



BCPL

Strategic Plan

2024-2028

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Acknowledgments

Bartholomew County Public Library thanks the committed Bartholomew County Public Library staff members who engaged in workshop sessions to incorporate their deep knowledge of their communities, neighborhoods, and the rich array of daily programs they facilitate for their patrons. During this process, the Strategic Working Group focused on the people and communities of Bartholomew County to ensure that the library’s network of places will evolve with a values-driven, community-centric lens for decades to come.

The library Strategic Plan & County-Wide Facilities Strategy also thanks the Board of Trustees for their support in advancing the mission of the Bartholomew County Public Library to serve the residents of the county by connecting people, ideas, and innovative services.

Library Board

Laura Hack
Gary Gron
Stephen Shipley
Monta Frazier
Billie Whitted
Michael Wilkerson
Vern Jorck
Dawn Doup-Pandit

Strategic Working Group

Rachel Akemon
Sandy Allman
Lindsey Bailey
Valerie Baute
Decker Cavosie
Michelle Copple
Cindy Day
Stefanie Day
Art Douglas
Angela Eck
Tricia Gilson
Rachel Ginsburg
Kate Grafelman
Hannah Grimm
Dakota Hall
Jason Hatton

Missy Henderson
Tessa Hirons
Audrey Hood
Christina Kelley
Maria McCarrick
Brenda McKinney
Dave Miller
Tyler Munn
Maddie Paul
Margaret Pflueger
Claire Powell
Giselle Schilling
Molly Schroeder
Kaelyn Staley
Sonya Stretshberry
Annemarie Wallace
Michelle Williams



The library extends its sincere gratitude to The Heritage Fund and the Friends of CIAA for their generous support and recognition as sponsors.

Acknowledgments

Bartholomew County Public Library thanks the community stakeholders who contributed to the Strategic Plan Process & Framework and County-Wide Facilities Strategy by sharing their needs, challenges, opportunities, and aspirations supported by data, surveys, and anecdotal community evidence.

Community Stakeholders

Julie Abedian
Sheryl Adams
Whitney Amuchastegui
Rachelle Antcliff
Harriet Armstrong
Nance Arund-Humpf
Britt Brewer
John Burnett
Nic Cable
Stephanie Carmer
Heather Carson
Fabiana Costa
Arriann Custer
Kelly Daughtery
Tom Dell
Diane Doup
Mary Ferdon
Amber Fischvogt
Cindy Frey
Laura Garrett
Melissa Gross
Tom Harmon

Whitney Hartwell
Brooke Hawkins
Erin Hawkins
Sherri Jewett
Louis Joyner
Grace Kestler
Chuck Kime
Sue Lamborn
Carl Lienhoop
Mark Lindenlaub
Whittney Loyd
Tony London
Felipe Martinez
Richard McCoy
Luz Elena Michel
Julie Miller
Jorge Morales
Pamela Morris
Kristin Munn
Nikki Murphy
Dan Mustard
Michelle Newland

Kathy Oren
Shawn Price
Christina Rajanayakam
Aida Ramirez
Jennifer Riddle
Diane Robbins
Paulette Roberts
Jim Roberts
Shanda Sasse
Tracy Souza
Mark Stewart
Beth Stroh
Colleen Sullivan
Donna Taylor
Alyse Tucker Bounds
Ben Wagner
Liz Walsh
Chelsea Warriner
Christine Waters
Cheryl Wright
Jayme Zobrist

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Bartholomew County Public Library thanks the community organizations that actively participated in this collaborative process. These organizations effectively voiced the concerns and interests of their respective constituents, contributing their valuable knowledge, insights, and anecdotes to help shape the strategic plan. This engagement not only strengthened the bond between the library and these organizations but also fostered greater connections among the participating entities.

Community Organizations/Partners

African American Fund of Bartholomew County
The Arc of Bartholomew County
ASAP Bartholomew County
Bartholomew County Commissioners
Bartholomew County Historical Society
Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation
Bartholomew County Council
Bartholomew County Genealogical Society
BCSC Cultural Learning Center
City of Columbus
CivicLab
Columbus Area Arts Council
Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce
Columbus Area Visitors Center
Columbus Chinese Association
Columbus Human Rights Commission
Columbus IN Pride
Columbus Indiana Parks & Rec
Columbus Newcomers Club
Columbus Regional Health Foundation

The Commons
Community Center of Hope
Community Education Coalition
Council for Youth Development
Early Learning Coalition
Family School Partners
Family Services, Inc.
First Presbyterian Church
First United Methodist Church
Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation
Foundation for Youth
Friends of CIAA
Heritage Fund Community Foundation of Bartholomew County
Human Services, Inc.
Indian Association of Columbus IN
Indiana University – Columbus
IU J. Irwin Miller Architecture Program
Ivy Tech Community College
Just Friends Adult Day Services
kidscommons

Landmark Columbus Foundation
Legal Aid, Pro Bono Indiana
Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Center
Love Chapel
Mill Race Center
NAACP Bartholomew/Columbus
North Christian Church
Purdue Extension Bartholomew County
Sans Souci
Second Baptist Church Enrichment Program
Soul’s Truth Coaching
Sri Ganesh Mandir
Su Casa
Thrive Alliance
Turning Point
Unitarian Universalist Congregation
United Way of Bartholomew County
Viewpoint Books
Yellow Trail Museum

Letter from the Director

On behalf of the Board and staff, I am pleased to present this aspirational vision for the future of Bartholomew County Public Library (BCPL) to our community. This strategic plan positions BCPL as a trusted leader to responsibly use the library's assets and the county's vast network of resources to support all community members in their pursuit of a meaningful life.

As a critical anchor of Bartholomew County's civic infrastructure, you will continue to see BCPL showing up in all areas of the community with intentionality. We remain the community's trusted partner, providing access to programs, services, and collections that all enjoy. Looking forward, we are pledging to use our unique strengths as a community connector to advance and amplify resources to further opportunity for all who call Bartholomew County home.

Co-created with community partners and library staff, this plan accomplishes two things. First, it reorients our existing library services toward social impact. Second, it positions BCPL to connect community partners to amplify the great work that we all do to reach the community members who need our services the most. In this role of building partnerships in service of the public good, BCPL will be at the forefront of the new era of librarianship, one that activates the library as an essential element of civic and social infrastructure.

The library plays a unique role in our community. We are a "neutral" institution that by its very nature is open and welcoming to all. As an organization, we see everyone as a person of potential. I am proud that this strategic plan enables BCPL to be an active and unwavering partner in developing an inclusive community.

We will honor our communities by creating community connections through:

- Fostering inclusion and belonging;
- Promoting health and well being;
- Developing critical literacies;
- Providing educational and school support;
- Celebrating history and architecture; and
- Supporting the economic engine.

These commitments aren't new, but they are fresh, focused, and fueled by passionate staff who we will support in every way possible to do their important work. Thank you to our amazing partners and staff who contributed their creativity to this process. Thank you in advance to the many more people who will continue to be partners in this invigorating future. We are a stronger county when we work together, and the kindness within and our shared passion for this special place will generate a vibrant, welcoming community where all of our stories are celebrated.



Jason Hatton
Library Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JH'.

Jason Hatton
Library Director

Introduction

Margaret Sullivan Studio engaged in a year-long strategic plan project with Bartholomew County Public Library. The consultants engaged with a team of the library's leadership and staff to facilitate a series of highly participatory community engagement sessions and focus groups that invited a diverse cross section of community leaders, organizations, and individual stakeholders. As part of this process, a thorough review of library statistics, demographic data, and growth forecasts was completed to ground future strategies in the context of today's reality.

The purpose of the work was to develop a flexible strategic framework and county-wide facilities strategy for a contemporary 21st-century library system that will flourish along with its community of users. This process employed service design techniques, which enabled the staff to generate a meaningful future vision for BCPL and develop skills for ongoing transformation and relevancy.

