



## **Strategic Plan**

**January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2031**

Voted and approved by the Board of Trustees on February 12, 2026

## Community Overview

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Ida Grove is the county seat of Ida County in Northwest Iowa. The estimated population in 2025 is approximately 1,904, reflecting a slight decline from the 2020 census. The community is fairly balanced with no significantly large population of any age group; however, as of the 2020 census, Ida Grove had a lower percentage of young people (17 or younger) and a higher percentage of older people (65 and older). The median age in 2025 is 43.8 years. The residents of Ida Grove are predominantly white, and English is the principal language spoken in the community.

The children of Ida Grove attend school in the Odebolt-Arthur Battle Creek Ida Grove (OA-BCIG) Community School District. The district has two elementary schools, one shared Middle School, and one shared High School. Elementary schools (PreK-5) are located in Odebolt and Ida Grove, with children attending based on district residence. The shared Middle School (grades 6-8) is located in Odebolt, and the shared High School (grades 9-12) is located in Ida Grove, with bus transportation provided for both. One daycare center and approximately four in-home daycare centers operate within Ida Grove, and there are an estimated 50 home-school families in Ida County. Excluding preschoolers, approximately 19 percent of the population is school age.

The community's main employers include Horn Memorial Hospital and associated healthcare clinics, Midwest Industries, and GOMACO Corporation along with its subsidiaries. Many residents commute to and/or from nearby communities such as Holstein, Denison, and Storm Lake.

The median household income in Ida Grove is \$63,194, which is lower than the Iowa statewide median of \$73,147 and below the U.S. national median of \$75,976. The per capita income is approximately \$36,100, with a poverty rate of 9.2%, below the national average of 11.8%.

The community benefits from affordable housing, with a median property value of \$96,000 and a homeownership rate of 80.2%, while the median gross rent is approximately \$671 per month. Residents enjoy small town amenities, including the Ida Grove Recreation Center and outdoor pool, new athletic facilities, an active public library, and a conservation center offering varied opportunities. Essential services, including a hospital, medical and dental clinics, emergency services, shopping through local small businesses, a local newspaper, and grocery store are available. The city also features parks, a golf course and Country Club, and an outdoor walking trail.

Citizens of Ida Grove take pride in the many amenities offered in their community and value these small-town living ideals. The Ida Grove Public Library continues to play a central role in supporting lifelong learning, early literacy, creativity, community engagement, and safe spaces for residents of all ages. Over the years, the library has adapted its programs and services to meet changing community needs, including STEM programming, creative maker spaces, technology access for adults and seniors, virtual engagement, and now communication through monthly newsletters and an active social media presence.

## Introduction

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This Strategic Plan is a revision and continuation of the Ida Grove Public Library's original FY2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Developed using community input from the 2017-2018 planning process, the original plan established a strong framework guiding library services, programs, and priorities.

Rather than creating an entirely new plan, the Library Board of Trustees and staff have chosen to treat this document as a living, evolving guide. It builds on established service priorities while reflecting on new programs and services introduced over the past several years. Some initiatives were delayed due to COVID-19, affecting the timeline for certain goals from

the FY2018-2021 and FY2022-2025 plans. This approach allows the library to maintain current offerings, assess their effectiveness, and determine which initiatives should continue, be refined, or adapted to meet the community's evolving needs.

The service responses from the planning process remain the foundation of this plan, reflecting long-term community values while supporting efforts to expand offerings, strengthen communication, and connect with residents.

This Strategic Plan guides decision-making, supports sustainable growth, and provides flexibility as community needs change. It will be reviewed yearly and adjusted as necessary to ensure the library continues to serve as a vital resource and gathering place.

The Library Board of Trustees and staff extend sincere appreciation to the community members who participated in the 2017-18 Focus Groups. Building on that foundation, the library achieved many original goals and continues to adapt services while addressing delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Vision Statement

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Ida Grove will be a community where students thrive academically, teens grow socially, newcomers feel welcome, seniors live independently, and people of all ages learn and connect.

## Mission Statement

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The Ida Grove Public Library enriches our community by providing access to books, technology, and shared spaces that support learning and connection for all ages.

