



Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library

Strategic Plan

2025-2029

Nicole Messier
Library Director



What's Inside

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library's Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 outlines a roadmap to enhance community engagement and library services. Key initiatives focus on expanding digital resources, improving facility accessibility, and increasing diverse programming to meet the community's evolving needs. The plan emphasizes collaboration with local organizations to offer enriching programs and workshops, aiming to foster a vibrant and inclusive environment for all patrons.

Who We Are



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Who We Are

Library History

The Dudley Free Public Library was instituted in Dudley in 1896, and the facility opened in 1897 in a first-floor room within the Chaseville School on Schofield Avenue with \$300 worth of books. In 1901, it moved into a new home at One Village Street where it existed, with one expansion, until 2010 (Stevens Linen donated the lot and cement slab for the Village Street location). In July of 2010, the Library moved into a brand new building at 40 Schofield Avenue, the site of the former Town Hall.

The library building was the culmination of more than a decade of cooperation and teamwork that involved many members of our community and beyond. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners awarded the Crawford Library a Construction Grant for \$2.3 million; Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Crawford made a private donation of \$2 million; the Dudley voters supported a \$1.4 million debt exclusion at town meeting; and the Capital Campaign Committee raised another \$1 million plus through diligence and hard work. Surplus funds from the building phase were used to establish the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library Endowment Fund in 2011. These funds are specifically earmarked for enhancements and enrichments to the library and as a supplement to the municipal allocation.

The Library is a department of the Town of Dudley and receives funding from the town budget, which is approved by voters at the annual Town Meeting. The Library also receives State Aid from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners by meeting the requirements for library certification. Financial support also comes from local cultural grants and the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment Fund.

Additional support for Library services, including the purchase of annual museum passes, is provided by the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library also sponsor semi-annual book sales and offer an ongoing book sale nook where residents can purchase donated books.

In 1901 Dudley's population was just over 3,600 and the Dudley Free Public Library—later renamed the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library—held 791 books. There were 287 library cardholders and in FY 1901 the library circulated 3,410 items. The current library has over 5,900 cardholders, and in FY 24 circulated almost 58,000 physical and digital items.

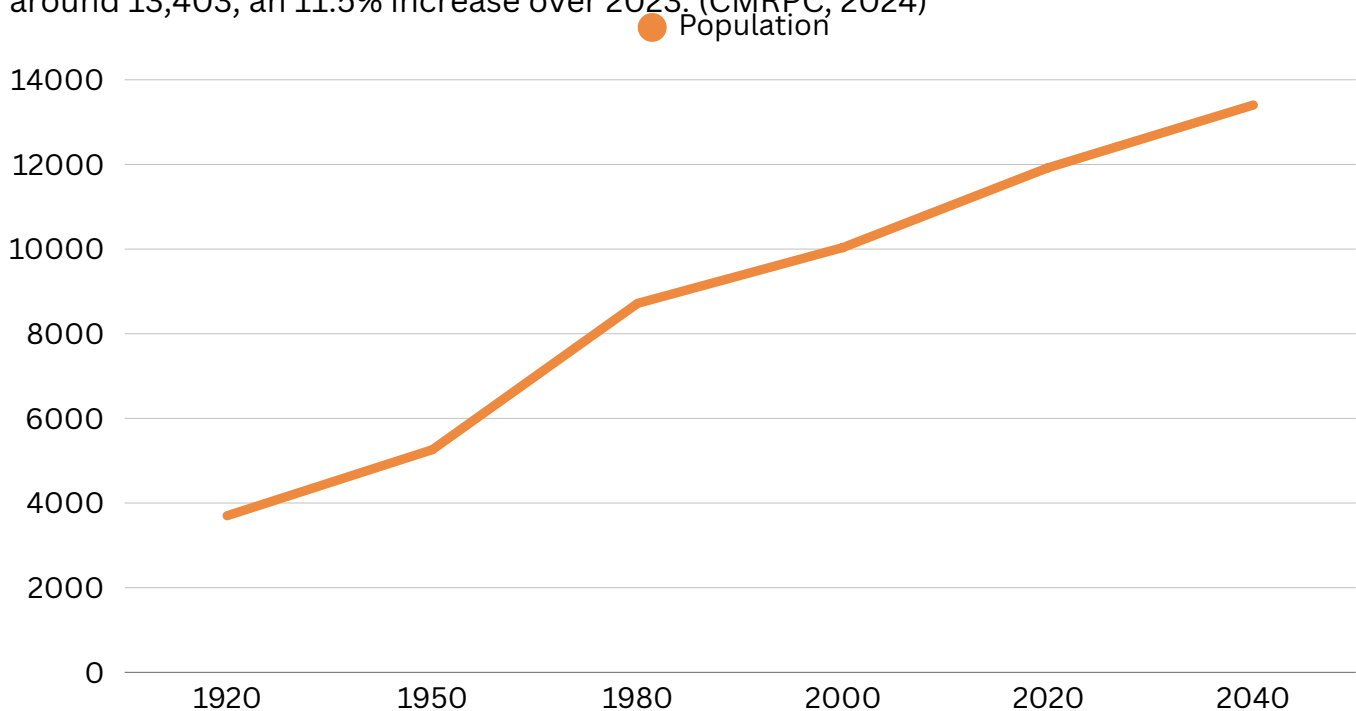
The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library is a member of the C/WMARS network and uses the network's Evergreen ILS. The Library also participates in the Massachusetts Library System's delivery program, allowing our patrons to access materials from libraries throughout the state. In fiscal year 2024 patrons of the Library received nearly 4,600 items from other libraries.

