



Sarasota County Libraries
and Historical Resources

STRATEGIC PLAN

About Us

Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources is a system comprised of 10 community branches, a history center and a mobile library that provides opportunities for lifelong learning, vibrant cultural experiences, and enriching activities for all ages.

MISSION

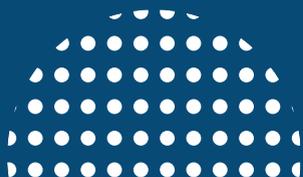
Ensuring **all residents** can access and enjoy the quality of life that makes Sarasota County a great place to live, work, grow, play and learn.

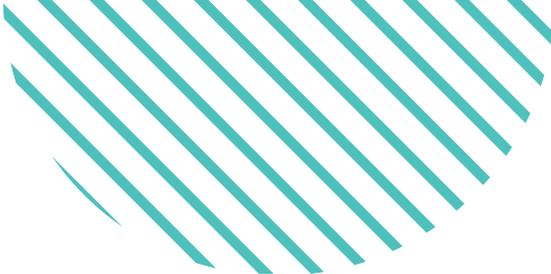
VISION

To create a space where everyone in the community can flourish.

VALUES

- Learning
- Honesty
- Creativity
- Joyfulness
- Inclusion
- Compassion
- Collaboration





Value Statements



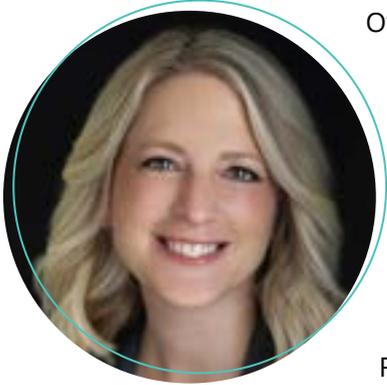
We enjoy trusted relationships. We collaborate with partners to foster lifelong learning opportunities with all our residents.

We connect the dots. We know how to direct individuals to the resources, organizations and experts they need to achieve their goals.

We know people. We work with organizations on your behalf to ensure that we are all working toward the same goals.



Letter from the Director



Over the next five years, you will start to see the Sarasota County library system differently. We remain your trusted partner, providing free access to books, services and programs that residents want, need and enjoy. Looking forward, we pledge to use our unique strengths and talents as an institution to further the quality of life for all Sarasota County residents. We will do this by working in deep collaboration with partners and aligning our respective talents to advance common aspirations and shared goals.

From our commitment to the arts, the beauty of our natural environment, the generosity of our philanthropic community and so much more, Sarasota County is a national inspiration. At the same time, we acknowledge the rapid growth, the rising cost of housing and the isolating effects of a long pandemic- to name a few of our entrenched challenges- does not allow all people an equal share of what our county has to offer. Your public library can serve as a catalyst and convener for shared community problem-solving, bringing people and groups together to create the conditions for change.

I couldn't be prouder of the strategic areas of focus that will guide how we serve our community going forward. With an emphasis on quality of life, we framed our objectives around key areas of living: healthy living, green living, active older adult living, living a vibrant cultural life, meaningful career journeys and learning as a lifelong practice. Many of these commitments aren't new, but they are fresh, focused and fueled by passionate staff whom we will support in every way possible to do their important work.

Thank you to the amazing Sarasota County residents who contributed their creativity to this process and thank you in advance to the many more people who will continue to be by our side during implementation. We are stronger and smarter when we work together.

Sincerely,

Renée Di Pilato, PhD

Director for Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources

STRATEGIC PLAN

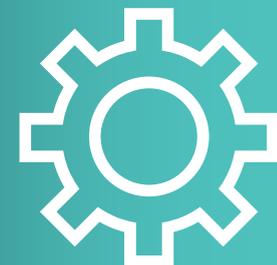
Process

In early 2022, Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) and Advancing with Purpose facilitated a strategic planning process with Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources (Sarasota County Libraries). The consultants worked closely with the library's leadership and staff for six months, conducting community engagement sessions and focus groups with diverse stakeholders. They also reviewed library statistics, demographic data and growth forecasts.



