QUESTIONS ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND OUTCOMES:

- What programs, services, or community offerings do you already see as priorities for deeper review or refinement through this process? We'd welcome insight into any areas (such as digital access, youth engagement, or workforce readiness) where added clarity or direction could be especially valuable.
- Are there specific program areas or services currently under evaluation or in transition that should be prioritized during our review and stakeholder engagement? This allows us to focus our energy where it's most needed and ensure timely, actionable insights.
- What are the top 2–3 outcomes HPL hopes to achieve through this strategic planning process beyond producing a final document? This helps us align our approach with your broader organizational goals—whether those are internal alignment, deeper community trust, or stronger funding positioning.

Response:

The goal of the planning process is to determine what programs and services are the priority need and align with the feedback we get from the community engagement. This process will entail identifying goals and outcomes.

QUESTIONS ON USE OF DATA AND EVALUATION TOOLS:

- What existing tools, systems, or practices does HPL currently use to track program outcomes and community impact?
- Can you share examples of how program or service data is currently collected and used at HPL—and what kinds of improvements or support you'd most value from a strategic planning partner? This will inform how we scope and strengthen the evaluation and performance measurement components.

Response:

HPL currently uses the following software to track program outputs and outcomes: Counting Solutions and Looker for program attendance, number of programs, community outreach and engagement and type of program. For adult education and occupational trainings outputs and outcomes, we use Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), ACCUPLACER-LOEP, LACES, Efforts to Outcomes, eImmigration, and TransAct.

HPL used SIRSI as our Integrated Library System, which tracks inventory and circulation.

HPL contributes data to the Connecticut State Library survey annually: https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/stats

QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE ACCESS:

➢ What specific communities or audiences do you consider essential to include in the engagement process? Are there particular languages or access considerations we should anticipate as we shape engagement tactics?

➢ Are there specific community groups or stakeholders who have been historically under engaged?

➢ What are the priority languages for community engagement materials and does HPL have the capacity to provide translation and/or interpretation services in house? If yes, for which languages?

➢ Can you elaborate on "*creative language*"? RFP mentions: "Proven ability in incorporating **creative language** access participatory strategies in community engagement with diverse communities and stakeholders."

Response:
Libraries serve individuals of all ages, ethnicities, religions, cultures, and economic backgrounds. As such, it is essential to include a wide range of voices in the engagement process. This includes:

- Youth, both in and out of school
- Senior citizens, including grandparents who are parenting again
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Unemployed and under-employed
- Reentry citizens
- Caregivers
- Individuals experiencing homelessness

Additionally, we serve a large immigrant population. While Spanish is the most commonly spoken language, we also frequently encounter speakers of Portuguese, Swahili, and Pashto. Language access that includes translating/interpretation capabilities, cultural sensitivity, and culturally relevant messaging will be key to ensuring meaningful engagement with these communities. HPL does not have in house interpretation service.

QUESTIONS ON THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

➢ How do you anticipate decision-making will flow across the groups listed in the RFP (such as the Strategic Planning Task Force, Internal Work Group, Senior Leadership, and the Board of Directors)? Would you find it helpful for the selected consultant to help design a structure that builds alignment and shared ownership across these groups?

Response:
We anticipate a combination of decision-making approaches that best align with the role for each group culminating in a structure that helps build alignment across these groups.

The Library will design the structure of the decision-making process, but input from the consultant will be solicited.

QUESTIONS ON THE BUDGET:

> ➤ What general budget parameters should we be aware of as we shape a proposal that is both responsive to your goals and grounded in what's feasible for the Library? We want to ensure the approach we propose is thoughtful, right-sized, and sustainable.
> ➤ Is there a general budget range or not-to-exceed amount HPL has allocated for this strategic planning project? Understanding your budget expectations will help us tailor our scope and team structure to deliver maximum value within your resources.
> ➤ What is the budget for this project?

Response:

HPL will not provide specific budget parameters. Consultants should assess the time and resources they will require to complete the project tasks and prepare the proposal accordingly.

QUESTIONS ON SELECTION CRITERIA:

> ➤ The RFP outlines key selection considerations including completeness, demonstrated competence, professional qualifications, and cost as one factor among many. As you're able, could you share more about what qualities or priorities are likely to matter most across the Strategic Planning Task Force, leadership, and Board as you review proposals?
> ➤ Is preference given to local consultants within the state of CT?
> ➤ Is preference given to consultants with library references for similar work done previously?

Response:

HPL will not be providing additional details regarding the criteria. The criteria for selection are:

- Relevant experience and success in strategic planning facilitation, including the level of satisfaction of current and past clients.
- Experience of firm or consultant in understanding the urban library landscape and intersection of community and library services.

- Proven ability, cultural competence and experience in facilitating large and small staff and public discussions.
- Proven ability in incorporating creative language access participatory strategies in community engagement with diverse communities and stakeholders.
- Flexibility, creativity and responsiveness outlined in the Project Work Plan/Approach to the project.
- Cost and demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and operate within budget.
- Three references by former clients on similar projects, preferably in diverse communities similar to the City of Hartford.

QUESTIONS PARTNERSHIP MAPPING AND MEASURING SUCCESS:

- ➤ What would a "successful" partnership mapping deliverable look like to HPL? For example – would you prefer a static inventory of partners, a strategic engagement strategy, or a dynamic tool aligned to specific goals?
- ➤ How will success be measured for this strategic planning process?

Response:

A successful partnership mapping deliverable should inform our community engagement process and provide a roadmap that enables the organization to position itself in a larger landscape.

QUESTIONS ON TIMELINE:

- ➤ When was the last strategic plan done?
- ➤ Is the January 31, 2026 end date firm, or is there flexibility if community engagement takes longer?

Response:

Hartford Public Library's Strategic Plan https://www.hplct.org/about/strategic-plan

The January 31, 2026 end date is firm.