



State Library of North Carolina
NCPLDA Summit

Engaging Community Leaders: Exercise Two

“A visualization”



It is three-to-five years from now and your library and community have a thriving, productive relationship. What does this look like? What three steps were critical to making this happen?

MOVING FORWARD WITH NEXT STEPS

The power to re-envision public libraries is the power to re-envision our communities for success in the digital era. Re-envisioning the public library for every community will require a unity of purpose and action by stakeholders at all levels. It will require new relationships and partnerships that are nurtured and strengthened through ongoing dialogue and engagement, not a single event.

To get started, library directors, staff and their supporters must forge new partnerships and collaborations in the community and align their work with the community's goals. Leadership at the local level is crucial. Library, government and civic leaders will have to adopt new thinking about the public library. This thinking rests on understanding what makes the library uniquely valuable to the community beginning with its people, place and platform assets. It also rests on the uniquely public value proposition grounded in the principles of equity, access, opportunity, openness and participation. These are also values at the heart of American democracy.

The challenge to pick up and move forward is dependent on iteration, available resources and the commitment and vision of library and other community leaders. Specific next steps will depend upon the unique needs and priorities identified in the initial dialogue.

Here are some recommendations for initial action steps to help you chart your path forward.

- **Consider formation of an advisory group or steering committee** to continue working on development of action items, implementation and future dialogue events.
- **Bring the summary of the event to regional or statewide library meetings** or meetings of municipal leagues and associations to share experiences and encourage other communities to hold their own events. Use this opportunity to nurture a community of practice around these conversations and the promise of libraries engaging with civic leaders to transform communities.
- **Consider outreach to key stakeholders** like community foundations or other philanthropic partners to share the outcomes of the meeting and invite their participation in next steps.
- **Publish a report**, share and market it widely.
- **Share your report and experience**, including resources you have created, with the community at www.LibraryVision.org.

