



**Strategic Plan  
for the  
Grand County Public Library  
2025-2030**

## **A. COMMUNITY PROFILE**

### **Introduction**

Grand County is home to a small, rural community located in the heart of southeastern Utah's picturesque canyon country. The area's residents form a tightly knit community. Many citizens are active in local government, supportive of nonprofits, and engaged in volunteer opportunities. Grand County High School's athletic events regularly fill to capacity and local businesses go out of their way to support school fundraisers, youth activities, and community events.

Despite Grand County's geographically remote location, its unique landscape of canyons, mountains, and rivers attracts millions of tourists each year from across the nation and globe. The area's population centers serve as gateways to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, the Colorado and Green Rivers, and the La Sal Mountains. Grand County is also gaining a reputation as an arts and music center, with numerous annual festivals and several galleries. The regular influx of visitors continues to drive a booming tourist industry – especially during the spring and fall months.

### **History**

Grand County was established in 1890 by the territorial legislature, and named for the Grand River (now called the Colorado River), which runs through it and forms its southwestern boundary. Small farms and orchards, livestock ranching, and potash mining have been the major economic activities during much of Grand County's history. The uranium mining boom in the 1950s brought the first real population expansion to the area. Arches National Monument, established in 1929 and upgraded to a National Park in 1971, has drawn an increasing and significant number of tourists since its inception, making tourism one of the county's most important economic resources today.

### **Population**

The United States Census Bureau estimates that Grand County's population was 9,706 in 2023 and there were about 2.6 persons per square mile in the county. The average household size was 2.21 people compared to a state average of 3.04. Most residents of the county live in the Moab area, with a few hundred in the communities of Castle Valley and Thompson Springs. Most residents are white, with thirteen percent Hispanic and five percent Native American.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Census Quick Facts <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>

Ninety-four percent of residents 25 or older are high school graduates or higher and thirty-two percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>2</sup> Many college-educated adults have relocated to Moab from metropolitan areas. There are high expectations for cultural and educational causes, including library services.

## **Employment**

At the end of March 2024, the Utah Department of Workforce Services reported that trade and leisure/hospitality sectors accounted for approximately 56% of Grand County's employment, while government accounted for 16%. Higher paying professional and business services account for only 7% of local jobs.<sup>3</sup> The economy is heavily focused on tourism-related industries. Moab Regional Hospital is the largest employer in the county. The Grand County School District, Red Cliffs Lodge, City Market, and the state, local, and federal government are also among the major employers.<sup>4</sup>

Grand County's unemployment rate in June 2024 was 3.9%, which is higher than the state rate of 3.0%.<sup>5</sup> A significant portion of the service sector is furloughed during the quiet winter months.

## **Challenges**

In 2024, the average wage in Grand County was 30% less than the state-wide average. More specifically, the average monthly wage for Grand County's leisure and hospitality workers - the largest employment sector - is \$2,734.<sup>6</sup> A continuing tourism boom in Grand County has led to an affordable housing crisis that does nothing to help low-income residents. The library is uniquely positioned to serve all community members with information, education, technology, and/or communication needs.

According to the Grand County School District, 40% of kids attending Grand County schools qualify for free or reduced school lunch in 2023. In 2022, Utah's expenditures per student were ranked lowest in the nation at \$9,552 per student – much lower than the \$15,633 nation-wide average.<sup>7</sup> The State of Utah reports that southeast Utah's teen birth rate in 2023 was 15.5 per 1000 - the highest in the state.<sup>8</sup> These statistics demonstrate a need for programs and services that support youth in the community.

<sup>2</sup> Census Quick Facts <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>.

<sup>3</sup> Utah Department of Workforce Services <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/insights/county/grand.html>

<sup>4</sup> Utah Department of Workforce Services <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/firm/majoremployers.html>

<sup>5</sup> Utah Department of Workforce Services <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/insights/county/grand.html>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> US Census Bureau

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2024/public-school-spending-per-pupil.html>

<sup>8</sup> Utah.gov Public Health Data [https://ibis.utah.gov/ibisph-view/indicator/complete\\_profile/AdoBrth.html](https://ibis.utah.gov/ibisph-view/indicator/complete_profile/AdoBrth.html)

## **B. LIBRARY HISTORY**

On February 17, 1915 the Grand County Public Library, located in a corner of the county courthouse, opened to the public with 425 donated books. Over the past century, the library has transformed along with Grand County. The main library has moved locations three times due to building demolition, fire, and growth. It has expanded collections, added services, and kept pace with changing technologies. In response to local desires, the library has expanded in physical size, increased hours of operation, added a branch in Castle Valley, a Teen Center in Moab, and incorporated numerous ways for the public to use library services remotely. What has not changed is the tremendous amount of support the library receives from the community.

