



Capital Area District Libraries

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Adopted by the
Capital Area
District Libraries
Board of Trustees
August 20, 2025

Strategic Plan Consultants:
Midwest Collaborative for Library Services
Jan Davidson

*A public-facing version of the Strategic Plan will be available online at
the Library's website: cadl.org*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A successful library is built on more than just books—it thrives through thoughtful planning, informed decisions, and a shared vision for the future. Strategic planning plays a vital role in guiding our work, ensuring that we align our services, resources, and goals with the evolving needs of our community. This process not only helps us set clear priorities but also strengthens our ability to adapt, innovate, and serve as a trusted resource for all.

The creation of this strategic plan required many hours of dedication and collaboration, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to bringing it to life.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

- **Library staff** for their invaluable contributions throughout the process, and for their ongoing commitment to making this plan a success.
- **Members of the Library Board of Trustees** for their active participation and steadfast support.
- **Members of the Strategic Planning Committee** for generously sharing their time and expertise, conducting interviews with community leaders, and engaging in planning discussions.
- **Community leaders** who participated in interviews, and **community members** who shared their aspirations for CADL through surveys and focus groups.

Finally, we offer our deepest appreciation to the **CADL community**. Your feedback, insights, and ongoing support have been instrumental in shaping this plan—and in guiding the future of our library.

Thank you,

Jenny Marr
CADL Executive Director

Library Board of Trustees

Brian Baer, Chairperson
Quinn O'Donnell, Vice-chairperson
Mark Stewart, Treasurer
Debora Bloomquist, Secretary
Sandy Drake, Meridian Township Appointee
Ashley Smith, County Appointee
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Strategic Planning Committee

Debora Bloomquist, Board	Jenny Marr, Staff
Heidi Butler, Staff	Victoria Meadows, Staff
Melissa Cole, Staff	Michael Moore, Staff
Janet Elliott, Staff	Thomas Moore, Staff
Heather Goupil, Staff	Quinn O'Donnell, Board
Jolee Hamlin, Staff	Thais Rousseau, Staff
Julie Laxton, Staff	Mark Stewart, Board

Operational Retreat Committee

Jeff Antaya, Staff	Jenny Marr, Staff
Heidi Butler, Staff	Miriam Mattison, Staff
Julie Chrisinske, Staff	Victoria Meadows, Staff
Melissa Cole, Staff	Sherri McConnell, Staff
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Janet Elliott, Staff	Thomas Moore, Staff
Jolee Hamlin, Staff	Thais Rousseau, Staff
Sheryl Cormicle Knox, Staff	Amanda Vorce, Staff
Julie Laxton, Staff	Karon Walter, Staff

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To guide this effort, the Board elected to work with consultants at the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) of Lansing, MI to facilitate a strategic planning process that would help to align library services with the aspirations and needs of the community. Based on the work of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, community members were asked, “What kind of community do you want?” and “How can the library help?”

Keeping in mind the context gained through data analysis and the community’s input, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended that the Library Board adopt four strategic service priorities for the period Fiscal Years 2026-2030. The priorities are:

Grow Community Relationships

We will continue to develop collaborations with other organizations and municipalities that leverage strengths and enhance available resources.

Improve Facilities

We will make improvements to existing library facilities and plan for welcoming new spaces to better meet our community’s needs.

Align Internal Operations

We will make organizational decisions that strive to find balance between aspirations and available resources to ensure CADL is impactful, responsive, and sustainable.

Strengthen User Experience

We will imagine and implement new strategies to increase access to all we have to offer and enrich engagement.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

In early 2025, the Library Board engaged consultants from the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) to lead the creation of a new strategic plan grounded in community needs. Using The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation’s “Turning Outward” approach, the process focused on understanding community aspirations, aligning library services with those needs, and placing community priorities first.

A fourteen-member Strategic Planning Committee—comprising Board and staff representatives—began its work on March 3, 2025, by identifying a diverse list of community leaders to interview. Using The Harwood Institute’s “Ask” exercise, committee members conducted 47 interviews to learn about residents’ aspirations, challenges, and ideas for how the library could help. In late March, MCLS facilitated five Community Conversations at different CADL branches, gathering input from 55 participants. Findings from both efforts were compiled into a Community Engagement Report and “Community Narrative.”

In April, a public survey was launched online and in print, generating 677 responses (plus 66 late responses retained for reference). Later that month, Board members, management, and staff participated in focus groups to review community input and consider the role the library should play in meeting local aspirations.

On May 16, 2025, the Strategic Planning Committee, joined by additional Board and staff members, held a Planning Retreat. Through a SOAR analysis, they identified the library’s strengths (forming core values), aspirations (shaping the vision), and opportunities (guiding service priorities). On June 4, an Operational Committee retreat focused on translating those priorities into a tactical plan, answering key questions about community and patron benefits, potential activities, measures of success, and necessary organizational adjustments.

