

2021-2025

ERVING PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN



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Approved: 9/8/21

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Contents

With Thanks To:.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Overview of EPL and Erving.....	2
Mission Statement.....	3
Methodology	4
User Needs Assessment	5
Goals	5
Staffing.....	5
Programs	6
Collections	6
Outreach.....	7
Facilities	7
Governing Body of Approval	8
APPENDIX A: Community Survey.....	9
APPENDIX B: Community Forum	26
APPENDIX C: Teen Survey.....	30

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The residents, volunteers, and employees of the Town of Erving: together, you are helping to *make Erving a great place to live.*

Introduction

According to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), a strategic plan is a

*Document that sets the goals that a library, network, or other organization wants to focus on during a multi-year timeframe, usually 3 to 5 years. It is intended to help the institution move towards meeting its overall mission and vision.*¹

A strategic, or long-range, plan is also a management best practice and tool which enables the library, its staff, board of trustees, and the public, to have a point of reference for our direction and goals. The plan is meant to serve as a dynamic and “living” document that changes in response to community needs. The plan helps us construct annual action plans to better prioritize our resources. Finally, a current plan allows libraries to apply for specified grant funding (LSTA).

The Erving Public Library’s (EPL) current strategic plan covered years 2016-2020, however in 2020 (a year of severe service disruption across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic), the MBLC granted all libraries with plans expiring in 2020 a one-year extension. Thus, this plan encapsulates years 2021-2025. This plan constitutes the fourth such plan written in EPL’s history.

Overview of EPL and Erving

EPL’s history dates to 1882, when the citizens of Erving voted to accept books from the Library Association and establish the main library in Erving Center with a branch at Millers Falls. The two branches continued to operate until their merger in 2003. The one “Erving Public Library” was situated in a small cape-style building (built in 1961) until 2020. EPL joined Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing Inc (CWMARS) in 2007. Trustees staffed the building until 2008 at which time a professional Director was hired.

EPL’s history started a new chapter when the citizens voted in May of 2014 to pursue funding to investigate a feasibility study to determine the current and future needs of Erving Public Library. At the 2017 Annual Town Meeting, the citizens voted to appropriate nearly five million dollars for the “purpose of constructing and equipping a new library.” In fiscal year 2018, the town was awarded a Massachusetts Library Construction Grant, paying approximately half of total construction costs. The new 8,325 square foot building opened on March 1, 2020. Usage is off to a slower than expected start due to the occurrence of an international COVID-19 pandemic that shut the new library down only days after opening. Services and open hours were majorly impacted for most of FY2021. The advent of

¹ Source: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/planning/index.php>

FY2022 brings more normal operations, albeit with caution and some uncertainty. The Library employs three staff (2 FTE), has several volunteers, and is overseen by a Board of Trustees. The Board members are elected and each receive an annual stipend. The Library Director is appointed and reports to the Board of Trustees. The Library is supported in part by the Friends of Erving Public Library. The library is open 30 hours per week year-round.

The Town of Erving, incorporated in 1838, is located in eastern Franklin County. It shares borders with the towns of Northfield, Gill, Montague, Wendell, and Warwick. Erving is a rural town with an industrial past, and scenic landscapes include the Millers River, Mohawk Trail, Erving State Forest, and Northfield Mountain Reservoir. It is home to FirstLight Power Resources hydroelectric pumping station. There are three distinct sections of town: Erving Center, Farley, and Erving side (the library's location).

Erving has approximately 772 households and 1740 residents². The median age is 44 years. According to Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG), Franklin County's population declined from 2000 to 2017 by about 670 people (or <1%), while the state and nation grew by 4.8% and 5.5% respectively. Franklin County was one of three counties (out of fourteen) in Massachusetts that witnessed declining rather than increasing populations. According to FRCOG, Erving's estimated 2019 population declined by about 2.8% from 2010.³

Education includes one elementary (PreK-6th) school, Erving Elementary School. After graduating from 6th grade, students travel out of Erving to attend middle and high school. Area schools include Great Falls Middle School, Pioneer Valley Regional, Franklin County Technical School, or Turners Falls High School. Greenfield Community College also has opportunities for high school aged students to complete courses.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Erving Public Library is to help make Erving *a great place to live*. The Library accomplishes its mission by providing a community gathering space that provides open and free access to educational, informational, recreational, historical, and cultural resources for area residents through its collections, programs, staff and volunteers, and facility.

² Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Demographic and Housing Estimates 5-Year Estimates Data Profile, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Erving%20town,%20Franklin%20County,%20Massachusetts&tid=ACSDP5Y2019.DP05>

³ Source: <https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-CEDS-Annual-Report.pdf>

Methodology

- 1) In the spring of 2021, we began our planning process. The Library Director attended strategic planning workshops offered by the Massachusetts Library System (MLS). The Director also reached out to the Erving Town Administrator about policies and procedures for assembling a working group, and to the Assistant Town Planner about current and relevant town and regional reports that could help inform the Library's planning. The Director reviewed previous Long Range/Strategic Plans prepared for the Library. The Director invited three community members to serve as Working Group members, and reported on the planning process progress at each monthly Board of Library Trustees meeting.
- 2) The director drafted a community survey in April and sought feedback about the survey from library staff, the Board of Library Trustees, and the Massachusetts Library System. The survey went live on May 1 and closed on July 16. The survey was available online and in paper format. We offered incentives to complete the survey. Our survey outreach included: posting it in each of our digital weekly newsletters; including in Erving's June Around Town newsletter which is printed and mailed to every household in Erving; regular posts on our Facebook; copies left at Town Hall and in the library; Director attended Annual Town Meeting to promote; promoted in the elementary school's digital newsletters; included flyers in patrons' holds pickups; attended a senior/community Center meals pickup; emailed Town of Erving employees and elected officials listserv; and directed registrants of our Summer Reading Program to a link to the survey. We received 42 online responses, and seven paper responses, for a total of 49 responses (the survey results are found in Appendix A, with identifying information omitted).
- 3) The Director and staff conducted a visioning activity during their weekly staff meeting on July 10. Questions explored included: "Describe the library in one word" and "What do you value most about your work?"
- 4) On July 15, we hosted a Community Forum on the virtual platform Zoom. Michelle Eberle, consultant with the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) facilitated the forum, and Natane Halasz (Library Director) participated as an observer. Four community members attended the forum. Eberle lead the community members through several activities. Eberle summarized the responses from each of the activities and provided a report to the Library Director (attached at Appendix B).
- 5) In August, we reached out to local teens and asked for their feedback on a survey designed by staff, especially for teens. We received 16 responses, most of them on paper which we then inputted into Google Forms for ease of data analysis. The data is attached at Appendix C.

