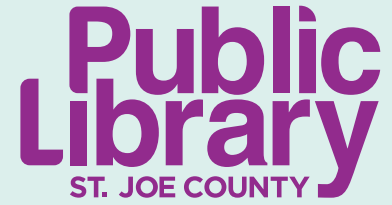


St. Joe County Public Library
STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2029 Strategic Plan



Letter from the Director

At the St. Joe County Public Library, we believe a strategic plan is more than a document. It's a promise to our community and a roadmap for our future. Libraries have the power to transform communities, and that is our legacy—one we proudly carry forward. Libraries are a critical resource in many different ways, and this plan outlines how we will continue to connect people to information, resources, culture, and each other.

This plan reflects our unwavering commitment to listening, evolving, and meeting the needs of our community. This is not your typical strategic plan. The library used to have a predictable rhythm that allowed us to plan out the next few years with ease. Today, the world changes so quickly—technology, social media, publishing cycles, how people live their lives, even fashion—that we must remain adaptable.

Rather than pretending to know exactly what we'll be working on five years from now, we've outlined what we understand about our changing community and the priorities that will guide our decisions during this planning cycle. Each year, we'll develop an action plan for the coming year, ensuring we can respond flexibly to the evolving needs of St. Joseph County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie". The script is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Murphy, Executive Director





Mission

We connect members of our diverse community to information, resources, culture and each other.

Community Insights

Through careful planning, surveys, and countless conversations, **we learned:**

- Community members strongly support the library and value their neighborhood branch
- Approximately 2,600 jobs are coming to the County's west side
- Multiple housing developments and infill housing are planned across South Bend
- St. Joseph County is not exempt from the mental health crisis and epidemic of loneliness
- Green initiatives are important to our patrons
- Print books continue to be the top reason people visit the library
- 87% of St. Joseph's population growth is driven by immigration
- Individuals living in poverty heavily rely on the library's print, fax, and broadband resources

Vision

We are integrated into our community, empowering people and enriching lives.



Strategic Priorities



◆ Access

Access to a wide variety of content, knowledge, spaces, and tools fuels vibrant communities. Neighborhood spaces that support art, technology, and education transform lives.

- Provide innovative spaces that inspire creativity, collaboration, and learning.
- Develop unique collections and cutting-edge technology that meet evolving needs.
- Connect people to impactful resources within our facilities and through innovative outreach methods that meet them where they are.



◆ Partnerships

All great communities work best when they work together. Collaboration amplifies impact and creates opportunity.

- Strengthen current partnerships and seek new connections that align with our mission and vision.
- Build a pool of local and diverse vendors to increase our economic impact and support local businesses.
- Leverage our resources to strengthen and collaborate with libraries across the state.
- Adopt sustainable practices and prioritize environmental responsibility to be a better partner to the planet.

Strategic Priorities



◆ People

People are at the heart of our mission. Social connection is the key to healthy people and communities.

- Create welcoming environments where people feel connected, inspired, and joyful.
- Provide opportunities to listen and learn, ensuring our decisions reflect community needs.
- Challenge ourselves to pursue excellence and offer clear, meaningful pathways for professional growth.

◆ Literacy

Literacy is the foundation for opportunity, empowerment, and lifelong learning. Supporting early literacy, our local schools and adult learning creates a stronger future.

- Provide spaces that promote literacy and learning for all ages, in ways that are both expected and delightfully unexpected.
- Partner with schools and families to foster a love of reading and learning from an early age.
- Expand resources that support literacy in all its forms, including digital, health, civic and financial.
- Seek ways to support literacy among New Americans.

ACCESS

Create Destination Spaces

- Western Branch Renovation
- LaSalle Branch Renovation

Tell Our Story In New Ways

- Increase Awareness of Services Offered
- Storytelling Librarian for LFH

PARTNERSHIPS

Maintain & Enhance Existing Partnerships

- Seek Green Solutions
- School Partnerships
- Diversify Vendor Base
- Share Resources to Support Libraries

PEOPLE

Patron Engagement

- Develop Patron Feedback Process
- New Cardholder Experience
- Evaluate & Enhance Accessibility

Staff Development

- Create a Robust Onboarding Experience
- Community Aligned Recruitment

LITERACY

Literacy Spaces

- Discovery Centers
- Enhanced Non-fiction Browsability

Programmatic Initiatives

- ELL Classes
- Book Delivery
- Innovative Book Access