

Embudo Valley Library

Strategic Plan

July 2020-2023



Photo Credit: The Taos News

Vision: The Embudo Valley is a connected and thriving community.

Mission: The mission of the Embudo Valley Library and Community Center is to cultivate community well-being by providing educational, cultural, and recreational resources for children, youth, and adults. The library provides public library services, literacy and cultural programming, as well as public gathering spaces for meetings, events, and *resolana*. We are home to the village Fiestas, a community radio station, a public park, and a cooperative grocery store.



Photo Credit: EVL

Introduction

In January 2020, the Embudo Valley Library (EVL) Board of Directors and staff embarked on a six-month journey to reflect on their purpose, programming, patrons, and to chart a course for the next three years. Founded in 1992, EVL serves communities from Velarde to Vadito, in Rio Arriba and Taos counties, and opened the doors to a new 3,000 square foot library in 2014 after 10 years of planning and fundraising. The renovated old library now houses children's programs, a low-power FM radio station, and is a general use community center. Additionally, the EVL grounds are home to a public park and a cooperative grocery store; the library also hosts the village Fiestas. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit public library, EVL is not tax-funded, and approximately 64% of the library's operating budget comes from foundations and private donors. Over 60 volunteers help to run the library and its programs. EVL is a member of Rio Arriba Independent Libraries (RAIL), a collaboration with other area rural libraries for sharing resources and expenses while striving to improve economic and educational outcomes in their communities. In 2015, EVL was one of 10 institutions nationwide that received the *National Medal for Museum and Library Service*, awarded to institutions that provide outstanding service to their communities. EVL celebrated 28 years of library service this year.

The Planning Process

Over the course of seven facilitated meetings interspersed with work sessions, EVL Board and staff reflected on their services, programming, impacts, and responsiveness to the communities it serves. The planning process began with a re-affirmation of the organization's vision and mission (with minor revisions to existing statements), along with a spirited reflection on organizational values. Additionally, the group brainstormed an array of internal strengths and areas for growth, as well as external opportunities and challenges in play this planning cycle. A recent Evaluation Plan (2018-19) and Evaluation Report (2019) informed the deliberations, and community input from focus groups convened for that report underscored the process - that also centered continuous improvement in equity and inclusion as key priorities. Planners aimed to be faithful respondents to community voices emerging from those focus groups that spoke of strong ties to people, land, culture, and history of place as core community values, assets, and attributes. Those voices and stories animated the overarching ethic of the planning group: that EVL be a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, anchoring, placemaking partner that - in addition to offering traditional library services - supports and stimulates community cohesion and identity, community revitalization, and the life-enhancing determinants of community health and well-being.

Values, Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities

Actions (values re: how we work)

Fun
 Joy
 Play
 Flexibility
 Creativity
 Collaboration
 Anti-institutional/outside the box
 Supporting access, growth, capacity
 Stewardship ethic
 We say "yes" (to curiosity, possibility)
 Safe place
 Respectful communication

Context (values re: landscape we work in)

Local culture, history, tradition, languages
 Partnerships
 Resolana

EVL Values



People (values re: each other, community)

Connected
 Diversity
 Welcoming
 Nurturing
 Beauty

Things (values re: our desired reality)

Community
 Well-being
 Equity (articulate & actualize)
 Inclusion & belonging
 Education
 Life-long learning
 Trust
 Thriving
 Safety

Strengths (internal)

- We say: yes
- Human resources committed board, great staff, skilled volunteers
- Provide leadership in community & in state
- Bigger than we look
- Respect for differences of perspective
- Modus operandi: creative, out-of-the-box, little-by-little, revise & improve, persistence, fearless, playful, willing to ask for help, responsive to community
- Assets: space, reputation, collaborations, partnerships (co-op, radio, school)
- Successes: fundraising, strong programming
- Community support
- Community buy-in (yard sale, fiestas)

Opportunities (external)

- To make community-level impact (by how we articulate & actualize our mission)
- To improve equity
- Community eager to participate & benefit
- Libraries are trending as innovators
- We are free to create our own organization b/c we are independent
- We deliver (much external cred as a good partner)
- Children's programming/STEM funding
- Develop/leverage other programming opportunities (park plan, garage, radio station)
- State endowment funding
- Making the "health case" for what we do to expand funding opportunities
- Connection to rural library community via NM Rural Library Initiative

Needed Growth & Improvement (internal)

