



PARKLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

Strategic Plan 2023-2025

The Parkland Regional Library System provides leadership for our members to achieve excellence in service.

The Parkland Library Board

Strategic Plan: 2023-2025

Parkland Regional Library System (PRLS) was formed in 1959 to provide service to libraries across rural central Alberta. As the province's oldest regional library system, it supports libraries by providing human and material support and acting as a focus for leadership, training, and communication on library issues.

Key Facts

- Area serviced: 24,153 sq. kilometers.
- Population served: 226,899 (2022).
- First Nations Reserve residents served: 14,205
- Public libraries: 49 (including 4 service points for which the PRLS Board is board of record and the library service at Maskwacis).
- Number of participating library boards: 45.
- Number of member municipalities: 64.

Mission Statement

Expanding opportunities for discovery, growth, and imagination for all Central Albertans.

Goals

Goal 1. The Parkland Board and its member library boards will be effective library advocates and promoters of sustainable library service.

Objectives:

- a) Municipal councils will provide ongoing, additional funding to support public library service in sufficient amounts to at least keep pace with inflation and operating costs, including wages.
- b) Member library boards will develop advocacy plans and will be effective advocates for public library service.

- c) PRLS Board members will be effective as a governing board and regional library advocates with the knowledge to explain their role, the purpose of the regional system, and the relationship between the system, municipalities, and local libraries.
- d) PRLS will be an effective resource for member library boards to develop and implement local marketing plans.
- e) PRLS will develop and implement a marketing plan for regional public library service.
- f) Library staff will have the resources, knowledge, and support to promote and market the services and value of the library to funders and community members.
- g) Member municipalities will understand their role regarding libraries and have awareness of the services and value of both the regional library system and their local library.

Goal 2. Member library staff and boards will have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide exemplary public library service.

Objectives:

- a) Staff throughout the region will develop and demonstrate the competencies required to deliver effective and responsive library service.
- b) Library trustees will understand their roles and responsibilities regarding board governance. They will have the tools to lead the library through successful strategic plans, policies and bylaws, library financials, and capital initiatives.
- c) Library staff will have access to library core competency and management training which will lead to enhanced, innovative services to the public.
- d) Member libraries will have support to create and maintain exemplary collections that stimulate imagination and satisfy curiosity.
- e) Library staff will have skills to use basic library technology and the confidence to teach library patrons in their use.
- f) Library patrons will have access to a quality, diverse digital collection.

Goal 3. Parkland and its libraries will operate within a collegial environment that fosters cooperation and mutual support for the efficient delivery of public library service.

Objectives:

- a) PRLS will foster a collegial environment amongst library staff, boards, and municipal councils that results in innovative service models and increased cooperation for public library service.
- b) PRLS will build a unified/cohesive system identity that strengthens and supports local library marketing and branding efforts.
- c) Parkland will grow awareness of the pooled resources, services, and the wider connectivity of libraries that is offered through the membership of Parkland Regional Library System.
- d) Library staff will have support for the development and delivery of public library programming leading to increased public programming options throughout the region.

Activities that Support the Strategic Plan

According to Part 4, 18(3) of the Alberta Libraries Regulation, in developing a plan of service or strategic plan, a library system board shall establish and include procedures to address five functional requirements. The Parkland Board has the following procedures to address these points:

(a) *Co-operation with municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards to assemble, make available, promote, preserve and dispose of organized collections of library resources to meet the needs and interests of the communities served;*

Parkland Regional Library System:

- Provides materials allotment (set annually as part of Parkland's budget) for the purchase of materials by member libraries.
- Catalogues, orders, and processes library materials for the system's member libraries.
- Provides an integrated library system for the entire system.
- Makes accessible to patrons of all member libraries collections that are challenging for small libraries to purchase independently, including large print, audio books, and digital content.
- Provides access to a centralized collection of print-disabled materials.

(b) *Employment of suitably qualified staff, with the knowledge and ability to help municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards and their employees to provide comprehensive and efficient library service as well as to operate the library system;*

The Parkland Library Board:

- Ensures that sufficiently qualified staff are employed to comply with legislative requirements and meet the needs of the system.

- Creates and passes a budget that ensures adequate funding to meet operational and staffing requirements.
- Ensures a robust continuing education program is available to Parkland staff and board members guaranteeing their ongoing professional development.

(c) *Co-operation with municipal boards, intermunicipal library boards and other groups in the communities that it serves in the initiation and provision of information services, program events and other activities related to its goals and objectives;*

Parkland Regional Library System:

- Provides reference and research service to support the information needs of members and their patrons.
- Provides support to libraries through access to program kits, gaming and virtual reality kits, and professional knowledge to assist member library staff.
- Offers library services to First Nations Reserves within our region and works with member libraries to provide programming and education related to Alberta’s First Nations populations.
- Coordinates summer reading club programming across the region.

(d) *Provision of fixtures, furnishings and accommodation necessary for proper operation and maintenance of the library services and maintenance of the assets of the library system board in a proper state of preservation and repair;*

The Parkland Library Board:

- Addresses in its budget a suitable building with adequate furnishings and equipment and their maintenance/replacement.
- Has established schedules for building maintenance, computer replacement, and vehicle replacement.
- Maintains financial reserves, backed by secure investments, to ensure ongoing funding for planned and unplanned expenses, including building, equipment/furnishings, technology and vehicle reserves.

(e) *The development, implementation and operation of a provincial resource sharing network in partnership with the Minister and other library system boards.*

Parkland Regional Library System:

- Provides interlibrary loan service through mail and region-wide delivery services.
- Manages a centralized interlibrary lending service.
- Maintains and manages the system-wide integrated library system.
- Participates in The Alberta Library; and complies with all provincial and partnership agreements including the *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries*.

Needs Assessment & Strategic Priorities

The needs assessment process for Parkland's strategic plan was thorough and multifaceted. Early in 2022, three focus group sessions were held to gather input into a new strategic plan/plan of service. Those invited to these meetings included:

- Members of municipal council
- Members of municipal administration
- Parkland board members
- Parkland staff
- Member library staff
- Member library board members

Shari Hansen, a Community Development Officer with the Community Development Unit, Alberta Culture and the Status of Women, facilitated the focus groups. Due to the shifting environment caused by the removal of COVID-19 restrictions, a further follow-up focus group meeting was held in early May to review the data gathered from the earlier focus groups and discuss with stakeholders if anything had changed since libraries were resuming normal operations.

In addition, a service priority survey was sent to member libraries. The first part of the survey asked libraries to rate our "optional" services based on their level of importance and the second part had them rank these same services in order of priority. In the case of this survey, the word "optional" was used because there are a number of services Parkland is obligated to provide due to legislation and our own membership agreement. Services that are mandatory were not included in the survey. As part of the needs assessment, Parkland staff also reviewed the plans of service, where available, of member library boards and member municipalities.