



## **SUNDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN**

### **2023 - 2028**

20 School Street  
Sunderland, Massachusetts

Katherine Umstot, Library Director

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Sunderland Public Library is a welcoming and lively center for lifelong learning, personal enrichment and community interaction. It is dedicated to serving Sunderland as a vital cultural resource and community center, and is cognizant of its role in promoting the value of reading and self-expression to local youth. The Library responds to community needs as they evolve over time and strives to connect its users to ideas, to experiences, and to others in the community and world at large.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sunderland Public Library followed a long range plan from 2016 - 2021 which was created by then Library Director Katherine Umstot and members of the Long Range Planning Committee. The Long Range Planning Committee was comprised of members of the Board of Library Trustees, a library staff member, a member of the Friends of Sunderland Public Library, Inc., patrons, and members of other Sunderland community organizations. In the summer of 2022 the Library Director formed a new Long Range Planning Committee to begin working on the new plan. Members of the Long Range Planning Committee included Amy Battisti, Coordinator of the Union 38 Family Network, Heidi Bauer-Clapp, Trustee of Sunderland Public Library, Jenna Evans, Sunderland resident, active patron of Sunderland Public Library, and Treasurer of the Friends of Sunderland Public Library, Aaron Falbel, Head of Adult Services at Sunderland Public Library, Barbara Morrell, President of the Friends of Sunderland Public Library, Emily Pettit, Trustee of Sunderland Public Library, and David Wissemann, Trustee of Sunderland Public Library. The Long Range Planning Committee met with the Library Director on three occasions to identify the needs of the Sunderland Community, potential new services and areas of growth, and to identify ways the library can improve upon its current services. The Library Director then used the Committees input to write the new Long Range Plan, which was approved by the Library Board of Trustees on May 23, 2023.

It is expected that this long range plan will be used as required in grant proposals as well as a guide in various planning activities, such as developing job descriptions, performance evaluations, priority setting, strategic planning, budgeting and any efforts that help in clarifying direction and aspirations over the next 5 years.

## METHODOLOGY

The Library Director used the Massachusetts Library System's *Strategic Planning for Libraries* (2019) guide to inform the Long Range Planning process. Under this guide's recommendations, the Library Director formed a Long Range Planning Committee comprised of Library Trustees, Library Staff, Community Organizations, and Sunderland Residents. The Library Director created a community input survey, which was edited by the committee at their initial meeting. This survey was then made into an online version and a paper version. The online version was advertised on the library's website, Facebook page, and email newsletter. The paper

version was made available at the circulation desk and Town Offices. The chance to win one of two gift certificates to the Millstone Market served as an incentive for people to respond to the survey.

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Town of Sunderland has a population 3,663 and is located in southern Franklin County on the Connecticut River in Western Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley. The town, which was incorporated in 1718, has a rich agricultural history as well as many current working farms, with over 1,000 acres permanently protected for farming through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program. Located along Route 116 in between Deerfield and Amherst, Sunderland is near to Interstate 91 and near the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Because of its location near the bridge across the Connecticut River, the Sunderland Public Library is a convenient location for commuters and serves residents of many towns including Amherst, Deerfield, Conway, Montague, and Greenfield, in addition to the residents of Sunderland. Sunderland is home to many faculty and staff of the Five Colleges and includes many apartment complexes that cater to undergraduate and graduate students, and international visiting professors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. As a result, the Town of Sunderland has a population that is a mix of long-term and short-term residents. Sunderland is governed through open town meeting, aided by elected boards and volunteer communities.

The following is key data about the Sunderland community:

- According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau figures, there were 3,663 residents in Sunderland, a decrease of .6% from 2010 – 49% of these residents were male and 51% were female. 75% of residents were White; 12% were Asian, 3% were Black, 6% were Hispanic, and 4% were American Indian or Native Alaskan.
- The greatest population growth is expected among residents aged 65 or older. Currently 20% of Sunderland's population is over the age of 60. Sunderland recently increased its affordable housing accommodations for seniors by the completion of Sanderson Place, which has 33 one- and two-bedroom units in the Village Center.
- The Sunderland tax rate in 2023 is \$12.80, is a decrease from \$14.80 in 2022.
- The estimated median household income in 2020 was \$58,750. An increase from \$47,690, reported in 2010, but below the state median household income of \$89,026.
- According to 2020 U.S. Census Bureau figures, 13.8% of Sunderland's residents live below the poverty line.
- 56% of Sunderland housing units are renter occupied. Since the census data was gathered, Sunderland has added 183 rental units, which would increase the percentage to 58%, one of the highest percentage rates in the state.
- Sunderland sent 109 students grades 7 – 12 to Frontier Regional High School as of February 1, 2023.
- 178 students grades pre-K-6 attended Sunderland Elementary School in January 2023. This is a decrease of 5 students from the previous year. 37 of these students are School Choice students from other towns.
- In January 2023 there were 2,376 registered voters in Sunderland.

## **LIBRARY DESCRIPTION**

Sunderland's tradition of library service began in 1794, and the Town has proudly provided its residents with free library service since 1878. Sunderland's first libraries were organized in the homes of residents and later secured space on the second floor of a store that stood on the corner of present-day School Street and North Main Street. That building burned in 1854. From 1869 to 1900, Sunderland's library was housed in a room on the second floor of the Old Town Hall. In 1900 the library acquired a new home in the Graves Memorial Library building, built with funds provided by Sunderland native John Long Graves.

The Graves Memorial Library was staffed by part-time non-professionals and volunteers until 1985, when the first part-time professional Librarian and a part-time assistant were hired. In 1987, the Town voted to establish the first full-time Library Director position. The Graves building served the Town well into 2004. In April of that year, the newly constructed and renamed Sunderland Public Library opened its doors. The construction of the building was the culmination of a planning process that began in the mid-1990's. In 2000, the library applied for a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Grant, which was awarded in 2001 and provided \$1,079,272 to the Town. This grant represented half of the cost of the building project. In September 2001, Sunderland voters agreed to fund the other half. Private contributions in the amount of \$170,000 completed the funding picture.

Currently the Sunderland Public Library enjoys a dual role in the community as both a library and a community center. In addition to providing access to diverse resources, the library also offers a variety of programs for people of all ages, access to technology, and makes its Community Room available for use by the public.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Library is a Town department governed by an elected nine-member Board of Library Trustees. The Board's authority is derived from Chapter 78, Sections 10 and 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 10 states in part that "the Board shall have the custody and management of the library...and of all property owned by the Town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the Town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the Board. All money or property which the Town may receive by gift or bequest shall be administered by the Board...." Responsibility for library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Board to the Library Director. The Library Director is appointed and directly responsible to the Board and is an employee of the Town of Sunderland.

## STAFFING

The Library is staffed by a full-time Library Director and four part-time librarians at a total of 110.5 hours per week:

**Library Director** - 37.5 hours per week. Responsible for all aspects of library management including planning, budgeting, acquisitions, technical services, grant management, equipment upkeep, adult, young adult and children's programming and services, circulation, public relations, and facilities management.

**Head of Adult Services** - 25 hours per week (starting 7/1/2023). Responsible for cataloging library materials, adult fiction and nonfiction collection development, assisting with adult programming, and other duties as assigned by the Director. As of 7/1/2023, this position officially serves as Acting Director during any absences of the Library Director.

**Head of Youth Services** - 25 hours per week. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, Interlibrary Loan requests, children's collection development, book processing, book repair, planning and implementation of children's programs and services, including the Youth Summer Reading Program, and other duties as assigned by the Director.

**Head of Young Adult Services** - 8/15 hours per week, alternating weeks. Assists with circulation, young adult collection development, planning and implementation of young adult services and programs, including the Young Adult Summer Reading Program, and other duties as assigned by the Director.

**Circulation Assistant** – 15 hours per week. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, hold notifications, Interlibrary Loan requests, and other duties as assigned by the Director.

**Volunteers** – Approximately 12 hours per week. Shelving, shelf-reading, materials processing, weeding the collection, and other duties as assigned by library staff.

## HOURS

The Sunderland Public Library is open forty hours per week year-round.

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Monday              | 10am - 8pm |
| Tuesday & Wednesday | 1pm - 8pm  |
| Thursday            | Closed     |
| Friday              | 10am - 7pm |
| Saturday            | 10am - 5pm |
| Sundays & Holidays  | Closed     |

## DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

### Adult Services

Adult Services encompasses all library services that cater to adult patrons visiting the library. These services include overseeing and curating the Adult collection of books, DVDs, CD audiobooks, and other materials. It also includes handling reference questions, helping adult patrons use technology, and developing programming for adults.

The challenges of providing Adult Services stem from the fact that the term “adult” comprises a wide variety of age ranges. Twenty-year olds have rather different needs, desires, and tastes from seventy-year olds, not to mention the gradations in between. This challenge extends to both collection development and program development to ensure the library has diverse offerings and something for everyone. The Head of Adult Services is required to stay current on global, national, and local issues, trends, and events. Attendance at programs for adults has been hit or miss in recent years. Some programs, such as the short story series, have been very popular, while some of the films we have shown have attracted only sparse attendance.

Goals for the Adult Services Department are to develop a system of gaining consistent feedback from patrons as to what programs, materials, and services they would like to see at the library, and to help people rediscover the library as a safe place for social gathering as well as private education and entertainment. As the pandemic subsides, the library needs to think of new ways to bring people together again in a way that feels comfortable and safe.

### Young Adult Services

Young Adult Services at Sunderland Public Library serves patrons in grades 6-12. It offers a collection of books, DVDs, audiobooks, and some non-traditional items as well. Young Adult fiction and audiobooks are housed in a dedicated Young Adult room, while nonfiction and DVDs are located near or intermixed with the regular collection. The Young Adult room also houses two computers set aside for use by young

adults, a graphic novel collection, a few periodicals, a collection of board games, fidget toys, several ukuleles, a small assortment of reference guides for use as study aids, and an assortment of coloring pages and word puzzles that are refreshed monthly.

The Young Adult Department offers a variety of craft and other programs throughout the year, focusing particularly on the summer months and school breaks, as well as a few programs that meet on a monthly basis. Monthly programs consist of our Teen Advisory Board (TAB), a YA Writers Group, and an informal “crafternoon.”

The challenge with Young Adult services is often just getting kids in this age group to show up to programs. They are often excited by upcoming programs and sign up for them, but about 50% of those who signed up attend. A couple of programs that had higher than average attendance were our ‘boffer’ making program, and a pre-pandemic screening of the first Harry Potter movie which included a house scarf giveaway.

