

JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY

**SOUTHBRIDGE, MA
LONG RANGE PLAN FY2017-FY2022**

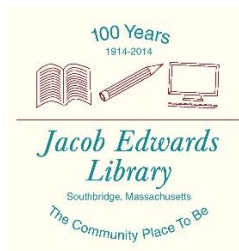
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Board of Trustees	Position	Jacob Edwards Library Staff	Position
Richard Whitney	Chairperson	Margaret Morrissey	Director
Robin Weber *	Vice Chairperson	Ashley Kenney	Adult Services Librarian
Gary Bridgman *	Finance Director	Elizabeth Gendreau	Children’s Librarian
Mary Ellen Blake *		Debrah Gendreau	Circulation Supervisor
Maureen Gullekson *		Lynn Wolstencroft	Tech. Processing Librarian
Jessica Jimenez		Michelle Garcia	Circulation Assistant
Elizabeth Cournoyer		April Denault	Circulation Assistant
Tammie Darling ^	Minutes Secretary	Kathryn Lapriore	Library Aide
		Debra Mercure	Library Aide
*Trust Appointed		Anekah Ellis	Library Aide
^Non-Board Member		Mackenzie Mercure	Library Page
		Marialys Torres	Library Page

Submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners
 By Margaret Morrissey, Library Director &
 Richard Whitney, Chairperson, and
 The Jacob Edwards Library Board of Trustees

Acknowledgement:
 Special thanks to colleagues throughout the state for sharing their plans



Approved by the Board of Trustees at the August 29, 2017 meeting

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The Jacob Edwards Library enjoys a rich legacy of excellent service and is committed to the promotion of reading, education, literacy, culture, and lifelong learning for persons of all ages in our community.

VISION STATEMENT

Jacob Edwards Library will be the community hub, the place for any and all of our community's residents to gather, learn and discover.



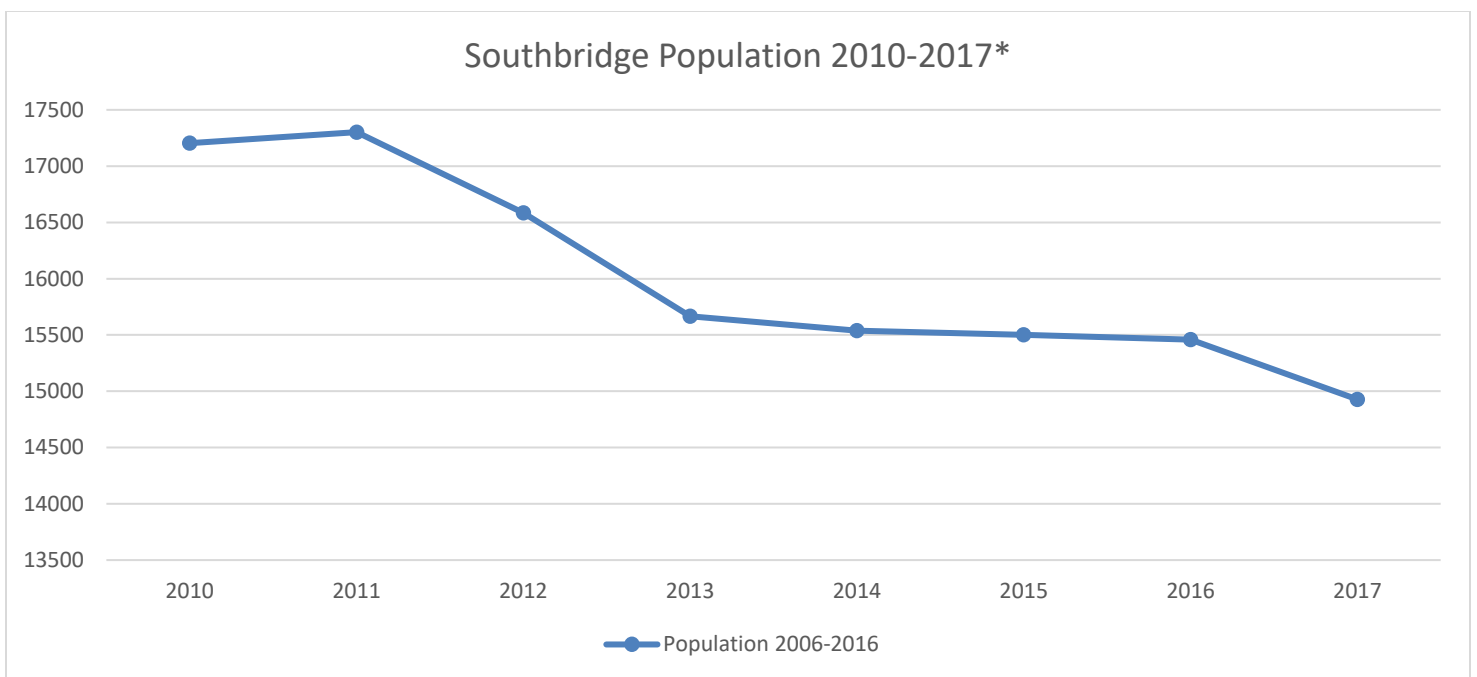
SOUTHBRIDGE COMMUNITY HISTORY & PEOPLE

In 2016, the Town of Southbridge celebrated its Bicentennial Year. A yearlong celebration reminded the community of the town's history and events of the past 200 years. Southbridge emerged as a breakaway from the towns of Sturbridge, Charlton and Dudley and was incorporated in 1816. Southbridge's development was based on the cotton and woolen mills. In the mid-1800's the American Optical company started its long history in the town and by the 1970's employed 5,500 workers in Southbridge. Today, the main employers include the Harrington Hospital and the health care industry, the fiber optics industry, several manufacturing companies, social service and public agencies.

