

CROWN POINT COMMUNITY LIBRARY

# LONG RANGE PLAN

FY2023-2026

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Crown Point Community Library was established in 1908. In its 115 years of operation, it has served the community by providing the resources and services for the people it served. Many years after the building of that first Carnegie library, it continues to meet the changing needs of the community as it grows and evolves. New Library locations both in Crown Point, 2012, and in Winfield, 2016, were created to encourage collaborative engagement for study, social, or cultural events. There are community spaces designed for studying and rooms that can accommodate meetings and large events. As a result of these new spaces, a dramatic increase in programming has occurred. Post pandemic, programming has continued to grow, and the Library's activities draws attendance from our community and beyond. Children's programming has always been well supported by our community, but with the additional space and increase in adult programming, the community has embraced adult programming too. The library has truly become a valued "3rd Place" in the community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Crown Point Community Library is a community center for lifelong discovery.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The Crown Point Community Library provides a community center for information and discovery through innovative programming, diverse collections, and responsive services in a safe and comfortable environment. The Library is a gathering place to read, discover, and connect. The Library is an integral component in creating a strong community.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Access** The Library believes in the freedom to read, to learn, and to discover.

**Collaboration** The Library develops and nurtures partnerships to help build a better community.

**Promote Literacy** The Library recognizes the importance of reading as a critical tool for successful lives of individuals of all ages.

**Responsive** The Library listens and responds to the needs of the community it serves.

**Service Excellence** The Library staff offers quality service to all individuals that is helpful, courteous, respectful, and values diversity.

**Innovation and Learning** The Library values continuous learning and invests in staff development and technology to meet current community needs and anticipate future needs.

## OUR COMMUNITY

The Crown Point Community Library is an independent library district in Lake County, located in Northwest Indiana. The Library has two locations; the main library is in Crown Point with a smaller branch located in Winfield. The library district includes Center and Winfield Townships. According to the 2020 census, the library serves a population of 51,557. Crown Point, in Center Township, has added 9,747 new residents since 2010, a 23% increase. Crown Point is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in Lake County. This increase places it at the top of all communities in Lake County, IN, for population growth. In 2021 the town of Winfield, located in Winfield Township, was identified as

one of the top ten fastest growing towns in the state of Indiana based on percentage of increase.

The Library's service area is identical to the Crown Point Community School Corporation's district area, and as a result the Library and the school corporation partner on educational projects and literacy outreach. According to Indiana Department of Education, the community's 2020/2021 high school graduation rate was at 98.4%, higher than the graduation rate for Lake County of 85%. Graduation rates have greatly improved in recent years in Indiana. In 2012/2013 Indiana was ranked 29<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states and the District of Columbia with an 81% graduation rate. This historic improvement, however, does not take into consideration the older individuals that did not graduate high school. It is not uncommon for the Library's literacy center to have students in their 40s and 50s enrolled in the High School Equivalency (HSE) program.

According to the United States Census Bureau's American Fact Finder, Winfield Township has 4.0% of the township population living below the poverty line. Center Township has 5.7% of its population living below the poverty line. In addition, the median household income is \$93,927 for Center Township and \$119,837 for Winfield Township. Data collection for the library's service area is complicated to gather because it serves two townships and does not include the entire county. It is also an area that is growing each year, and as a result, the data is always changing drastically. Geographically, the Library serves a community larger than its service area by providing an attractive reciprocal membership and providing the same benefits as resident membership. As a result, many users outside the community use the Library as a resource.

The community is expanding and changing in its demographics and becoming more diverse. As a result, the Library has seen an increase in requests for English Language Learning from immigrants. After collecting and evaluating data on the Library's service area several needs have become more evident. Historically, Crown Point has been considered a community untouched by poverty or struggle, but the reality is evident that the community is changing. There are 19.4% of students identified as economically

disadvantaged in the Library's service area. Due to the misconception, those at-risk individuals in the community lack access to resources needed to make a difference in their lives. The Library's service area includes residents that struggle with employment and poverty due to a low educational achievement due to of a lack of a high school diploma or inadequate ability of English-speaking skills. These residents may feel isolated from the majority of the community. The Library's direct involvement in providing a stable, public place for adult literacy and job training resulted in the need to provide more materials and services for the adult literacy learners in both the HSE and ESL programs offered at the Library. The addition of the Crown Point Adult Learning Center brings community members to the Library that may not have utilized the Library as a personal resource in the past.