Goals for the Young Adult Department are to increase attendance and circulation. The Head of Young Adult Services receives a lot of requests from teens for more kinds of programs, especially active, hands-on programs as well as social gatherings. The biggest challenges this department faces are getting the word out to teens about events and services, and having patrons who express an interest in events and services utilize the library. Having the Head of Young Adult Services work more hours would enable the position to conduct more outreach to teens, offer a wider variety of timing of programs, and be a more consistent presence in the library.

### **Juvenile Services**

The Sunderland Public Library’s children’s room is an interactive area for children ages 0-12 and their caregivers. Space in the children's room is zoned for early literacy (ages 0-4), young school age (ages 5-8) and pre-teen (ages 9-12). The aim is to provide a safe and comfortable space to read, play and listen for pleasure. Many families utilize the children's collection of books, audiovisual materials, kits, and sensory items. The two main goals for the juvenile department is to increase the amount of items that circulate and increase patron visits to the space. A challenge the department faces is the need to keep the juvenile collection current and interesting by weeding out-of-date formats, while expanding high-demand selections.

The juvenile services department offers weekly preschool story/craft time during the school year as well as a robust summer reading program. The library needs to continue to offer programs and services that meet the needs of parents and children.

The juvenile department also needs to engage with the community to increase access to and awareness of the collection, programs, and services available to the age group. The library used to have a robust relationship with teachers at Sunderland Elementary School and hopes once again to be able to help support their curriculum. The library is very pleased with our collaboration with the CFCE Union 38 Family Network. They provide invaluable resources to young families with their storywalks, playgroups, and toddler storytimes.

### **COLLECTION DESCRIPTION**

The Sunderland Public Library provides access to materials and services to meet the recreational and informational needs of the citizens of Sunderland, Massachusetts and of the Library’s patrons. The primary emphasis is on meeting the need for popular materials for all



ages. In addition, the Library provides complementary educational support for the elementary and secondary school levels and outreach services to the entire community.

The Library owns a total of 218,914 items, with 37,120 available in the library each day and 181,794 digital items available online. The library is a member of the C/WMARS resource sharing network, and Sunderland Public Library patrons have access to items from the over 190 member libraries, which they may borrow in person or order through Interlibrary Loan. As a member of C/WMARS, the Library also has access to the Overdrive digital collection, which provides patrons with the ability to borrow eBooks, eAudiobooks, and streaming video options. The library also independently subscribes to Kanopy. Not included in the Collection Statistics is the library's recent acquisition of three more streaming services: Craftsy, Qello Concerts, and Classica.

In addition to traditional materials such as books, videos, and periodicals, the Library also loans non-traditional items including ukuleles, wireless hotspots, kill-a-watt electricity usage monitors, and free passes to many local museums and parks.

Of the 218,914 items owned by the Library, 76% are intended for use by adults, 7.5% are intended for use by young adults, and 16.5% are intended for use by children (please note that the majority of electronic items are intended for use by adults). Of the 33,120 items available in the library, 51% are intended for use by adults, 8.5% are intended for use by young adults, and 40.5% are intended for use by children. Circulation figures align closely with the holdings, as 56% of circulations are for items intended for use by adults, 4% of circulations are for items intended for use by young adults, and 40% of circulations are for items intended for use by children.

The Library offers an extensive Young Adult materials collection, including fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, audiobooks, and DVDs. The Young Adult Collection was revamped in 2014 and 2015 with assistance from an LSTA Serving Teens and Tweens grant. This grant provided funding to purchase materials for Young Adults and allowed for a redesign of the Young Adult Room and reconfiguration of how Young Adult Materials are displayed. Young Adult nonfiction materials were moved into the Adult Stacks to make more room for the increased Young Adult fiction collections, and Young Adult DVDs were separated from the Adult DVDs and placed on their own shelf.

The Children's Room offers picture books, easy reader books, fiction and non-fiction books, board books, discovery kits, DVDs, audiobooks, comic books, and a collection of parenting books. A small selection of Spanish-language picture books and easy reader books are also available in the Children's Room. In addition to our circulating materials, the Children's Room also has a variety of puzzles and toys meant to stimulate young children's minds. Thanks to a LSTA Grant in 2019 and 2020 to improve services to families with children on the autism spectrum the library was able to add a Sensory Toy Collection to our children's room. The Sensory Toy Collection is comprised of toys that stimulate the senses, learning tools, and comfort objects. Items in this collection are available to borrow from the library and can also be requested by patrons of other libraries through Interlibrary Loan.

The majority of library space is devoted to our adult collections, which includes fiction and nonfiction, large print books, audiobooks, DVDs, reference materials, and a local history collection. In 2014 and 2015 the adult collections were reorganized. The reference collection, which was not well used, was downsized to include only useful and current resources. The local history collection was then moved to its own, well-designated, shelving area. Nonfiction

gardening books, cookbooks, and biographies were also moved to their own well-designated areas in order to make these well-used books easier for patrons to find and browse.

## COLLECTION STATISTICS FY22

|                               |   |                |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>BOOKS</b>                  |   |                |
|                               | Adult Books                                   | 11,886         |
|                               | Young Adult Books                             | 2,254          |
|                               | Children's Books                              | 11,500         |
| <b>AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIALS</b> |   |                |
|                               | Adult Audiobooks                              | 1,097          |
|                               | Young Adult Audiobooks                        | 185            |
|                               | Children's Audiobooks                         | 370            |
|                               | Adult DVDs & Bluray                           | 3,122          |
|                               | Young Adult DVDs & Bluray                     | 313            |
|                               | Children's DVDs & Bluray                      | 1,210          |
| <b>PERIODICALS</b>            |   |                |
|                               | Adult Magazines                               | 866            |
|                               | Young Adult Magazines                         | 69             |
|                               | Children's Magazines                          | 122            |
| <b>ELECTRONIC CONTENT</b>     |   |                |
|                               | Adult eBooks                                  | 96,512         |
|                               | Adult eAudiobooks                             | 53,146         |
|                               | Adult eVideo                                  | 99             |
|                               | Young Adult eBooks                            | 8,898          |
|                               | Young Adult eAudiobooks                       | 4,675          |
|                               | Young Adult eVideo                            | 3              |
|                               | Children's eBooks                             | 15,553         |
|                               | Children's eAudiobooks                        | 6,884          |
|                               | Children's eVideos                            | 24             |
| <b>DATABASES</b>              |   |                |
|                               | Statewide Databases<br>(Research Databases)   | 19             |
|                               | Local Databases (Streaming<br>Film Libraries) | 1              |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>    |   |                |
|                               | Adult Miscellaneous                           | 45             |
|                               | Young Adult Miscellaneous                     | 8              |
|                               | Children's Miscellaneous                      | 73             |
|                               |   |                |
|                               | <b>TOTAL ITEMS</b>                            | <b>218,914</b> |

## CIRCULATION STATISTICS FY22

|                               |   |               |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|
| <b>BOOKS</b>                  |   |               |
|                               | Adult Books                                   | 17,079        |
|                               | Young Adult Books                             | 1,551         |
|                               | Children's Books                              | 21,036        |
| <b>AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIALS</b> |   |               |
|                               | Adult Audiobooks                              | 1,431         |
|                               | Young Adult Audiobooks                        | 58            |
|                               | Children's Audiobooks                         | 196           |
|                               | Adult DVDs & Bluray                           | 7,521         |
|                               | Young Adult DVDs & Bluray                     | 635           |
|                               | Children's DVDs & Bluray                      | 2,350         |
| <b>PERIODICALS</b>            |   |               |
|                               | Adult Magazines                               | 1,510         |
|                               | Young Adult Magazines                         | 24            |
|                               | Children's Magazines                          | 244           |
| <b>ELECTRONIC CONTENT</b>     |   |               |
|                               | Adult eBooks                                  | 3,961         |
|                               | Adult eAudiobooks                             | 2,489         |
|                               | Adult eVideo                                  | 0             |
|                               | Young Adult eBooks                            | 183           |
|                               | Young Adult eAudiobooks                       | 246           |
|                               | Young Adult eVideo                            | 0             |
|                               | Children's eBooks                             | 197           |
|                               | Children's eAudiobooks                        | 187           |
|                               | Children's eVideo                             | 0             |
| <b>DATABASES</b>              |   |               |
|                               | Statewide Databases<br>(Research Databases)   | 100           |
|                               | Local Databases (Streaming<br>Film Libraries) | 3,684         |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>    |   |               |
|                               | Adult Miscellaneous                           | 221           |
|                               | Young Adult Miscellaneous                     | 6             |
|                               | Children's Miscellaneous                      | 153           |
|                               |   |               |
|                               | <b>TOTAL ITEMS</b>                            | <b>67,389</b> |

## BUILDING FACILITIES

The Sunderland Public Library building was built in 2004. It is a one-floor facility, offering excellent sightlines to most areas of the building from the centrally located circulation desk. This attribute is essential for a library with a small staff. The handicapped-accessible building features a logical layout that functions well in the fulfillment of library service roles. Access to and from the parking area is easy and convenient. The new facility was designed to meet the anticipated needs of the library for a twenty-year period. While there is room for collection growth in the children's room, the young adult space is nearly full.

A generously sized Community Room (maximum seating capacity of 50) is available for use by the community, including Town and local organizations, as well as for regularly scheduled library programs. This handsome space can be closed off from the rest of the library with the use of large pocket doors or left open so that the room, with four study tables, can be used as an integral part of the library. The *Community Room Policy* permits the library to charge certain categories of users for use of the room, with the proceeds used to offset the costs of room maintenance. An adjacent kitchen that functions as a staff break room is also available to Community Room users.

The Circulation Desk and Staff Work Area provide adequate space for work-related tasks, however, additional work counter space would be welcome, as would additional shelving and storage for supplies and items awaiting processing. This is an open work area, which does result in work-related noise echoing throughout the library. Checkout is available at a self-checkout station and two staff computers, though for approximately 15 hours per week the circulation desk is staffed by only one staff member. Library policy does require that two staff members be present in the library during open hours, though the Library Director works alone in the building for three hours per week. The Head of Adult Services position works four hours per week alone in the building, but the library is not open to the public during these hours. Public printing jobs are routed to the printer behind the circulation desk for pickup by the public. The printer is also a fax machine, and patrons must request a staff member send a fax for them. A public copier is also available in the main part of the library, which includes scanning in addition to copying.

A sunny café area welcomes a weekly drop-in coffee group and is the designated area where patrons may consume food or beverages. Shelving adjacent to this space displays a large selection of adult periodicals, and two waist-height shelving units showcase the library's new adult books. Two bulletin boards are available for library-approved posting of information related to community news and events. The adult wing of the library houses a large collection of DVDs and Blurays as well as daily newspapers, audio books, Reference and Local History, large print books, and the fiction and nonfiction stacks. For adult patron use, there are eight networked public internet computers, wireless internet, and additional study tables.

