



COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Poplar Bluff Library Strategic Plan



libraryIQ

PREPARED FOR
Poplar Bluff Library
February, 2026

GOVERNMENT

Letter From the Director.....	3
Mission, Vision, and Values.....	4
The Strategic Planning Process.....	5
What We Learned	6
Strategic Goal Areas and Objectives.....	7
Strategic Context.....	7
Strategic Goals.....	8
Community Engagement and Outreach.....	8
Lifelong Learning.....	10
Expanded Cultural Programming.....	13
Intentional and Useful Library Spaces.....	14
Appendix A: Implementation Enablers and Risk Mitigation.....	16
Appendix B: Implementation Timeline.....	18

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Poplar Bluff Library has always been more than a building filled with books. It is a place where people come to learn, connect, create, and feel a sense of belonging. As our community continues to change and grow, so too must the Library—guided by the voices, needs, and hopes of the people we serve.

Community members, partners, and staff shared their experiences, priorities, and ideas through surveys, conversations, and visits across our service area. Their input affirmed what many already know: the Library is a valued part of community life, and it has an important role to play in supporting learning, creativity, and opportunity. Just as important, the feedback pointed to areas where the Library can do more—reach more people, strengthen partnerships, and better align services with how our community lives and works today.

The strategies outlined in this plan focus on practical, people-centered impact. They emphasize expanding access to services, supporting learning at every stage of life, enriching cultural experiences, and ensuring library spaces continue to serve a wide range of needs. Together, these priorities reflect a shared belief that the Library should be flexible, welcoming, and responsive to change.

This plan is not a promise to do everything at once, nor is it a fixed endpoint. It is a framework to guide decisions, focus resources, and measure progress over time. Just as importantly, it is an invitation—to community partners, supporters, and residents—to continue shaping the Library's future with us.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their voice and perspective. Your input makes this plan stronger and more meaningful. We look forward to the work ahead and to continuing to serve Poplar Bluff as a place for learning, connection, and possibility.

With appreciation,

Shannon Midyett | Library Director

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Vision

To serve as the community's primary destination for reliable information, meaningful connections, and discovery.

Mission

Our mission is to provide free and equitable access to information, resources, and educational and cultural programs for all community members. This involves serving as a vital community hub for lifelong learning, fostering literacy, and ensuring access to all ideas and perspectives in a safe environment for all.

Core Values

- ✓ **Provide access to knowledge:** Offer free and open access to books, digital information, and technology to support personal and professional growth.
- ✓ **Foster literacy and lifelong learning:** Create reading habits, support formal and self-directed education, and encourage continuous learning for all ages.
- ✓ **Serve as a community hub:** Act as a gathering place for people of all backgrounds to connect, attend events, and participate in community life.
- ✓ **Support community development:** Empower citizens and strengthen the community by providing resources for cultural, creative, and professional development.
- ✓ **Promote intellectual freedom:** Champion everyone's right to access a wide range of information and perspectives without censorship.
- ✓ **Ensure access for all:** Provide services and resources that reflect the community's needs and are open and welcoming to everyone.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Poplar Bluff Library (PBL) launched a community and data-driven strategic planning initiative in May 2025 to develop a forward-looking plan that supports a successful, sustainable future for the Library. The project team began by gathering and analyzing background data and seeking insight from community leaders, patrons, staff, and other key stakeholders.

From June through September 2025, the team conducted an online survey, held in-person visits across PBL's service area, and collected feedback on the Library's current operations and future aspirations. More than 400 individuals participated through direct conversations, informal interviews, focus groups, observations at existing programs, and other engagement opportunities.

The project team framed its work around three guiding questions.

- First, do PBL's services, programs, and collections align with the community's needs and interests?
- Second, how can leadership, staff, and community partnerships be strengthened and used to enhance impact?
- Third, what strategies will help the Library remain responsive, innovative, and sustainable in the years ahead?

The team also aimed to ensure that the perspectives of a wide cross-section of the service population were included in the final plan. To meet this goal, they used a variety of data-gathering methods, including online surveys, focus groups, one-on-one conversations, and additional forms of engagement.



