

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Letter from The Goffstown Public Library Board of Trustees

The Goffstown Public Library is an essential part of our town, providing access to information, fostering lifelong learning, and promoting cultural enrichment. The Trustees and Library staff know that our library must adapt to meeting the changing needs of the town while remaining committed to the core values of accessibility, inclusivity, and innovation.

This strategic plan outlines the Library's vision for the future. It sets forth clear goals and actionable strategies to enhance services, leverage technology, and strengthen community engagement. Through thoughtful planning and collaboration, we plan to create an environment where knowledge is readily available, resources are efficiently managed, and patrons are empowered to explore, discover, and succeed.

By aligning our mission with emerging trends and community priorities, this plan ensures the Library remains a relevant, dynamic resource for everyone.

January 21, 2026

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

History of the Goffstown Public Library

The Goffstown Public Library's story began in 1888 with the establishment of the Rogers Free Public Library. Lucy Rogers donated the founding collection of 150 books, which was housed in the old town hall until 1907.

That year, construction began on land donated by Frank Parker. Designed by Fitchburg, Massachusetts, architect Henry Francis, the classical revival building was completed and dedicated in 1909. Initially known as the Goffstown Memorial Library, the north room still contains two large marble tablets honoring Goffstown residents who served in past wars. In 1910, the library was officially renamed the Goffstown Public Library. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

When the library was built, Goffstown's population was approximately 2,500. Today, the library serves a community of 18,577 residents (2020 census). As the community has grown, the library has expanded its hours and services to meet evolving needs. Programming serves all ages and includes workshops, activities, reading programs, and museum passes. Cardholders can borrow both print and digital materials and access subscriptions to genealogy, educational, and recreational databases. The library provides wi-fi and computer access for public use.

Through membership in the Greater Manchester Integrated Library Consortial System (GMILCS) consortium, cardholders can access resources from libraries throughout the region, including Amherst, Bedford, Derry, Hudson, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, Merrimack, Milford, Salem, Windham, and New England College.

Community Partnerships and Recognition

To support its expanding programming and services, the library partners with numerous community and civic organizations, including the Friends of the Goffstown Public Library, The Goffstown Public Library Foundation, Saint Anselm College Geisel Library, Goffstown Parks and Recreation Department, Goffstown Police Department, Goffstown Department of Public Works, the Goffstown Lions Club, the Main Street Program, the Goffstown Network Food Pantry, Goffstown Rotary Club, and the Goffstown Historical Society.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Community Partnerships and Recognition cont.

The library serves as a community hub, providing information and connections to local events such as Candidates' Night, Toys for Tots, Grow a Row, National Night Out, and personal item collections for the Goffstown Food Pantry. In 2019, the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association recognized the Goffstown Public Library as its Library of the Year.

The Challenge of Physical Space

One area that has not kept pace with the growth of the town or the services offered by the library: the building's physical footprint. The library collection was originally contained on one floor. As the collection, staff, and services have expanded, available space has been continuously repurposed to meet growing needs.

The unfinished basement was renovated to house the children's collection and provide space for children's programming. In 1997, an extension was added to accommodate an elevator, an emergency stairwell, and a circulation desk. Attic space was converted into reading and computer areas, a meeting room, and a staff workspace.

Despite these adaptations, the library still faces significant space constraints. There is only one public restroom, and staff continue to work in public areas of the building due to the lack of dedicated office space. These limitations affect the library's ability to fully serve the community's needs.

While this strategic plan does not include a specific goal to expand the library at this time, the Board of Trustees and staff remain committed to researching and planning for a future expansion. As the community continues to grow and evolve, addressing the library's space needs will be essential to ensuring we can continue to provide exceptional service for years to come.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

LIBRARY OF TODAY

Today, the Goffstown Public Library stands at the heart of our community as a trusted resource, gathering place, and champion of lifelong learning. More than a place to borrow books, the library has evolved into a multifaceted community center that connects residents with information, technology, cultural experiences, and each other. The library staff consists of six full-time and six part-time employees.

Collections & Access

Our collection has expanded far beyond the original 150 books donated in 1888. Residents now have access to thousands of print and digital materials, including books, audiobooks, e-books, magazines, DVDs, and streaming content, including movies, TV shows, and music. Through the GMILCS consortium, cardholders can request items from libraries across the region, exponentially expanding available resources.

Programming & Services

The library offers year-round programming for all ages:

- Early literacy programs and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities for children
- Teen programming developed with input from our Teen Advisory Board
- Adult programs, including book clubs, craft workshops, various lectures, and technology training
- Outreach programs, such as delivery to homebound residents
- Community initiatives like the Human Library, an event that lets participants “borrow” a person to hear their story, and a Candidates’ brochure and Candidates’ Night, an event that the Goffstown Public Library collaborates with the Goffstown Lions Club for voters to meet town candidates.

