La Porte County Library Strategic Plan 2025–2029

Empowering People. Strengthening Community. Preserving Our Story.

Mission Statement

The La Porte County Public Library (LPCPL) empowers individuals and strengthens our community through access to knowledge, interest-driven learning, civic engagement, and the preservation of our shared stories.

Vision

A connected community where every individual has the curiosity, tools, and shared history to build a better future.

Core Principles

- Investment in People: Knowledgeable individuals form the foundation of a strong and resilient community.
- Access: Everyone deserves the tools to learn, question, and contribute.
- Collaboration: Partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and individuals to amplify impact and strengthen outcomes.
- Innovation: Curiosity drives problem-solving and creativity—traits essential for a thriving, adaptable community.
- Sustainability & Funding: Strategic financial stewardship and diverse funding sources ensure the Library's capacity to serve current and future generations.

Executive Summary

This five-year strategic plan outlines how the LPCPL will invest in the community's intellectual, economic, and cultural vitality.

The LPCPL's five strategic priorities—Reading, Lifelong Learning, Public Involvement, Preservation of Local History and Securing Funding—form the foundation for this investment. Together, they position the library as both a civic and economic catalyst, supporting education, workforce readiness, innovation, and a shared sense of place.

Our mission aligns with public and private sector goals: building a skilled workforce, fostering entrepreneurship, developing informed citizens, and preserving the cultural identity that drives local pride and prosperity.

To realize this vision, the Library will secure sustainable funding through public investment, private partnerships, grants, and philanthropic support, ensuring that innovation, learning, and preservation efforts remain resilient and responsive to community needs.

Call to Action: Read. Stay curious. Get involved. Invest.

Strategic Priorities

1. Reading: Foundation for Growth

Goal: Strengthen literacy and digital fluency across all ages.

- Launch literacy awareness campaigns.
- Expand reading and literacy programs aligned with education goals.
- Promote early reading readiness through youth initiatives.
- Partner with schools, employers, and civic groups to promote reading and information literacy.
- Integrate a focus on literacy into all reading programs.

Outcomes:

- Higher literacy and digital competency rates.
- Improved academic and career readiness.
- Reduced barriers to information access.

2. Lifelong Learning: Fuel for Innovation

Goal: Inspire continuous learning, creativity, and problem-solving.

- Develop learning labs, makerspaces, and professional learning hubs.
- Offer hands-on programs connecting interests with local educators and industry needs.
- Encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing networks linking businesses, educators, and learners.
- Collaborate with community partners to build a culture of curiosity.

Outcomes:

- Increased community innovation capacity.
- Stronger workforce pipelines.
- Broader participation in STEAM and creative sectors.

3. Public Involvement: Building Strong, Informed Communities

Goal: Strengthen civic collaboration and participation.

- Host public forums and leadership workshops on key issues.
- Partner with businesses and nonprofits to foster civic engagement and volunteerism.
- Promote civic literacy and access to reliable information.
- Collaborate with chambers of commerce and local government to align community priorities.

- Informed, engaged citizens.
- Greater trust in local institutions.
- Expanded cross-sector partnerships.

4. Preservation of Local History: Strengthening Identity

Goal: Preserve and celebrate local heritage to promote civic pride and economic opportunity.
- Digitize and archive local documents, photographs, and oral histories.
- Create heritage-based exhibits and events that draw visitors and celebrate community identity.
- Partner with schools, museums, and tourism entities to integrate local history into education and culture.

Outcomes:
- Increased cultural tourism and local visibility.
- Expanded placemaking education.
- Sustained community memory for future generations.

5. Securing Funding: Ensuring Sustainability and Impact

Goal: Ensure the Library has diversified, stable, and sustainable funding sources to support core operations, innovation, and long-term community impact.
- Develop a comprehensive funding strategy that balances public funding, private partnerships, philanthropy, and community investment.
- Build strong relationships with local, state, and federal agencies to secure grants and programmatic support.
- Engage businesses and community stakeholders in sponsorship, volunteer, and advocacy opportunities tied to library programs.
- Cultivate philanthropic giving through foundations, endowments, and donor programs to support special projects and preservation initiatives.
- Track funding performance and impact metrics to demonstrate accountability and inform future funding decisions.

Outcomes:
- Diversified and sustainable funding streams that reduce dependency on a single source.
- Increased grant and donation success.
- Enhanced ability to scale programs, innovate, and maintain long-term initiatives.
- Stronger alignment between library funding and measurable community outcomes.
- Transparent reporting and evidence of impact that builds trust with funders, policymakers, and the community.

Implementation Framework

Phase 1 (2025–2026)

- Establish literacy and learning benchmarks in partnership with schools, workforce agencies, and chambers of commerce.
- Launch "Curiosity Forums" linking businesses and residents through innovation challenges.
- Develop a funding strategy to identify and pursue diversified funding streams including grants, local government partnerships, business sponsorships, and philanthropic opportunities.

Phase 2 (2026–2028)

- Expand successful literacy and learning programs and scale proven models.
- Introduce recognition programs for businesses investing in employee learning and civic engagement.
- Create a Library Investment Council to align funders, donors, and community stakeholders with library priorities.

Phase 3 (2028–2029)

- Institutionalize high-impact initiatives and integrate them into long-term policy and funding frameworks.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure sustained community investment.

