

# Belmont Public Library

Belmont, Massachusetts  
2021—2026 Long Range Plan





# INTRODUCTION

Every five years, the library creates a new long range plan, focused on programs and services as we continue to evolve. We strive to seek feedback and ideas from the community in this process. As part of this plan the library includes a mission, vision, values, goals and actions. The result serves as a guide for the library team as they enhance and expand library services.

Since its inception in 1868, the library remains a source of joy for Belmont's citizens. Our library endures the test of time, adapting, continuously evolving, supporting the changes in education, technology, and community needs.

The Belmont Public Library offers all citizens access to books, magazines, films, music, electronic resources, remarkable programs, services, educational opportunities, and so very much more.

Building off a great process in 2016, we present the 2021 - 2026 Belmont Public Library Long Range Plan.

Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation.

-Walter Cronkite

# OUR MISSION

The Belmont Public Library is guided by the past and focused on the future. Its mission is to enrich the lives of the community by empowering its citizens' personal, educational and professional growth. The library is dedicated to advancing literacy and fostering life-long learning.

## Vision Statement

The Belmont Public Library aims to provide a center for information and discovery through innovative programming, robust collections, and responsive services. The Library is a place for Belmont to learn, share, and create.

## Core Values

- Knowledgeable staff and great service
- Intellectual freedom and access to knowledge for all
- Current and historical digital collections
- Technology and information literacy training
- Spaces for study, collaboration and innovation
- A place where Belmont comes to explore, learn and discover

## *...founded on the 5 I's*

### **INFORMATION & EXPLORING**

Knowledge, Resources, and Access: All Formats for All Ages

### **INSTRUCTION & LEARNING & ENRICHING**

Guiding Life-Long Learners Through Literacy & Technology

### **INTERACTION & COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Partnering with the Community: A Library Without Walls

### **INNOVATION & CREATING & DREAMING**

Today's Librarians & Tomorrow's Technology: Educating & Empowering

### **INSPIRATION & DISCOVERING AT OUR LIBRARY**

Be Inspired at Your Belmont Public Library, The Doorway to Opportunity

## *...which will determine OUR GOALS*



# INFORMATION

## EXPLORING

Knowledge, Resources, and Access: All Formats for All Ages

### Accomplished as Part of the 2016 - 2020 Long Range Plan

- Expanded book club activities for all ages, both online and in the library. Offered support to these groups to improve patron experience.
- Created themed reading lists for children, teens and adults.
- Developed strategies to inform patrons when our system changes or is upgraded by the Minuteman Library Network.

### Current and Ongoing

- Publicize library services and programs through promotion in print and online.
- Continue to offer educational programming for patrons of all ages.
- Continue to promote local authors.
- Digitize historic materials including yearbooks and newspapers.
- Continue to expand the size and quality of our ebook collections.
- Make technology training opportunities more visible to the public.
- Share relevant news stories, surveys, and studies focused on libraries with our patrons via our website and social media.

The only thing that you absolutely need to know is the location of the library.

- Albert Einstein





# INFORMATION

## EXPLORING

Knowledge, Resources, and Access: All Formats for All Ages

### New Goals and Ideas

- Increase programming and services that “reach patrons where they are.”
- Work to develop more robust 1:1 and group technology trainings.
- Increase awareness of digitized historical materials & work to partner on this effort with the Belmont Historical Society.
- Collaborate with business professionals to give talks on job searching, resume writing, test prep, etc.
- Increase access to books through increased Little Free Library partnerships with retail and community spaces like laundromats, coffee shops, etc.
- Create satellite libraries such as the Beech Street Center, Town parks, Food Pantry, train stations & explore offsite checkout technology and book vending machines.
- Continue to explore ways to share library resources with those who cannot physically be at the library.

When I got my library card, that’s when my life began.

