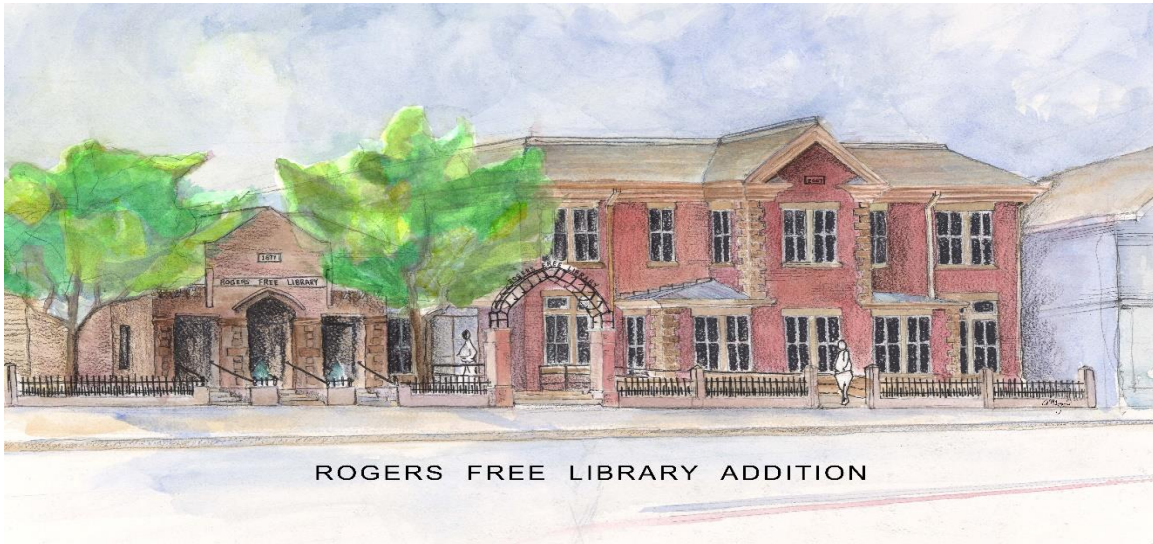


ROGERS FREE LIBRARY  
BRISTOL, R.I  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**FY2018 – FY2022**



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September 2017

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## **BRIEF LIBRARY HISTORY**

Built by Maria DeWolf Rogers in memory to her husband, Rogers Free Library opened in 1877. Over its first 80 years, the Library occupied the second floor of the building in which two banks shared the first level (providing a revenue stream for Rogers Free Library).

A fire in 1957 completely destroyed the building. A 6,200-sq. ft. two-story building was erected three years later on the same site.

With the growth of technology, the need for hardware and information of all kinds, as well as the growth of new media formats, RFL has continued to adapt to meet the public's needs. The library joined Ocean State Libraries in 1990 (called Cooperating Libraries Automated Network, CLAN, at that time.) The Library Board of Trustees and the town of Bristol expanded the current facility, with assistance from the state's library construction program, and opened the new 28,000 sq. ft. building in the fall of 2008. The design incorporated many architectural elements of the existing library, keeping a connection with its past that befits this Bristol institution.

## **LIBRARY MISSION as of August 2017**

*Rogers Free Library, a taxpayer supported institution, exists to provide access to information in a wide variety of formats to Bristol's residents and the greater community.*

*The library actively strives to satisfy the educational, cultural, recreational, informational, and practical needs of adults, young adults, and children through materials and programs relevant to their interests. To that end, the Library works closely with parents and others to build partnership with the school librarians, teachers, educational personnel, and social service agencies.*

*The Library recognizes and accepts its responsibility to accommodate for and to promote the lifelong learning aspirations of its patrons; to reach out to special populations especially for literacy assistance; and to provide materials for the visually impaired.*

*A strong advocate of intellectual freedom, Rogers Free Library strives to enrich the lives of those who avail themselves of its services and facilities.*

*A discussion on Core Assumptions was part of the initial meeting of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. A core assumption is a tenet under which all involved agree the library will operate. It assists further discussion to establish such assumptions at the onset.*

## **CORE ASSUMPTIONS**

### **FACILITY:**

- The facility's square footage will remain adequate for the foreseeable future. However, the usage within that square footage is open to redesign as services and finances might dictate.

### **PERSONNEL:**

- To retain high quality staff requires a strong commitment to the ongoing professional development of staff.
- New staff positions may be necessary over the next five years. However, due to the fiscal constraints, funding of those positions will need to be "creative" and outside town funding. It may also require some repurposing of staff and increased use of volunteers.

### **TECHNOLOGY:**

- The prediction of technology long term is foolhardy. Short term, there will continue to be a great programmatic/educational demand by all ages for access to the internet, productivity software, and tech. training.
- The library will continue to invest as finances and grants allow to stay current in technology hardware, systems, and software. OSL will continue to provide leadership and guidance in those efforts.

### **COLLECTIONS:**

- Printed materials will remain status quo, no growth beyond current allowances.
- Interlibrary Loan will remain status quo due to the overall trend downward of circulation. (It's busy, it will *stay* busy, but probably not get much busier).
- Demand for electronic materials will be met in a variety of ways, including Interlibrary Loan, streaming, the library's Overdrive service, and donations.

### **PROGRAMS:**

- The demand for programming will continue to grow.
- The demand for meeting room space will continue to grow.

### **FISCAL:**

- The library will continue to receive (only) cost of living increases from the town.
- Friends will continue to support the library financially and will maintain the ability to shift support from line to line.
- R.I. Grant in Aid will continue from the state w/o any foreseeable decreases
- Ocean State Libraries (OSL) will continue to support libraries, but with fees potentially increasing faster than cost of living increases from the town.

## THE PROCESS

This is a 4-5-year plan, with most objectives in years 1 and 2, using years 3 & 4 to consolidate and evaluate the Objectives. Year 5 serves as either a final evaluation period in anticipation of drafting a new plan the next year; or as Year 1 of a new plan. If Year 5 is Year 1 of new plan, the survey scheduled for Spring 2021 may need to be adjusted to an earlier time.