Over the summer, MCLS worked closely with the Executive Director, Assistant Director, and staff to refine goals, objectives, and activities for the five-year plan. After approval, the Management Team will develop an initial implementation framework, assigning responsibilities, target dates, and measures for tracking progress. The resulting plan is designed to be both strategic and adaptable, evolving with the community’s needs over time.

CAPITAL AREA DISTRICT LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission Statement

CADL is dedicated to empowering our diverse communities to learn, imagine, and connect.

2025 Strategic Plan Vision

As an engaged and respected leader in our community, CADL builds strong relationships, nurtures growth, and provides innovative and accessible library services.

CADL's Core Values

Exceptional Collections

We skillfully develop and share a vast wealth of information, resources, and technology with people of varying needs and backgrounds and are committed to intellectual freedom for all.

Lifelong Learning

We are an essential source for individual development and ongoing education throughout people's lives, with particular expertise in early childhood literacy.

Compassionate Service

Our talented and highly dedicated staff engage patrons with joy, kindness, and respect, striving to provide a sense of safety and helpful, empathetic service.

Community-Centered Responsiveness

Through facilities and services spread across our wide, diverse geographic area, we cultivate relationships and strive to meet the evolving needs of our patrons.

Adaptability

We expect ongoing improvement and adjust services appropriately in an ever-changing world.

Widespread Accessibility

We work to remove barriers and increase access to information and services to meet people where they are.

Responsible Leadership

We hold ourselves accountable as good stewards of the resources entrusted to us and are recognized as a respected voice in the communities we serve. We believe in helping staff grow and develop throughout their career.

Focus Areas, Goals, and Objectives

Capital Area District Libraries' goals address the strategic priorities and aspirations identified by participants during the planning process. These goals serve as a roadmap for the next few years. Although these goals do not cover all of the Library's work, they are intended to set a strategic direction for the life of this plan. The objectives are performance measures that indicate "how much" and sometimes "by when." The goals will remain constant while objectives and potential opportunities may likely evolve during the living of the plan.

Focus Area 1: Grow Community Relationships

We will continue to develop collaborations with other organizations and municipalities that leverage strengths and enhance available resources.

Goal 1: Design an intentional, creative, and mutually beneficial partnership strategy.

Objectives:

- Our impactful partners say we have deepened the relationship between us
- CADL staff and municipal officials know each other by name
- Staff know and can articulate our strategy to grow impactful relationships
- Increase in the number of social media mentions of CADL by partner organizations
- Increase in the number of partnerships highlighted by CADL's social media

Goal 2: Actively pursue and embrace opportunities for leadership within our sphere of impact

Objectives:

- Find new opportunities for CADL to be at the table and have a voice
- Partner organizations say they recognize CADL as a leader in the community
- Community members say they think of CADL first when looking for difficult-to-find information

Goal 3: Champion a strong organizational network that leads to wider, unique services

Objectives:

- People will say that when they need to locate a resource, they find the information through CADL
- Staff report confidence in knowing where to refer people
- People say they live in a supportive community with a wide range of unique services available

Focus Area 2: Improve Facilities

We will make improvements to existing library facilities and plan for welcoming new spaces to better meet our community's needs.

Goal 1: Expand and update current spaces and develop library outreach access points to adequately meet needs and enhance services

Objectives:

- Survey respondents indicate satisfaction with CADL's facilities
- Increase in space available for programming and services as well as community use
- People say they can easily access CADL's materials
- Increased number of CADL touchpoints outside of branch buildings

Goal 2: Build understanding of CADL's organizational structure and services to enhance transparency in facilities-related decision making

Objectives:

- Increased touchpoints of education on CADL's organizational structure at the branches
- Increased cooperative efforts and initiatives with municipalities

Focus Area 3: Align Internal Operations

We will make organizational decisions that strive to find balance between aspirations and available resources to ensure CADL is impactful, responsive, and sustainable.

Goal 1: Strengthen and streamline communication to improve staff's wellbeing and effectiveness in customer service

Objectives:

- Staff report that they feel confident in their work and responsibilities
- Managers and staff report communication tools are being used more consistently and effectively
- A majority of survey respondents say our staff's customer service is Excellent or Above Average

Goal 2: Regularly evaluate our staffing structure to reinforce CADL's sustainability

Objectives:

- Staff report that CADL is a desired employer
- Staff of all levels utilize opportunities for professional development
- Staff report feeling part of a strong, collegial work team on a shared mission

Focus Area 4: Strengthen User Experience

We will imagine and implement new strategies to increase access to all we have to offer and enrich engagement.

Goal 1: Create a library user experience across our system that is consistently delightful and uplifting

Objectives:

- Increase in library use (both physical and digital)
- Number of “library joy” expressions shared with us increases each year
- Millage passed decisively
- Increase in the number of local artists engaged each year

Goal 2: Improve access to facilities, resources, and services and enhance wayfinding

Objectives:

- At least one new effort toward increasing access made each year
- Survey respondents say they have access to the materials and services they want from the library
- Survey respondents speak positively about their experience within library facilities