



Strategic Plan FY2025 – FY2030



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Introduction

The North Hampton Public Library initiated its strategic planning process in March 2024 and completed it in February 2025. This five-year plan will guide the library through 2030. Included in this document are the methodology and needs assessment, detailing how information was collected and analyzed to shape the strategic plan. The mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, and goals were developed based on insights gathered from the community.

Acknowledgements & Plan Approval

We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the strategic planning process.

Library Director Elizabeth Herold and the Board of Library Trustees worked closely with Deb Hoadley, Consultant from Hoadley Consulting, to guide the strategic planning process. This included recruiting community members for focus groups, reviewing the survey and its results, and participating in a retreat to refine the final elements of the strategic plan based on the gathered insights.

Sincere thanks to the North Hampton Public Library Staff, the Board of Library Trustees, and the community members who took part in focus groups and shared their perspectives through the survey. Their input was invaluable in shaping this plan.

The North Hampton Public Library's Strategic Plan 2025-2030 was reviewed and approved by the following Library Board of Trustees at their meeting in March 2025.

Board of Library Trustees:

Jacqueline Brandt – Secretary

Susan Leonardi – Chair

Kathleen Kilgore – Treasurer

Methodology

An Initial meeting with the Library Director, Board of Trustees and consultant, Deb Hoadley was held to review various aspects of the library, including the newly expanded and renovated building, operations, budget and visions of how the library will continue to engage and be a vital part of the North Hampton community. Library statistics and town demographics were also shared during this meeting to get a snapshot of how the library and community has changed over the past few years. A discussion about recruiting community members for the focus groups was also discussed.

Ms. Hoadley facilitated a variety of focus group meetings. A group of 12 community members were asked to participate in two focus group meetings. They were recruited for their various roles within the community. There was also a Community Forum, open to all community members, a Library Staff Focus Group; and a Board of Library Trustee Focus Group. In each of these facilitations, the S.O.A.R. (Strengths,

Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) exercise was conducted to explore the library's role and then later the groups addressed community challenges, issues and hopes for the future. These focus groups were held in September & October of 2024.

To gather additional information from the larger community, a community-wide survey was made available in both print and online formats. The survey was accessible to all community members during the month of December 2024. It was promoted on the library's website, included in the library's regular emails, and distributed as paper copies. The survey received 170 responses.

In February 2025, a retreat session was facilitated by Ms. Hoadley. This involved the Library Director and Board of Trustees reviewing the survey results and working through a draft version of the mission, vision, values, strategic priorities and goals.

Needs Assessment

Scope of Needs

The North Hampton Public Library involved library staff, trustees, and community members in its strategic planning process to gather a range of perspectives. These discussions helped identify the community's needs and aspirations for the library.

As part of the process, the library reviewed its current services and explored new opportunities for growth and improvement. The goal was to ensure its offerings align with the community's evolving needs, with a focus on engagement, technology access, program expansion, and maintaining the library as a valuable resource for all.

To gather data, a variety of methods were used, including:

- **Community Focus Group & Community Forum**– Two sessions (2 hours each) were held with 12 community members brainstormed ideas about the future of the library and the community. There was also an open invitation for the whole community to join a two-hour facilitated discussion similar to the community focus group meetings.
- **Staff Meetings** – Discussions on the library's strengths and opportunities for staff to enhance service delivery and community engagement.
- **Trustee Meetings** – Strategic discussions with library trustees about long-term goals and the library's place in the community.
- **Community Survey** – Available both online and in print, the survey collected broad community feedback on library services and future priorities.

By leveraging these various methods of collecting information, the North Hampton Public Library developed a strategic plan that reflects the community's needs and aspirations, ensuring its continued relevance and impact.

Demographic and Community Needs

North Hampton, New Hampshire, is a small seaside town with a population of approximately 4,538 as of the 2020 census. The town's demographics are predominantly White (87%), with Hispanic and Asian communities each comprising about 4% of the population. The median age in North Hampton is 51 years old. Economically, North Hampton is relatively affluent, with a median family income of \$145,600, which is higher than both the county and state medians. Despite its affluence, North Hampton faces challenges related to its aging population, including increased demand for healthcare services and age-friendly infrastructure.

The information gathered from the focus groups revealed six (6) key areas related to the issues, challenges and future vision of North Hampton. These priorities focus on creating a safer, more connected, and inclusive community that supports all residents.