The strategic planning process implementation began in February 2017 with the interviewing and subsequent contracting of Library Consultant/Facilitator Kay Ellen Bullard who prepared a **Process Timetable** for March – Sept. 1, 2017. (Pages 7-8).

In March, the Strategic Planning **Steering Committee** was formed and charged with the following duties:

1. Broad oversight of the consultant/facilitator.
2. With facilitation by the consultant, to discuss, determine, and present to the full Library Board of Trustees for approval, the Goals and Strategies of the new Strategic Plan.
3. To review and recommend to the full Library Board of Trustees the Implementation Plan written by the staff (with consultant feedback), as being appropriate to achieve the Goals and Strategies.

Once the new SP is accepted, the Library Board assumes responsibility for periodic oversight of its implementation over the plan's timeframe.

The timetable planned for 4 formal meetings of the Steering Committee. Each of these was achieved.

Simultaneously with the establishment of the Steering Committee, the Strategic Planning **Advisory Committee** was formed with the following charge:

To facilitate the process of information gathering within the community about current and future library services. This will happen in two ways:

1. By serving as conduits to community groups, clubs, organizations, and agencies for the purpose of conducting interviews, focus groups, surveys, or meetings with the respective members of said organizations. These data gathering opportunities will be facilitated by the Consultant.
2. By participating directly in interviews, focus groups, meetings, or surveys as conducted by the Consultant/Facilitate.

The timetable planned for 2 formal meetings and much informal communication, all of which was achieved.

The **Staff** met twice formally, and met throughout July/August to draft the Implementation Plan (Part Three of the Strategic Plan).

Several **Focus Groups** were scheduled and held throughout April and May, and ending with one in June. (See that section for more details).

A public **Survey** was launched in mid-April both online and in hard copy, ending May 30. (See that section for more details).

**The Library Board of Trustees** met on July 12, 2017 to review the plan. At that time, the Board approved all the Goals of the plan, and all the Objectives of each goal, pending further details on Goal 1, Objectives 1 & 2. On Aug. 30, the Board approved moving forward on Goal 1 Objectives 1 & 2. Board is expected to accept the Implementation/Action Plan on Sept. 19, 2017.

Once the new Strategic Plan is accepted, the Library Board of Trustees will assume responsibility for periodic oversight of its implementation over the plan's timeframe.

*Confusing strategies, goals, objectives, and activities is common. Brief definitions applicable to this Plan are offered below to help with that. What something is labeled is not nearly as important as having a plan that will achieve the desired, ultimate results, regardless of what they are labeled.*

## DEFINITIONS

**THE VISION** – a simple but effective way to express the primary, overarching role of the library within the community.

**Core Assumption** - a broad tenet which all involved agree to accept and plan accordingly.

**Goal** - a major idea to be achieved. A single goal may use multiple strategies. A single goal will have multiple objectives.

**Strategy** – a major *means* by which to achieve the goals; a concept that infuses *all* levels and *all* activities. An organization may have multiple strategies, each with varying degrees of application for its goals. Strategies and Goals must also take into account Core Assumptions, so that no strategy or goal conflicts with an assumption.

**Objective** – a more specific step that must be done as a primary move toward achieving its goal. A single objective will have multiple activities.

**Activity** – a specific, micro level step of “who/what/when/how” that must happen in order to achieve its objective.

**Indicators** – a way to measure success; how we know whether a goal has been achieved. Because indicators must have quantitative or qualitative measurements, most indicators apply directly to the Objectives level, except in a few cases. In this plan, Major Indicators are measurements encompassing cumulative years of the plan, and other Indicators are generally for periods of less time. Within this document the means of measurement are called measurement tools, or MTs.

**Rationale** – the reason why the Library Board of Trustees decided a goal is worth dedicating resources to. Those decisions were made based on various gathered data: focus groups including that of staff, library and town data, the survey responses, national trends and best practices, and board members own experiences.

## The VISION

**This vision emerged from focus group discussions, particularly Community Advisory Committee discussions.**

Throughout this process, the words “gathering place, community center, and hub” were frequently used by participants to express what they considered the library to be and/or what they wanted the library to become. They envisioned a library that was a place wherein people of all economic strata, ages, ethnicity, or interests could come together, and be connected via programs and services, outreach, as well as informally. They envisioned a place wherein people were engaged both with an activity of interest and value, and with each other.

Public libraries, including Rogers Free, have not been stand-alone (or unconnected) institutions in terms of their programs and services for several years. This new vision recognizes that fact formally, and establishes this role of **Community Connector** as primary to the library’s core values; and the right vision for its future.



## STRATEGIES for ROGERS FREE LIBRARY

A strategy is a concept that governs ALL aspects of the library's services, permeating ALL planning; and is uppermost in the minds of administration and Boards as they execute their duties. **Thus, these five strategies (ACCOUNTABILITY, CONNECTING/COLLABORATING, ENLISTING/EDUCATION, LOCAL SERVICES FOR LOCAL NEEDS, PILOT PROJECTS) shall inform the organization across the board in managing Facilities, Personnel, Collections, Programs, Services, Technology, Marketing, and Governance.**

*The following strategies emerged from the Environmental scan, Community feedback, and Steering and Advisory Committee discussions:*

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Organizational Accountability flows throughout the organization and at every level from staff to administration to Library Board of Trustees. It requires that: programs and services are conducted effectively and efficiently; evaluation of programs and services is done routinely; all staff set annual departmental and learning goals and are evaluated on them; the Director provides the Library Board of Trustees with the information that Board needs to govern and advise effectively; and the Library Board commits to ongoing staff training.

**CONNECTING/COLLABORATING:** the library is the Connector for both individuals and organizations at all levels. These connections in turn foster Collaborations in many forms, but most notably in programming, marketing, staff education, and new initiatives.

**ENLISTING/EDUCATING:** The library formally enlists the public as partners in advocacy, volunteerism, and education about the library. We build a corps of people who both love the library, but also recognize what more can be accomplished working together.

**LOCAL SERVICES FOR LOCAL NEEDS:** All library services, particularly collections and programs, are crafted specifically to serve Bristolians in the ways most meaningful and important to them, thus curation with "local" emphasis, including content created locally.

