FY 2022-2024
GASTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLAN
“Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.”

- Sidney Sheldon
# Gaston County Public Library Strategic Plan

## Mission, Vision, and Purpose

Foster literacy efforts from infancy through adulthood to develop an inquisitive, inventive, and enlightened community of lifelong learners.

## Outreach

Implement a comprehensive outreach plan to broaden the Library’s community impact by engaging underserved audiences.

## Technology

Continue to create and implement a living technology plan that meets changing in-house and community needs.

## Inclusivity

Make inclusivity of all people a priority in library collections, programs, and services.

## Local History

Preserve and promote local history and genealogy resources.

## Organizational Culture

Create a highly engaged and fulfilled Library staff.

## Acknowledgements
GASTON COUNTY

Mission Statement
“Providing excellent public service every day.”

Vision
Gaston County Government will be a model of excellence in public service leadership, innovation, collaboration and inclusion, ensuring the safety and well-being of residents, preserving natural resources, and providing recreational, cultural, and economic opportunities that lead to global success and set the stage for future generations.

GASTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Purpose
The Gaston County Public Library will serve the citizens of Gaston County and be a vital, inclusive, and evolving resource dedicated to creating a connected, collaborative, and engaged community through literacy, recreation, and lifelong learning.
Core Values

Core Values represent the fundamental beliefs or guiding principles of the organization. The Library’s Core Values direct us in our service to Gaston County and in our interactions with one another.

**We Value People.**
**Compassion, Inclusivity, and Respect for All**
The Library is open, inclusive, and welcoming to all. Our interactions are respectful, polite, and professional. We strive to understand, recognize, and honor a diversity of culture, experience, and perspective. Our branches are welcoming community centers for anyone who wishes to read, relax, discover, and connect.

**We Value Library Employees.**
**Equity, Staff Development, and Well-Being**
We acknowledge the unique talents and contributions of each Library employee. We offer opportunities to grow, to develop, and to reach their career goals. We actively support the importance of their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. We take strides to ensure the equitable treatment of every team member at every Library location.

**We Value Relationships.**
**Integrity, Transparency, and Trust**
The Library values its role as an institution of trust. We are committed to providing the resources needed by the community while at the same time protecting the privacy of our citizens. We uphold and use as guides the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics and Library Bill of Rights.

**We Value Quality and Creativity.**
**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**
The Library is committed to being agile and responsive in making current resources, services, and technology available to all. We leverage best practices and continually pursue knowledge to remain relevant, effective, and efficient in our service to Gaston County. We seek innovative solutions to remove barriers and provide improved access to all.

**We Value Our Resources and Resiliency.**
**Stewardship and Sustainability**
We value the financial support of the County and are conscientious stewards of the assets needed to provide quality resources and services. We stay actively aware of trends in Library services and make informed decisions in the provision of our materials and services. We employ effective and efficient means to measure and produce excellent results.
Gaston County Public Library History

The history of library service in Gaston County began in 1885 as a 50¢ paid subscription library available through the Gastonia Gazette and affordable to only a few. It has continued throughout the last 136 years to become the current 10 branch system with fine-free access for all Gaston County residents. With the first official location opening above Dr. D. E. McConnell’s office in January 1905, the Gastonia Public Library later became the Gaston County Public Library in 1937. Gaston County then joined with Lincoln County in 1964 to form a two county Gaston-Lincoln Regional System, which separated in 2012 returning the Gaston County Public Library to the current single county system. Through all the changes in name, the changes in location, and the changes in access, the Library’s commitment to being open and welcoming to all has not changed.

We value our history and honor the lessons we can learn from it. As we create new history and embrace more changes, we are dedicated to providing access to materials, resources, and services that will allow Gaston County residents to become more connected and engaged in their pursuit of literacy, recreation, and lifelong learning.