6) The Director, with review and feedback from staff, Board of Trustees, and Working Group members, wrote the plan over July, August, and September 2021.

7) Plan accepted and approved by the Board of Library Trustees in September, and plan announced and shared at the Library's "Celebration Open House" on September 26, 2021.

8) Final version Submitted to the MBLC by October 1, 2021.

User Needs Assessment

I feel so fortunate to have this amazing library in my town. I love everything about it. (Except those car pool signs in the parking lot.) Thank you for all you have done since the opening to ensure patron access. It is a gem! – Survey respondent

Five major themes were identified from the community engagement process (community and teen surveys, community forum, and staff SOAR exercise):

- The community desires a range of **programs** catering to a wide range of ages and interests.
- The community appreciates the currency and breadth of the **collections** and would welcome continued and expanded collection development across genres.
- Librarians are trusted and respected **staff resources** who are endeared to many patrons.
- The library is valued as an important **community asset** that enriches the town of Erving and is a source of pride.
- Continued **outreach** is necessary to build awareness of the library and its resources in the community.

Goals

Staffing

Goal: Maintain excellent level of service by professional, helpful, and friendly staff.

Actions:

- Maintain and add to staff procedures manual.
- Continue progress on Director manual.
- Encourage staff to participate in professional development opportunities where and when appropriate.

- Develop Readers' Advisory services and resources.
- Draft formal policy to mandate two staff members in building at all times when open to the public.
- Research and prepare needs statement for increased staffing (increased open hours and/or programming).
- Pilot a change to opening hours to include morning hours.

Programs

Goal: Bring a wide range of programs for all age levels to the library year-round.

Actions:

- Aim to schedule three programs per month (one each for adults, teens, and children).
- Continue to solicit ideas and recommendations for programs from the community.
- Explore and encourage local talent and community expertise to offer programs.
- Pilot opening hours one or more mornings per week to ascertain suitable program times for young children and seniors.
- Continue collaborations with other local libraries to offer joint programs.
- Continue to collaborate with the Friends on programming efforts.
- Continue multi-town community read on an annual basis.

Collections

Goal: Maintain collections that satisfy and inspire community's need for recreational, educational, and informational materials.

Actions:

- Undertake more frequent weeding to make room for new additions and develop more effective and efficient way to handle discarded items.
- Add more items to "Library of Things", i.e. untraditional library items based on patron feedback and appropriate to shelving/space constraints.
- Promote digital collections more and offer quick tutorials on getting started.
- Investigate the acquisition of additional databases (languages, Kanopy, genealogy, etc). Complete stocktake of Traversari and local history collections (located in community room) and investigate potential for creation of finding aids.

Outreach

Goal: Build awareness of and raise the profile of the library, especially by reaching out to non-library users and underserved populations.

Actions:

- Perform targeted outreach for artist exhibition space and encourage a thriving, fully reserved calendar with Erving and other local artists (including students) works on display and associated openings and programs.
- Collaborate with other Town of Erving departments, such as Erving Elementary School and the Senior/Community Center, to promote and reach non-users in untraditional ways (farmers markets, new residents welcome kits, pop-up library).
- Investigate launching library website (separate from town website).
- Establish Instagram presence for library.

Facilities

Goal: Maintain and protect/preserve the library's external and internal facilities.

Actions:

- Finalize all items listed on Owner Project Manager's project punch list.
- Develop informational material (brochure, solar production/energy usage real-time kiosk) to promote the library's energy efficiency as a cost-saving benefit and positive environmental impact measure for the town.
- Develop outdoors facilities as extension of the new building to promote and provide outdoors engagement/programming opportunities and enjoyment, such as developing a trail network behind library and school, and bicycle fix-it station.
- Continue to build knowledge of the new facility and make adjustments as required to inform annual budget process, and care and upkeep.
- Establish digital calendar with library and senior center meeting rooms. Promote meeting rooms to small business/micro business owners, home based entrepreneurs, and teleworkers.
- Work with other Town of Erving departments to bring public art installations to Erving.

Governing Body of Approval

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on September 8th, 2021

Signed: Daniel B. Hammock

Daniel Hammock, Trustee Chair

Signed: Mackensey Bailey

Mackensey Bailey, Trustee

Signed: Patricia Semb

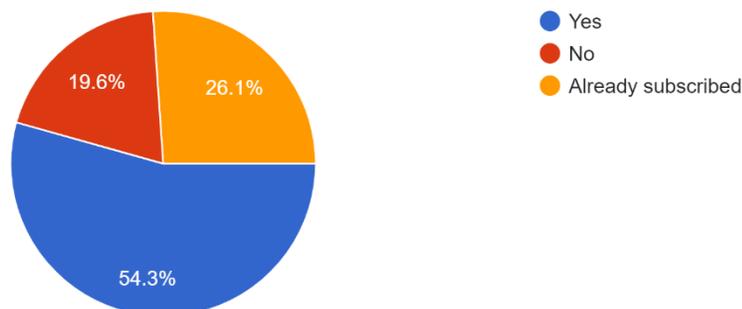
Patricia Semb, Trustee

APPENDIX A: Community Survey

All questions were optional. Questions with identifying information are not included here.

Would you like your email added to our weekly Wowbrary e-newsletter?

46 responses



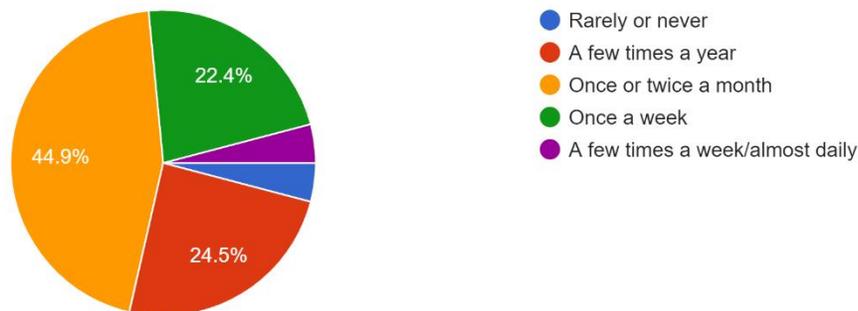
Have you visited the new library building? If Yes, please share your thoughts about the new building. If No, please explain why (48 responses):

- Yes
- Yes. It is beautiful and well organized!
- No
- yes
- I love it! I grew up going to the old library but this one is so light and airy it's lovely.
- Yes - I love how open it feels and they different places to browse books, sit, and still see outside. The teen room is a great addition as is the makers space. The children's room is very welcoming.
- Love it!
- Loved it!
- Yes when it first opened last yr
- Yes. It's very nice but because of COVID haven't been to the library very often.
- Yes. It's beautiful and airy. You can see the potential for so many community activities with that space.
- Yes, only from the outside. Love the lockers (when they are working correctly).
- Yes! It is beautiful and functional. Love the kids area; appreciate the computers and printer; and happy to know there are meeting rooms, too!
- Not yet. Covid. Also, we live across the river in Millers and just haven't made it there yet but we have 3 little girls and can't wait to visit when everything is running normally again.
- Yes, it's a beautiful space.
- Yes I have visited it.
- I have only visited before it closed for the pandemic.
- Yes! It is beautiful. Open, sun-filled, and welcoming. Organized, bright, easy to find things.

