



# Stone County Library

Strategic Plan  
2022-2027

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# MISSION AND VALUES

## **Library Mission Statement:**

A place to learn, connect, create, and grow.

## **Library Vision:**

The Library strives to be at the heart of the community, a trusted resource and partner known for excellence, creativity and open, equitable access that connects every person to opportunities for a lifetime of discovery, learning and joy.

## **Library Values:**

The library is committed to responsible stewardship of all the resources with which we have been entrusted. We are accountable for ensuring the proper use of funds to deliver quality library services to the county.

### **Excellent Service**

The library is committed to our patrons and is responsive to their service needs. The community's opinion and input are welcome in all areas of library service. We consider the impact on the patron in all decisions and strive for fair and equitable treatment of all in the community.

### **Literacy and Learning**

The library is committed to being the focal point of learning and literacy in the community by providing a wide variety of materials, resources, and services to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs in our community.

### **Growth and Innovation**

The library is committed to continuous learning and innovations in the pursuit of excellence. We respond to present situations and anticipate future needs.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

The library is committed to the right of its community to information representing all points of view, even when this information is controversial or offensive by others. The library endorses the American Library Associations' Bill of Rights.

## THE PROCESS

In 2020, the Library Board of Trustees and the staff of the Stone County Library embarked upon the process of strategic planning. The process used a basic assumption: excellence must be defined locally – it results when library services match community needs, interests and priorities. Successful, relevant, and vibrant public libraries operate by recognizing community needs and fully assisting the community to realize their goals. The process also recognizes that in today's reality, public libraries must fully operate in a team manner with governmental, social, educational, and other public agencies within the same local service area.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Stone County Library chose to utilize a series of surveys to gauge community feedback regarding current services. Initially, staff were surveyed both to set a new mission statement that is relevant to library operations, and then to determine where staff sees the needs of the library. Following that, library patrons were surveyed about current services and resources. Key community stakeholders from a variety of organizations in the county were also surveyed to determine awareness and effectiveness of library resources.

The director met with administrative staff and the outreach coordinator to discuss the survey results and formulated a set of goals and objectives to target the needs revealed in the survey results. From there the strategic plan was presented to the Library Board to discuss community needs and the goals of the strategic plan. The role of the Library Board, in this planning process, was to review the strategic plan from their perspective – the big picture. They read through each service priority, evaluated each goal, and tested the objectives under each goal in the strategic plan. Before approving the 2022-2027 strategic plan. As executives to the Stone County Library, Board Members reviewed the work and adopt it as the future road map for the Library to follow in the next five years to serve the informational, educational and recreational needs of the citizens of Stone County.

# COUNTY PROFILE

Stone County Library is located in southwest Missouri, in the heart of the Ozarks. It is a rural county, which also benefits from tourism supported by Table Rock Lake. The geographic challenges presented by the Ozark Mountains make transportation and access to services difficult for many within Stone County.

The Library serves a population of 31,952 residents, which is a .8% decrease from the 2010 census data. The population is 4% persons under 5 years old, 16.4% persons under 18, 31.6% persons over 65. Currently 31% of the population is over the age of 65. 96.5% of the population of Stone County is Caucasian, with the remaining 3.5% split between Hispanic or Latino and those of multiple races.

Stone County had an estimated 15.4% of residents living below the poverty line in 2019, which was lower than Missouri's 12.9%. The unemployment rate in Stone County in December 2019 was 4.7% compared to the state rate, which was 3.3%. However, the January 2020 unemployment rate in Stone County jumped to 10.4%. This change is due, in part, to the tourism industry, which provides a large number of jobs to Stone County residents. These jobs are seasonal and typically close down during January and February.



# LIBRARY PROFILE

## Overview

The Stone County Library began offering services to the county in 1948 through the Galena Library. The Crane Area Library was incorporated into the Stone County Library in 1997 in order to better serve the community. To serve the southern end of the county, the Blue Eye Library was added in 2015. A total of 39,208 physical items are held between the three branches, but the Library participates in a consortium of libraries in the state, which currently gives Stone County residents access to 3.5 million items.

The Galena Library building, which houses the headquarters, was completed in 2008. The 10,000 square foot library features 6 public computers, wireless internet access, meeting spaces, a presentation system in the meeting room, and wonderful architecture and natural light.