Locations

1905 – Gastonia Public Library opens as a paid subscription library above a doctor’s office.
1931 – First library building opened on West Second Avenue.
1934-1936 – Branch libraries were opened in Dallas, Cherryville, Mt. Holly, and Belmont.
1935 – The first Library for African-Americans organized at Highland High School.
1937 - Name changed from Gastonia Public Library to Gaston County Public Library. The Highland High School location became an official branch.
1959 - New branch libraries opened in Bessemer City, Stanley, and Lowell.
1964 - Gaston County joined with Lincoln County to become the Gaston-Lincoln Regional Library System, with headquarters in Gastonia.
1978 - The new Main Library building on 1555 East Garrison Blvd. in Gastonia opened to the public.
1992 – Erwin Center Branch Library opened in City of Gastonia’s Erwin Recreation Center. This branch was a cooperative effort between the City of Gastonia and Gaston County governments.
2000 – Union Road Branch opens
2001 – Erwin Center Branch Library was renamed the James Ferguson Branch.
2012 – The Gaston-Lincoln Regional Library System dissolved into individual county systems. Both systems still honor library cards from either county at no charge.

Technology

1989 - Computerized catalog system replaced the paper-based index card catalog.
1996 - Internet and World Wide Web available at Main for staff and patrons.
2004 - Public Access Computer Center opened at Main. The PACC gave patrons self-service access to PCs with Internet and Office 2000.
2005 - New Polaris Integrated Library System, with online catalog, circulation, cataloging, acquisitions, serials control and system administration.
2013 - Ferguson Branch Library became the first free wireless Internet Wi-Fi hotspot.
2016-2018 – Tech@Lowell and BC@BC became tech branches with 3D printing and Makerspaces
2021 – All locations have 24/7 Wi-Fi access in their parking lots.

Services

1937 – First bookmobile service began.
1944 - Purchased projector and started a film collection.
1955 - The “Friends of the Library” organized.
1964 – First coin-operated photocopier installed.
1979 - Dial-A-Story service began and averaged 8,000 telephone calls a month.
1985 – Videotapes added to the collection.
2004 - Added DVDs for children and adults.
2006 - Library website launched.
2015 – Laptop checkout for in-house use.
2021 – Checkout of magazines begins.
Strategic Focus Areas and Goals

**LITERACY**  
Foster literacy efforts from infancy through adulthood to develop an inquisitive, inventive, and enlightened community of lifelong learners.

### Strategic Focus Areas and Goals

#### L1. Childhood Literacy - By 2024, increase childhood literacy initiatives to ensure children have the best foundation for learning.

- Strengthen and grow educational partnerships including homeschooils.
- Create an atmosphere for exploration that educates children, parents, and caregivers and that promotes successful learning.
- Continuously train staff in the utilization of evidence-based literacy practices.
- Continue to expand the WithOut Walls (WOW) library card program (card # is student ID #) to more local schools and expand access to include physical items.

#### Performance Targets:

- Increase participation in and completion of Summer Reading by 2% annually.
- Provide all GCS students access to physical items with their WOW card by Fall 2023.

#### Performance Metrics:

- Annual Summer Reading Statistics.
- Number of schools and students with access to physical items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Collaborate with public, private and home schools and the Gaston Literacy Council. Conduct annual surveys of literacy partners and summer reading participants to determine efficacy of programming.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Use survey data to adjust/improve programming as needed. Seek out best practices from other library systems and literacy organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Use funding and resources from the State Library of NC and other grant opportunities to foster literacy efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Identify and participate in at least one (1) training or networking opportunity in evidence-based literacy practices per year for staff involved.</td>
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</table>
**LITERACY**

Foster literacy efforts from infancy through adulthood to develop an inquisitive, inventive, and enlightened community of lifelong learners.

**L2. Adult Literacy** - By 2024, increase adult literacy rates by providing accessibility to resources that support adult learners.

- Strengthen and grow partnerships for GED, ESL, and workforce development success.
- Provide high interest literary resources that engage readers and assist individuals in developing practical skills.
- Partner with high schools for college and career programming.

**Performance Targets:**

- Add 1,500 additional adult library card holders by 2024.
- Over three years, increase workforce development programming by 20%.

**Performance Metrics:**

- Data reports from Library ILS system.
- Monthly statistics reports from all Library locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Collaborate with high schools, Gaston College, NC Works, and other community organizations to offer adult literacy programs. Survey partners and participants to determine efficacy of programs. Seek out nontraditional locations outside of Library walls.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Take advantage of new platforms and technology that become available, such as online video tutorials, to offer the most up-to-date resources possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Seek grants and other funding opportunities that support adult literacy.</td>
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<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Identify and participate in at least one (1) training or networking opportunity in evidence-based adult literacy practices per year for staff involved.</td>
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**County Initiative/Target**

**Collaborative Goal**

**Organizational Culture Goal**

**Stretch Goal**

**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**

Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being

Economic Development & Planned Growth

Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities

FY2022-2024 Gaston County Public Library Strategic Plan
LITERACY

Foster literacy efforts from infancy through adulthood to develop an inquisitive, inventive, and enlightened community of lifelong learners.

