

# Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library

## Strategic Plan

### Phase I Implementation

There are *four* major goals in the strategic plan, which cover the main aspects of Library function and services. Copies of the strategic plan are available at the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library for the general public.

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### Introduction

The purpose of the plan is to provide recommendations for the Board of Trustees, and guidance for the Library Director, and the Staff over the next two years. The plan focuses on gathering and evaluating data concerning the Library to continue or improve on providing information, knowledge and resources to the public. It is a living, not a static document, and will be reviewed and revised to meet the community's changing needs.

Planning Time Frame: The plan covers a *two year* period. It is the intent that the objectives listed under the *four* goals be implemented during this period.

Monitoring the Implementation of the Plan: The Director will report on *the progress and needed revisions* of the Plan at the regularly scheduled Board meetings.

## **PART II: CURRENT MISSION AND VISION**

**Mission**: Our library enriches the community through equitable access, meaning fairly for all concerned, to all library services, educational resources, and opportunities to explore new ideas and skills.

**Vision**: Our library strives to bring our community together to experience creativity, connection and an appreciation of learning and literacy, where staff members provide a welcoming, comfortable, and helpful environment.

## PART III: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal #1 Customer Service Excellence**

At Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library, we hold our community tax-payers and patrons in the highest regard. Our team members work tirelessly to create a welcoming environment and to that end, several steps will be undertaken to promote excellence in customer service.

#### A. Identifying Behavior

Library leadership and staff will define the fundamental behaviors that will support the principles of customer service excellence and develop our library staff expectations. Examples might include:

- a. Greetings and salutations.
- b. Methods for respectfully engaging patrons during mild, moderate, and severe complaints.
- c. Maintaining a professional environment through cleaning and organization standards.
- d. Using de-escalation techniques to inform patrons of rules violations while maintaining staff and patron safety.
- e. Methods of using resources to find solutions for patronage inquiries.
- f. Develop position appropriate cross training to better serve patrons.
- g. Engage Librarians to expand on current basic knowledge of librarianship.

Timeline: 60 days

#### B. Designing Training Implementation

The identified fundamental behaviors will become a part of institutional training for all new and existing staff, celebrated among team members when observed, and incorporated into the staff evaluation process.

- a. Training will be designed by the Director with input from the library leadership.
- b. 3 fundamental behaviors will be incorporated into training and evaluation throughout the first year.

Timeline: 30 days

#### C. Training and Implementation

- a. Training to be facilitated by the Director and Assistant Director.
- b. Director with the support from the Assistant Director, serves as the institutional champion for customer service excellence, conducting periodic reviews of the fundamentals, training, and ensuring continuous quality improvement.

- c. Every team member will begin a process of personal professional development and a review of all job tasks that an individual is assigned. Their knowledge, skills, and abilities will be demonstrated and whenever possible, strengthened through individualized training. Staff members who excel in the demonstration will be added to a New Hire Team and eligible to train others in the same position.
- d. To promote a learning atmosphere, team members will respectfully present concepts, ideas, techniques in librarianship to one another in individual and team building settings.
- e. Team members showing initiative for appropriate cross training in parallel areas will be celebrated.

Timeline: 60 days and ongoing

#### D. Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative measurements will be utilized to determine the effectiveness of staff training and to enable the Board along with the Director the opportunity to 'course correct' along the way if necessary. Examples include

Qualitative: Staff report increased confidence in addressing complaints with de-escalation techniques. Staff report a professional and welcoming work environment and increase in team member communication. Community members report the library as being a perceived valuable resource, welcoming, and less controversial in the public eye than in previous years.

Quantitative: A target goal as determined by the Board and Director is reached for the following:

- i. Visitor counts
  - ii. Circulation numbers
  - iii. Program attendance
  - iv. Staff outreach initiatives
  - v. Number of cross trained staff
- a. Library management will undertake an expansion of its staff evaluation process, increasing from semi-annually to quarterly.
  - b. New hire first year evaluations will be defined and incorporated into the onboarding process.
  - c. Fundamental behaviors of customer service excellence will be incorporated into the staff evaluation process as criteria for review and reinforcing this strategic priority.