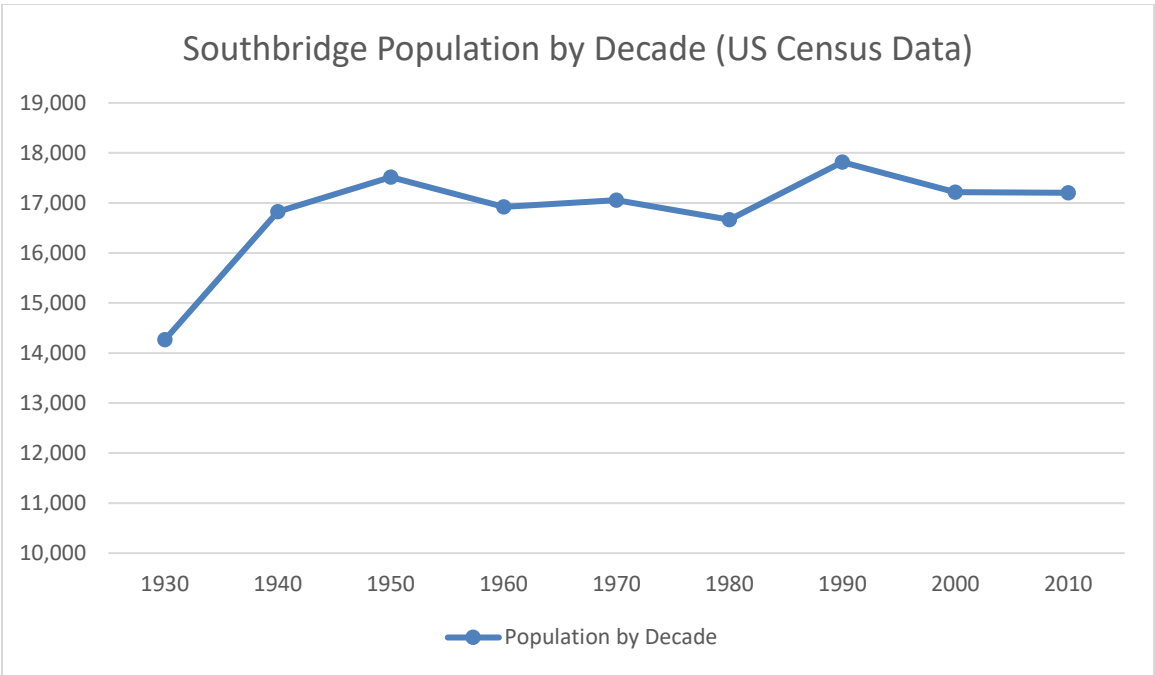
Southbridge is located in the south central portion of the Commonwealth, almost equidistant from the cities of Worcester, Springfield, Providence and Hartford. The town is a mix of suburban, rural and urban sections and is approximately 21 square miles. Traditionally private transportation dependent, an expansion of public transportation in the past two years has improved access to and from the town. However, there is still a lack of intra-town public transportation.

Southbridge has a Town Manager/Town Council form of government. The Town Manager reports to a nine-member Town Council and its subcommittees.

The Town of Southbridge has a rich history of diversity and has many different ethnic and cultural groups that make up the fabric of the town.

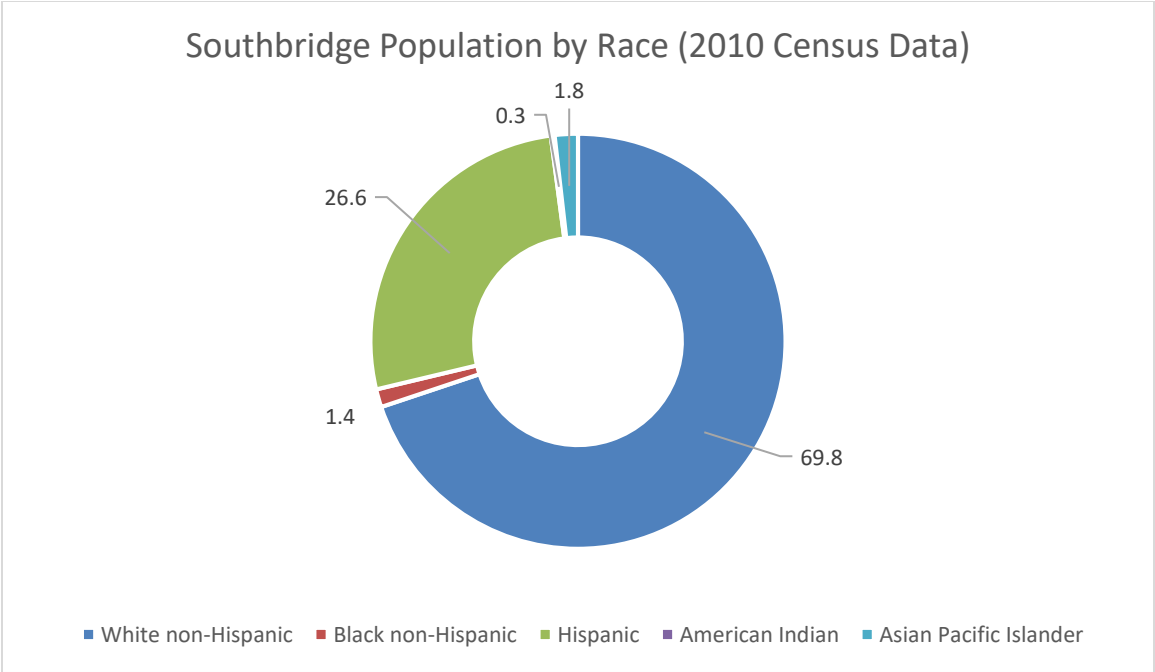


*Data obtained from Town Clerk's Office – please note that the 2010 US Census population was recorded as 16,719

