

Long Range Plan 2025–2030



George Hail Free Library

Vision Statement	Mission Statement
<p>The George Hail Free Library envisions a future in which the library's collections, programs, services, and leadership help to ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the community has the opportunity to enjoy an intellectually and culturally rich life• That every community member, young and old, has the opportunity to experience the pleasure of reading and the joy of learning <p>That library users of all ages have free and equitable access to a safe space to learn, create, and share with the help of a friendly and helpful staff.</p>	<p>The George Hail Free Library is dedicated to advancing intellectual discovery, fostering lifelong learning, and enriching the lives of all Warren community members. The library's goals are to provide a variety of resources, innovative programs, and welcoming spaces that promote community engagement and connection while adapting to evolving needs.</p>

Library service in Warren dates back to the 1790s. A reading room was opened to the public in January 1871. Located in a building at the northeast corner of Main and Market streets, it was incorporated as "The Warren Public Reading Room Association." In 1877, the name was changed to the Warren Public Library and it was housed at the corner of Main and Baker streets.

In 1882, Martha Hail, the widow of prominent Warren citizen George Hail, made a bequest of \$12,800 to the library in memory of her husband. The name was then changed to the George Hail Free Library. It was not until 1888 that enough money was raised to erect a building on the library's present site at 530 Main Street. With a fund of approximately \$18,000, the building was constructed in the style of the famed architect Henry Hobson Richardson. The beamed interior and the stained glass windows are characteristic of the Victorian period while the structure's exterior incorporates castle-like elements from Romanesque Revival architecture in the treatment of granite walls and rounded arches.

A substantial renovation and restoration project costing approximately \$250,000 was done in the late 1970s. At that time, a room on the second floor was dedicated as the Charles Whipple Greene Museum with the children's room and staff room relocated to the basement. The first and second floors were restored

to their original Victorian design.

Today, an eight-member Board of Trustees - with two of its members appointed by the Warren Town Council-governs the George Hail Free Library. There is also a Friends of the Library volunteer group, which assists with fundraising. Although not a town department, the library receives the majority of its operating revenue from an annual appropriation from the Town of Warren. These funds are supplemented by the Grant-in-Aid to Libraries from the State of Rhode Island and from monies generated by the library through sources such as grants, donations, and fund-raising events.

The George Hail Free Library is a participant in the Ocean State Libraries network, which means the library is able to provide patrons with materials not available on the premises through a shared network of public libraries in other cities and towns.

In addition to lending books, the library also lends DVDs, books on CDs, and video games. There are on-site computers available for public use as well as public wi-fi in and outside the library, to provide all patrons with free internet access.

In 2022, the library website was updated at www.georgehail.org, which furnishes patrons with additional information concerning the library, its services and the availability of materials.

Other services at the George Hail Free Library include children's programs, such as story times, programs geared toward families, teen programming, and adult programming such as book club groups, lectures, and musical events.

In accordance with a state mandate, in late 2002 the position of part-time reference librarian was added to the staff. Presently three positions, namely the director, youth services librarian and reference librarian, require library science degrees.

In 2025, the George Hail Free Library remains committed to its mission, to meet the educational, informational, recreational and now the technological needs of its patrons within the constraints of its budget



Warren History

Warren, Rhode Island is a small community of approximately 11,100 residents located on the eastern side of Narragansett Bay. It is the smallest town in Bristol County, Rhode Island, with a land mass of 5.8 square miles. Geographically, Warren is bordered by Barrington to its north and Bristol to its south. Its eastern limits border the town of Swansea, Massachusetts, and its western boundary is formed by the Palmer and Warren Rivers.

Warren, at one time, was a town attractive to immigrants, which led to certain areas developing into ethnic neighborhoods. Although these neighborhoods are less evident today than fifty or even twenty years ago, their relationship to the evolution of Warren is important. Imaginary geographical boundaries divide the town into several regions such as the North End, South End, Downtown, Metacom Avenue, and East Warren and Touisset. Each section has special needs and concerns which will be examined so that the library can

respond accordingly.

The North End has seen succeeding ethnic populations come and go. This area had high levels of ethnic concentrations which settled the region, then, in later years, moved on. Redevelopment and restoration projects have been undertaken to revitalize the town's 19th century mill, factory tenements, and older or historic homes.

The South End, on and off Main Street, is an area featuring mostly single family homes along with several upscale condominium complexes. Development over the last few years has been mainly in-fill housing, which maintains the area's character.

The George Hail Free Library is located in the downtown area. In addition to homes, many historic, this area contains numerous businesses, retail and antiques shops, and restaurants and is considered a first class example of an old New England business district. It remains to this day the center of operation for town citizens and features town offices located in Town Hall (just north of the library). Downtown is also the Government Center, once the site of Joyce Street School, which now houses the police department, the main branch of the fire department, and branch offices of the state Registry of Motor Vehicles and the state Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Another significant area that has seen improvements and development in recent years is Water Street, which runs parallel to the Warren River. This street is the site of the Town Beach and waterfront-related businesses, and now features a Town Wharf along with shops, restaurants, and artists' studios and residences.