1. **Improving Walkability and Safety:** Enhancing pedestrian safety and connectivity is a high priority for residents. This includes installing sidewalks, adding crosswalks, and creating safe walking and biking routes between important town areas, such as the school, library, and other public spaces.
2. **Enhancing Technology Infrastructure and Bridging the Digital Divide:** Improving the town's technology infrastructure and offering accessible internet options, especially in public spaces, would help residents stay connected and allow broader access to digital services and information.
3. **Creating Community Gathering Spaces:** There is a need for more centralized spaces that bring people together. These spaces would support events, programs, and intergenerational interactions, strengthening the sense of community and offering a welcoming environment for residents of all ages.
4. **Expanding Housing Options and Affordability:** Rising housing costs and limited options make it challenging for families and workers to live in North Hampton.
5. **Strengthening Local Economy and Supporting Small Businesses:** Building a thriving local economy and supporting small businesses would foster economic growth and provide residents with essential services. The town could explore ways to support and retain local businesses, encourage new ventures, and create a welcoming environment for entrepreneurship.
6. **Enhancing Civic Engagement and Communication:** Improving how the town communicates with residents and encouraging civic involvement is a key priority. Clear and consistent communication would help residents stay informed.

Library Services and Program Development

Since its establishment in 1892, the North Hampton Public Library has been a cornerstone of the community, enriching the quality of life for its residents. In 1973, a new library was constructed to accommodate the town's growing needs, and was designed to serve the community for over 20 years.

By 1996, the Library Board of Trustees recognized the need for expansion to support a growing collection, evolving programs, and diverse community interests. After years of planning, a renovation and expansion project became a reality in 2021, adding a 5,000-square-foot, single-story addition wrapping around three

sides of the existing building. This project introduced essential upgrades, including meeting and study spaces, a Program Room, an expanded Children's Room with an Activity Room, dedicated tween and teen room, a lounge, an outdoor patio, upgraded technology, and ADA-compliant entrances, restrooms, and aisles.

Now that the expanded facility is in use, it was time to reassess the community's needs and expectations to ensure the library continues to serve as a vital resource for all residents.

Based on the community and staff reports, here are the six (6) strategic priorities North Hampton Library might consider over the next five years:

1. **Enhanced Community Engagement and Outreach:** The library could increase its role as a community connector by offering programs that foster civic involvement, partnerships with town departments, and outreach to isolated residents.
2. **Digital Literacy and Technology Access:** To bridge the digital divide, the library could offer digital literacy classes covering topics like safe internet practices, identifying misinformation, and using new technologies such as artificial intelligence, as well as regular drop-in sessions for tech help.
3. **Cultural and Educational Program Expansion:** As a cultural hub, the library could broaden its program offerings to include more arts, culture, and educational events. This might involve partnerships with local artists, hosting a poetry festival, providing guest lectures on various topics, and offering more diverse book selections.
4. **Accessibility and Inclusivity Enhancements:** Improving accessibility to the library's collection and services could be achieved by offering a home delivery service, and also investigating transportation options for seniors or isolated residents who can't drive or have a way to get to the library.
5. **Communications and Marketing:** Building a comprehensive communication strategy could help raise awareness about the library's services, programs, and resources. This may include developing a quarterly town newsletter, expanding cross-marketing efforts with local organizations, and utilizing digital and traditional media to reach all community members effectively, especially those without reliable internet access.
6. **Staff Development and Resource Investment:** Investing in staff training, particularly in digital and educational skills, could enable the library to provide high-quality support to patrons. Resources for staff development would ensure that the library meets evolving community needs effectively while maintaining high morale and service standards.

The full strategic plan outlines these priorities and the goals to achieve them. To streamline the focus, overlapping areas in operations, programs, and services were consolidated into four (4) key priorities.

By addressing the evolving needs of its residents, the North Hampton Public Library will continue to serve as the heart of a thriving and connected community. The library is committed to providing welcoming spaces that foster lifelong learning, creativity, and cultural engagement for all ages.

With its expanded and modernized facility, the library will maximize its potential by offering dynamic programs, upgraded technology, and inclusive resources that reflect the diverse interests of the community.

It will work to improve accessibility, including programming that accommodates working families, and ensure that its services remain relevant and responsive to changing community demographics.

Excellence in service will remain a top priority, with a dedicated, knowledgeable, and friendly staff who support patrons in their informational, educational, and recreational pursuits. As the community's informational hub, the library will continue to provide essential resources, facilitate meaningful connections, and serve as a gathering place where ideas, learning, and culture come together.

