



The Community and the Library

Beginning Workshop 2013

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Grand Ledge Area District Library

Who is your Community?

- **Community**
 - **your individual library**
- **Community**
 - **the libraries in your area**
- **Community**
 - **the people in your area**

Why do you need to know about your Community?

- Effective planning
- Ensure that services and programs are what your community needs
- Library stays relevant
- Why else?



Community – your individual library

- What information do you know about your library?
- Common data points found in the [Library of Michigan State Aid Statistics](#)



What data points are you using for your strategic plan?

- If you don't have a plan – pick one area to improve, decide how best to measure and gather data, establish a benchmark, set a goal
- Need to make goals SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely
- Focus on the vital few rather than the trivial many

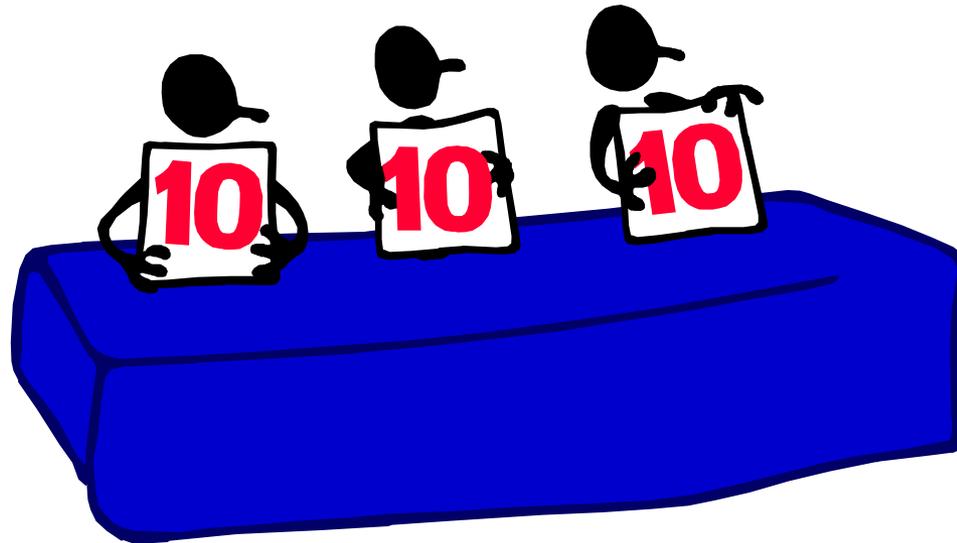


Measuring Methods

- Measure 1: People served – total number of users or number of unique users
- Measure 2: How well the service meets the needs of the people served – usually measuring user's opinions on quality, value, or satisfaction with a service
- Measure 3: Total units of service provided – counting transactions, # of programs offered, reference questions

Accountability

- Make sure your measures are something you can be held accountable for – if you can't own the measure then it's too easy to let go of being responsible



How does this information effect your decisions?

- Which criteria should you use to compare your library against other libraries?
- By reviewing data from a comparable set of libraries you can establish benchmarks for services.

Data gathering – need to get the data for the state aid report

- Review all the data you are currently gathering and how you are gathering it.
- If you do not have a concrete reason to collect the data then don't
- Continually review gathering methods to make sure there isn't an automated process to collect the same information

Simplify!

- Whenever possible have the daily or monthly or quarterly statistics automatically being added to a cumulative spreadsheet.
- This enables for charts and graphs to be produced easily and comparisons of data to happen regularly.
- Data is often tracked over years to show increases/changes in usage
- [Sample charts and graphs](#) showing changes over time.

Community – the libraries in your area

- You belong to a city, township, district, county, region, cooperative,...
- How do your geographic borders connect?
- What reciprocal agreements do you have? (formal and informal)
- Do you collaborate for programming?
- Do you coordinate your advocacy activities?
- Do you connect with the school and academic libraries in your area?

Not sure where to start?



- [Library of Michigan Interactive Library Directory](#)
- [Build a map of your area](#) – get to know your neighbors
- Build a map of your service area – [Google Earth](#)

Community – the people in your area

- What information about the community residents is the most useful to know?
- Choose data points that will help you decide what programs and services to offer.
- Census data helps to paint a picture of what your residents look like.



Great places for stats

- [U.S. Census](#)
- [U.S. Census – County Business and Demographics](#) – very cool interactive map
- American Factfinder – quick data sheets
- www.city-data.com – provides data to the census block level through interactive map
- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development corporations

Census data tells you about residents but it doesn't tell you about your patrons

- Map patron data – www.batchgeo.com
- Allows you to see where patrons live and where you have concentrations or gaps of users
- Companies that will connect your patron data to census data –
 - www.geolytics.com
 - www.civictechnologies.com

Other methods for collecting data

- Phone surveys
- Web surveys
- Point in Time or Point of Service surveys

Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What about qualitative data?

- Numbers don't give you the full picture, but how do you get that picture?
- By talking to people about their aspirations and challenges.
- In order to understand your community you have to be turned outward, can you tell your community's story?

Harwood Institute

- More effective than visioning exercises or SWOT analysis – want to get positive energy but grounded in reality.
- When you understand your community better than you can see what role the library can play to be effective and make an impact.
- You are only gathering information, not designing programs, forming partnerships, judging organizations
- End result -- you will have a better sense what programs are needed and which organizations are more effective partners

Who to talk to?

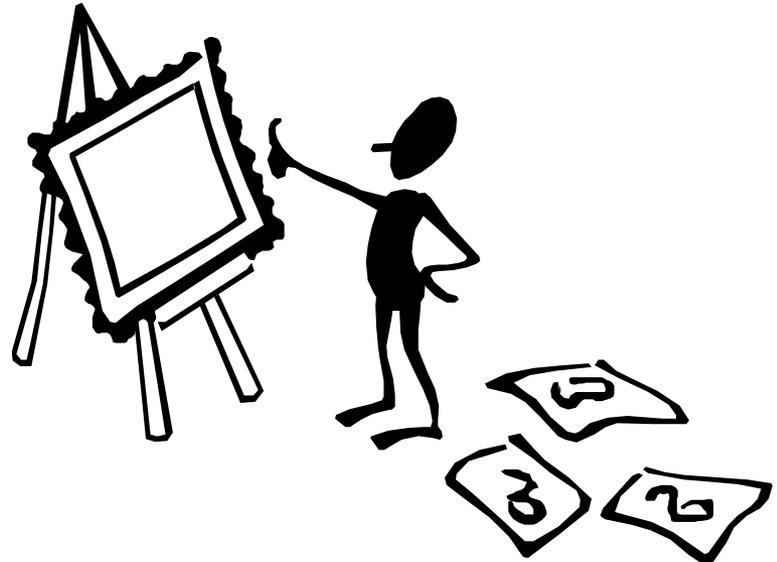
- Start with your board, staff, and volunteers and get their input and ask for their suggestions.
- Looking for any community groups or leaders that are willing to talk.
- Utilize listing from PLA Strategic Planning for Results – Community Stakeholders

How to plan to be effective – PLA Strategic Planning for Results

- 1st step – determine community needs -- utilizes community stakeholders
- 2nd step – identify priority service responses – [PLA service responses](#)
- 3rd step – allocate resources -- every library has resources – staff, space, collections, and technology
- 4th step – establish benchmarks and set goals

Why Data?

- Needed to develop, maintain, and evaluate effective programs and services
- Better data leads to better plans
- Libraries that plan stay effective and relevant to their communities



Questions?

- Feel free to contact me anytime (just let me get moved into our new house first!)

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