



STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2030

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Executive Summary

The role of libraries in today's communities is shifting. Libraries, long known for being places strictly for education are now places where local citizens can gather for entertainment, information, crafting, listening to lectures, seeking solitude, and more. Further, the libraries of today and tomorrow will be increasingly virtual spaces offering media and resources to anyone looking for connection. The Hackettstown Free Public Library seeks to meet these changes head on and offer forward-thinking and responsive collections and services to meet the ever-changing needs of community members. The staff and trustees of the Hackettstown Free Public Library endeavor to create a unique and diverse community resource encompassing access to materials, educational opportunities, and dynamic physical and online spaces.

To aid in the continued development of community resources, the Hackettstown Free Public Library Board of Trustees and Hackettstown Library staff engaged in a strategic planning process to help identify the community needs, pinpoint library strengths and weaknesses, and create a measurable plan to enhance library services and collections.

The library utilized professional research and resources on strategic planning best practices. Library staff engaged in several avenues of research and community analysis to help establish community needs, trends, and service interest.

The following methods were used:

- Demographics research utilizing Census data and American Community Survey data
- General survey of the community
- Survey of Library Staff
- Survey of Library Board of Trustees



Summary Goals

To accomplish this vision and mission the library's strategic plan focuses on five goals:

- GOAL 1:** Amplify library outreach to foster deep-rooted relationships with the community at large, including organizations and businesses.
- GOAL 2:** Provide and promote meaningful, substantive content and experiences relevant to every segment of our community.
- GOAL 3:** Work to increase funding and fundraising and make the library a worthy recipient for giving.
- GOAL 4:** Invest more in continuing education for staff with a focus on foreign language and tech skills.
- GOAL 5:** Improve services, facilities, and accessibility while keeping small-town charm.

The Library's Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, Library Director, and staff will work together to accomplish these goals over the next four years by following a path of objectives and tactics that address both current and future needs. This plan will pave the way for exceptional library service that will delight Hackettstown residents for years to come.



Mission and Values

Our Mission

The mission of the Hackettstown Free Public Library is to enrich the lives of all members of our community by providing opportunities for learning and entertainment, cultural enrichment, access to information and the preservation of knowledge for future generations.

Shared Values

These values will guide our work:

- We make Hackettstown a better place. The library's collections, staff, services, and facilities accommodate the interests and needs of our community.
- We inspire and facilitate lifelong learning, early childhood education and love of reading, and general information literacy.
- We help people connect. We offer programs, resources, and services that help people understand the world
- We embrace change. Tradition is not our mission. We are eager and excited to launch new initiatives and incorporate best practices to improve all that we do.
- We celebrate the community's diversity and talents. The library thrives in a culture of intentional inclusion where all Hackettstown residents feel welcomed, valued, and engaged.



Goals

The Hackettstown Free Public Library's goals address the strategic priorities, issues, and aspirations identified by participants, library leaders, and staff during the planning process. These goals serve as a roadmap for the next few years along with renewed commitment to address changes in the way people learn and work and seek and consume information. Library staff and trustees are committed to improving the library and creating exceptional service for all Hackettstown residents.

Although these goals do not cover all the library's work, they are intended to set a strategic direction for the life of this plan. The goals will remain constant while objectives, action steps, and measurements may evolve.



Goal 1

Amplify library outreach to foster deep-rooted relationships with the community at large, including organizations and businesses.

Objectives:

1. Renew and strengthen partnerships with community, educational, and cultural organizations.
2. Increase relevancy in the community through constant outreach.
3. Work with the Board of Education to ensure every child enrolled has a library card.

Measuring Success:

1. Have library staff members do outreach events an average of every other month, beginning in January of 2026.
2. Work to ensure that all local businesses are aware that they are entitled to a library card.
3. Work with school administration to ensure every public school student in Hackettstown has the opportunity to apply for a library card by September 2026.



Goal 2

Provide and promote meaningful, substantive content and experiences relevant to every segment of our community.

Objectives:

1. Offer innovative new services and collections, reflecting the necessary mix of digital, streaming, and print content.
2. Celebrate Hackettstown's cultural and social history through library collections, programs, and events.
3. Increase the variety of program offerings across all age groups.
4. Expand services for Spanish language speakers.

Measuring Success:

1. Provide more funding for digital and streaming offerings starting in 2026.
2. Work more closely with outreach and nonprofit organizations that service the Spanish-speaking population.
3. Develop a new program series every 6 months, starting in June 2026.



