

**RUSSELL LIBRARY
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

STRATEGIC PLAN

Background

Established in 1875, Russell Library has been designated as the public library of Middletown. We are also an association library, incorporated as the Russell Library Company. Funding is primarily from the City of Middletown. Strong, personalized service, a broad range of resources, and an array of educational and enrichment programs have resulted in extensive usage and a very favorable community perception. While many long-time residents trace their roots to Italy, Ireland, Poland and other nations in Europe, we have an increasingly diverse population of 48,000, with a public school minority population of 44% (25% Black, 13% Hispanic, 5% Asian American).

The Library plays a strong role in a lively mix of community educational and cultural institutions, which includes Wesleyan University and Middlesex Community College. While city residents use the Library extensively, we also serve a regional population. Patrons often use the Library without borrowing materials, such as for public computers, programs, and reading current periodicals and newspapers.

This plan is shaped by the changing nature of library use, information seeking, and technology. Maintaining a balance between print and non-print materials and technology is very important. Each year, we examine community needs, our past progress, and future opportunities, and set new goals.

Mission Statement

Russell Library is “A Gateway to the Future of Middletown,” dedicated to providing the diverse community with the highest quality of library service, reliable information, and lifelong educational, recreational and cultural resources for all ages, abilities and backgrounds. We help children explore the world around and within them, enable teens to grow towards new understandings, and ensure that adults have access to the fullness of human experience. The mission of the Russell Library Company, which is derived from its charter, is to receive, hold and manage the property and income of the corporation, from whatever source derived; and to establish, increase and maintain a free public library in the City of Middletown.

Priorities

Collections: We will provide a wide collection of materials to respond to community needs and interests. The Library will continue to draw from the resources of other libraries for materials not in its collection. As needs, formats and technology change, our collections will reflect the pattern of use.

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Personnel: We will make optimum use of all our human resources in meeting our goals.

- The Russell Library Company is comprised of 100 city residents who meet annually to assess the Library's progress and to elect two members each year as Trustees for three-year terms.
- The Board of Trustees are six Company Trustees, six appointed by the City, and one member of the Russell family, who meet monthly to review finances, establish policy, oversee operations, set long- and short-range goals, guide administration of the Library, and oversee the performance of the Director.
- The Administration (Director and Assistant Director) plans and implements the operation of the Library, in consultation with the Department Heads.
- Library Staff provide materials, arrange programs, and assist the public in using the Library.
- Friends of the Russell Library and other Volunteers provide vital financial and program support.

Patrons: Our users are diverse in age, background and ability.

Outreach: We will reach out to day care centers, schools, senior locations, organizations, agencies, businesses, religious institutions, and individuals. We will use a wide range of publicity, publications and our web site to connect with the public beyond the Library.

Technology: We will provide technology and user support for fast access to information and library resources, including from outside the building. Public computer classes assist users in a wide range of levels of experience. The Library is a member of Libraries Online, Inc. (LION), a computer network of 22 libraries, providing an Integrated Library System, with telecommunications, bibliographic services, circulation support, and links to other libraries and the Internet.

Community Cultural Center: As access to educational and cultural activities for all ages is vital, we will provide informational, educational, enrichment and entertainment programs throughout the year.

Physical Plant: Our physical plant enables the mission statement and priorities to be fully implemented. The original building at 123 Broad Street was expanded in 1984 and has been periodically renovated since then. It houses public services for children and adults, offices, and meeting and program rooms. Administrative Services and Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut occupy the first floor of 234 Court Street, while the Connecticut Library Consortium rents the second floor. The vacant building at 139 Broad Street is not in good repair but is used for storage, staff parking, and possible future expansion.

Finances: The primary source of operating and capital revenue is the City of Middletown. The Russell Library Company, State of Connecticut, outside grants, and contributions from individuals, organizations, and the Friends of the Russell Library provide additional funds.

Implementation

November: Board Strategic Planning Committee review/revise proposed plan

November: Department Heads review proposed plan

December: Board of Trustees review/revise/adopt plan