## **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND GOALS**

Information gathered in previous surveys from patrons and community members regarding strengths and weaknesses of the Library's services and resources and desired improvements. Overall the users of the Library are very satisfied with the services and materials provided by the Library. A comprehensive survey will be conducted in 2024.

### **A summary of community needs and goals**

#### **The positive feedback of the community included the following:**

- Friendly and knowledgeable staff
- Great spaces available for community use and personal use
- Wonderful programming for all ages
- Library's community outreach events
- Wide selection of materials

#### **Services/Materials Requested:**

- Increase readers' advisory services

- Increase digital offerings
- More genre book clubs
- Materials offered in other languages for all ages
- Increase in adult programming-movies, author events, discussion groups
- Increase arts programs for all ages
- Increase in story times
- Increase audio picture books collection
- Increase open hours (Sundays at CP, Mondays at WL)
- Increase in school-aged and teen programming
- Increase tech programming
- Improve signage and organization of materials
- Improve parking at Crown Point location
- Offer job readiness programming and resume help
- Improve promotion of programs/events outside the Library

Many of the requests for services/materials improvement were met that were requested in the last long range report. Including:

- Increase readers' advisory services with addition of database Novelist and increased production of reader advisory bookmarks
- Increase digital offerings when the Library joined the Indiana Digital Library consortium and increased digital materials budget.
- Added an additional genre book clubs with non-fiction and popular true crime book club offerings
- Increased materials offered in other languages for children, including bilingual audio enabled books
- Increase in programming offerings for all ages with attention paid to groups that were under represented in past programming
- Increased access hours by restoring Monday hours at Winfield Branch and Sundays at Crown Point location.

- Improved promotion of library activities with partnerships with City of Crown Point PACE Department
- Improved Crown Point location parking with parking expansion projects

## **ASSESSMENT**

- **Facilities**

The Library is located in Lake County, Indiana and has two locations. The main location of the Crown Point Community Library, located in downtown Crown Point, was built in 2012 and has 47,000 square feet. The Winfield Branch Library, located in the Town of Winfield, was moved into a newly renovated 5,800 square foot space in 2016. A 2020 Bond refinancing provided funds for capital improvements at both locations. The Crown Point location has had major maintenance and cosmetic refreshment during 2020-2022 after 10 years of heavy use in this new location. Winfield also had a refresh project that aimed at adding desired features that were missed in the first renovation project including expanded shelving, expanded play area, and the addition of a study room. The branch renovation project also provided an opportunity to match the aesthetics of the main location to help establish a system-wide visual brand. In 2020, the Library has added the position of Head of Operations that helped to establish a preliminary short-term and long-term building maintenance schedule. Investment in of the major systems, including lighting and automation, has taken place in the past few years.

- **Services**

The Library offers high quality services, programming, and resources, and provides a high return on taxpayer's investments. New library services/programming introduced includes:

- Continued expansion of community outreach events
- Growth of use of the Community Literacy Center at the Crown Point location
- Expanded materials budgets for print and digital materials



- Deposit collections to underserved senior living populations
- Shifting to fine-free model
- Continued test proctoring
- Increased early literacy programming
- Increased STEM/STEAM programming
- Addition of audio enabled picture book collection
- Continued upgrade of Adult Large Print fiction and non-fiction collection

- **Technology**

The Library meets or exceeds Indiana public library standards for technology and public access. CPCL offers databases, public computers, wireless internet access, and variety of STEM technology hands-on equipment. Since 2019 the Library has accomplished the following technology projects:

- Upgraded receipt printers to thermal receipt printers at all service desks
- Replaced the following servers: Domain Controller, Storage, virtual
- Upgraded and increased surveillance cameras at Crown Point location and Winfield location
- Upgraded all staff and public computers and updated to Windows 10
- Prepared for implementation of wireless printing
- Prepared for implementation of credit card payment of printing throughout building
- Purchased staff 12 laptops
- Added outdoor WIFI at both locations
- Obtained Community Foundation grant for STEM equipment for Youth Services Department

