



Inspiring Ideas, Enriching Lives, Building Communities

JACKSON-GEORGE REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2031

***A Five-Year Strategic Framework for Growth
and Community Impact***

“Inspiring Ideas, Enriching Lives, Building Communities”

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1. Executive Overview

The Jackson-George Regional Library System (JGRLS) serves as a vital educational, cultural, and technological hub for the residents of Jackson and George Counties. As the community evolves—demographically, economically, and technologically, the role of

the library remains more essential than ever. This *Strategic Plan 2026-2031* establishes a comprehensive framework to strengthen the library's capacity to meet community needs, expand equitable access, empower staff, modernize infrastructure, and support lifelong learning across all ages.

Building on the strong foundation of service excellence, community trust, and dedicated staff, JGRLS will focus on three overarching priorities:

1. **Strengthening community outreach and partnerships**
2. **Enhancing employee engagement, development, and retention**
3. **Increasing library usage and improving accessibility across all service areas**

These priorities guide the broader strategies outlined in this plan and represent JGRLS's long-term commitment to inclusive, equitable, and future-ready library services. As a public institution, JGRLS remains dedicated to fostering discovery, supporting literacy, encouraging creativity, and connecting people with the information and the resources they need to thrive.

2. Planning Process

The development of the *Jackson-George Regional Library System Strategic Plan 2026-2031* was guided by a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven planning process. This process ensured that the final plan reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the communities JGRLS serves, as well as the expertise and professional insight of library staff across all departments.

3. Mission, Vision, Values, and Diversity

3.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Jackson-George Regional Library System (JGRLS) is to provide high-quality, relevant, and customer-centered library and information services, collections, and programs that enrich the lives of all citizens. JGRLS is committed to expanding access to knowledge, fostering lifelong learning, and supporting intellectual freedom across Jackson and George Counties.

3.2 Vision Statement

Empowering our community to discover, connect, and grow through innovative and inclusive library experiences.

This vision reflects JGRLS's dedication to being a dynamic, responsive, and transformative resource for all members of the community.

3.3 Core Values

Inspiring Ideas

We cherish and encourage lifelong learning, creativity, curiosity, and innovation. Libraries serve as places where imagination and education intersect—empowering patrons to explore new interests, develop skills, and discover opportunities.

Enriching Lives

We aim to expand opportunities for every library user. By providing equitable access to knowledge, technology, and cultural resources, JGRLS serves as a catalyst for personal enrichment and community growth.

Building Communities

Our libraries are welcoming spaces where individuals gather, collaborate, and connect. Through programs, partnerships, and responsive services, we strengthen the social fabric of our regional communities.

3.4 Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We value the perspectives and contributions of each staff member and patron. Our commitment to equity and inclusion informs our hiring practices, service design, programming, and partnerships. JGRLS strives to create spaces where everyone feels welcome, represented, and supported.

4. Community Profile and Needs Assessment

The Jackson-George Regional Library System (JGRLS) serves large population spread across two counties. To determine their needs, a community assessment survey was conducted and the findings are provided below along with demographics analysis from the Census Bureau.

4.1 Regional Overview ¹

Jackson County, the largest and most populous of the two counties served by JGRLS, contains a mixture of suburban, rural, and industrial communities. The primary industries in the county are health and educational services, tourism and hospitality, and manufacturing.

- Population of 143,252
- Median household income of \$69,871
- Twenty-eight percent of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2020). Jackson County, Mississippi. https://data.census.gov/profile/Jackson_County,_Mississippi?g=050XX00US28059

- Median age is 40, with nearly a quarter of the population under 18 and less than twenty percent over 65
- Thirteen percent of the population lives in poverty
- Twenty-one percent of the population is legally disabled
- Sixty-six percent of the population are White followed by Black (seventeen percent), and Hispanic (eight percent)

George County is predominantly rural, with a growing population in the county seat of Lucedale. Many residents rely heavily on Lucedale Public Library for access to technology, educational resources, and community programming.

- Population of 24,350
- Median household income of \$54,822
- Seventeen percent of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher
- Median age is 36, with twenty-seven percent of the population under eighteen and fifteen percent 65 or older
- Eighteen percent of the population lives in poverty
- Twenty percent of the population is legally disabled
- Eighty-five percent of the population are White, followed by Black (eight percent) and Hispanic (three percent)

4.2 Community Needs Identified

Based on the needs assessment, several critical service priorities emerged:

Access to Technology and Digital Literacy

Many households, especially in rural areas, may lack reliable broadband, devices, or the skills to use it. Community members rely on libraries for free access to high-speed internet, computers and printers, instruction for interacting with technology, and digital resources.

Early Literacy and Youth Engagement

Residents expressed a strong desire for early childhood literacy programs, teen engagement opportunities, and family-friendly events.

Workforce Development and Adult Learning

Local employers, job seekers, and continuing education students need access to workforce readiness programs, resume and digital skills development, as well as business and entrepreneurship resources.