**PILOT PROJECTS:** New programs and services will be added in this plan initially as Pilot Projects by attempting to fund with alternate support. This support may take the form of non-town funding, repurposing of existing staff, using volunteers, or a combination of all forms of alternate support. If a project is initially successful, the Library Board of Trustees will decide then whether to continue providing it through budgeting money or, alternatively, to advocate for additional funds. Key to any such efforts will be the data from the pilot project.

*The following Goals emerged from the June 17 meeting of the Steering Committee.  
The Objectives emerged from that meeting, community feedback, and data/trend analysis.*

## **GOAL 1:**

### **LEARNING, READING, CREATING, & SHARING – Local Services for Local Needs**

Support Bristol as a unique Community of Learners, Readers, Creators, and Sharers, through enhanced programs & services and by creating a library that could only be – Rogers Free Library.

**STRATEGIES:** Accountability, Connecting/Collaborating, Local Curation, Pilot Projects

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Add Sunday hours for a portion of each year, potentially as Pilot Project.
2. By relying largely on collaborations and partnerships and the drafting of an annual program plan, RFL will provide an array of programs annually that impact participants in meaningful, measurable ways, and that meet identified community and/or service population needs.
3. Providing a collection of intensely focused materials of high use to the residents of Bristol, including a bestseller collection that more sufficiently meet the needs of Bristol's Readers.
4. Connect and Build Partnerships via library staff within the community.
5. Task the YA Librarian with developing at least one "signature" teen program based on the focus group topics.
6. Offer at least two new Children's programs in response to focus groups and survey, in addition to the existing array of programs.

***\*Please note that Measurement indicators for all the goals and objectives are to be included in the Implementation/ACTION Plan.***

### **RATIONALE:**

Focus groups were particularly keen on the library's role as a community hub or gathering place, and all that would engender in terms of connecting all Bristolians to one another and to other cultural and educational institutions. This would not be to usurp any other organization but rather to enhance communications and opportunities for learning and engagement.

This is totally in keeping with national best practices, which also indicate collaboration as a major means of services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century public library.

Best practices also indicate that creating and sharing are two components most often missing from traditional library programming; and that library patrons are no longer merely consumers, but want to participate as they learn. Subsequent sharing what is learned or created is a vital part of being a community connector.

Community feedback clearly indicated highly successful story-time program, but less so for the parent who works during the day, or for families on weekends. Sunday hours was number one “ask” in community feedback.

Teens and parents of teens wanted more responsive programs and hours, created specifically for them.

Several in community expressed gratitude for Interlibrary Loan (ILL) but wished for more bestsellers availability. Others were unaware that Bristol residents have first crack at their requested titles owned by RFL.

## **GOAL 2:**

### **MAKE THE PUBLIC OUR #1 PARTNER**

Engage the public as our partner for Advocacy, Volunteerism, and Education/Marketing about the library’s importance to the community and the many learning opportunities therein.

**STRATEGIES:** Connecting/Collaborating, Enlisting/Education, Pilot Projects

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Establish a traditional “Friends” volunteer group for volunteer recruitment, education about the services of the library and to serve as Ambassador advocates for library services within the community. (When a “friend” joins, they designate their area of interest: Volunteering or Ambassador Advocate or both).

### **RATIONALE:**

The community has told us they wanted the ability to volunteer at the library, in multiple ways. This plan will enable that process to begin for appropriate tasks and to become more aware of the wide range of services available.

### **GOAL 3:**

#### **ALIGN SPACE USE WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS & THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Align space usage within the building and without, with strategic planning priorities, i.e. community needs and wants.

**STRATEGIES:** Accountability, Local Curation, Pilot Projects

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify potential new meeting room spaces and implement as feasible.
2. Review Teen area for ideal space utilization and design.
3. Decrease the number of “Silo” patrons that use – literally – a single location with the library (in addition to circulation desk).

#### **RATIONALE:**

The community is rightly very proud of their library building. There is much to love about it – its natural light, its comfort, parking, ease of access to whichever floor most interests you most, and the charm of the original building. But having three separate floors of service and service desks has created somewhat of a “silo” mentality in some patrons, which needs to be addressed.

Meeting rooms continue to be well used, and in fact, often create conflicts between library sponsored programs and community sponsored ones. Since this library is a community resource and connector, it behooves the library to at least investigate whether any additional meeting spaces can be carved out.

The Teen space looks very much the same as the rest of the library. It may need to be freshened-up a bit.

## **GOAL 4:**

### **ESTABLISH/MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF ROGERS FREE LIBRARY.**

**STRATEGIES:** Accountability

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Library Board of Trustees, Director, and Staff will create, and widely share, a new mission statement.
2. Review all job descriptions to align with current duties, adjust to any necessary reassignments, and to clarify what's expected of staff in that position.
3. Establish a system of annual performance reviews for all staff, including the training and professional development needs required, and community partnership building plan if applicable.
4. Significantly improve the marketing efforts of the library.
5. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Library Board of Trustees and the Directors of the Friends of Rogers Free Library, to ensure the two boards are not overlapping, and that public, staff, and members of both boards fully understand those roles and responsibilities of each.
6. Enhance the Director's management reporting to Library Board of Trustees.

#### **RATIONALE:**

Focus Groups and Survey comments indicate that RFL has an excellent customer service reputation. However, staff, committee members, and some focus group participants, expressed confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the Library Board of Trustees among the public, staff, and board members themselves. And more information in regular updates is felt needed by the Library Board and the Friends Board.

An internal audit on management/governance also ascertained some areas needing improvement. A revised Mission statement may need to be part of that process.

Staff and Trustees have both expressed a desire for annual performance reviews. In order to effectively do that, job descriptions must be up to date.

The consultant heard frequently from residents (even frequent library users) that they do not feel they know everything going on at the library. It's important to recognize that there will

never be full saturation of *everyone*, but a greater, more cohesive and organized method of marketing is necessary. Public Relations (PR) seems sufficient. But different departments are often doing their own PR efforts, which dissipates any attempt at branding the library as the wonderful connecting place it is, with free learning, reading, creating, and sharing taking place. Furthermore, Bristol has a very high degree of resident volunteerism for a variety of efforts. The library should harness that for not only volunteers but for informal advocacy of the library's services to the community at large.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN SUMMARY:**

### **National Best Practices & Trends**

Best Practices & Trends are defined as broad, overarching strategies and goals that leading libraries are following and that national library and library-related organizations are reporting. Also included in this scan is a Public Library Association document for Organizational Competencies, labeled in this Plan as the “internal audit”. A full summary of this scan is available in the Strategic Plan Part Two: Appendices.

