

Library Association Strategic Plan Examples

August 2015

I looked at about 30 library association strategic plans. Many looked almost exactly the same. The examples called out below have something slightly different about them to use as a “do” or “do not”. These are just my impressions from a quick scan of the plans or whatever documents I could find. If an association doesn’t have a “Process” listed, it’s because I didn’t find one mentioned on their website. -- Sara Thompson

The Big Ones	Best	Better	Good / Fair
ALA PLA ACRL SLA	MassLib PNC-MLA TxLA WisLA	DCLA MTLib NLA	WashLA SDLA PaLA OKLibs

ALA - American Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/strategicplan>

Plan coverage: 3 - 5 years ... 2011 - 2015

Sections:

goals & objectives, key action areas, organizational values, envisioned future

Process: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/strategic-planning>

As part of the Association’s strategic planning process, we would like to invite you and other ALA members to share your best thinking about what you would like to see happen/accomplished in three priority areas that have been identified as strategic initiatives for the Association over the next 3-5 years. These three strategic initiatives are:

- Advocacy
- Information Policy
- Professional and Leadership Development.

Over the course of this fall and winter, the ALA Council, divisions, round tables, interest groups, committees, chapters, affiliates and individual members will all be invited to discuss three questions that will help shape our vision, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics in each of these areas. These questions are:

- What would success look like?
- How do you think we might get there?
- How might you/your community (division, round table, committee, chapter, affiliate) help us get there?

PLA - Public Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/pla/about/strategicplan>

Plan coverage: 3 years ... 2014 - 2017;

10 years (long-range horizon)

Sections:

overview, core ideology, envisioned future, goals & objectives, assumptions of relevant future
key accomplishments 2011 - 2013

Process:

revised existing 2010 strategic plan, held facilitated discussions at two board meetings

ACRL - Association of College & Research Libraries

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan>

Plan coverage: 5 years ? ... 2011, 2013, 2015 - 2020

Sections:

preamble, core ideology, long-term envisioned future, five-year goals & objectives

Process:

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan/planningroles>

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan>

SLA - Special Libraries Association

<https://www.sla.org/about-sla/strategic-plan/>

<https://www.sla.org/about-sla/strategic-plan/sla-strategic-priorities-2015-2016/>

Plan coverage: 2 years ... 2015 - 2016

Sections:

plan: strategies & tactics, priorities

priorities: vision, key areas of focus, values

Process:

“Annual operational plans, developed by the Executive Director, will provide specific directions toward achieving SLA’s strategic goals. These goals are based on the current three priorities that will be reviewed and adjusted annually to ensure the association is on the leading edge of the information profession. The three priorities are based on ongoing membership input, research, and Board and staff discussions.”

MassLib - Massachusetts Library Association

<http://www.masslib.org/Resources/Documents/New%20strategic%20plan%20draft%20revised%202-19-10.pdf>

Plan coverage: 5 years ... 2010 - 2015

Sections:

vision, mission, goals list, action plan

Notes:

The action plan is really well done - step by step actions with deadlines for every objective and specific responsible units.

PNC-MLA - Pacific Northwest Chapter of MLA

<http://pnc-mla.cloverpad.org/page-1231240>

Plan coverage: ?? approved in 2010, had annual revision committees up until then

Sections:

vision, mission, goals each with objectives, strategies, and measurement indicators (!!)

Notes:

Seems too long with too many levels, but those measurement indicators! There’s the ticket!
Also, best line: “Two monkeys will be surveyed every year - pre and post conference.”

TxLA - Texas Library Association

<http://www.txla.org/strategic-plan>

Plan coverage: 3 years ... 2012 - 2015

Sections:

founding purpose, mission, core values, envisioned future, initiatives & action items

Process:

used a (rather large?) task force plus two subcommittees that included people both on and not on the task force

Notes:

They're in the middle of an update process with timeline and survey: <http://www.txla.org/stratplanupdate>

WiscLA - Wisconsin Library Association

<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/about-the-wla/wla-strategic-plan>

Plan coverage: ?? 2011 - 2013

Sections:

mission, goals & objectives

Notes:

The objectives are really well written - clear outcomes, deadlines, measurable.

DCLA - District of Columbia Library Association

http://www.dcla.org/Strategic_Plan2012

Plan coverage: 2 years ... 2012 - 2014

Sections:

overview, vision, goals each w/ statement, objective, strategies; clarified leadership roles

Process:

"In June 2012, the District of Columbia Library Association (DCLA) Board invited DCLA Past President Susan Fifer Canby (1991-1992) to lead the group in developing a two year strategic plan and setting goals for the coming year. The group reviewed the DCLA 2005-2007 Strategic Plan, the Bylaws, the Board Handbook, membership data, and past event data. In advance of the meeting, each Board member completed a survey created by Susan Fifer Canby, the answers to which formed a basis for thinking and discussion. The resulting strategic plan creates a roadmap of goals and action items for the Board and Association for the next one to two years. It is hoped that the plan builds on DCLA's strengths and successes. At the same time, the plan calls on the Association, its governing structures, and its Membership to re-evaluate, update, and perhaps even eliminate outmoded systems and procedures in order to best meet the needs of its members."

Notes:

wow, they got really specific about leadership role responsibilities!

MTLIB - Montana Library Association

https://mtlib.org/MTLibraryAssocStrategicPlan_2011-2014.pdf

Plan coverage: 3 years ... 2011 - 2014

Sections:

... hard to say

Process:

consultant, SWOT analysis, focus questions

Notes:

The PDF has some fantastic charts we could use as for ideas in brainstorming and drafting our strategic plan, but it doesn't feel like a finished plan to me. It feels like the result of a workshop - which has its purpose, but doesn't necessarily reflect a complete product.

NLA - Nevada Library Association

http://www.nevadalibraries.org/publications/strategic_plan.html

Plan coverage: 2 years ... 2013 - 2015

Sections:

vision, mission, focus each with objectives and activities

Notes:

The layout keeps the emphasis on the relationship between activities and overall focus points.

WashLA - Washington Library Association

<http://www.wla.org/about-us> - past 4 versions of strategic plan

<http://www.wla.org/assets/AboutUs/wla%20strategic%20plan%202013%20update.pdf> - 2013 update

Plan coverage: 4 years ... 2012 - 2016

10 year vision ... 2022

Sections:

mission, vision, summary version, core values, 2016 objectives & goals, 2014 priorities

Notes:

The priorities each relate to the overall goals and have corresponding leaders responsible.

SDLA - South Dakota Library Association

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.sdlibraryassociation.org/resource/resmgr/docs/sdla_strategic_plan_public_2012_2014.pdf

Plan coverage: 2 years ... 2012 - 2014

Sections:

executive summary, history, plan process, mission, goals & objectives

Process:

online survey to members (51% response), executive board strategic planning meeting, contracted Sage Project Consultants

Notes:

context sections are helpful, but the objectives are all very vague, no deadlines or measurements

PaLA - Pennsylvania Library Association

https://www.palibraries.org/?page=Strategic_Plan

Plan coverage: 2 years ... 2013 - 2015

Sections:

vision, mission, goals & objectives with accountability for each goal

Notes:

more vague wishy-washy objectives but they did identify specific organizational units responsible for each goal -- nice!

OKLibs - Oklahoma Library Association

<http://www.oklibs.org/?page=StrategicPlan>

Plan coverage: 2013 - 2020

with 1-year Presidential Initiatives added at the bottom on ongoing basis

Sections:

mission, vision, core values, goals, annual presidential initiatives

Notes:

They went with a much longer timeline than most, no goals at all. Instead, they have annual presidential initiatives that are then related back to specific values.