The Children's Room is colorful and spacious, and features a number of age-appropriate reading and play areas and a separate children's bathroom. The carpets in the children's room were replaced with carpet tiles in the fall of 2022. Two internet stations in the Children's Room are networked to the central printer. In order to prevent exposure to adult materials, each internet station is filtered using Qustodio software. In addition to the main room, an adjacent Children's Activities Room is accessed through a pocket door. Child-sized tables suitable for craft activities seat twenty-four. This room is banked by childproofed craft supply cabinets and a sink. A built-in window seat offers a view of Riverside Park and the town's recreational fields. The Activities Room receives ample natural lighting and is further enhanced by the bright color scheme of the flooring and furniture. Seven original drawings by the noted children's illustrator Mordecai Gerstein lend a playful atmosphere to the room.

The library features a separate Young Adult Room that affords young adults a measure of privacy, but with large glass windows that allow clear views into the room. The room is equipped with a study table that seats four, four comfortable chairs around a coffee table, and two computers that are filtered using Qustodio software. Outside of school hours, use of the room is restricted to grades 6 through 12 and to adults who are seeking young adult materials. The room was redesigned in 2014 using funds from the LSTA Serving Teens and Tweens grant, and two study carrel computer stations were removed and a raised “laptop bar” was added to house the computers in the room.

At the extreme end of the adult wing is the Lane Family Reading Room. This comfortable reading room is the closest the library comes to a quiet study space. While we are primarily a popular library, it would be ideal to offer more choices for quiet study. 37 linear feet of wall space are given over to a revolving bimonthly art show. Exhibiting artists are chosen by the library’s Art Exhibit Committee, appointed by the Library’s Board of Trustees. Furnishings throughout the library, in the arts and crafts style, are both sturdy and comfortable. Window seats, library study tables, armchairs and a small sofa create inviting areas for study and relaxation. The room was repainted in early 2022.

As the building approaches 20 years in service, it requires regular maintenance to ensure its continuous functions and longevity. The library’s HVAC system requires regular monitoring, as the lifespan of the 16 units in the building is approximately 15 years. Of the 16 units, seven have had compressors replaced and three units have been fully replaced. It is expected in the next five years that the remaining six units will need to be replaced. The carpet in the Children’s Room was replaced in 2022. Some of the library’s lights (those in the Community Room and main patron area of the library) were retrofitted with LED bulbs in 2019 thanks to a Green Communities Grant sponsored by the Sunderland Energy Committee. Other grant funding to replace the remaining lights in the library with LED have been unsuccessful but doing so remains a long-term goal for the library.

The building is run on a ground source heat system. Sunderland Public Library was an early adopter of this more sustainable heating and cooling method. However, the system still uses electricity to function. The Library is eager to continue collaborations with the Energy Committee to find ways to reduce the Library’s monthly electric usage. A solar field was installed at Sunderland Elementary School in 2017, and the energy credits from the solar panels was split between the various town departments based on the average amount of electricity used monthly. As a result, the Library’s electric bill has been reduced by nearly 50% per month on average.

While technically owned by the Town, the parking lot outside of the library will need repairs in the next few years, as there are large cracks forming where the trees that line the median’s roots are growing up through the asphalt. The Board of Library Trustees have taken patron complaints about the difficulties in crossing the median seriously. After meeting with landscape architects, it was determined that it would be costly and ineffective to cut a pathway through the median due to the grading differences between the two sides of the median. A full stairway or ramp would need to be installed, which could not be handicapped accessible due to the small space.

The Library’s backyard is host to a magnificent American Elm Tree. This old and rare tree has a large canopy that provides ample shade throughout the library’s backyard and creates an inviting space for Library programs and relaxation. In 2016 the Library received a Community Preservation Act Grant to make improvements to the Library’s Backyard, and much of the funds went towards preserving the American Elm Tree and protecting the Library and Town Hall buildings from sustaining damage should a branch fall. A cabling system was installed in 2017 which raised the branches of the canopy and ensured

that if a limb were to break it would fall in towards the tree and away from the buildings. In 2019 a large crack developed down the trunk of the tree and was leaking water. The arborists believe that the crack was caused by a lightning strike. The Library and Tree Warden received funds from the Town of Sunderland to take additional steps to preserve the tree. These steps included the installation of bolts to keep the trunk from splitting further and the installation of a lightning mitigation system. The Library has the tree inspected by the arborists annually and have the tree treated with a Dutch Elm Disease preventative biannually.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Sunderland Public Library is fortunate to benefit from a committed community, a supportive Friends of the Library group, an outstanding Board of Trustees, and a knowledgeable, experienced, and personable staff. The library's main needs are to maintain our current staff, increase and strengthen our program offerings, increase technology support for patrons, ensure the physical building is comfortable for patrons, improving marketing and communication, and to develop stronger community connections.

### **Retain Staff**

It is clear from the Community Input Survey that the library's staff are Sunderland Public Library's greatest asset. Patrons made no criticisms of the staff's performance in the survey, and many mentioned the staff as one of their favorite things about the library. 57% of patrons stated that the staff was one of the reasons why they visit the library, and 0% reported that the staff are a reason why they don't visit the library often.

Sunderland Public Library is extremely lucky to have a dedicated and knowledgeable staff. Two positions have been filled by the same person for 20 or more years and one position has been filled for more than 15 years. For a small library with only part-time positions, with the exception of the Director position, this fact is extraordinary. It is clear that retaining the library's current staff and making the library a desirable employer for any future staff is a high need for our community.

Great strides have been made in the Town of Sunderland to improve staff salaries, and the Board of Library Trustees are happy that the staff at Sunderland Public Library are paid an equitable wage comparable to what other local librarians at similar libraries receive. However, cost of living increases from the Town of Sunderland have not increased at the same pace as inflation, and, as such, there is still work to be done to ensure that the library staff salaries remain competitive. The main struggles that the library faces when it comes to retaining our wonderful staff and attracting qualified candidates to open positions are the limited hours of the positions and the lack of benefits offered for any of the support positions. There is a clear need to increase staff hours to ensure that the demands of the positions can be met within the hours provided. One comment from the Community Input Survey specifically mentioned that the staff seem overworked. While the compassion and recognition offered by this community member is appreciated, what would be best for the library staff and community at large was if there were more working hours available to our staff to complete the great work that we do.

Though Sunderland Public Library does very little hiring outside of Substitute Circulation Assistant positions, it is important that the library works towards making the positions desirable to highly qualified candidates. It is clear to the Board of Library Trustees that the library staff all go above and beyond to provide great service to our patrons, and it is important that as employers the

Board of Library Trustees are able to make the library employees feel supported. The library needs to ensure that each position is provided with enough hours to do the work that is asked of them, that the hours, salary, and benefits match or exceed what is offered comparable positions, and that communication between the Director and staff is frequent and open.

### **Increase and Strengthen Program Offerings**

The library's programs were frequently mentioned in the Community Input Survey. It is clear that people view the library as a place to attend special events, classes, workshops, and social gatherings. While most of the feedback regarding the library's current program offerings were positive, it is also clear that there is a lot of room for improvement in the library's programs. For the most part, patrons love the variety of programs that the library offers, but they want to see more: more variety, more programs geared towards specific age groups, more variety in timing of events, and more local topics.

Specifically, patrons requested more programs for adults that provide instruction on specific skills, engage with the outdoors, and engage with local topics. Adults are eager for more language learning opportunities, more hands-on workshops and crafting events, and more opportunities to learn any number of skills that can be applied outside of the library. Sunderland Public Library is fortunate to be located in an incredibly beautiful environment with lots of outdoor recreation opportunities. The library is adjacent to Riverside Park and the Connecticut River, and many patrons see the outdoor space surrounding the library as an extension of the library. There is a need to offer more outdoor programs and programs relating towards learning about local natural resources. The library is excited to launch a kayak loan program that will enable patrons to kayak on the Connecticut River near the library. This program is expected to launch in June 2023. Depending on the success of this program, the library will likely increase local recreational opportunities by adding more non-traditional recreation items to our collection and continuing our partnership with the local outdoor recreation company, Adventure East. Patrons have also specifically asked for more programs relating to local topics, such as local author visits, local history talks, and other educational events featuring local artisans, makers, and educators.

Beyond the survey, library staff have noticed an increased desire for patrons to make connections with their local environment and community. These interests seemed to have been sparked during the pandemic, when social connections were difficult to make and people were unable to travel far from home. As a result, our community has developed a renewed interest in meeting and learning from other people, self-sufficiency, and learning about and exploring our local environment. The library needs to find ways to encourage, develop, and support these interests.

In the survey, several patrons also mentioned that they would like to see more programs for children ages 7 – 12. While the library has robust programs for young children and teens, there are fewer options for children in this particular age range. The library needs to have both the Children's department and Young Adult department staff collaborate to provide programs, activities, and services for this specific age group.

However, in an effort to ensure staff are given enough hours to complete the work assigned to them, it is important to recognize that in order to add new programs the library will have to decrease, pause, or cease already existing programs. It is important that the library find a

balance between continuing well-used programs and adding new programs requested by patrons within the limitations of our available staff hours.

### **Build Community Connections**

Sunderland is a vibrant and active community. Though the library views itself as a hub of the community, there is always more that the library can do to develop and strengthen community connections. In the Community Input Survey, patrons requested more outreach to local organizations such as South County Senior Center and Sanderson Place, a new senior housing facility that opened in the Spring of 2023. As mentioned previously, there is a strong desire for people to make connections in their community, and the library is viewed as resource for helping people make these connections.

Specifically, it seems that patrons are looking for greater outreach to Sunderland's senior citizens. Sunderland does have a large population of residents over the age of 65, which is confirmed by the recent census data as well as the Community Input Survey. Conducting outreach to this population, creating programs specifically for them, and ensuring accessibility of the building, programs, and services, are high priorities for the library.

A way that the library can meet the needs of the Young Adult Department, which is seeking greater teen participation in its programs, and our patrons who specifically requested programs for older children ages 7 – 12, is to create stronger bonds with the local schools and other organizations that serve people in these age ranges. Greater outreach to these populations is certainly needed and will help the library develop programs that meet their needs and are of interest to them.

