



Strategic Plan

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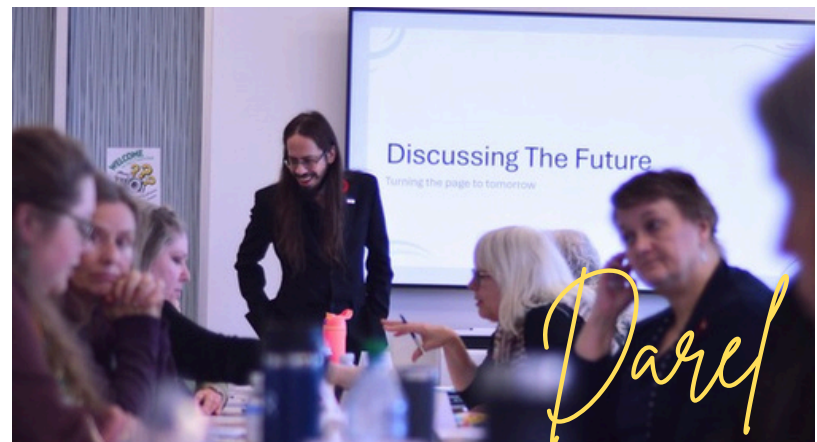


MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE

Our members' libraries connect people to information, opportunity, and lifelong learning within their communities. Across Alberta, libraries operate in diverse cultural, geographic, and governance contexts, united by a commitment to service, equitable access to information, and the public good. The Alberta Library (TAL) strengthens this network by supporting collaboration, building capacity, and helping libraries respond to change with clarity and purpose.

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan sets TAL's direction for supporting libraries while strengthening collaboration across the sector. It affirms TAL's responsibility to remain sustainable and responsive to member needs.

We thank the members who contributed their time and expertise to this process. Their engagement continues to shape TAL's work. This Plan will guide decisions over the next five years while remaining adaptable and responsive to evolving needs. We look ahead to working together in strengthening Alberta's library network.

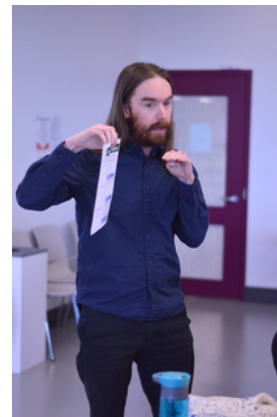


INTRODUCTION TO THE 2026 – 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan was developed to guide TAL’s priorities and build shared understanding across library sectors, roles, and regions. More than thirty members participated in Vision, Mission, and Values sessions and in a PESTLE analysis examining the forces shaping Alberta’s libraries. A smaller working group conducted a SWOT/TOWS analysis to align these external conditions with TAL’s internal strengths and challenges.

To ground the Plan in local context, distinct cultural and governance realities, and operational nuance, TAL conducted twenty-eight interviews and a member-wide survey with forty responses. The process concluded with a Town Hall on November 6, 2026 at Airdrie Public Library, where more than thirty participants explored TAL’s future direction.

This engagement reflects the time, expertise, and care invested by TAL members and partners. The resulting Plan brings together perspectives from public, academic, regional, Indigenous, and specialized libraries and sets direction for the years ahead. It will guide TAL’s priorities, remaining responsive to change, grounded in member experience, and advancing equitable access to information, lifelong learning, and informed communities.



STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

Libraries across Alberta operate in a complex environment where expectations for service and impact continue to grow while funding, staffing, and capacity remain constrained. Libraries play a vital role in supporting informed communities through equitable access to knowledge, lifelong learning, and shared cultural resources.

Engagement throughout this process confirmed a shared reality: libraries are resilient and deeply committed to their communities, yet unevenly resourced and increasingly stretched. Members value local autonomy and self-determination while recognizing the benefit of purposeful, well-structured collaboration that reduces duplication and builds collective capacity.

In this context, TAL serves as connective infrastructure, enabling access to licensing, shared services, learning, partnerships, and system-level coordination that strengthen Alberta's library network.



VISION

STRONGER LIBRARIES. GREATER IMPACT. TOGETHER.

