



# Hanson Public Library

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[www.hansonlibrary.org](http://www.hansonlibrary.org)

**To:** Lisa Green, Town Administrator  
**From:** Karen Stolfer, Library Director  
**Date:** January 23, 2025  
**Re:** FY2026 Budget Cuts – Library Impact

The Hanson Public Library strives to enrich, engage, and strengthen the community. The Library provides a variety of services including educational and recreational programs for all ages; access to a large collection of print and digital materials; the ability to borrow non-traditional items such as mobile hotspots, jigsaw puzzles, yard and board games, STEAM learning kits, musical instruments, crafting equipment, and household tools; discount passes to local museums; early literacy programs; free wifi; research and technology assistance; printing/copying services; bookable meeting spaces; volunteer opportunities; and delivery to homebound residents.

Budget cuts would have a devastating effect on library services. The Library is still short 10 staffing hours from budget cuts in 2010 and is spread thin when it comes to having enough staff to meet the public's demand for services. Maintaining adequate and safe staffing levels is already a challenge, and a further reduction in funds would exacerbate this situation. Should FY26 budget cuts become a reality, the Library would have to reduce staffing hours, eliminate entire positions, and/or limit its hours of operation, and the benefit patrons receive from the services described above would be significantly impacted.

Specifically, any cuts that lead to the Library opening less than 40 hours or 5 days per week, spending less than 16% of our budget on materials, or receiving a FY26 operating budget below \$536,524 would result in Hanson losing library state aid funds, unless guidelines are met for a waiver granted at the discretion of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. When reviewing waiver applications, it is important to note that the Board does not look favorably on cuts to the Library that are disproportionate relative to changes in other town departments and the town's budget as a whole. If the Library is not certified for the state aid program, virtually all programming would need to be eliminated and residents would be restricted to accessing materials owned by the Hanson Library, since neighboring libraries cannot lend items to residents of a non-certified municipality.

The Library is a well-used resource. Nearly 40% of the town's residents have a library card. Seniors and families with young children rely heavily on the Library for learning, socialization, and recreation. Input gathered from residents during our recent planning process shows Hanson's need for a "community hub", a role the Library is perfectly suited to embrace. In addition to the impacts described above, budget cuts to the Library would lessen opportunities for residents to meet, gather, socialize, and learn together. Although these impacts may be subtler, they would affect the overall well-being of the Hanson community.