

Proposal to create a specialized branch: Lexington Public Library's Biblioteca Hispana

In October 1998, the Lexington Public Library Board adopted a visionary and far-reaching "Planning Blueprint." This strategic plan is built on five Core Values with a recurring theme of Partnership. Community representatives who participated in shaping this critical document were very clear in their advice: "... proactively seek opportunities to collaborate with outside entities whose mission, work, and/or interests overlap with Library services and programs" (p.2).

This proposal—a working collaboration between the Lexington Public Library and the Biblioteca Hispana to establish a specialized branch in Cardinal Valley—is a timely and important opportunity for a partnership that supports the Library's Core Values of Diversity and Equity of Access.

Need for a specialized library site in Cardinal Valley: In Lexington, most Latino families live in one of two census tracts, which are rich in diversity but poor in other ways. The median family income for Cardinal Valley and for Winburn is about two-thirds (65-66%) that of the rest of Fayette County, while a fourth of the area residents over age 25 have not completed high school (*US Census 2000*). A high percentage of these adults come from Mexico, a nation with no public libraries. Thus, in addition to the barriers created by language, educational level, and income, these new immigrants have no real experience or concept of a public library as a center and resource for either their own or their children's learning.

Educational support of Hispanic children is no small issue. Demographics show Kentucky is top heavy with Baby Boomers nearing retirement, yet a comparable replacement population does not exist. Kentucky needs young people who can work in a knowledge-based economy. Lexington can no longer afford to dismiss or under-educate any child, and some of that replacement labor force will be Hispanic, the only census group that is showing growth (Kentucky State Data Center, 2003).

For the past five years, total enrollment in Fayette County Public Schools has remained almost flat while enrollment of ESL students has more than doubled. Every fall, Fayette County Schools must find ways to teach between 100-200 more ESL students than the year before (*2000 Census: Lexington/Fayette Ethnicity, Languages, and Educational Attainment*). These children are (or will become) first generation Americans. Lexington Public Library can provide the resources they need to grow and thrive in a new culture.

The past four years at the Northside Branch demonstrate the positive impact a library can have on the lives of immigrants. Under the Wallace-Reader's Digest initiative, Northside became a major tutoring site for Hispanics. Coupled with space for free tutoring, the Library opened a specialized ESL lab, and then for the past two years has sponsored a successful family literacy summer camp. The needs of Hispanic families in Winburn—which the Library is meeting through its collaboration with area literacy providers,

extensive remodeling to provide more computer access, and hiring of bilingual staff—are very similar to the needs of the families living in Cardinal Valley.

Groundwork has already been laid by both Biblioteca Hispana and the Lexington Public Library:

Biblioteca Hispana (a non-profit organization under the umbrella of the Hispanic Association) recently celebrated its first year anniversary. Its primary mission is the literacy and education (in both English and Spanish) of Hispanics. The physical library is one very small room for books in the Cardinal Valley Center. The room (staffed by volunteers two-three afternoons a week) is too small to hold more than four people. Already the number of books in the collection exceeds the shelving; nonfiction materials are being kept in storage. Moreover, the entire Cardinal Valley Center is open only from 9-5 on weekdays. Even if the library's hours within the Center were expanded, it would still be inaccessible to many working parents.

In spite of these drawbacks, Biblioteca Hispana is making an impact. Every month, volunteers present bi-lingual after-school programs for parents and children at Cardinal Valley Elementary. In addition to its volunteers and local partnerships—Partners for Youth Grant, YMCA, the police department, resource centers in target schools, Fifth Third Bank—Biblioteca Hispana can provide both bi-lingual and bi-cultural support to collaborative projects.

Lexington Public Library is also providing some services to this area. The bookvan makes monthly deliveries to the Biblioteca Hispana, although the resources we place there are underused. In 2003, the Library piloted its first bi-lingual summer reading program by taking the bookvan and staff out to Valley Park. In all, 72 children participated in the program. Finally, two members of the Outreach Department are now sitting on the Advisory Board of the Biblioteca Hispana to facilitate cooperation, and Director Kathleen Imhoff has met with three representatives of the Biblioteca Hispana to discuss ways in which the organizations can work together.

