

Start Here

Bklyn Public Library

Strategic Plan





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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY



INTRODUCTION



Linda E. Johnson

People have long turned to Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) as a critical and free source of educational and recreational programming and resources. For the Library to remain relevant, it must adapt to meet the current and anticipated needs of Brooklynites—from combating illiteracy, unemployment and the digital divide, to cultivating entrepreneurship, creativity and civic engagement. Now more than ever, the Library must be flexible, dependable and well equipped to support the borough.

To determine the steps we should take to strengthen our institution, over the past three years, BPL solicited feedback from many individuals, including patrons, elected officials, trustees, employees and community members. Based on this input we identified six major goals, centered on education, access, culture, inclusion, space and stewardship. These priorities will guide our programming and financial decisions in the years to come.

Brooklyn is a diverse and dynamic borough that is home to more than 2.5 million people, including a growing creative community, large immigrant population and many residents who have limited access to technology. Each of our 60 libraries needs to reflect and support their unique neighborhoods. By nurturing community ties and keeping abreast of demographic trends, we will provide highly customized, focused and responsive service to all Brooklynites.

As the role of public libraries is growing, we also will move aggressively to incorporate new strategies for better serving the public. Libraries now offer materials in more formats, on more platforms and in more languages than ever before. And as technology has become more integral to daily life, we have expanded our traditional literacy programs to include digital training. Libraries around the world are becoming laboratories, places where people not only consume information, but create it. New trends will continue to emerge, and BPL will keep working to offer the critical resources and opportunities the citizens of a great borough deserve.

We are deeply grateful for the support of elected officials, donors, the Board of Trustees, friends groups, BPL's employees and volunteers, and most importantly, our patrons. All of you breathe life into our buildings and transform them into centers of community, learning and knowledge. Above all else, our libraries are places for everyone, and BPL is committed to ensuring that this fact will never change.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda E. Johnson".

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony W. Crowell".

Anthony W. Crowell
Chair, Board of Trustees



CREATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This document is the outcome of a highly collaborative process that began over three years ago and involved qualitative and quantitative planning initiatives. Internally, these efforts included a public service staff retreat, system-wide staff survey, two strategic planning retreats with our Board of Trustees and over 30 focus groups and interviews with a total of more than 60 employees. Externally, we commissioned a rigorous Community Needs Assessment, which gathered information from 11 patron focus groups and 1,500 households as well as through a multilingual telephone survey and online surveys. We analyzed demographic and census tract data, including information from the NYC Department of City Planning and the Center for the Study of Brooklyn. Finally, the Library conducted a thorough review of branch usage, secondary data and industry trends, including “Creating the Future: A 2020 Vision Plan for Library Service in New York State” by the New York State Regents Advisory Council and “The Library in the City: Changing Demands and A Challenging Future” by The Pew Charitable Trusts.



Photo © Philip Greenberg

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1896, Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), in accordance with its mission, has provided the people of Brooklyn with free and open access to information for education, recreation and reference. Evenly distributed across the diverse borough, BPL's 60 locations serve as integral community gathering spaces for a wide variety of purposes. In many neighborhoods, the local branch library has remained one of the few constants amid more than a century of extraordinary change. Regardless of events outside its walls, the neighborhood branch has been a trustworthy source of timely and reliable information on a wide range of topics and a safe haven for children after school. Perhaps most importantly, BPL provides all library patrons with a sense of dignity and belonging, regardless of age, race or income.

While the Library remains a fundamental community institution, profound external changes in the way information is disseminated and accessed make it imperative for us to revisit our service model to enhance core services, re-envision programming to ensure its relevancy, and develop new and innovative approaches to best serve Brooklyn's unique populations.



Photo © Philip Greenberg

BPL Today

BPL has traditionally focused on the needs of children and families. Through innovations such as opening the Brownsville Children's Library in 1914, the world's first public library devoted to children; the launch of The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs in 1986; and recurring programs such as story time, arts and crafts and Homework Help, the Library has been at the forefront of educational programming, with a particular focus on literacy. Our library professionals maintain strong relationships with educators and children at day care centers, public and parochial schools, and those who are schooled at home. We will continue to make the needs of children, teens and families our highest priority in our services and programming.

The Library is also committed to responding to the significant demographic shifts that have occurred in the borough over the past few decades. According to the Center for the Study of Brooklyn, Brooklyn's population has grown 11.5% since 1990¹ and nearly half the borough's population speaks a language other than English at home². There have also been great shifts in Brooklyn's local economy and industries, as manufacturing has given way to new technology, an expanding service economy and creative arts communities.

Parts of the borough are flourishing. Neighborhoods like Fort Greene and Williamsburg are attracting artists, writers and other creators of new content and mediums, in addition to families with young children. BPL has an opportunity to devise new ways to serve the needs of these thriving, creative populations.

Amid all the exciting growth and changes, the 2010 American Community Survey reveals that a staggering 23% of people residing in Brooklyn live below the poverty level³. This widespread poverty calls for a new approach to service delivery, including partnerships with community-based organizations and government agencies that promote economic empowerment, early literacy and training. The Library must develop a strategy to best serve the geographically large and heavily populated neighborhoods that have been left behind. This task is all the more complicated by the need to rebuild branches and engage in outreach to communities that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy, from Red Hook to Gerritsen Beach to Coney Island. Our obligation and desire to help neighborhoods recover from the storm makes our already challenging budget situation, with nearly \$230 million in unfunded capital needs, extremely difficult.

BPL must also address the dramatic changes in the role libraries play in serving their communities. Public libraries are increasingly relied upon for a range of educational and social services that extend far beyond providing access to books. The advent of sophisticated internet search engines and the increasing public adoption of electronic books and other forms of digital content have compelled the Library to provide access to content in a growing number of formats across multiple platforms, despite continued budget reductions.

Total Population by Neighborhood Tabulation Area* Brooklyn, 2010

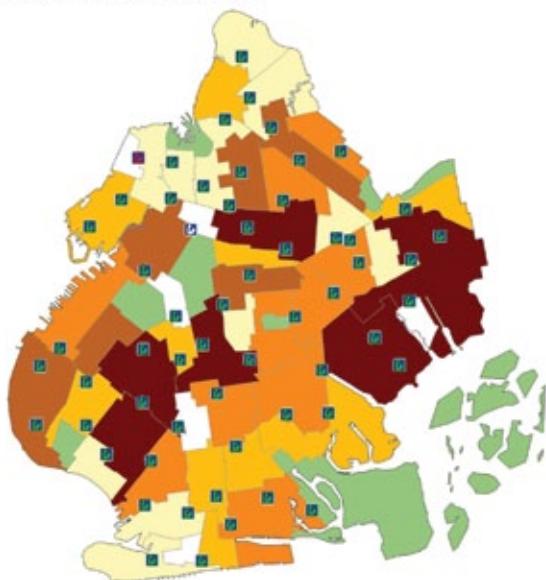
Brooklyn Total = 2,504,700

Total Population



Branch

- Central
- Business & Career Library
- All Other



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: 2006–2010 American Community Survey-FactFinder
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

Our Vision: Every Brooklynite can Start Here

People come to BPL for many reasons: some want to create or improve their resumes, check out books or start new businesses, while others want to learn English, study local history or write the next Great American Novel. Whatever their reasons for visiting the Library, BPL will help patrons begin their journeys. Guided by this strategic plan, the Library will focus on being a leading voice in digital literacy, offering access to technology and providing support for children, families, entrepreneurs, jobseekers and Brooklyn's creative community.

We will strive to make our branches welcoming environments to all patrons, from returning veterans to new immigrants. BPL will also build close partnerships with institutions and organizations with complementary missions. By working with agencies ranging from the NYC Department of Education to BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn, the Library will expand its reach and enhance the services offered to the public. The Library aspires to be a nimble organization, one that is responsive to its environment and able to quickly adapt to changes in user needs.

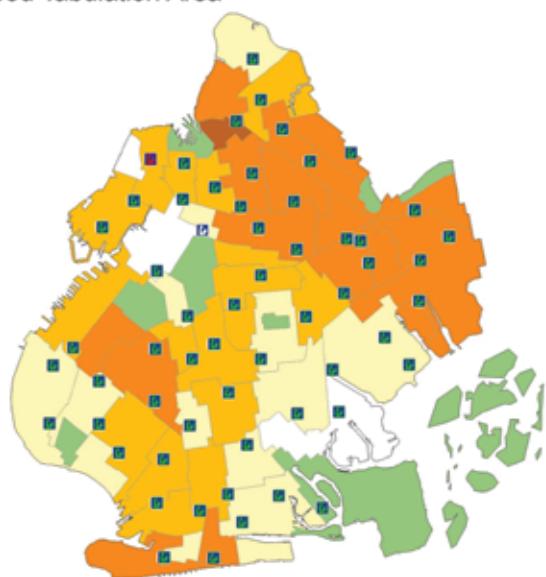
Poverty Rate by Neighborhood Tabulation Area* Brooklyn, 2006–2010

Poverty Rate



Branch

- Central Library
- Business & Career Library
- All Other



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: 2006–2010 American Community Survey-FactFinder
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

* Neighborhood Tabulation Areas or NTAs, are aggregations of census tracts that are subsets of New York City's 55 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Primarily due to these constraints, NTA boundaries and their associated names may not definitively represent neighborhoods.

¹ Center for the Study of Brooklyn- Brooklyn Neighborhood Reports 2012

² 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate (DP02)

³ 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate (CP03)

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. EDUCATION

Promote early literacy, lifelong learning and civic participation

- Create a foundation for educational success through youth, family and school engagement
- Build strong literacy skills among teenage and adult learners, enabling them to achieve their educational goals
- Advance digital literacy and engage users across the spectrum of technology proficiency
- Help jobseekers and entrepreneurs develop a foundation of skills
- Encourage patrons to be civically engaged and informed

Key Initiative: In 2012, we launched MyLibraryNYC, a collaboration between the City's three library systems and the NYC Department of Education to provide services for public school students and educators. Through this initiative, we provide a seamless online catalog across the four institutions and deliver our vast collections directly to NYC public school libraries.

Key Initiative: By 2014, launch Start Here: Literacy, an initiative to reconfigure BPL's services to prepare adult learners for new computer-based GED tests.