- d. The Director will periodically engage in positive reinforcement with the staff to encourage the fundamental behaviors of customer service excellence.
  - i. Monthly staff appreciation award
  - ii. Recognition during staff meeting

Timeline End of First Year

## **Goal #2 Collections and Programs**

Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library is dedicated to providing taxpayers with an extensive collection and resources along with offering new and improved programming to fit the community's needs. The Library recognizes that opportunities will occur to offer new and exciting additions to the collection, services, and programs, and to accommodate those changes, important decisions to pause other activities may be necessary. To this end, staff will expand on services and pause others as needed with help from community responses and guided by Board policies.

### **A. Identifying Services**

Library leadership and staff will analyze current services and calculate community engagement to determine what needs are already being met. This will be done through calculating the number of attendees/usages for each category from the previous year.

Examples might include:

- a. Homebound usage.
- b. Digital resources.
- c. MeL resources.
- d. Special collections.
- e. Book collections.
- f. Library of Things.
- g. Maker Lab.
- h. Adult Programming.
- i. Youth Programming.

Timeline: 30 days

### **B. Designing Services**

Feedback from the community is required to know if the Library is meeting the needs of the community. This is done by utilizing surveys and asking for feedback from members of Library created community groups (2).

- a. Short patron survey to be handed out after each program.
- b. Feedback from staff running the program/service.

- c. Development of Teen Advisory Board-TAB (youth).
- d. Development of Patron Advisory Council- PAC (adult).
- e. Evaluation of 2025 services survey from community.
- f. Work with community representatives to reach those disengaged from the library (not active library users).

Timeline: 10 days

### C. Implementation

Approximately 25% of existing collections, services, and programs will be updated to meet the needs of the community.

1. Collections
  - a. Library collection team with staff support identify gaps in the collection and add to or adjust as needed to support community usage.
  - b. Library leadership and staff identify what purchase needs will support the collection for the year ahead.
2. Services
  - a. Library leadership and staff look into services requested by the community to determine if they fit within the financial scope of the Library.
  - b. Library leadership research ways to offset costs of service that benefits the community.
3. Programs
  - a. Library programming team with staff support identify programs to retire or pause to accommodate new community needed or requested programs. These programs include;
    - i. Programs per age group developed from community group feedback.
    - ii. Programs developed from community survey feedback.

Timeline: 60 days and ongoing

### D. Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative measurements will be utilized to determine the effectiveness of the new initiatives. This enables the Board along with the Director the opportunity to 'course correct' along the way if necessary. Examples include

Qualitative: Staff report patron feedback after program completion. Staff report feedback from patrons utilizing the collections and services. Staff engagement and interest in dedicating a portion of their efforts towards new and different library services.

Members of the community acknowledge the growth and efforts of the library to bring new and different value-added collections, programs, and services.

Quantitative: Past numbers are compared to current numbers in the following areas:

- i. Circulation numbers
  - ii. Program attendance vs Program type (i.e. garden, skills...)
  - iii. MeL requests
  - iv. Library of Things requests
  - v. Usage in Special collections
  - vi. Digital usage
- 
- a. Library leadership will request a post-program survey from each program completed to track numbers and growth.
  - b. A community wide service survey is sent out via the following channels , with an incentive to increase participation;
    - i. Social media
    - ii. Organizations- i.e Besser Museum, Boys/Girls Club
    - iii. Flyers with QR code
    - iv. Paper copies to Friends of the Library for distribution
    - v. Paper copies available at the Library

Timeline End of First Year

### **Goal #3 Community Outreach and Marketing**

Leadership recognizes opportunities for members and organizations of the community to become involved with the Library, while recognizing that gaining new exposure to potential patrons is critical to growing effective outreach.

