



Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Connecting People

Introduction

Every few years, public libraries in Alberta create a Plan of Service, a way to make sure the programs and services they offer continue to meet the needs of the people they serve. In 2025, the Olds Municipal Library asked community members, patrons, and staff to share their ideas through surveys and focus groups. We wanted to know: what matters most to you, and how can the library support those needs?

Using what we heard, the Library Board and staff chose a set of Service Responses, broad focus areas that reflect how the library can make a meaningful difference in our community. From there, we built a three-year strategy designed to guide our work from 2026 to 2028.

Here's how the process worked:

- Choose Service Responses based on community priorities
- Write Goals that reflect what we hope to achieve
- Set Objectives with clear ways to measure success
- Create a Roadmap of programs and services to bring it all to life
- This plan is our promise to grow alongside Olds—responsive, relevant, and rooted in community.

67

Years of operations

40+

Connections to other Libraries

30,000+

Community Visitors annually

90,000+

Items Borrowed annually

“My hope is that everyone will find a place to explore, learn and discover who they are at the Library.”



Lesley Moody
Library Manager





Our Service Responses

We strive to help you...

Create Literate Children & Youth

The library will help children and youth develop the skills they need to become strong readers, lasting lovers of story, and successful lifelong learners.

Visit a Comfortable Place

We make the library a safe, cozy, and inclusive space where people can relax, meet others, or work quietly; both in-person and online.

Find, Evaluate and Use Information

The library teaches people how to search for, evaluate, and use information wisely so they can make smart choices and avoid being misled.

Know Your Community

The library is the hub where people can find out what's happening around them; local events, services, programs, and community support all in one place as well as celebrating the other people in their community.

Satisfy Your Curiosity

The library fuels a lifelong love of learning by giving people access to information, programs, and experiences that help them explore topics that interest them.



A Note about Roadmaps



Each set of Goals and Objectives is followed by a list of potential programs and service ideas. These were developed through thoughtful staff brainstorming and are intended to illustrate the kinds of initiatives the library may pursue in the coming years. As part of a living document, these ideas are not fixed plans. They may evolve in response to funding, staffing, and community needs, and should be viewed as a guidebook of possibilities rather than a definitive action plan.

Create Literate Children & Youth

Goal:

The library will support **families with young children** in developing early **literacy and learning confidence** and will foster early library engagement to **prepare children and families for school**.

Objective

By the end of 2028 there will be a 10% increase in the number of participants attending early literacy classes and using early literacy resources. Parents taking part in library programs will say they understand the importance of reading as a foundation for learning and report that the library helped prepare their children for school.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Circulation statistics for early, beginner reader, board book, and book kit collections
- Number of program attendees for literacy programs ages 0-5
- Survey questions asking whether they feel their children are developing early literacy and learning confidence.
- Survey question asking if they feel library programs prepared their children for school



Program and Service Roadmap



Programming:

Expand and Promote Early Literacy Programs

- Improve signage and marketing at service points (e.g., front desk).
- Offer family-friendly challenges to encourage participation
- Launch Family Book Clubs.
- Design programs that help children become comfortable with books and longer reading sessions, (school readiness).
- Continue core early literacy offerings like Story Time and Rhyme Time, reinforcing reading routines.

Embed Library Services in the Community

- Host pop-up story hours in parks, the pool, or clinics .
- Promote services in immunization clinics, dental offices, etc.
- Make outreach consistent and visible across the community.

Ensure School Readiness for Families

- Work with educators to embed curriculum readiness into library programs for young learners.
- Invite families entering kindergarten to sign up for a library card.

Advocacy:

Build relationships with daycares and day homes to put books directly into children's hands.

- Arrange regular visits from library staff or offer curated book kits for loan.
- Encourage group participation in early literacy programs.

Collections:

Improve the way early chapter books are shelved and displayed to encourage independent reading.