Evaluation

Regular and ongoing evaluation of this strategic plan is crucial to success. The Patron Services, Collections, Programming, and Outreach teams bring together staff serving in the various departments of the library. Each team will work to implement and evaluate aspects of the strategic plan that coincide with its specific areas. The director will work closely with these teams, the management team, and other staff to monitor progress and adjust services, programs, and resources as necessary.

Outcomes and success will be gauged and evaluated based on data collected through surveys, program attendance, circulation numbers, database usage, and the like.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

As a local government entity, the library’s main source of revenue is derived from property and local income taxes. In 2010, property tax caps which limit the amount of tax paid were put in the Indiana Constitution. While this is great for the taxpayers’ wallet, it has put a strain on the abilities of local governmental units to conduct business. Thankfully, Bartholomew County is a growing area and assessed valuation continues to increase thus reducing the effect of property tax caps on BCPL’s budget.

However, rising costs continue to push against the library’s annual operating budget. Every line item continues to see increases from inflation and growth of general costs. For example, digital resources are much more expensive than print resources. To meet the community needs, BCPL must purchase titles in a multitude of formats. The library strives every day to be intentional about the dollars spent and to be as efficient as possible with its resources.

Capital funds are also an issue. Large capital expenses in recent years have reduced our LIRF (Library Improvement Reserve Fund) to its lowest level in many years. Due to rising operating costs, BCPL has not been able to replenish LIRF as desired. The needed maintenance and renovation costs will need to be carefully considered and most likely staged in order to have enough funds. As part of the implementation of this plan, BCPL will need to look at other sources such as fundraisers, gifts, grants, and issuing debt.

Collaboration

BCPL understands that it cannot achieve its greatest impact alone. It requires partnerships and collaboration with the many wonderful agencies and organizations in our community. The library will continue to forge new partnerships at every opportunity. The library’s partners



Photo Source: Visit Columbus Indiana

include, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation, Columbus Area Arts Council, United Way of Bartholomew County, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Columbus Area Visitors Center, Columbus Indiana Parks & Rec, Bartholomew County Historical Society, Early Learning Coalition, Ecumenical Assembly of Bartholomew County Churches, Thrive Alliance, Yellow Trail Museum, Landmark Columbus Foundation, and area preschools, Staff are also encouraged to sit on boards and participate in community activities that help further the library’s mission.

BCPL also believes strongly in networking and learning from other public libraries around the state and country. Staff members regularly participate in roundtables and other opportunities for formal and informal networking. Staff are active in the Indiana Library Federation through its boards, committees, and conferences.

Professional Development Strategy

The library’s staff is its greatest asset. BCPL recognizes this through many opportunities for professional development. Along with the statewide networking and professional activities, BCPL sends many staff to several national and regional conferences. Staff have attended Public Library Association (PLA), Back-in-Circulation,

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Sirsi-Dynix User group (COSUGI) conferences and many others.

The library values life-long learning and education for its staff in addition to patrons. BCPL reimburses staff for taking library science courses to acquire certification necessary for their positions. BCPL is fortunate to have an endowed gift fund (Frances Carr Memorial Fund) and a line item in its operating budget for some of these professional development opportunities.

Staff training is a high priority. Through staff in-service days and other sessions throughout the year, the library provides training on readers’ advisory, technology, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and much more.

Equipment Retention Schedule

The library aims to refresh all computers, printers and copiers, and network equipment every five years. However, emerging technologies may cause the library to purchase additional or replacement equipment sooner. All other items will be replaced on an as needed basis.



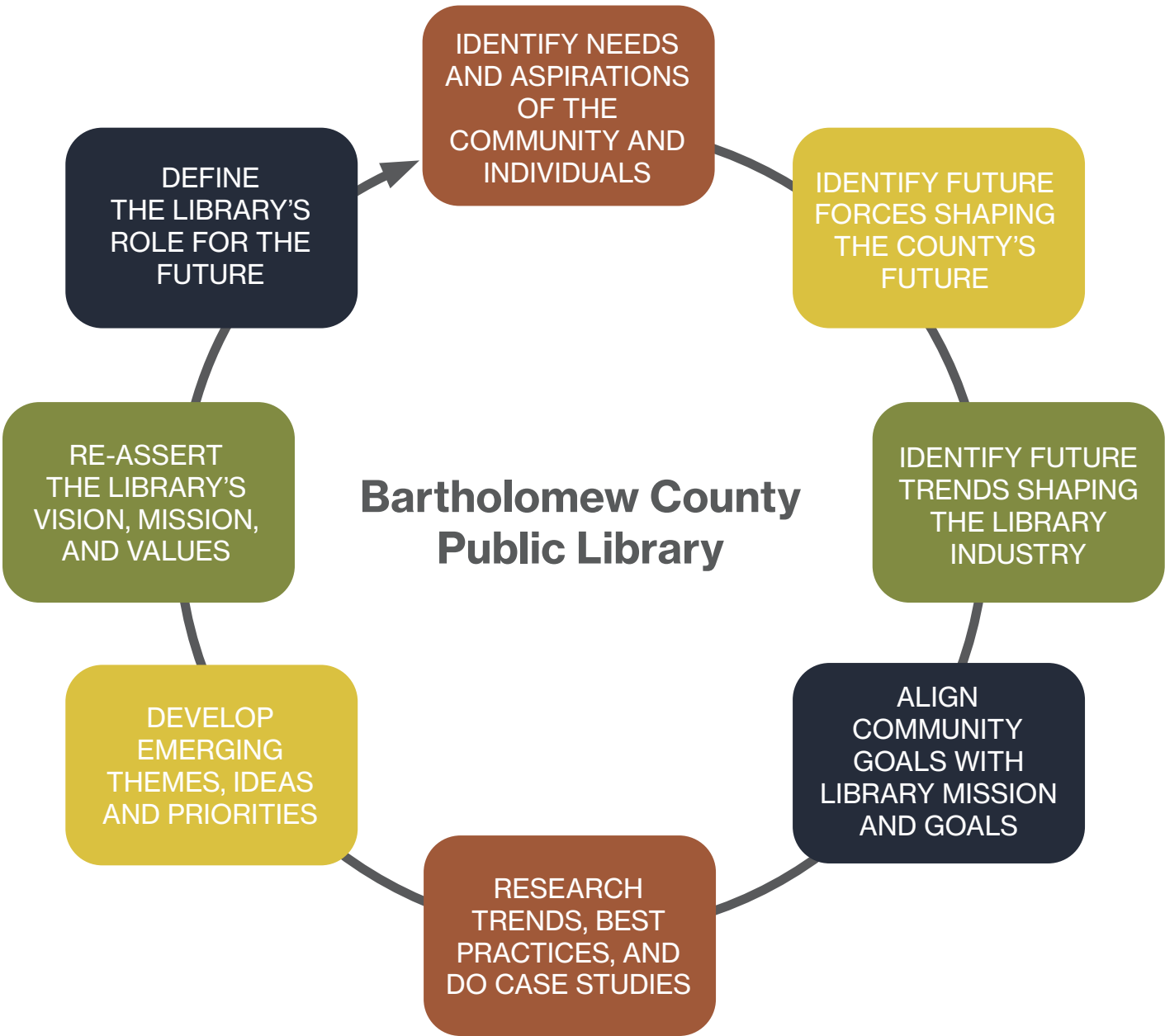
Photo Source: Wikipedia

Methodology

Bartholomew County Public Library employed a comprehensive discovery, engagement, and planning process that focused on community co-creation and collective impact to develop a plan for current and future capital projects.

