



Massachusetts
**LIBRARY
SYSTEM**

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SOAR: Staff Strategic Planning Session
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SOAR Raw Data: Wilmington Public Library

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Coding

- Coding is the process of assigning codes to open-ended answers, or other types of text data, after which text can be analyzed just like numerical data.
- Code frames can be flat (easier and faster to use) and hierarchical (more powerful).
- Code frames need to have good coverage and flexible to allow for a complete and a varied analysis of open-ended answers.
- Inductive coding (without a pre-defined code frame) is more difficult but less prone to bias. *For this session, I am using inductive coding.*
- Accuracy means consistent coding – which can be achieved by logging and reviewing decisions.

Inductive Coding

Strengths:

Several themes emerged from discussions on strengths. Three categories identified related to the following:

1. Personable and supportive staff
2. Welcoming and inclusive environment
3. Community engagement and support
4. Educational and resourceful programs
5. Innovative and expanded services
6. Community connections and safe space

These themes highlight the strengths of all three teams in terms of their dedication to patrons, welcoming and inclusive environments, community engagement, educational programs, innovative services, and personal connections within the community. During breakout sessions, staff members identified these strengths as support systems for the community and for library staff. Discussions on creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment, for example, applied to community members and to library staff. The notion of expanding services and learning opportunities to staff also demonstrated a connection with Opportunities discussed and reviewed later in this report.

Personable and Supportive Staff	
Personable and caring	Staff is supportive of other staff
Passion for patrons and profession	Patrons with specific connection to staff
Trusted staff	Great staff
Non-judgmental staff trainings	Positive Google reviews
Passionate staff	Themes: People
Resourceful staff	
Determined Staff	

Welcoming and Inclusive Environment	
Welcoming	Age inclusive
Safe space – especially for kids and adults	Cozy library – approachable
Equity	Themes: People, Environment
Third space	
Welcoming and comfortable	

Community Engagement and Support	
Good friends of the library/trustees	Community interaction
Supportive	
Seniors are our bread and butter	Themes: People, Relationships
Town support/budget	
Value community feedback	

Educational and Resourceful Programs	
Demystify technology	Quality programming
Readers advisory	Great programs
Summer reading	Prizes for everyone
Outreach to schools	Themes: People, Service, Communication
Tons of programming	

Innovative and Expanded Services	
Free public space and services	Books serve all patrons even if we don't like (the subjects of the books)
Having things beyond normal scope of library (e.g., diapers, library of things)	Connected to trends – what the people want
Offer materials beyond books	4 th wing book
Merchandise book displays	Themes: materials, resources, people, service
Helpful, “Google that for you?”	

Community Connections and Safe Space	
Connections	The 3 rd space
Library is a busy, joyful, living space	Themes: materials, resources, people, service
Personal connections with our community	

Opportunities:

When discussing and exploring opportunities, staff members identified several buckets:

1. Accessible and inclusive services
2. Community engagement and support
3. Innovative and adaptive approach

The staff identified the importance of being well prepared to create environments where those opportunities could develop. These themes highlight identified opportunities for collaborative work within, and outside of, the library. Community engagement is a theme identified for future success with multiple projects, services, and opportunities. Noted during discussion and reporting out, however, is the significant value of professional development opportunities, which would allow for staff to participate in large, medium, and small group engagement to best serve all patrons. Among the most noted were opportunities to work with a growing population of senior citizens, a diverse/multicultural community, and new-to-the library patrons. The most frequently discussed groups in the new-to-the-library were patrons who may be in the young adults/youth age group, and adults in the 20-40 age range. The interest in attracting patrons in this age group was also identified as an Aspiration.

The staff also identified the importance of developing strategic growth, the importance of a diverse collection of materials to reflect the needs and requests of patrons, and the

importance of balancing these components with budget limitations, a physical space that may not provide the most optimal environment, and changing/evolving technological services for patrons, and their access to those services.

These themes highlight identified opportunities for collaborative work within, and outside of, the library. Community engagement is a theme that is identified for future success with multiple projects, services, and opportunities.

Accessible and Inclusive Services	
Free public space	Equitable opportunities for all
Trusted source of information	Exposure to technology
Outreach – going to community	Figure out where the non-users are
Community participation	Senior center – focus on other groups
Identifying new demographic trends	
Connecting to trends, people’s desires	Themes: People, Literacy
Rapid tech change, artificial intelligence	

Community Engagement and Support	
Partnerships with organizations	Community surveys, collaborations, open to feedback
Support of/from town government	New patron base in town
Growing with the town’s needs	Themes: Collaboration, People, Engagement
Figure out who the stakeholders are	
Engaging with long-term residents who are not patrons	

Innovative and Adaptive Approach	
Programming	Staff trainings – being prepared for all situations
Growing collections – being adaptive	Staff expertise
Willingness to try new ideas	Upgrade spaces
Working outside of our spaces	
Not a lot of venues – open to filling needs	
Rapid changes in tech, artificial intelligence	Themes: Programs, Preparedness, Outreach

Aspirations

Note: this coding is presented differently as there were several subthemes within each topic.