WHAT WE LEARNED

42,150
population

40.5 yrs
media age of
residents

23%
of residents under
the age 18

57%
of residents between
18 - 64 years old

20%
of residents are
65 or older

87%
of population
is white

6%
of population is black
or african american

\$49,200
median household
income

85%
of adults have a
high school diploma

15%
of adults have a
bachelor's degree or
higher

Butler County, Missouri, anchored by Poplar Bluff as its county seat and largest city, has a population of approximately 42,150 people with a median age of about 40.5 years, reflecting a somewhat older population. About 23% of residents are under age 18, roughly 57% are between 18 and 64, and 20% are age 65 or older, indicating a substantial presence of both youth and older adults. The county is predominantly White (about 87%), with Black or African American residents comprising approximately 6% of the population, along with smaller shares identifying as Asian, Native American, multiracial, or Hispanic or Latino. The median household income is approximately \$49,200, and about 21% of residents live below the poverty line, a rate higher than state and national averages. In terms of educational attainment, roughly 85% of adults age 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, while about 15% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, which is lower than Missouri and U.S. averages.

Poplar Bluff Library is widely recognized as a trusted, welcoming hub for learning and connection. Residents highly value the Library's inclusive environment and consider it one of the few remaining community "third spaces." Public input emphasized a strong desire for practical and creative enrichment—life skills, arts and culture, STEM learning, and opportunities to gather as a community. These insights affirm that PBL's mission extends beyond books to fostering lifelong learning, well-being, and social cohesion.

Participants across all engagement methods consistently identified connection as the Library's defining role and strategic direction. Stakeholders want the Library to continue linking residents with information, services, and opportunities while broadening its outreach to underserved populations. Suggestions for future growth include mobile library services, enhanced partnerships with schools and nonprofits, and efforts to expand or improve facilities to better meet community needs and support library services.

However, several barriers limit impact. Technology and broadband inequities, rural isolation, and communication gaps all restrict access for many residents. The Library's physical constraints—lack of space, hours, and after-hours meeting options—further challenge program expansion. Staff capacity and sustainability also emerged as pressing internal needs, with leadership recognizing that burnout and resource constraints could undermine long-term goals.

Looking ahead, the responses suggest a clear roadmap: invest in flexible, inclusive spaces; expand outreach through mobile and community-based services; strengthen cultural and educational programming; and ensure sustainability through partnerships and organizational support. By building on its reputation for trust and connection, Poplar Bluff Library can position itself as a central catalyst for community vitality, creativity, and lifelong learning.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS AND OBJECTIVES



Community Engagement and Outreach

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will expand access to its resources by delivering services both inside the Library and throughout the community, meaningfully engaging current users while reaching new audiences.



Lifelong Learning

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will serve as the community's literacy hub and a key destination for learning, offering opportunities for patrons to pursue ongoing personal and professional growth.



Expanded Cultural Programming

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will become a vibrant center for the arts, with dynamic programming that highlights literature, signature author events, national traveling exhibits, and the dramatic arts.



Intentional and Useful Library Spaces

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will create adaptable, welcoming spaces that support quiet study, community connection, and creative exploration.

(WHY THESE GOALS NOW)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- Residents strongly value the Library as a welcoming “third space” and want life skills, arts/culture, STEM, and more outreach beyond the main building
- Access barriers include broadband gaps (≈52–58% adoption in Butler County), transportation, and fragmented awareness, as well as limitations of library hours, locations, and facility size
- Leadership and staff emphasize organizational sustainability, targeted programming, partnerships, and restructured and expanded facilities to serve diverse needs
- Staff and leadership consistently emphasized the need to expand hands-on, practical, and skills-based learning, including workforce readiness, technology support, parent education, and creative and wellness-oriented programming, while noting that current space limitations and staffing capacity restrict the Library's ability to meet growing community demand

STRATEGIC GOALS

1.



GOAL 1: Community Engagement and Outreach

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will expand access to its resources by delivering services both inside the Library and throughout the community, meaningfully engaging current users while reaching new audiences.