- Rita Mae Brown





# INSTRUCTION

## LEARNING & ENRICHING

Guiding Life-Long Learners Through Literacy & Technology

### Accomplished as Part of the 2016 - 2020 Long Range Plan

- Surveyed adult users for educational needs and promoted other continuing education opportunities in Belmont.
- Incorporated web tutorials and instructional videos to cover social media, technology, and databases offered through the Library; made these videos available on Library website.

### Current and Ongoing

- Identify emerging technologies and provide hands on training and workshops for the public.
- Identify local experts to offer educational lectures.
- Expand on ELL (English Language Learner) opportunities.

### Current and Ongoing (continued)

- Continue to offer more joint educational programs with other Town Departments and organizations. Topics to include: cooking, technology, digital citizenship, genealogy, and local history.
- Increase offerings of database and applications training for patrons, both 1:1 and in a classroom format.
- Create more opportunities for technology training for seniors.
- Create a Tech Petting Zoo to teach patrons about different technologies, namely tablets and devices.
- Explore opportunities for more STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) discussions and programming.





# INSTRUCTION

## LEARNING & ENRICHING

Guiding Life-Long Learners Through Literacy & Technology

### New Goals and Ideas

- Expand programs and offerings in multiple languages.
- Create a database of resources based on reference questions & update it regularly. Make said database available on the Library website, and as a list for in-building browsing.
- Develop more “life skills” programming focused on job training, unemployment, filing taxes, health care and wellness, etc.
- Expand services to seniors with expanded partnerships through the Beech Street Center team.
- Engage community groups and businesses to use the library for educational opportunities (free instructional courses on gardening, cooking, banking, writing, fitness, etc.)

I ransack public libraries and find them full of sunk treasure.

- Virginia Woolf





# INTERACTION

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

### Partnering with the Community: A Library Without Walls

#### Accomplished as Part of the 2016 - 2020 Long Range Plan

- Expanded Sunday hours.
- Created an additional Children's Librarian position with the goal of having more opportunities to visit the schools, extend Children's Room hours, and increase programming.
- Hosted a volunteer/staff appreciation event.
- Hosted *One Book, One Belmont* programs in 2016 & 2018.

#### Current and Ongoing

- Increase cross generational programming, bringing together people of all ages.
- Enhance relationship with the Belmont School Department. Seek opportunities for additional collaboration with administration, school committee, teachers, and librarians.
- Offer at least two high school programs annually.

#### Current and Ongoing (continued)

- Explore opportunities for more quiet study spaces, dedicated areas for Children's programming and makerspaces.
- Showcase library resources and services at town events. Offer remote checkouts when possible.
- Offer at least two after hours events for different age groups annually.
- Offer at least two joint programs with area businesses annually.
- Increase annual school visits by library staff, focusing on summer reading and curriculum needs.
- Explore creating new spaces for informal community groups such as knitting and book clubs to use without needing to schedule in advance.





# INTERACTION

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

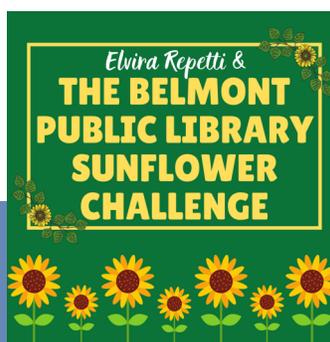
### Partnering with the Community: A Library Without Walls

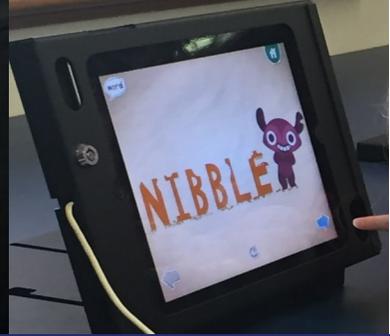
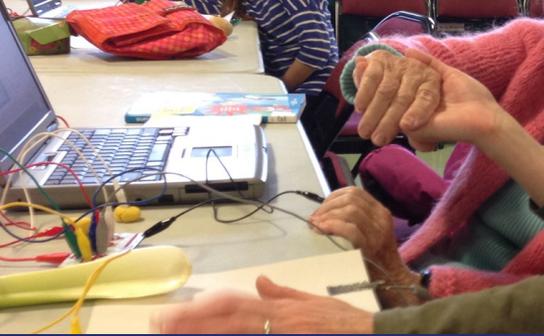
#### New Goals and Ideas