**L3. Digital Literacy** - By 2024, increase digital literacy programming to equip residents of all ages with the digital skills needed to maneuver in an increasingly technological world.

- Provide easy access to online video tutorials through the Library website.
- Expand technology programming in-house, online, and out in the community.

**Performance Targets:**

- Expand digital literacy programming by 15%.
- Increase online video tutorial participation by 25%.

**Performance Metrics:**

- Monthly statistics reports from all Library locations.
- Usage statistics from online platforms.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Collaborate with community organizations to offer programming out in the community. Increase marketing campaigns to raise awareness of services and programs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Seek out nontraditional avenues to provide access where it is most needed. Implement library industry best practices in programming and service enhancements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Work with County IT to maintain updated technology. Seek state funding and grant opportunities to provide mobile access and equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Implement and maintain staff technology competencies in order to best serve our citizens’ digital literacy needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**

| Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being | Economic Development & Planned Growth | Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities |
OUTREACH
Implement a comprehensive outreach plan to broaden the Library’s community impact by engaging underserved audiences.

O1. Visibility - By 2024, increase visibility, access, and participation in library programs and services through community engagement and targeted marketing campaigns.

- Provide a Library presence at community festivals and events.
- Offer programming and services in non-Library locations throughout the Gaston communities.
- Target specific underserved audiences through marketing campaigns on social media and other venues.

Performance Targets:
- Increase presence in community events by 5%.
- Increase targeted marketing interactions by 15%.

Performance Metrics:
- Monthly statistics reports from all Library locations.
- Data reports from Patron Analytics software platforms.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Network with local organizations to maintain awareness of community events. Work with community partners to identify non-Library locations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Use surveys at events and through marketing campaigns to determine areas of need for access and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Use patron analytics and participation statistics to ensure we are providing services in the best areas to reach underserved audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Provide bi-lingual training to outreach staff as needed. Identify and train staff interested in marketing on using platforms for targeted campaigns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COUNTY FOCUS AREA

| Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being | Economic Development & Planned Growth | Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities |
O2. Community Needs - Evaluate community needs and facility capabilities in light of residential and industrial growth in Gaston County. Create an outreach plan to address these needs by 2024.

- Explore options for increasing library services throughout the county (branch expansion, outreach vehicle, pick up lockers, lending kiosks, etc.)
- Collaborate with other county departments to identify growth areas and areas of need.

**Performance Targets:**

- Increase assessments among underserved audiences by 25% by 2024.
- Present outreach plan to 5 different audiences by 2024.

**Performance Metrics:**

- Percent (%) change in total assessments from FYs 22-24.

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**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**

<table>
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<th>Economic Development &amp; Planned Growth</th>
<th>Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement and Inclusion</td>
<td>Utilize surveys and group discussions among underserved audiences to identify the needs to be addressed through outreach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Pilot use of lockers and/or kiosks in areas currently not within 15 minutes of a Library location.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Expand methods of analysis and outreach to identify and address challenges of underserved populations so that more access to Library services is achieved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Train appropriate staff in the use of new data analytics platforms. Network with other library outreach departments to determine best practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTREACH
Implement a comprehensive outreach plan to broaden the Library’s community impact by engaging underserved audiences.

### O3. Partnerships & Collaborations - By 2023, increase collaboration with County departments and other local organizations to create positive impacts for the community.

- Create intentional opportunities to discuss cross-departmental collaborations with other service departments.
- Create partnerships with local health organizations to offer diverse health programming, resources, and services.
- Target specific underserved audiences through marketing campaigns on social media and other venues.

**Performance Targets:**
- Increase cross-departmental collaborations by 5%.

**Performance Metrics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Utilize surveys for program participants to determine the impact of programs and services.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Provide feedback across departments on how well the collaboration worked and what could be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Share staff and resources across departments to meet community needs. This provides broader perspectives and prevents duplication of services and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Create collaboration goals in Performance Evaluations. Seek out and provide training on working effectively on teams.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**
- Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being
- Economic Development & Planned Growth
- Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities
TECHNOLOGY

Continue to create and implement a living technology plan that meets changing in-house and community needs.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>County Initiative/Target</th>
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**T1. Self-service** - Implement multiple self-service opportunities by 2024 to improve and enhance user experience and safeguard privacy.

