



# Best Practices for Your Coming Library Renovation

A quick guide on planning and expectations

## America's libraries are getting an upgrade.



We've seen an incredible shift in the library sphere since the rise of the Internet, including easy access to the written word that, previously, only a library could offer. As the needs of the community shifted in the last few decades, so too has library offerings in response to these changes. It's clear that libraries must show there's so much more they do than lending books: they're bastions of learning, a stolid front against ignorance and educational exclusivity where all are welcomed equally.

This has always been the crux of every library's existence, but in the Digital Age it is given new meaning. Academic and public libraries alike are stepping into new roles as community hubs and meetinghouses, connecting those they serve to a broader swathe of engagement than in years past. This historic pivot also marks necessary changes to the physical library itself. Your library needs to be a space that is comforting, inviting, and exciting for the crowds that populate it. With outdated facilities you cannot best meet the public needs; it's time for a revitalization, thanks to your upcoming renovation.

We've worked with countless library clients in our decades of national business, and created this guide to assist in your new project. We cover big issues in the next few pages, like how to allocate your budget with when funding is tight. We also cover the little things you don't want to overlook; this includes our niche expertise on furniture tailored for today's library goers. Lean on the experiences from our several hundred projects to create libraries that meet the test of time.



## Planning Your Renovation Goals

Benjamin Franklin put it most succinctly: “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”. These are harsh words that also ring with truth. Before you can get started, you need to have goals for your big project; you need to have a plan for your ideal vision of your library, and there are several questions you can ask yourself to build out that vision. The biggest questions you should answer are:

**What's the best for your community?** Some communities focus on preserving tradition, while others prioritize adapting to modern tastes and lifestyles. Keep your finger on the pulse to best determine the direction for your remodeling.

**What part of the library is most in demand?** Identifying this will reveal where your renovations will have the most impact. The most in-demand parts of the library will also have the most wear and tear; they will need more attention (and possible maintenance) than the rest. Our library clients name study areas, reading rooms, group areas, and function rooms as some of the most used spaces.

**What's the culture of your library like?** Do you want to change it or maintain it? Renovations can bring radical change to the “feel” of a library, and you'll want to steer that “feeling” to what will delight your patrons. Design a library that works best for those that will be using it.

**How much time will the renovation take?** More importantly, will any of your services be impacted during renovations? If so, make sure you have a plan to address it. Know your timelines, but stay flexible if something goes wrong – it's not uncommon for a project to stretch on for longer than expected, and you don't want to be in a bind if this does take place.





## Tips on the physical features

Now that you know what your library needs, it's time to translate those needs into its physical changes. Your library could need anything from minor to major renovations – what, specifically, needs to be upgraded?

**The Seating.** We work on one of the most crucial parts to a library that's not the books: its seating. When your patrons aren't browsing the collection or asking your staff for help, they're going to be doing their work or reading while sitting. If your chairs are uncomfortable or rickety, no one will want to stay in them for long. Find chairs that will be comfortable, pleasing, and that will outlast the daily rigors of a busy space.

**The Flooring.** Older libraries have gone with tile or wood flooring, which we generally see in only very old facilities. Most libraries today spring for carpet flooring as it better absorbs sound, making for quieter acoustics and a more peaceful environment.

However, carpet is also harder to clean spilled food and drink from; if your library allows food and drink into certain sections, consider how often you see messes happen and whether carpet is the sensible option.

**The Lighting.** If your lighting is old enough, its loud humming or inefficient placement could spell grief when it doesn't have to. This could be your opportunity to flood your library with natural lighting, whether that's adding additional windows or brand-new skylights. A quicker solution could also be installing better overhead lights or lamps on your study tables.

**The Decor.** When clients spring for our chairs, they're looking for styles that complement their architecture and interior design. It may not be necessary to upgrade the building's stylistic elements, but if your building's construction is outdated it's a good idea to consider changing it to something more welcoming.

