

SOUTHWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2019-2023

**Southwick Public Library
95 Feeding Hills Road**

Southwick, MA 01077 (413) 569-1221

www.southwickma.org/library

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Approval by the Board of Library Trustees

The Southwick Board of Library Trustees accepted and adopted this 5-Year Strategic Plan FY 2019-2022 on October 9, 2018.

Notification of acceptance from the M.B.L.C. received on November 23, 2018.

2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The library would like to thank the members of our Strategic Planning Committee for their time and thoughtful input in developing this 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Michael McMahon (Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee & Chairman of the Library Board of Trustees and head of the town's Economic Development Commission)

Jacklyn Hart (Former Young Adult Librarian and current Assistant Director of the Southwick Public Library)

Nancy Zdun (Former Trustee and current President of the Friends of the Southwick Public Library)

Bonnie Nadeau (Active member of the Friends of the Southwick Public Library and frequent Library User)

Donna Rollins (Librarian at Westfield Technical Academy and frequent library user)

Lynette Buley (Frequent library user who often attends library programs)

We would also like to thank Kristi Chadwick from M.L.S. for facilitating our first meeting by explaining the process and helping us with the S.O.A.R. exercise.

Also, Diane Caruso, Director of the Southwick Public Library who made arrangements for all meetings and attending the meetings.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN –

Thank you for reading or scanning this new Strategic Plan. The library develops a new report covering a multi-year period. Each year, the library conducts a customer (patron) survey asking what is done right, what needs work and what else can the library do. For this Strategic Plan the 2017 and 2018 survey results were used. The library is used by the public about 40,000 times per year. As you know a public library is more than hard bound and paperback books. The public has access to thousands of electronic books, CD's and many other items. You can access newspaper and periodicals at no cost 24/7.

The library is available because of library employees, trustees, the Strategic Planning Committee, volunteers, Town Hall, the Select Board and residents. We also thank the State of Mass. and the legislature for fiscal support.

As Southwick continues to grow, the library will expand services, hours and more; subject to the resources (staffing, funding) being available.

3.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Southwick Public Library is to reach out to the community at large by offering a welcoming, safe, and comfortable environment, highlighting business and career development opportunities and lifelong learning.

METHODOLOGY

The Library Board of Trustees in February 2018 discussed the need to develop a new Five Year Strategic Plan. Members of the committee were appointed at the meeting. Diane Caruso, the Library Director, informed the Trustees she was scheduled to attend a workshop on Strategic Planning on March 13th. Unfortunately, a few weeks later the workshop was canceled due to low enrollment.

Kristi Chadwick, M.L.S., was contacted concerning facilitating the first committee meeting. Chadwick explained the three-meeting process and led the committee through a SOAR exercise to determine the library's strengths, opportunities, attributes and results. The results may be found in the Appendix. At this meeting, the committee members were given a copy of *Strategic Planning for Results* by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association, 2008. They also received a copy of the library's current strategic plan, and copies of Forbes Library's and Emily Williston Memorial Library and Museum's 2019-2022 Strategic Plans.

At the second meeting, the committee was presented with copies of the results of the SOAR exercise and copies of the 2017 & 2018 survey. In 2018, in addition to having the survey online and handing them out at the library, two committee members handed surveys out at the Annual Town Meeting. Staff members also spoke to members of the community gathering information on their thoughts concerning the library.

After reviewing the information, the committee discussed the former plan's Service Responses and what the library should concentrate on in the future. It was decided that the plan would focus on Business and Career Information, being a Community Hub with a comfortable and safe environment and Lifelong Learning. The prior plan included Current Topics & Titles and General Information. The committee felt that these areas should be included in the Lifelong Learning area and didn't need to be separate.

The third meeting was held and at that time the Director presented goals and objectives along with possible activities for the three Service Responses. A few additions were made. The group also developed a Mission Statement for the library. Assignments were made to write different sections of the Strategic Plan and to share their sections with the other committee members. The final plan would be put together by the Chairman of the committee.

