

FODPL 2023 National Library Week: State of Libraries

John Chrastka, Executive Director, EveryLibrary

April 24, 2023

EveryLibrary is uniquely focused on the funding and policy framework for libraries

- Nationally, 92% of funding for Public Libraries is from the local tax base. All decisions to fund libraries are political.
- School Library programs have lost 20% of the workforce since 2015
- Censorship, Book Bans, and Anti-Person legislation are deeply affecting public libraries and school libraries as they attempt to serve their communities and students

EveryLibrary is a donor supported organization that provides pro-bono consulting and support across our political and public policy sides to inoculate or mitigate these problems

Why a Political Action Committee for Libraries

Post-Covid Landscape for Libraries

The User Landscape

Patterns of in-person use, digital access, and human interactions were highly disrupted during COVID and the long-term impact for libraries is beginning to be understood.

- Libraries grew as the source for reading materials from 16% in 2019 to 21% in 2022. This while eBooks and audiobooks have increased from 5% to 22% of all reading.
- Foot traffic is down at many urban and suburban libraries.
- There is an overall increase in serving patrons who have employment disruptions, transportation issues, housing risks, are homebound, or face other social isolation.
- Reference services about health, legal, and social services are up significantly.
- The effect of the “COVID slide” on student skills and achievement is significant.

What Funders Want

Political or Public Money = Values Systems

Donor, Grant, Philanthropy = Mission Alignment

Programs and Direct Services = Common Vision

Coming through COVID, funders want to see their money go to effective programs and competent staffing in ways that deliver results.

They want to support programs and projects that can be measured and justified through data as well as stories.

They are looking for the right way to apply funding and resources to solve problems or avert new crises.

What Elected Officials Want

Why did that person run for office?

- Interesting Places to Live
- Thriving Places to Live
- Prosperous Places to Live
- Avoid Duplicative Services
- Deliver Efficient and Effective Services

What are the agendas of your elected officials and their constituents?

How does your library map to those agendas?

Is your library a Core or Complement to education?

Innovations Across Libraries

Services - Innovations

Libraries are leaning in to their core services while piloting and scaling population-focused solutions.

1. Programming: Expansion of virtual programming; health and wellness.
2. Digital Collections: Expansion of digital collections (ebooks, e-audio, streaming video, as well as language learning and other self-paced learning platforms.)
3. Accessible Services: Improved access to services through the creation or expansion of online reference assistance; e-cards, online renewals.
4. Technology: Wifi and hotspot circulation; remote print/copy; Improved wifi reach in building and surroundings.
5. Equity: Going Fine-Free

Spaces - Innovations

Communities are investing in library spaces and are on the front-lines of anticipating new trends in human behavior, comfort, and accommodation post-COVID

1. Co-Location with schools – Spokane, WA
2. Mixed Use with residential, retail, or other services – Washington, DC
3. Outdoor and green-space integrations – Salt Lake City, UT
4. More “private public” spaces – Wilmington, DE
5. Remote access and 24/7 – Toronto, ON
6. Tourist Destination – Calgary, AB (and Dallas, TX)

The locations and layout of Dallas Public Library have a generational impact

Consumer Trends Drive the Marketplace

Library users may be users, but consumer behavior and attitudes are powerful forces

- A. Delivery services – Do we need an Uber Books / Bookmates
- B. Impersonal 24/7 access – Amazon at 7-11
- C. Universal broadband – Unskilled and uncomfortable means low utilization
- D. Tele-Everything – Health, banking, e-gov, travel
- E. Office-less Work– Moving the library from 3rd space to 2nd space
- F. Mini-Media Markets – Being found in specialty media channels

Political and Social Climate

A Fraught Time

Book Bans and Censorship – PEN America 2023 Report

- Texas and Florida continue to lead the country in book bans — 7 districts in Texas were responsible for 438 instances of individual book bans, and 13 districts in Florida were responsible for 357 bans.
- Of the 1,477 books banned this school year, 30% are about race, racism, or include characters of color, while 26% have LGBTQ+ characters or themes.
- 91% of voters are opposed to book bans, but it a soft 91%