Inclusive Cultural and Social Spaces

Communities across both counties emphasized the importance of libraries as safe, accessible, and inclusive gathering spaces—especially in areas lacking other public venues.

Mobile and Outreach Services

The assessment identified some underserved populations who cannot easily travel to library branches due to geographic distance, limited transportation, work schedules and mobility disabilities.

4.3 Key Opportunities

Based on population characteristics and community input, JGRLS has several significant opportunities. Some of the key opportunities are to expand technology access and training across both counties; strengthen partnerships with schools, youth organizations, civic groups, and senior centers; grow as a connector for families, educators, and businesses; enhance bilingual and multicultural programming; develop ADA-accessible, modernized facilities; and improve engagement in rural and isolated communities.

6. Strategic Priorities (2026 -2031)

The Strategic Priorities of the Jackson-George Regional Library System define the major areas of focus that will guide initiatives, resource allocation, and organizational development between 2026-2031.

Priority 1: Strengthen Outreach and Community Partnerships

JGRLS will expand its presence throughout Jackson and George Counties, building meaningful partnerships and enhancing access to library services for underserved and rural populations.

Goals for Priority 1

Increase partnerships, expand outreach services, strengthen community awareness, and support literacy development and lifelong learning.

Priority 2: Enhance Employee Engagement, Development, and Retention

JGRLS will invest in its workforce by creating a strong internal culture, improving communication, supporting professional development, and strengthening leadership capacity.

Goals for Priority 2

Establish consistent communication, improve staff education, and encourage a positive workplace culture.

Priority 3: Increase Library Usage and Accessibility

JGRLS is committed to ensuring that all patrons have access to library resources, technology, and services.

Goals for Priority 3

Modernize facilities to ADA standards, improve access to digital collections and services, produce consistent marketing and bilingual promotional materials, and enhance UX of website through simplified navigation.

Priority 4: Promote Innovation, Technology, and Digital Inclusion

Building on the Technology Strategic Plan (2025), JGRLS will broaden digital access and expand technology-based services to meet growing community demand.

Goals for Priority 4

Offer classes to the public on digital skills, expand cybersecurity training for staff, explore emerging technologies for organizational use, and enhance digital access for patrons with disabilities.

Priority 5: Ensure Organizational Sustainability and Operational Excellence

JGRLS will continue to enhance organizational sustainability through streamlining of workflows, careful management of public resources, and transparency with the public and stakeholders.

Goals for Priority 5

Utilize data to inform decision making, develop long-term capital improvement plans, improve internal communication, and continue strengthening financial stewardship across the organization.

6.2 Summary

These Strategic Priorities form the backbone of the 2026-2031 plan and guide every departmental strategy outlined in later sections. Together, they position JGRLS to support literacy, advance digital inclusion, engage with communities, and ensure long-term growth and operational strength.

Specified Strategies

7. Staff Development and Engagement Strategy (2026 -2031)

JGRLS recognizes that its greatest asset is its staff. An engaged, well-trained, and supported workforce is essential for providing high-quality public service. This Staff Development and Engagement Strategy outlines a framework for professional growth, internal communication, leadership development, and organizational wellness across the system.

7.2 Objective 1: Promote Staff Well-Being and Engagement

Goal 1.1: Establish a Healthy, Supportive Workplace Culture

JGRLS will cultivate a positive organizational environment that prioritizes emotional well-being, collaboration, and morale. Staff will participate in wellness initiatives, supportive programs, and workplace recognition activities.

Goal 1.2: Enhance Internal Communication Systems

JGRLS will develop internal newsletters, digital bulletin boards, and regular cross-branch updates to keep staff informed and engaged.

Goal 1.3: Implement Recognition and Appreciation Programs

Staff anniversaries, accomplishments, and contributions will be celebrated through monthly recognitions, awards, and public acknowledgments. This recognition program will use resources JGRLS already has available.

7.3 Objective 2: Foster Continuous Learning and Professional Growth**Goal 2.1: Expand Professional Development Opportunities**

JGRLS will offer staff development workshops, leadership seminars, skill-based training, and access to state and regional conferences.

Goal 2.2: Establish Peer Mentorship Programs

New employees will be paired with experienced staff mentors, ensuring a supportive onboarding experience and promoting knowledge sharing.

Goal 2.3: Build Career Pathways and Leadership Pipelines

Staff interested in advancement will receive guidance, coaching, and opportunities to gain supervisory experience through special assignments, cross-training, and leadership cohorts.

7.4 Objective 3: Strengthen Internal Collaboration and Teamwork**Goal 3.1: Facilitate Interdepartmental Collaboration**

Departments will collaborate on shared programs, outreach, and problem-solving to build a unified systemwide culture.

Goal 3.2: Implement Regular Team-Building Initiatives

JGRLS will host annual staff development retreats, inter-branch visits, and peer exchange opportunities to strengthen cohesion and build trust.

Goal 3.3: Improve Cross-Branch Training and Support

Employees will have opportunities to learn operations at other branches, gaining a systemwide perspective and strengthening organizational resilience.