The Crane Library in the historic bank building was completed in 2012. The 3,300 square foot library included 5 public computers, wireless access, and a meeting space. In 2017, additional space was purchased next to the library. In 2020 the space was renovated to add an additional 4,000 square feet of space. The redesign added a larger meeting space, kitchen, staff & storage space, a designated children's area, additional public computer space, and a complete redesign of the buildings.

The 2,000 square foot Blue Eye Library opened in 2015. It features 4 public computers, wireless internet access, and shares a building with the Lions Community Center. It is centrally located within walking distance of the Blue Eye Schools.

The Library added an Outreach Department in 2020, which is responsible for the Books 2 Go service, which delivers books to residents unable to visit the library because of medical reasons or age. Outreach staff are also responsible for the Holds Locker, which was added to Reeds Spring City Hall in the winter of 2020-21. This provides residents in the Reeds Spring area a way to pick up and return books, if visiting a branch is not feasible.

## Facilities

Stone County is a rural county with many small communities that are difficult to reach. The Galena Branch is located in the county seat of Galena, pop. 440. The town is hard to reach for some residents and other than the county government has little commercial activity to draw visitors.

The Blue Eye Library is located in the very southern end of the county, 45 minutes away from the Galena library. The Blue Eye Branch has no program room so all programs are held in the main area of the library which can cause noise bleed-over.

The Crane Branch is newly renovated, which solved many of the space issues that the branch previously faced. The branch also serves as the main office for outreach staff.

Despite three branches in the county, there is still a large gap in service to many residents of Stone County. In 2020, a holds locker was placed in Reeds Spring to begin providing services in much needed areas. Outreach services have also begun to the schools and the library has begun providing a weekly storytime in the community. There is a need for a permanent facility between the Galena and Blue Eye locations, in order to better serve residents of the county.

## Circulation

In 2019 Stone County Library circulated 35,397 items and had 8,998 registered borrowers, making the per capita of circulated items 3.9, which is three times higher than reported in the previous strategic plan. Fewer than half of the county population are registered borrowers, which is 28% of the county population, compared to library systems of similar size in the state, which average 50% of their population registered.

There are two main challenges that impact patron registration. The first is branch location. There are no branches located in the most populous areas of the county, and transportation is difficult for many. Second, Kimberling Area Library is an all-volunteer library located in an area much more convenient to many county residents. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the Galena library saw an influx of new patrons from the Kimberling Area. It is possible that this trend will continue.

## Collection

According to the 2019 statistics, Stone County Library had a total collection size of 131,827 and spent \$80,072 on collection development. The collection development amount includes money spent on electronic books & audiobooks, but those numbers are not counted in the total collection size since they are not a permanent part of the collection. In addition, the library is a member of the Missouri Evergreen Consortium which currently has 54 member libraries throughout the state and shares a collection of over 3.5 million items. The library is also a member of MOLIB2GO, a consortium of 119 libraries which provides access to ebooks, eaudiobooks, and digital magazines.

## Technology

Each branch of Stone County Library provides public access to the internet through computers and/or wireless connection. Currently, Blue Eye has 4 public computers, Crane has 6 public computers, and Galena has 6 public computers. In addition, each branch has 6 laptops purchased with grant money in 2020. Crane's public computers were also replaced in 2020 with grant

money, but Blue Eye and Galena have public computers that are at least 5 years old. Wireless access is available in the building and in the immediate parking areas after hours.

In addition to internet access, each branch has the ability to print copies for patrons in black & white or color. The branches are also able to send and receive faxes. Crane and Galena also have the ability to scan documents and send them to an email address. The Galena branch has a microfilm machine located in its local history room.

## **Programs**

Programs are an important part of the modern library mission. Stone County Library provides programs at each of its branches for all ages. In the past two years focus has been spent building programs for elementary age students and teens. In addition, Crane was limited on space and this made it difficult to hold programs. Since the branch expansion a storytime group has been formed and additional programs for all ages are being held.

## **Outreach**

In 2020 the library system began operating an outreach services department. One full-time employee was hired to start, and another part-time employee was added part-way through the year. The outreach department launched a homebound service, which delivers library materials to patrons who are unable to leave their homes. They also manage the holds locker located in Reeds Spring. In addition to those services, the outreach department is responsible for coordinating library participation in community events, as well as providing outreach programs to partner organizations and local schools.



