

Hereford library field study

Fall 2016

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Welcome to the Hereford Library. The site study will describe the community around the library, the materials and their organization within the structure, the purpose of the library, typical users of the space and collection, and its value to the local schools in the Hereford zone.



Figure 1. Photo of the front of the new Hereford Library. Taken from: Baltimore County Public Library. (2016). *Hereford branch* [Webpage image]. Retrieved from <http://www.bcpl.info/about-us/history-bcpl-hereford>.

Location - Area

The Hereford library serves families whose children attend the community schools. Those schools are: Hereford High School, Hereford Middle school, and the elementary schools, Seventh District, Fifth District, Sparks, and Prettyboy. Area nonpublic elementary schools which may rely on the library are St. James and Our Lady of Grace Schools. There are also numerous preschools and homeschooling groups in the area. The Hereford Library serves a high percentage of families with a median income of sixty nine thousand dollars (\$69,000) per year or more (Maryland State Government, 2013, February 20). However within the area served, as many as six point two percent (6.2%) of individuals in the community may be living below the federal poverty level (Maryland State Government, Department of Legislative Services, 2016)

and in some pockets south of the library it may be almost fourteen percent (14%) (See Appendix A). The Hereford Library's website says that the area that the library serves comprises about 20 percent of the land space in Baltimore county with many single family dwellings; district zoning laws prohibit planned communities but instead encourage agricultural activity and large single family housing lots. (Baltimore County Public Library, 2016). Communities served by the library include Hereford, Parkton, Monkton, Freeland, Sparks and White Hall as well as parts of Jacksonville, Upperco and Glyndon.

In an effort to serve all economic levels, the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) system has opened libraries from 9 to 9 Monday through Thursday, 9-5:30 Friday and Saturday, and 1-5 on Sundays. Access to a computer area offers residents of all economic levels use of a computer to check email, fill out job forms, create resumes, and more; the customer needs only sign up with his or her public library card. By providing a photo id and residential information anyone can obtain a library card in Maryland.

Location - Inside

The word "inviting" may describe the newly renovated branch of BCPL which is located in Hereford, an unincorporated community in North Baltimore County. The accessible entrance to the building is located off of the front parking lot on York Road. Additional parking is available in the rear of the building.

The entrance doors open automatically. The foyer area has a mobile shelving unit displaying new books with covers showing. Hold items are shelved along the wall to the left in alphabetical order by the requesting borrower's last name.

Accessibility

A customer can start at the information desk to lower some of the language, educational, economic or physical barriers which may prevent full use of the library's resources. A librarian

can arrange for foreign language materials to be sent to the branch through interlibrary loan. There is access to information for the English language learner through the general Baltimore county public library website at: <http://www.bcpl.info/> (BCPL, 2016). A variety of pamphlets displayed in the entrance area will help begin a process for locating and using materials for the visually impaired, offering information and media from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped within the Library of Congress and describing services and media offered by the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The educationally disengaged student may ask the librarian for help locating resources for test practice or further education. Helpful community resources can be found at <http://www.bcpl.info/community/connections-education/> or through the BCPL website. Those whose homes do not have internet may use tools in the free computer access area; printing and copying are available for a fee. Job seekers, students, and other library users may bring their own device, connect to the free wireless, and work in one of several open study areas. Space for a wheelchair varies, but furniture and most of the bookshelves are on wheels to adjust to possible space needs of the population. Doors to the periodicals room, or to the study or meeting rooms within the facility will need to be physically opened. Self checkout stations are accessible to ambulatory and wheel chair bound. The computer search sites are too high for the wheel chair bound but look adjustable should there be a customer need. Meanwhile the librarians can do a catalog search for a customer who requests it. There is an elevator near the information desk.

Materials and Space

Past the information desk on the ground floor to the left, the customer can find a ten foot by fourteen foot area with three two and half by six foot tables and four chairs around each for independent or small group work. Along two walls are three carrels and a long high counter with six high chairs. And there are electrical outlets and connectivity ports. The space is nestled in by

ranges of DVDs shelved by movie or series title. *Downton Abbey* final season is filed with other Ds in consecutive order.