Six documents in particular stood out in the scan. Each has a link listed in the Bibliography. These six provided a good foundation for looking at what is regarded as excellence for current and future public library services.

A seventh document was used to conduct the internal audit of Organizational Competencies. It is part of the Public Library Association’s *Strategic Planning for Results*. This document was used in some measure in development of the survey also. But it’s the internal scan on organizational competencies that provides us with a good benchmark for best practices organizationally.

In examining all of the documents certain key concepts and key words recur:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Embedding</b>          | <b>Community Collaborations &amp; Partnerships</b>            |
| <b>Content Creation</b>   | <b>(Local) Curation</b>                                       |
| <b>(Civic) Engagement</b> | <b>Leadership</b>   |
| <b>Accountability</b>     | <b>Literacy Skills (digital/information/health/financial)</b> |

Although the word itself did not recur with as much frequency as the words above, few would read the documents without inferring the key concept of:

### **Intentionality (PROactive not REactive)**

After reviewing and discussing these documents, the consultant and the Steering Committee settled upon the following statements as guidelines to use in formulating Strategies and Goals based on this scan of national best practices & trends:

#### **AFFIRMED STATEMENTS:**

1. Collaborations and partnerships have risen from “nice” to “essential” as vehicles for achieving a library’s mission.
2. A library’s mission/goals should be clearly aligned to their community’s goals, as well as to the skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

3. Programs should be engaging, experiential, educational opportunities (with all of the higher-level planning, intentionality, and evaluation that might imply).
4. The library plays a key role in building social capital within the community. It is a connector institution in a multitude of ways.
5. Library patrons are not just consumers. They are learners, creators, and sharers.
6. The library supports several kinds of literacy necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century life: health literacy, informational literacy, early language literacy, financial literacy among them.

### **LIBRARY DATA SUMMARY**

The library is open:

60 hours weekly: Mon. – Thurs. 9 AM to 8 PM and Fri. and Sat. 9 AM – 5 PM Bristol falls into the population group of 20,000 to 49,999, which requires 60 unique hours of service weekly.

The library of 28,000 sq. ft. opened in the Fall of 2008 (FY09) after extensive addition and renovation to the existing 6,000 + sq. ft. library.

It employs the following staff:

8 FT – 4 professionals – Director, Reference Librarian, Outreach Librarian, Youth Services Librarian

2 paraprofessionals – Assistant Director, Circulation Supervisor

2 non-professionals – Library Associate Circ./Tech., Custodian

17 PT – 16 para-professionals: 12 in circulation, 1 in youth services, 3 in reference and 1 non-professional junior page

*The full summary data results are available in Part Two: Appendices, including all charts and graphs.*



**A statistical analysis of library data determined the following:**

**Visits, Circulation total, and Staff as percent of total budget are of paramount concern as RFL compared unfavorably in the analysis.** The categories of computer use, reference use, and collections expenditures per capita were also of some concern.

Local revenue as percent(%) of total was of some concern because of the trend downward, but not as much when compared to others. It also appears that the FY16 (and previous) statistics do not reflect total expenditures, as the FY17 budget does.

**Programs were a positive highlight.** Categories of borrowers, revenue total, and physical holdings were neutral or in middle of the ranking of R.I. public libraries.

After reviewing the data, the following statements can be affirmed:

#### **AFFIRMED STATEMENTS**

1. The percentage of local appropriations may be approaching unhealthy levels.
2. Staffing levels and hours will, or have, become an issue, requiring either a staunch defense or a reallocation of some sort.
3. Visits are low, and this may impact any strategies, e.g. building community/becoming a hub.
4. The internal audit identified areas that are important to address for internal health. (Some of these areas directly concern the Library Board of Trustees. Other internal areas have also been identified during staff meetings.)
5. The library is headed in the right direction, but may need to ramp up the speed of that direction.
6. The decline in use of reference services and computer usage may become problematic in the future and bears monitoring.
7. Programming shows increase but may need more intentionality and bona fide learning goals, as well as a formal system of evaluation in place.
8. Although circulation is overall declining, it still remains the number one service provided by the library, and is likely to be so for the life of this strategic plan.

The following statistical information was compiled from the Office of Library and Information Services Annual Reports.

**5 YEAR LOOKBACK**

|                            | Visits<br>Per<br>capita | Circ.<br>Total | Program<br>Attend. | Borrowers<br>As % pop. | Ref.<br>Questions<br>Per<br>capita | Comp.<br>Use as<br>Per<br>capita | Revenue<br>total | Local<br>Revenue<br>As % | Staff<br>As %<br>total  | Colls.<br>Expend.<br>Per<br>capita | Physical<br>Holdings |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>FY</b>                  |                         |                |                    |                        |                                    |                                  |                  |                          |                         |                                    |                      |
| <b>2016</b>                | 2.3                     | 6.34           | 0.5                | 41%                    | 0.2                                | 1.19                             | 39.57            | 75%                      | 83%                     | 1.70                               | 69,547               |
| <b>RI 2016<br/>Ranking</b> | <b>#39</b>              | <b>#22</b>     | <b>#14</b>         | <b>#16</b>             | <b>#31</b>                         | <b>#12</b>                       |                  | #27                      | <b>#2</b><br><b>#46</b> | <b>#37</b>                         |                      |
| <b>2015</b>                | 2.3                     | 5.7            | 0.5                | 43%                    | 0.2                                | 1.19                             | 35.16            | 80%                      | 81%                     | 1.76                               | 80,919               |
| <b>2014</b>                | 2.23                    | 6.65           | 0.45               | 43%                    | 0.17                               | 1.44                             | 34.59 x          | 85% X                    | n/a                     | 1.76                               | 80,546               |
| <b>2013</b>                | 2.18                    | 6.45           | 0.38               | 43%                    | 0.2                                | 1.49                             | 32.78            | 82.5%                    | 83%                     | 2.00                               | 71,441               |
| <b>2012</b>                | 2.14                    | 7.52           | 0.47               | 41.7%                  | 0.1                                | 1.63                             | 32.40            | 83%                      | 76.2%                   | 2.52                               | 70,339               |

\*Rankings in **red** are in the bottom third of R.I public library rankings.