- In addition to food and book donations, provide other library resources to the Belmont Food Pantry.
- Work with the Belmont School Department to provide support to students based on the technology they are using (Chromebooks, iPads, teaching platforms, etc). Include support for any information literacy curriculum offered.
- Work with Belmont School Department to support after school programming, and provide expanded library access to virtual programming or education tools as needed given the program.
- Offer expanded Library of Things items, poll patrons on what they'd like included in this collection.
- Provide an expanded welcome kit to new patrons.
- Create an all ages Winter Reading program.
- Create (another) full-time Children's Librarian position.
- Hold a monthly "Coffee Hour" with the Library Director.
- Create travel kits to showcase different locations and cultures, including travel books, fiction, history, film; highlight this "Corners of the World" collection.
- Position the Library as **the** "Community Hub Space:" a place to go to vote, for community programming, for free educational resources, and to see friends.
- Offer coffee hour programming monthly: social gathering opportunities for patrons to interact with one another, communicate with staff and enjoy coffee and refreshments.

I have found the most valuable thing  
in my wallet is my library card.

- Laura Bush





# INNOVATION

## CREATING & DREAMING

Today's Librarians & Tomorrow's Technology: Educating & Empowering

### Accomplished as Part of the 2016 - 2020 Long Range Plan

- Promoted program to deliver materials to homebound patrons.
- Engaged a Teen Advisory Board to help run programs and developed the Teen Room to their liking.
- Reconfigured the Reference space to be more inviting and comfortable.
- Created a new website.
- Offered children's programming options on the fly with board games, crafts, puzzles & movies.

### Current and Ongoing

- Continue to offer opportunities to rearrange space to offer maximum usability of the library to patrons.
- Offer additional support to business professionals.

### Current and Ongoing (continued)

- Offer at least two programs outdoors on library grounds.
- Explore opportunities to offer more comfortable seating spaces in the library.
- Offer library tours for new patrons.
- Seek funding to create new circulating collections such as personal technology, power tools, seeds, microscopes and science backpacks.
- Support the School Department and Belmont Media Center in publicizing their offerings focused on STEM/STEAM.

Without libraries, what have we?

We have no past, and no future.

- Ray Bradbury





# INNOVATION

## CREATING & DREAMING

Today's Librarians & Tomorrow's Technology: Educating & Empowering

### New Goals and Ideas

- Offer additional support to business professionals.
- Reconfigure spaces to create designated food consumption area specifically with a coffee option.
- Add more programming about food!
- Provide a virtual tour of the Library.
- Circulate tablets and laptops. Focus on future technology for circulation.
- Evaluate 5 year old website, to determine if updates or replacement is needed.
- Create travel based programming—showcasing different locations & fostering discussion.
- Create circulating “travel kits” highlighting the different corners of the world.

Google can bring you back 100,000 answers;  
a librarian can bring you back the right one.  
- Neil Gaiman





# INSPIRATION

## DISCOVERING AT OUR LIBRARY

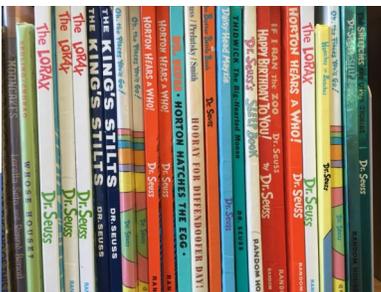
Be Inspired at Your Belmont Public Library, The Doorway to Opportunity

### New Goals and Ideas

- Create multi-generational, culturally specific programming, including music, dance, food, and other relevant topics.
- Increase the amount of pleasant and comfortable reading areas in the Library.
- Add more comfortable furniture to these reading areas.
- Focus on the library as a place of peace and a refuge from the noise of our society.
- Expand reviews of books by staff and patrons, including reviews of older titles.
- Utilize more options within social media for staff and patrons to share titles of interesting books, both old and new.
- Create opportunities for virtual browsing of the shelves.
- Find ways for the community to get to know individual staff members more (using the website where applicable.)

