

Wilmington Memorial Library 2024 Annual Report

Strategic Plan

Wilmington Memorial Library has completed its Strategic Plan for the fiscal years 2026, 2027, and 2028. Instead of a longer plan, the administration opted for a shorter three-year plan to ensure that the goals, objectives, and action items remain relevant and timely as the years progress.

With the assistance of Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting, Administration and the Library's staff embarked on a series of activities to identify the challenges that lie ahead in the coming years. We aimed to understand how we should engage with our patrons and determine the direction we want to take for our mission, vision, values, and goals between 2025 and 2028. In May 2024, we conducted an online community survey that garnered responses from 531 patrons. Additionally, we held focus groups with residents in May and June. To gain further insights, staff also engaged informally with patrons through "pop-up" interviews held at the Senior Center, Market Basket, and Elia's. With the help of staff, we created new Mission, Vision and Values statements for Wilmington Memorial Library. These statements were accepted by the Board of Trustees at their May meeting.

- Mission: To enrich, educate, empower every member of our community through free and easy access to knowledge, connection, and enjoyment.
- Vision: Wilmington Memorial Library is the welcoming heart in our connected and vibrant community, where imagination, opportunity and people thrive.
- Values: At WML we have the responsibility to:
 - o make our resources, services and expertise accessible for all,
 - o recognize the inherent dignity in each person,
 - o protect intellectual freedom and challenge censorship, and
 - o provide safe, welcoming places where everyone can learn, enjoy and connect.

Later in the year, Administration and staff created goals for WML, which were also accepted by the Board of Library Trustees. Those goals are:

- Provide welcoming community spaces.
- Deliver opportunities for learning and literacy.
- Build and nurture community engagement.

The final document encompassed all these items and more, including an analysis of our learning, completed activities, and strategic plan goals. Like many libraries, WML opted for a visually appealing, colorful format for its plan, which is now accessible on our website. The plan was approved by the Board of Trustees and swiftly accepted by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. It will go into effect on July 1, 2025.

Personnel

Library Director Kate Coraccio resigned from the position in July to become Library Director in Westborough.

Town Manager Eric Slagle met with the library trustees in late July to discuss the process for the search for a new Library Director. The trustees voted to recommend one of the 2023 director finalists (Nathalie Harty) to the Town Manager. The Town Manager interviewed Nathalie and offered her the position of Library Director effective September 4, 2024. Retired Assistant Library Director Charlotte Wood was appointed Interim Library Director for the month of August.

Nathalie has worked in public libraries for over 20 years and brings extensive experience in management, collection development, cataloging, and programming to Wilmington. She was most recently at Ipswich Public Library as the Head of Technical services. In that role, she oversaw cataloging, adult collections, and launched a Cookbook Club, as well as the biannual Johnson Author

series.

Assistant Library Director Danielle Masterson served as liaison to the Friends of the Wilmington Memorial Library, assisting on several projects throughout the year, including the group's crown jewel – the annual jewelry sale – and the town-wide yard sale, annual meeting and Annual Appeal fundraising project. She also contributed to the coordination of small upgrades to the Bookstore Next Door, creation of an Instagram account, the updating of the Friends' website and the writing and editing of several newsletters. Danielle also spearheaded the Library's Readers' Advisory project in 2024. This project involves creating booklists for patrons through the WilmLibrary app, our newsletter, physical displays, and take-home bookmarks or postcards. The staff plans to update patrons with one to three lists per month, sending email newsletters.

Technology Librarian, Brad McKenna, became the chair of the national American Library Association's Bridging Deaf Cultures Interest Group. He looks forward to expanding on the library's resource list and making libraries around the country better equipped to serve deaf and hard of hearing patrons.

We were able to hire two new associates, Marie Smyth and Katelyn Steen. They joined the library in May. These positions will ensure additional staffing and program coverage on Saturdays, bolster desk coverage during the week, and give more opportunity for other part-time staff to swap and cover shifts. We were excited to have Marie and Katelyn join our team!

At the biannual staff meeting in June, Oscar Lanza-Galindo (Massachusetts Library System) led the staff in a S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) exercise. This was one of many components of the Library's year-long Strategic Planning process. At the December staff meeting, Ed Mitnick of Just Training Solutions, presented a 90-minute training on Implicit Bias and Harassment.

