Fontana Regional Library

Long Range Plan 2022-2027

Mission:

To provide the public of Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs.

Vision:

We envision a sustainable human service organization committed to meeting the information needs of everyone in our communities.

Values:

- We value user confidentiality and privacy.
- We value diversity, equity, and inclusivity in every aspect of access, service, and management.
- We value lifelong learning.
- We value the freedom to read, view, listen, and speak.
- We value providing excellent service for all users.
- We value our commitment to social responsibility.
- We value sustainable policies and practice in all areas of service and management.
- We value partnerships and relationships internally and externally.
- We value integrity in all personal and organizational relationships.
- We value organizational versatility, agility, responsiveness, and innovation.
- We value individual creativity and commitment.
- We value effective and transparent communication.

Planning Process:

Fontana Regional Library utilized the philosophy and methodology of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) as the framework for its planning process. TBL relies on three measures of organizational and community sustainability: social, economic, and environmental (or, people, performance, and planet). In the library context, these measures of sustainability "refer to an intentional alignment of a library's core values and resources—including staff time and energy, facilities, collections, and technology—with the local and global community's right to endure, bounce back from disruption, and thrive." -- Rebekka Smith Aldrich
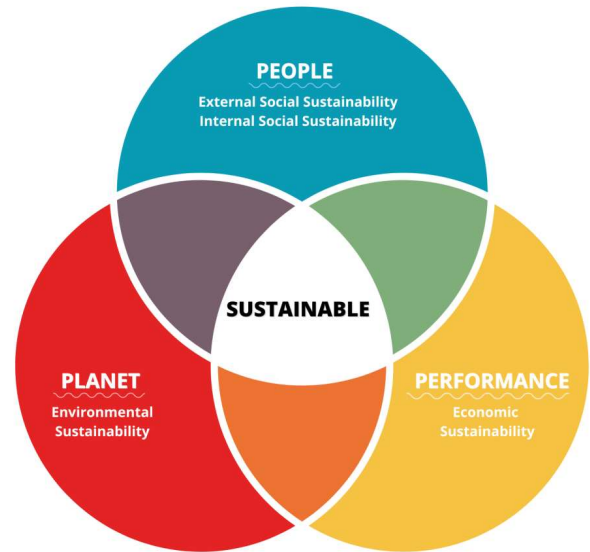
Development of Fontana Regional Library's new Long Range Plan was funded by a grant called Planning for Sustainability. This project was made possible by funding from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Library consultants Ed Sheary and Dan Barron facilitated engagements with stakeholders, partners, funders, the general public, and library staff to ensure all perspectives were represented.

The planning process assessed community needs through a review of local demographic data, community surveys, and interviews and surveys with funders and community partners. The new Long Range Plan uses the input from these sources and sets goals for the Library that align with community priorities. Organizational sustainability is incorporated into the new Plan to assure the capacity of the library to provide the identified services into the future.
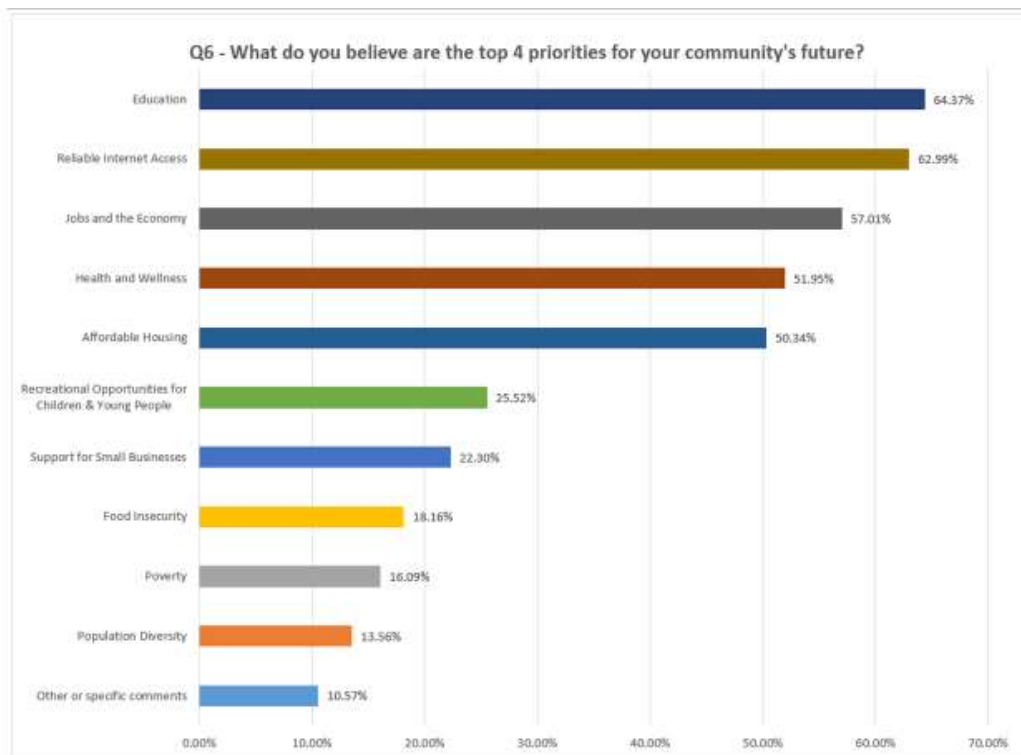
Community Engagement

