



Strategic Plan 2022-25
Dashboard Assessment Report to the Stratford Library Board
Annual Report July 2025

Mission & Vision

Our mission: The mission of the Stratford Library is to empower and enrich our diverse community by providing access to innovative services, information and ideas.

Our vision: Our Library will be a welcoming and dynamic community center for a diverse and evolving Stratford, recognized as the Town's essential partner in guiding all residents to access the informational, educational, and cultural resources they need to thrive.

Introduction

In June 2022, the Stratford Library Board adopted a new strategic plan for 2022-25.

This plan is framed by four key goals—statements of expected outcomes or impacts—that the Library aims to achieve in the next three years. The goals are supported by 12 objectives designed to implement each goal. Library management and staff have developed a tactical plan for each objective, charting our course of action in meeting each objective.

This dashboard charts our progress toward achieving these goals by identifying measurable outcomes and defining success. For each measure, we set performance benchmarks and rate our progress with a color-coded system.

- Green indicates that we are performing on target in this area
- Yellow indicates that work is progressing in this area, but we are performing below target
- Red indicates that work is just getting started in this area

The purpose of this dashboard is to provide the Library staff and board with a tool to assess the progress we are making toward achieving the goals set forth in our strategic plan.

Goals & Objectives

Goal I: Advancing our Community.

The Stratford Library will advance the social, economic and educational needs of residents through programming and resources that support their success.

1. DIVERSITY Reflect the diverse composition of the community through collections, programs, public spaces, and cultural celebrations.
2. ECONOMY Provide access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities that support economic and personal advancement.
3. SCHOOLS Collaborate closely with the school community to provide complementary educational content, programs, and support for faculty, students and their families.

Goal II: Gateway to Stratford.

The Stratford Library will expand community outreach and engagement so that every Stratford resident feels connected to the Library's and Town's rich resources.

4. WELCOME Welcome residents, new and established, through informational materials, programs, and initiatives that provide orientation to the Library, the Town, and available resources, and that encourage the open exchange of ideas.
5. ACCESS Ensure that all residents have access to the Library by strengthening outreach programs, language availability, and new program initiatives.
6. MARKETING Develop and implement a marketing plan to reach more Stratford residents with news and information about the Library through investments in marketing tools and the people to do the work.

Goals & Objectives

Goal III: Addressing Human Needs.

The Stratford Library will partner with human service providers to connect residents in need to resources that ensure their well-being.

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| 7. HUMAN SERVICES | Facilitate patron access to services offered by relevant community providers and partner with them to ensure a seamless response to patrons in need. |
| 8. TRAINING | Train library staff to respond to human service needs and make appropriate referrals. |

Goal IV: Investing in the Library's Future.

The Stratford Library will strengthen both physical and organizational infrastructure to position it for continued excellence in its programs and services.

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| 9. FACILITY | Remake the Library facility for Stratford today and tomorrow as a welcoming and inspiring place to learn, create, and share. |
| 10. FUNDRAISING | Initiate an advocacy and development strategy to secure funding for long-term capital improvements. |
| 11. STAFFING | Work to broaden the competencies of the staff through professional development and a hiring plan to reflect the community and address patron needs. |
| 12. GOVERNANCE | Structure the board to ensure it reflects the community it serves, operates efficiently, and is positioned to attract a diversity of candidates. |

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 1 DIVERSITY

Reflect the diverse composition of the community through collections, programs, public spaces, and cultural celebrations.

Desired Outcome

- Patrons see people who look like them and their family in the books, movies, programs and staff of the Stratford Library.

	Collections	Programming	Spaces
FY 22-23	● Updated collection management procedures include selecting materials with diverse viewpoints & people of various socioeconomic backgrounds.	● Programs specifically highlighting multicultural themes/topics. Programs for children regularly feature characters from a variety of backgrounds.	● Representation of diverse writers and topics is incorporated into all displays, year round.
FY 23-24	● Updated Collection Development Policy, adopted 10/23	● Program scheduling strives to avoid significant cultural and religious holidays	● Presented displays featuring artists of color, artifacts from the African American Collection & Hispanic Heritage Committee.
FY 24-25	● Continuing to select materials representative of all members of the community.	● Keeping our focus on multicultural themes/topics for all ages.	● Continuing to ensure that diverse writers and topics are included in displays and that more flyers are available in Spanish.