8. Technology and Innovation Strategy (2026 -2031)

8.2 Objective 1: Strengthen Employee Engagement Through Technology

Goal 1.1: Implement Staff Engagement Platforms

JGRLS will explore and evaluate employee engagement platforms that support communication and collaboration. These may include messaging tools, digital workspaces, or learning management systems.

Goal 1.2: Enhance Cybersecurity Awareness Training

Working with the Staff Development Coordinator, JGRLS will adopt cybersecurity training modules—including free or low-cost solutions such as Paylocity or state-supported programs. Staff will complete annual training to ensure familiarity with phishing prevention, password security, and safe use of library systems.

Goal 1.3: Establish Branch IT Liaisons (2026 -2028)

Each branch will designate at least one staff member per shift to serve as an IT liaison. Responsibilities include assisting patrons with basic troubleshooting, helping colleagues resolve simple issues, and escalating complex problems to the IT department more efficiently.

8.3 Objective 2: Expand Technology-Driven Outreach and Community Access

Goal 2.1: Evaluate Technology-Based Outreach Solutions

JGRLS will continue exploring mobile devices, digital displays, Wi-Fi hotspots, and portable kits that can support outreach events and remote learning opportunities in the community.

Goal 2.2: Integrate Technology into Outreach Programs

Outreach programs will include digital demonstrations, virtual learning modules, and technology literacy events designed to engage underserved and rural populations. This includes offering digital signup for library cards and promoting e-resources at community events.

Goal 2.3: Assess Regional and National Best Practices (2030)

JGRLS will review how other public library systems use technology to support outreach, evaluate mobile service models, and incorporate proven strategies for serving remote and underserved communities.

8.4 Objective 3: Improve Technology Access and Promote Digital Equity

Goal 3.1: Evaluate Opportunities for Artificial Intelligence (AI)

JGRLS will analyze responsible, privacy-conscious uses of AI to improve staff workflows, enrich patron search results, and enhance catalog interactions—while maintaining strong ethical guidelines.

Goal 3.2: Research and Test Accessible Technologies

Beginning in 2028, JGRLS will pilot accessibility tools including screen readers, adaptive keyboards, large-print interface options and assistive listening devices.

Goal 3.3: Upgrade Accessibility-Focused Technology (2029)

Upon successful testing, JGRLS will integrate approved accessibility solutions across all branches, improving access for patrons with disabilities.

8.5 Objective 4: Strengthen Internal IT Infrastructure and Efficiency

Goal 4.1: Modernize Equipment and Hardware

JGRLS will replace aging computers, printers, routers, and public devices using a standardized replacement cycle to ensure reliability and reduce downtime.

Goal 4.2: Improve Network Stability and Cybersecurity

The IT department will enhance firewalls, software updates, and internal controls to safeguard the library's digital environment.

Goal 4.3: Streamline Internal IT Processes

Procedures for ticketing, troubleshooting, and communication will be refined to improve response time and user satisfaction.

9. Public Relations Strategy (2026 -2031)

9.1 Objective 1: Improve Employee Engagement and Retention Through Internal Communication

Goal 1.1: Develop an Internal Communication and Recognition Program

JGRLS will implement consistent internal communication channels to ensure all staff remain informed and appreciated. These efforts will include monthly internal newsletters, digital bulletin boards and staff update portals, employee spotlights and recognition of new hires, anniversaries, and milestones.

Goal 1.2: Strengthen JGRLS Brand Culture Internally

A strong internal identity enhances morale and service quality. JGRLS will develop branded staff shirts, badges, and lanyards; updated onboarding packets and mission- and values-centered employee culture campaigns, such as "*Proud to Serve at JGRLS.*"

Goal 1.3: Implement Staff Engagement Surveys and Feedback Channels

Quarterly surveys and open feedback sessions will allow staff to express needs, concerns, and ideas related to communication, morale, and customer service. Results will be reviewed by administration and shared with employees alongside planned improvements.

9.2 Objective 2: Expand Outreach Opportunities Throughout the Service Area

Goal 2.1: Increase Partnerships with Local Schools, Civic Groups, and Organizations

To deepen community impact, JGRLS will work collaboratively with K-12 schools and preschools, homeschool groups, senior centers and civic clubs, nonprofits and community centers among other organizations. These partnerships may include reading programs, co-branded events, library card drives, and literacy outreach initiatives.

Goal 2.2: Enhance Visibility at Community Events

JGRLS will continue to show a unified outreach presence with branded pop-up booths, table coverings and signage, outreach banners, brochures, bookmarks, and giveaways.

Goal 2.3: Launch Targeted Digital Campaigns for Underserved Communities

Using demographic data and social media analytics, JGRLS will identify neighborhoods and populations with low library usage. Targeted campaigns will promote the fact that library resources are free, highlight our digital tools and internet access, and share accessible and bilingual content.

