

2025-2030 Strategic Plan



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CENTRAL
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LIBRARY
SYSTEM

2025–2030 Strategic Plan

When CALS began the strategic planning process in 2024, we reflected on the outcomes of our previous plan and asked the community where they'd like the library to develop further. The people who use our libraries (and some who don't) offered thoughtful praise and constructive feedback, helping us understand how to focus our efforts. This plan concentrates on areas of opportunity and improvement, but we know that books and reading are at the heart of what we do. Our commitment to books, reading, and literacy remains as strong as ever.

We believe a thriving public library enriches the lives of everyone it touches, so we sought insight from those we serve: library visitors, educators, families, and community partners. Frontline staff, who engage with patrons every day, offered valuable input that helped shape the direction of this plan.

In our last strategic plan, we introduced new strategies for community engagement, reallocated funds to better support programs and staff, and increased our investment in collections. These were big steps forward, and the community's positive response affirms that we're on the right path.

The 2025-2030 plan is rooted in the voices of our community.

It highlights key focus areas shaped by those who care about our mission, but it does not capture the full scope of our daily work. It's a guide—one that allows room to grow and adapt. We'll continue to provide books and reading materials that reflect the diverse voices and needs of our neighbors, friends, and families. We'll continue to champion early literacy, support teachers and students, and encourage lifelong learning.

We're excited about the next five years. Thank you for being part of the journey.



Mission, Vision & Values

As part of our strategic planning process, we developed a new mission and vision and revised our core values to reflect what both our staff and community believe are the essentials of CALS. These guiding statements express who we are, what we stand for, and how we strive to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Our Mission

We connect people. We nurture potential.
We grow community. We are CALS.

Our Vision

A community where people feel
heard, supported, and connected.

Our Core Values

We provide access to all.
We believe in the freedom to know.
We respect diverse perspectives.
We cultivate collaboration and innovation.
We provide open and respectful spaces.
We carefully steward shared resources.
We offer exceptional service.

Our Goal: Raising Awareness

To ensure the sustainability of the library services our community loves, we invite community members to connect more deeply with our services and processes.

Results you may see could include:

- A deepened engagement with frequent users, and marketing and outreach tailored to specific communities.
- Additional commitment to Spanish language communications.
- Heightened awareness of the library's offerings.
- Consistent sharing of data that shows how the library improves both the lives of individual community members and the greater community.
- A refreshed and improved library website that follows best practices for accessibility.



Strategies we may use could include, but are not limited to:

- Multi-lingual outreach, marketing, and communications.
- Increased library engagement with social media across the Central Arkansas region.
- A publicly-accessible dashboard highlighting our strategic plan activities and the community impacts of that work.
- Information and stories about our informational and cultural resources, showing how much we care about our commitment to library services.

Our Goal: Building Lasting Relationships With Our Community.

To ensure all of our community members feel they have a place at the library, we commit to community relationships and partnerships that are authentic and meaningful.

Results you may see could include:

- Spaces and relationships which reflect the unique aspects of each community.
- Spanish language services are available when and where needed.
- Creating welcoming and trusted spaces for members of the Black community.
- Ensuring staff, collection, and community demographics align.
- Expanding on the successful partnerships built through the community liaison model, to include liaisons for groups such as our older community members and the disabled community.
- Developing a wider range of partnerships across our community.



Strategies we may use could include, but are not limited to:

- Cultivating stronger relationships with schools, teachers, and our youth in schools.
- Working with community members to reimagine underutilized spaces in library facilities, ensuring they are responsive to local needs.
- Expanding our volunteer opportunities to meet the needs of our community, including engaging more corporate and eligible student volunteers.
- Bolstering our relationship with the local job market to steer programming and resources towards what our local employers and entrepreneurs need most.
- Significantly investing in collections in languages other than English.
- Further developing programs to build local history community relationships within Central Arkansas's Black community.
- Promoting opportunities to further develop the long-term relationship between CALS and local artists and musicians.

Our Goal: Combating Loneliness and Isolation For Those Often Overlooked.

To ensure our most vulnerable community members are not alone, we will prioritize programs and services that take best advantage of the trust our community has in the library.

Results you may see could include:

- Continuing CALS' approach to prioritizing collaborative services and support for the unhoused.
- Culturally relevant, multigenerational community focused programming for all ages.
- Improved access for our older community members to the physical locations and resources of the library.
- Offering opportunities for adults, particularly those who are isolated in the community, to take part in regular, ongoing, informal programming.
- A focus on resources to welcome those new to our community and to our country.
- Ensuring that patrons of all ages who cannot visit in person still have access to CALS programs and services, whenever possible.



Strategies we may use could include, but are not limited to:

- Removing barriers to connect patrons to events and services, such as making sure programs are accessible to patrons regardless of their economic status or ability and reviewing CALS facilities and programs to gauge access and accessibility.
- Designing social-service-informed programs to help patrons of all ages and status engage in their personal learning interests and connect with community resources.
- Interpersonal communication training for staff, especially for patrons with high resource needs.

Our Goal: Organizational Excellence.

To ensure that our staff and service provide exceptional service, we will commit time and resources to professional development.

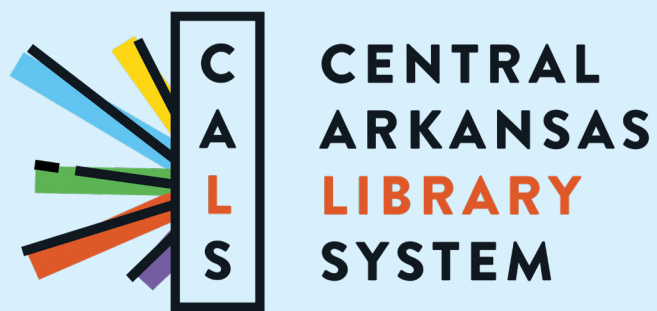
Results you may see could include:

- An expanded, empowered, and reconfigured community liaison team that incorporates input from community stakeholders.
- Improved staff capacity to support community needs.
- Ensuring each library staff person can be an advocate for library services and values.
- Robust and leading-edge training for staff at all levels throughout their career with CALS.
- A commitment to organizational sustainability so that programs are impactful and lasting.



Strategies we may use could include, but are not limited to:

- Development of a committee informed by personnel from every location and department across the system to determine a plan for staff training through the year and for years to follow.
- Additional and more diverse training opportunities for all staff, regardless of position.
- More library staff with social services-based education and experience.
- A professional development path for library staff that extends past orientation, including leadership development training and opportunities.



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