Town of Dudley History

The Town of Dudley was first settled in 1714 and was officially incorporated in 1732. It is in south-central Massachusetts about 22 miles south of Worcester and 59 miles southwest of Boston. Dudley is bordered by Southbridge on the west; Charlton on the north; Oxford on the northeast; Webster on the east; and Woodstock and Thompson, Connecticut, on the south. It consists of 22 square miles with 90.2 miles of roads with open fields, woodlands, and multiple active farms. In addition, the Town has several scenic roads including Baker Pond Road, Hayden Pond Road, and Marsh Road. In 2014 the town earned the State's energy-related "Green Community" designation because leaders wanted to lower energy costs and be a responsible community. (DudleymaHistory, n.d.) The Central Mass Regional Planning Committee website provides other interesting insights into the Dudley community and includes results from the Dudley Gateway Revitalization Plan completed in 2024. (John Gumpert, n.d.)

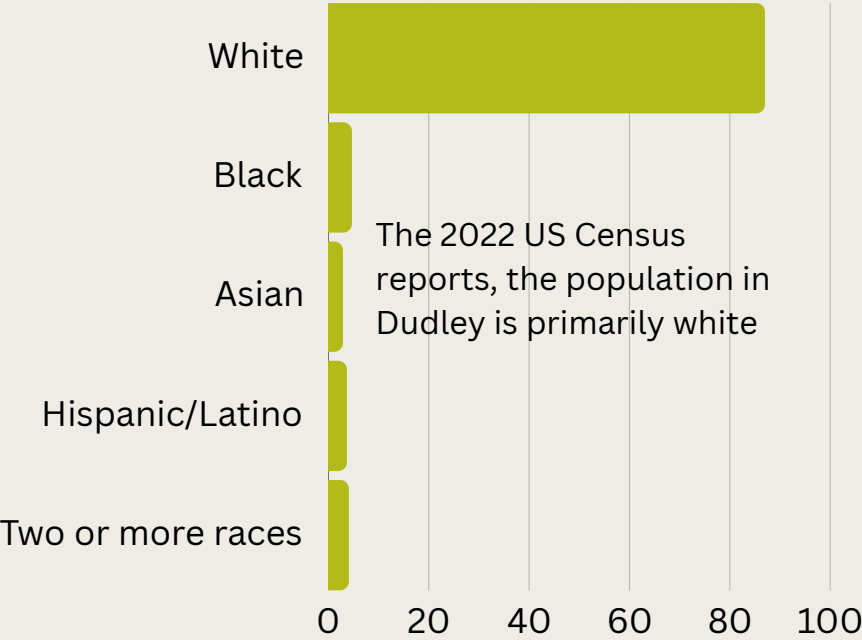
Community Profile