## Service Responses, Goals, and Objectives

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The library continues to focus on six key service responses identified by the community:

- ❖ SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING
- ❖ EXPRESS CREATIVITY: CREATE AND SHARE CONTENT
- ❖ STIMULATE IMAGINATION: READING, VIEWING AND LISTENING FOR PLEASURE
- ❖ KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES
- ❖ CREATE YOUNG READERS: EARLY LITERACY
- ❖ VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE: PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES

## Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

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Residents will have access to resources and programs that support personal interests, curiosity, and learning at every stage of life.

### **Goal 1:**

Children and families will have access to resources and programs that support lifelong learning and skill development.

#### ***Objective 1:***

In each year of this plan, the library will continue working with LaunchPad Children’s Museum to secure an institutional membership and provide admission passes for patrons. Progress will be measured annually through circulation data and general patron demand, and the partnership will be evaluated based on usage and available funding.

#### ***Objective 2:***

By Fall 2026, the library will complete an inventory of all hands-on learning resources, including STEM kits, learning backpacks, and activity-based collections. This inventory will be used to review usage, identify missing or damaged items, and determine repair or replacement needs. Effectiveness will be evaluated through completion of the inventory and comparison of usage trends before and after updates.

#### ***Objective 3:***

By Summer 2027, the library will complete a 5-year assessment of informal learning activities such as story times, summer reading, and after-school programs. Attendance trends and community feedback will be reviewed to determine whether changes to programs or services are needed. Findings will guide future program planning and resource allocation.

#### ***Objective 4:***

At the conclusion of each year, youth programs and resources will be reviewed to ensure they align with community interests and available staff capacity. This evaluation will be based on participation levels, staff feedback, and community engagement.

### **Goal 2:**

Adults and older adults will have opportunities to learn, connect, and engage through library services and programs.

#### ***Objective 1:***

In Spring 2027, the library will explore outreach service options for residents who experience barriers to visiting the library. Progress will be measured by completion of a feasibility review, and outcomes will be evaluated based on identified community needs and operational capacity.

#### ***Objective 2:***

Each year of this plan, the library will offer a minimum of six educational or recreational programs for adults and older adults, as budget and staffing allow. Attendance and participant feedback will be reviewed annually to guide future programming decisions.

#### ***Objective 3:***

Throughout each year of this plan, the library will maintain a working partnership with Connections Area Agency on Aging to support learning and access to technology and digital services. The partnership will be evaluated annually through participation levels and staff observation of community benefit.

### **Goal 3:**

Children will have access to engaging, exploratory programs.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year, the library will evaluate the Summer Reading Program by collecting feedback from parents and caregivers. Participation levels and survey responses will be reviewed annually to ensure the program reflects community needs during the summer months.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each August, the library will explore new afterschool programming opportunities with local organizations to maintain a diverse and engaging selection of programs for young learners. Success will be evaluated through participation and sustainability of partnerships.

## **Goal 4:**

Teens will have access to learning experiences that encourage curiosity, independence, and peer connection.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year of this plan, the library will offer at least one teen-focused program or program series that supports learning, creativity, or exploration. **Participation and informal feedback will be reviewed annually to assess relevance and engagement.**

### ***Objective 2:***

By Spring 2028, the library will explore opportunities to collaborate with schools or community organizations to expand teen engagement. Progress will be measured by the establishment of potential partnerships and evaluation of interest from teens and partners.

### ***Objective 3:***

By Fall 2029, the library will develop or expand one teen-focused resource or service. Usage and participation trends will be reviewed to evaluate effectiveness and inform future development.

## **Express Creativity: Create and Share Content**

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Residents will have access to services and support that encourage creative expression and the creation of original content in physical and digital formats.

## **Goal 1:**

Children will have opportunities to explore creativity through hands-on experiences.

### ***Objective 1:***

By fall 2027, the library will refresh children's creative and maker-based resources as funding allows. Progress will be evaluated through completion of updates and staff observation of use.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each year of this plan, the library will incorporate creative and STEM-based activities into existing children's programs rather than developing stand-alone services. Effectiveness will be reviewed annually based on participation and staff capacity.

### ***Objective 3:***

Throughout each year of this plan, the library will encourage imagination and creativity through low-cost activities and services appropriate for a rural library setting. Success will be evaluated annually through participation and sustainability.

## **Goal 2:**

Adults will have access to tools and opportunities that support creative expression.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year of this plan, the library will schedule and host at least 4 creative programs or workshops in partnership with local artists, crafters, or community organizations. Attendance and general feedback will be reviewed annually.

