

Plan of Service 2024-2028



“More Than You Expect”

Message from the Board



On behalf of the Westlock Libraries Intermunicipal Board, we are proud to present our five year Strategic Plan of Service. This plan charts our vision for the next five years: To create a physical space that is welcoming, comfortable, and functional, to encourage literacy and satisfy curiosity, to know our community, and to celebrate diversity focusing on cultural awareness.

It was truly exciting for our board to develop connections and collaborate with our staff, the Town and County of Westlock residents and councils, and Yellowhead Regional Library, to create this document and to plan for the future of our libraries.



The result is a Strategic Plan of Service that centers around connection and community, while leaving room to navigate change. We know we will achieve the goals and strategies we have set for ourselves.

It is with great excitement we can look to the future and the key role our Library will play in meeting the needs of our communities!

- The Westlock Intermunicipal Libraries Board

Message from the Staff

“A library card is the start of a lifelong adventure”
(Lillian Jackson Braun)

A visit to the library can be many different things. You can plan to pop in quickly to pick up your holds – until you see the NEW Books shelf and stay a wee bit longer for a quick peek. Or perhaps you see a friend and stop to chat while the children colour a picture. Other times, you start looking for a book and find yourself lost in the stacks, only to discover a whole new area or genre you didn't know existed.

At Westlock Libraries, we strive continually to make our library a welcoming space for you and your family. We want everyone to enjoy coming to the library. We do this by offering multiple programs for children of all ages and several adult programs.

We want to be a place where you can explore your thoughts, ideas, questions, hobbies, and talents. We want to be a friendly face; one you can depend on to help you find what you're looking for – or even find something you didn't know you needed.

Whatever brings you through our doors, the staff at Westlock Libraries work hard to prove our motto “More Than You Expect.”

A visit to the library is a whole new world waiting to be discovered. Come discover yours!

-The Staff at Westlock Libraries



Library Profile

Westlock Libraries serve residents of both the Town of Westlock and Westlock County as well as the Village of Clyde with a combined population of 11,220. Although Westlock County's population is mostly rural and agriculturally based, the Town of Westlock supports a thriving business and government administrative economy.

According to the 2021 Federal Census, in the Town of Westlock, there is a larger senior population (65+) making up 28.3% of the population and a smaller population of children under the age of 19 making up 19.9%. Within the county, the largest age demographic is 40-64 years old at 25.6% and residents under the age of 19 is at 24.5%.

This demographic information along with changing diversity stats helped to develop the Strategic Priorities for our current Plan of Service.



We have three service points: The Town of Westlock, the Hamlet of Jarvie and the Hamlet of Fawcett. The Westlock Library has been open since 1945 but it has been serving Westlock town and county residents from its current location in the Town of Westlock for 34 years. It is the largest of the three libraries and is located in the Heritage Building along with Town Council Chambers, Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), and the Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) Centre.

The Jarvie Library and M. Alice Frose Library in Fawcett are located in their local Community Centres. Both libraries serve the northern communities of Westlock County.

CALP

The Westlock Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) is under the umbrella of Westlock Libraries. Westlock Libraries received the CALP grant in 2021 and the program has grown exponentially. The Westlock Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) is one of 80 community-based learning programs in Alberta.

CALP is focused on helping adults in our community reach their learning and literacy goals by providing classes and individual tutoring in reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills, and GED prep. We assist newcomers to Canada with English Language Learning, IELTS and CELPIP prep and foster connections to partner agencies in our community.



COMMUNITY ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM

Snap Shot of our Library Services



The libraries had **2,440** open hours in 2023



1444 people have a card at our libraries



44,980 people walked through our doors in 2023



In addition to **35,544** website visits



Our service is delivered by **12** dedicated staff



And **31** amazing volunteers



The libraries added **2,072** new items in 2023



Bringing the total collection to **29,937**



There were **11,637** downloads of e-Content



Contributing to a total of **75,064** checkouts



We lent our items to libraries outside of our system **14,436** times



And brought in **24,516** items upon patron request



The libraries have **8** public computers



They were in use for a total of **4764** hours



The libraries participated in **14** promotional events



Where **over 1,285** people heard our message



We offered **199** programs for kids



49 for adults and seniors



And **9** for families



9,235 people attended in total!