A New Approach to Strategic Work

By recognizing the need for a new strategic plan to effectively address the evolving needs of Bartholomew County, Bartholomew County Public Library sought to evaluate its existing strengths and opportunities for evolution. Collaborating with Margaret Sullivan Studio, the library gathered community and stakeholder input to support its transformation into a more community-centric institution. This involved a collaborative engagement process that utilized human-centered design methodologies, community economic development practices, collective impact principles, and social impact assessment methods. As a result of this method, the library’s aim to serve as a crossroads, connector, and catalyst for driving solutions to address community challenges emerged. Emphasizing an asset-based perspective, the library will focus on the strengths of the community and individuals, aiming to understand what motivates and drives each resident. By acting with intentionality and expediency, Bartholomew County Public Library will serve as a lifelong partner, providing resources, expertise, and connections to support residents on their journey toward purpose, happiness, and accomplishment.



Why We Do This Work

Libraries Must Meet the Demands of a Growing Community

The increasing population and community needs emphasize the importance of expanding library facilities to provide adequate space for the community to learn, play, study, and grow. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bartholomew County experienced a modest increase in population during the pandemic. BCPL’s approximate 104,700 total square feet of public space serves a population of about 81,845 Bartholomew County residents. Currently, the library operates two locations as well as mobile services and outreach programs that circulate a diverse range of materials and serve a significant number of library cardholders annually. However, the library facilities have fallen short of meeting the growing demands of the community. Challenges hindering BCPL’s ability to fully support their evolving community needs and aspirations include their ratio of building size to community served and the inability to upgrade technology due to facilities infrastructure and building materials.

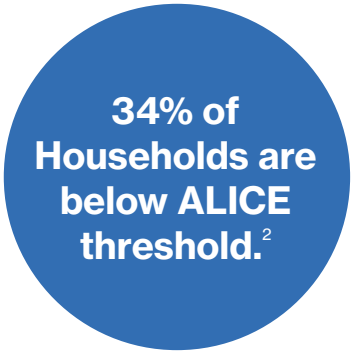
A Growing County Facing Inequality and Poverty

ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) is an assessment tool created by the United Way to understand and advocate for the urgent needs of those whose earnings are above the federal poverty level (FPL) but less than what a specific community’s cost of living requires. The populations that fit this criteria are

An estimated 658 people moved to Bartholomew County from a foreign country between July 1, 2021, and July 1, 2022, which accounts for roughly 81% of the county’s population growth in 2022.¹

critical to the service economy of any community and are uniquely positioned to benefit the most from the library’s ability to provide essential resources to stabilize quality of life essentials.

Based on online data, it has been observed that as the county experiences growth, the wealth gap widens. The population living in certain communities within Bartholomew County, including East Columbus and Taylorsville, faces more economic challenges compared to others. Several community challenges were identified through discussions between library staff and community-based organization leaders. These include limited access to affordable housing, an uneven distribution of poverty within the community, challenges related to community integration for newcomers, restricted access to books, and increasing concerns about mental health support systems for both youth and adults.



¹ Signs of a comeback: Bartholomew County saw some population growth last year.
² United Way of Bartholomew, "2019 Community Needs Assessment." See page 19 for full resource list.
³ DATA USA, Bartholomew County, IN

How We Do This Work

Community Strengths and Assets

Columbus boasts a remarkable collection of buildings designed by world-renowned architects. However, although every corner of Columbus reveals a masterpiece of design and innovation, the county is not without its needs and challenges. Analyzing the geographical distribution of amenities and economic resources, the community's collective strengths and particular needs have been identified. This, in turn, allows the library to envision where and who it might improve and/or expand its services to better serve the community.

Community Collectives

As a convener, connector, and liaison between the partners and residents of Bartholomew County, BCPL is in an extraordinary position to catalyze collective impact and economic opportunity. The library has meaningful connections and provides services throughout the county; its foundational role in generating community trust and collaboration is one of the library's strengths. BCPL enjoys powerful county-wide partnerships with Bartholomew County government, private enterprises, and community influencers. During community stakeholder workshops, community partners and the library were excited about the opportunity to reimagine their potential strategic partnerships to expand reach, innovation, and impact.

Placemaking for Social Impact

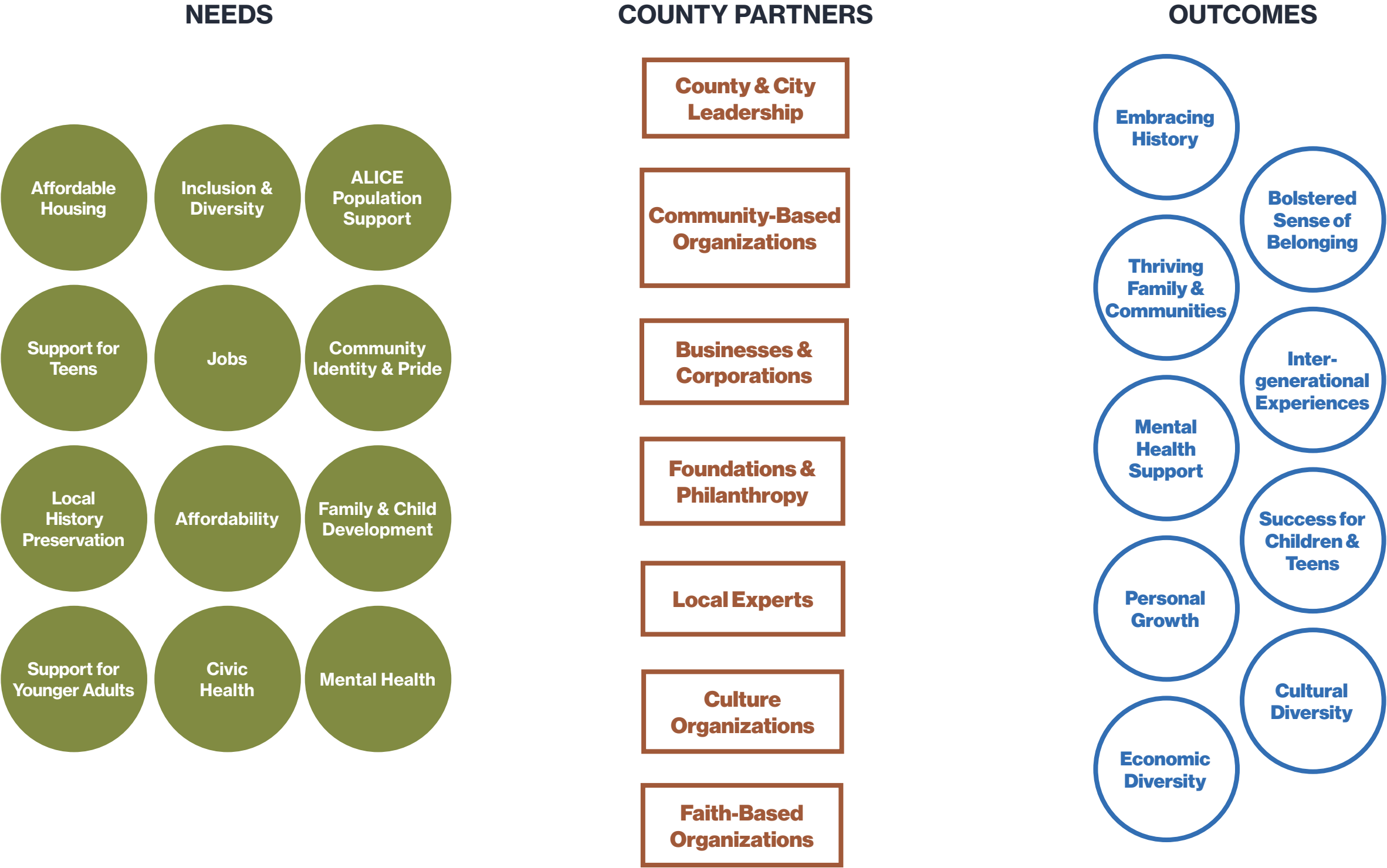
Libraries play a significant role in various aspects of social impact. Placemaking, which involves creating spaces that are not only functional but also serve as catalysts for community engagement, social connections, and community transformation, is essential to shape the social fabric of the community. By designing welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant spaces, the library strives to foster a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for individuals to connect, learn, and grow.

