

Strategic Plan Catawba County Library 2016-2019



OUR COMMUNITY'S PLACE TO CONNECT, EXPLORE, AND GROW

“The library staff are warm, loving, caring people. The first thing I find in a new community is the library. We found friends when we moved to Newton. Many of those friends are the library staff.”
(Catawba County resident, November 2014)

Special Thanks

- Over 1,500 Catawba County residents who participated through focus groups, community forums, surveys, and interviews
- Library Strategic Planning Committee
Susan Anderson, Carson Bailey, Anthony Chow, Ellen Dewey, Sherry Drum, Cynthia Eades, Alex Frick, Mary Furtado, Pat Gibson, Abigail Hardy, Dewey Harris, Kim Lyke Holden, Debbie Hovis, Wendy Johnson, Amelia Kennedy, Mary Bess Lawing, Siobhan Loendorf, Scott Millar, Glenn Morrison, Jennifer Patterson, Brenda Sigmon, David Stegall, Suzanne White, Amy Wilson, Dawn Wilson, Staci Wilson, Kenneth Wright, Lee Yount, Tammy Yount
- Catawba County Library Staff and Library Board
- Funding from the State Library of North Carolina and the Library Services & Technology Act
- Strategic Performance Systems and Dr. Anthony Chow

We are excited about moving forward in connecting with and empowering our citizens in the coming years with these community-driven vision, mission, and goals at the forefront. Many goals are contingent upon funding availability, and these initiatives will be prioritized for local funding against other critical County services. The level of volunteerism, community support, and citizen engagement will also impact the pace of implementation. In light of this reality, we will take advantage of all local, regional and national funding sources and harness the community’s volunteer energy to bring this vision to life in a way that acknowledges the County’s current and future financial condition.



This project was made possible through funding from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

The Voice of the Community

The Catawba County Library System conducted a comprehensive 10-month community needs analysis and strategic planning process from July 2014 to May 2015.

Over 1,500 Catawba County residents shared their thoughts about library services through interviews, focus groups, community forums, and surveys gathered both at the library and in the community.

The top six ways the Community uses the Library include:



1. Checking out printed books
2. Getting help from library staff
3. Using public meeting rooms
4. Using the Library as a place to read, work, learn, and study
5. Using the Library's website and digital services
6. Accessing Wi-Fi and technology



Our Vision | What we aspire to be

Our community's place to connect, explore, and grow

Our Mission | What we commit to

We empower lives and build our community by bringing people, information, and ideas together



Core Values | What we believe in

1. Providing Exceptional Service with Integrity and Respect
2. Connecting People with Empowering Resources and Expertise
3. Enhancing Early and Lifelong Learning
4. Collaborating to Build Strong Teams and Community
5. Ensuring Access and Engagement

Core Competencies | How we thrive

1. Inspiring Children and Adults with Lifelong Learning Opportunities
2. Delivering the Right Resources at the Right Time—Connecting People with the Information They Need When They Need It
3. Empowering People with High-Tech, High-Touch Technology Services
4. Strengthening Community through Outreach & Partnerships
5. Engaging People with Positive Experiences, Creativity and Storytelling
6. Fostering Innovation and Risk-Taking



HIGH PRIORITY GOALS: WHAT WE DO

GOAL 1

Library Anytime, Anywhere: Expand Citizens' Access to Information and Ideas

We will drive new models for improving information access and delivery and expand the reach of library services beyond the physical walls of the building.

GOAL 2

As a Community Center of Excellence, Fuel Citizens' Passion for Reading, Personal Growth, and Learning

We will serve as a central community destination for diverse, free information, entertainment, and enrichment--enhanced by welcoming, expert help.

GOAL 3

Innovate to Support 21st Century Access That Empowers Our Citizens

We will align ourselves with the community by meeting current and anticipating future needs of Catawba County with vibrant, modern, and relevant information, services, technology, and programming to empower all in our community.