North Hampton Public Library Strategic Plan FY25-FY30

Mission Statement

(Our purpose and why we exist):

The North Hampton Public Library connects our community to resources, programs, and services that empower and inspire lifelong learning, creativity, and cultural engagement.

Vision Statement

(Aspirations we have for our library):

The North Hampton Public Library will be the heart of our community by creating a vibrant and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and inspired.

Value Statement

(What we believe in):

We value:

- Access
- Education & Lifelong learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Service

Strategic Priorities & Goals:

1. Enhance Community Engagement and Outreach

Goals:

1. Expand programs that foster civic involvement, intergenerational interaction, and community-wide events.
2. Increase outreach to isolated individuals, new residents, and underserved demographics through targeted initiatives programs and consistent communications.
3. Build partnerships with local organizations, town departments, and schools to co-host events and programs that connect diverse groups.
4. Develop a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy to raise awareness of library services and programs.

2. Access to Digital Literacy and Technology

Goals:

1. Provide ongoing classes and drop-in sessions on digital skills and emerging technologies to bridge the digital divide.
2. Improve access to technology resources, including expanded Wi-Fi, digital lending options, and technology assistance for patrons of all ages.
3. Invest in staff training to enhance digital literacy support and ensure the library remains a reliable technology resource.
4. Partner with local schools, businesses, and organizations to create community-wide digital literacy initiatives and increase accessibility.

3. Expand Cultural and Educational Programs

Goals:

1. Increase the variety and frequency of programs, including arts and cultural events to appeal to a broader audience.
2. Highlight local talent and history by organizing community-driven initiatives like oral history projects, poetry festivals, and showcases of local artists.
3. Strengthen partnerships with cultural and educational institutions to bring diverse and high-quality programming to the library.
4. Enhance the library's collection to reflect diverse perspectives and emerging interests, and promote readers advisory.

4. Improve Accessibility and Inclusivity

Goals:

1. Ensure the library is physically and digitally accessible.
2. Collection, both physical and online, is easy to search and find materials.
3. Strengthen partnerships with local services to include transportation opportunities to help seniors and isolated individuals access the library.
4. Promote the library as a safe, inclusive space for all by offering programs and training that emphasize equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Exhibit A: Survey Summary

North Hampton Public Library Summary Report for Survey December 2024

The survey was open for about six (6) weeks during November and December. There were 170 responses to the survey.

Q1. Do you have a North Hampton Public Library Card?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	92.94%	158
No	7.06%	12
	Answered	170
	Skipped	0

Q2. Do you live in North Hampton?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	90.59%	154
No. Please tell us where you live?	9.41%	16
	Answered	170
	Skipped	0

Other towns mentioned were: Hampton (3), Exeter (2), Rye (2), Portsmouth (1), Newmarket (1) and Manchester (2).

