanced resources and non-curricular educational programs;**

- **Positions young adults for success entering the workforce or higher education through preparatory programs and resources;**

- **Helps adults maintain and enhance workforce skills at every stage of their careers and aspirations;**

- **Provides a source of high-quality entertainment and enjoyment for all ages through books, CDs, DVDs and other materials; and**

- **Enriches the lives of all through health, educational, civic, and social engagement programs provided by both library staff and partner agencies.**

In order to meet these new expectations for memorable, high-quality customer learning experiences, library services should strive to provide experiences focused on:

PEOPLE – The public library is a hub of civic engagement, fostering new relationships, and strengthening the human capital of the community. Library staff are actively engaged in shaping their community. They connect individuals to a vast array of local and national resources and serve as neutral conveners to foster civic health. They facilitate learning and creativity for children and adults alike.

PLACE – The public library is a welcoming space for a wide range of purposes: reading, communicating, learning, playing, meeting, and getting business done. Its design recognizes that people are not merely consumers of content but creators as well. Its physical presence provides an anchor for economic development and neighborhood revitalization, and helps to strengthen social bonds and community identity. The library is also a virtual space where individuals can gain access to information, resources and all the rich experiences offered.

PLATFORM – The public library is user-centered in both physical and virtual locations. The library enables the curation and sharing of the community's knowledge and innovation. A great library platform is a "third place" – an interactive entity that can facilitate operating individually as well as in groups – and supports the learning and civic needs of the community.

Taken together, these three elements – people, place, and platform – call for innovations in library services, spaces, and staffing. Therefore, the Library's Strategy seeks to realign its strengths and resources to meet current and emerging community needs through both traditional and innovative services provided by an agile, entrepreneurial staff. This alignment realizes the Library's core, distinctive skill: *we bring the immense, overwhelming world of information down to human scale, enabling all the opportunity to change their lives for the better.*

Our Values

Commitment
We work with passion and resilience, dedicated to our personal best.

Compassion
We are empathetic, patient, and kind.

Diversity
We celebrate the variety of backgrounds and experiences in our community and staff, treating everyone with respect.

Empowerment
We foster a community of learning and growth for people of all ages.

Informed Decision-making
We listen and are responsive to our community and staff.

Innovation
We encourage creativity, exploration, and a sense of adventure.

Integrity
We are honest, transparent, and accountable.

Teamwork
We work together in a spirit of cooperation.

Our Purpose

"To educate, enrich, and inspire."

The planning process reaffirmed the Library's mission statement that was adopted in 2015.

Our purpose rests on three pillars:

1. **To Educate – the Library provides information resources and programs to support learning in all phases of life, in both traditional, curriculum-based settings, as well as in nontraditional, innovative, and experiential venues.**

2. **To Enrich – the Library brings literature and information in written, verbal, and visual forms to all, for personal growth and enjoyment as well as to deepen understanding and awareness of personal, civic, and economic issues.**

3. **To Inspire – the Library helps people realize their dreams, imagine possibilities beyond the everyday, and develop a path to self-improvement and fulfillment.**

Our Vision

"A welcoming, resilient community where all can realize life to its fullest potential."

Our vision describes the desired outcome of the Library's work in the county. It defines the future aspirations for our community as a result of our efforts.

This vision recognizes the great disparity of needs in our county. Anne Arundel is rich in economic resources, but even here, poverty amidst plenty exists. The Library plays an important role as the "Great Equalizer," providing access to resources to enable every county resident the opportunity to achieve and enjoy a fulfilling life.

Our Goals

Our goals reflect community priorities identified in the strategic development process. They are broadly defined to allow senior library leadership and individual branch managers the latitude to develop locally tailored programs and services to meet each community's diverse needs.