- A. Identifying Potential Partners and Opportunities  
As a preliminary step, the leadership team, in collaboration with the strategic planning committee will identify current partnerships and collaborations and potential partners and collaborations. The potential partnerships might support a variety of outreach initiatives including;
  - a. Parks
  - b. Agencies
  - c. Schools
  - d. Cultural institutions
  - e. Service organizations

The director and designated members will make connections with the potential partners to explore needs and opportunities for collaboration, from basics such as on location story times to any number of imagined activities that might be mutually beneficial.

An “Outreach Tracker” contains details on contacts made by staff members, and opportunities being explored, developed, scheduled, and delivered. This will include current and potential partnerships.

Timeline: 30 days

B. Reimaging Marketing Team

The Marketing Team will reform to include members of the leadership team and staff to widen ideas and outreach initiatives. The new team will conduct a fun internal contest, inviting staff and board members to submit anonymous “Mascot” suggestions for the library’s outreach efforts. The winning suggestion will be celebrated with a press release, thereby announcing the mascot while serving as a teaser for the general public.

The Marketing Team will launch a marketing campaign to support outreach events with a common look, sound, feel, and language in advertising and promoting the events.

Timeline: 30 days

C. Planning and Documentation

Planning will occur for an increase of outreach activities by 10%, with approximately 20% of outreach events occurring at new venues or with new partners. This stretch goal is flexible depending on current partnerships and available partnerships. Potential partnerships are not limited to Alpena County. The Outreach Tracker will be shared in the monthly director’s report. Employees not traditionally engaged in Library Outreach will be scheduled to participate in events as either support staff or leaders (as relevant to their job description). This ensures the entire library workforce is supporting the initiative and working towards greater engagement with the community. To accommodate employee participation, schedules and events will be altered in order to meet the new demand.

Participation of employees in new events:

- a. Part time ~ less than 20 hours per week at least 1 event

- b. Part time ~ 20+ hours per week at least 2 events
- c. Full time ~35+ hours per week at least 3 events
- d. Facility Manager exempted due to time sensitive work related tasks

Timeline: Ongoing annually

D. Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative measurements will be utilized to determine the effectiveness of outreach and marketing. Examples might include the following:

Qualitative: Staff report a stronger sense of belonging and engagement with their role as a library employee as they work with colleagues towards a collective goal. Community leaders who are the recipients of outreach efforts will report their appreciation of the library staff efforts.

Quantitative: The number of programs with new partnerships will increase by 10% and the number offered at new venues will increase by 10%. Overall attendance will increase by 20% over the previous year.

Timeline End of Each Year

**Goal #4 Collaboration**

The library is mindful to strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations, while expanding/building upon other opportunities. The Director and the Board recognize that collaboration takes time and patience but results in outcomes that create synergies for the parties involved.

A. Inventory of Collaborations/Partnerships

The library will look at the information collected in Goal #3 part A that identified current partnerships. The leadership team will conduct a basic review of the circumstances that historically set the stage for the current partnerships, while documenting the nature of those benefits (i.e., STEAM learning, Resource sharing, etc.) to be published in the annual report and shared on the website.

Timeline: 30 days

B. Partnership Dialogue

Upon deep examination of the relationship's history, the partner entities will be invited to share further thoughts and ideas through a formal meeting, on what the

library and community partners might consider as a natural progression of their relationship to foster further value.

Timeline: 60 days

C. Partnership Appreciation

Those entities that are well established with a successful history of library collaboration will be nominated by the Library Director and considered for formal recognition by the Board of Trustees (either at a library board meeting, or at their work location), with a certificate of appreciation and press release. This will garner positive attention to both the library and the partner.

Timeline: 60 days

D. Potential Partnership

Benchmark the collaborative relationships that at least five (5) other libraries have in place and consider the potential of such relationships for ACL and similar institutions in the library's service area. If the benchmark review yields less than three new ideas, another five (5) libraries will be chosen for benchmarking.

