West Tisbury Free Public Library

Strategic Plan 2025– 2028

MEETING THE CHANGING AND GROWING NEEDS OF WEST TISBURY



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Pride Parade, 2025

The WTL Board of Trustees recognizes and honors the many generations of Wôpanâak people who have lived and continue to be sustained in this territory for more than 10,000 years. We acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land, and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories.

The land on which we sit is the traditional territory of the Wampanoag Nation. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of their territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous People connected to this land on which we gather.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 02/11/2026



Oyster talk with MV Fisherman's Preservation Trust, 2021

OUR MISSION

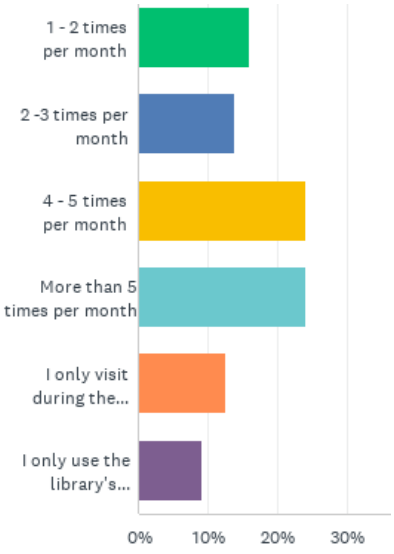
The West Tisbury Free Public Library provides free and equal access to information, resources, materials and technology to educate and enrich the lives of the residents and the wider island community in a welcoming and collaborative space.

OUR VISION

The West Tisbury Free Public Library is a community center that provides resources, information, recreation, entertainment and open space to all in a welcoming, safe, and free environment. We are an institution that recognizes and honors the history of our town and island while embracing the changes of the present time and future.

"I love the West Tisbury library! It's friendly, user friendly, well stocked with good books; everything I want in a library!" Patron quote

How often do you visit the library?



THE MAJORITY OF OUR USERS USE THE LIBRARY MORE THAN 5 TIMES A MONTH OR AT LEAST 4-5 TIMES A MONTH.

GOALS

1. SUPPORT AND EMBRACE DIVERSITY

The library will continue to grow and adapt with the changing demographic of the town and island. With a focus on this goal we will better embrace the opportunity to serve our diverse community, especially the 20% of our island that is Brazilian or of Brazilian descent.

While the library has a limited collection of bilingual and non-English children's books, we are in the process of expanding this collection beyond our kid's room, especially in Brazilian Portuguese. Our future collection will better represent the diversity of languages spoken on the island.

To move towards this goal we hope to have programming better reflecting the diversity of our community. The goal will include bilingual signage and marketing, programs, resources for English language learners, new immigrants, and patrons looking for assistance in immigration and citizenship issues.



Families on our Halloween Hay Ride, 2024

2. CONTUNUE EXPANDING DIGITAL ACCESS AND ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

Our community uses the library as a point of access to new and emerging technology. We will continue to offer technology assistance and training to staff and patrons of all ages. We currently offer one on one tech help and support and weekly tech help at the neighboring Council of Aging.

Success of this goal will entail continuing to embrace and offer technologies to our patrons that they might not otherwise have access to, such as the Oculus Rift Virtual Reality sets we offer, Wi-Fi hotspots, laptops, scanners and devices for converting DVDs and other media to digital files. We will continue to grow our digital resources and better use social media for outreach. Our after school gaming programs gives kids and teens a space to play games collaboratively.

This goal could include increased classes and workshops for both staff and the public in new and emerging technology such as virtual and augmented reality and AI.

