

DICKINSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Northfield, MA

2025-2030 Strategic Plan



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

I am pleased to share with you the Dickinson Memorial Library Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. I have asked for opinions and help with creating this plan for the Library, and am proud of the results.

A strategic plan is a living document that serves as a management tool for the Library. Through this process we have been able to gather opinions from our community through a community-wide survey, individual interviews with town leaders, and two focus groups (one adult and one teen). We then used that data to create goals for the next five years. The plan creates a sense of purpose and direction for Library staff and Trustees. Just as I have been using Dickinson Memorial Library's previous strategic plan, I will use this plan to guide my goals and decision making. We hope this plan also presents a way to communicate with the community. It lets you know what the library administration is working towards and how it will benefit Northfield.

In the following pages you will find the five needs that showed up the most in our collected data, both quantitative and qualitative. These five needs are also chosen based on what is possible in our community and what we feel fits into the library landscape at large. Each identified need has three corresponding goals that will help us meet those needs. Each year, an annual action plan will be created from this long-range plan, and I will share these documents with you along the way. The Library belongs to our community, and if you have the interest to see what my goals are for the coming year, I want that information to be available to you. The Library would not exist without its wonderful community.

Thanks for reading and caring about YOUR Dickinson Memorial Library,
Misha Storm
Library Director

FOSTER COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Northfield is looking for community connections, both social and through more town and organizational communication. "Community" was mentioned 31 times in answers about our strengths, but an ask for more community and communication showed up 21 times in our weaknesses. This shows we are doing well, but people need more.

In our group discussion about our town as a whole, communication was a big theme. The Library is looking for ways to help with that in the next five years.

Goal 1: Provide space and opportunities for social and community interactions.

Goal 2: Foster a welcoming and friendly space for all.

Goal 3: Be a place that people look for town communications and build relationships with other town departments.



SUPPORT OUR STAFF

From our collection of data, one theme floated to the top again and again. The staff was mentioned 170 times when the community was asked what the Library's greatest strength is. Our community loves our staff. We are lucky to have a great team at our Library. The staff is part of what makes our Library such a comfortable place to be and it is what helps our patrons receive the services that they need and want. It is important to keep it this way.

Goal 1: Maintain high staff morale in our service-focused environment.

Goal 2: Encourage professional development for staff.

Goal 3: Ensure staff salaries are comparable to salaries at similar libraries.



EXPAND OUR COLLECTIONS

The Library's collection was mentioned 57 times as a strength and 20 times as something that could use some improvement. Patrons want "more" of many different things. What they are looking for includes more diversity, more classics, a better teen collection, and more additions to our "Library of Things." Our local history collections are admired, and we plan to continue to give them context and allow them to be more accessible.

Goal 1: Meet our changing community needs by continuing to diversify our collection.

Goal 2: Build a teen collection that has something for a variety of reading tastes.

Goal 3: Protect our historical collections and improve access to local history.



PRIORITIZE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability rated highly in the goal-ranking section of our community survey, and this complements the goals of the Library community at large, the state, and many of our community members at home. We will be adding sustainable practices both in our day-to-day operations and in our larger building needs, and hope that we can be community leaders in this way.

Goal 1: Incorporate small but mighty practices in our supply purchasing and our day-to-day operations.

Goal 2: Provide programming and collections to support community members' sustainability goals.

Goal 3: Make sustainability a priority in all major building maintenance.



MAKE THE MOST OF OUR BUILDING

Our community is lucky to have a large and accessible historic building in a town our size, but that doesn't mean there cannot be a desire for more. "Space" was the top response to our questions about room for improvement. On the other hand, 60 people said our building and atmosphere are our greatest strength. While we cannot build a new addition, we can make the most of the space that we have in our beautiful building and preserve the historic and cozy atmosphere that people love.

Goal 1: Protect our historic building by implementing a proactive maintenance plan.

Goal 2: Improve our teen space, creating an inviting and safe space for young people to gather.

Goal 3: Find flexibility in our current spaces for our growing program attendance and need for study and remote work.

