



Wilbraham Public Library Strategic Plan FY2026-2029

Prepared by Karen Ball, Library Director

Approved by the
Wilbraham Public Library Board of Trustees
on June 25, 2024

Wilbraham Public Library
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METHODOLOGY/USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In developing the latest Strategic Plan for the Wilbraham Public Library, library staff and trustees gathered feedback about the library and its services through a town-wide survey that was available for the public to complete November 2023-January 2024. An online version of the survey was sent out to over 1500 e-newsletter subscribers and was posted on the library website and various social media group pages. Printed copies of the survey were also available to pick up at the library, town hall, and senior center. The complete survey results are included in the appendix.

A call for volunteers to serve on a Strategic Planning Committee went out through the quarterly newsletter, monthly e-newsletter, and the local newspaper. The committee was formed with members representing different demographics and user groups. The library hired Paul Critchley, from New England Lean Consulting to facilitate the working sessions of the Strategic Planning Committee. Three meetings were held with the committee – two in person meetings and one hybrid meeting.

Library staff participated in a Staff Development session to brainstorm ideas for programs and services in response to community needs.

The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of :

1. Jenn Banker (Wilbraham Friends of the Library member)
2. Caroline Euber (Student)
3. Daniel Hatten (Community member)
4. Megan Harrigan (Community member)
5. John Harrington (Community member)
6. Emilie Lang (Wilbraham Public Library full-time staff)
7. Barbara Pilarcik (Community member)
8. Rachel Smythe (Wilbraham Public Library part-time staff)
9. Pamela Sonnenfeld (Community member)
10. Cheryl Wesolowski (Wilbraham Public Library Board of Trustees)
11. Marjorie Williams (Wilbraham Public Library Board of Trustees)

MISSION STATEMENT

Comments from the Strategic Planning Committee resulted in the following updated mission statement, approved by the Board of Library Trustees in June 2024 -

The Wilbraham Public Library provides resources and opportunities for community learning, recreation, and making connections.

SERVICE RESPONSES

The committee selected the following service responses from “Public Library Service Responses 2007,” by June Garcia and Sandra Nelson, published by the Public Library Association.

Create Young Readers: Early literacy. Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure. Residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong learning. Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Make Informed Decisions: Health, wealth, and other life choices. Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and virtual spaces. Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

GOALS

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Definition: Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

<i>Goal – Wilbraham parents and caregivers of the young will receive appropriate instruction and assistance to obtain skills related to parenting and early childhood development, and their children will have the materials and services that support their developmental and learning needs.</i>		
Activity	Responsible	Timeline
Obtain list of newborns in town to mail introductory package, “Baby Bundles”	Library Director/Children’s Department	Monthly
Survey local preschools and private daycare centers to determine their needs from the public library	Children’s Department	FY2026
Familiarize all staff with the use of digital resources such as Teachables, Tumblebooks, and Miss Humblebee’s Academy	Library Director	FY2026
Continue partnership with Pathways for Parents to provide programs for ages zero-five	Children’s Department	FY2026, assess annually
Produce in-house storytimes and explore incorporating ASL, multilingual storytimes, and visiting readers	Children’s Department	FY2026
Maintain collection in a variety of age-appropriate formats for use by babies, toddlers, and preschoolers	Children’s Department	Ongoing

Promote digital and physical collections	Children's Department	Ongoing
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Stimulate Imagination: Reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure.

Definition: Residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

Goal – Library users of all ages will have access to materials and programming to support recreational reading, viewing, and listening.		
Activity	Responsible	Timeline
Maintain collection of digital and physical materials through ongoing purchasing and deselection.	Collection Development Staff	Ongoing
Promote collections through physical displays	All library staff	Ongoing
Promote collections through e-newsletters, social media posts, and featured lists in the Aspen catalog	Collection Development Staff, Borrower Services Staff	Ongoing
Instruct community members on the use of library resources sharing outlets – such as the C/W MARS Aspen catalog, ComCat, Libby and partner libraries	All library staff	Ongoing
Library will host regular Book Discussion groups for adults – such as the Booked for Lunch group and Evening Discussion Group	Library management	Ongoing – monthly meetings
Connect with the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District to determine the opportunities for student book discussion groups	Children's Department and Teen Services Department	FY2026
Promote the virtual author visits through the Library Speakers Consortium program	Adult Services Department	Ongoing
Promote the library's seasonal reading programs, Big Library Read, Massachusetts Center for the Book Reading Challenge, One Book One Community or other community reading activities	Adult Services, Teen, and Children's Departments	Ongoing
Host at least four music or entertainment programs for families or adults	Adult Services, Children's Departments	FY2027

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong learning

Definition: Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Goal – Library users of all ages will have resources and opportunities to participate in programs to develop skills and increase their body of knowledge.

Activity	Responsible	Timeline
Identify four topics for collection development by examining demand for requests	Library Director with Borrower Services Staff	Annually
Provide training opportunities for the library’s electronic resources that promote lifelong learning, such as Ancestry Library edition and Great Courses	Library Director, Asst. Director, and Adult Services Department	Ongoing via appointment and semi-annual in person
Partner with the Senior Center to support Memory Cafe events and services related to the Dementia Friendly Community program	Adult Services Department	FY2026
Survey adults and teens to determine three topics for lifelong learning programs	Adult Services, Teen Services Department staff	FY2026
Offer age appropriate programs and/or training materials on digital literacy and digital citizenship for adults, teens, and children.	Adult Services, Teen Services, and Children’s Staff	Annually

Make Informed Decisions: Health, wealth, and other life choices.

Definition: Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

Goal – Library users of all ages will have access to physical and digital resources and programming to assist them in making informed decisions.

Activity	Responsible	Timeline
Partner with Pathways for Parents to promote their services to teach parenting skills	Children’s Department Staff	Annually
Offer tutorials in print and digital format on evaluating source information	Adult Services Department	FY2026
Offer programs such as Great Decisions that explore global and local social, economic, and political issues	Adult Services Department	Regular, TBD
Identify four topics for collection development by examining demand for requests	Library Director with Collection Development and Borrower Services Staff	Annually
Invite elected officials to hold office hour session at the library	Library Director	Bi-Annually

Visit a Comfortable Space: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Definition: Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Goal – Library users will be able to find places in the library or on its grounds for a variety of purposes – quiet reading and study, collaborative work, and recreation.		
Activity	Responsible	Timeline
Oversee the continued maintenance of the StoryWalk®	Library Director	Ongoing
Continue to offer the Brooks Room for public use according to the Brooks Room Use Guidelines	Library Director	Ongoing
Explore the options for flexible furnishings to promote “quiet work sessions” in the Brooks Room	Library Director	FY2026
Explore cubicle or other study carrel options for additional work spaces for individuals and small groups in the library	Library Director	FY2026
Explore acoustical treatments for the ceiling	Library Director with the Town Facilities Director	FY2027
Obtain professionally designed signage to assist in way finding	Library Director	FY2026
Explore HVAC solutions for the lobby	Library Director with Town Facilities Director	FY2028
Explore HVAC solutions for the mezzanine level	Library Director with Town Facilities Director	FY2028
Continue to provide space for a community food pantry and solicit donations of items as needed	Library Director with the Borrower Services Coordinator	Ongoing

Programs and collections mentioned in this plan will be promoted according to the methods and protocols of the Wilbraham Public Library’s Marketing Plan.

Appendix - Attached to this document are the following:

- 2023-2024 Community Survey Results
- Notes from the Strategic Planning Committee meetings and the Library Staff Development Session
- Wilbraham Public Library Marketing Plan
- Sample of the Baby Bundle packet mailed out to parents of newborns