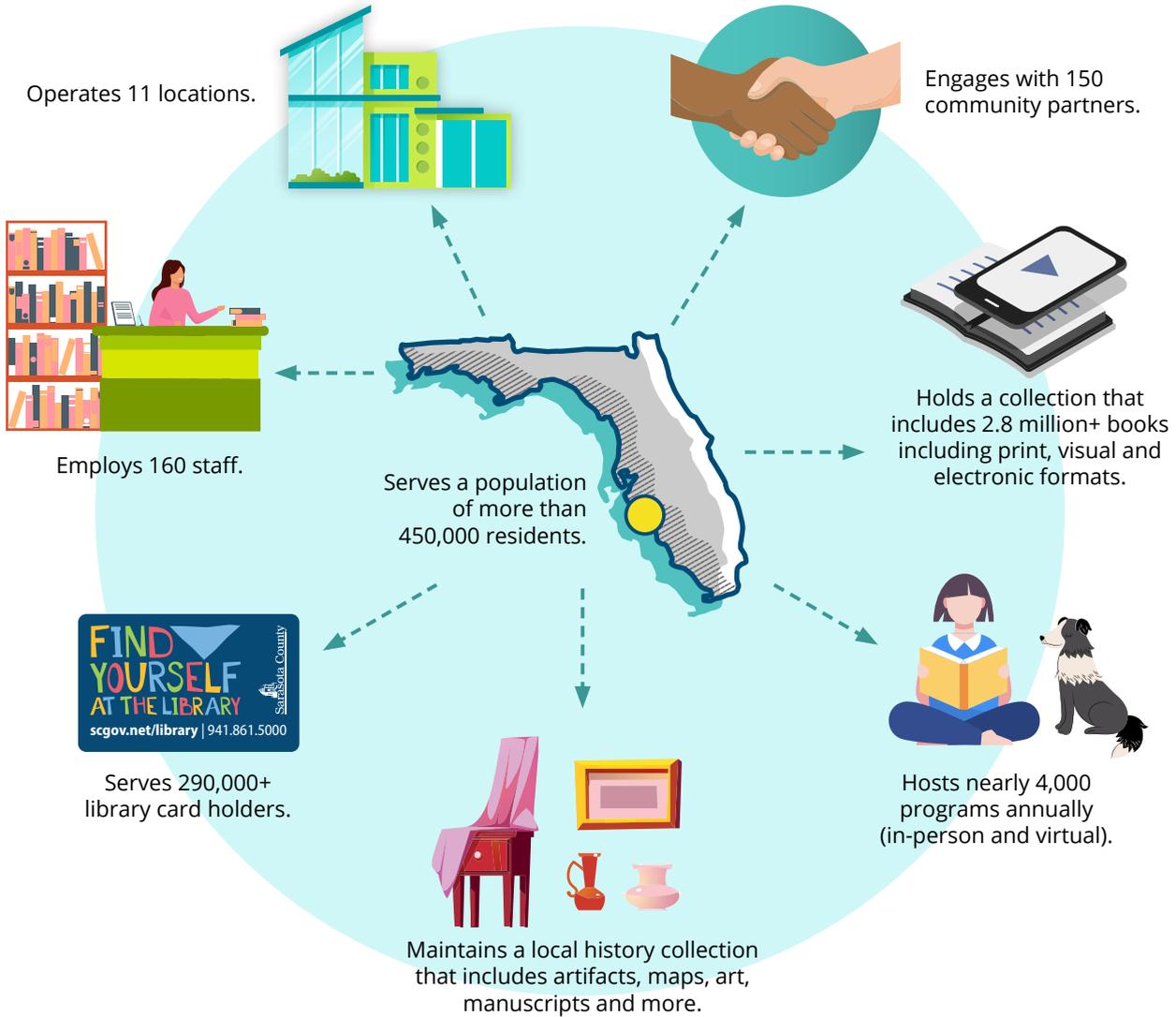
The goal was to develop a flexible strategic framework for a modern library system that aligns with the needs of our community and our patrons. The process used service design techniques to create a future vision for Sarasota County Libraries and equip the staff with skills for ongoing transformation and relevance.

