

# Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2025

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:



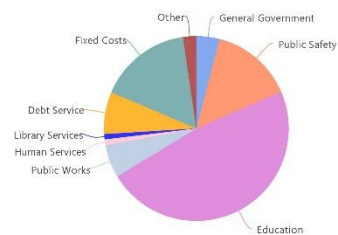
Mad Science "Fire and Ice. July 24, 2025

2025 saw record borrowing of physical materials (books, DVD's CD's, attraction passes and puzzles) and e-content (eBooks, eAudio and streaming video). Program attendance, study room and meeting room use, and technology and reference help sessions saw significant increases over 2024. While increases in demand and services continue on a yearly basis, it is important for residents to note that the Library budget for fiscal 2025 was 0.93% of the total town budget.

Following the success of the Civic Hub grant in 2024, the Library Director and Trustees were eager to explore new federal Library Services and Technology Act grant opportunities in 2025. Abington residents have benefitted from services funded by five different LSTA grants over the past fifteen years; these grants totaled \$45,900



Town of Abington  
FY2025



FY25 Library Pie Chart. MA DOR, Div. Of Local Services.

in federal funds administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Unfortunately due to the federal defunding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services on March 14, there were no LSTA grant opportunities in 2025. Funding for 2026 is uncertain, despite a court order on November 21, which is protecting the Institute of Museum and Library Services from closing completely.



**Database Logo**

*Peterson's Career and Test Prep Databases*, which has been used at both the public library and the AHS/AMS Library. In October, public library staff visited the high school to register students for APL cards, as the simple geolocation database login does not carry over to an individual public library subscription. The resource is still available to public library borrowers and students, but access is not as simple with the loss of the statewide subscription.

With the support of the Griffin's Dairy Committee, the Library offered three StoryWalks® along the walking path at the Dairy. The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson. A StoryWalk® places the pages of a picture book in signs along a pathway encouraging children to both exercise and read. In four years, the StoryWalks® have become a much-loved community summer tradition, enjoyed by children and adults alike. The books featured were *Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus, *All Through My Town* by Jean Reidy, and *It's Fall* by Renee Kurilla.



**Fall Story Walk Sign.**

Abington Reads 2025 featured author Amanda Peters and her award-winning novel, *The Berry Pickers*. This novel deals with family relationships, and what happens over time when a family is broken by a traumatic event. *The Berry Pickers* showcases a family of Indigenous workers from Nova Scotia who pick blueberries in Maine every summer. Ms. Peters, an

Indigenous Canadian author, delivered a fascinating keynote address on April 6<sup>th</sup> to an audience of almost 75 people. In conjunction with the author program, Dr. Rita Jones-Hyde, Ph.D., Dean of Liberal Studies and the Arts at Massasoit Community College spoke about Indigenous identity on March 18th. Dr. Jones-Hyde is a member of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. Her talk included information about what it means to be Native in the United States, misconceptions versus the realities of Indigenous identity, as well as historical context about institutions like reservation schools.



**Author Amanda Peters in conversation with Library Director Deborah Grimmett, Apr. 6, 2025**

2,460 Abington Public School students participated in 149 class visits presented by Children's Services staff. Kindergarten and Pre-K classes received monthly visits to their classrooms; all classes in grades 1, 2, 3 and 5 visited the Public Library once during the school year and received library instruction from Children's Librarian Amy Matejka or Staff Librarian for Children's Services Heidi Hernandez. Kindergarten classes ended the school year with a visit to the Public Library. The extremely popular Beaver Brook and Woodsdale Art Shows returned to the Library in May to celebrate our young artists.

The Non-Fiction Book Club, Popular Fiction Book Club, Saturday Book Club and Cookbook Club, met throughout 2025; the Popular Fiction group meets virtually, and the other book clubs meet in person. The Cookbook Club is facilitated by Linda Sampson and has a devoted group of home cooks who share their experiences with recipes from the cookbooks selected for each meeting. Monthly adult Craft Nights continue to be very popular. Crafts offered have included needle felting, holiday greens arranging, metalsmithing and paper crafting. Lectures, author visits, a tarot card program, puzzle races and board game nights were also offered for adults. Monthly passive activities, including Library Valentines requested by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in February, were a huge hit with adults, teens, and children all year long. 145 live and virtual programs were offered for adults with 1,155 attendees. The monthly newsletter, *All Around the APL*, provides detailed information about library programs and services.