We have identified objectives and supporting actions for each of the 3 goals. These actions have been assigned implementation timeframes: short-term = 0-18 months; mid-range = 18 months-3 years; long-range = 3+years)

GOAL 1

Library Anytime, Anywhere: Expand Citizens' Access to Information and Ideas

1. **Bring library resources to where people are, including non-traditional locations, and target underserved audiences**
 - a. Coordinate with Partnership for Children to ensure Imagination Library participants automatically receive County library card as additional benefit of participation (*short-term*)
 - b. Explore options for digital learning outreach --visiting daycares, senior centers, etc. (*mid-range*)
 - c. Explore options for building partnerships with community agencies (Meals on Wheels, Backpack Program for Children, Greenways, etc.) to provide access to library resources for underserved populations (*mid-range*)
 - d. Explore provision of materials and services to satellite spaces (ex. – “Redbox” model at laundromats, soup kitchens, courthouse, YMCAs, community centers, malls, other public spaces) (*long-range*)



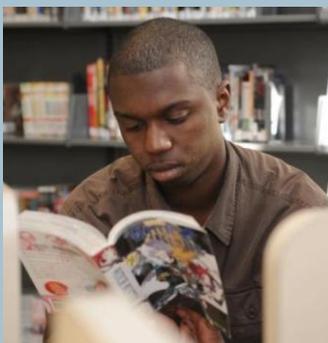
2. **Implement digital strategy to expand access through creating a virtual library with 24-hour delivery of digital learning resources (*mid-range*)**
3. **Expand library's reach with an improved intuitive, user-friendly website (*mid-range*)**
4. **Collaborate with non-profits, civic-minded community organizations, and other local governments to share information about their programs and services throughout the community (*mid-range; ongoing*)**
5. **Evaluate expansion of library hours to increase convenience and access for citizens (to include possible addition of evening and weekend hours) (*mid-to long-range*)**

GOAL 2

As a Community Center of Excellence,
Fuel Citizens' Passion for Reading, Personal Growth, and Learning

1. Develop and maintain relevant and inspiring collections that meet the community's evolving needs and expectations, ensuring equal access to underserved populations

- Support the principle of open access and freedom to read by updating collection development policy to reflect best practices (*short-term*)
- Improve availability of best sellers and most popular titles and customize branch offerings to match local community demographics and needs (Latino and Hmong collections, etc.) (*short to mid-range*)
- Partner with schools to align collections with school based initiatives (accelerated reader, Battle of the Books, Common Core, etc.) (*mid-range*)



2. Create welcoming, vibrant, comfortable, and secure library spaces

- Enhance access and security of collection with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) installation (*short-term*)
- Enhance community access to library spaces by aligning applicable policies around facility use (*short-term*)
- Explore options for providing coffee and refreshments at branch locations (*short-term*)
- Provide device charging stations for customers (*short-term*)
- Build community partnerships with the United Arts Council, its funded affiliates, and other artists and organizations, to bring rotating exhibits into library spaces (*mid-range*)
- Ensure proper lighting for visibility and safety and install security cameras as appropriate (*mid-range*)
- Explore possibility of providing access to current events and news resources via branch-based televisions (*mid-range*)
- Update and modernize branches for both individual and collaborative furnishings and spaces: group and individual seating, meeting/work space (*long-range beyond existing activities*)

3. Establish a culture of excellence by empowering a well-trained, knowledgeable staff

- a. Secure training opportunities focused on capacity building: partnership development, community engagement, grant writing, etc. *(short-term)*
- b. Ensure staff is technology trained in latest devices, software, electronic resources, and reference services *(short-term)*
- c. Offer training in reference, readers' advisory services, and customer service *(short-term)*
- d. Provide tutorials, classes, online training modules and troubleshooting guides *(short-term)*
- e. Continue to encourage staff involvement in local, regional, state, and national professional associations *(short-term)*
- f. Provide cross training among library locations and departments in a "train-the-trainer" model with rotation of staffing and sharing of best practices *(mid-range)*
- g. Offer training in security, safety and crisis management, and update policies and procedures to ensure clarity and staff understanding *(mid-range)*

4. Build community presence by partnering and devising new and creative ways to raise awareness of library services and value

- a. Tell the library's story and connect the community to literacy services by launching outreach and marketing campaign (targeting community groups, festivals, and events) *(short-term; on-going)*
- b. Engage the community via social media, targeted email, and website *(short-term)*
- c. Build connections with schools to ensure presence at school orientations and other school functions (presentation/video, materials, etc.) *(short-term)*
- d. Distribute vibrant welcome packet when adults and children get their library cards *(short-term)*
- e. Partner with county departments and community organizations in offering library programs to the public and in sharing information about library programs and services throughout the community *(short-term)*
- f. Initiate campaign to grow library use among school-aged children by providing parents with library card applications for their children *(mid-range)*
- g. Explore installation of electronic outdoor signage for increased awareness of library activities *(mid-range)*