- Yes.
- Yes. I like it, it's cool
- The new library is fabulous!
- Yes - it's beautiful!
- We have and its beautiful. Everytime we go in, which is weekly since its opened back up, we have a great time
- No, Covid19
- Yes, I love the additional rooms for studying, meetings, and crafting. I am glad that the teens and children have their own space to enjoy the benefits of the library. The fact that there is an area of adult seating adds much to making the library welcoming to all. The fact that there is a patio for outdoor activities or reading is also an added benefit that is sure to be used by the community.
- Yes. I love the bigger space and the familiar faces of the people who work there.
- Yes, fantastic!!
- Yes, we love our library ♡ space and natural light are so inviting.
- Yes once before COVID hit. Utilize after hours boxes since.
- Yes. Happy it is opening again as only got a brief glimpse.
- yes, amazing! It doesn't feel like Erving, feels like a fancy library on Cape Cod.
- yes--love it
- Yes, with my grandson and to pick up a pass.
- Yes, it's beautiful. Full of light, separate spaces which are all so functional. Modern features and an ever widening selection of items to borrow
- Yes. I love the space but it's the librarians that are the best.
- No, I have not visited the new library but am looking forward to doing so in the future. Due to the pandemic and my own health concerns, I am reluctant to go out except to dr. appointments.
- Yes. LOVE.
- Yes, but only for pick ups on my way to work so far. I will stop in to browse and explore soon.
- Yes, only to pick up a book from the locker and return via drop box.
- Yes. It is beautiful.
- Yes. Love it

How often do you visit the Erving Public Library?

49 responses



In what ways does the library excel?

43 responses

- The kind staff and many many books!
- I like that it's so close to my house and They can get anything I'm looking for if they don't have it already.
- Meeting the diverse needs of its local patrons through a range of services - I use online and interlibrary loan a lot.
- Friendly staff
- Great choice of books!
- Just the new library alone is awesome
- Easy pickups @ the lockers or outdoors. Its spacious and has different areas for use (craft, teen, kids, etc).
- Serving/meeting patrons literary desires...attempting to reach all age groups with social distanced activities...just being as helpful as possible.
- Quick responses via FB messenger to put new books outside that day or in a locker. The act/craft activities :) loved the crochet one and the fall tea light cylinder.
- Great space. Amazing, dedicated, approachable, fun, creative staff. Programs are excellent (Jeans math and science for example)
- Friendly and helpful staff, good selection
- It is hard to answer this question since it is a new building, a new Director and COVID-19 caused the building to be shut down to the public for over a year. However, that being said, I think that the Erving Library has a good collection of children's books, teen books and a decent collection of the adult books. The new Director and staff have done a great job of getting the word out on upcoming events at our Library and other libraries in area and outside the area. The outreach effort has increased substantially. It is a warm and welcome place.
- Programs for the children
- Spacious. Friendly, helpful staff
- Customer service is top-notch. Our librarians know their patrons and provide recommendations and are very accommodating. Flexibility with borrowing/pick-up, updated collection.

- Good organization, new stuff regularly
- Always helpful staff, convenient hours, nice atmosphere
- The friendly and attentive staff. Creative programming. Partnering with neighboring libraries
- The set up is nice, and the people that work there are great.
- I believe one of the most prominent ways that the library excels is the welcoming staff. The staff is always friendly and willing to help all patrons no matter how busy they may be with other library matters. They are willing to make accommodations to meet the needs of all patrons (i.e. allow patrons to come into the library if appropriate with covid restrictions even if they had not called in advance for an appointment, putting materials requested at curbside within a few minutes of the request-I was there when a patron called and within 10 minutes the item was at curbside for the patron-) The staff is willing to work with other organizations to benefit the community. The staff is willing to help the Friends of the library by selling raffle tickets, setting up for plant sale, etc. The staff sees the Friends as an important part of the library not as a separate entity that they view as an intruder. During the covid pandemic, the staff worked to come up with events and activities (make and take crafts, zoom activities) so the community could still have access to library resources.
- Availability of books. Getting them delivered outside to a pick up location makes it quick and easy.
- Lots of availability and timely in getting books from other libraries. Several great options to pick up my books. Also the hours you folks are open are great.
- Personal service is superb.
- They have so many opportunities for our community
- Fast service and after hours boxes
- Great customer service. Interesting programming that is aimed at a Diverse audience.
- Friendly, personal, caring librarians! Amazing building also of course. DVD collection is above any other library in the area.
- great staff, nice building
- A beautiful facility but mostly the friendly and helpful staff.
- Open space Good book selection
- The staff is amazing!
- Helpful staff.
- They try to meet the needs of all age groups through programming and activities. With the use of lockers and curbside pick up, listing new books and media are other ways they excel.
- Love the programs, service and selection of books
- Librarians go above and beyond. The children's room is really well laid out and easily accessible to our children.
- Customer service is great, hours are better than other libraries, I don't use the events for children but they offer a lot of fun sounding programs.
- Never been in the new library, I don't feel they necessarily excel in anything at this time simply due to covid.
- accessibility.
- The new library appears to be a nice space with lots of room to support more activists
- Nicely

In what ways could we improve?