An adjacent ten by fourteen foot study room can be reserved for small groups for an hour or more; its four foot by six foot table seats eight students with room. Outside the study room and displayed are child-level playaway materials and audiobooks. To the right are adult level audiobooks. Intermediate level audiobooks are shelved with black-lettered signage on white message boards which include: "Playaway;" "Biography," and "000-900." A study area in the intermediate/middle school reader section has a round table supporting at least 4 visitors. Shelves of graphic novels and new fiction line one wall. In a corner is a small turn around display of comic books. The nonfiction are shelved in Dewey order on seven ranges along the south wall of the building. "Juvenile Fiction Audiobooks" A-Z are displayed to the right with spines showing location name and nonfiction Dewey or fiction alphabetical call numbers. At the end of one of the ranges is a public access catalog to check for a particular item.

Picture books are located to the right of the juvenile section. As mentioned before, much of the shelving is on wheels. Picture books are in alphabetical order by author last name or by title if author varies. Spanish language materials for children are located in a section of shelving at the end of the picture books. Customers can request other foreign language books or audio books; when returned, the media will be shelved at Hereford. This enables the individual library to serve its community's needs.

Children's DVDs and playaways are located at the perimeter of the large forty-four by twenty-four foot children's section. A puppet theatre and puppets are located in the large area and a bookshelf with containers for blocks, toys and puzzles is nearby. Along the north wall are two computer catalogs. There are two round tables with 4 primary colored chairs around each. Within the children's area there are also board books.

Walk past the elevator on the left to view the musical cd section. Media is shelved in alphabetical order by artist, group or production within drawers labeled by genre. A selection of music book titles is displayed on top of the cases. Nearby is a shelf marked “Staff Picks” which highlights media of the season or the holiday.

A twenty-eight by seventeen square foot periodicals room provides space for general reading. An older white man, who may be a retiree, comes in to read a newspaper and sits in one of the six chairs in the area. Eight ranges of shelves display a variety of English language magazine choices. There are windows facing the street to the East, providing some natural light. Along two interior walls which are shared with the entrance foyer and with the music cd area there are newspapers and local informational fliers and booklets. Outside the periodicals room at a wall shared with the entry area there are new fiction and nonfiction titles shelved spine label out in order by author or nonfiction number. Outside the periodicals area and turning back, customers pass the music area, a small casual study area on the right, and the staircase and a seasonal display of decorated pumpkins on the left.

Take the elevator to the second level to reach the adult and teen collections, copy machine, makerspace, and public access computers and printer. Off the elevator is also niche with soft lighting for reading or quiet conversation.

This second level is all new. Previously the library was located on the lower level of the two story building. The upper level was rented to professionals in the community. BCPL purchased the building and began to acquire the second floor space. After major flooding to the library in 2015, plans went ahead to restore the flood damaged first floor and to develop the existing two story building into a larger library space. This renovated space opened in June 2016. The present fifteen thousand square foot space (Earls, 2016) incorporates the two floors, connected by staircase and elevator. Within the space, exit doors have been retained from the

original design of the building and can be used for emergency exits on the first or second floors. Bathrooms have been redesigned throughout to be accessible, non-gender designated facilities which are located on each floor.

A librarian staffs an information desk on the second level. A self checkout station is available and a copy machine. Walking straight off the elevator, customers can inquire at the information desk on the right, or continue, passing the stairs on the left. They may proceed across the space to the library's "Center of excellence," its arts/maker space, the Hive. The door is open. Visitors are invited to color or make crafts. Inside are two stainless-steel-topped tables which measure four by six feet and allow for about eighteen guests at a time. A *Printbot* three-D printer is connected to a computer which will allow customers to create 3D images during library-led events. This seventeen by nine foot enclosed space has a window along one wall. Outside the Hive, is the large-print section, where Ta-Nehisi Coates's new book, *Between the world and me* is available in multiple copies. Beyond this is the "Computer access" area. The open space has 7 computers and printer. It is available to any customer with a library card. This valuable resource helps customers connect to a variety of computer tools and services. Flash drives and earbuds may be purchased from the librarian.