Goal 1: Sustain trusted relationships with Indigenous library partners and build new connections where invited.

Goal 2: Reduce barriers to participation and support Indigenous-led collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Goal 1: Maintain TAL's operational and financial strength.

Goal 2: Support long-term resilience through systems, engagement, and governance.

Strengthen Relationships with Indigenous Libraries and Communities, and Support their Participation in Alberta's Library Landscape

Sustain TAL's operational and financial health to empower and benefit its members.

Goal 1: Increase awareness and understanding of the role libraries play in communities across Alberta.

Amplify the Collective Value and Impact of Alberta's Libraries


**Strategic Plan
2026-2030**

Strengthen Connection and Collaboration between TAL member

Goal 1: Create a cohesive network that links Alberta's libraries through purposeful collaboration to address shared priorities.

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships that advance the role of libraries as essential public infrastructure.

Build Capacity, Confidence, and Professional Growth throughout Alberta's Libraries

Goal 2: Ensure equitable participation and representation across the network.

Goal 1: Strengthen the skills, leadership, and adaptability of Alberta's library workforce.

Goal 2: Promote a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

MISSION

To advance collective impact for Alberta libraries through advocacy, innovation, economies of scale, and cross-sectoral collaboration.



Vision

Stronger Libraries. Greater Impact.
Together.

Mission

To advance collective impact for Alberta libraries through advocacy, innovation, economies of scale, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Values

Adaptability • Collaboration •
Collective Impact • Community •
Sustainability



SUSTAIN TAL'S OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL HEALTH TO EMPOWER AND BENEFIT ITS MEMBERS.

Goal 1: *Maintain TAL's operational and financial strength.*

Objectives:

- Sustain core licensing and service programs while diversifying revenue through partnerships and new service opportunities.
- Review resource allocation to maximize efficiency and member value.
- Ensure transparency through consistent reporting and performance evaluation.

Goal 2: *Support long-term resilience through systems, engagement, and governance.*

Objectives:

- Continue modernizing technological and logistical infrastructure to ensure secure, responsive operations.
- Strengthen inclusive, collaborative member engagement in governance and decision making.
- Foster innovation through calculated risk-taking and strategic partnerships

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Core services are sustained and revenue is diversified to maintain financial stability.
- TAL provides transparent reporting and demonstrates measurable value to members.
- Systems and governance are secure, representative, and member-responsive.
- Innovation and responsible risk-taking are supported across the organization.

STRENGTHEN CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN TAL MEMBER

Goal 1: *Create a cohesive network that links Alberta's libraries through purposeful collaboration to address shared priorities.*

Objectives:

- Establish cross-sector working groups with clear mandates, timelines, and outcomes.
- Standardize communication, reporting, and coordination frameworks to support flexible collaboration.
- Advance joint planning, pilot projects, and knowledge sharing to turn ideas into results.

Goal 2: *Ensure equitable participation and representation across the network.*

Objectives:

- Provide digital, logistical, and emerging financial supports to enable full participation by small, rural, and Indigenous libraries.
- Design collaboration opportunities that deliver clear value and use member time and expertise efficiently.
- Maintain open communication to share insights, sustain momentum, and reduce duplication.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Libraries across sectors actively collaborate through TAL-supported initiatives.
- Communication is consistent, coordinated, and inclusive.
- Members participate equitably across library types and contexts, finding clear, locally relevant value.
- Collaborative initiatives produce adopted outputs that reduce duplication.

BUILD CAPACITY, CONFIDENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH THROUGHOUT ALBERTA'S LIBRARIES

Goal 1: *Strengthen the skills, leadership, and adaptability of Alberta's library workforce.*

Objectives:

- Coordinate provincial training within a framework aligned with sector competencies and emerging needs.
- Deliver professional development in TAL's core areas or to address identified gaps, aligned with member capacity.
- Partner with members and relevant organizations to develop leadership and professional pathways for staff and trustees.

