

# LAMBERTVILLE LIBRARY: RIGHT AT HOME



STRATEGIC PLAN  
2024 – 2027

# OUR COMMUNITY-CENTERED INDEPENDENT LIBRARY RIGHT AT HOME IN LAMBERTVILLE

Whether it's feeling *right at home* at 6 Lilly St, accessing and enjoying library resources *right at home* in your own space, or celebrating the presence of a community library *right at home* in Lambertville, there is a way for you to be RIGHT AT HOME with the Lambertville Free Public Library.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# A Message from the Trustees of the Lambertville Free Public Library

So much has changed since the Lambertville Free Public Library (LFPL) Board of Trustees began work on the library's first strategic plan in 2019. That plan, completed in 2020 and designed to cover a five-year period until 2025, was the result of many hours of wide-ranging collaboration, with input from library staff, the Board of Trustees, municipal and civic leaders, library users, and residents of Lambertville. Since 2019, the library has experienced the retirement of a long-time director and several staff members, welcomed a new director and new staff members, and grappled with many COVID-related challenges (closures, limited openings, book quarantines, and back again). We gained insights from expert consultants in the fields of library science and architecture, pored over the results of a municipal building audit, served as a community warming and charging station through the difficulties of Hurricane Ida, refurbished the technological foundation of the library, expanded digital resources and program offerings, revamped the interior library layout, refreshed the physical collection, hosted a number of community events such as the Oaxaca Festival, received a prestigious nomination for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, and celebrated the digitization of a beloved piece of Lambertville history, *The Beacon* newspaper. And we are just getting started!

What has not changed since 2019 is our community's need to learn, explore, create, and connect both locally and with the world at large—and our hope that you will feel *Right at Home* with the Lambertville Free Public Library.

From bestsellers to tax preparation forms, from all-age language classes to the *Latinas en Lambertville* social group, from *The Beacon* online to Bouncy Book Time, and from genealogy databases to streaming services, our residents have opportunities to connect not just to resources but to each other. The lessons learned from the last few years have made the library team better prepared, more resilient, and more determined than ever to ensure that LFPL grows into our vision—to be Lambertville's center for literacy and information resources that serve and empower our diverse community. LFPL wants to offer community members the opportunity to use the vast array of resources when in the library itself, but also when at home or on the go—leading to many opportunities to be *Right at Home* with the Lambertville Free Public Library.

There is still much more to do. So much, in fact, that we created this new strategic plan early, before the planned end date of the last one. There is strength and opportunity in LFPL's increasingly rare status as an independent public library, poised to focus on and meet the needs of our community directly through our accessible in-town location. Like other libraries across the state and the nation, we face the challenges of limited budgets, rising costs, deferred building maintenance, and diverse community needs, all in the context of an ever-changing information landscape. Fundraising and increased volunteer efforts will be necessary to sustain and expand the library, and to fulfill our purpose, vision, and mission. You can also support LFPL by evolving with us in changing times. For example, take the time to download the app for audio books even if you are not very "techie," explore an online class through our website, and of course, continue to come in and check out the latest bestseller and then chat about it at book club with friends.

As the library's trustees, we are stewards of the Lambertville Free Public Library, charged with the task of ensuring the highest possible quality of library service to the public today and for many tomorrows. More than ever, we are working to extend the library as a resource outside of its own 'four walls' and directly into the homes and lives of our community.

As always, we invite the entire Lambertville community to join us in the effort and to be *Right at Home* with the Lambertville Library!

### **2024 Lambertville Free Public Library Board of Trustees**

Karen Riedeburg, President

Edward Hoag, Vice President

Albert Bauer, Treasurer

Kate Winslow, Secretary

Amy Connelly, Mayor's Representative

Stephanie Volmer, Superintendent's Representative

Kathleen Jones Harris, Trustee

Ricardo Zapata, Trustee

Walt Jiménez, Trustee

**What a gift to have a hometown library, where the only price of entrance is interest,  
where the only thing we have to pay is attention. – Amy Connelly, Trustee**

# ASPIRATIONS

## TIMELESS PURPOSE

The Lambertville Free Public Library serves the public by connecting people and resources to encourage literacy and lifelong learning in the heart of Lambertville.

## VISION

To be Lambertville's center for literacy and information resources that serve and empower our diverse community.

## MISSION

To provide accessible space and resources that inspire and assist our community to learn, explore, create, and connect.