To the right of the maker space, shelving surrounds an area with media for teens; new material (graphic novels, audiobooks, soft cover novels) are displayed often with cover side showing. Graphic novels are shelved in order by author. The label's first line indicates that it is a Graphic novel and second line shows author name or series title. These are located adjacent to the adult nonfiction. The second floor space is arranged to market teen reading and has displays of fiction and nonfiction titles at the end of the large-print and the romance sections to invite readers.

Signage and organization examples. Teen is painted on the wall to the back left. Two sections invite teens to linger, study, and collaborate. One space is a working area with desks and chairs that slide and rock. It includes carrels and twenty-foot long counter with high chairs along two walls. This area has plenty of outlets for charging phones or laptops. Another location tempts a small group to share ideas and information in a ten by sixteen foot space with low table and comfortable chairs bordered by bookshelves of fiction books and graphic novels. Nonfiction are shelved by Dewey number. White signs with black lettering are posted at the ends of the aisles to invite the browsing customer to shelves that house “Science Fiction,” “Teen A-Z,” “Teen Graphic” or “Audiobook.”

The adult fiction and nonfiction are shelved beginning after the Teen graphic novel and nonfiction area. The black lettered signs at the end of the aisle announce that the area begins shelving by Dewey order: 000-900 (and Biography). The new title *Between the world and me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates is also located here in 305.8009, in regular type book format. The popular nonfiction title is also shelved in the audiobook section in Dewey order.

Romance is shelved separately. A twelve by eighteen foot area next to the “Romance” section provides for study, charging phone, or using laptops. Additional open space provides seating with small tables.

Turning toward the elevator and the stairs, at the very front of the building is a meeting room that extends the width of the second floor. Within this space students congregate for activities after a tour and groups schedule the room for meetings. Outreach activities may happen here as well.

The stairs widen to reach the lower level. On either side of the stairs are displayed local art and crafts. A. Knapik (2016), Library specialist at the Hereford branch, has developed a general collection floor plan (See Appendix B).

Purpose of the facility

The mission throughout the Baltimore County Library system is: “Providing opportunities to explore, learn, create, and connect.” (<http://www.bcpl.info/about-us/administration#mission-statement>). A shared vision includes a hope to empower and engage individuals for “a more inclusive and connected Baltimore County community.” Its shared values are expressed as follows:

- Our customers and communities;
- Equal access and intellectual freedom;
- Flexibility and collaboration; and
- Continuous improvement.

The Hereford Library’s Programming team works to “determine our community’s needs, generate ideas, identify resources, and implement quality” in order to “embody the library’s mission” (McCullough, 2016, October 27) (see Appendix C). The Hive makerspace is the Hereford Library’s special asset, each library has one. The programming team’s mission includes this statement: “As an arts center of excellence, [its goal moves to] prioritize arts-based programming and consider the broad spectrum of the arts for a wide range of people.”

Typical clientele

Early morning clientele are retirees checking out the audiovisual media or reading the newspapers in the periodical room. A busload of local area kindergarten students meet the librarian to tour the library. A few have a personal aid with them. There are a few that may be second language learners. They are following clues in envelopes hung throughout. Labels at each checkpoint are marked with the universal Sneaks the cat’s image and the next number in the quest. The tour is in English. Clues move young students throughout the library to find out answers for questions about how to search for a book, how to find a playaway on the shelf, where to check out a book, where to ask for information, and where the librarians eat lunch. The

tour finishes in the meeting room with a demonstration and a craft, which all engage in. In the children's section, young parents, all mothers, bring their preschool-aged children to the children's area to meet, select books, and play with the puppets; a library program is planned for young children on Fridays at 10 am. Later a group of early readers who are visiting from another area school search through clues marked by Sneaks the cat to check out the library; students may sign up to get their very first library card, if they do not have their own yet. A retired couple checks out armloads full of hardcover fiction and nonfiction adult titles. Two older ladies inquire about their library accounts. One needs help finding a book which she thought was on the reserve shelf for her; the librarian locates it. A mother and her home-schooled son use the library to find and check out books and DVDs. Besides the diversity among student visitors, customers at this time of the day are not of color and do not have special needs. Homeschooled and autistic learners may visit to use the space, the computer, or the books from time to time. After school the library's clientele will change to reflect the community of learners with research and space requirements and food (which they may bring into the library); by evening, the library clientele will reflect the employed adults and the expectations will be for readers' advisory and for research.