The library needs to focus on improving our presence in the community and welcoming new people into our building. This requires staff to attend more community events, introduce ourselves to local organizations and businesses that serve the residents of Sunderland, and increase collaboration with other Town of Sunderland Departments. It also requires the library to develop a more diverse lineup of programs beyond what we have traditionally offered, in hopes of attracting new patrons to visit our library. Ensuring the continued diversity of library collection, in both content and variety of items offered, should also be a high priority. There is an increased need and desire for patrons to borrow non-traditional items for the library, which can help them learn or practice a new skill, engage with the local environment, or access technology. Developing the library's Library of Things should be a focus in the coming years.

### **Improve Marketing and Communication**

Another need for the library is to improve our marketing and communication to current patrons, new residents, potential patrons from other communities, and local organizations. There were many requests for programs and services within the Community Input Survey that the library is already offering. A desire amongst all of the library staff is to increase attendance and circulation, and improving the way we market the library and communicate with our patrons will be one of the most important ways we achieve these goals.

Traditionally, the library uses paper flyers, our website, Facebook, and press releases to advertise our programs and services. Annually, the Friends of Sunderland Public Library, Inc, pays for a newsletter to be mailed to each household in Sunderland. This mailing usually occurs in mid-



June to advertise the library's Summer Reading Programs. Library staff have noticed that while the library's email newsletter subscribers continue to increase, the number of opens and clicks in these emails is decreasing. More and more patrons are requesting to be notified of library holds through text now, as opposed to email. The library's recent addition of Calendly program scheduling software allows patrons the option to get event reminders through text, which more than half are taking advantage of. Patrons have also asked about the library having an Instagram page, which is gaining popularity over Facebook.

This long range planning process was the first time Sunderland Public Library has employed a QR code to interact with patrons. The library saw a 46% increase in survey responses since the 2016 survey, and a large part of this was increased online participation and the ability to advertise and have patrons access the survey through the use of a QR code on flyers shared throughout the community. While in 2016, 66% of the survey responses were in person, in 2023, only 15% of survey respondents used the paper forms. It is clear that the library can benefit greatly from employing QR codes and other digital methods of communication with our community.

The library also needs to improve our face-to-face outreach. As expressed above, people are generally seeking more human connections in our increasingly online world. While digital mediums of communication are quickly becoming the norm for patrons of all ages, the novelty of in-person interactions are highly valued and more memorable. Having staff participate in other community events outside of the library and meeting potential patrons where they are will be an important aspect of meeting this need.

In particular, the Library needs to expand outreach to Sunderland's renters. There are several large apartment complexes in Sunderland, and a constant influx of new residents based on the lease cycles. Continued efforts to connect with the apartment complexes' management or reach out to new residents individually are a goal of the Library.

### **Increase Technology Support**

While only 12% of survey respondents reported that they visit the library to use our technology, there is still a large need within our community for the library to provide increased technology support. 34% of respondents stated that there is a technology that they do not know how to use that they would want to learn from the library. A few patrons also specifically requested technology-related classes in the survey. The types of technology that patrons want to see at the library varies widely, but the general consensus appears to be that patrons want to learn about technology and try new technologies, and view the library as a resource for both.

Anecdotally, library staff have noted a significant increase in the number of patrons coming to the library needing technology assistance since the start of the pandemic. Staff experience a mix of patrons who have little experience using technology but need to learn in order to apply for jobs or social services, or communicate with loved ones. Staff are also seeing patrons who are new to using laptops, tablets, smartphones, or other technology and are looking for basic introductions to the technology, as well as patrons who want to learn how to make use of the library's increasing digital collections. The staff have reported an uptick in reference services and technology-related questions starting in 2021, and this trend continues. At a staff meeting in early 2023, staff brainstormed ways to lessen the burden on staff when it came to technology instructions, as often times patrons come in unexpectedly and required individual staff assistance for an extended

period of time. The solution was to push for patrons to sign up for technology help sessions, or personalized reference appointments, rather than just drop in when they needed detailed assistance. The Director created a webpage with an online appointment request form and also created a note that could be given to patrons explaining why staff are not available for long sessions without a prior appointment.

### **Ensure Library Building is Comfortable Physical Space for Patrons**

The final need that became apparent through the Community Input Survey was the need to maintain the library facilities and ensure the space is comfortable and accessible for patrons of all abilities. The library building is nearing 20 years old, and while it is in wonderful shape, library leadership needs to ensure that the facilities are well maintained and improved to meet changing patron needs. Many patrons love the library as a space, but two patrons reported through the Community Input Survey that they find the building to be uninviting or uncomfortable to visit.

The local region is very lucky to have several libraries that are recently renovated or are currently working on renovations. Sunderland Public Library has always had a large proportion of our patrons travel from outside Sunderland to visit us for a wide variety of reasons. While the recently constructed library buildings in Hadley and Greenfield have only had a small impact on the library's patronage (it is also worth mentioning that the pandemic may have shifted the severity of the impact as well), two of Sunderland's neighbors with whom we share a lot of patrons, Deerfield and Amherst, are currently undergoing renovations too. It is expected that these two renovations will have a much larger impact on Sunderland Public Library's circulation and attendance. In order to remain competitive with other libraries and a desirable destination for patrons, Sunderland Public Library needs to pay particular attention to patron comfort using our facilities in the next few years.

Due to the aging population of Sunderland, accessibility of the library building is a crucial need for our patrons. The Town of Sunderland is currently working to increase accessibility on School Street and in Riverside Park. Riverside Park, which includes a fully accessible riverside walking path, is a popular destination, especially for people with physical limitations. As the area attracts more people with physical limitations, the library needs to ensure that we remain easily accessible, comfortable, and welcoming for people of all ages and abilities. The library needs to collaborate with the Town of Sunderland to ensure that the library is able to remain easily accessible, as do the areas surrounding the library.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVE**

### **1. Retain Current Staff.**

- a. Ensure staff salaries remain comparable to salaries at similar libraries.
  - i. Work with the Sunderland Personnel Committee to ensure positions are adequately compensated.
- b. Increase staff hours when appropriate.
  - i. Increase Head of Adult Services position to 25 – 30 hours per week.
  - ii. Add benefits to the Head of Adult Services position.
- c. Encourage participation in continuing education opportunities, as funding and scheduling allows.

**2. Ensure staff positions are attractive to qualified candidates.**

- a. Ensure staff salaries remain competitive with salaries offered at similar libraries for similar positions.
- b. Work towards increasing hours for Department Head positions.
- c. Maintain an atmosphere that feels supportive towards employees.
  - i. Ensure open communication between the Director and staff.
- d. Maintain tradition of offering innovative and creative programs and services for patrons.
- e. Work closely with Department Heads to ensure the library's budget and fundraising are substantial enough to allow for meeting patron needs as well as innovation.

**3. Increase library hours.**

- a. Research patron demand for increased hours.
- b. Advocate to the Selectboard, Finance Committee, and Personnel Committee for increased staffing to cover these needs.

**4. Increase program offerings.**

- a. Increase programs for children.
  - i. Begin offering more programs for children ages 7 – 12.
  - ii. Work closely with Sunderland Elementary School staff, the Union 38 Family Network, and other organizations that support families to learn what the needs and interests of children and their caregivers are.
- b. Increase programs for young adults.
  - i. Work closely with local middle and high schools, North Star Self-Directed Learning for Teens, and other organizations that work with teens to learn what the needs and interests of teens are.
    - 1. Work closely with these organizations to promote the library and receive feedback from teens.
  - ii. Encourage participation in the Teen Advisory Board and heavily use the TAB's recommendations for programs.
- c. Increase programs for adults.
  - i. Create programs targeting senior citizens.
    - 1. Work closely with the Senior Center, Sanderson Place, and other organizations that support senior citizens to learn what the needs and interests of this community are.
  - ii. Create programs targeting adults ages 19 – 40.
    - 1. Create surveys to targeting this age group to learn what their needs and interests are.
    - 2. Expand use of social media and digital advertising to reach this population.
  - iii. Create programs targeting adults ages 40 – 64.
    - 1. Create surveys targeting this age group to learn what their needs and interests are.

- d. Work to increase funding for library programs.
  - i. Research grant opportunities.
  - ii. Advocate for program funding from the Town of Sunderland.
  - iii. Work closely with the Friends of Sunderland Public Library to support their fundraising efforts.
  - iv. Solicit private donations to support library programs.

**5. Strengthen current program offerings.**

- a. Incorporate a brief survey into all library programs.
  - i. Create options for digital and paper survey responses.
- b. Have library staff to consider pausing ongoing programs to focus more time on developing and testing new kinds of programs.

**6. Build community connections.**

- a. Support children ages 7 – 18.
  - i. Investigate creating a designated space in the Children’s Room for children ages 7 – 11.
- b. Support Sunderland’s senior citizens.
- c. Develop connections with local artists.
  - i. Continue to present bi-monthly exhibits in the Lane Family Reading Room Gallery.
  - ii. Seek out artists and artisans to lead programs for patrons in the library.
- d. Maintain close ties and open communication with the Friends of Sunderland Public Library.
  - i. Ensure Trustee representation at all Friends of the Library meetings.
  - ii. Ensure open and frequent communication about library financial needs and processes with the Friends of the Library.
  - iii. Support Friends of the Library fundraising efforts.
- e. Develop relationships with organizations that support Sunderland residents.
  - i. Develop/improve relationships with South County Senior Center, Sunderland Women’s Club, PTO, and other Sunderland-based organizations.
  - ii. Develop relationships with CISA, NELCWITT, The Survival Center, and other groups.

**7. Improve library’s marketing and communication.**

- a. Design targeted library brochures that are appropriate for distribution at various organizations and events.
  - i. Distribute to town businesses, daycare centers, community institutions.
  - ii. Send to new residents.
  - iii. Investigate sending with town census
- b. Publicize library news and events as widely as possible.
  - i. Continue to send press releases to all local media.
    - 1. Continue to develop new media connections.

