

Hubbardston Public Library

2025-2029 Strategic Plan



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Introduction

This is the Library's second 5-year Strategic Plan. It builds on the groundwork of our 2019-24 plan and our community survey with an overall focus on increasing use and visibility of the Library.

The Staff and Trustees of the Hubbardston Public Library recognize the important role that a Library has within the community. They developed and made significant progress on an initial strategic plan for 2019-2024. This 2025-2029 Strategic Plan builds on the previous plan to lead the Library team in its efforts to further enhance and expand the Library's collections, services and programs over the next five years to meet and promote the educational, recreational, and social needs of our community.

About the Town of Hubbardston

The Town of Hubbardston is located in northern Worcester County, south of Route 2 and 17 miles northwest of the city of Worcester. With a 2024 population of 4,351 in 41.1 square miles, there are only 106 people per square mile. Neighboring towns include: Phillipston, Templeton, Gardner, Westminster, Princeton, Rutland, and Barre. (Hubbardstonma.us) For more information about Hubbardston, see [Appendix 2](#).

About the Library



The Hubbardston Public Library is certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and operates pursuant to Board standards. The Library is open 24 hours a week over 5 days (closed on Fridays and Sundays). Currently, the Library collection includes over 11,500 physical items including books, audio books, and DVDs. As part of the CW MARS Library consortium for Central and Western Massachusetts, Hubbardston Library patrons can borrow physical items and audiobooks and ebooks from any of the 100 member libraries.

In addition to a range of special programs, the Library offers four regular programs (children's story time twice a week, Dungeon & Dragons for Teens and Tweens twice a month, Senior Book Club once a month, and Not Just Knitting program twice a month) and students from the Hubbardston Center School visit the library twice

a month during the school year. Rotating thematic and new book displays are prominent in both of the Library's reading rooms.

Library staff include the Library Director, an Assistant Librarian and Storytime Leader. A six-member elected Board of Library Trustees hires and supports the Library Director, engages in policy development and strategic planning, and provides financial and building maintenance oversight. As of July 1, 2024, the Library team consists of the following:

Library staff:

Christine Barbera, Library Director

Anne Goewey, Assistant Librarian

Patricia Lowe, Storytime Leader

Library Trustees

Connie Strittmatter, Chair

Tom Robinson, Vice-Chair

Krista Goguen, Secretary

Morgan Brinker

Chris Kisiel

Alycia Smith



The Hubbardston Public Library was founded in 1872, and originally housed its collection of books in the local Mechanics Hall. In 1874, Jonas G. Clark, a native of Hubbardston and founder of Clark University, purchased the Main Street Property and funded the construction of the brick and stone Library building. The building is in the Second Empire/Italianate style and was designed by Elbridge Boyden and Son, of Worcester. In September 1875, the Hubbardston Public Library opened the doors at its current location, 7 Main Street. The Library building will celebrate 150 years of operation in September 2025.

The main floor was originally half library, half post office, hence the plaques flanking the front door. The former post office is now an inviting childrens room. To take advantage of the two-story space, a gallery level was added to the

rear of the main reading room in 1929. Many residents recall the gallery's original translucent glass floor which has since been reinforced with a wooden floor. The gallery level currently houses storage and a legacy collection of Library books, including some

from the Hubbardston Library Association that predated the public Library and some from Mr. Clark's donation of books. The gallery level is no longer open to the public due to its limited accessibility by a single narrow staircase.



Over the last 25 years the Library received financial support from the town to maintain the building's historical status. In 2000, the Library property underwent a historical restoration project to address many of its needed repairs including fixing the front entry and stairs and cleaning and repointing the brickwork. In 2016, the Library had an interior restoration which included restoring the original heart pine floors, new carpet in the entry, electrical work, and repainting. In 2019, the Library roof was replaced and restored to the original slate color and pattern. Over the

last 5 years, the Library has also received funding through Community Preservation (CPA) and Capital Improvement (CIPC) for infrastructure improvements to electrical, lighting, windows, and building foundation, as well as a 2023 Building Conditions Assessment Report. Thanks to a Green Communities Competitive Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), the Library's aging heating system will be supplemented with new high efficiency air source heat pumps installed throughout the Library building in 2024-25.

The Library building is home not only to the Library on the main floor, but it also houses several of the Hubbardston Town Offices in the basement and the Hubbardston Historical Society's collections on the second floor. The second floor 'museum' area is no longer open to the public due to its single point of entry and the lack of an elevator. There is a manual chair lift to assist users with main floor entry, but there is no assistive access to the upper floor.

Library users visit the Library to borrow materials from the collections, participate in children and adult programming, and to find a welcoming space for quiet and academic reflection. While we have dedicated Library users, survey results showed that these users also visit other area libraries.

Library's Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

The Hubbardston Public Library is dedicated to inspiring, supporting and connecting our local community by procuring and ensuring access to a variety of quality materials, technologies, programs, and services to fulfill each patron's educational, recreational, and cultural needs regardless of all ages, abilities, or background.

Vision Statement

Through our collections, services and programs we will be a reliable resource, ensuring that our community has access to the materials and information they seek, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and discovery.

Values Statement

In May 2024, the Library trustees and staff adopted the following core values that guide our Library work:

- **Access to information.** We support the freedom to read and ensure confidential access to information for people of all ages, abilities and means.
- **Professionalism.** We strive to deliver the highest quality Library services in a friendly, approachable and knowledgeable manner.
- **Community Engagement.** We ensure the Library is a welcoming space and provide educational and recreational programming for lifelong learning in collaboration with community groups and organizations as possible.
- **Good stewardship.** We hold ourselves accountable for the efficient and effective use of all resources - people, time, preservation of assets and funds.

The Planning Process and Needs Assessment

The Board of Trustees began the strategic planning process in fall 2023 with a review of the previous Strategic Plan and annual progress reports. Trustees utilized the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Strategic Planning Guide and the Public Library Association book, *Strategic Planning for Public Libraries* by Joy Fuller to develop a timeline, a plan for community input, and proficiencies with needs analysis techniques. A working group of three trustees was formed to finalize the community survey and focus group questions. The survey was developed to gather feedback from the community about Library use, the Library building, programs and services and to identify which Library services, programs and collections the community utilizes or would like to see expanded. The Library conducted the community survey and three focus groups in April 2024. The focus groups were held in the town offices and conducted by a former Library trustee. The survey and focus groups were advertised on the Library's Facebook page and website, sent through a town email, and paper copies were distributed throughout town. summary of survey responses can be found in [Appendix 3](#)

In May and June 2024, Trustees and Library staff met to review the results of the community survey and focus groups and conducted SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis to identify the strategic priorities for this planning cycle. Trustees also

reviewed and revised the Library's Mission and Vision statements and approved a Values statement. The Library community survey and follow-up analysis were presented to the Town Select Board in May 2024 and made available through meeting minutes for the public to review. Over the summer, Trustees and Library staff drafted goals and strategies. A working group of three trustees and the Library director was formed in July 2024 to formalize the goals and strategies based on these strategic priorities. The strategic plan was approved by the Library Board of Trustees in September 2024 and submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) in October 2024. The finalized plan will be posted on the Library's website and publicized on social media and through town communication channels.

As part of this plan, the Library director will work with the Library staff and two trustees to develop an annual action plan based on the objectives and actions identified in this plan, address the previous year's achievements, and identify new needs as they emerge. The annual action plan will be presented to the Library trustees for approval and then submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

SWOT/SOAR ANALYSIS

Strengths

The Hubbardston Public Library is an iconic building in the center of town. The location enables the Library to collaborate with organizations and town offices. For example the Library hosted the town's Citizen's Academy which was a 6 week program for citizens to attend to learn more about town operations. The Library staff is held in high regard with those who use the Library and are continually complimented on their friendly and knowledgeable service. The Library expanded its hours of operation from 21 to 24 hours a week which exceeds the required hours for a Library of its size and budget. The Library continues to offer interesting books displays and has increased its social media presence to reach a broader audience. Over the past several years, the Hubbardston Public Library has worked hard to instill the value of reading to children. During the school year, students from the Hubbardston Center School visit the Library every other week. Each summer, the Summer Reading Program reaches children of all ages. Children's programming has increased from one program per week to two programs per week with special story times on select Saturdays.

Weaknesses/Threats

The Library building, while beautiful, has several challenges. As an aging building, there are several structural issues that need to be addressed. The 19th century

steep entrance and lack of an elevator can make it challenging for those with mobility issues or strollers to access the building.

The Library shares its space with several town offices and the second floor is inaccessible and underutilized. As a result, the Library space is only one floor. The lack of space makes it difficult to create diverse spaces that meet the needs of all Library users and is a barrier to the growth of the Library's collection, programs, and services. The Library is also limited in the grants that it can apply for given the mixed use nature of the building. The Library shares a parking lot with town offices and the senior center which can make parking difficult for library users.

In addition to building challenges Hubbardston is a small, rural community with significant budget constraints, insufficient broadband service, and perhaps a population that has not optimally realized the benefits of a public Library as a valuable resource. The Library has three staff members working only a total of 40 hours a week. While the Library excels in its children's programming, the lack of staffing, budgets and space makes it difficult to offer a robust set of programming for adults, seniors, teens, and families.