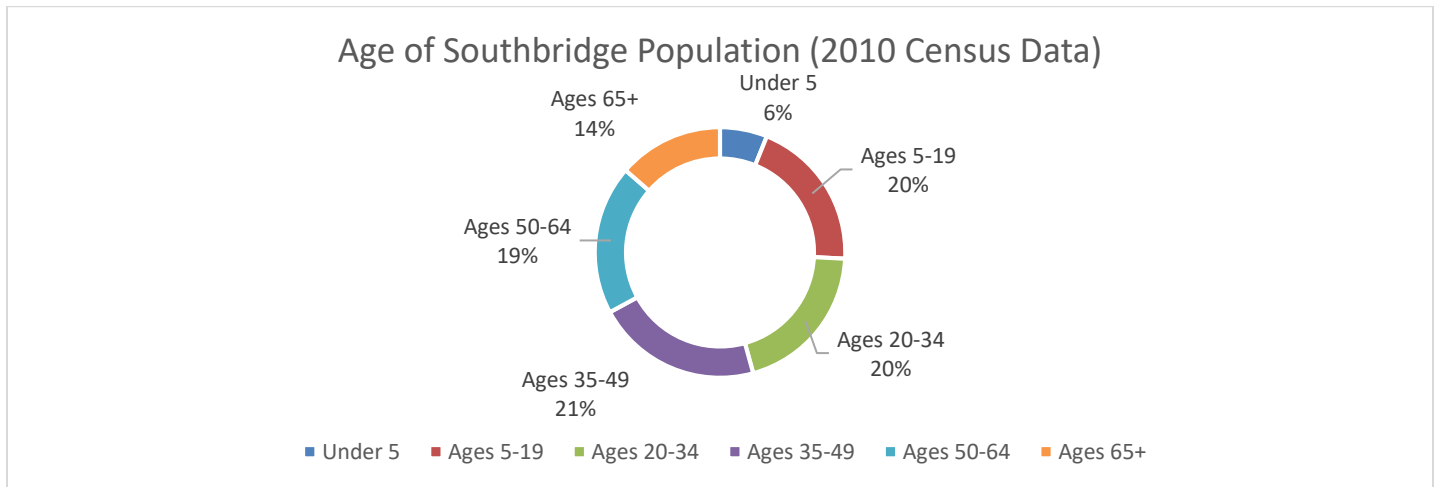


Total Population by race and gender (2010 Census Data/Mass Community Health Information Profile)

	2010 Area Population Estimate	2010 Area Percent	2010 State Percent
Males	8,055	48.2%	48.4%
Female	8,656	51.8%	51.6%
White non-Hispanic	11,660	69.8%	78.4 %
Black non-Hispanic	242	1.4%	6.3%
Hispanic	4,452	26.6%	9.6%
American Indian	58	.3	.2
Asian Pacific Islander	299	1.8	5.5



It is important to note that the most significant change can be seen in the town's youth population. While the total Hispanic population in Southbridge is 26.6%, for residents age 9 and under, the Hispanic population percentage jumps to 42.6%.



Southbridge faces economic and social challenges. It is identified as the 9th poorest community in the state. Per capita income is \$21,579, and median income is \$42,376, establishing 17% of the population as living below the poverty line. By comparison, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts median income is \$70,625.

However, on a positive note, the May 2017 unemployment rate for Southbridge is 6.3%¹ (down from 13.6% in 2011). The Commonwealth unemployment rate is 2.7%² and the National rate is 4.9%³.

The American Community Survey (2015) reports that of the adult population 25 or older, 81.2% hold a high school diploma, 16.3% have a Bachelor's degree and 6% hold a graduate degree.⁴

Southbridge Educational Resources

The Southbridge Public schools seek to provide a consistent quality education that is available for all Southbridge students. The District was placed in to Receivership by the State Department of Education in early 2016. The District has been restructured into a total of 5 schools. Eastford Road (Preschool and Kindergarten), Charlton Street and West Street Schools (Elementary), Southbridge Middle School and Southbridge High School. The total enrollment for the 2016 school year is 2,228.⁵

School choice has been operating in Southbridge for some years, and has distorted the student enrollment. Currently, there are three districts outside of Southbridge that are favored, and consequently this depletes the remaining student population in Southbridge.

At the end of the academic year, 2016-2017, the Receiver was placed on a leave of absence and all of the members of the senior administration have resigned.

¹ State of Massachusetts Labor Force & Unemployment Data
http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_lur_area.asp?AT=15&A=000005&Dopt=TEXT

² http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/Laborarea_comparison.asp

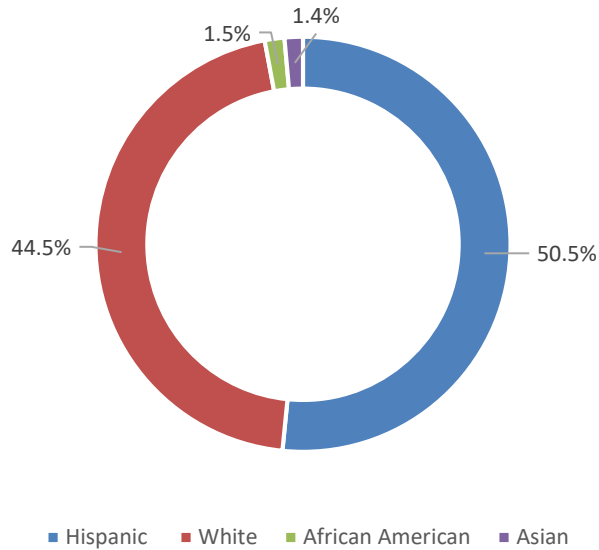
³ <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/national-employment-monthly-update.aspx>

⁴ 2015 American Community Survey https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/S1501/8600000US01550

⁵ 2015 Massachusetts District Report Card Overview, Department of Education

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/DistrictReportCardOverview.aspx?linkid=106&orgcode=02770000&fycode=2015&orgtypecode=5>

Southbridge Public Schools Student Enrollment (DOE Data)



The 2016-2019 Southbridge Public Schools Turnaround Plan can be found on line⁶. In FY17, library staff participated in the development of the Dual-Language Program, scheduled to go live in the beginning of new academic year in Fall 2017. Faculty from the Alternative School and Library Staff worked cooperatively to develop of Empowering Youth Through Literacy, a program utilizing rap music to connect students with literary resources. The Board of Trustees is fortunate to have two appointees who also are professionals in the School Department.

