



CABARRUS COUNTY
Public Library System

Cabarrus County Public Library
Strategic Plan: FY2020 – FY2025

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on August 19, 2019.*

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Introduction 5

 The Planning Process

 Staff Planning Team

 Community Needs Assessment

 Developing the Plan

Mission Statement, Values 8

Areas of Focus, Goals, and Activities 9

 Youth Services

 Teen Services

 Adult Services

 Community Engagement

 Operations

Executive Summary

In June 2018, the Cabarrus County Public Library received a federally-funded LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant to develop a new, community-engaged strategic plan for its libraries by implementing the planning process outlined in the Aspen Institute report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, and the accompanying *Action Guide*.

Library Areas of Focus and Goals

Youth Services

- Goal 1.1. Preschool children (birth to five years) will be provided with programs and resources to prepare for and encourage a lifetime of learning.
- Goal 1.2. School-age children (six to twelve years) will have access to programs and resources that spark curiosity and inspire learning.
- Goal 1.3. The library will enhance the knowledge and skills of caregivers through resources and programs.

Teen Services

- Goal 2.1. Teens will have access to dedicated spaces that foster positive social interactions and allow for the exploration of materials and resources.
- Goal 2.2. Teens will have access to engaging programs and opportunities to contribute to the development of teen services.
- Goal 2.3. Teens will have access to current technologies that encourage creation, collaboration, and exploration.

Adult Services

- Goal 3.1. Adults will have access to engaging programs that promote lifelong learning.
- Goal 3.2. Adults will have access to current technologies that enable modern methods of business, education, and recreation.
- Goal 3.3. Adults will have access to well-developed collections that promote reading for enjoyment and personal growth.

Community Engagement

- Goal 4.1. The library and organizations in the community will mutually benefit from collaborations and partnerships that create lasting connections and opportunities to serve.
- Goal 4.2. The public will benefit from an increased awareness of the library's resources and services.
- Goal 4.3. The library will promote social equity through increased access to library services for underserved populations.

Operations

- Goal 5.1. Library users will be served by trained and educated staff whose knowledge of current resources has been enhanced in order to meet the needs of the community.
- Goal 5.2. Library users will benefit from the library having sufficient staff to cover both operating hours and programming needs in order to meet the needs of the community.
- Goal 5.3. The library will provide adequate facilities to meet public demand and support the future success and continued growth of the community.

Introduction

In June 2018, the Cabarrus County Public Library received a federally-funded LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant to develop a new, community-engaged strategic plan for its libraries by implementing the planning process outlined in the Aspen Institute report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, and the accompanying *Action Guide*.

The Planning Process

The Cabarrus County Public Library chose to use the planning process outlined in the Aspen Institute report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, and the accompanying *Action Guide*, both of which have been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This planning process was developed by the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries, a working group of leaders from the library field, business executives, individuals from various levels of government, individuals from community development organizations, and education experts. That group came together to craft and articulate a shared vision for the future of public libraries, based on the following ideas:

- Libraries are critical partners in the educational ecosystem.
- Libraries are a gateway to lifelong learning.
- To be successful, libraries need to:
 - Align with community goals.
 - Provide access to content in all formats.
 - Ensure long-term sustainability.

The planning process focuses on the library as people, moving away from a focus on building collections to focus on “building human capital, relationships, and knowledge networks in the community”; the library as place; and the library as a platform that “supports the learning and civic needs of the community.”

Consequently, the planning process asked community stakeholders to identify the needs of the community served by the library and the ways in which the library can best meet those needs. The process included a survey of the citizens served by the Cabarrus County Public Library, to which a total of 311 individuals responded.

Staff Planning Team

A staff planning team, made up of members of the staff of the Cabarrus County Public Library, oversaw the planning process. The staff planning team included:

Stacy Garber	Emery Ortiz
Amanda Lynch	Christie Reale
Denise McLain	Brandy Shaver
Jenny Meeseree	Carly Varnadore
Melinda Metz	Kyle White
Aryn O'Connor	Adrian Zeck

The Cabarrus County Public Library's planning process was facilitated by Dr. Robert Burgin, a library consultant with nearly 45 years of experience in library education, library consulting, and library administration.

Community Needs Assessment

The consultant provided the library staff planning team with a community needs assessment, based on demographic data for Cabarrus County; surveys of the county's citizens and the library staff; library usage, funding, and technology data; meetings with staff members and library board members; interviews with library users and community stakeholders; and several public forums.

The demographic data reflect the fact that Cabarrus County is younger than the rest of the state; has a rapidly growing population; has a relatively wealthy population; has a healthy population; and is more highly educated than the state as a whole. Demographic trends for the past ten years show that, compared with the rest of the state, Cabarrus County has experienced less aging of the population; a growth in levels of education; more rapid population growth; a growth in the percentage of minority populations; and increased economic well-being.

A survey of Cabarrus County citizens found that respondents most frequently used the library for books for adults, books for children, and programs for children. About half of the respondents rated the ability of the library's resources and services to meet their needs as excellent, and two thirds rated the quality of customer service and support provided by the library staff as excellent. Respondents rated books for adults, books for children, programs for children, the library Website, books for teens, and programs for teens as the most important library resources and services. About half of the respondents felt that some factor limited their

use of the library, and the most frequently identified limit to library use was inconvenient library hours.

