Children's Play Areas – Specifically Designed Spaces

Project	Children's Play Areas-Specially Designed Spaces
Description	Play is one of the best ways for children to learn language and literacy skills. They learn about language through playing as the activities help them put thoughts into words and talk about what they are doing. MLS provides opportunities for young children and their caregivers to talk, sing, read, write, and play together at the library so that caregivers understand their vital role in helping their children be prepared to start kindergarten. MLS places a great emphasis on play, with prominent play centers and visible toys. MLS' Children's Areas feature parent information, comfy seating, technology, toys, and play areas. MLS' focus on families talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing together means that library spaces are taking on a different look and feel. Every Child Ready to Read and Family Place Libraries calls for our libraries to offer play areas and opportunities for parents to engage with children, including spaces for blocks/manipulatives/transportation toys, dramatic play, gross motor toys, infant toys, puzzles, and writing stations, as well as cozy spots where parents and children can sit and read together.
Demonstrated Need	Playing is one of the five main components of their joint initiative, Every Child Ready to Read (everychildreadytoread.org), which is being proposed as an early childhood programming best practice from the Literacy Workgroup. It is also a main component of Family Place Libraries. A proven change agent, Family Place Libraries, which MLS is a member of, transform libraries into community centers for early literacy & learning, parent education and engagement, family support and community connectivity helping to ensure all children enter school ready and able to learn. The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and Public Library Association's (PLA) joint project "Every Child Ready to Read® 2nd edition" emphasizes the importance of play for the development of early literacy skills. Play is described as one of the best ways children can learn language and literacy skills. (Every Child Ready to Read®, 2011). It is also listed as one of five practices (talking, singing, reading, writing and playing) that are important for parents and caregivers to share regularly with their young children to help them get ready to read. Through play, young children learn about their world. With this knowledge, they can understand books and stories once they begin to read. The first edition of the "Every Child Ready to Read®" project listed six skills necessary for children to successfully learn how to read and write. They included print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills and print motivation, all of which can be learned through play. As stated in The Science of Early Childhood Development report by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, "when we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship" and "creating the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age."

Outcome	Literacy
Potential Supporting Departments	Business Office, Development and Volunteer Services, Engagement and Program Services, Facilities Maintenance, Information Technology, Learning and Development, Marketing, Planning and Assessment
Startup Costs	more than $250,000
Ongoing Costs	$10,000 - $24,999
Startup Staff Time	100+ hours
Ongoing Staff Time	1 - 3 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	3.271
Timeline / Workplan	Apr-Jun 2019

Early Childhood Literacy Programming

Project	Early Childhood Literacy Programming
Description	Here at Metro we have had trainings on early childhood literacy programming, such as Mother Goose on the Loose with Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen and Super Charging Your Storytimes with Saroj Ghoting. With the changes to our service model and the number of new hires in the past few years, many staff have not had access to these trainings. Because of the lack of consistent trainings across the system for all of our Engagement staff it is difficult to create a cohesive approach to Early Childhood Literacy Programming and to provide consistent experiences for our customers across the system. To accomplish this, the following are needed: • Metro system standards/best practices for story time programs for babies, toddlers, and preschool aged children • incorporating the 5 Practices of Early Literacy from ECRR2, including recommendations for providing these programs at large libraries and small libraries • Metro system standards/best practices for Playtime and 123 Play with Me including recommendations for age appropriate toys, manipulatives and supplies. • Training plan for Engagement staff on 5 Practices of Early Literacy, standards/best practices for early childhood programs at Metro and their implementation
Demonstrated Need	Parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, want their children to be successful. But not all parents have the knowledge and resources to help their children with early literacy skills. In Getting it Right from the Start: The Case for Early Parenthood Education, Thomas Sticht found that research shows that the "most successful early childhood education programs include early parenthood education". Studies have shown that the PLA/ALSC sponsored Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library parent education initiative has an impact on early literacy by encouraging librarians and library staff to widen their focus in programming from just children to children, parents, and caregivers. Librarians are encouraged to teach and model for parents how to be engaged with their children in the Five Practices critical to early literacy: playing, talking, reading, singing, and writing. In Bringing Literacy Home: An Evaluation of the Every Child Ready to Read Program, the authors find that libraries that implemented the ECRR initiative have shifted their focus to parent engagement and that is evident in many aspects of those libraries. It is parent engagement as the child's first and best teacher that leads to stronger early literacy skills in children which leads to greater success in school and life. Many programs fall under the heading of Early Childhood Literacy Programming including story times for babies, toddlers, and preschool age children, Mother Goose on the Loose, 123 Play with Me, Play Times and bilingual storytimes. There is a need to create guidance and best practices for these programs to allow for greater cohesiveness and consistency in implementing these early childhood literacy programs across the system. There is also a need to create training courses for