Opportunities/Aspirations

Eliminating infrastructure shortcomings and improving access will allow for future expansion and diversification of offerings by the Hubbardston Public Library to facilitate the realization of our aspirations to become a more vital community resource. The Town of Hubbardston is actively pursuing the acquisition of a separate building for all town offices which would make it possible for the library to gain use of the entire building. If the building housed only the Library, new sources of financial support would be available to help offset the cost of the significant renovations needed for remodeling and improve accessibility. Gaining the use of the entire building would also enable the Library to provide a dedicated space for programs, as well as spaces for social interactions, quiet reading and study, meetings, and exhibits.

The town of Hubbardston also has a plan to improve internet access which will further increase the use and visibility of the Library. Grant opportunities as well as funding from the town will be investigated to support improving library technology. There is a feeling of optimism about the current action plans within Hubbardston which if realized will result in the Library becoming a more visible community resource.

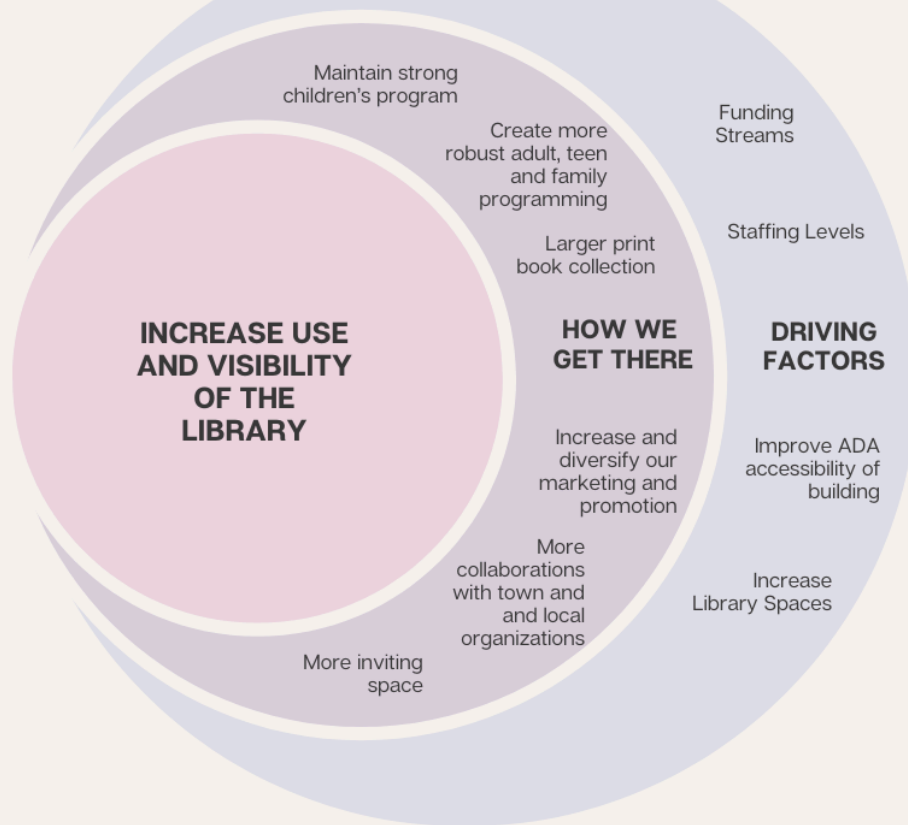
Results

The Library is well-positioned to address some of the weaknesses mentioned above and is committed to creating spaces and programs that meet users' needs. The Library sees an opportunity to offer multi-generational programs, host programs from external groups, provide programs at off-site locations, and create more programming for all age groups. To do this, the Library trustees and staff need to explore grant opportunities for programming and ADA accessibility and seek additional funding from the town for hiring additional personnel needed to support this expansion of the Library.

Success in achieving the strategic goals of the Hubbardston Public Library is measured by increased membership, circulation of library materials and financial support as well as a more multigenerational participation in Library programs, events, and community partnerships. Retaining and hiring competent and enthusiastic Library personnel will support the Library's existing and new initiatives. Improving partnerships with other community organizations such as the Historical Society, Senior Center, Town departments and committees, and local schools, along with improved and more transparent communication and marketing will help establish the Library as a visible and viable hub for all constituents in the community.

The infographic highlights the Library's strategic goal to increase the visibility and use of the Library, key factors to achieve the goals and driving factors.

HUBBARDSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Collaborations, Communication and Outreach.

Hubbardston Public Library will explore collaborations and outreach opportunities with local community organizations, local public libraries, and individuals.



Strategy 1: Making connections with the community.

- Continue to identify potential groups for collaborations (Senior Center, Cultural Council, Historical Society, Scout Troops, businesses, speakers, Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT), neighboring libraries)
- Reach out to groups using various communication channels (i.e. personal connections, social media, meeting attendance, etc.)
- Build relationships with local history stakeholders to promote cultural heritage to the community (e.g. invite/have joint meeting with historical society)
- Continue to participate in civic events like Field Day, Hubbardston Fair, and the annual Library Road Race
- Promote civic activities on the Library website, town website, Barre Gazette, and in-Library displays
- Explore internship opportunities for high school or college students to assist in developing an outreach and communication plan

Strategy 2: Library Trustees and Staff will be transparent in keeping the community informed and solicit feedback about Library related issues through regular communication

- Provide meeting videos and comprehensive meeting minutes to the community
- Post meeting minutes in a timely manner
- Regularly seek feedback from constituents about their use and satisfaction with Library services, collections and programs using formal and informal assessments
- Library trustees attend events to create relationships with community members

Strategy 3: Communicate more effectively with local government offices

- Invite Town Administrator to attend at least two meeting per year
- Contribute to the monthly town-wide department report update

- Provide a “State of the Library” to the Select Board and community once per year
- Continue building the relationship with the Library’s Select Board Liaison

Goal 2: Library Programs

The Hubbardston Public Library will offer cultural, educational, engaging, and relevant programming to enhance lifelong learning.



Strategy 1: Increase programming for all audiences

- Children: Maintain existing weekly early childhood storytime and offer Saturday programs when possible
 - School Age Children: Continue collaboration with the Hubbardston Elementary School to have students visit the HPL on a bi-weekly basis to borrow Library materials and learn information literacy skills
- Teens and Tweens: Continue D&D and gaming programs for tweens and teens
- Teens: Explore partnership opportunities with Quabbin Regional High School to serve as a site for high school students to engage in Library related projects for their senior Capstone project
- Teens: Create a teen advisory group
- Seniors: Collaborate with Hubbardston Senior Center to develop programs of interest (e.g. provide instructional sessions on how to access Libby, the e-book and audiobook platform.
- Survey other area libraries about their program offerings and programming trends
- Explore options for collaborative programming with other local libraries or organizations

Strategy 2: Publicize Library programs to increase attendance

- Promote programs on the Library website, social media, town website, Barre Gazette, and in-Library display
- Create a tool to track attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of the publicity

Strategy 3: Explore adding personnel/hours dedicated to Library programming

- Survey other area libraries about their programming calendar and budget for programming personnel
- Develop a justification document outlining the need for additional hours, expectations and responsibilities for the position, and benefits to the community

- Consult with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) regarding staffing recommendations

Goal 3: Library Collections

The Hubbardston Public Library follows its collection development policy to provide a balanced and diverse collection for all ages that responds to community preferences and emerging trends.



Strategy 1: Continue to provide a balanced and diverse collection

- Continue to utilize Library selection tools and bestseller lists
- Proactively add materials on emerging topics and trends
- Maintain a dynamic book collection through the removal of damaged, outdated and unused materials
- Continue to expand the “Library of Things” collection

Strategy 2: Be responsive to community suggestions for reading materials

- Promote ‘request for purchase’ and ‘share your comments form’ in the Library and on the Library website
- Continue to monitor hold alerts for ebooks and e-audio

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities to preserve Hubbardston’s historical documents and records

- Consult with Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Preservation staff
- Investigate Digital Commonwealth and Internet Archive digitization services for libraries <https://archive.org/scanning>
- Collaborate with the Hubbardston Historical Society to organize and prioritize collections for digitization

Strategy 4: Continue to refine the selection of museum passess offered to citizens

- Conduct a usage analysis of current museum passes to determine return on investment (ROI)
- Conduct a survey of local libraries to identify additional passes of interest

Strategy 5: Highlight Library collections and museum passes through a variety of channels including social media, Library website, and physical displays.

- Continue to create topical displays in adult and children's rooms on a rotating basis
- Investigate website tools for online displays of new books and/or topical displays
- Investigate website tools for messaging users (e.g. new book alerts, newsletter)
- Create and distribute brochures at outreach events and to new Library cardholders

Strategy 6: Continue to maintain our consortial relationship with CW MARS to maximize access to items beyond our local collection

- Continue to promote access to ebooks and audiobooks through LIBBY
- Educate users about interlibrary loan services and requesting physical materials from other libraries
- Utilize communication tools to remind residents and Town government of the value of meeting Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) requirements for consortium participation

Goal 4: Building Accessibility and Interior Space

The Hubbardston Public Library will become more accessible to our Library users.



Strategy 1: Trustees will explore options for making the building entrance and 2nd floor more accessible for all users.

