

PRINCE MEMORIAL LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025-FY2027

Prince Memorial Library serves both the towns of Cumberland and North Yarmouth, Maine, and has been a vital part of the community for over a century, originating as the First Social Library of Cumberland in 1821 and housed in private residences. The first public library was opened in 1923. The library has since undergone numerous expansions, including a 1959 addition, its transition to a town department in 1982, and a major expansion in 1987, all ensuring it remains a modern, accessible space.

The library is undertaking a strategic planning process to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the Cumberland and North Yarmouth communities. This process will help guide the library's future direction, prioritize resources, and enhance the library's role as a vital community hub. The library started the process in August 2024, launched a community survey in September and finalized their plan in February 2025. Special thank you to the members of the Strategic Planning Team: Jennifer Benham, Linda Draper, Robert Davidowitz, Madeline Grigg, Kelly Greenlee, Dale Hahn, Webb Long, Stacy Mazur, Dev Perrin, and Erica Swan.

Vision

Prince Memorial Library champions environmental, economic, and social responsibility, creating a welcoming space where everyone feels valued and contributes to a stronger, more connected community. We strive for every resident to have a library card and actively use our services.

Mission

We foster a spirit of curiosity to inspire and build a connected community.

Values

Connection – We are a vibrant hub that fosters collaboration, inclusivity, and thriving relationships.

Innovation – We prioritize excellent customer service and sustainability, blending traditional library practices with a creative mindset to stay adaptable.

Trust – We create an inclusive, welcoming space with a kind and friendly staff. We protect the right to privacy and uphold the right to read and access information freely.

Learning – As a vital and free resource, we offer learning opportunities for all ages. Our diverse collections and knowledgeable staff support curiosity and lifelong learning.

Enrichment – We provide opportunities for fun, meaningful connections across generations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FLEXIBLE SPACES

Goals

- Create quiet spaces that support focus and productivity.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability.
- Engage in deliberate assessment and planning for investing in the future of the library facility.

Initiatives

- Connect with vendors to analyze strategies for continued acoustics improvements.
- Adopt three new ways of being environmentally sustainable within the library facilities.
- Work with town administrations and the library expansion committee to collect and analyze data.

Possible Activities (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

- The Director will contact acoustics vendors by the end of FY25 to get updated recommendations and quote on the next stage of noise mitigation measures. For CIP consideration in FY26.
- An interdepartmental team of staff will meet in FY25 to brainstorm a list of possible activities the library can engage in related to environmental sustainability. A report of those activities will be reviewed by the Director by the end of FY26 for adoption.
- By the end of FY26, the Director, in coordination with the Town Council, Town Manager, Library Advisory Board, Cumberland Historical Society and the Library Expansion Committee, will identify the necessary next steps to analyze the financial requirements needed for improvement to the library facility.
- IN FY25, the Library Expansion Committee will investigate potential needs for fundraising for library facility improvements.
- Align financial and operational resources with strategic priorities to ensure long-term sustainability.

Potential Measures of Success

- User satisfaction reported for acoustical improvements.
- Usage data of spaces, including occupancy rates and frequency of use.
- Patron satisfaction reported on surveys focused on the functionality and accessibility of library spaces.
- Staff report usage and success of measures that have been implemented for environmental sustainability.
- A developed plan for fundraising and advocacy.

ENGAGE & CONNECT

Goals

- Weave the library's presence into the community.

Initiatives

- Deepen and expand community and municipal partnerships.
- Broaden the library's reach and recognition by expanding into places outside of the library's walls.
- Develop events and activities that resonate across all age groups.
- Promote stronger social connections in an effort to reduce isolation.

Possible Activities (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

- Staff will be placed into interdepartmental brainstorming teams by the end of the FY25 for completing a variety of Strategic Plan Goals.
- Brainstorm a list of new outreach locations, outreach events, and cross-generational events to be considered for implementation by the end of FY26.
- Advance public education and awareness efforts in FY26 to introduce and elevate the topic of social connection and disconnection among community members.
- By the end of FY26, work to foster a culture of connection in the broader community by highlighting examples of healthy social connection and leading by example.
- In the first year, determine a regular schedule for pop-up library services in communities that have low rates of library card ownership.
- Create an event survey and partnership evaluation by the end of FY26.

Potential Measures of Success

- Patrons report that events offered are inclusive of their cultural needs.
- Formal and informal evaluation provides feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of events.
- Number of partners and number of targeted partnerships renewed.
- Partnership evaluation shows increased connections with new partners and deepened connections with others.

TRUSTED & RESPONSIVE

Goals

- Foster inclusion and a sense of belonging.
- Offer reliable emergency services (wi-fi, power, heat, cooling).
- Incorporate environmental sustainability.