31 responses

- I can't think of any ways.
- I don't have an answer for this one.
- I can't really think of any... once things open up again fully and we are back to regular visits to the library, maybe collaborate with other area libraries for programming aimed at younger adults?
- Start up in person children events again
- A color printer.
- More books?
- You're great; keep it up! I know more will be added soon as Covid restrictions ease.
- More programs geared to a wider range of people
- Right now -- can't think of one way! I can't fully answer this question until I see how things unfold as the library opens up and is used by more people. There were problems in the past at the old library in terms of noise/and disruptive game playing, but I'm sure with the new areas this won't be a problem. When the pandemic is over, I'd love to see the circulation desk area cleared off. There is no room right now, and feels cluttered. But I think it is due to the shield. It must be hard for you, too!
- Programs
- Kids movie selection?
- Wish there were more audio books. But the staff is always helpful with ordering from other libraries.
- Nothing to improve on yet.
- I can't think of anything now. After the library is open I might have something.
- I wish whole series were available in the library and with online options. Sometimes I'll read a book on the series, but the rest of the books aren't offered.
- So hard to say since the timing of the new building coincided with the shut-down
- A few benches out front would be nice.
- Perfect now
- Certain parts of the collection could expand now that there's more room - nature guidebooks (especially NE focused) and classic/award-winning novels (like the Pulitzer list for example). There may be a plan for it but outdoor furniture for the courtyard, maybe even a hammock.
- Maybe ask patrons for ideas about upcoming book orders
- More events for over 50 people.
- having an outreach program for homebound patrons.
- More books! Perhaps outdoor movie nights this summer?
- Can't think of anything, haven't fully visited yet.
- Better social media presence, more posts via Facebook/Instagram. Events that people will want to attend. More free passes for museums, parks, etc. I've had to go to greenfield and northfield to get passes because our library doesn't offer the same ones and that's inconvenient.
- offering of programs like paying chess. Boating safety course, Hunter Safety course..

- Hard to say due to the restrictions that COVID imposed over the last year since the new library has been completed.
- Popcorn

If you visit other libraries, which libraries do you visit and what attracts you to them?

36 responses

- Only visit Erving
- No
- I only use the MWCC library for school if I need to.
- I visit the library in Provincetown because we love the young adult and children's floor; I also visit the libraries in Amherst and Turners because it is convenient to where I work and shop. Also, I love the Pittsfield Atheneum's programming for kids.
- Levi Heywood Memorial- great children's area and selection of materials, museum passes
- Northfield we love the children's section there
- I only use the Erving Library.
- Carnegie Library: closeness and kid stuff. Greenfield Library: free book giveaways, great selection of new fiction.
- Bernardston...my mom lives in that town. They had kid events before COVID.
- Pre-COVID, we went to the weekly Lego group in Sunderland, plus the times they had Nerf Gun and Laser Tag Nights, as well as movie nights during the summer. We also like going to Amherst Jones for all the Spanish / bilingual kids books.
- I have visited 284 libraries over the last 10 years or so. The new Erving library is #283. The old one is #24. Each library is unique. I look forward to visiting the new Erving library.
- Millers Falls and Montague Center. Previously Turners as well. They are our most local libraries and we loved music and movement.
- Prior to Covid 19, I would visit the Sunderland Library for programs
- I do not.
- Greenfield (because I spend a lot of time in Greenfield); Sunderland and Jones occasionally
- I visit Northfield and Sunderland frequently, Tilton occasionally. I love their different collections-- everyone has their own twist. I especially love the Dickinson--very friendly folks, nice building, excellent programs--always find something new there. I just like libraries in general and enjoy spending time in them.
- I don't regularly visit any other ones. But Pelham Library is one I have been to frequently. I liked their YA fantasy section.
- Diverse activities - physical and spiritual like yoga classes, talks with experts on interesting subjects, hands on workshops. I like programs that attract diverse age groups. Puzzle swaps!
- Erving
- Orange, Athol, Turners Falls: events they offer and library resources (I know the Erving Library can get some of these resources via ILL but I like to browse the resources as well).
- No others now.
- I use this library exclusively for years.

- Eastham, when I'm away I go there to print things. (Also gorgeous library)
- I visit libraries wherever I travel, often as a quiet place to work or read and use wifi. If they're quiet, comfortable seating, have a cozy nook ideally with a view outside that's what I'm looking for.
- I go to programs co-sponsored by my bird club at the Dickinson Library.
- I don't visit other libraries
- Amherst Jones. Amount of books.
- No others currently
- Events such as story time, or educational events with bugs, science, etc. Better selection of books, better selection of free passes.
- N/A
- none
- This one for nice people, computers, and popcorn

What would you most want to see at Erving Public Library in the next few years?

38 responses

- Hopefully get back to having kids together again for projects.
- I would love to see more things happening there again now that covid is slowing down
- Not sure...
- Museum passes and events for families
- I would enjoy having guest speakers - authors or other topics of interest.
- Book clubs/groups, activities for kids of all ages
- More craft activities
- Kids playgroups and events are great (especially movie nights that start at a reasonable hour like 4, 5, 6pm). But overall, just really excited to get into the actual library for books again soon!
- I hope to call a contradance, which we were set to do in 2020.
- Programming for children.
- Childrens play groups or children activities. Yoga classes.
- I would like to see a increase in the adult collection to include other genre including sci fiction and sci fi fantasy. We seem to be heavy into the murder mysteries or romance novels in the adult collection. More diversity of reading materials. I would like more programs for the public at large. Maybe the creation of a monthly meeting like a genealogy group, etc. or programs on the history of Erving and the valley.
- Continue programing
- Perhaps an adult reading club?
- Opened up fully for sure. I'd love to see the maker space used in regular programming for kids and adults. I want to see it busy--full--bustling--as any great learning/social space should be
- Hopefully, more storytime for my sister cuz she really likes it
- I'm quite happy with it as is
- More partnership with the other Town departments to provide programming and information on what happens around Town and tying in programming with projects going on

- We just did the teddy bear sleep over and our kids enjoyed that, so maybe more activities like that?
- More activities-book discussions, talks or performances. Plans to make the library a gathering space for community activities for all ages.
- Classes, gatherings. Can't wait to see the library fully functioning as one with people inside, perusing the stacks, on computers.
- Unsure
- Community gatherings in the courtyard.
- Cooking for one or 2, for elderly or small crowds. I would love to help.
- Great the way it is !!!!
- Continuation of programming including some remote, it was fu. To have people from Canada at the book discussion last week.
- More hours open during the day if there's budget for it someday.
- Programs for the community - speakers, adult Ed.,
- More Stem programs and different kinds of fun stuff in the maker space.
- More in library programs for adults, performances, author talks or educational programs.
- More community activities now that pandemic slowing.
- Public events, not sure what type though.
- Events for both children and adults.
- Chess Club. Hunter Safety Course. Courses offered by Massachusetts Environmental Police Department.
- no mask mandate

How do you see the library contributing to the future of Erving?

36 responses

- There are many things the library offers for those whom do not have access to things at home.
- I hope it keep encouraging younger people to read like it did for me
- A place for kids, families, and community members to come together for programs, a meeting/work space for school aged kids, a place where residents can learn about different resources in our town and area (nature, history, cultural.)
- A space where residents can gather
- Promoting reading and communication for our children is so important
- No recommendations at this time.
- Community building...a central place to gather and grow.
- Fun activities for everyone :)
- Literacy. Social activities. Teaching skills.
- Hosting community events
- More joint programs with the elementary school and senior center. The library could service those in need for computers, etc. More access and cataloging of our local history. Maybe a collaboration with the Historical Commission.