The Town of Dudley's population continues to grow in small, steady increments. According to the Central MA Regional Planning Commission, the 2040 projection is expected to be around 13,403, an 11.5% increase over 2023. (CMRPC, 2024)



People of Dudley

Race:



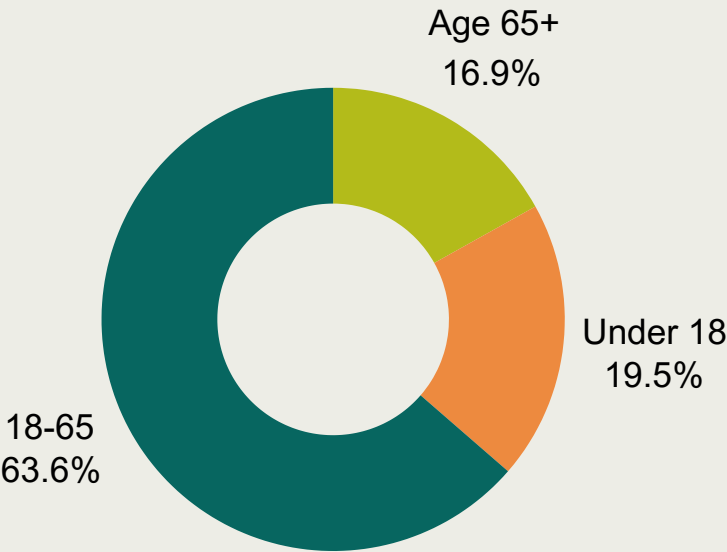
Key facts

Median Income
\$87,306

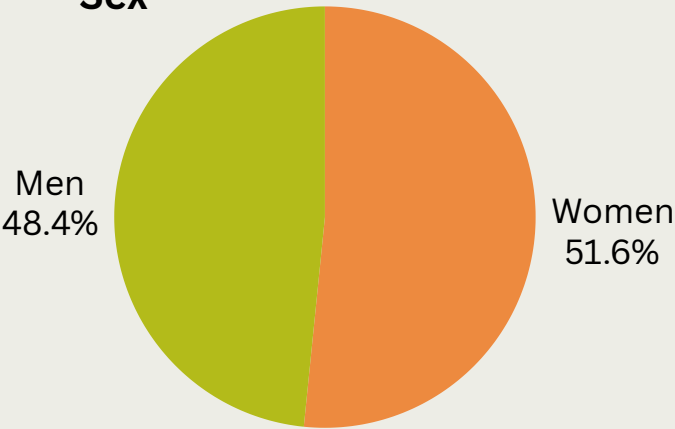
Persons in poverty
7.3%

Persons with a disability
12.7%

Age



Sex



Computer Access



91.5% of households have a computer

90.4% have a broadband internet subscription

Schools

The Dudley-Charlton School District was established between two rural, agricultural towns in 1970, and became operational in 1973 with the opening of Shepherd Hill Regional High School in Dudley. The district graduated its first class of its new high school in June 1974.

“The towns can no longer be described as agricultural or rural but that has not made them any less attractive to the many families who move here because of the school district and the quality of education. The district now provides for the education of nearly 3,800 students in pre-K through grade 12 across 7 schools in Dudley and Charlton.” (*About DCRSD - Dudley-Charlton Regional School District*, n.d.)