Also of note are two renovated mill complexes on Cutler Street off Child Street that have attracted small retail and other businesses along with artists' studios and a gallery.

The Metacom Avenue area, which developed randomly on rural farmland, is lined with fast food outlets, small commercial plazas, and other sales-related establishments and is considered the town's newest commercial center.

Touisset, in the easternmost section of town, was once primarily agricultural, with a summer colony at its point. Today, the area has evolved into a year-round community. Touisset continues to add single-family homes and small housing developments. Nevertheless, much of its rural character has been preserved through purchase of development rights to farmlands.



Demographics

Population

As of the 2020 U.S. Census, Warren is home to 11,125 residents. The population is composed predominantly of adults, with 86.6% of residents over the age of 18. The town has a significant older demographic, with 24.5% of residents aged 65 and older. Children under the age of 18 now comprise 13.4% of the population, reflecting a decline from 20.7% in 2010. The median age in Warren is 46.4 years, higher than the state median of 40.2 years, indicating an aging population.

Ethnically, Warren is predominantly white, comprising about 89.9% of the population. African-Americans account for roughly 1.4%, Asians for 0.7%, Hispanic or Latino residents for 3.7%, and individuals of mixed or other racial backgrounds for 4.8%. Approximately 16.2% of residents speak a language other than English at home, highlighting a modest but important segment of multilingual households.

Economic Landscape

The median household income in Warren, as of 2023, was \$89,722, a significant increase from \$54,609 reported in the 2010 Census.

Employment is strong, with 66.4% of residents over the age of 16 employed across various sectors, including healthcare, education, construction, and retail. However, approximately 9.2% of families live below the poverty level, highlighting areas of economic need.

Warren had 4,962 households in 2023, with 59% being single-family, detached homes. The median home value in 2024 was \$492,500, and the average monthly rent was \$1,742. Rising housing costs reflect the town's growing appeal but may pose challenges for lower-income residents.

Education

Warren residents demonstrate strong educational attainment, with 90.4% of adults aged 25 and older holding a high school diploma and 36% possessing a bachelor's degree or higher.

Approximately 1,025 students aged three and older are enrolled in educational institutions in Warren. Of these, 59 are in preschool, 73 in kindergarten, 385 in grades 1 through 5, 230 in grades 6 through 8, and 278 in high school.

Warren is part of the Bristol-Warren Regional School District. Local elementary students attend the Hugh Cole School, which enrolled approximately 517 students as of 2024. Kickemuit Middle School, located in Warren, enrolled 230 Warren students, while Mt. Hope High School in Bristol had 278 Warren students.



Collection and Circulation

Table 1. This table demonstrates the number of items that are borrowed by either adults or kids, teens, or online. The figures represent the circulation of books, periodicals, DVDs, music CDs, books on CD, video games, and downloadable items. **As you can see circulation of actual physical items has decreased but our online services are growing.**

CIRCULATION STATISTICS					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Adult	20,599	15,118	17,663	16,026	14,562
Kids	8,443	3,680	8,033	9,064	9,581
Teens	928	589	883	862	1,083
<u>Online</u>	7,713	8,951	10,017	10,613	11,155
Total	37,683	28,338	36,596	36,565	36,381

Table 2. The Library offers a variety of programs to its community. This table records attendance at story hours, family programs, and outreach to the community, adult programming and the like. **During the pandemic, programs were halted but we have now resumed and are adding to our program services.**

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Adult	320	203	549	467	355
All Ages	0	0	431	155	240
Kids	1959	0	935	1907	2387
Family	943	70	63	148	391
Teens	110	15	81	310	553
Total	3,332	288	2,059	2,987	3,926

Table 3. This table shows the number of reference questions asked and answered. Reference questions look for a specific author, title, or information on a particular subject or topic. It does not include

technical help with a computer or other business machines.

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Reference Questions	1,545	1,442	,2,176	3,928	1,472

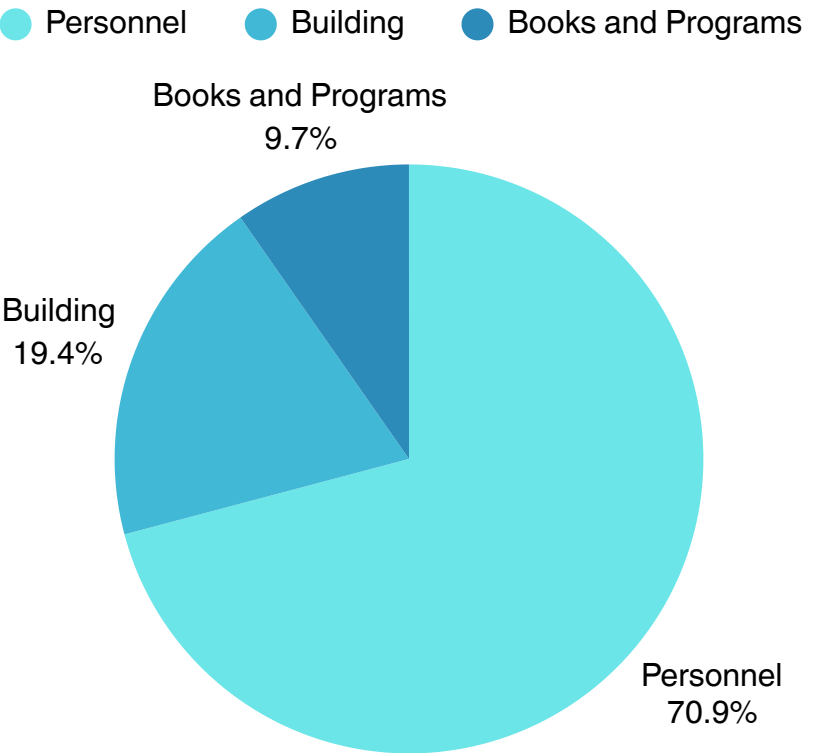
Table 4. The collection consists of books, videos, DVD's, audiobooks, reference materials and magazines. There has been a significant decrease in physical items at the library but this is related to a recent overall inventory to clean up our database as well as a move to invest more in technology rather than items to meet our patron's needs.