2. ACCESS

Improve access to library resources and increase the number of active registered cardholders

- Develop a targeted collection that reflects Brooklyn's diverse cultures and interests and provides access via preferred formats and media
- Make it easier to find, borrow and return BPL materials and resources online, in person and across the City
- Support and launch efforts to provide Brooklynites with access to our collections in non-traditional settings
- Create a library membership program that recognizes and rewards active users

Key Initiative: In 2012, we converted to BiblioCommons, an interactive online catalog with improved search capabilities, multilingual translations, mobile applications and social media features. This is a first step toward improving our digital presence through our website and on mobile devices.

Key Initiative: By 2017, expand BPL membership to over 50% of Brooklyn's 2.5 million residents.

3. CULTURE

Support creative expression, culture and the arts throughout Brooklyn

- Provide cultural programming and recreational opportunities
- Highlight the borough's rich history and the work of contemporary Brooklyn authors and writers
- Become a lead supporter of Brooklyn's creative community

Key Initiative: In 2013, launch a new writers-in-residence program to support aspiring writers and expand the use of the Espresso Book Machine as a self-publishing resource.

Key Initiative: In 2013, adopt a new acquisitions strategy for the Brooklyn Collection to include contemporary Brooklyn works in addition to its existing concentration on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historical materials.

4. INCLUSION

Present a welcoming and inclusive environment

- Strengthen library accessibility for immigrants
- Provide programming and services for older adults
- Improve service to all patrons, including veterans, persons experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals

Key Initiative: In 2012, we partnered with the Center for Court Innovation to provide space at the Stone Avenue branch in Brownsville for returning probationers to meet with caseworkers in their local communities.

Key Initiative: In 2013, through a partnership with Lifetime Arts, BPL will expand artist-led instructional arts programming for older adults, providing them with opportunities to be creative and socialize within their communities.

5. SPACE

Provide functional, attractive and safe spaces and align the Library's physical footprint with twenty-first-century service delivery

- Modernize the Library's real-estate footprint to deliver services in the spaces where our users live and work
- Offer flexible spaces that meet the evolving needs of our users
- Create environments that accommodate existing and emerging technology and facilitate digital learning
- Continue to renovate the landmarked Central Library to create spaces designed to support innovative and relevant programs and services

Key Initiative: BPL will leverage its over one million square feet of real estate by launching partnerships to provide expanded services, including co-location and/or program delivery with groups such as Spaceworks and BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn.

Key Initiative: Open the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons in 2013, which will become the cornerstone of BPL's efforts to advance digital literacy and engagement across the borough and builds upon our current strength as the borough's largest provider of free WiFi and computer access.

6. STEWARDSHIP

Develop and maintain an adaptive and responsive culture of service

- Actively engage staff, trustees, supporters, volunteers and partner organizations in the Library's mission and transformation
- Launch a networked service model to optimize services and locations throughout the borough
- Deepen and build relationships with existing and new funders
- Increase transparency, accountability and efficiency across the institution

Key Initiative: In 2013, establish a shared library technical services partnership with NYPL, enabling universal drop-off services across four boroughs for our libraries' patrons.

Key Initiative: In 2013, launch a BPL membership program for individual donors.

EDUCATION

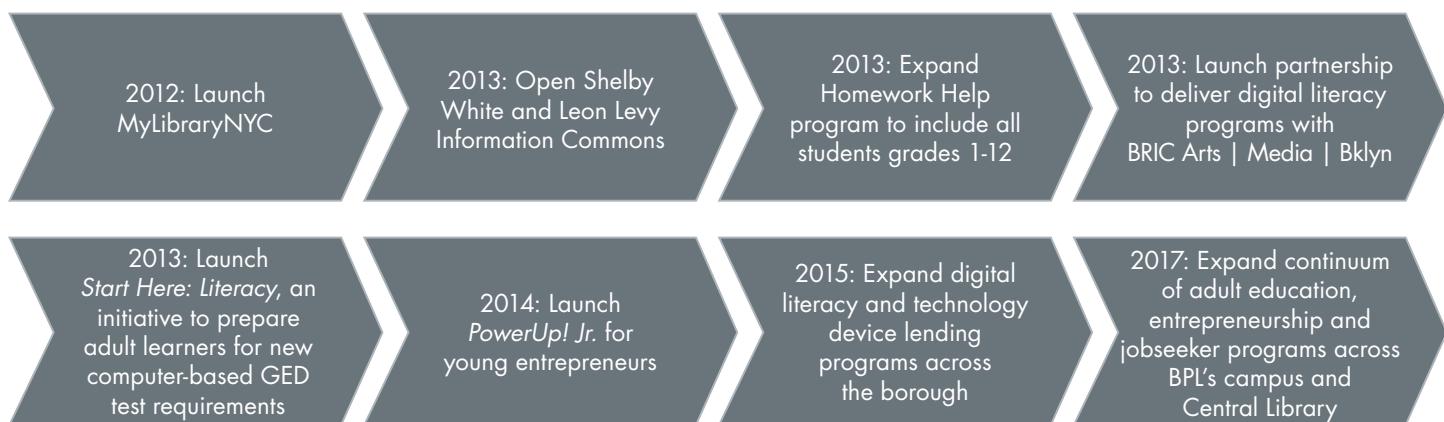


Promote early literacy, lifelong learning and civic participation

Brooklyn is a diverse borough of long-time residents and newcomers, all hoping to make better lives for themselves, their families and their neighbors. Brooklyn Public Library is a trusted institution Brooklynites can turn to for assistance as they strive to fulfill their goals. Education and civic engagement are keys to unlocking the doors of success and BPL is committed to creating a vibrant and responsive institution that meets the needs of today's patrons and those of the future.

From early literacy to digital literacy, homework help to job training, college readiness to entrepreneurship, BPL is a place for all Brooklynites to take the next step in realizing their dreams. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and providing a safe and welcoming space, BPL will help patrons explore new ideas, new identities and new connections in the community. In the diverse and evolving neighborhoods that BPL serves, the Library will continue to be an agent of change for all.

Key Initiatives



Create a foundation for educational success through youth, family and school engagement

Most Brooklynites begin their relationships with the Library at an early age. Generations of families have depended on local branches for books and other materials, family programs and homework help resources. As we envision the Library of the future, we will continue to meet the needs of children and families. BPL's philosophy focuses on nurturing curiosity with programs and resources for independent, self-directed learning. Our early literacy programs for children from birth to age five encourage pre-reading skills and school readiness and support parents in their role as their child's first teacher. Our youth librarians are devoted to helping develop literacy skills and a love of learning by promoting recreational reading, supporting

learning during out-of-school-time, providing personal interaction and delivering engaging programs and initiatives such as First Five Years. They will also continue to serve as important mentors for many of Brooklyn's young people, guiding them not only in their reading choices, but also in opening up a world of possibilities as they imagine their futures.

In the coming years, our Youth & Family Services team will continue to support academic achievement. Beginning in 2012, the Library will dramatically expand its print collections to support the national Common Core Standards required in all NYC public schools. Specifically, we will grow our collection of juvenile and young adult non-fiction not only in English, but also in Brooklyn's most widely spoken foreign languages: Russian, Chinese and Spanish. The new standards emphasize English-language arts, history, science and math, in addition to addressing the

needs of students with disabilities and English language learners. This enhancement of our traditional collections will complement an investment in technologies that support learning and creative play. In 2012, we began to install iPads loaded with educational applications in our branches; we will continue to expand this effort across the system and establish mobile tablets for use in outreach programs at Brooklyn schools.

BPL is dedicated to assisting learners outside of the classroom. Since 2004, BPL has offered a popular volunteer-based After-School Homework Helper program for students in grades 1-8, helping children learn reading, writing and math skills as well as how to use the Library's resources. Since its inception, the program has assisted approximately 220,000 elementary and junior high school students. Recently, BPL piloted a similar program at Central Library for high school students. Based on