Through placemaking initiatives, the library aims to create an environment where community members can come together, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and actively participate in shaping the future of the community. BCPL's commitment to placemaking for social impact reflects its belief in the transformative power of libraries as dynamic community spaces that go beyond the traditional role of information provision to serve as hubs for inspiration, connection, and positive social change.



Strategic Working Group Asset Map Workshop

COUNTY ALIGNMENT



Needs & Opportunities of the Library

The Bartholomew County Public Library is at a pivotal juncture, marked by a series of pressing needs and promising opportunities. It's evident that the current library facilities are falling short of effectively serving the community's needs. The constraints of limited space are stifling the library's growth and, consequently, its potential impact for the community. With the county experiencing significant demographic shifts and rapid socioeconomic changes, there is a clear call to provide access to educational opportunities that can adapt to this evolving landscape.

To fulfill its mission more comprehensively, the library must take bold steps to connect with the entire county through outreach services and partnerships, thereby bridging gaps in income and service accessibility.

CHALLENGES



OPPORTUNITIES



According to the most recent data from the 2019 Community Needs Assessment that considered community disparities across income, access, healthcare, food insecurity, mental health and more, there is still a substantial demand for increased support in the suburban areas and neighborhoods experiencing limited access to resources.⁴

BCPL'S Outreach Department works diligently to connect with the community through initiatives such as the Bookmobile, BCPL Express, and outreach programs. However, with increased demand the library struggles to ensure that resources are distributed equitably.

The library continues to tackle these disparities and is working hard to promote a more equitable and inclusive community.

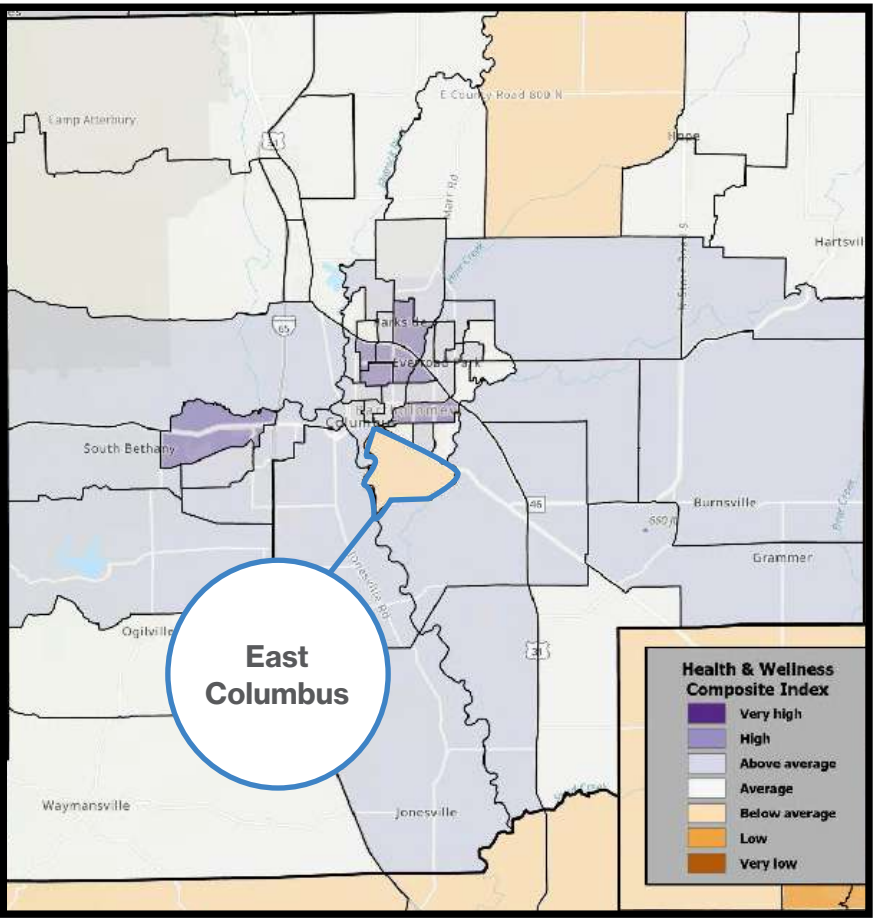
- **Over 10,000 households struggle to meet their most basic needs.**
- **Over 3,000 children suffer from food insecurity.**
- **Nearly 700 households do not have a vehicle.**
- **10.7% of Bartholomew County residents lack proper access to healthcare.**
- **19 out of the 25 most common jobs do not earn enough to support a single working parent with one child.**
- **63.7% of the Hispanic population is below the ALICE Threshold, which is nearly double the amount of the White and Black populations.**



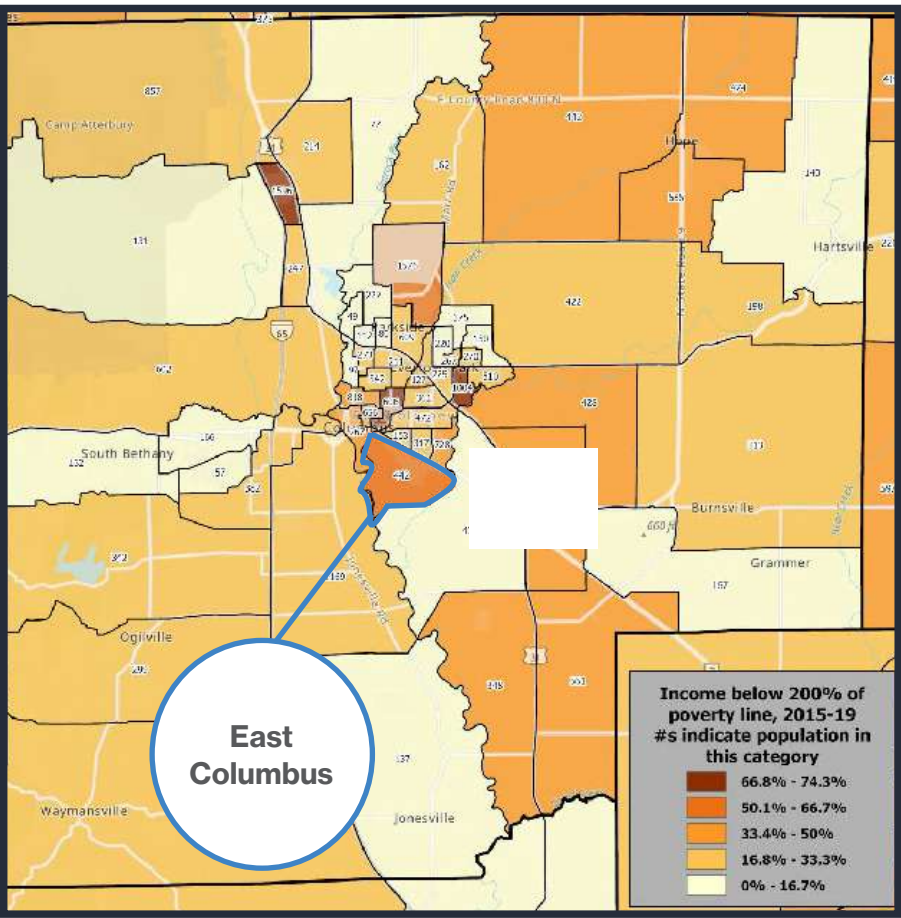
⁴United Way of Bartholomew, "2019 Community Needs Assessment." See page 19 for full resource list.

The data suggests there is a need to concentrate resources and social service support in East Columbus.