9.3 Objective 3: Promote Library Resources and Enhance Access

Goal 3.1: Implement Themed Marketing Campaigns Around Core Resources

JGRLS will highlight high-value services through themes such as “Digital Library Month” or “Discover Local Authors” to help broaden awareness and encourage patrons to try new tools.

Goal 3.2: Improve Website and Social Media Integration

To ensure a clear and engaging online presence, JGRLS will feature new resources prominently on the website; simplify digital navigation; coordinate messaging across Facebook, Instagram, and local news outlets; and provide event information in consistent, easy-to-read formats.

Goal 3.3: Develop User-Friendly Promotional Materials and Tutorials

JGRLS will create short instructional videos for service use, step-by-step flyers and infographics, bilingual brochures and tutorials on accessing e-resources, reserving rooms, and using new technologies.

10. Branch Services Strategy (2026 -2031)

Branch Services is the foundation of the Jackson-George Regional Library System. Each branch serves as a vital community hub, offering access to collections, technology, programs, and public spaces that support learning, creativity, and civic engagement. This Branch Services Strategy ensures consistent, high-quality service across all locations while honoring the unique needs of the communities they serve.

10.1 Vision for Branch Services

JGRLS branches will be welcoming, community-centered spaces that provide reliable, high-quality library services. To do this they must reflect the needs and priorities of their local areas, including programming for all ages, connecting patrons to their local community resources, and offering positive and engaging customer service.

10.2 Objective 1: Enhance Patron Experience and Service Consistency

Goal 1.1: Standardize Core Service Expectations Across All Branches

To ensure equity and consistency, JGRLS will establish systemwide expectations for customer service standards, branding and signage, program planning and evaluation. There will also be standardization of technology support for patrons, and accessibility features offered by the branches.

Goal 1.2: Improve Customer Service Training and Support

Branch employees will participate in ongoing training focused on customer service, trauma-informed service techniques, cultural competency and de-escalation.

Goal 1.3: Strengthen Collection Access and Circulation Support

Branch staff will receive training to improve reader's advisory services, materials management, displays and circulation efficiency.

10.3 Objective 2: Expand Community-Focused Programming and Services

Goal 2.1: Tailor Programming to Local Community Needs

Branch managers will collaborate with local organizations, schools, and civic leaders to identify community-specific program needs such as early childhood literacy, teen engagement, ESL and language programs, workforce development and more.

Goal 2.2: Increase Outreach Through Branch-Led Community Initiatives

Branches will develop outreach plans that reflect neighborhood demographics and needs, such as library pop-ups, senior center programs, or library card sign-up events.

Goal 2.3: Integrate Technology into Branch Programming

Branches will expand programming using digital tools, offering virtual events and giving technology demonstrations and workshops.

10.4 Objective 3: Strengthen Branch Operations and Staff Capacity

Goal 3.1: Improve Cross-Branch Collaboration

Branches will share resources, program ideas, and best practices through regular inter-branch meetings, shared calendars, and collaborative planning sessions.

Goal 3.2: Enhance Branch Manager Support and Leadership Development

Branch managers will receive targeted training in supervisory skills, operational management, staff evaluation and coaching, conflict resolution and strategic decision-making.

Goal 3.3: Implement Regular Operational Assessments

JGRLS will develop a standardized set of metrics and evaluation tools to monitor program participation, patron satisfaction, facility usage and the materials collection.

11. Facilities Strategy (2026 -2031)

JGRLS must ensure that its facilities remain modern, accessible, resilient, and capable of supporting high-quality services.

11.1 Vision for Library Facilities

JGRLS facilities will be safe and welcoming, ADA-compliant, modern, efficient and sustainable and available to the community.

11.2 Objective 1: Improve Building Accessibility, Safety, and Comfort

Goal 1.1: Ensure ADA Compliance and Accessibility Enhancements

JGRLS will conduct facility-wide ADA assessments to identify and address barriers related to entrances/exits, restroom accessibility, parking and pathways as well as interior navigation and signage.

Goal 1.2: Enhance Patron Comfort and Safety

The library system will prioritize upgrades as needed to lighting, HVAC systems, seating and furnishing, and cleanliness/maintenance schedules. Finally, safety features such as cameras, alarms will be maintained and added as needed, and regular safety drills will be conducted.

Goal 1.3: Improve Internal Signage and Wayfinding

Standardized, user-friendly signage will be installed to help patrons navigate branches and modernize appearance as needed.

11.3 Objective 2: Modernize Facilities to Support Current and Future Service Needs

Goal 2.1: Update Technology Infrastructure

Facility upgrades will accommodate additional public computers, increased outlets and device charging stations and dedicated spaces for digital learning, makerspaces, or virtual programming.

Goal 2.2: Create Flexible, Multi-Use Spaces

JGRLS will redesign interior spaces to support a variety of activities. This will include dedicated quiet spaces, coworking spaces, youth areas, and meeting rooms.

Goal 2.3: Improve Aesthetic Appeal and Functionality

Cosmetic and functional improvements, including flooring, shelving, paint, layout improvements, and updated décor, to strengthen public perception and comfort as needed.