The resulting document outlines the strategic plan and recommends a framework to ensure that Sarasota County Libraries remains a dynamic, active and crucial institution. The plan aims to support both individuals and the community, addressing real needs while fostering aspirations for a vibrant future.



Snapshot

of Sarasota County Library System



A New Focus

New areas of focus have emerged from an extensive process of gathering feedback from staff, the public and stakeholders in Sarasota County. These priorities will guide the efforts of Sarasota County Libraries to make a positive impact throughout the community by leveraging our unique strengths and collaborating closely with partners to advance common aspirations and shared goals. As we implement this plan, we will activate staff skills, key partnerships, services, collections, technologies and spaces to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Healthy Living

Green Living

**Library as
Community
Convener**

**Meaningful
Career
Journeys**

**Lifelong
Learning**

**Active Older
Adult Living**

**Vibrant
Cultural
Life**

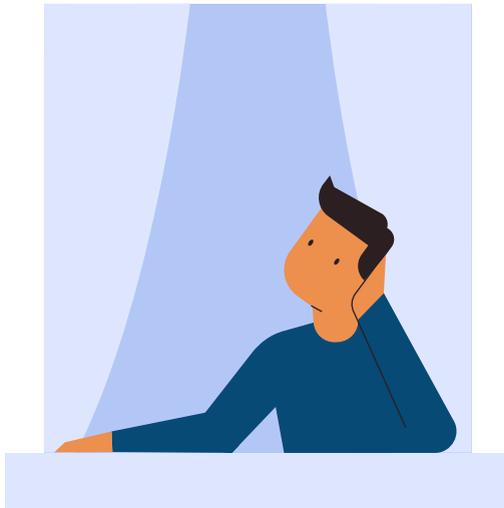


Photo courtesy of Karen Arango and the Library Foundation of Sarasota County.

Community Conveners

When was the last time you visited a library? Our buildings have been modernized to create both expected and unexpected experiences where patrons enjoy seeing friends, taking part in events and having a place to relax.

Our Community Conveners initiative focuses on bringing people together in community and fellowship by creating opportunities for gathering, convening and connecting at library locations, partnering facilities and in the virtual world. These shared experiences strengthen the social fabric that binds Sarasota County citizens.



Social isolation and mental illness relating to social disconnection have become one of the most significant problems in Sarasota County.

1. Residents have access to vibrant social engagements.
2. The community grows and flourishes with intergenerational experiences.
3. All residents enjoy belonging to an inclusive and welcoming community.

Healthy Living

Health and wellness are the foundation of a thriving community, affecting economic prosperity, educational achievement and social development. Sarasota County Libraries promotes programs, resources, expertise and connections to encourage physical, mental and emotional health for all members of the county. To do this, libraries provide a variety of opportunities to strengthen an individual's well-being, enabling all residents to enjoy holistic health and wellness, safety and vitality.

Sarasota County is experiencing a noticeable divide in beliefs, values and politics, which is having a negative effect on the well-being of residents.



1. Residents learn more about the effects of healthy living practices.
2. A thriving community where everyone has access to resources for physical, mental and social health.
3. Sarasota County Libraries is a trusted partner to support county-wide health and wellness initiatives.





Green Living

The Green Living initiative focuses on the library playing an intentional role in devising solutions to the environmental challenges that negatively impact an individual's quality of life and the county's sustainable development. In 2019, the American Library Association adopted sustainability as a core value of librarianship. Our libraries will demonstrate this national initiative by raising awareness, offering educational opportunities, providing solutions and advocating to protect the fragile ecosystems of our community. This initiative will integrate preservation, archaeology and Sarasota County Libraries' renowned historical collections.



