

State Library of North Carolina
Strategic Plan 2008–2012



Introduction

Strategic Plan Purpose

The State Library of North Carolina invested and actively participated in a strategic planning process in 2007 and 2008 to facilitate the development of a 2008–2012 Strategic Plan. This plan is intended to set the Library on a strong course for meeting the needs of the people of North Carolina for the next 100 years through the provision and facilitation of excellent library services. The timing of this plan purposely coincides with the 200th anniversary—in 2012—of the State Library, and is intended, in part, to provide the Library with a solid platform for publicizing and celebrating this significant milestone. The State Library's LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) five-year plan was developed at the beginning of this planning process, and serves as a precursor and foundation for the full strategic plan.

Planning Horizon

The Library's Strategic Plan was written to provide guidance for calendar years 2008–2012. The strategic framework—including the Library's vision, mission, philosophy and approach, goals and objectives—will likely remain relevant for longer than the five-year planning horizon, but should be evaluated for relevance when the Strategic Plan is next updated.

Specific action items required to make progress toward the Plan's objectives may need updating prior to 2012 if the Library is able to rapidly achieve its goals. Some action items may continue to be relevant after the 2012 planning horizon if not achieved within the five-year implementation window. Any action items that remain after 2012 should be examined for relevancy and revised, if necessary, during the Strategic Plan's next updating process.

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Methodology

The process for developing the Library's Strategic Plan was diverse and participatory in nature. An outside strategic planning consultant was hired to research, coordinate and facilitate the planning process, and to write the Strategic Plan. The consultant's research methods included:

- Reviewing background documents relevant to the Library's past, present and future needs;
- Establishing and hosting facilitated discussions with a Core Planning Team representing diverse Library functionalities and interests;
- Designing and hosting in-person workshops with Library staff;
- Designing, hosting, and analyzing data from an anonymous, Web-based survey of staff;
- Designing and hosting in-person workshops with library directors and their delegates around the state; and
- Developing a detailed situation analysis (see Appendix).

Documents reviewed in developing the Strategic Plan included The Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan; State Library of North Carolina Needs Assessment and Marketing Study; Program Evaluation of the Library Services and Technology Act Plan For Implementation in North Carolina, 2003–2007; State Library organizational charts; and meeting minutes from State Library Commission meetings in October 2005, June 2006, October 2006 and May 2007.

Members of the Core Planning Team were selected based upon their functional expertise, length of service with the State Library (a mix of staff tenure was included), level within the organization, and interest in active participation in the planning process. The Core Planning Team was consulted on a regular basis for input and guidance regarding the plan's direction, and for reviewing project deliverables such as the Situation Analysis (Appendix) and draft versions of the strategic and implementation frameworks. The Core Planning Team played a significant role as well in the refinement of the strategic framework and the full development of action plan items.

At the project's outset, "listening sessions" with staff were conducted to determine the project's direction; all listening sessions were structured in a semi-confidential manner to ensure open feedback. Library staff were also given the opportunity to respond to a fully confidential online survey. Finally, three workshops were conducted with Library staff in 2007 and 2008 to get input on staff perceptions, needs and issues surrounding a set of priority topics. Staff participated in a "discovery" workshop designed to explore issues related to training and development, technology, internal communication, and leadership. Staff also participated in follow-up workshops designed to prioritize Library goals and objectives.

Library constituents were engaged in a series of in-person forums as well. Three meetings were conducted around the state with library directors (or their delegates). All library directors were invited to attend, along with representatives of the state's graduate schools of library and information science, the State Library's various advisory committees, and the State Library Commission. The four-hour meetings—held in Asheville, Greensboro and Rocky Mount—provided an opportunity for the State Librarian to present the 2008–2012 LSTA plan which formed the basis for a discussion of the role and future of the State Library. No internal Library staff were present during the portion of the dialogue that was specifically about the role of the Library now and in the future. The meetings were well attended (20–30 per location), with the notable absence of library directors from four-year academic institutions. In addition, the State Librarian was in contact with the North Carolina State Library Commission and Department of Cultural Resources throughout the process.