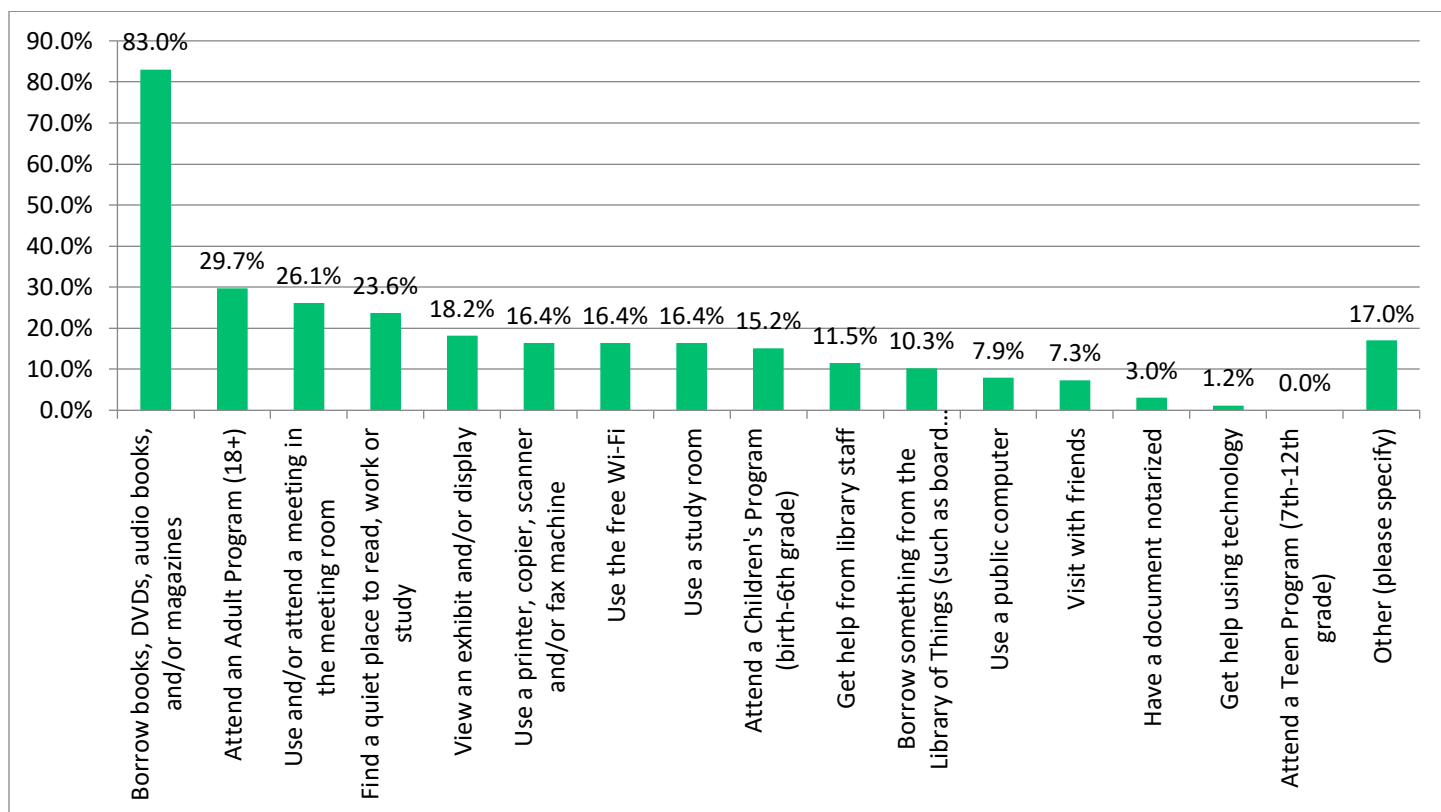
Q3. How often do you visit the library in person?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Daily	0.60%	1
Weekly	32.34%	54
Monthly	47.31%	79
Yearly	15.57%	26
Never	4.19%	7
	Answered	167
	Skipped	3

Q4. If you do not visit the library in person, do you use the library's downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, streaming movies and/or other online resources?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, I do use the library's 24/7 Library.	36.94%	58
No, I do not use the library's 24/7 Library.	44.59%	70
I did not know the library offered these services.	20.38%	32
	Answered	157
	Skipped	13

Q5. If you have visited the library in the past year, what were your main reasons for visiting? (Check all that apply.)



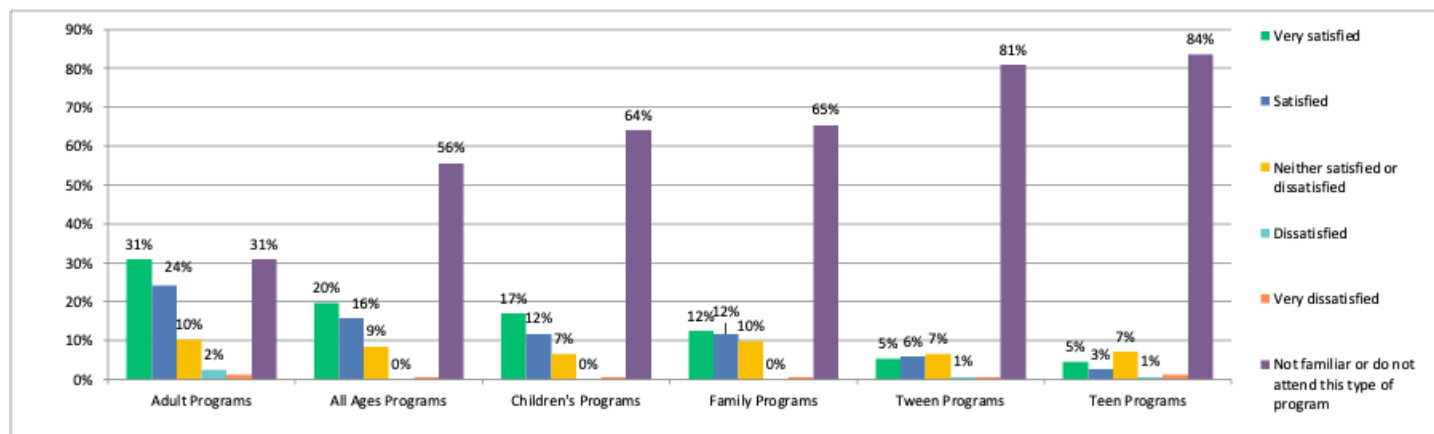
Other reasons mentioned were: Visit with grandchildren and play in children's area, volunteer, purchase items, borrow museum pass, and read magazines and newspapers.