During September 2021, the Planning consultants met face to face with Regional Library Board members, some of the local Library Board members, and Friends of the Library Board members. They also surveyed Library and Friends Board members for a total of 45 surveys.

During October 2021, 75 organizations and businesses were identified as communicative, cooperative, or collaborative partners of the Library. Surveys from 45 partners were collected as part of this process.

During November 2021, the consultants had telephone interviews with each of the three County managers in our region and surveyed the four Town managers of municipalities in our service area. Seven County Commissioners completed surveys.

Public surveys were conducted over several months, with 700 being completed by the end of December 2021. Key findings identified the most important priorities for the community's future, as illustrated in this graph.

Q6 - What do you believe are the top 4 priorities for your community's future?

Priority	Percentage
Education	64.37%
Reliable Internet Access	62.99%
Jobs and the Economy	57.01%
Health and Wellness	51.95%
Affordable Housing	50.34%
Recreational Opportunities for Children & Young People	25.52%
Support for Small Businesses	22.30%
Food Insecurity	18.16%
Poverty	16.09%
Population Diversity	13.56%
Other or specific comments	10.57%

Staff Engagement

Staff engagement included multiple surveys to gather their input and staff meetings to share public and staff survey results. The Planning consultants conducted interviews with Library leadership and gathered input from Library staff through 58 surveys and several face to face focus groups. Environmental surveys were conducted with all the Library building managers to collect data on recycling, energy efficiency, and green practices.