Librarians have always been among the most thoughtful and helpful people. They are teachers without a classroom. No libraries, no progress.

- Willard Scott





# BELMONT

The Town of Homes — Old (But Still Good) Ideas from You!

## Accomplished as Part of the 2016 - 2020 Long Range Plan

- Promoted program to deliver materials to homebound patrons.
- Provided more topic-based programming.
- Increased patron opportunities for instruction focused on databases, both on the asynchronously and 1:1.
- Re-established the newsletter both in print and with a web presence.
- Offered more open hours, specifically on Sundays and during the summer.
- Surveyed patrons more often to hear feedback on day-to-day experiences.
- Explored opportunities to expand Chinese language collection.

## Current and Ongoing

- Explore collaboration with Belmont Media Center.
- Create a welcome letter from the Library for all new residents.
- Offer more technology training opportunities.
- Offer patrons more checkouts through Hoopla.
- Offer more clubs at the Library.
- Offer more promotion of award winning titles available to patrons.
- Provide more circulating technology collections.
- Offer more digitized materials on website.
- Host more cultural programs in the evening.

A house that has a library in it has a soul.

- Plato





# BELMONT

The Town of Homes — New Ideas from You!

## New Goals and Ideas

- “More online programming — it’s great!”
- “Create a welcome letter from the Library for all new residents.”
- “Offer more services outside: seating, wifi coverage, programming options, etc.”
- “Increase self-service offerings, including self-check and self-service holds if possible.”
- “Put more money into Teen Services. Your Teen Librarian is doing excellent stuff!”
- “Lots more digital resources, the ebooks are my favorite.”
- “Chinese storytime would be wonderful.”
- “Expand the Library of Things, please.”
- “More talks on local history.”
- “More comfy furniture, cozy areas with carpet and seating.”
- “It’s time for a café or at least some vending machines and food options in the library, it’s attractive and will get more families in there.”
- “Open more hours and 7 days a week. We love the Library and need more access to it. Hire more Librarians too.”
- “Please build some quiet study rooms, we really need them.”
- “Increase your budget, more copies of popular books and a LOT more ebooks are needed.”

**A library outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert.**

**- Andrew Carnegie**



# PLANNING PROCESS

The Board of Library Trustees sought to develop a new five-year Long Range Plan for the Belmont Public Library, required by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The plan focuses on services, programming, community outreach, and life-long learning.

The work of the Belmont Public Library's Long Range Planning Committee was to gather ideas, suggestions, concerns, and action items. The committee ran four meetings and a community survey focused on future offerings. The survey welcomed the thoughts and contributions of the members of the Belmont community, focused on the next five years, and specifically asking about their rating of library successes during the pandemic library shutdown in 2020.

# PARTICIPANTS

We wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the members of the Belmont Public Library Long Range Planning Committee. Our thanks also go to the entire community for their attention and willingness to participate. We strive to provide the best experience possible to the people of Belmont. With this plan we'll be able to focus our efforts over the next five years, and years to come.

