



**BANCROFT PUBLIC LIBRARY
COMMUNITY-BASED
FIVE-YEAR
STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR 2022 – 2027**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bancroft Public Library has developed a Five-Year Strategic Plan to meet the minimum standards required by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, and to assist the librarians and the Board of Trustees with operating in a cost-effective manner while meeting the needs of the Salem community. The Strategic Plan will be the cornerstone for designing, programming, selecting materials, choosing new services and making many other types of decisions.

The Library's long-range plan was last updated in 2018.

The Bancroft Public Library was granted a provisional charter as a town public library for the Town of Salem on October 27, 2015. An absolute charter was granted February 8, 2021. Prior to this time, the Bancroft Public Library was chartered as a village public library for the Village of Salem. This change is a result of the dissolution of the village at the end of March 2016. Bancroft Public Library first opened its doors in December of 1891.

The Introduction explains how we collected information to develop this plan. This is followed by Demographics which show the various groups we serve. The Mission Statement is included so the reader can see the alignment of the statements and follow the flow of thinking and perspective that has been used in writing this plan.

The heart of this Strategic Plan are the five goals which have been targeted as important for the library to focus on. Each goal was carefully chosen taking into consideration the needs of the Salem community as communicated to us by members of the community.

- **Goal One:** Bancroft Public Library will provide access to materials (print, audiovisual, and digital) and programs to meet community needs and interests as communicated to us through our community inquiry process, and to uphold the principles of freedom and the public's right to know, reflecting all points of view for people of all ages.
- **Goal Two:** Because the Bancroft Public Library is an important resource for technology as well as books, videos, and other materials, the library will provide technology support and equipment to meet the needs of the community.
- **Goal Three:** The library will continue to play a visible role in the Salem community, work to increase public awareness of library offerings and enhance the role of the library in our community. It will strive to be a place where people come for community interaction and information. The library will communicate and collaborate with Salem businesses, organizations, and community members to better serve the needs of our community.

- **Goal Four:** The Bancroft Public Library will develop programs and activities that meet the needs and interests of our community. Programs and activities will be developed keeping in mind the feedback the library receives from the Salem community.
- **Goal Five:** The Bancroft Library, together with the Bancroft Trust, will maintain and improve the physical building and courtyard to better serve the public.

By adopting this plan, the Board of the Bancroft Public Library is making a commitment to follow this plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING SUMMARY

Starting in March, 2021 the Library Director (LD) began attending virtual workshops offered by Erica Freudenberger of the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) which provided guidance on how to develop a community based strategic plan. Our first step was to form a planning committee consisting of the library director, board trustees, and community members. Our top priority was to identify the needs and desires of the people in the Salem community.

The trustees were asked to participate in a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) Exercise. The SOAR Exercise comes from Appreciative Inquiry, a philosophy that focuses on assets, not deficits. In strategic planning, we used this framework to identify our strengths and opportunities as we look to the future and identify what results we want to create.

Committee members were asked to participate in an Ask Exercise. They each interviewed three to five people and asked them what their aspirations are for their community, not what they want to see from the library. In this exercise no questions were asked about the library, however, the information collected was reviewed and discussed by the committee. We then, in turn, used it to determine how the library can better serve the Salem community.

The Library Director met with the director of the Historic Salem Courthouse to discuss what she feels people in Salem are wanting/needing in our community. Many things were discussed and ideas were generated to add to the information our committee had already gathered.

At our next meeting, we developed our goals and discussed what we would need to achieve each of them. A draft of the plan was put together. Just prior to our September 2021 meeting a draft of the plan was sent to Erica Freudenberger for her review. At our meeting we reviewed a draft copy of the plan. Erica's suggestions were taken into consideration and revisions were made to the plan. The committee met again in October 2021, approved the plan and sent it on to the Library Board.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important to understand the members of our community, so we can obtain materials and develop programs that are applicable to them. The Bancroft Public Library is chartered to serve the Town of Salem, which has a population of 2,612 (2020 U. S. Census). In addition, there are a number of under-served communities in the area with limited access to local public libraries (Hebron, Jackson, East Greenwich). The library is currently open 35 hours each week, with four part-time staff members.

The library's budget for the most current fiscal year (2021) is \$74,997 which represents an increase of 1% from the adopted budget of the 2020 fiscal year. The library is funded by the Town of Salem and the Salem Central School District. Charitable donations to the library vary from year to year, but are an important part of our budget.

In 2020, circulation was 11,453 total transactions, including electronic materials, and the library gained 43 new patrons. Throughout 2020, the library's public computers had a total of 670 log-ins, and the Wi-Fi system had 3,697 sessions. In 2020, the library offered 16 adult programs, at which there were 139 attendees; 49 children's programs, at which there were 795 attendees; and 10 multi-age programs, at which there were 89 attendees. (The statistics for 2020 are different from years past due to the COVID 19 pandemic. During parts of 2020 the library was closed to the public, had no in-house programs, had limited browsing and computer use).

3. MISSION STATEMENT

The Bancroft Public Library exists to assemble, preserve, and provide free access to printed, electronic and other materials that will meet the day-to-day educational, informational, cultural, and recreational interests and needs of the community, in compliance with local, state, and federal laws. Its mission is to uphold the principals of intellectual freedom and the public's right to know by providing access to information reflecting all points of view for people of all ages. In addition to books and other materials of contemporary interest and permanent value, Bancroft Public Library provides and encourages the use of its facility, collection, and services to meet a wide variety of community needs.

4. GOALS

4.1 Goal 1: Bancroft Public Library will provide access to materials (print, audiovisual, and digital) and programs to meet community needs and interests as communicated to us through our community inquiry process, and to uphold the principles of freedom and the public’s right to know, reflecting all points of view for people of all ages.

