



**East Bridgewater Public Library
East Bridgewater, Massachusetts
Strategic Plan FY2027-2032**

East Bridgewater Public Library Strategic Plan FY2027-2032

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Lauren Roy, Vice-Chair
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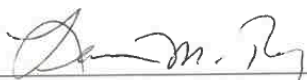
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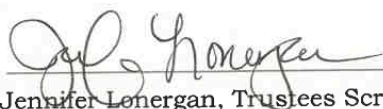
The East Bridgewater Public Library Strategic Plan for FY2027-2032 was approved by
the Library Trustees on 14 Sept 2026.



Anne Marek, Trustees Chair



Lauren Roy, Trustees Vice-Chair



Jennifer Lonergan, Trustees Scribe



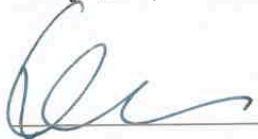
Victoria Panora, Trustees Friends Liaison



Jennifer Stewart, Trustee



Ashley Ware, Trustee



Karen Urbec, Director of Library Services

Mission Statement

The East Bridgewater Public Library is an essential community space where all who visit are warmly welcomed and assisted by dedicated, professional staff. Patrons can find the highest-quality materials, programs, and library services through which they can learn about themselves, their community, and the world.

Vision Statement

The East Bridgewater Public Library is an essential community hub where library patrons come to learn, grow, and build community ties. All who enter are welcome and everyone who visits can find resources that tell their story, help them understand their history, and inspire them to create their future.

Slogan

Start here, go anywhere!

Core Values

Excellence
Welcoming
Inclusivity

Diversity
Creativity

Executive Summary

The East Bridgewater Public Library strives to be a welcoming space where all community members can find opportunities to learn, grow, and build community. As the Strategic Planning Committee has sought community input to our planning for the next few years, there have been consistent themes and ideas expressed by library patrons, Trustees, Friends, staff, and the community at large.

Overall, the library is seen as a welcoming space with helpful and caring staff. This was a strength in our last strategic plan, and it continues to be the cornerstone of our work. Being friendly, approachable, and helpful is the key to meeting people's needs, because if a patron does not feel that they can ask for help, then they will struggle to locate the information they seek. Our patrons have consistently and clearly stated that our staff is among the best in the business!

Another consistent positive is our service to East Bridgewater's children. Our books, media, storytimes, scavenger hunts, messy play days, story walks, crafts, and other varied offerings throughout the year are enjoyed and appreciated by all. And as children grow and mature, our Teen Zone is ready to welcome them with age-appropriate books, resources, video games, after-school hang out space, and creative activities, too. Many of the town's teens begin to learn leadership while serving on the Teen Advisory Board and many learn the value and joy of service as library volunteers.

Our patrons' appreciation of our adult library services includes the wide variety of our book selections, our events and programming, discounted museum passes, magazines and newspapers, our audiobooks and ebooks, quiet study spaces, and our Library of Things options.

Along with the positives, some challenges still face the library. Our programming is extremely popular, which means reservations fill up quickly making it difficult for some to participate. The library's internal environment was mentioned, often too cold or too warm with inconsistencies throughout the building. WiFi coverage in the building is also a significant limiter. Finally, for all our patrons who work during the week, it is often difficult to visit during our regular hours, and many patrons are interested in seeing extended evening and weekend hours. The goals and objectives in this new strategic plan will continue to build on our strengths, and work to improve our challenges.

Community Profile

For over 12,000 years, this region we call East Bridgewater was inhabited by the Pokanoket Band of the Wampanoag Tribe. The Wampanoag called this region “Satucket” which means “place of the river” or “place where the rivers meet”. English colonists moved here after a 1649 agreement between colonial and native authorities; it was incorporated as the East Precinct of Bridgewater in 1723 and was incorporated as the Town of East Bridgewater in 1823.