- I am not sure ? The Erving students have a library in the school. So much has changed. Unless you have students interested in going to the Erving public library I am not sure attendance will increase.
- Once the community is truly up and running again, I see the library as a central resource for the town.
- It's a huge part of it. It builds the sense of community. It is the only place I see some people from town. I think it is the social center. More meetings held there. Can we get the town TV channel going? Opportunities for teens and afterschool support.
- They have nice space, and good selection for lots of books. I think peeps will wanna visit.
- Offering a place for neighbors to gather and have shared experiences. Bridging age gaps.
- I see it as a place to go for my family to enjoy places in the community as well as books. So, I see them as a community outreach as well.
- I see room for more resources, rooms for patrons to use during or after library hours.
- Educating, classes
- Unsure
- Bringing people together.
- More community events. When its safe.
- Eco sustainable building provides great service to the town with minimal overhead.
- Great place to gather. Can be the heart of the town.
- It's the crown jewel now with the building and its proximity to the senior center it's going to contribute
- More things to bring the community together.
- A great part of the community where people can come together, get settled into the town, use resources etc.
- I see the library as a great resource for supplying information in a variety of formats.
- It builds community.
- Public events and programs and meeting space could be useful.
- Would be nice if voting could be held at the library rather than the town hall.
- offering programs for Erving Elementary School
- volunteering when I can

How do you feel about the library's current open hours? (The library is currently open Sundays through Thursdays, from 1pm-7pm. The library is currently closed on Fridays and Saturdays.)

44 responses

- I feel the hours work just fine
- Good hours
- Sometimes it's hard to get there by 7 during the week but I love the lock box option I need to start utilizing that. Sometimes I wish you were open Friday or Saturday but I understand the need to be closed and not everyone spends the weekend stuck in a book.
- I do wish it could be open on Fridays, but it's okay that it's not. For families with younger children, the library is open during nap times and dinner time - a couple of mornings would be helpful.

- Okay, would love to see an occasional Friday or Saturday
- Perfect hours- love that it is open till 7!
- For the most part these are good hours
- They are fine and do-able.
- I like the consistency of the hours - same time, same days.
- I had to get used to them as they were diff and much later in the day that what I was used to but I like that if books have come in I can always have them put in a locker for the Friday/Saturday if I can't make it on Thursday.
- Love that you're open Sundays. Please keep that!
- Love that there is a library open on Sunday.
- Morning are better for our little ones and it would be great to have a library option for weekday mornings.
- Works for me but I wonder if the public would be happier with Saturday hours.
- I believe if people are going to the library for DVD or books for the weekend. It seems Friday would make more sense then Sunday.
- For a small-town library, EPL has amazingly generous hours!
- I'd like to see you offer one morning/daytime slot. The current hours work well for me, but I think for some families, especially those with young children, having a morning option might be nice.
- I am now used to the hours therefore I like them
- Perfect hours. I like the fact that it's open until 7.
- The hours aren't a problem for us.
- I like that it is open after 5pm
- I like the fact that the library is open on Sundays. I also like that the hours are consistent each day but possibly morning hours may be added in the future if there is a need.
- They have been working for me.
- Great!
- Very nice to be open on Sunday
- I love the Sunday hours
- Would love Saturday hours even if it was only a few hours. It would be great.
- Like it
- Perfect!
- It's nice that it's so easy to remember - every day's the same hours. But I do wish it was open more weekday work hours, earlier than 1 PM. If there's no budget for additional hours 12-6 would be preferable to 1-7. But 10 or 11 AM opening would be amazing. Especially in the winter, 7 PM is pretty late to be out on a cold snowy night, for the librarians as well.
- hours are good
- This works well. Perhaps closed two weekdays and open part of Saturday.
- I would welcome more hours, maybe only closed one day?
- I love the hours.
- I find them satisfactory, it is only since pandemic that I have not taken advantage of the hours.
- Would like to see open til 8pm a couple nights/week.
- They are better than many other area libraries

- It's nice they are open on Sunday as well as later in the day but it is odd they don't open until 1pm.
- Library closes to early for programs offered in evening. (9:PM) would work better.
- Nicely done

How often do you use the following library resources? Rank each item on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "rarely or never" and 5 is "almost every visit". (Note: that the summary of responses was tabulated in table format which does not translate well to presentation in this report.)

Children's collections:

Rarely or never (20)

Almost every visit (18)

8 respondents were in the middle.

Teen/young adult collections:

Rarely or never (25)

Almost every visit (6)

16 respondents were in the middle.

Adult collections:

Rarely or never (0)

Almost every visit (21)

25 respondents were in the middle, and 1 respondent answered "Want to, but can't"

Large Print Collection:

Rarely or never (28)

Almost every visit (2)

14 respondents were in the middle, and 1 respondent answered "Didn't know library offered this" and 1 respondent answered "Want to, but can't"

Local History Collection:

Rarely or never (25)

Almost every visit (4)

16 respondents were in the middle, and 4 respondents answered "Didn't know library offered this" and 1 respondent answered "Want to, but can't"

Electronic Resources:

Rarely or never (16)

Almost every visit (12)

15 respondents were in the middle, and 3 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this" and 1 respondent answered "Want to, but can't"

Museum Passes:

Rarely or never (13)
Almost every visit (4)

24 respondents were in the middle, and 6 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this" and 2 respondents answered "Want to, but can't"

Place to work, read or study:

Rarely or never (24)
Almost every visit (6)

12 respondents were in the middle, and 3 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this" and 2 respondents answered "Want to, but can't"

Public computers, WIFI, printing or photocopying:

Rarely or never (24)
Almost every visit (6)

10 respondents were in the middle, and 2 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this" and 5 respondents answered "Want to, but can't"

Space to relax or socialize:

Rarely or never (19)
Almost every visit (9)

14 respondents were in the middle, and 3 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this" and 2 respondents answered "Want to, but can't"

Meeting Rooms:

Rarely or never (27)
Almost every visit (2)

13 respondents were in the middle, and 6 respondents answered "Didn't know the library offered this"

How satisfied are you with each of the following resources? Rank each item on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "extremely dissatisfied" and 5 is "extremely satisfied".