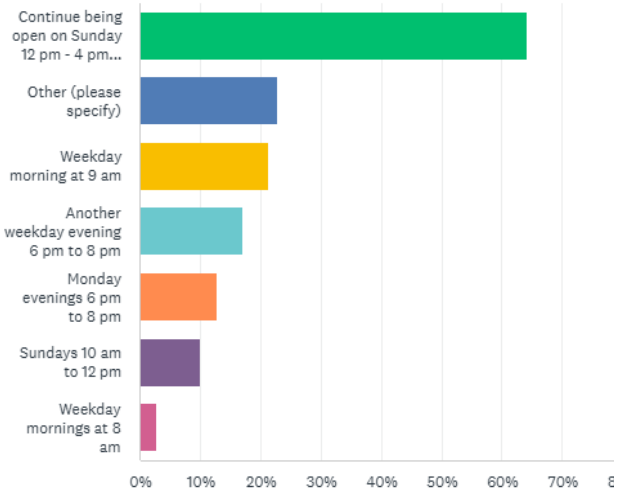


Kids at the afterschool Nintendo Switch gaming, 2025

PATRON QUOTES:

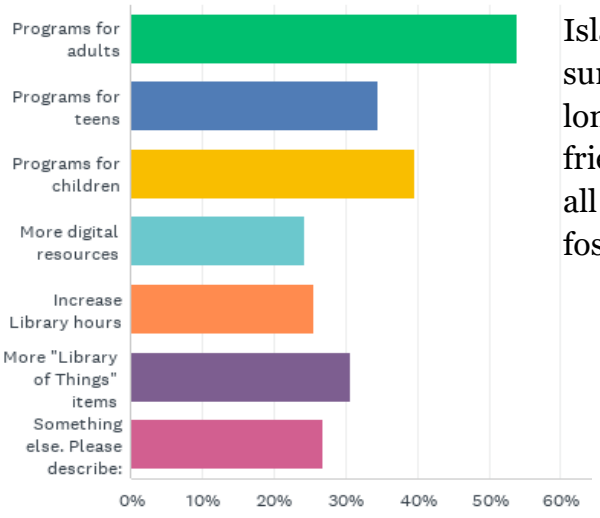
"The West Tisbury library is my favorite library in the world. We have lived in a number of different communities across the US and traveled quite a bit with children and the West Tisbury library remains our most beloved library to visit.

The physical space is beautiful and welcoming. The staff are helpful and competent. The programming is creative and practical and creates the library as the heart of the community, serving the people of Martha's Vineyard, and its visitors in deeply meaningful ways. The library represents for us what the ideal library can and should be."



The West Tisbury Library is currently open six days a week (seven in winter). If we could be open at other times, which times would be the most convenient for you? Please choose two options.

If somebody was to give the library a pot of gold, how would you want the library to spend it?



3. EXPANDED SERVICES

The library has steadily increased services over the year, not only offering extended hours but off-site programs. We saw outdoor "pop-up" libraries during the Covid19 shutdown and story times at partner organizations continue, such as Polly Hill Arboretum, the Ag Society, the schools and so on. Patron feedback and our survey shows that patrons would like expanded hours; such as Sundays year round, and later and earlier hours for weekdays.

"Non-traditional" library services will continue to be explored and grow, such as our Community "Freedge" (free fridge), our "Library of Things," museum passes and childcare for town meetings.

Achieving this goal could look like more of these innovative offerings and more outreach at other locations, such as senior housing, the farmer's market and possibly a book mobile one day.

4. INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

We are proud of our programming and are excited to continue offering our successful programs such as Community Dance, Sunday off-season Jazz concerts, community art shows and soup and bread lunch for all (see photo below) during school breaks.

Working towards this goal will look like expanding our outreach with the local schools and working with the Up-Island Council on Aging. Many patrons responded to our survey (see page 6 for some of the responses) that they were lonely and would like help making connections and friendships. As a community center that is used by folks of all ages we will work towards this goal by establishing and fostering programs and connections between all ages.



Soup and bread lunch, 2023



Tomato tasting workshop, 2022



"The kid's room is awesome and I loved the story times when my kids were little. I honestly can't imagine raising kids without such a wonderful community resource. I also love all the wide range of books I've been able to check out from cookbooks to photography books and leisure reading. It's rare that the library doesn't have/can't get what I'm looking for." Patron quote

PLANNING METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

This process involved numerous workshops for library staff, stakeholders (members of the West Tisbury Library Board of Trustees, Friends and Foundation) and the general public, coordinated by a consultant from the Massachusetts Library System. These groups did a number of exercises including a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis. A survey was available both online and paper, in both English and Brazilian Portuguese. The survey was not only handed out to patrons who physical entered the building but available online through our website and newsletter to reach our seasonal visitors. All of this information, in combination with an in-depth review by library staff of current program and services offered, has helped to build a strategic framework for the next five years, written by the library director and trustees and reviewed by staff and other

PATRON QUOTES:

"The Library is the heart of the community"

"Staff is wonderful! Space is beautiful!"

