



COMMUNITY NEEDS RESPONSE PLAN

*Listening. Learning. Connecting.
Building a Stronger Community—Together.*



Community
Focused



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Driven



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Solutions



INFORMED BY OUR COMMUNITY. INSPIRED BY OUR MISSION.



Crete Public Library: Community Needs Response Plan

This comprehensive Community Needs Response Plan outlines the strategic direction for the Crete Public Library based on actionable data collected from recent community surveys. In alignment with community feedback, this plan sets forth defined pathways to maximize community progress, optimize resource utilization, and eliminate service barriers over the next three years.

1. Library Mission Statement

Crete Public Library provides enrichment, enjoyment, and education for all. We celebrate intellectual freedom and foster creativity and lifelong learning.

2. Community Profile

Demographics

Crete's population has grown significantly over the last several decades. In 2023, Crete, NE, had a population of 7.52k people, a median age of 33.2, and a median household income of \$76,258. Between 2022 and 2023, the population of Crete, NE grew from 7,093 to 7,521, a 6.03% increase, and its median household income grew from \$62,468 to \$76,258, a 22.1% increase.

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Crete, NE are White (Non-Hispanic) (48.8%), Other (Hispanic) (27.9%), Two+ (Hispanic) (9.07%), White (Hispanic) (7.09%), and Asian (Non-Hispanic) (4.6%).

82.8% of the residents in Crete, NE, are U.S. citizens.

The economy of Crete, NE, employs 3.77k people. The largest industries in Crete, NE are Manufacturing (1,185 people), Educational Services (510 people), and Health Care & Social Assistance (364 people), and the highest paying industries are Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (\$59,904), Construction (\$56,154), and Manufacturing (\$54,088).

12.3% of the population for whom poverty status is determined in Crete, NE (862 out of 7.01k people) live below the poverty line, a number that is lower than the national average of 12.4%. The largest demographic living in poverty is males 18 - 24, followed by Females 18 - 24, and then Females 45 - 54.

The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in Crete, NE is White, followed by Hispanic and Two or More.

Community

There is a high quality of life for those living in Crete for many reasons. For starters, there are many options for healthcare in Crete. The available healthcare includes hospitals and medical clinics, a public health department, special needs and skilled nursing, vision care, pharmacists, dental, health professionals, and veterinarians.

Currently, the community is working to improve the housing situation in Crete. There is a Housing Authority that assists in providing the community with affordable housing to residents of the municipality. This Housing Authority is made up of 5 members, each of them being appointed for 5-year terms. Overall, living in Crete offers citizens both a rural and suburban feel, which can be beneficial in many ways and help bring in new residents.

Crete is the first community to achieve a Certified Welcoming designation in the state of Nebraska. Certified Welcoming is a formal designation for cities and counties that have created policies and programs reflecting their values and commitment to immigrant inclusion. This innovative program assesses city and county governments on their efforts to include and welcome immigrants in all areas of civic, social, and economic life in their communities. The entire community came together to show that we are a truly welcoming community.

3. Assessment of Community Needs

Based on comprehensive data gathered from the dual-focused "Community Needs Survey" distribution, community requirements have been segmented into two primary areas of insight:

General Community Insights

- **Civic Satisfaction:** Gathering specific metric ratings (scaled 1–5) to benchmark general satisfaction and understand core drivers of quality of life in Crete.
- **Perceived Challenges:** Open-ended tracking reveals that a distinct community needs to identify and actively address the most critical infrastructure, economic, or social issues facing Crete today.
- **Social Fabric:** Understanding word-of-mouth sentiment and whether residents confidently recommend Crete as a premier place to live and raise families.

Library-Specific Needs

- **Operational Footprint:** Survey results indicate a spectrum of engagement, identifying regular weekly/monthly visitors while highlighting a vital sub-segment of residents who

have not yet utilized library services.

- **The "Library of Things" Demand:** A clear public desire exists to expand the library's catalog beyond standard literature into non-book lending. High-interest categories include gardening supplies, basic tools, baking equipment, pasta makers, fitness kits, and memory kits tailored for seniors.
- **Targeted Programming Requirements:** Demographics show an explicit need for structured activities supporting early childhood (0–5 years), school-age children (6–11 years), teens (12–17 years), adults (18+), and older adults (55+).
- **Bilingual & Special Interest Courses:** Strong community interest is directed toward family-centric events, adult computer literacy, financial literacy (Budgeting 101 and Investing 101), estate planning, and an expanded schedule of both adult craft nights and dedicated Spanish-language programming for adults and children alike.

4. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Resources, Barriers, and Opportunities

Strengths & Resources

- **Bilingual Capacity:** Established capability to design and distribute bilingual operational materials, ensuring equitable participation.
- **Robust Volunteer Network:** A dedicated pool of community volunteers available to execute operational tasks such as shelf reading, book shelving, and facility organization, allowing paid staff to focus on specialized program execution.
- **Agile Programming Framework:** Current infrastructure is capable of handling rapid additions of diverse, specialized events across various age groups.