- Saying "yes" always = over-committing, overwhelm
- 100% relevance to/inclusion of community
- Attract, enable engagement of youth and community
- Build organizational capacity to support community capacity
- Process for increased & ongoing community input
- Planning-to-doing ratio (always doing= no time for planning)
- Budget (too little for operating expenses; \$; no long-range income planning)
- Revenue streams (dependence on soft/grant, no filters for assessing/prioritizing grant opportunities)
- Staffing (isufficient?; no time for Director to dive deep)
- Staff retention (compensation & benefits)
- Board composition (better youth and heritage-Hispano representation)

Challenges/Threats (external)

- Diminished funding/increased competition (philanthropy landslide; foundations changing focus less state/no county funding)
- Aging community
- Trust & inclusion optics (isuspected, perceived?) that may be a barrier to participation and partnerships (e.g. after school program)
- Perceived relevance of libraries
- Community resistant to change
- Gentrification
- Climate change (community vulnerable to fire, flood)
- No PreK summer care in community (is this an opportunity to fill or threat to EVL?)

Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives that shape the new plan include successful current programming, as well as new initiatives. Development of a Master Plan for the library grounds, as well as a Health Plan (collections, programming, partners, health care enrollments) were prominent additions to this planning cycle, along with the creation of new forums to enable broader community input, and exploration of opportunities for new and deepened partnerships. Diversification of funding streams, library advocacy, evaluation, staff support, and community responsiveness were among the objectives the Board tasked itself with, under a broad goal of strengthening the organization and its governance.

The following goals and objectives form the frame of the strategic plan, which is included in the next section of this report:

Goal One: Provide patrons and residents of our service area with essential resources and expertise to help preserve, showcase, and nurture the living history and cultural traditions of the community.

Objective 1.1 EVL will offer events and programming annually that focus on regional cultural heritage and history

Objective 1.2 EVL will promote, support, partner around, and sponsor activities and initiatives that steward culture and tradition as community resources

Objective 1.3 EVL will integrate regional cultural heritage and history into youth programming

Goal Two: Serve as anchor institution so all community members have a welcoming place to engage in *resolana*, recreational, cultural, and economic activities, and to support community development.

Objective 2.1 The library will continue to improve its outdoor space by developing a Master Plan for the grounds, with a minimum of two projects completed within the next three years.

Objective 2.2 The library will work to support individual and community health.

Objective 2.3 EVL will be a resource to support small business and entrepreneurs in our service area.

Objective 2.4 Strengthen relationships and planning with existing state, regional, county, local, co-located, and fiscally-sponsored partners.

Goal Three: People of all ages will have access to a wide range of programs and materials to encourage lifelong learning.

Objective 3.1 The library will take one year to do a teen and young adult needs assessment.

Objective 3.2 Provide early childhood literacy, youth afterschool, STEAM-H, and summer literacy programming at the library.

Objective 3.3 Prioritize relevant collection development; expand digital and physical holdings.

Goal Four: Optimize organizational strength & governance.

Objective 4.1 Through partnerships and fundraising, grow and diversify funding sources to stabilize library operating budget.

Objective 4.2 Strengthen the governance functions of the Board.

Objective 4.3 Professionalize and compensate library staff positions in order to grow a strong organization able to retain highly qualified employees.

Objective 4.4 Improve organizational responsiveness, assessment & evaluation.

DOCUMENTS:
Planning Participants & Full Plan

Planning Participants

EVL Staff

Felicity Fonseca, Library Director
Minna Santos, Librarian
Shirley Atencio, Librarian
Sandra Romero, After School Coordinator

EVL Board

Marcia Brenden, President
Joy Cutcheon, Vice President
Tim Raphael, Secretary
Susan Akins, Treasurer
Darren Griego, Member
Shel Neymark, Member

Facilitator

Juliana Anastasoff, Health Extension Officer
Office for Community Health
University of New-Health Sciences Center

GOAL ONE: Provide patrons and residents of our service area with essential resources and expertise to help preserve, showcase, and nurture the living history and cultural traditions of the community.

