

James L. Hamner Public Library

Strategic Plan FY24-29

Who we are

The James L. Hamner Public Library is the sole public library in Amelia County, Virginia. The Library provides access to materials for in-house and outside circulation, including books, movies and television shows, video games, board games, educational kits, and e-materials. The Library routinely provides public access to computers, wireless internet, educational and cultural programs, and free meeting space.

Who we serve

The Hamner Public Library primarily serves the 13,000+ residents of Amelia County,* with programs and materials lending available at no charge to residents of neighboring counties.

Mission

Facilitate connections that provide free learning opportunities for the public.

Vision

Model excellence for small and rural libraries throughout the U.S.

Values

We value empathy, accessibility, and transparency.

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The Hamner Public Library's primary areas for growth and improvement for the FY2024-2029 period are:

Governance

(Accessibility, Transparency)

Meet the essential and enhanced Standards for Public Libraries for governance and administration as adopted by the Virginia Public Library Directors Association (VPLDA) in 2023. The VPLDA Standards promote an inclusive governing board that adequately prepares new trustees with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide continuity and quality for the community. Meeting the essential and enhanced standards shall primarily be the work of the Library Board of Trustees with creation of a board development committee to make the process more efficient.

Governance goals include:

- creating an orientation process for new trustees;
- establishing an annual self-evaluation process for the board;
- recruiting a board that is representative of the community the library serves;
- incorporating quarterly strategic plan updates into board meeting agendas;
- establishing expectations for board service such as volunteer/attendance expectations for library programs and events;
- creating group and individual continuing educational opportunities for board members;
- raising the visibility of the library board and its members in the community;
- enhancing communications between board members and the County Supervisors.

Technology

(Accessibility)

Improve the Library's overall IT infrastructure to better support the community demand for access, optimize available funding, keep staff and patrons safe, and support the staff's ability to perform well in their jobs. Technology infrastructure shall be primarily the work of the Library Director with assistance from the Circulation Manager.

Technology goals include:

- implementing cloud-based storage and back-ups for data;
- exploring options and invest in a new system of closed-circuit security cameras;
- improving the print process for patrons and public computer management with switch to a new vendor;
- in-depth staff training on new print release and public computer management software;

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- developing a long-range technology plan in partnership with outside IT support contractor to ensure cyber security, updated technology tools for staff, and the best quality information technology infrastructure for patrons; and,
- optimizing use of IT infrastructure funding sources such as E-Rate.

Collections

(Empathy, Accessibility, Transparency)

Implement routine and cyclical procedures to ensure the ongoing maintenance and development of the library's collections. Collections goals will primarily be the responsibility of the Technical Services Librarian with support from the Circulation staff.

Collections goals include:

- update labels and fully implement new local call number standards for materials in the collection;
- create and implement plans for systematic maintenance of the collection through shelf-reading, cleaning, repair, recovering, and weeding;
- implement collection development procedures to ensure a curated collection for the community; and,
- promote collections to increase circulation through physical displays, social media, Website, book lists, seasonal acquisitions, encouraging patron requests, and highlighting collections at special events.

Community Engagement

(Empathy, Accessibility)

Expand community involvement and engagement through professionalization of marketing strategies, expanded Web presence, formalized community survey and response opportunities, and increased in-person learning opportunities. Community engagement goals will primarily be the responsibility of the Programming Librarian.

Community engagement goals include:

- uphold and raise visibility at community events (Amelia Day, National Night Out, etc.);
- explore opportunities and potential funding sources for providing library services to homebound individuals;
- increase volunteer opportunities for teens and adults;
- implement a regular process of soliciting and documenting community feedback;
- establish and expand policies and procedures for volunteer staff (volunteer manual);
- develop and expand community partnerships to promote inclusivity and accessibility for diverse audiences;

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- continued improvement and content expansion of Library Website; and,
- expanding and professionalizing means of communication with the community such as a quarterly print calendar, e-marketing software upgrades, etc.

Professional Documentation

(Accessibility, Transparency)

Improve internal procedural documentation to ensure a strong plan of succession for all staff roles and to ensure uninterrupted levels of service to the public. Professional documentation for each department will be created by the primary staff person responsible for those functions.

Procedural documentation goals include:

- improving internal communication among staff to ensure consistent communication to the public;
- clean out digital administrative files and develop standards for maintenance (retention policy detail);
- create a comprehensive manual for each area of operations (i.e., circulation, programs, technical services, administration/finance, and volunteers); and,
- refresh “Hamner How-To” guides to reflect current functions.

Professional Development

(Empathy, Accessibility, Transparency)

Increase staff engagement in the broader professional community to stay informed about emerging and established standards and best practices in the field. Staff will be responsible for identifying specific professional development opportunities they would like to pursue, with ideas, support, and budget allocations provided by the Library Director.

Professional development goals include:

- utilizing the free Niche Academy resource provided by the state library and creating time and space for staff to engage in regular personal and professional development opportunities;
- staff representation at statewide, regional, or national conferences as timing and location allows, with emphasis on paraprofessional staff also engaging with the broader professional community;
- establishing dedicated time for circulation staff to explore library materials for readers’ advisory purposes;
- encouraging staff to present at professional conferences and to serve on committees at the state and national level; and,
- setting time aside for library staff to visit other public libraries throughout the state to stay abreast of emerging best practices for the purpose of implementation.

Physical Facility

(Accessibility)

As the Hamner Public Library building will be 25 years old in 2024, furnishings and fixtures within the building are reaching the end of their useful lives. Emphasis must be placed on repairing and replacing furnishings, fixtures, and mechanical equipment to maintain a safe, healthy, and pleasant space for patrons and staff. Physical facility goals will primarily be the responsibility of the Library Director.

Physical facility goals include:

- updating the grounds with native and flowering plants that enhance the overall appearance of the site and contribute to the sustainable management of the Library's green space;
- refurnish and repurpose the public spaces with new seating, shelving, and public computer stations;
- working with the Extension Office and local garden clubs to create demonstration gardens, such as a rain garden bordering the parking lot;
- replacing entry doors to ensure access;
- updating bathroom fixtures;
- working with the Department of Public Works to plan for roofing, gutters, and mechanical equipment replacements and upgrades within the Amelia County Capital Improvement Plan.

*According to American Community Survey data from the U.S. Department of the Census (2022) the Amelia County population is comprised of: 27% people under age 18, 21% people over age 65; racial identities of 74% White, 19% Black, 4% Hispanic, 2% mixed race, and 1% Indigenous American; 77% with home internet access, 85% with a home computer; 12.5% persons under age 65 with a disability; median household income of \$57,000 per annum; and 1,071 veterans.