'24-'26 Strategic Plan

4th Quarter Update
2025

Kent District Library
kdl.org

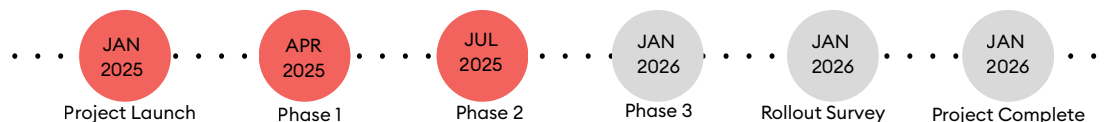Information
Ideas
Excitement!

2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

Celebrate distinctive communities by proactively prioritizing meaningful partnerships and patron relationships, finding commonalities with our neighbors, and intentionally connecting resources.

2025 Initiative #1

Evaluate community partnerships by accessing data to establish reciprocity and shared goals, develop a partnership intake process and prioritize relationships and partnerships at the branch and system levels to reveal where there may be gaps or overlaps. Create a "Who is My Community" sheet & map for each branch so key partnerships are highlighted and communicated.

Project Timeline: January 2025 - January 2026

JAN 2025	APR 2025	JUL 2025	JAN 2026	JAN 2026	JAN 2026
Project Launch	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Rollout Survey	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   Completed

This quarter marked the completion of several key deliverables for this initiative. In October, *My Community Maps* were finalized and distributed to branches, giving managers ample time to share both the maps and their purpose during November in-services. The project team also refined the Salesforce Partnership Meeting Form, and updated procedures to clearly define when and how staff should use the form, so that partnerships are consistently captured and maintained.

Throughout November and December, the team shifted focus to sustainability and staff readiness. Project leader Craig Buno, Community Engagement Manager, presented the *Partnership Guide,* meeting form and *My Community Maps* to staff during a December training summit, reinforcing shared understanding across departments and roles.

Buno and his team have done an exceptional job reviewing and updating processes, procedures and forms to eliminate outdated information and reduce confusion as staff adopt these new practices. A major win for the project's long-term impact was the inclusion of every BOPS (Branch Outreach and Programming Specialist) on the project team. As key outreach coordinators for their branches, they have played a critical role in sharing and training staff on these updates.

In January, the team will release a final Communication Bulletin outlining the annual update process for the maps, highlight top community partners, and direct staff to all relevant guides, forms and procedures. A rollout survey will follow in mid-January, after which the project team will meet with the PMO to formally close out this initiative.

Strengthening Community
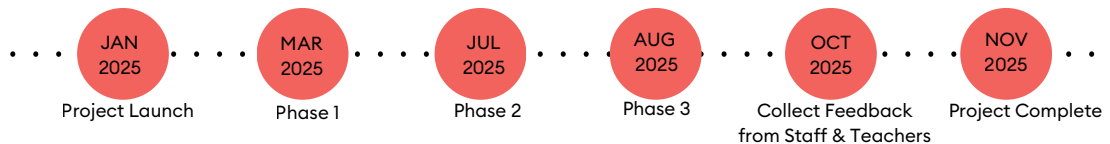
2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

Celebrate distinctive communities by proactively prioritizing meaningful partnerships and patron relationships, finding commonalities with our neighbors, and intentionally connecting resources.

2025 Initiative #2

Develop a comprehensive school outreach menu for branches, showcasing various ways to partner and collaborate with teachers and students. Establish clear boundaries for staff prep time and designate specific months for focused outreach efforts. This initiative aims to engage students and educators effectively while respecting the unique dynamics of each partnership.

Project Timeline: January 2025 - November 2025

JAN 2025	MAR 2025	JUL 2025	AUG 2025	OCT 2025	NOV 2025
Project Launch	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Collect Feedback from Staff & Teachers	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   ~~Completed~~

This quarter was an exciting one for the School Outreach Menu initiative as the project entered its final stretch. In October, a training plan introducing the menu, updated webpage, and staff time guidelines was rolled out to staff. The project team also prepared separate training for deeper learning at a youth librarian summit in December, where staff explored how these new tools should guide and strengthen their partnerships with schools.

The project closeout meeting took place on November 17 and provided an opportunity to celebrate the completion of the initiative and address questions or concerns raised through the rollout survey. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Staff consistently described the menu as a comprehensive, easy-to-share resource that clearly communicates what KDL offers. Many noted that it functions as a true one-stop shop for outreach, making conversations with teachers and school partners more streamlined and effective. Both staff and teachers expressed enthusiasm for the menu, with increased engagement and new partnerships with teachers already reported.

This initiative has brought greater system-wide consistency and clarity to school outreach, helping staff better understand what to offer while making services more visible and accessible for educators. The menu has also supported reconnections with schools not visited in years and sparked new ideas for future outreach efforts.