- **Operations**

The Library maintains and updates general operating, personnel, and administrative policies to ensure smooth Library operations. A seven-member board of trustees governs the Library, hiring a Director who manages the day to day operations of the Library.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

The Board of Trustees and library leadership selected the following Public Library Association (PLA) service responses as priorities to continue to focus on:

- **Celebrate Diversity:** Cultural awareness. Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.
- **Create Young Readers:** Early literacy. Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.
- **Discover Your Roots:** Genealogy and local history. Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.
- **Know Your Community:** Community resources and services. Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.
- **Learn to Read and Write:** Adult, teen, and family literacy. Adults and teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers.
- **Make Career Choices:** Job and career development. Adults and teens will have the skills and resources they need to identify career opportunities that suit their individual strengths and interests.
- **Satisfy Curiosity:** Lifelong learning. Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.
- **Stimulate Imagination:** Reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure. Residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.
- **Visit a Comfortable Place:** Physical and virtual spaces. Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly

and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

- **Welcome to the United States:** New immigrants will have information on citizenship, English Language Learning (ELL), employment, public schooling, health and safety, available social services, and any other topics that they need to participate successfully in American life.
- **Connect to the Online World:** Public Internet access. Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the internet.

## **ONGOING EVALUATION PROCESS**

The Library's Board of Trustees, Library Director, Leadership Team, and staff will be familiar with the goals, objectives and measures of success outlined in the 2023-2026 Long Range Plan, and will seek to implement future programming, services to align to its strategic initiatives. Director will provide updates to Library Board and staff with accomplishments associated with the Long Range Plan on a regular basis.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The Library provides funding for its Long Range Plan from the following sources:

- Operating fund
- Library Improvement Reserve fund (LIRF)
- Rainy Day fund
- Gift and Memorial funds
- Library fundraising events: Library Mini Golf and other future events

Supplemental funding may also be procured by the following outside sources:

- Grant writing
- Friends of the Crown Point Community Library

- Crown Point Community Foundation
- Winfield Community Foundation

The Library currently benefits from an expanding, growing community and anticipates that growth to continue to provide a stable funding base for the foreseeable future. Despite this projected growth, the Library’s Board of Trustees budgets and plans in a fiscally conservative manner.

## **COLLABORATION**

The Library currently values collaboration with a variety of organizations and institutions that enable it to maximize the impact of its mission and services. The Library currently collaborates with the following partners:

### **Library Partnerships:**

- SRCS
- Statewide Reciprocal Borrowing Participant
- Northwest Indiana Directors Group
- ADOLPLI-Director Group
- Indiana State Library
- Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS)
- Indiana Library Federation (ILF)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Public Library Association (PLA)
- Northwest Indiana Counterpart Groups
- Friends of the Crown Point Library
- Northwest Indiana Library Boards Association (NILBA)

### **Community Partnerships**

- City of Crown Point
- Town of Winfield

- Crown Point Community Foundation (CPCF)
- CPCF Women’s Giving Circle
- Lake County Courthouse Foundation
- Purdue Extension Lake County
- Crossroads Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Cedar Lake Historical Association
- Crown Point Adult Learning Center
- Friends of the Crown Point Adult Learning Center
- Center Workforce Innovation (CWI)
- WorkOne
- Crown Point PACE Department

**School Partnerships**

- Crown Point School Community School Corporation
- Community’s private schools
- Community’s preschool providers

**Civic Partnerships**

- Crown Point Rotary Club
- Crown Point Lions Club
- American Legion Auxiliary
- Kappa Kappa Kappa, Gamma Theta Chapter
- Psi Lota Xi, Beta Xi Chapter
- Girl Scout Troops

**LIBRARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

As a result of the disruption of services due to the pandemic and the unexpected bond refinance leading to a long list of construction projects that were time sensitive, the Library is continuing with the same goals for this long range plan. 2024 will be used to do an extensive survey process and to evaluate progress on

existing goals and develop new goals with the goal to adopt an updated long range plan by the end of 2024.