State Legislation – EveryLibrary Tracking

- 17 states with legislation to criminalize librarians and educators (2 passed)

Structural Attacks on Government

- KS and LA bills to reduce or end authority of library boards

Personal Attacks on Librarians

- The moral panic about sex, gender, and porn is at our doorstep; appropriate v. inappropriate content

Five Freedoms are in Conflict

Freedom of Speech

Freedom of Religion

Freedom of the Press

Freedom of Assembly

Right to Petition the Government for Redress

When a petitioner neither respects the outcome of the challenge nor participates in the policy framework which is designed to protect minority opinions and due process, the petition is a political action.

How do we resolve the conflicts within the First Amendment?

Why Did We Bring the Book Into the Library?

From K-12: There are only three reasons to bring a book into a school setting: relevance to the standards, relevance to the curriculum, or relevance to the unique role of a school library (e.g. health and sex ed, AP and IB classes, art, history and social studies).

Define the Relevance of a title as a universal within the standards, curriculum, or school library frameworks?

Define “Appropriate” and “Inappropriate” as particular to a family’s choice.

Is there a model for collection development policies that points to an affirmative rights framework in Public Libraries?

Looking at Our Rights Comprehensively

Is there a rights-affirmative pathway to collection development?

- Title II of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, and national origin in places of public accommodation.
- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by programs that receive federal financial assistance.
- Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion by state and local government employers.
- Likewise, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Dallas Public Library in its Ecosystem

Funding Opportunities

Federal and State

Digital Equity Act and BEAD – Broadband and how to use it

Workforce Innovation Act – First, next or best job in an evolving economy

21st Century Community Centers – Before school, after school, and out of school

HUD and HHS – Built environment of government services

Philanthropy and Grant Makers

FODPL and neighborhood Friends are a conduit and a catalyst

City of Dallas

Are your values reflected in the budget for the City of Dallas?

Are Your Core or Complimentary?

Dallas Planning Ecosystem:

Dallas Cultural Plan (2018)

Dallas County Workforce Development Plan (2021)

Dallas PD and OEM Plans

Dallas Racial Equity Plan (2022)

Dallas Economic Development Policy (2023)

Dallas ISD Strategic Initiatives

Where does your strategic planning fit into this robust ecosystem?

I Talk About Dallas Public Library All the Time

Dallas Public Library and the Friends are an engine for social, cultural, economic, and educational growth in this city.

- The “Two Front Doors” to your main library
- Entrepreneurship and economic attainment through programs and tech
- Wrap-around services for families
- Powerful school collaborations
- Supporting Dallas Neighborhood by Neighborhood

Where Do We Go Together?

Theory of Coalitions

Civic Coalitions are built as either:

Common Cause to Support a Population

Common Concern about a Place

The fundamental question for any group looking to build a coalition is to ask “Who Else Cares” and then align the agendas of other groups.

In Dallas, are the people who care have a place at the table with the library to actualize their mission, vision, and values?

Help Set the Agenda

2023 Dallas Public Library Strategic Planning Process

Public Meetings

Bachman Lake Branch on Tuesday, 5/2 (6-7:30pm)

Fretz Park Branch on Saturday, 5/13 (10-11:30am)

Lochwood Branch on Saturday, 5/20 (10-11:30am)

Big Community Survey: <https://www.surveyhero.com/c/DPLCommunitySurvey>

- Locally, the Friends of the Dallas Public Library is a membership organization for people who care: <https://supportdpl.org/>
- Texas Library Association is activating people about Texas legislation: <https://txla.org/>
- Nationally, EveryLibrary invites you to take action for libraries at Action.EveryLibrary.org or on FightForTheFirst.org

facebook.com/everylibrary on Facebook and [@everylibrary](https://twitter.com/everylibrary) on twitter

Please Get Involved

NLW 2023: State of Libraries

John Chrastka

EveryLibrary and the EveryLibrary Institute
for the Friends of Dallas Public Library

April 24, 2023