The PMO extends its warmest congratulations to project leader Julie Ralston and her team for their dedication and successful completion of this initiative: Annette Miller, Christine Bylsma, Clare O'Tsuji, Dave Fletcher, Hennie Vaandrager, Holland Rietberg-Miller, Jordan Perkins, Jennifer DeVault, Joyanne Huston-Swanson, Katie Zuidema, Morgan Hanks, Mike Golczynski, Penni Zurgable and Ty Papke.
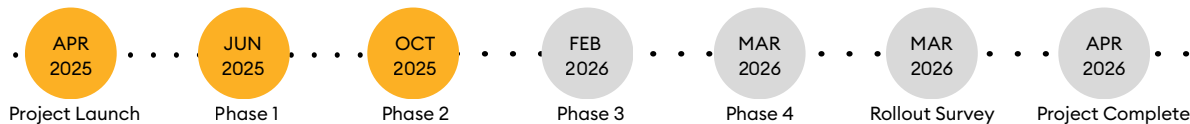
Strengthening Community

2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

Celebrate distinctive communities by proactively prioritizing meaningful partnerships and patron relationships, finding commonalities with our neighbors, and intentionally connecting resources.

2025 Initiative #1

Strengthen and promote technology instruction in the library by ensuring staff have the training and equipment to assist patrons at the desk and in one-on-one sessions with emerging technologies. Evaluate tech tutoring to create clarity and centralized processes around offerings and align efforts with ENTF's digital inclusion strategies and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance to tackle the expanding digital divide with best practices and existing framework.

Project Timeline: April 2025 - April 2026

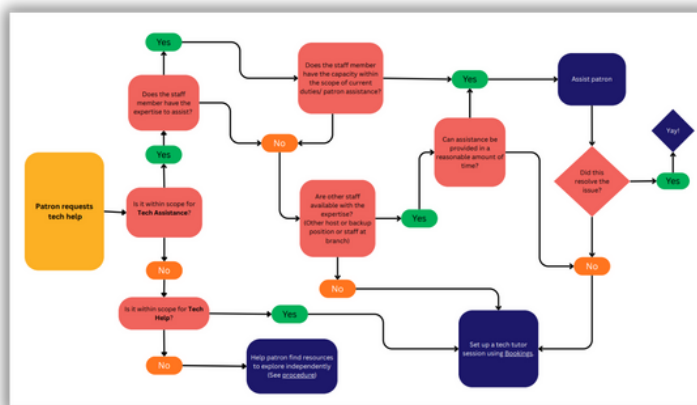| APR 2025	JUN 2025	OCT 2025	FEB 2026	MAR 2026	MAR 2026	APR 2026
Project Launch	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Rollout Survey	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   Completed

The Tech Tutoring initiative gained significant momentum this quarter beginning with the successful launch of its pilot phase. In October, the project team prepared for pilot rollout at the Cascade, Caledonia, Kentwood and Gaines branches, which officially launched on November 5. With the intake form fully integrated into Microsoft Bookings, the solution has proven effective, and both patrons and staff at pilot branches have shared valuable feedback through surveys. This feedback helped inform the systemwide rollout, which is taking place region by region, with all regions expected to be live by the end of January 2026.

A key milestone this quarter was establishing a clear distinction between tech help and tech assistance, defining which requests can be supported at the service desk and which require a scheduled appointment. Work is also underway to design a webpage to clearly communicate the scope of tech assistance available at KDL and guide patrons to the right level of support. The project team is excited to see all branches using Microsoft Bookings to schedule Tech Help appointments, streamlining staff workflows while improving the patron experience.

This tech help flowchart is just one of many new or revamped training materials created by the project team to support staff

Technology

2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

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2025 Initiative #2

Collect and reflect on the egaming lab data from KDL's 3 branches. Expand esports as patron interest supports, evolving usage from open play to formal team engagement and game creation, while integrating egaming as a central STEAM component for next summer's programming to enhance educational and career opportunities for public and homeschool students.

Project Timeline: January 2025 - December 2025

JAN 2025	SEP 2025	DEC 2025
Project Launch	Rollout Survey	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   **Completed**

This quarter focused on preparations to operationalize KDL's gaming labs as this initiative moved toward formal project closeout. In October, the PMO met with the project team, along with managers and staff overseeing gaming labs, to align on best practices and shared processes to support long-term sustainability. A key outcome of this session was the designation of an esports "champion" at each location with a gaming lab to support lab success, share knowledge, maintain standards, and help guide partnerships and future direction. Additionally, centralized processes were established to support both KDL's six existing labs and the future lab planned for the Walker library expansion.

On December 11, project leader Kurt Stevens, Director of IT, met with the PMO to formally closeout the initiative. Feedback from the rollout survey highlighted strong engagement at all participating branches, with esports labs attracting new library users - particularly teens and young adults. Survey feedback also informed a Communication Bulletin, scheduled for release alongside the project closeout announcement in January, which will outline newly centralized esports procedures and the esports champion role.

