

ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES, PROGRAMS, & COLLECTIONS

The assessment of Albany County Public Library (ACPL) services, programs, and collections is intended to increase the efficient delivery of:

- Information technology and reference services;
- Collections of all types and formats;
- Public performance and community meeting/conference spaces and amenities;
- Display and exhibition spaces and needs; and
- Staffing needs for service and the number/location of service points.

Our work will include an evaluation of the existing collection locations by means of personal inspection and discussions with staff and users. We will assess how the collection locations are now being accessed by the users and then make recommendations for changes that will improve both the deployment of shelving and the productivity of staff.

THE PROGRAM OF SERVICE REPORT

This brief chapter comments on items not addressed in the Program of Service (P of S) because they touch upon P of S as well as the Building Assessment and the Utilization of Space.

Information Technology & Reference Services

The P of S includes recommendations about the number of computers and how they should be used as well as the size of the reference collection. The P of S also encourages the Library to provide as many electronic databases as funds will allow (the databases are not included in the numeric count of the size of the reference collection).

We believe the reference collection should be housed near a service point that is easily accessible by a staff member stationed at that service point. Low, i.e. 48-inch high counter shelving (same as now in use) is the recommended book stack arrangement for the print-on-paper reference collection.¹

¹ Staff report that this change has been implemented.

Collections of all Types & Formats

The P of S details the sizes and general makeup of the print-on-paper and media collections. What was not included is the housing of the collections and some de-selection we recommend. Concerning housing the collections:

- No adult book stack should be taller than 72 inches high. This can be achieved with the present book stacks by placing the topmost shelf of 84-inch high uprights at a position from the floor of no more than 66 inches;
- Teen materials should be on book stacks no taller than 66 inches, requiring a placement of no more than 60 inches;
- Children's fiction and non-fiction for older children should be no taller than 60 inches, thus a placement at 54 inches;
- Easy/picture/board books at 45 inches (the approximate height of the existing shelving for these materials);
- All clear aisle spacing should be a minimum of 42 inches, and 48 inches is preferred. Remove all canopy tops on all shelving except the 45-inch high and 48-inch high stacks. Shelve all paperback books (adults and teens) on standard book stack shelving, no spinner racks or other housing configurations;
- All back-file magazines now stored in Princeton Files should be discarded (see the P of S report for further information re magazines and newspapers); and
- Media (Books-on-CD, music CDs, and movie DVDs) were also detailed regarding quantities in the P of S report. As for housing, it can vary from bins similar to those found in some music stores to specially outfitted standard book stacks. As for aisle spacing, it can be as for books and magazines. This final report will make a recommendation as to the type of media housing we believe will work best for the Albany County Public Library.

Public Performance & Community Meeting/ Conference Spaces & Amenities

Consideration should be given to providing the following:

- Public performance space(s) should seat, in stackable chairs, no fewer than 50 and no more than 150 depending upon the anticipated attendance;
- Community meeting space(s) should be the same space(s) as the public performance space(s);
- Conference space should seat no fewer than 10 and no more than 20; and
- Amenities should include visual presentation capabilities, easy access to coffee/soft drink service, and perhaps limited food service, and be 100 percent accessible by the physically challenged.

In addition to the above spaces, consideration should be given to group study rooms (seating four to six in each room) and two-person semi-private spaces for tutoring or individual/two-person research.

Display & Exhibition Spaces & Needs

Consideration should be given to providing the following:

- At least one Display Case that can be used to showcase items loaned to the Library by local residents and/or a very small traveling exhibition and/or a Library created display, perhaps highlighting a forthcoming event.
- One electronic information kiosk that (1) informs the public as to what is happening in the Library that day, (2) announces future events/activities, and (3) serves as a community bulletin board.

Staffing Needs & the Number/Location of Service Points

The consultants recommend three service points in the present building as it is now outfitted; one each in Children's Services, Circulation, and Adult Services (or the Information Desk) which would also assist Teen services.