\*Rankings in **bold black** are in the top third of rankings.

\*Rankings in normal print are in middle third.

- Visits are on the upswing and yet RFL lags behind other R.I. libraries.
- Circulation is downward, but this is a state-wide trend.
- Program attendance is increasing and appears as a strong plus for RFL
- Borrowers as % of population is holding steady and has a good ranking.
- Ref. questions per capita is steady but still at a low comparatively.
- Computer usage is decreasing and yet the ranking within the state is good.
- Local Revenue as a % of the total is decreasing and RFL ranks mid-low. However, this may change in FY2018 since the town calculated the library budget differently.
- Staff as % is either very good or very bad. There are mitigating circumstances for this ranking.
- Coll. Expenditures are alarmingly low and rank near the bottom in the state.
- Physical holdings are steady. Additionally, what OLIS counts as RFL collection has changed.

**COMPARABLE POPULATION WITHIN RHODE ISLAND**

| Pop.  | Town                     | Visits Per capita | Circ. T | Prog. Attend Per capita | Borrow % | Ref. Per capita | Comp Per capita | Revenue T | Local Rev. as % T. | Staff % of budget | Colls. Expend. Per capita | Physical Holdings |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 22954 | <b>BRISTOL</b>           | 2.3               | 6.34    | 0.5                     | 41%      | 0.2             | 1.19            | 39.57     | 75%                | 83%               | 1.70                      | 69547             |
| 19376 | <b>Central F</b>         | 1.6               | 0.5     | 0.1                     | 16%      | 0.1             | 0.787           | 24.15     | 25%                | 67%               | 0.29                      | 32142             |
| 21105 | <b>Lincoln</b>           | 7.1               | 9.4     | 0.2                     | 42%      | 0.3             | 5.25            | 55.38     | 80%                | 68%               | 8.62                      | 138700            |
| 17389 | <b>Portsm.</b>           | 5.1               | 6.6     | 0.3                     | 35%      | 0.2             | 1.12            | 38.16     | 72%                | 76%               | 2.22                      | 72129             |
| 24672 | <b>Newport</b>           | 8.2               | 7.5     | 0.4                     | 50%      | 0.4             | 1.49            | 98.05     | 74%                | 58%               | 9.83                      | 158968            |
| 24487 | <b>No.Kings.</b>         | 6.6               | 11.0    | 0.5                     | 52%      | 1.5             | 1.05            | 56.37     | 81%                | 73%               | 7.27                      | 129683            |
|       | <b>Ranking Comp. Pop</b> | #5                | #5      | #1                      | #4       | #4              | #3              | #4        | #3                 | #1                | #5                        | #5                |
|       | <b>R.I. Av</b>           | 7.2               | 8.1     | 0.6                     | 39%      | 0.8             | 1.29            | 49.00     | 68%                | 71%               | 3.43                      | 83359             |

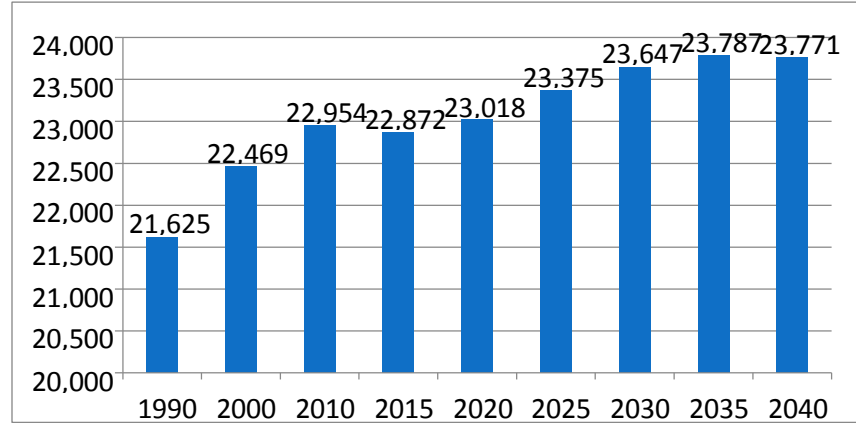
**EAST BAY COMPARISON**

| Pop.  |                           | Visits Per capita | Circ. T | Prog. Attend Per capita | Borrow % | Ref. Per capita | Comp Per capita | Revenue T | Local Rev. as % T. | Staff % of budget | Colls. Expend. Per capita | Physical Holdings |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 22954 | <b>BRISTOL</b>            | 2.3               | 6.34    | 0.5                     | 41%      | 0.2             | 1.19            | 39.57     | 75%                | 83%               | 1.70                      | 69547             |
| 47037 | <b>EastProv</b>           | 5.0               | 7.3     | 0.3                     | 43%      | 0.3             | 1.06            | 46.31     | 84%                | 78%               | 5.53                      | 101896            |
| 15780 | <b>Tiverton</b>           | 2.9               | 4.4     | 0.2                     | 40%      | 0.1             | 0.38            | 42.49     | 81%                | 79%               | 2.58                      | 56379             |
| 10611 | <b>Warren</b>             | 2.8               | 4.2     | 0.2                     | 27%      | 0.3             | 0.80            | 33.18     | 70%                | 72%               | 2.66                      | 23032             |
| 16150 | <b>MiddleT.</b>           | 10.9              | 10.1    | 0.4                     | 45%      | 0.5             | 1.16            | 51.36     | 79%                | 66%               | 6.39                      | 73973             |
| 17389 | <b>Portsm.</b>            | 5.1               | 6.6     | 0.3                     | 35%      | 0.2             | 1.12            | 38.16     | 72%                | 76%               | 2.22                      | 72129             |
| 16310 | <b>Barringt.</b>          | 13.4              | 22.2    | 0.7                     | 88%      | 1.7             | 1.21            | 121.81    | 83%                | 76%               | 7.97                      | 132967            |
| 25672 | <b>Newport</b>            | 8.2               | 7.5     | 0.4                     | 50%      | 0.4             | 1.49            | 98.05     | 74%                | 58%               | 9.83                      | 158968            |
|       | <b>Ranking in EastBay</b> | #8                | #6      | #2                      | #5       | #6              | #3              | #6        | #5                 | #1                | #8                        | #6                |