A survey of library staff found that a large number of staff regarded the library's ability to meet the needs of its customers as very good. Staff identified the library's strengths as the staff itself, children's services and resources, and the collections. Staff saw facilities, communications within the staff, publicity, and technology as the greatest weaknesses. Staff listed the top priorities for the library in the future as staffing, collections, and programs. Staff identified the most important library resources and services as books for children, free Wi-Fi, programs for children, and books for teens.

Data regarding library usage and funding show that the Cabarrus County Public Library is providing a high level of library service to the citizens of Cabarrus County, ranking among the top half of county libraries in the state in half of the fifteen measures examined. Over the past ten years, usage and funding for the Cabarrus County Public Library have grown faster than they have for the average county library in the state in ten of the thirteen areas examined. A recent statewide assessment of the degree to which the library has been successful in providing public access to computer technology found that the Cabarrus County Library exceeds the state average on two of the three major areas and exceeds the state average on seven of the eleven benchmarks that make up those three areas.

Participants in the interviews and community forums identified the library staff, the programs for children, and the library's collections as strengths of the library. These individuals also identified the following as ways to improve the library: new library facilities in Harrisburg, Mt. Pleasant, and western Cabarrus County; more books; more adult programming; and more marketing.

Developing the Plan

The library's staff team used the community needs assessment to recommend service priorities or areas of focus for the library's strategic plan. The library's staff team then identified goals and activities for each of the focus areas and re-affirmed their support for the mission statement and values of the library.

Strategic Plan, FY2020 – FY2025
Cabarrus County Public Library

Mission Statement

The Cabarrus County Public Library mission is to connect Cabarrus County Citizens with information and resources that educate, enrich, and empower.

Values

Community

We provide resources and spaces that bring people together.

Hospitality

We offer a welcoming, safe environment with a friendly, knowledgeable staff.

Accessibility

We believe in equal and equitable access to education and information for all.

Diversity

We embrace the differences and similarities of all people and ideas.

Strategic Plan, FY2020 – FY2025
Cabarrus County Public Library

Areas of Focus, Goals, and Activities

Youth Services

Goal 1.1. Preschool children (birth to five years) will be provided with programs and resources to prepare for and encourage a lifetime of learning.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide story times for babies, toddlers, preschool children, and families.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide Music & Movement story times.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide preschool visits.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide Art and Science programs for preschool children.

Activity 5. The library will begin participating in the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

Activity 6. The library will increase the marketing of non-English language materials for preschool children, for example, resources on Tumblebooks.

Activity 7. The library will increase the number of non-English language materials for preschool children.

Activity 8. The library will increase the diversity of its preschool collections to reflect the diversity in the communities being served.

Goal 1.2. School-age children (six to twelve years) will have access to programs and resources that spark curiosity and inspire learning.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide STEAM activities for school-age children.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide Summer Reading Programs for school-age children.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide homeschool programs.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide collections of books and other materials for school-age children.

Activity 5. The library will expand access to online resources to school-age children.

Activity 6. The library will explore a program to pair school-age children with teens to build confidence in reading and comprehension.

Activity 7. The library will increase the marking of non-English language materials for school-age children.

Activity 8 . The library will develop collections and resources that support the non-English languages taught in the public schools.

Activity 9. The library will increase the diversity of its collections for school-age children to reflect the diversity in the communities being served.

Activity 10. The library will implement a PAWS for Reading program to develop reading skills and confidence among school-age children.

Goal 1.3. The library will enhance the knowledge and skills of caregivers through resources and programs.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide a Parent/Teacher collection.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide opportunities for networking and resource sharing among parents and caregivers.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide programs specifically for parents and caregivers in conjunction with the Cabarrus Health Alliance and/or other community partners.

Activity 4. The library will provide Every Child Ready to Read training for parents and caregivers.

Activity 5. The library will integrate literacy building tips for parents and caregivers into story times.

Activity 6. The library will create and provide parents and caregivers with resources to further enhance and build upon library programming.

Teen Services

Goal 2.1. Teens will have access to dedicated spaces that foster positive social interactions and allow for the exploration of materials and resources.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide dedicated teen collections.

Activity 2. The library will provide dedicated teen spaces for programming and study as facilities allow, and develop ways to more easily monitor these spaces.

Activity 3. The library will increase the diversity of its collections for teens to reflect the diversity in the communities being served.

Activity 4. The library will increase nonfiction materials that address areas of interest to teens.

Activity 5. The library will expand access to online resources for teens.

Goal 2.2. Teens will have access to engaging programs and opportunities to contribute to the development of teen services.

Activity 1. The library will continue to use the Teen Advisory Board to involve teens in collection development, displays, and programming.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide volunteer activities for teens.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide programs for teens that present opportunities for creative expression.

Activity 4. The library will expand its leisure programming for teens.

Goal 2.3. Teens will have access to current technologies that encourage creation, collaboration, and exploration.