Objective 1: The Library Director, Deputy Director, and staff will evaluate and shape the library’s collection to meet the changing needs of the community. They will increase the circulation of materials through the development of our collection of books, e-books, DVDs, games, etc.

Objective 2: The library will continue to provide access to library resources and programs to homeschool families and will work to increase awareness of what the library has to offer.

Objective 3: The Library shall grow its collection of Spanish language materials to better serve the growing population of Spanish speaking members of the Salem community.

Objective 4: The Library will provide access to materials and programs that encourage adult literacy and Spanish/English services.

Measurement/Evaluation:

- Use circulation reports from SALS to record statistics to measure changes monthly.
- Inclusion of home school families in the library’s programming and circulation.
- Implementation of an adult literacy program (English and Spanish)

Resources:

- Budget an appropriate dollar amount to add new items to the collection
- Tri-County Literacy Center, tutors to work with adults

4.2 Goal 2: Because the Bancroft Public Library is an important resource for technology as well as books, videos, and other materials, the library will provide technology support and equipment to meet the needs of the community.

Objective 1: The library will maintain an appropriate number of public computers to meet the needs of the library's patrons. The library will maintain the associated color printer, as well as a wireless color printer/copier/scanner/fax machine. This equipment will be replaced as needed to keep it up to date.

Objective 2: The library will continue to offer access to free internet services for its patrons.

Objective 3: The library staff will monitor technology trends to prepare for the needs of their patrons, and will work to satisfy those needs.

Objective 4: The library staff will help with patron's technology questions. Staff will offer assistance when time permits along with providing programs on a regular basis to provide technology instruction and information. The library will continue to provide tech assistance one night a week from a local volunteer.

Measurement/Evaluation:

- Annual Report
- The effectiveness of each step can be measured by looking at usage of computers along with attendance of programs providing technology assistance.

Resources:

- Training – staff, patrons
- Budgeting/funding for the purchase of emerging technologies
- Volunteers – help with technology, teach patrons how to use technology

4.3 Goal 3: The library will continue to play a visible role in the Salem community, work to increase public awareness of library offerings and enhance the role of the library in our community. It will strive to become a place where people come for community interaction and information. The library will communicate and collaborate with Salem businesses, organizations, and community members to better serve the needs of our community.

Objective 1: The library will keep the community informed of programs and events through the use of the library website, our Facebook page, the library newsletter, the library windows, fliers and our local newspapers. In addition, the library will expand its social media presence, such as Instagram, to reach out to our younger patrons.

Objective 2: The Library Director will meet/communicate with local businesses, organizations, school employees, and government officials to identify and discuss the current needs of our community. Whenever possible, the library will collaborate with said groups in order to bring more programs and opportunities to the people that live in our community. The library will also collaborate with other area libraries, when possible, to increase our ability to offer more programs through the library.

Objective 3: The Library will serve the Salem community by continuing to offer free, fresh, produce and fruit through the Farm-2-Library program. This program is offered through SALS and the food is provided by the Comfort Food Community (CFC).

Measurement/Evaluation:

- Keep count of number of participants in programs offered at the library.
- Accurately report program attendance in the Annual Report.
- Keep track of the number of people taking items from the Farm-2-Library refrigerator.

Resources:

- Plan appropriate number of low-cost or no-cost programs
- Use of volunteers for library programs
- Time needed for creating newsletters, articles, etc.
- Donations to pay for fruit provided by the CFC

4.4 Goal 4: The Bancroft Public Library will develop programs and activities that meet the needs and interests of our community. Programs and activities will be developed keeping in mind the feedback the library received from the Salem community.

Objective 1: The library will continue current library programs such as Chess Club, Book Club, Mahjong, and Scrabble Club. As some program/services have been suspended due to COVID, the library will work to reinstate some of the programs that were in place in the past keeping in mind we will also be putting new programs in place that meet the current needs and interests of the community.

Objective 2: The library will develop regular programming/activities for the senior citizens in our community. These programs may include but are not limited to exercise classes, book deliveries, tech help, insurance help, etc.

Objective 3: To meet the needs of the children/teens in the Salem community, the library will plan programs geared to their interests.

Objective 4: The library will explore ways to welcome new residents to the area and provide them with information and resources about the library, Salem, and the surrounding area. Welcome bags will be put together and given to new residents.

Objective 5: When planning programs, the library will take into consideration the need expressed by new people in our community to have a place where they can meet, interact, and get to know other people that live in the area. The library will work with other organizations in Salem, such as the Historic Salem Courthouse, Salem Central School, Salem Rotary Club, Salem Area Chamber of Commerce and Fort Salem Theater, to find activities that will give new residents the opportunity to meet people and become part of the Salem community.

Measurement/Evaluation:

- Program development and/or resource purchases reflecting community needs.
- Data – attendance at programs

Resources:

- Budget – costs for programs, Friends of the Library
- Volunteers
- Items for Welcome Bags
- Other Salem businesses and organizations
- Time for staff/volunteers to develop library programs

4.5 Goal 5: The Bancroft Library, together with the Bancroft Trust, will maintain and improve the physical building and courtyard to better serve the public.

Objective 1: Through the use of private donations, the library courtyard space will be made into a usable space for library patrons to enjoy. The space will include outside seating, (some of which is handicapped accessible), plants and flowers, and areas set up for learning.

Objective 2: Updates/repairs will be made to the library building as needed. When applicable, grants will be sought to pay for completion of such updates.

Measurement/Evaluation:

- Completion and usability of the court yard space.

Resources:

- Private donations
- Grants

This plan was created in the midst of a pandemic, assuming a return to normalcy. Goals and objectives may be modified as the needs and interests of the community change over the next five years.

Adopted: November 2, 2021
Bancroft Public Library Board of Trustees