Funding Framework

Funding Source	Examples	Purpose
Public Funding	Local, State, and Federal monies	Core operations and capital projects
Private Partnerships	Corporate sponsorships, business collaborations	Innovation programs and workforce initiatives
Philanthropy	Foundation grants, individual donors, Library Endowment	Special projects, preservation, and outreach
Community Investment	Friends groups, civic clubs, crowdfunding	Program support and local engagement activities

Measuring Success

- Literacy and digital skill development.
- Participation in lifelong learning programs.
- Civic engagement and partnership growth.
- Preservation outcomes (digitized items, oral histories, exhibits).
- Economic indicators reflecting collaboration and innovation.
- Funding outcomes, including grant success rates, new partnerships, and increased private contributions.

Impact Summary

- For Individuals: Expanded skills, confidence, and opportunities.
- For Businesses: A literate, innovative, and adaptable workforce.
- For Policymakers: Stronger civic engagement, efficient alignment with public goals, and measurable returns on public investment.
- For Funders & Partners: Tangible community impact, fiscal accountability, and visible outcomes.
- For the Community: A vibrant, informed, and connected society rooted in shared heritage.

Appendix A

Statement of Community Needs and Goals

To ensure the LPCPL's Strategic Plan 2025–2029 reflects the priorities and aspirations of the community it serves, the planning process was intentionally inclusive, data-driven, and collaborative.

LPCPL partnered with a consultant to facilitate the planning process through a series of input meetings that included community members, staff, and Library Board members.

Participants were asked to reflect on library strengths, future possibilities, and community needs. The consultant compiled and analyzed all interview data to identify recurring themes, aspirations, and service opportunities. These findings became the foundation for the community-driven goals, outcomes, and strategic priorities included in this plan.

Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations

The planning process included a comprehensive review of library resources, including facilities, technology, collections, and staffing capacity to evaluate organizational strengths and identify areas for improvement needed to achieve the plan's strategic priorities.

Discussions addressed key operational components—staffing, funding, technology, facilities, collections, partnerships, and policies—to ensure the LPCPL's infrastructure aligns with community expectations and future growth.

Strategic Goals and Measurable Objectives

Five key strategic directions were identified to address community needs and guide library service delivery:

1. Reading: Foundation for Growth

2. Lifelong Learning: Fuel for Innovation

3. Public Involvement: Building Strong, Informed Communities

4. Preservation of Local History: Strengthening Identity

5. Securing Funding: Ensuring Sustainability and Impact

Each strategic priority includes clearly defined goals, measurable objectives, and targeted strategies that outline how progress will be achieved and assessed. The LPCPL's mission and vision statements were reaffirmed and refined to reflect the benefits residents gain from these service responses: empowerment through knowledge, engagement through learning, and pride through shared heritage.

A communication plan was also developed to ensure transparency and engagement throughout implementation, keeping residents informed of progress and impact.

Implementation and Evaluation

A phased Implementation Framework (2025–2029) was developed to guide action, assign responsibility, and ensure accountability across departments. Annual evaluations will measure both outputs (programs, participation, collections digitized) and outcomes (literacy gains, civic engagement, innovation impact).

Progress will be tracked through established performance metrics and shared in annual reports to the community and governing bodies, ensuring that goals remain aligned with evolving community needs.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

Sustaining excellence requires responsible stewardship and proactive funding strategies. LPCPL is committed to:

- Pursuing diverse and stable funding sources, including grants, partnerships, and philanthropic investment.
- Aligning financial planning with strategic priorities to ensure long-term viability.
- Demonstrating measurable returns on investment through community impact data.

Technology and Equipment Renewal

LPCPL will maintain a Technology Equipment Replacement Schedule to ensure up-to-date infrastructure supports innovation, digital literacy, and equitable access to information.

Professional Development and Organizational Growth

A Professional Development Strategy will ensure staff have ongoing opportunities to strengthen skills in leadership, technology, outreach, and customer service—building organizational resilience and capacity to deliver on the plan's vision.

Collaboration and Community Partnerships

Collaboration remains central to LPCPL's mission. Partnerships with schools, local government, businesses, cultural institutions, and neighboring libraries will enhance program reach, resource sharing, and community impact. Through shared purpose and collective action, these collaborations will amplify LPCPL's role as a hub of knowledge, connection, and civic life.

Appendix B

Technology Equipment Replacement Schedule

Note about the table below: LPCPL's approach to hardware and software purchase and replacement is one of continuous evaluation with a focus on fiscal responsibility. Computer hardware and peripherals typically have a four to five-year life cycle. Each year LPCPL evaluates any equipment at the end of its life cycle. If replacement is necessary to maintain operations, it is generally purchased if the budget allows. The same approach to purchasing software is taken as well. If it is needed in order to maintain services, it is updated or replaced. The current technological environment has driven LPCPL to adopt this method of updating and replacing equipment and software. The "x" in the columns below is an indicator of evaluation and not an indictor of an expenditure.

Category	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Staff Computers and Peripherals	x	x	x	x	x
Public Computers			x		
Network Infrastructure	x	x	x	x	x
Server Infrastructure	x			x	x
Staff Software	x	x	x	x	x
Public Use Technology	x	x	x	x	x
Public Printing	x	x	x	x	x
Security	x	x			x