Today, East Bridgewater has a population of 14,602. The median household income is \$133,853, the per capita income is \$61,193, and 4.6% of the community lives in poverty. Over 88% of the town identifies as White, 2.2% Black, 4% Hispanic/Latino, and 7% two or more races. Over 95% of the residents are high school graduates and 34% have Bachelor’s degrees or higher. Just over 21% of the population are under 18 years old, 63% are between 18 and 65 years, and almost 16% are over 65 years old. English is not spoken at home in 6.2% of households. 3.1% of residents are foreign-born.

During the 2026 fiscal year, 51,582 patrons visited the library. We hosted 469 programs where 13,739 adults, children, and young adults learned, grew, and built community together.

Our total circulation of books, magazines, audiobooks, ebooks, and other resources was 94,216. Of our 5,199 registered borrowers, 4,493 are East Bridgewater residents. The library’s holdings of 38,009 resources include 35,040 books, 1,604 videos, and 412 Library of Things items.

Librarians answered 9,516 reference questions in fiscal 2026, and the library was open 2,431 hours, including 255 Saturday hours, 50 Saturdays, and 291 evening hours (after 5pm). The library hosted 120 non-subsidized volunteers who donated 378 hours of time and expertise to the library.

Planning Process

The East Bridgewater Board of Library Trustees authorized the Director of Library Services to establish a Strategic Planning Committee at their September, 2025 meeting. The committee was composed of one Trustee, two Friends of the Library, and three staff members, and began meeting monthly in December, 2025.

The largest tool to gather information was an online and analog survey that asked patrons about how they use the library and what they see as our strengths and weaknesses. During February, patrons were encouraged to list what they love about their library on post-it notes in the library. Small-group discussions were held with the town Department Heads and with current staff during a Library staff meeting. Three public small groups were scheduled, but did not receive any attendees. One-on-one meetings were also available to be scheduled, and one patron met with the director.

Data from all sources was gathered and analyzed by the committee, the mission and vision statements were updated, core values were added, and the strategic goals for the next 5 years were identified and objectives to reach them were added.

The Library Trustees approved the new strategic plan on 14 September 2026.

Library History

Libraries have been part of the East Bridgewater community since the 1700s. The Library of the East Parish of Bridgewater, which was mostly religious books, was in use by 1770. The Proprietors of a Library in the East Precinct of Bridgewater formed a library society in 1793, and a Social Library was formed in Joppa Village in 1836 by the Reverend Adonis Howard and others. A Village Library was available in Welcome Young's law office in 1838. John Adams Conant, Jr. started a library in Eastville about 1840 and an Agricultural Library was established in 1860.

Then, in 1870, the East Bridgewater Library Association was formed and the voters of East Bridgewater established a free public library in 1884. This library opened in a single room over Isaac N. Nutter's store on June 25, 1884 and offered 468 books to library patrons. Later, the library moved into the Savings Bank building in 1885 and moved again in 1892 to the Masonic block.

In 1894, Cyrus Washburn endowed \$10,000 for a new library building, which was built on the former site of St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church at 32 Union Street. Construction started in 1896 with locally-made bricks and from a design by architect Waldo V. Howard of Brockton. Known then as the Washburn Library, it was dedicated on September 22, 1897. The first Library Trustees were Benjamin M. Keith, George M. Keith, and Robert Orr Harris. The new library did not have any interior furnishings, so a library fair was held that raised \$300 that were used to purchase curtains for the windows and 170 new books. By the 25th anniversary of the library, in 1909, there were nearly 6,000 volumes available for patron use.

Children's Services was begun in 1930 and a children's room was built in 1938 with federal funding through the Works Progress Administration. In September 1938, a hurricane damaged the building and the library was closed for a few months. After funding was donated for repairs, the library reopened in 1939. A second WPA project in 1939 allowed for the entire interior to be repainted.

During World War II, the library was the town's headquarters for Civilian Defense. Packages of cigarettes, food, and books were wrapped and sent to soldiers overseas. The Children's Room was also used as an air raid shelter. In 1941, all the resources were recatalogued according to the Dewey Decimal System, which we still use today. Then in 1949, the third floor was remodeled,

to create staff workrooms and a history room. That same year, the Mary Parker Memorial Fountain was installed outside. By 1955, the library had 21,844 volumes.