Dudley is home to:

- **Mason Road School** approx. 234 students
- **Dudley Elementary School** approx. 343 students
- **Dudley Middle School** 547 students
- **Shepherd Hill Regional High School** 923 students
- **Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School** 111 Dudley students
(located in Charlton, MA)

(*Search for Public Schools - Shepherd Hill Regional High (250436000591)*, n.d.)

34% of
Dudley residents
under the age of 17
have a P.L.C.M. Library Card

Opportunity!

580 juvenile patrons
465 young adults

*based on FY24 data
registered patrons
zip code 01571

What We Achieved

Library Programs & More

The Library offered more than 480 programs from July 2023 - June 2024. There was truly something for everyone, and the line-up was as diverse as the population: storytimes, crafting, music, history, job readiness, book clubs, eclipse viewing, and so much more. The Library initiated recurring clubs as well: Mahjong, Movie Tuesday, monthly Bluegrass jams, and yoga, just to name a few. Children's programs included everything from guest readers to Pokemon Club, to a Graphic Novel Book Club. In addition, long standing favorites were reimagined to encourage more participation too. The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten adopted a space theme and Summer Reading featured a Community Art Project that showcased artists of all ages and skill levels.

Our Impact



"I love this book club". — Louise - True Crime Book Club member

Our Year in Pictures...programming excitement from 2024!



adult art classes



welcoming staff



Summer Reading winners



family programming



rotating art exhibits



wellness workshops



Guest Reader crafting fun



family engagement



Science Hero fun!



interactive storytimes



reading challenges



community spirit



clubs



ongoing activities



library card sign up month



celebrations

Our Impact in Words

Providing gathering spaces for residents is at the forefront of our mission. The Library is quickly becoming a “third place” away from home or work where people can learn, socialize, or interact with others in the community.



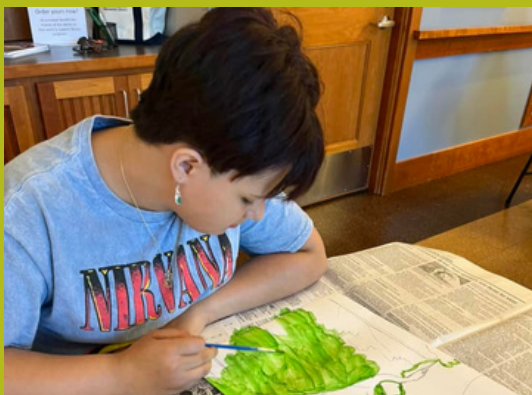
Weekly Mahjong games at the Library was a patron request. Although it has only been offered for a short time it is always well attended.

"Through game play, deep relationships develop and a community forms building friendships and bonds that last a lifetime." Sharon C.

Interactive and educational Storytimes are the foundation of good programming. The evening Guest Reader program has become a popular staple at the Library helping to connect community members of all ages.



Local K9 Officer Suss & , Officer Mehlhouse,
Guest Reader Storytime



Sarah, Teen patron

Fostering creativity and attracting teen patrons through art.

"It means a lot to have a nice place to hang out at away from home. The staff are very nice and it always feels very comfortable."

Our Impact in Numbers

Comprehensive insights into Library usage for
July 2023- June 2024 (FY24)



COLLECTION VALUE

\$1,120,895.67

LIBRARY VISITORS

40,257

Up 2,793 over FY23

CARD HOLDERS

5,935

Includes all library card holders, of all ages with “Dudley” Library card. Includes eCards

ROOM BOOKINGS

Outside uses of Fels Community Room, Local History Room & 2 Quiet Study Rooms

568



WIFI & COMPUTER USAGE

1,948

WiFi usage

2,128

computer usage

ELECTRONIC USAGE

Includes eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines & streaming services

14,819

increase of 22.68% over FY23



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



480

PROGRAMS

4,233

ATTENDEES

ITEMS CIRCULATED

Includes books, magazines, DVDs, Library of Things, hotspots and kits

42,740

MUSEUM PASSES



12 PASSES

162 USES

*FUNDED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE PEARLE L. CRAWFORD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

938

SUMMER READING SIGN UPS



450

ADULTS



347

CHILDREN



141 TEENS

2023 TOTAL SIGN UPS
499

What We Envision

Planning Process

The strategic planning process started in late February of 2024 when the new Library Director was hired and concluded in January 2025.