Ease of use. A couple of middle-aged customers who are women seem to be selecting movies, series DVDs and hardback popular fiction. If something was not on the shelf, people inquire and the librarian tries to make it easy for them. The item can be brought to the library and held for them. An interlibrary loan may be made as well. A caller to the information desk asks about renewing items checked out; the librarian is able to do this over the phone. All spine labels are marked with the shelving area information – “Spanish language” or “romance,” for example. Labels are marked with the loan information if the item is due back sooner than the

three week loan – “one day” or “seven day” loan, for example. These little services provide customers with help to find resources easily or independently.

Signs are at the ends of the aisles, displayed in frames on the shelves, or painted right on the walls to help clientele find materials. Computer screens on the walls on both levels advertise library upcoming events. Access to computer catalogs and to librarians on each floor helps patrons find materials.

Online databases and specific search

At the public library site a researcher can select the tab “Find materials” which reveals “Books and more” and “Other tools.” Select the link “Research databases” under “Other tools” section at the top right part of the page. . Use featured buttons or the search box within the Research tools portion of the page to select a resource. These include links to databases under categories for business, downloadable materials, do-it-yourself, encyclopedias, genealogy, health, homework, languages, literature, chat reference, magazines and newspapers, and testing preparation. Another way to access this information in a more specific list format is to use “Find info” and to select “Databases A to Z.” Still another way to find information in your search is to use “Find info” and to select “Magazines and newspapers Within the library space, many of these databases are accessed without password; at-home use may require a library card.

The magazine *Consumer reports* is accessible through the database *Ebscohost* after any of these three described steps. The magazine opens in a new tab so that the earlier search trail is accessible at another tab. A specific search reveals that a searcher can look within *Consumer Reports* and can do a basic or an advanced search for information. The advanced search includes date, request for full text, and image choices. A second search under the heading, “Do It Yourself” and button, “Outdoor Power Equipment,” brings up a new tab with a list of links for chain saws, lawn mowers, trimmers and blowers, snow throwers, and tillers. Selecting “Walk behind mowers” reveals full text information from *Walk-Behind lawn mower service manual*, 5th edition, 1997. There is an option to search within the “Small engine repair reference center” but more recent information is not easy to find; this information is more valuable for older models and parts number information. General information searches about a product may find current product reviews and comparisons.

Another search from the button, Gale/Testing & Education Reference Center, opens in a new tab, a page called Testing & Education Reference center. Drop downs from “High School” tools show an assortment of test links which lead to practice tests. The searcher will need to register. A disclaimer offered by Gale Cengage Learning, a valid testing and information company which is not affiliated with any testing organization, is listed at the bottom left of the screen. Links to practice test questions and explanations of answers are provided. Practice tests for ASVAB for Armed Services qualification and the GED for High School equivalency are found by using the search box; these are not listed in the general dropdown lists. A search for “Brain Pop” will not bring up the database/website, which is used by Baltimore area schools; students should be able to reach the site by going through their school websites or by reaching it online using county school system’s username and password.

There are two Genealogic databases. A visit to *Ancestrylibrary.com* allows the user to view information about a great uncle who lived from July 20 1917 to January 2001. Census data, draft card, and photographs added by other family members with a paid subscription are accessible through the public library.

Public Library and School Collaboration Observations

Demonstrating its ongoing cooperation with local schools, the Hereford library encouraged one of its librarians, who is also an artist, to create a quilt with designs made by schools in the area. One of the librarians contacted each school’s principal and art teacher. When a school did not complete the small panel in time, the librarian created a beautiful patch and included it in the quilt anyway.