Our Goals

BETTER COLLECTIONS, BETTER ACCESS

THRIVING MINDS

TAILORED SERVICES

ENTREPRENEURIAL STAFF

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Our Goals

GOAL 1: BETTER COLLECTIONS, BETTER ACCESS

What this means:

- We provide materials in a variety of formats.
- We ensure Library collections are responsive to community interests and needs.
- We strive to eliminate all barriers to use, whether they be policy-, technical-, or ability-based.
- We connect Library collections to everything we do: all our other services and programs naturally lead to increased readership.

Potential outcomes from meeting this goal:

- Improved educational results and economic outlooks for individuals
- Engaged, informed and satisfied residents
- Increased customer satisfaction and increased use of library resources

GOAL 2: THRIVING MINDS

What this means:

- We develop engaging and diverse programming to young learners – Every Child Ready to Read, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten - to build on the success of the previous strategic plan.

- We provide welcoming spaces and appealing programs for teens to prepare them for college or career as well as provide a safe place.

- We provide services and programs to enable adults to enjoy life fully and continue to contribute to the health of the community.

Potential outcomes from this goal:

- Increased kindergarten readiness

- Increased High school graduation and college acceptance rates

- Agile, future-ready workforce

- An eager and available pool of mature, experienced adults who continue contributing to the community in retirement
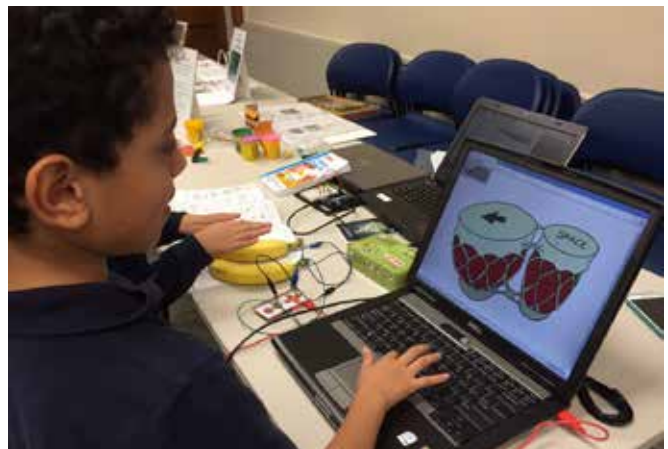
GOAL 3: TAILORED SERVICES

What this means:

- We highlight community library services, including options to build specialized information collections on-site, in coordination with virtual holdings for the entire county.

- We provide the same core services through every branch and platform and allow flexibility for branch staff to adjust for local needs.

- We recognize and celebrate the diversity of community residents and their needs by providing access to a variety of high quality services and programs.

- We design all aspects of our services – how customers access our resources, material format, language, and program delivery – to meet needs at the local and individual scale.

Potential outcomes from this goal:

- Neighborhood residents tightly identify with and are connected to their branch

- Equitable access to services regardless of where a person lives

- Enhanced partnership opportunities and packages of services with local organizations and governmental agencies

GOAL 4: ENTREPRENEURIAL STAFF

What this means:

- We empower all staff, at all levels and at every position, to innovate and experiment.

- We are creative in developing initiatives and programs to meet local needs, while remaining true to library-wide goals and coordination with the Board of Trustees.

- We are dedicated to professional, organizational, and individual development.

Potential outcomes from this goal:

- A dedicated, engaged, and creative staff

- Already excellent customer service is taken to the next level

- Positioning the Library as an innovator

GOAL 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

What this means:

- We "connect it all," leveraging past success in building relationships with community partners, recognizing that needed services and programs are already provided by a variety of agencies and organizations and that the Library is best positioned to make these vital connections.

- We harmonize our services and programs with those of our partners to minimize duplications and take advantage of supporting opportunities.

- We use partnerships to their best effects, leveraging resources and talents to maximize the impact of the Library's assets and our partners' outcomes.

Potential outcomes from this goal:

- Reach and effectiveness of our partners is increased

- Resource "deserts" are eliminated.

