

Mid-Hudson Library System Vision Statement

System Vision

During the next five years, the Mid-Hudson Library System (the “System”) needs to work with the member libraries to assist them in providing quality library service to their patrons.

Quality service has been defined as ensuring patrons have a positive experience at the library, being treated with respect and obtaining the information they requested in a timely manner. Operationally this requires that:

- Libraries identify and promote services for their communities;
- Staff have the resources to fill the request of their patrons;
- Staff be skilled in customer service and understand all available resources and services;
- The library infrastructure function seamlessly and efficiently;
- Libraries be recognized as a valuable, cost-efficient resource in their communities; and
- Libraries continually review their programs for effectiveness and responsiveness

The 2007-2011 plan describes the role the System plays in achieving this overarching vision for quality library service.

Challenges

Environmental Trends

The Mid-Hudson region is undergoing a transformation. The MHLS Project 2022, through a series of focus groups, identified the areas of change as: Changing communities, changing region, changes in the way people work, and changes in the way people live.

Our communities are becoming less centralized, often lacking a focal point for activities. As the population has increased, infrastructure issues such as transportation, schools and land development are becoming more complex. People are more likely to take public stands on issues and the use and allocation of tax dollars is under continual scrutiny. Many of our communities are becoming tourist destinations and are refocusing their efforts in that area.

The region is experiencing an influx of weekenders settling into second homes and retirees choosing to make this their primary residence. We are also seeing an influx of speakers of languages other than English.

People's worklives are changing. More people commute or work non-traditional hours. Businesses are striving for 24/7 service hours. Many people are looking to the Mid-Hudson Valley as a location for telecommuting or home based businesses.

Lifestyle changes are resulting in busier schedules. The traditional family structure is changing with more people balancing work life, children's schedules and leisure time. People are more accustomed to computerized research and "e-tail," demanding instant results.

Library Trends

Libraries have used the Internet to make their collections available to any resident throughout the region with a simple click of the mouse. For the increasing numbers of patrons who use multiple libraries within the system, the notion of a home library has become foreign. In fact, they see no functional boundaries for local libraries. This patron perception requires more interdependence among libraries and suggests that who owns an item is not as critical as how quickly it can be delivered. People also want items in varying formats including CDs, DVDs, Large Print and Audio books.

Libraries are also becoming a primary stop for people who want to use the Internet. The demand for public-access workstations and wireless networks continues to grow as does the need for training and supervision.

Libraries are being looked at as a place in the community where people can meet, learn and socialize – connecting with their neighbors or with people who have similar interests. Most libraries need more space to meet these demands.

As libraries respond to these needs, we are seeing growth in budget and staffing levels. This is changing the nature of libraries from small, simple organizations to complex multi-level organizations, with an increasingly professional staff. Because libraries are then competing for tax dollars, the public is more demanding of higher quality of service and levels of satisfaction.

Meanwhile, as technology continues to advance, librarians are required to be responsive to changes in planning, implementation, cost-effectiveness and staff training.

As library users become more diverse in terms of demands, library programs must become more specialized and more customizable.

Plan of Service

To assist the libraries in our service area meet these challenges and provide quality library service, the following plan has been developed.