## TOWN OF BRISTOL SUMMARY

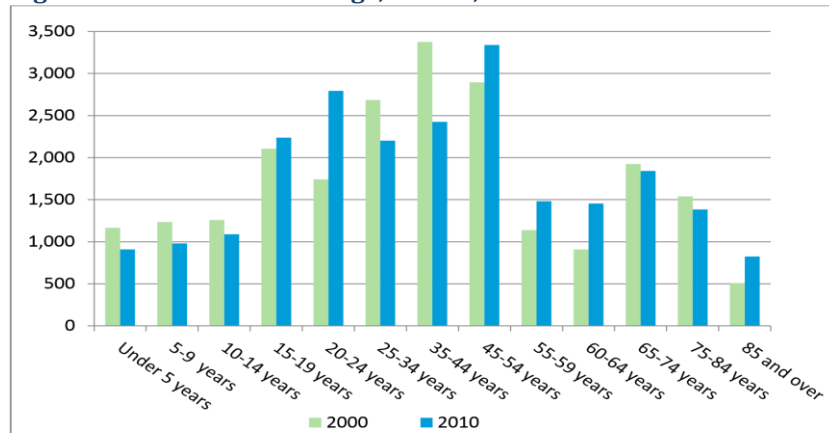
The following graphs are taken directly from the Town's Comprehensive Plan, revised 2016. For a fuller analysis, consult the Comprehensive Plan itself (see Bibliography) and the Full Summary in Part Two: Appendices.

**Figure 2.2: Historic and Projected Population Growth in Bristol, RI**



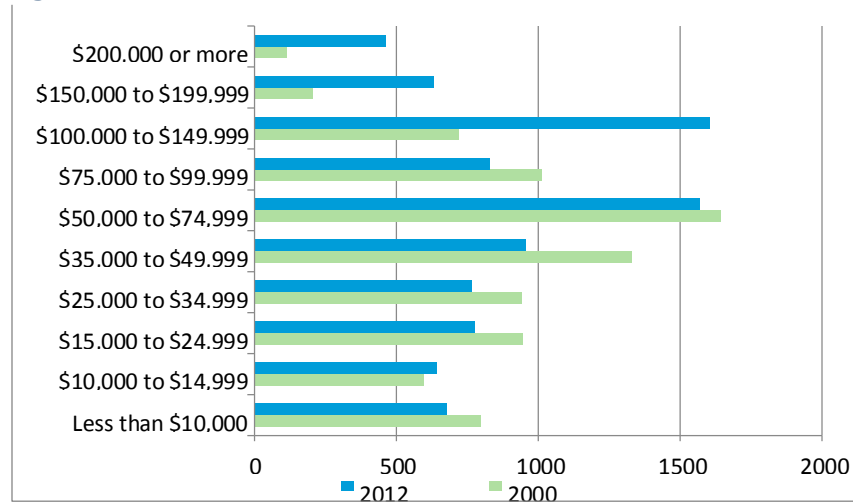
Source: US Census, Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program Population Projection

**Figure 2.3: Distribution of Age, Bristol, RI**



Source: US Census 2000 and 2010

**Figure 2.5: Households Income Distribution, Bristol, RI**



Source: US Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

**Table 2.7: Education Attainment of Population 25+ in Bristol**

|                                       | Bristol | Bristol County | RI State |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| <b>High School Graduate or Higher</b> | 84.0%   | 88.6%          | 84.88%   |
| <b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>    | 32.9%   | 42.2%          | 30.8%    |

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

Reviewing all the data, the following statements can be made:

**AFFIRMED STATEMENTS:**

1. Bristol is aging, albeit slowly
2. The income “gap” between the higher levels and lowest levels is growing, albeit slowly.
3. It is important to note that approximately 23% of the population has *household* income of under \$25,000 (in 2010 figures).
4. High Education levels in Bristol raise expectations for quality and subjects of programs.
5. Resources, e.g. museums, cultural institutions, the arts in many forms, small businesses, RWU, make Bristol a uniquely “endowed” town. i.e. ripe for collaborations.
6. Bristol Comprehensive Plan provides a good foundation by recognizing the importance of the library, its location and overall services as part of the town commons, and the town’s public services infrastructure. Let this serve as starting point, not the finish line.

## COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY:

### FOCUS GROUPS

*The full report of all focus groups, group conversations, interviews is in Part Two: Appendices*  
**A total of 102 interactions occurred in 19 meetings.**

An analysis of all Focus Groups indicates the following key themes across the board:

**Collaborations -- Community building -- Marketing -- additional Sunday hours -- more Technology (tech. time, classes, equipment), and a great appreciation for the Staff.** Also, those that have **Outreach** services genuinely value them. But since only a few receive such services, it didn't rise to the level of being mentioned frequently. But again, those that experience the service, speak very, very highly of it. Therefore, Outreach Services are included as part of Collaborations. Collaborations also include the use of volunteers, which was mentioned by some when speaking about community building.

### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON HOURS.**

People are quite cognizant that it would cost something to do this. But those who suggested it also agreed it would be worth giving up other hours in the week. The problem of course is that seniors and stay at home parents of young children, both of whom form a healthy percentage of weekday clientele, in all likelihood will not want to give up any weekday hours. The use of volunteers was brought up a few times, but consultant did not engage focus groups in discussion on pitfalls of using volunteers as that would not be appropriate in a focus group discussion. Consultant also has some suggestions as to how best proceed with this issue financially (as I'm sure Committee members do).

### **The COMMUNITY CENTER/CONNECTOR**

As might be expected, focus groups or conversations with a particular category, e.g. performing arts, teens, senior living, etc., focused on their particular needs. However, it became very clear across the board of all those groups, a belief that the library should function as a Community Connector/Community Center, or that the library in fact is already functioning as that and that important role should be encouraged, expanded, and perhaps most importantly, recognized as a bona fide goal in itself. Sunday hours was also mentioned as another way to encourage this.