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY2024
Total Collection	23,012	22,934	18,796	17,311	17,296

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Budget

Here is a representation of how our income is spent in order to maintain the library. Our total income received versus the Rhode Island Library state requirements puts a constraint on our ability to manipulate the budget.





Statement of Community Needs

Based on the Warren Comprehensive Plan's recognition that the George Hail Free Library should continue to expand and update its resources, analysis of community feedback, and observations of other East Bay libraries, the following needs were identified:

- There is no separate meeting room for programming either for adults, children or teenagers.
- The lack of a separate meeting room limits attendance at children and adult programs to 30 people.
- There are insufficient quiet spaces for studying.
- Access to the upper floors is impossible for physically disabled people and the elderly.
- More parking is needed.



Goals and Objectives

Goal Number	Definition	Action Number	Action
1	Update furniture and wiring to allow for an increase in technology and make space more flexible for programming, quiet study, and collaboration		
		1.1	Upgrade main floor wiring receptacles to enhance safety for staff and allow for a different desk configuration.
		1.2	Purchase mobile, flexible furniture to enable reconfiguration of the main and second-floor for training, programs, and events.
		1.3	Replace the circulation desk with a modern, mobile option to accommodate technology needs.
		1.4	Replace and repair flooring around the circulation desk to withstand high traffic.
		1.5	Purchase mobile walls to create private meeting areas and support art exhibits.
2	Maintain the library's building with scheduled maintenance		

		2.1	Review building assessment and prioritize updates
		2.2	Create a calendar of building upkeep and continually access needs
		2.3	Continue to seek grant funding to mitigate costs
3	Inventory, evaluate, and update the historic collection and area in the Charles Whipple Greene Museum		
		3.1	Complete an inventory of the historical collection.
		3.2	Evaluate items and determine their alignment with the mission of the historical collection.
		3.3	Identify the most relevant documents and artifacts and seek funding for their preservation.
		3.4	Update storage and display cases to minimize deterioration of documents and artifacts.
		3.5	Install ways to mitigate environmental factors such as ways to reduce UV lighting and humidity
4	Take steps towards an addition to the library building or installing an elevator		

		4.1	Complete a feasibility study.
		4.2	If the study has positive results, obtain three RFQs from recommended architects.
		4.3	Approach the town council to gauge interest in proceeding.
		4.4	Based on financial standing and town commitment, hire an architect.
5	Outreach programming for Seniors		
		5.1	Create a survey specifically for seniors to identify their needs
		5.2	Reach out to the senior center and establish programs and ways to assist members
		5.3	Develop an on-going program about technology for seniors
6	Revitalizing Friends Group		
		6.1	Maintain a Friend's group by soliciting membership and encouraging participation

		6.2	Assist with awareness and marketing
		6.4	Market membership to families
7	Expand the parking lot and add greenspace and/or storage		
		7.1	Contact the Historic Warren District Commission to obtain permission to demolish the house at 17 Croade St.
		7.2	Hire a demolition company and remove the house.
		7.3	Construct the parking lot and green space.
		7.4	Explore the purchase of an outdoor shed for seasonal storage.
8	Increase staff training to reflect new state standards		
		8.1	Develop a training calendar focused on customer service and technology skills.
		8.2	Provide opportunities for staff to attend conferences and workshops.
		8.3	Promote awareness of online training opportunities.

9	Implement new board bylaws to reflect new state standards		
		9.1	Establish a review calendar for updating library policies.
		9.2	Develop a trustee job description and solicit new board members as positions become available.
		9.3	Review and modify as needed terms and term limits.
		9.4	Provide initial training for new trustees.
10	Increase library funding		
		10.1	Explore public / private / academic partnerships.
		10.2	Request additional funds from town.
		10.3	Review assets for merchandising.



Board of Trustees

June 2025

Kate Barry, President
Carol Gafford, Vice President
Cheryl Caggiano, Treasurer
Theresa Baus, Secretary
John Chaney
Paula Rooks
Derrik Trombley
Clara Mendonca

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