Goal 3

Work to increase funding and fundraising and make the library a worthy recipient for giving.

Objectives:

1. Create a comprehensive marketing and branding effort.
2. Improve social media presence and relevance.
3. Increase donations and grant funding through creative means.

Measuring Success:

1. Implement a marketing guide for outreach and social media by September 2026.
2. Increase the number of e-newsletter subscribers to 700.
3. Apply for at least two grants per year starting in 2026.
4. Work with the Friends of the Library on new, innovative ways to fundraise.



Goal 4

Invest more in continuing education for staff with a focus on customer service, foreign language, and tech skills.

Objectives:

1. Develop an organizational culture that enables every staff member to achieve and excel.
2. Assess staff workflow in relation to community needs and pursue increased staffing if needed.
3. Leverage staff member strengths to support the work of the library.
4. Continuously revise policies and procedures to ensure they work for the library's patrons and staff.

Measuring Success:

1. Offer staff more continuing education opportunities, especially in the realm of technology and foreign language.
2. Increase staff presence at the front desk to avoid staff burnout and patron wait times.
3. Compare and contrast policies and procedures periodically with other libraries in the Main Alliance.
4. Encourage more collaboration between staff and staff at other Main Alliance libraries, including committee work.

Goal 5

Improve services, facilities, and accessibility while keeping small-town charm.

Objectives:

1. Continue to update 10-year capital plan with new quotes for library carpets, roof, windows, and other physical plant needs.
2. Work with staff to maintain “cozy” feel of the library while ensuring modern technology access.
3. Work on better flow for collections within the building.
4. Develop ways to make building more accessible for all residents.

Measuring Success:

1. Review status of individual capital projects throughout each year.
2. Update interior of the building with financial help from Friends of the Library.
3. Stay up to date on latest trends in library tech.
4. Consider joining purchasing cooperatives to guarantee better rates on capital expenses.



Community Survey Results

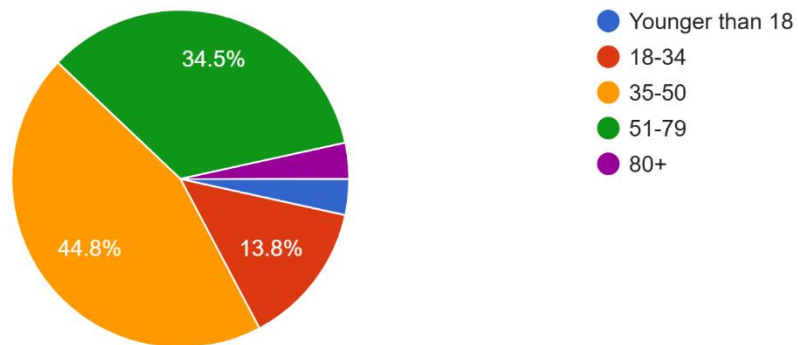
Summary

The library conducted a community survey as part of the Strategic Planning process, receiving 106 responses from the community. This survey helped the library to obtain insightful data and perspectives of the Hackettstown community regarding the library and how the community currently uses the library. The library's survey included 21 different questions, ranging from usage levels and favored services to areas for improvement and desired services and programs. The major results of the questions are included here below.

Summary of Question Answers

What is your age group?

29 responses



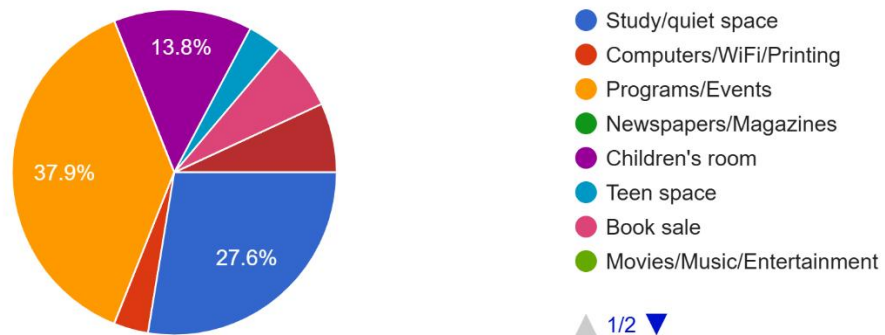
Which of the following best describes your use of the library?

