



Hillboro Public Library

Quadrant System

How to support a patron focused service model while adopting self-management principles.

Patrons' needs, wants, and usage are the cornerstone of any library's work. Our Quadrant System harnesses the strengths of individual staff members to meet the needs, wants, and usage of our ever-changing community while building a welcoming place For Everyone.

The quadrants—Explore, Connect, Cultivate, and Innovate—create a context for this work while fostering an environment that promotes diverse staff voices and celebrates individual talents. The quadrants are intended as expressions of what we want our community to see, feel, and do at the library; they are not library departments.

Each quadrant is overseen by a manager, with supervisors' responsibility areas matched with a quadrant. All other staff do not report into a quadrant, but rather, work across all quadrants. They are asked to explore new interests like cataloging, running an adult book club or story time, or heading a teen STEM-program, while still providing direct service to patrons.

At first, staff members were confused. They wanted to know what quadrant something fell in, or what quadrant they were part of. To address this, we held a series of breakout sessions at an All-Staff meeting. Staff members shared their successful experiences of working across quadrants and outside of traditional departmental models.

The goal is to move Hillsboro Library towards self-management principles, where the work, not the people, is organized. This approach supports personal and organizational resilience while celebrating a culture of evolution. It keeps us patron-focused and collaborative while giving every staff member a chance to stand out, step up, and take the lead.

Staff is already driving structural change and evolving the quadrants. For example, we've moved away from "adult" and "youth" services, instead putting supervisors in charge of Literacy and Learning.





Here's what our coordinating structure looks like today:

Connect: Five library support supervisors, three at our large location and two at our smaller location. They are responsible for library service that is truly for everyone. They enforce our Quality Service Standards, ensuring equity and inclusivity is consistently applied across services and locations. As programs mature and become part of our City-funded budget, that service moves to Connect. For example, in 2019, our maker-space activities moved to Connect.

Cultivate: Two librarian supervisors, both with a focus on staff development, training, and support, and one Volunteer Services Coordinator. Cultivate remains the leader in organizational culture work.

Explore: Three librarian supervisors, covering literacy, learning, and collection development. The coordination of all outreach efforts is consolidated in this quadrant. Explore is responsible for coordinating strategy and focus for all library programming, community engagement, and events.

Innovate: Two librarian supervisors, focusing on access, including alternative service delivery, technology, and process improvement. One of Innovate's key responsibilities is serving as an incubator for staff ideas and proposed projects.

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