The Friends of the Library conducted fundraising activities with a Book Sale in April, as well as maintaining their popular "Everyday Sale Shelf" in the library. The Friends Membership Drive was held successfully in January 2025. The Friends also conducted several successful fundraising raffles. The Friends book discussion groups, Book Talk and the Mystery Group, met throughout the year, with a hiatus during the summer. Friends fundraising supports attraction passes and programs for all ages.



The Abington Cultural Council provided funding to the Friends for the patron passes to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Boston Children's Museum. A \$400 grant for additional children's titles in Brazilian Portuguese was also funded. The Cultural Council directly funded a concert by musician Matt York in March featuring the "Songs of Willy Nelson".

Memorial gifts were received in honor of Mr. Michael Conley, an avid reader and long-time library user. Gifts were again received for children's programming in memory of long-time library trustee Melba Smith. A donation for the Story Garden was received from the Bailey's daylily sale. Many individual residents made donations for library materials, including additional memorial gifts. The Library Trustees and Library Director thank the many generous residents who donated to the Friends of the Library and provided direct financial support for Library services.



**Library Mini Golf August 2025. Funded by Donations in Memory of Mr. Michael Conley. Enjoyed by 92 participants.**

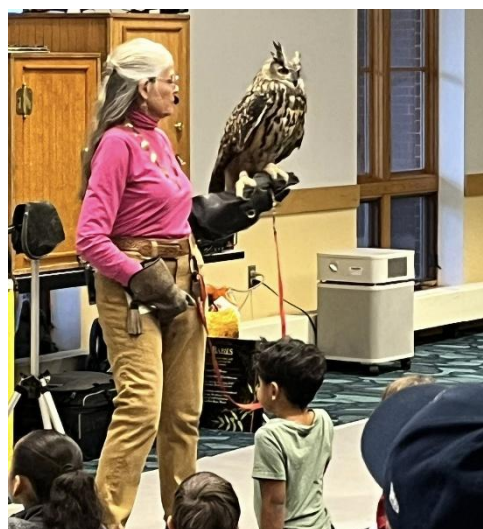
The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) continued to meet and to guide program offerings for teens. Barn Babies made their highly-anticipated annual visit to the library in February, and the teens spent an afternoon playing with baby farm animals. Needle felting continued to gain popularity amongst our teens, and we offered a needle felting class for teens in March, and again in July. Educators from the Pop Up Art School also ran programs for elementary school-aged kids: one in March and another in July. Chopped, one of our most-requested after-hours programs, was once again offered in June, and was followed up with another after-hours program for teens again in August, with the focus being another popular

program: a newspaper fashion show. Teens split up into groups and created an elaborate outfit made entirely from newspaper and masking tape.

Along with the needle felting program (facilitated by educators with the Pop Up Art School), the teens, led by instructor Heather Beck, learned the technique behind metal smithing. Heather gave an engaging presentation on the technique, and then guided the teens while they worked on making their own keychain. Back by popular demand was Ms. Heidi's photography workshop during which teens built on the skills they learned last year, and took new photographs that now adorn the entrance to our young adult room. A group of TAB volunteers supervised activities including a temporary tattoo station, crafts, and various games during the Summer Reading Program Kickoff. Once again, the extreme heat prevented Mr. Vinny from performing his bubble show in June, but he graciously delayed his program and visited us in August when the weather was much better. The bubble show was sponsored by the Friends of the Library with funds donated in memory of David O'Brien. Summer reading time continued to be recorded virtually using the READsquared software.

Summer 2025 saw the library participating in the iREAD summer reading program theme "Level Up at Your Library" and provided a variety of programming for all children ranging from birth to age 18. The Anderson Foundation generously funded several children's cultural programs like Circle of Songs with Hugh Hanley, and a musical storytime with Julie Stepanek- both geared towards our youngest audiences. The fund in memory of Melba Smith sponsored a Sing-a-Long with Mama Steph, also geared towards our littlest patrons. Educators from the Mystic Aquarium brought their traveling touch-tank to our library and provided patrons with an interactive experience, allowing them to get an up-close look at some of the region's most unique creatures. Scientists from the Mad Science group put on an educational science show geared towards elementary school students. Both the Mystic Aquarium touch-tank and Mad Science were funded by the Friends of the Library.