11.4 Objective 3: Develop a Long-Term Capital Improvement and Maintenance Plan

Goal 3.1: Establish a Systemwide Maintenance Schedule

Goal 3.2: Identify High-Priority Capital Projects

JGRLS will evaluate facility needs including possible roof repairs, structural repairs, parking lot resurfacing and energy efficiency upgrades.

Goal 3.3: Explore Funding Sources for Facility Improvements

The library will pursue funding to execute these plans. Possible sources for this funding could include local and state funding, federal infrastructure grants, Friends group contributions and local businesses or civic organizations.

Goal 3.4: Conduct a Facilities Master Plan Review (2031)

As the planning period concludes, JGRLS will assess progress and develop a new Facilities Master Plan for 2032-2037.

12. Administration Strategy (2026 -2031)

This Administration Strategy establishes goals that strengthen organizational effectiveness, foster transparent communication, ensure operational consistency, and support long-term sustainability.

12.1 Vision for Administration

The administrative team of JGRLS will support both staff and the community through strategic leadership. This can be done by promoting a culture of communication, collaboration and shared purpose. Careful adherence to policies and procedures and data-drive decision making will ensure efficient workflows. Finally, the leadership will continue to build organization resilience through financial stewardship, transparency and accountability.

12.2 Objective 1: Strengthen Internal Communication and Organizational Coordination

Goal 1.1: Improve Cross-Departmental Communication

JGRLS will implement structured communication channels—including regular leadership meetings, staff updates, and improved digital communication tools—to ensure employees remain informed and aligned.

Goal 1.2: Standardize Administrative Processes Across Branches

Policies and procedures related to circulation, scheduling, reporting, and service delivery will be reviewed and updated to ensure consistency and clarity across all library locations.

Goal 1.3: Enhance Transparency and Information Accessibility

Administration will provide staff with regular updates related to policy changes, strategic projects, funding developments, and organizational priorities through newsletters, internal postings, and systemwide meetings.

12.3 Objective 2: Strengthen Policy Development and Governance

Goal 2.1: Modernize the JGRLS Policy Manual

Policies will be reviewed for accuracy, relevancy, inclusivity, and legal compliance. Updates will ensure alignment with best practices in public librarianship and administrative operations.

Goal 2.2: Improve Documentation and Record-Keeping Processes

Administration will establish standardized templates and documentation procedures to improve accuracy, support compliance audits, and streamline workflows.

Goal 2.3: Support Board of Trustees Governance

The administrative team will ensure that the Board receives clear and accurate reports, strategic updates, and documentation necessary to make informed decisions. Orientation materials for new trustees will be updated to reflect current system goals and operations.

12.4 Objective 3: Strengthen Leadership Development and Staff Evaluation

Goal 3.1: Develop a Leadership Pipeline for Current and Future Leaders

Administration will work with department heads and branch managers to identify emerging leaders and provide opportunities for expanded responsibilities, training, and coaching.

Goal 3.2: Enhance Staff Evaluation and Performance Management

A consistent performance evaluation framework will be implemented. This will help to develop staff goals and professional growth. It will also enable managers to provide more accurate feedback and recognition.

Goal 3.3: Provide Skills Training for Supervisors and Managers

Managers and supervisors will participate in annual leadership training sessions focused on developing communication skills, conflict resolution, decision making, equity and inclusion in supervision, and team development.

12.5 Objective 4: Strengthen Financial Stewardship and Organizational Sustainability

Goal 4.1: Improve Long-Range Budget Planning

Administration will develop long-term budget projections to ensure sustainable funding across branches, departments, and strategic initiatives.

Goal 4.2: Expand Resource Development Efforts

JGRLS will seek additional funding through grants, partnerships, donations and Friends groups.

Goal 4.3: Develop Organizational Risk Management Practices

To ensure continuity of operations, administration will establish protocols for emergency response, data protection, and operational resilience during crises.

13. Youth Services Strategy (2026 -2031)

13.1 Vision for Youth Services

The vision of JGRLS Youth Services is to help create and support lifelong readers through childhood literacy and engagement. This will be done through providing access to educational and recreational materials; programming that is engaging and meaningful; strong partnerships with schools, daycare centers and youth organizations; building relationships with families through outreach; and promoting digital literacy and technology access for students.

13.2 Objective 1: Improve Employee Engagement and Retention in Youth Services**Goal 1.1: Establish Regional Learning and Professional Development Opportunities**

Youth Services staff will participate in at least one regional professional learning trip annually, visiting nearby library systems or education centers to learn best practices, explore new programming ideas, and strengthen team cohesion.

Goal 1.2: Create a Peer Advisor Program for New Youth Services Staff

New employees will be paired with experienced peer advisors to provide onboarding support, help with programming preparation, and guide new staff through Youth Services role expectations and workflows.

Goal 1.3: Strengthen Internal Communication for Youth Services Teams

Regular meetings, shared digital workspaces, and communication tools will improve collaboration, reduce duplication, and enhance consistency across all branches.

