

# **LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System**

## **Long-Range Plan for Library Service, FY 2020-2022**

### **Introduction**

Our public library system is a free and open community resource for personal enrichment, recreation, and lifelong learning. Library staffs strive to effectively serve users by anticipating needs and interests of citizens; by providing friendly, professional customer service; and by providing quality services, programs, resources, and library materials. In offering access to all, the library provides opportunity to all.

To meet the needs of residents, services and materials are provided at a main library, six branch libraries, and via outreach services to selected senior residential communities, as well as online. Through the library's web site, users can locate and download e-books, audiobooks and videos; renew and request library materials; ask for information or research assistance via e-mail or the "Ask a Librarian" live chat service; and use online subscription databases. Children's programs support literacy development, creativity and socialization, while programs for adults provide a myriad of lifelong learning opportunities.

Leon County's libraries continue to provide new and innovative services and programs including the Seed Library, the Library Lecture Series, lending programs for mobile hotspots and telescopes, virtual reality gaming systems, as well as thousands of downloadable e-books, audio books, and movies. However, in Leon County and communities across the nation, circulation of fixed format materials is declining while downloads of digital content and interest in interactive library programming is on the rise.

Over the last three years in Leon County, downloads of digital content has increased by 81% and attendance at Library programs has increased by almost 20%. Patrons are also seeking more meeting and quiet spaces. Study rooms are increasingly needed for individual study, online test taking and tutorials, job interviews via webcams, and tutoring. Additionally, there is growing demand to use the Library's meeting rooms as gathering spaces for events and programs. In 2018 alone, the library system's 10 meetings rooms were reserved for over 3,300 meetings hosted by a diverse group of community organizations. This is a 62% increase in reservations since 2016.

These trends make it necessary to reassess how the physical space within our libraries is being utilized, and to prepare for the future roles our libraries will play in residents' lives.

In Spring 2019, Leon County Government convened a focus group of stakeholders and community leaders to identify library best practices and innovations in other communities. The focus group conducted on-site visits to five communities with nationally-recognized library systems, to explore how they have identified, strategized, and implemented unique ways to maintain and increase the relevancy of libraries in the community. Focus group

members included Leon County staff, representatives from the Knight Creative Communities Institute, as well as representatives from the Friends of the Library, whose mission is to help support the library to improve and expand services.

Themes emerging from the tours included a broader use of technology for all age groups, for both fun and education, reprioritizing collections and services, working smarter to improve efficient use of limited resources; purposeful community engagement; focus on facilities, including meeting rooms, creative spaces and workplaces for the public; student success in school and enhanced literacy programs; workforce development programs; professional development and redefined roles for staff to facilitate more engagement with patrons and the community at-large; and a variety of diverse programming to support the interests and needs of the community. These and some of the readily adaptable ideas inspired by the tours are reflected in this plan's goals and strategies.

The final report and recommendations from the focus group will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for further consideration. In considering ideas and information gathered from the libraries visited on the tours, and subsequent meetings to get community input, strategies in this plan may be modified. Annual plans with established measures of success will be developed for each of the years encompassed by this document.

---

Public libraries must make a difference in the lives of the people who use them and a difference in the community as a whole. Through pursuit of our vision and mission, the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System will play a vital role in the continued growth and success of our community.

**Vision**

Our community discovers the joy of reading, the energy of ideas and the power of information together in the Library.

**Mission**

The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System enriches the community by inspiring a love of reading, providing a dynamic resource for creative and intellectual pursuits, and enabling residents to live a life of learning.

---

**Goal 1: Reimagine the library and its roles in the community**

*Through participative and inclusive processes, the library's new and continuing roles are determined, communicated and demonstrated to the community.*

Strategies:

- 1.1 Recommendations from the final libraries tour report and existing data which identifies community needs provide a framework for priorities and initiatives.
- 1.2 Listening Sessions gather stakeholder input, expanding insights and direction.
- 1.3 Annual plans with actionable and measurable activities are developed and shared with the community through a variety of communication and outreach strategies.

**Goal 2: Help our community learn, grow and succeed**

*The library supports learning, creativity, discovery and success through programs, services and partnerships.*

Strategies:

- 2.1 Through community outreach and partnerships, identify and respond to interests and needs of Leon County citizens.
- 2.2 Provide resources, activities and facilities to support literacy, life skills and workforce development, and individual success.
- 2.3 Support academic success by partnering with schools, providing guided homework help at libraries, and enriching youth with STEM and STEAM activities.
- 2.4 Offer programming to foster and support creativity, self-expression and fun.

**Goal 3: Improve the user experience**

*Create ways to make it more convenient and enjoyable to interact with the library.*

Strategies:

- 3.1 Offer online library card registration.
- 3.2 Explore new methods of service delivery.
- 3.3 Replace the outdated "Patron Rights and Responsibilities" policy with a simplified "Code of Conduct".