Collections:

A new Teen Spanish Language collection has been added. A new vendor for Spanish Language materials has been identified.

Programming:

Spice up your Life Grab & Go kits for adults featured international flavors. Teen cooking programs featured food from a variety of cultures.

Spaces:

The Library general information flyer has been translated into Spanish and Stratford Public Schools have helped translate Children's flyers for distribution to parents.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 2: ECONOMY

Provide access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities that support economic and personal advancement.

Desired Outcome

- Library is a known and popular nexus of community for skills acquisition, offering programs, resources, and space where patrons can learn meaningful skills and build helpful networks.

	Programs	Resources	Space
FY 22-23	● Teen volunteer program provided opportunities to develop skills needed in the job market. One-on-one technology assistance helped develop skills for jobs.	● Circulating Chromebooks and wifi hotspots available. The Studio used by patrons for job interviews, classes and meetings. NorthStar digital literacy training for basic computer skills.	● Recognizing the limited space available for hands on training, utilized the CT Dept. of Labor Career Coach to provide hands on computer skills training.
FY 23-24	● Adult volunteer program with 21 participants assisting with the Annual Book Sale. New resume & job search program initiated this year.	● A Small Business Resources page was created providing a clearinghouse of information and contacts for local small businesspeople.	● A Nook Solo pod was purchased to provide space for individuals needing privacy for remote meetings, phone calls, etc.
FY 24-25	● Teen & Adult volunteer programs continue. Total volunteer hours increased by 6%. Contacts with local businesses to offer programs expanded.	● Print & web resources for jobseekers are regularly updated. Use of JobNow online resource increased 116%	● Utilized PEGPETIA grant funding to install remote entry control for conference & study rooms providing faster access to spaces & flexibility for users.

Programs:
174 Teens & Adults volunteered 6367 hours this year, with the Book Sale utilizing SignUp Genius to schedule 28 volunteers this year. Collaborations with ShopRite, Chase & M&T Bank resulted in consumer & financial education programming for patrons.

Resources:
The [Small Business Resources web page](#) for small business owners was promoted through local social media, the Chamber of Commerce & on site at the Library.

Space:
Individual use of the Nook, conference and study rooms increased 34% over last year!

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 3 SCHOOLS

Collaborate closely with the school community to provide complementary educational content, programs, and support for faculty, students and their families.

Desired Outcome

- The community recognizes the partnership between the Library and Stratford schools in enhancing the educational experience for students of all ages.

	Support for Families	Support for Educators	Collaborations
FY 22-23	● Schools/daycare providers share library calendars & promotions. Library offers Homework Help tutoring.	● 2 nd and 6 th Grade Class Visits provide orientation for students and teachers in support of school curriculum.	● Robust working relationships with schools with increased focus on SECC this year.
FY 23-24	● Homework Helpers free tutoring services for families is a much sought after resource.	● Books to Your Door service for preschools & daycares successfully piloted.	● Hosted tables at inaugural SPS Back to School Family Partnership and Preschool Readiness Fairs
FY 24-25	● Collaboration with NHS Students expanded free tutoring for students in grades 5-8.	● Librarians created summer reading lists for the schools to distribute to K-12 students.	● Increased initiatives with middle schools this year yielded a 29% increase in Teen program attendance

Support for Families:

The Teen Department tutoring program serving students in grades 5-8 with six National Honor Society student tutors providing 126 tutoring sessions. The Homework Helpers program, for students in elementary school & supported by the Vicki Soto Foundation provided teens with valuable tutoring experience while assisting families with no-cost tutoring. 8 student tutors provided 437 tutoring sessions.

Support for Educators:

980 2nd and 6th grade students visited the Library this year. Conversely, Librarians visited 143 classrooms & shared Summer Reading information with 2845 students in grades K-6.

Collaborations:

Collaborations with schools, preschools, daycares, camps & afterschool programs are strong. The Library provides recommended summer reading lists for all grade levels & is represented on the Stratford Partnership for Youth & Families, Early Childhood Coalition of Stratford, Stratford Community Services, 21st Century Afterschool Program, Strive/Milestone, Kinder Connect, Stratford HS Football Team & Community Accountability Program for Stratford Students.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 4 WELCOME

Welcome residents, new and established, through informational materials, programs, and initiatives that provide orientation to the Library, the Town, and available resources, and that encourage the open exchange of ideas.