In addition to the public school system, the Southbridge Community is served by the Trinity Catholic School, Early Head Start, Head Start, and YMCA day care programs. Quinsigamond Community College is now well established in the community with a satellite campus, and offers classes in business, technology, health care, human services, liberal arts and ESL. Sturbridge Academy, a charter school, is a new option to be added in the 2017-18 school year.

THE JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY

Library service has been available to Southbridge residents since the 1860s in the Globe Village section of the town. In 1904, Jacob Edwards, a native of Southbridge, provided the land and the bequest to build at the current location. Continual services have been provided to the townspeople from 236 Main Street since 1914, except for a two-year hiatus in the Town Hall basement during remodeling and expansion of the building in 1998-2000.

The original brick building of Georgian Colonial style was erected in 1914, and included approximately 8,260 square feet of useable space. In 1966 an addition was built, bringing the building to approximately 13,000 square feet of useable space. In 1997, Southbridge was awarded a \$1.14 million Massachusetts Public Library Construction grant which increased the total space to 23,000 square feet, with nearly matched funding from the Town. This expansion provided a modern, air conditioned and accessible building which reopened in May 2000.

⁶ <http://www.southbridgepublic.org/receivership-documents>
Jacob Edwards Library, Southbridge, MA Long Range Plan FY2017-2022

Library Facilities

The library is a municipal building, and the Town of Southbridge has responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep. The library has three levels and a commanding presence on the corner of Main and Foster Streets. There are 38 dedicated parking spaces plus on-street parking and overflow parking in the area. There is seating for 120 patrons.

Jacob Edwards Library public meeting rooms are available for educational, literary, philanthropic and civic purposes. The Pioppi Room can accommodate groups of up to 50 people and has a multimedia projection system. The Mills Room is a conference-style room, and can accommodate up to 12 people, and the Periodicals Room up to 8 people. There are two quiet study rooms available for public use as well. All public use rooms are configured as meeting and study spaces. The heart of the library is the Reading Room, a welcoming and flexible open-plan space on the first floor that can be used for programs, quiet reading or group gatherings.

Computers

The library provides free access to broadband internet. There are 15 computers available for public use as well as wireless access throughout the building and to the perimeter of the property. Starting in FY16, the library worked closely with C/W MARS as a pilot library for an IT Service (in addition to the contracted services), conducting an assessment and creating a plan to purchase all new public and staff computers, and upgrade them to Windows 10 and Microsoft Office 2016. Also installed were a new server, and a new printer/scanner/copier for public use. Through combined regional, state, and network sources, many online information resources are available for general and specialized research.

Adult Services and Teen Services

The upper levels of the library house collections and services for the adults and teens in the community. The library provides access to more than physical collections – eBooks and other downloadable materials are available. The library offers interactive programming and workshops on a variety of topics throughout the year. A rotating monthly art exhibit provides exposure for local artists and craftspeople, and fosters a symbiotic relationship between creators and the community.

The library also offers homework help and research assistance to students at local schools and colleges, as well as general interest research help. A proctoring service was recently added due to demand. Library staff has worked more cooperatively with the Southbridge Public Schools to deepen the relationship. The library has also established a cooperative partnership with Quinsigamond Community College, which has a satellite campus in Southbridge, providing library orientations, research assistance, and a place for students to present their work.

Summer Reading programs are run every year for Adults and Teens in the community to encourage our patrons to read through incentives, generously funded by the Friends of the Jacob Edwards Library (FOJEL). The library also engages with the local schools to obtain the assigned summer reading books, ensuring that multiple copies are available for students over the course of the summer.

Jacob Edwards Library facilitates a number of community and social services, in partnership with other organizations. Services include the Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts, to whom the library provides office and tutoring space as an in-kind donation. The library also provides space to facilitate access to the community for the WCAC Fuel Assistance program to meet with local clients, and the AARP Tax Aide program for middle-low income families and senior citizens provides assistance here annually. Additionally, the library participates in the tax-abatement program and works with mentally and physically disabled clients from several agency programs to assist staff in a variety of limited clerical and janitorial projects.

Children's Services

The Children's Department, located on the ground level, offers a complete range of print and nonprint materials, in addition to the digital download options. The department serves children from birth through age 12. There is a place to work on computers, including an AWE Early Literacy Station, an online catalog, and comfortable places to sit and read. The library focuses on creative play and has a dress-up area.

Story hours, holiday activities, special entertainers, seasonal craft programs, and school vacation specials are offered throughout the year. This year, a focus on STEM-based activities and Tinkering has added a new dimension to programs offered for Children. The Summer Reading Program is a major focus every year, encouraging children to continue to read throughout the summer, in conjunction with the Southbridge Public School's suggested reading lists.

Community and social service needs are further met by the library's partnership with Project Bread and the Summer Food Service Programs. The library serves as a distribution site for free lunch during the summer for anyone under 18. Additionally, a working relationship with Massachusetts DCF has been established to allow the library to be a safe, friendly place for some families to conduct visits.