Adult Services Librarian Erin Driscoll attended the New England Library Association conference in Portland, Maine in October. Marketing Librarian Mary Nicholson and Youth Services Librarian Nicole Chevalier attended the Association for Rural and Small Libraries conference in Springfield, Massachusetts in September. They used a scholarship award that helped subsidize their attendance. Additionally, the following staff attended the Massachusetts Library Association conference in May in Framingham:

- Library Assistant Eric Berube
- Youth Services Librarian Nicole Chevalier
- Circulation Librarian Lisa Crispin
- Assistant Youth Services Librarian Victoria Maganzini
- Marketing Librarian Mary Nicholson
- Teen Services Librarian Sara Rottger
- Library Assistant Jackie Strob
- Technical Services Librarian Laurie Wierzbicki

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library continue to support the Library and its programs. They have been instrumental in raising funds to help us with the redesign, hold library programs for children, teens, and adults, and support staff development. They work tirelessly to expertly curate and staff our Bookstore Next Door, which we think is the best deal in town! They also hold an annual jewelry sale, which is extremely popular, and directly benefits our library. This fully volunteer-run group has

dedicated their time, energy, and enthusiasm to the Wilmington Memorial Library. Thank you to our dedicated Friends group for all they do to continue to support us!

Summer Reading

The theme of the 2024 Summer Reading Program was Read, Renew, Repeat. It ended on August 7 with our big End of Summer Bash held the day after to celebrate! From June through August, Youth Services staff hosted a total of 102 programs, with 3,399 attendees – a 5.85% increase from last year's attendance totals. We had 509 registrants on our reading challenge software Beanstack, up 8.3% from last year's numbers, and 71.3% of those registrants logged at least one day of reading. We gave away a total of 265 halfway prizes (books) and 209 final prizes (ice cream coupons), plus gave out over 11,000 beads for Read and Bead keychains! The addition of the kids' weekly raffles was a highlight for families, with over 11,505 tickets entered throughout the summer. The most highly sought after kids' raffle was the year-long membership to the Discovery Museum with 5,250 entries. Of the weekly raffle baskets, the highest ticket entries went to the Movie Night backpack with 2,323 entries. Our Teen program featured "scratch tickets" where participants could scratch off a sticker and win a prize. Over 200 tickets were given out in July, proving a successful pilot of this program.

Reading Challenges

The library participated in "Minute Madness", our third annual bracket-style reading competition. We won the championship, taking down Lunenburg (and 21 other participating libraries) in the process. From March 1-April 4, 312 participating readers logged an incredible 627,162 minutes (a marked increase in participation from last year's contest which had 228 participants and 346,680 minutes logged).

For the second year in a row, we participated in the Massachusetts Center for the Book's Reading Challenge. This involves reading 12 books in 12 months and prompts participants with monthly themes. There were 281 patrons that registered for the challenge, and they collectively read 484 books throughout the year.

Programming & Events

Throughout the year, the library hosted many educational, informational and entertaining programs.

We kicked off our very first Coffeehouse Concert Series from January-March. Drawing from 50s and 60s pop and American Songbook standards, Brad Bensko on vocals and guitar and Kathleen Parks on vocals and five string fiddle, performed a mixture of original songs and revitalized covers from the past. Singer, songwriter, flautist Rodney Mashia also performed and attracted close to 50 patrons. And almost 60 patrons attended the Jordan Tirrell-Wysocki Duo concert. They put a fresh spin on traditional Celtic music and served up a dynamic show full of foot-stompin' fiddle tunes and classic Irish songs.

Patrons got out and about with a series of library "field trips" in May and June. We visited Strongwater Farm in Tewksbury, the Public Health Museum (Tewksbury), and the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford.

We finished the summer strong with adult programs like After Hours Line Dancing, Afternoon Tea, Learn to Fish, and Creating Flower Crowns.

Our very first After-Hours Murder Mystery Party brought in 45 very active participants who requested more murder mystery events.

Youth Services held 437 programs throughout 2024, with 11,471 attendees. Our busiest month was July when we held 49 programs with 1,368 attendees, thanks to summer vacation and the Summer

Reading Program.

Sensory Discovery for Teens – Youth Services worked with the High School Life Skills group that visits monthly to plan a program for them and any additional teens that may want to join. We held six events, starting in March 2024, with 51 attendees in total.

Mind in the Making Grant

Youth Services was awarded a Mind in the Making grant from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and federal agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This grant provides \$15,000 to create our 2025 initiative Playful Pathways: Nurturing Life Skills in Library Play Spaces. Our vision is to design a space for ages 0-6 that incorporates life skills and early education curriculum to establish a free, interactive, flexible learning and play space in our children's area for early literacy outside of formal education. Using evergreen furniture, staff will bring out supplies based on each unit's theme for families to enjoy and learn together. Along with each unit's play area, children's staff will host programs based on the theme, with a focus on Ellen Galinsky's Mind in the Making: The Seven Life Skills Every Child Needs. Unit themes are food and nutrition, construction and building, time, transportation, life skills/home, nature/animals, and finally, money and jobs. In addition, staff will run a monthly parent book club via Zoom, to read Galinsky's book and discuss supporting their children's preschool educations.