- Investigate options for upgrading the sidewalk and walkway
 - Continue to investigate options for adding an elevator and emergency exits for the 2nd floor
- Visit other local 'historic' libraries to identify resources they have used to achieve accessibility

Strategy 2: Continue to pursue and highlight services that make it easier for users to utilize our collections

- Continue to offer curbside delivery
- Continue to provide access to alternative media (audio and digital, services for the blind)
- Investigate additional services that reduce barriers affecting patrons use of the Library

Strategy 3: Explore options for reconfiguring interior space, including use of lower and upper floors for the Library.

- Collaborate with Town Administrator and Select Board on relocation of town offices
- Develop a justification document outlining the need for additional space, resources needed to support the space, and benefits to the community
- Collaborate with the Historical Society to determine the best use of shared space in the building

Goal 5 :Stewardship

Library Trustees and Staff are effective stewards and managers of the Library building and its fiscal resources.

Strategy 1: Be good stewards of the Library's fiscal resources

- Continue monthly review of Library accounts
- Investigate trust fund investment details
- Trustee training on State accounts.
- Execute Library capital improvements according to the town master capital plan

Strategy 2: Explore opportunities to increase Library funding through capital campaigns, fundraisers, and grants to increase funding for programming and infrastructure improvements

- Review grant opportunity spreadsheet twice a year to identify potential grant opportunities
- Explore new fundraising opportunities
- Explore establishing a Friends of the Library group to help support fundraising efforts

Strategy 3: Continue to participate in professional development opportunities for Library trustees and staff

- Offer paid professional development opportunities to staff at least two times per year (e.g. paid time for workshop or conference attendance)
- Support staff attendance at Town professional development and staff appreciation events
- Provide annual Trustee training/refresher
- Library Trustees attend events to increase their knowledge of town practices and policies.

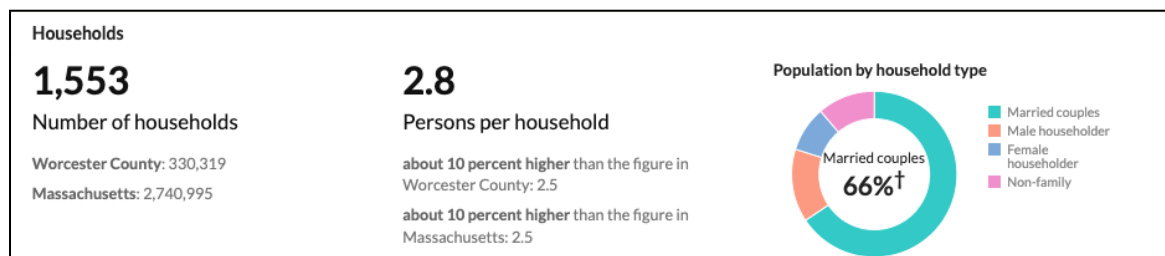
Strategy 4: Continue to define and develop service-oriented Library policies to ensure safety and equal access to information for all users

- Conduct a policy review to ensure that the Library has a full range of policies needed to operate the Library
- Develop a schedule for reviewing policies
- Publicize Library policies on the Library website, social media, and in print

Appendices

Appendix 1: Hubbardston at a Glance

(Source: [Hubbardston town, Worcester County, MA - Profile data - Census Reporter](#))



Income

\$44,194

Per capita income

a little less than the amount in
Worcester County: \$45,433

about 80 percent of the amount in
Massachusetts: \$53,513

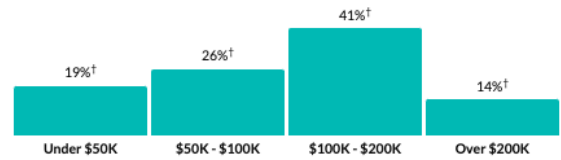
\$114,922

Median household income

about 1.3 times the amount in
Worcester County: \$88,524

about 20 percent higher than the
amount in Massachusetts: \$96,505

Household income



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Poverty

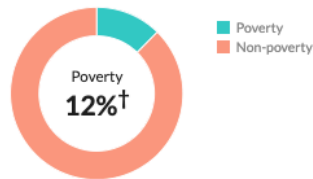
7.5% ±4.6% (324 ±198)

Persons below poverty line

about three-quarters of the rate in Worcester
County: 10% 83,304 (±0.4% / ±3,673)

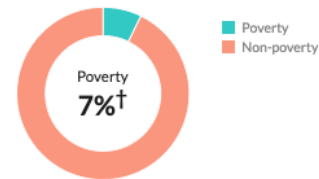
about three-quarters of the rate in Massachusetts:
9.9% 672,361 (±0.2% / ±11,769)

Children (Under 18)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Transportation to work

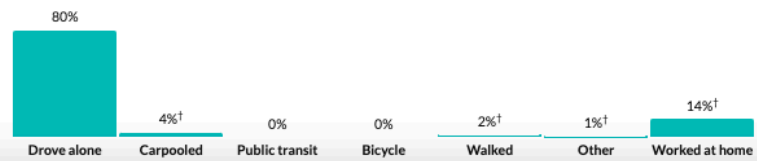
38 minutes

Mean travel time to work

about 1.3 times the figure in Worcester County:
29.3

about 1.3 times the figure in Massachusetts: 29.4

Means of transportation to work



Appendix 2: Hubbardston Library FY2024 Year in Review

FY 2024

From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 our patrons have borrowed
16,513 items and saved \$227,475 by borrowing instead of buying!

The Top 5 most circulated authors:

Dav Pilkey

Mo Willems

Jeff Kinney

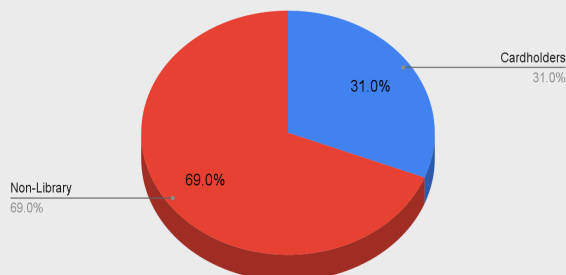
Jerry Pallotta

Lauran Tarshis

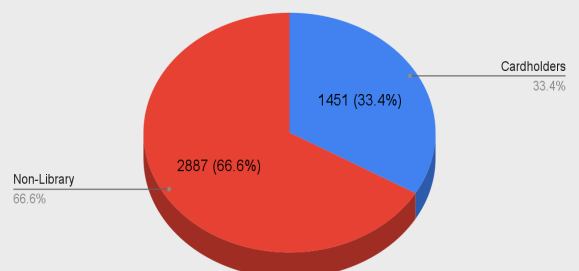
Top 5 most circulated items:

1. **The Bad Guys** (graphic novel)
2. **Wings of Fire** (graphic novel)
3. **Lunch Lady** (graphic novel)
4. **MaryJanes Farm** (magazine)
5. **Better Homes & Gardens** (magazine)

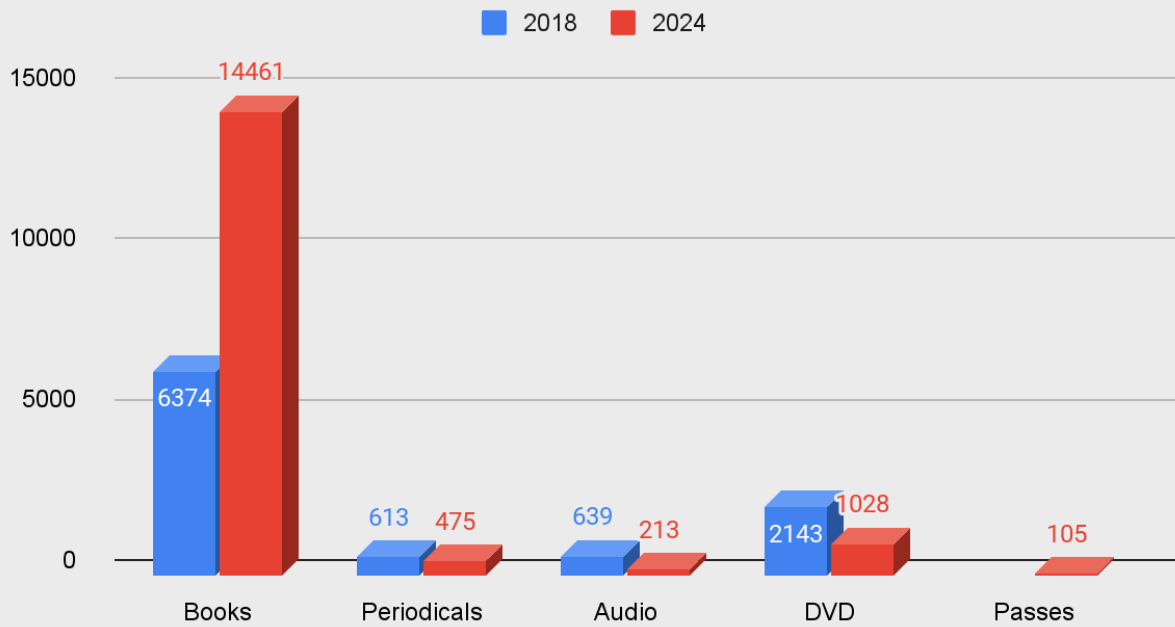
Hubbardston Residents with a Library Card 2018