29 responses



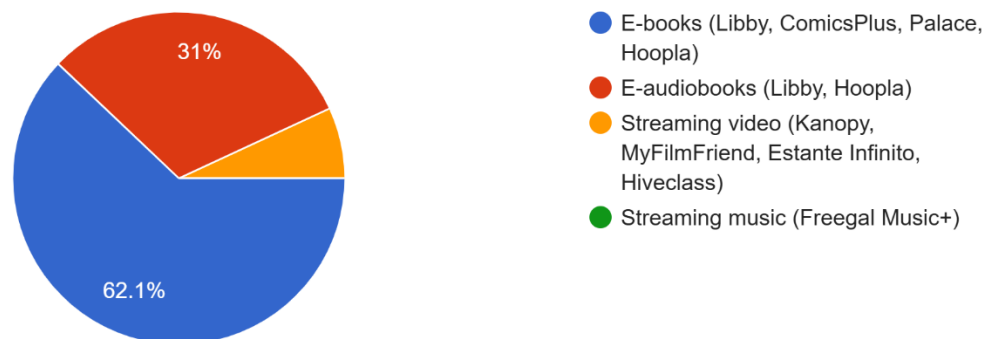
During your visits to the library, which of the following is most important to you and your family?

29 responses



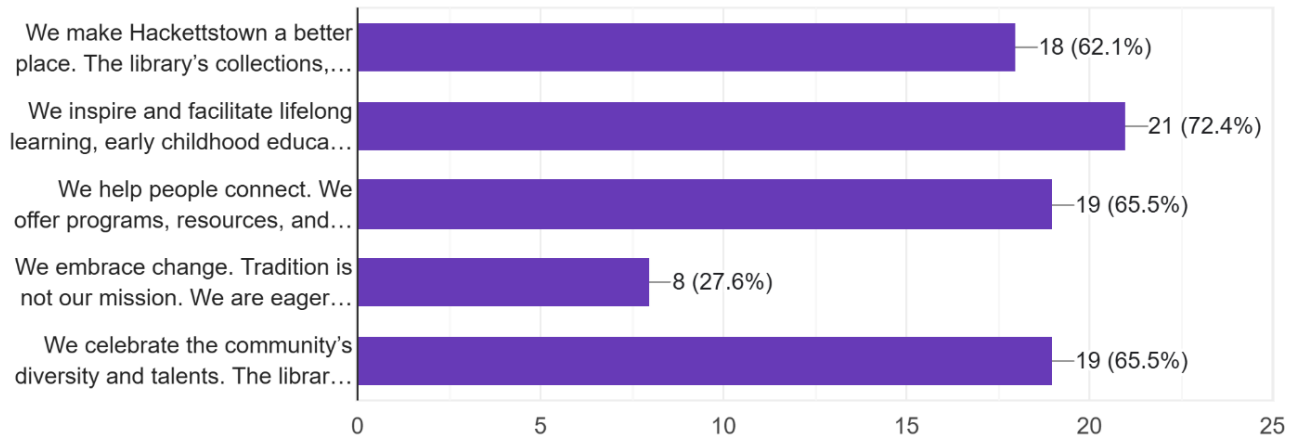
If you use virtual/digital services with the library, which of the following is most important to you and your family?

29 responses



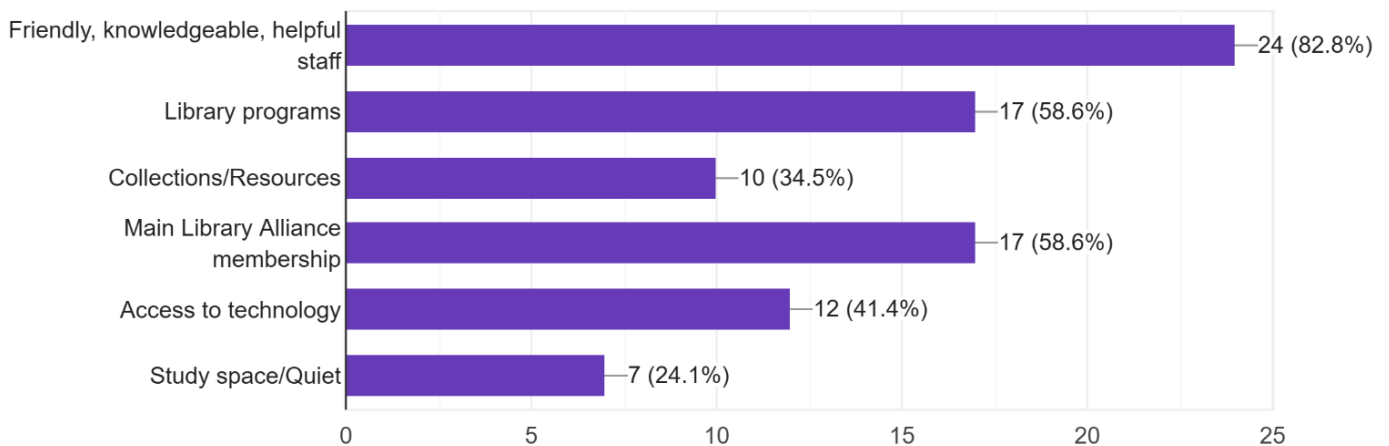
Please pick up to 3 of the most important library shared values