- Implement self-help holds.
- Provide self-checkout options through stand alone units or a mobile app.
- Offer mobile printing at all locations.
- Offer online payments for library fees, and possibly other county department fees.
- Provide circulating mobile technology such as laptops, hotspots, etc.

**Performance Targets:**

- Provide self-help holds, self-checkout, mobile printing, and online payments at all 10 Library locations by Dec 2023.
- Provide at least two types of circulating technology by Jun 2024.

**Performance Metrics:**

- All locations report that their self-service technologies are in place and are being utilized.
- Library ILS and other data platforms will provide usage statistics.

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**Community Engagement and Inclusion**

Self-service options offer a more inclusive approach to service. Providing training to patrons on using new technology allows opportunities for engagement.

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**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Continue to investigate self-service best practices. Work with vendors to keep software and platforms up-to-date.

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**Stewardship and Resilience**

Self-service options reduce the need for additional clerical staff and allows current staff to engage in more outreach and in-house programming.

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**Staff and Organizational Development**

Provide staff training on roving service and interpersonal marketing.

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**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**

Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being

Economic Development & Planned Growth

Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities

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TECHNOLOGY

Continue to create and implement a living technology plan that meets changing in-house and community needs.

T2. Infrastructure - Implement infrastructure changes by 2024 to support increased use, changing technology, and improved access.

- Work with County IT to analyze and improve infrastructure changes related to bandwidth, wiring, and hardware.
- Implement changes that will enable use of the mobile version of the Polaris ILS, an enterprise resource planning system.

Performance Targets:

- Research costs of fiber installation at branch library locations by 2022.
- Install staff Wi-Fi segmentation by 2023.
- Install fiber at 1/3 of branches by 2024.

Performance Metrics:

- Speed test results to measure bandwidth capacity.
- Wi-Fi usage reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Engage in-house patrons in discussions of speed and reliability when using their personal mobile devices.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Use feedback from patron discussions to track performance. Work with IT to complete updates and upgrades in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Take advantage of funding and initiatives from the State Library as they work towards a better connected and more informed state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Train all staff on new technology that is implemented after infrastructure changes. Train appropriate staff on approaching patrons to discuss impacts of improvements.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

COUNTY FOCUS AREA

Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being
Economic Development & Planned Growth
Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities
T3. Digital Inclusion - By 2024, advance digital inclusion by offering access to connectivity and digital literacy programs in underserved areas. Offer nontraditional library technology to meet changing community needs.

- Create a podcasting studio for public use.
- Create a Creation Station lab for the public that offers video and music editing, as well as other maker activities.
- Explore providing public broadband access and hotspot lending.

Performance Targets:
- Have podcasting studio equipped and ready for public use by end of 2022.
- Have Creation Station lab operational by end of 2024.

Performance Metrics:
- Main Library Monthly Report will indicate usage of studio and lab.

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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement and Inclusion</td>
<td>Providing the studio and the creation lab will offer nontraditional services to the public and will allow training in diverse career pathways.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Library staff will procure up-to-date technology that meets changing trends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Collaborate with local music studios and other partners to sponsor equipment and offer training.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Create a team to determine equipment, training, and staffing. Offer Adult Services staff training to become comfortable with new technology.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I. **Diverse collection** - By 2024, actively procure and maintain a diverse collection of electronic and physical formats.

- Utilize vendor diversity audits to ensure diverse print and electronic book collection.
- Offer non-traditional items for checkout by circulating a Library of Things collection.

**Performance Targets:**

- Use iCurate to increase the diversity of our collection by 5% by 2024.
- Launch the Library of Things collection by June 2022.

**Performance Metrics:**

- iCurate Reports will measure collection diversity.
- Library ILS checkout statistics will verify use of Library of Things collection.

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**Community Engagement and Inclusion**

Survey library patrons and other library systems to determine best practices in a Library of Things collection.

**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Run bi-annual diversity audits to continue to improve collection. Seek patron feedback on use and improvement of LOT collection.

