



**ALAMEDA
FREE LIBRARY**
— BETWEEN THE LINES —

Strategic Plan

2026-2030



Powered by Community Input



In mid-2025, the Alameda Free Library launched a community-wide effort to shape our next strategic plan, inviting Alamedans to share what they love about their library and what they hope to see in the future. More than 1,600 people joined in through surveys, conversations, focus groups, sticky-note boards, and online and print outreach. We offered many ways to participate, in multiple languages and across all library locations, to make sure everyone had a chance to be heard.

This plan is built from that input and reflects the ideas, experiences, and aspirations shared by the people who use, support, and work at the Library.



Focus Area 1

Access

Programs, collections, resources, and referrals that connect people with learning and enrichment opportunities.

Goal 1.1

Improve Electronic Collections:

Make it easier for people to find and enjoy popular eBooks, audiobooks, and other digital materials.

Approaches

- Lower wait times for popular titles
- Evaluate and broaden digital collection to reflect reading trends
- Release digital editions concurrently with print release dates

Goal 1.2

Strengthen Physical Collection:

Keep the library's shelves easy to browse and filled with books that reflect what our community cares about.

Approaches

- Improve high-demand collections
- Establish collection maintenance procedures
- Install clear, consistent signage for all collections and shelving areas
- Create discovery tools—book lists, shelf talkers, and thematic guides—to help users explore the collection
- Shorten processing time for new acquisitions
- Strengthen staff proficiency in multilingual cataloging
- Broaden multilingual collections—particularly Spanish and Chinese—based on used demand and preferred formats
- Complete systemwide signage installation

Goal 1.3

Deliver Community-Driven Programs:

Offer engaging, inclusive programs that evolve with the community's needs and interests.

Approaches

- Expand Summer Reading incentives for Teens and Adults
- Pilot community conversation clubs and invite library users to co-host gatherings
- Launch family-oriented Spanish-language programs
- Explore the feasibility of a Spanish-language affinity group via WhatsApp
- Expand take-home kits and community-curated display opportunities
- Develop ongoing feedback tools to capture community opinions



Focus Area 1

Access

Goal 1.4

Expand Referrals and Resources

Connections:

Help more people find the services, information, and community support they need.

Approaches

- Distribute self-help materials across all branches
- Increase visibility and accessibility of on-site Social Services staff at Main Library

Goal 1.5

Advance Technology Access:

Offer computers, software, and internet access that help people learn, create, and stay connected.

Approaches

- Assess feasibility of new software offerings for creativity, learning, and job readiness
- Increase library user access and training opportunities for the 3D printer
- Evaluate opportunities to establish free public Wi-Fi zones with other City departments

Goal 1.6

Grow the “Library of Things”:

Expand and promote borrowing of everyday items—from tools to games—that make life easier and learning more fun.

Approaches

- Boost promotion and visibility of current Library of Things inventory
- Increase supply of high-demand items
- Pursue ongoing funding to expand and sustain the Library of Things collection



Focus Area 2

Experience

A welcoming and visible presence through inclusivity, strong outreach, and trusted partnerships.

Goal 2.1

Deepen Outreach & Partnerships:

Build stronger connections with local groups and organizations to bring the library's resources and services to more people.

Approaches

- Build intentional, trust-based partnerships with Alameda's non-English-speaking communities
- Expand outreach collaborations at Alameda Point and other locations
- Create short-form video content to promote programs across social media channels
- Grow the preschool outreach program
- Establish a cross-department outreach committee to coordinate community engagement
- Provide a library card to every student enrolled in Alameda Unified School District
- Assess feasibility of adding drop-off and pickup locations at Alameda Point and the West End
- Establish consistent and dedicated library services at Alameda Point
- Explore mobile library service models
- Leverage city partnerships and collaborate with youth organizations and local businesses
- Promote bridge library experiences—such as honor-system book exchanges
- Pursue advertising and outreach opportunities with local transit agencies

Goal 2.2

Broaden Access Channels:

Share library news and resources in ways that reach everyone—online, in person, and throughout the community.

Approaches

- Reassess social media strategy to determine which platforms best reach key audiences
- Research community social media usage and seek access to relevant closed groups
- Engage parent networks through school channels to strengthen family outreach
- Identify communities who need customized communication and access strategies
- Explore targeted partnerships with schools that may face transportation barriers to accessing the library for visits or special programs
- Create accessible “how-to” guides tailored for neurodivergent library users
- Implement a marketing and communications platform



Focus Area 2

Experience



Goal 2.3

Improve Library Spaces:

Make welcoming library spaces where people can explore, learn, and connect.

Approaches

- Reconfigure shelving to increase face-out displays in high-traffic areas
- Collaborate with architect to reimagine the Main Library's layout
- Conduct a systemwide assessment of furniture and seating needs
- Develop brand standards
- Install gender-inclusive restroom at the Main Library
- Implement the Main Library redesign to create more flexible, welcoming spaces
- Explore redesigned spaces to exceed accessibility standards and better accommodate library users with mobility aids
- Standardize signage and marketing materials based on brand standards

Goal 2.4

Introduce Library User-Facing Technology:

Add new digital tools that make it easier for people to use and enjoy library services.

Approaches

- Launch an updated website featuring an integrated, interactive event calendar and easier navigation
- Add online tools for meeting room reservations and event registration
- Launch a mobile app to streamline catalog browsing, holds, and account management
- Pilot large digital display boards for event and service promotion
- Adopt touch-screen kiosks
- Install barcode scanners compatible with mobile device displays
- Install a child-friendly self-checkout station in the children's section
- Add an accessible service station with large-print screens and wheelchair access near circulation

Focus Area 3

Capacity

The library's ability to develop staff, infrastructure, and systems to achieve library goals.

Goal 3.1

Invest in Staff Expertise & Collaboration:

Help staff build skills, confidence, and teamwork across departments so everyone can provide great service—one team, one library.

Approaches

- Establish structured cross-department collaboration and cross-location training and collaboration opportunities
- Refine onboarding processes to ensure clarity and consistency
- Grow staff knowledge and confidence in all aspects of library service through training and other means on topics such as de-escalation and disability equity
- Identify training and tools for serving non-English-speaking library users
- Prioritize recruitment of multilingual staff and individuals with lived community service
- Explore forming a staff-led diversity committee to guide inclusive approach to library service
- Implement recurring staff exchange days to strengthen systemwide awareness
- Provide training and tools for serving non-English-speaking library users

Goal 3.2

Refine Processes and Service Standards:

Keep improving how we do things so library services are easy, consistent, and high-quality for everyone.

Approaches

- Develop and implement customer service standards and related training
- Provide routine refresher trainings related to daily operations to ensure process consistency
- Analyze logistics to optimize service flow at every location



Focus Area 3

Capacity

Goal 3.3

Foster a Positive, Supportive Workplace

Culture:

Celebrate staff contributions, encourage teamwork, and build a workplace where learning and appreciation are part of our culture.

Approaches

- Establish recognition programs to celebrate achievements, including development of best practices
- Development and launch a structured mentorship or buddy program to support staff development
- Send staff to regional, state, and national conferences to expand professional learning
- Strengthen interdepartmental partnerships with City departments through collaborative initiatives

Goal 3.4

Invest in Technology and Tools:

Give staff and workspaces the up-to-date tools and technology they need to work effectively.

Approaches

- Provide laptops for all staff to enable flexible and efficient work
- Conduct ergonomic assessments systemwide to ensure healthy and sustainable work environments and apply results to improve workstations