## **Community Participants**

Tony Kastor  
Anne Paulson  
Hannah Fischer  
Nancy Dignan — Co-Secretary

## **Co-Chairs**

Library Foundation Representative  
Marcie Schorr Hirsch

## **Library Director**

Peter J. Struzziero

## **Library Trustee Representative**

Elaine Alligood

## **Council on Aging Representative**

Dana Bickelman

## **School Committee Representative**

Tara Donner

## **Belmont Chinese American Association Representative**

Lynn Zheng

## **Belmont Public Library Staff**

### **Coordinator of Children's Services**

Deborah Borsuk

### **Coordinator of Technology & Technical Services**

Ellen Girouard—Co-Secretary

### **Coordinator of Reference & Public Services**

Lauren Pfendner

### **Circulation Supervisor**

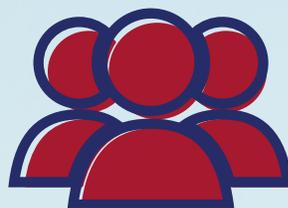
Lisa Cassidy

# a **SNAPSHOT** of the **BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**FY19**

**254,833**

PEOPLE  
VISITED  
THE LIBRARY



**16,478**

TOTAL  
REGISTERED  
BORROWERS



**29,754**

QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED BY  
REFERENCE  
LIBRARIANS



**BELMONT**

**PUBLIC**

**LIBRARY**

[BELMONTPUBLICLIBRARY.NET](http://BELMONTPUBLICLIBRARY.NET)

617-489-2000

[ASKBELMONT@MINLIB.NET](mailto:ASKBELMONT@MINLIB.NET)

[@BELMONTLIBMA](https://www.facebook.com/BELMONTLIBMA)



**FY19**

# library HIGHLIGHTS compared to PAST YEARS

**648,076**

TOTAL  
COLLECTION USE

up 20%  
from 542,004  
in FY15

DIGITAL  
CIRCULATION

over  
**50,000**

over 125%  
increase  
since FY15

54 in FY14  
— up more  
than 500%

TOTAL ADULT  
PROGRAMS

**278**

ATTENDANCE  
AT ADULT  
PROGRAMS

an increase  
of 160%  
from FY14

**3,350**

# BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY

## over TIME

FY15

TO

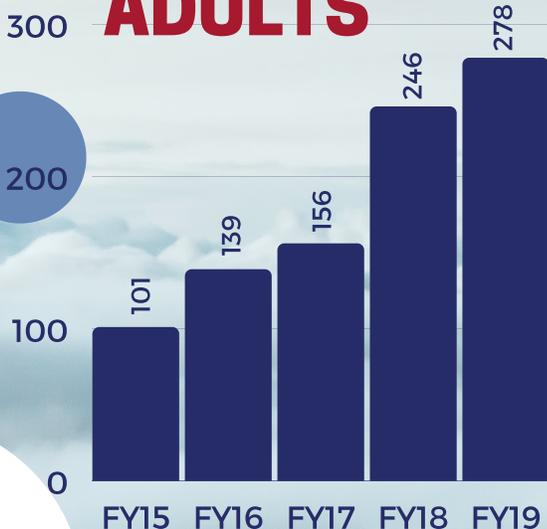
FY19

patrons borrowed ...

TOTAL COLLECTION USE OF  
PHYSICAL & DIGITAL MATERIALS



for  
**ADULTS**



patrons attended ...

TOTAL LIBRARY PROGRAMS



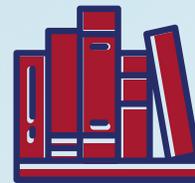
for  
**KIDS  
and  
TEENS**

# did you know?

## BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY

STATEWIDE,  
BELMONT IS  
**10th**

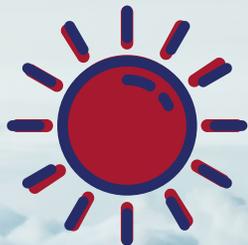
FRAMINGHAM = 644,636  
WINCHESTER = 524,937  
WALTHAM = 500,844  
SOMERVILLE = 412,012  
CONCORD = 355,611



IN FY19

**648,076**

total collection use



IN FY20  
**summer reading**  
for all ages

APPROX.  
**700 users**

COMPLETED  
**1,900 activities**  
AND SPENT OVER  
**16,000 minutes**  
READING

# new INITIATIVES and HIGHLIGHTS from 2020

## Food for Fines

completes its first year

The library became one of the largest contributors to the Belmont Food Pantry, helping to provide meals to Belmont families.