Report Organization

This report has two primary components: the strategic framework, presenting the Library's vision, mission, philosophy and approach, primary goals and supporting objectives; and an implementation framework detailing the actions that must be taken to accomplish the goals and objectives at hand.

A process graphic is presented in the implementation framework section of this plan, showing the recommended phasing of action plan items. In particular, this graphic should enable users to visualize the "critical path" needed to help the Library achieve some of its cross-functional goals. A large-size printout of this action plan process graphic is also available as a quick reference guide for users.

State Library of North Carolina Strategic Framework

Vision

What is different in the world because you exist?

The State Library of North Carolina envisions a future in which all North Carolinians have access to exceptional library services and to the information resources they need to achieve their personal, educational and professional goals.

Mission

What major pathway to change does your organization use?

The State Library of North Carolina is the catalyst for exceptional library services in North Carolina. We are the principal library of state government; we build the capacity of all libraries; and we develop and support access to specialized collections for the people of North Carolina.

Philosophy & Approach

Why and how do we do what we do?

- **We connect** the people of North Carolina to library services, information and resources.
- **We collect** unique and specialized collections for the people and libraries of North Carolina.
- **We enrich** the North Carolina experience.
- **We empower** libraries to meet community needs for library services, now and for the next 100 years.
- **We collaborate** by creating relationships and building skills in the library community to benefit the people of North Carolina.

Goals & Objectives

How will you know you were successful? What pathways will you use to get there?

Access

To enrich the lives of all North Carolinians by facilitating the availability and accessibility of information, technology and resources, and by encouraging the joy of reading.

- Support and promote equitable library service for all North Carolinians.
- Develop and support resource sharing and access to digital collections.
- Promote reading and lifelong learning for North Carolinians of all ages.
- Develop and support specialized collections and services.

Catalyst

To develop the potential of all North Carolina libraries by advocating and supporting excellence in programs, resources and services.

- Support the development of exceptional services in the libraries of North Carolina.
- Facilitate and support effective library partnerships and collaborations.
- Design, develop and provide access to staff development opportunities for all North Carolina library staff.

Capacity

To build a strong and capable State Library of North Carolina by creating an organization with an engaged and productive staff, an efficient structure and appropriate resources.

- Structure the State Library and develop staff to meet current and anticipated library needs.
- Create a culture of excellent internal and external communication.
- Support current and emerging technologies in delivering library services.
- Be a library employer of choice.

Implementation Framework

The following pages detail the action items that will need to be carried out to achieve the Library's overarching goals and objectives. Responsibility for implementing and carrying out these activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis as the Library progresses through its 2008–2012 planning horizon. However, general concepts regarding responsible parties are already known and capacity issues were fundamental in determining both the scope and timing of individual action items.

The process graphic presented at the end of this section indicates the recommended phasing of action items in the plan. Note that the phasing concepts were developed with an eye to both capacity issues and “catalytic impacts” (i.e., can an activity completed on behalf of one goal enable greater or easier achievement of another objective or goal?; likewise, must some activities be done in order for others to begin or be done properly?). Finally, some activities are designed to be repeated on an annual or biennial basis, as needed.

All of the action items detailed herein are designed to work together to accomplish the Library's overarching goals and objectives, and more importantly, support the mission and vision of the State Library.

Goal One

Access

To enrich the lives of all North Carolinians by facilitating the availability and accessibility of information, technology and resources, and by encouraging the joy of reading.

2008–2012 OBJECTIVES

- A Support and promote equitable library service for all North Carolinians.
- B Develop and support resource sharing and access to digital collections.
- C Promote reading and lifelong learning for North Carolinians of all ages.
- D Develop and support specialized collections and services.

A Support and promote equitable library service for all North Carolinians.

1. Promote the value of libraries and the benefits that they provide to the people of North Carolina:
 - Identify the unmet needs of North Carolina’s libraries.
 - Capture data and stories that demonstrate value.
 - Actively demonstrate value in multiple formats.
2. Support the development of additional funding for public libraries:
 - Support the efforts of the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association.
 - Support the efforts of Friends of North Carolina Public Libraries.
 - Provide advocacy training for library staff, trustees and supporters.
3. Promote equal access to library services for all North Carolinians through statewide services and programs and through direct support to libraries with federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants:
 - Develop and support programs that cross library patrons’ life spans, geographical boundaries, and income levels.
 - Expand information resources for lifelong learning in North Carolina’s libraries by supporting digitization, preservation and access to special collections.
 - Promote equal access to 21st-century library technologies and services for all North Carolinians.