Timeline: 60 days

E. Fostering Partnership

The Library Director with support from the Board of Trustees, will seek and make introductions in the community to foster potential partnerships. These potential partnerships will be invited to tour the library and sit in on a facilitated meeting with relevant staff members to further explore mutually beneficial opportunities.

Timeline: 60 days and ongoing

F. Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative measurements will be utilized to determine the effectiveness of benchmarking, prospecting of partnerships, and the outcomes of both existing and future partners. Examples might include the following:

Qualitative: Trustees, the Director, and Staff, experience a stronger sense of community belonging and growth due to the relationships that form through event and program collaboration. Organizations that haven't traditionally been seen as potential collaborators are seen engaging with the director and others for the

purpose of advancing collaboration. Staff members are engaged in the thoughts and ideas that might be generated due to the positive energy around existing partnerships. Community leaders sense the positive energy of partnerships and possibly generate even more ideas and opportunities in support of the library.

Quantitative: Benchmarking of other library collaborative partners is set between five and ten libraries. A minimum of two partnerships each year will participate in a tour and discussion around the value of formal partnership. The number of formally recognized new collaborative partners increases by 1-2 per year. Social media promotional videos will highlight each of these partnerships within four weeks of being formalized.

Timeline End of Each Year

## **Phase II- Data Analysis and Re-evaluation**

**One year after implementation of the two year strategic plan, the strategic planning committee will meet to discuss and analyze data collected from:**

- a. 10 question survey sent at the end of the first year to collect data using:**
  - i. Digital link to survey on library and collaborating organizations social media sites**
  - ii. In house paper copies**
  - iii. Paper copies sent to collaborating locations**
  - iv. Prize raffle for all returned surveys**
- b. Patron surveys conducted and collected after programs**
- c. Staff feedback from short questionnaire (TBD)**
- d. Evaluation data collected from goals**

**The Director will present the results to the Board of trustees with suggestions for amending the strategic plan as necessary.**

## **Phase III- Evaluating Strategic Plan Success**

**An in-house strategic committee consisting of the director, assistant director, tech. specialist and at least two board members will be formed to evaluate the success of the strategic plan by using the following data.**

- a. Data analysis from Phase II**
- b. 10 question survey sent at the end of the first year to collect data using:**

- i. Digital link to survey on library and collaborating organizations social media sites
- ii. In house paper copies
- iii. Paper copies sent to collaborating locations
- iv. Prize raffle for all returned surveys
- c. Patron surveys conducted and collected after programs
- d. Staff feedback from short questionnaire (TBD)
- e. One on one evaluation feedback with emphasis of staff cross training

The Director will present the findings to the Board of Trustees with suggestions for adjusting the second year of the strategic plan.

Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library  
 211 N First Av, Alpena, MI 49707  
 989-356-6188  
[www.alpenalibrary.org](http://www.alpenalibrary.org)

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all who helped shape Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library's Strategic Plan 202# - 202#.

Strategic Planning Committee

Christina Markowski-Director  
 Jessica Luther- Asst. Director  
 Nancy Moussau-Tech Specialist  
 Marie Dully-Community member  
 Carly Lixy-Community member  
 Laney Schultz- Community member  
 Rita-Marie Peters- Community member  
 Brian Mortimore- Consultant  
 Don LaBarre-State Historian  
 Debra Greenacre-previous Director

Board of Trustees

Dustin Budd- President  
 Jennifer Graham- Vice Pres.  
 Traci Collins- Secretary  
 Julie Byrnes-Treasurer  
 Joe Fulkerson- Member

Library staff

Community members

*Grateful thanks to Colleen Sikorski and Ashley Banas of University of Michigan for help with strategic measurements and data collection.*

