

Friends of Newark Free Library (FNFL)

Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026

OUR MISSION

The Friends of the Newark Free Library is a non-profit organization that provides volunteer and financial support to the Newark Free Library to enhance its ability to serve our community

OUR PRIORITIES

Increase the impact of library services in our community

Expand our reach and advocacy

Enhance community partnerships and engagement in our community

Develop & implement a capital campaign effort to assist New Castle County with private sector funding for a new Newark library

Goals

This Strategic Plan is based on FNFL board member input and approved by the FNFL board of directors at our meeting on July 10th, 2023.

To fulfill our mission, we have established four (4) goals for FNFL for 2023– 2026. These goals support the following areas of focus of the Newark Free Library and the New Castle County library system:

FNFL's four (4) goals are:

Goal 1: Support and strengthen FNFL

Goal 2: Focus and increase FNFL's service to the library and to the greater Newark community

Goal 3: Enhance our public image and awareness

Goal 4: Develop and implement a capital campaign to assist New Castle County with private sector funding for a new Newark Free Library

Objectives

We have identified several objectives under each of these four (4) goals, and they are listed here.

Goal 1: Support and strengthen FNFL – This goal focuses on membership and on establishing core FNFL Committees in general (membership, finance, educational programming, development, and communications).

This goal also focuses on formally establishing the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee shall create a membership pathway, including but not limited to new membership development, membership levels, personal member/volunteer outreach, membership/volunteer events, retention and recognition.

Objective 1.1. Identify, invite, and obtain new members, with a focus on diversity – Membership Committee

Objective 1.2. Explore and develop potential new membership levels and benefits – Membership Committee

Objective 1.3. Develop a Welcome Team with roles/responsibilities for onboarding new FNFL members and board members – Membership Committee

Objective 1.4. Foster effective and engaged committees to utilize the talents of our members and make recommendations to the board of directors

Goal 2: Focus and increase FNFL’s service to the library and to the greater Newark community – This goal focuses on establishing an Educational Programming Committee, Finance Committee and Development Committee.

Objective 2.1. Prioritize FNFL existing community projects and educational programming that align with our endeavors to promote reading and literacy and are in direct partnership with the Newark Free Library

Objective 2.2. Establish new opportunities for community projects and educational programming that align with our endeavors to promote reading and literacy and are in direct partnership with the Newark Free Library

Objective 2.3. Establish and strengthen FNFL development efforts

Goal 3: Enhance our public image and awareness – This goal focuses on establishing a Communication’s Committee

Objective 3.1. Promote awareness of FNFL activities through print, social media and public relations

Objective 3.2. Build and sustain partnerships with other community organizations to increase our visibility

Goal 4: Develop and implement a capital campaign to assist New Castle County with private sector funding for a new Newark Free Library – This goal focuses on the establishment of a Capital Campaign Committee and successful capital campaign

Objective 4.1. Fundraise at least \$1,000,000 towards the new library project

Objective 4.2. Develop, implement and monitor a Capital Campaign Plan

Tactics and Measures

The specific tactics for achieving the goals and objectives, along with the measures we will use to assure the goals and objectives are achieved can be found in the appended table.

Monitoring

We intend to monitor and report on our progress on achieving these goals through the work of various FNFL committees. These updates will be provided as needed, but not less than quarterly.

We will review and update this plan annually.

Goal 1:

Support and strengthen FNFL

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 1.1. *Identify, invite, and obtain new members with a focus on diversity – Membership Committee. Include at least one Communications Committee member on this committee*

Measure: *FNFL becomes more diverse and more closely reflects the community by successfully welcoming more members. Identify ways to measure our diversity*

1.1.1. Encourage FNFL members and board members to ask friends and acquaintances to join FNFL. Establish a numeric goal on adding new FNFL members, perhaps 100, by end of December 2024. Board members to each submit 10 names for potential members. FNFL members to submit 2 names for potential members.

1.1.2. Use social media to invite the community to our meetings and events (including our “Zoom” meetings). Ask attendees if they feel we are welcoming and relevant by giving them a short two question survey – To be completed by end of October 2023 and then ongoing

1.1.3. Make personal contact with individuals who have expressed an interest in FNFL and invite them to join as a member, and potentially committees and/or the board of directors. Establish a clear easy path for volunteers to connect with committees. - To be completed by end of September 2023 and then ongoing

1.1.4. Evaluate current communication tools and identify any additional tools (information folders, online tutorials, brochures, new member/volunteer survey, website pages, etc.) to update and share with prospective members to facilitate recruitment. This may include outreach to board and friend’s members, other library friend’s groups, other identified organizations, in library opportunities (table at events, ability to join at circulation desk, etc.) and library staff. - To be completed by end of July 2024

1.1.5. Consider holding new member/volunteer appreciation event (s), in addition to our annual meeting/brunch – one additional event in 2024, 2025 and 2026

1.1.6. Have regular board meetings that engage all board members. Consider inviting potential/new FNFL members as well as potential new board members to the board meetings – Ongoing

