Hartford City Public Library

Long Range Plan
2023 – 2026

Mission Statement

The Hartford City Public Library is a community anchor, providing a central location for the community to meet, learn, play, and do business.

Goals

The primary goal of the library is to adapt to the community's needs in a rapidly changing world. The Director and the Board of Trustees will regularly review progress towards goals outlined within this long-range plan while also constantly looking for emergent needs in the community.

Community Profile

The Hartford City Public Library serves Hartford City and, via contract, the Blackford County townships of Jackson, Licking, and Washington. As of the 2020 census, the population of Hartford City was 6,086, a 2.2% reduction from 2010.[1] However, the American Community Survey (ACS) is reporting an estimated population of only 5,781 – a significant decrease of 7.5% from the 2010 Census but in line with the 2017 ACS population estimate. Like most of the United States, our community's birth numbers are too low to compensate for the number of deaths in the area.[2]

The median age in the community has now increased to 40.3, with 20% of the community now over the age of 65. Only 24.6% of the community is under the age of 18 as of the 2020 Census.[3]

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[1] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hartfordcitycityindiana
[2] https://www.stats.indiana.edu/vitals/
[3] https://data.census.gov/table?q=2020&g=160XX00US1832242&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP05

Our small, rural town is slowly diversifying, with 4.9% of our population identifying as something other than "white alone" in the 2020 Census. That is a 2.5% increase, or approximately 150 people in the community, from the 2010 Census.

Enrollment in Blackford County Schools system has continued to decrease to only 1,159 students in the entire system. Since the 2010 Census, the system has also closed and sold off two school buildings, one in Hartford City and one in Montpelier, further consolidating the system into only 3 school buildings and one administration building. The graduation rate for the now Blackford Senior-Junior High School has dropped from 96.8% in 2017 to 93.1% in 2022, although that decrease may be partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[4] As of 2023, 75% of students were eligible for free or reduced meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) federal program.[5]

According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), the percent of the population below the federal poverty level in Hartford City rose to 21%, an increase of 5.8% from the 2016 ACS.[6] The median household income has dropped to $34,748 and 50.5% of households now make less than $35,000 per year, an increase of 2.6% since 2016. It is clear that the income in the community is not keeping up with inflation or cost-for-living increases.

Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations

Facilities

- Disjointed HVAC that needs yearly minor repairs (4 Units in various locations, 6 wall mounted heating units, 4 baseboard heaters, and 1 non-functioning thru-wall heating/cooling unit.)
    - Heating of staff lounge needs redone completely (location of 3 baseboard heaters as well as broken in-wall heating/cooling unit).
    - 3 wall mounted heating units in rear stairwell need changed to a safer model or some other way to condition the air in stairwell should be found.
    - Of 3 wall mounted heating units in elevator lobbies, 1 is already unhooked and should be removed; the other 2 should follow suit.
    - Ancient in-wall unit in "4th Floor" should be checked to make sure it is unhooked; preferably get it removed and wall patched.
- Elevator mechanisms were replaced in 2019; interior of elevator needs renovated.
    - 2021-2022 renovation and addition solved the following problems from the previous Long-Range Plan: Replaced perimeter french drain during 2021-2022 construction/renovation project. Renovated children's hallway and AV department to be wheel-chair accessible, including removing the door to the Children's Department and adding a wide archway for access. Public restrooms were renovated.
    - Carpet in all public areas (except meeting room) has been replaced.
    - Seating was increased from 3 tables to 6 tables on main floor.

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[4] https://inview.doe.in.gov/
[5] https://www.in.gov/doe/files/fy2023-idoe-enrollment-nslp-report011623.pdf
[6] https://data.census.gov/table?q=2020&g=160XX00US1832242&tid=ACSST5Y2020.S1701&moe=false