	Engagement staff related to these best practices for early childhood literacy programming.
Outcome	Literacy
Potential Supporting Departments	Collection Development, Development and Volunteer Services, Engagement and Program Services, Learning and Development, Marketing, Outreach
Startup Costs	$10,000-$24,999
Ongoing Costs	$1,000 - $4,999
Startup Staff Time	80 - 99 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	1 - 3 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	3.229
Timeline / Workplan	Apr-Jun 2019

Project	Engagement Outreach Best Practices
Description	EPS will work on a framework for staff to go out in the community so that a consistent experience is had by residents and the library message is uniform in content if not format.
Demonstrated Need	Oklahoma County has a lack of public transportation, under maintained sidewalks or walking paths and a lack of home access to the internet creating undependable access to programs, resources and digital content. In many cases library outreach into schools, community centers or events is the only contact Oklahoma County residents have with library staff.
Outcome	Civic Engagement
Potential Supporting Departments	Engagement and Program Services, Learning and Development, Marketing, Outreach
Startup Costs	less than $1,000
Ongoing Costs	less than $1,000
Startup Staff Time	25 - 39 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	1 - 3 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	3.229
Timeline / Workplan	Apr-Jun 2019

Project	Evaluation Methods Best Practices & Training
Description	Formalized guidelines are needed so all our libraries are evaluating all of our programs and services in a standard way. This will help us determine if our new programs and services are helping us meet the desired outcomes and can also be applied to existing programs and services. Guidelines will help staff determine which type of data collection and evaluation should be local vs. systemwide, and which methods are the most appropriate for each program. This will include focus groups and customer surveys. A project team that will develop best practices, survey templates, guidelines, and training are needed to realize this effort.
Demonstrated Need	As we continue through the process of Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation, we need a systemwide methodology in place for collecting data and evaluating our efforts. According to 5 Steps of Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation for Public Libraries, data collection methods include analyzing outputs, conducting surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, administering tests, and observation. Using these methods will demonstrate accountability and help us be good stewards of our resources as we move forward.
Outcome	Educational Attainment
Potential Supporting Departments	Development and Volunteer Services, Engagement and Program Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Learning and Development, Planning and Assessment
Startup Costs	less than $1,000
Ongoing Costs	less than $1,000
Startup Staff Time	80 - 99 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	1 - 3 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	2.479
Timeline / Workplan	Apr-Jun 2019

Project	Health & Safety Fair
Description	A health and safety fair would: • bring community partners together to educate the public on the prevalence of the health challenges in OK County, • provide information on making healthier lifestyle choices, • and inform the public of the myriad health and safety resources available within their community. In addition to providing this valuable resource to the community, this event would also allow MLS to discover additional community partnerships as well as bolster existing relationships with our area health agencies. The primary space for this event would include informational booths, while adjacent library spaces could be utilized for health screenings and other stand-alone health programs or presentations. Possible community partners to recruit for this event include: area hospitals, OCCHD, grocery retailers, YMCA, area health agencies, disease-specific organizations (i.e. American Heart Association), sporting goods retailers, OSU Extension services, and area municipal partners (i.e. police, fire department, parks and recreation). MLS would also provide an information station to highlight its many physical and digital resources related to health and wellness. Larger regional library locations may be the most appropriate venues for an event of this size and scope to ensure ample physical space for multiple information booths and attendee participation. A large-scale event as described being offered more than once annually per location. Proposed program duration is 3-4 hours.
Demonstrated Need	As outlined in the Community Needs Assessment, the state of Oklahoma is ranked as one of the unhealthiest states in the nation (46th place), and OK County reflects these overall statewide health trends. According to OSDH's State of the State's Health, OK County's most pressing health concerns include: obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, incidence of cancer, physical inactivity, alcohol and tobacco use, poor diet and nutrition and sedentary lifestyles. Not only does OK County receive a grade of D or F in the aforementioned areas, but these health challenges are also recognized as some of the top causes of death within our community. Unintentional injuries (i.e. motor vehicle accidents, accidental falls, drownings, fires, poisonings) are also major causes of death in the county. A health and safety fair would bring community partners together to educate the public on the prevalence of these health challenges, provide information

	on making healthier lifestyle choices, and inform attendees of the myriad health & safety resources available within their community.
Outcome	Health and Wellness
Potential Supporting Departments	Development and Volunteer Services, Marketing
Startup Costs	less than $1,000
Ongoing Costs	less than $1,000
Startup Staff Time	25- 42 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	15 - 24 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	2.854
Timeline / Workplan	August – TBD 2019