GOAL 3

Innovate to Support 21st Century Access That Empowers Our Citizens

1. Lead in early literacy efforts to ensure children start school ready to learn and positioned to excel

- a. Provide infants a “first library card” at hospitals / doctors’ offices along with information about literacy tools and early learning opportunities at libraries (ex. – Born to Read program) (*short-term*)
- b. Provide highly interactive learning and sensory stations for preschool children (*mid-range*)
- c. Partner with community organizations to expand reach of early literacy opportunities for all preschool children and their caregivers (*mid-range*)

2. Embrace and support active learning for children

- a. Collaborate closely with schools to implement services and programs that strengthen students’ access to reading and learning resources (*mid-range*)
- b. Offer engaging hands-on learning opportunities through interactive displays and community partnerships (*mid-range*)
- c. Provide incentive-based interactive programs to promote continued engagement with reading and learning (ex. – reading challenge competitions, rewards, etc.) (*long-range*)
- d. Organize periodic children’s art contest with winning design placed on library card (*long-range*)
- e. Explore providing after-school programming to meet families’ opportunities for access (*long-range*)
- f. Explore options for enhancing literacy opportunities for Spanish-speaking families (*long range*)



3. Provide and maintain state of the art technology and technology programming to ensure access across the entire community and bridge the digital divide

- a. Offer tablets for public use at all locations (*short-term*)
- b. Improve printing workflow and wireless printing for customers and staff (*short-term*)
- c. Provide a technology “petting zoo” with tablets and other high-tech devices (*short-term*)
- d. Offer classes and one-on-one sessions with customers to provide skill development in technology devices and resources, in partnership with IT Department (*short-term to mid-range*)
- e. Partner with IT Department to replace public and staff computers and update software every 4 years (*mid-range*)
- f. Ensure robust technology access and services by partnering with IT Department to update technology infrastructure, evaluate wireless access reliability, and improve as necessary (*mid-range*)
- g. Create and maintain Tech/Maker Spaces equipped with the latest technology like Microsoft Office, Movie maker, Go Pro, editing software, smart tables, etc. in partnership with IT Department (*mid-range*)



4. Be Catawba County's source for high-quality free lifelong learning programs that support personal growth for diverse community populations

- a. Provide robust family and adult literacy and learning programs to include technology learning, gardening, cooking, healthy living, movies, exercise, language learning, genealogy/local history, crafts, arts, and Spanish and Hmong classes (short-term)
- b. Foster shared passion for reading and discussion by facilitating book clubs (*mid-range*)
- c. Enhance access to literacy and lifelong learning opportunities and improved quality of life by partnering with literacy advocates, senior groups/centers, and other community groups (*mid-range*)
- d. Accommodate working people by offering evening programming and classes (*mid-range*)
- e. Enhance multi-lingual learning skills by exploring options for promoting a community conversation club (*long-range*)
- f. Encourage cross-generational collaboration between children and seniors with programs (*long-range*)
- g. Explore options for partnering in the community to provide adult literacy services (*long-range*)
- h. Enhance strategy for gathering ongoing feedback and input for data-driven program development (*short-term*)
- i. Explore options for facilitating use of self-guided learning and educational resources (*mid-range*)



5. Increase teen engagement with highly-interactive, creative programs, spaces, and resources

- a. Connect with teen population to determine needs (*short-term*)
- b. Explore possibility of implementing teen advisory group (*mid-range*)
- c. Create specialized teen spaces (*mid-range*)
- d. Align robust and specialized teen programming, (technology and arts, gaming, STEM, clubs, etc.) with identified needs (*mid-range*)

6. Offer resources and programming to further career readiness through employment and job skills development

- a. Partner with NC Works to provide employment and job skills counseling, both hard and soft skills (*short-term*)
- b. Partner with Small Business Administration, Manufacturing Solutions Center, etc. to provide relevant programs and workshops (*mid-range*)
- c. Ensure robust library resources that support job seekers and economic advancement (*mid-range*)
 1. Employment database subscriptions (*mid-range*)
 2. Job search-focused web and print resources (*mid-range*)

7. Engage the community by comprehensively integrating opportunities for citizens to volunteer and participate in library programs and services