- - Children's department retained one table for formal seating, but the addition provided enough space to hold story time indoors. For crafts or programming, Amy has 2 folding tables and access to meeting room chairs for temporary setup.
  - Added both an Indiana/Local History section and a larger YA area with seating with addition.
    - While bookshelves have been installed for Indiana/Local History section, custom shelving is still needed for the YA collection.
- Structural issues with 2nd floor/3rd floor (attic).
- An automatic door still needs installed on at least one bathroom door.
- Flat roof shows signs of distress and is causing minor leaking into newly renovated main floor.
- Front stairwell (rebuilt in 2015) continues to have damp issues. Plaster in closet under the stairs is falling off and there is phosphorescence behind paneling in stairwell.
- Electrical work that needs to be done:
  - Front stairwell light cover was broken during construction; fixture needs replaced.
  - New light over alley drop box has manufacturing issue despite being brand new.
  - New light by handicap-accessible door had a water leak that blew a fuse; problem was corrected in Spring 2023.
  - New table in magazine area on Main Floor needs outlet access.
  - NE public restroom had heat removed and not replaced during construction.
  - Exterior alley light needs replaced for safety.
- Meeting room needs new carpet or, preferably, vinyl.
- Roof on original building will need to be replaced in the next 10 years or so, and should be replaced with a color and style to match the metal roof of the new rear entrance to Children's Department.
- The EPDM (ethylene propylene diene terpolymer) on the 1988 addition's flat roof is showing stress despite having only been installed around 2016 or so. Quotes are being gathered in the summer of 2023 for replacement using TPO (Thermoplastic Polyolefin).
- Front doors to the building are showing their age and need to be replaced. Design will have to be adjusted due to new code laws. The front drop box needs redone as well.

Services

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- As of the winter of 2022, the Friends of the Library group has disbanded, although their book club does continue with support of the library. Adult programming is currently limited to a casual summer reading program.
- Early literacy programming includes story times, where attendance fluctuates depending on the time of the year, and 1000 Books Before Kindergarten.
- Youth programming is well attended overall, though it does vary depending on time of year and advertising methods.
- We currently do not have a proper Teen program (ages 12+). Both a summer and winter reading program are provided in the Children's Department. Staff on the Main Floor have shown little enthusiasm for creating Adult and Teen Programs – even ones as simple as Summer Reading -- which is a problem.

Technology

- The library provides 4 public PCs with printing capabilities. We also are able to provide printing from patron cellphones.
- Microfilm viewing and printing is available from a dedicated PC.
- Each department has one OPAC machine for viewing the catalog.
- The Children's Department has 2 AWE machines with no internet access.
- Hotspots are available for checkout but seemed to have reached their peak during COVID-19 shutdown in 2020-2021. Children's has a tablet with educational games on it that they circulate.
- There has been zero interest in physical Kindle circulation in years. However, demand for e-material access has grown significantly – people just prefer to use their phones. The library's Wi-Fi has been upgraded to a managed service through ENA. We now have multiple nodes on each floor as well as an outdoor node that projects Wi-Fi into the nearby public parking lot and Weiler Park. The library is a member of the State Consortium for Internet Service, which is currently provided by ENA. In 2023 the library is working with ENA to increase fiber bandwidth to 1 Gbps up/down. The library also has a firewall, internet filtering, and VOIP services via ENA. Their services are discounted due to e-Rate. The library maintains physical AT&T telephone lines for ADT security and elevator emergency lines.
- Added digital faxing in 2022 due to high demand.
  - Local print shop closed and only other location that faxes charges a lot.

Operations

- The library went fine-free in 2020 due to COVID-19 shutdown and intends to remain so; the fine-free status is for HCPL materials only (and excludes hotspots). Replacement costs for lost or damaged materials are set to the purchase cost of the item; the $10 processing fee is set by Evergreen Indiana but waived by library staff.
- Printing and copying fees are set at $0.20/page to cover the cost of both paper and ink. Currently only black and white printing is available.
- Laminating fees are set to $1.00 per linear foot for large format laminator, and $1.00 per sheet for small laminator.
- There is a refundable $20 deposit for Wi-Fi hotspots to encourage prompt return. Due to high lost rates in the community, a special $60 refundable deposit is required for new card holders to borrow a hotspot

Community Needs and Goals

1. Internet Connectivity

Need: Not everyone in Hartford City and Blackford County has access to or can afford high speed internet (10 Mbps or higher).[7]

Goal: Assist Hartford City and Blackford County residents in accessing the internet.