Here are the key themes identified from the provided text:

1. Community engagement and support
2. Educational and literacy programs
3. Promotion and communication
4. Infrastructure and expansion
5. Cultural and historical initiatives
6. Attracting younger patrons
7. Accessibility and inclusivity

These themes highlight the library's focus on community engagement, educational and literacy programs, promotion and communication, infrastructure expansion, cultural initiatives, attracting younger patrons, and ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. As mentioned earlier, growing the number of patrons to include a more diverse age category was identified as an Opportunity. With a large staff, the aspirations identified offer an opportunity to create and develop trainings, programs, services, and an environment that reflect a diverse and multi-generational/demographical population of patrons and library staff members.

The staff identified a healthy tension between cultural and historical initiatives and the need for physical/digital spaces that offer modern accessibility. One item that seemed to resonate with staff was the idea and concept of “fearless programming.” As staff

explained, it would be the ability to provide respectful, appropriate programming that is not shut down because of a numerical minority.

Community Engagement and Support

- Gathering place for deaf community
- ESL and ASL opportunities
 - Programs
 - Community groups
 - Resources
- Connecting seniors, meeting them where they are
- Outreach during soccer events [youth activity events outside of library]
- Partnerships, in and outside of Wilmington

Educational and Literacy Programs

- Early literacy
- Library time for older teens
- Fearless programming
- Take a break – coloring spot for younger patrons who may be having a difficult time

Promotion and Communication

- Promotion
 - Promoting what we can adapt
 - Decodable fonts on Libby
 - Printing brochures on Communico
- Cookie The Books on WCTV

Infrastructure and Expansion

- Book mobile
- Library van (bookmobile)
- Bigger library – new building
 - Youth room revamp
 - Conference room
 - Bathrooms with exterior access
 - Welcoming, clear entrance
 - Elevator
 - Quiet space
 - More defined teen space

- Common area – more spaces
- Phone booth – soundproof space
- Free printing

Cultural and Historical Initiatives

- Wilmington's 300th Anniversary in 2030
 - 250th of revolution
 - Town department partnerships

Attracting Younger Patrons

- Attracting patrons in their 20s and 30s

Accessibility and Inclusivity

- More accessibility
- Library card

Results

There were two large themes that emerged in this area. Here are the key themes identified:

1. Community Engagement and Inclusivity
2. Data-Driven Decision

These themes emphasize the library's focus on community engagement, data-driven strategies, staff accountability, and outreach to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all patrons. Library staff identified specific methods for collecting data that are typical of libraries, such as door counts and usage. One group identified that materials from programs (such as book clubs or story times) could be monitored for statistics on check-outs to determine program-resources access. Across all teams, the staff heavily identified the desire to participate in the data collection, and in analysis and recommendations, while being aware that not all recommendations will be followed. There was a fruitful discussion on creating opportunities for impact analysis in addition to quantitative analysis – such as specific programs, where attendance may be lower than desired, yet impact is higher than expected.