13.3 Objective 2: Expand Outreach and Community Presence**Goal 2.1: Enhance School, Preschool, and Homeschool Partnerships**

Youth Services staff will work closely with educators to help support them and student learning. This will be done through outreach activities such as library card drives at schools, Storytime at preschools, and attending homeschool resource fairs.

Goal 2.2: Implement Seasonal Outdoor Programming Across All Branches

Youth Services will expand outdoor programming with activities like Storytimes in parks, STEAM activities on library grounds and seasonal reading challenges.

Goal 2.3: Develop and Launch a Mobile Outreach Vehicle (2030)

By 2030, JGRLS will establish a Mobile Outreach Vehicle (MOVE) dedicated to reaching patrons unable to access the library regularly such as rural families, homeschool groups in rural areas, students at daycares and preschools, and otherwise underserved neighborhoods. With this MOVE, Youth Services will be able to provide Storytimes, book checkout, technology access, and programming directly to children and families where they are.

13.4 Objective 3: Promote Youth Services and Increase Access to Resources

Goal 3.1: Launch a Systemwide “Discover Youth Services ” Awareness Campaign

Using coordinated marketing and outreach, JGRLS will highlight Youth Services offerings through social media and website promotions, newsletters distributed through local schools, and flyers at branches.

Goal 3.2: Develop Signature Annual Events Beyond Summer Reading

In addition to Summer Reading, JGRLS will introduce new annual Youth events. These could include an Early Literacy Festival, a Teen Creators Expo, a Family STEAM Day or Youth Author Celebrations.

Goal 3.3: Create Accessible, Bilingual Promotional Materials

Youth Services will develop visually engaging and bilingual materials to ensure improved communication to all families in our community.

13.5 Objective 4: Strengthen Youth Programming and Resource Development

Goal 4.1: Expand Early Literacy and School-Readiness Programs

Youth Services will continue broaden and renovate our core offerings like baby and toddler Storytimes and sensory-friendly programs. They will also begin offering kindergarten readiness workshops and regular parent education events.

Goal 4.2: Develop Programs for Tweens and Teens

To engage older youth, JGRLS will offer programming and engagement opportunities such as creative arts and writing workshops, Teen Advisory Boards, gaming and esports programming, and career development.

Goal 4.3: Strengthen Digital Literacy Opportunities for Youth

Youth Services will offer programming on robotics and coding, digital storytelling and multimedia creation, online safety and demonstrations of emerging technologies for students.

14. Business Services Strategy (2026 -2031)

This strategy outlines JGRLS's goals for strengthening financial operations, streamlining processes, and ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources.

14.1 Vision for Business Services

Business Services at JGRLS will provide accurate, timely, and transparent financial management. They will ensure responsible allocations of resources and support strategic priorities through efficient procurement and budgeting. The department will maintain strong internal controls and continue to strengthen operational resilience through planning and risk management.

14.2 Objective 1: Strengthen Financial Stewardship and Accountability

Goal 1.1: Improve Multi-Year Budget Planning and Forecasting

JGRLS will develop long-range budget projections aligned with strategic priorities, technology needs, facility improvements, and staffing goals. This will help ensure stability and preparedness for future financial changes.

Goal 1.2: Enhance Transparency and Fiscal Reporting

Business Services will provide monthly and quarterly financial reports. They will give budget updates to Administration and the Board of Trustees and create accessible summaries for staff to improve their understanding of fiscal priorities.

Goal 1.3: Strengthen Internal Controls and Compliance

JGRLS will update and enforce internal procedures related to expenditures, reconciliation, inventory control, cash handling and audit compliance.

14.3 Objective 2: Improve Procurement and Resource Management

Goal 2.1: Standardize Procurement Processes Across the System

Business Services will adopt consistent procurement policies related to vendor selection and bidding, contract evaluation, and the purchase of materials, equipment and services.

Goal 2.2: Enhance Inventory and Asset Management

JGRLS will maintain an up-to-date inventory of furniture and fixtures, collections and specialized materials, technology equipment, and supplies.

Goal 2.3: Improve Efficiency in Purchasing and Invoicing

Automation and digital tools will be used to streamline processes such as invoice processing, approval workflows, vendor communication, and purchasing documentation.

14.4 Objective 3: Support Organizational Sustainability and Risk Management

Goal 3.1: Establish a Formal Risk Assessment and Mitigation Framework

Business Services will work with Administration to identify risks and how they can be handled causing as little disruption to services and staff as possible. This could include technological outages, facility emergencies, natural disasters, financial disruption or supply chain delays.

Goal 3.2: Strengthen Insurance and Liability Coverage

JGRLS will regularly review insurance policies to ensure adequate coverage for all assets, personnel and public programs and funds.

Goal 3.3: Support Financial Sustainability Through Grant Management

JGRLS will research and apply for grants that support strategic goals. This could include technology initiatives, youth programming, improvements to facilities, community outreach and collections development among others. Business Services will assist in ensuring compliance, reporting, and billing for awarded grants.

