



Who We Are

PLANit Sarasota is the local college access network (LCAN) for Sarasota County. With the Education Foundation of Sarasota County as the backbone organization, **PLANit Sarasota is an alliance of community organizations and corporate partners working to increase the rate of students who pursue purposeful education after high school.** We are especially focused on improving that rate among those historically underrepresented in higher education.

Our Goal

Our goal is to **convene, connect, and collaborate with organizations and individuals to address the barriers that hinder students from gaining an education beyond high school.** Through the coordinated and intentional efforts of our partners, we do more for students. Together, we can increase the percentage of Sarasota County residents 24 years and under who have obtained a high value certificate or degree to 60% by 2030.

What Motivates Us

In 2020 – 2021, Sarasota County Schools reported that 45.5% of its student body was economically disadvantaged. In 2020, only 88.6% percent of its low-income students graduated high school, significantly lower than the 92.5% of all students graduating that year. Only 88.2% of its African American and Hispanic students graduated compared to 94% of white students. In 2019, only 45.7% of its economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a postsecondary education in Florida within the first academic year after graduating.

In 2019, nationwide, 29% of the African American population aged 25 – 29 held a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 18.8% of the Hispanic population in the same range held a bachelor’s degree compared to 45% of their white counterparts (Postsecondary National Policy Institute).

Only 42.5% of Sarasota County residents between the ages of 25 – 64 hold an associate degree or higher. Yet 60% of Florida jobs in 2025 will require education beyond high school (Florida College Access Network).

These statistics fuel PLANit Sarasota’s work—because the benefits of completing specialized training or college are so immense. Education after high school profoundly improves the lives of individuals and their families and changes the trajectory of families for generations to come. It keeps our community thriving.



How We Support Students

For many first-generation and low-income students as well as students of color, realizing the dream of college or specialized training can be uniquely challenging.

We connect community partners to students to ensure they can access extra layers of support. A connected, robust community can do so much more. Together, we can guide more students to the life-changing resources provided by PLANit Sarasota and its partners.



These resources are provided through the PLANit Sarasota workgroups, and they include FAFSA workshops, financial aid webinars, career explorations, and many others. Our partners offer unique programming and services that support students and help them realize their dreams.

How We Collaborate to Change Lives

The collective spirit of PLANit Sarasota and the amazing opportunities it provides was on full display last spring, when we hosted an Auto & Marine Lunch & Learn at the Education Foundation of Sarasota County's Student Success Center at North Port High School. After learning about careers in auto and marine repair, five students signed up to take fast-track training at PLANit Sarasota partner Suncoast Technical College, with their tuition covered by another partner, CareerEdge.

Student Adam Elg attended. While he took advanced courses at North Port High, he always wanted to work with his hands. He completed the training and now works at Audi Sarasota, doing what he loves most.

Perhaps PLANit Sarasota's collaborative work is best exemplified in Nicole's story. After her father died, she took a job at a factory instead of pursuing education after high school. A mentee in the Education Foundation's mentoring program, she found herself in an unstable housing situation. The manager of mentoring



worked with the director of PLANit Sarasota, who reached out to partners State College of Florida, which helped Nicole complete her FAFSA and find scholarships; CareerSource, which provided program and grant funding opportunities; and Suncoast Technical College, which helped her learn more about the Precision Machining and CNC Automation program, which she attended. She was the only female student in her class! With the help of her mentor, and PLANit Sarasota, Nicole accessed the resources she needed to realize the dream of a high-value certification during an incredibly challenging time.

PLANit Sarasota Workgroups

FAFSA informs students and families about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and assists to ensure they complete it. Our long-term goal is to increase the FAFSA completion rate to 60% and higher.

College, Career, Life Readiness / Having a Plan collaborates with Sarasota County School's College Career Readiness Committee to develop career, college, and life readiness by exposing students to opportunities and connecting them to employers.

Career Explorations raises awareness of college and career pathways for all students, with an emphasis on students not currently identified as college or career bound. We will achieve this goal by hosting in-person and virtual events open to all students in Sarasota County Schools.

Persistence uses student influencers, peer-to-peer forums, and social media campaigns to motivate students to pursue their education beyond high school. It encourages those who have moved on to college or technical school to continue their studies.



Our Partners

Our alliance for education and career planning is as varied as the students we support, but we are unified in our belief that students, when given the opportunity and resources, can pursue purposeful education after high school.

ARTS PARTNERS	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	EDUCATION PARTNERS	PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS	WORKFORCE PARTNERS	
<th>BUSINESS PARTNERS</th> <th>MENTORING PARTNERS</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td>	BUSINESS PARTNERS	MENTORING PARTNERS			