Special resources include museum passes (funded by the Friends of the Goffstown Public Library) to regional attractions, generously funded by the Friends of the Library, as well as a Seed Library for home gardeners, a Beyond Books collection to let community members borrow items like kits or equipment instead of buying them, and subscriptions to educational databases and language-learning platforms.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Library Of Today cont.

Technology & Information Access

Wi-Fi, public computers, printing services, and knowledgeable staff support ensure that all community members can access the digital world and find accurate information in an age of misinformation.

Community Partnerships

The library collaborates with numerous local organizations to extend its impact and better serve residents. Partners include schools, civic groups, cultural organizations, and social service agencies, creating a network of community support.

Commitment to the Future

Our dedicated staff is committed to innovation, accessibility, and responsive service as our community continues to grow and evolve.

Our Library mission and vision statement defines our purpose, guides decisions, and sets goals for the future while serving our community clearly and consistently.

Mission Statement

Goffstown Public Library provides access to quality materials, programs, and information in a welcoming environment led by skilled, knowledgeable staff who adapt to the changing needs of the community.

Vision Statement

To be a cornerstone of our community, ensuring equitable access to information and resources while providing a vital space for discovery, lifelong learning, and human connection.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan
2026-2029

Goffstown Public Library

CARDHOLDERS SERVED

7,152



2 High Street, Goffstown, NH 03045 603.497.2102
www.goffstownlibrary.com

2025



E-CONTENT
DOWNLOADS

30,397

102,491

TOTAL
CHECKOUTS



11,844

ITEMS LENT OUTSIDE
OUR LIBRARY

15,139

ITEMS BROUGHT IN BY REQUEST

42,081

VISITORS



9



FTE STAFF

MUSEUM PASSES
BORROWED



842



51 HOURS
EACH WEEK



2,215

PUBLIC COMPUTER SESSIONS



REFERENCE QUESTIONS

7,549



610

PROGRAMS OFFERED

11,106

PEOPLE ATTENDED



WEBSITE
VISITS



32,318

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY

Our methodology combines Trustee and staff SWOT analyses with community surveys and focus groups to inform clear, realistic, and responsive strategic priorities.

In December 2024, the committee facilitated a SWOT Analysis with the Board of Trustees and Goffstown Public Library staff.

Board of Trustees SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths**

The library's greatest strengths are its exceptional, creative staff and its role as a community hub offering programming for all ages, particularly children's and family programs. Trustees valued the extensive collection access through multiple platforms and innovative programming like Courageous Community Conversations.

- **Weaknesses**

Space limitations, including inadequate meeting rooms, program areas, and non-ADA-compliant restrooms, were the primary concern. Low community awareness of services limits the library's visibility.

- **Opportunities**

Trustees envisioned expanded spaces for meetings, maker spaces, and leadership in AI literacy, and combating misinformation. Aggressive outreach campaigns, targeted engagement with new residents, and creative programming partnerships could significantly boost patron engagement.

- **Threats**

Polarized politics, anti-library sentiment, and budget referendums resulting in default budgets pose the greatest threats to services and funding. Competition from commercial platforms, rising digital resource costs, and limited community understanding of the library's value create ongoing vulnerabilities.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Staff SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths**

Staff identified exceptional customer service, a wide range of programming for all ages, and comprehensive collections in multiple formats as key strengths. The library serves as a vital community hub with unique offerings like the Seed Library and museum passes, enhanced by GMILCS consortium membership for extensive resource sharing.

- **Weaknesses**

Extremely limited physical space was the overwhelming concern, impacting program hosting, collection expansion, quiet study areas, and children's spaces. Insufficient parking, lack of dedicated meeting rooms, budget constraints, and limited privacy for staff and patrons were also noted as significant challenges.

- **Opportunities**

Staff envisioned creating maker spaces with 3D printers and tools, expanding the Beyond Books collection, and offering AI literacy training. Additional opportunities include leveraging social media for outreach, enhancing multilingual resources, and creating more inclusive spaces as the community grows and demographics change.

- **Threats**

Book-banning movements, potential budget cuts, and growing anti-library sentiment pose significant threats. Competition from school activities affects attendance at teen programs. Private streaming platforms, online retailers, combined with a lack of public understanding about library services and value, create ongoing vulnerabilities for the library's support and funding.