Key findings from the staff surveys identified the most important priorities for the community's future, as illustrated in this graph. Results of public and staff surveys aligned on the highest priorities for the community.
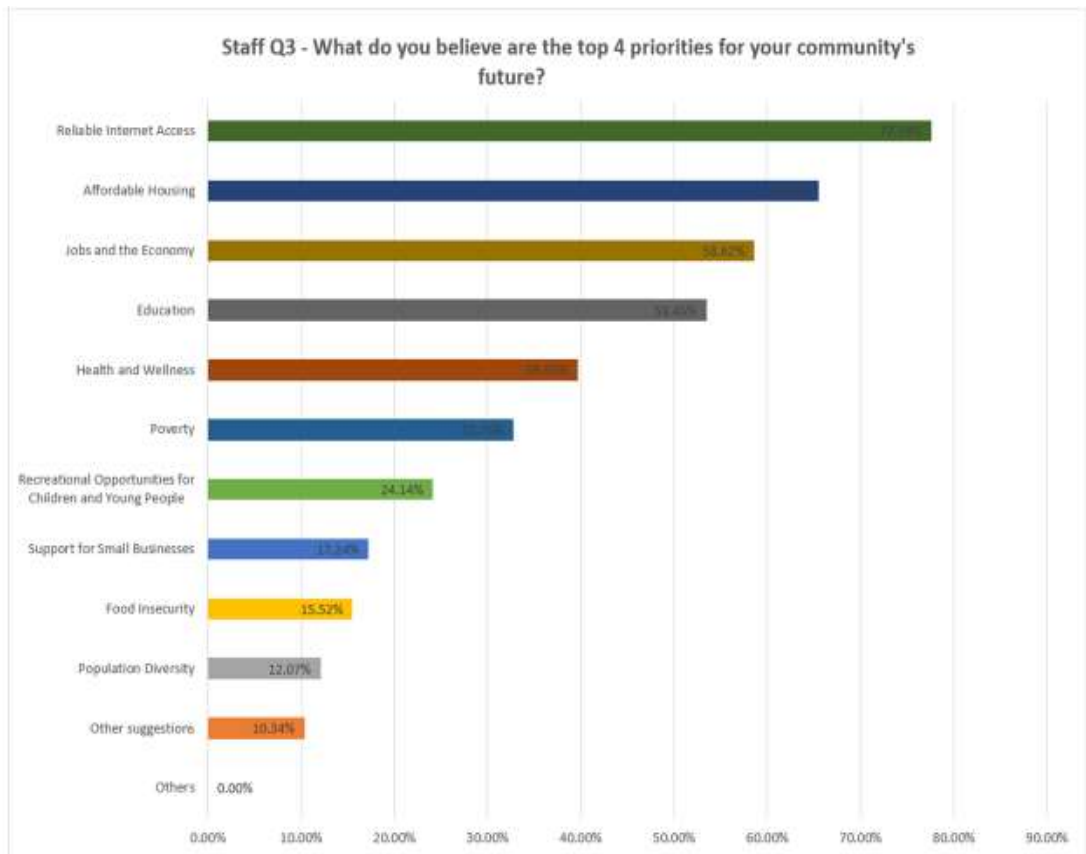
Additional staff engagement included meetings with staff during March 2022 to highlight accomplishments made with the past Long Range Plan and to brainstorm ideas for activities for the new Long Range Plan.