- ii. Continue to post flyers in the library and on community bulletin boards.
    - 1. Add QR codes to library flyers and communications.
    - 2. Send flyers to FCAT for distribution on their station.
  - iii. Maintain email distribution list.
  - iv. Develop a stronger online presence.
    - 1. Regularly update and review the website.
      - a. Ensure the website remains mobile friendly.
    - 2. Continue to use social media to promote the library.
    - 3. Investigate new social media and new ways to utilize existing social media to promote the library.
    - 4. Investigate locating teen volunteers to assist with library social media.
- c. Find ways to communicate with patrons through text that respect patron privacy.
- d. Increase cooperation and coordination with the Selectboard.
  - i. Meet with the Selectboard regularly to provide updates on the library.
  - ii. Create ongoing discussion about library financial needs.
- e. Increase cooperation and coordination with Sunderland Elementary School.
  - i. Meet with principal.
  - ii. Meet with school librarian/technology specialist.
  - iii. Arrange class visits to library.
  - iv. Send promotional materials to school librarian and school administrator to share with families.
  - v. Keep up-to-date on school events and attempt to collaborate/attend when appropriate.
- f. Increase cooperation and coordination with Frontier Regional School.
  - i. Meet with principal.
  - ii. Propose collaboration by hosting Frontier talent: young poets and artists.
  - iii. Meet with school librarian.
  - iv. Continue Summer Reading book loans.
- g. Increase cooperation and coordination with North Star.
  - i. Meet with leaders.
  - ii. Host outreach session to promote library services to their teens.
  - iii. Share event flyers.
  - iv. Learn about classes each semester and offer resources to support those classes.
- h. Increase cooperation and coordination with South County Senior Center.
  - i. Meet with Director.
  - ii. Attend Senior Center events for direct outreach.
  - iii. Solicit program and service recommendations from seniors.
  - iv. Share event flyers.
- i. Develop cooperation and coordination with Sanderson Place.
  - i. Meet with Housing Coordinator.
  - ii. Provide Sanderson Place with library brochures to give to new residents.
  - iii. Share event flyers.

- iv. Provide programs specifically for their residents, either onsite or offsite.

**8. Increase technology support.**

- a. Advocate for technology funding.
  - i. Work with the Selectboard, Finance Committee, and Town Administrator to develop Town supported funding for library technology.
  - ii. Solicit private donations to sponsor unmet technology needs.
  - iii. Decrease reliance on the Friends of Sunderland Public Library, Inc. to support technology acquisition.
- b. Keep library technology up to date.
  - i. Maintain a regular schedule of technology replacement.
- c. Provide regular training for staff on use of current technology.
- d. Increase loanable technology offerings.
  - i. Ensure staff receive training on the use of all loanable technology.
- e. Keep abreast of new technologies offered by other libraries and investigate feasibility to implement in Sunderland.

**9. Ensure the library facilities are comfortable and accessible.**

- a. Work closely with the Sunderland Selectboard and Finance Committee to ensure appropriate funding of day-to-day facilities needs.
- b. Work closely with the Sunderland Capital Committee to ensure appropriate funding of larger facilities' needs.
- c. Investigate alternative energy sources to reduce electricity costs.
  - i. Consult with the Sunderland Energy Committee.
    - 1. Investigate adding a solar canopy in the library parking lot.
  - ii. Research grant opportunities.
- d. Improve patron comfort during browsing, studying, and relaxing in the library.
  - i. Regularly receive patron input on their comfort levels while using the library.
  - ii. Investigate options for increasing lighting in the Lane Family Reading Room.
  - iii. Investigate options for increased comfortable seating.
    - 1. Investigate installing cushions on the built-in window seats.
  - iv. Continue to work to reduce ambient noise in the library.
  - v. Resolve temperature differences in various locations in the library.
  - vi. Investigate adding small storage lockers for those studying in the library for extended periods of time.
- e. Improve library accessibility.
  - i. Maintain functional handicapped access to the building.
    - 1. Keep doors open whenever appropriate.
  - ii. Research current trends in accessibility.
    - 1. Work closely with accessibility experts to ensure our library continues to be accessible.
  - iii. Add items to the Library of Things that support accessibility in the library, outdoors, and at home.

- f. Establish a Trustee Working Group to visit new libraries in the region and advise the rest of the Board of Library Trustees on potential building and service improvements.

**10. Ensure efficient governance and financial security of the Sunderland Public Library.**

- a. Continue to inform the Selectboard, Finance Committee, and Personnel Committee about the benefits of library services and operations.
  - i. Have a Trustee frequently attend Town Board and Committee Meetings to represent the library's needs.
- b. Ensure continuity of leadership in the library.
  - i. Maintain a full Board of Library Trustees of active participants.
  - ii. Assign official or unofficial roles for all members of the Trustees.
  - iii. Conduct annual self-evaluations.
  - iv. Trustees will attend workshops and seminars when appropriate.
  - v. Trustees will review Library By-Laws and policies annually and update as needed.
  - vi. New Trustees will receive an orientation packet including Massachusetts Public Library Trustees Handbook, library policies, Library Bill of Rights, current library budget, and previous Trustees meeting minutes.
- c. Trustees will take an active role in fundraising for the library.
  - i. Trustees will coordinate with the Friends of the Library regularly about library needs and financial goals.
  - ii. Trustees will manage the annual appeal.
  - iii. Trustees will regularly research fundraising options and opportunities.
  - iv. Trustees will ensure fundraising goals match library goals.
- d. Trustees will advocate for an increased library budget that supports all previously stated goals.

## APPENDIX: SURVEY AND RESULTS

# Community Input Survey

## Sunderland Public Library

### 1. Where do you live?

- ☐ Sunderland
- ☐ South Deerfield
- ☐ Deerfield
- ☐ Montague
- ☐ Leverett
- ☐ Hadley
- ☐ Amherst
- ☐ Greenfield
- ☐ Conway
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What age ranges are represented in your household?

- ☐ 0 – 10
- ☐ 11 – 18
- ☐ 19 – 40
- ☐ 41 – 64
- ☐ 65+

### 3. Which libraries do you visit?

- ☐ Sunderland Public Library
- ☐ Amherst Libraries
- ☐ Tilton Library (Deerfield)
- ☐ Greenfield Public Library
- ☐ Hadley Public Library
- ☐ Forbes Library (Northampton)
- ☐ Montague Libraries
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. How often do you visit the Sunderland Public Library?

- ☐ Multiple times per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ A few times per year
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



5. Why do you visit the Sunderland Public Library?
- ☐ Check out books, DVDs, and other materials
  - ☐ Attend programs
  - ☐ Use computers, photocopier, or other technology
  - ☐ Open community space
  - ☐ Helpful and friendly staff
  - ☐ Convenient hours
  - ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you don't visit the Sunderland Public Library often, please let us know why.
- ☐ Hours are not convenient.
  - ☐ Books, DVDs, and other materials I want are not available.
  - ☐ Space is uninviting or uncomfortable.
  - ☐ Staff are not helpful.
  - ☐ Technology does not meet my needs.
  - ☐ Programs offered do not interest me.
  - ☐ Other libraries meet my needs.
  - ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What would you like to see more of at the Sunderland Public Library?
- ☐ More books/DVDs/other materials.
  - ☐ More children's programs.
  - ☐ More programs for teens.
  - ☐ More programs for adults.
  - ☐ More technology.
  - ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. What kinds of technology do you use (check all that apply)?
- a. Computer
  - b. Tablet
  - c. Smart Phone
  - d. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is there a kind of technology that you do not currently use, but would like to use?

**10. Do you prefer to attend programs in-person, virtually, or prefer having a hybrid option?**

- ☐ In-Person only
- ☐ Virtual only
- ☐ Hybrid (option to attend In-person or Virtual)
- ☐ Comfortable with both In-Person and Virtual programs
- ☐ Not comfortable attending programs
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. What kinds of programs would you like to see the library offer?**

**12. Are there any changes the Sunderland Public Library should make?**

**13. What is your favorite thing about the Sunderland Public Library?**

**Thank you for completing this survey! Please leave your name and phone number or email address for a chance to win a \$20 gift certificate to the Millstone Market in Sunderland.**

### **COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY RESULTS**

146 total responses to survey. 22 paper responses and 124 online responses.

#### **Question 1: Where do you live?**

146 Responses

Sunderland: 92

South Deerfield: 20

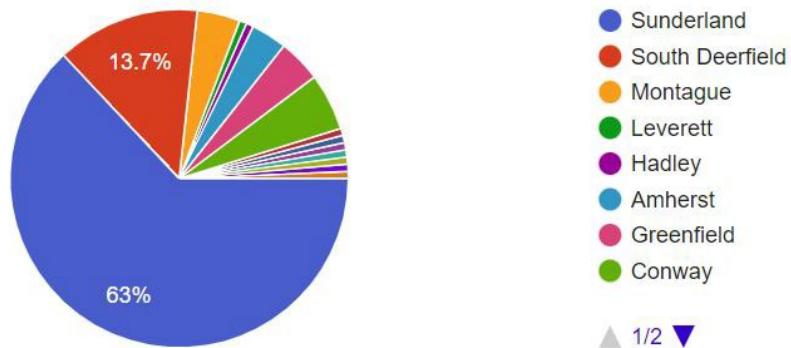
Conway: 8

Montague: 6

Greenfield: 6  
 Amherst: 5  
 Leverett: 1  
 Hadley: 1  
 Northampton: 1  
 Hatfield: 1  
 Franklin: 1  
 Homeless (Amherst): 1  
 Shelburne Falls: 1  
 Whately: 1  
 Shutesbury: 1

Where do you live?

146 responses



**Question 2: What age ranges are represented in your household?**

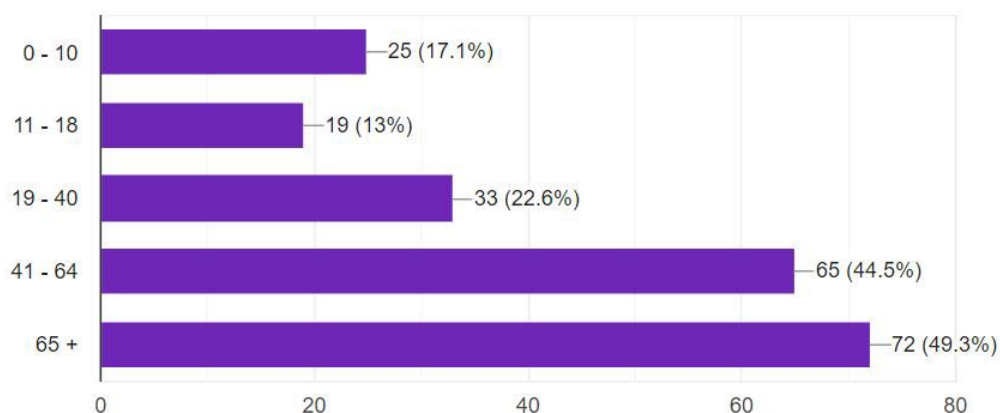
146 Responses

0 – 10: 25  
 11 – 18: 19  
 19 – 40: 33  
 41 – 64: 65  
 65+: 72

What age ranges are represented in your household?



