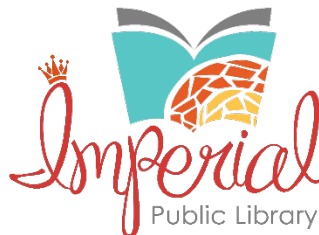


Imperial City Library Board of Trustees

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STAFF REPORT
Agenda Item No. B-1

To: Imperial Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Library Administrator, Ember Haller
Date: September 10, 2024
Subject: Imperial Public Library Mission Statement

Summary/Background:

According to the American Library Association, every public library “should have a central, guiding mission statement that defines the library’s purpose and describes who the library serves. Additionally, the vision statement that clearly defines what the library would be if the mission statement was achieved and a list of values, commitments, or goals that would help the library achieve its mission statement. At the minimum, a mission statement is needed to provide guidance for all efforts of the library.”

During the application process for the California State Library Inspiration Grant, it required affirmation of the Imperial Public Library having a mission statement. At this time, there are no records available identifying the adoption of a mission statement. The library page on the City website provides the following statement, which was created by a past assistant city manager/public information officer approximately in 2021. When searching online, the web identifies the statement on the website as the library’s mission statement. Nonetheless, it is beneficial to review the library’s mission, vision and core values to ensure they remain relevant to the alignment of the needs and values. It provides an opportunity to reflect current goals and values as our community evolves, adapt to technological change, assist in guiding decision-making, and improve the library’s public image by clearly communicating its relevance and commitment to serving the community. The current statement on the library page is the following:

“The Imperial Public Library welcomes and supports all people for the enjoyment of reading and the pursuit of life-long learning. Working together, we strive to provide access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, technology, programs, services and other resources.

The City of Imperial Library was first established in 1909 and had a total of 101 books. Carnegie library was built in 1909 and opened for business in 1910. It was devastated in the 1940 earthquake and subsequently had to be torn down. Temporary facilities were utilized during the war years and post-war years, until a new library could be built. The Library as it exists today was opened in 1953; therefore, the City of Imperial Public Library is the Imperial Valley's oldest operating library.

The Imperial Library may be small but it actually has access to millions of books through the Inter-Library Loan System. As a member of the Serra Cooperative Library System we are able to request books from most of the libraries in the San Diego County, as well as Imperial County. If you want a book we do not have in our collection, we can get it for you through the Inter-Library Loan. This also includes audio books (books on tape). You are invited to come by the library and ask about this service, or call us at (760) 355-1332.”

During reflection of the mission statement for the Imperial Public Library, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), California State Library (CSL), and American Library Association (ALA) was used as a resource to guide best practices and the goal for “excellence in public service”. In addition, IMLS provides a 2022-2026 Strategic Plan which applications for grant funding must align with.

Several mission statements were created identifying core values of serving all people in our community and provided to library staff for feedback. The outcome for the Imperial Public Library mission statement is below:

“The mission of the Imperial Public Library is to empower our diverse community through innovation and collaboration to provide free and open access to credible information, equitable programs and services, and foster lifelong learning and sustainability. We strive to create a welcoming space where all individuals can explore ideas, acquire knowledge, and connect with others to enrich their lives and strengthen our community.”

Recommendation:

Staff requests the Imperial Library Board of Trustees to support and recommend the new mission statement to be adopted by City Council.

It is further recommended to hold a workshop of the library board at the beginning of 2025 to begin identifying and creating the “core values” for the library, based on IMLS, ALA, CSL, and the diverse community we serve.