The FRL Annual In-Service Training Day (AIT) for all staff was held in April 2022 with a focus on prioritizing activities that should be included in the new Plan. The Planning consultants facilitated the group sessions based on the five focus areas of the new Plan: Digital Inclusion, Jobs & Economy, Education, Health & Wellness, and Affordable Living (Housing, Food Insecurity, Poverty). Recreational and Leisure activities remain an important and ongoing library service. Operational Excellence will include a focus on facilities, staff compensation, local and state funding, sustainable practices, policy development and review, and implementation of the *North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021*.
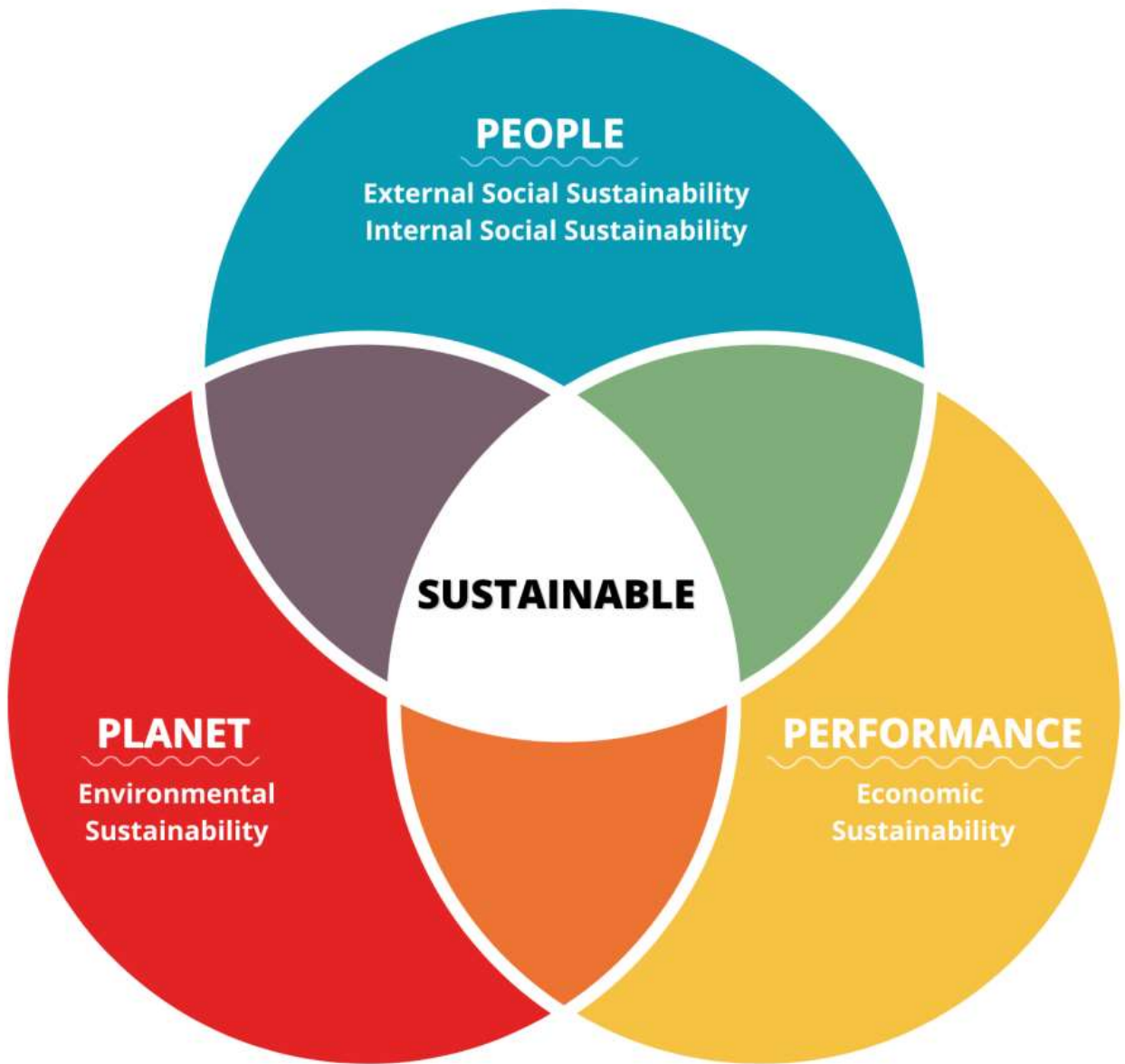
Feedback from staff indicates that 100% understand the importance of FRL's Long Range Plan and 92% feel that they learned ways that they can serve the community's needs through library activities in the future. 98% feel that they have had enough input into the development of the 2022-2027 Long Range Plan.

Library leadership worked with the consultants to develop a draft of the new Plan that includes the input from the community and the staff. A preliminary draft was presented to the FRL Board of Trustees at their July 2022 meeting.

The final draft of the Plan included metrics that utilized some of the Essential, Enhanced, and Exemplary levels of the *North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021*.

The Plan was presented to and approved by the FRL Board of Trustees on September 13, September 2022.

Staff will begin implementing the Plan after Board approval. Progress on the Plan will be tracked through FRL's Staff Activity Portal. FRL's Regional Advisory and Support group, made up of library managers and supervisors, will meet annually to review and revise the objectives of the Plan.

PEOPLE
External Social Sustainability
Internal Social Sustainability

SUSTAINABLE

PLANET
Environmental
Sustainability

PERFORMANCE
Economic
Sustainability

People

Goal 1: Digital Inclusion: To open the digital world to everyone in our community.

Goal 2: Health and Wellness: To assure that everyone in our community will have access to resources and services in order to make the best decisions to maintain and improve their health and wellness.

Goal 3: Education: To provide information, resources, and services which support opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone in our community.

Goal 4: Work and Economy: To help assure that all residents will be able to find and secure employment and to navigate their financial world.