An election in February 2004 was successful in approving a bond for construction of the library's current facility. More than 71% yes votes reflected the community's overwhelming support of the library. Grand County opened its new library in June 2006. The facility provides 14,000 square feet of indoor space and a 2,400 square foot outdoor courtyard. The Grand County Public Library was named *Library Journal's* Best Small Library in America in 2007, Utah Outstanding Library in 2009, a *Library Journal* 3-Star Library in 2011, 2013, and 2019; and a *Library Journal* 4-Star Library in 2012, 2014, and 2020. In 2021, the Utah State Library recognized the library for impactful service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Significant Changes Since the Last Strategic Plan**

- Library has a Teen Library Assistant position and a Teen Center
- Library has an Assistant Director position in addition to Service Manager positions
- All Library Board members are different
- Upgraded online public catalog to Aspen Discovery Layer
- Mobile device circulation has increased greatly with new offerings such as mobile hotspots
- We went through a pandemic: closure and then a metered return to full services over two years
- Safe Outdoor Living (SOL) shed partnership
- Backroom space is shared with Friends of the Library
- Metropolitan newspapers are no longer delivered to the area
- Public transportation is now available

## **What We Know**

Local support for the library is strong.

Most current library computers (with exception of kids computers and six adult computers) won't support Windows 11. Windows 10 will no longer receive support after October 2025. Adult computer stations are almost never full. We could see an increased need for laptop stations instead of adult computers.

There is a grant opportunity with UEN to replace all existing patron computers but won't know until after Jan 2025 for implementation in 2025/2026.

There is a lot of demand for work space with wifi - especially behind a door.

Van life continues to be popular and Moab is an attractive place for the lifestyle. The WiFi grant will update equipment in spring 2025.

Library service is impacted by tourism and could be funded with TRT but that is not currently a politically supported idea.

Low income residents are losing housing and there's little to no affordable housing in the area. This increases the need for a formal home delivery program but staff members currently use personal vehicles for these types of services.

We can't keep mobile devices (Chromebooks, hotspots) on the shelf no matter how many we have. As numbers of available devices decrease, hold lists remain long.

AI is changing the way people interact with technology, content creation, etc.

Book bans are an ongoing problem in Utah, but Grand County has been fairly quiet.

The library's offsite spaces have much potential (Teen Center, Castle Valley): programs, expanded hours and/or services, etc.

The Teen Center is already a victim of its own success with crowded, cramped spaces. The old Housing Authority of Southern Utah building is a great opportunity to move the Teen Center closer to the main library and use it as a "library" if closure is needed for capital projects.

Additionally, the County may be building a public safety complex which would leave the old library building available - it would be ideal space for a teen center. Also, the Grand County School District might look into purchasing the current Charter School complex for teen services. This would also be a great location.

The Moab building is aging as demands on the library increase due to population and visitation growth: HVAC is unreliable, 75% of roof needs fixed, wiring for computer

ports is unreliable, staff spaces are cramped, carpet is worn and stained in many places, solar panels are not working, etc.

Library staff generally stay for long periods of time, but part time positions turn over quicker than in the past.

The Castle Valley Assistant position is the only remaining Assistant position that is not full-time.

The Friends of the Library have to share backroom space and the pile of donations is frequently overwhelming. There is no easy way to remove unwanted books except for recycling.

Formats that are declining in use: print periodicals, printed government documents, audio cds, music cds, DVDs

Cosmo is beloved and an excellent marketing tool.

### **What We Don't Know**

Coming pandemics, floods, fires, political conflicts, etc. - The library is a temperature controlled, indoor public space.

How much AI will be woven into patron tech needs/expectations.

County Commission priorities/decisions for fixing, upgrading/renovating facilities (new county building? renovating others? public safety space? etc).

Changes at Utah State Library or the state level regarding library certification, consultants, access to online resources, etc.

Future grant opportunities.

Market forces that will drastically change property tax revenues - up or down.

We don't know what we can't or don't know.

## **C. LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT AND LIBRARY ROLES**

### **Mission Statement**

The Grand County Public Library is a freely accessible resource that connects people, information, and ideas to inspire, empower, and enrich all members of the community.

### **Library Roles**

The library collects and maintains materials that are popular, relevant and/or, current for patrons of all ages. The library extends services to all segments of the Grand County community.

Libraries, communities and methods of retrieving information are improving and changing rapidly. The library maintains access to computers, technology, and internet connections consistent with patron needs and requests.

