



Lied Battle
Creek Public
Library
Presents:

ACCREDITATION 2022-2027



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Lied Battle Creek Public Library is to provide quality library service to its patrons and to provide lifelong learning opportunities.

The Library will provide materials, services, programs, and technology to the Battle Creek service area for information, entertainment, cultural, and educational development.

Community Profile

The city of Battle Creek is a town of just 1,194 citizens in the 2020 census which is a slight decrease from the 2010 census. The median age of our community is 37.5 years down from 43.4 in the previous census. Our largest population is under 18 years old with 18-34 and 45-64 year olds being the next top age ranges. Ethnically, only 9.1% of the population reports of being a different race than white. Ninety five percent of the population range 25 and over has at least a high school diploma. The median household income is \$73,056 which is higher than the state average yet our per capita income is \$26,562 which is below the state average. Our poverty rate is 8.7% which is below the state non-metro percentage. The majority of employed residents, 90.8%, are employed outside of Battle Creek.

Assessment of Community Needs

The Battle Creek community is currently working with the University of Nebraska Extension, Rural Prosperity Nebraska to do a community survey and have community conversations about Battle Creek's future. The accreditation committee is using the results of the community survey administered in August 2022 and the community discussions held in September and October 2022 to assess Battle Creek's community needs. The following 6 needs were identified and became the basis for goal planning at these community meetings.

- 1) Flood Control Plan -- In 2019, the City of Battle Creek had a major flash flood. After that a group of citizens came to the city council to demand action on flood control. The council then voted to have surveys done which set in motion a partnership with the city and the Nebraska Natural Resources District to figure out the best way to deal with Battle Creek's frequent issues with flooding. While some solutions have caused some contention, the NRD seems closer to having a plan that will be satisfactory to most of the community but as of the date of this report has not taken any vote to confirm further action will be taken. In the community discussions, the citizens present strongly believed that it will be hard for the city to grow until this issue is addressed. The library does not have any roll in this process other than supplying newspaper articles about the meetings that have happened.
- 2) Attract Young Families – The Battle Creek community already has many children and younger families as demonstrated in the census information. However, it is a deep desire of the citizens

present in the discussions to continue to focus on the wants and needs of young families so that Battle Creek continues to be a desirable place to live for this demographic. The library can assist this need by supplying materials that are attractive for families. Programs that will help parents and caregivers become more connected to one another and the community would also be something that the library can do.

- 3) Retain 65+ Community – One need that came out strongly in the community discussions was the need to have housing and amenities that will be attractive to those of retirement age. Currently, there are only a few duplexes and apartments that are on ground level that would be suitable for those of mature age to downsize and have the stress of yardwork and snow removal off their to do lists. Transportation back and forth to Norfolk, NE where many go for medical and pharmacy needs and buy their groceries is also a problem. The city currently does not have a senior center or community center that could serve as a meeting place and activity space for this demographic. The library, while limited in space, could supply programming, space, and materials for this age group.
- 4) Economic Growth -- Battle Creek has lost many of the businesses it used to have in the downtown area. The buildings that were built, some 100+ years ago, are becoming more and more difficult for the owners to maintain leaving the appearance of downtown to be unattractive to new businesses and tourists. Currently, the city leadership has no plan to help improve these buildings or any kind of incentives to attract new businesses to come in. This need is harder for the library to help with but we can partner with Northeast Community College or the Nebraska Extension, Rural Prosperity Nebraska to have entrepreneur workshops about starting a business.
- 5) Strengthen Infrastructure -- One common comment that came up in the survey was the desire to have a new or remodeled swimming pool or aquatic center. A group has been formed called the Battle Creek Development that will be fundraising for the pool area. Plans have been drawn up for a remodeled pool area that is satisfactory to the committee but the price of construction will continue to rise the more time it takes for the community to get to the building stage. The library can continue to provide meeting space for the committee and post any flyers for fundraising. Another infrastructure issue are the streets. The city has a street improvement plan that it sticks to but unfortunately the roads are still in poor condition. The library has no role in this process.
- 6) Community Involvement – A major issue the community discussions identified was the lack of engagement of community members in city and community leadership and activities. The survey showed that people do not feel that the leadership is seeking to improve the community or that community members have a say about what is going on. One issue that makes citizens feel disconnected and unable to engage is the lack of communication. This is one area where the library can help through setting up and maintaining a community calendar.