Q6. How satisfied are you with the current North Hampton Library's services?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not familiar or do not use these
Overall customer service	71.08%	18.67%	4.22%	0.60%	0.00%	5.42%
Adult collection	41.46%	33.54%	12.20%	1.22%	0.00%	11.59%
Free wireless internet (Wi-Fi)	38.75%	15.00%	7.50%	1.25%	0.00%	37.50%
Library of Things collection	25.47%	14.29%	11.80%	0.62%	0.62%	47.20%
Children's collection	25.32%	11.04%	4.55%	0.65%	1.30%	57.14%
Reference and research help	22.50%	13.13%	6.25%	1.25%	0.00%	56.88%
Printer, copier, scanner/fax machines	18.47%	11.46%	4.46%	0.00%	0.00%	65.61%
Reserving a meeting room	17.83%	10.19%	7.01%	1.27%	0.64%	63.06%
Public computers	14.65%	9.55%	7.01%	0.00%	0.00%	68.79%
Tween collection	8.44%	5.19%	6.49%	0.65%	1.30%	77.92%
One-on-one technology help	7.64%	1.91%	8.28%	0.64%	0.64%	80.89%
Teen collection	4.52%	6.45%	7.10%	0.00%	1.29%	80.65%

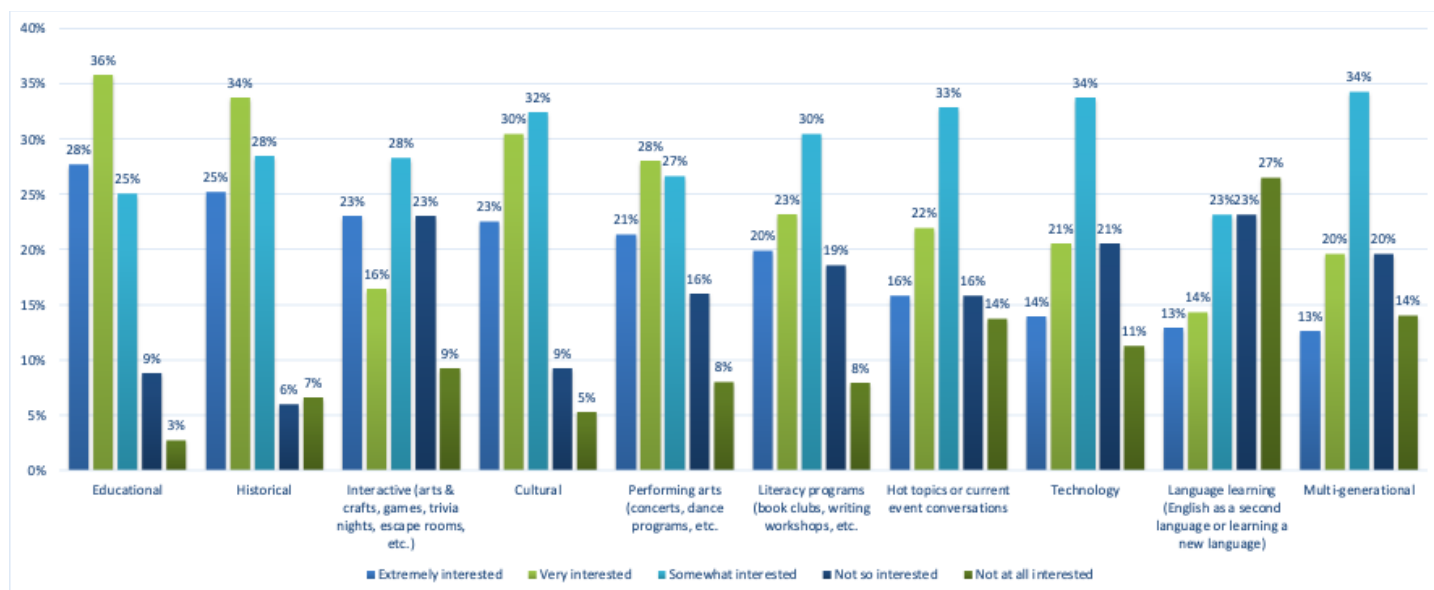
Reasons given for being dissatisfied were: Overall collection, ease of finding things both in the library and online, and technology.