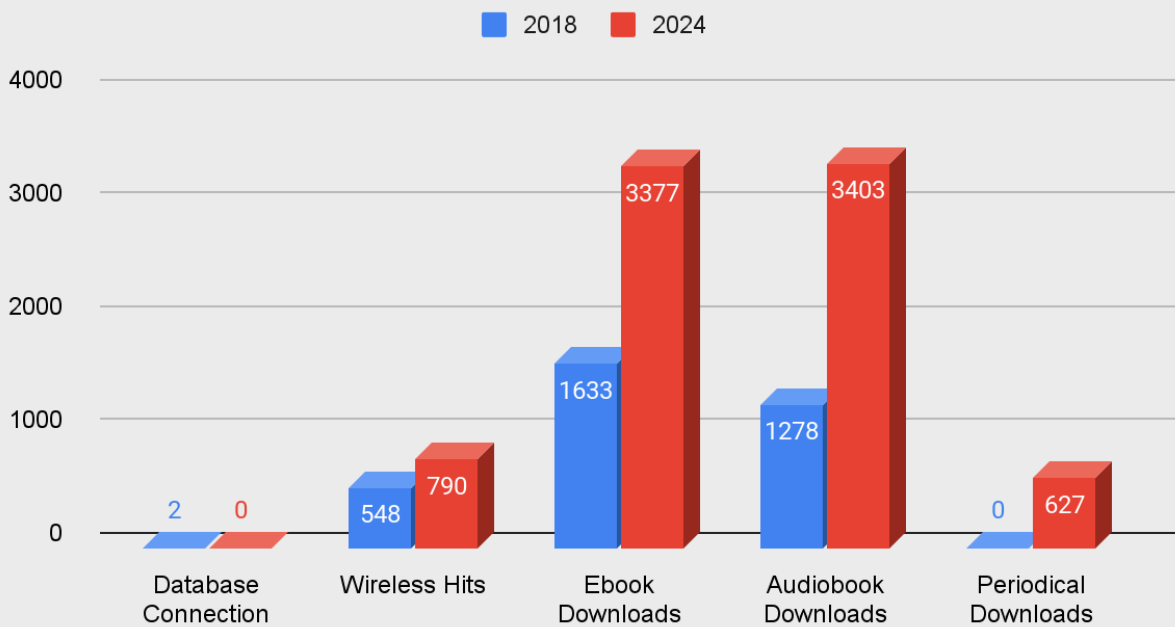
Hubbardston Residents with a Library Card 2024