The library provides programs, materials, and services related to emergent literacy, and the library collaborates with local agencies to promote best practices for creating lifelong readers in the community.

The library supports civic engagement by encouraging citizen participation, connecting community members, and promoting increased involvement in community problem solving and decision making.

The library creates physical and digital spaces that are comfortable, appealing, and easy to use. The library provides meeting room space for non-profit and community groups.

## **D. GOALS & MEASURES**

### **Goals**

- 1. Stimulate Imaginations:** Provide a wide variety of programs, services, and materials for adults, teens, and children to engage their interests in reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure.
- 2. Civic Engagement:** Serve as a community hub that enhances civic engagement and community participation at local, national, and global levels through program offerings, use of space, and access to materials and services.
- 3. Family Literacy:** Provide programs, services, and materials to encourage and inspire families of all types to learn, read, and discover together.

**4. Lifelong Learning:** Offer patrons the resources and support they need to explore topics of personal interest and to continue learning throughout their lives.

**5. Connect to Digital Spaces:** Provide free access to public computers, high-speed internet, user-friendly interfaces, learning opportunities, and tech-savvy library staff so that residents and visitors to Grand County can take full advantage of digital content, electronic resources, and online services.

**6. Excellence in Service:** Deliver high quality, consistent service to all users in physical and online library spaces. Services are responsive to community needs and focused on continuous improvement.

## **Measures**

The Library tracks walk-in, item circulation, computer use, and program attendance numbers. These statistics highlight trends in library use and levels of interest in or engagement with library services. Library staff also monitor requests for services that the library currently does not provide to determine service gaps based on user expectations. Services are regularly adjusted to respond to patron expectations, technology updates, and opportunities to improve efficiency. Service-specific surveys – such as questionnaires focused on summer reading, technology training, or the library’s website – are also used to gauge user satisfaction levels and/or project outcomes.

Each goal detailed in this strategic plan document contains multiple objectives, which will be achieved through the completion of projects listed below. Projects are either ongoing, one-time, or set to occur a particular number of times. Library staff will assess the success of projects through methods including but not limited to: attendance, usage data, and user feedback – both formal and informal. The Library Director will provide a report to the Library Board at least once annually that details the progress of the strategic plan and any anticipated adjustments necessary to fulfill the library’s stated goals.

## **E. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & PROJECTS**

**Goal - 1. Stimulate Imaginations:** Provide a wide variety of programs, services, and materials for adults, teens, and children to engage their interests in reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure.

### **Imaginations Objective 1.1: Collections**

**Enhance readers' advisory efforts, collection visibility, and avenues to access materials.**

1.1.1 Provide readers' advisory services.

- a. Offer "staff favorites" via displays and/or lists of materials. Encourage all staff to participate.
- b. Invite community groups/leaders to share favorite reads and share via readers' advisory lists.
- c. Create and maintain a monthly book display shelf to highlight various library collections on a rotating basis.
- d. Provide links to new materials in newsletters, the catalog, and the library website.

1.1.2 Promote the option to make purchase suggestions using library spaces and other media and/or public relations opportunities.

### **Imaginations Objective 1.2: Outreach**

**Formally engage in community events to offer library services in innovative or non-traditional ways.**

1.2.1 Participate in the Moab City ArtWalk.

1.2.2 Set up and staff booths (and/or the library book bike) at local events such as the Farmers' Market, Kindergarten Round-up, local festivals, etc. to offer in-person library services (e.g. library card sign-up, reference assistance, tech help, etc.) at community events.

1.2.3 Radio Book Club - offer a monthly radio show hosted by library staff at KZMU.

### **Imaginations Objective 1.3: Programs**

**Offer a broad spectrum of events on a regular basis to engage and delight patrons of all ages and interests.**

1.3.1 Partner with local and regional organizations to deliver cultural library programming for all ages such as speakers, book groups, film screenings and discussions, writing programs, summer reading, and Utah Humanities Book Festival events.

1.3.2 Offer passive programming, such as contests or puzzles to engage patrons at their own pace.

1.3.3 Create and deliver interactive programs (e.g. art or writing classes, board game club, storytelling, etc.).

**Goal - 2. Civic Engagement:** Serve as a community hub that enhances civic engagement and community participation at local, national, and global levels through program offerings, use of space, and access to materials and services.

### **Civic Engagement Objective 2.1: Access to Resources**

**Offer Grand County residents and visitors access to civic resources through in-library activities and community partnerships.**

2.1.1 Use displays to highlight collections: create displays of books and materials to highlight current events and/or encourage community engagement.