Analysis of Lied Battle Creek Public Library’s Strengths and Resources/ Barriers and Opportunities for Improvement

| Strengths and Resources | Barriers and Opportunities |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
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| Library: | |
| Building is still in fair shape after remodel 10 years ago | Meeting room not large enough to hold larger programs |
| Plenty of computers to meet needs | Finances to replace technology is somewhat limited |
| Larger budget compared to peer libraries | Communication about events is difficult |
| Large attendance at programs compared to peer libraries | Programming for adults is limited |
| Staff seeks to have patron desired programming | Staff is stretched timewise to maintain current programming and start new |
| Community: | |
| Younger population | Busy people leading to lack of time or desire to do community events |
| Momentum is for change | Closeness to Norfolk has led to business blight |
| Proximity to Norfolk allows for partnerships with various organizations | |
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Library and Community Progress

The library can provide more programming for older adults. The library will be starting a quarterly make and take program in the fall of 2022. Teens on up will be invited to come. The director can also become certified to help seniors sign up for Medicare. Other programs for older adults should be considered as well. To address the issue of communication, the Library could also partner with other community entities (the city office, the schools, the churches) to start a community calendar that is accessible to people of all ages through Facebook, websites, and by the publishers of the local paper so that it can be placed in it.

Specific Goals

1. Provide more programming for adults.
 - a. Start a Make and Take program for young adults and adults.
 - i. Hold quarterly programs starting in the fall of 2022
 - ii. Seek a grant to help with funding for the programs or choose to charge patrons an amount for each project
 - iii. Advertise the program in ways that will be seen by most adults
 - b. Provide assistance for signing up for Medicare.
 - i. Find and attend a training program to become eligible to sign up people for Medicare.
 - ii. Advertise the dates in an effective manner
 - iii. Sign people up for appointments
2. Start a community calendar by 2024

- a. Research the best mode (google calendars?) to have a community calendar that is easily added to by organizations in town, (school, city office, churches, etc.)
 - b. Inform the organizations and give them access to add to the calendar
 - c. Maintain it as needed
3. Provide activities to create opportunities for young families to meet by 2027
 - a. Continue Listen and Play and Saturday morning Story Times
 - i. Expand advertising about these events
 - ii. Consider expanding to more than one Saturday
 - b. Trivia night
 - i. Talk to Fighting River or to the Eckert's Event Center about partnering for a quarterly trivia night
 - ii. Set up questions and format for the night
 - iii. Decide on prizes
 - c. Movie in the park
 - i. Consider doing more movies in the park throughout the year
 - ii. Explore funding for movie licenses

Accomplishments and Evaluation

Since 2017, our last accreditation year, the library has changed directors and while its mission has stayed the same, we have gone from more material-based services to adding more programming and outreach. One of the goals from our 2017 accreditation was to make people more aware of the housing that was available. Through 2020, we worked with a local realtor to provide listing flyers of all houses for sale in Battle Creek. This ended over the Covid pandemic and has not resumed. We did not see many people needing houses looking at these and at this point do not intend to restart this resource. Another goal was to advocate for a grocery store in town. No action was taken on this goal and in the intervening years a Dollar General was built close to the city and according to the community meetings there is no longer a desire for a grocery store in town given Battle Creek's proximity to Norfolk. Other goals were worked on but with the change of director the details of the efforts are not known.

The evaluation for the goals that we have set out for our new accreditation period will be evaluated by attendance at the programs and community feedback.

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