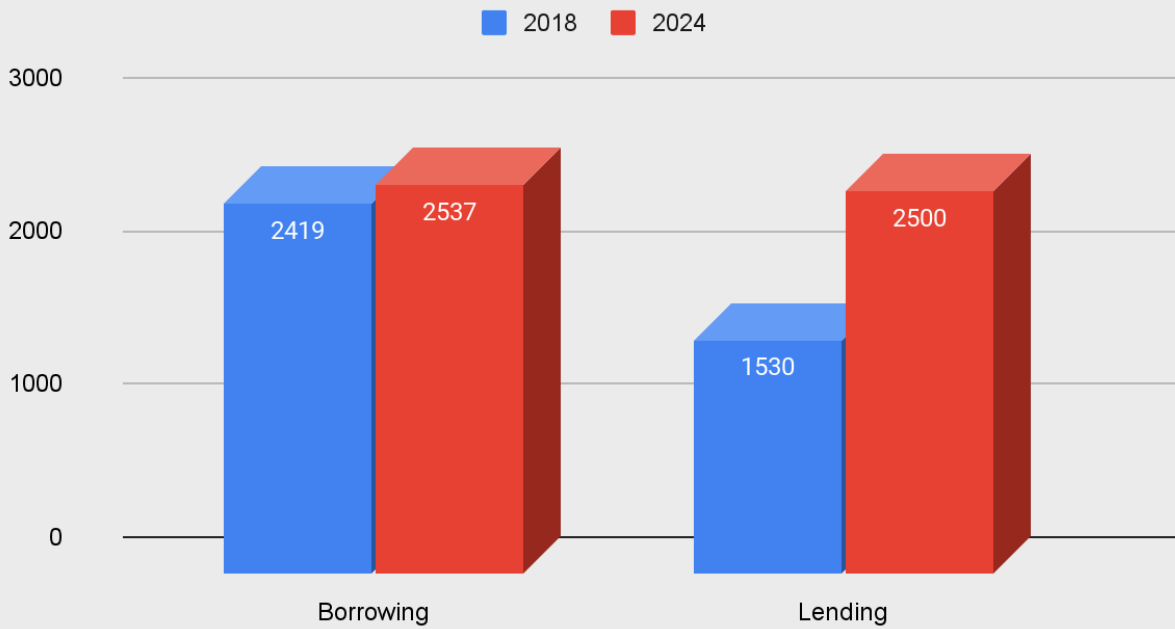
Collection Use 2018 vs 2024



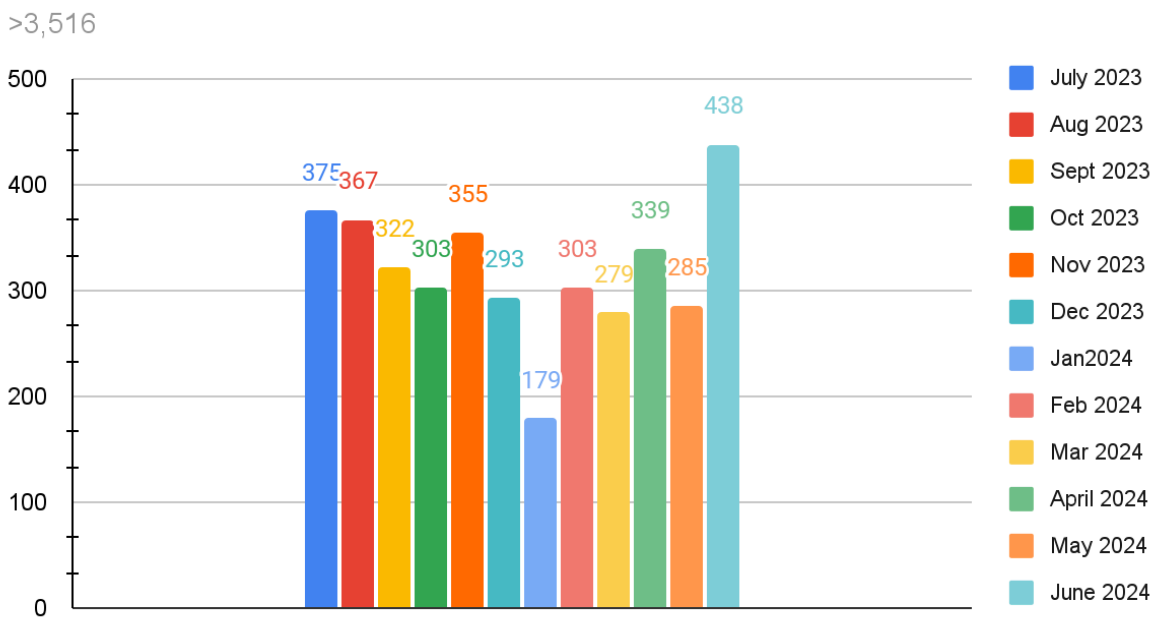
Online Use of the Library 2018 vs 2024



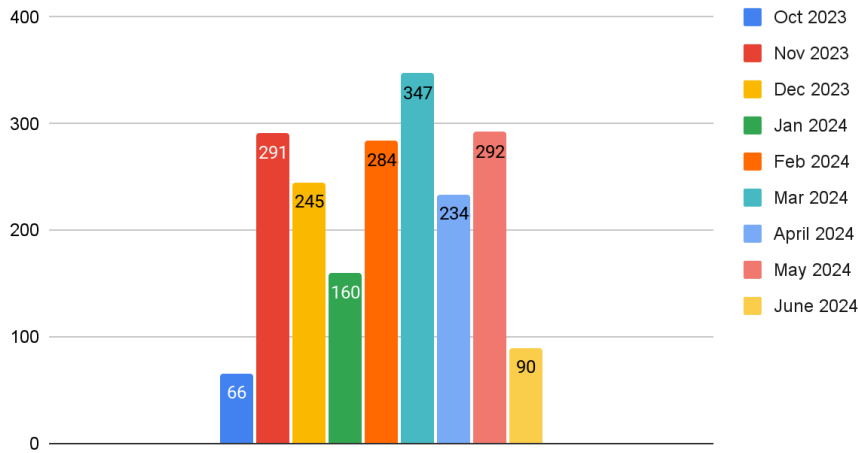
Interlibrary Loan Use 2018 vs 2024



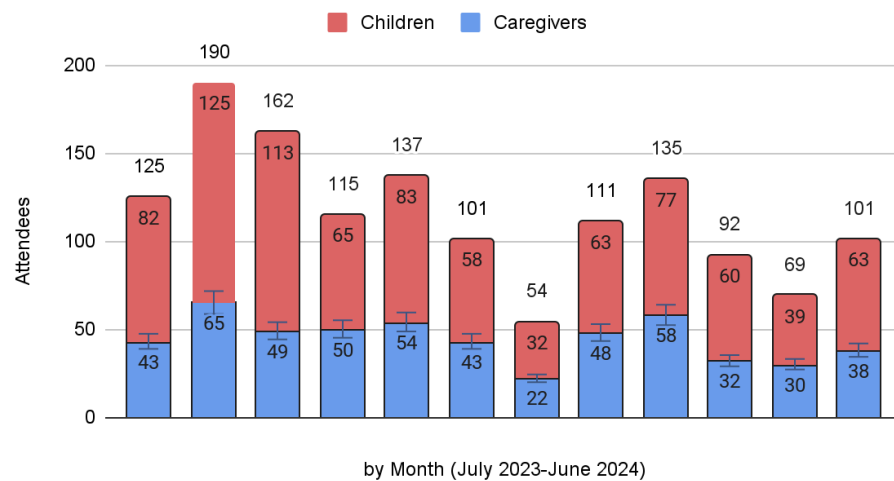
Patron Visits FY 2024



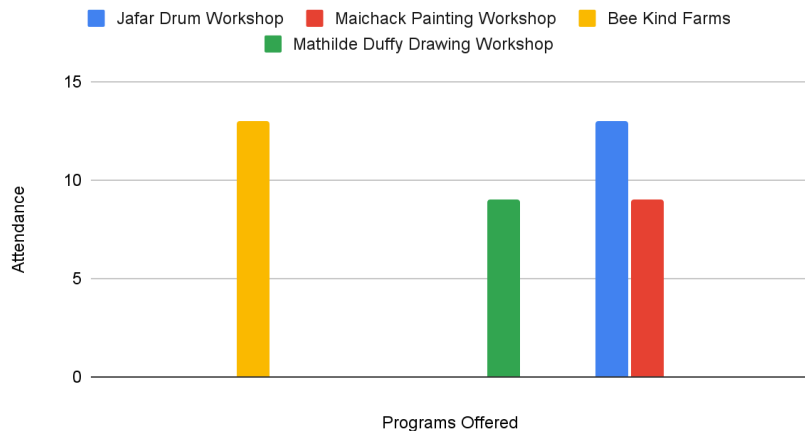
Center School Class Visits FY 2024 (number of students)



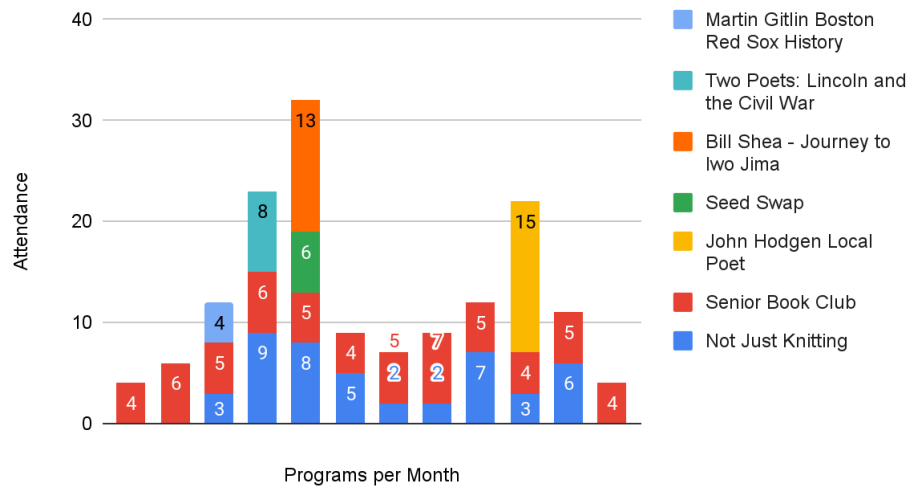
Story Time Attendance



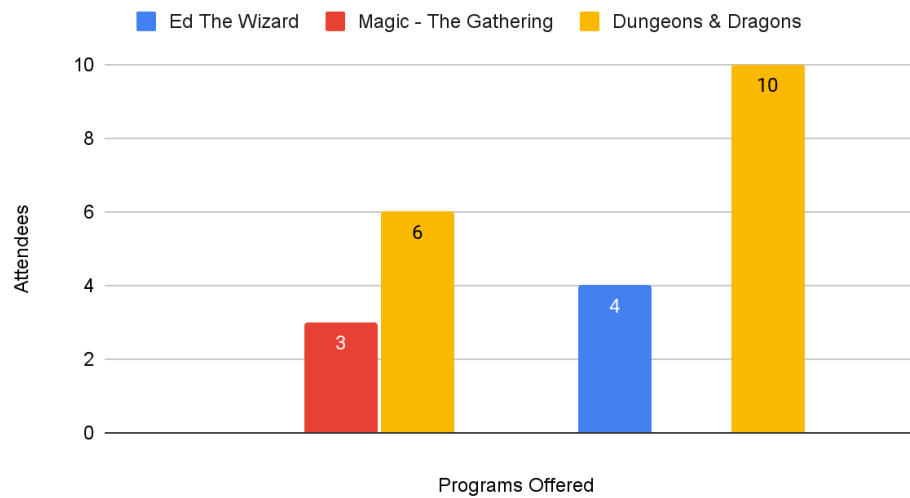
Family Programs



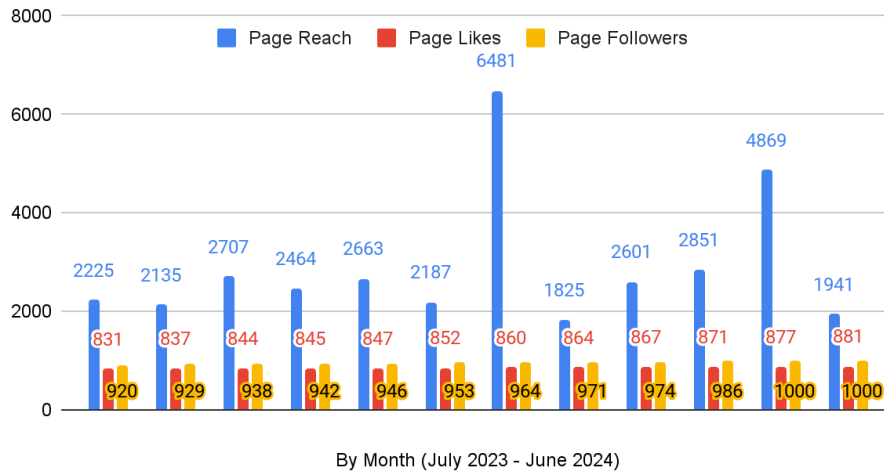
Programs for Seniors and Adults



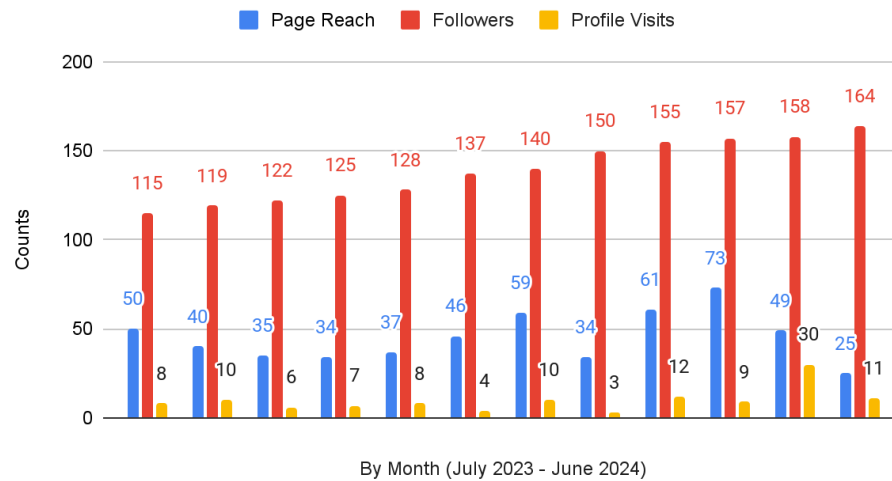
Programs for Teens and Tweens



Facebook Totals



Instagram Totals



Appendix 3: Library Community Survey & Focus Group Summary

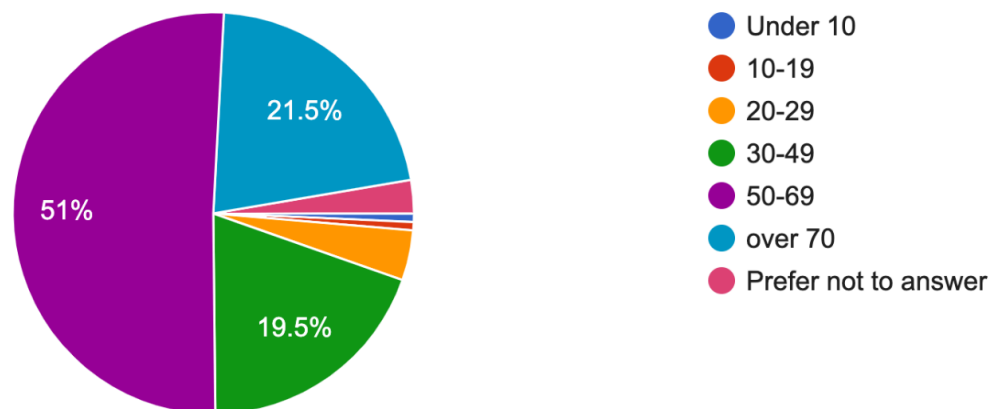
152 people completed the library community survey in April 2024.