### **COLLABORATIONS**

Also, the idea of expanding programs in more collaborative ways was highly encouraged by every group, as both a way to expand programming and a way to become more of a community hub. Most believed collaborations would enhance the ability to provide more programming, an expanded range of programming, and to keep costs down. In other words, using a model in which the library serves as the *connector* between the programmers and the participants, not as much of a model in which the library itself provides the programs. Having said that, it was also clear that the Teen book group and the Adult book group, and all of the young children's

programming are *extremely* popular and people in those groups want even more of the same, or the same with a twist, i.e. an open playtime requiring no registration or some children's programs on Saturday or Sundays so working parents can participate in family time at the library.

## **MARKETING**

Many people said they did not feel they were informed about the library's services and programs to the extent they would wish. Others felt they knew enough but that rest of the residents might not. Marketing and PR were felt to be very important, and people wondered what the library did in that regard. Again, it's not the consultant's job to tell people that the library does do PR, it's the consultant's job to let people express their thoughts. But enough people said they didn't feel they knew what was going on, that it makes the top tier of comments across the board. Subsequently, having spoken with staff about PR, it does seem somewhat fragmented and could benefit from a more cohesive approach. Marketing and branding, which are a step up from PR, might also benefit the library, especially in regards to the Community Hub idea.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology was also brought up, though not to the extent it was in the survey comments. People love Tech. Time. They want more of that. They want more instructional programs, classes (primarily of basic nature), and on new technologies they might have purchased for themselves. Also, they'd like some of the newer tech. equipment to be available not only for themselves but for their children.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

All the focus groups and group conversations were very creative in their suggestions for specific programs and collaborations. Readers of this plan should take the time to peruse details of focus groups. Some in particular had great merit, e.g. Artist in residence, using courtyard outside for small "tastes" of performances, and making the 10-year anniversary of the library building in Fall 2018 a town celebration, not just a library one, i.e. collaboration.

## **INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS**

Conversations with individuals at other organizations primarily centered on the role of the library in the community and ways to collaborate. There was no single theme that emerged, other than every organization is ready and willing, and sees the benefits in, collaboration. Rather than seeing another organization as competition, they see it as a way for EACH to leverage the other, i.e. a win-win and a way to add value to their own client services.

## **STAFF FOCUS GROUP**

Because Staff obviously have a unique perspective, below are some of their ideas from their focus group. Many of the issues of concern to Staff are addressed somewhere in this process.

### **MARKETING:**

- More cohesive and comprehensive marketing
- A way to keep town funders informed
- Ways to get people in here

### **NEW SERVICES:**

- Literacy, different kinds
- Different things to check out
- Look at teen services and area
- Some middle school after school programs
- More school collaboration w/private schools

### **COLLECTIONS:**

- More regularly updated nonfiction, special colls.
- Online subscriptions to periodical and genealogical websites

### **BUILDING:**

- Fix old roof
- Spruce up Teen area
- Consider remodeling areas that aren't working consistently
- Address lighting issues

### **STAFF**

- Improve internal staff communication
- Panic buttons at desks and safety training
- More Staff training, especially in technology
- Adult service programmer
- More adult programs

### **COLLABORATION: Volunteers**

- Vol. for managing book donations
- Vol. opportunities in various departments
- A Friends group just for volunteers



## SURVEY

The survey was launched in mid-April 2017 online using Survey Monkey, and with hard copies available at the library (with a dedicated computer available as well).

It consisted of 2 separate surveys, with a single cover page to automatically direct the respondent to either the Library User survey or the Library non-user survey, based on whether respondent had used the library within the last 12 months for any purpose. The Full survey with responses is in Part Two: Appendices. There was also the opportunity to provide comments and *readers of this Plan are encouraged to go to the Survey results and read the copious and thoughtful list of comments.*

### LIBRARY USER SURVEY

**There was a total of 573 respondents to the Library Users Survey.**

|                   |         |       |                |        |       |
|-------------------|---------|-------|----------------|--------|-------|
| <b>AGE GROUP:</b> | 11 – 17 | 1.6%  | <b>GENDER:</b> | Male   | 22.9% |
|                   | 18 – 30 | 10.2% |                | Female | 77.1% |
|                   | 31 – 65 | 59.7% |                |        |       |
|                   | 65+     | 28.5% |                |        |       |

**Used the library within the last months in person or online:**

|     |       |    |       |
|-----|-------|----|-------|
| Yes | 86.4% | No | 13.6% |
|-----|-------|----|-------|

**How often have you used RFL for library purposes within last 12 months?**

|           |       |            |       |                  |       |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| 1-3 times | 17.5% | 4-10 times | 23.3% | 11 times or more | 57.2% |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|

**I have used the library website or online databases from home, work, or school within last 12 months:**

|                          |       |            |       |                  |       |
|--------------------------|-------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| 1-3 times                | 23.7% | 4-10 times | 17.9% | 11 times or more | 30.0% |
| No use in past 12 months | 28.4% |            |       |                  |       |

**I have attended a community program, event, or meeting at library within 12 months.**

|     |       |    |       |
|-----|-------|----|-------|
| Yes | 52.1% | No | 47.9% |
|-----|-------|----|-------|

**VERY SATISFIED (with this particular service):**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Information Services/questions/other direct assistance | 75.95% |
| Borrowing Books from other libraries/picking up at RFL | 70.86% |
| General Adult Fiction/Nonfiction                       | 61.59% |
| Quiet Place for study/reading                          | 59.20% |

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Interesting Exhibits | 57.08% |
| Adult bestsellers    | 55.36% |