**Goal: Evaluate Space for Optimal Use to Meet Community Needs**

Service Response: Visit a comfortable space

Objectives:

- Explore expansion of study rooms
- Expand collaborative work space for all ages
- Evaluate current library spaces to ensure they reflect community needs
- Evaluate building maintenance schedule and create master calendar of planned maintenance for routine service and special projects
- Develop additional and enhance merchandising/display areas to better promote library materials, resources, and services
- Advocate for additional or enhanced parking in the downtown area in proximity to the library
- Evaluate meeting and study room use at each location, and establish policy and procedure changes that will result in improved access and usage

Measurable Outcomes:

- Increased number and use of study rooms
- Create additional collaborative spaces for all ages
- Action plan created to reflect space evaluation
- Increased number of displays
- Master building maintenance schedule created

## **Goal: Increase Community Outreach Engagement**

Service Response: Know Your Community

### Objectives:

- Present library booth presence at community events to engage where the community members are gathered
- Present pop-up events in the community to increase encounters with community members not using the Library as a personal resource
- Seek outreach opportunities beyond festivals and farmer's markets to expand outreach services into the community
- Encourage Leadership Team, Trustees, and Library staff to attend community meetings

### Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase in number of outreach events
- Increase in number of people engaged at outreach events
- Increase in number of community meetings attended by Leadership Team, Trustees and Library staff members
- Expand number of staff doing outreach work

## **Goal: Increase Community Partnerships**

Service Response: Know Your Community

### Objectives:

- Explore and pursue additional community partnerships that enhance Library services inside and outside the library
- Invest time in networking to increase partnership possibilities by Library Leadership Team
- Further cultivate current partnerships with City of Crown Point and Town of Winfield

- Establish digital access cards for students within the Crown Point Community School Corporation and other school communities
- Expand current partnership with Crown Point Community School Corporation ***Birth to School*** early literacy program and ***Ready to Learn*** social and emotional health initiative

Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase in number partnership programs and attendance
- Issue digital access cards to students

**Goal: Revitalize Library Print and Digital Materials**

Service Response: Stimulate Imagination, Satisfy Curiosity

Objectives:

- Evaluate materials for deselection and addition to the Library collections to provide relevant collection that meets the current needs of the community
- Update Materials Selection Policy
- Explore ILS and database analytics to determine usage of collections
- Highlight collections in print and digital marketing

Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase in circulation of materials
- Increase of “face-out” display of books within the Library’s collection areas
- Use analytics to help determine community driven collection purchasing



**Goal: Promote Early Literacy**

Service Response: Create Young Readers, Learn to Read and Write, Stimulate Imagination

## Objectives:

- Increase access to early literacy activities (story time, open play, and passive activities)
- Increase participation in the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- Employ Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) practices in Birth to 5-year-old programming and passive activities

## Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase in enrollment of children signed up for 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- Increase in number of children completing 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- Increase in early literacy program attendance
- Provide Youth Services staff training on Every Child Ready to Read practices
- Increase in passive programming tied to Every Child Ready to Read practices

**Goal: Engage the Community in Lifelong Learning**

Service Response: Learn to Read and Write, Make Career Choices, Celebrate Diversity, Satisfy Curiosity, Welcome to America, Discover Your Roots

## Objectives:

- Optimize utilization of the James C. Conlon Community Literacy Center by the Crown Point Adult Learning Center and other literacy programming
- Provide workforce readiness adult programming

- Partner with schools, community groups, and individuals to showcase local talent
- Continue to provide space and support for the Library's adult creativity and activity groups and explore starting additional groups
- Optimize utilization of gallery and exhibit spaces by community members
- Facilitate elementary school student visits to the Library
- Create a parent/caregiver resource center in Youth Services and Winfield location
- Explore possibility of providing more comprehensive computer classes (Word, Excel, etc.)
- Promote use of databases and digital materials
- Promote library resources and materials at associated programming events
- Provide adult programming focused on community history and genealogy topics
- Provide cultural programming for all ages

Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase in use of library display cases and gallery
- Increase in attendance at adult and all-ages programming
- Increase in number and attendance of school visits
- Circulation statistics for parent/caregiver resource collection
- Offer a programs on workforce development and higher level computer skills
- Increase in use of databases and digital materials