4.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Community Profile

Southwick is a community incorporated in 1770 after having separated itself from nearby communities in two states. Southwick in the 1700's and 1800's was a farming community especially tobacco and ice. Southwick is located 12 miles west of Springfield and 20 miles north of Hartford (CT.) and has become a bedroom community for the greater Springfield and Hartford areas. The town had a population of 9,502 in 2010 according to the U.S. Census Bureau and an estimated 9,758 in 2017. Again, according to the Census Bureau some thirty-five percent of adults over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher. Family income is estimated at more than \$ 76,000 in town. . Southwick has more than 350 small businesses and is home to multiple small manufacturers employing several hundred people. The town is on the Connecticut border, and 12 miles from Bradley International Airport (BDL). It is also within 20 minutes the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) and I-91 (New Haven to Canada). U.S Route 202 and State Route 10 is the principal north-south road in town. Southwick serves the recreational needs of the area with the Congamond Lakes, two 18-hole golf courses and one par 3 facility. The town also has two seasonal campgrounds. Southwick has been home to a motocross track for several decades which brings people to the area during the summer months. In addition, the town has a six- mile paved rail trail connecting with Westfield to the north and more than 20 miles of rail trail to the south in Connecticut. In 2018 two residential single-family housing developments are under construction totaling 100 new homes.

LIBRARY DESCRIPTION

Southwick Public Library – Overview

The Southwick Public Library is a 12,000 square foot building and houses an Adult Library, the William A. Laporte Art Gallery, a Young Adult Section, a Children's Library, a Community Room, Restrooms and a Staff Room. The parking lot has spaces for 33 vehicles. The building is all on one floor and fully handicapped accessible. The library is a recipient of the Paul Winske Access Award given by the Stavros Center for Independent Living.

Programs for adults and children, including young adults (YA) are offered on a regular basis. The library held a total of 212 programs in F/Y 2018 (108 children's, 48 YA and 56 adult programs). The children's programs had a total attendance of 2,250, YA program attendance was 718 and adult program attendance was 1,310.

5.

The Southwick Public Library personnel consist of a full-time Director, a full-time Assistant Director, one employee serving as a Reference/Young Adult librarian and seven part-time Staff including Reference, Children and Circulation experts. All library employees with the exception of the Director and the Assistant Director are now members of a union. The staff first met with the union officials in early 2014. The first contract was signed on July 1, 2015. The union employees just finished negotiating their second 3-year contract with the town. One Children's Librarian works 22 ½ hours and receives benefits. The Young Adult Librarian works 37 ½ hours in a position comprised of two part-time jobs (Young Adult Librarian and Children's Librarian with a few Reference Librarian hours added) and receives all town benefits. The balance of the staff are part-time employees (18 hours per week generally) and are provided with no town benefits (vacation, holidays or sick time). The library also has five adult volunteers who help with processing, one adult volunteer who oversees the art gallery, and two volunteers who deliver books for our Books on the Go program. During the school year, the Young Adult Librarian oversees a Teen Volunteer Program. The teens help with shelving materials.

The library is located on a large parcel of land situated on Route 57 (Feeding Hills Road), a main thoroughfare and a crossroads area which leads to Agawam, Westfield, and Granby, CT. The library is also adjacent to, and within walking distance of, the Southwick- Tolland- Granville Regional School District's three schools which include Woodland Elementary School, Powder Mill Middle School, and Southwick Regional School. Therefore, large numbers of school age youngsters are attracted to the library. Offering the students a comfortable, safe place and a wide variety of programs, services and materials is an objective of this plan. The Southwick Industrial Park is located across the street from the library. Another objective of this plan is to offer support to businesses, not only in the Southwick Industrial Park, but throughout town, to those who are interested in starting businesses including homebased enterprises and to those starting or changing their careers. This objective will assist people who are just graduating from high school as well as those who are currently employed or unemployed.

The first public library was built in 1892 and served the town until 1999 when the current facility was opened. The current building is a one story handicapped accessible facility with 33 free parking spaces on Route 57 (Feeding Hills Road).

The building is open six days per week except during the summer when it is open 5 days per week. It houses seven public computers with internet access. Free Wi-Fi is available inside and outside the building which includes 24/7 access in the parking lot. The library became a fully operating C/W MARS library in 2014 thus reaching a goal set in our prior 5-Year Strategic Plan.

The library is a municipal department of the Town of Southwick and governed by six library trustees. The trustees are elected by town voters and each trustee serves a three-year term. The Library Director is appointed by and directly responsible to the Board of Library Trustees, and is an employee of the Town of Southwick.

6.