## Overview of Planning Process

1. Conversation about strategic planning began with previous Director Eric Magness-Ubank in 2021 with bids from consulting firms; ReThinking Libraries, FastForward Libraries, and Midwest Collaborative for Library Services. Copies of “Strategic Planning for Public Libraries” by Joy L. Fuller handed it out to the leadership team.\*
2. Strategic planning restarted in July 2023 with new Director Debra Greenacre and leadership team.
3. August 17, 2023. The leadership team discusses goals/vision for the library.
4. The leadership team meets to develop updated mission, vision, and six core values on September 21, 2023.
5. Under the new Interim Director, Christina Markowski, the strategic planning continued with input from staff at the inservice day, January 31, 2025.
6. Markowski presents a draft of the Strategic Plan goals with staff insight and input to the Board of Trustees during the February 2025 board meeting.
7. Strategic Planning committee reforms with Christina Markowski and staff members, Jessica Luther and Nancy Mousseau in February 2025.
8. March 2025. Markowski reaches out to community stakeholders to join the Strategic Planning Committee. A request is sent to board members for a board liaison volunteer to join the committee. A 10 question preliminary survey is developed to send out to the community.
9. The 10 question preliminary survey opened from May 1st through May 31st, 2025. Paper copies were distributed and a digital copy was sent out over social media. News outlets were contacted with information.
10. Survey data analyzed in June 2025 and a committee with stakeholders is finalized.
11. Strategic Planning Committee meets July 17th 2025 to discuss survey results and initial strategic plan.
12. The committee meets August 27th, 2025 to discuss documents and develop 5 question secondary survey.
13. 5 question survey goes live September 2025. Luther sends in a proposal to University of Michigan for student project outreach.
14. Luther and Markowski meet with UofM students for an outreach proposal with the focus on why community members do not use the library on September 21st.

15. October 7th and 21st is a meeting with UofM students to develop an initial survey, and initiate contact with major community stakeholders.
  16. The committee meets October 16th, 2025 to discuss powerpoint, secondary survey, and finalize strategic plan.
  17. UofM students provide updates and data collection/analysis in November 2025. Finding sent to committee members for review.
  18. Strategic Plan presented to the Board of Trustees on November 19, 2025.
  19. The committee meets December 3, 2025 to discuss suggestions from the Board.
  20. Strategic Plan presented to the Board of Trustees on December 17, 2025.
  21. Suggestions from the board were sent to the Director who then sent out to committee members.
  22. Director and board president met with consultant Brian Mortimore on January 13th, 2026
  23. Follow up meeting with consultant and Director on January 23rd, 2026 to further discuss strategic document and a game plan to work together on the first goal and present it to the committee on February 5th.
  24. January 24, 2026 meeting between consultant and Director.
  25. The committee met February 12, 2026 to discuss suggestions from the Board and consultant.
  26. Presented Goal #1 of Strategic Plan to Board for feedback at Board of Trustee mtg Feb. 18th, 2026.
  27. March 13, 2026 Director met with Brian Mortimore to discuss goal #2 of Strategic Plan.
  28. April 2, 2026, Strategic Planning Committee met to discuss Phase I (Introduction, Mission, and Vision) of strategic plan and goal #2.
  29. Director presented Phase I (Introduction, Mission, Vision) and goal #2. Board approved Phase I (Introduction, Mission, Vision) of Strategic Plan and reviewed goal #2.
  30. April 5, Director met with Brian Mortimore to discuss goal #3 of Strategic Plan.
  31. May 12, 2026, Strategic Planning Committee met to discuss goal #3.
  32. Director presented goal #3 at May 20, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting for feedback.
  33. May 28, 2026 met with Brian Mortimore to discuss goal #4.
  34. June 16, 2026, Strategic Planning Committee met to discuss goal #4.
  35. Director presented goal #4 at June 17, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting for feedback.
- \* The leadership team is composed of director, assistant director, and department heads. At different stages of this process, the leadership can alternate depending on staffing changes.