29 responses

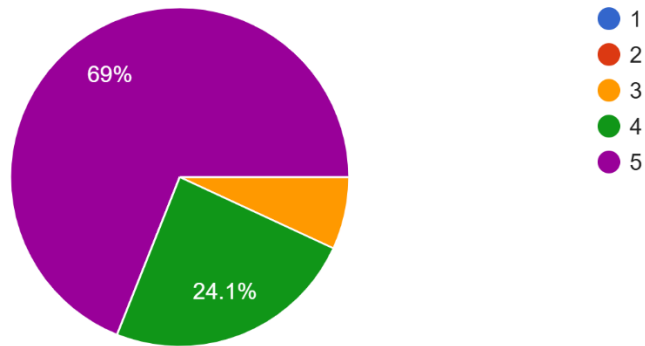


Please pick up to 3 of the most important library strengths

29 responses



On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Hackettstown Free Public Library?
29 responses



Key Findings

- Library users love the staff and programs.
- While quiet and study space is important, it is something we need to work on.
- Barriers to use: Physical space limitations, on-site parking.

Open Ended Question Summaries

What are the library's strengths?	In what areas can the library make improvements?
Knowledgeable, helpful, friendly staff	On-site parking
Collections	Increase physical space
Innovative programs	Better signage
Access to Main Library Alliance materials	

Staff Survey Results

Library staff were also surveyed as part of the strategic planning process. It is important for all staff to have a stake in the planning process as well as implementation of the goals and objectives for the organization. Staff experience, institutional knowledge, and understanding of the community are integral to forging a practical and community responsive plan for the library.

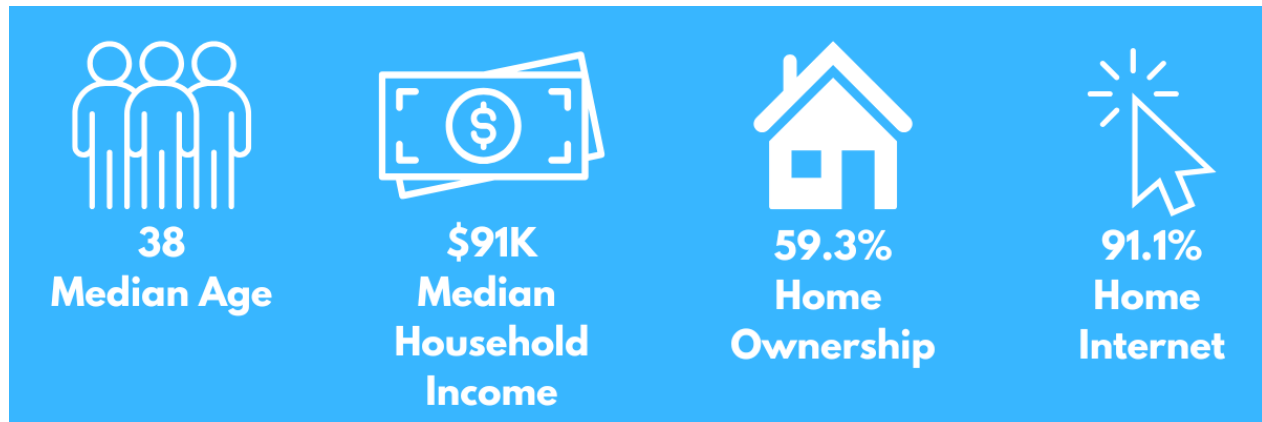
An open-ended survey was conducted with staff with a variety of questions concerning the organization – strengths, weaknesses, suggestions, etc. The following is a summary of the most cited input in different areas of the survey:

Key Findings

- Areas of strength in the library
 - Customer service
 - Access to computers/printing
 - Programming overall
 - Acting as a community space
- Organizational challenges
 - Physical space limits
 - Lack of storage
 - Little interest in certain programs
 - ADA compliance
- Other suggestions
 - Focus on technology/language training for staff
 - More Spanish titles in the collection
 - Fax machine/better document scanning functions
 - Improved physical space usage/design
 - Working with certain organizations/businesses in town

Community Portrait - Hackettstown

Hackettstown, New Jersey is a town of 10,143 located in Warren County.



INCOME

The median household income in Hackettstown is \$91,250. About 7.8% of residents live below the poverty line.

ORIGINS AND LANGUAGE

More than 63% of the Hackettstown population is White, followed by 25% Hispanic or Latino. 16.8% of residents are foreign-born, which is higher than the national average of 13.8%. 25.4% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

CITIZENSHIP

As of 2023, 90.1% of Hackettstown, NJ residents were US citizens, which is lower than the national average of 93.4%. In 2022, the percentage of US citizens in Hackettstown, NJ was 91.4%, meaning that the rate of citizenship has been decreasing.

SCHOOLS

Hackettstown has two public elementary schools, one public middle school, and one public high school. Approximately 20% of the population is enrolled in kindergarten through high school.

EDUCATION

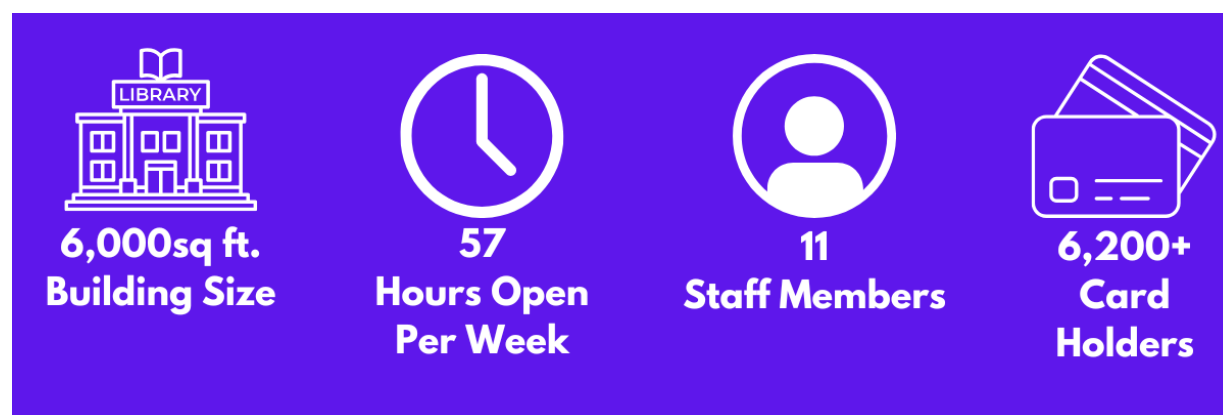
93% of residents have a high school degree or higher, and 34.8% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

COMMUTING

The mean travel time to work is 30.9 minutes. Additionally, 4.45% of the workforce in Hackettstown, NJ have "super commutes" in excess of 90 minutes.

Snapshot of the Hackettstown Public Library

The Hackettstown Free Public Library has over 50,000 physical and virtual items in its collection, bolstered by even more titles available via streaming services and electronic resources. Hackettstown Free Public Library cardholders have access to millions of items through our own collection and the Main Library Alliance, a cooperative comprised of over 50 libraries in Morris, Somerset, Essex, Warren, Union, and Hunterdon Counties. Main's mission is to lead and encourage collaboration, resource sharing, staff development and innovation by providing high quality, cost effective shared services to member libraries for their communities. Main aspires to help member libraries and the communities they serve to readily access a rich spectrum of resources.