While this project formally launched in 2025, esports initiatives have been part of KDL's strategic plan since November 2023. Sincere thanks are extended to Kurt Stevens, along with his team: Angela Culp, Bethany Metivier, Brad Baker, Dan Nguyen, Joyanne Huston-Swanson, Kat Glardon, and Keeva Filipek.

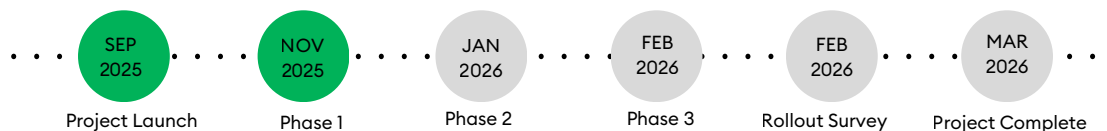## Technology

2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

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2025 Initiative #1

Develop a clear framework and timeline for cross-promotion and invite-back strategies within our programs to enhance visibility and engagement, and to maximize the reach and impact of our services across all branches. Establish guidelines to streamline promotional efforts and ensure consistent messaging.

Project Timeline: September 2025 - March 2026

SEP 2025	NOV 2025	JAN 2026	FEB 2026	FEB 2026	MAR 2026
Project Launch	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Rollout Survey	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track (circled)   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   Completed

The Cross Promotion project team began the quarter with its official kickoff meeting on October 8, where meeting dates and the project's goals and deliverables were reviewed. By the end of November, the team gathered foundational information about existing programs, clarified goals, and established the structure needed to move forward with confidence.

As the project moved into Phase Two, the focus shifted to design and development, with an emphasis on active engagement and feedback from frontline staff, department leads, and cross-functional partners. These conversations have been instrumental in identifying opportunities and anticipating potential challenges early. Project leader Lulu Brown, Regional Manager I, has prioritized transparency during each phase, encouraging her team to share regular updates at branch huddles, and thoughtfully incorporating feedback into ongoing planning.

Progress continued through December as the team focused on refining early concepts. Staff input has been translated into clearer considerations and opportunities for greater consistency across locations. This feedback has helped shape solutions that are realistic and supportive of daily library operations.

The project remains on track with its projected timeline, and the team appreciates the continued support and guidance from both Randy Goble as the project sponsor and the rest of the Leadership Team as it advances toward upcoming milestones.

Core Programming
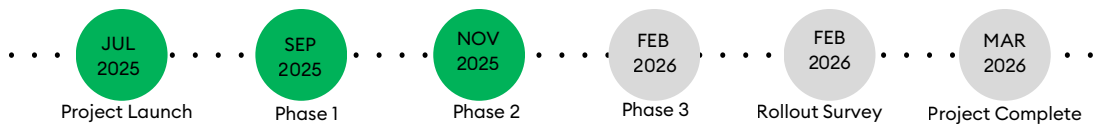
2024-2026 Strategic Goal:

Celebrate distinctive communities by proactively prioritizing meaningful partnerships and patron relationships, finding commonalities with our neighbors, and intentionally connecting resources.

2025 Initiative #2

Define and establish pathways for core programs, ensuring structured development and implementation. Create a schedule to regularly reassess and refine each core program. This initiative aims to maintain program relevance, ownership and effectiveness over time.

Project Timeline: July 2025 - March 2026

JUL 2025	SEP 2025	NOV 2025	FEB 2026	FEB 2026	MAR 2026
Project Launch	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Rollout Survey	Project Complete

2025 Q4 Update

On Track   Paused/Delayed   Canceled   Completed

Project leader Hennie Vaandrager, Programming and Outreach Manager, and her team made significant progress this quarter, with all Phase Two deliverables completed in November. Given the complexity and breadth of KDL programming, the team continues to move forward with a strong focus on clarity, boundaries, and sustainability as programming evolves into 2026. While opportunities for innovation are plentiful, capacity remains limited, making shared strategy and clear decision-making essential.

In December, the project moved into Phase Three, which will focus on training the organization to clearly distinguish between Core programs and branch-sponsored programs, along with establishing consistent guidelines for how programs are created and funded. Vaandrager will present this information to Managers and BOPS in January, followed by a system-wide training rollout that will also be incorporated into onboarding for all new employees.

Another key outcome of this project is the establishment of a four-year assessment cycle for all major KDL initiatives, introducing a consistent and much-needed process for evaluating staff-intensive and long-running programs. These assessments will examine usage data, budget considerations, and staff and patron feedback.

The project team is excited to see this work create space for thoughtful innovation while ensuring KDL's Core programming remains strategic, sustainable, and impactful.

Core Programming