- Group by theme, reading level, or character familiarity.
- Use kid-friendly signage and face-out shelving to increase visibility.

Increase Funding for Literacy Collections

- Secure additional resources to expand books and materials supporting early learning and reading readiness.
- Provide Family Book Club Kits with age-appropriate selections for both adults and kids to encourage intergenerational discussion and bonding.

Displays and Passive Programs:

Create Book Lists and Read-Aloud Resources by Age.

- Offer curated read-aloud book lists organized by age group to support caregivers and families in choosing quality shared reading materials.

Create Literate Children & Youth

Program and Service Roadmap

Programs:

Seasonal Literacy Programming for Youth

- Run fresh reading programs each season, including in-person literacy activities and library-led programs at local schools.
- Rotate themes to keep content engaging (e.g., mystery month, genre challenges, seasonal reading quests).

Integrate Literacy into Existing Youth Programs

- Embed literacy goals or reading components into established youth offerings (e.g., after-school programs, maker sessions, clubs).
- Use opportunities where teens are already present to promote reading and library resources.

Center Programs Around Peer Connection and Discussion

- Establish regular reading-focused gatherings like a Teen Book Club or quarterly themed series with discussion, activities, and incentives.
- Include opportunities for teens to lead or co-design program elements.

Displays and Passive Programs:

In-House Reading Challenges with Physical Prompts

- Shift from online-only reading challenges to in-library prompts like: “Read a Mystery” or “Read a Red Book.”
- Use interactive displays and weekly mini-goals to foster engagement inside the library.

Offer Meaningful Incentives

- Provide prizes, certificates, or themed rewards for participation in reading programs and challenges.
- Ensure the incentives appeal to a wide age range and include both fun and recognition-based options.

Collections:

Expand and Promote Youth Access to Resources

- Increase the number and visibility of teen/youth titles in Libby and physical collections.
- Feature age-relevant books in displays, programs, and staff recommendations.

Goal:

The Library will empower **youth and teens** through accessible, engaging **literacy development** opportunities.

Objective

By the end of 2028, there will be a 10% increase in the number of youth engaged in programs (in person and online), and use of collections that develop literacy skills.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Circulation statistics for Youth collections including Junior Non-Fiction, Juvenile Fiction and Youth Fiction in all formats.
- Program statistics that increase literacy skills in reading, numeracy, science, art, and digital skills in youth.



Visit a Comfortable Place

Goal:

The library will support **New Canadians** through **inclusive resources and community focused services**, and will **celebrate cultural diversity** through inclusive spaces, programs, and resources.

Objective

By the end of 2028, there will be a 10% increase in the number of participants attending ELL programs and accessing library materials and community resources that support their needs.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Track circulation stats of ELL resources.
- Track the number of program attendees.
- Track the number of support questions asked.
- Track the number of learners connected with tutors.



Program and Service Roadmap

Programs:

Offer ELL Programs and Cultural Sharing Events

- Include English Language Learning classes alongside community-building events like cultural potlucks to foster connection and language practice.
- Bring in representatives from established cultural communities to connect with newcomers and share integration experiences or support.

Celebrate Cultural Diversity Through Community Engagement

- Invite community members to share their culture, beliefs, and traditions through presentations, storytelling, or creative displays.
- Host community potlucks and similar social gatherings that bring diverse groups together to celebrate and connect.

Displays and Passive Programs:

Feature "Community Person of Interest" Profiles

- Highlight local individuals from diverse backgrounds through displays or interviews to celebrate representation and build familiarity; "Who's in your neighbourhood?"

Expand Collections and Signage for New Canadians

- Increase library materials in multiple languages and ensure signage and brochures are available in those languages to help New Canadians feel seen and supported.

Establish a "Welcome Wagon" Presence at the Library

- Create a dedicated hub for newcomers that includes community info, service connections, and integration support.
- Compile and maintain an accessible list or guide of local programs, services, and supports relevant to New Canadians. Include physical and digital formats.
- Partner with local and regional cultural organizations, businesses, and community leaders to foster belonging and offer mentorship or peer-support opportunities.