1.1.7. Develop plans to ensure that membership of the FNFL is reflective of the greater Newark community. Ongoing

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 1.2. *Explore and develop potential new membership levels. This process includes identifying the current levels/benefits/dues of joining FNFL - Membership Committee. Include at least one Development Committee member on this committee.*

1.2.1. Identify current membership levels, benefits and dues and other opportunities to expand – To be completed by end of December 2023

1.2.2. Present any proposed new membership level(s) to the Board to discuss feasibility and possible adoption – To be completed by end of December 2023

1.2.3. Implement to promote any adopted level(s) as part of FNFL’s recruitment activities – To be completed by end of January 2024

Measure: Evaluate and define current/recommended membership levels, benefits and dues for each level. Any membership level/benefits/dues recommendations will be brought to the board for potential adoption

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 1.3. The Membership Committee shall create a membership pathway to provide a natural way for new members to get involved and volunteer, including but not limited to obtaining new FNFL members, volunteer opportunities, specific membership goals, personal outreach, welcome partners, membership levels, and membership and volunteer events

Measure: Every new member may have an assigned welcome partner and be welcomed by at least one other person (library staff member, board member, membership committee member). In addition, volunteer activity data and renewal member data will be reviewed and assessed

1.3.1. The Membership Committee will develop communication tools (for example welcome letters for new and renewal members, welcome packets, information folders, online tutorials, videos, brochures, give an identifying item, like buttons, for new members to be recognized etc.) for use in orienting new members to FNFL – To be completed by end of July 2024

1.3.2. The Membership Committee will explore the possibility of developing a welcome team of FNFL member(s) to serve as a welcome partner when a new member joins – To be completed by end of February 2024

1.3.3. The Membership Committee will explore and possibly establish roles and responsibilities of being a welcome partner and train members on being a welcome partner – To be completed by end of February 2024

1.3.4. All board members will assure new members are aware of and engaged in FNFL activities and volunteer opportunities. This may include defining what volunteer opportunities are available, such as helping distribute books, helping with communication efforts and at events, library advocacy. Set up a process to connect new members with the board and other members responsible for volunteer activities. - Ongoing

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 1.4. Foster effective and engaged committees to utilize the talents of our

1.4.1. Establish committees to strengthen and support FNFL with chairpersons, including membership, educational programming, finance, development and communications to be approved by the board of directors. Committees shall meet

members and make recommendations to the BOD

Measure: The board makes informed decisions based on the work of the Committees and achieves outcomes related to its goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

at least 4x year and report back to the board. To be completed by the end of October 2023.

Each established committee shall develop a budget (as needed), to be approved by the Finance Committee and then the Board, prior to the beginning of the FNFL year. To be completed no later than end of January 2024.

1.4.2. Committees will meet and explore actions to achieve goal(s) the committee has established - Ongoing

1.4.3. Committee chairs will be responsible for documenting committee activities and meetings, attendance and for messaging committee accomplishments to the defined FNFL members responsible for the newsletter, social media and website - Ongoing

1.4.4. Committee recommendations will be presented to the board of directors for consideration and approval – To be completed by end of September 2023

1.4.5.: FNFL board will periodically review current committee format for efficiency and convenience - Ongoing

1.4.6: A Bylaws Committee will be created to review FNFL existing bylaws in 2023. The Committee will be reconvened to review the bylaws every two years thereafter – To be completed by end of September 2023

Goal 2:

Focus and increase FNFL’s service to the Library and to the greater Newark community

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 2.1. Support an Educational Programming Committee to, among other tasks, prioritize existing FNFL library projects and educational programming in direct partnership with the Library

Measure: The Board will hold a vote on projects and programs to continue each year

2.1.1. The board of directors will support an Educational Programming Committee – Investigate ways to strengthen board and friends knowledge of library programs and priorities. This committee shall develop a budget to be approved by the Finance Committee and then the Board, prior to the beginning of the FNFL year. To be completed by end of July 2025

2.1.2. The Committee will determine which supported activities are “active” and “passive” projects. (Active projects are supported by volunteer time by the volunteers; passive projects receive primarily financial support only.) – To be completed by end of December 2025

2.1.3. The Committee will prioritize all current activities with three criteria in mind: (a) FNFL and community volunteers believe our highest priorities are initiatives regarding education, youth programming, and promoting reading and the library and (b) the number of projects in which we are involved (c) input from the community, including diverse populations – To be completed by end of December 2025

2.1.4. The Committee will recommend to the Board any educational programming that should be expanded, maintained, reduced, or discontinued - Ongoing

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 2.2. *Identify new opportunities for projects and educational programming in direct partnership with the Library*

Measure: *The Board will hold a vote on adopting any new proposed projects and educational programming*

2.2.1. All board members will continually engage community leaders, local organizations, and other sources of information to be aware of changing unmet needs within the community as a means of identifying new projects and educational programming - Ongoing

2.2.2. Any new project/educational programming ideas presented to the board will be referred to the Educational Programming Committee first for evaluation - Ongoing

