



# SPARTANBURG COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES 3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



Updated Final Draft August 2019 – August 2025 due to pandemic delays

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Public Library





# SPARTANBURG COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Create. Connect. Change.

October 9, 2019

## Letter from the Board of Trustees

To Spartanburg County Community Members,

### *Board of Trustees*

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### *County Librarian*

R. Todd Stephens

In 1885, Helen F. Kennedy opened Spartanburg County's first library, with a collection of 300 books in her late husband's second-floor medical office on Morgan Square.

Today, almost 135 years later, the Spartanburg County Public Libraries operate 10 locations county-wide, with a wealth of resources, services, and programs. Toward our mission of inspiring lifelong learning for a thriving county, we champion community progress in key areas, including early literacy, job readiness, and the enduring benefits of reading for pleasure.

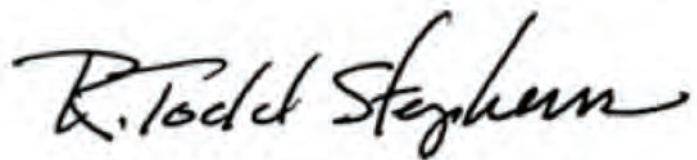
The Libraries' Board of Trustees is proud to serve the people of Spartanburg County through quality public service, outstanding collections, programs, and accessible and comfortable facilities. Over the next three years, through this new strategic focus and accompanying initiatives, the Libraries will continue to positively impact the County's mission of prosperity and opportunity for our residents and business communities.

This strategic plan represents the combined efforts of the Board, library staff, patrons, volunteers, the Friends of the Library, and community stakeholders, coming together to share ideas for innovation and improvement in the library system. When executed, the plan will unite the residents of Spartanburg County in the use of library resources to improve their lives. The Board looks forward to the implementation of this new strategic plan, and it will continue to uphold the Libraries' vision of being Spartanburg's leading provider of information, entertainment, and exploration.

Thank you for your continued support of your public library system.



John Cribb  
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Todd Stephens  
County Librarian

# Introduction to the Strategic Plan

*“A vision without a strategy remains an illusion.”*  
- Lee Bolman

In 2019 Spartanburg County Public Libraries (SCPL) made the strategic decision to initiate a planning process that would provide direction for the organization over a three-year period. To conduct the planning process, we

- solicited input and feedback from a variety of resources;
- conducted a day-long planning meeting with the Management Team;
- reviewed the draft plan with key staff; and
- presented the plan to the SCPL Board of Trustees.
- Our staff will operationalize this plan during our annual Staff Planning Day in October 2019.

## Strategic Analysis

Best practices in strategic planning suggest that an organization gather input on internal and external factors that impact the success of the organization, as well as on trends and environmental influencers.

To ensure the data we used reflects the needs of both internal individuals as well as external constituents, we obtained information from a variety of sources:

Existing plans that involve SCPL and its role within Spartanburg County;

- Meetings with our staff and leadership;
- Input from a variety of key stakeholders including our Board of Trustees, community leaders, elected officials, and community volunteers; and
- Review of key documents.

The results of this information were summarized in a succinct report that outlined our organizational and program capacity, stakeholder input, and critical issues for discussion. Discussion topics for the planning process focused on:

- Building the diversity of our patrons and staff;
- Reducing barriers (physical, transportation, internet) to library use;
- Updating our external communication;
- Enhancing our role in education and career readiness; and
- Strengthening local history presence in all communities.

These issues guided the development of our strategic focus for the next three years. The following strategic focus is built around our four goals and will guide new initiatives. Following each objective are preliminary concepts offered during the Management Team planning session; these and other strategies will be explored during the Annual Staff Planning Day.





## Vision

Our Vision is to be Spartanburg County's leading provider of information, entertainment, and exploration.

## Mission

We inspire people to pursue lifelong learning for a thriving Spartanburg County.

## Values

We value intellectual freedom.

We value lifelong learning.

We value equitable service.

We value the responsible use of resources.

We value welcoming and safe spaces.

We value creativity, play, and exploration.

We value diversity and inclusion.