Collections:

Expand and Promote Culturally Diverse Materials

- Increase the library's collection of materials in multiple languages.
- Highlight these resources through displays and online tools (e.g., promote multilingual databases like Niche Academy or other relevant platforms).

Visit a Comfortable Place

Program and Service Roadmap

Display and Passive Programs:

Promote Inclusivity Through Visible Signals and Partnerships

- Examples include the use of LGBTQ+ Safe Space stickers and explore partnerships with groups like the Gay-Straight Alliances to reinforce the library as a safe, inclusive space for all.

Encourage Patron Reflection and Feedback on Welcoming Practices

- Create interactive displays (e.g., “Love Your Library”) that invite patrons to share what makes them feel welcome, and provide ongoing opportunities for feedback, including simple feedback slips.

Encourage Passive Engagement Opportunities

- Provide passive programs (e.g., puzzles, self-guided activities, quiet stations) to make spaces inviting even when no formal programming is taking place.

Staff Training:

Support a Culture of Welcoming and Hospitality

- Train staff in practicing inclusive, welcoming attitudes, especially toward families, newcomers, and patrons with young children. (e.g. make accommodations and offer support to parents, even when children are noisy or unsettled.)

Facility:

Provide Responsive and Flexible Use of Space

- Proactively offer meeting or study spaces when a need is identified, even if not pre-booked, and post signage in spaces clearly so patrons know what’s open for use.
- Ensure spaces like meeting rooms, exam rooms, and makerspaces have clear evaluation forms so users can share their experiences and suggest improvements.
- Schedule more programs that intentionally use different rooms, helping people see their purpose and potential.

Increase Comfort and Accessibility in Library Spaces

- Add more comfortable and varied seating, including enclosed or private workspaces (e.g., desks, tables, and chairs for solo or quiet work).
- Invest in new furniture to refresh and modernize high-traffic areas.



Goal:

The library will ensure all community members feel a **sense of belonging and safety** within library spaces and create flexible, comfortable, and **welcoming environments** that support diverse ways of using library spaces.

Objective

Annually, all library spaces will be in use by patrons who have stayed in the library at least 50% of the time.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Daily count of library space usage at regular intervals.
- Question on the annual survey that asks patrons if they feel a sense of belonging and safety within library spaces.
- Patron stories recorded that showcase a sense of belonging and safety in the library.



Find, Evaluate & Use Information

Goal:

The library will strengthen **digital literacy** for all age groups to support living in a **safe digital world**.

Objective 1

From the beginning of 2026 to the end of 2028, there will be an increase in the number of patrons who feel safe using and navigating the online world

Objective 2

By the end of 2028, there will be a 10% increase in the number of patrons asking questions about and attending programs about online safety.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Survey question asking if people feel safer using and navigating the online world after attending programs.
- Track the number of requests related to digital safety annually.
- Track the number of patrons attending programs about online safety.



Program and Service Roadmap



Programs:

Offer and Promote Online Safety Education

- Provide regular online safety courses targeted to different audiences (e.g., seniors, parents, youth).
- Continue and grow programs like Silver Surfers for older adults and others who struggle with technology.
- Offer kid-focused programs on topics like online gaming safety and digital citizenship.
- Develop take-home resources for seniors and parents who may prefer print.
- Reintroduce and promote 1-on-1 tech help sessions more visibly to the public.

Partner with Experts for Deeper Community Learning

- Invite guest speakers (e.g., local RCMP, cybersecurity professionals) to deliver talks on digital safety, privacy, and responsible online behavior.