General Collections

There are approximately 89,000 items in the Jacob Edwards Library, including books, magazines, videos, audiobooks, CDs, and videogames. Not included in this number are the vast number of digital downloads (eBooks and audiobooks) available via the website. The library subscribes to 115 magazine and newspapers, in addition to the rich database offerings accessible from any location. There are Spanish language collections in the adult, teen and children's areas.

Since the last plan, a collection-wide assessment was conducted by the Adult Services Librarian, identifying materials to be discarded or replaced. The collection has also been evaluated to better meet the needs of the community. The staff continues to conduct an inventory to gain a more accurate overview on the total collection, a project that began three years ago. With recent development to Evergreen (Integrated Library System), staff were able to run comprehensive reports on inventory and use of collections to facilitate the evaluation. The Children's Room has begun a similar initiative, which is anticipated to take up to 2 years.

The Ammidown History Room contains the Ammidown Collection, the Genealogy and Local History collections, and various collections of historic photographs. The Ammidown Collection is an 18th century gentleman's library that belonged to Holmes Ammidown, a prominent early citizen of Southbridge. Through the years, various projects have been completed to digitize some of these significant collections as staff worked on *The First Century: Jacob Edwards Library 1914-2014*, and the Town of Southbridge's Bicentenary in 2016. Gifts and donations from the community facilitated a small increase to the collection. An orientation to the Town's history has been made available on the Library's website⁷, providing access to many digitized resources, as well as a bibliography of Town historical texts.

Networks

Jacob Edwards Library staff is an active participant in the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and takes advantage of the training programs offered in-person and via webinar. Access to services provided through the membership include delivery of library materials, interlibrary loan (ILL), reference support services, online databases with remote access, and summer reading program support and materials.

Southbridge is a full, circulating member of the Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/WMARS) network, connecting Southbridge and its patrons with 149 other libraries.

⁷ <http://www.jacobedwardslibrary.org/history.html>

LIBRARY-BY-THE-NUMBERS

The following information provides a brief overview of the Jacob Edwards Library. It includes data from FY2016, the last year self-reported compiled statistics are available from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

Resources

	FY2016
Total Collection	89,340
Total Periodical Subscriptions	112
Holdings per capita (print)	4.76
Adult & Young Adult Internet Workstations	11
Children's Internet Workstations	4
Children's Early Literacy Station (Donation)	1

According to the Pew Research Center in September, 9, 2016 study: "In this survey, 29% of library-using Americans 16 and older said they had gone to libraries to use computers, the internet, or a public Wi-Fi network. (That amounts to 23% of all Americans ages 16 and above.) The library computer user figures are essentially the same as in 2015. In this context, it is worth noting that 7% of all Americans age 16 and older have used libraries' Wi-Fi signals outside when libraries are closed." During these challenging economic times, people rely on library technology to find work, apply for college, secure government benefits, learn about critical medical treatments, and connect with their communities. In acknowledgement of the importance of public computer access, a major system overhaul was conducted throughout 2016. A new server was added to the refurbished server and equipment cabinet, files have been migrated to the new shared drive. New computers were purchased, so that the oldest computer in operation was manufactured in 2015. Cornerstone Bank (Southbridge Savings) donated the AWE, Children's Early Literacy Station, containing 50 software programs, some of them bilingual.

Library Hours

	Winter	Summer
Hours Open per Week	50	46
Number of Evenings Open per Week	2	2
Evening Hours Open per Week	6	6
Number of Saturday Open per Year	37	0

The library is open Mondays and Thursdays from 9am-8pm, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am-5pm, and Saturdays from 9am-1pm. The library is closed on Saturdays during the summer months (Memorial Day through Labor Day).

Library Staffing Levels

Total number of employees	12 (8.5 FTE)
Number of part-time employees	7
Number of full-time employees	5
Average volunteer hours per week	15

Education levels of staff: 2 MLS, 4 Bachelor's degrees, and 1 Associate's degree.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Jacob Edwards Library is a subscription based organization with approximately 134 members, that provides financial support for museum passes for The Worcester Art Museum, The Tower Hill Botanical Garden, Old Sturbridge Village, and The Ecotarium in Worcester, and fund a significant number of the library's adult, teen and children's programs. The group also runs an ongoing book sale, with an Annual Book Sale every March, as well as the 12th Annual Artful Friends Raffle fundraiser was held in June, 2017.