Initiatives

- Ensure the library building is welcoming and easy to use.
- Explore policy and procedures that would need to be adopted to designate the library as an emergency shelter.
- Explore activities that would make the library a more reliable place of shelter during weather events or power outages.
- Host new public events focused on environmental sustainability.

Possible Activities (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

- Review the safety and security of the library facility with relevant administrators, the Town Manager, and the CPD/CFD by FY 26.
- Review current hours of operation with relevant administration and staff by FY26.
- Learn more about community barriers to access (physical and virtual).
- The Director will review the current internet plan and seek quotes on fiber connectivity service for the library for inclusion in FY26.
- Starting in the first year, the Director will explore the necessary steps that would need to be taken for the library to be designated as an emergency shelter.
- Brainstorm a list of new environmental sustainability events to be considered for implementation by FY26.
- Support a diverse workforce where all employees are treated fairly.
- Provide consistent, transparent, high-quality communication at every level.
- Regularly evaluate library policies, procedures, staff pay and benefits with an equity lens.

Potential Measures of Success

- Increased understanding of patron demographics and usage patterns.
- Increased understanding of patron tech needs and uses.
- Increased cardholders and circulation.
- Patrons report feeling represented and engaged.
- Patrons report feeling welcome and comfortable.
- The library is more readily recognized as a key resource in the community.

LEARN & DISCOVER

Goals

- Serve as a neutral, reliable hub for civic discourse.
- Empower people with the skills needed to be information literate.
- Satisfy the depth and breadth of our community's curiosity.

Initiatives

- Host conversations and speakers that bridge differences of opinions.
- Expand digital collections to ensure broad accessibility.
- Curate a diverse collection of materials (books, periodicals, movies, Library of Things, etc.).

Possible Activities (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

- Brainstorm a list of new civic discourse events to be considered for implementation by FY 26.
- Regularly invite elected officials or candidates to visit the library.
- Identify events that would teach the skills of critical thinking and reflection required to be savvy consumers, producers, collaborators, and sharers of information by FY26.
- Investigate the cost of alternate vendors of digital materials.
- Conduct diversity audits to ensure the physical collection accurately represents the community's local and global cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Identify resources within the first year that highlight the community's past and present, that include a recognition of who we are, while accounting for marginalization, inequity, and racism.
- Staff train and engage in readers' advisory services within the first year.
- Annually cultivate a learning culture for staff through training, continued educational opportunities, and conference attendance.

Potential Measures of Success

- Number of social media posts related to issues of civic engagement.
- Number of programs and attendees at programs and events related to civic engagement.
- Patrons report that collections and programs offered are inclusive of their cultural needs.
- Increased community awareness and use of services.
- Patrons report increased awareness of and confidence using digital technology and resources.
- Staff report job satisfaction during annual reviews.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Service Area / Branch Location

Towns of North Yarmouth (4,702) and Cumberland (8,473)

Combined Population: 12,545 (2020 Decennial Census)

12,549 (ACS 2022 5-year)

ALL NUMBERS REPORTED ARE FOR FY2022-23

Hours of Operations

Tuesday-Thursday 9am-8pm

Friday-Saturday 9am-5pm

Weekly Operating Hours: 49 hours per week

Annual: 2,548 hours annual

Operating Revenue

Town of Cumberland: \$442,967

Town of North Yarmouth: \$190,155

Other Revenue: \$56,047

Total Revenue: \$689,169

Operating Expenditures

Salaries/Wages/Benefits: \$497,418

Collections: \$41,368

Other: \$94,336

Total Expenditures: \$633,122

Governing Type

Municipal/ Town Department

Advisory Board

Librarian Staff FTE

4.12 FTE

Friends Fund Balance / Expenses / Income

.\$39,326 / \$15,142 / \$21,600

FY2022-23 Adult Programs by the Numbers

Total Number of Programs: 391 (300 at PML; 73 Outreach Programs; 18 Virtual Programs)

Number of Adult Attendees: 4,526 (3,930 were in-person and 596 were virtual attendees)

Number of Multigenerational Program Attendees: 1,176

FY2022-23 Youth Programs by the Numbers

Total Number of Programs Offered: 648

Number of Children's Program Attendees: 6,306

Number of Teen Program Attendees: 846

Number of Teen Volunteer Hours: 140.5

2022 Summer Reading Program Participants: 351 Children; 272 Teens

Total Events: 1039

Total Attendance: 12,854

Total Staff FTE

6.37 FTE / 12 Employees total

Friends Budget / Support

Revenue \$38,581

Interlibrary Loans

524

FY2022-23 Circulation at a Glance

Circulation of PML Materials: 105,637

Physical materials: 93,274

Ebooks: 6,888

Digital Audiobooks: 5,352

Digital Movies: 123 (April – June 2023)