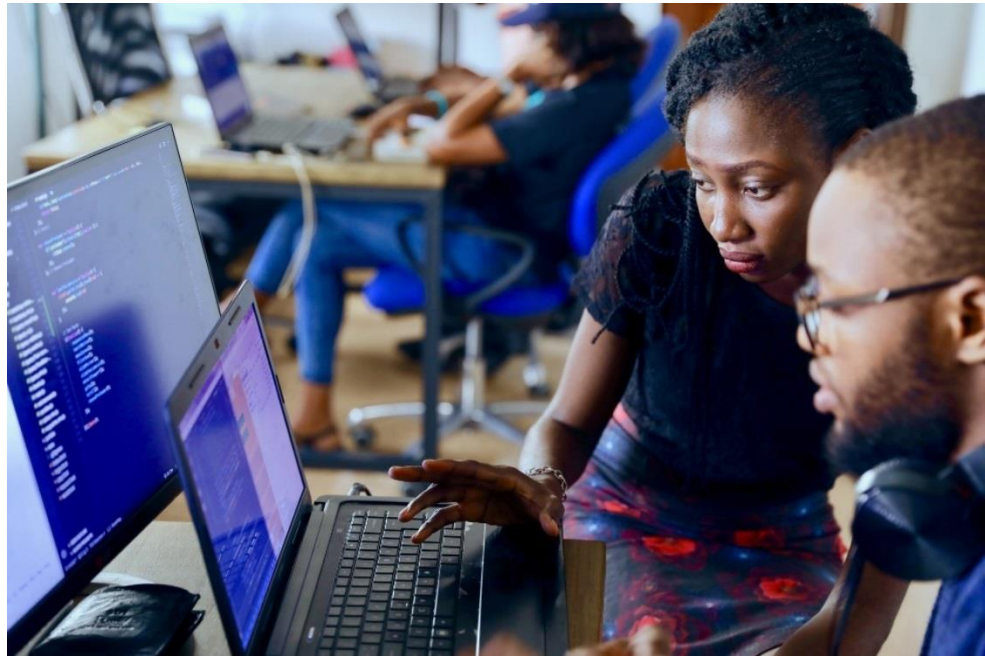
### REMEMBER:

- Remain part of the process to ensure you're kept up-to-date on the remodeling progress
- Think ahead to future renovations, and see what can be done about them, if anything, in the current iterations



## Budgeting

It's hard to get the budgeting needed for renovations. We are longtime members of the American Library Association (ALA) which advocates to sustain federal funding for libraries across the country; with the fight to even maintain current



levels of backing, the renovation budget must be as efficient as possible. You need to ensure the renovations that do take place will retain its quality for years of daily use.

**Think long term.** If you're deciding between two products now and your main concern is cost, calculate how much each will cost you in the long run. We see this sometimes with libraries that choose not to go with our seating in favor of "cheaper" chairs, only to have them break down in five years. In these cases, they have to purchase new chairs twice when it could have been avoided with tougher, better crafted chairs. This lesson goes for any major feature of the renovation: go with the option least likely to give you a surprise bill down the line.



### Need help securing your budget?

ALA has several resources for making budget presentations, fundraising, and other best practices for libraries like yours. Visit [ala.org/advocacy](http://ala.org/advocacy) for this detailed advice, where you can also contact their team directly for assistance tailored to your needs. We've helped our past library clients work within their budget, and we can also offer help for how to fund your renovation.



## A Streamlined Remodel

If there's any one thing we'd suggest, it's to make seating the focal point when renovating. We know, we know: of course a chair company would suggest this. But don't be so quick to dismiss our points, as your patrons will spend the greatest amount of time sitting. No matter if they're there to study, work, or for leisure reading, you want them to be comfortable.



Comfort, while a major concern, isn't the only point of consideration. You should also look for seating that will withstand the daily demands of a modern library; durability is a must, especially so you won't need to buy new chairs for decades to come. With the amount of time your chairs will service your space, you should also find seating

with a pleasing look to them. Chairs draw the eye and serve as nice partners to your overall aesthetic.