All parties agree that the next step is to find space and staff to build on the success of the bi-lingual educational and family reading programming that are already in place. We proposes a space leased and maintained by the Library, initially staffed by a two FTE (bi-lingual and preferably bi-cultural) Lexington Public Library employees. The facility needs to be within walking distance of the target population and clearly recognizable as bi-lingual. It needs to offer computer instruction. The Biblioteca Hispana would donate and support the collection, as well as recruit volunteers who would work with Library staff to provide adult, family, and children's programming. The Lexington Public Library's Biblioteca Hispana would be a bi-lingual branch that specializes in programming and educational support. (See budget attachment.)

A fit with the Library's long-range plan: Opening a specialized—rather than a full service—branch is a move in another direction, but clearly an action that is consistent

with both the Core Values and the eight Strategic Issues articulated in the 1998 "Planning Blueprint."

- **Community Commons:** *"Consider locating new branches near the kinds of institutions that draw together a community of people"* (p.4)
- **Community Referral:** "Develop collaborative responses with other community resources . . . organizations that have identified a need for information brokering or in some capacity as community referral agents" (p.5).
- **Center for Information Literacy:** "Target programs on computer use and information retrieval to specific groups whose exposure to technology has been significantly limited . . ." (p.6).
- **Cultural Awareness Center:** "Recognize and serve the diverse elements in the Community . . . Develop programs that reflect the cultural and ethnic profile of the community" (pp.6-7).
- **Adult Basic Literacy:** "Expand Library's Literacy programs to address the ESL needs of the Community's burgeoning Hispanic population" (p.8).
- **Formal Learning Support Center:** "Offer supplementary help for students through after-school programs . . . Such programs will consider special needs that arise from such factors as ethnicity . . . working-parent households" (p.8).

A creation for the next generation: Over the past three years, the Library has made some progress in addressing the specific and diverse cultural needs of a growing Hispanic community. Creation of a specialized branch will take Lexington Public Library to the next level of service.

Estimated first cost for this project: \$139,116

Lexington Public Library
Outreach-Cardinal Valley

Budget of Estimated Costs for Project

	Square Feet	Rate per Foot	Annual Cost
Rent-Building	4,327	\$ 7.50	\$ 32,453
Building Operations-Maintenance-Utilities	4,327	\$ 2.00	\$ 8,654
Miscellaneous Operating Costs			\$ 3,000
	Hours Annual	Rate per Hour	
Librarian I			
Salary Grade 12 Step 2	1957.5	\$ 17.96	\$ 35,157
FICA/Medicare	7.65%		\$ 2,689
Fringe Benefits	\$ 360	Cost per Month	\$ 4,320
Retirement	8.48%		\$ 2,981
			\$ 45,147
Librarian Assistant-Full Time			
Salary Grade 7 Step 2	1957.5	\$ 11.94	\$ 23,373
FICA/Medicare	7.65%		\$ 1,788
Fringe Benefits	\$ 360	Cost per Month	\$ 4,320
Retirement	8.48%		\$ 1,982
			\$ 31,463
Librarian Assistant-Part Time			
Salary Grade 6 Step 1	1040	\$ 10.48	\$ 10,899
FICA/Medicare	7.65%		\$ 834
			\$ 11,733
Total Payroll Cost			\$ 88,343
Total Annual Cost of Operations			\$ 132,450
Contribution for Project thru Biblioteca Hispana Thru Fifth Third			\$ (10,000)
Start Up Costs for Operations			
\$30,000 to \$70,000	Range		
Estimated Cost Amortized over 3 Years		\$ 50,000	\$ 16,667
Total Costs-Year One			\$ 139,116

The Lexington Public Library project, with funding from the Knight Foundation, began the process of buying books and other library materials to establish a Spanish language collection. The need for a high-quality collection of Spanish/English materials was identified by the Foundation Director and manager of the Outreach department and ultimately led to the opening of the Village Branch of the Lexington Public Library. The identified need was consistent with what was actually found as the Library began the process of purchasing materials and offering expanded services and programs to the Latino community. The response has been positive and overwhelming at times. The Knight Foundation project has greatly impacted the desire for education opportunities and improved knowledge within the Latino community. The need to provide a quality Spanish/English collection has been a very positive one and no significant changes were made to the original proposed objective of the grant.

