



# Simsbury Public Library Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026



*INSPIRE. EXPLORE. CONNECT.*



# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Fellow Simsbury Residents,

I am pleased to share with you the Simsbury Public Library Strategic Plan for 2022 through 2026. Since its establishment, the Library has played an integral part of enhancing life in Simsbury. The goal of developing the Strategic Plan was to identify ways in which the Library can enable Simsbury to meet the needs and desires of its residents, especially as to the type of community in which its residents want to live.

This Plan is the framework for moving the Library into the future. It is designed to be able to address short term needs and be broad enough to adjust and meet future demands. The past two years has definitely tested that ability to be flexible. When the 2017 to 2021 Strategic plan was written, the committee couldn't anticipate a global pandemic and all the issues that stemmed from it. That plan, however, enabled the Staff to respond successfully to the needs of the community as they arose. Curbside pickup of materials was started, programs were offered online, updates to national, state and local mandates were continually sent to patrons, the Business Resource Center became the Business and Career center and the best practices for keeping the Library patrons and Staff safe and healthy were implemented.





This Plan was developed based on input from you, the residents, the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library, the Library staff, town departments, civic organizations and town officials. At its core were questionnaires available to all Simsbury residents and Library patrons. Its focus is not on the Library as a standalone entity, but on how the Library can help meet the changing needs of Simsbury residents.

Books have traditionally been the heart of a library's collection, but over the years sources of information have gone far beyond the printed page. Resources and content have expanded to include visual, audio and digital formats. Perhaps most importantly, knowledge and information are gained by person to person interactions. These interactions may take many forms including formal presentations, interactive programs, online programs, shared technology, hands on experimentation and innovation and sharing ideas with others. This plan embraces all these opportunities for enrichment.

The Board of Trustees for the Simsbury Public Library hopes this plan will help Simsbury residents understand the direction in which the Library is heading and how it expects to meet its objectives. We remain committed to providing excellent customer service and being the Community Gathering Place. We will continue to make the Library a safe and welcoming environment for all our patrons, where their lives can be enhanced, their horizons expanded and their quest for lifelong learning satisfied.

Marianne B. O'Neil

Chair, Simsbury Public Library Board of Trustees

### Welcome to Simsbury!

First inhabited by the Massacoe Tribe, the land along the banks of the Farmington River Valley provided rich soil and abundant fish and game for the indigenous people, as well opportunity for early settlers who migrated to the area's fertile grounds in the mid-seventeenth century. Named in 1670, early citizens farmed the land, manufactured explosives, quarried rock and transported goods along the canal system that ran through the center of town. Their legacy of hard work and neighborly care has evolved into a community that offers top-notch public schools, an award-winning library, outstanding recreation facilities, and a robust business community. We are a community that takes pride in its history with aspirations for a bright future.

Simsbury is a suburb of Hartford located in Connecticut's scenic Farmington Valley. Its population of 25,395 people lives mainly in single family homes nestled among woodlands, parks and agricultural land. Several new apartment complexes have recently welcomed more than 1,000 new neighbors of all ages to town. Yet Simsbury retains its small-town feel with robust civic engagement through dozens of clubs, service organizations, sports leagues and houses of worship. The local economy is supported by a combination of small businesses, retailers, restaurants and corporations.

Simsbury is a well-educated community that values educational excellence and lifelong learning opportunities. Simsbury High School's graduation rate is 94% and schools have consistently ranked near the top in state-wide mastery tests. The town is also home to numerous private schools and an active home school population.

Community members and visitors enjoy the outdoors along the town's hiking and biking trails and the scenic Farmington River. The Town also offers excellent outdoor facilities at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, Simsbury Farms Golf Course and Recreation Complex, and several parks.



Simsbury Public Library has grown in service to the town since it was founded as the Simsbury Free Library in 1872. Thoughtful growth over the years allowed the Library to expand its footprint and diversify the resources it provides. It has become essential to the spirit of Simsbury as a connector, convener and center for learning. With several renovations and expansions, the library is now a 45,795 square foot building that serves the public with eight meeting rooms, streaming broadcast capabilities, a thriving Children's Department, the Business and Career Center and the Innovators Workshop. The Library's foundational print collections and digital resources provide free access to a world of information.



The majority of Library funding comes from the Town of Simsbury in the form of tax appropriation. The Library also seeks grants, receives bequests and memorial gifts as well as substantial financial and programming support from the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library.

**The Town has invested \$1.29 per week per capita for the past three years. The return on that investment is currently \$6.93 for every \$1 spent.**

Guided by the 2016 Strategic Plan, the Library made significant strides in both in-person and digital access for patrons. Library staff connected with residents regularly at off-site programs while encouraging patrons to visit the library for a wide variety of programs, classes and events. Digital resources were updated and expanded, and new cable broadcast capabilities enabled the public to access programs from home and online. This focus on accessibility positioned the Library to serve the community well. When the pandemic altered lives in so many unforeseen ways in 2020, the Library continuously made resources available to the public virtually. Residents and businesses looked to the Library as a trusted source of information to help them navigate through unexplored waters. Even during the shutdown, thousands of patrons remained connected to the world and each other through Library services and resources.

