

Fletcher Free Library - Budget Justification FY16
Board of Finance, Burlington City Council
May 2015

1. Department Description

The Fletcher Free Library (FFL) serves the evolving educational and cultural needs of the Greater Burlington community. Our urban public library offers a welcoming place for people to gather and to learn. The primary role of the Fletcher Free library is ensure equal access to the world’s ideas and information through physical and electronic resources. The Library is a primary community resource connecting the local learning setting with global information and knowledge. The Library plays a fundamental role in the development of lifelong learning models both formal and informal by: 1) ensuring a meeting space for the discussion and sharing of issues and interests; 2) providing adult programming and equipment for self-improvement and economic progress; and 3) providing programming to pre-school age children and their families that strengthen early literacy foundations.

The Fletcher Free is the largest public library in Vermont at 44,000 square feet. FFL serves the largest population in Vermont and historically has the highest circulation of public libraries in the state, averaging 1,100 loans per day and 7,450 per week. FFL is open 7 days a week, totaling 58 public service hours and 74 operating hours. FFL has over 13,500 cardholders. The below graphic summarizes our Library services and programming.



2. FY16 Goals:

Financial Stewardship

- Budget development and resource allocation for FY16 and beyond is data-driven. During FY15, a complete budget assessment was conducted with the creation of the Financial Assistant position. The Library's financial management was analyzed, reorganized and centralized. All vendor contracts were analyzed and re-negotiated where necessary. Resources were reallocated where necessary. Also during FY15, the Library's data management systems were assessed, data sets were rationalized, data tracking and collection systems were updated.

Creating Opportunities

- Outreach and programming for teens is developed. The creation of a new position of Teen Librarian (1 FTE) is requested in FY16 (see the justification for this new position in *FY16 Fiscal Changes* section of this paper).
- Youth Services capacity is strengthened and increased. Two part-time positions reclassifications to full-time are being requested in FY16 (see the corresponding justification for this reclassification in the *FY16 Fiscal Changes* section of this paper).
- Dynamic and robust partnerships in the following initiatives are developed to their full potential.
 - ELI (Mayor's Early Learning Initiative)
 - City's Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan
 - RISPNet (Refugee & Immigrant Service Providers Network)

Modernization

- A new ILS system is implemented to provide patrons with a more efficient and effective library experience. During FY15, an RFP for a new integrated library system (ILS) was issued, proposals were evaluated, meetings with potential vendors were held, and a new vendor was selected. The Library is currently working with the new vendor on data migration from the old system. Staff training for the new system has begun. The new ILS goes live at the beginning of FY16.
- The Library's Strategic Plan and associated Community Engagement Report are finalized. During FY15, a RFQ and RFP were issued for a consultant to lead the development of a new strategic plan for the Library. Maureen Sullivan, a national library consultant, was contracted. The Library is currently engaging with the Burlington community to elicit feedback to guide the future of Library services and programming. Open community forums as well as targeted forums are being held to maximize community input to the strategic plan around three main goals: enhancing literacy skills, facilitating access to and exchange of knowledge and building community connections. The Strategic Plan and associated Community Engagement report will be finalized by the end of the first quarter of FY16.

- Results-based Accountability (RBA) methodology is implemented library-wide. RBA is a methodology that can be used by communities can use to improve the lives or well-being of the community as a whole. RBA is also used by organizations to continually improve the performance of their programs or services. RBA will be foundational to the implementation of the Library’s new strategic plan – measuring performance and providing accountability to the community. The Library’s Development Coordinator was certified as a RBA Trainer in FY15. RBA will be implemented across Library programs by the end of FY16. The Development Coordinator position will be reclassified to reflect additional responsibilities for Library data management & capacity building, Departmental reporting, as well as fundraising & grant development.
- The Library is rebranded and the website redesigned.
- All job descriptions will be evaluated and updated, and a standardized annual evaluation system aligning staff responsibilities with goal setting will be created. The Library Director will work in collaboration with Human Resources.
- Library reference services and the public computer center model will be restructured for increased efficiency and effectiveness of service.