Outcome: More residents, especially those who are rural, low-income, seniors, non-users, and non-cardholders, experience library services in the places where they live, learn, and gather.

Data Rationale

38% of respondents want services outside the Library. Broadband adoption is modest, limiting digital access to resources

Strategy 1: Take Services Beyond Library Walls

1. Intended audience: current nonusers; people who cannot travel to the library
2. Data rationale: **38% of survey respondents want services outside the Library**; low library usage among persons aged 55 and older
3. What we hope to achieve: **increase cardholders and access to library materials and services**
4. How we will measure success: patrons reached through mobile unit, new cards issued offsite, enrollment in Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library, increase in cardholders aged 55 and older.
 - Explore mobile unit options and design routes using LibraryIQ patron map (consider income-based housing, parks, senior centers, rural hubs)
 - Add library lockers or book vending machines in high-traffic community locations
 - Offer outreach to senior centers and living communities at least every other month that focuses on delivering materials through the State Library and digital collections. Grow the number of cardholders of persons aged 55 and older by 10%. Offer crafting and health-related programs at senior centers and simplify card sign-up to grow usage by this group. Increase enrollment in the Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library by sharing information and applications during mobile visits and outreach events.

Strategy 2: Improve Intentional Programming for Underserved Populations

1. Intended audience: Individuals in need of assistance, particularly people with lower incomes
2. Data rationale: **21% of residents live below the poverty line**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Increase access to assistance and cost-prohibitive experts; build partnerships** with other community organizations
4. How we will measure success: The number of people connected with experts and services
 - Facilitate access to experts and services by partnering with local agencies (such as Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Division of Social Services, and Area Agency on Aging), both at the branches and from the mobile branch

Strategy 3: Enhance Team Capacity and Efficiency

1. Intended audience: PBL staff and all patrons
2. Data rationale: **PBL operates two locations with a small staff**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Increase public-facing staff time**
4. How we will measure success: Number of hours of work shifted from administrative/behind-the-scenes tasks to front-facing service; total staff FTE
 - Add or redistribute roles to allow staffing for a mobile unit without placing additional strain on current staff; consider contracting with specialists for each phase of development.
 - Explore funding and opportunities to deploy automated material handling and reallocate these staff hours to front-facing service

Strategy 4: Increase Access to Library Spaces and Materials

1. Intended audience: Library users for whom traditional hours do not work (shift workers, parents, etc.)
2. Data rationale: **24% of survey respondents said current Library hours are inconvenient**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Increase access to the Library**
4. How we will measure success: Number of patrons served beyond current library hours
 - Explore the feasibility of self-service hours
 - Consider a facility design that would allow meeting spaces to be used while the Library is closed



GOAL 2: Lifelong Learning

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will serve as the community's literacy hub and a key destination for learning, offering opportunities for patrons to pursue ongoing personal and professional growth.

Outcome: Residents build skills for school, work, and life, with pathways from early literacy to adult education and digital/workforce readiness. The Library supports knowledge and improvement at any stage of life.

Data Rationale

59% prioritize life skills; 43% seek STEM; 26% want emerging tech. Educators request early literacy and safe study spaces; business leaders stress office and professional skills and workforce readiness

Strategy 1: Technology Access & Support

1. Intended audience: Individuals with limited tech and broadband access, job seekers, individuals interested in exploring new technologies
2. Data rationale: **Low broadband access** (52-58%, below state average of 84%); **43% of survey respondents seek STEM; 26% want emerging tech**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Increase access to broadband and other technology**, at home and in the library; **increase digital skills for personal and professional use**
4. How we will measure success: Tech devices in circulation; workshop attendance, and number of completed certifications
 - Launch a tech lending program (hotspots, tablets/Chromebooks) using grant funding, prioritizing communities with identified barriers to accessing online library resources and learning platforms, virtual workshops, educational apps, and job search tools
 - Explore offering a tech skill certification program that allows patrons to learn, practice, and certify in areas such as Microsoft Office and Google Workspace, Canva, Adobe, Facebook Business Suite, QuickBooks
 - Explore adding emerging tech at both branches. Survey library users and regional employers to identify an initial collection, focusing efforts on tools that can be used both for fun and educational purposes (i.e., virtual reality games and training simulations). Utilize LSTA grants or local private funders where possible