# GOALS

INSPIRE COMMUNITY LEARNING AND  
ENRICHMENT

ENHANCE LIBRARY SERVICE TO BENEFIT  
OUR COMMUNITY

OPTIMIZE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

UPGRADE THE LIBRARY FACILITY FOR  
COMFORT, ACCESS, AND FLEXIBILITY

GOAL ONE

INSPIRE COMMUNITY  
LEARNING AND  
ENRICHMENT



# Raise the community profile of the library to broaden impact

## **Create awareness of the library's broad offerings and capacity to serve as a second home for those looking for informational, educational, social, or entertainment resources.**

The library will encourage all Lambertville residents to feel comfortable being in the library space and confident engaging with library resources. We will identify ways of supporting individual, family, and small group use of the library as a "third place": a community-accessible space away from work and home.

## **Identify opportunities to engage and support local institutions.**

The library will actively seek opportunities to benefit our community by engaging and supporting neighboring Lambertville institutions and interest groups such as businesses, non-profits, municipal committees, district schools, and societies (e.g., Lambertville Historical Society, Kalmia Club).

## **Nurture long-term community engagement.**

The library will connect with individuals from within the diverse constituencies of our community to provide feedback for various initiatives and to aid in program planning and collection development.

## **Become a resource for new residents through active outreach.**

LFPL will explore ways of working with local realtors and the Chamber of Commerce to distribute information about the library to new residents and business owners as part of a "*Welcome to Lambertville*" initiative.

## **Create more visibility for the library trustees as ambassadors to the community.**

LFPL will post biographies and photos of the trustees on the library website, and trustees will continue to participate in community events where library representation may have a positive impact. Additional initiatives may include a 'meet a trustee' section in the library newsletter and/or 'chat with a trustee' events.

# Identify and support community needs for lifelong learning

## **Support the development of early childhood literacy and pre-literacy skills.**

The library will provide high-quality programs and resources for infants and pre-readers (along with their caregivers) such as Bouncy Book Time, musical programming, and more, via a dedicated, full-time Children's Librarian. Materials that support early reading and programs that encourage frequent reading will be a focus of the childhood literacy program.

## **Provide varied services for elementary students, teens, and young adults.**

LFPL will engage elementary, teen, and young adult patrons through a variety of media and programming. Graphic novels and other high-circulation print resources, museum passes, and maker programs will be available along with digital options (such as Hoopla) for electronic books and audio books. Summer reading programs in multilingual digital and print media will encourage frequent reading and help bridge the digital divide. Feedback from this group will be sought through an ongoing teen advisory board, and we will strengthen further engagement through youth volunteer opportunities.

## **Develop and expand additional services for adults and seniors.**

LFPL will provide a wide variety of high-circulation print and large-print materials and expanded digital offerings. We will add a dedicated adult programming librarian to increase the number of social, historical, maker, and other program offerings. We will explore and implement senior outreach strategies such as homebound and senior center deliveries, collection lending initiatives (such as monthly art book rotation), and offsite adult programming.

## **Support the South Hunterdon Regional School District through its building transition, temporary relocation, and new facilities integration.**

While district elementary school students experience a shift in their facilities, LFPL will serve as an extension of the school libraries, providing library cards and borrowing privileges to all local public school students (including students who live outside Lambertville) and hosting regular library visits as determined by the school curriculum and calendar. The library will seek to continue this partnership on an ongoing basis in a way that is mutually beneficial to all.

GOAL TWO

ENHANCE LIBRARY  
SERVICE TO BENEFIT OUR  
COMMUNITY

# Reduce barriers to service

## **Assess and identify gaps in service.**

Using American Library Association (ALA) Standards and Guidelines as resources, LFPL will consult with patrons and municipal representatives to explore how we can better meet the needs of varied populations within Lambertville. Possible strategies include delivery to patrons who are homebound, improved physical and digital access to library resources, and improved support of multilingual patrons (perhaps through the addition of more multilingual staff).

## **Make it easier to use library resources.**

LFPL will explore and try to implement ways to make it easier to schedule appointments for library space, notary services, computer assistance, and more.

## **Align open hours with community needs.**

The library will explore ways to expand library hours through creative staffing, volunteers, board members, and additional staff. We will research strategies for secure, contactless, off-hour pickup of reserved resources.

# Provide and promote services beyond traditional library resources

## **Diversify the library collection across all ages and varied interests.**

LFPL will incorporate the use of reader advisory tools to identify circulation trends and build the print collection based on community demand. In addition to providing traditional print media resources, we will continue to research and increase the number of non-traditional resources for all age groups to enjoy, such as STEAM kits, museum passes, baking tools, and more.

## **Promote resources that can be accessed inside or outside the library building.**

LFPL will increase community awareness of its many multilingual online tools that can be utilized from home to explore ancestry, learn a new language, take an online class, access health or legal journals, gain career readiness skills, and more. To benefit the community, LFPL will also promote borrowing of its technology tools, including streaming devices, Meeting Owl Pro, and Smart TV.