- Positioning the library as a connector and vital community partner

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments

This document would not have been possible without the contribution of the Board of Trustees, Anne Arundel Public Library staff members, and dedicated community members who engaged in interviews and workshop sessions to articulate the Strategic Goals of the Anne Arundel County Public Library system.

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Mizetta Wilson, Community of
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Roxana, Caliente Grill

Appendix

Appendix

"Using Customer and Community Intelligence to Shape the Strategic Plan" - This report was created by Danielle Milam for Anne Arundel County Public Library Steering Committee

Reference Data - used to inform Strategy 2022

a. User and Non-user Surveys

b. Directed Storytelling Interviews

c. Organizational Brief Results

d. ESRI Tapestry

e. Branch Manager Questionnaires

Workshop Materials Generated

a. My AACPL Zine

b. Persona Zines

Bibliography

Customer Intelligence Report

Using Customer
and Community
Intelligence
to Shape the
Strategic Plan

This report was created by Danielle Milam for Anne Arundel County Public Library Steering Committee. The full report can be found here.
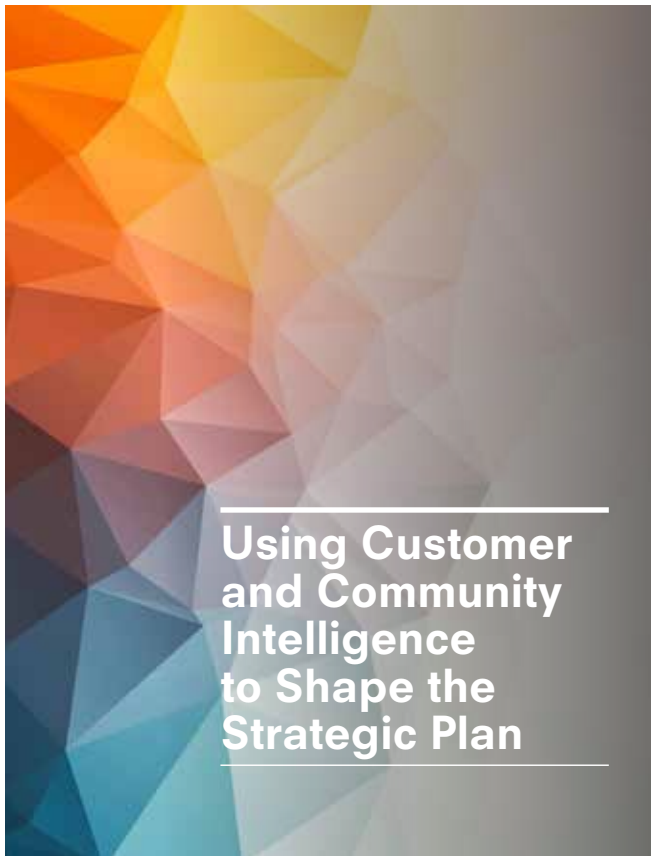
Reference Data

Reference Data - used to inform Strategy 2022

a. User and Non-user Surveys

b. Directed Storytelling Interviews

c. Organizational Brief Results

d. ESRI Tapestry Segments Presentation

e. Branch Manager Questionnaires

FACILITIES: BROOKLYN PARK COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Building recommendations per 2017 Library Master Plan

- Comprehensive Assessment score – 65 (**Poor**)
- Currently **0.95** sf/capita
- Age of existing facility is **46** years.
- Serves an isolated section of the County (cut off by major highways and County border).

ACTION: This branch has excess capacity for its growing service population. Consider renovation to incorporate specialized services to match community needs. New "Route 9 Library & Innovation Center" in New Castle County, Delaware may be a model worth considering. A request for funds for a moderate renovation of this building should be considered.