There were also **48,872** connections to our Wi-Fi

Planning Process

The planning process for the 2024-2028 Plan of Service began March 2022, when the Plan of Service Committee and the Director met to discuss the planning process and develop a timeline. There were three main information gathering sessions:

1. **Community Planning Session (June 2023)**
2. **Customer Surveys (June-July 2023)**
3. **Staff Planning Meeting (August 2023)**
4. **Board Planning Meeting (August 2023)**



After reviewing all the data from our surveys and planning sessions, The Board approved four Library Service responses at the October 2023 meeting:

1. **Create a physical space that is welcoming, comfortable, and functional**
2. **Encourage Literacy and Satisfy Curiosity**
3. **Know Your Community**
4. **Celebrate Diversity and Cultural Awareness**

Once the library service responses were passed, the staff and board collaborated to brainstorm the goals, objectives, strategies, and measures.

The Plan draft was presented to the Board and approved at the December 2023 Board Meeting.



Vision and Mission

Vision:

To connect people to people, information, entertainment, and ideas.

Mission:

To be the premier destination for information, entertainment, and inspiration; where everyone is welcome to connect, share, and grow.



Our Values

Community—

We collaborate with our communities and our community agencies to provide amazing programs and services.

Openness—

We are open to new ideas and to new ways of doing things.

Inclusivity—

We value Intellectual Freedom and our programs, collections, and services are for everyone.

Diversity—

We value everyone's needs, experiences, and differences.

Fun—

Our programs and services make our customers smile.

Friendly Service—

Our staff are easy to approach and happy to help.

Welcoming Environment—

We want everyone who uses our services to feel comfortable and appreciated.





Strategic Goals:

2024-2028

Create a welcoming, comfortable, functional space

Encourage Literacy & Satisfy Curiosity

Know your Community

Celebrate Diversity and Cultural Awareness

Goal:

Create a welcoming, comfortable, functional space

Goal:

Residents of Westlock Town and County will have welcoming multipurpose spaces within the libraries to meet and interact with others, where everyone is free to enjoy, learn, and share. The libraries will have accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Objective 1.1:

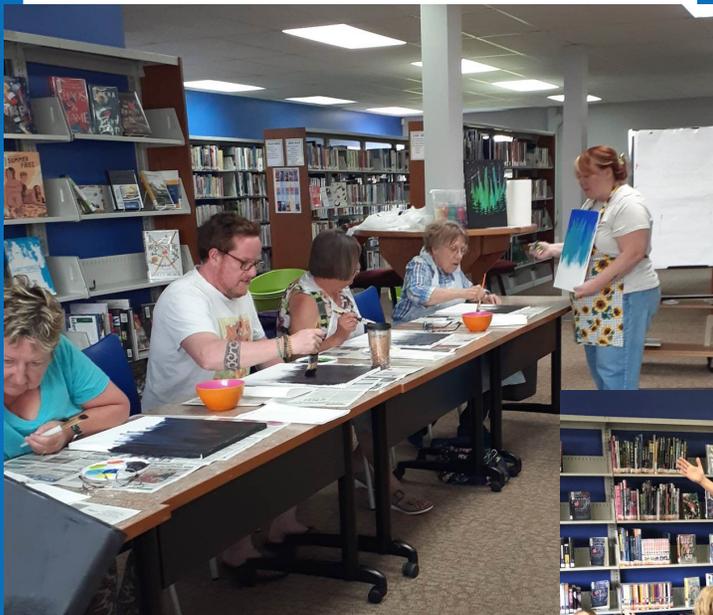
The libraries will ensure that all Town and County residents will have ready access to well maintained and welcoming spaces where they have opportunities for personal, intellectual, and social growth.

Strategies:

- Interactive technology modernization projects will be investigated. Example: Self check out options, etc.
- Investigate and implement ways to develop a quiet space for patrons.
- Create physical displays. Examples: Talk back boards, I Spy boards, Busy boards, etc.
- Create virtual interactive displays that engage and stimulate the imagination. (Ongoing)
- Purchase of durable interactive furniture to create client friendly engaging areas in town and county libraries.

Measures:

75% of our customers surveyed will respond that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the physical space



Goal: Encourage Literacy and Satisfy Curiosity

Goal:

Provide the resources, technology, and programming opportunities to residents of all ages to explore and support growth and success at every level of lifelong learning.