**OVERALL SATISFACTION 80.00% (higher than any single category)**

**DON'T USE (this particular service):**

|   |               |                                       |
|---|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adult Programs of more formal education | 79.38%        | (library currently provides very few) |
| <b>Online databases</b>                 | <b>73.94%</b> |                                       |
| Teen Service                            | 77.01%        | next highest is Very Satisfied        |
| <b>e.books, streaming video</b>         | <b>63.58%</b> | <b>next highest is Very Satisfied</b> |
| General Adult Program                   | 57.05%        | next highest Very Satisfied           |
| WIFI                                    | 56.22%        | next highest is Very Satisfied        |
| Story-times, etc.                       | 55.53%        | next highest is Very Satisfied        |
| <b>Newspaper/magazines</b>              | <b>53.85%</b> | <b>next highest Very Satisfied</b>    |
| <b>Computers w/Internet</b>             | <b>52.97%</b> | <b>next highest Very Satisfied</b>    |
| Meeting Rooms                           | 52.44%        | next highest is Very Satisfied        |
| <b>Materials on Bristol/RI</b>          | <b>51.11%</b> | <b>next highest is Very Satisfied</b> |
| Tech. equipment, classes, assistance    | 46.46%        | next highest is Very Satisfied        |
| <b>DVDs, CDs</b>                        | <b>39.43%</b> | <b>next highest is very Satisfied</b> |

The items in **BOLD are areas of concern**, primarily as they showed some numerical distance between the top two responses of “don’t use” and “very satisfied”. This would indicate they deserve further examination in terms of ROI (return on investment). Those having those top two responses not too far apart numerically does not indicate as much concern.

**MAXIMUM NEED IN THE COMMUNITY, i.e. library roles:**

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Create Young readers                | 70.78% |
| Vibrant and useful book collections | 64.46% |
| School success and info. literacy   | 60.44% |
| Encourage creativity                | 58.50% |
| Tech. and STEM                      | 57.69% |
| Build Community                     | 54.48% |
| Media Fun                           | 53.63% |
| Jobs and career development         | 47.12% |

Basic answers/information 46.32%

**The LIBRARY CONTRIBUTES TO BRISTOL: 71.21% (higher than any single category)**

**NO NEED:**

No category led in “no need”, the highest only reaching 9.16% in Teaching English. Even if you combine Minimal need with no need, there was no category that led in these categories.

**IN COMMENTS SECTIONS, WHAT THEMES EMERGED?**

Love staff, find them always helpful!!

Sunday hours!!

Marketing!!

Programs that working folks can attend (early evening best)!!

Programs that elementary age children can attend (i.e. with parents who work during day).

More and different kinds of programs

Tech. programs, most often mentioned being basic ones, or new technology focused

Genealogy programs/assistance

Books – most, but not all, understand the role of public library and impossibility of having the book on shelf for everyone’s needs. But some do wish there could be a system of Bristol residents first, or copies limited to Bristol residents.

A lot, in various ways, about working with other organizations: schools especially, followed by arts and cultural organizations.

**THE LIBRARY NONUSER SURVEY**

**There were 73 respondents by those identifying as Library Non-users.**

|                   |       |        |                |        |        |
|-------------------|-------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|
| <b>AGE GROUP:</b> | 11-17 | 1.37%  | <b>GENDER:</b> | Male   | 31.51% |
|                   | 18-30 | 54.8%  |                | Female | 68.49% |
|                   | 31-65 | 71.23% |                |        |        |
|                   | 65+   | 21.92% |                |        |        |

**Have you used library within last 3 years?**

Yes 52.05% No 47.95%

**Have you used the library even once?**

Yes 82.19% No 17.81%

Over 80% were English speaking as primary language at home.

**Top reasons not to use library:**

58.06% get all they need elsewhere,  
45.16% not enough time in the day.

This could indicate that Sunday hours would be welcomed by infrequent users as well as regular users.

***Of the Important services that the library provides, ALL BUT ONE were deemed Most Important:***

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Create Young Readers                     | 84.48%  | <b>NON USERS CHOSE THE SAME TOP SIX MAJOR ROLES AS LIBRARY USERS. The only difference was in reversal of # 5 &amp; 6. Top 4 were IDENTICAL.</b> |
| Vibrant and useful bk. Coll.             | 74.14%  |   |
| School success I Info. literacy          | 70.69%  |   |
| Encourage Creativity                     | 67.24%  |   |
| Build Community                          | 63.79%  |   |
| Tech. and STEM programs                  | 58.62%  |   |
| Basic Information                        | 55.36%  |   |
| Teach English and other immigrant skills | 51.72%  |   |
| Jobs and Career Dev.                     | 51.72%  |   |
| Media Fun                                | 51.72%  |   |
| <b>CONTRIBUTION Max.</b>                 | <b>45.61 (lower than any single Most Important)</b> |   |

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### *Best Practices and Trends*

*ctstatelibrary.org/dld/bestpractices*

<http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/bestpractices>

[http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/ld.php?content\\_id=18649094](http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/ld.php?content_id=18649094)

<http://www.slideshare.net/verzosaf/best-practices-in-library-servicesdes>

<http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends>

<http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet06>

<http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/AspenLibrariesReport.pdf>

<https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/21stCenturySkills.pdf>

<http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2016/06/featurethe-2015-public-library-data-service-statistical-report-characteristics-trends/>

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/09/15/libraries-at-the-crossroads/>

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/09/libraries-2016/>

### **BRISTOL:**

***Town of Bristol Comprehensive Plan, 2009, revised 2016 – see town of Bristol website.***

*Specifically, Chapter 2 – Snapshot of Bristol:*

<http://www.bristolri.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/248>

<http://www.bristolri.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/249>

### **LIBRARY STATS. AND INFO.**

***Comparable Statistics of Rhode Island Public Libraries, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016.***

*R.I. Office of Library and Information Services. Karen Mellor, Director. With assistance of Lauren Plewes*

[www.olis.ri.gov](http://www.olis.ri.gov)

### **STATE STANDARDS:**

<http://www.olis.ri.gov/pubs/plstandards/standards.php>

## **PART TWO: APPENDICES**

*Part Two is a separate, digital document, which can be sent to anyone via email per request to the library director or assistant director; or a hard copy may be printed upon request.*

### **APPENDICES:**

*Included in "Full Survey:"*

*Full Survey Responses Library Users*

*Full Survey Responses Library Non-Users*

*Full Details of Focus Groups & Conversations*

*Included in "Environmental Scan":*

*Full Details of Library statistical trends*

*Full Details of Bristol statistical trends*

*Fuller Summary of National Best Practices research*

## **PART THREE: Implementation/ACTION Plan**

*Part Three is a separate "working" document for internal use only.*

*It contains the detailed steps, timetables, and Success Measures for all Objectives.*