The majority of the funding for the Southwick Public Library comes from the Town of Southwick. The library also receives money from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. In addition, the library obtains funding through grants including those from the Southwick Cultural Council, Shurtleff Children's Services, Inc. and Sarah Gillett Services for the Elderly, Inc.). Also, our Friends of the Southwick Public Library group is hardworking and has supplied funding for programs, furniture and materials.

Southwick Public Library by the Numbers

The following data are from the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) as of June 30, 2018:

Holdings: 120,000

Circulation: 46,405

Interlibrary loans received from other libraries: 3,681

Inerlibrary loans provided to other libraries: 11,984

Total visitors: 39, 518

Total hours open: 2,132

Total registered borrowers: 3,531

Total number of reference transactions: 2,250

Challenges & Patrons' Needs

Town Growth:

The town of Southwick is heading in the direction of no longer being classified as a small library. There is one major housing project starting in town and another smaller project of residential houses being built. It is likely that the town will reach a population of 10,000 within the next few years.

Results:

1. The library will no longer receive a SLIN grant.
2. The next library director will need to have an M.L.S.

Library Building:

After nearly twenty years in our current, larger building, our patrons and staff have pointed out areas that need change/improvement.

Results:

1. The library needs an area for quiet study. Due to the high ceilings in sections of the building, sound carries much further than anticipated by staff and library users.
2. The current young adult area is part of the main room of the library which also includes the adult area. Ideally, the young adult area should be enclosed and made into its own room.
3. The restrooms should have baby changing stations
4. It is hard to provide customer service in certain areas of the library that aren't visible to staff. The Young Adult Librarian provides coverage for the Children's Room when the Children's Room staff is not scheduled/on vacation or they are conducting programs. Though the Young Adult Librarian is seated near the entrance to the Children's Room, if she/he are away from their desk helping other patrons it is possible that they aren't aware that patrons are in the Children's Room and may need help.

Programming

The library offers numerous programs and the library has steadily increased the amount of programming it offers but there are ranges where we don't have programming or need to increase offerings.

1. The library does not currently have any programs specifically for our youngest patrons and their parents. Our current story time programs start for those aged three and up.
- 8.

The library does offer programming for students here at the library after school. The School Choice students tend to be at the library for three or more hours waiting to be picked up. Also, students who are involved with sports often come to the library to wait for rides home. The library needs to be able to provide more after-school programming and have staff available to run the programs.

Staffing:

1. The library wants to convert the 22 ½ hour Children’s Librarian position to a full-time 37 ½ hour position.
2. The library currently has only an 18 hour a week Reference Librarian, but the library is open 44 hours per week. The Young Adult Librarian is asked to cover the Reference Desk the balance of the time. We need at least another 18 hour per week Reference Librarian position.
3. Patrons are asking for the library to be open more than 44 hours per week. This would mean increasing our staff because everyone is already working the maximum number of hours the town has approved.

SERVICE RESPONSES AND GOALS & OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY HUB/CENTER – PROVIDE A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

Based on our S.O.A.R. exercise and comments from our annual survey, the library staff is well liked. Some survey comments include:

“Great place Nice people!” “I love the cheerful light & welcoming space of the interior-it feels like a peaceful space, and your staff are wonderful” “The staff is top shelf in terms of professionalism and human relations skills” “Well-informed & courteous staff” In answer to the survey question, “What do you like best about the library?” 76.64% selected staff responsiveness as one of their answers.

When asked how often you visit the library 57.01% respondents answered once to two or more times each week and 28.97% answered once every two to three weeks.

There are areas where we can improve and make the library a place that patrons will visit more often and stay longer. We want the library to be safe, welcoming and comfortable. We currently don’t have any quiet study areas. Currently, all we offer is a pair of ear plugs. We need to explore ways to carve out a quiet area for these patrons.

9.

In the former library, the YA section was in a corner and consisted of two book shelves and no table or seating. When the current library first opened, the teens were always in the teen area amid the many shelves, using the tables and seating. The library has added more shelving units in the main room which has created pockets that are hidden away. These areas are where the teens tend to go. We would like to enclose the teen area to make it a room instead of a section of the main room. Also, if we increased the hours of the Reference Librarian position it would make the YA Librarian available to provide more activities for the teens after school. By adding more comfortable seating in this area, teens might be more attracted to spending time there.