2.1.2 Offer access to grant research and writing resources. Provide access to Candid.org's grant seeking resources.

2.1.3 Add images and improve information on the library's website to promote the library space to community groups as a resource for local meetings, gatherings, or community conversations.

2.1.4 Develop the library's collection of local self-published books to highlight local writers.

### **Civic Engagement Objective 2.2: Programs**

**Develop and promote events and opportunities to encourage civic engagement and awareness.**

2.2.1 Offer library volunteer opportunities – both ongoing and event/project specific – for all ages.

2.2.2. Bring culturally and socially relevant documentaries and/or speakers to the community. Partner with local organizations when appropriate.

2.2.3 Participate in national intellectual freedom events such as Banned Books Week.

### **Civic Engagement Objective 2.3: Outreach**

**Participate in community meetings, distribute materials, and interact with local leaders to assist in community problem solving and decision making.**

2.3.1 Send a library staff representative to a gathering of local leaders (e.g. community coalitions, etc.) to ensure the library is included in the community's big picture thinking.

2.3.2 Present informational reports about the library to civic leaders.

2.3.3 Support library staff involvement in state and/or national library organizations (e.g. Utah Library Association, Utah State Library, Association of Rural and Small Libraries, Mountain Plains Library Association). Involvement may include membership, round table participation, conference presentations, etc.

**Goal - 3. Family Literacy:** Provide programs, services, and materials to encourage and inspire families of all types to learn, read, and discover together.

### **Family Literacy Objective 3.1: Collections**

**Support literacy and encourage learning through access to engaging library materials and services.**

3.1.1 Rotate bulletin boards and displays on a regular basis.

3.1.2 Offer a selection of early readers and chapter books that include books for beginning, intermediate, and advanced readers to support all ages of patrons that are new to reading.

3.1.3 Provide readers' advisory service to parents. Compile information that helps parents and caregivers find age appropriate library materials.

3.1.4 Provide materials for parents to continue story time or other activities at home

3.1.5 Offer children's discovery kits for check out.

### **Family Literacy Objective 3.2: Outreach**

**Partner with local education, health care, and child care facilities to support and encourage learning for families of all types.**

3.2.1 Offer school-group field trips so that Grand County students may visit the library for an interactive tour.

3.2.2 Reach out to new parents (e.g. provide Baby Bags via the hospital or health department).

3.2.3 Collaborate with local organizations to offer special storytime events on and off-site to encourage parents and caregivers to read to children every day.

3.2.4 Reach out to daycare facilities and preschools

### **Family Literacy Objective 3.3: Programs**

**Deliver programs that support multiple literacies (foundational, digital, etc.) and appeal to a broad spectrum of interests.**

3.3.1 Offer whole family programming (e.g. game night, family films, etc.).

3.3.2 Present summer reading programs for children, teens, and adults.

3.3.3 Offer weekly storytimes & after school programs.

3.3.4 Implement a family literacy focused program (e.g. 1000 Books Before Kindergarten).

**Goal - 4. Lifelong Learning:** Offer patrons the resources and support they need to explore topics of personal interest and to continue learning throughout their lives.

### **Lifelong Learning Objective 4.1: Collections**

**Encourage lifelong learning opportunities through access to engaging traditional and non-traditional library materials.**

4.1.1 Use in-library signage, and digital library spaces to encourage patron requests for items not found in the library collection.

4.1.2 Use Aspen Discovery Layer to promote and provide access to library materials.

4.1.3 Inventory library collections to ensure the library catalog is an accurate reflection of holdings and cull in accordance with the collection development policy.

4.1.4 Improve tech lending opportunities with a Library of Things such as digital projectors, voice recorders, cameras, and devices to convert media to digital formats.

4.1.5 Integrate free digital library resources and/or collections (e.g. a selection of Project Gutenberg e-books, University of Utah digital archives, etc.) into the library catalog to expand discovery opportunities.

### **Lifelong Learning Objective 4.2: Outreach**

**Partner with local experts, education groups, and community-wide events to support and encourage learning opportunities for community members of all ages.**

4.2.1 Collaborate with local adult learning services to provide access to learning materials and help promote literacy in Grand County.

4.2.2 Offer a book give-away program to attract and interest new users.

### **Lifelong Learning Objective 4.3: Programs**

**Deliver programs for patrons of all ages to encourage skill building and spark interests in learning and growth.**

4.3.1 Present a series of “adulting” programs for new adults, 18 - mid 20s (e.g. how-to buy a car, write a resume, etc.).

4.3.2 Partner with groups and/or individuals to provide engaging info sessions or lectures focused on community interests.