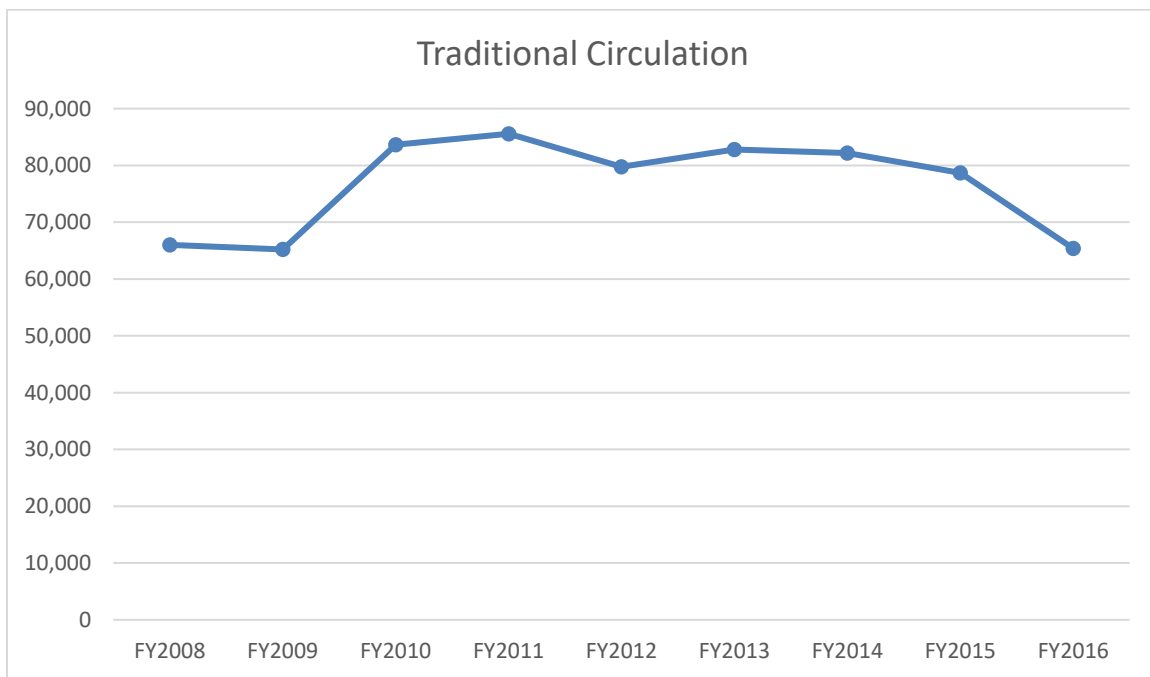
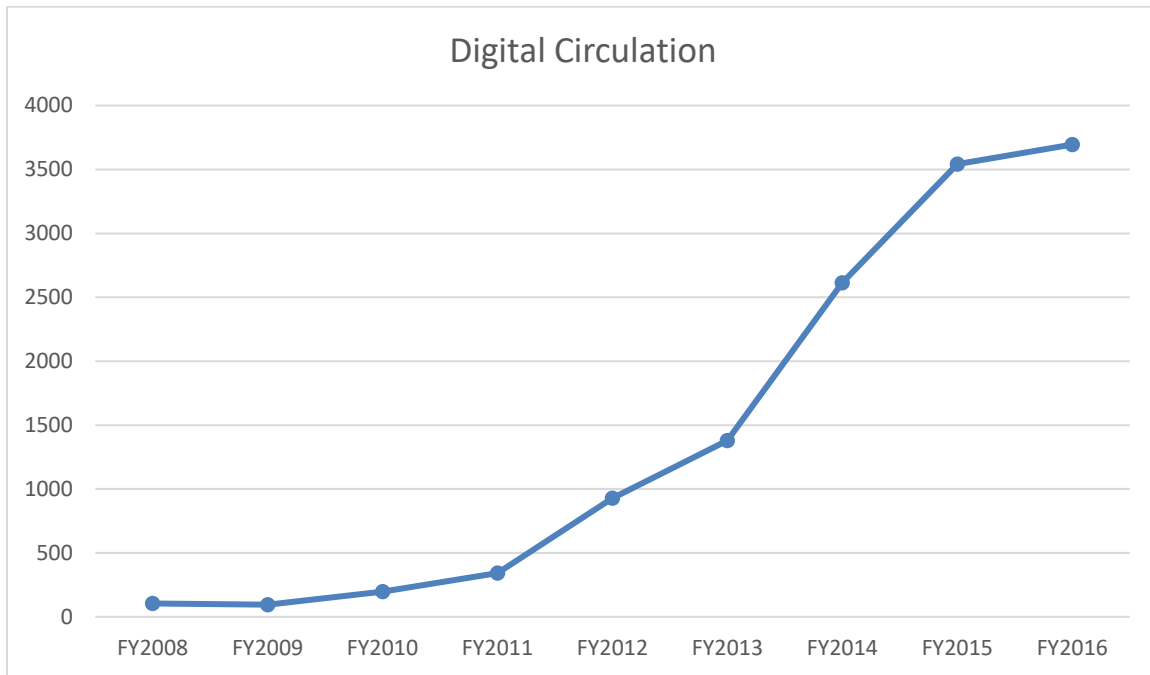
Library Use

	2016
Number of Registered Borrowers	9,418
Total Circulation	65,407
Total Holdings	88,915
Non-resident circulation	15,347
Attendance in Library	95,112
Children's Programs/Attendance	285 / 5,502
Adult Programs/Attendance	128 / 1,789
Teen Programs/Attendance	30 / 135
Meeting Room Uses	1,683
Interlibrary loan materials borrowed for patrons	7,123
Interlibrary loans provided to other libraries	16,542

Private Support

The Jacob Edwards Library is fortunate to receive private support from existing Trust Funds established by the Edwards family and also from generous donations and bequests. From these private donations, approximately \$40,000 is contributed annually to the Town of Southbridge to offset expenses of the annual budget.

Circulation



PROCESS/PLANNING METHODOLOGY

The JEL Trustees and Library Director took on the task of developing the JEL Strategic Plan in December 2016. The Plan will cover the years of 2017-2022. The Trustees appointed a sub-committee to oversee the task and membership included the Library Director, and three Trustees. Beginning in January of 2017, the LRP subcommittee of the Board of Trustees met to design a survey. The online survey format was selected as it would reach users and nonusers. The survey

was linked to on the library's website, library email newsletters, and via the library's Facebook page. Library staff also actively invited completion of paper surveys in the library building, both to regular users and nonusers (such as RMV customers). 241 surveys were completed in total.

The Trustees and Library staff reviewed the previous strategic plan, and discussed their goals and vision for the library.

Results of the survey were used to determine what library services the community valued and what was envisioned for the future. Survey results were used as a basis for library long range planning. Survey results are attached as an appendix to this Long-Range Plan.

Statistical, demographic and census data was used, as well as Annual Reports of the Library.

The Board of Library Trustees formally adopted the Long Range Plan on August 29, 2017.