2.2.3. The Committee will report to the Board their evaluation of the need, feasibility, and scope of any new project and educational programming ideas and their recommendation for or against establishing the specific project/educational programming. This evaluation will include direct input from the Newark Free Library. To be completed by end of December 2025

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 2.3. *Support and strengthen FNFL's revenue efforts by supporting a Finance Committee and a Development Committee*

Measure: *The Board will hold a vote on which development activities to continue each year and on any new proposed development ideas. The Board will also vote on a budget and financial plan each year*

2.3.1. The board of directors will support a Finance Committee, chaired by the FNFL Treasurer, with the responsibility of evaluating and making recommendations on FNFL's revenue, investments, and expenses. This will include a yearly budget and a long-range financial plan, as well as detailed reporting at the board meetings. To be completed by end of September 2023

2.3.2. The board of directors will support a Development Committee that will conduct an evaluation of the FNFL's current development projects and make recommendations to the Board regarding each project's return on investment and sustainability. To be completed by end of October 2023

2.3.3. The Development Committee will strategically evaluate and make recommendations regarding any new development opportunities which may include events, grants, solicitation, in person, direct mail, annual appeal, social media, third party benefits and legacy gifts. To be completed by end of December 2023

2.3.4. The Development Committee will explore opportunities for development activities that could be conducted in conjunction with other local organizations. To be completed by end of December 2023

Goal 3:

Enhance our public image and awareness

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 3.1. Support a Communication’s Committee. Promote awareness of the FNFL’s activities through print, social media and public relations

Measure: Compile an annual report on the number of social media posts, press announcements and FNFL articles; track the number of print and online media stories that resulted from press announcements; track social media data and website traffic reports; include any feedback from new volunteers and/or members who cite how they learned about FNFL

3.1.1. Post photos and short descriptions of FNFL events and meetings on our website and/or other social media: include posts that are both reports of past events and invitations to participate in future events. Ongoing monthly

3.1.2. Maintain active member engagement through volunteer support, FNFL newsletters, new member/volunteer survey, ebulletins and social media. Ongoing monthly

3.1.3. Use social media to invite members of the local community to participate in FNFL meetings and events. Ongoing monthly

3.1.4. Develop a format for press releases to be sent to print, radio, TV and online mainstream media sources. To be completed by end of February 2024

3.1.5. Compile a list of media contacts (TV, print, radio) to whom announcements could be sent; include contacts with the State and County library system, as well as local legislators and partner organizations. To be completed by end of March 2024

3.1.6. Develop and maintain FNFL as a key source for the FNFL membership information, and lists of past and future events; include the logo, website address and any social media on all printed materials. Ongoing

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 3.2. Develop and build upon sustainable partnerships with other community organizations to increase our visibility.

3.2.1. Develop and build upon partnerships with local schools and the University of Delaware, highlighting benefits and values for them to do so. This will be achieved in partnership with the Library. To be completed by mid-2025

3.2.2. Identify other community organizations with whom we could partner at public events as well as library educational programming opportunities, highlighting benefits and value for them to do so. Include other Friends groups. To be completed by end of July 2024

Measure: Successfully establish an ongoing partnership with one or more community organizations to work together at a community event in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027

3.2.3 Increase volunteer and financial support for the Newark Free Library, through FNFL's efforts. Ongoing

3.2.4 Maintain and develop relationships with elected officials and other friends of libraries in Delaware. Participate in Legislative Day and any other library advocacy events. Maintain and/or grow our participation in the Friends of Delaware Libraries, New Castle County Library Advisory Board and Council on Libraries. Define specific opportunities for FNFL to get more involved in these three organizations. Ongoing

Goal 4:

Develop & implement a capital campaign to assist New Castle County with private sector funding for a new Newark Free Library

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 4.1. Fundraise at least \$1,000,000 towards the new library project

Measure: Meet or exceed the fundraising goal

4.1.1. Contract with a professional fundraising firm to assist us with completing the capital campaign. Signed contract completed for Part 1 and Part 2. Contract for Part 3 and Part 4 to be evaluated/executed by end of December 2023

4.1.2. Develop and implement a budget for the capital campaign. To be completed by end of September 2023

4.1.3. Set up a separate bank account and accounting system. Completed

4.1.4 Apply for appropriate grants within their appropriate time frame - Ongoing

4.1.5 Establish a development timeline with a goal of raising at least \$333,000 at start of construction, at least \$333,000 six (6) months after construction starts, and at least \$334,000 three (3) months after the grand opening of the new library as specified in the Friends executed agreement with New Castle County - Ongoing

Objective and Measure

Tactics

Objective 4.2. Develop, implement and monitor a Capital Campaign Plan

Measure: Execute the plan within the identified construction timeframe established by New Castle County

4.2.1. Develop and implement a marketing plan, to include print material, social media, website, logo. To be completed by end of October 2023

4.2.2. Develop and implement a donor plan (individuals, corporations, grants, individuals and foundations) to include donor gift table levels, donor solicitation timeline and a donor recognition plan. **To be completed by end of October 2023**

4.2.3. Work closely with the New Castle County Library system during the development and implementation of the capital campaign. Ongoing

