



*Learn. Engage. Innovate.*

# ESSENTIAL LIBRARIES INITIATIVE

UPDATED OCTOBER 2024



**Leon County Board of County Commissioners:** (From left) District 3 Commissioner Rick Minor, At-Large Commissioner Nick Maddox, At-Large Commissioner Carolyn D. Cummings, District 4 Commissioner Brian Welch (Chairman), District 2 Commissioner Christian Caban (Vice-Chairman), District 1 Commissioner Bill Proctor, and District 5 Commissioner David T. O'Keefe.

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# LEON COUNTY GOVERNMENT ESSENTIAL LIBRARIES



**VINCENT S. LONG**  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

On behalf of Leon County Government, I am excited to present Leon County's Essential Libraries Initiative (ELI). The ELI re-envision's County libraries to better serve our community's changing needs both now and in the future. According to the Aspen Institute, libraries are no longer book warehouses. Rather, they are critical social infrastructure and integral to the community's continued resilience and overall well-being.

Approved by the Board of County Commissioners in June 2021, the ELI

guides the Library System's daily actions to serve and support citizens as they learn new skills, engage with the community, and pursue creative interests for the whole family. Part of the ELI also includes renovations to library facilities, including a \$3.4 million capital improvement project at the Main Library focused

on modernizing more than 40,000 square feet of space with new meeting rooms, a workforce development hub, and so much more.

Leon County has long recognized the significant role our libraries have in serving and supporting citizens of all ages and abilities. As the needs of the community evolve, demands for digital content, gathering spaces, and interactive programming continue to grow. To better align our priorities with the needs of the people we serve, the County gathered input from thousands of citizens and community partners to develop the ELI, ensuring continued relevance of County libraries. The plan you are now holding serves as a road map to grow that relevance in many different ways.

From engaging programming to facility enhancements, citizens can already see the ELI being implemented throughout our Library System. And as we plan for the future, we will continue to engage our citizens in transforming County libraries into centers of learning, engagement, and innovation.



**PAMELA MONROE**  
DIRECTOR,  
LEROY COLLINS LEON COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The Essential Libraries Initiative (ELI) is a visionary plan for our Library System that was created with your input and designed to meet your needs. Using information gathered through internal reviews, research on best practices of award-winning libraries, interdepartmental collaboration, and a wide range of community feedback, this exciting strategic plan leads the way to a vibrant, community-focused Library System. We appreciate the participation of so many in the planning process. The ELI focus areas and priorities are direct results of listening sessions with citizens, community partners and stakeholders, and close to 5,000 survey responses from library users and non-users alike. We are so excited for the opportunity to engage and serve even more citizens with new, relevant programs, materials, and services. Since 2021, we have implemented action items and enhancements to library facilities, including the renovation of the downtown Main Library, which will continue to allow us to meet the current and emerging needs of the citizens we serve. As you explore the ELI, we hope you'll see how it is shaping the library to positively impact our community for generations to come.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System's Essential Libraries Initiative is a strategic plan that re-visions the library to address the changing needs of residents and trends in library use. Approved by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners in June 2021, the initiative contains refocused priorities and action items to enhance the library's offerings.

Since implementation of the plan began in 2021, the library has continued to offer innovative programming and services that inspire and connect Leon County's diverse population and engage citizens in new and exciting ways. Additionally, facility enhancements at all library locations, including a \$3.4 million renovation at the Main Library to modernize more than 40,000 square feet of space, allows the Library System to better align programs and services with the community's evolving needs.

The four focus areas of the library guide the development and enrichment of all new and existing programs and services that are offered as part of the Essential Libraries Initiative:

- » Literacy and Lifelong Learning
- » Business and Workforce Development
- » Civic and Community Engagement
- » Arts and Humanities

Each focus area includes specific priorities which will be achieved by implementing their respective action items. Although the library is responsible for developing and ensuring the completion of the action items, ongoing support from departments, such as the Office of Sustainability, the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality, and Parks and Recreation, and partnerships with local institutions and community organizations are vital to the success of the initiative.



LEROY COLLINS  
**LEON COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

*Learn. Engage. Innovate.*

## Mission Statement

To be an essential resource and place for learning, engagement and innovation that provides for our community's changing needs.