Objectives:

- Continue to provide public computers at the library.
- Continue to provide free Wi-Fi at library.
- Continue to circulate Wi-Fi hotspots to Blackford County patrons.
- Work with community leaders to increase internet access in the community.

2. Replace Local Print Shop services

Need: A place to print, send faxes, and get items laminated.

Goal: Provide affordable options for printing, faxing, and laminating locally.

Objectives:

- Maintain printing services by cell phone and public pc.
- Add color printing services.
- Continue to provide affordable public faxing service, including researching faster service.

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[7] https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/residential-fixed-internet-access-service-connections-per-1000-households-by-census-tract-dec-2016/

3. Language Literacy

Need: Language Literacy – 22.2% of enrolled students did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment[8].

Goal: Enhance early literacy programs for preschool children.

Objectives:

- Promote free 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program.
- Continue to provide weekly story times.
- Develop programming for pre-k through 3rd grade utilizing outdoor classroom.
- Explore outreach (including Little Free Libraries) to far-flung communities in Blackford County (Millgrove, Roll, Shamrock Lakes), as well as the farthest points within city limits.
- Provide outreach to local preschools in addition to Blackford County Schools.

4. Health Literacy

Need: 31-37% of the county's adults have basic or below basic health literacy.[9]

Goal: Assist in educating community in health-related topics.

Objectives:

- Work with local organizations to provide easy access to educational materials and programming, including Healthy Community Alliance and Second Harvest.
- Ensure that the health materials provided by the library are comprehensive and up-to-date.

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[8] https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/8974-iread-3#detailed/10/2429/false/2048,870,573,869,36,868/any/17926
[9] http://healthliteracymap.unc.edu/

5. Low- and No-Cost Entertainment

Need: 50.5% of the households in Hartford City make less than $35,000, leaving little if any money for entertainment.[10]

Goal: Provide free entertainment opportunities to community.

Objectives:

- Maintain a material collection that meets the desires of the local community.
- Fully utilize and promote Evergreen Indiana Resource Sharing and SRCS
- Work with staff and local organizations to provide interesting programming.
- Create and maintain public park behind the library to provide a safe but educational play environment for pre-k through 3rd grade specifically, and the community in general.

6. Neutral Meeting Space

Need: Free-to-use meeting space for tutors, students, local and traveling business people, and local organizations.

Goal: Find ways to provide space for people to use the library for reading and meeting, including areas designated for quiet study.

Objectives:

- Facilitate the use of the library as a neutral meeting space through proper management of building through renovations and expansions.
- Utilize small meeting room for a quiet room or meetings for up to 3 people.
- Renovate large meeting room to meet the need for a medium-sized gathering space (4-20 people). Research how the library can provide a larger gathering space (20+ people) without increasing the footprint of the building (which would trigger building code requiring sprinkler system).

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[10] See Community Profile section.

7. Community Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

Need: Community center that is prepared for an increase of extreme weather situations and prolonged power outages.

Goal: Create a safe space for members of the community during disasters.

Objectives:

- Install either alternative power sources (solar panels) or work with local gas company to install a full-building generator.
- Work with local government to establish a local disaster recovery plan for the entire community.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

The library submits an 18-month budget every October to the state. The library's day-to-day operations are funded by local taxes, primarily property taxes from the city of Hartford City. Other regular income includes yearly contracts with the townships of Jackson, Licking, and Washington here in Blackford County.

Due to variability in township trustee reliability and to provide a wider tax base to ensure the stability of the library in the future, it is in the library's best interests to pursue expanding the library tax district to include the three townships currently served by contract. This will require action on the part of the local township trustees or a referendum on election day.

