



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

PREPARED BY:
STILLWATER COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
STILLWATER COUNTY LIBRARY DIRECTOR
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

INTRODUCTION

At Stillwater County Library, we are committed to providing the means for Stillwater County residents to learn, grow, and connect. We have developed this plan as our roadmap that sets the course for the library's future. With this plan, we aim to build upon our strengths and address our challenges to ensure that the library continues to meet the changing needs of county residents. Through collaboration and innovation, we will strive to make Stillwater County Library a vital resource of knowledge, inspiration, support, and community connection for years to come.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Discussions of launching a public library in Stillwater County began in 1917; however, it was not until 1919 that the Columbus Women's Club petitioned to establish a county library. The petition was successful, but the library was again held off due to the ongoing war.

From 1924 to 1928, the Columbus Women's Club successfully ran "Stillwater Library," a community library. First housed in the Little Stone Church in Columbus, it later moved to the second floor of the old Columbus State Bank building

In 1928, the library became county supported, and the Stillwater County Library was officially established in the first week of June of that year with books donated from the Stillwater Library. It was in a 900 square foot room located in the Stillwater County courthouse. The current location at 27 4th St N in Columbus, a building that was previously a doctor's office and a bakery, was purchased and remodeled in 1993.

Stillwater County had the first bookmobile permanently established in the state of Montana. It traveled approximately 600 miles a month between 1947-1957 until the costs could no longer be sustained.

A strategic planning committee was formed in 2010 with the goal of building a new library/community center. A steering committee that began in 2014 continued the work into 2017, but the goal of a new library was not reached.

In 2023, the Stillwater County Library Foundation was established with the mission to "raise vital funds for capital improvements and the expansion of quality services, programs, and events offered by Stillwater County Library." The current goal of the library is to have a new building by 2027.

MISSION

Stillwater County Library provides education, inspiration, innovation, and support.

VISION

Stillwater County Library expands access to knowledge, collaboration, connection, and creativity throughout the county.

CORE VALUES

- Service
- Growth
- Positively Impacting Lives
- Teamwork
- Curiosity
- Bringing people together

GOALS

1. SERVICE

THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, THE LIBRARY WILL SERVE ALL COMMUNITIES IN STILLWATER COUNTY, OFFERING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ALL AGES.

2. BUDGET

CONTINUALLY INCREASE LIBRARY FUNDING.

3. MARKETING

ADJUST MARKETING AS NEEDED IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT. INCREASE AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE LIBRARY AS A VITAL PUBLIC RESOURCE.

4. NEW BUILDING

FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BUILDING.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL 1: SERVICE

THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, THE LIBRARY WILL SERVE ALL COMMUNITIES IN STILLWATER COUNTY, OFFERING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ALL AGES.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE	YEAR(S)
Action A: Expand senior citizen outreach.	Staff	1
Action B: Expand outreach to high school	Staff	1-2
Action C: Provide two (2) programs per year in each key county community	Staff	2
Action D: Hire additional staff as needed.	Board/Staff	1-5
Action E: Identify needs not met elsewhere that the library can fulfill.	Board/Staff	1-5
Action F: Provide three (3) programs/year in key county communities	Staff	3-5

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL 2: BUDGET

CONTINUALLY INCREASE LIBRARY FUNDING.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE	YEAR(S)
Action A: Secure increased funding.	Board/Staff/County Commissioners	1-5
Action B: Locate and acquire grant funding.	Staff/Board/Foundation	1-5
Action C: Increase funding through donations and fundraising efforts.	Staff/Board/Foundation	1-5

VICE PRESIDENT

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL 3: MARKETING

ADJUST MARKETING AS NEEDED IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT. INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE LIBRARY AS A VITAL PUBLIC RESOURCE.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE	YEAR(S)
Action A: Develop a short narrative to promote services and positive perception of the library.	Staff/Board	1
Action B: Create a user-friendly, library-staff-managed website.	Staff/Board	1-3
Action C: Identify community contacts for collaboration.	Staff/Board	1-5
Action D: Identify and implement successful marketing methods.	Staff/Board	1-5
Action E: Develop and implement a promotional campaign. Explore hiring a consultant.	Staff/Board	2-5

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL 4: NEW BUILDING

FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BUILDING.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE	YEAR(S)
Action A: Raise funds.	Staff/Board/Foundation	1-2
Action B: Identify a new library building location.	Staff/Board/FCIP Committee/ County Commission/Foundation	1-2
Action C: Select an architect to adjust the previous building plans, hire a contractor, then oversee the construction.	Staff/Board/Building Committee/FCIP/County Commission/Foundation	1-5
Action D: Hold community meetings to provide information regarding the building project and garner support.	Staff/Board/Foundation	2-5

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In establishing the strategic planning goals, multiple surveys and meetings with groups throughout the county to inform people of library services and to gather input were conducted. A SWOT/SOAR revealed what reaching our goals looks like. Two areas addressed in the surveys were: 1. What library services are currently most used. 2. What did county residents want more of.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Each year, the library board and the director develop short term goals that lead to the fulfillment of the five-year goals established in this strategic plan. Some measurements of the success of meeting our goals are:

- Services offered throughout the county
- Increased usage of library services
- Recognized value of the library from county residents
- A new building

SURVEY RESULTS

Top Five Uses of the Library

- 1.Borrowing materials (books, devices, audio CDs, seeds, DVDs)
- 2.Adult programs
- 3.Children's programs
- 4.Book sale
- 5.To socialize

Top Survey Requests

- 1.Makerspace
- 2.Programs/Activities
- 3.Book Club
- 4.Partnerships
- 5.Wifi
- 6.Engaging with the community
- 7.Support (Materials, tech assistance, information)