

Weslaco Public Library Long-Range Plan

Introduction

This long range plan was created to guide the Weslaco Public Library as it responds to the growing needs of area citizens and to fulfill requirements of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for the existence of such a plan. Therefore, the staff and Library Board of the Weslaco Public Library have together gathered information from the citizens within the Library's service area, examined the role and purpose of the Library, prepared goals and objectives.

Library Background

The Library was established in 1948, as part of the Civic Center Complex on Kansas Avenue. Originally, it was run by community volunteers. Mrs. Pearl C. Doss provided a seed grant for the library's collection of \$8,000.00 in memory of her late husband, Porter Phelan Doss, an active local businessman and civic leader. In 1966, the City of Weslaco provided funding for construction of its first facility, the building now houses the Weslaco Museum. The first professional librarian, Frances Wyatt Isbell, was hired in 1971. In the early 1980's, the citizens of Weslaco approved a bond issue of well over one million dollars for the construction of the present facility, which opened its doors to the public in January 1986.

The library facility is a two-story Spanish style building. Its interior features a stairway decorated with blue Saltillo tile in the *ta/vera* pattern. The Library is joined to the Mayor Eugene A. Braught Memorial Theater by a courtyard featuring a fountain and tropical plantings. The Library was designed by Weslaco architect, Gene P. Hobart.

Patrons have access to books; large print materials; a Texas history collection; audio books; art prints; reference databases; computers with word processing and Internet capability; and reference databases. Other services and features include Homework Help, an annual summer reading program for children and families, and monthly exhibits.

The Library is a department of the City of Weslaco and receives most of its funding from the City. The Library also receives supplemental funding from county, federal, state, and private sources.

The Community

Weslaco is centrally located within the Texas Rio Grande Valley. Established in 1919, the City of Weslaco was named as an acronym for W.E. Stewart Land Company. Early settlers converted wild brush land into thriving agricultural land irrigated by pump stations and canal systems. Weslaco has grown from a progressive agricultural community to the host of a combination of retail, distribution, and light manufacturing businesses. To support economic growth, the city established a Foreign Trade Zone at the Airport Industrial Park and a Foreign Trade Sub-Zone near the Progreso International Bridge. The Valley

Nature Center, Frontera Audubon Center, and Estero Llano Grande State Park and World Birding Center, offer guided tours and activities throughout the year for all ages

According to current U.S. Census estimates, the City of Weslaco had a population of 33,354 in 2008. The estimated median age in 2008 was 31.7 years. As of the 2000 Census, 83.8% of the population was of Hispanic or Latino origin. Median family income is estimated at \$31,307 (2007), with 30.9% of families below poverty level, and 85.7% of local students economically disadvantaged. Educational attainment is 57% with a high school degree (or GED) and 13.8% Bachelors degree or higher (2007).

The Hidalgo County Library System (HCLS) divides the county population among the 13 libraries. Weslaco's service population share is 57,148.

Library Mission Statement

The Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Public Library seeks to provide the citizens of Weslaco and the surrounding community with the appropriate service, information access, social atmosphere, and cultural setting that is merited of a Library within this community.

Service Goals and Objectives

The goals developed for this statement of goals and objectives emphasizes these service responses and track key areas measured by the Texas Public Library Standards (the *Public Library Standards*) accepted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission on August 2, 2004. Levels of service identified and described in the *Public Library Standards* are noted where appropriate.

Broad Goals

- To be a regional leader with regard to the quality and quantity of our physical and electronic collection.
- To provide a welcoming environment to the citizen's of Weslaco and the surrounding community.
- To provide the community with a variety of services, both traditional and cutting edge.
- To provide the community with the information they need and desire.
- To serve as a cultural and social center for the community.
- To use the aforementioned goals as a vehicle for improving all types of literacy
- To improve the quality of children's programing and overall marketing of library events.

- To remain above 5.5 visits per capita. This number is among the highest within the State for our population group and above the 90th percentile among Texas libraries.
- To average above 63 hours open per week. This number represents just above the median hours open per week with respect to Texas public libraries within our population group.
- To remain at or above 4.0 reference transactions per capita. This number is among the very best within the State for our population group and well above the 95th percentile among Texas libraries.
- To improve to 0.6 program attendances per capita. This number is among the highest within the State for our population group and well above the 90th percentile among Texas libraries.

Specific Goals

Collection

- Users have a core reference collection available to them (Basic/Enhanced/Comprehensive)
 - Objective 1 – The reference collection will include reference sources recommended by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in *Selecting and Using a Core-Reference Collection*.¹
 - Objective 2 – Dated reference titles will be removed from the collection.
- Users have access to works of popular authors and bestselling titles in both electronic and physical formats.
 - Objective 1 – Works of popular fiction writers will be purchased
 - Objective 2 – Bestselling non-fiction works will be purchased
- Users have access to Internet and full-text databases provided by the state library and to licensed full-text databases purchased locally.
 - Objective 1 – Print reference resources that become available as subscription databases will be replaced with their electronic version where cost effective
 - Objective 2 – New subscription databases will be evaluated and added where cost effective

Facilities

- Users will have a facility suited for computer enabled individual and group learning
- Users will be able to navigate within the Library facility without difficulty.

- Library users will enjoy a secure and orderly environment.
- Comfort and response to customer generated demand are paramount in determining future library improvements

Personnel

- Staff members will project an image of competence and courtesy to the public they serve.
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- Staff will know the service goals of the Library and be familiar with its policies.
 - Objective 1: Library staff members will be instructed on the Library's service goals.
 - Objective 2: New policies will be shared and explained to staff members and existing policies will be explained to new staff members.

Services

- The Library will keep its website current and updated.
 - Objective 1: The Library will have staff members from its various departments share in the responsibility for monitoring and updating the various sections of the Library website.
- The Library will improve information services for the citizens of this community.

Technology

The *Weslaco Public Library Technology Plan* details the current technology component of the Library's strategic plan. Below is a summary of this technology component.

- The Library will maintain a ratio of at least one computer to every 1,500 people in its service population. This meets Texas State Library standards for comprehensive service levels.
- The Library will enhance the quality of electronic information resources available to users.
- The Library will expand training to the public on computer technology and information searching, evaluation, and use.
- The Library will provide training opportunities for staff members to stay informed on developments in technology and information research.