In 1979, the adjacent land was acquired and a two-storey addition was built that nearly tripled the library space to 14,163 square feet. In 2000, the library joined the SAILS Library Network, a regional library consortium that we are still members of today.

Lucy Loring Siddell (1864-1936) was the first librarian, and her responsibilities were considerable. She selected, purchased, and cataloged all books, cleaned the library, attended regional meetings of the Old Colony Library Club, and established an inter-library loan system for East Bridgewater patrons to receive books from Boston and Brockton. All for an annual salary of \$348.

The library's current staffing, in addition to a director, includes an Assistant Director/Technical Services Librarian, Administrative Assistant, Senior Librarian/Head of Youth Services, Head of Adult Services, Young Adult Librarian, Outreach Librarian, a full-time Children's Library Assistant, two part-time Circulation Assistants, and one part-time Page.

The library is open six days a week for 49 hours each week. This time includes two evenings until 8pm and five hours on Saturdays throughout the calendar year. The annual budget in fiscal 2027 is \$746,517, which includes \$679,762 in town appropriations, \$47,000 in State Aid, \$11,000 from library trusts, \$6,000 from the Friends of the Library, and \$3,000 from a town revolving account. Of this amount, \$110,000 is budgeted for circulating library materials and \$14,000 for library programming.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Collections and Programming

The East Bridgewater Public Library will continue to offer the highest-quality library materials and library programming for our patrons. We are committed to remaining the town's trusted source of vetted, accurate information that will allow our patrons to learn, grow, and develop into their best selves. We are determined to provide programming that delights, encourages, and provides recreation and creative enrichment for all who attend.

- ☐ Objective 1.1: Continue to provide excellent library services to all library patrons
- ☐ Objective 1.2: Curate a wide selection of library resources, both physical and digital, and remain up-to-date on media needs and changes so we can best support our patrons' information needs
- ☐ Objective 1.3: Continue to provide passive programming and non-digital third-space options, so patrons see their library as a welcoming space where they can regularly spend time
- ☐ Objective 1.4: Provide community meeting spaces that meet town and patron needs.
- ☐ Objective 1.5: Explore ways to increase access to popular programming.
- ☐ Objective 1.6: Work with town leaders and community partners to improve archival stewardship and increase access to historical, archival records and realia.

Goal 2. Facility and Accessibility

We will work to improve the accessibility and usability of the existing library building and grounds. An expansion of the library building is unlikely, so we will need to make the best use of the existing space. We also seek to make the library an inviting place where students can study, patrons can browse, read, and relax, and where programming can be scheduled and carried out easily and efficiently.

Indoor Facility Objectives

- ☐ Objective 2.1: Improve the climate control throughout the building, to ensure comfortable and consistent warmth in winter and cooling in summer.
- ☐ Objective 2.2: Complete electrical upgrades in the historic portion of the library to allow for uninterrupted electrical service throughout the library.

- ☐ Objective 2.3: Explore ways to redesign the circulation desk and to establish a reference desk to maximize usable space and increase staff workspaces.
- ☐ Objective 2.4: Explore ways to bring the existing doorways and ramps into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ☐ Objective 2.5: Enhance library spaces with comfortable seating, study carrels, and design choices that encourage patrons to stay and read, study, and increase their library dwell time. Explore options to refurbish the community room to make it more welcoming. Explore opportunities for murals and other public art exhibitions.

Outdoor Facility Objectives

- ☐ Objective 2.6: Expand outdoor seating and gathering spaces, to allow for fuller use of the library's property. Explore options for constructing a pavilion for outdoor storytimes and messy project workspaces.
- ☐ Objective 2.7: Continue enhancing and expanding the Sensory Garden, to provide additional outdoor spaces for rest and reflection. Explore opportunities for murals and other public art installations.
- ☐ Objective 2.8: Enhance existing parking lot by resurfacing and repainting.

