

Shenandoah County Library System

Five Year Plan

Fiscal Year 2024 – Fiscal Year 2028

Adopted 08-03-23 by the Library Board of Trustees

Mission

To enrich the quality of life in the community by providing residents with access to the world of ideas, information, and creative experience.

Vision

The Shenandoah County Library System is an organization that fosters lifelong habits of learning, self-improvement, and self-expression. All library locations provide space and resources to support the educational, informational, and recreational needs of the community.

Introduction and Purpose

The Shenandoah County Library System consists of the County Library in Edinburg, and five Community Libraries located in Basye/Orkney Springs, Fort Valley, Mount Jackson, New Market, and Strasburg. The Library System's Five-Year Plan guides the Library Board of Trustees, Director, staff, and volunteers to achieve the mission and vision for the Library System. The plan considers a variety of factors that include economic climate, demographic trends, Shenandoah County priorities, and input from a variety of stakeholders. The Five-Year Plan is the capstone document guiding the overall direction of the Library System. It also references supporting documents as appropriate (Appendix I). The Library Board conducts an annual review of the plan and provides revisions where necessary.

Major Planning Areas

The Five-Year Plan contains six major planning areas that guide the comprehensive operation of the Library System. These planning areas have remained stable over previous long-range planning periods, allowing for consistency in our strategic

approach. Although there is generally no priority assigned to the order in which these are listed, we expect that facilities will drive many of the other goals for this planning period in the form of a major renovation and expansion of the current County Library in Edinburg.

Facilities

The Shenandoah County Library System strives to provide spaces that house healthy collections, support access to technology, and present opportunity for community engagement. Our efforts in this planning area over the next five years will be driven by the County Library renovation and expansion plans currently underway. The current library building in Edinburg is no longer large enough to meet our service needs. We require additional space to house our archives and local history documents, a variety of flexible use meeting spaces for library programming and outside groups, and additional room for library users to take advantage of our services and collections.

Goals in Progress

- Create spaces for individuals and groups to share ideas, collaborate, and expand community knowledge.
- Increase our capacity to preserve, protect, and make accessible the historical documents of Shenandoah County.
- Build support with the community, Board of Supervisors, and County Administration to secure funding for a major building renovation and expansion.
- Develop a plan for continued operation during the building renovation and construction.
- Support facility needs at Community Library locations through Foundation Funding

Goals Completed

Outreach and Publicity

This major goal area would most benefit by the addition of a paid position dedicated to community outreach and publicity. Many county residents are unaware of the full range of services provided by the Library System. Similarly, there are diverse communities in the county that we could better serve by soliciting feedback and responding to identified needs. Increasing awareness of the benefit our libraries provide to the community will result in expanded use of these resources. It will also solidify the community support necessary to reach our goals for facility expansion and additional staffing to maintain these services.

Goals in Progress

- Pursue funding to hire a Marketing and Outreach Coordinator to support the goals in this major planning area.
- Develop awareness of Library resources in the community via partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Schools, County Agencies, and nonprofit organizations.
- Increase number of active cardholders.
- Work with the Community Libraries as needed to help distribute information about their programs and events.
- Develop a library advocacy toolkit for use by the Library Board, Foundation, and other community advocates.
- Consider the development of a comprehensive marketing plan to expand the library's reach through traditional media, and electronic communication.
- Expand direct email marketing to include communication from individual Community Libraries, and more frequent delivery of information from the County Library.
- Expand the promotion of Library System resources available for High School students to encourage the use of student cards and increase library visits with this demographic.

Goals Completed

Annual review, revision, and evaluation

Collections and Services

We anticipate in the next five years that physical items will continue to account for a majority of our circulation. However, we do not anticipate a significant growth in the overall collection size for physical materials and believe that the item count for some formats may decrease significantly or disappear altogether. Any increase in the footprint for our physical collections will be based on organizing and presenting items to be more visually appealing, browsable, and more accessible. We believe the growth in both popularity and use of downloadable content will continue at a steady pace, which will require attention to our collection development policy, and our annual budgeting for materials.

Goals in Progress

- Optimize the quality, relevance, and size of our physical collections at all library locations through evidence-based weeding and selection.
- Target annual spending to reduce wait times for popular materials and meet the growing demand for online collections.
- Streamline current Collection Development Policy to simplify guidelines for selection and evaluation and include guidelines for selection of electronic resources and downloadable materials.
- Establish middle and high school libraries as satellite locations where students can pick up and return items via the Library Courier service.
- Expand school library card initiative to include access to physical materials for all students in grade 6 and above.
- Provide regular, age-appropriate programming for children ages 0-18, focusing on early literacy skills and social development.
- Seek partnerships with individuals and outside groups to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and recreational programming for adults.
- Make space available for businesses or educational institutions to establish a satellite workforce training and development location.