The library wants to add cameras to our space to improve our customer service abilities and to make the library safer for all. The cameras will give us the ability to be aware of patrons in blind spots of the library and offer them help if needed. This will also make it easier for the staff to spot any bullying that may be going on.

We learned from our survey the types of programs people are looking for: 35.5% were looking for hands on craft/art workshops; 30.24% historical programs; 29.91% gardening programs and 28.04% music programs. Also mentioned were travel programs, computer use, theater, and creative writing.

Goal 1: To provide a safe, comfortable and welcoming place for all our library users.

Objective: Improve the ability for the staff to make sure our patrons are safe.

- Activity: Install cameras in the library to help the staff to see what is happening in areas of the library that aren't visible.
- Activity: Receive training from the local police department in case of an aggressive and/or armed intruder.
- Activity: Create Grab and Go Bags for the Children's Room, the Community Room and the Main/YA areas of the library.

Objective: To make the Young Adult area a space the teens will want to use.

- Activity: Explore ways the Young Adult area may be rearranged, so comfortable seating may be added to the area.
- Activity: Provide new self-directed activities in the YA area in addition to our current coloring pages and chess/checkers.
- Activity: Explore ways to enclose the YA section off from the Main Room of the library.
- Activity: Maintain a vibrant YA collection.

Objective: To maintain an inviting Children's Room

- Activity: Work on decluttering the Children's Room by storing some of the items in the area and rotating different equipment throughout the year.
- Activity: Use the cameras that will be installed to provide better customer service in the Children's Room when there isn't staff available in the room (at lunch, running programs in the Community Room).

Objective: To provide a quiet area in the Main Room of the library.

- Activity: Explore ways to provide a quiet area for individuals and small groups.

Objective: To make other areas of the library more usable.

- Activity: Install baby changing stations in the two restrooms and have a feminine hygiene dispenser.
- Activity: Explore ways to use the library's outside space (ex: picnic tables, outdoor movie equipment).

Goal 2: To encourage the use of the Library's Community Room by outside groups.

- Activity: Promote the use of the library to outside groups and contact groups that have used the Community Room in the past.
- Activity: Provide updated or new technology in the Community Room (i.e. assisted listening system)
- Activity: Increase the hours the library is open in the evenings, which would make it more convenient for groups to meet at the library.
- Activity: Explore how senior citizen groups might use the Community Room during the day.

Goal 3: To provide a vibrant collection to meet the needs of our community and make the collection accessible to all members of the community.

- Activity: Promote and make more visible our "Recommend to Purchase" forms.
- Activity: Promote the library's "Books on the Go" program to the community's residents that are unable to use the library due to short or long-term illness or disability issues.
- Activity: Review and select materials for all collections to meet our users' needs based on professional reviews and requests. Actively weed the collection and ensure that information is current.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SUPPORT BUSINESS & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The library is situated almost across the street from the Southwick Industrial Park and has a relationship with the town's Economic Development Commission. As the town grows there is an anticipated need for more businesses and jobs.

During the economic downturn, the library had an increase in patrons who were trying to conduct job searches with little or no computer skills. We also saw people who had only held one job for many years and were suddenly unemployed. They had no idea how to conduct a job search. We also deal with people who are interested in starting a home-based business. Though the economy has improved, the library is still seeing patrons looking for their first job and those looking to change careers.

Goal 1: Promote our Business Center.

Objective: Make the community aware of the resources the library has available in the Business Center.

- Activity: Have a series of articles in the local newspaper which promote the different business resources available in the library.
- Activity: Include in the monthly newsletter any new items that have been added to the Business Center collection.
- Activity: Work with the town's Economic Development Committee to promote the business center.
- Activity: Provide specific business resource links on the library's webpage.
- Activity: Develop a Business Center brochure that may be distributed to local businesses and patrons.
- Activity: Participate in the local Business Show.

Goal 2: To have a Business Center that provides the information current and future business owners/managers need.

Objective: Have a Business Center that is current and covers up-to-date topics.

- Activity: Develop the Business Collection to include current materials on marketing, accounting, starting a business, employee rights, human resources, home-based businesses, human resources, start and technology.

Objective: Maintain our subscription to Career & Job Accelerator (or something similar) and explore other online resources.

- Activity: Offer special programs that will be of interest to business owners using our online resources.

