

Indiana librarians 2016 community narrative

Indiana librarians want a multi-type statewide library community that is inclusive and serves all residents through every stage of life. We want to belong to a professional community that supports risk taking and innovation; that is cooperative, collaborative, communicative, and connected with each other and with our local communities, whether a town, campus or school building. We want library staff to have the attitudes, skills and abilities they need to remain essential in times of rapid change, and we want to attract bright, new people to the profession. We want to be well-funded, safe places for our communities; the cultural center-point, that is a vital source of education, entertainment, enjoyment and enrichment, providing people with access to the information, technology, and resources they need. We want to be able to accurately assess our communities needs, and we want to demonstrate our impact and importance to our stakeholders.

But, we are concerned about the public's perception that the library is a nostalgic place, rather than a place that is essential for today and the future. We know that we need to prioritize and let go of services that are no longer relevant, but we are overwhelmed with tasks and don't know where to begin. We are concerned that our staff do not have the skills they need for today's library, and that library science curriculum has not kept up with changes in the profession. On top of that, too many barriers get in the way of patrons' seamless use of libraries statewide. The loss of K-12 librarians in schools is causing an information literacy deficit impacting academic and public libraries and eventually the workplace.

As we talk more about these concerns, we specifically talk about the following:

- We have too many un-served areas.
- Trustees and other decision-makers are not educated on the impacts of library services.
- We don't have the right metrics to measure the impact, especially with changing uses of the library.
- We don't know how to tell our story to decision-makers.
- We feel like we need more leadership in the state regarding these issues.

We believe the library community needs to focus on finding ways to connect librarians from all sizes and types of libraries, using a variety of tools. We also need to define what a 21st century librarian is, develop skills for all library staff, mentor new librarians, and provide training for trustees. We all need to work together to help school librarians in their efforts to provide information literacy and critical thinking skills to K-12 students. Lastly, we need to find ways to provide library services more seamlessly to all residents.

If the State Library, ILF, MCLS and other library services agencies worked together, and also worked with non-library groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, we would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.