Equipment Replacement Schedule

Inventory Category	End of 2023	2024	2025	2026
Networks				
Physical Servers (cameras)	1	1	1	1
Backup drives (on-site)	2	2	2	2
Backup drives (off-site)	2	3	3	3
Computers				
Staff PCs	8	8	8	8
Public PCs w/ Internet	5	5	5	5
OPACs	2	2	2	2
Youth PCs without Internet	2	2	2	2
Staff Laptops / Tablets	3	3	3	3
Public Laptops	2	2	2	2
Public Tablets	1	1	1	1
Hotspots for Circulation	6	6	6	6
Whiteboard (interactive screen)	1	1	1	1
Projector	2	2	2	2
Peripherals				
Local Staff Printers	5	5	5	5
Networked Staff Printers	1	1	1	1
Public Printers	2	2	2	2
Copy Machines	1	1	1	1
Staff Scan Snap Scanners	3	3	3	3
Public Scanners	0	0	0	0
E-Readers	1	0	0	0
Internet Connections				
Fiber Optic	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	1.5 Gbps	1.5 Gbps
Managed Routers	1	1	1	1
Telecommunications				
Telephone	Landline & VOIP	Landline & VOIP	Landline & VOIP	Landline & VOIP
Telephone Handsets	9	9	9	9

Update Schedule	2023	2024	2025	2026
PCs				
STAFF - TECHNICIAN 01 (2017)			x	
STAFF - CIRC 01 (2017)			x	
STAFF - CIRC 02 (2017)			x	
STAFF – CHILD – CIRC (2016)		x		
STAFF – CHILD LIBRARIAN (2016)		x		
STAFF - BOOKKEEPER	x			
STAFF – DIRECTOR	x			
STAFF - EVERGREEN (Resource Sharing) (2017)			x	
CATALOG 01 → MAIN-OPAC (2016)				x
CATALOG 02 → CHILD-OPAC (2016)				x
Patron-01 (New 2022)				x
Patron-02 (New 2022)				x
Patron-03 (New 2022)				x
Patron-04 (New 2022)				x
Self-Checkout Children's (new 2022)				x
Self-Checkout Main (2016)		x		x
Patron-07 → NOW CHILD-CIRC	Removed			
Patron-08 → NOW CHILD-OPAC	Removed			
AWE 1 (purchased 2014 or so)		x		
AWE 2 (New 2022)				x
MICROFILM (New 2022)				x
Peripherals				
Printers	As needed			
Copier (2020?)	As needed			
Scanners	As needed			
Monitors	As needed			
Wireless Access Points				x
Laptop-Overhead				x
Laptop-Training-1				X
Laptop-Training-2				X

Windows 7 will no longer be updated after Dec 2019, so staff PC updates were pushed up on timeline.

Timeline	2023	2024	2025	2026
Target Date Activities				
Add color printer for public access	x	x		
Install/reinstall interior cameras	X			
Ongoing Activities				
Evaluate library-purchased databases (Ancestry, Resume)	X	X	X	X
Provide staff work time to learn new technology skills	X	X	X	X
Train on the use of portable devices for staff (AV Tech)	x	X	X	X
Maintain a library website meeting state standards	X	X	X	X
Update website links	X	X	X	X
Provide public access computers meeting state standards	X	X	X	X
Increase bandwidth as needed	X	X	X	X
Review policies and procedures for public computers	X	X	X	X
Encourage staff to attend webinars/workshops to increase technology skills	X	X	X	X
Apply annually for Universal Services E-Rate for Internet Service	X	X	X	X
Continue to comply with CIPA for E-Rate access	X	X	X	X
Update/re-negotiate telephone plans to lower costs	X	X	X	X

Professional Development Strategy

Library staff need to be continuously trained in order to meet the demands of modern patrons. The Library Director shall:

- Monitor all certified library staff to ensure they are attending the appropriate type and number of trainings to allow their certificate to be renewed after five years;
- Encourage certified staff to train their non-certified peers;
- Schedule monthly training for all available staff to provide training in all aspects of librarianship and technology to ensure that staff is knowledgeable;
- Conduct personnel reviews yearly, to include yearly goals and objectives for each staff member.

Community Collaboration

The library regularly collaborates with the following local organizations to provide information and entertainment for the Blackford County community:

- Blackford County Historical Society
- Arts Council
- Arts Place
- Senior Citizens Center
- Imagination Library
- Blackford County Community Foundation
- Blackford County Schools
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- Healthy Community Alliance of Blackford and Delaware Counties
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Purdue Extension of Blackford County

We will continue to foster these relationships to better serve the community by taking our programming and services to where our non-users may be located, and to help better the community as a whole.

Adopted on the 19th of July, 2023, by the Board of Trustees of the Hartford City Public Library.