## **Goal: Increase Awareness of Library Services and Resources in the Community**

### Objectives:

- Create and implement a Marketing Plan
- Create customer-friendly user guides for collections, resources, and policies
- Uniformity of content and brand in marketing materials promoting library resources and programs
- Maintain current and updated presence on the Library's web page and social media sites
- Introduce multi-media marketing efforts (video, Facebook Live, YouTube)
- Encourage community members to make investment of time and financial resources to augment public funding and allow expansion of library services
- Explore rebranding Library logo

### Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase social media engagement
- Explore analytics of social media to evaluate effectiveness for each platform and adjust use
- Train staff regarding marketing plan and guidelines
- Production of library marketing materials and creation of a central location of promotion materials
- Utilize survey for regular evaluation of resources and programs (Project Outcome)
- Increase fundraising revenue to support library programming and resources
- Create marketing materials for Library's Giving Campaign

## **Goal: Provide Technology Resources for Community and Staff**

Service Response: Connect to the Online World

### Objectives:

- Replace and upgrade existing technology as needed to provide optimum library service for community
- Explore emerging technology and evaluate its use in library setting
- Explore the use of thin clients in public computer replacement
- Update all remaining computers to Windows 10
- Increase promotion of availability of digital resource training

### Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase attendance at digital resource training
- Replacement schedule used as guideline for replacement and upgrading library equipment

## **Goal: Streamline Administrative Processes and Improve Staff Communication**

### Objectives:

- Explore the creation of a staff intranet or other internal communication system
- Create an electronic employee evaluation system
- Create an electronic donor database
- Provide access to personnel manual in an electronic format outside of the current S-Drive
- Create a master list of policy and procedures
- Create a uniform onboarding staff training guide for each department
- Create departmental help guides for using in cross-training
- Incorporate succession and emergency planning in Leadership Team record keeping and processes

- Create a building maintenance schedule and a comprehensive disaster plan

Measurable Outcomes:

- Utilize a staff internal communication system
- Utilize an electronic employee evaluation system
- Utilize a uniform system of employee policy and procedure acknowledgement
- Utilize electronic donor database in ongoing fundraising activities
- Review all policy and procedures in a timely manner
- Greater awareness of departmental essential tasks by Leadership Team members
- Complete building maintenance schedule and a comprehensive disaster plan

## **EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE**

The Library anticipates doing the following projects in the next four years, dependent on funding. The projects are prioritized in the following order:

### **2023**

- Upgrade dedicated hotspot for secure and reliable internet access for outreach activities
- Upgrade Library’s main internet connection from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps
- Optimize Winfield Branch cameras to reflect needs of remodeling project
- Explore solutions for upgrading Crown Point Meeting Room projection systems

### **2024**

- Replace all wireless access points at both library locations
- Replace switches in server room at both locations
- Upgrade staff computers to Windows 11, support for Windows 10 ends October 14, 2025

### **2025**

- Add additional fob readers for staff areas at Crown Point and Winfield Branch
- Replace additional switches in server room
- Establish an ongoing, prioritized replacement schedule for the next 5 years
- Explore upgrading existing phone system

2026

- Replace virtual servers
- Replace NAS Network Accessible Storage

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Library's guiding principle of Innovation and Learning prioritizes staff development and an ongoing learning process to best support excellent library services. The Library's budget provides for staff to participate in professional development opportunities.

### **Internal Training:**

The Library provides up to one staff training day per year. Staff are updated on internal policies and apprised of library matters. Some sessions provide staff the opportunity to earn LEUs. Staff is guided in ongoing training by Department Heads by individualized learning opportunities. Online training is available from Lynda.com and free or paid webinars via various sources. All internal training is done on library work time.

### **Professional Conferences and Counterpart Meetings:**

Leadership Team members in professional roles are provided opportunity to attend professional and counterpart meetings as budget allows. It is expected that all Leadership Team staff pursue applicable professional development.

### **Certification Tracking:**

Employees are required to record and manage their personal LEUs/TLEUs for certification requirements. Renewal of certificates is filed with the Director.