# BENCHMARK COMPARISON

\*Data compiled from the FY19 Public Library Survey of Missouri Libraries and Stone County FY19 Annual Report

The library chose 4 single county libraries that were of similar population to compare statistics.

Library	Population	Total Income	Staff FTE	Hours Open (per year)
Stone County	32,202	\$663,015	8.2	7904
Adair County	25,607	\$459,289	7.25	2392
Dunklin County Library	31,953	\$834,806	11.8	10608
Lebanon-Laclede County	35,571	\$768,384	13	3432
Webster County Library	35,252	\$550,644	8.5	4836

Library	Registered Borrowers	Annual Library Visits	Children's Program Attendance	Uses of Public Internet Computers
Stone County	8,998	45,183	3,212	11,714
Adair County	8,012	93,080	13,638	7,799
Dunklin County Library	21,465	90,052	2,430	8,650
Lebanon-Laclede County	28,620	139,198	4,906	22,084
Webster County Library	10,291	91,862	4,986	12,550

Library	Collection Expense	Total Collection	Total Circulation	Circ per Capita
Stone County	\$80,072	131,827	35,397	3.97
Adair County	\$94,011	110,340	184,785	24.31
Dunklin County Library	\$66,298	336,676	295,424	13.78
Lebanon-Laclede County	\$121,496	164,123	177,627	6.65
Webster County Library	\$63,076	147,854	135,222	13.8

In the benchmark comparisons, Stone County Library ranks towards the middle in total income, staff, and money spent on materials. However, the Library lags behind in library visits, registered borrowers, computer use, children's attendance, and circulation. However, since the previous strategic plan the number of annual visits has gone up 61% and the circulation per capita has doubled, although the rest of the stats have stayed roughly the same. This indicates that progress is being made, though slowly.

# LIBRARY GOALS

Based on the library mission statement the following goals will be the focus of this strategic plan:

## Learn

Goal: Increase electronic resource usage and awareness.

Objective 1: Increase overall electronic resource usage by 5% each year.

Objective 2: Review databases annually to ensure they are meeting the needs of residents.

Objective 3: Offer digital resource classes to local schools each year.

### Action Plan:

- \*Provide resource information and training to teachers at the beginning of the school year.

- \* Make ecards available to interested students and their families.

- \*Use statistics from the Public Library Survey, and individual databases to determine awareness and interest in databases.

- \*Do bi-annual survey of patrons to determine database interests.

## Connect

Goal: Stone County Library will continue to connect with residents of the county through outreach. This will be done through expanding the Books2Go program, school visits, and participation in community events.

Objective 1: Serve a maximum of 20 patrons through Books2Go.

Objective 2: Hold a monthly story time in every preschool and/or kindergarten class in Stone County schools during the school year.

Objective 3: Participate in at least one additional activity at each school district per year.

### Action Plan:

- \*Connect with eligible homebound patrons through Senior Age and local organizations for seniors.

- \* Communicate with county schools and offer services.

- \*Add additional youth services/outreach staff member to more adequately visit classrooms.

## Create

Goal: Stone County Library will create programs to meet the educational and recreational needs of our patrons.

Objective 1: Ensure that regular programming addresses a wide variety of interests.

Objective 2: Regularly review program offerings to ensure resources are being used effectively.

Objective 3: Start a "Library of Things" to address patron interests.

### Action Plan:

\*Take annual survey to gauge patron interest in program offerings.

\*Evaluate program attendance 1-2 times per year to determine continuation.

\*Plan and implement new programs ideas based on community need and library trends.

\*Incorporate circulating items to collection that would benefit patrons (i.e. fishing poles).

## Grow

Goal: Stone County Library will find ways to better serve residents who live in areas not being served by a library branch.

Objective 1: Provide more equitable services for residents of Stone County.

Objective 2: Secure a permanent library location in southern half of Stone County.

Objective 3: Support underserved groups with needed resources.

### Action Plan:

\*Offer more programs in the Cape Fair/Reeds Spring/Kimberling City area of the county, through outreach.

\*Add/adjust staffing as necessary to better meet outreach needs.

\*Identify possible locations for library branch & begin planning for a permanent location.

\*Provide programs and resources to underserved populations (i.e. ID/DD, elderly, disabled, etc.).