Objective: Educate staff on the resources that are available

- Activity: Provide information about our current online business related resources and seek out online webinars.
- Activity: Encourage staff to use the online resources themselves and become familiar with them.

Goal 3: Provide information on careers

Objective: To help people conducting job searches.

- Activity: Provide one-on-one training for those not familiar with using a computer, so they may submit online job applications.
- Activity: Provide resources to help patrons with creating resumes, practicing interviewing skills and writing cover letters. This includes making them aware of the different areas of the online resource Career and Job Accelerator.
- Activity: Encourage patrons to use Learning Express which provides test prep for HISET (High School Equivalency), SAT (College Aptitude) and various career certifications.
- Activity: Provide information on MassHire Springfield or MassHire Holyoke and the services they offer.

SATISFY CURIOSITY/LIFELONG LEARNING

Our prior 5-Year Plan included Service Responses for Current Topics and Titles and General Information. The Strategic Planning Committee felt that both of these responses could be accomplished under the Service Response: Satisfy Curiosity/Lifelong Learning because Lifelong Learning offered more opportunities for our patrons.

Goal #1: To provide programs of interest for all age groups that have educational and cultural value

Infants & Preschoolers

Objective: Promote the importance of early literacy.

- Activity: Start a *Baby & Me* program that meets twice a month.
- Activity: Update and promote more aggressively our Welcome Baby packets.
- Activity: Continue our three-session story times for 2-5 year-olds and incorporate more music into the program.
- Activity: Work with Pathways for Parents to bring in other programs in addition to our Story Time Yoga program.

Objective: To provide creative, educational and hands-on programs.

School Age K-6th Grade

- Activity: Hold monthly Makerspace programs around a theme (engineering for example).
- Activity: Incorporate items like Little Bits into our two block building programs.
- Activity: Introduce coding activities in our programming.
- Activity: Hold two book discussions in support of the schools' required reading program.
- Activity: Invite the Kindergarten classes to a special introduction to the library program.

Young Adults

- Activity: Expand our Teen Lounge Program to at least twice a month and offer creative, hands-on activities that are fun!
- Activity: Resurrect our Teen Anime Club.
- Activity: Have S.P.L.A.T. (Southwick Public Library Advisory Teens) become more involved in planning and facilitating activities for children and teens.
- Activity: Use our animation software and video camera to create promotional material for our webpage and library programs.

Adults

Objective: Provide programs that support our patrons' interests in gardening, the arts, genealogy, science and aging.

- Activity: Offer programs concerning retirement, Medicare, Social Security, etc.
- Activity: Offer writing workshops.
- Activity: Offer one-on-one training on downloading eBooks and other apps on hand-held devices.

Goal #2: To endeavor to be aware of current and future technology resources for our collection

- Activity: Research the addition of downloadable/streaming music and movies to our collection.
- Activity: Provide new technology training to the library staff who will then offer instruction to our patrons.
- Activity: Maintain a regular computer replacement program

Goal #3: To strengthen current and seek out new partnerships with organizations in Southwick

- Activity: Find additional ways to collaborate with the Southwick Historical Society
- Activity: Expand our relationship with the Regional School District beyond our individual library and school summer reading programs and our Kindergarten class visits.
- Activity: Seek out new potential partners in the community

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

Southwick Public Library

SOAR Exercise

April 23, 2018

Strengths

Staff – “small town” feel, dedicated
Southwick is lucky to have the library
Good, diverse programming
Internet and Wi-Fi
Gets MAR from town
Children’s Room
Strong popular materials – bestsellers
Interlibrary loan
Excellent YA collection
Accessible to variety of people and needs
Handicapped accessible
Meeting place for other organizations – DCF/foster care
Adequate parking
Summer reading program
Programs/activities
Able to meet other people
Balanced intergenerational programs
Strong teen librarians
Staff sets the pace
Friends of the Library are supportive
Good use of technology – social media
Email reminders for activities
Clean and bright facility

Opportunities

Location – after-school kids
Work with teens – pent up energy
YA librarians have been leaving
No after-school programming in area
Helping patrons with technology
Advocating to Town officials who do not use library
Reaching single/no kids Millennials
Marketing digital resources and non-traditional collections
Place to socialize
Interactive programs
More money
Changing perception of library
Delivery/van service from outlying facilities