Q7. How satisfied are you with the current North Hampton Library's programs?

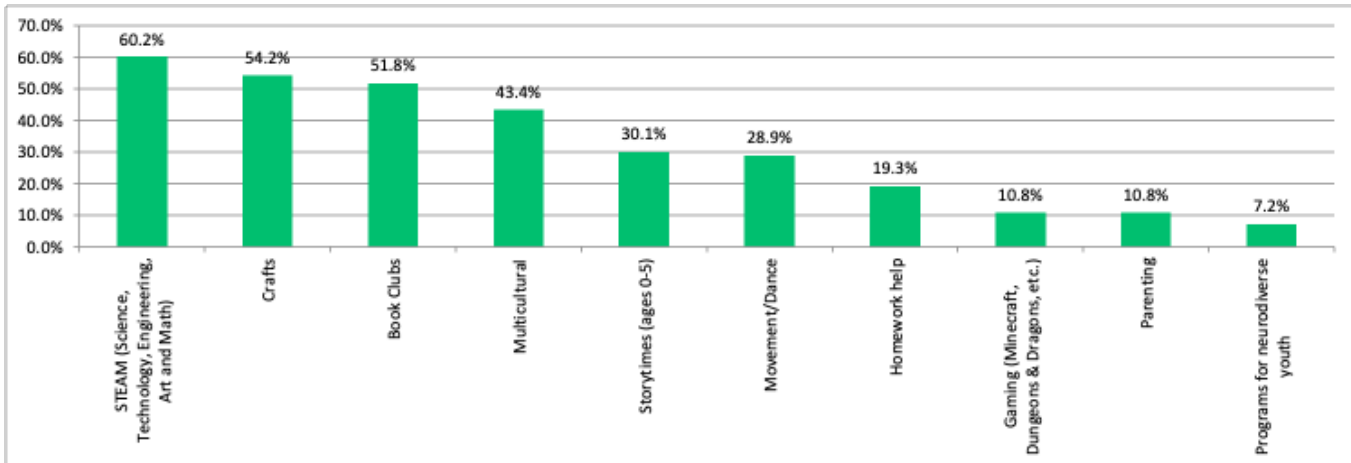


Most cited reason for being dissatisfied was adult programs. While most people were satisfied, this was also the largest percentage for dissatisfaction.

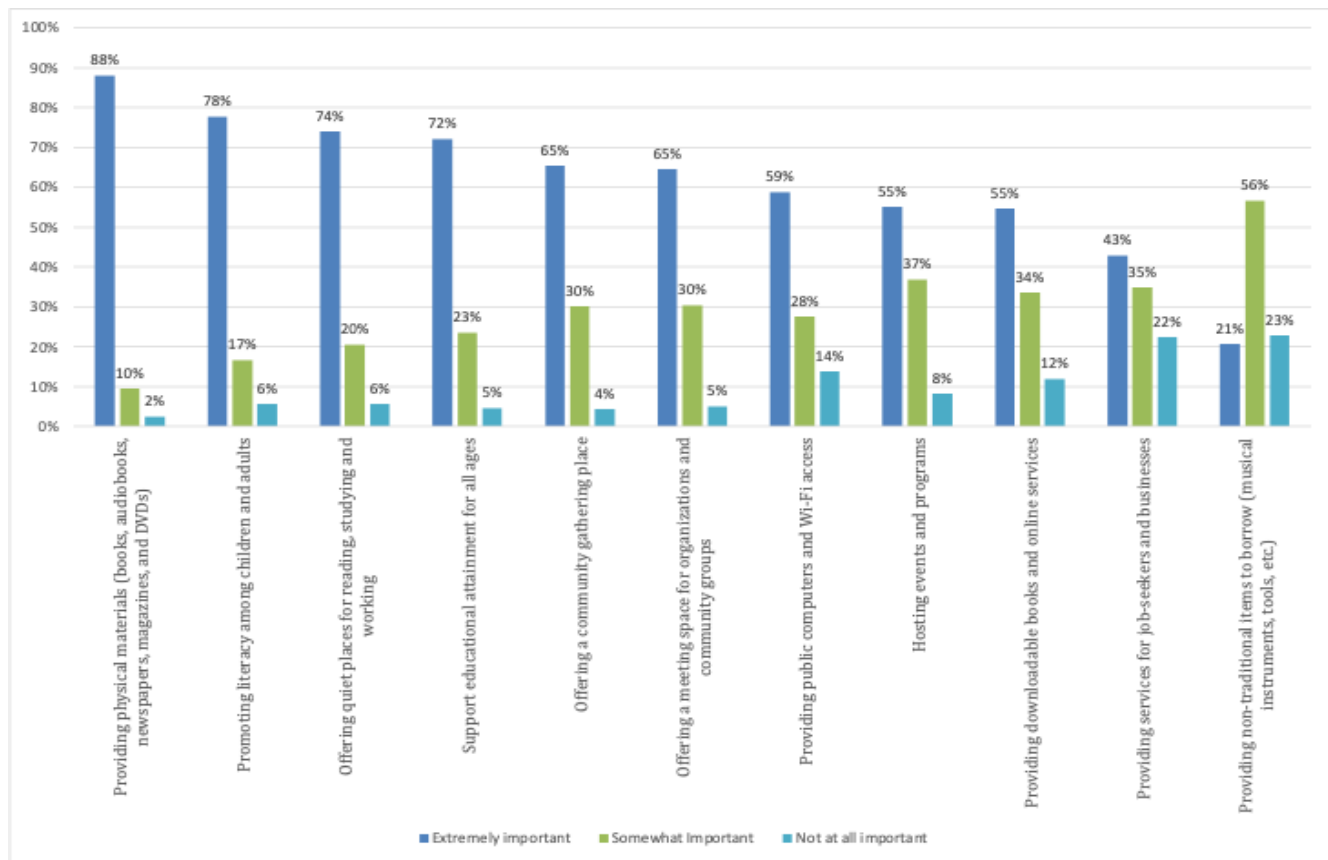
Q8. Programming at the library has become a major focus of what a library offers. Please tell us if the following adult programs would be of interest to you.