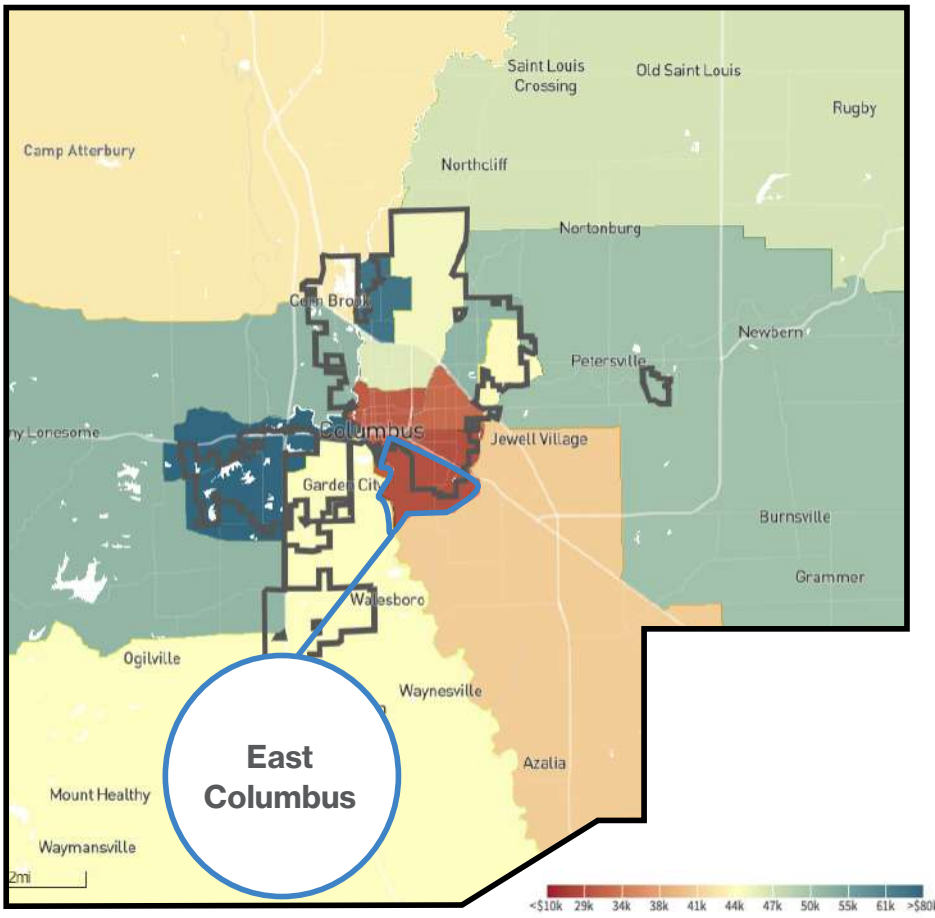
These maps illustrate the challenges facing the East Columbus community. The composite index for health and well-being, as well as income above the poverty line, is relatively low in metropolitan areas within Columbus.⁵ By tracing back household income based on where children grew up, the data shows individuals who grew up in East Columbus have significantly lower incomes compared to those who grew up in other areas of Columbus. There is a substantial gap that needs to be filled to provide the necessary resources and services to support all residents equitably.



Health & Wellness Composite Index
The health and wellness composite index is the average of the access to care and proximity to public outdoor areas.



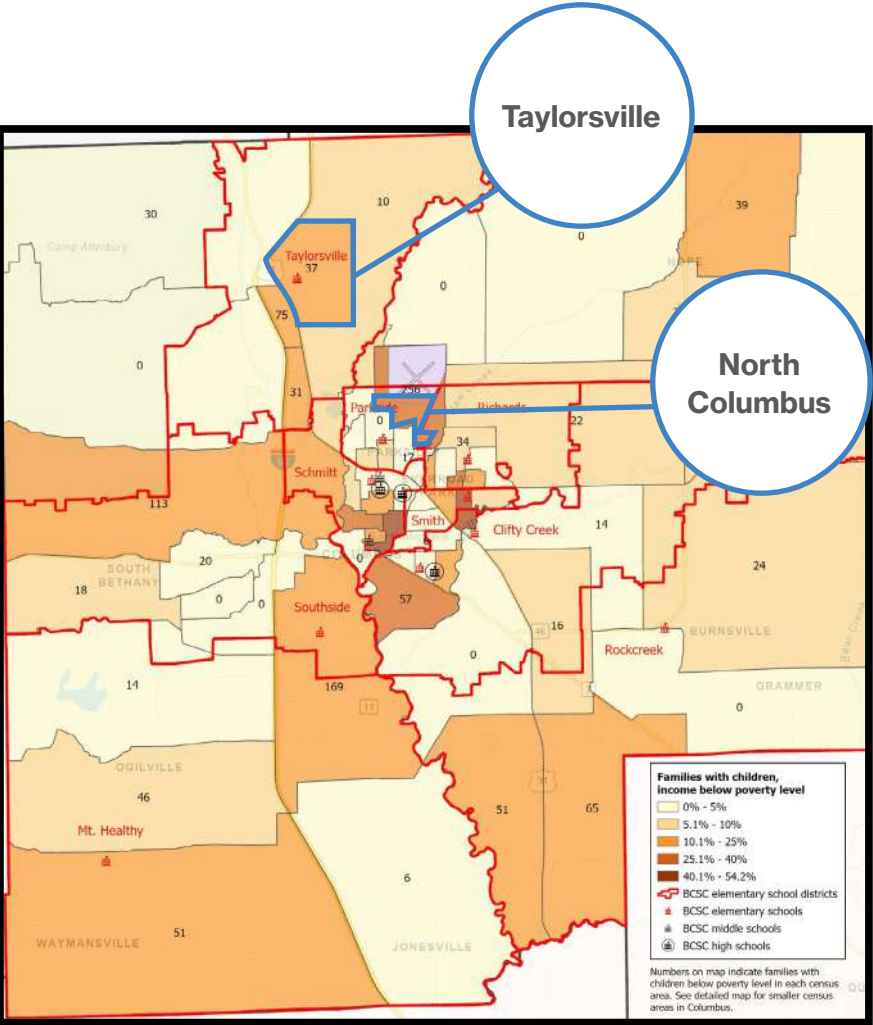
Population living in and near poverty, 2015-2019



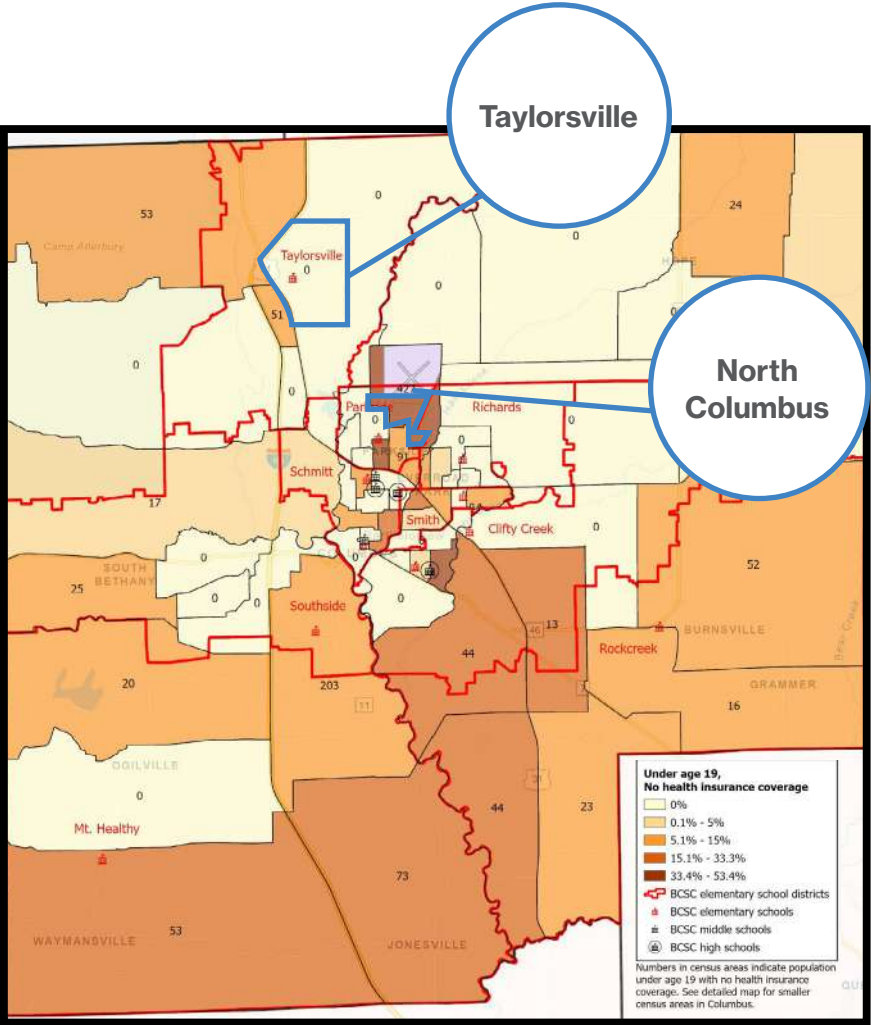
Income for households with children
This map illustrates household incomes by the neighborhood where children grew up.