This kind of outreach to schools and local students is ongoing. The library offers tours. Individual librarians will visit at school related local events to encourage readership. The library offers a summer reading program and support for BCPL’s “Battle of the Books.” Librarians are

available to visit individual classrooms by arrangement as well. Once a year Hereford library offers space and materials to encourage school library media specialists to meet each other and share common concerns and remedies. When the public libraries provided an opportunity for public school library media specialists to meet and share information, the Hereford library extended the invitation to nonpublic library media specialists as well. Throughout the year the Hereford library maintains contact with the school library media specialists. Communication between school and library is crucial for the best opportunities for collaboration.

Several resources and products offered by the public library system serve the teachers in the school community. A My Librarian request form will set up an appointment for a teacher talk to a librarian about a specific request: <http://www.bcpl.info/mylibrarian>. There is an online teacher request form for text sets and multiple copies of a particular title at: <http://www.bcpl.info/kids-teens-parents-teachers/teacher-features>. In addition teachers can create an “Assignment Alert” and a “Teacher Collection” by calling the library. Teachers can use Gale research databases and Marina or other Inter-library loan opportunities for their planning or professional development

Students are served when the library provides additional services and resources that the school library may not be able to give. The public library also offers homework help at Teen place: <http://www.bcpl.info/kids-teens-parents-teachers/teens>. Individual questions at “Ask us now” and specific tutoring help at the site, *Brainfuse* offer assistance to students with research guidance or homework questions. To use *Brainfuse*, students may need their library card number and their password (usually the last four digits of their phone number) or may need to register first.

Conclusion

The Hereford Library is welcoming and accessible. Its collection encompasses print and nonprint materials including audio books, music cds, movie and television DVDs, and story playaways. Its clientele are made up of a small number of lower income customers, a large percentage of middle class families, some Spanish speaking families, and students from the Hereford Zone. The Hereford Library's expanded space allows members of the rural community in North Baltimore County to access resources and enjoy a free public space. It is very important to the local community and supports the schools in the area by tours to the library, librarian visits, reference desk assistance, physical and virtual access to materials and space. Its collection and its online resources create a large collection of resources to meet individual customer queries and needs. The library offers annual opportunity for area school library media specialists to meet. The Hereford Library is located in North Baltimore County. Its address is 16940 York Road; Hereford, Maryland 21111-1025. Information about the library is available on its website: <http://bcplonline.org/hours-locations/hereford>.

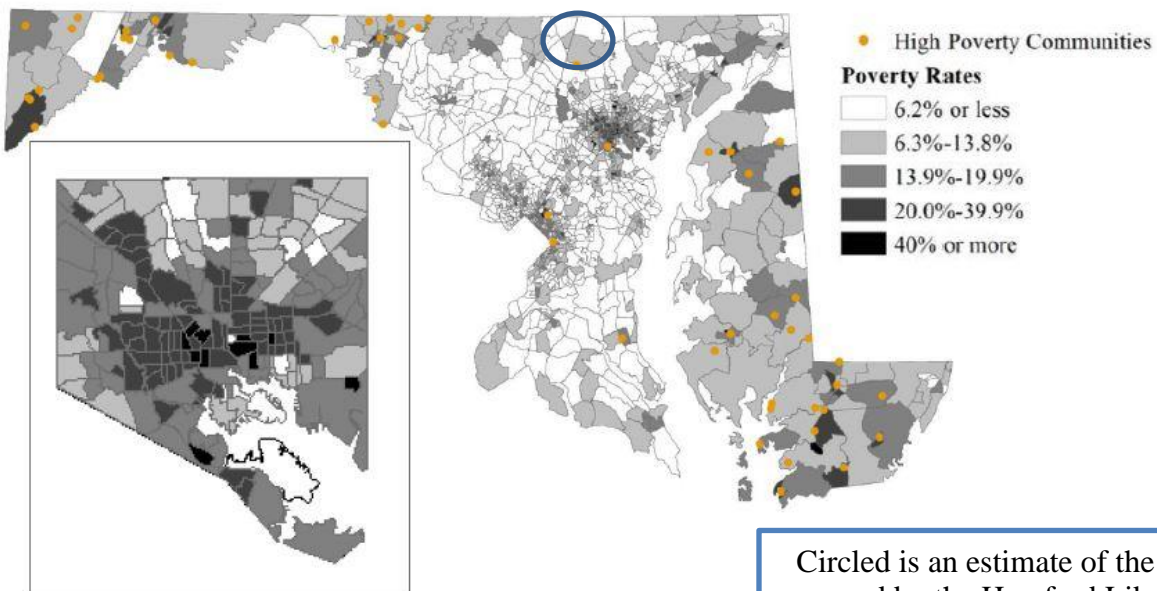
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Appendix A