15. Collection Management Services Strategy (2026 –2031)

Collection Management is central to the mission of the Jackson-George Regional Library System. A strong, diverse, and accessible collection ensures that all residents—regardless of age, ability, language, or background—can discover resources that support literacy, learning, enrichment, and personal growth. This Collection Management Services Strategy outlines JGRLS’s approach to building, maintaining, and promoting a responsive and community-focused collection.

15.1 Vision for Collection Management

JGRLS will maintain a collection that is diverse and inclusive, responsive to community demographics, balanced across formats, accessible and user-friendly, regularly updated and supportive of the literacy of all ages.

15.2 Objective 1: Build and Maintain a Diverse, High-Quality Collection

Goal 1.1: Strengthen Collection Diversity Across All Formats

JGRLS will continue expanding materials that reflect cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and experiential diversity. This includes books and media featuring underrepresented voices, bilingual and multilingual resources, and materials that support accessibility including large print and audiobooks.

Goal 1.2: Support Literacy and Learning for All Ages

Collection priorities will include early literacy and picture books; juvenile and teen fiction and nonfiction; adult fiction, nonfiction, and career development resources; educational and STEAM materials; and resources to support homeschoolers and independent learners.

Goal 1.3: Monitor Circulation Trends and Community Needs

Data from the ILS system, patron suggestions, and demographic insights will guide purchasing decisions, removal of outdated or low-circulating materials and digital vs. physical demand.

15.3 Objective 2: Expand Digital Collections and Promote Digital Equity

Goal 2.1: Increase Access to Digital Materials

JGRLS will continue building its eBook and eAudiobook collections, ensuring reduced wait times for patrons, interesting offerings and user-friendly access.

Goal 2.2: Provide Digital Research Tools and Online Resources

Databases and digital learning platforms are provide to help with homework, provide career and job search assistance, learn languages, and develop professionally. Tools are also available for genealogical and local history research.

Goal 2.3: Promote Digital Services Through Outreach and Education

Staff will help patrons learn to access digital resources through tutorials, printed guides, one-on-one assistance, and demonstrations at events.

15.4 Objective 3: Improve Collection Maintenance and Optimize Shelving Space

Goal 3.1: Implement a Systemwide Weeding and Refresh Schedule

Branches will follow structured guidelines for weeding, as well as visually appealing displays of both new and featured materials.

Goal 3.2: Optimize Space for Patron Discovery

Collection layout improvements may include face-out displays, thematic browsing areas, curated collections or genre-based shelving.

Goal 3.3: Evaluate Shelf Space and Storage Needs

JGRLS will look for overcrowded shelves, underutilized areas and storage constraints. These will be taken into consideration to explore future expansion needs.

15.5 Objective 4: Strengthen Collection Promotion and Community Awareness

Goal 4.1: Create Regular Collection-Focused Marketing Campaigns

Systemwide themes shall be created and promoted by PR and the branches. Themes could include “Hidden Gems”, “Voices of the Gulf Coast” or “Family Reading Month”.

Goal 4.2: Support Staff Training in Reader ’s Advisory

Staff will receive training and resources for recommending titles, building themed lists, and supporting diverse reading interests.

Goal 4.3: Expand Partnerships to Support Collection Use

Opportunities include reading lists for schools, collaborations with local authors, Summer Reading promotion, and partnerships with local book clubs.

16. Implementation Timeline (2026 -2031)

The Implementation Timeline provides a structured framework for carrying out the goals and strategies presented in this Strategic Plan. This phased approach ensures that JGRLS can move forward with clarity, purpose, and coordination while balancing staffing, funding, and operational needs. The timeline includes three major milestone years—**2026**, **2028**, and **2031**—each representing key advancements in service expansion, technology, facilities, staff development, and organizational operations.

16.1 Implementation Phase I - Foundation Building (2026)

Strategic Focus

Establish the foundation for long-term improvement across outreach, staff development, technology, and internal communication.

Major Milestones

Outreach and Community Engagement

- Launch new school and community partnerships.
- Increase presence at festivals, fairs, and civic events.
- Begin seasonal outdoor programming at all branches.
- Start targeted digital campaigns for underserved communities.

Staff Development and Engagement

- Implement internal newsletters and employee spotlights.
- Establish peer advisor mentorship program for new employees.
- Begin quarterly staff engagement surveys.
- Conduct initial cybersecurity and digital literacy training.

Technology & Innovation

- Launch branch IT liaison model.
- Begin evaluating mobile outreach technology needs.
- Conduct system-wide technology accessibility audit.

Branch, Youth, and Collection Services

- Expand early literacy and teen engagement programs.

- Begin systemwide weeding and collection refresh cycle.
- Launch “Discover Youth Services” promotional campaign.

Administration & Business Services

- Standardize core administrative workflows across branches.
- Begin multi-year budget planning process.
- Identify critical facility needs requiring short-term attention.

16.2 Implementation Phase II - Growth and Expansion (2028)

Strategic Focus

Expand services, implement major technology improvements, and enhance branch capacity to meet emerging community needs.