3. Fiscal Challenges for FY 16

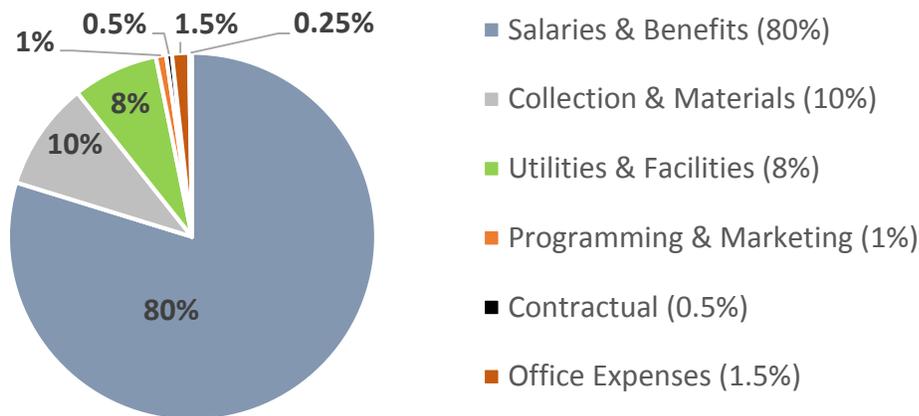


Figure 1. Cost drivers for FY16 (% of requested expense budget \$1,983,588)

As can be gathered from the pie chart in Figure 1. less than 4% of the expense budget is available to the Library Director for strategic allocation to services and programming. Apart from funds allocated to staff salaries and benefits, funding for collections and materials and utilities and facilities are committed 100%. The collections and materials budget is by City resolution the product of a half cent tax that must be used exclusively for the purpose of purchasing books, subscriptions and other collection materials for patron use. The utilities and facilities portion of the budget is committed to maintaining the Library infrastructure.

Preliminary results from the community engagement process that the Library has been undertaking in development of a new strategic plan, indicate the community is seeking

increased programming capacity and better marketing of programming to the public. With 1% of the overall expense budget allocated to these activities, it will be challenging to meet these community needs.

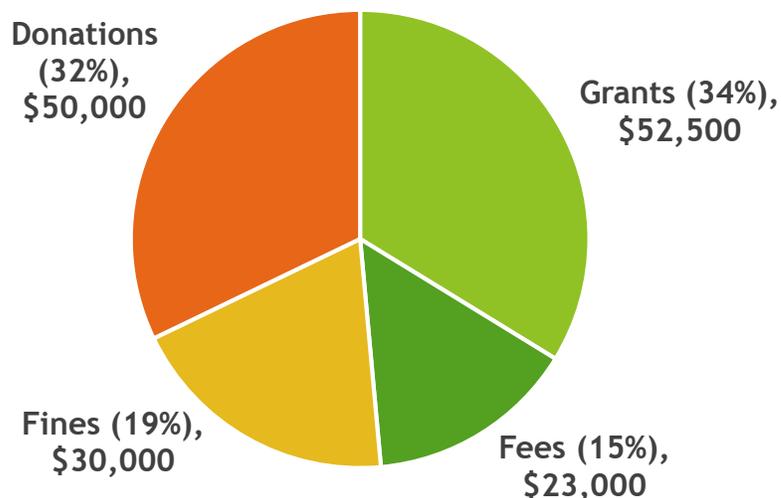


Figure 2. Proposed revenue budget for FY16 (total \$155,000)

After a full year of having a part-time Development Coordinator on staff, it is evident that the traditional non-profit development paradigm is not sufficient for long term Library sustainability. As a municipal organization providing core services free of charge to the Burlington community. Library sustainability is neither the work of charity nor is it achievable through raising purely unrestricted funds. While expanding our annual appeal from 400 to over 5000 households in Burlington during FY15 has raised the community's awareness of Library services and programming, it has not however succeeded in raising our unrestricted donation revenue goal for FY15.

A revised data-driven sustainability strategy will be implemented in FY16. Key elements of this revised strategy include:

- **Diversify revenue sources.** While recognizing the importance of cultivating our dedicated individual donors, and community organizations and businesses that have supported us over the years, we also see the need to develop restricted public-private program sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, we will be increasing grant development efforts seeking funding from private foundations, as well as state and federal agencies. We will seek opportunities to collaboratively develop grants with other City Departments and community organizations providing coordinated access to complementary funding sources, creating economies of scale and ensuring joint achievement of common social objectives.
- **Strengthen Friends of Fletcher Free Library as Library's 501c3 foundation.** In FY15, the FFL worked with the Friends to develop governance and management structures for increased functionality. Under Library guidance, the Friends have streamlined their financial management systems – adopting a resource allocation system and contracted

accounting services for increased transparency and fundraising capacity. In FY16 and beyond, FFL will increasingly use the Friends 501c3 status to seek increased funding for programming, technology resources and other innovative literacy projects.

