PANHANDLE PUBLIC LIBRARY COOPERATIVE SYSTEM

LONG RANGE PLAN

OCTOBER 1, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2029

MISSION STATEMENT

The Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System provides users access to materials and programs that assist in meeting their recreational, informational, and lifelong learning needs.

COOPERATIVE PROFILE

The Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System (PPLCS) is located in the Florida Panhandle and is comprised of Calhoun, Holmes, and Jackson County Public Library Systems, and one administrative office. PPLCS is a Florida Special District and was established in October 1992 through an Interlocal Agreement between the three County governments. PPLCS is governed by a nine member Board comprised of the three Directors of the member library systems, and an additional two members appointed by each County. The Cooperative office is managed by an Administrator, and is entirely funded by the Florida State Aid to Libraries Grant Program, and other grant opportunities. The member libraries are funded from a combination of local government funds, State Aid to Libraries Grant funding, other grants, and donations.

The Calhoun County Library System consists of a headquarters library in Blountstown, and five branch libraries: Altha, Hugh Creek, Kinard, Mossy Pond, and Shelton Park.

The Holmes County Library System is located in Bonifay.

Approved by PPLCS Board 10/16/2024

The Jackson County Library System has a headquarters library in Marianna and a branch in Graceville.

The PPLCS administrative office is located in Marianna.

STRENGTHS OF THE COOPERATIVE

1. A spirit of cooperation among member libraries and the close-knit communities they serve makes for a system responsive to its user's needs.
2. Training opportunities are abundant for staff to learn innovative approaches to library services and programming, as well as new trends in technology.
3. Cooperative administration is proactive in pursuing new grant opportunities and community partnerships.
4. Member libraries and Cooperative administration provide a variety of programs for all ages, with emphasis on youth during the annual Summer Reading Program.
5. Member libraries enjoy support from the community: they are considered a necessary and invaluable service.
6. PPLCS provides a robust collection of electronic titles through subscriptions with OverDrive and Hoopla, that includes ebooks, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, movies, music, and television shows.
7. Member libraries provide users with both computer access and Wi-Fi, as well as printers at all locations.

CHALLENGES TO THE COOPERATIVE

1. PPLCS counties are in the top tier of Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern with:
    a. Low per capita income
    b. Low per capita taxable values
    c. High unemployment
    d. Low weekly earned wages compared to the state average
    e. Low housing values compared to the state average
    f. High percentage of the population receiving public assistance
    g. High poverty levels compared to the state average

h. Lack of year-round stable employment opportunities
i. Stagnant population growth

2. PPLCS serves communities that have high illiteracy and school dropout rates.
3. Calhoun and Jackson counties were severely affected by Hurricane Michael in October 2018, a category five storm that caused $18.4 billion in damages to Florida. Due to the damage of homes and businesses in these areas, the population has declined rather than increase as previously estimated.
4. Member counties have inadequate broadband and/or high-speed internet infrastructure.
5. Member libraries are understaffed and lack funding.

GOALS OF THE COOPERATIVE

The goals of the Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System are:

Goal 1: Provide library users of all ages access to current bestsellers and the most up-to-date information in both physical and virtual formats.

Activities:

- Staff will respond to material requests from users promptly- as budgets allow- continually improving and updating physical and virtual collections in response to community needs.
- Libraries will periodically weed their collections for outdated materials and conduct inventory of their holdings.
- PPLCS supports libraries by funding access to the Florida Library Delivery Service that allows ILL (interlibrary loan) borrowing between libraries across the state.
- Libraries will provide access to the Florida Electronic Library (FEL), which provides current information on a variety of topics.

Goal 2: Provide proficient, courteous, and professional staff at all locations.

Activities:

- Staff will participate in ongoing training and professional development to ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to provide excellent service and adapt to new technology and community needs.
- PPLCS will apply for "@ Your Library" training grants offered annually through PLAN.
- New hires will be trained on the use of the integrated library system and PPLCS-subscribed electronic resources.

Goal 3: Member libraries have suitable facilities to provide library services.

Activities:

- Staff will maintain equipment inventories and will replace outdated or defective equipment as budgets allow.
- Libraries will be responsive to the technology needs of users and supplement existing equipment when budgets allow.
- Staff will seek to expand services into underserved areas of each county.

Goal 4: Continuously evolve and refine library services to meet the changing needs of a diverse community, ensuring the library remains a vital and innovative resource for all.

Activities:

- Enhance the library catalog by integrating LibCal so library events are displayed along with print and digital resources of the same topic.
- Continue to personalize the Aspen catalog to highlight special collections, library services, and digital resources that patrons may not be aware of.
- The use of non-traditional services such as curbside pickup and virtual programming will be evaluated as an alternative to in-person or onsite library experiences.

Goal 5: Develop and implement creative and diverse library programming that caters to different age groups, interests, and learning styles.

Activities:

- PPLCS will continue to build library programming costs into subsequent budgets.
- PPLCS staff will search out and schedule library performers throughout the year for member library systems.
- Programs for adults and teens will be added throughout the year to provide cultural and recreational opportunities to those users.