Project	Health and Wellness Resource Guide
Description	The Health and Wellness resource guide would provide information on low-cost/free clinics (medical, dental, vision), wellness centers, food pantries, prescription assistance, substance abuse assistance, mental health counseling, and various community partners/initiatives. This would be an online resource guide; a print version could be created as well. Additional deliverables might include best practices for how to share this information with customers, incorporate this information into programming, etc.
Demonstrated Need	This system-wide resource guide will specifically address Oklahoma's 16% non-insured rate and 17.7% county poverty rate, providing information about resources for low-cost/free medical, dental, and vision opportunities in the communities we serve. During the process of completing the external audit of resources the health and wellness workgroup found many resources that are already available in the county. It would be beneficial to our customers if we could provide them a resource guide that pulls all the information we found together in one place. Finding this information is difficult enough, but add in a lack of literacy skills, digital literacy skills, language barriers and other road blocks and people may never get the proper information they need.
Outcome	Health and Wellness
Potential Supporting Departments	Engagement and Program Services, Marketing
Startup Costs	less than $1,000
Ongoing Costs	less than $1,000
Startup Staff Time	25 - 43 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	Less than one hour per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	2.646
Timeline / Workplan	August – TBD 2019

Project	Job Fairs
Description	We would like to propose hosting job fairs in our library locations and having a presence at job fairs around the Oklahoma County area that are hosted by other organizations. **Host General Job Fairs in our local libraries:** • Invite local and national business in the Oklahoma City/Oklahoma County area to have an information booth, accept applications and conduct on the spot interviews. • Provide job seekers with instructions on interviewing, resume writing, and general job search skills. • Instruction can be provided in many different ways. Three examples might be Motivational Speakers Classes Individual help and support by librarians or career professionals **Host Industry specific job fairs:** • Invite only companies and organizations within a specific industry such as medical or aeronautics to participate. • Invite people who have experience within the industry to speak and/or demonstrate industry skills and techniques. • Invite companies and organizations who support the specific industry to participate creating a networking environment. **Attend Job Fairs:** • Participate in Job Fairs around the Oklahoma County area that are hosted by other organizations. • Provide an information booth highlighting the job resources we have available through our library system.
Demonstrated Need	Unemployed Oklahoman's frequently experience barriers when seeking jobs in the Oklahoma City area. These barriers include but are not limited to the location of job fairs and the targeted audience of a job fair. The overwhelming majority of Job Fairs in the Oklahoma City area are hosted at Educational Institutions like High Schools and College Campuses with a focus on attracting high school and college students to entry level industry careers. Professional job fairs and industry specific job fairs in the Oklahoma City area are consistently hosted at hotels in the Downtown area or in selected areas of the city. Oklahoma Works has two locations, one on the south side of the city and one on the east side of the city where job fairs are hosted at specific times per year. While the unemployment rate is healthy for the state, certain

	populations are disproportionately affected. For single mothers, the unemployment rate is nearly double that of the state average of 8.3%. Single fathers with children have 4.5% unemployment. In contrast, 2% of married men with children are unemployed and 3% of married women with children are unemployed.
	Hosting Job Fairs in our local Oklahoma County libraries would break down barriers by providing more accessible locations and offer single parents and families a comfortable familiar environment to explore job opportunities.
	The benefits of a Job Fair which provides an equal opportunity event for the job seekers and the employers alike are that citizens receive access to a larger number of employers in our community and employers receive a diverse pool of applicants.
	Our Library System benefits when we participate in Job Fairs hosted by organizations outside of our library system. By having a booth at a job fair that is located at a local school, college, hotel or workforce centers, we can potentially reach a segment of our community that does not come to our library locations.
	By attending job fairs, we can increase our awareness in our community and educate our community on the job resources available to them through the library. We can market our library as a Job Center resource.
	Job Fairs meet our Workforce Development Outcome by providing Career Exploration opportunities. Residents become aware of careers, organizations, and industries in Oklahoma County and understand the skills and education necessary to obtain these careers. Job Fairs allow residents to see themselves in these careers.
	The Library becomes the connection between the Oklahoma County workforce and local and national employers. Through Job Fairs, residents are connected with resources, community groups, and government agencies to help them further their careers.
Outcome	Workforce Development
Potential Supporting Departments	Collection Development, Development and Volunteer Services, Engagement and Program Services, Human Resources, Learning and Development, Marketing, Outreach
Startup Costs	$1,000-$4,999
Ongoing Costs	$1,000-$4,999
Startup Staff Time	80-99 hours

Ongoing Staff Time	15 - 24 hours per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	2.896
Timeline / Workplan	August – TBD 2019

Project	Reference Best Practices
Description	A workgroup will create a best practices document for reference services that will include: • Training recommendations • Guidelines for setting boundaries (including the amount of time spent with a customer) • Ethics • How to evaluate resources • Reference Interviews • Suggestive Selling
Demonstrated Need	As engagement services change, and with the inflow of new staff who may not have an MLIS, we as a system need training and best practices to ensure a consistant and professional engagement experiecne for customers, whether over the phone or in direct contact.
Outcome	Literacy
Potential Supporting Departments	Engagement and Program Services, Learning and Development, and Central Information Services, Special Collections and Research
Startup Costs	less than $1,000
Ongoing Costs	less than $1,000
Startup Staff Time	25 - 39 hours
Ongoing Staff Time	Less than one hour per offering of the program/service
Prioritization Score	2.688
Timeline / Workplan	Apr-Jun 2019