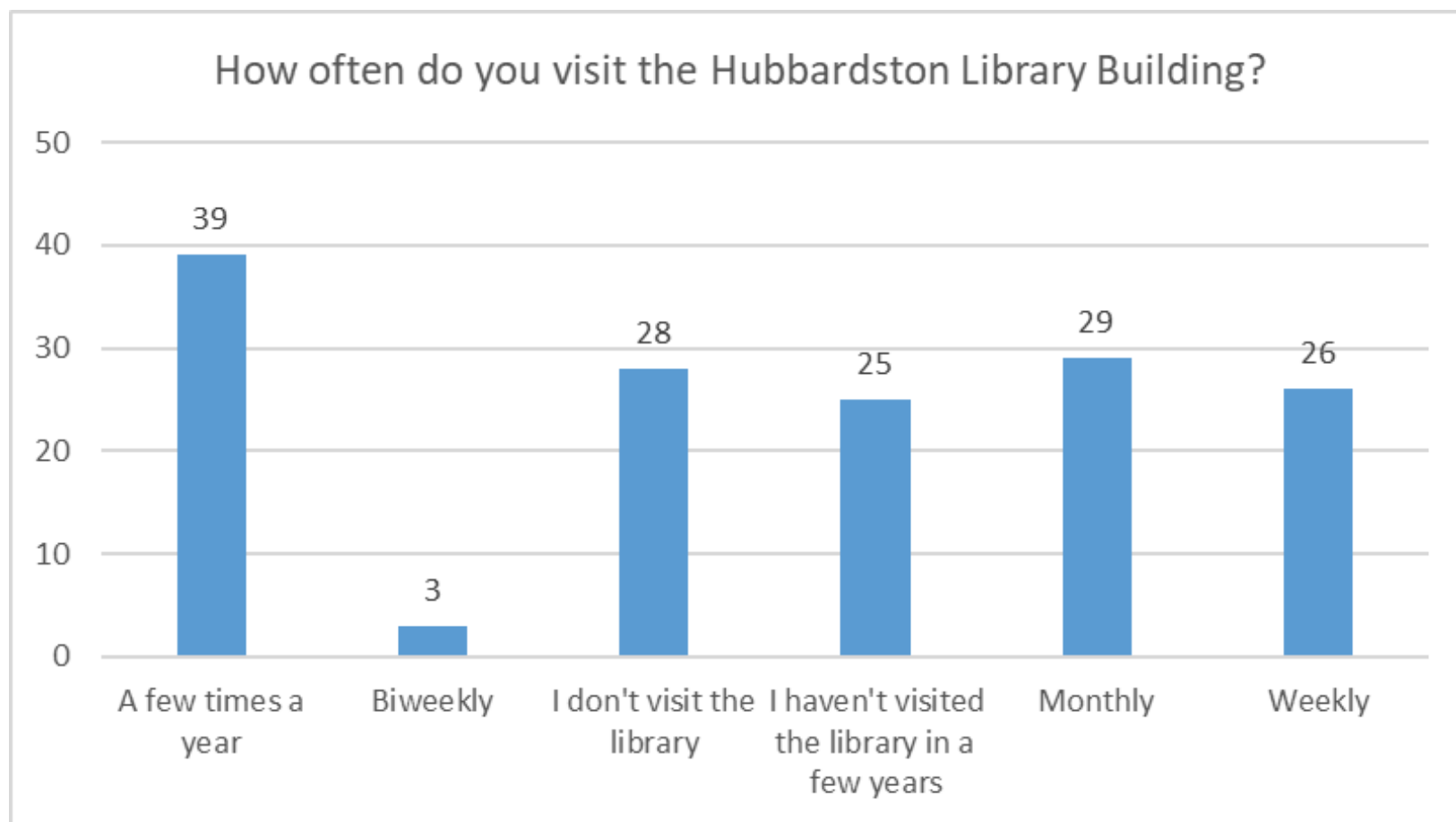
Respondents demographics:

- 97.3% Hubbardston Residents
- 82% White and 17% preferred not to state
- 68% Women; 24% Male; 8% other or prefer not to state

What is your age range?