Goal 5: Affordable Living: To provide information, resources, and services that support residents' efforts to achieve stable living conditions which are healthy, comfortable, and enable them to participate in and enjoy life events.

Goal 6: Recreation and Leisure: To provide the community with engaging activities and resources which increase their quality of life and promote a sense of joy.

Goal 7: Staff Support: To create an environment that equitably supports the needs and aspirations of a satisfied workforce.

Performance

Goal 8: Operational Excellence: To maintain and constantly improve the economic wellbeing and managerial operations of each library and the regional organization.

Planet

Goal 9: Environmental Sustainability: To develop and maintain policies and practices which help to create a cleaner and safer environment and to develop information and educational opportunities encouraging others to do so.

People

Goal 1: Digital Inclusion: To open the digital world to everyone in our community.

1.1   Provide internet to patrons who may not have access due to barriers such as affordability or location
   a. Make Hotspots available to patrons through December 2023 using Emergency Connectivity Funds
   b. Offer public computers in library facilities with internet download speeds of at least 1-10 Mbps per user[1]
   c. Offer Wi-Fi access in and around library facilities with internet download speeds of at least 1-10 Mbps per user[1]

1.2   Provide opportunities for digital literacy
   a. Offer group learning activities to meet community demand
   b. Offer ongoing one-on-one assistance to meet individual needs
   c. Initiate Northstar Digital Literacy training by July 2023

1.3   Provide information to the public about internet access and initiatives
   a. Engage staff in ongoing learning about internet access and initiatives
   b. Adult Services Supervisors will develop and maintain an up-to-date list of potential internet service providers and available options for assistance with obtaining affordable internet access
   c. At least one staff member from each county will participate with organizational partners focused on digital inclusion and will report on related initiatives

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[1] Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Technology 18.4)

Goal 2: Health and Wellness: To assure that everyone in our community will have access to resources and services in order to make the best decisions to maintain and improve their health and wellness.

2.1   Provide library collections in physical and digital formats that increase knowledge and understanding of community health and wellness
    a. Determine community health and wellness priorities through partnerships and community engagement, including those priorities outlined in the Community Health Assessments (CHIPs) prepared by each county
    b. Review and audit current health and wellness collections and remove outdated or worn material at least every three years[2]
    c. Purchase and promote health and wellness material throughout the year to align with community priorities[3]

2.2   Offer opportunities for people to participate in healthy activities at the library
    a. Coordinate fitness opportunities with instructors and trainers on an ongoing basis
    b. Organize wellness checks annually in partnership with local health agencies
    c. Facilitate healthy eating and nutrition workshops at least quarterly

2.3   Increase awareness of community health and wellness resources and priorities
    a. Develop and maintain partnerships in order to provide library programs on a variety of health and wellness topics (such as County Health Departments, local hospitals, VAYA)
    b. Provide in-service training annually for staff on community health and wellness resources
    c. Disseminate information from local and regional health and wellness organizations on an ongoing basis
    d. At least one staff member from each county will participate with organizational partners focused on health and wellness and will report on related initiatives

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2 Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Collections 6.7)

3 Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Collections 6.4)

2.4　Explore the feasibility of having a social worker on site in one or more FRL libraries through partnership with Western Carolina University's Department of Social Work
   a. Assess the need for a social worker in one or more libraries by June 2023
   b. Develop a plan for having an social work intern in one or more libraries by September 2023
   c. Implement the plan for including a social work intern in one or more libraries by January 2024
   d. Evaluate the viability of continuing having a social work intern at one or more libraries by June 2024

2.5　Support access to telehealth services at FRL libraries
   a. Provide space to enable private consultation in new or renovated facilities
   b. Provide the necessary broadband and technology for patients to remotely connect with their doctors and medical professionals
   c. Promote telehealth capabilities where available on an ongoing basis

Goal 3: Education: To provide information, resources, and services which support opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone in our community.

