

## Library Link Center Proposal

### History:

In 2010 the City-funded position of Welcome Coordinator was eliminated, due to cuts in LGA funding from the state of MN. In order to continue these services, in January 2014 the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) agreed to provide these services through a three-year contract with the City (from the City's Communications fund).

In 2017 the Northfield Public Library hired a full-time bilingual Outreach Coordinator position; in 2018 the library hired 2 part-time bilingual staff, for a total of 3 bilingual staff.

The Library Director proposes to take on the services once provided by the City, currently the services of the LINK Center, within Library operations.

Our aim is to make the Library LINK Center a clearinghouse for resident information, and to support the City in its long-range strategic goals of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Operational Effectiveness.

### First 6 months

The library would continue Link Center Services at a minimum of current hours and services.

- This would include
  - The hiring of a part-time staff person in the range of 20-24 hours per week to allow for additional staff capacity to provide Link Center services
  - Open hours. Link Center open hours for 2017 = 1,660 per year. Library open hours = 3,204 per year 31 hours per week Link Center versus 61 library open hours.
  - Notary Services. Link Center Notary = 20 in 2015. Library Notary = 182 free Notary services in first 9.5 months of 2018
  - Newsletter. Current distribution of newsletter =5,945 in 2015 = 500 per month distributed. Library would maintain or increase distribution. The Newsletter will be in Spanish and English, with translation provided by Library staff. Consider the continuation of distribution via US Mail to include specific geographic areas in the City of Northfield to reach key neighborhoods –Viking Terrace, Northfield Estates, Jefferson Square, etc.) These neighborhoods currently receive Link Center Newsletters via US Mail monthly.
  - Translation services. 5% of Link Center Services are translation/Interpretation. (Does this include translating their own documents) We have 3 bilingual paid staff who can interpret and translate, plus 2 bilingual work-study students from Carleton. The Library will consider the use of certified translation services for the final proofing of Newsletter text. Note, Outreach Coordinator Angelica Linder is currently studying to become a certified translator.

- Face-to-face appointments. The Link Center facilitated 55 in one year—an average of less than 4 per month. As the library is more accessible in location and hours we would predict this number would rise. We could also make use of City Hall conference rooms for confidential consulting between clients and city, county, and social service agencies.
- Use of computers/phone. We have 20 regular Internet stations available for adults and children. We have 10 iPads for in-library use. We have 4 laptops that are used to teach computer use in Spanish weekly. We have one-on-one appointments called Tech-time for in-depth instruction, including bilingual instruction. We have access to the database Lynda for computer-based learning, accessible in library and through any internet connection using your library card account. In 2017, we had 19,661 sessions on our library computers, and over 95,000 session through our WiFi connections. We would predict use of computers by LINK Center clientele would rise due to our location, accessibility, number of computers and availability of instruction.
- Bringing LINK Center services to the client—because of our regular Outreach efforts with the library bookmobile we are often easily accessible for the client near their home. Library staff could provide referrals, transportation vouchers, community and social service contacts and information through Outreach events at Greenvale Park Community School, and through Growing Up Healthy and Early Childhood Navigators programs, becoming a mobile Link Center.
- City ID—this is not a service provided by the Link Center currently, but could be a desired service for Link Center clients.
- Mechanics of the transition: telephone and web redirects to a library-hosted website. For telephone, we have an existing, functioning telephone tree that would give direction—for example, English, Spanish, which library service—Link Center—redirect to bilingual staffer on duty.

First year:

- Creation of an internal database of resources for staff training and reference
- At least one bilingual staff person would receive official certification through the American Translators Association for interpreter and translator services; this is a national certification.
- At least one bilingual staff person will train and be certified to become an Authorized Provider of Immigrant Services (currently unavailable in Northfield).
- Create and maintain an external (public-facing) web presence to include a database of community partners and resources – 50 North (the Senior Center) very interested in having resources for seniors represented.
- Strong and active Facebook presence for the Link Center

- Develop and grow a network of referral agencies and contacts, including religion-based organizations, real estate offices, rental managers, Welcome Wagon/Newcomers, Northfield CAC, HCI, Northfield Works, Workforce Center, Chamber of Commerce, Rice County social services, Northfield area schools, City of Northfield departments, Age-Friendly Northfield, City boards and commissions, area health care professionals such as HealthFinders, SMRLS, etc.

Second year:

- Develop a reimagined, reconfigured website including interactive, online forms
- Expand existing and new subject guides on Libguides, including Job and Career information in Spanish and English format
- Use existing City online request and tracking system for queries/requests for information or services
- Additional bilingual staff would have the opportunity to study to receive official certification through the American Translators Association.
- Expanded scope and distribution of monthly Link Center Newsletter