



SECURITY & PEER NAVIGATOR OPERATIONS AT BPL

Library Commission Meeting
June 2, 2021

Overview & Background

- Since 2016, BPL has used un-armed Security guards at the Main Library through various Security contractors (G4S, JCI, MSS)
- In 2020, we began exploring options for bringing Security in-house
- Possibility of adding a Peer Navigator role to partner with Security
- Goals include to provide more empathetic, values-based customer service through our Security personnel
- Also to provide Security staff with benefits and more equitable pay

Current set-up

- Work with a contractor to provide Security service
- Guards are not City employees and assigned by Security provider
- Our existing Security schedule requires 60 hours (1.5 FTE) per week
- Current Security contractors provide benefits and paid leave
- Contracted through end of 2021, with option for renewal

Recent Challenges

- Consistent staffing during all 55 operating hours at Main
- Hiring and retaining qualified guards
- Recruiting for a mobile guard position
- Maintaining a sufficient pool of substitute guards to cover missed shifts
- Training guards to our high customer service expectations & unique building

Considerations for In-House Security

- Our existing budget for in-house security positions only covers 1.5 FTE (60 hours per week) for staffing, so a Peer Navigator would come at the expense of a guard
- Supervisor time to hire and train new guards
- Library staff are not experts in training or recruiting Security guards
- Building a substitute security guard pool from scratch (unfunded)
- Staff time spent finding substitutes

Why keep Security as contracted service?

- Successfully support staff in creating welcoming environment
- Found contractors who offer benefits and paid time off (since 2020)
- Increased burden on staff and MODs with limited coverage
- More easily extended to branch libraries (i.e. new NoBo)
- Centralized supervision under Library Resources Manager
- Use remaining budget to hire Peer Navigator position



Adjusted Plan

- Continue using Security contractors to fully cover Security needs during all operating hours at Main
 - Hire a .75 FTE Peer Navigator as a City employee to connect library users with resources (housing, food, mental health) in the community
 - Peer Navigator could support branch locations as well
 - Both positions supervised by the new Library Resources Manager
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New Security Contractor

- Denver Metro Protective Services began June 1
- Applied during June 2020 bid process
- Previously covered in substitute role
- Another contract with City of Boulder to provide alarm checks after hours
- Two full-time officers
- Larger firm with pool of subs to cover absences

Peer Navigator Role

- Close connection with library security but operates with a unique and different mission.
- Peer navigator will help guide patrons experiencing hunger, homelessness, and mental illnesses toward social services, such as housing and health care.
- Will not do casework, like traditional social workers or therapists, but they do stay connected and follow up with those who seek continued assistance.



Supporting our Peer Navigator

- Brand new role within the City
 - Outside of library scope of work, so work closely with HHS and MHP to determine training, set goals, and help with evaluation measures.
 - Important to find colleagues within City where they can find support, new ideas, and stay connected with city initiatives and standards.
 - Position will ultimately report to the Library Resources Manager.
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Next steps & Timeline

- Job description largely based on DPL's, incorporating what we've learned from our community partners/agencies, being finalized in the next month.
- HR will review and grade in third quarter, looking to hire and train in 4th quarter to have navigator on-board for fall/winter season.
- Assess at one year. We see this as an expansion of our work- the library is here to connect people to the resources they need- this provides us with a new tool to expand and enhance our work. Do we have a different perspective or need after one year?

Questions?
Feedback?

Summer of Discovery 2021

As of June 1, 2021 we have **1,253 registered for Summer of Discovery 2021** (160 more than the grand total of those registered in 2020).

366 adults

887 youth ages 0-17.

Our SoD community has already read **3,611 minutes!**

Registrations by location:

George Reynolds Branch - 124

Main Library - 828

Meadows Branch - 146

NoBo Corner Library - 137