B Develop and support resource sharing and access to digital collections.

1. Continue to develop and support statewide and regional lending services:
 - Explore a statewide library card initiative.
 - Facilitate and maintain regional collaborative networks.
 - Maintain and enhance interlibrary loan services.
2. Support and promote NC LIVE, the statewide consortium that provides equal access to electronic resources for North Carolina’s public and academic libraries:
 - Participate in the governance, committees and activities of the NC LIVE consortium.
 - Manage funding and determine eligibility for the public library Community of Interest.
 - Provide training in the use of NC LIVE resources.
 - Supplement resources available in NC LIVE, as feasible.
3. Establish formalized collaborative programs with other Department of Cultural Resources (DCR) divisions for creation of and access to digital collections:
 - Identify current digital projects at DCR.
 - Identify existing gaps.
 - Develop a plan for digital content creation and access.

Goal One *continued*

Access

C Promote reading and lifelong learning for North Carolinians of all ages.

1. Support and facilitate reading and lifelong learning in libraries for North Carolina's out-of-school adults:
 - Support local library programs for adults through the North Carolina Center for the Book.
 - Maintain lending collections of materials for *Let's Talk About It* book discussions, *NC Reads NC: Our Poets Speak*, and documentary film discussion series.
 - Provide access to the statewide network of speakers and other literary-based programs.
 - Create, promote and maintain an online literary and cultural map of North Carolina.
 - Support communitywide reading projects with lending collections, resources and organizational information.
2. Support and facilitate public library reading programs for North Carolina's youth:
 - Work with the Youth Services Advisory Committee to plan and work toward excellence in services to North Carolina's youth.
 - Coordinate and support the annual Summer Reading Program.
 - Develop and support programs and services for youth services library staff.
3. Support and promote information literacy programs developed and provided by the State Library's Library Services Section:
 - Formally define the purpose, mission and components of an information literacy program for state employees and implement strategies for promoting and executing the program.
 - Strengthen and enhance the North Carolina demographic and statistical data information literacy program to meet ongoing user needs.
 - Develop and implement information literacy programs that educate and facilitate public use of the State Library's resources and collections.

4. Support and promote services offered to special populations through the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH):
 - Implement and maintain best practices for conducting outreach and maintaining effective communication with LBPH users, supporters and volunteers.
 - Implement strategies for leveraging State Library consultants' relationships with public libraries to strengthen LBPH outreach and promotional efforts to new populations and potential users.
 - Build and maintain strong relationships with librarians, professionals in disability and aging-related fields, and leaders in related advocacy and consumer organizations in the state.

D Develop and support specialized collections and services.

1. Ensure specialized collections reflect the vision and mission of the State Library:
 - Define the vision and purpose of specialized collections at the State Library.
 - Conduct a needs assessment/gap analysis of existing specialized collections.
 - Define collection strategies to fulfill the goals of the needs assessment/gap analysis.
2. Support long-term accessibility of specialized collections:
 - Develop and implement programs to ensure access.
 - Facilitate sharing of specialized collections with other institutions.
3. Ensure requirements for mandated collections and services are met:
 - Review mandates regularly.
 - Update collection strategies and action plans as needed.

Goal Two

Catalyst

To develop the potential of all North Carolina libraries by advocating and supporting excellence in programs, resources and services.

2008–2012 OBJECTIVES

- A Support the development of exceptional services in the libraries of North Carolina.
- B Facilitate and support effective library partnerships and collaborations.
- C Design, develop and provide access to staff development opportunities for all North Carolina library staff.

A Support the development of exceptional services in the libraries of North Carolina.