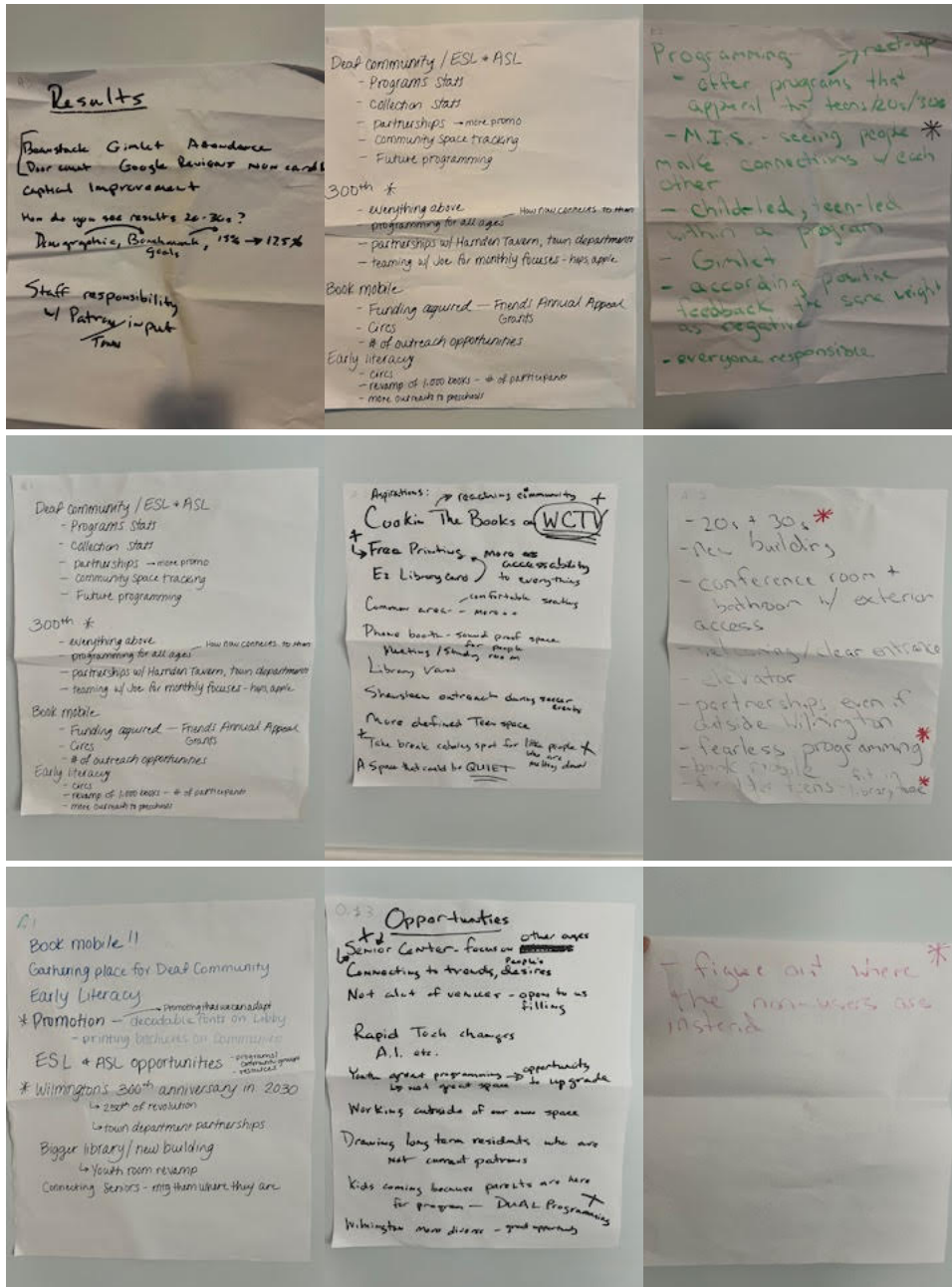
Community Engagement and Inclusivity

Offer programs that appeal to different community members	Observing people make connections
Deaf community events, stats for collection (example)	300 th Anniversary – stats, participation, interest, feedback on impact
Early literacy programs – qualitative (stories), quantitative (participation and connection with collections statistics)	Themes: People, Community, Outreach

Data-Driven Decisions

Door count	Demographic benchmarks
Collection analyses	Community space usage – analyses feedback
Staff accountability and participation, patron feedback with usage feedback	Themes: Data usage, collection, methods

Addendum: Images from Workshop



- figure out where the non-users are instead *

- new patron base in town
 - identifying new demographic trends *
 - growing w/ the town's needs
 - figure out who the stakeholders are
 - willingness to try new ideas *
 - outreach - going into the community *

Free public space
 * Partnerships w/ organizations
 Programming
 * Staff Trainings - being prepared for all situations
 ↳ willing to meet the patrons where they are

Trusted source of information
 Exposure to Technology
 Equitable opportunities for all - access to materials
 Support of town gov't
 Community Participation

Growing collections - adaptive
 Staff expertise
 Community surveys/collaboration/open to feedback

Results

Boardwalk Gimlet Abundance
 Our count Google removed non-cardholders
 Capital Improvement

How do you see results 20-200?
 Analytics, Bookcount, 15% → 125%

Staff responsibility
 ↳ Patrons - put
 Time

helpful
 (google that for you)

- we problem solve *
 - resourceful staff
 - determined staff
 - staff is supportive of other staff
 - library is a busy, joyful living space
 ie. The 3rd place

- passionate staff *
 - welcoming
 - value community feedback
 - tons of programming
 - quality
 - work beyond the inadequate building
 - merchandise book displays
 - offer materials beyond books e.g. L.O.T.

S. 3

↳ patrons with specific connections to staff

Personal connections - it - community

Great Programs

* Great Staff - Positive Google Review
 Books serve All patrons even to use debit like

* Welcoming - comfortable
 ↳ Age inclusive
 Great across the age groups
 - Prices for everyone

Community interaction

↳ Big library - approachable

* Third Space
 Connected to Trends - what the people want
 - Making One

People