Community Voices: Survey Results

From March 2025 through May 4, 2025, the committee conducted a public survey to gather community feedback. The survey asked respondents to identify what they would change about the Goffstown Public Library, what they appreciate most about the library, and to rate library services. The committee employed multiple strategies to maximize community participation in the survey.

Paper copies were distributed at polling locations in March 2025 and made available at the library throughout the survey period. The survey was also heavily promoted through the library's social media channels to reach a broad audience. The survey generated 377 responses.

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Survey Demographics

There was a relatively balanced representation between middle-aged adults (41-60) at 37.5% and seniors (61+) at 36.9%, with younger adults (18-40) constituting nearly a quarter (23.9%) of respondents. A majority of respondents (59.3%) are employed or self-employed, while over a quarter (28.8%) are retired, reflecting the significant senior population in the community. College degrees were prevalent across all age groups.

Focus Group- Teen Advisory Board

Recognizing that teens were underrepresented in the survey results despite being a vital library user group, the committee conducted a focus group with the Teen Advisory Board to ensure their voices were included in the planning process.

Summary of focus group:

They praised the library's book collection, activities, and comfortable teen space that allows them to socialize and "just chill." Popular programs include cooking events, D&D sessions, and Teen Advisory Board games.

Communication remains a challenge; not all teens have phones, and school announcements often go unnoticed. Most teens don't know what the library offers unless they're actively seeking it out. Participants suggested placing event posters outside the library for better visibility.

Strategic Planning Committee

Terry Curtis, Trustee
Judy Johnson, Trustee
Casey Leach, Trustee

Caroline Kenney, Head of Adult Services and Outreach
Stacey Desrosiers, Youth Services Librarian
Jen Wyman, Adult Services Librarian

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

I. Space Optimization and Flexible Use Environment

- A. **Objective:** Explore offering meeting space time for current library card holders, with the potential to open it up to other visitors (would involve policy & procedures)

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Explore ways to facilitate consistent meeting room times. Convene to discuss how we might practically offer a few hours of meeting room time to cardholders each month.

Participating Parties: Library Director

- b. Update policies and procedures to reflect the changes. Create policies and procedures to support meeting room offerings.

Participating Parties: Library Director and/or Trustees

- B. **Objective:** Explore and pilot creative approaches to further extend library access beyond current physical limits.

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Assess at least three potential community partnerships and/or alternate space opportunities.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- b. Test one new flexible service and/or outreach model within the strategic plan period.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- c. Research opportunities for a bookmobile or mobile workstation to be used for community outreach and programming.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

- C. **Objective:** Explore adding additional outdoor seating and amenities to expand usable space, encouraging outdoor library use.

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Explore grant opportunities quarterly for upgrading and enhancing outdoor space.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- b. Collaborate with community partners, such as community organizations and Town Departments.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

II. Community Engagement and Supportive Services

- A. **Objective:** Identify 2-3 new program opportunities for all ages and abilities

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Integrate the anniversary of the USA into the Community Conversations series, including community partners wherever possible, and collaborating across library departments.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- b. Winter Reading Program across all departments.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- c. Identify ways to enhance accessibility options for all programs, and communicate these opportunities through established library marketing channels.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

B. **Objective:** Expand accessibility within the collection

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Research best practices, methods, or approaches that are widely accepted as the most effective and reliable.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- b. Secure funding for accessibility aids, such as Wonderbooks (children’s books that combine a physical book with a preloaded audio narration), dyslexic font-friendly titles, headphones for sensory needs, etc.

**Participating Parties: Library Director, Head of Adult Services and Outreach,
and/or Head of Youth Services**

III. Digital Literacy and Enhanced User Experiences

A. **Objective:** Expand technology programs

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Offer technology programs at least two times per quarter.

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

- b. Cover a variety of technology topics (e.g., cybersecurity, social media, digital literacy, AI basics, including responsible use, smartphone instruction).

**Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach
and/or Head of Youth Services**

Goffstown Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2029

- B. **Objective:** Develop and improve wayfinding, the use of signage, layout, and visual cues to help people easily understand and navigate a space, to enhance the user experience

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Implement directional signage for the Fiction collection.

Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach

- b. Develop standardized signage.

Participating Parties: Library Director, Head of Adult Services and Outreach, and/or Head of Youth Services

- C. **Objective:** Strengthen Readers Advisory services for readers of all ages.

Measurable Goal or Activity:

- a. Offer advisory service of personalized reading recommendations for readers based on past titles and genres they have read and enjoyed.

Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach and/or Head of Youth Services

- b. Expand genre-specific recommendation lists on the library website for readers to peruse.

Participating Parties: Head of Adult Services and Outreach and/or Head of Youth Services