1. Advance guidelines, standards and competencies as appropriate for the public library community:
 - Assess the various standards currently established in North Carolina.
 - Evaluate “standards” models from other states.
 - Develop and issue standards for North Carolina’s public libraries, as appropriate.
 - Update North Carolina’s public library standards, as needed.
2. Facilitate knowledge transfer about current and emerging library issues and practices:
 - Review and evaluate existing mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information.
 - Develop and maintain programs and services that promote exceptional library service in North Carolina.

B Facilitate and support effective library partnerships and collaborations.

1. Develop and maintain statewide collaboration:
 - Identify areas of greatest need and interest in statewide and regional collaborations.
 - Develop and host regional and statewide meetings that support collaborative programs and services.
2. Partner with institutions and associations to facilitate library collaborations:
 - Identify platforms and mechanisms for collaboration.
 - Identify institutions and associations with which to collaborate.
 - Initiate collaborations, as appropriate.

3. Enhance and support regional connectivity:

- Assign Library Development consultants regionally.
- Develop and support programs that enable regular collaboration.

C Design, develop and provide access to staff development opportunities for all North Carolina library staff.

1. Support the professional development of North Carolina’s library employees and supporters:
 - Identify staff development needs for library employees and supporters.
 - Create a training and education plan.
 - Implement the plan, and assess statewide needs regularly in the future.
2. Complete the transition of the State Library’s continuing education programs from federal to state funding.
 - Evaluate existing federally funded continuing education programs.
 - Define needs and priorities.
 - Retain and refine offerings as feasible with state funds.

Goal Three

Capacity

To build a strong and capable State Library of North Carolina by creating an organization with an engaged and productive staff, an efficient structure and appropriate resources.

2008–2012 OBJECTIVES

- A Structure the State Library and develop staff to meet current and anticipated library needs.
- B Create a culture of excellent internal and external communication.
- C Support current and emerging technologies in delivering library services.
- D Be a library employer of choice.

A Structure the State Library and develop staff to meet current and anticipated library needs.

1. Ensure the State Library's organizational structure supports the Library's mission:
 - Create an organizational structure that provides for the evolving practice of librarianship and that enables the upward growth of employees.
 - Evaluate the organizational structure on an ongoing basis.
 - Transition the structure as needed.
2. Create flexibility in structuring and utilizing library staff resources:
 - Create cross-section matrix teams to address librarywide issues.
 - Develop and implement cross-training procedures as appropriate.

B Create a culture of excellent internal and external communication.

1. Ensure well-coordinated communication functions supported by appropriate staff:
 - Identify and assess existing and needed staff communication resources.
 - Develop a cross section-matrix team to support communication.
2. Create and maintain a plan to support a culture of excellent communication.
 - Develop a State Library Communication Plan that addresses internal and external needs.
 - Implement the State Library Communication Plan.
 - Update the State Library Communication Plan as needed.

C Support current and emerging technologies in delivering library services.

1. Ensure technology reflects and enables implementation of the State Library's vision and mission:
 - Articulate the relationship between libraries and technology.
 - Invest in staying abreast of new and emerging technologies.
 - Develop and maintain a cross-section matrix technology team.
2. Ensure that the State Library's technology resources, functions and systems are adequately supported to meet current and evolving needs:
 - Develop a State Library Technology Plan.
 - Implement the State Library Technology Plan.
 - Update the State Library Technology Plan as needed.

Goal Three *continued*

Capacity

D Be a library employer of choice.

1. Enhance a sense of community among all staff:
 - Establish a program to celebrate the accomplishments of the library's staff.
 - Create systems and opportunities for regular interaction among staff, including participative gatherings.
2. Promote a culture of intra-organizational cooperation, understanding and diversity:
 - Create opportunities for cross-sectional and cross-functional teams.
 - Recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
 - Encourage and support the sharing of skills, knowledge and best practices.
3. Be a solutions-oriented culture:
 - Promote and reward innovative thinking among employees.
 - Design flexible systems, structures and processes that are adaptable when needs change.
4. Ensure that the staff of the State Library of North Carolina have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out current and evolving library practice in order to fulfill the Library's vision and mission:
 - Conduct an internal needs assessment of skills required for current library positions.
 - Create an updated training and education plan based upon the needs assessment.
 - Incorporate staff development requirements into individual work plans.
 - Assess staff development needs regularly in the future.