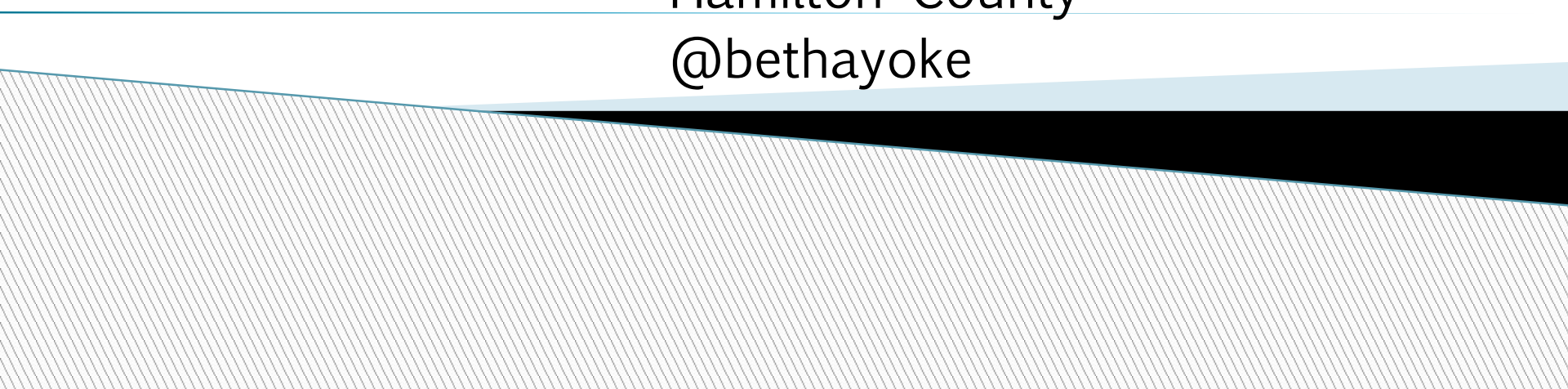


Rethinking our role to better serve the community during and beyond times of crisis

Beth Yoke
Chief Strategy Officer
Public Library of Cincinnati and
Hamilton County
@bethayoke



What is a public servant?

- Government worker (funded by taxpayers)
- Main duties are outwardly focused on the welfare of public & society
- Characteristics
 - Selflessness/sense of duty
 - Empathy
 - Integrity
 - Future-focused
 - Collaborative
 - Community/local focus
 - Uses an equity lens



Are we public servants or library servants?

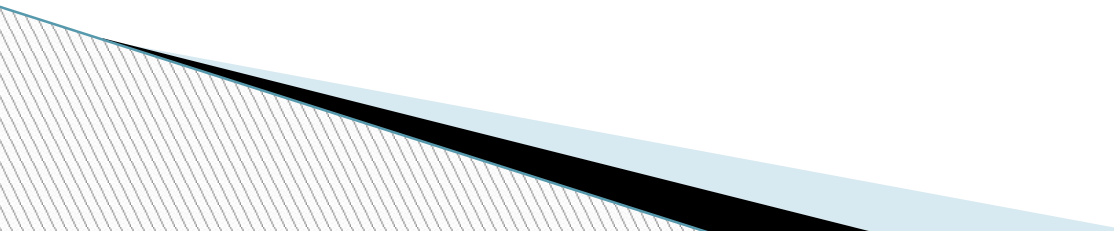
Public Servants

1. Focus on community members
2. Outreach = listening to community
3. Identify issues & align resources to address needs
4. Co-create solutions that empower community members

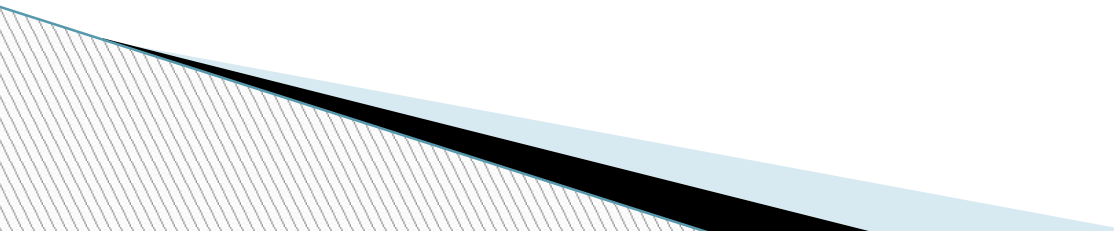
Library Servants

1. Focus on facilities & the stuff in them
2. Outreach = telling people about our stuff
3. Promote books & materials we selected
4. Host “programs” featuring stuff