Objective 2.1:

Increase learning and creative opportunities for all age groups.



Strategies:

- Continue ongoing and development of Foundational learning programs with CALP.
- Continue ongoing children's foundational literacy programs. Examples: Summer Reading Club, Mother Goose, Baby Mother Goose, Read and Roll, Storytime, crafts, puppet shows, etc.
- Investigate and develop programs for working adults to re-engage with library services. Examples: paint night, gardening, baking, board and card game night, adult Lego night, etc.
- Continue to promote and develop book clubs for all ages and interests.
- Offer programming that supports a variety of topics. Examples: Information, health, financial, business, media, food, etc.

Measures:

- Increased participation in CALP foundational learning programs
- Increased attendance for Children's foundational literacy programs
- New adult programming activities added and promoted



Encourage Literacy and Satisfy Curiosity continued...

Objective 2.2:

Increase digital literacy and skills to residents of all ages.

Strategies:

- Digital literacy outreach courses to outlying communities and town residents.
- Assist patrons with accessing library e-resources and computer skills.
- Investigate loanable e-readers and tablets for patron use.
- Offer outreach to senior facilities that develop and support senior literacies. Example: Digital literacy
- Develop and implementation of libraries technology plan.

Measures:

- Increase of computer sessions in branch
- Increase of computer outreach sessions in outlying communities
- Increase of visits to senior facilities
- Purchase of e-readers and tablets



Objective 2.3:

Continue to expand the libraries' collections to serve patrons' needs.

Strategies:

- 2024: Investigate the option of a Library of Things and gauge community interest/need and scope. Examples: Computers, tablets, craft tools, kitchen and shop items, DVD player, sporting gear, museum passes, etc.
- 2025: Implement pilot project for "Library of Things."
- Continue to purchase materials that reflect the diversity and inclusion of our community.
- Purchase "Makerspace" items for all ages.
- Advertising and marketing.

Measures:

- Development of "Library of Things"
- Two special events/year to showcase "hands on" resources



Goal: Know Your Community

Goal:

Be the center for community knowledge, where residents can find information and explore leisure activities within Westlock Town and County.

Objective 3.1:

Increase the percentage of Town and County residents with active library cards.

Strategies:

- Promote our services by gaining exposure at community events. Examples: Community Showcase, Seniors Fair, Farmer's Market, parent teacher nights, County open houses, parade, school newsletters, participation at Interagency meetings, etc.
- Investigate new promotional activities to include "free library card" coupons.
- Investigate additional staffing needs to accommodate increased outreach opportunities.
- Promote the library through social media (ongoing).
- Promote the library through radio, newspaper, Town and County websites, Town and County seniors' centers bulletin boards, podcasts, etc.



- Partnering with local businesses and other organizations to promote each other's services (Spirit Center/Aquatic Center, Smithfield/Pembina, FCSS, AHS, Home Hardware, Kerri's Cafe, etc.).
- Hosting events, info sessions, etc.
- Investigate the creation of a satellite library in Busby.
- Investigate the use of SMART lockers for patrons who need to access library resources after hours.

Measures:

- Increase of Town library memberships
- Increase of County library memberships
- Additional staff member is hired to assist with library outreach and services



Goal: Celebrate Diversity and Cultural Awareness

Goal:

Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

Objective 1:

Offer programs on various aspects of the cultural heritage of the community residents.

Strategies:

- Engage members of the community to introduce cultural programs. Examples: Art, cooking, customs
- Introduce a “second language” story time to provide language learning opportunities for children.
- Host cultural fairs.
- Mount exhibits and displays that reflect the cultural heritage of the community residents.

Measures:

- 4 multicultural programs/year offered by 2028



Acknowledgements

The Planning Committee for this Plan of Service would like to thank the Westlock Intermunicipal Libraries' staff for all their collaboration and assistance in developing this vision for the next five years. Thank you, also, to Westlock Libraries' board members, and council and community members of the Town of Westlock and the County of Westlock for their input and participation in the creation of this plan. Thank you to Yellowhead Regional Library staff for assistance with our community engagement, staff, and board plan development events. We are truly grateful for everyone's continued support.

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Thank you to **The Friends of the Westlock Library**

