



Board of Directors

**APPROVED**

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2017- 2019

## OVERVIEW

Vision and Mission:	<b>Vision:</b> To be recognized as a leader in the nation as a supporter and advocate of public libraries <b>Mission:</b> To advocate for and support the Charleston County Public Library
Mission Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To strategically plan and proactively manage the FOL organization</li><li>2. To increase net revenue generated by FOL</li><li>3. To increase membership in the FOL</li><li>4. To increase the number and availability of FOL volunteers</li><li>5. To advocate for public library issues in legislative and funding processes</li></ol>
Who We Serve:	Revenue generated by the Friends funds more than <b><u>6,000 programs</u></b> in the Charleston County Library system each year. The reach of these programs is estimated at <b><u>200,000 people</u></b> per year. The library has <b><u>16 branches</u></b> and a <b><u>circulation rate of 3.0 million.</u></b>

Programs and Services (Current):	<p>Membership: Supports library programs, provides access to “Members-Only” events</p> <p>Book Sales: Generates revenue to support library programs</p> <p>Volunteer: Processes all book/media donations, provides setup and breakdown support for book sales, facilitates replenishment and checkout during book sales</p> <p>Community Events: Promotes engagement and raises awareness, allows for connection between library staff, FOL, and supporters</p>
Goals:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase revenue generated and grow the annual contribution of FOL to library programs by 4% each year for the next 3 years.</li> <li>2. Expand community engagement by increasing the number events held throughout the county to support FOL.</li> <li>3. Grow membership program by 3% each year for the next 3 years.</li> <li>4. Increase awareness of and advocacy for our library system in local and state government.</li> </ol>

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Charleston Friends of the Library (Friends) is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports the network of libraries serving the Charleston County area in South Carolina. Its mission is to advocate for and support the Charleston County Public Library (CCPL) through proactive management of its membership organization, generation of revenue to support CCPL programs, promotion of volunteerism, and advocacy for library issues, specifically related to legislative support and funding. Revenue raised by the Friends augments the existing funding structures of the library system in South Carolina to maximize the availability of programs offered to Charleston county residents and the number of people served.

Through the years, the role of the Friends increased from a dedicated network of volunteers to include public book sales and online consignment, a silent auction, and engagement events hosted by community partners. Revenue generated through these efforts allows the Friends to make an annual contribution of approximately \$100,000.00 to the library in support of its programs.

In early 2016, the Board of Directors of the Charleston Friends of the Library began a discussion about how to raise additional funds to support the Charleston County Public Library. This discussion began after an analysis of budget data for the last 5 years revealed

that the Friends have relied partially on savings to continue meeting the \$100,000 expected annual contribution to the library.

Some aspects of fundraising for the Friends are dependent on economic factors that cannot be controlled or predicted. However, in order to guard against economic fluctuations and support organizational longevity, new action must be taken to expand existing programs and pursue opportunities to increase revenue. Through strategic action, the Friends will increase their contribution to the Library by 4% annually, expand community engagement through outreach events, grow their annual membership rate by 3% annually, and increase advocacy efforts in support of the mission of the library to connect our diverse community to information, foster lifelong learning and enrich lives.

The objectives and action items laid out in this Strategic Plan will be proposed at the Annual Meeting of Charleston Friends of the Library, scheduled for November 16, 2016. The Board of Directors will work in partnership with the Charleston Friends' Executive Director and share responsibility for the execution of the strategic plan. The implementation of these objectives and action items will begin at the start of Fiscal Year 2017 and continue through Fiscal Year 2019, at which time the success of the plan will be evaluated and opportunities for continued improvement identified.