### ***Objective 2:***

By Fall 2029, the library will evaluate current access to basic technology and software that supports creative projects, and will update applications, services or systems as funding allows.

### ***Objective 3:***

Throughout the duration of this plan, the library will evaluate, explore, and advocate for regular funding, grant opportunities, and donations to support creative offerings without increasing operational strain.

## **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**

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Residents will have access to a variety of reading, viewing, and listening materials that enhance leisure, foster curiosity, and encourage personal growth.

## **Goal 1:**

Residents of all ages will have access to engaging, relevant, and diverse library collections.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year of this plan, the library will assess physical and digital collections to ensure they reflect community interests and usage patterns. Circulation data, digital usage statistics, and patron feedback will be reviewed annually to guide collection development and acquisitions.

### ***Objective 2:***

By Fall 2027, the library will review participation in digital and pay-per-use services. Findings will inform adjustments to maximize access, improve resource availability, and align services with community needs.

### ***Objective 3:***

Each year, the library will balance purchases of new and popular materials with long-term favorites and locally relevant content while maintaining a three percent add/delete ratio. Annual collection reports and community feedback will inform these decisions.

## **Goal 2:**

Residents will be able to easily discover and access library materials and services.

### ***Objective 1:***

In 2028, the library will complete an in-depth evaluation of the library website and digital catalogs. Usability testing and staff review will inform updates to ensure easy navigation and accurate access to resources.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each year, the library will maintain dynamic in-library displays, reader advisory services, newsletters, and social media posts to highlight library services and resources. Usage and community engagement will be reviewed annually to guide improvements.

### ***Objective 3:***

Online tools and digital services will be reviewed annually for accessibility and usability. Updates will be implemented as needed to ensure ongoing relevance and ease of use.

## **Goal 3:**

Residents unable to visit the library will have access to materials through outreach programs.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year, the library will maintain outreach services, including monthly delivery to local assisted living facilities. Program usage and resident feedback will be reviewed annually to ensure services meet community needs.

### ***Objective 2:***

Additional outreach needs will be investigated continuously, with new services implemented as staffing, policy, and budget allow. Annual reviews will assess impact, and adjustments to services will be made as needed.

## **Goal 4:**

Residents will have opportunities to engage with others around reading and shared interests.

### ***Objective 1:***

By Fall 2026, the library will secure funding and install a Story Book Walk along the walking trail. Participation and community response will be reviewed to inform future similar initiatives.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each year, the library will provide space and support for informal discussion groups or book clubs when interest exists. Attendance, engagement, and participant feedback will be reviewed annually to guide adjustments.

## **Know Your Community: Community Resources/Services**

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Residents will have access to a central, reliable source of information about local programs, services, and community activities.

### **Goal 1:**

Residents will view the library as a trusted hub for accessing community information.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year of this plan, the library will maintain and update community information resources in the building and online, including digital displays. Usage, staff observations, and community feedback will be reviewed annually to ensure information remains current and meets community needs.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each year of this plan, the library will produce a monthly library newsletter featuring library news, services, and community information. Distribution, readership, and community feedback will be reviewed annually, with findings informing content and format improvements.

### ***Objective 3:***

Social media will be used to promote library services, programs, and timely updates. Engagement metrics and community interaction will be reviewed annually to assess effectiveness and inform future communications.

### ***Objective 4:***

The library will maintain partnerships with local organizations to share information and collaborate on community initiatives. Partnership effectiveness and alignment with community needs will be reviewed annually to guide continued collaboration.

### ***Objective 5:***

Communication methods will be evaluated each year to ensure they are accessible, sustainable, and effective. Staff and community feedback will guide any necessary adjustments.

## **Goal 2:**

New and returning residents will feel welcomed and informed.

### ***Objective 1:***

By fall 2030, the library will create and maintain a physical or digital welcome resource highlighting local services, organizations, and library offerings. Usage, community feedback, and engagement will be reviewed annually to guide updates.

### ***Objective 2:***

Each year of this plan, the library will collaborate with city offices and community groups to ensure new residents receive timely information about library services and local resources. Collaboration effectiveness and coverage will be reviewed annually to inform adjustments.

## **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**

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Children from birth to age five will have access to programs, services, and collections that support early literacy development and school readiness.

### **Goal 1:**

Families will have access to consistent, high-quality early literacy opportunities.