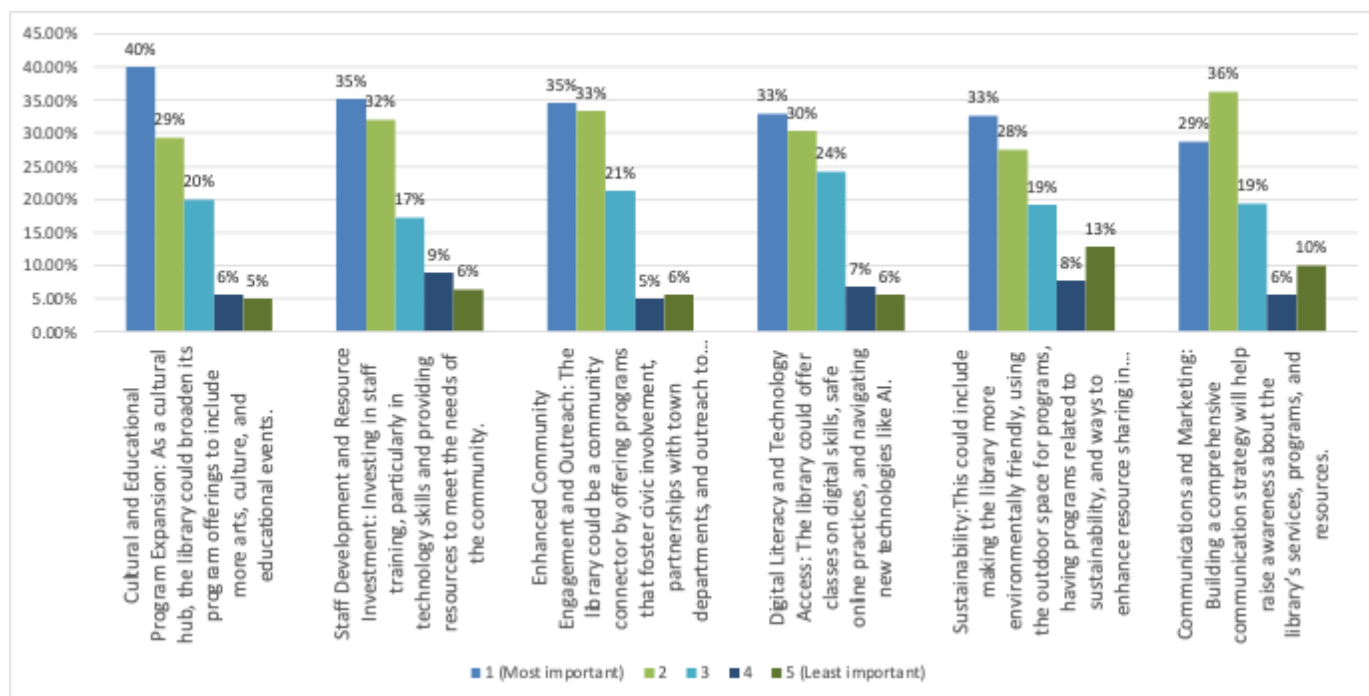
Q9. Now, please tell us what youth and family programs you would be most interested in attending.



