As previously stated, the time for the library community to take action is now because

- Teens make up a significant portion of library users.

- Library services and resources for teens are in jeopardy.

- There has been a significant shift in the demographics of teens.

- Technology continues to impact communication methods, teaching, and learning.

- Teens are entering the workforce without critical skills.

In *The Atlas of New Librarianship*, Dave Lankes argues that the nobility of librarianship "is found in action."[69] The paradigm shift called for in this report may point to the need for a variety of stakeholders to come together to leverage expertise and resources; however, its success depends on those of us in the library community. These important changes will only be implemented if we hold ourselves accountable for taking action to improve the lives of today's 42 million teens and, ultimately, our community as a whole. The teens are depending on us, and our communities need us to help them thrive. We must support and empower teens by working with stakeholders to provide a range of timely, progressive, and effective services for and with the teens, thereby putting them on the path to a successful and productive adulthood. When libraries take on this role, the value they add to their community will be immense, and community members will embrace the library as a crucial resource.

So what is the next step? Gather the library staff and key stakeholders in the community to determine what the most pressing needs of the teens in your community are. Then examine the library services currently being provided for and with teens and work with stakeholders to create a plan for moving forward together. Use the questions below to guide your work.

Be bold, persistent and critical. Do not be afraid to experiment. Above all, never lose sight of your goal: to change the lives of teens and provide them with a brighter future. In the end, you won't just be changing teens' lives—you'll be changing libraries and making them great!

Questions to Guide Local Assessment and Planning

Knowledge of Teens

- How well do you know ALL of the teen groups in your community—not just the teens who are regular library users, but also those who belong to the demographic groups increasingly represented in today's society?

- What strategies are you using to identify specific groups of teens that the library can or should help? College-bound teens, homeless teens, teens with disabilities, incarcerated teens, home-schooled teens, teens who are English-language learners, etc.

- How are you identifying the aspirations, interests, needs, or issues within each targeted group? Have you identified the strengths of each targeted group? Have you prioritized their interests and their problems?

- What are the most pressing problems and challenges of the teens in your community? What is it that teens need in order to overcome them?

- What processes do you have in place for reaching out to and engaging the members of each targeted group? How are you engaging teens in helping the library develop programs and services that meet their needs?

- What steps are you taking to talk to the teens in your community and learn from them?

Professional Development

- Are you part of an established professional learning network (PLN) that is supporting your professional growth?

- Are you reading the latest research on youth development on topics such as the teenage brain, the identity development of teens of color, the social and emotional needs of teens with disabilities or LGBTQ teens, the issues homeless teens face, and so on?

- Have you read research related to culturally relevant pedagogy and funds of knowledge so you are not adopting a deficit viewpoint of the teens in your community?

- Are you aware of the latest research on connected learning?

- Are you keeping up with new technologies and the research related to teens and how they use these new technologies?

- Have you read the research related to all forms of literacy—digital, media, traditional, etc.?

- Are you sharing what you are learning with other staff members? With teens?
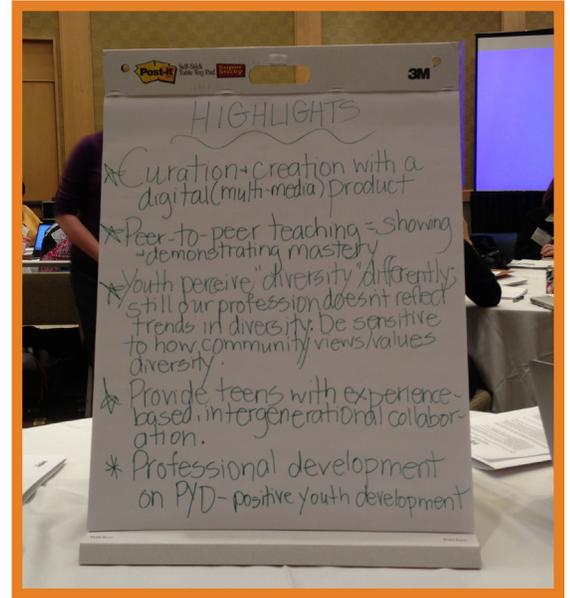
Partnerships

- Do you have a list of outreach partners—other community agencies that also work for or with or that address teen-related issues such as career readiness?

- Do you have a process in place for formally and regularly interacting with other relevant agencies in your community? Do these organizations know what kinds of services the library currently provides, or could provide, for and with teens?

- Have you considered how the mission and goals of the library complement and extend the mission of the other community organizations? Have you shared your ideas with your community partners?

- Do you have a process in place to work with representatives from each targeted group of teens and community stakeholders to set goals for the library services and programs?

- Do you have a process in place to evaluate, or benchmark, the outcomes of community partnerships?

Teen Program and Services

- Are your programs and services focused on educating and empowering teens—enabling them to be successful academically and personally?

- Have you mapped the outcomes of your programs and services to the needs, interests, or issues of each targeted group of teens your library is serving and should be serving?

- Have you mapped the outcomes of your programs and services to your community's goals for teens? Do these words describe the programs and services your library is providing: youth-led, interest-powered, authentic, relevant, meaningful, inquiry-based, inclusive, stimulating, pressure-free?

- Do the programs/services provided by your library cultivate development of job skills, proficiency in non-traditional literacies, teen voice, self-expression, leadership, independence, empathy and understanding, connections to others with similar interests?

- Have you developed meaningful outcomes-based ways of evaluating the library's programs and services?

Technology

- Does your library have a vision statement for the role that technology plays/will play in its services and specifically related to teen populations?

- Have you incorporated 21st-century technologies (e.g., Web 2.0 tools, social networks) into your library online presence, policies, and practices?

- Is your library website or online presence a bi-directional resource that offers information-seeking tools and allows for content generation for teens?

Teen Spaces

- Does your library have physical and virtual teen spaces where teens can be not just consumers, but also creators?

- Are your teen spaces technology-rich, thus bridging the access gap that many of today's teens still face?

- Do your teen spaces provide opportunities for teens to work collaboratively and individually?

Policy

Have you systematically examined the library's policies and procedures to ensure that they are patron-driven and respectful; in other words, that they acknowledge the fact that teens are on the brink of adulthood and respect the privileges and responsibilities that come with being a young adult?

- Are all staff aware of the policies and procedures and how to effectively communicate them to teens?

- Are library policies structured in such a way that they facilitate the newly envisioned role of librarians as coaches and mentors?

- Do library policies acknowledge and create opportunities for library staff to incorporate 21st-century technologies into their services and programs?

> "I always look forward to going to the library, for teen events or to volunteer for things like the summer reading program. Coming to the library is always a highlight of my day.
>
> —Johnathan, Port Orchard, Washington