Sarasota County is experiencing real and imminent environmental challenges. Our libraries can educate, advocate and convene community members to inform tactical solutions to address urgent and long-term ecological challenges.

- 1. Residents learn more about how they can make a positive impact on the environment.**
- 2. Community growth through sustainable initiatives.**
- 3. Preservation of the county's unique archaeological and historical assets.**
- 4. A sense of belonging with nature.**

Active Older Adult Living

The Active Older Adult Living initiative focuses on centering our older adult residents. Sarasota County Libraries will provide meaningful services to support this community's specific lifestyle goals and motivations. The library will foster age integration through programs that celebrate and enable the sharing of skills, talents and wisdom that Sarasota County's diverse and talented older adult population offers to strengthen our civic health.

Intergenerational experiences are not only a critical key component of the overall civic health of a community. These also show tremendous health benefits for all ages.

Sarasota County's strength is that it has one of the oldest adult populations in the country. Our libraries will leverage this strength to capture their unique stories with both the libraries and the History Center's programming.

40 percent of Sarasota County residents are over the age of 60 and 50 percent of those over the age of 85 have some form of dementia.



- 1. All residents enjoy the health benefits of intergenerational experiences.**
- 2. Older adult residents perceive Sarasota County Libraries as an essential institution in their daily lives.**
- 3. Sarasota County Libraries create programs and activities that center on older adult interests, needs and hobbies.**





Lifelong Learning

The Lifelong Learning initiative focuses on being a lifelong partner for every resident of Sarasota County on their customized learning journey through discovery, exploration and passion building. Our libraries work with partners across the county to nurture 21st-century skill sets, provide wrap around services to support achievement and foster a love of learning at every age and stage of life. The library will embrace its strength as an equity-driven, alternative learning institution and contribute to the county's quality educational system to ensure opportunities for all.



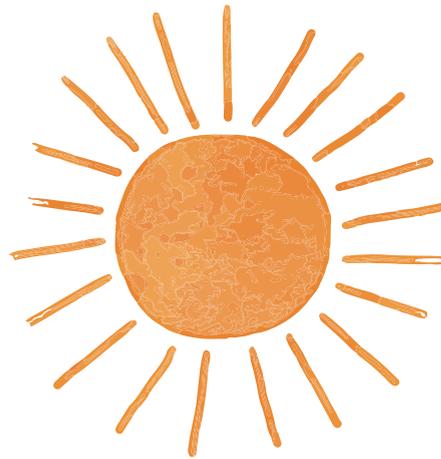
All residents need to be equipped with 21st-century skill sets, including critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration, to evolve and be prepared for a rapidly changing future. The library's strength is providing enjoyable learning experiences for all residents.

- 1. Everyone has equal access to public service and educational resources.**
- 2. The library system is the heartbeat of a community that connects and supports everyone.**
- 3. Support for civic health, education and individual growth and fulfillment.**

Vibrant Cultural Life

The Vibrant Cultural Life initiative focuses on creating, celebrating and experiencing the world-class arts and culture scene that defines Sarasota County. With a focus on "storytelling in all its vibrant forms," Sarasota County Libraries will offer community members a variety of enlightening, enriching and entertaining experiences. The library will be the free and inclusive center of the county's cultural richness, fostering empathy and compassion to promote a variety of viewpoints, forge new cultural identities and strengthen the creative economy.

Sarasota County enjoys a rich array of cultural offerings, yet not everyone has access. With arts and culture, there are immense opportunities for advancing shared experiences, inclusion, cultural understanding and democratic expression. Arts and culture have a direct economic impact of \$295,004,458 per year in Sarasota County.