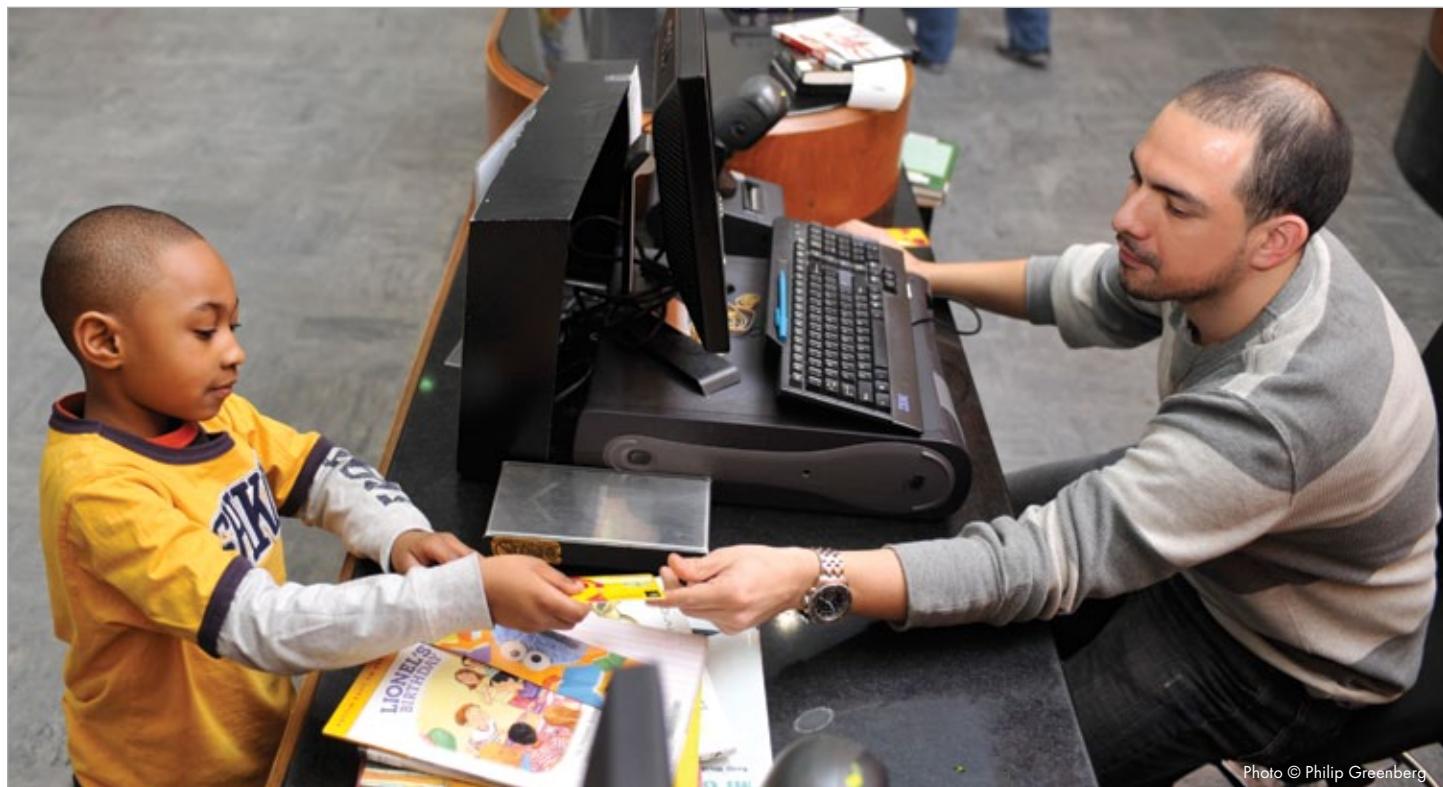


Photo © Philip Greenberg

First Five Years

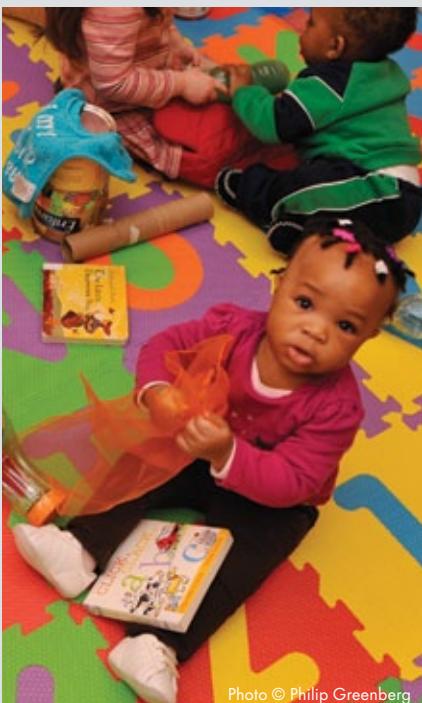


Photo © Philip Greenberg

Through BPL's renowned First Five Years programs, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, parents and caregivers are introduced to great books, age-appropriate songs and rhymes and other early literacy activities. Programs are available in all BPL locations and include Babies & Books (birth to 18 months), Toddler Time and Read, Play, Grow! (18 months to 3 years), Story Play (birth to 5 years), and Preschool Story Time and Ready, Set, Kindergarten! (3 to 5 years).

Since the First Five Years initiative began in 2005, BPL has hosted more than 62,000 class visits, child care group visits and programs, with an aggregate attendance of over 1.5 million people. The Brooklyn Reads to Babies campaign, part of the First Five Years initiative, received the 2008 John Cotton Dana Award. First Five Years will continue to grow with expanded programming across the system, tablets loaded with kid-friendly applications and mobile classroom sets for outreach programs at Brooklyn schools.

BPL will continue to educate parents and caregivers about the relationship between reading to children in their first five years, and future academic and individual success. Through this important program, our staff members help children across the borough build critical early literacy skills and foster a love of reading.

its success, BPL plans to implement this program across the Library in early 2013.

BPL will also develop integrated programs for educators and students designed to support academic success. Through the Library's Brooklyn Connections program, middle and high school students gain direct access to original archival materials from BPL's Brooklyn Collection. BPL staff members provide in-class instruction and guide students as they create local history projects and learn critical research skills. We will continue to offer these services in support of students and educators, while deepening our ties to academic institutions.

In 2012, BPL partnered with the NYC Department of Education, New York Public Library and Queens Library to launch MyLibraryNYC. This collaborative project includes a new, integrated

online platform enabling students and educators to access not only the collections in their school library but also the entire collections of all three public library systems in New York City. Students and teachers at participating schools now receive access to a dramatically increased number and variety of texts and other resources to support the Citywide Instructional Expectations, which are set by the NYC Department of Education for public school teachers. Furthermore, this program delivers book sets and individual resources directly to teachers at their participating schools, and students can request to have books held for them at their local libraries. MyLibraryNYC is slated to roll out to all public schools across Brooklyn by 2015.

Build strong literacy skills among teenage and adult learners, enabling them to achieve their educational goals

BPL provides a range of resources to assist teenagers in achieving their educational goals. In the award-winning Today's Teens, Tomorrow's Techies (T4) program, students ages 14 to 18 attend a two-week summer technology institute and then use their newly acquired skills at BPL branches to assist patrons with technology, help staff with computer troubleshooting and assist in delivering technology classes. Teens receive additional training during the school year through workshops on desktop publishing, animation and graphic design, among other subjects. We are currently in the eighth year of the popular T4 program and intend

to continue to recruit hundreds of new teenagers in the years to come.

BPL also offers programs to help adults and young adults build the critical reading and writing skills necessary to enroll in GED programs, college transition programs, community colleges and job training programs. The Library's Adult Learning Centers offer flexible classes for adults 17 years and older who are reading below a General Educational Development (GED) level. In 2012, BPL opened a new Adult Learning Center at the New Lots branch to support the East New York community. For young adults ages 17 to 24, BPL offers intensive classes that not only help strengthen literacy, math and job skills but also provide internship opportunities, social support services and transportation assistance to classes.

Beginning in 2014, the GED test will be administered exclusively on computers and will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards. By 2014, we will prepare students

for the new GED-computer test requirements and offer additional computer basics classes.

BPL will continue to assist test takers and offer critical test preparation resources for a wide range of exams, from job certification exams and the SAT, to the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). The Library will also work to raise awareness of the educational services we offer and build relationships with external service providers to increase participation and the number of online and distance learning opportunities we provide.

Advance digital literacy and engage users across the spectrum of technology proficiency

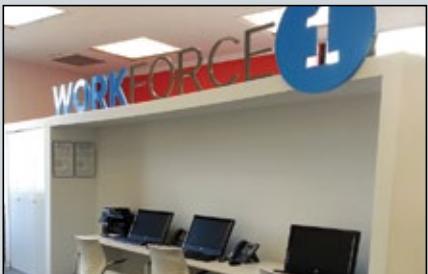
Technology is an integral part of daily life, and nearly all aspects of our society are automated or involve the use of technology, including employment

opportunities, and health, financial and transportation systems. A digitally literate person is better able to make informed decisions and participate effectively in the workforce, higher education, social groups and civic life.

BPL is committed to being the lead provider of digital literacy education in Brooklyn. Every year, BPL hosts thousands of classes, workshops and training opportunities at its 60 locations, including those targeted specifically to teens, older adults and jobseekers. BPL's Central Library will become a hub for digital programs and access in 2013 with the opening of the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons. It will serve as the focal point for digital literacy programs across the system. This innovative environment will offer spaces designed to facilitate individual and group work, learning and creativity and the use of digital resources and technology. Simultaneously, BPL will launch a partnership with the nonprofit BRIC Arts | Media |



Workforce1 Career Centers



BPL has long offered a wide range of free services for jobseekers, such as interviewing and job search workshops, resume writing assistance and career assessment and exploration software. Yet, BPL has never had the capacity to offer on-site some of the most important resources for job seekers: actual job placement and recruiting services.

To help meet the demand for these services, BPL partnered with the NYC Department of Small Business Services to launch Workforce1 Career Centers at Central Library and Sunset Park Library. Since their opening in October 2011, these centers have referred 4,439 New Yorkers to interviews that have resulted in 917 job placements. Additionally, to ensure appropriate referrals to the Career Centers, librarians received customized training from the Workforce Professionals Training Institute, including how to assess the needs of the under or unemployed.

Jobseekers can now visit the Library to accomplish all of the steps involved in becoming workforce-ready: from learning English as a second language, improving literacy skills and editing cover letters and resumes, to learning computer skills and ultimately, being referred to organizations in the process of hiring.

Bklyn to provide media education and production classes. In 2016, our digital literacy initiative will be complemented by a new technology-rich, dedicated teen space at Central Library, with equipment ranging from tablets to gaming consoles, as well as comfortable, flexible and inviting furniture to accommodate group interactivity, and encourage participation by an audience that has been traditionally difficult for libraries to reach.

BPL is the largest provider of free WiFi access in the borough. For many patrons, the Library provides their sole access to computers and the internet. BPL bridges the digital divide by providing a crucial link to databases, job applications and information that is increasingly only available online. A program funded through the federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) allows BPL to provide enhanced broadband access and increased technology resources including

laptops, public programs and outreach at eight neighborhood libraries located in some of Brooklyn's most underserved neighborhoods. Based on the success of this effort, BPL will expand its technology device lending program and digital literacy initiatives to additional branches by 2015.

The Library will invest in technologies and programs that facilitate training, interaction and experimentation with digital tools, and we will partner with innovators to provide cutting-edge resources. In addition, we need to continuously upgrade our technology infrastructure to deliver services effectively and efficiently. From computer tablets for class visits to self-checkout technology, the Library will closely track consumer preferences and modernize its workflow accordingly.

Help jobseekers and entrepreneurs develop a foundation of skills

BPL's Business & Career Library (B&CL) meets the needs of entrepreneurs, business owners, investors, jobseekers, students and community organizations through an array of resources and services. It provides access to information, both online and in print, that supports the economic development of Brooklyn and its residents. Services include one-on-one business and finance consultations, resume and test prep help, instruction in job searching and computer use, topical seminars, computer access and more. Additionally, BPL has partnered with the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to offer Workforce1 Expansion Centers at Central Library and Sunset Park Library. These centers connect qualified candidates to job opportunities across the city.



PowerUP! 2011 winners, Brooklyn Open Acupuncture

Photo © Philip Greenberg

In 2013, BPL will launch a new program to help prepare and connect immigrants with a range of educational attainment and training with jobs that meet their skills and professional abilities.

By 2017, we will expand a continuum of adult education, jobseeker and entrepreneurship programs across the Library, focused on preparatory skills for individuals seeking to improve their educational or job circumstances, and developing strong referral networks to the appropriate academic institutions, government agencies or non-profits that can best support individuals with more extensive service needs. Increasing these services across Brooklyn will help jobseekers take advantage of BPL's community connections. These programs will be supported by an expanded collection of related materials and resources. Additionally, branch libraries will work with local partners to offer programs specific to jobseekers in their neighborhoods. Use of online

training, guides and other web-based initiatives will increase the reach of the Library, providing a 24/7 resource.