Highlights of Changes in the Previous Five Years

- 30/hr week position eliminated, unfilled after a retirement, May 2015
- 4 turnovers in the Children's Librarian position, stability has been restored
- Emphasis on staff training and cross-training
- Lunch served via the Summer Feeding Program in the Children's Room
- Major technology upgrade, 2016-2017; AWE Early Learning Station installed
- May 2012, C/W MARS migrated to Evergreen Open Source software
- New camera security system installed in January 2017, grant-funded by State Aid & MIIA
- LED lighting upgrade throughout the building
- Interior repainting ongoing; up-to-date maintenance on HVAC and other systems
- New copper gutters, façade repointed and sealed
- JEL made a stop on the WRTA Bus Route, Bus Tracker & benches installed, staff provide bus hub services
- RMV staff direct customers to the library for their printing needs, this represents a significant number of computer uses. Staff often assist people who have had a negative experience.
- Several donation of Felix Gatineau ephemera were made, resulting in a dedicated section honoring French Canadian experience in Southbridge
- Celebrated the Library's Centennial Anniversary in 2014, and the Town's Bicentennial in 2016
- Participated in the Town's Master Plan

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

Through outreach to various groups, Staff, Trustees & Friends become aware of community needs.

- Participation in the Youth Summit held annually by YOU, Inc., connects library staff to teens in the community
- An active connection to the Southbridge School Department and area schools, prompted by the large number of local students who utilize school choice
- Attending meetings of the Community Health Network Area 5 (CHNA5) gives us direct contact with over 35 human service agencies in the area
- Connecting with the Recreation Department and Council on Aging to reach senior citizens
- Working closely with ASPIRA to liaise with the Spanish-speaking community

- Annual Pride event to establish inclusiveness in the community
- Liaising with the Commission on Disabilities

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

- 1. SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING & CREATIVITY**
- 2. CELEBRATE DIVERSITY: CULTURAL AWARENESS**
- 3. VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE: PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES**
- 4. CONNECT TO THE ONLINE WORLD: PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS**

1. SATISFY CURIOSITY: LIFELONG LEARNING & CREATIVITY

The aspiration of the library is to create a space and environment conducive to learning for self-directed personal growth and lifelong learning.

Objective 1: Initiate & develop resources and relationships to support educational entities and other community organizations.

- Overhaul the library's Collection Development Policy to reflect digital, as well as print collection needs
- Provide authoritative information to serve community needs
- Through its collections and its programming, recognizing the importance of offering diverse perspectives
- Expand on traditional library resources and materials to serve a 21st century community
- Support the Southbridge School District, including private schools, charter schools and home schooled students, as well as Bay Path Vocational Technical High School
- Continue to provide physical space and work cooperatively with the Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts.

Objective 2: Expand promotion of the unique aspects of the library

- Harness the power of social media and e-newsletter, and video
- Work to build the Friends of the Jacob Edwards Library organization further

Objective 3: Make the library a welcoming and relevant place

- Continue to develop a collection of the best books, movies, music, graphic novels and video games & any emerging formats
- Maintain and update the library's website, and reach out with social media
- Incentivize the Summer Reading program to be relevant to all ages
- Maintain connections with local social service agencies
- Promote and encourage attendance at programs and events for various age groups, to encourage the community to be stakeholders
- Sustain a bilingual program for children
- Select materials to support new immigrants

Objective 4: The library will help support community interest in Southbridge historic materials

- Seek to opportunities to continue to digitize local historical materials and promote existing digitized collections
- Continue to partner with the Southbridge Historical Society and Southbridge Historic Commission to preserve important materials
- Facilitate the use of the historical resources of the library

Objective 5: Increase library card holders

- Reach out to the School District to encourage students to obtain library cards
- Reach out to nonusers, including the immigrant population
- Work with existing card holders to bring their cards back into compliance

2. CELEBRATE DIVERSITY: CULTURAL AWARENESS

The library's role is to promote inclusion and understanding in the community. To that end, heritage and cultural traditions will be represented in the library's collection and programming, with a view to promoting tolerance and acceptance. Encourage staff to attend cultural sensitivity training.

Objective 1: The library will offer monthly programs and/or showcase exhibits on various aspects of the cultural heritage of our community

- Maintain a strong connection with the Southbridge Cultural Council
- Apply for grant(s) to increase the mix of programs offered to patrons
- Host cultural events that include seasonal and ethnic events, such as Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Women's History Month, Pride Month, National Poetry Month, etc.

Objective 2: Increase multicultural collections

- Increase Spanish language and Hispanic cultural materials
- Evaluate community ethnic statistics and adjust collection development accordingly
- Develop an ethnic history collection reflecting the cultural heritage of the Town

Objective 3: Develop Spanish language materials and signage for the library

- The Library will translate library brochures, bookmarks, and literature into Spanish
- Assemble a welcome packet, in English and Spanish, containing community information of interest to new residents and immigrants for distribution
- The Trustees will assist in funding a promotional campaign for multicultural outreach

Objective 4: As a result of marketing services of the library, increase usage by minority populations

- Develop and/or maintain relationships with churches and other places of worship
- Develop a marketing plan to make library services attractive to the unserved and underserved in the community

3. VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE: PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES

Patrons need a safe, comfortable place to sit and read, appropriate places to use reference materials and consult library materials, and to confidently navigate the Library's electronic materials – including the website.