Actions	Responsible Party	Projected Completion Date	Resources Needed	Metrics	Notes/Status Update (date)
Objective 1.1 EVL will offer events and programming annually that focus on regional cultural heritage and history					
1. Sponsor the annual Fiesta de Santa Rosa on library grounds	Fiesta Committee	Annually last weekend in August	-Staff Time (40+ hours) -Fundraise budget (\$1000 for staff time, NM Arts for baile folklorico)	Crowd count, parade participation (number of floats)	Postponed due to pandemic - 9/1/2021
2. Include local history in the library's evening cultural series	Library staff & volunteers (Sev, Karen Cohen, others)	Ongoing	Public space, volunteer support, 4+ staff hours per event	Number of participants, diversity of participants, partnerships, other indicators of engagement	Aim: Events that draw a diverse local audience (like Oil Lamps on the Plaza, StoryCorps, Cipriano Vigil) Postponed due to pandemic – 9/1/2021
3. Expand upon the StoryCorps project by promoting oral history gathering and sharing	Library staff w/ support from volunteers (& Manitos?)	Ongoing	Audio/Video equipment, web capacity, 40+ hours staff time minimum per project (\$1,000)	Number of contributors/participants, attendance at events, survey of participants and audience members	My Grandmother's House – 9/1/2021
Objective 1.2 EVL will promote, support, partner around, and sponsor activities and initiatives that steward culture and tradition as community resources					
1. Participate in Manitos Digital Heritage Project	Library staff & volunteers	Project driven	40+ hours staff time minimum per project, audio/visual equipment	Number of contributors/participants, attendance at events, survey of participants and audience members	
2. In consultation with Community Advisory Committee develop other cultural work	Library staff & community volunteers	6/30/2021	NM Arts Cares Act funding, AARP Community Challenge, other possibilities in the future (like YCC funding)	Metrics tied to the product developed as part of NM Arts and AARP projects	
Objective 1.3 EVL will integrate regional cultural heritage and history into youth programming					
1. Support baile folklorico classes or other cultural activities for children as a means of involving youth in the fiesta	Library staff, NM Arts contract teaching artist	Annually at fiestas	\$1,000 currently funded through NM Arts	Develop survey for baile folklorico participants (and audience members?) Survey could ask if baile folklorico is best way to involve youth. Survey for this program was recommended by NM Arts panelists.	
2. Partner with EVTA to use cultural heritage curriculum in afterschool program	Library Director, Afterschool staff, EVTA staff	Ongoing	\$18,000 for 4 day a week afterschool program	Afterschool program survey. Cultural heritage came out as least requested option in recent survey. New language or way to describe this work?	

GOAL TWO: Serve as anchor institution so all community members have a welcoming place to engage in *resolana*, recreational, cultural, and economic activities, and to support community development.

Actions	Responsible Party	Projected Completion Date	Resources Needed	Metrics	Notes/Status Update
Objective 2.1 The library will continue to improve its outdoor space by developing a Master Plan for the grounds, with a minimum of two projects completed within the next three years					
1. Convene quarterly a Community Advisory Committee to inform the planning process to develop the library grounds for youth recreation and public gathering.	Library Board	Ongoing	Staff time (120 hours minimum) Volunteer Time (120+ hours) Budget to support plan	Numbers of meetings, track participation, ongoing recruitment/retention of diverse voices in Community Advisory Committee	CAC to advise on grounds development for health (outdoor exercise classes, linking to walking trails)-ask Tim
2. Update Master Plan (2003) for grounds that board, staff, and CAC agree on and that identify project priorities.	Library Board	12/31/2020	\$300,000+	Subsequent rounds of community feedback regarding master plan and grounds development, eventually producing plan.	Ask Tim
3. Develop and integrate into Master Plan a plan for outdoor programming to build community connection and reinforce cultural identity.	Recruit volunteers + Library staff	Pilot Summer 2021*	Staff and volunteer time- currently staff is overcommitted	Track uses of grounds somehow? Continued community engagement and ongoing feedback Pre-post comparison (how could this be done? Could the park survey be the pre?)	* Projected completion date depending on COVID-19 restrictions & master plan progress
Objective 2.2 The library will work to support individual and community health					
1. Develop health plan for library, including current health related partners and programming.	Library Director (Felicity), with health partners	12/31/2020	Library staff will each do two National Libraries of Medicine trainings in July/August/Sept 2020 to help inform our approach.	Tentative plan formed	Taos First Steps, Picuris Peñasco Community Coalition, SPOT, UNM-Health Sciences Center Library, Carnelian Center, Mack Dittz (health insurance enrollments), National Library of Medicine, Española Public Schools, PISD Community School. (what we can learn from them?) UNM HERO office can provide TA. Long-term: offer parenting classes
2. EVL will make facilities available to support healthy living, including for exercise classes and Cooking with Kids program.	Community Advisory Committee, Library staff (Minna)	Ongoing	Outreach, networking with exercise teachers	Track uses, programming and participation	? Exercise classes in library building in the future?
3. EVL will continue to provide resources for health care enrollments.	Library staff (Minna)	Ongoing	10-20 hours contacting potential partners to help with this	Number served	
Objective 2.3 EVL will be a resource to support small business and entrepreneurs in our service area)					
1. Seek support from NMSBDC to develop a small business entrepreneurial support plan for library	Library Director (Felicity)	12/31/2020			Connect with Anwar Kalen