## Our 4 Goals

**Programs** –Address community needs and interests through inclusive programs that engage, educate, and entertain.

**Staff** –Select and support an innovative, diverse staff whose goal is compassionate public service.

**Collection** –Curate collections that connect people, ideas, and information and preserve the full history of Spartanburg County.

**Environment** –Provide an environment that is equitable, welcoming, and safe for all.



# Our Strategic Focus for the next 3 years: The Library will invest in outreach to people who do not use our services.

*In addition to the library's ongoing programs and services, the strategic focus provides a framework to align our efforts and resources toward accomplishing progress as an organization.*

## Goal 1, Programs: Address community needs and interests through inclusive programs that engage, educate, and entertain.

### Outcomes:

- People who were nonusers will use library resources to improve their lives.
- People will be able to participate in library programs that reflect their experiences and culture.
- People will become more aware of how the library's resources can benefit them.
- Libraries will increase their role as a gathering place in their communities.
- Strong Friends of the Library groups will provide support to all library locations.

### Objectives:

#### **Establish an outreach department to provide and coordinate outreach programs throughout the county.**

We will develop a new department that will enable us to focus our energies where needed within the county. Implementation will include a plan for staffing, resources, and coordination with the branch libraries.

#### **Increase programs designed to meet the needs of underserved populations and non-English speaking residents.**

In order to design these programs, we will begin by conducting an analysis of populations in the county who are not adequately represented in library programs, and develop or modify programs based on that information.

#### **Expand and build connections with local community organizations to improve representation of diverse communities in library services.**

Our staff will create new partnerships and build on existing partnerships with local organizations that represent people underserved by the library.

#### **Create library access points in areas not served by a branch library and at local events.**

To increase accessibility to library resources, we will assess new services including creating "pop-up" libraries at local events, implementing software to allow off-site library card registration, and creating library card registration forms in multiple languages.

#### **Implement a marketing campaign to introduce new initiatives from the strategic plan.**

We will conduct a marketing audit which may result in the development of new marketing campaigns, evaluation of the website and social media, and improved signage. Working with the new outreach department, this marketing effort will target underserved populations.

#### **Build robust Friends of the Library groups across the library system.**

While each facility has its own Friends group, they are not equally strong. To ensure all Friends groups can support their respective facility, we will invest in recruitment and training efforts at all locations.



## Goal 2, Staff: Select and support an innovative, diverse staff whose goal is compassionate public service.

### Outcomes:

- People will be welcomed by seeing themselves reflected in the makeup of library staff, interns, and volunteers.
- Staff retention and satisfaction will improve.

### Objective:

**Attract and retain staff, interns, and volunteers who reflect the diversity of the community.**

We will implement new initiatives to attract staff who are reflective of the community; create a pipeline to employment through internships; and provide professional development opportunities for staff to progress within the organization.







## Goal 3, Collection: Curate collections that connect people, ideas, and information and preserve the full history of Spartanburg County.

### Outcome:

- People will be able to access library collections that reflect their experiences, in their native language.

### Objectives:

**Increase collections to meet the needs of underserved populations and non-English speaking people.**

We will invest in the resources needed for the selection, purchase, and processing of print and electronic materials of interest to underserved populations, including people for whom English is a second language.

**Expand the reach of local history collections to reflect the cultural and ethnic communities in the area.**

We will build diverse local history collections using strategies such as collecting school yearbooks, town histories, and oral histories from minority populations throughout the county.

## Goal 4, Environment: Provide an environment that is equitable, welcoming, and safe for all.

### Outcomes:

- Rural communities will have more options for internet connectivity.
- Library facilities will be accessible to all people.

### Objectives:

**Increase the reach of internet connectivity for people with limited or no access.**

We will expand internet coverage over the entire library campus, including parking lots at each facility; circulate MiFi devices; and develop policies to facilitate lending technology to patrons.

**Conduct an accessibility audit of library facilities and services.**

We will conduct an accessibility audit to evaluate how well our facilities and services support the needs of people with disabilities. The audit will result in a long-term master plan to increase our accessibility as an organization.