Goal 2: *Promote a culture of continuous learning and innovation.*

Objectives:

- Support practical pilot projects that address member and community needs.
- Promote cross-training, mentorship, and communities of practice across library types.
- Share local innovations and embed reflection and evaluation in TAL initiatives to inform future practice.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- TAL provides a recognized provincial professional development framework.
- Staff and trustees demonstrate stronger leadership and system-level understanding.
- Communities of practice and pilot initiatives produce adopted innovations.
- Continuous learning is embedded in TAL culture and member outcomes.

AMPLIFY THE COLLECTIVE VALUE AND IMPACT OF ALBERTA'S LIBRARIES

Goal 1: *Increase awareness and understanding of the role libraries play in communities across Alberta.*

Objectives:

- Develop shared advocacy tools and messaging for a consistent provincial narrative.
- Demonstrate libraries' measurable social and economic impact in partnership with members and communities.
- Position libraries as essential contributors to community wellbeing, innovation, and informed civic life.

Goal 2: *Strengthen partnerships that advance the role of libraries as essential public infrastructure.*

Objectives:

- Collaborate with municipal, educational, Indigenous, and GLAM-sector partners on initiatives aligned with provincial priorities and knowledge needs.
- Connect members with government, funders, and allies to strengthen long-term support.
- Coordinate provincial and targeted campaigns highlighting libraries' collective civic impact.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Shared messaging and evidence are used consistently across the province.
- Decision-makers demonstrate increased understanding of library impact.
- Data and storytelling effectively communicate return on investment and social benefit.
- Libraries are positioned as essential public infrastructure through cross-sector engagement.
- Relationships with partners strengthen visibility and influence.

STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORT THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ALBERTA'S LIBRARY LANDSCAPE

Intent: TAL recognizes that Indigenous libraries, learning centres, and other knowledge-keeping institutions operate within distinct cultural, governance, and funding contexts. Conversations with Indigenous partners throughout the strategic planning process highlighted the importance of trust, approachability, and meaningful connection. TAL will focus on sustaining respectful, long-term relationships that support Indigenous partners' self-determined goals, reduce barriers to participation, and create pathways for collaboration within Alberta's broader library ecosystem. This work will be guided by respect for Indigenous peoples' self-determination, cultural protocols, and the principles of reconciliation.

Goal 1: *Sustain trusted relationships with Indigenous library partners and build new connections where invited.*

Objectives:

- Foster an approachable, culturally respectful environment where Indigenous perspectives are welcomed and valued.
- Prioritize continuity, trust, and relationship-based engagement over transactional participation.
- Build new relationships in invitation-based, responsive ways aligned with community priorities.

Goal 2: *Reduce barriers to participation and support Indigenous-led collaboration and knowledge-sharing.*

Objectives:

- Identify ways TAL services, shared infrastructure, and partnerships can provide tangible, capacity-aware benefits to Indigenous libraries.
- Support Indigenous-led collaboration that respects cultural protocols and intellectual sovereignty.
- Work with regional systems and existing partners to support Indigenous library development.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Indigenous partners describe TAL as trusted, respectful, and responsive to their contexts and priorities.
- Indigenous libraries access TAL services, resources, and partnerships in ways that provide tangible value.
- Participation occurs without straining Indigenous library capacity.
- Indigenous libraries feel more connected to Alberta's library community while their autonomy and self-determination are upheld.

EVALUATION

This Plan sets a focused direction for TAL's work, grounded in member engagement and sustained through ongoing evaluation and dialogue. Strategic progress must be both measurable and meaningful. Quantitative indicators, including financial performance, participation levels, and program outputs, will be tracked and reported regularly. At the same time, many aspects of TAL's work, including relationship-building, collaboration, and sector alignment, require thoughtful qualitative assessment. Progress will be reviewed regularly with members and the Board to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to evolving needs.

The strength of this Plan lies not in the document itself, but in the relationships and shared commitment that underpin it. TAL's work will continue to be shaped by its members and informed by their experience, grounded in respect for the diverse communities and knowledge traditions libraries serve, and guided by a shared belief in the enduring value of libraries within their communities and across the broader landscape of knowledge, learning, and connection.