Aspirations

Separate YA area
Makerspace with tile and sink
Café
More technology including lendable items
Lots of people – community space
More staff
More funding
Professional development budget
Community room
Self-checkout
Larger collection
No longer a “small library” – population almost over 10,000
RFID
Larger meeting room
More storage
More art – gallery space
Lending instruments/Library of Things
Inclusive space
Activity space for active participants
3D printer
Quiet study space

Results

Lots of people in the library

Tons of activities

Excited and involved teen population

Parents interacting with children

Connections with community and schools

Fully staffed library – more FT staff

Reaching more people with message that library is the “go-to” place

Higher circulation

Enough parking when there are school events

Collection in tune with community

Plan for expansion

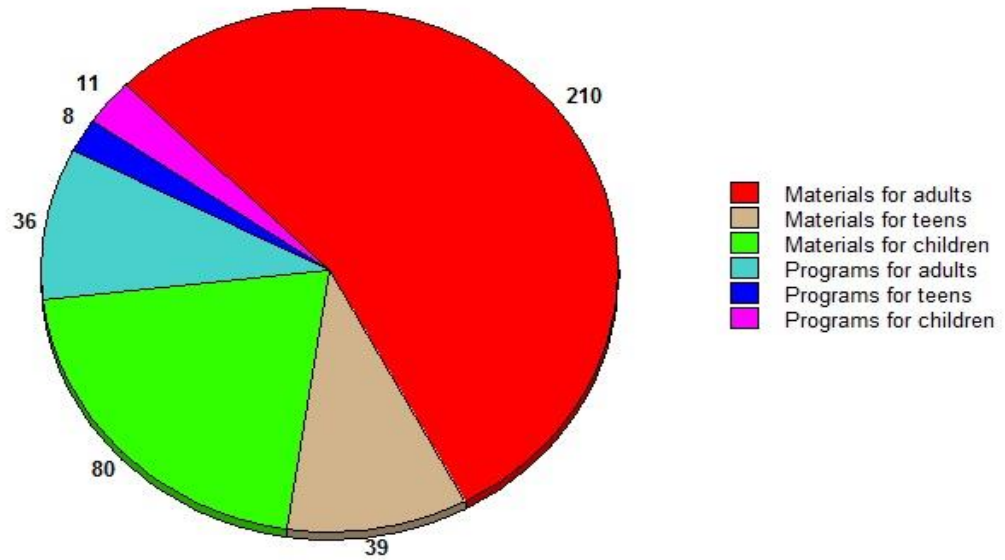
Satellite campus for continuing education

International profile (in Library Journal)

