2025-2027 ACLA STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

We envision a healthy, engaged, and thriving community supported by libraries that welcome, inspire, educate, and provide equal opportunities to all residents of Allegheny County.

MISSION

As a federated library system, ACLA provides and promotes the highest quality public library service possible for all residents of Allegheny County through collaboration, cooperation, and coordination.

CORE VALUES

- **Visionary Leadership:** We encourage visionary leadership committed to excellence, sustainability, and innovation.
- **Ethical Stewardship:** We promote ethical stewardship of both current and future resources.
- **Openness and Collaboration:** We promote a free and open exchange of information and active collaboration.
- **Respect:** We respect diversity of member library opinions and community needs.
- **Diversity:** We encourage diversity by recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of every individual.
- **Inclusion:** We foster environments in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and are empowered to contribute.
- **Equity:** We are committed to providing access, opportunity, and advancement by taking into account and recognizing that some groups were (and some continue to be) disadvantaged in accessing opportunities for advancement in society.

FOCUS

ACLA is placing a strong focus on our Core Values, as these are the drivers for everything we do. These values guide our actions every day, so it is appropriate to build our future with these as our foundation.

To that end, our Strategic Plan is organized in such a way to highlight these core values and we have built our plan on the following four pillars:

- Visionary Leadership
- Ethical Stewardship
- Openness and Collaboration (with respect paid to the needs of individual libraries)
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The work ACLA does is grounded in the Mission, Vision, and Core Values adopted by the ACLA General Membership. We want to make sure that library service remains strong and equitable throughout Allegheny County and this plan is designed to make this possible.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Goal: To build upon the strong leadership in our libraries in ways that benefit our library communities. As visionary leaders, we can plan for the future of our libraries and meet the needs of patrons of today and tomorrow.

Action Items:

- Community Engagement
  - *Create data sheets to provide needed information about our communities, which will ensure that we fully understand the communities we serve. (2025)*
  - *Develop training modules that demonstrate how this information can be used to determine need (2025)*
  - *Work with the libraries to develop best practices for community engagement to make sure that we are providing necessary services to our communities in ways that are meaningful to those we serve or hope to serve. (2025-2027)*
  - *Using best practices, develop a Community Engagement Toolkit that will help all libraries to effectively engage with their community. (2025-2027)*
- Staff and Board Training
  - *Develop orientation best practices and toolkits for board members and new staff at member libraries. (2025)*
  - *Continue to develop and provide new director training and orientation opportunities. (2025-2027)*

ETHICAL STEWARDSHIP

Goal: To promote the ethical stewardship of our current and future resources through understanding the importance of building a strong organization.

Action Items:

- Collective Impact
  - *Establish community partnerships to help promote literacy throughout Allegheny County. (2025-2027)*
  - *Find ways to work with community partnerships to identify cost-saving opportunities to benefit all organizations involved in order to provide needed programming to better serve our communities. (2025-2027)*
- Marketing
  - *Determine ways to effectively advertise high-level library services to inform our communities about what Allegheny County libraries offer to all. (2025)*
  - *Create marketing materials for the libraries regarding county-wide library services. (2025-2027)*
- Capacity Building
  - *Seek out new avenues for fundraising opportunities for ACLA and the member libraries. (2025-2027)*
  - *Provide training in grant writing for libraries. (2026)*
  - *Keep abreast of grant opportunities and inform the libraries as they come up. (2025-2027)*
  - *Continue working with funders to demonstrate need and to advocate for additional funding, where needed, to maintain service excellence. (2025-2027)*
- Financial Stewardship
  - *Work with member libraries on methods to determine what services are priorities and what services are desired in order to honestly assess capacity. (2025-2027)*
  - *Provide financial training opportunities for library directors and board members to help demonstrate best practices for fiscal responsibility. (2026)*
  - *Develop a strong and sustainable formula for the RAD allocations that will provide reasonable stability and reliability in funding. (2025)*

OPENNESS AND COLLABORATION

Goal: To find ways to encourage collaboration between libraries and develop new ways to share services that are necessary and vital to our communities while keeping the lines of communication open and transparent.

Action Items:

- Staffing

- o *Develop a staffing pool to help libraries keep their doors open during times of staff shortages. (2025)*
  - o *Work with libraries to evaluate staffing needs in order to ensure proper staffing levels are maintained. (2025-2027)*
  - o *Seek out funding for and conduct a salary and benefit survey. (2025)*
- Programming
  - o *Develop best practices for shared programming opportunities. (2025-2027)*
  - o *Assist libraries with programming opportunities county-wide. (2025-2027)*
  - o *Establish partnerships with local organizations to provide programming across the county to encourage not only library attendance but also attendance at other community assets. (2025-2027)*
- Shared Services
  - o *Work with member libraries along with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to determine need in regards to shared service opportunities. (2025-2027)*
  - o *Continue expanding the Social Work in Libraries shared service to meet the needs of member libraries. (2025-2027)*
  - o *Explore shared service opportunities between libraries, such as outreach and after school programming, for efficiency of service in libraries that are in close proximity to each other. (2025-2027)*

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Goal: To encourage equitable, inclusive, and accessible library services throughout Allegheny County while working to diversify our staff and boards.

Action Items:

- Staff and Board Recruitment and Retention
  - o *Increase promotion of the Talent Bank to encourage community members to volunteer to serve on library boards and committees. (2025)*
  - o *Create best practices and toolkits for board recruitment. (2025-2026)*
  - o *Create best practices and toolkits for staff recruitment. (2025-2026)*
  - o *Train library directors and boards to effectively use the information found in the salary and benefits survey to advocate for funding needed to pay appropriate staff wages. (2026)*
- Accessibility Audits
  - o *Identify funders to allow us to conduct accessibility audits of library buildings in order to identify needed structural changes. (2026-2027)*
- Digital Equity

- o *Partner with area organizations to provide trained digital navigators in member libraries in order to assist library staff with answering technology questions. (2025)*
- Equitable Service Across All Locations
  - o *Develop "core competencies" for frontline library staff and provide training opportunities to ensure equitable service excellence throughout Allegheny County libraries. (2025-2026)*
  - o *Continue working with the EDI Advisory Group on establishing best practices for equitable and accessible service across all locations. (2025-2027)*