- February 2024- The Library Board of Trustees expressed interest in having an up to date strategic plan in place for FY25.
- April 2024- The Library Director, Nicole Messier drafted an outline to identify key planning goals and created a rough timeline for collecting community data and input.
- April 2024- Notified Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator of upcoming planning process.
- June 2024- The Library Director, with input from staff and Library BOT, created a community survey to be rolled out during the summer reading initiative.
- August-Early October 2024- The town-wide community survey was available online and as a hard copy. Surveys were posted in the Library, the Dudley Municipal Complex and at the annual Dudley Apple Fest. Links and reminders to take the survey were on Facebook and Instagram. The survey was rolled out during Summer Reading to encourage participation. 258 People of various ages responded.
- August 2024- December 2024- “Question of the Week” was posted in the Library at the main circulation desk. The questions were left up for approximately 2 weeks at a time. The patrons had a lot to say and appreciated the opportunity to provide input. To reach a broader audience, additional survey questions were posted to Facebook.
- September 2024- Staff completed the 1st SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results)

- November 2024- Two Community Focus Group sessions were offered at the Library. One morning and one in the evening. This allowed 10 community members from varying backgrounds the opportunity to participate in the value and SOAR exercises.
- November 2024- Library Director, Nicole Messier, began compiling key statistics and data from the surveys, SOAR exercises and Questions of the Week. Value exercises data was compiled and added to the draft plan document.
- December 2024- Survey and SOAR results were shared with the Library Board of Trustees and the Towns' statistical data was added to the draft Strategic Plan report.
- December 2024- Draft goals were compiled based on the hard data collected.
- January 2025- Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Library Trustees and approved.

Values & Goals

Library Mission



Monet's Gardens: Inspiration for a Creative Life program

The mission of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library is to provide members of our diverse community with equal access to traditional and electronic media, programs, and exhibits that will encourage lifelong learning, expand cultural horizons, facilitate research, and inspire curiosity.

Values

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library is guided by a set of core values that are foundational to our service and interactions with the community. These values reflect our commitment to providing a welcoming and enriching environment for all.



Honesty & Openness

We are committed to transparency in all our operations and communications, ensuring that patrons and staff alike are informed and involved in the Library's developments.

Creativity

We foster an environment where creativity can flourish. Through innovative programming, artistic endeavors, or resourceful problem-solving, we encourage imaginative thinking and exploration.

Determination

We are driven by a steadfast commitment to achieving our goals and continuously improving our services. Our determination ensures we will meet the evolving needs of our community, no matter the challenges.

Fun

Creating an enjoyable and engaging atmosphere is at the heart of our Library experience. We believe that learning and fun go hand-in-hand, and strive to offer programs and activities that delight and inspire.

These values are not just words but principles that guide every decision and action taken by the Library and its staff. We are dedicated to upholding these values, ensuring that the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library remains a beloved and vital resource for the community. These values are things the staff will not compromise on and will not change even under new leadership.

Goals

Goals provide direction, create a sense of purpose, and help align resources and actions towards achieving specific outcomes. We used the input from the community and the mission of the Library as our guiding principles. The Library Director will be responsible for developing short term goals and reporting accomplishments to the Board of Library Trustees annually. This will help the Library to prioritize and allocate its resources over the next five years.

**Key takeaways from the community survey, visioning exercise
and questions of the day include:**

- Increase Library usage
- Offer dynamic programming for all ages (especially adult crafting & musical performances)
- Demand for technology classes
- Increase open hours
- Enhance outside space
- Add to Library of Things collection

Goal 1: Offer dynamic and high-quality services and programming for members of all ages.