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES

- ❖ Robust, year-round book sales in locations throughout network of county libraries
- ❖ Dedicated volunteer corps
- ❖ Established membership program
- ❖ Board of directors comprised of diverse experiences and perspectives as community stakeholders
- ❖ Solid cooperative relationship with CCPL staff and administration
- ❖ Positive organizational reputation in Charleston community

## OUR GOALS: 2017-2019

## GOAL 1: INCREASE REVENUE GENERATED AND GROW THE ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION OF FOL TO LIBRARY PROGRAMS BY 4% EACH YEAR FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

Opportunities to increase revenue exist in 4 identified sectors: book sales, targeted events, grant writing, and corporate sponsors. Book sales have, historically, generated the most funds for the Friends and enjoy steady community support. However, targeted events that focus on specific community segments or are held/hosted by community partners can expand the footprint of the Friends. The establishment of a grant calendar and creation of an active grant writing program will further diversify revenue streams for the Friends. Building a corporate sponsorship program holds potential to make a significant contribution to income.

### Strategies:

- ❖ Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan that increases public awareness for book sales through a combination of press releases, media appearances, print media coverage, and social media
- ❖ Identify opportunities to share information about library programs with book sale patrons and highlight the role of the Friends in funding those programs
- ❖ Create and implement a grant writing calendar for use as a tool to pursue grant opportunities for the Friends
- ❖ Create and implement structured corporate sponsor program
- ❖ Pursue new funding strategies such as matching gift and peer-to-peer fundraising opportunities

## GOAL 2: EXPAND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY TO SUPPORT FOL.

Community engagement events can include: branch book sales, happy hour events, benefit dinners, auctions, lectures, ticketed events, spirit nights at local athletic events, and any other activities approved by the Board of Directors.

### Strategies:

- ❖ Increase number of events held annually
- ❖ Promote unity by holding events in sectors of Charleston county that correspond with library locations
- ❖ Explore new types of events

- ❖ Pursue strategic partnerships with other community organizations, civic sectors, businesses, and media contacts

### GOAL 3: GROW MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM BY 3% EACH YEAR FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

The membership program supplements income from book sales to fund the annual contribution of the Friends to the county library system. Growing the footprint of the Membership program will support the stated objective of the strategic plan to increase the annual contribution made by the Friends.

#### Strategies:

- ❖ Evaluate existing program using SWOT strategy
- ❖ Include membership promotion in comprehensive communications plan
- ❖ Explore business-level membership opportunity as step-in for corporate sponsorship and reciprocal membership with other community organizations

### GOAL 4: INCREASE ADVOCACY FOR OUR LIBRARY SYSTEM IN LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT.

Educating the public about the programs provided by CCPL branches and advocating for support on their behalf is integral to the work of the Friends. By promoting CCPL as a cultural center and resource, the Friends can connect the importance of supporting CCPL programs by supporting the Friends.

#### Strategies:

- ❖ Support CCPL events and Friends events through promotion in personal networks and attendance when possible
- ❖ Connect to volunteer provider programs to expand existing volunteer groups
- ❖ Update Friends website and redevelop content therein to emphasize connections between what the Friends does and how that work impacts the community via CCPL programs
- ❖ Create plan in partnership with CCPL to give greater visibility for the Friends in library branches and acknowledgement of support when the Friends sponsor programs
- ❖ Partner with the Library's Board of Trustees to optimize all strategies to increase awareness, revenues, membership, and volunteer participation

## IMPLEMENTATION

Administration of the strategic plan and development of action items will be managed by the Executive Committee of the Charleston Friends of the Library Board of Directors. Action items for plan strategies may be suggested by any member of the board at any time during the fiscal year. Upon approval, action items may be assigned to: the Charleston Friends' Executive Director, chairs and members of board committees, or specific members of the Board of Directors. Completion of the action items will be reported to the Executive Director who in turn will report progress during monthly board meetings. Evaluation of performance to plan will be conducted in November by the full body of the board of directors during each fiscal year included in the strategic plan.

Pending approval of the board at the annual meeting of the Charleston Friends of the Library on November 16, 2016, the board will discuss and approve specific action items at their January meeting to address each outlined strategy for the first year of the plan period. The Board of Directors will evaluate the success of the action items and performance to plan in November 2017, report the evaluation findings at the annual meeting in 2017, and make any necessary adjustments to goals for the following year. The board will repeat this cycle according to the timeline in Fiscal Year 2018 and Fiscal Year 2019. After a final performance evaluation in November 2019, the board will assess whether a new strategic plan is required and take steps to create a draft for presentation at the annual meeting in 2019.