The Friends of the Library continued to provide for the library's preschool and toddler story times, Lego Club, after-school story craft, the popular book discussion clubs for children and teens, additional performers, and the summer reading program. We ended the summer reading schedule by hosting OneUp Games and their indoor mini golf course. An entire 18-hole mini-golf course was set up throughout the library and patrons of all ages had the chance to play through as many times as they desired. Funds for this program were provided by the Abington Gift Account in memory of Michael Conley. 127 children, teens and adults registered for the Summer Reading program on Read Squared and read for a total of 2,024 hours. The library concluded 2025 with the return of the popular Eyes on



**Eyes on Owls Dec. 2025**

Owls program made possible by the Joyce L. Bumpus fund. Mark and Marcia Wilson returned to the library with six live owls and an engaging program about these birds of prey.

The Trustees thank the town's residents for funding a much-needed study to replace the library's air conditioning system. This study was completed in September. The plan is to request capital funding in 2026 to update the building's A/C. The system completed a 28<sup>th</sup> summer of cooling in 2025 and is in dire need of replacement.

Reference Librarian Rob Goodale conducted one-on-one sessions with patrons this year on a variety of topics related to accessing technology and information. This included Device Advice, where patrons could get assistance setting up new devices, learning basic computer skills, or using library technology including wireless printers, hotspots, and chromebooks. Sessions also included education on electronic resources such as Consumer Reports and Peterson's Test and Career Prep databases. Print materials with resources on food, housing, employment, mental health and language learning among others were made available to patrons. The Reference Librarian also provided access to Abington historical materials in the Wales Room for local history and family research.

Trustees Laura Brink and Gerry Haas were re-elected in the town's annual election in April. John Leahy, who previously served as a Trustee from 2001 - 2004 was also elected.



**Board of Library Trustees, 2025 From left: Gail Bergin, Mary Gillis, Henry DiCarlo, John O'Neill, Laura Brink, John Leahy, Gerry Haas, Susan Crowley. Not Pictured – Barbara McLaughlin**

The Trustees and Director recognize the dedication and professionalism of the Library Staff: Sandy Bumpus, Jonathan Gillis, Robert Goodale, Heidi Hernandez, Kerri Lohnes, Amy

Matejka, Lynne Nickley, Colleen Phelps, Joanne Plunkett, and Linda Sampson. Circulation substitutes Ann Bunszell, Susan Donovan, Jill Monti, Kim Reid, Sarah Roberts, Lisa Scott and Terry Taylor provide much needed assistance in covering the weekly schedule of open hours.

## **Selected 2025 Library Statistics**

Circulation: 130,538. Up from 124,753 in 2024.

92,936 physical items such as books, magazines, jigsaw puzzles etc.

37,602 digital items such as eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, Streaming video and music.

Total programs/school classes offered: 587. Total program attendance: 10,696

Total patron visits: 66,483

## **Library Value Calculator**

Are you curious about the value of library services? The Syracuse University School of Information Science provides a calculator to value library services. The calculator can be found here: <https://truevalue.ischool.syr.edu/> The calculator includes the value of things like books borrowed and includes services like programs, onsite computers and meeting room use. See the value of selected library services for

Books Borrowed: \$1,148,469

eBooks Borrowed: \$564,030

Museum passes borrowed: \$13,102

Interlibrary loan items borrowed: \$223,650

Adult programs attended: \$17,325

Children's/Teen programs attended: \$66,787

Meeting room use per hour: \$10,425

**Total value of selected library services (excluding staff labor): \$2,043,788**

**Library Budget for 2025: \$657,301 (½ FY25 budget + ½ FY26 budget).**

## **Respectfully submitted,**

### **Library Trustees**

Henry DiCarlo, Chair

Gail Bergin, Vice Chair

John O'Neill, Secretary

Laura Brink

Susan Crowley

Mary Gillis

Gerry Haas

John Leahy

Barbara McLaughlin

**Library Director**

Deborah Grimmatt