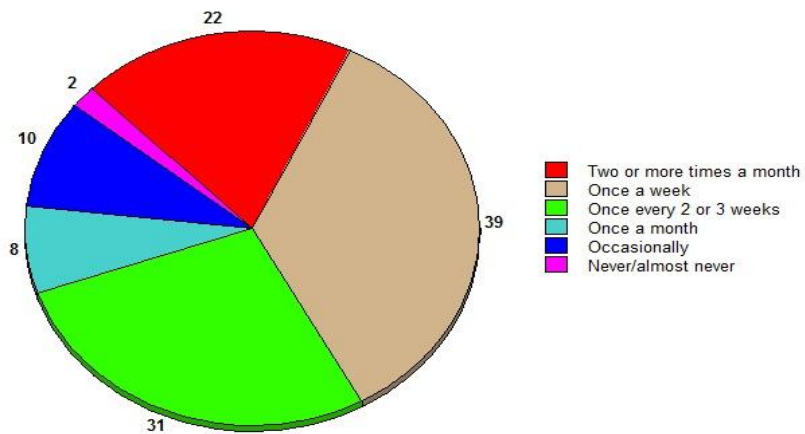
Investment from businesses

PATRON SURVEY RESULTS

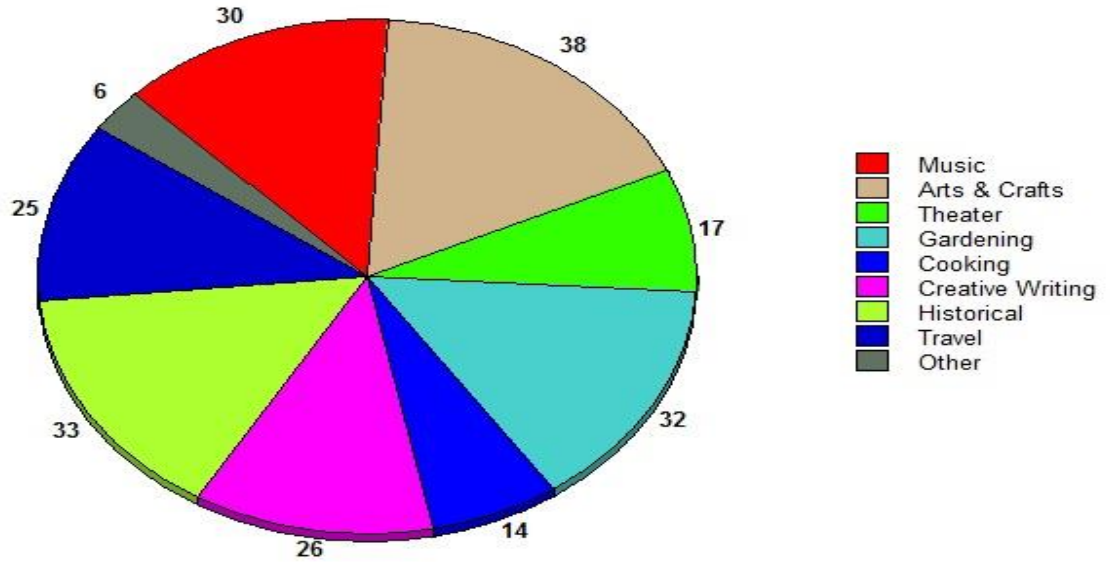
What specific library materials or services do you use?



How often do you visit the library?

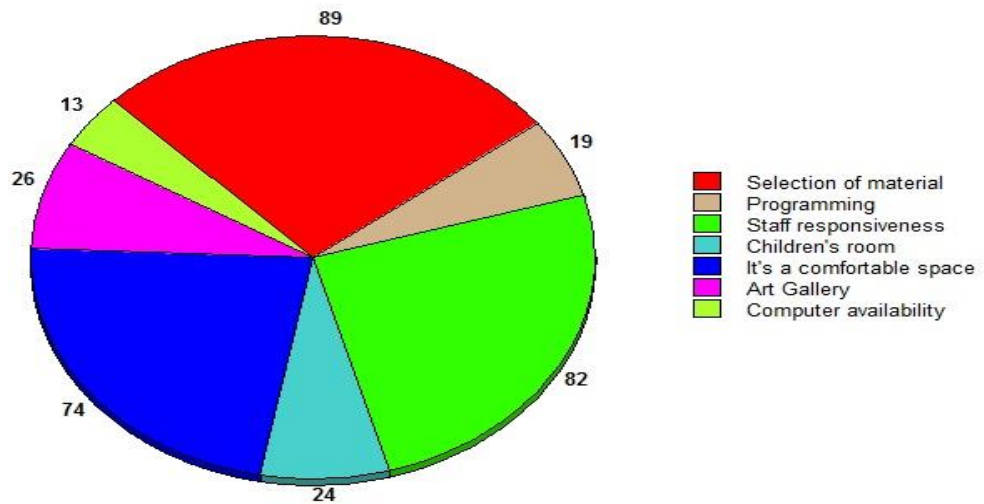


What kind of events would you attend?