Desired Outcome

- The Library serves as a known source for information about Town services, organizations, volunteer opportunities, events, and programs.

	Information Source	Programming	Outreach
FY 22-23	● Efforts to collaborate with community partners to create a welcome kit were shifted to the local Welcome Wagon	● Welcome week, in the Children's Department provided opportunities to learn about Stratford. Stratford Talks series held its inaugural meeting at the Library.	● The Library participated in 225 outreach opportunities, reaching more than 6,000 participants, attracting 28.3% more visits to the Library this year.
FY 23-24	● Provided materials for SPS packets for new families.	● Welcome week expanded to include all Library Departments this year.	● The Library participated in 231 outreach opportunities, reaching more than 6,600 people, attracting 10% more visits to the Library this year.
FY 24-25	● A new Marketing Plan was completed in June and is being implemented for FY25-26.	● With new early voting laws going into effect this year, multiple programs were offered by the Registrars of Voters.	● The Library participated in 228 outreach opportunities, reaching more than 6,700 people.

Information Source

Consultant, Cordelia Anderson worked with the Library's Marketing Committee to develop a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Library.

Programming

The Library hosted both planning & information sessions to enable the Registrars of Voters to gain public input & promote early voting procedures. The Library also provided space for civic organizations, fraternities & sororities to host voter registration drives.

Outreach

Identifying opportunities to be present in the community, continued to be a priority this year. Face-to-face communication about library services helps non-users connect with the library in ways they were not previously aware of.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 5 ACCESS

Ensure that all residents have access to the Library by strengthening outreach programs, language availability, and new program initiatives.

Desired Outcome

- Language, physical and cultural barriers which discourage people from utilizing Library services are removed.

	Language	Physical	Cultural
FY 22-23	● Pocketalk translators are available at service desks. Spanish language cheat sheets are in use. Introduction of CTLAB hub services.	● Utilizing CDBG funds, the Library replaced and upgraded the Main Street entrance ramps and stairs.	● Issuing library cards at the SECC Food Pantry and at the Latin Music Festival introduced services to a broader audience.
FY 23-24	● A new collection of Spanish titles has been established for Teens.	● A signage audit was completed, to plan for future upgrades.	● Preschool Sensory Storytime and a social for Adults with special needs were piloted.
FY 24-25	● The Children’s Department has added <i>Les Explorateurs</i> magazine for 6-11 year-olds.	● CDBG & CIP funding was used to modernize one of the Library elevators.	● Training provided by <i>Autism LevelUP</i> will improve services and programming.

Language

Through ongoing collaborations with the Haitian community, the addition of a French language magazine for children was identified as an effective way to encourage use of the Library by those who speak French at home.

Physical

While signage upgrades are on hold awaiting word on funding to begin Phase 3 of the Lighting/Ductwork/HVAC Project, the Lobby elevator was modernized and funding to do the same on the second elevator is pending final approval from the Federal Government.

Cultural










The Library received a Growing Equitable Library Services Grant to train staff in effective services and programs for people with autism. This training has already had an impact on service desk interactions & is being incorporated into programming for all ages.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 6 MARKETING

Develop and implement a marketing plan to reach more Stratford residents with news and information about the Library through investments in marketing tools and the people to do the work.

Desired Outcome

- Increased awareness and use of Library programs and services by a broader segment of the population.

	Initiatives	Awareness	Usage
FY 22-23	 Marketing plan program paused for the year, but current efforts continue.	 Sharing library social media posts to local groups helps to increase awareness of library events and services.	 Program attendance up 59% Building attendance up 59% Borrowing activity up 6%
FY 23-24	 Proposals for Marketing Consultants are under review.	 A new Stratford Moms FB group provided additional opportunities to share Library posts. Networking with homeschool families boosted awareness as well.	 Utilizing the Mayor's weekly newsletter, we are reaching people who have not been using Library services. Building attendance is up 10%. Borrowing activity is up 9%.
FY 24-25	 The Marketing Team worked with a Consultant to develop a comprehensive marketing plan.	 The Library published an official Annual Report for FY23-24.	 Utilizing Instagram & Discord to market to Teens resulted in a 33% increase in program attendance.