- 1. Residents will embrace the history of Sarasota County.**
- 2. The library system creates an environment that nurtures arts and culture.**
- 3. Individuals develop skills and appreciation for the performing and visual arts.**
- 4. Residents of Sarasota County develop pride in their own culture and have a deep appreciation of others.**






Sarasota County

Meaningful Career Journeys

The Meaningful Career Journeys initiative focuses on supporting every resident's goal to find purpose and meaning in their work. Sarasota County Libraries will facilitate learning about career pathways and educational opportunities for residents at every stage of life. The library will support the continuation of knowledge and skills to build and provide opportunities outside of traditional institutional pathways. The library will provide access to information and resources, including social services, financial resources and educational programs to anchor Sarasota County's lifelong learning system.



Not all Sarasota County residents are experiencing economic sustainability. Many residents require employment opportunities, skills development, small business support and wrap-around services to meet their career goals. Libraries can provide them with access to information, education and workforce development opportunities that may result in the financial sustainability for individuals and community economic prosperity.

- 1. The library system contributes to small businesses and entrepreneurship.**
- 2. The library serves as the hub of the community, supporting lifelong career paths for Sarasota County's residents.**

Next Steps



FINALIZE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

In 2023, Sarasota County Libraries will finalize an implementation plan that provides actionable initiatives for each of the seven focus areas within the strategic framework. The action plan will include goals, objectives, activities and timelines.

DESIGN A COMMUNICATIONS AND BRAND STRATEGY

Sarasota County Libraries will refresh and update its brand identity. Following this strategic work, we will re-imagine the library system as integral to a vibrant modern-day lifestyle with branding that reflects our contemporary ambitions.

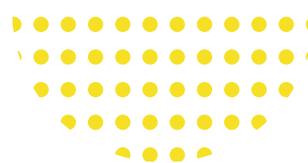
DEVELOP A FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

With Sarasota County Libraries serving as the key driver of local initiatives, no investment will yield a greater return than the transformation of our library facilities to help us achieve our strategic goals and enhance customer experiences. We'll revamp libraries for better efficiency, aligning with the county's rapid growth. Our facilities master plan, an extension of our strategic vision, will address service gaps, incorporate creative building uses, foster partnerships and leverage both public and private funding for a brighter future.





Next Steps

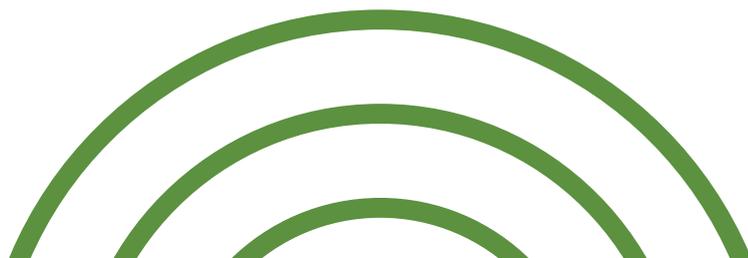


INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF

With a staff working group ready to act, continued investment in employee growth and professional development will be a critical part of our strategic plan. Pivoting from transactional customer interaction to contemporary librarianship requires confidence, competency and a community development perspective.

BUILD A DATA-INFORMED CULTURE

To gauge the library system's impact and track the progress of our strategic plan, we must foster a data-driven culture among staff. Going forward, Sarasota County Libraries' leadership will institute a performance measurement review process, adapting as we learn from experience. Our assessments will also include measures of subjective well-being and we'll establish additional performance metrics to track major initiatives. Gathering qualitative data and integrating human services design principles into new projects will become routine. Furthermore, sharing our library system's story through data and visualization tools is a natural progression.



STRATEGIC WORKING GROUP

Thank you for the hard work of our strategic work group, who spent countless hours identifying areas of interest and developing action plans for the seven focus areas.





Thank You

to our community stakeholders who ensured Sarasota County Libraries' Strategic Framework was informed by relevant needs, challenges, opportunities and aspirations supported by anecdotal community evidence. The library conducted 21 one-on-one conversations with community stakeholders and four focus group conversations involving 61 individuals representing 56 institutions.