**5.5K+  
Curbside  
Requests**

**200+  
Virtual &  
Recorded  
Programs**

**75% Increase in  
Borrowed Digital  
Material  
&  
33% More Online  
Offerings Since the  
Last Strategic Plan**

**2.6K Facebook  
&  
3.2K Instagram  
Followers**



# VISION & MISSION STATEMENT

## Our Vision

The Simsbury Public Library inspires an inclusive community that values exploration and connection through learning.

## Our Mission

The Simsbury Public Library provides free and equal access to information, experiences and educational resources that build community and inspire a lifetime of learning.

***The Simsbury Public Library is the center of a community of life-long learners.***



# **SIMSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **STATEMENT ON**

### **EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Simsbury Public Library recognizes that Simsbury is a diverse community and welcomes patrons, staff, and volunteers of all ages, abilities, races, genders, ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic statuses, political affiliations, and viewpoints.

We invite each and every one of you to bring your full, authentic self to the Library. The Library is committed to providing a comfortable space, where your individual needs are met with respect and without judgment. As a vital asset to the Town of Simsbury, we provide equal access to information and resources that allow individuals to thrive and learn in an ever-changing society, and support the community's exploration of matters related to diversity, tolerance, openness, acceptance, and inclusion.

To promote these values, Simsbury Public Library will:

- Create and sustain a culture of respect, in which individuals are heard, valued, and included.
- Remain engaged with the community in a process of continual improvement and responsiveness to matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Develop and implement programs, services, collections, and spaces for all ages that are diverse and inclusive.
- Expand strategic partnerships and collaborations with local organizations that seek to overcome social injustice and advance equity in the community.

***Approved by the Simsbury Public Library staff September 15, 2021***  
***Approved by the Library Board of Trustees September 20, 2021***



Programs and platforms may change over time, but one thing that remains the same is the Library's commitment to continuously provide superior traditional library services while evolving in a digital world. The ways in which people interact with each other, information and technology require that the Library seeks and evaluates new approaches for offering services and resources in safe, effective ways. This new 2022 Strategic Plan considers the continued digital evolution while keeping the institution centered on building community. The plan also balances community input with the understanding of the Library's limited resources. The plan is structured with the same framework that allowed the previous plan to remain focused yet flexible when the need arose.



This document is the result of community surveys, library staff input and the work of a dedicated planning committee. The committee was comprised of members of the Library Board of Trustees, Library staff and representatives from the greater Simsbury community. The Strategic Planning Committee compiled this new plan knowing that the people of Simsbury want to live in a community that is welcoming, inclusive and active.



## GOAL 1

Simsbury Library is the center of an inclusive community that values and welcomes peoples of all abilities, cultures and lived experiences.

- Engage the community in a process of continual improvement and responsiveness to matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Develop and implement programs, services, collections, and spaces for all ages that are diverse and inclusive.
- Expand strategic partnerships and collaborations with local organizations that seek to advance equity and overcome social injustice in the community.
- Increase services to under-served members of the community.
- Enhance programming that fosters both individuals' and the community's understanding of social, cultural, intellectual and political affairs.
- Offer services to welcome new residents.





## GOAL 2

The Library is a safe space for exploration that offers free and equal access to digital and physical resources.

- Offer optimal accessibility by presenting programs at the Library, in the community and online.
- Continually evaluate 24/7 access and ensure technology meets the needs of the community.
- Explore requirements to provide hardware and internet access to patrons who cannot afford virtual connections without assistance.
- Provide the highest level of security to staff and visitors to the library.
- Provide the highest level of security for patrons accessing online resources.
- Regularly evaluate the need for refreshing and improving the Library.
- Offer welcoming and well-maintained grounds and facilities.



## GOAL 3

Through in-person and virtual engagement with information and people, the Library inspires people to learn about themselves, their community and the world.



- Promote the depth and variety of Library services and resources to the community, encouraging deeper and broader patron engagement.
- Offer community-wide gatherings that promote inclusion of diverse people both in and outside our immediate community.
- Increase collaboration and strategic partnerships with organizations, businesses and libraries to increase program diversity.
- Encourage and incubate innovation and ideas among patrons and the community.





## **GOAL 4**

Simsbury Library supports a thriving economy with information, tools and connections to promote businesses, nonprofits and careers.

- Continue to grow a robust and relevant Business and Career Center with a dedicated BCC Coordinator.
- Build on and expand partnerships with businesses and organizations to spark programs and initiatives.
- Host programs at strategic commercial and nonprofit sites to raise awareness of local resources and expertise.
- Strengthen the entrepreneurial resources to encourage business incubation.
- Continually disseminate information, resources and guidelines to the business community.
- Support individual career development and employment with informational and skill-building programs.
- Maintain the Innovators' Workshop to include relevant technologies.
- Support and collaborate with town's economic development commission.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

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**INSPIRE.  
EXPLORE.  
CONNECT.**





**Simsbury Public Library**  
*So much happens here.*

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