146 responses



### Question 3: Which libraries do you visit?

146 Responses

Sunderland Public Library: 140

Amherst Libraries: 41

Tilton Library (Deerfield): 33

Greenfield Public Library: 17

Hadley Public Library: 14

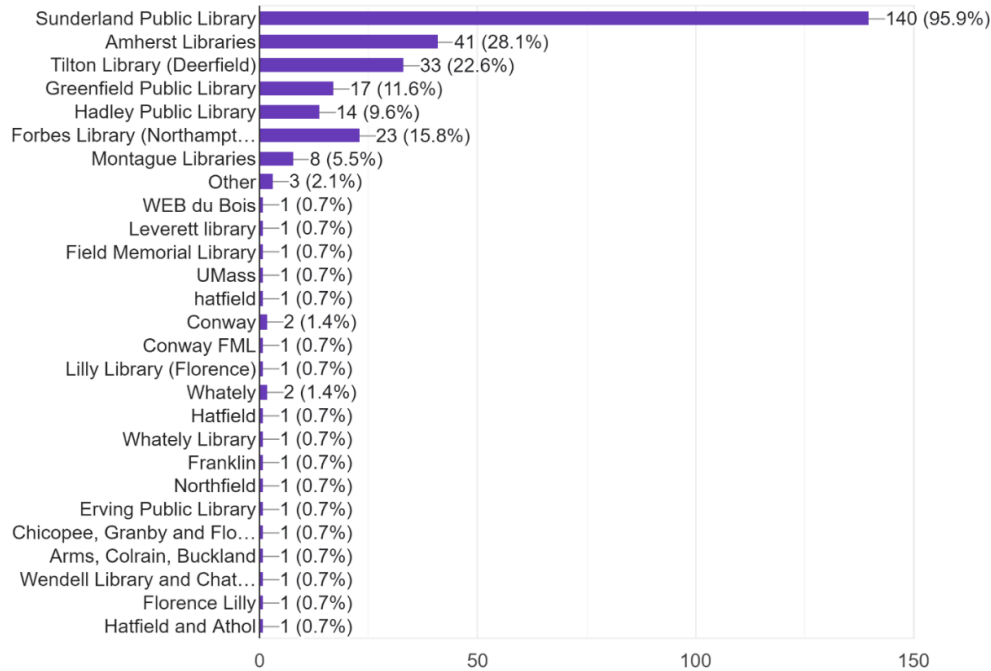
Forbes Library (Northampton): 23

Montague Libraries: 8

**Other Libraries:** 24 (WEB DuBois/UMass Amherst Libraries, Leverett Library, Field Memorial Library/Conway, Hatfield Public Library, Lilly Library/Florence, Whately Public Library, Franklin Public Library, Northfield Public Library, Erving Public Library, Chicopee Public Library, Granby Public Library, Arms Library/Shelburne Falls, Colrain Public Library, Buckland Public Library, and Athol Public Library).

#### Which libraries do you visit?

146 responses



#### Question 4: How often do you visit Sunderland Public Library?

146 Responses

A few times per month: 50

Once per week: 27

A few times per year: 27

Once per month: 22

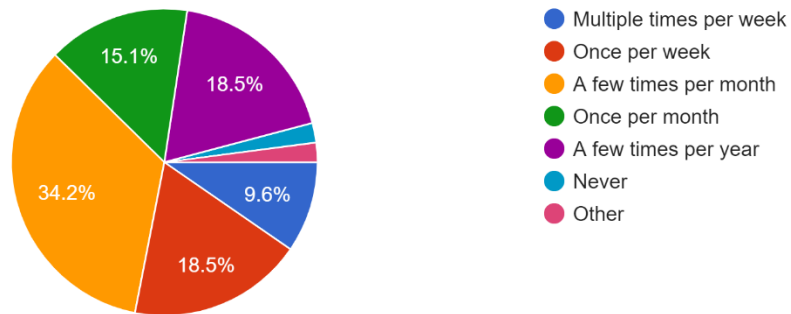
Multiple times per week: 14

Never: 3

Other: 3

### How often do you visit Sunderland Public Library?

146 responses



### Question 5: Why do you visit Sunderland Public Library?

146 Responses

Check out books and other materials: 124

Attend programs: 86

Use computers, photocopier, or other technology: 17

Open community space: 26

Helpful and friendly staff: 83

Convenient Hours: 45

Other: 31

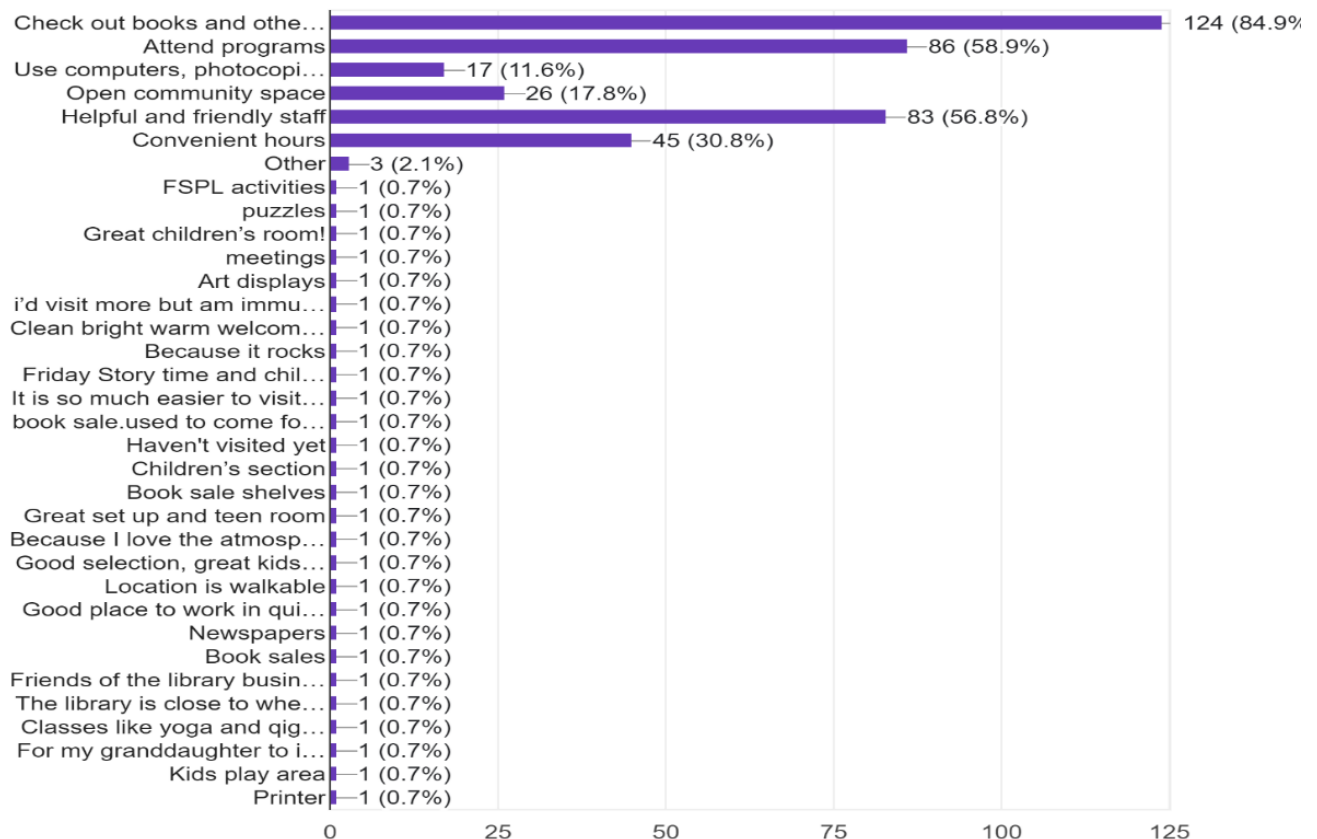
#### Comments from Other:

- Friends of Sunderland Public Library activities/business
- Puzzles
- Great children's room!
- Meetings
- Art displays
- I'd visit more but I'm immunocompromised and without other patrons masking I can't be inside for long. Have loved your outdoor programs.
- Clean, bright, warm, welcoming.
- Because it rocks!
- Friday Story Time and children's room.
- It is so much easier to navigate and visit.
- Book sale, used to come for music, trying to read the books I own.

- Haven't visited yet.
- Children's section.
- Book sale shelves.
- Great set up and teen room.
- Because I love the atmosphere in the library.
- Good selection, great kids' room, clean space.
- Location is walkable.
- Good place to work in quiet without distractions.
- Newspapers.
- Book Sales.
- Convenient location.
- For my granddaughter to interact with other kids.
- Kids play area.

#### Why do you visit Sunderland Public Library?

146 responses



**Question 6: If you don't visit Sunderland Public Library often, please let us know why.**

34 Responses

Hours are not convenient: 5

Books and other materials I want are not available: 3

Space is uninviting or uncomfortable: 2

Staff are not helpful: 0

Technology provided does not meet my needs: 0

Programs offered do not interest me: 3

Other libraries meet my needs: 7

Other: 19

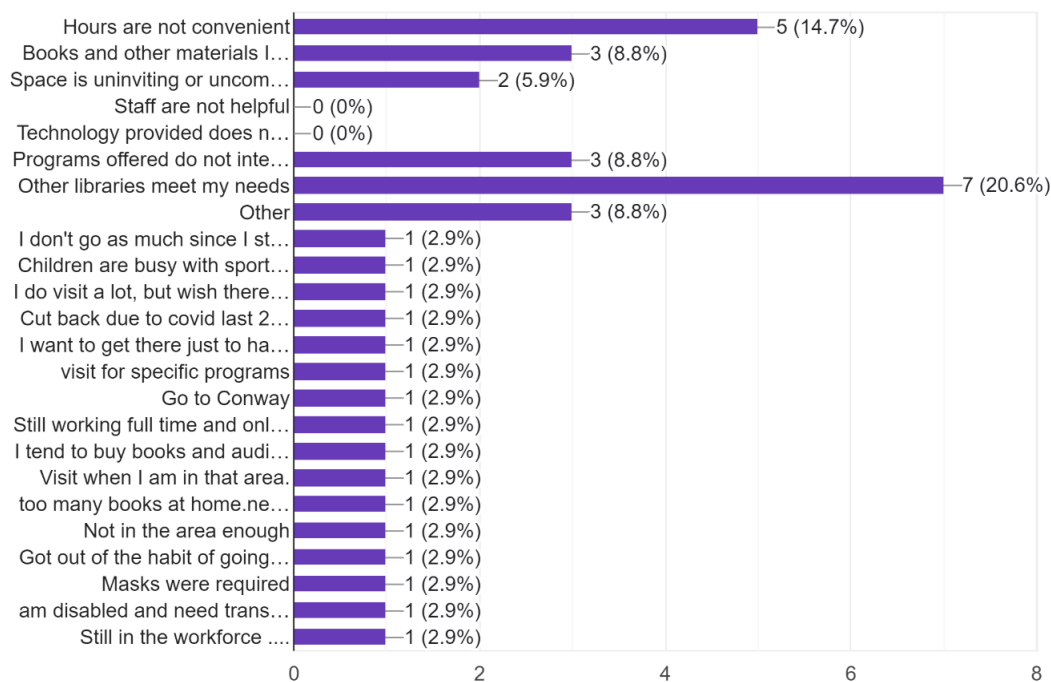
**Comments from Other:**

- I don't go as much since I started working part time at another library
- Children are busy with sports, not much free time
- I do visit a lot, but I wish there were more programs where an adult is welcomed.
- Cut back due to COVID but returning now.
- I want to get there more.
- Still working full time.
- I tend to buy books and audiobooks online.
- I visit when I am in the area.
- I have too many books at home that I need to read.
- I'm not in the area enough.
- I got out of the habit of going.
- Masks were required.
- I am disabled and need transportation



If you don't visit Sunderland Public Library often, please let us know why.

