

ALAMANCE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030



Alamance County Public Libraries

The Strategic Planning Process

The 2025-2030 Alamance County Public Libraries Plan serves as an outcome-based path to results, and a working guide that can be implemented on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis according to community needs--as determined by availability of staffing, funding, and facility resources.

The 2025-2030 Strategic Planning process included these key areas of focus:

- Gathering and analyzing community and library data including benchmarking, demographic data, and service delivery
- Community and stakeholder input including library leadership, library staff, steering committee, community partners and stakeholders, and community members at large
- Working with the library planning team to review prioritized input to establish essential strategic outcomes and potential initiatives/activities to help the library best respond to community needs.

Community and Stakeholder Input

Input into community challenges and aspirations--and potential library resources, services, and spaces to help meet those needs--was gathered through input from library leadership and staff, community leaders and stakeholders, and the community at large. Stakeholder interviews and input sessions reached approximately 76 members of the community. Additionally, 130 members of the community and 28 staff members provided input through online and print surveys. Analysis and review of this broad range of community and staff input led to recommended outcomes and potential activities for the library system to support and engage the community.

Alamance County Public Libraries provides services through four libraries along with outreach services serving a growing county of over 175,000 people and 15 communities. Community members participating in strategic planning input shared aspirations for building stronger connections in the community, enhancing early literacy and educational outcomes, and ensuring robust lifelong learning opportunities that impact quality of life for all. The library system is seen as offering welcoming community centers that contribute to that quality of life--noted for strides in the areas of children's services and lifelong learning, and providing access to vibrant resources, technologies, and the Internet, among others. Potential new or enhanced areas of focus might include providing increased early literacy and educational support, enhanced cultural and recreational opportunities focused on connection, refreshed and modern welcoming library spaces, collaborative opportunities in education, workforce, and economic development, and increasing awareness of library and community resources and services.

Vision

Nurture. Connect. Thrive

Mission

Nurturing minds, connecting communities, and building a thriving future

We fulfill our mission by:

Nurturing Exploration, Early and Lifelong Learning, and Bridging the Divide

Early learning resources and services, educational support, lifelong learning opportunities, enhanced cultural and recreational opportunities, vital technology, and online resources

Connecting, Collaborating, and Meeting People Where They Are

Vibrant and welcoming library spaces, collaborative community partnerships, robust outreach services to meet people where they are, and engaging the community to ensure awareness of vital library resources and services

Supporting a Thriving Community

Civic engagement through community conversations and human libraries, ensuring success with advocacy, aligning focus with community needs (healthy outcomes, socio/emotional learning, housing challenges, supporting workforce and economic development), a knowledgeable and empowered staff equipped to support the community

Our Values

We are welcoming, helpful, knowledgeable, professional, resourceful, and innovative

Core Competencies

- Welcoming, convenient, and safe spaces
- Professionally curated collections
- Literacy inspired services and resources
- Professional and knowledgeable staff
- Access to vital technology and online resources



Library Strategic Goals

Fostering Learning and Nurturing Exploration

Improving lives and community with vibrant services and resources for early literacy, exploration, and lifelong learning—cultivating growth through access to discovery and knowledge

Outcomes / Activities:

The community has enhanced access to dynamic early literacy and educational resources and services

- Enhance children’s spaces and services with engaging and interactive early literacy collections, tools, and equipment to support families
- Enhance collaborative work with early literacy partners to support improved early literacy outcomes
- Engage and enhance collaborative work with school system and homeschool community to support improved educational outcomes and prepare students for school, careers, and life
- Enhance STEM offerings to potentially include audio-visual tools, coding, robotics, etc.

The community is enriched with access to vibrant lifelong learning, cultural, and recreational resources and services

- Enhance library’s role as cultural hub with offerings of art, music, theater, and author programming
- Explore partnership with parks, community centers, and other organizations for offering additional learning opportunities
- Expand lifelong learning opportunities to align with community need (life skills--educational, financial, parenting, language learning, saving/budgeting, health and wellness/nutrition, parenting, mental health, college prep, FAFSA, job and career exploration, etc.)
- Expand offerings that support socio-emotional skills/learning to positively impact youth resilience
- Explore opportunities for enhanced cultural, social, family, outreach, recreational, crafting, intergenerational, and other community development opportunities



The community has access to vital technologies, online resources, and digital exploration spaces

- Expand access to digital and technology resources to meet community needs
- Provide frequent introductions to and training in online resources (Hoopla, Libby, etc.)
- Enhance technology workspaces that include STEAM resources at all library locations
- Expansion of hotspots/laptop lending, perhaps a mobile laptop lab for community outreach
- Pursue provision of digital navigators to provide targeted one-on-one assistance to community members



Connecting People with Vibrant Resources and Spaces

Collaborating and connecting people to information and ideas—and to each other, both in the library and in the community, digitally and in person, meeting people where they are

Outcomes/Activities:

Library users are connected to high quality, trusted information and resources they need to succeed

- Evaluate collections to ensure a robust and well-curated offering of resources to meet the needs of the community—including consideration of popular items, audio-visual materials, digital and online resources, and interactive learning kits, among others
- Consider offering a “library of things” responsive to community needs—such as household items, health and wellness equipment, small tools and appliances, etc.