In the Community

The library again worked with the School Department to revive our Kindergarten School Night at the library for both the Boutwell and Wildwood schools. These events encourage families that may have never utilized the library to bring their kindergartener to sign up for a library card, participate in a library scavenger hunt, enter to win raffle baskets and attend a reading with a mystery guest. We promote library programs and offerings at this event and answer many questions on how the library can best serve them. In 2024, WML hosted two Kindergarten School Nights, with 99 attendees. These collaborations have continued into 2025.

For the second year, the library took part in the town's annual tree lighting ceremony in December. Hundreds of residents stopped by the Library's booth and took photos with our Wilmington Memorial Library wreath. We also offered free bubbles, glow-sticks, and supplies to make ornaments at home.

The library also had booths at the Shriner's Trunk or Treat event in October, as well as the Wilmington Celebrates Committee's Fall Fest.

Services and Collections

In April, we distributed 900 solar eclipse glasses ahead of the Great North American Eclipse.

For Arbor Day, we also provided 100 free tree seedlings to patrons.

The library added 12 new discounted museum passes to our offerings, including the Merrimack Repertory Theater, New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, and the House of Seven Gables. We now have 22 passes available.

We launched two new collections in 2024: 1) an adult video game collection for Nintendo Switch and PlayStation consoles and 2) a Toniebox collection (a screen-free audio player for children that plays stories, songs, and other audio. It's designed to help children learn technology and develop skills like

reading, speech, focus, and independence).

We added many new items to our Library of Things collection including: Cricut machine, OBD II Vehicle Code Reader, a new tent, mini projector, and projector screen.

Technology and Digital Services

The Library introduced the WilmLibrary app via Communico's Connect platform. With the new app, patrons can search the catalog, place holds, check out items, reserve the meeting room, register for events, and cancel their reservations or registrations. It allows patrons to see what they have checked out and what events they have registered for all in one place. This also allowed the Library to improve reader's advisory with Communico's Collection module, which is displayed on the app.

Also new in 2024 was the launch of the Mango language learning database/app. Users can select from 75 world languages to learn (including ESL and American Sign Language).

The Library purchased and installed a new self-checkout station in the Circulation area.

Finally, we purchased an OWL camera that patrons can reserve and use in library meeting rooms.

LIBRARY STAFF (as of December 31, 2024)

Library Director – Nathalie Harty

Assistant Library Director - Danielle Masterson
Administrative Assistant - Gloria Corcoran

Department Heads
Adult Services - Erin Driscoll
Marketing - Mary Nicholson
Technology - Bradley McKenna
Youth Services - Nicole Chevalier

Assistant Librarians
Circulation Services - Lisa Crispin
Children's Services - Victoria Maganzini
Technical Services - Laurie Wierzbicki
Teen Services - Sara Rottger

Library Assistants
Eric Berube
Jacqueline Strob

Part-Time Library Associates
Britney Chin, Christine Johnson, Rebecca Lowe
Marie Smyth, Katelyn Steen, Meghan Tompkins

Library Pages
Jennifer Brogan, Alexander D'Anna, Adania Deshnica
Alexandra Erler, Hannah Noah, Uriel Hernandez Osorno

BY THE NUMBERS

Wilmington Memorial Library 2024 Statistics

102,191

people visited the library this year



33,166

patrons helped at our service desks



864

new patrons registered



LIBRARY CARD



9,948

total registered borrowers

WML provided access to thousands of physical and digital items

44,864

Physical Items in Collection

82,630

Digital Items in Collection

The items in each collection circulated over 200,000 times

148,461

Physical Items Borrowed

133,418

Digital Items Borrowed

Thousands of books, DVDs, and audiobooks, and more were borrowed throughout our 36 library consortium (MVLC)

13,353

Items from our collection borrowed by MVLC libraries

27,273

Items from other MVLC libraries borrowed by WML Patrons

and thousands more were borrowed from libraries across Massachusetts

4,362

patrons accessed our public computers



666,619

visits to wilmlibrary.org

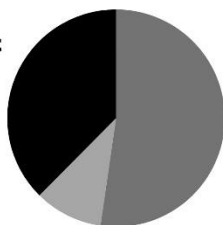


949

Library Museum Passes borrowed

Library Programs

Adult
263

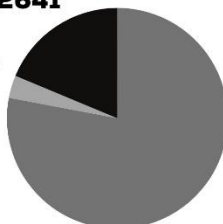


Teen
71

Children's
366

Adult
2641

Teen
467



Children's
11004

Total Attendance

There were over **900** programs held at the library, with over **14,000** patrons in attendance

2024 was a great year at WML!



WILMINGTON
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Community Starts Here