

Alberta public libraries must have a Plan of Service.

The Libraries Regulation, AR 141/98 states

13(1) In managing and controlling a municipal library, a municipal board or intermunicipal library board shall

Within 3 years of being established, develop and file with the Minister a plan of service with a mission statement and goals and objectives based on a needs assessment of the municipality or municipalities served by the board, and

Annually review its plan of service.

(2) A municipal board or intermunicipal library board shall file with the Minister a copy of its current plan of service with goals and objectives not less frequently than every 5 years following the date on which the plan was previously filed with the Minister.

To summarize, libraries are legally obligated to produce a Plan of Service based on a community needs assessment.

The Plan of Service: A Guide for Alberta Public Libraries



Photo: Airdrie Public Library

A Plan of Service emphasizes what the library does for the local community.

A Plan of Service describes the services a library will provide its community. Internet access and career help are examples of services. Activities such as fundraising and marketing are not services; they are a means to an end, not the end service itself.

The Plan of Service should describe the services that the community will receive from the library, at a high-level visionary scale appropriate to a strategic plan.

A Plan of Service is useful for the governance and management of the library.

A Plan of Service is more than a legal requirement; it is a great tool for managing a library. It helps a board to govern at a strategic level. It aligns the library with the community and helps increase use. It builds community support and helps fundraising and advocacy. The goals and objectives in the plan help a library measure its success.

Strategic Planning for Results is a path to planning.

Strategic Planning for Results is a process for library planning. It is straightforward, well-defined, easy to follow and will result in a useful guide that meets legal requirements. It focuses on the community and on how the library can respond to community needs.

Briefly, it works as follows:

A library develops and approves a “plan for planning”.

The library appoints a Community Planning Committee (CPC) consisting of community leaders from outside the library.

The CPC studies the community, develops a community vision for the future and identifies needs that the library can fill.

The CPC picks library service responses that meet the local community’s needs.

The library finalizes a list of library services that will be prioritized.

The library picks goals and objectives that are steps towards implementing and growing the selected library services.



Help is available to libraries doing service planning.

Many Alberta library professionals have been trained in *Strategic Planning for Results*. The Public Library Services Branch, library systems, and others can assist libraries doing planning.

Short presentations or longer training sessions are available for libraries that want to learn more. A toolkit developed by the Public Library Services Branch can guide your process. Consultant support and leadership can also be provided to libraries.

If you want help doing library service planning, or if you want more information, contact:

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Public Library Services Branch
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