***“Libraries are a great place  
to connect and recenter.  
They hold resources many  
aren’t aware of.”***

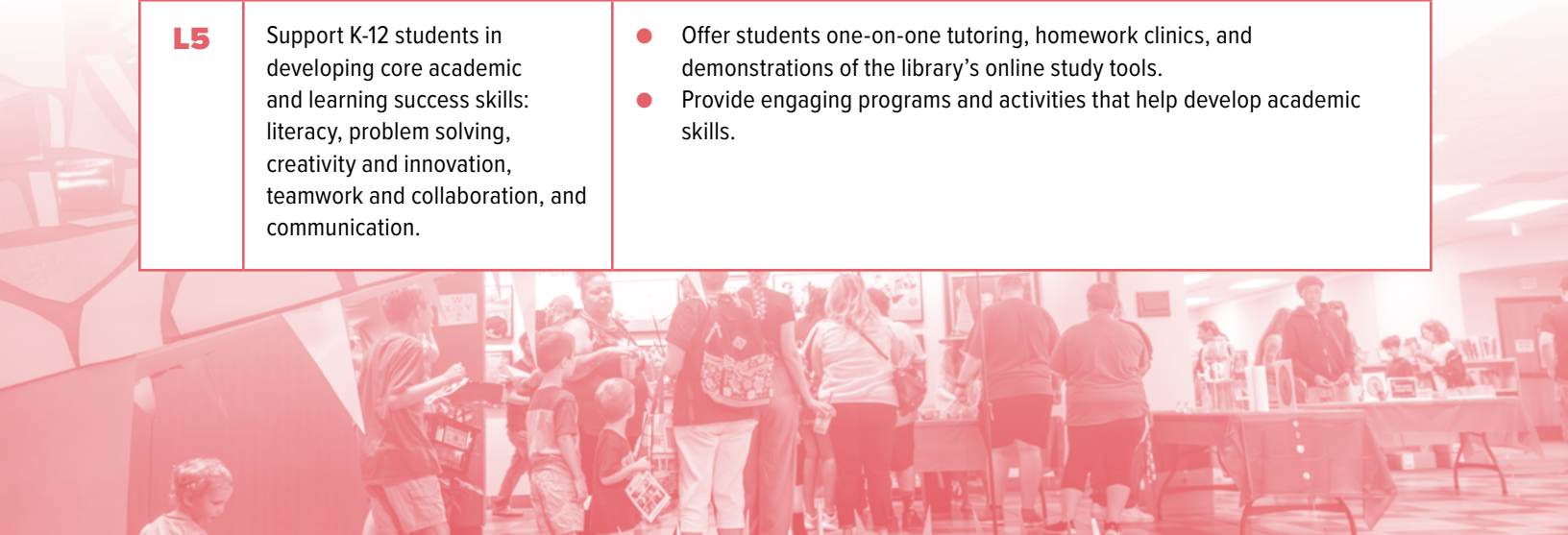


## FOCUS AREA

# LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

To serve as a resource in developing the skills needed to be successful socially, intellectually, financially, and technologically at any age by promoting traditional and non-traditional forms of literacy. (L)

	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Action Items</i>
<b>L1</b>	Champion adult and youth literacy as the foundation for learning and discovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host literacy programs and events that support the library's collection and resources to encourage youth and adults to access and use the library's materials.</li> <li>● Curate and maintain an up-to-date collection of books and materials that help reinforce literacy skills at home and contribute to a love of reading.</li> <li>● Offer a robust summer reading program that keeps youth and adults engaged with reading skills development and encourages patrons of all ages to make reading a lifelong habit.</li> </ul>
<b>L2</b>	Provide technology training for all ages to ensure a digitally literate community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer basic and intermediate digital literacy training programs to all ages.</li> <li>● Help decrease the number of residents impacted by the digital divide by providing access to resources.</li> </ul>
<b>L3</b>	Support lifelong education for seniors and retirees with programs that entertain, educate, and provide connections to community resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner with local organizations to develop workshops and events focused on the interests and financial, mental, and emotional well-being of seniors and their caregivers.</li> <li>● Host programs that help promote social connections through a shared interest, such as book clubs, crafts, and games.</li> </ul>
<b>L4</b>	Develop early learning resources for parents and guardians to teach their children the skills they need to succeed in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host story times and programs that model early learning skills using the five early literacy practices of Sing, Talk, Read, Write, and Play.</li> <li>● Create and provide book lists and early literacy tip guides that help caregivers reinforce early literacy skills.</li> </ul>
<b>L5</b>	Support K-12 students in developing core academic and learning success skills: literacy, problem solving, creativity and innovation, teamwork and collaboration, and communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer students one-on-one tutoring, homework clinics, and demonstrations of the library's online study tools.</li> <li>● Provide engaging programs and activities that help develop academic skills.</li> </ul>





*“Libraries have long been community focal points, providing a reliable internet connection, programs, training, and of course, books. Of all libraries do, introducing readers to new ideas and stories is one of their most important functions.”*