Children's collection:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 5
4: 6
5 (Extremely satisfied): 15
Not applicable: 18

Teen/Young Adult collections:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 1
2: 0
3: 3
4: 9
5 (Extremely satisfied): 13
Not applicable: 18

Adult collections:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 9
4: 11
5 (Extremely satisfied): 20
Not applicable: 1

Large Print Collection:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 5
4: 4
5 (Extremely satisfied): 11
Not applicable: 21

Local History Collection (Traversari):

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 2
3: 6
4: 5
5 (Extremely satisfied): 10
Not applicable: 20

Electronic Resources:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 4
4: 9
5 (Extremely satisfied): 15
Not applicable: 15

Museum Passes:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 1
2: 2
3: 3
4: 8
5 (Extremely satisfied): 11
Not applicable: 18

Physical places to work, read, or study:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 3

5 (Extremely satisfied): 20
Not applicable: 17

Public computers, WIFI, printing or photocopying:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 1
3: 3
4: 3
5 (Extremely satisfied): 17
Not applicable: 18

Space to relax or socialize:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 3
5 (Extremely satisfied): 20
Not applicable: 17

Meeting rooms:

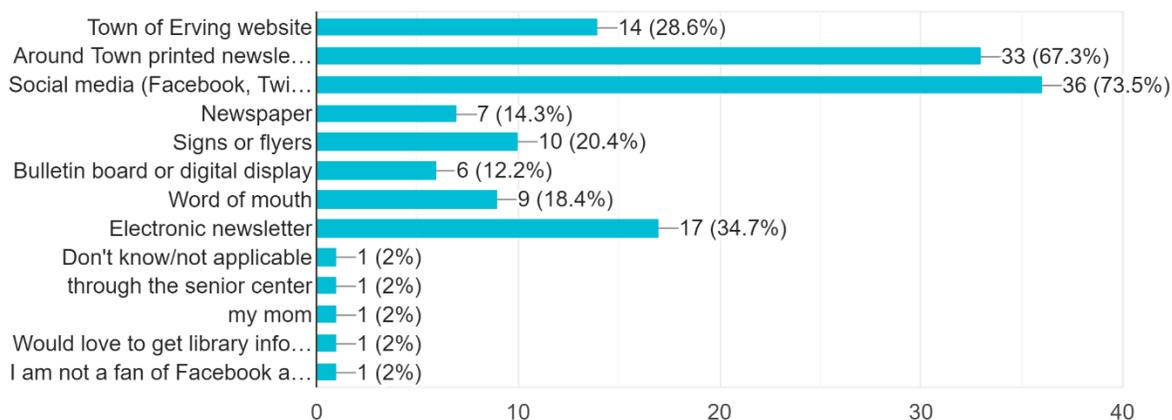
1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 0
3: 4
4: 2
5 (Extremely satisfied): 17
Not applicable: 18

Staff/customer service:

1 (Extremely dissatisfied): 0
2: 1
3: 1
4: 2
5 (Extremely satisfied): 34
Not applicable: 6

How do you prefer to find out about town events (including library events)? Check all that apply.

49 responses



What past programs at the library would you like to see repeated?

27 responses

- Kids groups
- I wanted to do the ukulele class but it seems to be when I have classes for school.
- All the science programs for kids - but also for older kids (now that mine are getting older :)); I really liked the programs around storytelling and music
- Local author read; writing club
- Lego- crafts
- Guest authors, writing program, art projects
- Storytime, yoga for kids, being able to check out cool toy items.
- Crochet or knitting
- Kids crafts
- I really liked the ones that included crafting and cooking
- ?
- Ukelele classes
- The virtual chocolate tasting was fun, and would be great in person. I've attended a bunch of virtual programs this year and really like them—it's great not having to go out at 7pm! I hope in the future we can continue to partner with other libraries for virtual events as well as in person.
- Hmm. IDK. Y'all are doing fine with events.
- Painting
- There have been so many. The panic room was fun.
- Author talks, craft programs
- David Brule local nature
- pollinators
- Author talks, performances such as Sheryl Faye.
- The children's activities on wednesdays. The children's take and go activity kits.

- Not sure
- Book signings from authors in Western Massachusetts etc.
- Lego Lady

What new programs would you like to see offered?

23 responses

- Not sure
- Anything really! I would love to see more people at the library!
- Geocaching? Programs about current events. Sewing or "fix it" type workshops. Writing for middle/high school (regular homework or study group hours?)
- Museum passes; family events; writing workshops
- For adults
- One that explains new computer programs and how to use them
- Maybe scavenger hunt or escape room for tweens, trivia/game night for kids? Fun stuff for adults? (sorry so vague)
- ?
- Art classes for adults, book club
- Anything, really! Anti-racism talks, maybe in conjunction with a book club, Ginger Burr--she is a fashion stylist, author talks (including children's authors), Crafting (beyond the Friends), Sports figures, DIY, Yoga, Fitness, Gardening tips (Teresa Foster?) Local history, Travel, craft beer talk with Element or local brewing, even meet up opportunities for singles in conjunction with other libraries. Really hope you can partner with both the school and the senior center for programming, too.
- IDK
- Family programs/activities, introduction to new hobbies, educational programs, demonstration how to access library resources (freegal,data bases, etc.)
- Local nature mostly, local history also - GCC Geology professor Richard Little (has written 2 great books on local geology), Harry Sharbaugh, other local naturalists - Paul Rezendes (tracker) is in Orange, also partnerships with nature organizations - ex MA Audubon has an employee living in Greenfield that works in Arcadia Sanctuary in Easthampton.
- Perhaps presentations by town boards. What is the Board of Health up to, Conservation Commission,....
- Knitting or crocheting class
- Book clubs
- Local musicians?
- Educational programs.
- Book signings / illustrated Art by Astrid Scheckels a local artist
- I don't know

Is there anything else you would like to share?

27 responses

- No
- Good job everyone! The library is an amazing place!
- No. We all love the library in this family. I love that the collection is so up to date and progressive, quite honestly!
- It would be nice if more patrons would join and assist the EPL Friends Group as it would help the group to continue to offer programs and do fund raisers. It would be nice to bring back the craft groups and potluck dinners as I feel those were enjoyed by all who attended.
- I think the library is doing an amazing job of engaging all ages with COVID restrictions in place.
- I wish there was a way to view all the available children's books (or any book) in the Erving library on CWMARS, but there isn't.
- I think you're doing amazing!
- Librarians from other libraries love the view on my Erving library card. I always tell them that the picture is actually of Gill.
- Before the pandemic, I was reading quite regularly and using the library frequently. I kind of got out of the habit over this past year, and hope to make it a more regular part of my life again soon.
- I feel so fortunate to have this amazing library in my town. I love everything about it. (Except those car pool signs in the parking lot.) Thank you for all you have done since the opening to ensure patron access. It is a gem!
- Y'all are cool beans.
- Libraries are great, Its just not the first thing that comes to my mind when I am looking for a book or other media. It should be!
- Once the pandemic is over, I see the library being able to expand programs and activities.
- We love kids programs for middle aged kids. Thanks for all you do
- We love our library
- Love my library.
- Many answers will change post-pandemic - helpful to remember that in terms of what it is being used in-person and what isn't. I answered as much thinking ahead as what it's been like. Thank you! The library is the most important service the town offers.
- I'm new to the community and think the library is excellent as is the network via which books can be ordered from other facilities.
- Yes, it is difficult to answer these questions about library use as it has just reopened. I did order some books while the library was closed and was happy with that process. I've been in on two quick visits since reopening but not with enough time to really gauge my preferred use.
- Nothing I can think of.
- I feel the library is vastly under utilized given the expense and support it was given to build a new one yet there is nothing going on there. Granted Covid has limited anything that could happen but it would be nice to see things get moving now. And one of the librarians is not very friendly at all, she can be downright rude and that is unacceptable.
- YES. Would like to assist in Chess Club.
- Miss y'all!