2. Use Creative StartUps resources to support entrepreneurship, with a goal of quarterly entrepreneurial sessions/programs	Library Director (Felicity)	12/31/2020	Staff time- 1 community member to act as support for project	Numbers served, impact made	Christopher Madrid RAC
Objective 2.4 Strengthen relationships and planning with existing state, regional, county, local, co-located, and fiscally-sponsored partners					
1. Continue to work with co-located partners; develop a plan to advance these partnerships and include them all we do (co-op, radio, farmer's market, Fiesta)	Library Board & Library Director (Felicity)	Ongoing	Staff Time	Share goals and strategic plans-Need for immediate meeting with coop board and management RE: farmer's market and other areas of EVL mission	Attend one meeting per year Meet w/Farmers' Market director
2. Continue to work with established regional, state, and Tribal partners	Library Staff	Ongoing	Staff time could be substantial	Ongoing shared programming	Such as Explora Children's Museum, NM PBS, Northern NM College, Picuris Pueblo, UNM, RAIL

GOAL THREE: People of all ages will have access to a wide range of programs and materials to encourage lifelong learning

Actions	Responsible Party	Projected Completion Date	Resources Needed	Metrics	Notes/Status Update
Objective 3.1 The library will take one year to do a teen and young adult needs assessment					
1. Design, convene and analyze findings of a Youth Advisory focus group	Librarian (Minna)	12/31/2020	Staff Time	Participation	
2. Develop and conduct a youth survey	Librarian (Minna)	12/31/2020	Staff Time	Survey	
3. Explore teen links to KLDK.	Librarian (Minna)	8/31/2020	Volunteer Time Radio Station	Participation	Ask Winston to train youth for radio work at KLDK
4. Explore options to partner with RMYC, WIOA, other partners for teen employment/internship	Library Director (Felicity)	6/30/2021	Staff Time	Numbers served	WIOA; other teen employment programs
Objective 3.2 Provide early childhood literacy, youth afterschool, STEAM-H, and summer literacy programming at the library					
1. Continue K-6 afterschool program as a tier 3 program that includes STEM and arts enrichment, with possibility of finding a program partner* to take over program and/or stabilize funding.	Library Director (Felicity) & Afterschool Staff	Ongoing	Staff Time, Materials & Facility	Attendance, annual survey and other	i.e. Boys and Girls Club or EPS Century 21
2. Work with partners to boost summer reading program quality, participation and attendance, targeting Española Public Schools, EVTA, and Picuris Pueblo as key program partners.	Library Director (Felicity)	Ongoing	Staff Time Materials & Facility	Diversity of participation & partnerships	
3. Maintain high level of continuing education for youth program staff in order to execute quality programs, with a minimum goal of one training annually per staff.	Library Staff	Ongoing	Staff Time		
4. Continue early literacy story time as key library program.	Library Director (Felicity)	Ongoing	Staff Time, Materials & Facility	Attendance and annual survey	
5. Develop fall semester arts-based component to STEM program, keeping spring semester focused on robotics.	Librarian (Minna)	Ongoing	LANL this year	Attendance, survey, products produced	
6. Continue participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.	Library Director (Felicity)	Ongoing	Staff Time	Registration #s	

Objective 3.3 Prioritize relevant collection development; expand digital and physical holdings

1. Set up collection development systems so that library is procuring new, relevant materials on a monthly schedule. Budget \$420-\$500/month.	Library Director (Felicity) & Librarian (Minna)	Ongoing	Time and money-ED time scheduled on circulation desk	New materials purchased, community feedback on annual survey about relevance and currency of collection	
2. Set up collection development systems so library uses NMLTG content credit monthly or quarterly.	Library Director (Felicity)	Ongoing	Time and money-ED time on circulation desk	New materials purchased, community feedback on annual survey about relevance and currency of collection	
3. Add resources to the library collection that support the history and culture of the community.	Library Director (Felicity) + (?who)	Ongoing	Time and money-ED time on circulation desk	New materials purchased, community feedback on annual survey about relevance and currency of collection	