## New Services & Collections

Ever expanding services include the vinyl LP collection, lendable technology like WiFi hotspots, the Great Belmont Puzzle Takeaway, belhop: Belmont Holds, Personalized, & more!

between March and June 2020

**over 700**

## Care Packages

given to Belmont residents

total digital circulation

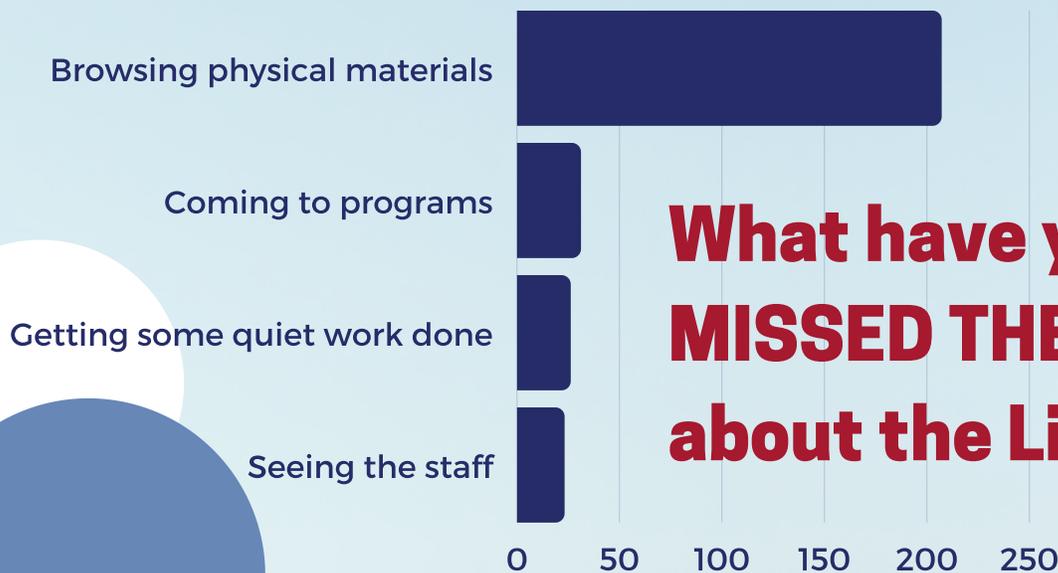
**over 140,000**

– highest in library history!

# long range plan SURVEY RESULTS

part  
ONE

From 288 patrons  
between August  
and October 2020



**What have you  
MISSED THE MOST  
about the Library?**



**What DIGITAL  
RESOURCES  
have you used  
while the Library  
has been closed?**

\*Other databases such as Ancestry.com,  
Consumer Reports, and Lynda.com

# long range plan SURVEY RESULTS

part  
TWO

From 288 patrons  
between August  
and October 2020

## The TOP FIVE most-used DIGITAL RESOURCES

while the Library has been closed

1. OverDrive and/or Libby
2. Virtual programming
3. hoopla
4. Kanopy
5. Acorn TV



## If the Library could INCREASE OFFERINGS in a specific area, what would be your TOP choices?

1. eBooks
2. Audiobooks
3. Streaming TV/movies
4. Digital magazines
5. Library of Things
6. Newspapers & periodicals
7. Something else