Kate Alexander

John Annis

Wayne Applebee

Jesse Balaity

Don Bayley

Kathy Black

Marlon Brown

Lee-Hayes Byron

Jamie Carson

Beth Cassell

Frank Cassell

Martha Collins

Robert Connor

Luz Corcuera

Greg Cruz

Wendy Deming

Erin DiFazio

Ron DiPillo

Andrea Doggett

Beth Duda

Jerome Fletcher

Shannon Fortner

Beth Gates

Helene Gold

Jane Grogg

Tom Harmer

Chuck Henry

Lynette Herbert

Steven High

Elizabeth Intagliata

Roxie Jerde

Ben Jewell-Plocher

Rollie Johnson

Janet Kahn

Michelle Kapreilian

Kristina Keogh

Harry Klinkhamer

Steve Koski

Deborah Kostroun

Ed Lavallee

Jonathan R. Lewis

Debbie Marks

Josh Matlock

Erin McLeod

Nelle Miller

Alisa Mitchell

James Monaghan

Anne P Moore

Kenneth J. Newmark

Nancy Pike

Mark Pritchett

Tammera Race

Ranata Reeder

Ann Reynolds

Nicole Rissler

Char Romano

William Russell

Jim Shirley

Peter J. Tavino

Thomas Williams

Glenn Zimmerman



Thank You to Our **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

American Association of Retired Persons

All Faiths Food Bank

Arts and Cultural Alliance
of Sarasota County

Autism Society of Florida

CareerSource Suncoast

Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation

City of North Port

City of Sarasota

City of Venice

Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Early Learning Coalition

Education Foundation of Sarasota County

Embracing Our Differences

Englewood Community
Redevelopment Agency

Fabulous Arts Foundation

Florida Department of Health

Florida Studio Theatre

Forty Carrots

Friends of the Sarasota County
History Center

Friends of the Library

Good Samaritan Pharmacy

Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Hermitage Artist Retreat

Jewish Family and Children's Service
of the Suncoast

Library Foundation of Sarasota County

Literacy Volunteers of South
Sarasota County

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Meals on Wheels of Sarasota

New College of Florida

Resilient Retreat

Ringling College of Art and Design

Ringling Museum

Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation

Sarasota County Enterprise
Information Technology

Sarasota County Health
and Human Services

Sarasota Housing Authority

Sarasota County Historical Commission

Sarasota County Historic
Preservation Board

Sarasota County Library Advisory Board

Sarasota County Parks and Recreation
and Natural Resources

Sarasota County Transit

Sarasota Lions Club

Sarasota Newcomers Club

Sarasota Opera

Second Heart Homes

Senior Friendship Centers

Streets of Paradise

Suncoast Technical College

The Historical Society of Sarasota County

The Patterson Foundation

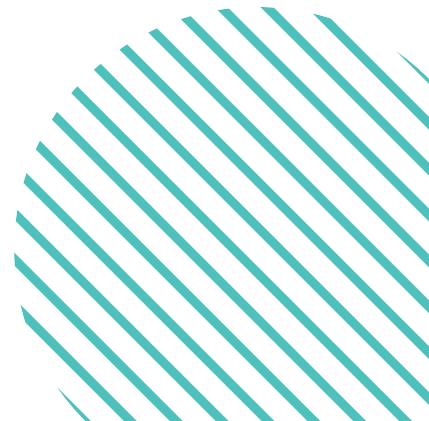
Town of Longboat Key

UF/IFAS Extension and Sustainability

UnidosNow

United Way of South Sarasota County

United Way Suncoast



Annual Events



One Book One Community invites residents to read a book selection, join in discussions at various events and share the story with others.



The Off the Page literary celebration launches in November 2023 and features bestselling author talks, writing workshops, book signings and more!



1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota

VISIT [SARASOTACOUNTYLIBRARIES.ORG](https://www.sarasotacountylibraries.org),
CALL 311 OR 941-861-1110.

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