Strategy 2: Strengthen Literacy and Educational Success Across All Ages

1. Intended audience: Patrons of all ages
2. Data rationale: **Educators emphasized the need for early literacy support**; drop-off in reading proficiency at middle school level and above
3. What we hope to achieve: **Support students and families; increase adult literacy rates**
4. How we will measure success: Increase circulation of reading and phonics kits, report improved confidence by parents and caregivers in reading competency of child; reports from educators and families on improved reading levels for middle school students; adoption of SORA reading app by families and classrooms; adult literacy program participation and increased confidence among participants
 - **Early Literacy:** Transform existing early literacy programs and materials into one cohesive offering to effectively champion early childhood literacy and ensure children and caregivers have the support they need to thrive. Expand early literacy collections, including caregiver/child reading and phonics kits
 - **Youth Engagement:** Open conversations with middle-grade educators to identify areas and actions the library can undertake to strengthen reading skills and improve overall reading comprehension and fluency. Introduce SORA and SORA-embedded incentives to educators as a way to raise enthusiasm among students. Expand reading collection of book and audio combos. Highlight this collection in student services booklets and feature in digital apps
 - **Adult Literacy:** Create an adult literacy program exploring a mixture of trained staff and using volunteer one-on-one tutors. Consult Ozarks Literacy Council for input or partnership. Develop a hi/lo collection to support adult learners

Strategy 3: Support the Community's Workforce

1. Intended audience: Individuals and families seeking employment opportunities, including those entering the workforce for the first time or looking for more stable and, meaningful work and wage growth
2. Data rationale: **Butler County's unemployment rate averaged above 5% for most of 2025 – higher than state and national averages.** The median household income is approximately \$49,200 much lower than state and national average, and about 21% of residents live below the poverty line, a rate higher than state and national averages. In terms of educational attainment, roughly 85% of adults age 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, while about 15% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, which is significantly lower than Missouri and U.S. averages.
3. What we hope to achieve: **Upskill the workforce, connecting learning to new job opportunities**
4. How we will measure success: Number and percentage of program participants who complete workforce support services and secure employment, improved wages, or industry-recognized credentials within 6 months.

- Collaborate with recruitment agencies, schools, or local employers to provide job readiness programs for individuals aged 20 to 25. Utilize the Technical Career Center and Three Rivers College, as well as groups like Rotary or Toastmasters, to teach a series of courses on collaboration, leadership, speaking/communication skills, acceptable workplace behavior, work-related tech skills, etc.
- Expand programming for adults targeting entrepreneurs, job seekers, and small business owners (such as creating a business plan, social media marketing, accounting/legal tips for 1099 workers (Walmart Delivery, Instacart, Uber, Door Dash, etc.), learning how to price your product, creating an online store, photographing your inventory/product for an online store.) Offer virtual appointments with a business consultant

3.



GOAL 3: Expanded Cultural Programming

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will become a vibrant center for the arts, with dynamic programming that highlights literature, signature author events, national traveling exhibits, and the dramatic arts.

Outcome: PBL is recognized as a cultural anchor, activating downtown and neighborhoods through inclusive, high-quality arts, heritage, and civic experiences.

Data Rationale

50% want arts/culture content of programs; 57% would visit the Library more with cultural offerings.