- Provide training, promotional, and financial support for programming for all ages at Community Library locations.

Goals Completed

Annual review, revision, and evaluation

Community Libraries

The Library System includes Community Libraries at Basye/Orkney Springs, Fort Valley, Mount Jackson, New Market, and Strasburg. These libraries are managed and operated by volunteers, supported by paid staff at the County Library. These volunteers allow us to expand our reach in the community and provide outstanding value to the taxpayer. As the System has grown, the pressure on volunteer workforce has increased at the larger libraries resulting in an increased need for paid support. Our long-term vision for the Library System is that it will continue to rely heavily on volunteers. However, it will be essential to make a financial investment in both personnel and facilities to ensure that this approach remains viable. Consistency of service at all locations is a high priority in this plan. The goals in this planning area focus on recruitment, training, and support from paid staff that is vital to achieving our mission and vision.

Goals in Progress

- Place paid circulation assistants at the New Market Area Library
- Develop the annual budget to support paid Library Manager positions at Strasburg and New Market.
- Prepare a budget and logistical plan for the Woodstock Library to join the Shenandoah County Library System if their volunteer membership expresses an interest in doing so.
- Expand formal training opportunities for Community Library volunteers, designated managers, and board leadership.
- Establish opportunities for volunteers from multiple locations to participate in both formal training and the informal sharing of ideas.

- Establish an annual volunteer appreciation celebration open to all volunteers at all locations.
- Support long term planning efforts for each individual community library location.

Goals Completed

Annual review, revision, and evaluation

Technology

Technology drives the Library System's ability to provide services, access to information, and collaborative spaces. The Library System aims to be proactive in providing access to digital formats and hands-on experience with new technologies. Our ability to engage with users in an online environment will be essential to meeting our mission and vision. We will also need to provide tools for our users to develop the tools to be capable and literate in a rapidly changing technological landscape.

Goals in Progress

- Provide access, instruction, and hands-on experience with emerging technologies.
- Focus on ease of use for technology and resources provided by the library.
- Provide adequate access to computers and high-speed internet, and wi-fi connectivity while prioritizing the availability of flexible-use public spaces.
- Consider ways in which the library can develop partnerships and expand services to become a technology incubator in the community.
- Expand available technology to support preservation of and access to local history documents held in the Shenandoah Room and Truban Archives.
- Support technological literacy through one-on-one sessions.

- Explore the feasibility of providing regular instructional opportunities related to workforce development.
- Continue sustainable replacement of computer equipment through the annual County budget cycle, and Capital Improvement Plan.

Goals Completed

Annual review, revision, and evaluation

Organization, Policy, and Leadership

The Library System recognizes the importance of continued internal improvement, and consistency of operations. To ensure that the organization runs smoothly and effectively, this plan acknowledges the need for revision and refinement of documentation and procedures. Leadership, training, and succession planning at all levels are crucial to the long-term health of the organization, and a primary focus of this goal area.

Goals in Progress

- Conduct a review of the Mission and Vision Statements for the Library System.
- Conduct a standard review of all Board-adopted policies every three years on a rotating schedule.
- Support professional development for full time staff by sponsoring memberships and supporting participation in Statewide and National professional organizations.
- Develop strategies and shared tools for volunteer recruitment and training among the member libraries.
- Provide opportunities to collect and respond to public feedback on library services, policy, and facilities.

- Work with the Archivist to digitize the Library System's public documents and improve public access to these documents.
- Develop a Disaster Response Plan

Goals Completed

Annual review, revision, and evaluation

Annual Review of Priorities and Benchmarks

In accordance with requirements from the Library of Virginia, the Library Board will review this plan on an annual basis, providing revisions and updates when necessary. Revisions and updates will be conducted by the Library Board Planning and Facilities Committee and added to each major goal area. Major revisions to the plan will be submitted for Library Board review and approval at the May quarterly meeting, and updates will be submitted to the Library of Virginia no later than August 1 of each year.

Appendix I – Associated Planning Documents

The Five Year Plan serves as a capstone planning document for the Shenandoah County Library System. The plan supports, and is enhanced by, a variety of additional planning documents that address system needs with more specificity. A list of these documents follows.

- Shenandoah Room and Truban Archives Strategic Plan
- Community Library Five Year Plans
- Shenandoah County Capital Improvement Plan
- Shenandoah County Library System Collection Development Policy
- Additional Planning Documents TBD*