**Stewardship and Resilience**

Work with local businesses to donate items for the LOT collection. Appropriately a percentage of collection budget for diversity focus.

**Staff and Organizational Development**

Provide staff with training and talking points for discussing increased diversity in collection.
Inclusivity

Make inclusivity of all people a priority in library collections, programs, and services.

I2. Community Conversations - By 2024, provide a safe and inclusive space for community conversations around a variety of topics.

- Create and host conversation programs for different age groups.
- Collaborate with community experts and organizations to lead and mediate discussions of current events.

Performance Targets:

- Host at least six (6) community conversations by 2024.

Performance Metrics:

- Monthly Programming Reports

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| Community Engagement and Inclusion | Engage the community in conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Use surveys to inform future discussions. |
| Innovation and Continuous Improvement | Collaborate with experts in the fields of discussion to design insightful and impactful programs. |
| Stewardship and Resilience | Maximize community partnerships to identify appropriate experts and mediators. Seek grant opportunities to fund programs. |
| Staff and Organizational Development | Provide diversity training for all staff. Create leadership opportunities through teams created to plan and host community conversations. |
## Inclusivity

Make inclusivity of all people a priority in library collections, programs, and services.

### I3. Barrier Removal - Identify, reduce, and remove barriers by 2024 to ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse access.
- Remove barriers to obtaining a library card.
- Provide programming in multiple formats.
- Audit and edit Library website to ensure accessibility and ease of use.
- Explore library access possibilities during unstaffed hours.

### Performance Targets:
- Establish more inclusive policies for issuing library cards by end of 2023.
- Add 10 diverse programs per year.
- Have an updated accessible website by end of 2024.

### Performance Metrics:
- Library card statistics from Library ILS.
- Monthly Branch Reports.
- Website usage data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Track issues and survey citizens to determine existing barriers for cards and website. Collaborate with local disability organizations to implement best practices.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Continually review all access policies to ensure inclusivity. Survey program participants to determine effectiveness of programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Seek alternative funding options for improved website accessibility and for after hours library access technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Create staff teams to explore library card barriers and to update website. Provide accessibility training as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### County Focus Area

- **Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being**
- **Economic Development & Planned Growth**
- **Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities**
**LOCAL HISTORY**  
Preserve and promote local history and genealogy resources and services.

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**LH1. Access** - Increase digitization and accessibility of items in the Local History and Genealogy collection by 2024.
- Identify relevant art and culture collections to be digitized and made available to the public.
- Offer public use scanners for scanning historical documents, photos, slides, etc.
- Offer public training on scanning and digitization.

**Performance Targets:**
- Digitize 4 relevant collections annually.
- Provide scanners and digitization programs by 2024.

**Performance Metrics:**
- Collection usage statistics available on BiblioBoard software.
- Monthly Programming Reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Solicit public feedback on effectiveness of training and programs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Develop creative solutions to promoting historical collections and programs. Maintain updated hardware for digitization projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Use resources available from the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center to aid in completion of digitization projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Train relevant staff on using scanners and training the public on use. Provide access to digitization training as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**COUNTY FOCUS AREA**

Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being  
Economic Development & Planned Growth

Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities
**Local History**

Preserve and promote local history and genealogy resources and services.

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**LH2. Collaborations** - Collaborate with the Gaston County Museum over the next three fiscal years to digitize and curate art and history collections in the Local History & Genealogy department.

- Seek grand funding opportunities to provide staffing and resources.
- Update and implement Scope of Collections policy.
- Explore collaborations with other County departments to ensure awareness of the LHG collection.

**Performance Targets:**

- Hire and utilize grant-funded intern for digitization projects through 2022.
- Implement new Scope of Collections policy by 2023.
- Collaborate with 2 county departments annually to promote, grow, and advertise the LHG collection.

**Performance Metrics:**

- Projects digitized by intern available for public use on BiblioBoard.

**Community Engagement and Inclusion**

Engage the community in the stories of our past through regional art and history collections. Expand the discoverability of diverse collection through the use of BiblioBoard.

**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Updating the Scope of Collections ensures less duplication of effort between Library and Museum and ensures collections are housed and preserved in appropriate venues.

**Stewardship and Resilience**

Use of grant-funded interns frees up staff to assist public with their personal history and digitization projects.

**Staff and Organizational Development**

Work with Museum staff to identify the most relevant art and history collections for digitization projects.