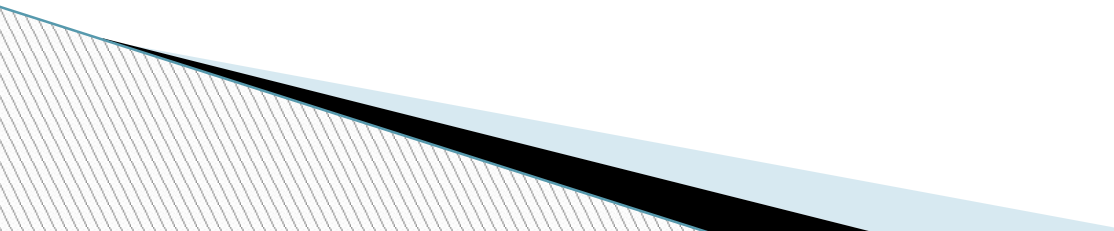
How can we shift from library servants to public servants?

1. Change our own mindset
 2. Make it not all about the stuff
 3. Listen, learn, repeat
 4. Leverage community assets
 5. Lead from wherever you are
- 

Change our own mindset

- It's not about us
 - Actively seek out CE/PD
 - Stop doing stuff
 - Get outside the library bubble
 - Build cultural competence skills
 - Challenge the status quo
- 

2. Make it not all about the stuff

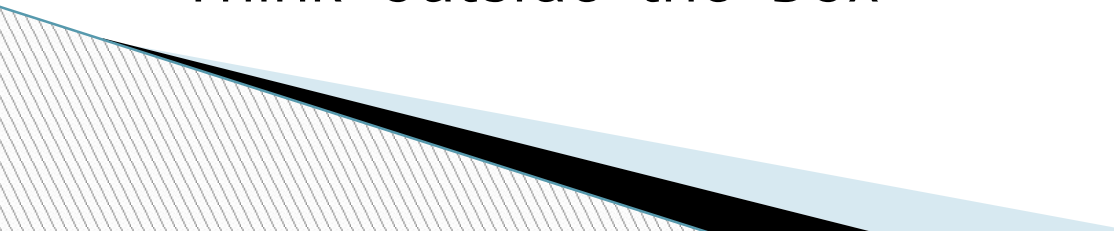
- Don't perpetuate the stereotype of the library as a warehouse for books
 - Marketing/PR
 - Language
 - Graphics/imagery
 - Staff as connectors and problem solvers
 - Relationships
 - Opportunities
 - Space to convene, connect, reflect
- 

3. Listen, Learn, Repeat

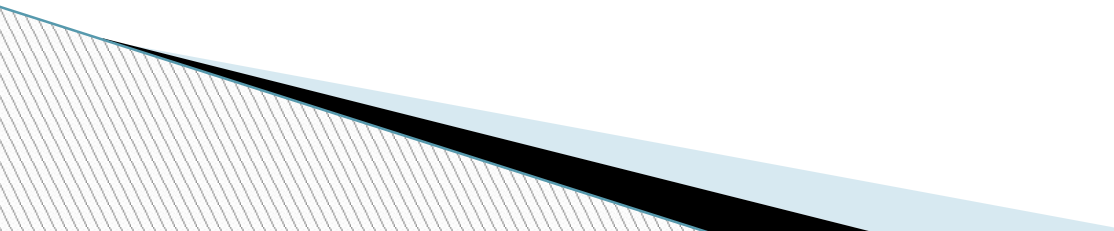
- Community groups
 - Nonprofits
 - Community councils
 - Government agencies
- Individuals
 - Non-library users
 - Underserved communities
- Media
 - Issues
 - Trends
 - Forecasting



4. Leverage Community Assets

- Don't make assumptions
 - Everyone has something to offer
 - Find out what it is before you try to bring something to the table
 - Inventory community assets
 - Add to it as you continue to engage with community members
 - Start with the willing, whomever that is, and build momentum
 - Think outside the box
- 

5. Lead from where ever you are

- Be proactive, not passive
 - Don't assume you can't or aren't “allowed”
 - Be solutions-focused
 - Arm yourself with data
 - Focus the conversation on community needs
 - Seek out & engage like-minded colleagues
 - Be a great teammate
 - Gain leadership skills
- 

Resources



<http://ow.ly/q6xPA>

Thank you!

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