Strategy 1: Build a Year-Round Cultural Calendar

1. Intended audience: Library patrons and community members who may not yet use library services.
2. Data rationale: **Community feedback shows strong interest in cultural programming**, with 50% of respondents expressing interest in arts and culture programs and 57% indicating they would visit the Library more often if cultural offerings were available.
3. What we hope to achieve: **Expand and diversify cultural programming throughout the year to increase community engagement**, attract new library users, and position the Library as a welcoming hub for arts, culture, and shared community experiences.
4. How we will measure success: Total number of cultural programs offered annually, attendance across all cultural programs, number of storefront and community partnerships established, engagement metrics such as QR code scans, digital checkouts, and ecard sign-ups connected to signature events
 - Once per year, host a signature event, like “Book in the Bluff” and national traveling exhibits, supported by author talks, speakers, and storytelling, highlighting celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and Black History Month
 - Once per year, host an ongoing lecture series (e.g., Poplar Bluff Presents) featuring timely topics connected to current events, local history, and community interests. Engage speakers from established statewide and regional resources, including the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Historical Society, and local and statewide universities
 - Once per year, host theatrical performances, bringing literature to life and inspiring the next generation of authors, playwrights, and theatrical performers
 - Explore storefront partnerships for signature events, including book display pop-ups featuring drawings for giveaways, physical copies for sale, and QR codes to borrow digital copies from the library or apply for an ecard



GOAL 4: Intentional and Useful Library Spaces

Goal Statement: Poplar Bluff Library will create adaptable, welcoming spaces that support quiet study, community connection, and creative exploration.

Outcome: Spaces are comfortable, accessible, and flexible to support a variety of needs within the Library, including areas for quiet study, reading, meeting and collaboration spaces, creativity, learning, programming, and community events.

Data Rationale

45% want lounge-style areas; 48% want a café; 21% want outdoor program space. Staff/leadership cite space constraints as a significant barrier; current well-attended and signature events must be hosted offsite or in multiple showings due to space constraints; facility needs assessment identifies prioritized upgrades

Strategy 1: Develop a 10-year Master Facilities Plan

1. Intended audience: Library users and staff
2. Data rationale: **Lack of space for new collections** (Library of Things); **program attendance/demand regularly exceeding capacity**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Create a long-term facilities plan to ensure future growth and success**
4. How we will measure success: Adoption of the Master Facilities Plan by the Library Board; Reduction in overstocked or underutilized collection areas; Identification of preferred short-, mid-, and long-term capital projects
 - Assess current use of library space and identify unmet needs for quiet, social, and creative areas
 - Assess the intersection of staff workflows and building layout to create a space that serves staff needs in addition to those of patrons
 - Work with the master planning team to reimagine existing spaces and consider possibilities for new spaces
 - Utilize the LibraryIQ Platform to right-size overstocked collection areas, potentially freeing up space for other uses
 - Explore opportunities for Elm Street and Ridgel Branch land parcels
 - Explore capital funding possibilities, including public and private grants and fundraising opportunities

Strategy 2: Create Spaces that Support Community Needs

1. Intended audience: All library users
2. Data rationale: **45% of survey respondents want lounge-style areas; 48% want a café; 21% want outdoor program space.** Staff/leadership cite space constraints as a significant barrier; facility needs assessment identifies prioritized upgrades
3. What we hope to achieve: **Create spaces that are comfortable, accessible, and flexible to support a variety of needs within the Library**
4. How we will measure success: Teen usage of Library space (visits, technology usage, or program participation); Increase capacity of programming spaces; Utilization rate of makerspaces, studios, or STEAM areas
 - Evaluate Teen Space and explore strategies to provide teens with an expanded dedicated space that includes comfortable seating, study areas, and flexible areas for gathering and socializing, while not disrupting adjacent zones
 - Develop new or expanded creative spaces such as studios, makerspaces, STEAM areas, and storage for Library of Things
 - Evaluate options for integrating conversational spaces within the library that have the potential to be more food and drink-friendly
 - Explore possibilities for outdoor space at Ridgel Branch
 - Study / explore options for adding an event space/venue that can accommodate an audience of 250 or more, and allow for large traveling exhibits
 - Reimagine the children's area at the Main Branch to modernize and create additional space

Strategy 3: Leverage New/Redesigned Spaces to Raise Awareness of Library Services