BRANCH CHALLENGES: BROOKLYN PARK COMMUNITY LIBRARY

SAVANNAH – UTILIZATION

- Computer use (100 occ)
- Some children (20 bedtime, 20 occ)
- Download (25 digit)
- Adult (20 bedtime)

STAFF SURVEY

- Poverty
- Digital divide
- Crime addition
- Lack of opportunity
- Homelessness
- No public transportation to this branch
- Lack of internet access
- Youth are stressed

AACPL

Organization Brief Data & Directed Storytelling Results

Questionnaire
For the Branch Library

Our Branch is:
Annapolis Regional Library

Tell us about your branch!
Diverse community (wide socio-economic spectrum)
Community loves their library
Serving the State's Capital
ILL Operations
Funding Info Network Site
Gold Star Collection
Dedicated Staff
Rock Star programmers!
Regional Library

Q1 Identify your branch's top customer types based on data from Orange Boy. Think about your customers that fit these profiles. Tell us about them! What are their aspirations, passions and challenges?

Q2 What are your customers' favorite things about their library and the neighborhood?

Q3 Describe the characteristics of the neighborhood/ community you serve. What makes it unique and distinctive?

Q4 What are the greatest needs you see in the community?
Early Literacy
Computer Access
Employment Resources
Information Literacy (Identify fake news, locating resources)
English as a Second Language
Meeting Room Space
Grant Research

*Please feel free to continue any answers on the back of this sheet.   Page 1

Zines

A one-page, foldable, pocket-sized zine was created for Workshop #3 as a summary of the Strategy for leadership and staff; the full size document can be found here.

Panel 6 (inverted)

THESE ARE OUR GIFTS!

EDUCATE! ENRICH! INSPIRE!

HOW WILL WE FOSTER THE AACPL EXPERIENCE?

HOW WILL WE EXPRESS OUR VALUES?

HOW WILL WE SHOW UP FOR THEM?

Panel 5 (inverted)

HOW WILL WE ELEVATE THEIR EXPERIENCE?

WHAT WILL WE CONNECT THEM TO?

WHAT ARE OUR COOL IDEAS FOR THEM?!

Panel 4 (inverted)

▲ COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER REPORT

▲ COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS

OPIOID CRISIS

WHAT ARE LOCAL AND REGIONAL "PATTERNS" OF NEEDS THAT SUPPORT THIS?

Panel 3 (inverted)

NEEDS MOTIVATIONS

Panel 7 (purple)

HOW WILL WE NURTURE OUR GROWTH?

WE WILL :

TALK TO OUR CUSTOMERS

DO CASE STUDIES

STAY UP TO DATE ON TRENDS

GO ON "SERVICE SAFARIES"

TALK TO OUR PARTNERS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY

MODEL 21st CENTURY SKILLS

CONTINUE OUR LEARNING!

Panel (center)

EVERY CITIZEN HAS A STORY!

MY

AACPL

ZINE!

EVERY STAFF MEMEBER HAS A GIFT!

Panel 1

"WHO ARE WE DOING THIS FOR AND WHY?"

• THEIR NEEDS
• THEIR ASPIRATIONS
• THEIR MOTIVATIONS
• THEIR LEARNING STYLES

WHO THEY WANT TO BE!

DIRECTED STORYTELLING

OBSERVATIONS & CONVERSATIONS

ALL THAT DATA & LIBRARY DATA

Panel 2

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY THAT THEY BELONG TO?

COMMUNITY BRANCH QUESTIONNAIRES

ESRI TAPESTRY
[WWW.ESRI.COM]

Zines

A one-page, foldable, pocket-sized customer persona was created for Workshop #4. Six persona zines were generated and can be viewed here.