GOAL FOUR: Optimize Organizational Strength & Governance

Actions	Responsible Party/ Owner	Projected Completion Date	Resources Needed	Metrics/Indicator	Notes/Status Update
Objective 4.1 Through partnerships and fundraising, grow and diversify funding sources to stabilize library operating budget					
1. Develop annual fundraising plan to expand fundraising events to more than once a year (raffle, book sale, a minimum annual revenues of \$40k).	Board Chair (Marcia) w/ support of rest of Board & Library Director (Felicity)	Sept 2020	Time	Completed plan; active item under old business under meeting agendas	Contact Anwar Kalen for ideas/support Hiring or contracting staff time for fundraising
2. Develop business plan to increase non-grant revenue streams such as a thrift store, book sale, rental income, contracts.	Board Chair (Marcia) w/ support of rest of Board & Library Director (Felicity)	Sept 2020	Anwar & time	Completed plan; active item under old business under meeting agendas	
3. Increase endowment by including a notice in all mailings, and by Board members committing to contact 2 people/yr to invite them to make a bequest.	Library Board	Ongoing	Invite Carol Neely to present on estate planning and making bequests. Plenty of tri-folds.	Board members verify contacts were made; LD endures notice goes out in all meetings and newsletters	Need to generate list of ppl who have already been approached
4. Develop criteria to realistically assess staff ability to a) maintain programs; b) add new programs; c) develop grant applications.	Board Chair (Marcia) & Board Director (Felicity)	July 2020	Utilize grant writing support from Laurie Kindler	Completed checklist list that is used consistently to assess opportunities and make decisions	Checklist to guide when considering adding new programs, Board and staff will either eliminate existing programs, add staff hours for new programs, find volunteers to take on new programs, or otherwise ensure realistic expectations of staff, fundraising, programming, and maintenance
5. Maximize effectiveness of library advocacy for libraries at state and county level with legislature, Governor's office and Rio Arriba County.	Board members (Shel, Tim)	Ongoing		More \$\$ coming in (currently 3 mil); funds are vulnerable given current budget issues. More robust state grants and aid.	relate to rural library endowment
Objective 4.2 Strengthen the governance functions of the Board					
1. Create an administrative calendar every month to include 990's, annual meetings, evaluations, grant deadlines, policy reviews, include donor and volunteer appreciation parties, evaluations.	Library Director (Felicity) w/Board Chair's assistance (Marcia)	Now		Have and maintain calendar	Monthly overview from Director at Board meetings Develop annual calendar Library Director maintain internal grant calendar Electronic
2. Board will review policies, procedures, handbooks, and bylaws annually and revise as needed.	Board members (w/Susan)	End of each fiscal year, beginning 2020	Digital copies of all policies, handbooks, and bylaws	Scheduled as an annual item	

3. Board will evaluate itself annually, define board expectations, roles, and responsibilities, and provide an orientation for new board members.	Board members	By the end of March	Board self-evaluation forms and other relevant resources	Completed self-evaluation and roles/responsibilities/expectations forms. Board orientation process is added to Board handbook.	The Library Director will also evaluate the board
4. Board will pursue relevant professional development annually.	Board members	By end of fiscal year	Online or foundation-sponsored nonprofit board PD	Certificates of completion of PD or workshop of <u>at least</u> one PD session/year	The Board president will compile and update an annual list of PD opportunities for board members.

Objective 4.3 Professionalize and compensate library staff positions in order to grow a strong organization able to retain highly qualified employees

1. Staff members will pursue annual on-going professional development both for skill building and professional rejuvenation (e.g. library work, communication skills, fundraising, youth programming,)	Staff with Library Director (Felicity) & Board	By end of calendar year	Board will prioritize in the budget;	Certificates of completion of <u>at least</u> two PD workshops/year.	Library Director will compile a list of possible PD opportunities.
2. Explore options and develop a plan for offering benefits for retaining staff.	Library Director (Felicity), Thea & Library Board	End of calendar year	Board will prioritize in budget	Developed plan	

Objective 4.4 Improve organizational responsiveness, assessment & evaluation

1. Develop, implement, and analyze annual survey of library services.	Library Director, Staff, Board	TBD	surveys	Completed surveys	Board will assist in analyzing survey data
2. Continue annual surveys of library programs, including afterschool, STEM, SRP, and early literacy.	Library Director, Staff, Board	TBD	Surveys	Completed surveys	Board will assist in analyzing survey data
3. Conduct equity assessment on library programs and services to see where organization can improve.	Library Director, Staff, Board	TBD	Equity assessment document	Completed equity assessment	UNM HERO office can provide technical assistance
4. Verify and ensure that the community needs identified in survey data* are (realistically) integrated into strategic plan.	Library Director, Staff, Board	TBD	Survey data	Strategic plan	*Maintain land and agriculture-based traditions, make community attractive to young families, support economic development, practice community engagement, advocate for community safety (highway and crime), offer exercise and recreation opportunities

This page intentionally left blank