Digital Facility Objectives

- ☐ Objective 2.9: Bring the library's website into full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ☐ Objective 2.10: Improve WiFi coverage throughout the library building and property.
- ☐ Objective 2.11: Increase accessibility to digitized archival collections.

Goal 3. Staff Development

The East Bridgewater librarians are creative, helpful, and dedicated to helping all library patrons. To ensure their ongoing professional growth, the library will be a workplace that encourages ongoing learning and innovation.

- ☐ Objective 3.1: Continue to provide wages and benefits that meet industry and community standards.
- ☐ Objective 3.2: Continue to encourage a pleasant and professional workplace culture where all are free to be their fullest and truest selves.
- ☐ Objective 3.3: Encourage library staff to conduct library-related research, publish their findings, and present at regional and national conferences to contribute to the profession of librarianship.

Goal 4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice

As librarians, we endorse and uphold the American Library Association's Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, and Library Bill of Rights statements. We are committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice in all our work. We will ensure all voices are heard and all stories are told in our materials, resources, and programming. We welcome diverse voices, so we can all learn, grow, and understand each other better.

- ☐ Objective 4.1: We will design accessible, inclusive community programming, and will seek out diverse voices to work with us to co-create a fair, just, and understanding community and world.
- ☐ Objective 4.2: We will conduct targeted outreach to underserved populations, including but not limited to those who do not feel welcome at the library, those who are unaware of library services, those who are incarcerated, and those who are homebound.
- ☐ Objective 4.3: We will ensure our collections are diverse and inclusive, and include stories and experiences of all in our community. We will conduct a diversity audit of our collections, to identify gaps that need filling. We will also work to expand our resources in non-English languages to meet the needs of patrons who are most comfortable using resources in other languages.

Goal 5. Communications and Community Outreach

As a community hub and third space, we will increase our efforts to interact with our patrons and the wider community. We will use a variety of means to reach out to those who may not currently use the library, as well as current patrons, to ensure all are aware of what their public library offers so the library can become part of their daily life.

- ☐ Objective 5.1: We will explore options to purchase and install an electronic sign on the library's yard.
- ☐ Objective 5.2: We will explore opportunities for community dialogue and interaction between the library and patrons.
- ☐ Objective 5.3: We will increase library services to include processing passport applications for library patrons.
- ☐ Objective 5.4: We will continue to work closely with the Friends of the East Bridgewater Public Library and other Town and community partners to further support the information needs of East Bridgewater.

Strategic Planning Data

Library Survey Questions

East Bridgewater Public Library Strategic Planning Community Survey

Thank you for taking this survey and sharing your thoughts about the East Bridgewater Public Library. All information will be kept confidential, and all questions are optional.

1. How often do you come to the library?

- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 1-3 times a week
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ 2-3 times a month
- ☐ Every now and then
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other:

2. When is it easiest for you to come to the library?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Weekday mornings
- ☐ Weekday afternoons
- ☐ Weekday evenings
- ☐ Saturday mornings
- ☐ Saturday afternoons
- ☐ Saturday evenings
- ☐ Sunday mornings
- ☐ Sunday afternoons
- ☐ Sunday evenings

3. Do you have a library card?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

4. Which library services do you use?
Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Books, magazines, DVDs, etc. (physical materials that are at the library)
- ☐ Overdrive, Libby, Palace, Hoopla, etc. (digital materials)
- ☐ Inter-library loan (books from non- East Bridgewater locations)
- ☐ SAILS Mobile app
- ☐ Museum passes
- ☐ Library of Things
- ☐ Community Cupboard
- ☐ Homebound Delivery Service
- ☐ Notary Services
- ☐ Story Time for Children
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Teen Zone
- ☐ Copying, Printing, Faxing
- ☐ Readers Advisory (help finding new books and resources)
- ☐ Small Meeting Room
- ☐ Newspapers/magazines
- ☐ Study Pod
- ☐ Children's Department activities
- ☐ Fish tank
- ☐ Community Room (for group meetings)
- ☐ In-person library programs
- ☐ Online library programs
- ☐ Community puzzle
- ☐ FamilySearch genealogy database