Activity 1. The library will provide teens with access to technologies that support creation, collaboration, and exploration, for example, robotics.

Activity 2. The library will provide programs to teach coding and to expose teens to the creative possibilities of coding.

Adult Services

Goal 3.1. Adults will have access to engaging programs that promote lifelong learning.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide access to resources and programs related to local history and genealogy.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide educational classes and general interest programs for adults.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide adult programs that foster discussions of literature.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide creative programs for adults, for example, craft programs.

Activity 5. Library staff will continue to stay knowledgeable about high-interest topics and to develop adult programs around these topics.

Activity 6. The library will expand its programming for younger adults.

Goal 3.2. Adults will have access to current technologies that enable modern methods of business, education, and recreation.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide access to e-books.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide access to e-resources, including Universal Class.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide public access computers.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide computer classes and hands-on technology training.

Activity 5. The library will continue to provide one-on-one technology assistance.

Activity 6. The library will continue to provide technology support for job seekers.

Activity 7. The library will continue to raise the public's awareness of its technologies and e-resources.

Goal 3.3. Adults will have access to well-developed collections that promote reading for enjoyment and personal growth.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide accurate, modern, and relevant resources for adults.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide collections that mirror the growing diversity of our community.

Activity 3. The library will continue to adhere to the strategies set forth in its Collection Development Policy.

Activity 4. The library will increase the number of non-English language materials in its adult collections.

Activity 5. The library will improve its readers' advisory services for adults.

Activity 6. The library will increase the number of digital book lists that it provides for adults.

Activity 7. The library will improve the marketing of its collections.

Activity 8. The library will conduct an inventory of its collections.

Community Engagement

Goal 4.1. The library and organizations in the community will mutually benefit from collaborations and partnerships that create lasting connections and opportunities to serve.

Activity 1. The library will continue to engage in outreach activities to educational institutions.

Activity 2. The library will continue to maintain relationships with established community partners.

Activity 3. The library will continue to work with other county departments and agencies

Activity 4. The library will continue to look for opportunities to establish relationships with new partners, especially:

- a) Organizations that promote education and literacy.
- b) Organizations that provide free or low-cost resources.
- c) Organizations that work with our underserved populations.

Goal 4.2. The public will benefit from an increased awareness of the library's resources and services.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide a monthly newsletter to library users.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide an online calendar.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide a Website and online catalog.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide press releases.

Activity 5. The library will continue to provide a Facebook presence.

Activity 6. The library will expand its presence on relevant social media platforms.

Activity 7. The library will continuously look for opportunities and platforms to share our message.

Activity 8. The library will procure support for innovative marketing methods that will reach new users.

Goal 4.3. The library will promote social equity through increased access to library services for underserved populations.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide programs to children and adults with special needs.

Activity 2. The library will continue to provide literacy services by recruiting tutors to help teach adults English reading and speaking skills.

Activity 3. The library will continue to provide library services to the Cabarrus County Detention Center.

Activity 4. The library will continue to provide library services to homebound individuals.

Activity 5. The library will continue to provide diverse collections and non-English language collections.

Activity 5. The library will build stronger partnerships with organizations that work with underserved populations.

Activity 6. The library will build stronger partnerships with organizations that provide nontraditional outreach, such as food banks.

Activity 7. The library will market library services in languages other than English.

Activity 8. The library will provide signage in languages other than English.

Activity 9. The library will provide more bilingual staff.

Activity 10. The library will provide more staff in Literacy Services.

Activity 11. The library will explore alternative methods to provide services to underserved populations.

Operations

Goal 5.1. Library users will be served by trained and educated staff whose knowledge of current resources has been enhanced in order to meet the needs of the community.

Activity 1. The library will continue to provide all-staff training days twice a year.

Activity 2. The library will continue to encourage staff to attend workshops and conferences.

Activity 3. The library will continue to encourage staff to participate in Webinars and other forms of online training.

Activity 4. The library will provide more staff training related to other county departments.

Activity 5. The library will provide more staff training related to the library's e-resources.

Activity 6. The library will provide more training for new staff.

Activity 7. The library will provide more cross-training between departments within the library.

Goal 5.2. Library users will benefit from the library having sufficient staff to cover both operating hours and programming needs in order to meet the needs of the community.

Activity 1. The library will attempt to bring staffing levels up to state standards and averages for public libraries in North Carolina.

Activity 2. The library will assess current staffing levels, current job descriptions, and current allocation of duties to maximize the efficiency of existing staff.

Activity 3. The library will explore ways to use the technologies to maximize the efficiency of existing staff.

Goal 5.3. The library will provide adequate facilities to meet public demand and support the future success and continued growth of the community.

Activity 1. The county will plan for and provide adequate library facilities to meet the needs of the growing communities in Cabarrus County.

Activity 2. The county will take into consideration adequate staffing needs for new and expanded facilities.

Activity 3. The library will continuously assess the use of library space and explore alternative methods of maximizing existing library space.

Activity 4. The library will explore alternative methods of providing additional library services points, for example, lockers, mobile services, etc.