

Polk County
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Process Timeline	4
Vision & Mission	5
Strategic Directions	6
Next Steps	10



Introduction

Polk County Public Libraries (PCPL) are a vital cornerstone of the community. The libraries offer a wide variety of resources and programs, developed and provided by knowledgeable staff. Library spaces and materials inspire creativity and collaboration for both education and enjoyment. To align our goals with the evolving priorities of the community, the libraries have undergone a comprehensive strategic planning process with feedback from the community and stakeholders. By implementing a new strategic plan, PCPL will renew its efforts to:

- Connect with the community and inform people about all the library offers;
- Welcome the public and inspire them through programs, collections, technologies, and accessible spaces; and
- Cultivate and strengthen PCPL's internal culture for growth and leadership.

Polk County Public Libraries initiated a strategic planning process starting in summer 2025. Fast Forward Libraries LLC was engaged in July 2025 to facilitate the planning process in three phases: Learn, Dream, Do. The Learn phase entailed gathering community feedback through a survey, focus groups, and interviews. Board and staff feedback was also collected through a survey. In the Dream phase, the Board and staff held workshop sessions to discuss possible future pathways for the libraries. This document includes the strategic directions and goals that will guide PCPL through the Do phase, as PCPL executes our vision for the future.

Polk County
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Create Connections • Ignite Imaginations

Process Timeline

July 2025 - May 2026

The Planning Team spent months learning about community needs and developing strategies to advance the library's impact over the next five years.

Planning Team Kick-off	July
Community Input and Learning Report	August - January
Workshop Sessions	February
Plan Development and Review	March
Present to the Board, Transition to Implementation	April - May

Vision

Create Connections. Ignite Imaginations.

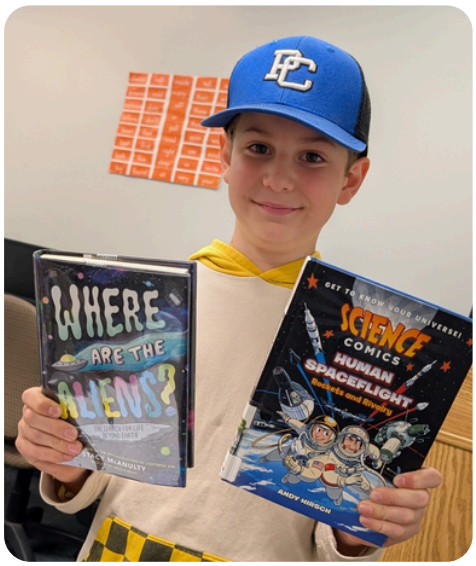
Mission

We enrich lives, encourage curiosity, and build community.



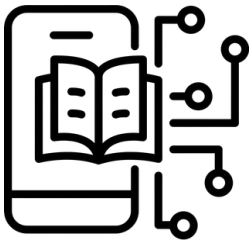






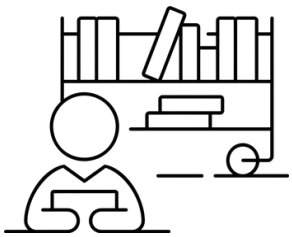


Strategic Directions



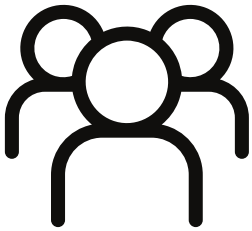
Connect & Inform

We collaborate and engage with local partners to better serve the community where they are. By expanding the library's communications, we raise awareness of community resources and library services.



Welcome & Inspire

We provide versatile and accessible spaces where people can gather, work, and play. Our responsive programs, collections, and technologies meet the community's needs and inspire individual growth and confidence.



Cultivate & Strengthen

We foster an organizational culture where staff can learn and grow. Our staff members deliver excellent customer service, and we have a supportive and informed Board of Trustees.

CONNECT & INFORM

We collaborate and engage with local partners to better serve the community where they are. By expanding the library's communications, we raise awareness of community resources and library services.





GOALS:

1.1 Design outreach initiatives that foster community engagement and improve access.

1.2 Strengthen local partnerships to create community connections.

1.3 Expand external communications to better share community resources and promote library services.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

- Citizens have easy access to library services
- The library is visible at community events
- Organizations think of the library as a go-to partner and repeat partnerships
- Community members indicate they know what is going on at the library
- Library usage increases
- Citizens are aware of community resources beyond the library

WELCOME & INSPIRE

We provide versatile and accessible spaces where people can gather, work, and play. Our responsive programs, collections, and technologies meet the community's needs and inspire individual growth and confidence.





GOALS:

2.1 Develop responsive programs and collections that address community needs and exceed expectations.

2.2 Provide technology resources to encourage confidence and advance competence in navigating the digital world.

2.3 Ensure welcoming, versatile, and accessible library spaces.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

- Program attendance and circulation increases
- Wait times for digital items shortens
- Community members feel more confident navigating the digital world
- Library patrons know what technology and services the library offers
- Meeting room use increases

CULTIVATE & STRENGTHEN

We foster an organizational culture where staff can learn and grow. Our staff members deliver excellent customer service, and we have a supportive and informed Board of Trustees.





GOALS:

3.1 Create an organizational culture that nurtures staff enrichment through professional development and training opportunities.

3.2 Consider staffing needs that anticipate future growth.

3.3 Institute consistent methods of internal communications.

3.4 Prioritize ongoing Board of Trustees development to support continuous improvement.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

- Staff knowledge supports strong customer service
- High staff retention
- Staff feel well prepared when interacting with patrons
- Board members reflect the composition of the community
- Trustees are knowledgeable about the organization and advocate for the libraries

NEXT STEPS

Implementation and Evaluation

Now that the vision, mission, strategic directions, and goals have been adopted by the Polk County Public Libraries Board of Trustees, staff will develop an activity plan to guide implementation. Implementation is a continual process. The timing of certain activities will be determined by priority and influenced by various factors, such as funding and other resource allocation. Review and adjustment of the activity plan will happen on a regular basis.

Evaluation of progress towards the goals will be ongoing once the plan implementation is underway. The status of activities and progress towards goals will be reported regularly to Trustees and stakeholders.

Polk County PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Create Connections • Ignite Imaginations