Number of Cardholders

Patrons: 6,571

Cumberland Residents: 4,621

No. Yarmouth Residents: 1,731

Elsewhere: 219

Items at PML: 53,105

In-person Visits: 54,257

Passports Processed: 886

Museum Passes Distributed: 22

SURVEY SUMMARY

Prince Memorial Library conducted a survey of Cumberland and North Yarmouth residents to better understand the needs of the local community. Survey invitations were shared via URL link as well as a QR code in a variety of electronic newsletters, personal email invitations, and in-person at a variety of events. Paper copies of the survey were also available at Prince Memorial Library, community farmers market, a newcomer's open house, polling locations, and at an active living event in Cumberland and North Yarmouth and were entered by library staff. One thousand and forty-two (1,042) participants completed the survey between September 23rd and November 26th, 2024.

The following figures display survey results including any demographic differences. Detailed tabular results may be found in Appendix A and Appendix B contains the survey instrument. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

Key Findings

Demographics

Most survey respondents are Cumberland or North Yarmouth residents. A small number of respondents (n=21) are residents of other towns or cities. The largest age group is 35-49, representing 1 in 4 respondents. Age groups 50-64, 65-74, and 75 and older are fairly evenly distributed, each making up about 1 in 5 respondents. Most respondents (about 3 in 5) live in households without individuals under 18. A slight majority of respondents (just over half) have lived in the area for 15 years or less, while a slightly smaller portion (just under half) are long-term residents of 16 years or more.

Community Event, Activities, and Groups

Respondents in Cumberland and North Yarmouth most often participate in activities identified as literature and book, parenting and family, sports and outdoor, social gatherings, and crafting, while fewer engage in music, theater, and performance, culture & ethnicity, and religious and spiritual activities in their local community. Community members stated that when attending events in Greater Portland, music, theater, and performance, culture & ethnicity, health and wellness, and activism are more popular. When asked about desired opportunities, respondents highlighted nature, gardening, wellness, arts, music, theater, arts and crafts and social gatherings, with smaller interest in finance, games and video games, and job skills & economic development.

Barriers

Conflicting priorities and lack of time are the most common barriers to participation in clubs or events, while fewer respondents cite shyness, lack of childcare, poor health, accessibility of facilities, or not feeling safe. Among community groups, challenges cited include attendance, scheduling, and funding, with fewer citing transportation or ADA accessibility. Most learn about events through the library or town newsletters, town websites, or word of mouth. Popular groups include book clubs, churches, and fitness.

Values and Feelings Towards the Community

Respondents highly value mutual respect and cooperation, caring and compassion, and environmental sustainability within their community. Justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion also emerge as a priority. Challenges facing the community include housing and housing affordability, cost of living, and taxes, with division and lack of diversity also noted. Many respondents desire greater community and social engagement, municipal services, and improved accessibility and transportation.

Use of Prince Memorial Library

Respondents engage with Prince Memorial Library in a variety of ways, with many attending live or online events, using the children's activity room, or accessing eBooks and audiobooks online. Services such as passport assistance, interlibrary loans, and museum passes are also popular, though some services like personalized book recommendations and assistance with technology remain underutilized. Library materials, events, and the library's role as a community gathering place are rated highly by most users. Quiet workspaces and access to ebook and audiobook resources were identified by respondents as poor. Many respondents who don't use the library cite a lack of time or preference for another library, while others mention inconvenient hours or unfamiliarity with services. Notably, a significant portion of respondents express no specific concerns and highlight their positive feelings toward the library.

Next Initiatives

When asked about the most important project for Prince Memorial Library, fewer than half chose to answer, with one in seven mentioning library expansion, one in ten stating more adult events at off-site locations, and one in eleven reimagined youth and teen spaces as most important. Smaller groups emphasized permanent outdoor event spaces, business resources, and off-site youth and teen events. However, in open-ended responses, one in twenty respondents expressed satisfaction with the library as it is, highlighting "no expansion or change" as their priority. Suggestions for improvement include more adult events, a broader selection of materials, quiet workspace and longer hours. Other ideas include outdoor event spaces, more children's events, eco-friendly building practices, and partnerships with local organizations. While some respondents prioritized events and activities, others mentioned improved digital services.

Overall Assessment

A significant number of respondents value the library's materials, events, the library as a place to gather and its role in fostering community connections. Most respondents appreciate the library as it is, with some expressing satisfaction and no desire for changes. Others suggest quiet workspace, reimagined spaces for youth and adults, more adult events, expanded materials, longer hours, and enhanced digital offerings as areas for improvement.