Initiatives

The Marketing Team, comprised of the Executive & Assistant Directors, Head of Programming & PR and Director of Development worked with Consultant, Cordelia Anderson to analyze current marketing, expand opportunities, focus the Library's message & develop a Marketing Plan. The PR & Social Media Teams are now implementing the schedules. Work will continue in the new year with logo & website redesigns.

Awareness

Marketing analysis revealed a high rate of interest in the Library's social media and e-mail communications. Having a well-designed, published Annual Report has enhanced communications with community stakeholders, current donors & potential supporters.

Usage

Programming & study spaces are driving traffic to the Library. Interest in downloadable collections is very high & we are looking forward to seeing the cost of those items come down in the future.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 7 & 8 HUMAN SERVICES & TRAINING

Facilitate patron access to services offered by relevant community providers and partner with them to ensure a seamless response to patrons in need. Train library staff to respond to human service needs and make appropriate referrals.

Desired Outcome

- People who come to the Library seeking assistance with issues related to their basic needs are provided with current and accurate information about available services.

	Partnerships	Resources	Staff Training
FY 22-23	● Stratford Strong Task Force has been effective in bringing together a variety of local service providers.	● Created a database of local human services available.	● Communicating directly with local social workers, Ryan Dowd Training, webinars
FY 23-24	● Social workers from Operation Hope and Thomas Merton Center have regularly scheduled service hours at the library.	● Staff created Freshen-Up Kit program using donated personal care items.	● Staff participated in CPR/AED Certification, Narcan training, Mental Health First Aid & Suicide Intervention training.
FY 24-25	● Teen Services has expanded their work with the Stratford Partnership for Youth & Families (SPYF).	● Staff continue to connect those in need with services & navigate providing spaces shared by housed & unhoused patrons.	● Monthly Ryan Dowd webinars, along with CLA Workshops provide both training & mental health support for staff.

Partnerships

Involvement with SPYF is reaching young people with information about the Library. Site visits from trained social workers meeting with homeless people in the building continues connecting people with the services that meet their basic needs.

Resources

With updated resource information available and continued availability of personal care items, staff continue to provide information while keeping the mission of the Library in sight.

Staff Training

Understanding that the human services needs seen among Library patrons every day are not diminishing, the continued need for staff self-care has been a focus of training this year.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 9 FACILITY

Remake the Library facility for Stratford today and tomorrow as a welcoming and inspiring place to learn, create, and share.

Desired Outcome

- A Library building where people of all ages have comfortable spaces for individual & collaborative work; flexible programming and work spaces; and a collection that is housed in a welcoming and accessible way.

	Short-Term	Long-Term
FY 22-23	● Staff space planning task force identified service area priorities and developed a new floor plan .	● Capital request for Architectural Services was not approved for funding. The Board is exploring a variety of options to move forward with building expansion.
FY 23-24	● Project documents for Phase 3 of the HVAC/Lighting/Ductwork/AHU were updated and the project went out to bid.	● Capital request for Professional Design Services was approved for funding in July 2024.
FY 24-25	● ARPA grant arranged through State Senator Gresko’s Office refreshed Teen Services furnishings.	● The opportunity to utilize spaces at the former Pistey Funeral Home provides an exciting opportunity to reimagine the delivery of Library services.

Short-Term

The support of the ARPA grant created a more modern and welcoming space for Teens—very important as they transition from the renovated Children’s Department. With the potential for additional CIP funding allocated to Phase 3 Lighting/Ductwork/HVAC plans, the Library is poised to address a variety of short term building needs in FY25-26.

Long-Term

With the news of the Town’s purchase of the Pistey property, the Library paused the release of the RFQ for Professional Design Services for Library Optimization & Expansion. This will proceed with clarification of agreements for the use of the property lining up for FY25-26.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 10 FUNDRAISING

Initiate an advocacy and development strategy to secure funding for long-term capital improvements.

Desired Outcome

- The Library has a clear path forward to expand and support Development initiatives.

	Fundraising Initiatives	Endowment Initiatives	Planning
FY 22-23	● Successful Associates, Gala and Book Sale fundraisers this year.	● Endowment fund value is up significantly this year. Updated endowment information available online and in print.	● Engagement of professional Development services was delayed to year two.
FY 23-24	● Successful Associates, Gala & Book Sale fundraisers along with grants this year.	● Endowment fund continues to grow. Updated endowment information for donors is available online and in print.	● The new Development Director was hired in April and is just getting started with a variety of initiatives to build capacity.
FY 24-25	● The Associates campaign(+12%), grants(+135%), book sale(+21%), gala(+9%) & individual donor work all expanded this year.	● Endowment fund work included consolidation of funds, approval of a new gifts policy & retooling the legacy brochure and website.	● A grants & fundraising calendar was established. Keela was selected as the tool for tracking donor activity & engagement.

