For over a century, the Arlington Public Library has cultivated a space for the community to learn, explore, and discover. When the first library in Arlington opened in March of 1923, it held a collection of only 500 books and served a population of 3,700 residents. Now, the Library serves 1.5 million people yearly and maintains a collection of 600,000 items.

As the Arlington community continues to grow and change, the Library is committed to growing and changing along with it.
A Letter From Our Director

I am pleased to present you with the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan for the Arlington Public Library. This plan will be our guiding compass for presenting programs and forecasting services as we strive to be our community’s center for learning, experience, access, and discovery. This plan enables every Library team to be intentional in their offerings to engage more Library users and create pathways to prioritize our services for the next several years. Time and time again, the Arlington Public Library has served as an anchor in our neighborhoods by providing support and complementary services that nurture learning and exploration for all ages.

Exploring a strategic plan process in the midst of a pandemic was a challenging but necessary task. Our process began with a consultant who led focus groups with all staff and the Library Advisory Board. Surveys were conducted with the community at large in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Arabic. Focus groups were held in person and virtually. Information was gathered, analyzed, common themes were identified setting the stage for establishing priorities. The Library’s management team focused on the priorities and organized the strategies, resulting in a three-year plan that creates a roadmap to programs and services that help enrich lives, empower learners, and create a community of learning and discovery.

There are many people to thank who were part of this journey. Every Library staff member was involved in the process, providing feedback and perspective to create and develop the final version of this plan. I would like to thank the Library’s management team for their hard work and dedicated approach to this project. I would also like to thank the Library Advisory Board and the Friends and Foundation of the Arlington Public Library for their participation. Last but certainly not least, to all of our Library users, thank you for your support, your feedback, and the opportunity to serve you. You are the reason we are here, and for that we are thankful.

The Library’s Strategic Plan has been and will continue to be a collaborative and comprehensive effort with feedback from community members who envision a thriving Library system and an engaged and informed community. We look forward to building upon this success for years to come.

Norma Zuñiga
Director of Libraries
OUR VISION

We strive to be our community’s center for learning, experience, access and discovery.
OUR MISSION

We build a bridge from curiosity to opportunity for a vibrant Arlington.
Our Values

To achieve our mission and fulfill our vision, the following ideals will direct us in our service to the community and interaction with each other. These values will help our organization align our intent with our actions.

1. Knowledge
   Always Learning

2. Access
   Removing Barriers

3. Excellence
   Our Best

4. Respect
   Value Others

5. Accountability
   Our Word
“The Arlington Public Library is my model for why libraries are so incredibly important today. Libraries are places where facts are kept safe, where imaginations can run free, and where curiosity can be cultivated [...] by meeting people exactly where they are, and by helping them get where they want to go.”

- AMY SCHULTZ, ARLINGTON MUSEUM OF ART
Our Strategies

Six strategies were identified as focus areas that will prioritize our work. These strategies are core to our planning and implementation in the next three years.

1. We foster literacy
2. We curate collections
3. We embrace experiences
4. We welcome all
5. We nurture relationships
6. We engage with our library team
We foster literacy for learning success.

FOSTER FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY

COMPLEMENT LEARNING AND SKILL BUILDING

SUPPORT LEARNING FOR SUCCESS

WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

Learners have access to learning opportunities

Community is invested in refining their skills

Patrons are empowered to evaluate information that impacts their quality of life
“We love that the public library has a summer reading contest each year [...] so we can try to address summer reading slump. We are so thankful for our APL librarians and their willingness to help us and our students.”

- SUZANNE SEVERNS, MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIAN, ARLINGTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
We curate collections to increase knowledge and information.

**WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:**

- Collection reflects the community we serve
- Community enjoys a diverse collection of relevant materials in various formats and platforms
- Patron demand results in increased use of materials
We embrace experiences to encourage exploration and growth.

WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Community has a wide variety of opportunities to learn and experience
- Programs and services reflect our community
- Patrons are inspired to engage with their community
- Community feels connected to the Library and each other
“Libraries serve as one of the primary conduits for education within the broader community [...] Arlington libraries serve as not just a central resource for educational material [...] but also a means for connecting and hosting educational entities in the region.”

- GREGORY PANDELIS, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
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We are welcoming in our spaces and interactions.

CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL PATRON EXPERIENCE

DEVELOP NEW, INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO CREATE ENGAGING DESTINATIONS FOR ALL

MAINTAIN INVITING, RESPONSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES

WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

Community has inviting and safe spaces to gather

Patrons are welcomed and respected

Community returns for continued service

Staff exceed patron expectations
We develop and nurture community relationships to extend our reach.

We know we are successful when:

- Respond to the evolving needs of our community
- Seek opportunities to reach new library users
- Connect with library allies and advocates

Community recognizes Library as a vital partner
We build awareness, advocacy and support
Community is empowered to use library services
“Libraries are essential to our community [...] to help people of all ages learn, grow, and connect with others [...] Libraries offer a variety of programs and services to support literacy and education, such as storytime for children, tutoring for students, and computer classes for adults.”

- DERRICK JACKSON, COLLEGE OF SCIENCE OFFICE OF THE DEAN, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
We engage with and support our library team.

We know we are successful when:

- Library team is engaged
- Team cultivates the dissemination of institutional knowledge
- Staff participate in growth opportunities
- Staff engage in retention and succession planning