⁵ George Towers, "Poverty, Income, and Wealth in Bartholomew County, 1990-2019," 2022. See page 19 for full resource list.

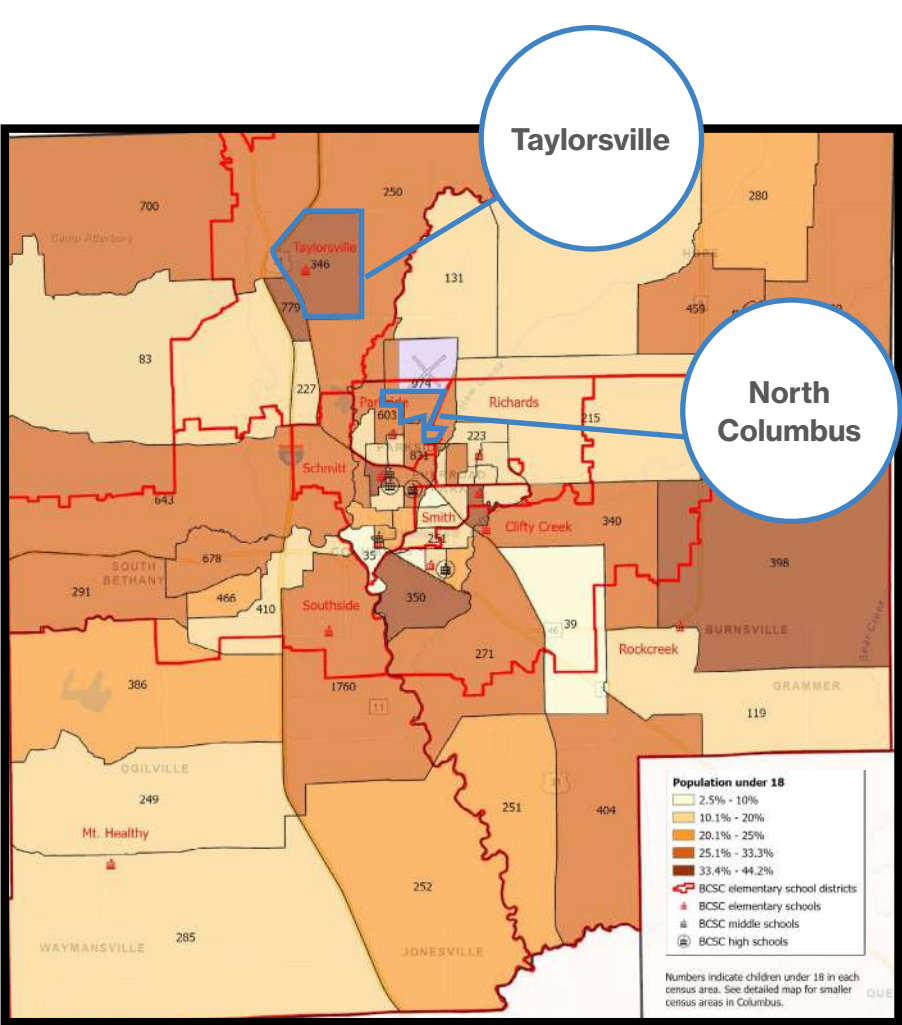
The data suggests there is a need to provide educational and whole-family support in Taylorsville and North Columbus.⁶



Percentage of Families with Children and Income below Poverty Level



Percentage of Residents under Age 19 with No Health Insurance Coverage

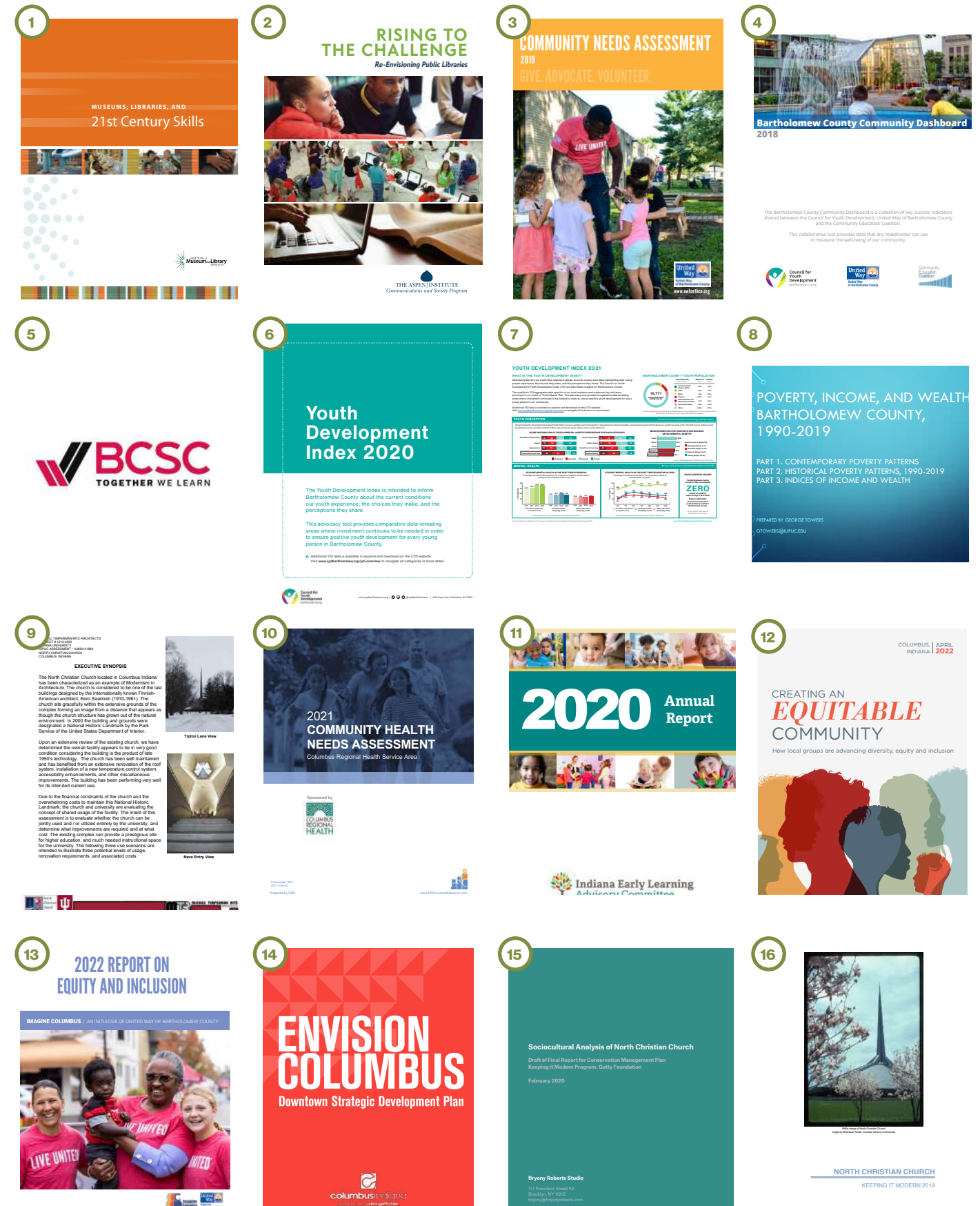


Percentage of Population under Age 18

⁶ George Towers, "Poverty, Income, and Wealth in Bartholomew County, 1990-2019," 2022. See page 19 for full resource list.