Fundraising Initiatives

Standard reports & queries were established in Keela to contact lapsed donors & email the summer program catalog. Received approval to participate in the FY25-26 Neighborhood Assistance Act program for window replacement. Overall grant income increased 135% and restricted gifts were up by 118%

Endowment Initiatives

The value of the endowment fund increased by 19% this year. The updated legacy brochure is now available for distribution.

Planning

Established a Development Calendar for annual activities & events. Set up a grants calendar to track opportunities & successes.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 11 STAFFING

Work to broaden the competencies of the staff through professional development and a hiring plan to reflect the community and address patron needs.

Desired Outcome

- A workforce that has the skills to provide the evolving array of services the Library provides and which reflects the diversity of the community we serve.

	Professional Development	Hiring
FY 22-23	● All staff are encouraged to participate in workshops, webinars and conferences related to their work at the library.	● Job descriptions and postings updated to expand inclusivity in education & experience. Utilizing Indeed platform and area cultural groups to share job postings to a wider audience.
FY 23-24	● Staff attended a variety of conferences, workshops and webinars related to their work at the library, including the national PLA and ALA Conferences.	● Continued to utilize area cultural groups to share job postings to a wider audience. Persons of color represent 14% of the Library workforce. 38.2% of Stratford residents are persons of color.
FY 24-25	● Staff are actively participating in ALA and CLA Conferences, with three people attending ALA this spring.	● Created a new Head of HR and Finance administrator position with a focus on compliance, employee handbook and training.

Professional Development

Our current workforce regularly participates in online and off site training opportunities and conferences. Staff members also engage in a variety of professional leadership opportunities outside of Stratford Library including: Chairing the ALA Printz Committee, Board Memberships on the State Library Board and Hagaman Memorial Library Board in East Haven; CT Education Network council, CT Library Consortium Assistant Directors Round Table Co-Chair, Department Heads and Supervisors Round Table Co-Chair, CLC Set the Stage Planning Co-Chair, Nutmeg Book Award Committee, Take Your Child to the Library Day Steering Committee, and State Library E-Resources Task Force.

Hiring:

The new Head of HR and Finance will improve hiring efficiency and records maintenance; and ensure that the library remains current with changing employment laws and requirements.

Performance Benchmarks for Objective 12 GOVERNANCE

Structure the board to ensure it reflects the community it serves, operates efficiently, and is positioned to attract a diversity of candidates.

Desired Outcome

- A Board that is passionate about the Library, operates efficiently and is comprised of members who possess a diversity of skills, a variety of interests and a broad range of life experiences.

	Membership	Skills/Experience	Efficiencies
FY 22-23	● The appointment of 4 members increased the capacity of the Board to accomplish year 2 goals.	● Board has identified deficiencies in skills and experience including: finance, arts, legal and fundraising.	● Four Board committees merged into the Governance Committee.
FY 23-24	● No new Board members were appointed this year.	● Board retreat helped to define members' role and to develop an action plan for improvement.	● With a goal to reduce the number of Board meetings, the February meeting was cancelled.
FY 24-25	● Three new Board members were appointed by Town Council.	● Significantly improved communication with Town Council concerning recruitment of new Board members.	● Board meeting schedule has successfully been reduced to 7 per year.

Membership

With one opening for a Town Appointed member and two openings on the Endowment Committee, the Board Governance and Executive Committees are actively recruiting individuals to apply for Board membership.

Skills/Experience

Board affiliations are updated annually, which helps identify skills gaps.

Efficiencies

This year, the Board reduced their monthly meeting schedule to seven per year, providing more time for committee work between meetings



Thank you for your interest in the work of the Stratford Library Association.

The Library Board and Staff are committed to creating a welcoming and dynamic community center for a diverse and evolving Stratford, recognized as the Town's essential partner in guiding all residents to access the informational, educational, and cultural resources they need to thrive.

We welcome questions and feedback on our work.
Please contact the Library Administration at slaask@stratfordlibrary.org or call 203-385-4166