- ☐ Francis Davis Millet Collection
- ☐ Online East Bridgewater History Collection
- ☐ Book Sale
- ☐ Online GALE databases
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other:

5. How do you find out about library services and programs?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Library website
- ☐ Printed events calendars
- ☐ Monthly newsletter (sent via email)
- ☐ Library yard sign
- ☐ Town website
- ☐ Town Hall yard sign
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ East Bridgewater Public Access TV (EBCAM)
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Other:

6. Why DO you use the library?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ I'm interested in the event topics
- ☐ I believe library programs are high quality
- ☐ I like to hang out in the Teen Zone
- ☐ I appreciate that events and programs are free/low-cost
- ☐ The library is a convenient location
- ☐ Programs are at a time that fits with my schedule
- ☐ The library is a safe place to spend time and hang out

- ☐ I prefer to borrow books and resources instead of buying things I'll only read once
- ☐ I feel welcomed at the library
- ☐ I want to support my local public library
- ☐ Other:

7. Why DON'T you use the library?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ The library is not open early enough for me
- ☐ The library is not open late enough for me
- ☐ My schedule is too busy
- ☐ I can't get to the library (no transportation)
- ☐ I have no one to go to the library with
- ☐ It's too quiet at the library
- ☐ Programs fill up too fast for me to sign up
- ☐ Programs are not offered at convenient times for me
- ☐ The library isn't open enough hours during the weekend
- ☐ I do not like the types of programs offered at the library
- ☐ I don't know what the library offers
- ☐ I have previous library bills, fines, or lost items
- ☐ I do not feel welcomed at the library
- ☐ The library isn't open enough in the evening
- ☐ I have had negative library experiences in the past
- ☐ I don't want to use the library

☐ There are too many unruly/unattended kids at the library

☐ It's too loud at the library
☐ Other:

8. What are good things about the library that you want us to continue doing?

9. What are ways you think the library can improve its service to you and the community?

10. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

11. We will be hosting a few small-group discussions about the library. If you would like to attend, please select the date that works best for you.

- Monday, April 6, 6:00 to 7:30 pm
- Saturday, April 11, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm
- Tuesday, April 28, 6:00 to 7:30 pm
- Monday, May 4, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

12. Would you like to meet one-on-one to discuss the library?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please share your name and email or phone number so we can contact you.

13. Age Range

- ☐ 0-12
☐ 13-15
☐ 16-18
☐ 19-35
☐ 36-45
☐ 46-65
☐ 66-89
☐ 90+

☐ No

14. Do you live in East Bridgewater?

- ☐ Yes

15. Which category describes you?
Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
☐ Middle Eastern or North African
☐ Native American or Alaskan Native

- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Prefer not to disclose
- ☐ Other:

- ☐ Indo-Aryan (including Hindi, Bengali)
- ☐ Cape Verdean Creole
- ☐ Other:

16. What languages are used in your home? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Haitian Creole
- ☐ Brazilian Portuguese
- ☐ European Portuguese
- ☐ French
- ☐ Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)
- ☐ Vietnamese

17. What is your education level?

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High School graduate
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College Graduate
- ☐ Graduate/professional degree
- ☐ Other:

Thank you for completing this survey!