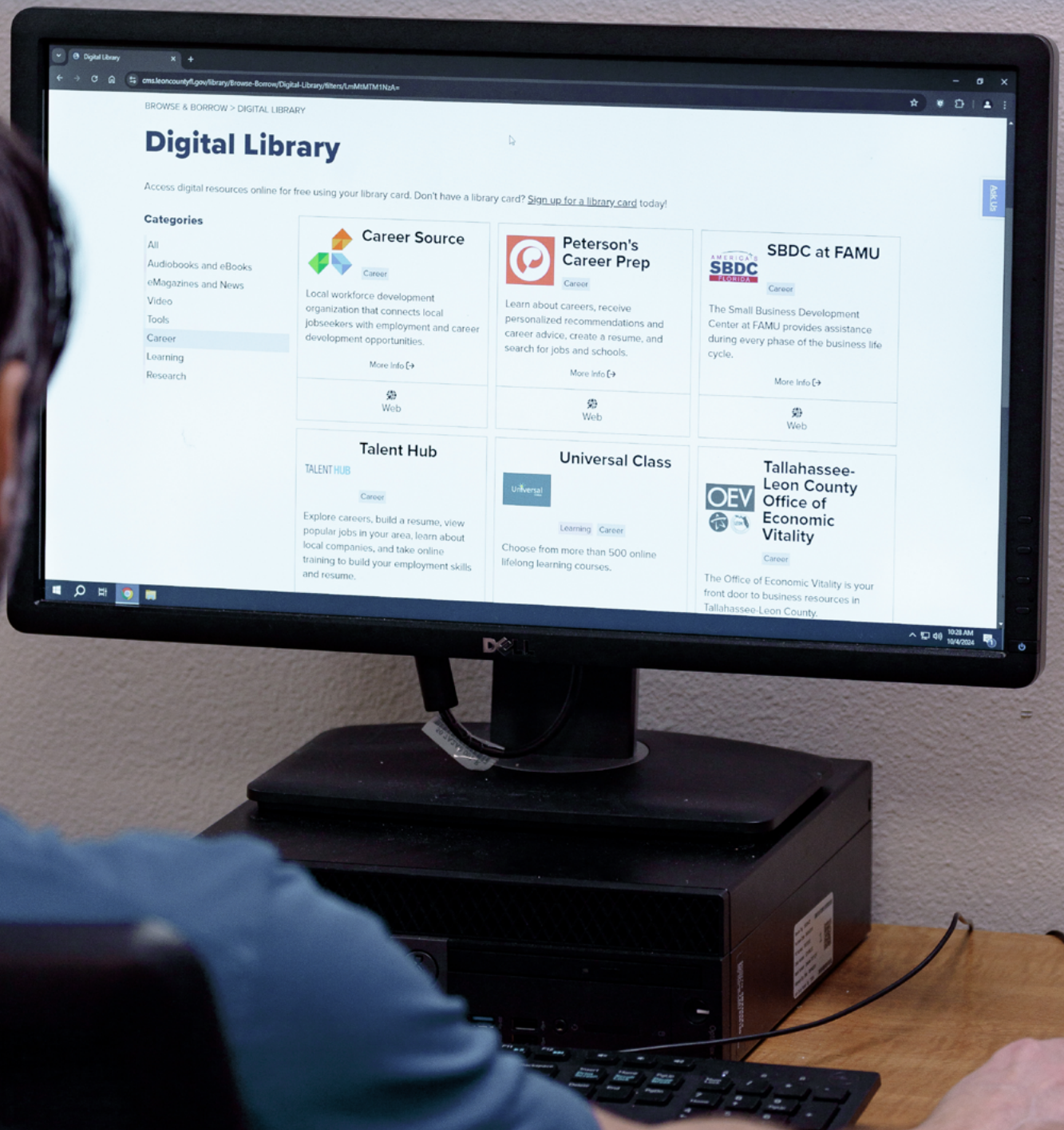
## FOCUS AREA

# BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

To support a strong local economy by acting as a resource for businesses and individuals seeking professional development. (B)

<i>Priority</i>		<i>Action Items</i>
<b>B1</b>	Collaborate with local business and workforce organizations to provide resources and space that support local businesses and entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner with the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality and other organizations to identify the workforce information needs of the community to curate print and digital resources.</li> <li>● Improve and expand coworking spaces and create new conference and meeting rooms for entrepreneurs, business owners, and telecommuters.</li> </ul>
<b>B2</b>	Provide programs that develop skillsets needed to build a thriving workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host programs and workshops on job seeking strategies, career coaching, professional essential skills, and other related topics.</li> <li>● Create internships and professional opportunities to develop skillsets within the library field.</li> <li>● Continue to provide programs, resources, and activities to introduce youth to a variety of career fields based on patron interest.</li> </ul>
<b>B3</b>	Offer resources for job seekers and those transitioning to new careers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner with local organizations during job fairs to provide story times and resource information.</li> <li>● Evaluate and maintain an up-to-date collection of business-related materials.</li> </ul>
<b>B4</b>	Provide opportunities for teens to develop leadership and life skills to ready them for the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to support the Teen Advisory Board program and provide youth volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>● Working with teens, coordinate presentations by outside organizations and subject matter experts on relevant topics to help prepare them for future workforce opportunities.</li> </ul>