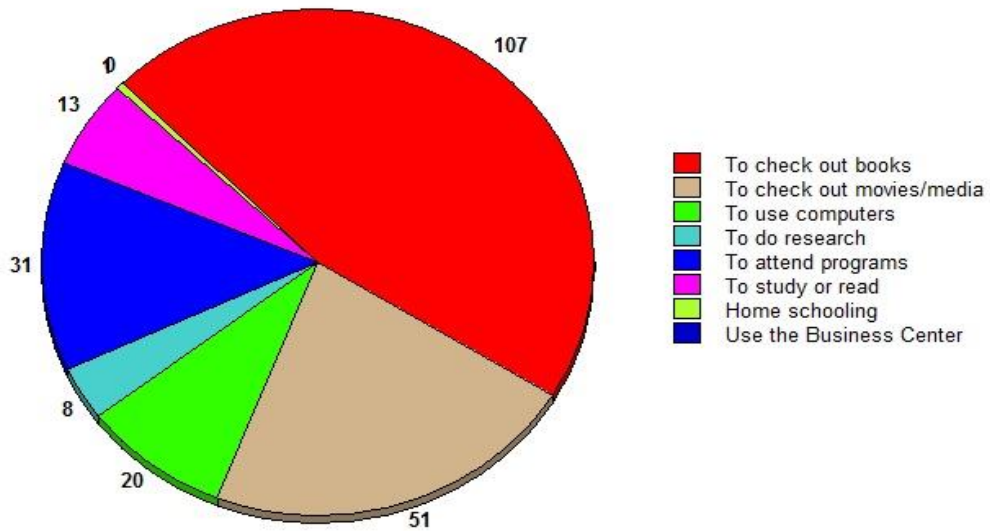


THE ABOVE QUESTION WAS FOR ADULT PROGRAMMING

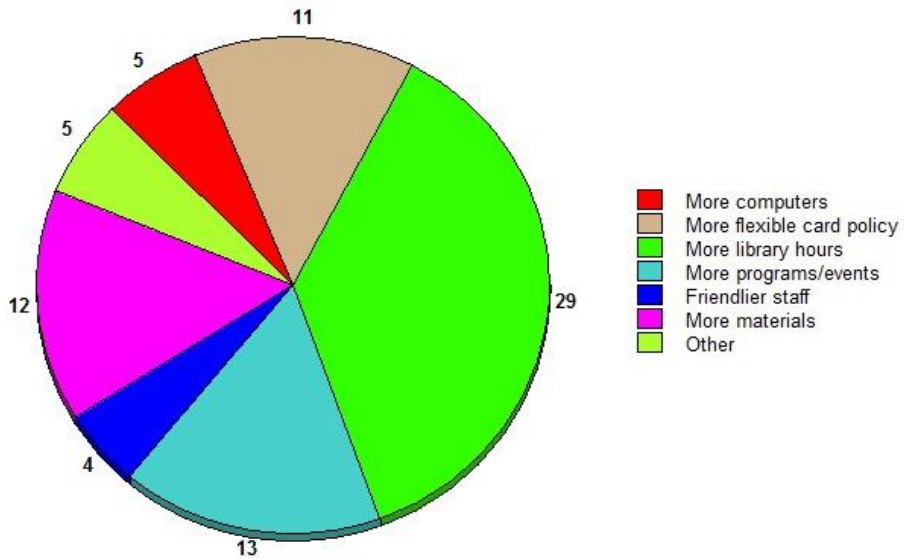
What do you like best about the library



Why do you use the Southwick Public Library?



What would bring you to the library more frequently?



Southwick Public Library Survey Results – Further Questions

Have you ever:

- Suggested an addition to the collection? Yes (30); No (78)
- Participated in the Summer Reading Program? Adults (19); Young Adults (10); Children (16)
- Asked a reference question? In person (72); By phone (15); By e-mail (2)
- Used community info/services available at the library? Brochures, etc. (33); Tax forms (17); Read notices of events on the computer at the Circulation Desk (20)
- Used the Community Room? For group meetings (3); Attend programs (29)
- Visit the Art Gallery? Yes (39); No (20)
- Checked out a museum pass? Springfield Museums (20); Norman Rockwell Museum (15); Eric Carle Museum (4); Amelia Park Children's Museum (6); Mass. State Parks Pass (19); Mystic Aquarium (8); CT Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center (5)

How do you use:

- Our computers? For internet access (26); For writing papers, letters, or general purpose (10); Job Search (5)
- Online resources? View the library's collection (16); Databases (4)
- Other equipment? Copier (31); Typewriter (5); Wheelchair (0); Magna Reader (0)

How do you hear about upcoming library programs and events? Library website (15); Library newsletter (34); Flyers/Posters (31); Channel 15 (4); Word of mouth (10); Local newspapers (37)

Do you know the library has social media accounts? Yes (38); No (51)

- Which sites have you visited? Facebook (25); Instagram (4); Twitter (2); Teen BlogSpot (1)

How valuable is the library to the community? Very valuable (86); Valuable (15); Some value (1); Little Value (0)

Are you a Southwick resident? Yes (71); No (30)

Age: 12-18 (9); 18-25 (2); 26-40 (5); 41-60 (30); 61-75 (42); Over 75 (10)

Gender: Male (22); Female (76)

Do you have children living with you? Yes (20); No (79)

21.