



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update: April May June 2022

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Here are the initiatives worked on over the last several months that specifically support our strategic priorities.

Promoting the Library as an impartial platform for creating **MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS AND CONNECTIONS**

As a special project, the Manville branch began the Inspire Action initiative in early 2020 in an effort to curate information in the public interest. Content is sent to the branch by not-for-profit and governmental institutions, as well as the branch using SCLSNJ resources as a compliment for customers. This initiative empowers the community to become a part of its own well-being. The project passively asks several questions like “what do you need?” and “how can you contribute?” Efforts also highlight the resources of community partners who want to improve civic conditions and the lives of the people who live in the library service area. Uniformly sized cards that have "actions" indicated on the front, along with contact information for the organization, is on the back. The cards are also produced in Spanish. The cards cover a variety of topics, like the location of local food banks, how Seniors may contact Somerset County’s Handyman program, or where members of the public can volunteer to teach English. All resources are local and vetted by the branch. The cards are updated at scheduled intervals.





SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update: April May June 2022

Exploring new ways to SHAPE OUR SPACES to meet community needs

SCLSNJ opened its eleventh branch library on Thursday, June 16, 2022. The new Montgomery branch is located at 100 Headquarters Park Drive in Skillman, New Jersey. The community has eagerly awaited the opening of Montgomery Township's new municipal center that includes offices for municipal staff, police department, and the new branch. The opening of this new state-of-the-art facility, for which we received \$5.375 million in state library funds, is cause for celebration across the entire county. Montgomery Mayor Devra Keenan noted "the new municipal center has been designed to serve as a community gathering place, something that our community has long sought, and which has proven even more essential after two years of a pandemic that kept members of our community in relative isolation." County Library Administrator Brian Auger commented that "we finally opened the doors of this beautiful new Library where we'll be showcasing new services and fresh takes on familiar ones." The new branch encompasses 21,500 square feet of space for community members to connect, to explore, to share and to discover all that SCLSNJ offers.

WELCOMING new residents

Select branches will be sharing information on the Democracy Conversation Project (DCP). Funded through the "Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation" initiative, DCP is a public humanities program designed to foster discussions among New Jersey communities about civic life and democracy issues in America. Participating branches are partnered with materials from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. DCP will create a depository for civic feedback on the state of the country in looking at democracy issues. The intent of this project is to capture a moment in time in civic life. Index cards are offered to the public with set questions. SCLSNJ is investigating Spanish-language version boxes. The initiative began June 19th and will run through election day in November 2022.

Addressing the needs of SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS

SCLSNJ Passport Services returned to the branches on a rotating basis in June 2022. The Civic Services team offers U.S. passport services that include applying for a new passport, renewing a passport, answering customer questions, as well as taking passport photographs. With the increased media attention to the May 2023 deadline for Real ID documents for domestic flights, SCLSNJ saw an influx of customers interested in passport products. Both the passport book and passport card are Real ID compliant documents, providing alternate or additional identification options to an updated state ID or driver's license. Beginning Wednesday, June 1, SCLSNJ's passport team started accepting appointments at a different branch each week from 4 to 7 p.m.



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update: April May June 2022

CORE SERVICES:

Core service activities are a part of normal SCLSNJ business.
Here are a few recent highlights and examples.

Making PERSONALIZED CONNECTIONS between patrons and materials

Due to current events during this time period, it was important to offer customers librarian-curated booklists for guidance on what was entitled 'Navigating a Hard World.' Prominently displayed on the SCLSNJ website, resource titles were shared with adults (*Choosing Hope: Moving Forward From Life's Darkest Hours*) to resources for children and teens (*Kids Speak Out About Violence*) to picture books about building tolerance and embracing others (*Just Help!: How to Build a Better World*). Unfortunately, we live in a world where tragedy strikes more often than we would like, and SCLSNJ is responsive in finding ways for children and adults to cope with societal impacts.

Presenting programs that help community members CONNECT, EXPLORE, SHARE AND DISCOVER

It has been two years since Broadway went dark, but now it is coming back better than ever. SCLSNJ was pleased to offer a presentation of all things Broadway with theater expert Brian Stoll. Library users received an update on the happenings and re-opening of Broadway, as well as a brief history of the Playbill and its importance. He also shared money-saving tips on how to score bargain tickets to shows. Mr. Stoll is a theater and entertainment enthusiast from Long Island, New York. He graduated from Binghamton University with his Bachelor's Degree in Human Development, and has attended over 200 Broadway performances! He started this *Stoll The Show* to encourage library customers to support the arts.

Serving as a community GATHERING SPACE

Now that the Mary Jacobs branch is temporarily closed, the Mary Jacobs Foundation is readying its phase two construction plans for a reopening soon. The new branch space will consist of approximately 3,000 square feet, and will be open for 20-hours of service per week. An exciting new component of the branch includes a repositioning of the exterior front doors, which will open onto the front lawn. This will allow for an examination of enhanced outdoor programming in relation to space planning issues. Cornerstone Architectural Group is the principle on the project, and you can view the new design plans below.