*“It has been a long time since I had to look for a job and I really didn’t know how to look online. The library staff not only helped me find jobs to apply for, but after I was contacted for an interview I was able to go back to the library and use a private meeting room to do a virtual interview. I got the job! I don’t think I could have done it without the library. Thank you!”*





## FOCUS AREA

# CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To serve as a vibrant, active hub of civic discourse and participative democracy, building relationships and bridging gaps in all segments of the community. (C)

<i>Priority</i>		<i>Action Items</i>
<b>C1</b>	Provide opportunities to engage in civil discourse around topics that impact Leon County and are of interest to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host facilitated discussions and programs on relevant topics and issues that impact Leon County residents.</li> <li>● Develop programs and provide spaces that encourage community members to engage with one another.</li> </ul>
<b>C2</b>	Serve as a gateway to connect people with community services and government programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Through the Community Resources Specialist, provide one-on-one assistance and referrals for government programs and community-based services.</li> <li>● Coordinate with local human services agencies to identify possible partnerships and program opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>C3</b>	Collaborate with local colleges and universities to maximize outcomes in areas of mutual interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use subject matter experts at local colleges and universities to enhance program content.</li> </ul>
<b>C4</b>	Act as a resource and partner to local nonprofit service providers in addressing community issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop collaborative food programming with the Leon County Office of Sustainability and other local partners to offer programs that promote food security and nutritional health.</li> <li>● Increase accessibility of library resources to vulnerable populations through library card and program outreach.</li> </ul>





*"The library has always been my go-to for reading, information, and voting. In recent years, I have started using the digital resources, too. I appreciate everything the library has been for me."*



## FOCUS AREA ARTS AND HUMANITIES

To support residents in their creative, intellectual, and recreational pursuits and foster cultural enrichment. (A)

<i>Priority</i>		<i>Action Items</i>
<b>A1</b>	Offer a diverse physical and digital collection that supports the needs and interests of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain the Library of Things to support the County's sustainability efforts and offer programs and events that use the items.</li> <li>● Analyze and maintain the library's collection to ensure the materials and items reflect the community.</li> </ul>
<b>A2</b>	Collaborate with arts, humanities, and other creative organizations to provide programming for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer tutorials, workshops, or clubs to teach crafting and maker skills that will facilitate collaboration and community engagement while developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.</li> </ul>
<b>A3</b>	Offer timely and relevant cultural events and classes that showcase all members of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Celebrate cultural heritage months and other annual observations with relevant programs, displays, and materials.</li> <li>● Participate in community-wide cultural events through outreach efforts.</li> </ul>
<b>A4</b>	Support creativity through the library's collection, collaborative spaces, events, and classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain and promote the library's display spaces by partnering with local artists, archives, colleges of arts, and community organizations.</li> <li>● Host programs that engage community members in creative and recreational pursuits.</li> </ul>





*"It's really beautiful to see  
local artists exhibit in a public  
space like the library."*



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#### **Mission Statement**

To be an essential resource and place for learning, engagement and innovation that provides for our community's changing needs.

# YOUR COUNTY LIBRARIES



## **LeRoy Collins Leon County Main Library**

200 West Park Ave.  
(850) 606-2665



## **Bruce J. Host Northeast Branch Library**

5513 Thomasville Rd.  
(850) 606-2800



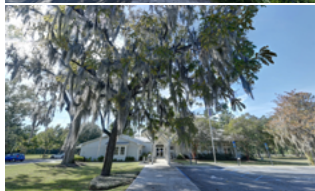
## **Dr. B. L. Perry, Jr. Branch Library**

2817 South Adams St.  
(850) 606-2950



## **Eastside Branch Library**

1583 Pedrick Rd.  
(850) 606-2750



## **Jane G. Sauls Fort Braden Branch Library**

16327 Blountstown Hwy.  
(850) 606-2900



## **Lake Jackson Branch Library**

Lake Jackson Town Center, 3840-300 North Monroe St.  
(850) 606-2850



## **Woodville Branch Library**

8000 Old Woodville Rd.  
(850) 606-2925

Visit **LeonCountyLibrary.org** to access our digital library and to sign up for a library card.

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# Leon County Wants to Learn About Your Vision for Our Essential Libraries

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Provide input on the LeRoy Collins Leon County  
Public Library System at **850-606-2665**.

To get more information on library resources and  
events, visit **LeonCountyLibrary.org**.

**Follow us on social media**



LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library  
200 West Park Ave. | Tallahassee, Florida 32301