

2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



PREPARED BY
**LIBRARY
STRATEGIES**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Patrons and Community Partners,

I am so proud to share the Pitkin County Library's new strategic plan with you.

This plan was built with great care and shaped by many voices. Over the past several months, we listened closely to staff, Library Trustees, focus groups, stakeholders, community leaders, and community members. We asked questions, gathered feedback, and worked hard to understand what our community needs from its library now and into the future. I am deeply grateful to everyone who took the time to share their perspective and help shape this work.

Pitkin County is a special place. It is beautiful, vibrant, curious, and constantly changing with the seasons. Our community includes year-round residents, workers, families, students, part-time residents, visitors, and the many partners who help make this valley strong. The Library is here for all of you. We know that the rhythm of this place ebbs and flows, and we know that the people who make up this community come from many different backgrounds and experiences. Our strategic plan reflects that reality and honors the many ways people live, work, learn, and connect here.

It was also important to us that this plan align with Pitkin County's carefully crafted strategic plan. Our goals are designed to support the County's core focus areas, and our measures of success align with the County's success factors, all in service of something we care deeply about: preserving and improving quality of life in this extraordinary community.

This is not a plan meant to sit on a shelf. It is achievable, realistic, and actionable. It gives us a clear path forward while leaving room to grow and adapt as community needs continue to change.

At the heart of this plan is our staff, who are the Library's greatest strength. They are thoughtful, hardworking, creative, and deeply committed to public service. Every day, they help make the Library not just a building, but a trusted community space.

My hope is that the Pitkin County Library will continue to be many things to many people: a trusted place, a welcoming third space, a beautiful public space, a basecamp for learning, connection, and discovery. I hope everyone who walks through our doors feels comfortable, welcome, and like they belong here. And I hope the Library continues to be a place where people have those wonderful little aha moments that can brighten a day or even change a life.

Thank you for being part of this community and for being part of the Library's future.

Warmly,



Genevieve Smith
Pitkin County Library Director



INTRODUCTION

As Pitkin County continues to grow and evolve, the Pitkin County Library is poised to remain a trusted and forward-looking community resource. In October 2025, the Library partnered with Library Strategies to conduct a strategic planning process. Guided by a collaborative approach, this strategic plan integrates the perspectives of library staff, leadership, community members, and regional partners to define an actionable path towards a shared vision and mission. The Library sought to understand the needs, aspirations, and challenges of the community it serves through the following process:

- ▶ Strategy sessions with library staff and the Library Board of Trustees.
- ▶ Online library staff survey with an 85% completion rate.
- ▶ Six individual interviews with library users, key partners, and stakeholders.
- ▶ Three focus groups with a total of 20 participants representing a broad range of the community.
- ▶ Community survey, available in English and Spanish, with over 400 total responses.
- ▶ Data mapping project resulting in an interactive story map that includes relevant community characteristics and demographics within the Library's service area.

Insights gathered from these efforts were synthesized into a community needs assessment report that captured the wide range of experiences and perspectives shared and examined broader demographic, economic, and social trends affecting Pitkin County. The assessment and recommendations from this report directly informed the priorities and direction of the Pitkin County Library's new strategic plan.

The resulting insights point to opportunities to expand access, strengthen partnerships, foster culturally relevant resources, and ensure that the Library remains a trusted, welcoming, and responsive resource. This plan also affirms the Library's role as a pillar in the community, aligned with broader county goals and contributing to a livable, supportive, and thriving region.

Reviewed and adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, the goals and success factors outlined in this plan are designed to be both aspirational and practical, guiding decision-making, informing resource allocation, and supporting continuous improvement in service to the community.

MISSION & VISION



MISSION:

We foster community, inspire learning, and open doors to mountains of possibilities.

VISION:

To be the welcoming heart of a vibrant community that is strengthened through access to ideas, resources, and one another.



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 1: Improve access across the region through collaboration and community connection

The Library recognizes that community members live and work across the broader Pitkin County region and understands that enhancing services beyond the Aspen core is critical to improving access.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Livable & Supportive Community

Success Factors:

- A. Deepened engagement and outreach across diverse and underserved populations
- B. Strong and impactful partnerships address community challenges, maximize resources, and enhance program offerings
- C. Enhanced library services outside of the Aspen core, including Snowmass Village, Woody Creek, and the Crystal River Valley



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 2: Advance culturally and age-responsive practices, programming, and services

The Library can expand access to recreation, education, arts, and culture by addressing service gaps among underserved populations. The Library fosters broader community participation that, in turn, supports a more sustainable economy.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Livable & Supportive Community and Prosperous Economy

Success Factors:

- A. Collections, programs, and services include multiculturalism and a broad array of groups and perspectives
- B. Effective partnerships and tailored programming enhance services for older adults
- C. Teen-driven programming increases library engagement and cultivates curiosity
- D. Collaborations with social service and community agencies support those with unmet needs



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 3: Optimize library spaces and technology to support work, play, and learning

The Library is nestled in the heart of Aspen and is an active and thriving community hub. The Library will remain a responsible steward of public assets by optimizing its spaces and upgrading technology.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Prosperous Economy and Flourishing Natural & Built Environment

Success Factors:

- A. Reconfigured Library Lab improves space utilization and increases engagement
- B. Redesigned indoor and outdoor furnishings support interactive and functional spaces
- C. Modernized technology systems and tools improve user experience and meet emerging needs



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 4: Amplify library awareness and visibility

The Library provides collections, programs, and services that are underutilized due to limited awareness. Many community members could benefit from these resources if they were better known and more accessible.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Livable & Supportive Community

Success Factors:

- A.** A comprehensive marketing strategy leads to increased awareness, use, and impact
- B.** Marketing materials are consistent, engaging, and clearly visible within the library and broader community
- C.** The Library's reach expands through shared communication channels, cross-promotion, and leveraged partnerships



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 5: Remain a trusted, welcoming, and accessible community resource

The Library strives to be a resource for a collaborative community that values intellectual and personal growth, a strong sense of belonging, and a shared commitment to supporting one another.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Livable & Supportive Community and Prosperous Economy

Success Factors:

- A.** Collections represent a broad range of perspectives, viewpoints, and interests
- B.** Welcoming physical and virtual environments reflect the community
- C.** Staff demonstrate cultural humility, inclusive service, and bias awareness
- D.** Policies and practices uphold intellectual freedom principles



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 6: Equip employees and leaders to strengthen organizational capacity and operational effectiveness

The Library values its staff as its greatest asset and as integral members of the community it serves. Investing in library staff development and well-being strengthens not only the library and its operations, but the community as a whole.

Pitkin County Core Focus: Prosperous Economy, Flourishing Natural & Built Environment, Livable & Supportive Community

Success Factors:

- A.** Ongoing staff development builds skills aligned with evolving community needs
- B.** Cross-departmental collaboration improves efficiency, problem-solving, and service integration
- C.** Lower-impact programs and services are streamlined, reduced, or discontinued to strategically reallocate resources
- D.** Strong disaster planning strategy developed, including prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery



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