Displays and Passive Programs:

Create and Share Up-to-Date Digital Safety Information

- Post printed materials throughout the library about current scams, digital threats, and safety best practices.
- Share updates internally during staff meetings and externally through bulletin boards, displays, or newsletters.
- Frame library staff as “digital allies” to encourage approachability.
- Use signage or marketing campaigns to make the library feel like a safe space for digital questions.
- Create engaging posters or displays about scams, online privacy, and trending topics (e.g., AI, social media).
- Distribute printed take-home resources for parents, seniors, and other vulnerable groups.

Staff Training:

Normalize Help-Seeking and Build Trust with Patrons

- Publicly promote the message that “there’s no shame in asking for help” when it comes to technology or online safety.
- Train all staff to be confident and compassionate when assisting with tech-related concerns.

Collections:

Support with Resources and Passive Education

- Maintain a robust collection of materials and books on cybersecurity, online safety, and digital literacy.

Find, Evaluate & Use Information

Program and Service Roadmap

Programs

Offer Programs on Research and Media Literacy

- Host regular classes on how to find credible information, evaluate sources, and dispel fake news.
- Run monthly “fireplace conversations” or informal forums where patrons can ask questions and explore current issues.

Staff Training:

Create a Culture of Inquiry and Questioning

- Use “Ask Us” buttons and signage to invite patrons to challenge staff with questions.
- Encourage curiosity by framing the library as a space for respectful dialogue and investigation.

Track and Respond to Patron Information Needs

- Record the number and type of questions asked about controversial or complex topics.
- Use this data to refine services and displays over time.

Displays and Passive Programs:

- Facilitate Dialogue Through Community Displays and Feedback.
- Set up “Controversial Topics” displays paired with feedback forms or prompts that invite patron input.
- Showcase books and tools on how to give, receive, and interpret information effectively.
- Introduce a weekly rotation where staff highlight two books on a current issues, (Think: “Hot Topic Thursdays”).
- Set up a “What in the World?” display or a current events board that invites patrons to ask questions and suggest topics they want to learn more about.
- Provide whiteboards, sticky notes, or drop boxes to gather responses.

Collections:

Develop a Targeted Plan for Current Events and ANF Purchasing

- Evaluate the collection to confirm that it reflects a broad range of viewpoints across social, political, and cultural issues.
- Create a structured selection strategy with specific goals for materials that reflect emerging topics.
- Ensure staff are equipped to recommend and highlight timely content.

Actively Respond to Patron Interests and Requests

- Encourage patrons to suggest materials through write-in prompts like “Looking for ___?”

Goal:

The library will promote critical thinking and informed decision making in a complex information landscape, and provide a balanced collection promoting the discovery of all sides of each issue.

Objective 1

By the end of 2028, there will be an increase in the number of patrons asking for balanced information on current and diverse topics.

Objective 2

By the end of 2028, collections that highlight information about current events and controversial topics will show a balanced coverage of information.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Tracking reference requests that ask for balanced information or information on both sides of an issue. (i.e. Politics, Oil & Gas, LGBTQ issues).
- Track collection usage on specific topics, tracking both sides of the issue. (i.e. Politics, Oil & Gas, LGBTQ issues).
- Annual collection audit of current trends and controversial topics.
- Annual survey questions about balanced library collections.



Satisfy Curiosity

Goal:

Residents of Olds and area will have programs and collections that support hobbyists, tinkerers, artists, and lifelong learners.

Objective 1

By the end of 2028 there will be a 15-20% increase in the number of people attending programs and using resources geared toward hobbyists, tinkerers, artists, and lifelong learners.

Objective 2

By the end of 2028, the board will research the possibility of funding patron-requested online resources that are not funded by Parkland Regional Library System or the Alberta Government.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Track circulation of collections including Adult Non-Fiction (physical and digital) and Library of Things.
- Number of program attendees.
- Year-end survey or program evaluation question asking patrons if they feel the library is helping them reach their learning goals.
- Completion of study and decision or plan in place for future funding.