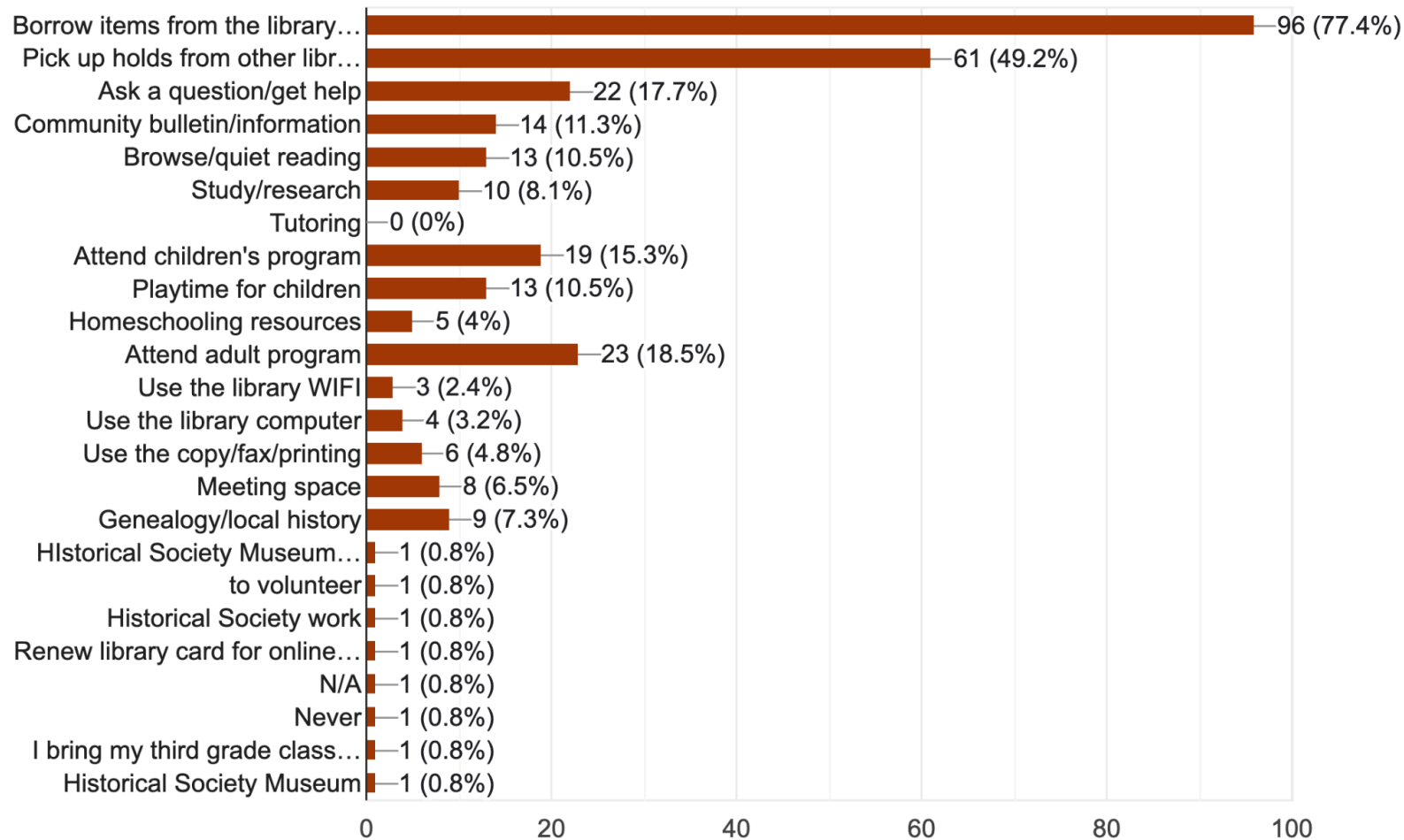
149 responses





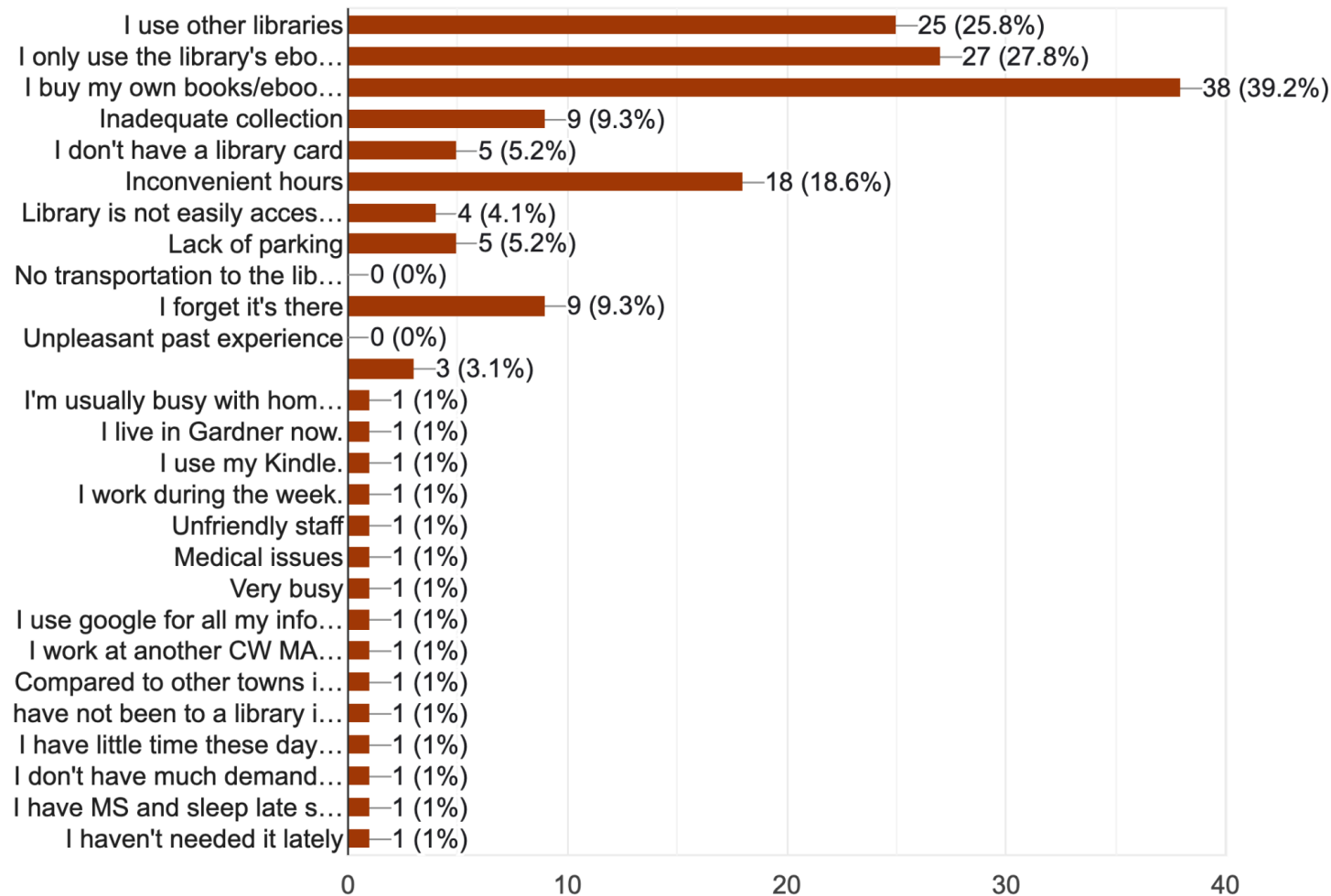
If you do visit the Hubbardston Library building, for what purpose? (Check all that apply)

124 responses

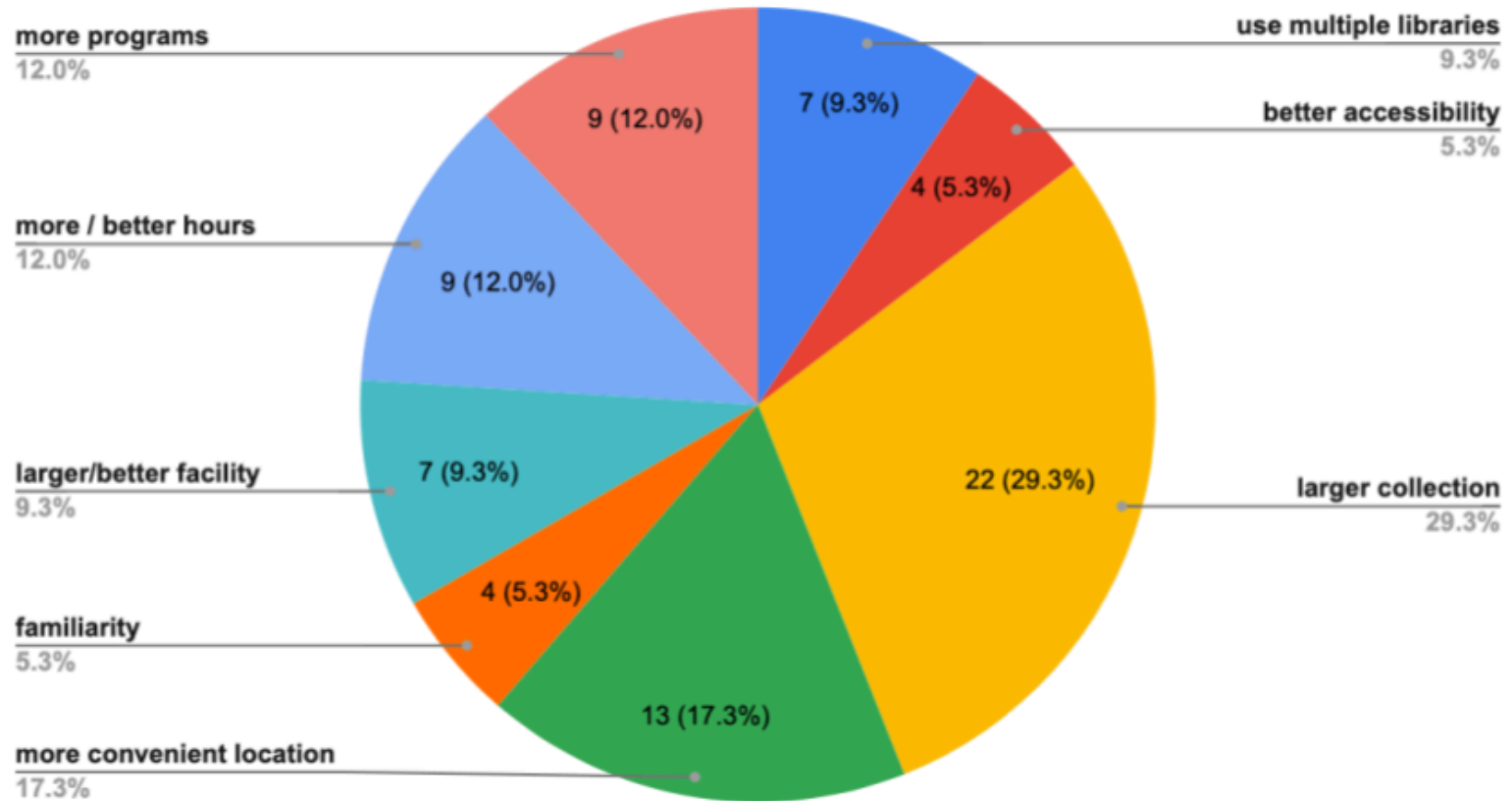


If you do not visit the Hubbardston Library building very often or at all, why not? (check all that apply)