# long range plan SURVEY RESULTS

part  
THREE

From 288 patrons  
between August  
and October 2020

**Are there ANY SERVICES  
that we have offered during  
the closure that you think  
we should OFFER PERMANENTLY?**



# long range plan SURVEY RESULTS

part  
FOUR

From 288 patrons  
between August  
and October 2020

**Are there things that the  
Library offers NOW that  
you would like to see  
EXPANDED in the next 5 years?**



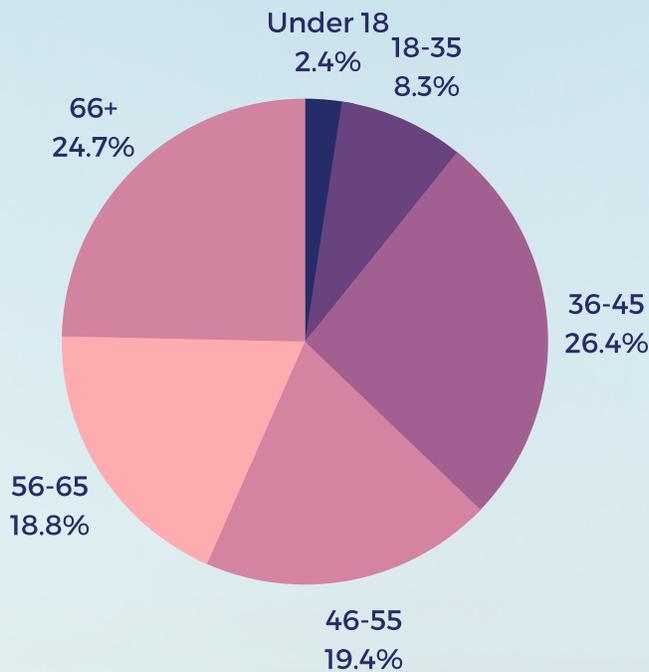
# long range plan

# SURVEY demographics

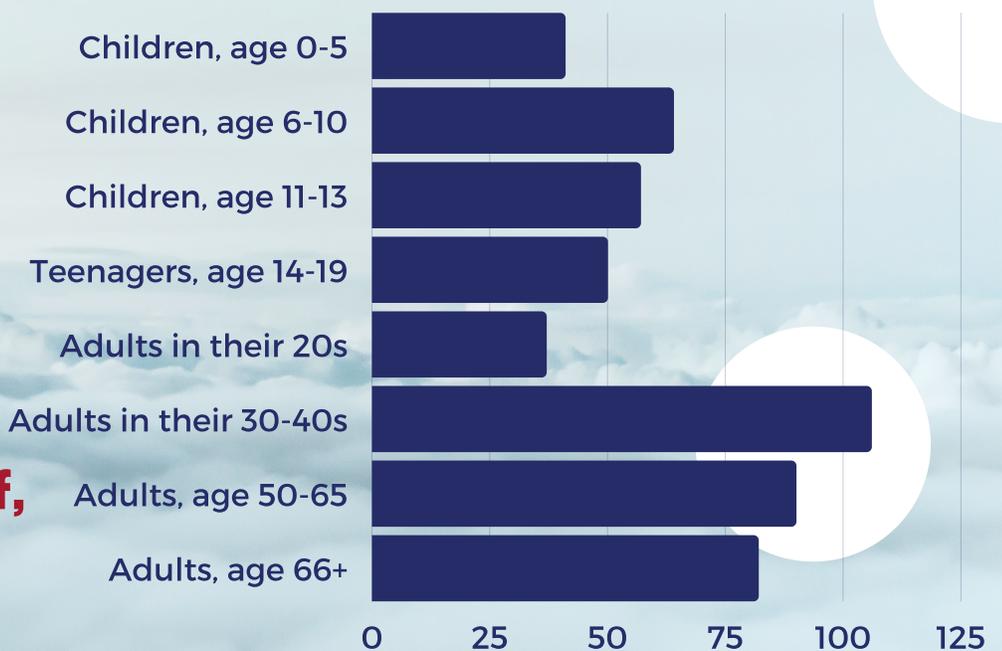
part  
FIVE

From 288 patrons  
between August  
and October 2020

My  
age is:



In my home,  
including myself,  
there are:



# references

1

Belmont Public Library. (2020). Long Range Planning Survey 2021-2026.

<https://belmontpubliclibrary.net/library-survey/>

2

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. (2020). Library Statistics.

<https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/library-statistics/>

**BELMONT**

**PUBLIC**

**LIBRARY**

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617-489-2000

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