APPENDIX B: Community Forum

Erving Public Library Strategic Planning

Community Focus Group

July 15, 2021

Library Director: Natane Halasz

Strategic Planning Facilitator: Michelle Eberle, Massachusetts Library System

Attended by 4 community members

Community Visioning

Attendees were led through a brief mindfulness exercise and then asked to complete the following statement.

I dream of an Erving where...

- everyone reads a lot and swims in the river and leaves no trash behind
- community members feel connected and have safe and welcoming places to be together
- the community works together and there is lots of activity going on in the town
- *Note: one attendee lost her internet connection at this point.*

These statements may be very helpful to develop the library's vision statement.

Describe the library in one word

Next attendees were asked to introduce themselves, their relationship to the library, and describe the library in one word

- Friendly
- Nice
- Home
- *Note: one attendee lost her internet connection at this point.*

These words may be helpful to develop the library's mission statement as they identify what participants view as most important about the library.

SOAR: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results

We discussed the library's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results

At this point, the attendee who lost her connection rejoined the meeting.

Strengths (what's working well)

What are the library's greatest assets? What is valued most? What is working really well?

- Staff is excellent, very responsive
- Book selection is good
- Impressed with the consortium - CWMARS

- Cooling center
- Children's program - children's room incredible
- Monthly craft on Zoom - nice to connect
- Staff willingness to go out of the way to help the community
- Always listening to community - like counselor - willing to listen - spend time with patrons - friendly atmosphere
- Very patient
- Treat young children with respect and listen to what they have to say
- Staff has gone out of the way to help everyone
- CWMARS system is phenomenal

What makes you proud of your library?

What achievement in the past two years are you most proud of?

- Growing selection of books, YA addressing current issues and what the world looks like
- Library is an extension of our home
- Able to see child learn in so many ways - not just access to books and resources - access to people
- People in town value the library - work of library building committee - a lot of work went into it
- Hard work of community and committee
- New library building. Having a meeting room and business center
- Teens have their own space
- Having a maker space for crafts
- Recognizing that libraries are changing
- Additional space for other programs
- Community members who were not supportive of building - now support building –
- Increased support
- Delighted from the outset

Opportunities (set of circumstances that make it possible to do something. Favorable time, occasion, or moment)

Keeping in mind that we are living in a pandemic, how can the library best meet the needs of the community?

- Can't imagine anything more than what the library has already offered: curbside pickup, lockers, crafts for adults and kids, appointments, open hours
- As a parent, feeling connected to community the whole time - during remote school
- Would love to see - connecting with elementary school - it's right next door

What trends could work in the library's favor?

- Library had offered a cooking program which was popular.
- Friends had held Zoom craft times monthly - was a good social time.
- When people joined in on the Zoom meeting - people felt connected
- Zoom cooking shows would be more popular if held regularly - every other month.

- Repeating programs offered every other month - or once a month.
- More people will join. Example - crocheting club or knitting club
- Challenge in small town is the funding.
- Recurring programs.
- Challenge to get a variety of people to come and expand.
- Usually same library lovers - how can we reach other people?

What new resources, skills, or collaborations/partnerships does the library need to move forward?

- Build on successful outreach to senior center and town meeting
- Outreach to school
- Offer something to seniors
- Get kids parents to talk up programs
- School - get kids library cards - during school day teacher would bring kids to library to get cards in kindergarten
- Picture taken with the librarian who gives you their card
- Environmental/sustainability partnerships
- Outdoor library space and programs
- Continue StoryWalks

How can the library repurpose its weaknesses and threats?

- It's hard to reach everyone - not everybody in town on FB page, post programs on town website
- Have staff or others in different spaces in the library to promote new uses of space. i.e. meeting space
- Would like the library to have a website
- Build relationship with the local newspaper

Aspirations (hopes and dreams)

What are your hopes and dreams for the future of the library?

- Better attitude from people in the community who don't believe in libraries
- Broaden community support
- Increase ties with the school
- Partner with the historical commission and the recreation commission
- Friends always participate in the fall festival and the Library Open House for Halloween
- Meeting with different community organizations - inquiry about how they can partner - for example how to use meeting room
- Ask community partners: How can we support you? How can you support us?
- Develop mutual support – work collaboratively with community partners

Results (desirable outcomes)

Think about your library in 2025. What would you like your library to be like in 2025? What results would you like to achieve?

- Library is a community hub
- Move beyond socialization
- Hub of activity - socializing, with projects, 2-3 things going on a time

- More staff
- Library is better utilized
- Vision - organizations, groups, committees - walking into library - there are food trucks, booths, fair - quarterly, monthly
- While kids are at school - stop at library for coffee to chat
- Fall festival - food trucks
- Coffee bar and hot chocolate - have space - would need volunteers to run it (Keurig)
- Monthly open mic night (filmed by local cable tv) - sound system
- There are lots of local hippie musicians
- Workshops by local experts
- Farmer's market style - meet a novice expert - 6 people at library with demo booths - gardening, meet your community novice expert
- Game show event for kids – LegoMasters competition night - Adults Night Out

Padlet Brainstorm: online sticky note collaboration tool

Participant contributed ideas in response to this question on Padlet:

Think of 5-7 ideas for resources, programs, or services you would like to see at the library in the future.

<https://padlet.com/MassLibSystem/ErvingPL>

Participants were provided a couple extra days to continue to contribute ideas.

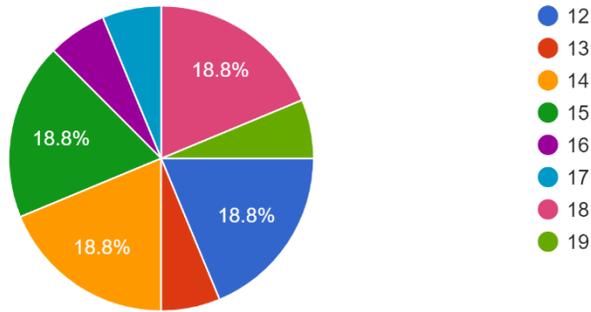
Results are available on the Padlet and will also be provided to the director in a spreadsheet and PDF.