34 responses



## Question 7: What would you like to see more of at Sunderland Public Library?

86 Responses

- Tabletop gaming.
- Thursday afternoon/evening hours.
- I'd love to see youth book clubs for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up.
- More community programs for kids and teenagers.
- I'm wondering if our library can also lend toys in addition to books, especially for toddlers and preschool kids. I'd be happy to donate if there is going to be a program like that.
- Concerts.
- More adult hands on programs that aren't during day hours – many folks work and can't attend such as the recurring programs are during daytime hours.
- Expanded section for history and culture such as women's history, African American history, Native American and Latin American history, if space permitted.
- Programming
- Honestly, myself and my family.

- Can't think of anything.
- I like the art programming especially. Informational programming.
- Author talks.
- The interactive programming is wonderful. French lessons, Book Clubs, Local Speakers, Trail Walks, etc.
- I can't think of anything that would improve the library for me.
- I love the holiday food-related programs (like cookie decorating) for all ages – I'm still a kid at heart!
- Food and financial workshops like medicare / taxes, etc.
- I'm happy with the current offerings
- More adult information programs and demonstrations.
- New DVDs.
- Adult oriented programs for those with curiosity about various topics, presented by experts and/or people passionate about their field. Also I would be interested in programs facilitating getting to know the staff better and your passions outside of (or adjacent to work), because you guys do so much for the community!
- Programming for the neurodiverse/sp needs adult community. Music and movement programming would be a joy! (This could also be for younger aged groups as long as the facilitator was open to having neurodivergent adults join in with their facilitators.
- Children's events, preteens, community events.
- Programs, reading groups.
- Play room and more new books for little kids.
- Lectures on literally anything; I don't know how to appreciate contemporary art. I'm interested in local, national, and world history, local celebrities and authors, writing workshops, maybe writing groups with prompts and everybody writes for 30 minutes, drawing classes. I loved the storytellers we had a few times. I would love to do some of the programming for teenagers but am not invited.
- Interesting programs.
- Tutoring/ESL/literacy classes
- "Library of things"
- More hours, which would need at least one additional staff.
- Meets all of my expectations.
- Hybrid/online events/
- Crafting programming for adults: watercolor how-to; sketching how-to, felting how-to, etc.
- Programs for adults/older patrons.
- I think they do a wonderful job at having a variety of events and programs already!
- Can't think of anything that's amiss!
- More programs/events geared to "thinking" adults (coffee and knitting occur during working hours).

- More outdoor programs and/or mandatory masking at indoor programs (with staff assigned to make sure it is being followed, including checking in with people who can't mask for their own health reasons, say asthma, and letting them know it is ok). I get that this is tricky to navigate but there are other library systems around the country who are finding ways to at least support immunocompromised people and getting to participate. Alternatively, more live streamed events as well. But the best are your outdoor events. It would be great to have a set day and hour when masks are required for browsing books. Some additional air filtration devices/open windows. Some programming around banned books and rising authoritarianism. , the attack on teaching Black history & targeting of trans youth (and specifically drag queen story hours). Would also love to see additional programming around local indigenous survivance.
- Programs for seniors and less wait time for books on reserve.
- Classes/programs.
- Maker space/ craft time for adults.
- Art workshops and programming for adults, maybe more book groups, both online and in- person.
- Biography and science books.
- Crafts to go.
- In-person story telling.
- Adult art instructional groups of all types, ongoing art workshop groups, very basic 1:1 technology instruction, interior and garden design workshops, presentations on caretaking and end of life issues, presentations on legal issues for older adults.
- I love the adult art programs as well as the lectures, performances, and music.
- New adult books.
- More activities for 10 – 12.
- Outdoor music.
- Events, field trips.
- Would love to see the short story performances revived. Love the summer outdoor concerts.
- Printer adjacent to the public computers.
- Expanded hours.
- Large print.
- New Fiction.
- Musical offerings, guest speakers, adult get-togethers evenings and weekends.
- Children's programs.
- Adult programs during the day.
- I use the library as a place to write to get out of my home office, so more spaces to work that aren't big communal tables would be incredible.
- More interesting programs please.
- It may not be realistic, but I would love it if the library were open on Sundays.
- Help with computer problems.
- Programs for tweens.

- Activities.
- More community events where they teach skills.
- Programs for teens and adults.
- More books!
- More books and copies of popular books, also more audiobooks.
- Technology classes.
- More programs for teens, more programs for adults.
- More awards for how great the library and staff are.
- More programs for adults like crafting and adult themed movie nights.
- Wow. I'm not sure what more I would need other than a bit longer hours, more books, magazines, and media.
- Outdoor programs.
- I am happy with the current offerings.
- More programs for adults.
- More programs for adults, more programs for young adults ages 20 – 40.
- More children/teen events. They're great!
- Outreach to new Sanderson House residents.
- Cooking and computer classes. Classes that involve learning about birds and other wildlife.
- Qigong class and other healthy classes for seniors. Computer, phone, and tablet classes. Or assistance on using them.
- More programs.
- Maybe rotate more between libraries when it comes to new releases of movies, books, etc.
- Kids programs on the weekends.

#### **Question 8: What kinds of technology do you use?**

146 Responses

Computer: 134

Tablet: 71

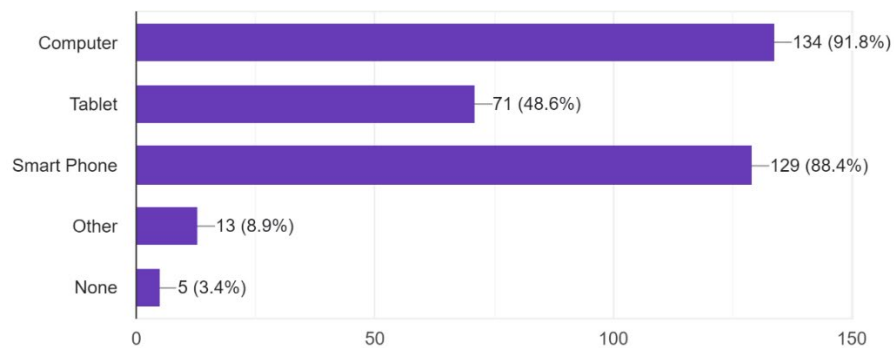
Smart Phone: 129

Other: 13

None: 5

### What kinds of technology do you use

146 responses



### Question 9: Is there a kind of technology that you do not currently use, but would like to use?

50 Responses

No: 28

Social Media: 1

Smart Phone: 2

Tablet: 3

Laptop: 1

Computer Courses: 1

Being able to rent a projector to project movies would be cool: 1

Drawing Tablet: 1

Anything: 2

Bluetooth: 1

3D Printer: 2

Kanopy & eBooks: 4

Digital and Film Cameras: 1

eReader: 1

Laser Cutting Machine: 1

Apple Watch: 1

**Question 10: Do you prefer to attend programs in-person, virtually, or having a hybrid option?**

144 Responses

In-Person Only: 44

Comfortable with both In-Person and Virtual Programs: 60

Hybrid: 35

Virtual Only: 2

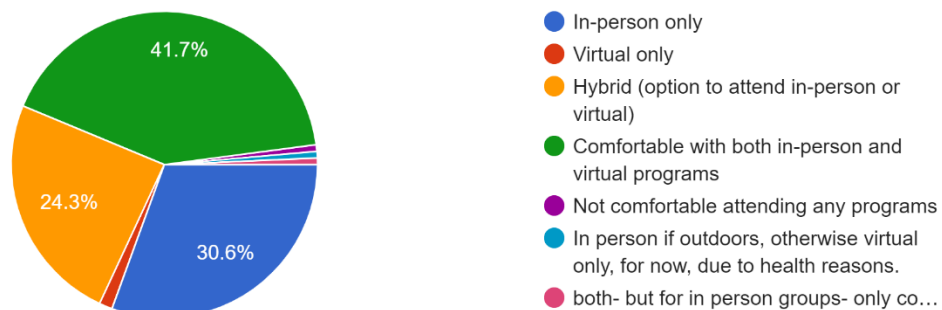
Other: 3

Other Comments:

- Both, but for in-person groups I'm only comfortable with fewer participants in ventilated spaces.
- In person if outdoors, otherwise virtually only, for now, due to health reasons.
- Not comfortable attending any programs.

Do you prefer to attend programs in-person, virtually, or prefer having a hybrid option?

144 responses



**Question 11: What kinds and programs and services would you like to see the library offer?**

- Crafts for kids and adults. Language classes.
- Not that I can think of.
- More up-to-date videos for self paced exercise programs. Most I've seen are very old and therefore I don't come into the library for stuff like that anymore.
- Local history, Native American history, African American history, Latin American history, adult crafts, and adult outdoor programs – plants, wildlife, hiking, geology.
- Current events discussion.