3.1   Develop, implement, and evaluate in-library services on a year-round basis[4] in support of
     a. Children's programming on topics such as: STEM, arts & crafts, cultural learning, early literacy skills
     b. Children's independent learning activities
     c. Children's 1000 Books Before Kindergarten
         i. Explore feasibility of participating in 1000 Books Before Kindergarten project by October 2023
         ii. Develop plans for implementing pilot project for 1000 Books project by March 2024
         iii. Evaluate success of pilot project to determine the viability of continuing and expanding the project by December 2024
     d. Teen programming on topics such as: Life skills, cultural learning, STEM, arts & crafts
     e. Teen service projects
         i. Support volunteer opportunities for New Century Scholars or Early College students
         ii. Develop projects for teens to serve special populations within the community
     f. Encouraging regular school class visits to the libraries
         i. Explore increasing school class visits to the libraries
         ii. Implement a schedule of class visits to the libraries throughout the school year
     g. Adult programming on topics such as: Life skills, cultural learning, STEM, arts & crafts
     h. Multi-generational programming on topics such as: Life skills, cultural learning, STEM, arts & crafts
     i. Effectively referring adults to resources on topics such as: GED, Basic literacy skills, English language learner (ELL)

3.2   Expand and evaluate outreach services in the community through services to:
     a. Childcare centers
         i. Identify childcare centers in our service area December 2022

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4 Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Programming 9.3)

ii. Explore interest in programming and delivery of materials, including literacy kits, among identified childcare centers by December 2022

iii. Develop plans for serving childcare centers with materials (including literacy kits) and programming by April 2023

iv. Develop a plan to determine the future of Reading Rover materials by April 2023

v. Implement childcare center service plans by September 2023

b. Public and Charter schools

i. Promote Student Access to teachers, students, and parents by January 2023

ii. Explore interest among public schools in developing a system of delivery of library materials by June 2024

iii. Promote library resources in the schools in association with special initiatives (Back to School, Library card sign-up, summer learning, etc.)

c. Private schools

i. Explore providing Student Access to private school students by July 2023

ii. Develop plans for implementation of Student Access with private schools by September 2023

iii. Promote library resources in the schools in association with special initiatives (Back to School, Library card sign-up, summer learning, etc.)

d. Community agencies

i. Explore potential partnerships and/or volunteer possibilities for delivery of library materials (such as Meals on Wheels or Parents as Teachers) by August 2024

ii. Develop and evaluate plans for implementation of book delivery by March 2025

3.3 Respond to the educational interests of the community

a. Select relevant or trending educational topics such as taxes, voter information, or ACA information to feature on the library's website, blog, social media, and on display in the library on a year-round basis

b. At least one staff member from each county will participate with organizational partners focused on education and will report on related initiatives

c. Provide space to enable group or individual study in new or renovated facilities

Goal 4: Work and Economy: To help assure that all residents will be able to find and secure employment and to navigate their financial world.

4.1　Assist community members with finding information and resources about financial literacy
　　a. Adult Services Supervisors will curate available up-to-date online financial literacy resources
　　b. Purchase and promote financial literacy material throughout the year
　　c. Identify local and regional financial organizations that can assist with financial literacy topics
　　d. Develop and maintain partnerships in order to provide library programs on a variety of financial literacy topics
　　e. Staff will participate with organizational partners focused on financial literacy and will report on related initiatives

4.2　Assist community members on an ongoing basis with finding information and resources on securing employment by partnering with community organizations to
　　a. Provide assistance with searching and applying for jobs
　　b. Provide assistance with career counseling and planning
　　c. Host and promote Job Fairs at least annually

4.3　Assist local businesses and entrepreneurs on an ongoing basis with small business development and support
　　a. Develop and maintain partnerships with local and regional organizations (including but not limited to SCC Small Business Center, WCU Small Business and Technology Center, BizWorks, Score, Chambers of Commerce, Southwest Commission)
　　b. Offer materials and community referrals for small business development and operation
　　c. Provide separate work spaces that can be reserved for private use

4.4　Offer opportunities for community members to participate in internships at FRL
　　a. Partner with educational institutions such as SCC Project Search, Vocational Rehabilitation, Western Carolina University, and others who offer internship programs
　　b. Fulfill necessary requirements associated with internship programs

Goal 5: Affordable Living: To provide information, resources, and services that support residents' efforts to achieve stable living conditions which are healthy, comfortable, and enable them to participate in and enjoy life events.