Documented by Michelle Eberle: July 16, 2021

APPENDIX C: Teen Survey

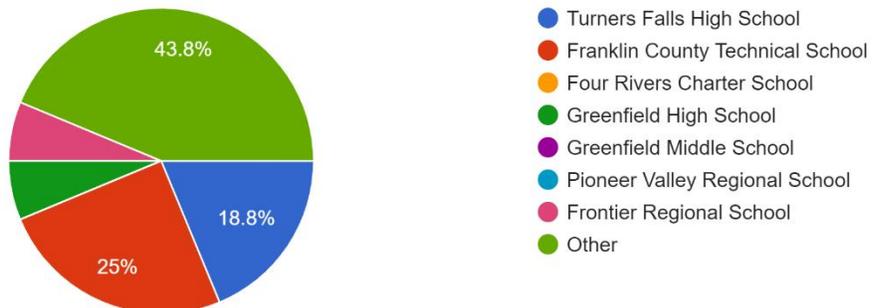
How old are you? Keep in mind, this survey is for teens only. Adults are welcome to give us their suggestions separately via email or phone!

16 responses



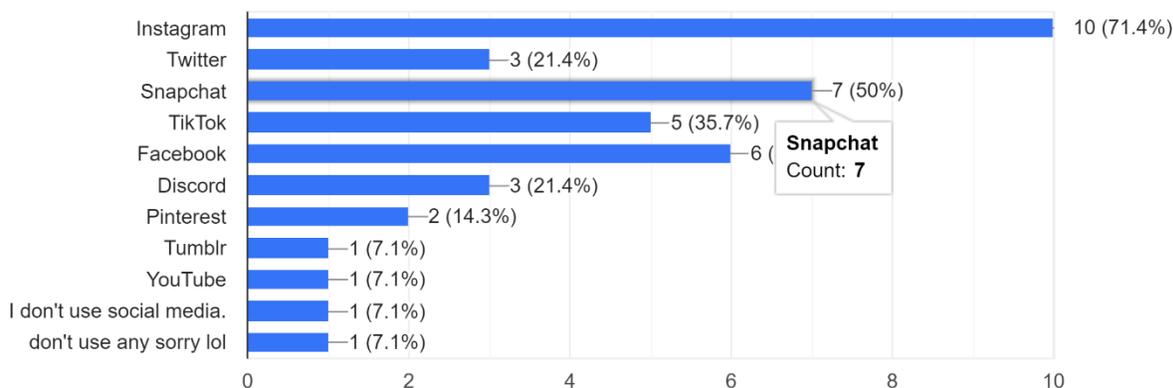
What school do you attend?

16 responses



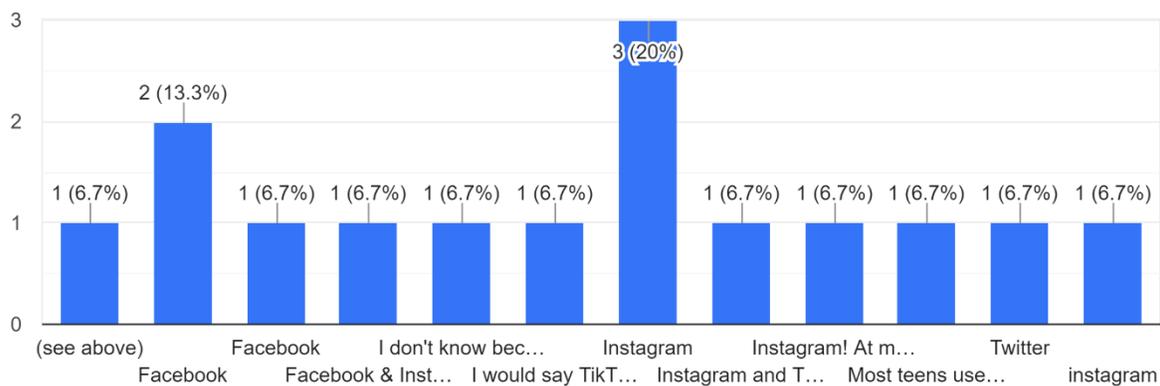
What social media platforms do you use on a regular basis?

14 responses



What social media should the LIBRARY use to tell you about upcoming teen programs?

15 responses



What mistakes do adults sometimes make when promoting and teen events? Help us NOT do that!

12 responses

- Topics of the events
- trying to use teen "talk" i.e. sheesh bussin
- attempting to use teen language: (sneesh, etc...)
- Memes and trends change rapidly and by the time adults know of them they're outdated. Follow younger social circles to stay in the know.
- they use the wrong platforms
- Appeal to large audiences - LGBTQ+, BIPOC, etc. Also, do promos w/plants! We LOVE them!
- make it too cringey

- A few mistakes adults can sometimes make when promoting an event is waiting too long or not giving enough time for everyone to sign up who is interested.
- Some of the programs seem too young
- I think most adults assume that most teens (and tweens) these days use social media, when many don't. If you're looking for suggestions having a bulletin board with events or making flyers are (in my opinion) good ideas.
- I don't know
- Uh, sometimes the events sound boring, along cute posters are nice. Cool fonts. Free candy is always appetizing.

Before we throw a bunch of our ideas at you, what are you looking for from your library? Anything you'd love to see happen that we have or haven't done yet? Like events, collections (even besides books!), services for teens?

12 responses

- Knowing log-ins to the applications.
- Japanese and Korean culture are becoming hugely relevant everywhere. Most people I know now like animal, manga, or manhwa (Korean comics)
- bone collections and crystal mining
- Just making the library a space where teens can enjoy themselves. Ex. Having events that many people would be interested in.
- LGBTQ+ sections, can borrow headphones, more manga
- just a place to hang out and have fun
- Teen book discussions groups, coming up with your own book discussion questions and share them with the rest of the group talking about who was your favorite character parts of the book you would change or possibly create an ending of your own. Monthly crafts for teens, painting Do it Yourself crafts. make your own jewelry journaling secession's write your own poetry research information about your favorite author
- I'm not sure
- More activities and crafts
- I would love (love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love!!!! :)) to have a YA book club at the library.
- more crafts more movies and books
- Hmm. I'd like a book club, just cuz I like ranting about books sometimes ;P I like the color display y'all have. Maybe have different types of books on display (genres)

Please check off all the below teen programs you'd be interested in happening at the library

16 responses