- Moms group – perhaps a babysitter to hang with kids in the kids section while mamas meet in the community room.
- I love the services that offer passes to local events and museums.
- Maybe an adult game session (afternoon or evening) once a month?
- I have enjoyed several types of programs. Art classes, readings, Italian classes. I like the idea of the library as a resource when I have technical difficulties (computer). Author readings would be great.
- The kids love craft stuff. What if you did a program tied in with the local bank. Teach kids about savings.
- More author talks, perhaps. More patron-initiated programs.
- Author talks.
- I recently enrolled in adult tap lessons and they offered this for the first time as a four week sign up with a HUGE response. Four weeks works for people. It's not too much, but it's enough that you "did something... learned, grew, met new people, etc. I would love for the trail system to be further developed with art installed along the trail. Gravel walking path, xc ski, running options, with cemetery loop and the history highlighted there.
- Continue with the programs and services you currently offer. They are the best in the Valley.
- I'm very happy with the current programs and services. I've especially enjoyed some of the recent outdoor programs that include short hikes with a naturalist. Maybe a few more of those would be nice. Talks and readings by local authors are always enjoyable too.
- Senior programs as mentioned below on legal issues, social security, medicare, and gap plans.
- My favorites are talks by authors or practitioners.
- Lectures or informational sessions, visits from local authors.
- More programs for adults, more music, more evening programs.
- Nature programming activities.
- Possible learning more about computer technology for older patrons.
- A speaker series with topics such as travel, plants, local businesses, new technologies. Brainstorming around a way to engage the many talented individuals in Sunderland and surrounding area.
- Story time.
- Language classes. If there were a thing such as a puzzle club I would join. I wish you could buy challenging puzzles and lend them out, but they would probably get broken too quickly.
- I love the wildlife presentations and ecology presentations.
- Sustainable future programs, so maybe how to change your grass lawn to a pollinator garden, local wild plants you can collect for food or medicine.
- I'm pleased with what is being offered now.
- Evening activities.
- Adult programming – book readings, adventure slide shows, staged/performed readings.

- Social media.
- They do a great job with the programs they offer now.
- You already have great offerings.
- Speakers or discussions, current events, intellectual pursuits, authors, artists processes.
- Arts, authors, educational programs. More social opportunities.
- Local talent sharing their knowledge.
- I'd love to see more outdoor events like the music in the summer. Such a wonderful space to have a food truck and live music.
- Genealogy.
- Art programs and book groups for adults. It would be nice to offer programs on Saturdays or evenings for those who work 9-5 M-F.
- Tai Chi in person classes.
- Instrument and tool rentals.
- Staff picks and reading recommendations. How to and experiential presentations and workshops. Low key art, design, journaling, technology instruction, aging concerns, personal, and legal issues related to caretaking.
- Adult art, music, performance pieces and lectures.
- Activities for kids ages 10 – 12.
- I love the outdoor walks and hikes.
- Instrument loans would be very fun. Other out of the box loan programs (tools) could be good. Love the kayak program that's coming.
- I have enjoyed seeing the variety offered at the moment.
- Local history.
- Book Clubs.
- Adult classes.
- Programs for children.
- How to programs for the most popular and trending apps as well as new technology.
- Historical and general interest.
- More programming geared towards pre-teens (10 – 12) if possible.
- Card making workshops and other arts.
- More classes and lectures (nature and local history in particular), and return of in-house qigong and short story readings.
- More sewing, embroidery, crochet events.
- Different kinds of art, cooking, crafts, STEM, teens reading to kids story time, kids reading to service dogs, teen library volunteer program, animal programs (the bird show was great), reptiles, traveling zoo, etc. Plays (I think you had an outdoor Shakespeare play last summer but it might have been Hatfield Library). Book clubs for different age groups. Scavenger hunts, book recommendations board with reviews by patrons.
- Speakers particularly on nature.
- More activities for adults that don't involve talking or knitting.
- Art for grownups. Technology for organizing photos and making albums, dropbox, etc.



- Something highlighting the skills and talents of Sunderlanders. I have a sense there are more people in town doing cool things, research, art, and have something they can share with the rest of us. You have found some of these people, and I love learning more about our local and regional history.
- Intergenerational theme.
- Hoping the summer concerts will return.
- Local history.
- Warm hub low cost coffee, tea, and food.
- I am happy with current offerings.
- Meditation.
- More exercise option: yoga, pilates, options more days and/or frequency. Crafting classes for adults more often. Musical performances.
- Art.
- The variety is great. More programs on diversity.
- Cooking, computer, and classes to learn about birds and wildlife. Maybe a gardening class or a plant sale.
- Programs for seniors on staying active and healthy.
- Book clubs or bring back the community reads and lectures.
- Additional workshops for arts.
- Educational.
- Kid and adult programming that promotes diversity and community building.
- Local naturalist seminars.

**Question 12: Are there any changes Sunderland Public Library should make?**

57 Responses

- No (12)
- Open more hours, or earlier hours (11)
- Receipts for tax purposes for donated books to the Friends of Sunderland Public Library.
- I'm sure the kayak kiosk will be a great addition too when that gets up and running. Hopefully this year?
- I wish we had more space for books and meeting areas.
- Engage younger audiences. It seems most patrons are in the oldest tier.
- Renovation.
- More current books on the two front square book shelves.
- Make a short sidewalk/step connecting the lower parking area to the upper library level area. It is dangerous, especially for senior citizens.
- Increase staffing. You currently each do the work of 10.
- Weed your children's books.

- More lectures and classes.
- More new books, specifically mysteries.
- A larger fiction section.
- More materials of all descriptions.
- More welcome.
- Increase the number of gardening/landscaping books, offer music to checkout in the form of CDs and records, offer more magazines to checkout, provide a few more comfortable chairs and couches to read and relax in.
- Kids can be super loud and parents don't seem to care.
- I think the staff might be a little overworked with long hours. Maybe cutting back a few hours the library is open on the off days would help them. More programs for seniors. Collaborate with the senior center who have a small space in Sunderland.
- More kids programs.
- Maybe display clearer loan terms on hotspots, etc.
- It's a cold unwelcoming space. It would be nice to see rugs, textiles, etc.

### **Question 13: What is your favorite thing about Sunderland Public Library?**

122 Responses:

- Wonderful staff, beautiful building!
- Big open tables to work on, book collection, designated teen room, friendly and helpful staff, convenient location near schools, rooms for community programs.
- The staff is so very helpful and the selection is amazing.
- The books!
- The variety of books and super friendly librarians.
- The creativity and hard work of library leadership. The autism programming is such a great and needed service. The fact that the building is fully accessible is really important to me. It's a good place for me to meet my friend who uses a wheelchair.
- The current Library Director has been such a wonderful addition to our Library. I never saw it so active until Ms. Umstot was brought on, she keeps expanding offering a broader variety than ever before. She is a treasure to our town!
- The Director and staff are really good – helpful, informative, enthusiastic, and the programs for all patrons are diverse and interesting.
- Y'all are awesome.
- Convenient location with lots of space.
- I can spend a few hours with my kiddo on Fridays – story time, each lunch, play and read. Plus the staff is great!
- The books you can buy.
- The friendly staff and welcoming environment.

- Children's and YA section.
- Great facility and excellent staff.
- People who work there are very positive and helpful. I really like the CWMARS system, and being able to get books not owned by SPL. I also really like the plant sale in the spring.
- The friendly staff and devoted group of volunteers. Our knitting circle is a comfortable space and is a great way to meet new people, socialize, and get some knitting done. Also the books for sale are so reasonable. I am able to recycle my gently used books.
- Location to home.
- Everything. What's not to like?
- I like the display near the circulation desk of new books. Easy to find a good book.
- We raised our kids taking them to the early childhood programs, and became hooked and committed then. It's what we all need more of! Time to learn and grow, open up, explore... naturally, in a guided format.
- The staff... helpful, kind, patient, knowledgeable, and award-winning!
- Friendly and helpful staff.
- Staff!
- Helpful staff.
- I love the outside walking area.
- Friendly and helpful staff, beautiful and comfortable space.
- The people who staff it, their friendliness and compassion as well as their sense of humor.
- Interesting nature programs, beautiful building.
- Everyone is always so kind and helpful, and there are so many events and services for such a small town.
- Warm, inclusive mindset of the staff, the creative programming, and the lovely ambiance of the library itself.
- The very helpful staff.
- Friendly staff.
- Friendly staff, convenient location, good evening hours.
- It is an accessible beautiful library.
- Story time is a good time for my daughter.
- The really nice staff.
- You can order anything and they will get it for you.
- It's a great space, nice building, and I haven't been there in a while but in the past the staff was always very friendly.
- 1 great staff. 2 interlibrary loans. 3 book sales. 4 creative programming.
- Friendly staff!
- The friendly, welcoming staff and space!
- Staff.
- The wonderful, friendly staff.

- Comfortable.
- The location is excellent.
- Nice staff.
- Location by the river.
- I like the size: small and personal.
- Thank you for providing your services and the space. Even though I don't visit often, I know that when I need it it is there.
- It's connection to the community.
- The staff.
- The weekly knitting group.
- Everything.
- I went in person more when I had children. There were great programs, activities, and summer reading projects for the kids.
- The space and the staff.
- One of my favorite stories: early in the pandemic when I really wanted a specific book, one of the librarians dropped it off in my mailbox on her way home so I could have it right away. It was such a generous, personal touch.
- Museum passes and good DVDs.
- Good selection of books and DVDs.
- Your mere existence! Besides the books and movies, book readings and concerts, plus friendly and helpful staff.
- Lane Family Reading Room.
- Story Time on Fridays. The beautiful layout of the library.
- Who you are and the many ways you interface with patrons. Everyone is warm, friendly, and helpful. We are so appreciative.
- Big space for kids to play.
- The people, the space, and the activities offered.
- Friendliness.
- Staff, hours, creative activities.
- Everything! People, space, events/
- It's where the books are, the community events/concerts/short story readings. The staff.
- Accessibility.
- Hours, selection, and helpful staff.
- The staff is very friendly and extremely helpful.
- Close to my home.
- Friendly staff, well organized, quiet.
- Friendly and welcoming staff. Lovely building. Access to interlibrary loans.
- The helpful staff.
- The children's area.
- Staff knowledge/friendliness.
- Very welcoming

- The physical space and the selection of books.
- Location, quiet, off street but handicap accessible and adjacent to outdoor rec facilities for all folks. Much appreciation for all you folks (and the good memories with my mom that you would always be a part of) Thank you.
- Wonderful customer service.
- Location.
- The building is so comfortable and nice, and the staff are awesome.
- Helpful and wonderful staff and new materials.
- Community. Also love the open design.
- Book sale.
- The peaceful space.
- It's a great library with a friendly staff.
- Accessibility, ease of use, ordering ahead and quick pick up.
- New books, Kelly.
- Everything.
- How clean and organized the space feels.
- Whatever book I want, they can get!
- Close to home, getting books, and seeing people.
- The people, the online entertainment resources, the space, the concerts.
- Staff, friendly warm place to read/work/think, CWMARS, access to the internet, books!
- Community Space.
- Memories of being a young girl.
- Clean, friendly, well lit.
- Comfortable, friendly staff, programs offered.
- It's beautiful, has nice gathering spaces and I don't feel like I'm putting myself at risk (COVID) there.