Resources

- 1 “Museums, Libraries and 21st Century Skills”, Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, 2009
- 2 “Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries.” The Aspen Institute, 2014
- 3 “2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary,” United Way of Bartholomew County, 2019
- 4 “Bartholomew County Community Dashboard”, Council for Youth Development, United Way of Bartholomew County, and Community Education Coalition, 2018
- 5 “Equity Works!” CivicLab, 2020
- 6 “Youth Development Index 2020,” Council for Youth Development, 2020
- 7 “Youth Development Index 2021,” Council for Youth Development, 2021
- 8 “Poverty, Income, and Wealth in Bartholomew County, 1990-2019,” George Towers, 2022
- 9 “Executive Synopsis” (North Christian Church Facility Assessment), Michell Timperman Ritz Architects, 2014
- 10 “2021 Community Health Needs Assessment,” Columbus Regional Health, 2021
- 11 “2020 Annual Report,” Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee, 2020
- 12 “Creating An Equitable Community,” Heritage Fund Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, 2022
- 13 “2022 Report on Equity and Inclusion,” United Way of Bartholomew County, 2022
- 14 “Envision Columbus, Downtown Strategic Development Plan,” David Rubin Land Collective and City of Columbus, 2019
- 15 “Sociocultural Analysis of North Christian Church” (draft), Bryony Roberts Studio, February 2022
- 16 J. Paul Getty Foundation “Keeping It Modern” Grant Application for North Christian Church prepared by Landmark Columbus, 2019



STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS & FRAMEWORK

**Collaboration for a
Flourishing Community**

Our
Vision
inspires our work.

A place where all people feel
SAFE, WELCOMED, and INCLUDED

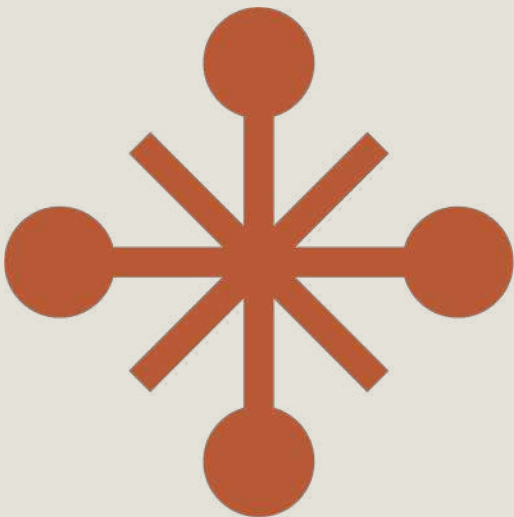
A place where all are
EMPOWERED and SUPPORTED

A place where we spark and
inspire **JOY**

A place where all are
FLOURISHING

Our
Mission
is our work.

The Bartholomew County
Public Library is the community
crossroads – connecting people,
ideas, information, and experiences
to empower everyone on their
journey of lifelong learning.



Our
Values
ground how we work.

- HONESTY & INTEGRITY**
- RESPECT & COMPASSION**
- JOY & PLAY**
- JUSTICE & EQUITY**
- HARD WORK & COLLABORATION**
- IMAGINATION & CREATIVITY**

Strategic Areas of Focus

The strategic areas of focus emerged from identifying the needs, strengths, challenges, and opportunities that communities in Bartholomew County are experiencing. They illustrate BCPL’s goals to create greater impact and will help inform future decisions.

The areas of focus were developed through an extended process of gathering and analyzing feedback from staff, the public, and stakeholders regarding the library’s future. Guided by these strategic areas of focus, BCPL will intentionally activate staff skills and talents, key partnerships, services, collections, technologies, and spaces to create a positive impact throughout Bartholomew County.





Fostering Inclusion & Belonging

Creating a welcoming environment for all and addressing each individual's unique needs



Supporting the Economic Engine

Assisting patrons to meet their economic, financial, and career goals



Celebrating History & Architecture

Instilling pride in both individual and community identity while embracing Bartholomew County's history and architecture



Promoting Health & Well-being

Heightening the quality of life for community members by promoting personal wellness and mental health



Developing Critical Literacies

Fostering literacies as the basis of an individual's ability to participate fully in society



Providing Educational & School Support

Preparing the students and parents of Bartholomew County to engage with and succeed in their academic programs across all grade levels, ages, and school types

Creating Community Connections

Creating community connections is Bartholomew County Public Library's core initiative, and the key to successfully addressing each of its strategic areas of focus. Just as BCPL plays a critical role in connecting people to ideas, information, and services, it relies on community connections - with both people and organizations - to carry out the work of promoting health and well-being, developing critical literacies, fostering inclusion and belonging, and each of its other areas of focus. BCPL's dedication to this core initiative aims to promote inclusivity, coalition building, and overall togetherness within the community.



Fostering Inclusion & Belonging

The Inclusion & Belonging initiative promotes accessibility and creates a welcoming environment for all. BCPL will foster an inclusive atmosphere by offering library programs and services at a variety of times and locations, and in languages other than English when it makes sense and is possible to do so. It will also train staff to interact with one another and with patrons in ways that affirm individual and cultural identities, and recognize the dignity of all people. BCPL’s dedication to this initiative will allow underrepresented community members to feel not only seen but also celebrated, fostering a sense of community belonging.

What we know:

- 13% of the population speaks languages other than English.⁷
- Over the past decade, Bartholomew County has been among the nation’s fastest diversifying counties with a 67% diversity index gain.⁸

KEY OUTCOMES

- Make people feel welcomed and included
- Bring a sense of community ownership and belonging to all
- Ensure underrepresented populations feel their community is actively working to meet their needs
- Work to erase feelings of shame and embarrassment

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- 4-H Youth Development of Bartholomew County
- BCSC Cultural Learning Center
- Columbus IN Pride
- Council for Youth Development
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Columbus Chinese Association
- Family School Partners
- Su Casa
- Columbus Interfaith
- Indian Association of Columbus IN
- NAACP Columbus/Bartholomew



⁷ CivicLab, “Equity Works!” 2020. See page 19 for full resource list.

⁸ Columbus Regional Health, “2021 Community Health Needs Assessment,” 2021. See page 19 for full resource list.

Supporting the Economic Engine

The Economic Engine initiative focuses on assisting patrons to meet their economic, financial, and career goals. The programs that BCPL creates to support this initiative will ensure patrons are prepared for the job market, know how to be responsible and organized in their personal finances, and help make their career goals a reality.