**Goal - 5. Connect to Digital Spaces:** Provide free access to public computers, high-speed internet, user-friendly interfaces, learning opportunities, and tech-savvy library staff so that residents and visitors to Grand County can take full advantage of digital content, electronic resources, and online services.

### **Digital Objective 5.1: Facilities**

**Upgrade and maintain hardware, software, technology tools, and spaces to meet changing digital needs and provide efficient electronic services.**

5.1.1 Upgrade or replace equipment as needed to ensure adequate hardware / Utilize a computer replacement schedule and ensure adequate funding to keep computers and software new and relevant.

5.1.2 Provide adequate bandwidth to ensure the library’s internet connection can manage the traffic necessary to keep up with evolving technologies.

### **Digital Objective 5.2: Training**

**Create a welcoming technology learning environment so that library users and staff are inspired and encouraged to obtain and continually improve the technology skills needed to effectively and comfortably navigate digital environments.**

5.2.1 Ensure all staff members are adequately trained to help patrons with internet navigation, basic public computer and mobile device troubleshooting, and basic navigation of the library's online resources.

5.2.2 Increase awareness of online resources and expand current usage.

5.2.3 Address local digital inclusion challenges through a mobile device lending program.

### **Digital Objective 5.3: Web Presence**

**Actively curate and present an online presence that is user friendly, engaging, and responsive to patron expectations.**

5.3.1 Use the library's Aspen Discovery layer to promote library events, services, and resources.

5.3.2 Use the library's website to promote all library activities. Information on the website will match all paper flyers and newsletters.

### **Digital Objective 5.4: 24/7 Library**

**Develop and provide online library resources to promote patron access to materials and services beyond the library's physical location and hours of operation.**

5.4.1 Provide patrons with access to language learning (e.g. Mango) and other specialized content available from anywhere with an internet connection.

5.4.2 Work with Utah State Library to comply with requirements to access Utah's Online Library.

5.4.3 Use the GCPL YouTube channel to provide access to recorded programs, events, and tutorials so that patrons have the opportunity to interact with library services remotely.

**Goal - 6. Excellence in Service:** Deliver high quality, equitable service to all users in physical and online library spaces. Services are responsive to community needs and focused on continuous improvement.

### **Excellence in Service Objective 6.1: Customer Experience**

**Promote positive customer interactions through the design and delivery of all library services and empower employees to create a culture of superior service and professional growth.**

6.1.1 Use local and social media outlets (print, online, radio, etc.) to promote services and events.

6.1.2 Use Koha and Aspen's tools to streamline customer service in relation to the library's ILS (e.g. acquisitions features, holds process, SMS/email notifications, links, lists, online library card registration, and interaction opportunities in the online catalog).

6.1.3 Take advantage of staff training and professional development opportunities through the Utah State Library and professional library organizations.

6.1.4 Offer an afternoon snack and/or meal program for school age children.

6.1.5 Develop a series of staff training modules. Staff members that complete the training modules will report an increased comfort level with assisting patrons in the use of Utah's Online Library and other library resources.

### **Excellence in Service Objective 6.2: Outreach**

**Connect with community groups, organizations, and local leaders in creative ways to assist in community problem solving and decision making.**

6.2.1 Participate in the local Homeless Council.

6.2.2 Participate in the School District / Community Youth Prevention Coalition.

6.2.3 Partner with community organizations when opportunities arise.

### **Excellence in Service Objective 6.3: Facilities**

**Improve and adjust library facilities to effectively use space, promote resource access, and care for building needs.**

6.3.1 Continue improving a more user friendly classification system for physical items.

6.3.2 Implement a major capital projects improvement plan that addresses the aging Moab library building.

### **Excellence in Service Objective 6.4: Limit Barriers to Access**

**Create a welcoming and accessible environment for all community members to encourage personal discovery, learning, and development opportunities.**

6.4.1 Provide library services via mobile devices, home delivery, in-library innovation, etc. to accommodate patrons of all abilities and support their use of library materials and services.

6.4.2 Eliminate or reduce barriers to access that are based on past approaches to service such as library fees, library card sign up requirements, circulation policies, shelving practices, etc.

6.4.3 Partner with local organizations to connect with ESL groups and families. Communicate the library's interest in fulfilling purchase requests for non-English materials, providing technology access, offering services, hosting free community events, etc.

### **Excellence in Service Objective 6.5: Succession Planning**

6.5.1 Complete a succession planning document to prepare for and ensure the library can seamlessly handle future staffing changes and/or unexpected absences.

6.5.2 Streamline library procedures: update existing documentation, improve accessibility for all staff, remove outdated information.

6.5.3 Improve in-library digital storage of institutional knowledge. Migrate important information from old servers.