5.1   Provide library collections in physical and digital formats that increase knowledge and understanding of affordable living topics
   a. Review and audit current collections and remove outdated or worn material at least every three years[5]
   b. Purchase and promote library materials that address topics on basic needs on an ongoing basis

5.2   Increase awareness of community resources available for affordable housing, food security, transportation, and other basic needs
   a. Identify local and regional agencies working in support of affordable living concerns
   b. Provide in-service training annually for staff on related community resources
   c. Develop and maintain partnerships in order to provide library programs on a variety of affordable living topics (including but not limited to Habitat for Humanity, Manna Food Bank, County Social Services, Extension Services, Transit Authorities)
   d. Disseminate up-to-date information about affordable living topics from local and regional organizations
   e. Participate with agencies engaged in collecting and/or distributing food, clothing, and other necessities at least once per year
   f. Staff will participate with organizational partners focused on affordable living and will report on related initiatives

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5 Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Collections 6.7)

Goal 6: Recreation and Leisure: To provide the community with engaging activities and resources which improve their quality of life.

6.1   Satisfy community's recreational and leisure interests by providing engaging activities and resources
   a. Library staff identify topics based on emerging trends and ongoing initiatives
   b. Create an annual calendar of events each October based on identified topics
   c. Develop programs, activities, and collections on an ongoing basis related to these topics
   d. Form and maintain partnerships with community organizations and businesses to support and enhance library recreational offerings
   e. Determine the optimum use of library space for individuals and groups to explore creative activities

6.2   Increase community awareness of library recreational and leisure services
   a. Annually, during National Library Week, conduct a community survey to gauge interest in current and prospective library services
   b. Develop and maintain partnerships with community organizations and businesses to raise visibility of library services
   c. Create monthly displays and featured collections (including both physical and digital) that highlight recreational resources

Goal 7: Staff Support: To create an environment that equitably supports the needs and aspirations of a satisfied workforce.

7.1   Provide competitive wages as outlined in Operational Excellence Goal: Improved Compensation for FRL employees

7.2   Improve leave benefits for FRL employees
 a. Investigate leave benefit packages of other NC libraries and local area employers by December 2023
 b. Revise FRL Personnel Policy to make improvements to leave benefits by July 2024

7.3   Maintain and expand health and mental health benefits for FRL employees
 a. Continue to provide major medical, dental, and vision insurance benefits
 b. Evaluate Revive Health online benefits for staff usage and satisfaction by January 2023
 c. Investigate options for a new Employee Assistance Program by April 2023
 d. Promote awareness of Employee Assistance Program on an ongoing basis

7.4   Conduct annual in-service training for employees to increase staff awareness, confidence, and knowledge including[6]
 a. Safety and response training
 b. Benefits available through FRL
 c. Empathy skills and trauma-informed practices
 d. Health and wellness strategies

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6 Essential level from North Carolina Public Library Standards 2021 (Staffing 2.6, 2.7)

Performance

Goal 8: Operational Excellence: To maintain and constantly improve the economic wellbeing and managerial operations of each library and the regional organization.

8.1   Enhance administrative operations by upgrading FRL's Financial software and procedures
   a. Replace Banyon data systems manual payroll module with online payroll, time and labor, e-hiring, and benefits tracking through Proliant by October 2022.
   b. Train staff to effectively use Proliant software by October 2022.
   c. Replace Banyon data systems server-based fund accounting with online general ledger, grant tracking, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and budgeting through Financial Edge NXT from Blackbaud by February 2023.
   d. Train staff to effectively use Financial Edge NXT by February 2023.
   e. Develop new FRL financial procedures to efficiently utilize the Financial Edge NXT software capabilities by May 2023.
   f. Institute the capability of accepting electronic payments and donations from the public online and in-person by February 2023