2024 SERVICE STATISTICS

51,921 items circulated (physical and digital)
1,898 public computer sessions
1,585 WiFi sessions
6,267 registered borrowers

2024 PROGRAMMING

212 programs for children
67 programs for teens
279 programs for adults
5,377 total program attendees

2024 MATERIALS & RESOURCES

29,386 print books
793 audiobooks
5,979 DVDs
41 newspaper/magazine subscriptions
8 electronic databases
5,787 ebooks
3,958 eAudiobooks

2025 Hackettstown Library Board Members & Staff

Library Board of Trustees

Rachel Marlowe - President
Erikka Bahnuk– Vice President/Mayor’s Alternate
Kathy Mayberry – Treasurer
Kerry Munson – Board Secretary/Superintendent’s Alternate
Debra DeFazio – Trustee
Joseph Fisher – Trustee
Lorien Babajian – Trustee

Library Staff

Jerry Galante – Director
Victoria Vulcano – Head of Circulation/Bookkeeper
Celine Ward – Technical Services Library Assistant
Kristen Kurack – Teen Services Library Assistant
Rebecca Weisman –Children’s Services Library Assistant
Michaela Bennett – Library Assistant
Kelly Brenner – Library Assistant
Mary Dean – Library Assistant
Evelyn Pilipenko – Library Assistant
Amor Principe – Library Assistant (Bilingual)
Helen LaForge – Library Page

Sources and Survey Questions

Data Sources

- 1) Data USA: Hackettstown, NJ (2025)
<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/hackettstown-nj>
- 2) QuickFacts: Hackettstown, NJ (2025)
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hackettstowntownnewjersey>
- 3) National Center for Education Statistics: Hackettstown Public School District (2023-2024)
https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?Search=2&details=1&ID2=3406300&DistrictID=3406300

Public Survey Questions

1. Do you have a Hackettstown Free Public Library card?
2. Are you a resident of, or do you work in, the town of Hackettstown?
3. If you answered “No,” what town do you live in?
4. What is your age?
5. Please describe your normal use of the library.
6. During your visits to the library, which of the following are the most important to you and your family?
7. If you use virtual services with the library, which of the following are most important to you and your family?
8. If you have visited the Hackettstown Library in the past three years, please describe how you felt about the facility. (Example: Clean, safe, easy to navigate, difficult to navigate) (open ended)
9. What could the library do to improve its space?
10. What do you value most about our community?
11. What do you value most about the library?
12. Please pick up to three of the most important library shared values.
13. Please pick up to three of the most important library strengths.
14. How does the library help you reach your goals?
15. What could the library improve overall?
16. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Hackettstown Library?
17. What local nonprofit organizations would you like to see the library partner with?
18. What kinds of programs would you like to see the library do?
19. Have you attended a program you would like to see us offer again?
20. If you answered "Yes" to the question above, what was the program?
21. Do you have anything else to share with the Library Director or Board of Library Trustees?

Staff Survey Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the most important service the library provides?
2. The mission of the Hackettstown Free Public Library is to “enrich the lives of all members of our community by providing opportunities for learning and entertainment, cultural enrichment, access to information and the preservation of knowledge for future

- generations. After reading the mission statement, what should be the primary goals of library staff?
3. What do you think are our strongest areas of service? Weakest?
 4. Which of the current library services need additional resources to perform more efficiently?
 5. Considering the current technology available in the library, what other technology would provide additional value to the community?
 6. Considering the programs and services currently offered, what others would you suggest?
 7. What enhancements could be made to programs and services to enrich the patron experience?
 8. What training or resources would help you serve patrons better?
 9. What three words would you use to describe the Hackettstown Public Library?
 10. What local non-profits or businesses should we partner with that we haven't already worked with?
 11. How do you envision the future of our library? What kinds of services would we be offering in 5 years?
 12. Please provide any other comments you would like to share with the library management and board.

Board Survey Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the most important service the library provides?
2. The mission of the Hackettstown Free Public Library is to "enrich the lives of all members of our community by providing opportunities for learning and entertainment, cultural enrichment, access to information and the preservation of knowledge for future generations." After reading the mission statement, what should be the primary goals of the library board?
3. What do you think are our strongest areas of service? Weakest?
4. Considering the programs and services currently offered, what others would you suggest?
5. Do you believe we have accomplished the goals of our previous strategic plan? If not, where have we fallen short?
6. What enhancements could be made to programs and services to enrich the patron experience?
7. What training or resources would help you serve the library better?
8. What three words would you use to describe the Hackettstown Public Library?
9. What local non-profits or businesses should we partner with that we haven't already worked with?
10. How do you envision the future of our library? What kinds of services would we be offering in 5 years?
11. Please provide any other comments you would like to share with the Director and the rest of the Board of Trustees.