For those interested in establishing new businesses, BPL acts as a center of business resources as well as a space for entrepreneurs to work, create and collaborate. The B&CL offers the SCORE program, which provides free business counseling with experienced businesspeople who offer private coaching sessions. Additionally, the Library's PowerUP! Business Plan Competition helps entrepreneurs turn their business ideas into a reality. Participants attend classes about writing business plans and marketing their business, among other topics, and are paired with business counselors in their communities. The contestants with the top business plans receive seed money—up to \$15,000—to help launch their businesses. Through the introduction of a PowerUP! Jr. competition in 2014, we will

support younger entrepreneurs with their business aspirations.

As we focus on expanding the reach of the B&CL throughout all of Brooklyn, BPL will provide a baseline of core financial counseling and basic business resources in our branches. The Library will work with both new and seasoned entrepreneurs to bring together a community of business owners to share ideas, collaborate and mentor each other while developing their ventures into vital components of the local economy. All of these efforts will be coupled with outreach strategies to build public awareness and to ensure our patrons take full advantage of these exceptional programs and resources.



Bookmobile headed to areas impacted by Hurricane Sandy

Encourage patrons to be civically engaged and informed

BPL provides equal access to knowledge and the tools necessary for an informed, engaged and educated citizenry, while serving as a powerful force for economic growth. The Library acts as a town hall, and our support for civic engagement is an extension of our core services.

BPL is trusted throughout the borough as an unbiased provider of information. Our environment cultivates community involvement, volunteerism and the open exchange of ideas. With branches in almost every neighborhood, BPL is uniquely situated to foster and support local community-based groups, and serve as a bridge between Brooklyn's diverse communities. In 2012, our civic role was best evidenced by our comprehensive storm response. BPL partnered with organizations such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Red Hook

Initiative, New York Cares, Street Lab, Transit Forward, United Way and countless others to collect warm coats for displaced individuals and families, offer online learning tools for displaced public school students, and provide information on FEMA applications and voting sites across the system. Locally, BPL opened the Red Hook branch as a warming center and provided storm supplies, charging stations and children's activities through our Bookmobiles at Coney Island, Gerritsen Beach and Red Hook. Every year, we also host public engagement campaigns, ranging from registration for Early Intervention services for babies and toddlers to providing assistance to Brooklynites preparing for the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program. Our branches meet their community's needs by holding citizenship classes, workshops in financial literacy, health and nutrition and by partnering with local groups.

In the coming years, we will work with civic and social service organizations and government agencies to expand our efforts to host community meetings, debates for local elections and community forums. These collaborations will help advance personal growth, local action and civic awareness among our patrons.

ACCESS



Improve access to library resources and increase the number of active registered cardholders

Brooklyn Public Library's collection is one of its core public resources and our professional staff use their vast knowledge of books and research methods to connect patrons to the information they seek. This expertise becomes even more critical as we continue to offer materials in new formats and on multiple platforms. Our staff have an invaluable understanding of community needs, from school curricula to popular titles in their neighborhoods, that can help guide our patrons' online and offline experiences.

As the publishing industry moves inexorably toward digital production and distribution, the Library must ensure access for those who may not have the means or training to take advantage of the benefits of electronic formats. BPL must also continue to promote literacy and learning through engaging active patrons and non-users alike. Through online community outreach, "pop-up" libraries in pedestrian plazas and direct delivery to homebound seniors, the Library will ensure access to our collection for all Brooklynites.

In the coming years, the Library will deepen its relationship with individual patrons, supporters, donors and leaders that comprise the communities we serve and encourage active and meaningful use of our assets, from our programs to our spaces to our materials.

Key Initiatives

2012: Launch new online catalog, BiblioCommons

2012: Expand collection to support Common Core educational standards and immigrant communities

2012: Expand eBook access beginning with Penguin/3M/NYPL pilot

2013: Launch program to recognize and reward "power users"

2013: Expand Readers Advisory services system-wide

2013: Begin pilot efforts to offer BPL in non-traditional "pop-up" spaces

2014: Launch universal card and universal drop-off services across the City

2017: Expand BPL membership to over 50% of Brooklyn's 2.5m residents

Develop a targeted collection that reflects Brooklyn's diverse cultures and interests and provides access via preferred formats and media

BPL's collection is targeted to meet our patrons' broad educational and recreational needs. The collection ranges from online databases and original source material for writers, to GED test preparation books and contemporary Russian novels. Our collection must be curated to maintain its quality and relevance to our changing user base. The Library has carefully managed its acquisitions strategy, and today our branches circulate nearly 20 million books, materials and eBooks a year. In 2012, BPL began a two-year effort to expand its collection to meet the needs of Brooklyn students and educators as the Common Core rolls out across New York State. BPL will continue to regularly evaluate its selection and acquisitions strategy and continue engaging with publishers, distributors and patrons.

As user reading preferences incorporate more digital content, BPL will respond by providing access to all platforms. The shift from physical to digital materials has been dramatic. According to a July 2012 survey by the Association of American Publishers and the Book Industry Study Group, eBooks more than doubled in popularity in 2011, with eBooks outselling hardcover books in adult fiction for the first time.

Currently, BPL has one of the top eBook collections in the country. As our patrons increasingly choose digital formats, our goal is to ensure the same customer experience regardless

of the platform or device. BPL will continue to build an eBook collection that represents our patrons' diversity and reading preferences. In partnership with NYPL, BPL has worked to increase eBook access for our patrons, through efforts including a 2012 pilot with Penguin Group and 3M.

At the same time, libraries currently have little control over the publisher/eBook distributor relationship. It's our responsibility to continue to educate readers about the issues concerning access to eBooks in public libraries and advocate for libraries' interests by partnering with national initiatives spearheaded by the American Library Association as well as grassroots efforts like Reader's First, a new coalition to improve eBook access and services for public library users.

Make it easier to find, borrow and return BPL materials and resources online, in person and across the City

BPL strives to make its collection of books, eBooks, DVDs and other materials easy to find and convenient to use. In 2012, BPL launched BiblioCommons, a new online search tool that provides accurate, more relevant and user-friendly catalog search results and enables users to connect with other readers, share book reviews and keep track of their reading history. BPL's new catalog also features information in Spanish, Chinese, French and Russian, and is the platform that supports the MyLibraryNYC public school initiative.

Beginning in 2013, our library professionals will grow

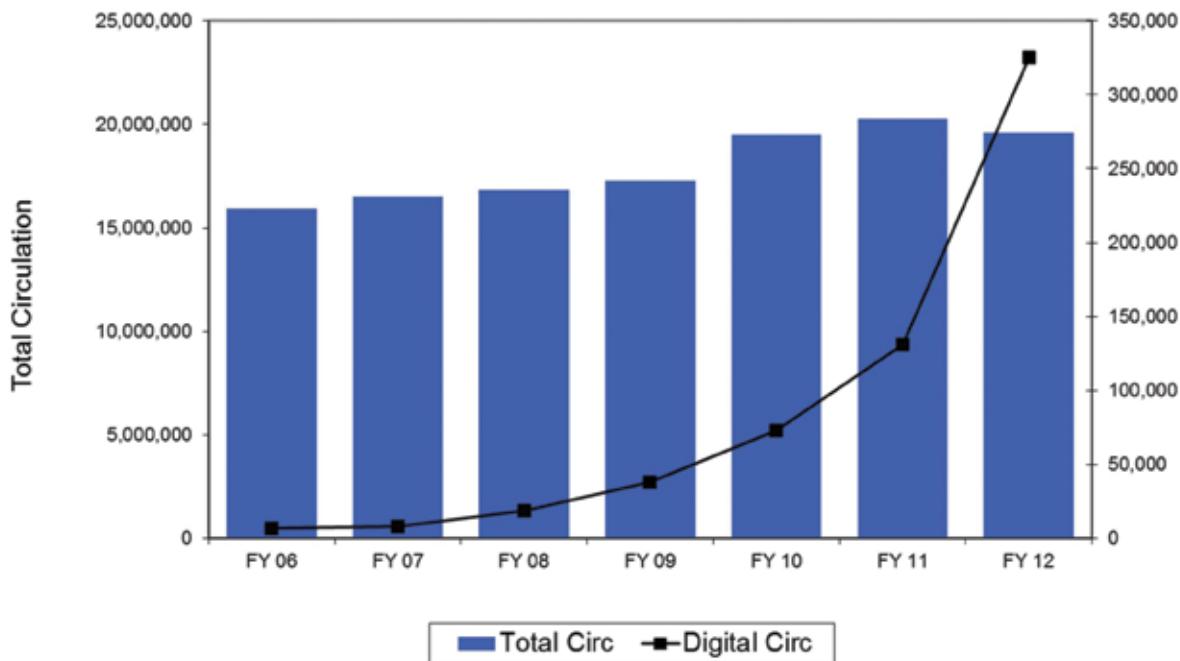
our Readers' Advisory services, which include everything from suggesting books to library patrons at the circulation desk, to recommending online materials in order to help patrons find the information they need.

In partnership with New York Public Library and Queens Library, BPL is strongly advocating for the establishment of citywide universal card privileges and universal drop-off services by 2015. According to recent commuter analysis provided by the Population Division of the NYC Department of City Planning, this change would benefit the 807,000+ commuters who currently work in a borough other than the one in which they live, and the countless students who attend schools outside their resident boroughs. This service expansion will begin in 2014 with a pilot involving BPL and NYPL, which will allow any NYPL or BPL patron to drop off materials in either system's branches.