"The staff is very professional, helpful, and friendly. Someone is always willing to assist you. The interior of the building is visually interesting and clean. Getting emails to renew books as well as requested books is very beneficial."

Eliminating fines for books and DVDs is very helpful as well."



Family yoga, 2024

Letter from the Board of Trustees:

The West Tisbury Free Public Library was established in 1893 by nine West Tisbury residents to provide a "free public library and reading room... free to the inhabitants of the town of West Tisbury and Chilmark." In an increasingly expensive world we are honored to provide a free, open space for all, along with free access to books and other material and resources. Our programming; concerts, yoga, arts classes, book talks and holiday parties are just some of the events we provide for families and for people of all ages thanks to the financial contributions of the two non-profits that support the library. The Trustees would like to give our deepest thanks to the Friends of the West Tisbury Library and West Tisbury Library Foundation for all of their hard work and time.

There is another meaning to the word free besides the financial. That definition is much more up for interpretation than the one connected to money. The West Tisbury Library strives to be a place where our patrons feel the freedom to be who they are and to access any and all materials that they may want. The Board of Trustees is proud to uphold these values and to support the staff and patrons of the West Tisbury Library.

West Tisbury Free Public Library

West Tisbury Free Public Library

1042 State Road
West Tisbury, 02575

Mailing address Vineyard Haven , 02568

508-693-3366
wt_mail@clamsnet.org

FROM OUR PATRON SURVEY:

What is a problem or challenge in your life or on the island that you wish the library could help you with?

- Still working on ebooks, need more practice!
- Making local friends .
- Aging.
- Biggest challenge is $.
- Keep being a library. To expect a library to behave as anything other than a library is unreasonable. Childcare would be awesome...but you're not a childcare center.
- A local person in charge that could answer most questions on gardening, raising animals or bees, well water quality testing, tree and plant health, proper methods of composting , how to fence off fields, and much more.
- Nitrogen! Harmful Cyanobacteria blooms!
- I'm lonely. Close friends have moved or died. I think I could use the library to build a new friend network .
- I really could use a remote book return...like at Cronigs or Stop and Shop! I know there are book returns AT the library, but I still never make it there!
- Digital resources and subscriptions to online journals and news.
- Getting older… support groups, book clubs.
- Living alone, I would appreciate more opportunity to socialize.
- Eradicate Lyme disease? (Just joking).
- Difficulty with technology because I'm olds!
- Parenting classes or programs for adults where babysitting is offered. Like group exercise, you can leave your kid/s while you do something to improve your self-care. It's so hard for working moms to get self-care. In the evening would be a good time for this. It's hard for working parents to get to the library between 10-5 or 10-6.
- As a aging adult, I am just beginning to understand what may lie ahead, & what I may find difficult to do. I would ask that you learn from other libraries what some of what some of those elder considerations are & start to incorporate them now!!
- Additional opportunities to interact with others to make connections and build friendships on island.
- Anything the library could do to support folks in getting healthy delicious food on the table quickly and affordably would be amazing! Even a kids "cooking" class where they could make healthy snacks or a parents' group with menu ideas to for packing lunches, snacks and making dinner with a focus on wasting less in the kitchen and making good climate choices when it comes to food --that would be AMAZING!
- Small business assistance.
- New learning opportunities, clubs: books, activities in nature such as fishing, hiking, sailing. Partnerships.
- I wish there was a maker space so we could use supplies and tools that we can't afford or rarely need. A maker space for all ages.
- I would like to see more well known authors come to talk. I would like more parent child classes and programming.
- Housing a is a major issue over here...