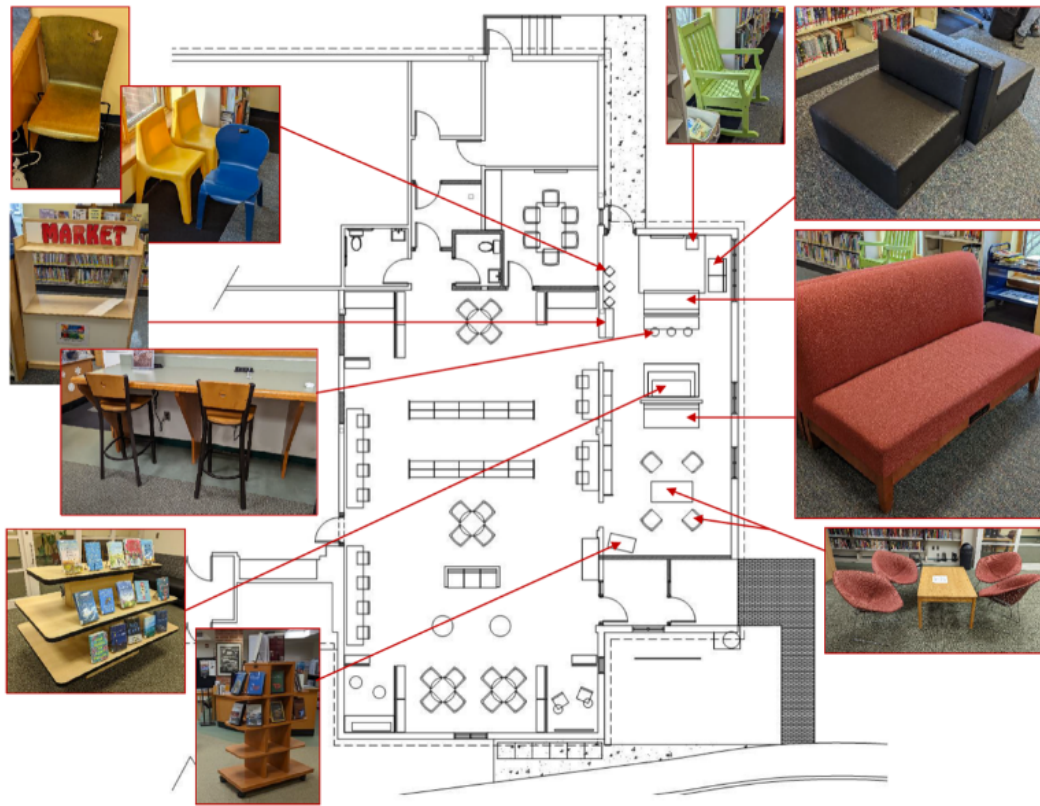
SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update: April May June 2022



More to come as updates happen!

Promoting and supporting **LIFELONG LEARNING**

On April 7th, 2022, the SCLSNJ Disability Job Fair, after a two-year hiatus, returned to the public. A key contributing factor was finding the correct timing for reintroducing the event. During the pandemic's transition to endemic, there was a remaining reluctance for job seekers, as witnessed by a relatively sparsely attended job fairs across the county in 2021. Somewhere between then and now, it became the right time to forge ahead and hold a well-attended event for potential employers, service agencies, job seekers, and the targeted audience for the various services currently available. Overall, 107 attendees were counted. The Civic Services table counted 52 individual interactions to discuss volunteering opportunities. Staff volunteering the event noticed continuous and engaging interaction with the public for the entire duration of the event, scheduled from 4 to 7 p.m. that Thursday afternoon into the evening.



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update: April May June 2022

Providing TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND EXPERTISE that meet the needs of the community

SCLSNJ is soon offering equipment in Montgomery's Digital Preservation Lab to allow customers to make digital copies of all kinds of things, including recording in old audio and video formats. The staff team started to collect old players and recorders to make this possible in the future. Staff were asked if they had old equipment in closets, basements, attics, or storage units to consider donating it to SCLSNJ. All equipment provided became a donation to SCLSNJ. Items sought included:

- Blu-Ray players
- Record players
- CD players
- DAT audio tape players
- VHS-C camcorders
- MiniDV camcorders
- Reel-to-reel audio tape players
- Mini-cassette player/recorders
- Micro-cassette player/recorder
- 8-track player
- LaserDisc player
- Betamax video player
- MiniDisc player and CD Rom drive
- 5-1/4" floppy drive

Another creative staff innovation in sharing expertise to meet public technological interest!

Creating opportunities that build Somerset County's ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SCLSNJ was pleased to join forces with Somerset County and put efforts towards the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). ERAP provided significant economic relief to low-and moderate-income households with financial support for rental arrears and temporary rental assistance. The program used \$7.7 million in Federal COVID-relief funds. Since Somerset County launched the program in August 2021, more than 1,700 families have been helped to stay in the homes and communities they love. As of April 12, 2022, Somerset County allocated all of its current ERAP funding and is no longer accepting new applications. However, additional Federal funds may become available in the coming weeks and months, and we encourage residents who may benefit from ERAP to provide their contact information to be notified immediately if applications open up again.



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

One Vogt Drive, P.O. Box 6700, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

T: 908.458.8400 F: 908.707.8324

Visit SCLSNJ.org

**SCLSNJ Strategic Plan Update:
April May June 2022**