Support and launch efforts to provide Brooklynites with access to our collections in non-traditional settings

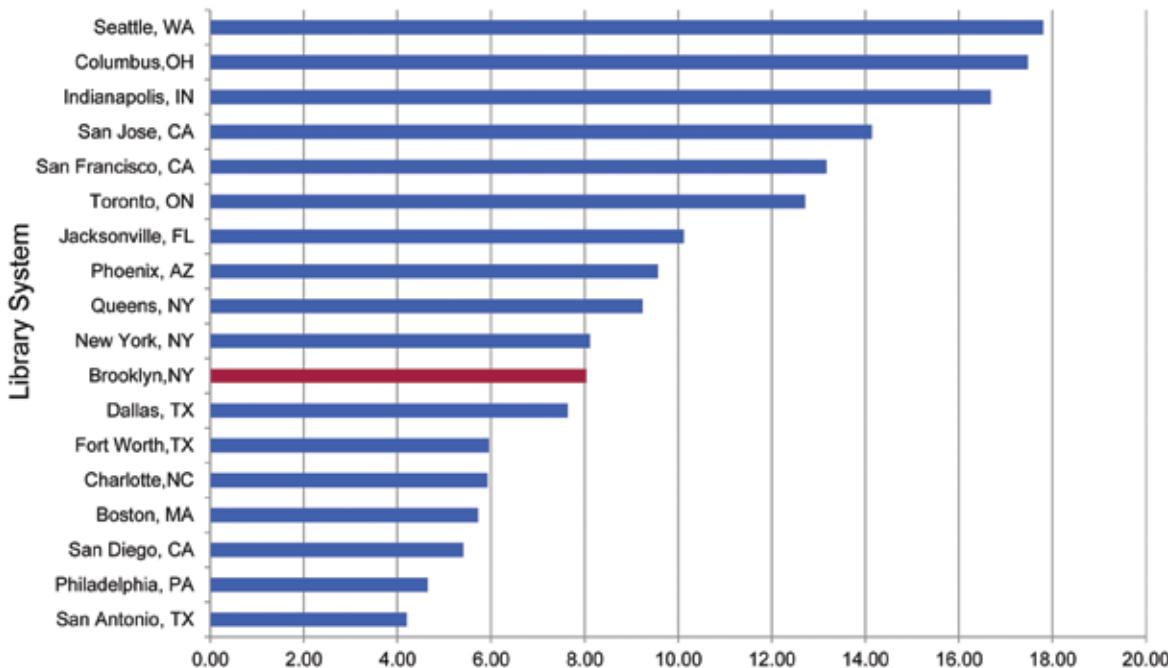
BPL will offer our materials in unexpected environments, from "pop-up" libraries in pedestrian plazas to the extended loan of materials at public schools or senior centers. MyLibraryNYC is our first major expansion of material access to Brooklynites, with books being delivered directly to Brooklyn public schools. We will also strengthen our "deposit collections," through which the Library lends targeted materials reflective of local needs at neighborhood community centers.

Brooklyn Public Library Circulation and Digital Circulation



Note: Total Circulation includes all library materials. Digital Circulation is limited to video, music, audiobooks and eBooks.

Circulation Per Capita Comparison (FY 2011)



Source: Public Library Data Service (PLDS).



Photo © Philip Greenberg

BPL will continue to be a strong supporter of borough activities that promote literacy and thoughtful discussion about books. Our efforts range from the Brooklyn borough president's annual Brooklyn Book Festival to the launch of temporary outdoor reading rooms in Red Hook's Coffey Park and Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza, in partnership with the non-profit Street Lab's Uni Project.

Create a library membership program that recognizes and rewards active users

In 2012, BPL had over 950,000 cardholders, a 35% increase in the past year. Nearly 38% of Brooklyn's 2.5 million residents currently carry a BPL library card. We aim to grow this number to 50% by 2017. But we cannot define success by simply increasing the number of registered users. We aim for an engaged community of active users taking part in our cultural

events, educational programs and public training initiatives, as well as making frequent use of our materials and resources.

Beginning in 2013, BPL will launch a program that will reward our patrons for their active and longtime use of the Library. Rewards will be based on patrons' overall material checkouts and renewals, length of cardholder status, number of events attended and how engaged they are with our online community. This new program will help create personalized experiences for "power users," and will feature incentives, including special borrowing privileges, invitations to exclusive cultural programs and notifications about upcoming author book tours and BPL events.

BPL Digital Engagement



In 2012, Brooklyn Public Library launched BiblioCommons, an online catalog that provides the kind of search experience that users have elsewhere on the web. It features improved browsing and quicker, more refined results. Patrons can now review books, send direct messages and store wish lists and reading histories. Users will be able to browse the online platform from a mobile device, as well as access the catalog from a new app for Android™ and iPhone®.

This launch represents the first in a series of digital innovations. We will continue to pursue interactive communication with our customers through our website, social media channels and via patrons' mobile devices. We will promote original content and meaningful engagement with our patrons about our neighborhood branches and allow organizations, technologists, developers and other interested parties to access open data and engage in data visualization projects. Through these efforts, we will increase BPL's profile, highlight our achievements and improve accessibility to those around the world who are interested in Brooklyn and the Library's vast offerings.



Photo © Philip Greenberg

CULTURE



BPL Exhibition, Fashion Illustration: A Contemporary Look

Support creative expression, culture and the arts throughout Brooklyn

Brooklyn Public Library is committed to inspiring Brooklynites of all ages by providing access to outstanding cultural resources, such as author talks, musical performances and art exhibitions. BPL is uniquely situated to bring together artists with very different backgrounds to engage in dialogue and build community. In the coming years, we will strengthen our libraries' roles as creative centers of their neighborhoods. The Library will consider what Brooklyn's many writers, designers, artists and other creative residents want—such as access to training, programs and workspaces—and how the institution can reposition itself to become a stronger force for advancing their growth and artistic development.

BPL is also at the epicenter of a resurgent interest in the history of Brooklyn, from former residents to the national and international press. People across the world wish to trace their roots to the borough, view historic maps of neighborhoods, and connect with photos, ephemera and other materials. We will significantly improve access to the Brooklyn Collection and expand its holdings so that more people can research their genealogy, track Brooklyn's current cultural renaissance and learn about the borough's history.

Key Initiatives

2012: Install Espresso Book Machine for self publishing

2012: Launch *Brooklyn Visual Heritage* website with Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn Museum and Pratt Institute

2013: Launch partnership with Spaceworks at Red Hook and Williamsburgh branches

2013: Launch BPL writers-in-residence program

2014: Launch "Artist Toolkit" to help independent artists build skills to achieve sustainable careers

2014: Expand the Brooklyn Collection to document Brooklyn's contemporary culture

2015: Complete digitization of *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and 63 local Brooklyn newspapers

Provide cultural programming and recreational opportunities

Creative expression, recreation and an appreciation for the arts are important for all Brooklynites. Learning can happen in many ways, and BPL offers a diverse range of programs and resources that encourage imaginative learning for people of all ages and backgrounds. These opportunities include storytimes, arts and crafts, chess workshops, Summer Reading events, film series and dance classes on Central Library's plaza as well as other interactive experiences.

Our cultural programs will extend across all age levels. To further support our growing partnership with the NYC Department of Education, BPL will expand its Theater in the Schools program, which has already introduced many public school students to their first live theater experience. Productions including Cool Rainforest Connections and The City's Green Book are staged by professional theater groups, including Hampstead Stage Company, Plaza Theatrical Productions, Wildlife Theater, and International Theater Arts Institute, a group that often presents in a bilingual format. BPL will also expand its creative arts programming for older adults through a partnership with the non-profit Lifetime Arts. From quilting and choral singing to drawing and writing short stories, our programs help patrons develop new artistic skills, express themselves and interact with others.

BPL will continue to provide invaluable humanities events for the borough. These efforts will

build upon our recent successes, such as 2012's Fashion Illustration: A Contemporary Look, one of the largest showcases ever assembled of the work of established and widely published New York- and Brooklyn-based fashion illustrators. BPL will also work to attract more New Yorkers to Central Library's Dr. S. Stevan Dweck Center for Contemporary Culture, the Library's largest performance venue. We will continue to provide programming through partnerships with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall and the Museum of Modern Art. In 2013, BPL will increase community participation in programs by using targeted outreach and creating a more user-friendly online events calendar. As a result, more people will experience the culturally diverse schedule of readings, talks and performances presented in the landmarked Central Library.

Highlight the borough's rich history and the work of contemporary Brooklyn authors and writers

As a 116-year-old institution with ties to every Brooklyn neighborhood, BPL is at the intersection of the borough's storied past and its exciting future. We believe that the Library should and can be a leading source of information about Brooklyn, whether patrons are looking for nineteenth-century maps of their neighborhoods, images of a 1950s Brooklyn actress or books by emerging Brooklyn authors.

The Library's Brooklyn Collection brings local history to life through maps, photos, ephemera and the historical *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* newspaper.

In the coming years, we will strive to offer a more comprehensive look at our borough. In late 2012, we launched Brooklyn Visual Heritage, a website created in collaboration with Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science, the Brooklyn Historical Society and Brooklyn Museum. This effort, developed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded Project CHART (Cultural Heritage, Access, Research and Technology), focuses on developing the skills of future staff members and on the digitization of historic images of Brooklyn. By 2015, BPL will complete the digitization of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which includes the years spanning 1903–1955, as well as 63 other Brooklyn neighborhood papers. To facilitate access, we will redesign Brooklyn Collection's website to improve search results and make it easier for researchers to obtain items. Finally, we will raise awareness about Brooklyn's past through rotating exhibits in our branches and discussion groups.

While we take care to preserve and catalog the past, we must also track current trends and events. In 2014, BPL will expand the Brooklyn Collection to document Brooklyn's contemporary culture. BPL will collect unique and notable work created in Brooklyn, as well as ephemera and photos. These items will supplement the Brooklyn Collection's existing concentration on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historical materials.

Brooklyn Connections



Since 2006, BPL's Brooklyn Connections program has helped middle- and high-school students develop important research and analytical skills while learning about the borough's history. Students in English Language Arts and Social Studies classes complete a standards-based local history project, receive tours of the Brooklyn Collection (BPL's special collection of Brooklyn-related historical documents) and enjoy direct access to the Collection's original archival materials. Connections staff members visit participating public schools to provide in-class instruction and deliver document reproductions tailored to class projects. Additionally, students can receive after-school project assistance at the Brooklyn Collection. Teachers enjoy one-on-one planning sessions with staff and have the opportunity to attend professional development workshops.

Brooklyn Connections has experienced significant growth—from serving 20 classes in 2007–2008 to 48 classes in 2011–2012. Since its inception, the program has reached nearly 4,000 students in grades 6 through 12, including students with special needs and English Language Learners. The initiative serves low-income and Title 1 schools, where 40% or more of students receive free or reduced lunch. Over the past five years, Brooklyn Connections has helped thousands of young Brooklynites develop a greater understanding of local history and build the critical-thinking skills needed for lifelong academic success.

Become a lead supporter of Brooklyn's creative community

Brooklyn is one of the country's preeminent creative hubs, a place where artists, writers, designers and performers come to live and work. The Library is committed to expanding opportunities for professional development, collaboration and public engagement for the borough's creative community.

In 2012, the Library began to deepen its support of local writers by launching the Espresso Book Machine as a self-publishing resource at the Central Library. In 2013, the Library will create an advisory board that includes local authors to help guide the development of new services. We will also seek out other organizations to enhance programming at our libraries by providing writing workshops and classes on how to navigate

the publishing industry. Also in 2013, the Library will open a writer's room; this will be the first step in creating a writer-in-residence program that will enable Brooklyn writers to work in dedicated, quiet spaces.