The Knight Foundation grant has had a tremendous impact on the Library's ability to provide services and programs to the Latino community. The opening collection at the Village Branch was well received by the public. Visitors were delighted with the variety of materials available to them and were pleased to find a lot to choose from on the shelves that kept them coming back. The materials are brand new and of excellent quality, and the library intends to keep the collection inviting and useful.

The Latino community now has what they requested: access to library materials in their primary language that they can use, enjoy and share with their children and families. Adults are able to locate information to help them with decision-making and improving certain aspects of their everyday lives. Parents are now able to read to their children in the language used at home. They are also encouraged to check out a variety of bilingual children's books to share with their children in the home.

The Library's Technical Services manager was responsible for ordering materials with the Knight Foundation grant (a list of materials purchased is included). Locating and purchasing appropriate books for a Spanish/English collection began in March 2004 and was completed in January 2005. The timetable for purchasing materials was adjusted due to a planning process that included working with several different sources in developing a list of appropriate materials.

A request was presented to each library branch manager to establish who would participate in the process of identifying books to purchase. The North Side Branch, the Extension branch of the Outreach Department and eventually the Village Branch participated in this process. The Library also relied on the services of OCLC – the Online Computer Library Center. Founded in 1967, OCLC has developed "Language Sets" of books chosen by language specialists to help libraries build foreign language collections.

Approximately half the Knight Foundation funds were used to purchase books chosen by Library Branch Managers and half for books suggested by OCLC. Books ordered from OCLC arrive in increments and Spanish materials ordered with Knight Foundation funds continue to come in to the main branch about every three months. The Lexington Public Library has ordered as many bilingual books as possible. Adult and children's books make up the

majority of the purchased materials. However, both adult and juvenile videos as well as Spanish newspapers and subscriptions to periodicals were ordered. To date there are approximately nine English/Spanish magazines and three Spanish newspapers available to Library patrons.

When the Knight Foundation proposal was written, the Village Branch of the Lexington Public Library was not even on the drawing board. It was partially due to the funding from Knight-Ridder that created the leverage needed for the Board to address the idea of creating library space to serve the heavily populated Latino neighborhood in Lexington. The \$20,000 Knight Foundation grant was instrumental in the opening of the Village Branch.

The Village Branch is a culmination of both a dream and a unique partnership shared by Biblioteca Hispana, Asociación de Hispanos Unidos Inc., and the Lexington Public Library. The Village Branch is located along the Versailles Road corridor and held its grand opening on September 18, 2004. As a smaller branch, Village Branch focuses on the library needs of its immediate neighborhood, a neighborhood rich in cultural diversity.

Because the Spanish and English books are interfiled it eliminates many of the problems and barriers that often occur when foreign language materials are available in a library. Direct results of the Knight Foundation funding include the availability of a library collection in the Spanish language that has opened a new world of possibilities for the Latino community.

Today the Village Branch offers the Latino population assistance in becoming better-informed citizens through use of Spanish/English materials available at the Library and through family reading activities using the materials that target underserved Latino families. Programs offered at the Village Branch concentrate on meeting the varied needs of the diverse, at-risk populations in the area, including the needs of adults not fluent in the English language and parents who want to develop skills needed to help their children with homework.

In order to continue to better serve the Latino populations increased funding will be needed to support any expansion of programs in the Library branches. An increase in Library staff will also be necessary to oversee any new programming efforts. New opportunities to effectively collaborate with other non-profit organizations must also be developed. Any expanded outreach to the community would entail identifying new funding sources for the Library Foundation.

Evaluating the project's impact included tracking the Library's circulation figures. From early Spring 2004 to February 2005, circulation numbers of the Spanish materials purchased with Knight Foundation grant monies (add circulation figures). From circulation numbers alone the response of the community to the Spanish/English materials has been very positive.

Library usage has increased among the Spanish-speaking patrons and the expanded Spanish/English collection has attracted new Latino library users. In the six weeks following the opening of the Village Branch, Library staff signed up over 1,200 new library card users and circulation has increased an average of 10% each month.