1. Intended audience: nonusers and inactive/returning users
2. Data rationale: **18% of survey respondents don't know what PBL offers, showing room for improvement in awareness of Library spaces and services**
3. What we hope to achieve: **Introduce new and existing users to the new space; Reinforce public support for the Library**
4. How we will measure success: Percentage of attendees at space-focused events who are new Library users; Media coverage or community mentions related to new spaces; Increase in visits or time spent in redesigned spaces; Increase in registered cardholders
 - Host an open house or other large-scale event to highlight new spaces and bring new and returning patrons into the Library
 - Use tours, videos, and storytelling in marketing strategy to showcase PBL as a destination

APPENDIX A: IMPLEMENTATION ENABLERS AND RISK MITIGATION

Enablers

Staffing & Training

Add/redistribute roles for marketing/outreach, youth/teen, and adult services; invest in training for reader's advisory, reference, de-escalation, and teen engagement

Library Hours

Assess current library hours against community needs

Technology & Cybersecurity

Increase internet speed (to ≥500 Mbps via Erate), implement cybersecurity protections and disaster recovery plan; expand staff digital literacy training

Marketing & Communications

Formal social strategy (calendar, branding, short-form video); sunset or repurpose dormant channels; expand co-marketing with partners; explore opportunities to incorporate marketing into library app and electronic resources

Partnerships

Use MOUs to focus collaboration (education, health, business, culture); leverage service clubs and county coalitions for sponsorships, volunteers, and advocacy

Risks & Mitigations

Staff Capacity/Burnout

Phase initiatives; add targeted positions; cross-train; rotate program leads

Funding Variability

Diversify grants; sponsorships; annual review aligning budget to ROI of programs

Facility Constraints

Use flexible furniture and multi-use layouts; schedule management to avoid conflicts; prioritize high-impact fixes first

Awareness Gaps

Consistent co-marketing with partners; quarterly outreach campaigns; storytelling of impact

APPENDIX B - IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The timeline below provides suggested timelines for achieving the Library's organizational priorities.

2026 Objectives

Reading & Literacy:

Strengthening literacy at every stage of life

Goal 1: Community Engagement & Outreach

- Offer outreach to senior centers and living communities at least every other month, focusing on delivering materials through the State Library and digital collections. Grow underserved senior cardholder households by 10%. Offer crafting and health-related programs at senior centers and simplify card sign-up to grow this usage by this user base. Increase enrollment in the Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library by sharing information and applications during mobile visits and outreach events
- Explore the feasibility of self-service hours
- Consider a facility design that would allow meeting spaces to be used while the Library is closed
- Explore mobile unit options and design routes using Library IQ patron map (consider income-based housing, parks, senior centers, rural hubs)

Goal 2: Lifelong Learning

- Early Literacy: Transform existing early literacy programs and materials into one cohesive offering to effectively champion early childhood literacy and ensure children and caregivers have the support they need to thrive. Expand early literacy collections, including caregiver/child reading and phonics kits
- Youth Engagement: Open conversations with middle-grade educators to identify areas and actions the library can undertake to strengthen reading skills and improve overall reading comprehension and fluency. Introduce SORA and SORA-embedded incentives to educators as a way to raise enthusiasm among students. Expand reading collection of book and audio combos. Highlight this collection in student services booklets and feature in digital apps
- Adult Literacy: Create an adult literacy program exploring a mixture of trained staff and using volunteer one-on-one tutors. Consult Ozarks Literacy Council for input or partnership. Develop a hi/lo collection to support adult learners

Goal 3: Expanded Cultural Programming

- Once per year, host a signature event, like "Book in the Bluff" and national traveling exhibits, supported by author talks, speakers, and storytelling, highlighting celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and Black History Month

Goal 4: Intentional and Useful Library Spaces

- Assess current use of library space and identify unmet needs for quiet, social, and creative areas
- Assess the intersection of staff workflows and building layout to create a space that serves staff needs in addition to those of patrons
- Work with the master planning team to reimagine existing spaces and consider possibilities for new spaces
- Utilize the LibraryIQ Platform to right-size overstocked collection areas, potentially freeing up space for other uses
- Explore opportunities for Elm Street and Ridgel Branch land parcels
- Evaluate Teen Space and explore strategies to provide teens with a dedicated space that includes comfortable

seating, study areas, and flexible areas for gathering and socializing while not disrupting adjacent zones