We will leverage our extensive physical plant to establish environments that can best support the creative community. In 2013, through a partnership with Spaceworks (a nonprofit organization that creates long-term and affordable artist rehearsal space), we will dedicate underutilized space at our Williamsburgh and Red Hook branches for use by local artists. This innovative program will connect our patrons to new creative resources while breathing new life into underutilized branches. At the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons, we will offer advanced computer software and digital design tools that artists and designers may not

have access to elsewhere. When planning exhibitions, the Library will continue to give priority to the work of Brooklyn-based artists, providing many new creative professionals with the opportunity to display their work. Through programming and events, the Library will champion the work of our borough's many talented individuals and help foster the development of Brooklyn's next generation of artists, writers, performers and designers.

INCLUSION



Present a welcoming and inclusive environment

One of Brooklyn's greatest strengths is its diversity. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, more than 37% of Brooklyn residents were born outside of the United States⁴ and nearly 46% of Brooklynites over the age of five speak a language other than English at home⁵. By providing English classes and conversation groups, as well as materials in more than 126 languages, Brooklyn Public Library is a source of support and information for new Americans. Yet despite our progress, there is still much work to be done. By expanding our bilingual programming, tailoring our services to meet specific community needs and improving the entire system's capacity to communicate with speakers of other languages, we can continue to be a vital resource for our borough's newcomers.

The Library also strives to meet the needs of Brooklyn's emerging communities, including veterans, persons experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, among others. By creating new partnerships with social service providers, strengthening our referral network, providing staff training and creating new ties within Brooklyn's communities, we will make a difference for all Brooklynites.

Key Initiatives

2012: Provide four language translations on BPL online catalog

2012: Partner with the Center for Court Innovation to allow parolees to meet with caseworkers in their local communities

2013: Launch outreach services to support older adults, immigrants and emerging communities

2013: Launch program to help immigrants find skilled jobs and careers

2013: Expand Lifetime Arts program for older adults across the borough

2014: Fully train all staff on emerging communities and referral processes

2017: Fully implement language access plan across BPL

Strengthen library accessibility for immigrants

All patrons, regardless of the language(s) they speak, should be able to enjoy a high level of service at local libraries. Brooklyn is now one of the most diverse counties in the nation. According to 2010 American Community Survey data, over 948,000 of Brooklyn's residents are foreign-born⁶, and more than one million residents—46% of the borough—speak a language other than English at home⁷. Over 583,000 residents are considered limited English proficient⁸.

A centralized plan of service for immigrant communities will enable our staff members to better meet the needs of patrons. Our immigrant services initiative began in 2012, when BPL began offering a robust online catalog with translations in Spanish, Chinese, Russian and French, and in multilingual Common Core

collections. In 2013, BPL's Business & Career Library will spearhead a new program to help prepare and connect immigrants with jobs and careers that meet their abilities—particularly for those who have not been able to apply overseas training and credentials into meaningful jobs in the United States. By 2015, we will increase the number of English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) groups that we host to accommodate the top ten foreign languages spoken in Brooklyn: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, French Creole, Yiddish, Polish, Italian, Bengali, Arabic and Urdu. Additionally, we will identify ways to make our existing programs more relevant to speakers of other languages and immigrants, including First Five Years programming for children, literacy classes, and business and career resources.

These individual efforts will lead to fully implementing an institution-wide language access and immigrant services plan in 2017. This plan will include establishing an expanded immigrant service volunteer program, installing signage at branches in multiple languages and providing interpretation and translation tools to employees. By being mindful of the needs of immigrants and new learners of English, we can ensure our libraries reflect the diversity of our borough and inspire all Brooklynites to achieve their goals.

Provide programming and services for older adults

Brooklyn has the largest concentration of older adults in New York City, a segment that will continue to grow and challenge public service providers. Understanding and successfully responding to the needs of older adult customers will be critical to BPL's future success. Partnering with Lifetime Arts has been a positive step in improving service to this constituency. The sequential arts programming series, which includes social interaction opportunities, is building the Library's capacity to deliver and sustain meaningful instructional arts programs for an aging population. Programs included quilting, poetry, drawing, collage, painting and singing, among others, for the 55+ population.

In FY12, a series of 12 arts programs with more than 100 individual sessions took place in 10 branches, Central Library and senior centers across the borough. Through this effort, BPL facilitated engagement among older Brooklynites, some of whom lead very isolated lives. The programs were well attended and positively reviewed by the participants. Lifetime Arts has secured a prestigious IMLS grant that will support additional programs at BPL in FY13. BPL will continue to expand this worthwhile program across the borough.

Lifetime Arts

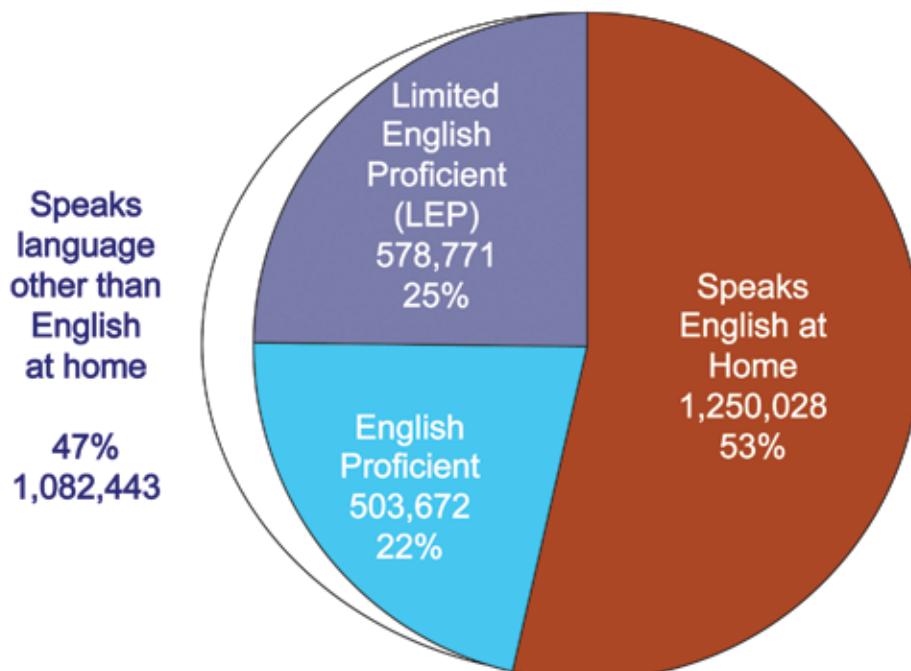
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Photo © Gregg Richards

Persons by English Language Ability Brooklyn, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

Limited English Proficient Population by Language Spoken at Home in New York City and Brooklyn, 2010

<u>New York City</u>		<u>Brooklyn</u>	
Overall LEP	1,816,599	Overall LEP	578,771
	Percent		Percent
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
Spanish	50.4	Spanish	35.1
Chinese*	16.5	Chinese*	20.6
Russian	6.3	Russian	15.0
French Creole	2.7	French Creole	5.5
Korean	2.6	Yiddish	4.9
Italian	2.2	Polish	2.5
Bengali	2.1	Italian	2.2
Polish	1.6	Bengali	2.1
Yiddish	1.6	Arabic	2.1
Arabic	1.5	Urdu	1.2

* Includes Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Formosan

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

Improve service to all patrons, including veterans, persons experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals

People from all backgrounds, living under a variety of circumstances, rely on the Library for assistance with achieving their goals. BPL will work to improve and expand upon our past efforts to reach underserved populations. In 2012, we began providing space in our Stone Avenue Library in Brownsville to the Center for Court Innovation, enabling parolees to meet locally with their caseworkers.

In 2013, BPL will create a Department of Outreach Services, designed to build relationships

with outside organizations, such as social service providers and advocacy groups, to offer specialized information and assistance for emerging communities, as well as older adults and immigrants. This department will coordinate new programming for our branches with external providers, encourage use of the Library, strengthen our referral services and oversee mobile services for people who may experience barriers to visiting the Library. It will educate employees about internal and external resources and programs and spend time in Brooklyn's communities, learning about the needs of our patrons. By 2014, BPL will fully train all staff on emerging communities and referral processes. Through these

initiatives, we will develop a cohesive strategy for ensuring that all patrons who visit our libraries feel welcome and receive helpful information.

⁴ 2010 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimate (DP02)

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ 2010 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimate (B16001)

⁹ 2010 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimate (DP05)

The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs



Photo © Philip Greenberg

At its 5 locations, BPL's The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs provides children age birth to 12, with or without disabilities, opportunities to play and learn together in barrier-free environments. From story times and crafts, to gardening clubs and weekend performances, the Child's Place offers a variety of fun and inclusive programming for children. Child's Place locations are equipped with adaptive toys, paint brushes and other tools, as well as audiobooks and twin vision and Braille books, among other resources. Child's Place staff members have special education backgrounds and experience working with children with disabilities. In addition to children's programming, they also conduct workshops for parents and make school visits. Additionally, through the Child's Place's Hospital Storytelling program, volunteers visit hospitals and clinics to read aloud to children.

The first Child's Place opened in Flatlands Library in 1986. Since then, BPL has added locations in Greenpoint, Red Hook, Saratoga and Sunset Park libraries. In fiscal year 2012, the Child's Place served over 22,000 children with disabilities, their families, peers, friends, educators and therapists at 1,360 programs. In FY13, the program will focus on making the Library more accessible and welcoming to children and teens on the autism spectrum. The Child's Place has become a model for national inclusion, and has been recognized as a best practices program by both the Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Council and the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

SPACE



Kensington Library, 2012

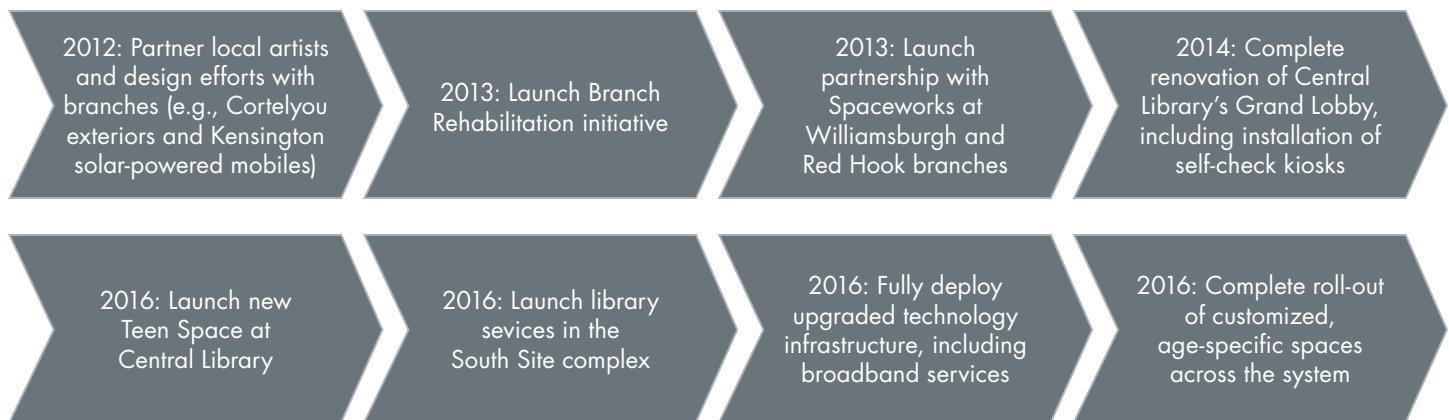
Provide functional, attractive and safe spaces and align the Library's physical footprint with twenty-first-century service delivery

For generations, local libraries have served as anchors of their neighborhoods. Brooklyn Public Library's extensive real-estate portfolio is comprised of over one million square feet of space in 60 libraries located throughout the borough. This physical footprint gives BPL reach into nearly every one of Brooklyn's diverse and dynamic neighborhoods. Our libraries range from the iconic Central Library at Grand Army Plaza to the system's 18 original Carnegie libraries from the early twentieth century, as well as smaller, more modern structures built over the last 75 years.

