To: Xchange Members

From: Tim Rogers, executive director

Date: January 17, 2017

Re: Strategic Priorities FY 2017-18

A year ago, we launched the Library's new strategic plan. Library Unbound, as we've come to call it, was drafted to codify for our staff and Commission what the Library's future success will look like, while providing us all with a framework for constructing bridges to that success. Built firmly on the foundation of "growing smarter communities, one person at a time," we identified a vision of the future in which the community will see the Library as its hub for critical thinking, creative problem solving, and lifelong enrichment. We also established a single ambitious, but reachable goal of "everyone in our community using a library service by 2035." Library Unbound challenges us to retain the 24% of households in the community with active library accounts by preserving our core, while also sending a clear message that we must embrace a new concept for how we will serve the community in order to reach and engage the other 76%. These new methods for growth will be exercised across all libraries and departments, and will include strengthening our relationships with our members (*Spark!Build!Hold!*), creating valuable experiences for them (not just products and services), and enhancing their learning opportunities through the provision of dynamic spaces.

There is an old African proverb that tells us that the best way to eat an elephant is to do so one bite at a time. So, it is with our 20-year goal. We cannot attack it all at once, but instead, we must break it down, focusing our efforts on coherent priority areas with defined system-wide initiatives. Doing so, we build momentum and capacity for the organization and the successful achievement of these initiatives will prepare us for larger efforts that will move us ever closer to the fulfillment of our goal (everyone in the community using a library service).

Because the community will never see us as the hub for anything until we are known for doing it best and most often, we tied the priority areas deeply to the concepts within the Vision statement, where critical thinking becomes "Learn Smarter," creative problem-solving becomes "Work Smarter," and lifelong enrichment becomes "Live Smarter." A short description of the priority areas, along with specific system-oriented initiatives that will launch in earnest as part of our next fiscal year (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018) are listed below:

1. Learn Smarter. Activities in this area will build system-wide approaches to prepare our younger members for reading and learning, assist them (along with their parents and educators) in being successful in school, and enable them to comfortably move to the next stages of their lives.

a. *Initiative*: Rollout ONEcard across all Oklahoma County schools.
b. *Initiative*: Create system-wide early literacy program for children ages birth – 3, and their caregivers.
c. *Initiative*: Create system-wide homework help service for students.

2. <u>Work Smarter</u>. Activities in this area focus on the development of system-wide approaches that strengthen ties between the Library and the local business community by: extending services to their employees; building programs that enhance the employment opportunities for members and; enabling the establishment of small businesses using Library services.
   a. *Initiative*: Create an employee account program for Oklahoma County employers.
   b. *Initiative*: Develop a system-wide workforce development program (i.e., product line, service, experience) tailored to build members' skills and make them more employable/promotable.
   c. *Initiative*: Develop a system-wide program (i.e., product line, service, experience) that prepares and enables entrepreneurs to launch new small businesses.

3. <u>Live Smarter</u>. Activities in this area focus on delivering system-wide approaches that improve the quality of our members' lives through the provision of Library products, services and experiences.
   a. *Initiative*: Simplify the processes necessary to create a Library account, so that 85% of members can attain an account 24x7x365 without needing to visit a library.
   b. *Initiative*: Enhance public technology to reduce our members' wait-time for applications, devices, and access to an acceptable period.
   c. *Initiative*: Develop a system-wide program (i.e., product line, service, experience) that enhances our members' knowledge and enjoyment of locally relevant content, services, and experiences.
   d. *Initiative*: Develop a system-wide program (i.e., product line, service, experience) that focuses on bringing the collection to life through presentations, discussions, and interactive events.

Success for each of these will be measured in market penetration (households with active accounts), member retention (active accounts being used with greater frequency), and a new metric we will introduce (Net Promoter Score) that speaks to the satisfaction levels of our members. Additionally, we will employ relevant key performance indicators (for example, attendance, circulation, cost-per-use, and use-per-capita, etc.,) to help describe the impact of the initiative on the audience targeted.

You may look at the ten initiatives and say, "those don't look so different from what we do everyday … we offer ONEcard (for OKCPS students); we provide story time; we offer homework help in a couple of areas; we provide programming that helps with job prep and business development; we deliver online temporary cards and public technology services; we have an Oklahoma Room and some local collections at individual libraries; and we offer programming." That is all true, and it is purposeful. Our priorities over the next five years will build on our current strengths and successes. We will not be abandoning what we do, but instead strengthening our commitment and changing our approach so we can do it better, more consistently, more often, and at a lower cost.

Because our libraries already provide resources and services that enable the community to learn, work, and live their lives, what is *new* in this plan is the focus that comes from all staff working together to create a single approach for each initiative based on best practices – the Metro Way. Instead of 19 different models for story time or homework help or workforce development, we will craft one best-practice-based model that will deliver results for all members, thereby enabling us to improve quality everywhere while reducing the time, effort, and cost needed to do so. Public services staff will be better able to spend their time serving our members directly, while departmental staff will solidify the infrastructure and foundational processes that will allow each of us to deliver results that help Spark interest, Build value and engagement, and Hold our members as loyal customers for life.

This will be a big change, primarily because over the past few years we have moved away from system-wide approaches in favor of exercising creativity locally. We still need *all* staff to think creatively and to bring their best ideas forward, and we believe the framework offered by Library Unbound (with the priorities and initiatives listed above incorporated into it), will provide staff with a foundation on which to build our system-wide success.

Over the next few weeks, I will again begin to visit staff and management meetings to talk about this next generation of Library Unbound, and about how we will position the organization to achieve it. We will discuss the changes that will support our success and about things that must be preserved to ensure that we don't lose the essence of what is important to our members. I hope you look at these priorities and initiatives and see a path forward that will enable us to grow smarter communities, one person at a time and craft a future in which each member of the community uses a library service.

Thank you for being part of Library Unbound.