What we know:

- Bartholomew County has a 11.6% overall poverty rate.⁹
- 36.4% of the population is living with food insecurity.¹⁰
- 19 of 25 of the most common jobs do not earn enough to support a single working parent with one child.¹¹
- Across neighborhoods in Bartholomew County there is on average a 20% difference in poverty rate, a 42% difference in youth poverty rate and a \$66K difference in median income.¹²

KEY OUTCOMES

- Provide community members with the support needed to achieve their financial goals
- Create a financially literate community
- Connect patrons to resources related to basic needs such as housing, transportation, and food

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce
- Community Education Coalition
- Family Services, Inc.
- Love Chapel
- Bartholomew County Financial Literacy Coalition
- Purdue Extension Bartholomew County
- SCORE, South East Indiana Chapter
- United Way of Bartholomew County
- Sans Souci
- Brighter Days
- Turning Point
- Local financial institutions



⁹ DATA USA, Bartholomew County, IN

¹⁰ United Way of Bartholomew County, "2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary," 2019. See page 19 for full resource list.

¹¹ United Way of Bartholomew County, "2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary," 2019. See page 19 for full resource list.

¹² CivicLab, "Equity Works!" 2020. See page 19 for full resource list.

Celebrating History & Architecture

The History & Architecture initiative aims to instill pride in both individual and community identity. BCPL will be dedicated to educating its patrons on Bartholomew County’s existing public art, architecture, and history to encourage appreciation of and contributions to the county’s cultural richness.

What we know:

- Bartholomew County has a deep history of industrial innovation and design excellence.
- Bartholomew County is known for its notable public art and architecturally significant buildings.
- Every other year, the Landmark Columbus Foundation invites a select roster of designers to create new, temporary works to be installed throughout downtown Columbus.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Encourage a stronger sense of pride in their individual and community identities
- Educate patrons on Bartholomew County’s public art, architecture, and history to increase appreciation of and contributions to the county’s cultural richness
- Foster cultural appreciation and an overall sense of community identity

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- BCSC Cultural Learning Center
- Bartholomew County Historical Society
- Heritage Fund Community Foundation of Bartholomew County
- Landmark Columbus Foundation
- IU J. Irwin Miller Architecture Program
- Columbus Area Arts Council
- Columbus Area Visitors Center
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Yellow Trail Museum
- Bartholomew County Genealogical Society
- Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum



Promoting Health & Well-Being

The Health & Well-Being initiative aims to heighten the quality of life for all community members by promoting all aspects of personal wellness. This initiative strives to provide patrons with the information and resources needed for them to make informed decisions regarding their physical and mental health and well-being.

What we know:

- Over the past 10 years, substance abuse and mental health have topped education and housing as residents' main concerns.¹³
- Only 10% of low income residents meet physical activity recommendations.¹⁴
- In 2021, 72.4% of Bartholomew County residents were overweight, and 39.4% were obese.¹⁵

KEY OUTCOMES

- Work to destigmatize mental health issues
- Foster a healthier community
- Encourage patrons to learn more about their own body and mind
- Support patrons through their access to mental and physical health resources

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Thrive Alliance
- Columbus Regional Health
- Columbus Indiana Parks & Rec
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Purdue Extension Bartholomew County
- ASAP Bartholomew County
- Mental Health Matters
- Family Services, Inc.
- Foundation For Youth
- Council for Youth Development
- Just Friends Adult Day Services
- Mill Race Center



¹³ United Way of Bartholomew County, "2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary," 2019. See page 19 for full resource list.

¹⁴ United Way of Bartholomew County, "2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary," 2019. See page 19 for full resource list.

¹⁵ Columbus Regional Health, "2021 Community Health Needs Assessment," 2021. See page 19 for full resource list.

Developing Critical Literacies

The Critical Literacies initiative focuses on BCPL's role in fostering multiple literacies to empower individuals to participate fully in society. BCPL will educate patrons on literacies including digital, textual, financial, media, medical, and visual.

What we know:

- In a 2022 national survey, only 42% of respondents reported they were taught to analyze news stories for bias and credibility in school.¹⁶
- Sixty-two percent of adults reported having no opportunity in school to reflect on how media affects their beliefs, feelings, and actions.¹⁷

KEY OUTCOMES

- Keep patrons educated on rapidly changing technologies
- Foster various literacies to empower individuals to actively participate in society

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- 4-H Youth Development of Bartholomew County
- Purdue Extension Bartholomew County
- BCSC Cultural Learning Center
- Community Education Coalition
- Columbus Propeller
- Indiana University - Columbus
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation
- Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation



¹⁶ <https://medialiteracynow.org/nationalsurvey2022/>

¹⁷ <https://medialiteracynow.org/nationalsurvey2022/>

Providing Educational & School Support

The Educational & School Support initiative aims to better prepare the students and caregivers of Bartholomew County to succeed and engage in their academic pursuits. BCPL’s dedication to this initiative will help to close the county’s opportunity gaps and support students’ future educational and economic success.

What we know:

- Educational attainment varies across the county.
- 43% of ALICE families could not afford school lunch in 2017.¹⁸
- High school graduation rate for Latino students is 17.6% lower than the average rate.¹⁹

KEY OUTCOMES

- Support educators with resources
- Increase access to and awareness of available resources
- Empower students to thrive by making sure they are set up for success early on
- Foster a healthy caregiver-student relationship
- Support families and children where they are
- Have a good relationship with students

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- 4-H Youth Development of Bartholomew County
- Purdue Extension Bartholomew County
- Community Education Coalition
- Council for Youth Development Bartholomew County
- Foundation For Youth
- Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee
- Preschools, daycares, and other early learning organizations
- Public, private, and home schools



¹⁸ United Way of Bartholomew County, "2019 Community Needs Assessment, Executive Summary," 2019. See page 19 for full resource list.

¹⁹ CivicLab, "Equity Works!" 2020. See page 19 for full resource list.

Partner Activation Strategy

One of the key strategies to achieve the outcome goals outlined in this plan will be to work more intentionally with Bartholomew County’s vast network of community service providers. As a leader and catalyst of the future collective impact model, BCPL will generate value to residents by amplifying the impact of Bartholomew County’s robust community-based network of services and break down silos through strategic partnerships, shared outcome goals, and service distribution – maximizing utilization of the library buildings, mobile services, and outreach programming. By strategically connecting with existing community resources, place-based programming, and the talented workforce of community partners, BCPL can help all institutions connect critical resources to community members more efficiently and effectively.

At the February 2023 Community Partner Lunch, community partners generated impact statements they could imagine accomplishing with the library. During the next phase of this work, BCPL will use these examples as the basis to develop strategic relationships and shared outcome goals.



Photo Source: Hadley Fruits



Next Steps

1. Orient Services toward Strategic Areas of Focus

In the near future, you will see library staff building out work plans, incorporating programs, collections, and technology strategies that deepen the goals, objectives, and tactics of the strategic focus areas.

2. Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

In the near future, you will see the library listening, learning, and engaging with partners in the county in meaningful ways that enable the impact of our collective work to reach a larger community.

3. Expand Placemaking for Social Impact

In the near future you will see the library embracing its role to deliver joyful, playful, and meaningful experiences through programs in our buildings, with partners, and through outreach services.

4. Implement County-Wide Facilities Strategy

In the near future, you will see the library continuing to plan an ambitious expansion to ensure that all residents are enjoying high-quality services, that learning needs are being met, and that BCPL is a leader in providing the places, tools, resources, and expertise for inclusive placemaking experiences.



Conclusion

Strategic Plan

The library, as a public institution, exists for a singular purpose: the benefit of people. More specifically, the Bartholomew County Public Library exists to serve the residents of Bartholomew County. BCPL is, by design, people-centered. So too was the strategic plan process undertaken by library staff and leadership. The process demanded conversation, reflection, and collaboration, not just within BCPL, but with community partners and stakeholders, on the nature of the library’s work and how it relates to the broader needs of the community. In doing this work, library staff honed their mission, vision, and values; developed strategic areas of focus; and, most importantly, came to a shared understanding of their role as a trusted institution within the community. It is the hope of library staff and leadership that going forward these will be used to both frame their day-to-day work and to guide their decision-making, for the benefit of the people of Bartholomew County.