## **Explore the development of a ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY initiative in celebration of the library's upcoming 100-year anniversary.**

LFPL will seek to sponsor a community-wide reading program in celebration of the library itself and the entire community to which we all belong. *"The idea is that the city that opens the same book closes it in greater harmony."* (Mary McGrory, *The Washington Post*, 2012)

## **Expand free notary public access.**

LFPL will encourage and support the Notary Public training of additional staff members and actively promote this service via the library newsletter and the municipal newsletter.

## **Improve access to local and regional history collections.**

LFPL will focus on the digitization of collections of historical relevance to preserve photos, maps, and other physical items.

## **Engage and support local artists...and inspire new ones.**

Through events and activities like rotating art gallery exhibits, writers' groups, and local author book readings and signings, LFPL will work to make the arts more accessible to everyone and celebrate and support the significant talent and vibrant creativity of many people who call our little river town home.

GOAL THREE

OPTIMIZE COMMUNITY  
INVESTMENT

# Develop an organizational culture of continuous learning, growth, and partnership

## **Develop a long-term strategy for library staff growth and development.**

LFPL will create an organizational plan to support and enhance the recruitment, training, and continuous education of library staff, and provide a positive environment where good work is acknowledged and rewarded. The plan will seek to increase the number of full-time staff while continuing to recognize the valuable contributions of part-time staff.

## **Create staff development programs.**

LFPL will create clear communications to define successful performance and provide training and development opportunities to ensure staff are able to meet or exceed expectations, while using their individual interests and talents in support of our community. The library will support ongoing training to keep staff informed of the latest industry trends, technology, and best practices, thereby enabling them to develop professionally and better serve the community.

## **Hold trustees to a high level of performance and participation.**

LFPL will ensure our library trustees meet or exceed New Jersey mandates for continuing education credits. Trustees will also fully participate in the work of one or more board committees in service to the library and the community.

## **Partner with municipal and state institutions to identify and apply for grants for which we are eligible.**

LFPL will seek grants and explore diverse revenue streams to help secure the financial stability necessary to support ongoing library operations and improvements. Strengthening relationships among city council, local institutions, and the library will support these endeavors to the benefit of the community.

# Develop a culture of giving to ensure financial sustainability

## **Lead by example through annual trustee donations.**

As library advocates and ambassadors in the community, members of the Board of Trustees will lead by example through annual donations. While there is no minimum required donation, 100% board participation in the library's annual appeal strengthens the board's response to certain grant and giving opportunities, while demonstrating each member's personal commitment as a library trustee.

## **Communicate a clear need to our prospective and current donors.**

As we seek to map creative pathways to greater financial stability, LFPL will begin a grassroots fundraising effort with board members, residents, local businesses, and others in support of enhancing library services and maintaining and enhancing critical library infrastructure. LFPL will determine and prioritize funding needs for operational and capital projects and communicate these needs clearly, offering a variety of ways interested parties can support library efforts.

## **Communicate sincere gratitude for each donor and each donation.**

The library board will be responsive to donors at every level of contribution. We will seek to express timely and sincere appreciation and demonstrate clearly how donations to the library are used.



## GOAL FOUR

# UPGRADE THE LIBRARY FACILITY FOR COMFORT, ACCESS, AND FLEXIBILITY

# Connect with the community via a welcoming, well-maintained facility

## **Develop a facilities master plan to address library maintenance and upgrades.**

LFPL will use municipal building audits and library self-assessments to create a multi-year master plan and schedule. The board will work with municipal officials to identify likely revenue sources among operational, capital, bonding, grant, and donation possibilities.

## **Establish high visibility with exterior signage and other exterior improvements.**

We will aim to draw attention to the library's highly visible location as an entrance point to Lambertville. Signage will be multilingual as a clear invitation to all to feel *Right at Home*. Universal design principles and accessibility will be prioritized pertaining to library entrances and exterior upgrades.

## **Improve comfort and functionality of space for individuals and groups.**

A welcoming and functional physical space enhances the overall library experience. Regularly assessing and updating the library's design ensures that it remains a comfortable, attractive, and versatile environment that meets the community's evolving needs. We will focus specifically on the creation of more space for small-group meetings while maintaining quiet space for individuals.

## **Explore solutions for improving aging infrastructure.**

Pursue access-enabling improvements to the elevator, bathrooms, and more as determined by the library's facilities plan.

## **Provide essential services as emergency location.**

We will continue to serve the community during emergencies as a warming, cooling, and charging station, and as a distribution center for essential items such as water.

## **Improve the safety of the library collection.**

LFPL will explore establishing a temperature-controlled storage room, relocating surplus collection items, and updating the fire notification and security systems.