Survey Data Analysis

Strengths

The following items were selected and/or mentioned more than 10 times

- events/programs
- Scavenger hunts
- Children's activities
- Children's events/programs
- Friendly staff
- Helpful staff
- books/variety

The following items were selected and/or mentioned between 2 and 9 times

- Programs are free
- Craft events
- Variety of art programs offered
- All ages availability
- Types of events offered
- Community programs
- Book sale
- Reading contests
- Adult programs/events
- Summer reading
- Take and make
- Animal events
- TAB
- Teen programs
- Staff: Welcoming, kind, great, wonderful, incredible, knowledgeable, amazing, happy, appreciate all, awesome
- Computers
- Copy machine
- Discounted tickets/passes
- Borrowing books
- SAILS app
- Borrowing from other libraries
- Magazines
- LOT
- Audiobooks
- New books
- Children's books
- puzzles/games
- Welcoming space
- Fun

- Quiet study space
- Book displays
- Love the library
- Meeting rooms
- Great addition to town
- Art exhibits/displays
- Teen zone
- Safe for teens
- After school space for teens
- Children's section

Improvements

No items needing improvement were mentioned more than 10 times

- None!

The following items were selected and/or mentioned 5 to 9 times

- More programming
- Open more hours
- Open later evenings

The following items were selected and/or mentioned 2 to 4 times

- Programming at different times
- Programs fill too quickly
- More adult programs
- Weekend children's programs
- Evening children's programs
- Teen programming (more wanted)
- More college course books
- Save older, historical books
- More popular books
- Larger inventory of books
- More large print
- More art
- Dedicated study/work space
- Dedicated reading space
- more/varied seating areas
- Heating is inconsistent
- Not enough outlets
- Parking lot
- More adult seating in childrens
- Sunday hours
- Open later Thursday and Friday

Small Group Feedback

The following pros and cons were mentioned in our small group meetings and one-on-one meeting

Pros

- Awesome staff
- Teen Advisory Board
- Abundance of digital and analog resources
- Welcoming space

Cons

- Not enough emails are sent to patrons
- Programming fills too quickly
- There should be more sessions of popular programs offered
- An electronic sign is needed
- Expand choices in the Library of Things
- Create more quiet reading spaces in the library
- The parking lot often full
- More evening and weekend hours
- Improve messaging

How often do you come to the library?

never	2
once a week	38
1-3 times a week	29
once a month	35
2-3 times a month	45
every now and then	66

What are the best times for you to visit the library?

Weekday mornings	67
Weekday afternoons	63
Weekday evenings	72
Saturday mornings	50
Saturday afternoons	76
Saturday evenings	34
Sunday mornings	47
Sunday afternoons	63
Sunday evenings	24

Do you have a library card?

yes	206
no	5
not sure	6

How do you find out about services at the Library?

Library Website	132
Library Yard Sign	62
Interior Library Signs and Calendars	68
Social Media	88
Town Hall Yard Sign	9
Town Website	15
EB Cam	6
Word of Mouth	61

What limits your library usage?

Book selection is too limited	1
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Don't feel comfortable searching for items	1
No transportation/can't get to library	6
Don't feel welcomed	3
Don't like types of programs offered	4
Don't know how to access services	1
Don't know what the library offers	8
Negative past experiences	2
Old fines/bills	3
Overwhelmed using Sails and getting a card	1
Too loud	3
Too quiet	1
My schedule is too busy	81
Everything I need is on the internet	1
Nowhere to work in library with plug	1
Programs not offered at convenient times	32
Programs fill too fast	27
Not open early enough	7
Not open late enough	56
Not enough weekend hours	49
Not enough evening hours	32
Too many unruly/unattended kids	3

What is your age?

0-12	8
13-15	3
16-18	2
19-35	28
36-45	73
46-65	50
66-89	36

Do you live in East Bridgewater?

yes	205
no	21

Which languages do you speak at home?

Brazilian Portuguese	3
Cape Verdean Creole	2
European Portuguese	4
French	4
Haitian Creole	1
Italian	1
Lithuanian	1
Spanish	6
Sujarati	1
Telugu	1
Vietnamese	1
English	199

What is your education level?

Some high school	6
high school graduate	15
some college	35
college graduate	89
graduate/professional degree	54
middle school	1

What is your race/ethnicity?

Asian	5
Black or African American	3
European	1
Gujarati	1
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	6
Middle Eastern/North African	1
Native American or Alaskan Native	3
Prefer not to disclose	19
White or Caucasian	169