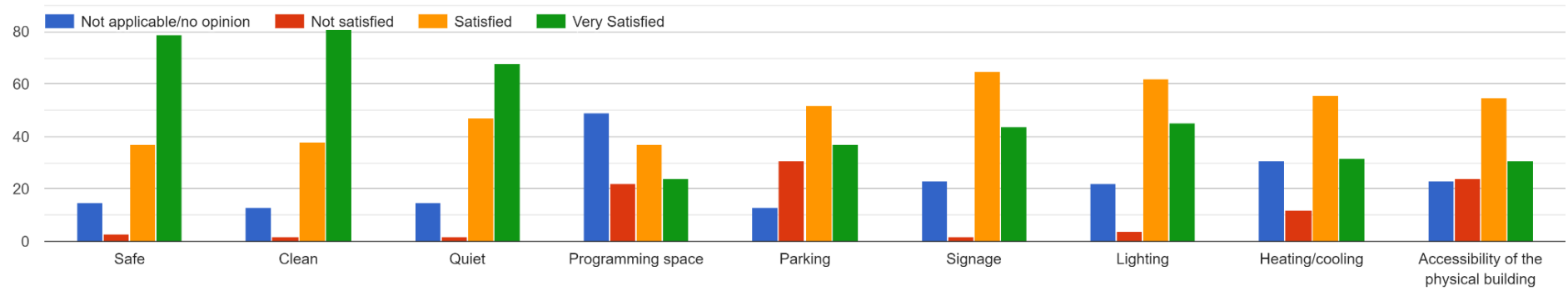
97 responses



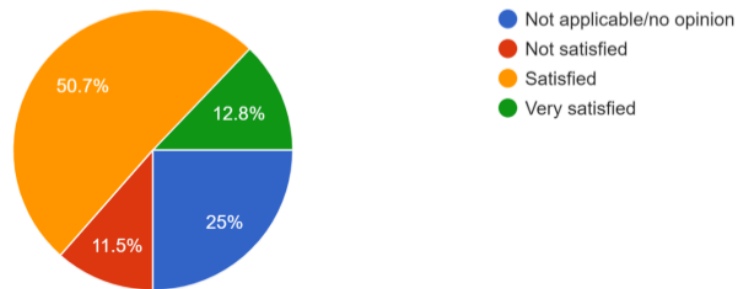
Reasons Respondents Use Other Libraries



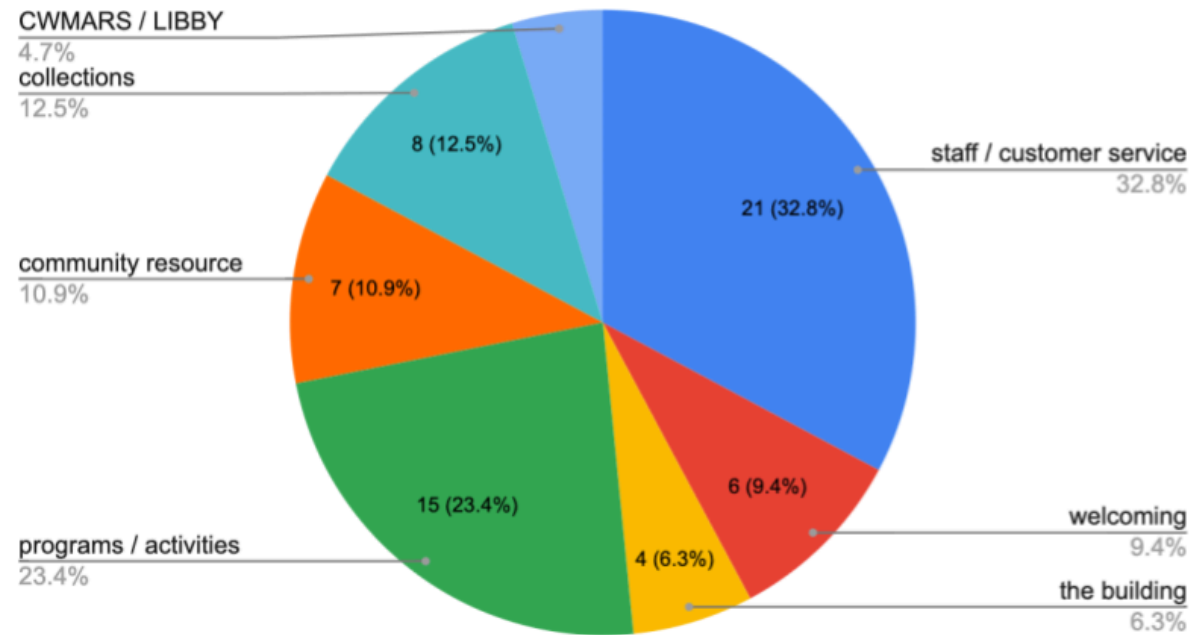
How satisfied are you with these aspects of the Library building?



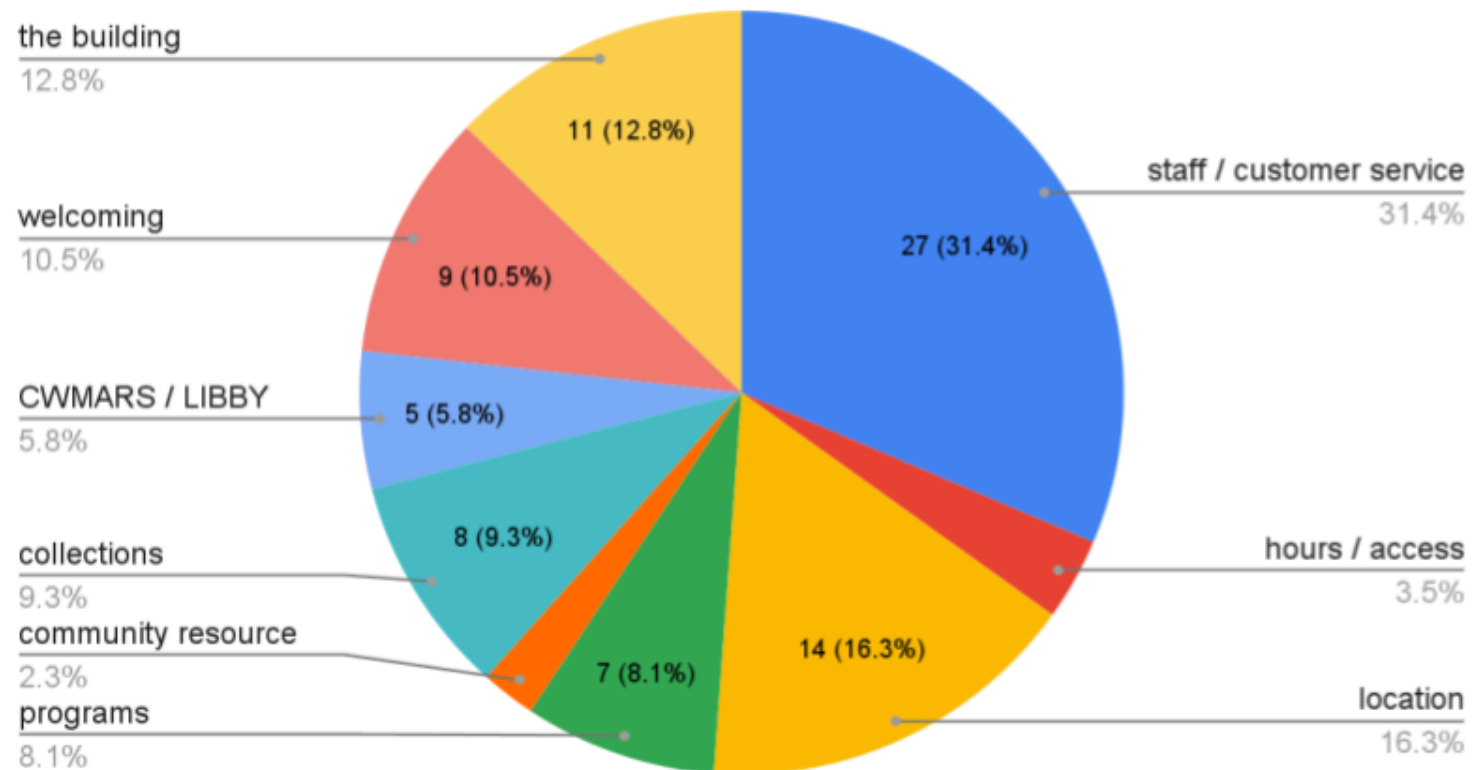
How satisfied are you with the Hubbardston Library current hours? Monday 1-7pm/ Tuesday 4-7pm / Wednesday 10am-4pm/ Thursday 1-7pm/ Saturday 9am-Noon.
148 responses



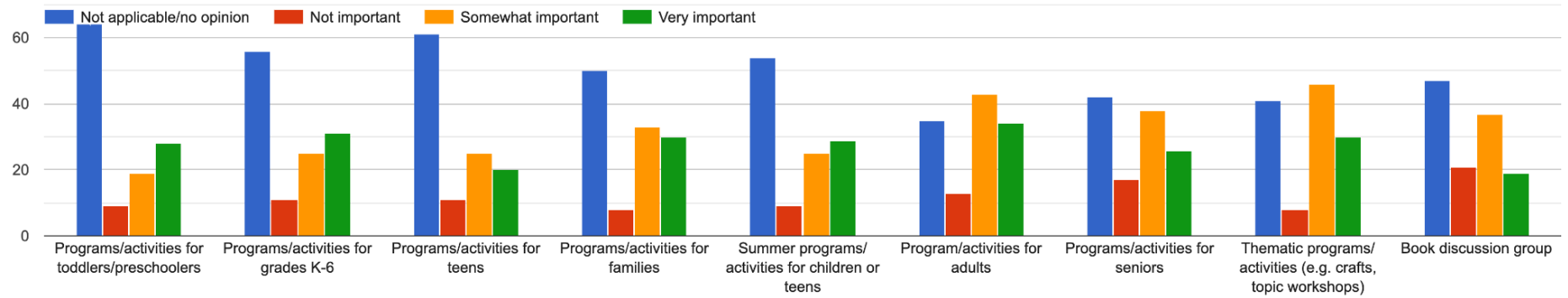
What is Hubbardston Library Doing Well?



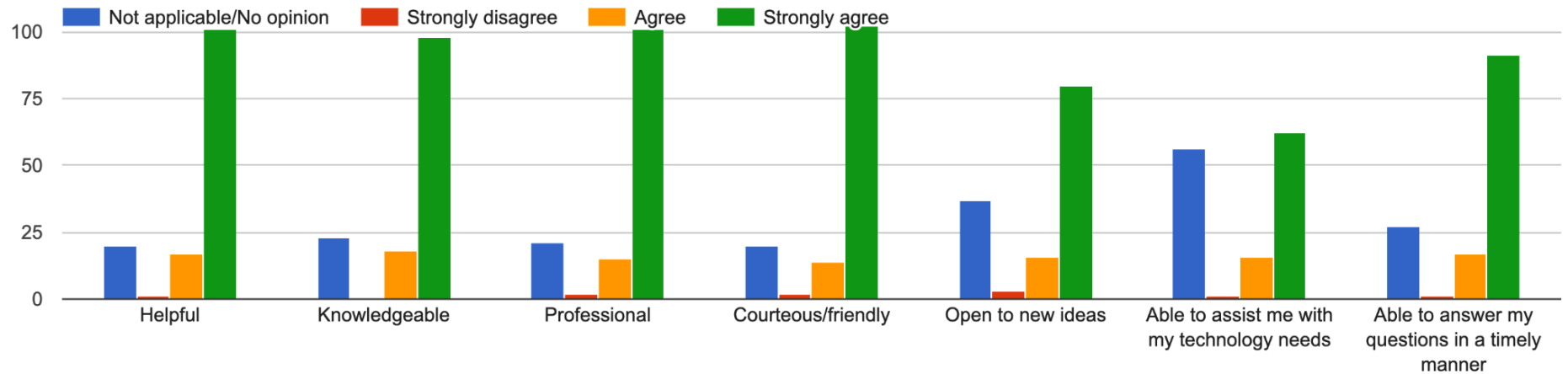
What Do You Like Best About Hubbardston Library?



Which Library programs are most important to you?



How satisfied are you with the customer service at the Hubbardston Library? Library staff are:



How Can the Library Improve?