- Evaluate options for integrating conversational spaces within the library that have the potential to be more food and drink-friendly
- Explore possibilities for outdoor space at Ridgel Branch
- Study / explore options for adding an event space/venue that can accommodate an audience of 250 or more, and allow for large traveling exhibits
- Reimagine the children's area at the Main Branch to modernize and create additional space

2027 Objectives

Jobs & Workforce Development:

Connecting learning to opportunities

Goal 1: Community Engagement & Outreach

- Add library lockers or book vending machines in high-traffic community locations.
- Add or redistribute roles to allow staffing for a mobile unit without placing additional strain on current staff; consider contracting with specialists for each phase of development.

Goal 2: Lifelong Learning

- Job Readiness: Collaborate with recruitment agencies, schools, or local employers to provide job readiness programs for individuals aged 20 to 25. Utilize the Technical Career Center and Three Rivers College, as well as groups like Rotary or Toastmasters, to teach a series of courses on collaboration, leadership, speaking/communication skills, acceptable workplace behavior, work-related tech skills, etc
- Job Readiness: Expand programming for adults targeting entrepreneurs, job seekers, and small business owners (such as creating a business plan, social media marketing, accounting/legal tips for 1099 workers (Walmart Delivery, Instacart, Uber, Door Dash, etc.), learning how to price your product, creating an online store, photographing your inventory/product for an online store. Virtual appointments with a business consultant

Goal 3: Expanded Cultural Programming

- Once per year, host theatrical performances, bringing literature to life and inspiring the next generation of authors, playwrights, and theatrical performers

2028 Objectives

Technology & Emerging Services:

Building new skills and confidence through technology

Goal 1: Community Engagement & Outreach

- Launch mobile unit options

Goal 2: Lifelong Learning

- Tech Lending: Launch a tech lending program (hotspots, tablets/Chromebooks) via grants, prioritizing communities with identified barriers to access online library resources and learning platforms, virtual workshops, educational apps, and job search tools
- Tech Certification: Explore offering a tech skill certification program that allows patrons to learn, practice, and certify in areas such as Microsoft Office and Google Workspace, Canva, Adobe, Facebook Business Suite, Quickbooks

Goal 3: Expanded Cultural Programming

- Explore storefront partnerships for signature events, including book display pop-ups featuring drawings for giveaways, physical copies for sale, and QR codes to borrow digital copies from the library or apply for an ecard

Goal 4: Intentional and Useful Library Spaces

- Develop new or expanded creative spaces such as studios, makerspaces, STEAM areas, and storage for Library of Things
- Host an open house or other large-scale event to highlight new spaces and bring new and returning patrons into the Library

2029 Objectives

Technology & Emerging Services:

Building new skills and confidence through technology

Goal 1: Community Engagement & Outreach

- Facilitate access to experts and services by partnering with local agencies (including Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Division of Social Services, and Area Agency on Aging), both at the branches and from the mobile branch

Goal 3: Expanded Cultural Programming

- Once per year, host an ongoing lecture series (e.g., Poplar Bluff Presents) featuring timely topics connected to current events, local history, and community interests. Engage speakers from established statewide and regional resources, including the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Historical Society, and local and statewide universities

Goal 4: Intentional and Useful Library Spaces

- Use tours, videos, and storytelling in marketing strategy to showcase PBL as a destination
- Explore capital funding possibilities, including public and private grants and fundraising opportunities

2030 Objectives

Goal 1: Community Engagement & Outreach

- Explore funding and opportunities to deploy automated material handling and reallocate these staff hours to front-facing service

Goal 2: Lifelong Learning

- Explore adding emerging tech at both branches. Survey library users and regional employers to identify an initial collection - focusing efforts on tools that can be used both for fun and educational purposes (i.e. virtual reality games and training simulations). Utilize LSTA grants or local private funders where possible



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