Our aging branch system presents both challenges and opportunities. Years of deferred maintenance have left too many branches in poor condition and unable to provide the services our patrons deserve and need. Additionally, our physical footprint was built to serve a twentieth-century model of library service and, in some cases, is no longer adequate.

BPL will focus on modernizing our physical spaces, while leveraging our real-estate assets to strengthen services for all Brooklyn communities. Our branches must become technology-rich and conducive for both collaborative learning and work in order to best support our patrons. We will work with external stakeholders and community partners to repurpose library spaces that are underutilized, provide homes for community-focused programming, improve our responsiveness to changing neighborhood demographics and develop new library spaces designed for modern needs.

Key Initiatives



Modernize the Library's real-estate footprint to deliver services in the spaces where our users live and work

BPL's one million plus square feet of City-owned real estate suffers from more than \$230 million in deferred maintenance needs, and our branches, with an average age of 58 years, are in many cases not configured to meet the Library's twenty-first-century service requirements. As most of our branches are owned by the City, BPL has relied on the generosity of our elected officials to support our capital needs. Unfortunately, we do not receive nearly enough funding to meet our enormous infrastructure needs and must think creatively about ways to deliver the sort of public spaces that our patrons and staff deserve. Our plan is to address this problem in several ways. At some locations, BPL will work with private developers to realize the sometimes significant value in our branches and develop brand new libraries. BPL recently began work

on one such project by partnering with Brooklyn-based developer Two Trees to build a state-of-the-art new branch in the heart of the BAM Cultural District in Downtown Brooklyn. At other locations, the Library will work with community leaders to identify creative partnerships that can share space with the Library and provide enhanced programming in more modern facilities.

While BPL's extensive branch network is an extraordinary resource, it also presents several challenges. By investing in a substantial "bricks and mortar" service delivery system, BPL is often challenged to respond to Brooklyn's rapidly shifting demographics and development patterns. BPL will explore new solutions aimed at bringing our collection and resources to the community and expanding our presence in Brooklyn's neighborhoods beyond the confines of our branches. We will collaborate with other service providers to locate collections and programming in unique places

such as public plazas, schools, community centers and senior centers. In certain neighborhoods, BPL will work with community leaders and the private sector to investigate relocating existing branches to better serve changing populations, develop new, high-tech and flexible libraries and enter into partnerships with developers to realize the revenue potential of select BPL branches.

BPL will modernize and maintain our local branches through regular technology and equipment upgrades, such as the current installation of self-check machines across the system. This initiative also includes expanding artistic partnerships such as those begun in 2012, including the Cortelyou Library mural and the solar mobiles in our new Kensington branch. In 2013, we will launch a groundbreaking partnership with Spaceworks, a newly founded not-for-profit, tasked with creating affordable work and performance spaces for New York City artists. Spaceworks will develop innovative work

Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons

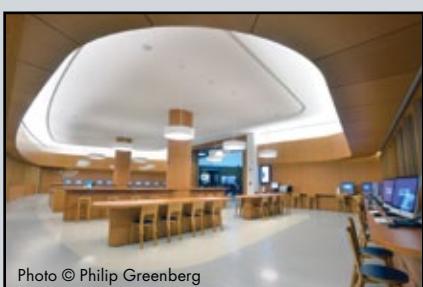
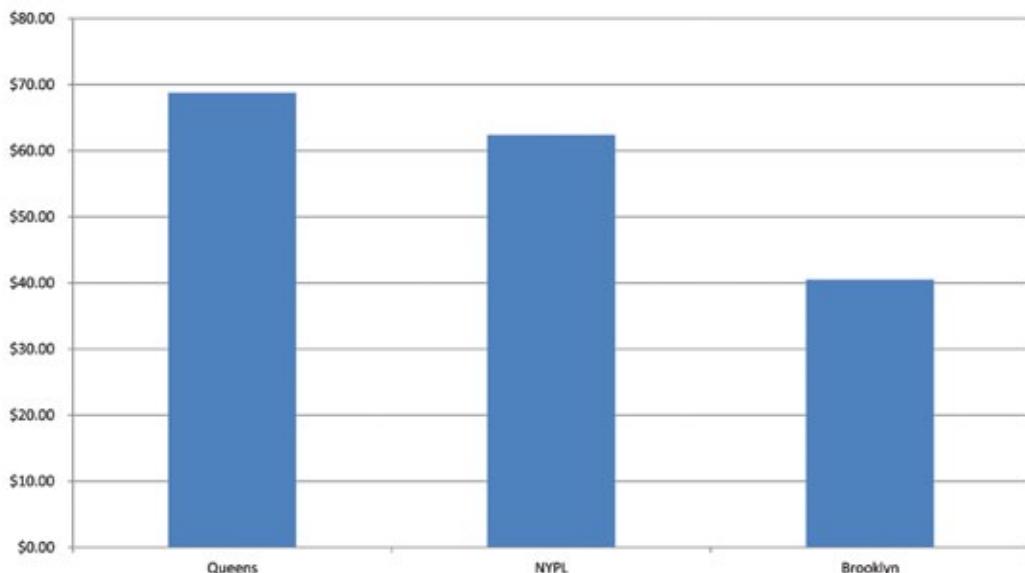


Photo © Philip Greenberg

In early 2013, BPL will open the groundbreaking Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons. This innovative project has repurposed a poorly conceived and uninspiring space directly off the main lobby of BPL's Central Library into a spectacular collaborative learning and technology resource. The new space, designed by internationally renowned architect Toshiko Mori and funded by a generous grant from the Leon Levy Foundation, will respect Central Library's stunning Art Deco architecture while bringing a high-tech digital learning center to the heart of Brooklyn.

The Information Commons will consist of public meeting rooms, a training lab and an open workspace, each equipped with technology and resources to facilitate individual and group work, learning and creativity. An open seating area will offer space and electrical outlets for 70 laptops, as well as 25 public computer workstations. These will include 10 iMacs running the latest creative and multimedia editing software. The Information Commons will also feature seven meeting rooms the public can reserve, with one room doubling as a recording studio where visitors can record podcasts, videos or other multimedia projects, as well as a state-of-the-art 36-seat digital training lab.

Capital Funding Per Capita FY03–FY12



Source: Center for an Urban Future, Branches of Opportunity, January 2013

and performance spaces at Williamsburgh and Red Hook libraries and will work with BPL to provide arts programming for our patrons at these locations.

In 2013, BPL will begin its Branch Rehabilitation initiative, an aggressive schedule of projects designed to significantly enrich the patron experience at all libraries. BPL will identify opportunities to improve our physical spaces, with a focus on enhancing community rooms, outdoor grounds, building exteriors and other aesthetic improvements, including murals. Additionally, BPL is committed to fully reopening all six of the branches (Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Gerritsen Beach, Gravesend, Red Hook and Sheepshead Bay) damaged and closed as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

Offer flexible spaces that meet the evolving needs of our users

Our libraries are community centers and must be safe and welcoming for everyone. By 2016, the Library will reconfigure its branches to create new and innovative spaces designed to serve the needs of different patrons. BPL will develop dedicated children's spaces at all 60 of our branches, and provide distinct space for teenagers. For example, at the Central Library in 2016, we will relocate teen services to the second floor in a flexible space that will much better serve the rapidly evolving needs of Brooklyn's young adults.

We will also create other customized spaces geared toward specific patron groups, such as collaborative spaces for entrepreneurs, one-on-one consultative spaces for jobseekers and mentorship

programs, quiet spaces for writers, and studio and rehearsal spaces for use by Brooklyn's large creative community.

Create environments that accommodate existing and emerging technology and facilitate digital learning

All libraries in the twenty-first century must embrace the rapidly increasing role of technology in society. BPL is a leader in promoting digital literacy and providing technology access for all Brooklynites. In January 2013, we will greatly enhance our digital resources by opening the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons at Central Library.

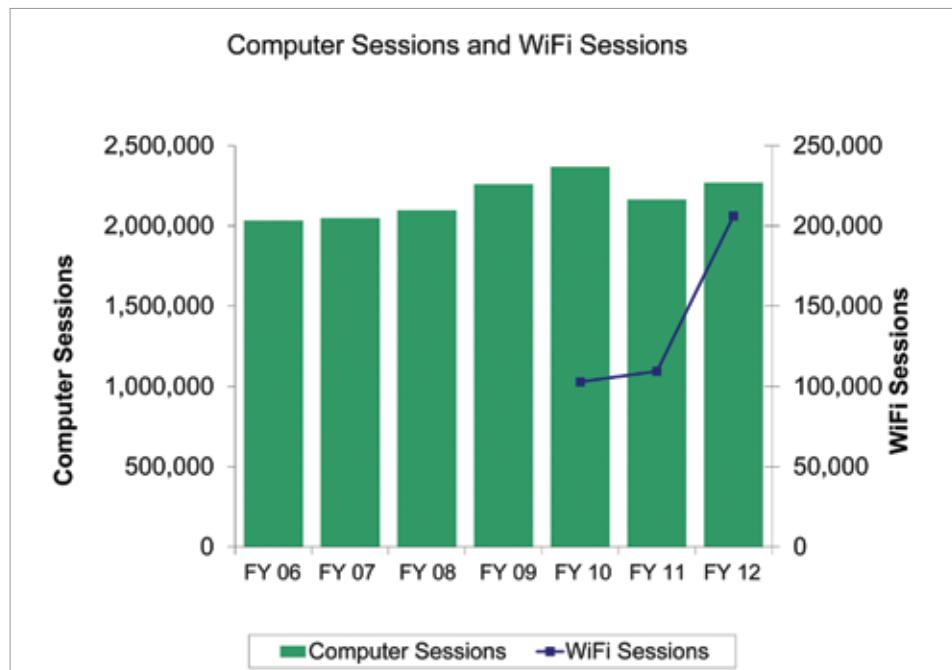
We will invest in infrastructure improvements designed to enhance broadband access at every BPL branch, ensuring that all Brooklyn communities have equitable access to BPL's wealth of digital resources, ranging from tablets to desktop

computers. All branches will see an expanded number of digital access points. We will also implement new technology to enhance service to our customers and reduce focus on manual processes, enabling staff to spend more time providing direct service to the public. These technology improvements range from self-checkout machines for patrons to tablet devices for our mobile reference librarians.