Exhibit 2.4 illustrates poverty rates across Maryland, ranging from a low of 6.2% or less to a high of 40% or more. The incidence of poverty is lowest in most of Central Maryland, the National Capital Region, and Southern Maryland. Poverty rates are higher in Western Maryland, Baltimore City, the Eastern Shore, and parts of Central Maryland and the National Capital Region. Exhibit 2.4 also shows the Census Designated Places or communities with poverty rates of at least 20%.

Exhibit 2.4
Maryland Poverty Rates and High-Poverty Communities



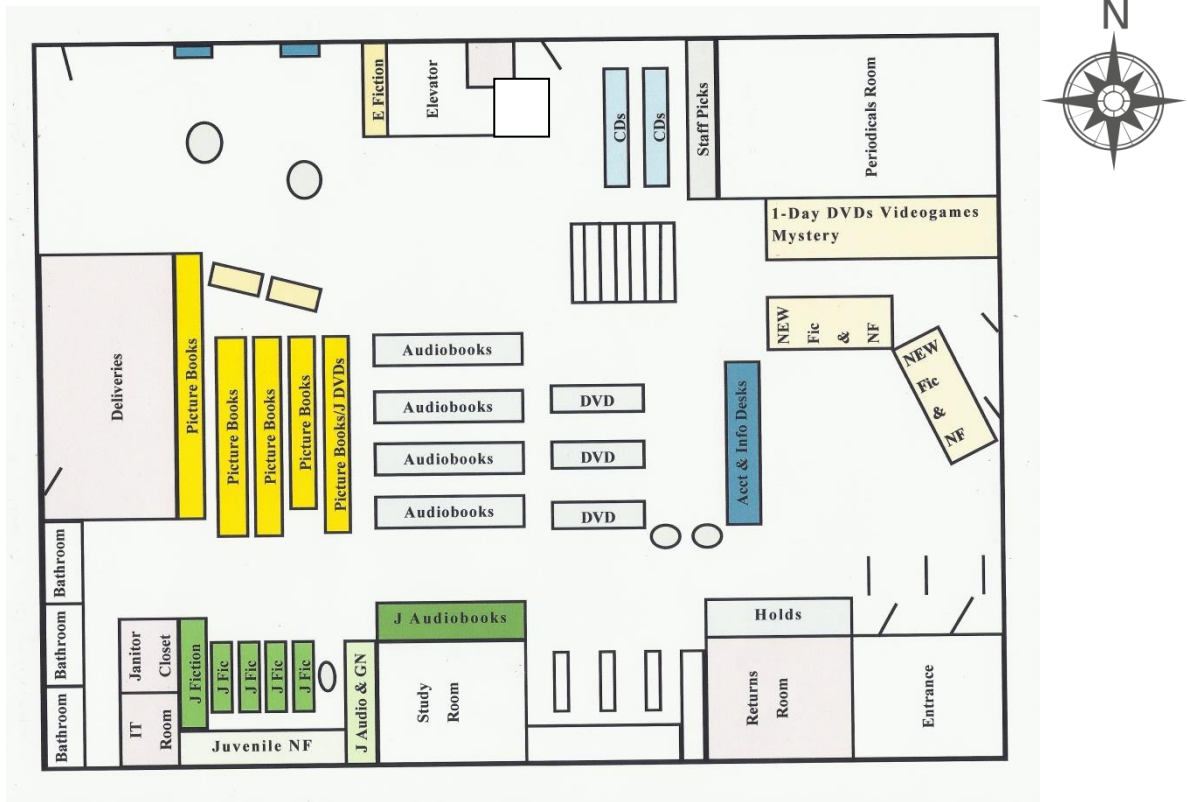
Note: High-poverty communities are communities with poverty rates over 20%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Department of Legislative Services