Program and Service Roadmap



Programs:

Develop Practical, and Art-Centered Learning Programs

- Offer tinker-style workshops and classes focused on STEAM, life skills, and practical knowledge (e.g., fixing things, prototyping, basic engineering).

Introduce Life Skills and Lifelong Learning Opportunities

- Host classes or guest-led sessions on everyday life skills (e.g., budgeting, resumes, digital literacy).
- Curate and promote free or low-cost online learning platforms like Coursera, Khan Academy, or LinkedIn Learning.

Displays and Passive Programs:

Position New technologies as a Core Learning Service

- Highlight the 3D printer not just as a tech tool, but as a gateway to hands-on learning, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Research and promote new and emerging technology.

Curate and Promote Themed Learning Displays

- Regularly update in-library displays focused on learning topics.
- Track usage during each display's timeframe.

Improve Patron Resource Discovery

- Provide instruction on how to locate materials within the library.
- Promote online resources and how to access them.
- Ensure signage and catalog systems support easy discovery.

Collections:

Create Backpack Kits for Independent Exploration

- Assemble themed kits that encourage self-directed learning across subjects—science, engineering, problem-solving.

Align Collections and Programs with Community Interests

- Conduct surveys to identify community learning interests.
- Reflect these interests in both physical collections and programming choices.

Promotion and Advertising:

Feature Library Resources in Newsletters and Marketing

- Create a recurring "Did You Know?" or resource spotlight in newsletters and other communications to highlight lesser-known materials and services.

Know your Community

Program and Service Roadmap

Staff Training:

Centralize Community Information for Staff Access

- Maintain a visible staff info board in the staff room with an up-to-date calendar of community events.
- Create a community binder or file at the front desk that is regularly updated and easily accessible for quick reference.
- Encourage staff to share local updates they learn outside of work.
- Implement a system to keep all staff informed of upcoming community events the library is involved in or should be aware of.

Establish Communication Routines Around Community Updates

- Dedicate a section of regular staff meetings to “What’s Happening in Town” to share upcoming events and opportunities.
- Encourage all staff to read and engage with partner emails, and know where to find that information when needed.

Advocacy:

Actively Build Relationships with Local Groups

- Invite community organizations to share their news, events, and materials with the library. (Note: trackability may be limited, but the visibility and trust-building are valuable).
- Attend interagency meetings to stay informed and strengthen connections with partner organizations.

Goal:

Position the library as a connector to local events, services, and volunteer opportunities.

Objective 1

By the end of 2028, there will be a 20% increase in the number of requests staff receive about community information, programs, and groups.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Track reference requests about community-specific information

Goal:

The library will foster **strong partnerships** with community organizations to enhance local impact.

Objective 1

By the end of 2028, there will be a 15% increase in the number of community groups using the library resources and collections, and choosing to partner with us.

Measurable Tracking Metrics

- Track the number of community groups booking our space.
- Track the number of programs offered by partnering with community groups.
- Track the use of library materials by community groups.

Program and Service Roadmap

Programs:

Collaborate on Programs and Shared Events

- Co-develop programs with other organizations; schools, local businesses, service agencies—especially around performances, showcases, or learning events.
- Offer the library as a venue to support event promotion, such as helping performers, groups, or businesses draw audiences.

Advocacy:

- Attend and Engage in Local Events and Networks
- Take part in quarterly interagency meetings (host or attend).
- Maintain a presence at community showcases, launches, and public events by setting up booths, attending as guests, or co-hosting.
- Deliver annual updates at service clubs and similar gatherings to share what the library is doing and build visibility.

Improve Communication with Community Groups

- Send out a newsletter specifically for community groups, keeping them informed of library programs & services.
- Reach out proactively to establish new partnerships and keep existing ones active.

Create and Promote a Central Hub for Local Events

- Maintain a community events brochure and/or webpage that includes local happenings, including partner events.
- Make it easy for groups to share events with the library and for patrons to discover what’s happening in town.