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LOCAL AND REGIONAL "PATTERNS" OF NEEDS THAT COULD SUPPORT ARMANDO:

- Need for Post Job Search Support
- Need for Adult Education Success
- Need For Access To Resource
- Need for Educational Support

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THE CRITICAL NEEDS & MOTIVATIONS THAT THE LIBRARY CAN SUPPORT FOR THIS INDIVIDUAL:

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS:
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Post-education Opportunity

MOTIVATIONS:
- An Accepting and Understanding Community Financial Literacy
-

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ABOUT ARMANDO'S COMMUNITY:

GLEN-BURNIE

About The Branch:
- Convenient
- Working middle class
- Serves the largest population in Anne Arundel
- Many individuals in crisis on a daily basis

For Armando, we need to be:
- Welcoming
- Understanding
- Systematic

Potential Partnerships:
- Hispanic Immigrant Community
- Community Colleges

ESRI TAPESTRIES:
- Ⓒ City Commons
- Ⓒ Park & Recreation
- Ⓒ Hardscrabble Road

We need to have:
- Classrooms
- Multimedia rooms
- Computers
- ESL teachers

(Page 3)

"WHO ARE WE DOING THIS FOR AND WHY?"

Armando!

He is:
- An carpenter
- An immigrant from Nicaragua
- Passionate about learning
- Committed

He aspires to:
- Learn English
- Adapt himself to a foreign culture
- Support his family
- Build a house for his family

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COOL IDEAS FOR ARMANDO

- ESL Classes
- Up-To-Date ESL Books and Audio Materials
- Financial Advisement
- Daycare Programs

A Zine About

Armando

Armando's Story

Armando is a Spanish-speaking immigrant from Nicaragua learning English while working full-time as a carpenter. Everyday, Armando faces challenges of handling a foreign environment. Armando lives with his brother, sister-in-law and their 3 kids. He is saving money to build a house for his family. Armando's brother told him that the library could help him learn English for free, and he can't believe it! He is excited but nervous to go visit for the first time. He takes the bus to the library and to search for some books and audios to learn English, and soon realizes he needs help. At first he is afraid to ask

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because he has a hard time explaining what he needs. Luckily, he finds a staff member who speaks Spanish and he is so grateful! He never expected to find someone who could help him in his own language. Armando goes to check out the materials they found, but they told him he needs a library card. He is so confused and sad because he doesn't have what he needs to get a card. A couple days later, Armando returns to the library gets a card, and checks out his materials! He is grateful, happy, and feels fulfilled! He also learns about the free ESL class and can't wait to come back often!

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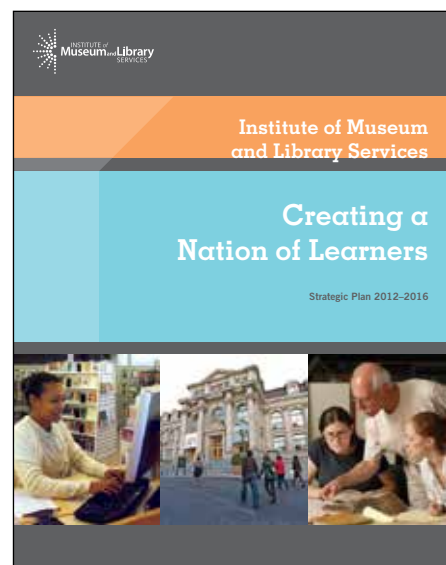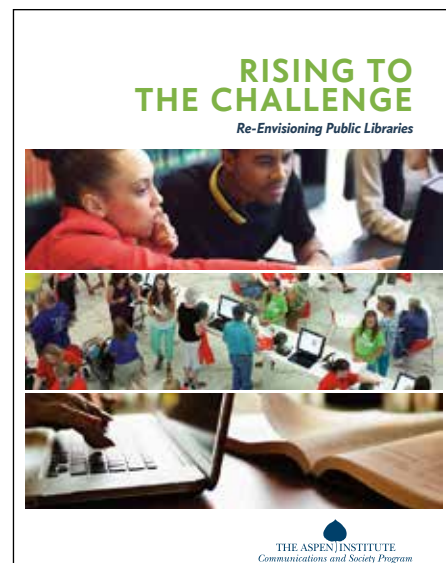
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Endnotes

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