Q10. Please tell us how important the following services are to you.



Q11. The following LIBRARY PRIORITIES were identified during our focus group discussions. Please tell us how important each priority is for you.



Q12. What is an issue or challenge you wish the library could help you with?

(Only 31 people answered this question.)

Here are the main categories and exact comments related to those categories:

Access to Digital Resources and Borrowing Limits

- "Could books be taken out for longer than 2-2 week stints if no one has it on reserve?"
- "Increase the length of borrowing time and/or the number of renewals."
- "Often, when I try to borrow a digital resource from Hoopla, I am unable to do so."
- "I have tried to access the EBSCO database remotely using library access and have never been successful."
- "Improve E-book selection."
- "Often, when I try to borrow a digital resource from Hoopla, I am unable to do so due to the maximum NHPL borrow limit has been reached. Hope you can up the borrow limit for the library. Thanks."

Operating Hours

- "I wish the library would consider staying open later one night per week. Sometimes it's hard to get there during the day or before 7pm."
- "You aren't open early enough."
- "I would like to see the library open on Sundays in lieu of a weekday, especially during the weekend."

Physical Accessibility

- "Making patrons walk from the back of the building to the front door. I have a pacemaker and heart condition where I end up gasping for breath if I walk very far in windy or damp weather."
- "Why do they not allow access to the library from the back where we park our cars."
- "The inside of the new library is cold and uninviting."
- "A sidewalk from the library to school."

Programming

- "I wish the library accepted book donations. Exeter loved getting donations of books in great condition."
- "Information about retirement planning, Medicare, and social security."
- "Education about new social media and artificial intelligence apps."
- "Things to do in the evenings."
- "Would like to have more help selecting books with age-appropriate content."

- "Help with technology issues. Information regarding wi-fi options in North Hampton."

Community Engagement and Volunteerism

- "I love the idea of pulling shut-in people into the library community - if it means writing a note of greeting or a call to check in - I would be happy to volunteer for this."
- "Meeting neighbors."
- "Meeting people in my new area."

Customer Service and Satisfaction

- "No issues but I want to comment on how helpful, friendly, competent, and well-informed the library staff is. My spirits are lifted every time I come in. Thank you to them!"
- "You're great."

Q13. What three words do you hope will define the North Hampton Public Library in the future? Please do not use phrases, just one word for each box.

Here are the top 20 words listed along with the number of times each was used:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Community - 44 times | 13. Fun - 5 times |
| 2. Welcoming - 33 times | 14. Current - 5 times |
| 3. Accessible - 21 times | 15. Useful - 5 times |
| 4. Educational - 21 times | 16. Diverse - 4 times |
| 5. Friendly - 18 times | 17. Community-oriented - 4 times |
| 6. Inclusive - 16 times | 18. Informative - 4 times |
| 7. Helpful - 10 times | 19. Engaging - 4 times |
| 8. Creative - 8 times | 20. Supportive - 4 times |
| 9. Resource - 8 times | |
| 10. Learning - 6 times | |
| 11. Innovative - 6 times | |
| 12. Literacy - 5 times | |



Q14. How old are you?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18	0.60%	1
18-24	0.60%	1
25-34	2.99%	5
35-44	11.98%	20
45-54	8.98%	15
55-64	26.95%	45
65-74	26.95%	45
75+	17.96%	30
Prefer not to say	2.99%	5
	Answered	167
	Skipped	3

Q15. How many children, by age, currently live in your household?

Age of child	Responses	
Less than 1 year old	7	
1 year old	7	
2 years old	8	
3 years old	7	
4 years old	7	
5 years old	7	
6 years old	7	
7 years old	8	
8 years old	8	
9 years old	9	
10 years old	7	
11 years old	7	
12 years old	6	
13 years old	5	
14 years old	5	
15 years old	6	
16 years old	7	
17 years old	5	
18 years old or older	27	
	Answered	55
	Skipped	115