Setbacks experienced in 2004 included the hiring of a new Foundation Director who was not familiar with grants received by the library in 2003 and unaware of the required reporting process. Also in October 2004 the Lexington Public Library began a computer changeover that created an obstacle to obtaining accurate information regarding the Knight Foundation grant. It was difficult to easily access information since every library staff member had to be trained in the use of the new computer system and library materials were being coded in several different ways. This often delayed reporting of accurate circulation figures and made it difficult to report these numbers in a timely manner. These changes, although positive, were part of the reason for a request to extend the due date of the final report to the Knight Foundation.

Publicizing the expanded Spanish/English collection at the Lexington Public Library was accomplished in several ways:

- 1) Announcements in the bi-monthly Library calendar of specific events targeting the Latino community.
 - a) Bi-Lingual café – provides opportunities for intergenerational dialogue
 - b) Primetime Family Reading Time – a humanities based program for children (6 – 10 years old) and parents who come together to read, discuss and critically deal with present day issues and topics. Included in the discussion is information on how to obtain a library card and what is available for parents and children at the Library.
 - c) Bilingual Story Hour – opportunities for young children and parents to speak and read the English language and also share their rich Spanish culture and traditions.
- 2) The Library staff has developed a close relationship with several schools in the Village Branch area: Cardinal Valley Elementary, Maxwell Elementary (offers a Spanish immersion program), Leestown Middle School, Beaumont High School and Dunbar High School. The Library staff has attended the schools' Open House in September where they shared stories with students and parents and signed them up for library cards and invited them to visit the Library.
- 3) Staff has also designed posters in-house promoting its Spanish/English collection and the programs available at the Library.
- 4) Information is available on-line at the Lexington Public Library's website.
- 5) The Library, working with Cardinal Valley Center, a human services agency, shares information regarding educational opportunities for its patrons and distributes flyers about the Library's programs. The Library has also become a resource for help with medical, dental and immigration problems for the Latino community.
- 6) The Library collaborates with the Lexington Arts & Science Center. There are weekly activities held at the Library planned by the Science Center and open to neighborhood children. Hands-on projects provided by the Village Branch and the Science Center help neighborhood children with their assigned school science projects.

Besides the Knight Foundation funding, the Lexington Public Library received a collection of materials from Biblioteca Hispana. Since 2002, Biblioteca Hispana had worked to bring reading materials and literacy programming to Hispanic families throughout Lexington. When the library began building its Spanish/English collection and opened the Village Branch, Biblioteca Hispana officially disbanded and gave its collection of materials to the Village Branch. Biblioteca Hispana had also received a \$10,000 grant for materials from Fifth Third Bank and they turned these funds over to the Lexington Public Library. The Library used the money specifically for cultural/literacy purposes that targeted Hispanic children.

“You Can Do It! We Can Help!” - This might be a headline for a news release announcing the Library’s newest outreach effort – establishing a basic collection of Spanish materials. The collection has done so much more for the community than the opportunity to check out books. Thanks to the \$20,000 grant from the Knight Foundation the Lexington Public Library has expanded and improved its outreach services to the at-risk, underserved Latino population of Fayette County. It has provided the Latino community with an understanding of how the vast array of library resources is relevant to their daily lives and is available at no cost to them. Latinos have found a place where they can go for answers and information to address a wide array of problems they might face as newcomers to the Lexington area.

The Library staff has provided assistance to not only the Latino community but to English speaking patrons who want to improve their Spanish language usage or expand their knowledge of the Spanish culture. The trained, professional staff has helped Library patrons acquire and use the information they need in order to improve and enhance their lives.

Discussion and correspondence with the Knight Foundation staff has been positive. The Library received a quick response when contacting Knight Foundation staff. The opportunity to meet with other grant recipients and Knight Foundation staff in February 2005 provided insightful information and assistance to the Library Foundation Director and Outreach manager.

The Lexington Public Library will continue to provide information and updates on its newest programming efforts to the Knight Foundation. One of the Library’s objectives in 2005 is to strengthen its collaboration efforts with Fayette County’s other nonprofit organizations. The Library will keep the Knight Foundation staff apprised of any new opportunities that might be of interest to the Knight Foundation.