Continue to renovate the landmarked Central Library to create spaces designed to support innovative and relevant programs and services

BPL will make Central Library more efficient and easier to use, while establishing a vision for what a twenty-first-century library can be. Building on the successful launch of the Dr. S. Stevan Dweck Center for Contemporary Culture, we will continue to transform Central Library by launching the Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons in 2013. By 2014, BPL will complete a full renovation of Central Library's Grand Lobby, including installing self-check kiosks. In 2014, we will also expand the Brooklyn Collection, creating new program and work spaces for authors, content creators, researchers, students and general users.

Another key service component will be the integration of the Business & Career Library, which is currently located in Brooklyn Heights, with Central Library's Adult Learning Center in 2017. This will provide one destination for a full range of services that includes adult basic education, financial literacy, job skills/career



readiness training, and business and entrepreneurship resources and classes. With the B&CL and the NYC Department of Small Business Services Workforce1 Expansion Center all under one roof, patrons who are seeking information about career services will also be able to obtain help with job placement. In addition to traditional services, Central Library will provide meeting and work space for the self-employed and jobseekers, as well as additional spaces for a combination of staff- and volunteer-led instruction and collaborative learning.

Finally, in 2016 we will launch a new space within Central Library dedicated to teens and young adults. It will incorporate technology—such as computers, gaming consoles and media stations—and modular furniture that allows for flexibility and collaboration. This inviting space will display teen art and showcase a range of media. Programs will include talks, film screenings and opportunities for teens to perform their own work. The space

will be staffed with young adult librarians and expert mentors who will facilitate digital projects, run workshops and assist teens with using advanced technology. It will be an informal, fun space that will encourage teens to express themselves, work with each other and discover new interests.



Park Slope Library, 2012

Photo © Philip Greenberg

STEWARDSHIP

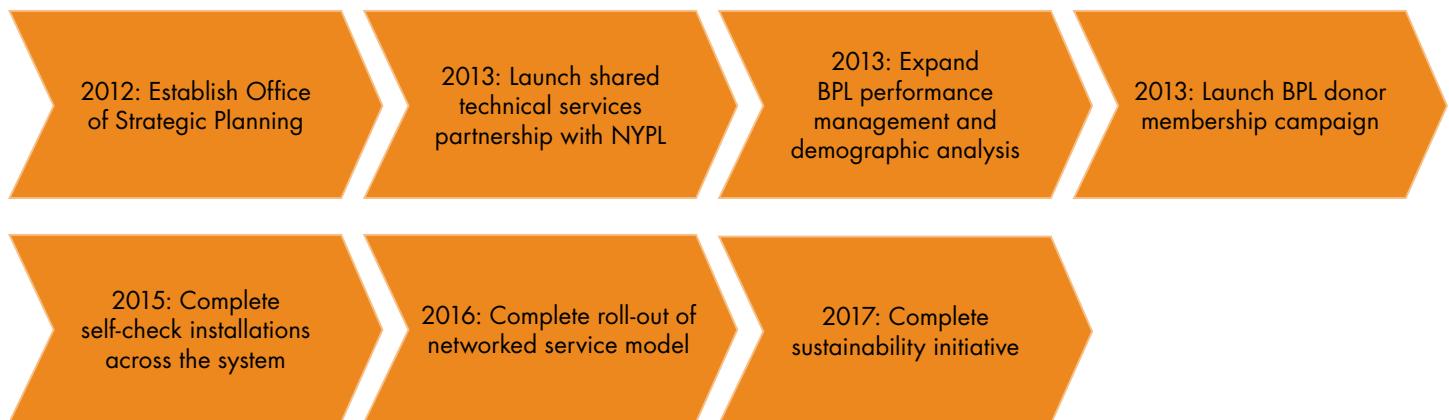


Develop and maintain an adaptive and responsive culture of service

Dramatic shifts in consumer technology and user preferences are creating opportunities and challenges for large urban libraries. In order to become more agile and responsive to our patrons' needs as well as to our shifting external environment, BPL will develop an organizational culture that fosters innovative thinking and rewards success in the areas highlighted by this strategic plan.

BPL will establish the internal systems and processes by which to better serve our patrons, including branch performance data, targeted demographic analyses and customer satisfaction surveys. To the extent our data can interest, excite and engage our partner organizations and support the community at large, it will be collected, promoted and made available to the public. The Library will focus its resources on its service to the public and streamline back-office operations wherever possible.

Key Initiatives



Actively engage staff, trustees, supporters, volunteers and partner organizations in the Library's mission and transformation

Brooklyn Public Library staff members, trustees, volunteers and community partners have a long-standing dedication to public service. Each one of our staff members represents the values of our organization and shapes the public's opinion of the Library. In order to effectively support the needs of our community, we must ensure our staff are appropriately trained, supported and invested in the future of the institution. This effort requires an ongoing, open dialogue with employees, and meaningful action in response to internal and external challenges. Additionally, we must raise awareness of our resources and encourage more Brooklynites to visit our libraries.

As the composition of Brooklyn's population and industries shifts, the Library must play an important role in bringing together all communities, from low-income neighborhoods to new immigrants to aspiring entrepreneurs. The Library serves as a bridge for Brooklyn residents, providing access to technology and information and closing gaps in educational and cultural opportunities. At the same time, the Library faces tremendous resource pressures. Only by strategically leveraging our staff, partner organizations and volunteers can we provide more comprehensive services, including multilingual programs, community events and creative programs.



Photo © Gregg Richards

Launch a networked service model to optimize services and locations across the borough

Beginning in 2013, the Library will launch a networked service model of regional and local branches throughout Brooklyn. At every local branch, we will offer the high-quality services that the borough has come to expect of our Library: safe and clean community spaces, knowledgeable and informed staff, a broad collection of materials, children's programming, broadband access and technology. At regional branches, we will provide the specialized services and programming that meet the needs and interests of our patrons. Regional branches will be accessible by mass transit and located across the borough. BPL will complete the reorganization of our "stand-alone" branch system into a network by 2016, while customizing branch layout and programming for individual

community needs. BPL will make flexibility both in physical layout and programming a hallmark of its extensive system.

Deepen and build relationships with existing and new funders

As the Library looks towards implementing its vision, philanthropy in all forms is critical for growth. We will build and deepen relationships with corporate and foundation funders through redeveloped and revitalized giving opportunities. These efforts also require outcomes-based approaches that clearly show the impact of our work.

The Library must create meaningful relationships with individual donors at all levels. Beginning in 2013, the Library will establish new donor programs and offer special events throughout the year. In addition, by engaging with patrons who have positive experiences

with the Library and creating new opportunities to contribute financially, we hope to build a new base of individual support. At the same time, we will launch new strategies for cultivating and stewarding major gifts, including corporate and individual naming opportunities for capital projects and signature programs.

While philanthropic giving and development are areas that the Library will continue to grow, we must continue to advocate for public funding—from local municipal government to state and federal aid. In 2013, we will help Friends of Brooklyn Public Library groups grow, leveraging their community knowledge to support our grassroots advocacy, programming and development efforts. As we launch our new vision for service, the Library will continue to partner with our Board of Trustees and Friends groups system-wide. These partnerships become all the more critical as changes in government and foundation priorities take place; the Library will have a stronger and louder voice through Board engagement and grassroots support.

Increase transparency, accountability and efficiency across the institution

Over the past few years, BPL has made tremendous strides through service enhancements and technology innovations. Through our Open Libraries Initiative in 2011, BPL increased service hours by 21%, from 35.8 to 43.5 hours each week, and increased the number of 6-day service branches from 16 to 33. These service improvements were made possible

by streamlining library services with operational advances such as online fines payment, centralized collection development and the installation of self-check machines.

In 2013, BPL will expand its performance management system. This system will include information about how our collections, technology and facilities are used at all levels, as well as external data, such as demographic and industry trends in Brooklyn. We will establish an ongoing process for gathering, analyzing and leveraging patron and employee insights through focus groups, surveys and advisory groups so the Library can be more responsive to change. The Library will make much of this data available to the public, so we can address community needs in a collaborative manner and raise awareness of the critical services we provide to Brooklyn.

Internally, the Library will continue to streamline operational processes. In 2013, we plan to partner with the New York Public Library to create a new, fully consolidated and shared library technical services team that will oversee selection, acquisitions, cataloging, processing, sorting and delivery of books and other materials for both of our institutions. This initiative would reduce BPL's annual operating expenses, expand services for our patrons and free up much-needed space at the iconic Central Library for public service. It will also provide the foundation for universal card and drop off services citywide.

By 2017, we will complete a sustainability effort aimed at digitizing our back-office and removing wasteful paper-based processes in favor of environmentally

friendly electronic workflows. In addition, by implementing time-saving technologies, from the completion of self-check installations across the system in 2014 to the introduction of handheld technology, our library professionals will be able to concentrate more of their efforts on public service.

To ensure that the Library does not lose sight of the need for continuous improvement, BPL created a new Office of Strategic Planning in 2012. This office was charged with the development and oversight of this strategic roadmap, performance management initiatives and tracking shifts in consumer preferences and Brooklyn's changing landscape. This office will also assess, foster, monitor and implement organization-wide change efforts.

By becoming a proactive organization, BPL will be better positioned to meet the future needs of its communities and remain a source of education, inspiration and empowerment for many years to come.

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