Library services are enhanced through community connections, collaborations and partnerships

- Enhance partnership with the school system to promote and expand services and collections that support local students and families—including potential to share information through the school email system, orientation/programming with school librarians and teachers, and advocate with superintendent and other school leaders
- Enhance collaboration with homeschool community to increase availability of resources and spaces
- Coordinate with the Department of Social Services to explore bringing services needed by special populations into library facilities
- Enhance advocacy and collaboration with local and county leaders and partner organizations to promote the value of libraries in impacting quality of life in the community, and to explore and plan for potential library expansion
- Enhance partnership with community centers to collaborate and provide programming at their facilities based on community needs, potentially including intergenerational opportunities, summer reading programs, small collections, lunch and learns, storytimes, etc.



The community has access to library services, resources, and spaces when and where they need them

- Evaluate outreach services to ensure the library is meeting people where they are and reaching underserved audiences and areas of the community
- Explore opportunity for enhanced summer reading participation by presenting programs and resources at town halls and other community centers, especially where library presence is limited
- Explore options and partnerships for enhancing internet access in underserved areas of the county
- Explore the potential for expansion of library services in underserved areas by working with community leaders and residents, including Saxapahaw/Eli Whitney, Green Level/Haw River, Snow Camp, and Elon
- Enhance custom and/or “menu” style program offerings at community centers including the Pleasant Grove Community Center and Beth Schmidt Park, among others
- Pursue potential for the addition of mobile printing/scanning to outreach services
- Explore enhancing access to materials beyond normal library hours and facilities through remote 24/7 lockers and a vibrant collection of e-resources



The community is aware of and primed to take advantage of library services, resources, and spaces

- Enhance marketing of library resources and services with a public relations plan/campaign for increased community awareness and engagement
- Pursue continued improvement in the library user experience by reviewing and optimizing responsive customer services
- Pursue continued improvement in the digital user experience by reviewing and optimizing the library website and digital services
- Explore opportunities to partner with the school system and other organizations to share information about library resources and services, i.e. “peachjar”, email, newsletters, etc.

The community has access to vibrant, welcoming, and safe library spaces that meet their needs

- Revitalize library facilities, interiors, signage, furnishings, and spaces according to community and operational needs and available funding
- Enhance use of library spaces by creating well defined quiet and collaborative spaces, potentially including additional individual, small, and group meeting spaces
- Evaluate and pursue potential for expanding community gathering spaces in libraries, perhaps reducing lesser used library services and collections to increase individual and group collaborative spaces
- Consider revising meeting room use policies and procedures to enhance ease of use and accessibility, including the potential for after-hour meeting room use where feasible
- Explore potential for enhancing access to STEAM resources
- At May Memorial: consider potential relocation of library administration to allow for the expansion of public services/meeting spaces on main level; consider creating separate/limited entrance to children's area; explore potential for enhancing parking access
- At Graham Library: seek opportunity to refurbish facility and explore potential for pursuing a new/replacement library—perhaps in the planned park area
- At North Park Library: pursue potential expansion of the library space
- At Mebane Library: determine the feasibility of providing additional meeting room space



Empowering Lives for a Thriving Community

Supporting the well-being of the county by fostering opportunities that enhance individual and community quality of life and help people and the community thrive.

Outcomes/Activities:

The community is supported with library services, resources, and spaces that respond directly to community challenges and opportunities for growth

- Consider enhancing civic engagement by offering facilitated community conversations on topics of interest to the community
- Consider developing a “human library” of professionals and other community members/experts/hobbyists to facilitate connecting community members to one-on-one exploration and learning opportunities
- Explore additional opportunities to participate in addressing community challenges through community-based initiatives, including health and wellness, mental health, affordable housing, social services, and unhoused populations in the community
- Explore offering a Community Navigator service to provide one-on-one assistance to community members seeking information and resources to build skills and improve their lives
- Explore potential partnership with Social Services and similar community organizations to provide assistance in libraries as determined by need



The library actively contributes to community-based initiatives, including health and wellness, and workforce and economic development

- Actively engage with “Impact Alamance” to collaborate and contribute to community based initiatives
- Collaborate with workforce agencies, community college, county departments, and other community organizations to enhance job and career path learning, career readiness, and work opportunities
- Collaborate with economic development leaders to promote smart growth in the County
- Explore options for enhancing small business and workforce development efforts with small business and job/career support services
- Collaborate to expand internet service to underserved areas in the community

Library leadership and staff are well-trained and well-positioned to advocate for and support enhanced library services, resources, and spaces that directly impact quality of life in the community

- Enhance dialog with county and municipal leaders to develop and support mutual initiatives that support community growth and potential for expanded library service and spaces
- Regularly review and assess staffing levels to meet community needs, securing funding where needed
- Explore grant opportunities to help support new and enhanced services, resources, and spaces responsive to community needs
- Review and develop plans for enhanced security and safety at library facilities
- Evaluate library hours and pursue any feasible adjustments based on commuter patterns and needs
- Consider adding an additional high level manager to support leadership and allow enhanced focus on community engagement and advocacy to support the library system’s mission and vision
- Provide systemwide staff development and training opportunities according to library and staff needs
- Implement staff team building exercises to enhance collaboration and sharing of expertise
- Facilitate enhanced communication and collaboration through barrier free communications
- Ensure effective volunteer engagement to augment services to the community