Barriers & Opportunities for Improvement

- **Unreached Demographics:** A segment of the local population remains unengaged, noting they "have not used the library yet."
- **Resource Constraints for Non-Traditional Collections:** Implementing a "Library of Things" requires distinct tracking, maintenance, and storage solutions distinct from traditional media.
- **Socioeconomic Hurdles:** Community feedback explicitly points to critical issues affecting Crete that require multi-agency intervention and educational support.

5. Strategic Analysis & Community Contribution

The intersection of community data and library capabilities demonstrates that the Crete Public Library is uniquely positioned to drive community progress. By transitioning from a traditional repository of books to an active engine of community development, the library can directly mitigate local challenges. Financial literacy programming provides immediate economic empowerment. Bilingual family programs offer a direct mechanism to foster social equity and bridge cultural divides. Furthermore, providing non-traditional assets like tools and educational kits lowers the barrier to entry for local families trying to improve their homes, health, and standard of living.

6. Strategic Goals and Action Plans

Goal 1: Establish a "Library of Things" Non-Traditional Lending Program

Objective: Acquire, catalog, and launch a non-book materials collection to satisfy diverse practical needs within 12 months, achieving at least 200 distinct circulations in its first year.

Action Plan Item	Timeline	Responsible Party	Success Metric
Procure initial inventory (gardening supplies, tools, baking kits, senior memory kits).	Months 1–3	Library Director	Minimum of 30 distinct items purchased and cataloged.
Develop tracking, maintenance, and liability waiver protocols for non-book lending.	Months 3–4	Circulation Supervisor	Approved safety and tracking policy document finalized.
Deploy volunteer workforce to handle shelf management,	Months 5–6	Volunteer Coordinator	100% of standard shelving tasks are delegated to

Action Plan Item	Timeline	Responsible Party	Success Metric
freeing core staff for program promotion.			volunteers.
Public launch and bilingual marketing campaign across Crete community centers.	Month 7	Public Relations Lead	50+ library users registered for the collection in Month 7.

Goal 2: Expand Multilingual and Multi-Generational Programming

Objective: Implement comprehensive programming targeting all age groups, featuring dedicated Spanish-language events, resulting in a 25% increase in program attendance within 18 months.

Action Plan Item	Timeline	Responsible Party	Success Metric
Launch recurring Spanish-language programs for adults and children (e.g., Bilingual Storytime).	Months 1–6	Bilingual Programming Specialist	Minimum of 2 recurring monthly Spanish-language sessions.
Introduce age-targeted workshops for seniors (55+) using memory kits and youth events (0–17).	Months 4–9	Youth & Senior Services Librarians	At least 1 specialized event hosted per age bracket per quarter.
Establish regular adult	Months 6–12	Library Director &	Average attendance

Action Plan Item	Timeline	Responsible Party	Success Metric
craft nights and large-scale interactive family events.		Youth Librarian	exceeds 30 participants per family event.

Goal 3: Launch a Lifelong Learning and Economic Empowerment Series

Objective: Introduce adult educational courses focused on financial stability, technology, and long-term planning to directly address critical socio-economic needs.

Action Plan Item	Timeline	Responsible Party	Success Metric
Design and host Finance: Budgeting 101 and Investing 101 educational seminars.	Months 3–6	Adult Education Coordinator	Successful execution of a 4-part financial literacy sequence.
Partner with local experts to provide legal/financial Estate Planning seminars.	Months 6–9	Library Director	Hosting of 2 biannual sessions with local legal professionals.
Develop foundational adult computer classes to bridge the local digital divide.	Months 9–12	Technology Instruction Librarian	At least 15 adults are completing certification in basic computer literacy.

7. Evaluation Plan

Plan for Evaluation of Accomplishment

- **Quarterly Performance Metrics:** Program attendance logs, material circulation numbers for the "Library of Things," and patron registry numbers will be systematically reviewed every 90 days.
- **Annual Community Feedback Loops:** The library will distribute follow-up bilingual surveys every 12 months to assess changes in community satisfaction, gather qualitative reviews on the new programs, and identify emerging community needs.
- **Stakeholder Reporting:** The Library Director will present an annual impact report directly to the Library Board and city officials to evaluate progress against specified goal timelines.

Summary of Evaluation of Previous Accomplishments

Prior evaluation metrics demonstrated that the library successfully recognized programmatic gaps and mobilized community assets to prepare for expansion. Specifically, the library completed a comprehensive assessment phase by creating and deploying targeted, bilingual community survey instruments. Additionally, the library successfully built an agile, structured volunteer registry—confirming readiness to absorb routine tasks (e.g., shelf reading and book shelving). This ensures staff resources are fully optimized to deliver on the newly established strategic priorities.