Objective 1: Maintain current facilities to provide a welcoming space to meet the needs of the community

- Repurpose existing spaces to meet the changing and growing needs of users
- Coordinate repairs to physical plant in cooperation with the Town DPW
- Develop an ongoing plan for physical plant maintenance
- In a building 100+ years old, capital improvement is vital to maintaining the attractiveness and function of the building for the community

Objective 2: Provide a safe, secure environment for staff and patrons

- Ensure user and staff safety, and make improvements as needed
- Work cooperatively with the Southbridge Police Department
- Staff to be trained in disaster preparedness, active shooter scenario, and substance abuse and mental health behaviors
- Allow for a minimum of 2, half-day all-staff trainings

Objective 3: Make a welcoming experience for all patrons

- All staff will strive to make each library experience a positive one for each patron
- Facilitate staff to participate in all training opportunities, particularly those in customer service

- Create a friendly, upbeat, and cooperative team, ready to assist and provide a satisfactory conclusion to each patron’s transaction

4. CONNECT TO THE ONLINE WORLD: PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

The library is committed to keeping abreast of changes in information technology, and will endeavor to ensure that staff and the public have the training and tools necessary to successfully navigate digital resources.

Objective 1: Focus on the website as 24/7 branch of the library

- Continually update with any and all current information and services
- Website should facilitate patron self-discovery of library resources
- Commit to a mobile-friendly website as a matter of urgency

Objective 2: Digitize materials for increased accessibility

- Endeavor to digitize more of the archive
- Attend Digital Commonwealth Annual Meeting

Objective 3: Promote and increase usage of online database collection

- Market database collection through electronic newsletter and outreach to educational institutions
- Offer a Book-a-Librarian Service to teach patrons about databases and other technology

Objective 4: Staff training

- Encourage and facilitate staff to stay current with technology training
- Allow staff time to participate in webinars and online training, such as WebJunction

Objective 5: Maintain current technology for patron use

- Develop plan to replace existing PCs every five (5) years, and other IT equipment as needed
- Explore opportunities to use Open Source software

STAFF NEEDS

A competent, well-trained staff is the essence of good customer service. It is recognized that changing technology creates a dynamic environment to which staff needs to respond. The library vision of becoming “the place to be” requires that we embrace our community, respond to their needs – efficiently and with empathy. To achieve this, the following objectives are noted:

- Customer service training continues to be our priority
- Aspire to increase the number of Spanish-speaking staff in order to fulfill the goal of having publications and web postings in both languages
- Continue to provide an in-service day (or two half days) for training
- Encourage participation within the library community, including attending conferences, participating in webinars, round table discussions on specific topics, and professional development training opportunities offered
- Perform outreach within the community
- Continue with staff cross-training so that flexibility among departments can continue
- Provide technology training as needed, and encourage staff to keep their skills honed

As part of the Strategic planning process for the plan year 2016-2021, the Library Trustees conducted a Survey of patrons. The survey was promoted on site at the library, as well as through social media and outreach to high school students. The results of the survey were analyzed, and used to formulate objective goals.

A total of 240 survey were completed.

Survey Participants

76% of the respondents were Southbridge Residents, 24% from surrounding communities

39.75% Identified as an adult

28% Identified as retired

20% Identified as an Adult with small child

6.70% As Other (professional, or adult with teen child)

5.44% Student

Survey Respondents use of library

41.70% Use the library at least one time a week

35.42% Use the library at least one time a month

18.75% Use the library a few times a year

4.17% Reported they did not use the library

Reasons for not using the library

34.91% I buy my own books, magazines, music and videos

32.08% I use library services on-line

23.58% I use other libraries

18.87% Library hours are not convenient

8.49% I don't know what is available at the library

3.77% Parking is inconvenient

1.89% I have no way to get to the library

Mission and Vision Renew

Survey participants were asked if they agree with the current mission and vision of the library.

Mission: To provide excellent service and to promote reading, education, literacy and culture for persons of all ages in our community.

- 98.74% Agreed with the mission as written. Several people made recommendations on re-writing the mission to be more concise, and include “accessing information”.

Vision: The library will act as the Community Place to Be, a hub for any and all of our community residents to gather, learn and discover

- 99.17% Agreed with the vision as written.

Most Valued Service

Survey participants were asked to rank the service they used the most, by rating a list of possible answers 1-6 (6 as most important). Each service was ranked by the survey.

1. Attending Children’s programs and events (4.72)
2. To learn about community resources (4.25)
3. Using library technology (computers, wireless) (4.19)
4. Attending adult programs and events (4.17)
5. Research (4.12)
6. As comfortable place to visit, relax and learn (2.99)

What else can the library offer?

“I truly can’t think of anything, I have always been pleased with all that is offered. I think of how fortunate we are in our town to have such a wonderful library filled with so many opportunities. Also, to have a staff of kind, compassionate people to help in every way. We are truly blessed”. Survey responder.

115 respondents presented a wide variety of different suggestions, and many people stated that the library should continue as it has been.

- Additional programs for **adult** including training on technology, craft classes, money and budget, parent education, and genealogy were a few of the suggestions.
- Hours – more weekend hours, and more evening hours.
- Increase programming for middle school students.
- Community discussions and forums, Presentations by town officials; Community service providers.
- Weekend programming for small children (Baby yoga)
- French Canadian history and historical fiction.
- Tool borrowing.
- More books for sale; Bigger for sale area.
- Increased number of CD; DVD; New releases.
- Outreach to the homeless, (special snacks once a month for example).
- Creative workshops.

Suggestions for outreach

89 respondents answered the question how to promote the library.

- Increase library activity on social media. Establish a YouTube channel, more frequent updating of the webpage and email newsletter. (multiple respondents)
- Collaborate and work with the schools, including visiting classes, partnering with teachers to use the library for extra credit, or as part of a curriculum. Promote library activities through the schools. (multiple respondents)
- The use of events and increased workshops and classes for adults; Contests, scavenger hunt, give aways; game nights, Library open house, Get a library card event.
- Increased advertising: Shoppers World, coordinate with the town to have a town wide calendar.
- Book mobile
- Focus on e-books and other internet resources
- A community "Welcome Wagon", that includes the library.
- Open later hours and more hours on weekends.
- Outreach to groups and organizations.