- Grow Library endowment fund. Long-term sustainability requires a robust endowment fund. The Library trust is managed by the Vermont Community Foundation. Our proposal is to annually reinvest the distribution from this fund.

4. Fiscal Changes from FY15 to FY16

'Connected Learning' for Burlington teens

In 2014, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) published a report entitled *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens*. Libraries are increasingly functioning as “connected learning spaces” to better serve the growing demands and needs of our teen populations. Connected learning seeks to understand how to bridge different spheres of learning (peer culture, personal interests, and academics) through innovative school and public library programs and services that leverage and engage all areas of the library and community. Additionally, according to a Boston Globe’s Article, written in 2013, a ‘new breed of teen-services librarians (has) emerged’. Teen services have exploded in the last decade due to the relatively large size of the current teen population in the U.S. and the convergence of two trends: the reinvention of public libraries as community centers of learning and information, and the surge of literature aimed specifically at teens in the last decade.

Teens need different services, access to information, collections, space, and staff more than ever before. Public libraries are best positioned to support the needs of our teen population. At a recent annual Vermont Refugee Resettlement Consultation Meeting around to social integration, support from the library was requested for the new American teen populations. Many of the needs of New American teens also pertain to the broader teen population, such as: traditional readers advisory, college prep services, GED, workforce development, and volunteer opportunities. The need for a space where new American teens can find opportunities to engage socially and receive guidance on how to navigate social and cultural differences was stressed. Helping our new teen population understand the American legal system was another crucial area of need, as evidenced by the rise in DUI incidents amongst this teen population.

The ALA and IMLS report also identified the fact that the lives of teens are affected by the socioeconomic and political landscape. Issues such as poverty, homelessness, failing schools, and bullying have physical and psychological ramifications for teens. As part of the larger community, many libraries have taken on the responsibility to contribute to alleviating the problems that negatively impact teens and to help them be successful, productive members of society. These are requests relevant to most urban contexts; ones that are very similar in nature to those we had in Boston. At the Boston Public Library, it is a priority to have highly skilled youth and teen staff. Urban libraries are aware that teen populations have different learning approaches and milestones. The role of teen librarians is well articulated in the IMLS report:

*The library profession has come to understand literacy as much more than a cognitive ability to read and write, but as a social act that involves basic modes of participating in the world. This more fluid understanding of literacy has meant that librarians' work with teens now falls under a larger umbrella of multiple literacies, which encompasses **information literacies, critical literacies, digital literacies, media literacies, and much more.***

Teens today must be able to read, write, and interact across a range of platforms, tools, and media. This impacts the types of services, programs, and collections libraries provide, as well as the nature of the work that library staff perform. The report's call to action is the formation of an 'Equity Agenda'. The report states "It is generally educationally privileged youth with effective learning supports at home who are able to take full advantage of the new learning opportunities that the online world has to offer and translate these opportunities to their academic and career success." The report also states, "white suburban teens with highly educated parents or with parents in the highest income brackets ... are more likely than their African American urban or rural counterparts to own a computer, tablet, or smartphone. In overall Internet use, teens ages 12–17 living in lower-income and lower-education households are somewhat less likely to use the Internet in any capacity—mobile or wired."

How can the Fletcher Free Library benefit Burlington's teens? We are requesting a new full-time position of Teen Librarian in FY16 to provide the following services:

- Organized activities and safe places for teens to socialize after school;
- Strong partnerships with community organizations to reach at-risk teens;
- Through innovative programs such as learning labs and makerspaces, offer teens the opportunity to develop 21st century skills as it relates to information literacy, media literacy, and digital literacy;
- Provide community service outlets for teens by engaging them in the development of young adult programs, intergenerational programming, teen advisory boards that help develop civic engagement skills and opportunities;
- Help teens explore and pursue their educational goals by offering programming about career and workforce planning/preparation, information on higher education institutions and college preparation workshops, including how to apply and seek student financial aid.

Increase and strengthen the capacity of Youth Services

Currently, the Library has 2.1 FTE Youth Services staff covering the youth desk for 58 hours a week, providing the community with programming and outreach which includes neighborhood services and community collaborations and partnerships. There is a critical need to increase and strengthen this capacity. Our proposal is to reclassify the two part-time youth services positions to full-time to meet community needs for services. Currently the desk is unstaffed for an average of 7 hours a week. Increased staffing would allow Youth Services to provide better service to patrons and more programming.

5. Proposed Organizational Chart