For today's libraries there are other concerns. If your library is a hub for community activity, it makes sense to add seating that's easy to move around. This way, you can more quickly reconfigure seating layouts for events and meetings. Stacking chairs especially will support this nicely.

With these concerns put together, we see wood chairs win over their steel and plastic counterparts, especially on comfort. As an added bonus, wood chairs are the most environmentally sustainable choice, as wood is the only renewable construction material. For libraries ready to go green, there's no better choice than wood for your seating renovations.



## FIVE REASONS TO CHOOSE WOOD CHAIRS THAT STACK



*The room's layout is completed much faster with stacking chairs – seen here in the function room at the Lawrenceville School*

Your facilities likely include rooms that must be rearranged for different events, which can seem a monumental task to perform again and again. You might also face difficulty when it comes time to deep clean the floors of your area, as juggling the seating around can cause a headache. Simply put, librarians face a lot of stress on the job, and we try to help alleviate that in what ways we can. With our line of stacking hardwood chairs, you don't have to sacrifice the elegance and warmth of wood for ease of convenience.

Your staff would have an easier time with stacking wood chairs, while your patrons will remain delighted with comfortable and beautiful seating. No need to dismiss either desire! Here are the top five reasons why our clients spring for our stacking models:

### 1. Easy Rearrangement for New Seating Plans

For multi-use rooms and function spaces, getting to stack your chairs makes event planning a smooth transition from one event to the next. This is especially helpful when there's a quick turnaround in between events, such as a morning conference before an afternoon party. We have included photos from a room at the Lawrenceville School function room to demonstrate this perfectly – moving seating becomes a simple matter instead of a complex one.

### 2. Transporting and Moving Chairs

Multiple rooms will need different seating numbers, depending on the function, and a stack of chairs means moving multiple chairs in one go instead of one at a time. Our custom-made Transporters make it a breeze to move from one room to another, cutting down the time needed to prepare or clean up. Each stacking chair is made for easy handling, relieving managers and facilities of stressful room changes, as several past clients can attest.



### 3. Cleaning

Speaking of cleaning, the days of arduous cleaning are over with stacking wood chairs. Instead of flipping chairs onto the tables or taking up half the room with chairs, they can be stacked in a small amount of space and allow for easier, faster cleaning. Our library clients earn their custodians' approval for improved floor cleanup.

### 4. Storage

Some libraries would like to keep their wood chairs separate for select events, such as high-profile meetings. Others want to keep them on standby for seasonal events, but have limited storage options. Stacked chairs make it possible to store chairs without needing a massive warehouse to do so. Smaller libraries especially have found it a perfect choice.

### 5. Efficient Use of Space

All of the above culminates in getting the most out of your library building. You'll save time and energy while also maintaining incredible seating that will last a lifetime, even under the toughest conditions. Having chairs that live up to your patron's demands and your staff's needs is completely possible with stacking wood chairs.





## Next Steps

Now you're ready to navigate the planning and moving forward with your library renovation. With key decision makers and resources like this one, you're doing your due diligence on how to best serve your community at large. Don't forget to involve them in the process, as this will be as exciting for them as it is for you!



With improved library facilities comes an improved community resource, outreach center, and pillar of civic education. Whether you're expanding your space or enhancing what you already have, a renovation breathes new life into your building for the betterment of all who walk through your doors. Our library clients are overjoyed when they share with us how many more people are taking advantage of their offerings, or how their operations run much more smoothly thanks to their upgraded features.



As libraries continue to grow and expand on the American landscape, so too will challenges spring up again and again. Your library renovations should be done with these future challenges in mind; they must satisfy the demands of today while prepared for those of tomorrow. We're always at hand to speak to your experience, along with the librarians throughout the country that have been in your shoes before. Get ready to take the plunge – you're about

to craft a better library to meet the test of time.

Think you're ready to talk with us? We're eager to help at any step in the process. Contact us online at [eustischair.com](http://eustischair.com), or directly at 978-827-3103. Thanks for your interest!