**County Focus Area**

Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being

Economic Development & Planned Growth

Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities
**LOCAL HISTORY**  
Preserve and promote local history and genealogy resources and services.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Initiative/Target</th>
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<th>Stretch Goal</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**LH3. Programming** - Increase history-based programming in-house and out in the community over the next three years.

- Provide community history programs in neighborhood venues.
- Provide resources and programs to enable the community to do their own genealogical research.

**Performance Targets:**

- Beginning Fall 2022, provide quarterly outreach programs that focus on community history.
- Host an Annual Genealogy Fair beginning in 2023.

**Performance Metrics:**


**Genealogy Fair**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Genealogy Fair will be open to all community members. Participant surveys will be used to solicit feedback on fair and outreach programs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Survey feedback will be used to adapt and improve the event as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Utilize the Genealogy Club at the Library to provide volunteer hours in helping patrons with their own research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Create leadership opportunities through Annual Fair team. Poll staff for history interest and knowledge and provide program training as needed.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Create a highly engaged and fulfilled Library staff.

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OC1. Growth Opportunities - By 2024, create pathways for growth, development, and career advancement for Library staff.

- Provide transfer opportunities across departments and branches prior to external publication of open positions.
- Provide job shadowing and cross-training opportunities for interested staff.
- Locate and promote scholarship opportunities for higher learning, conference attendance, and leadership programs.

Performance Targets:

- 100% participation in 80% of the County and Library employee surveys.
- A score of 75% or higher in all categories for the Library department in the annual Workplace Culture Survey.

Performance Metrics:

- County data provided to each department regarding surveys.
- Survey results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>Network with other library systems and local organizations to identify possible avenues for growth and development.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Conduct quarterly surveys of Library staff to gauge progress in goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Find creative ways to recognize staff achievements and share across the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>Provide training and growth opportunities as identified in surveys.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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COUNTY FOCUS AREA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community Health, Safety, &amp; Well-Being</th>
<th>Economic Development &amp; Planned Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities</td>
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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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OC2. Remove Barriers - By 2024, explore and remove barriers impacting employee success.

- Improve communication by exploring multiple communication formats and providing easy avenues for staff feedback.
- Conduct mini-pulse surveys to determine barriers and gauge success.
- Create diverse staff teams to research, advise the leadership team, and pilot various projects and initiatives.

Performance Targets:

- Conduct quarterly employee surveys beginning in Fall 2022.
- By Winter 2023, track team participation to ensure all staff have opportunities. Create and implement team evaluation forms.

Performance Metrics:

- Survey results.
- Excel spreadsheets to track participation.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community Engagement and Inclusion</th>
<th>An educated and engaged staff will offer better patron services to diverse communities across the County.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation and Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Work with HR and other County departments to explore and implement best practices in employee engagement and success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship and Resilience</td>
<td>Use Friends of the Library support and funding to identify tangible ways to reward success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Organizational Development</td>
<td>As barriers are identified, implement training and organizational changes as appropriate. Provide team participation and communication training to all staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COUNTY FOCUS AREA

| Community Health, Safety, & Well-Being | Economic Development & Planned Growth | Recreational, Cultural, and Life-long Learning Opportunities |
Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan was created by the dedicated and amazing staff of all 10 Gaston County Public Library locations. They provided input, feedback, and encouragement for the Planning Team and the Leadership Team. Their commitment to providing excellent customer service to the residents of Gaston County is evident in their daily transactions both inside and outside of the Library walls. The Planning Team, consisting of both full-time and part-time staff from all areas of the Library system, gave their time, energy, and creativity to writing a plan that honors traditional library services, embraces new and innovative services, and most of all ensures a Library environment that is welcoming and open to all.

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Teen Librarian, Main Library

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Branch Manager, Belmont

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Youth Services Supervisor

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Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator

A special thank you goes to the Friends of the Gaston County Public Library for their financial support that allows us to have creative and innovative programming throughout the year. Their members volunteer in our locations and are always ready to step in and help. Thank you also to the Gaston County Public Library Board of Trustees. Their support and wisdom is invaluable as we plan new services and strive to improve our current services. These two groups of tireless advocates recognize the importance of libraries in a community and they continue to challenge us to be the best library we can be for the residents of Gaston County and its individual communities.