8.2   Achieve economic sustainability of FRL regionwide operations through increased financial support from local county funders
   a. Establish an ad hoc committee with representatives from the FRL Board of Trustees, FRL leadership, and each county (County Managers and selected County Commissioners) by December 2022
   b. Identify and meet with a facilitator to guide a financial summit by December 2022
   c. Convene the financial summit with ad hoc committee and facilitator by February 2023
   d. Demonstrate the need for increased local county funding to sustain library services and operations
   e. Discuss commitment to sustain local county increases that match or exceed the annual rate of inflation
   f. Revise the Regional Agreement to incorporate agreed-upon annual funding commitments by July 2024

8.3   Improve compensation for FRL employees
    a. During the financial summit with ad hoc committee and facilitator, demonstrate the need for a Compensation Plan for FRL employees
    b. Identify consulting firm to conduct a Compensation Plan by May 2023
    c. Develop a Compensation Plan by December 2023
    d. Gain commitment from local County funders to support the implementation of the Plan by May 2024
    e. Develop implementation strategy for the Compensation Plan July 2024

8.4   Increase the awareness, effectiveness, and transparency of FRL communications
    a. Improve the content, timeliness, and distribution of marketing materials for library events and programs
    b. Distribute information highlighting library services and resources to local organizations and businesses on an ongoing basis
    c. Enhance public website on an ongoing basis
    d. Post FRL Board minutes on the FRL website by September 2022
    e. Create targeted advocacy messages for use by Library boards, Friends of the Library, and Library supporters to share with their elected officials on an ongoing basis
    f. Revise staff portal interface to accommodate tracking and reporting for the LRP 2022-2027 by April 2023
    g. Train staff in new staff portal interface by June 2023

8.5   Improve library facilities
    a. Renovate the existing Marianna Black Library/HQ by June 2026
    b. Develop plans for a new Nantahala Community Library by July 2023
    c. Create additional quiet spaces or rooms to assist local businesses and entrepreneurs with small business development (Work and Economy), support access to telehealth services (Health and Wellness), and respond to the educational interests of the community by providing group or individual study spaces (Education)
    d. Library managers will analyze changing service needs on an ongoing basis and adapt the physical environment as needed to create safe, useful, and comfortable spaces
    e. Install a generator at Hudson Library to provide continuity of services during power outages by December 2023

8.6 Develop an updated Technology Plan to effectively meet the needs of staff, community members, and visitors by November 2022
   a. Replace aging workstations for the public by March 2023
   b. Replace aging workstations in staff work areas by December 2023
   c. Upgrade FRL's network infrastructure by September 2023
   d. Increase fiber network speeds by December 2023
   e. Upgrade wireless network by September 2024
   f. Add streaming services to library facilities by January 2026
   g. Replace phone service with Voice over Internet Protocol by June 2027

8.7 Enhance operations through the adoption of NC Public Library Standards 2021
   a. FRL conducts a self-assessment using the State Library tool by June 2023
   b. Review where FRL stands within the five categories of Standards by September 2023
   c. Develop and begin implementation of a plan by May 2024 to meet at least Essential levels in all five categories

Planet

Goal 9: Environmental Sustainability: To develop and maintain policies and practices which help to create a cleaner and safer environment and to develop information and educational opportunities encouraging others to do so.

9.1   Reduce environmental impact of library facilities by working with County Maintenance Departments
   a. Conduct Green audits to understand our resource consumption by December 2025
   b. Implement energy efficient solutions as feasible
   c. Make recommendations for improved lighting and cleaning products
   d. Install water bottle filling stations by March 2024
   e. Use native plants to reduce water use and support wildlife, including beneficial pollinators and insects, as feasible

9.2   Create sustainable environmental management practices and policies
   a. Develop a policy on sustainable environmental management by January 2025
   b. Provide education and information for staff and patrons on sustainable practices on an ongoing basis
   c. Facilitate the recycling of materials in accordance with County guidelines by December 2022
   d. Research and utilize sources to recycle materials not accepted by our Counties on an ongoing basis
   e. Evaluate composting options by December 2024
   f. Repurpose or recycle discarded library books and donated books on an ongoing basis
   g. Select vendors with environmentally sound practices when feasible