### ***Objective 1:***

Each year of this plan, the library will offer regular story times for children ages birth to four that emphasizes early literacy skills through stories, activities, and play. Participation and feedback will be reviewed annually to guide program improvements.

### ***Objective 2:***

Throughout each year, the library will provide caregivers with resources and guidance that encourage reading and learning at home.

### ***Objective 3:***

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative will be maintained and enhanced each year. Participation and completion rates will be reviewed annually to ensure the program meets family and community needs.

### ***Objective 4:***

The early literacy collection will be evaluated annually, to ensure it reflects diverse experiences, inclusive content, and family structures. Findings will guide collection development and acquisitions.

## Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

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Residents will have welcoming physical and virtual spaces that support learning, creativity, connection, and community engagement.

### **Goal 1:**

Residents will have access to safe, accessible, and flexible physical spaces for community use.

#### ***Objective 1:***

By Summer 2029, the library will evaluate how recently updated spaces are used and provide a written assessment to the library board. Findings will guide future space planning and layout adjustments.

#### ***Objective 2:***

By Spring 2027, funding will be allocated to improve comfort, accessibility, and sustainability in the Heritage Room, including the addition of lightweight, durable tables and chairs. Completion and effectiveness of improvements will be reviewed and documented.

#### ***Objective 3:***

Each year of this plan, the library will endeavor to work with city officials to address maintenance, accessibility, and long-term facility needs. Progress and community feedback will be reviewed annually to guide ongoing improvements.

### **Goal 2:**

Residents will view the library's virtual presence as accessible and supportive of community needs.

#### ***Objective 1:***

Each year, the library will maintain consistent and welcoming online communication through websites, newsletters, and social media. Usability, accessibility, and community engagement will be reviewed annually.

#### ***Objective 2:***

Virtual spaces will reflect the library's role as a friendly, reliable, and inclusive community resource. Effectiveness will be assessed annually through staff review and user feedback.

#### ***Objective 3:***

Throughout the duration of this plan, virtual services and communication tools will be adapted as technology and community expectations evolve. Adjustments and improvements will be reviewed each year for effectiveness and relevance.

## Strategic Plan Evaluation

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The Ida Grove Public Library Board will review progress on this Strategic Plan annually throughout the 2026-2031 period. Reviews will occur in March each year and will include assessment of goals, objectives, timelines, and outcomes. Additional periodic reviews will be held as necessary to provide strategic plan updates to library staff and the library board. Findings will be used to guide adjustments, ensure alignment with community needs, staffing capacity, and available resources, and to maintain the overall intent of the Strategic Plan.

## Sources & Citations

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The following sources were consulted to update and verify information included in the Community Overview section of this Strategic Plan. These sources were used to ensure that demographic, economic, and community data reflect the most current information available and accurately represent the Ida Grove community. All sources were accessed between December 1, 2025, and January 9, 2026.

1. **Data USA.** *Ida Grove, IA Profile.* Population: 1,904; median age: 43.8; median household income: \$63,194; homeownership rate: 80.2%; median property value: \$96,000 (ACS 2019–2023 5-year estimates). Accessed 2025. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/ida-grove-ia>
2. **City-Data.com.** *Ida Grove, IA Profile.* Median gross rent ~\$671; housing, poverty, and age statistics. Accessed 2025. <https://www.city-data.com/city/Ida-Grove-Iowa.html>
3. **WorldPopulationReview.com.** *Ida Grove, IA 2025 Statistics.* Income figures, per capita income, poverty rate. Accessed 2025. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/iowa/ida-grove>
4. **Census Reporter.** *Ida Grove, IA Profile.* ACS 2023 5-year estimates for demographics, income, and poverty rate. Accessed 2025. <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1938010-ida-grove-ia/>
5. **United States Census Bureau.** *2020 Census Data (Public Law 94-171).* Official city population before recent estimates. Accessed 2025. <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/2020census/cities.pdf>
6. **Zillow.** *Ida Grove, IA Housing Market Overview.* Average home value ~\$145,638. Accessed 2025. <https://www.zillow.com/home-values/5255/ida-grove-ia/>
7. **Iowa State University Extension & Outreach.** *Iowa Median Income Trends: 1949–2023.* Iowa median household income \$73,147. Accessed 2025. <https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Census/Median%20Income%20Trends%20%20Iowa%201949-2023.pdf>