(Programming & Services)

- Develop programs and services that meet evolving needs.
- Offer programming, services, and resources that excite children, teens, adults, seniors, and families.
- Introduce programs that encourage lifelong learning, expand cultural horizons, facilitate research, and inspire curiosity.

Goal 2: Support the use of emerging technologies that aid in closing the digital divide. (Education).

- Provide community access to emerging technology programs, devices, software, and services.
- Develop one-on-one services or classes to support and strengthen technological competencies.
- Increase WiFi and internet accessibility offsite and onsite.

Goal 3: The Library will have a stronger presence in the community. (Advocacy)

- Increase marketing and communication efforts to encourage program attendance and Library use.
- Build strong relationships with community groups, businesses, and schools.
- Create a public awareness campaign with assistance from the Town Administration, Trustees, and the Friends group.
- Continue to update the Library website to improve ease of use.

Goal 4: The Library will maintain a well-trained, engaged, and enthusiastic staff. (Staff)

- Provide support for staff development and training opportunities.
- Continue monthly staff meetings to keep them up-to-date on new technologies and policies.
- Encourage joint training with other local public libraries.

Goal 5: Provide an up-to-date collection that is suited to the community's needs and interests. (Collection)

- Provide a comprehensive collection of print and digital materials and resources for all ages.
- Grow the Teen collection with a focus on eBooks and eAudio options.
- Expand the Library of Things to include access to technology and hands-on tools.

Goal 6: The Library will maintain and enhance the building and grounds to provide a safe, accessible, and welcoming space. (Building)

- Maintain the historic integrity of the Local History Room.
- Develop an outdoor Library space.
- Rethink, improve and exchange furniture to effectively meet the needs of patrons.

Measures of Success

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library's Strategic Plan is designed not only to set a clear direction for the future but also to provide a framework for assessing progress and success. Here are the key methods by which success will be measured:

Quantitative Metrics- Measure, record, monitor, and respond to Library data.

Answer the following:

- Is there increased use of the Library?
- Is there an increase in the number of participants attending programs?
- Are there more library card holders?
- Is there increased access to technology?

Qualitative Feedback - Gather feedback through surveys, focus groups, and the “Question of the Week” to understand community satisfaction and areas for improvement. Collect testimonials and suggestions from patrons to enhance services and programs.

Look for:

- Positive reviews and comments
- Social approval
- Community engagement
- Increased visibility

By utilizing these measures, the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library can ensure that its strategic initiatives are having the desired impact, adapting strategies as necessary to better serve the community and fulfill its mission. (Fuller, 2021)





Thank you for participating!

Library Board of Trustees

Richard Clark - Member
Benjamin Craver - Vice-Chair
Kate Horne - Chair
Patricia Korch - Secretary
Joyce Nierodzinski - Member
Jean Tilly - Member

Staff

Nicole Messier, Library Director
Kathy McGrath, Youth Services Librarian
Debra Coggans, Library Assistant
Anne Ethier, Senior Library Aide
Lena Costen, Library Aide
Dawn Grossi, Library Aide
Jubilee Nale, Library Aide
George Tryba, Custodian

Community Members

Ed Bazinet
Patty Biron
Ben Craver
Cheryl Hansen
Pat Korch
Lanette Lepper
Charlie Marlboro
George and Elaine Martin
Joyce Nierodzinski



Special thanks to our Library community who filled out the
survey & answered all of our endless questions!

Contact Us



Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library

Address: 40 Schofield Ave. Dudley, MA 01570

Phone: 508-949-8021

Website: www.crawfordlibrary.com

For further information, please reach out to us at pearle@cwmares.org.

Approved by the Trustees of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library at their regular meeting,
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Kate Horne
Chair of the Board

Benjamin Craver
Vice-Chair of the Board

Nicole Messier
Library Director

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[Search=1&Miles=10&Zip=01550&ID=250436000591](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school_detail.asp?Search=1&Miles=10&Zip=01550&ID=250436000591)

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