Major Milestones

Outreach and Partnerships

- Increase school-based programs and literacy initiatives.
- Launch additional community pop-up library events.
- Expand bilingual and multicultural outreach materials.

Staff Development and Engagement

- Introduce advanced leadership development cohorts.
- Coordinate staff learning trips.
- Increase cross-branch collaboration opportunities.

Technology & Innovation

- Implement new accessibility technologies across branches.
- Begin pilot testing of new emerging technology tools (AI-supported search, digital creation tools, etc.).
- Expand digital literacy programming for adults, seniors, and teens.

Branch and Facility Improvements

- Implement ADA accessibility upgrades in targeted branches.
- Add flexible, multi-use programming spaces at select locations.
- Improve wayfinding and interior signage across the system.

Collection Management

- Expand digital collections based on demand and circulation trends.
- Incorporate new models of reader’s advisory and themed displays.
- Measure impact of updated weeding and refresh schedule.

16.3 Implementation Phase III - Systemwide Transformation (2031)

Strategic Focus

Prepare for the next phase-planning through evaluation, assessment, and completion of major long-term initiatives.

Major Milestones

Outreach and Mobile Services

- Deploy the JGRLS MOVEs, serving rural and underserved communities.
- Evaluate systemwide outreach impact through community surveys and usage data.

Staff Development

- Complete full organizational review of professional development impact.
- Expand training in technology, leadership, and community engagement.

Technology & Digital Inclusion

- Complete integration of accessibility and emerging technology tools.
- Review cybersecurity training outcomes and update systemwide policies.

Facilities & Infrastructure

- Conduct facility master plan assessment to guide 2032-2037 capital planning.
- Evaluate long-term maintenance success, energy efficiency upgrades, and space utilization.

Administration & Business Services

- Assess progress toward multi-year budget and financial sustainability goals.
- Review policy manual updates and administrative workflows for continued improvement.

Collection Management

- Conduct full collection assessment, including diversity representation, digital usage, and community relevance.
- Adjust collection strategies to prepare for the next five-year plan.

16.4 Summary

The phased implementation approach allows JGRLS to execute this Strategic Plan in a realistic, sustainable, and coordinated manner. By focusing on foundational improvements in 2026, growth and expansion in 2028, and systemwide transformation by 2031, the library system ensures steady progress while remaining adaptive to changing needs and opportunities. This timeline supports the library's mission of empowering the community to discover, connect, and grow.

17. Acknowledgments

The Jackson-George Regional Library System gratefully recognizes the many individuals and groups whose contributions made the *Strategic Plan 2026-2031* possible. The development of this plan represents a collaborative effort rooted in community engagement, professional expertise, and organizational dedication.

17.1 Library Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provided essential guidance, oversight, and support throughout the planning process. Their commitment to transparency, governance, and community-centered service helped establish the strategic direction reflected in this plan.

17.2 Library Administration and Department Leadership

The administrative team and departmental leaders contributed their professional insight, operational knowledge, and long-term vision. Their work ensured that the plan accurately represents both current realities and future opportunities within the library system.

17.3 Library Staff

Staff from every branch and department played a central role in shaping this plan. Through feedback sessions, surveys, team discussions, and program evaluations, employees provided invaluable perspectives on community needs, internal strengths, and opportunities for improvement. Their dedication to service excellence continues to inspire the future direction of JGRLS.

17.4 Community Partners and Stakeholders

Numerous organizations—including schools, civic groups, nonprofits, senior centers, youth organizations, and local agencies—shared insights that strengthened the plan's foundation. Their continued collaboration helps expand the reach and impact of library services across both counties.

17.5 Community Members and Library Patrons

The voices of the residents we serve remain at the heart of this plan. Feedback from patrons and families helped identify key priorities and reinforced the essential role that JGRLS plays in daily life. Their trust, participation, and support continue to drive the mission of the library system.

18. Closing Statement

The *Jackson-George Regional Library System Strategic Plan 2026-2031* represents a unified commitment to serving the evolving needs of our communities with excellence, vision, and purpose. It is both a roadmap and a promise—one that reflects the collective insights of staff, trustees, partners, and the residents we proudly serve.

Over the next five years, JGRLS will continue to strengthen its role as a hub for learning, creativity, and connection. Through expanded outreach, modernized facilities, improved internal systems, enhanced professional development, and intentional investment in technology and innovation, the library system will remain a vital force for equity, empowerment, and community growth.

This plan reaffirms the library's mission to provide high-quality, relevant, and inclusive services for all, while embracing change and preparing for a dynamic future. As the needs of Jackson and George Counties continue to evolve, so too will JGRLS—guided by the values of *Inspiring Ideas*, *Enriching Lives*, and *Building Communities*.

The success of this Strategic Plan depends on continued collaboration, open communication, and a shared dedication to the lifelong learning and well-being of every resident we serve. Together, we will ensure that the library remains a strong, innovative, and welcoming presence for generations to come.