

Strategic Planning for Results: A One Page Description

What is it?

Strategic Planning for Results is a process for public library planning. It is defined in the book of the same name by Sandra Nelson, published by the Public Library Association.

What is it all about?

In a nutshell, it helps you plan for your library by

- Starting with community needs;
- Determining which needs can be met by the library;
- Picking library service responses that meet those needs;
- Writing goals and objectives that put the service responses into action.

What is involved?

The process goes as follows:

- The library board decides to do planning and develops a plan for doing so.
- The library picks leaders from outside the library to be on a Community Planning Committee (CPC).
- The CPC studies the community and creates a description of the community as it is, a vision for its future, and list of community needs.
- The CPC reviews the library as it is and a list of Library Service Responses describing the range of services that public libraries in Canada deliver. (There are 18 defined service responses and they capture at a high level the full range of things that public libraries normally do.) A short list of service responses that meet the local community's needs are selected by the CPC.
- The library board and staff review the findings and recommendations of the CPC and consider the implications of implementing the selected service responses including what it would take to do them and how existing services would be impacted by the change (particularly which services would be downsized or phased out.) The results are communicated to the CPC.
- The CPC considers the library's input and produces their final recommendations.
- The library board approves the final list of service responses.
- "Goals" and "objectives" are created that specifically describe how the generic service responses will be delivered by the library. (Goals are community benefits, and objectives are measurable steps towards goals.)
- The library prepares for organizational change.
- The plan is written and approved.