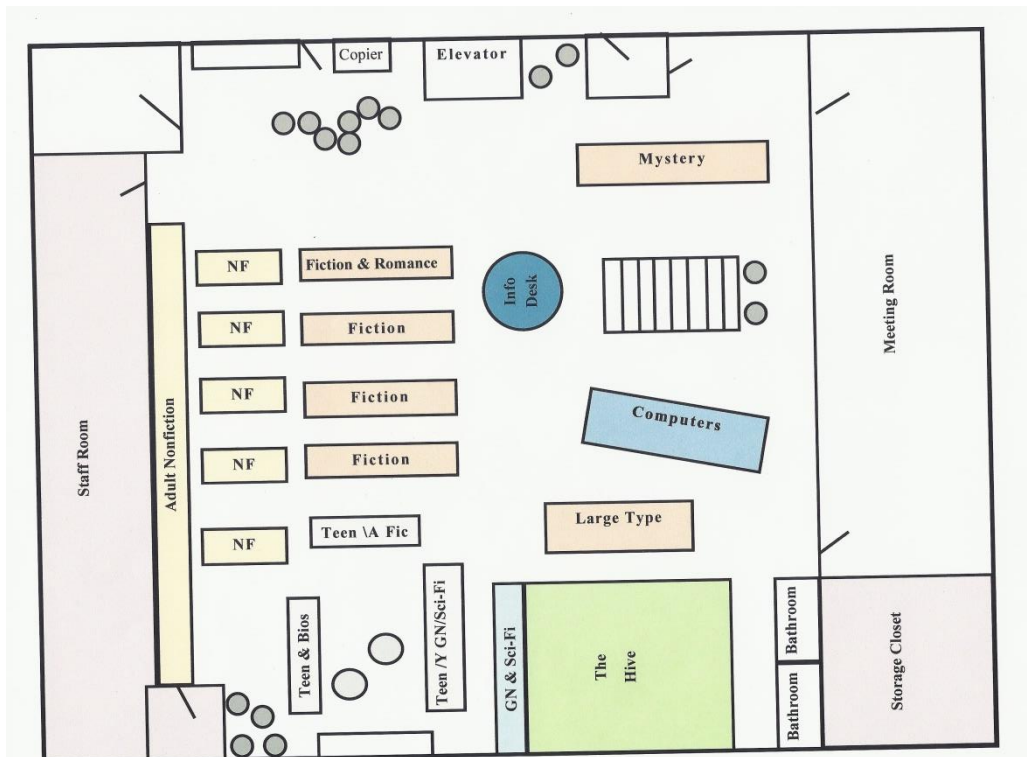
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Appendix B

[Collection floor plan (Knapik, 2016)]



← First Floor →



← Second Floor →

Appendix C

Copy of a personal email

October 27, 2016

Dear Ms. Hartig,

You were inquiring today about our 3D printer and Hereford Library's Center of Excellence art mission. To follow up on our discussion, I confirmed that our goal is to eventually make the 3D printer available to the public to use, but we are still working out the logistics and best practices with respect to that.

Hereford's mission as a branch is the same as BCPL's, and our Center of Excellence art focus just means that we're able to showcase artists' work and make the Hive space available for programming and to the general public for use outside of programs.

To the extent it might be helpful to you, here is the Hereford Library Programming Team's mission statement:

"Determine our community's needs, generate ideas, identify resources, and implement quality programming. Embody the library's mission to explore, learn, create, and connect. As an arts center of excellence, prioritize arts-based programming and consider the broad spectrum of the arts for a wide range of people."

Baltimore County Public Library's Strategic Plan IX, which includes its mission statement, can be found here: <http://www.bcpl.info/sites/default/files/images/about-us/pdf/about-us-administration-bcpl-strategic-plan-2013.pdf>

Please keep checking back about the 3D printer. We'll hopefully have an update soon. Thanks for your interest in Hereford's Center of Excellence!

Jill McCullough

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410-887-1919

www.bcpl.info/about-us/history-bcpl-hereford

(J. McCullough, personal communication, October 27, 2016)