Strategic Planning: Resource Models

There are many different ways that a library can pursue strategic planning. Here are some of the models that libraries have used through the years. This is not a complete list, nor is any process recommended by MLS or MBLC. It is up to each library and planning committee to decide the methodology they wish to use to create their strategic plan. All are available through the MLS Professional Collection or on the MLS Guide “Strategic Planning for Libraries.”

Strategic Planning for Results:

This 2008 title from Sandra Nelson has been one of the most used resources for a library to model for planning. While the book may seem lengthy, it is easily broken out in different chapters to utilize, several workforms to use, and your committee can partake in only the parts they wish to do.

Harwood Institute:

The Harwood Institute focuses on building “community conversations” and highlights this in their publication “Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Started in Your Community.” Libraries have used this model to gather user needs assessment information and other input.
Aspen Institute:

The Aspen Institute’s “Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library 2.0” contains worksheets to be used for evaluating the current level of activity and support for the library and its alignment with community goals; to determine priorities, goals and next steps forward; as a guide for planning and convening a community dialogue; for talking points to use in community outreach; and for links to other resources. There is also a facilitator’s guide available.

Public Libraries Association (PLA) Dynamic Planning Institute:

PLA’s Dynamic Planning Institute delivers best practices in strategic planning for libraries with a unique focus on simple, low-cost planning. Participants will learn how to create a dynamic strategic plan, in a timely manner, which will serve as a living document and create actionable pathways for decision making, community involvement, and funding priorities.

Massachusetts Library System Three Meeting Model:

Created to best utilize time for the busy libraries of the Commonwealth. Using brainstorming exercises from Nelson’s Strategic Planning for Results and creating an abbreviated process, libraries can engage with their committee effectively.