

THE WESTPORT LIBRARY

Annual Impact Report

Fiscal year 2025–26 · July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

What changed because The Westport Library was here — told through the people behind the numbers.

INSIDE THIS REPORT

Letter from the Board President and Executive Director

00 · Welcome: The year in impact

01 · Learn

02 · Listen & Respond

03 · Create

04 · Connect

05 · Your Investment at Work

Thank you to our donors

Sources and notes

OUR VISION

A future-focused library committed to lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, and creativity.

OUR MISSION

The Westport Library empowers individuals and fosters a connected, inclusive community through welcoming spaces, open exploration, the free exchange of ideas, and equitable access for all.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we look back on another remarkable year at The Westport Library, we have much to celebrate and even more to be thankful for.

Every day, people come through our doors seeking new experiences, fresh perspectives, and opportunities to connect with one another. Whether it's a child discovering a love of reading, someone learning a new skill, or neighbors coming together for a program or conversation, these experiences remind us why the Library matters so much to our community.

This Annual Impact Report reflects what we accomplished together. Through the numbers, stories, and experiences shared in these pages, we hope you'll gain a deeper appreciation of the Library's value and the many ways it enriches life in Westport.

Of course, none of this would be possible without your support. While the Town provides essential funding, the generosity of our donors makes so much more possible. Your gifts help us expand access to books and learning, bring extraordinary programs and cultural experiences to our community, and find new ways to serve people of all ages.

We are deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, community partners, Town officials, members of the Board of Trustees, and dedicated staff. Above all, we thank the people of Westport for embracing this Library, supporting its mission, and helping shape the Library's future.

We are proud of what we've accomplished together and look forward to another year of learning, discovery, and possibility.

With gratitude,

Bob Boroujerdi
President, Board of Trustees

Bill Harmer
Executive Director



CHAPTER 00

Welcome

What changed because The Westport Library was here — told through the people behind the numbers.

FY2025–26 · THE YEAR IN IMPACT

Westport showed up.

401,495
visits

2
every minute we're open

136,274
questions answered

40
every hour we're open — 7,000 more than last year

336,313
items borrowed

1.6
every minute we're open, in every format

OUR REACH

Six times

Westport visits its Library at six times the national rate.



Visits per person, per year

48% of Westport residents — nearly 1 in 2 — carry a Library card: 10,158 adults and 3,343 children.

OPEN LONGER, FOR ALL OF WESTPORT

+44%

Our weekly opening hours are 44% longer than the Connecticut state average.

Open seven days a week, and until 9 pm four nights a week: 69 hours a week, compared with a state average of 48. More hours means more of Westport can fit the Library into their day — before work, after school, and on Sundays.

NEW THIS YEAR

Sensory early opening. Quieter hours before we open, for families who find the Library's busy spaces overwhelming.

NEW THIS YEAR

Deaf & Hard of Hearing story time, with the HELLO Lab at UConn.

THE YEAR IN OUTCOMES

What changed for Westport.

One result for each goal of our Strategic Plan — not just how many came, but what changed for them.

GOAL 1 · LIFELONG LEARNING

90%

of Summer Learning families say their child kept their academic skills

GOAL 2 · ADAPT TO PATRONS' NEEDS

1 in 5

program ideas you shared became a Library program

GOAL 3 · CREATIVITY

1 in 4

Verso Studios users came back from an earlier year to make more

GOAL 4 · A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

56%

of civic program attendees intend to become more engaged in their community





CHAPTER 01

Learn

An agency for lifelong learning — where it begins with reading and never really ends.

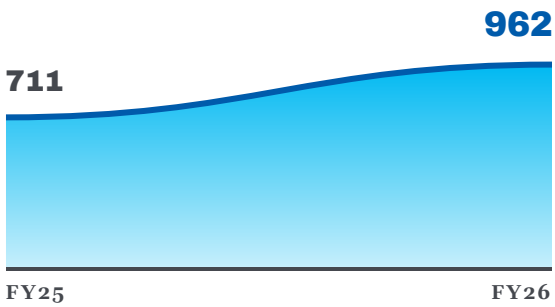
Strategic Plan Goal 1 · Foster engagement in lifelong learning.

SUMMER READING · AGE 18 AND UNDER

+35%

More of Westport's kids kept reading all summer.

962 children and teens signed up for summer reading, up from 711 — keeping books in their hands through the months when reading skills slip most.



SUMMER LEARNING CLUBS AND CAMP EXPLORE

357

children. 13 courses. Skills kept, curiosity grown.

Small-group, teacher-led camps for nearly 200 families — from cooking and flight simulators to wilderness skills and a history of spies.

90%
say their child kept their academic skills over the summer

83%
say their child is more likely to keep pursuing what they discovered

100%
say their child's understanding of the topic grew

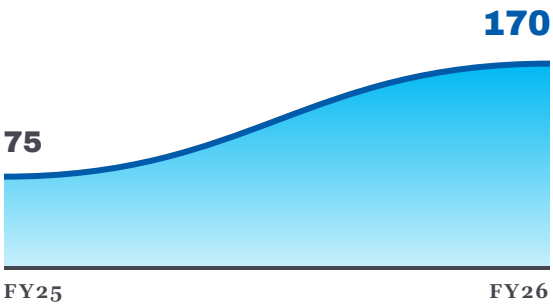
100%
of Camp Explore families saw more interest in the topic

SUMMER READING · ADULTS

+127%

And the grown-ups? They more than doubled.

Readers found their way in through curated displays, participatory events and newsletters built to invite discovery — and they read more than ever. Adult summer readers rose from 75 to 170, and books read, logged and rated rose 62%, from 1,108 to 1,793.



VERSO UNIVERSITY

79%

walked away with a new learning or understanding.

They came for the course — 60% enrolled in order to learn — and they left knowing more.

1,862
registrations

119
courses

74%
plan to put what they learned to use

READING · E-BOOKS

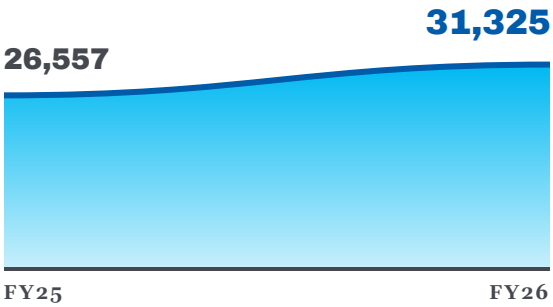
+18%

more e-book checkouts this year. Reading is at the core of learning at the Library.

31,325 e-book checkouts this year, up from 26,557. Westport reads wherever it is: on the train, at the beach, at bedtime.

80,106
e-book, e-audio and e-video checkouts in all — a record

+4,768
more e-books borrowed than last year

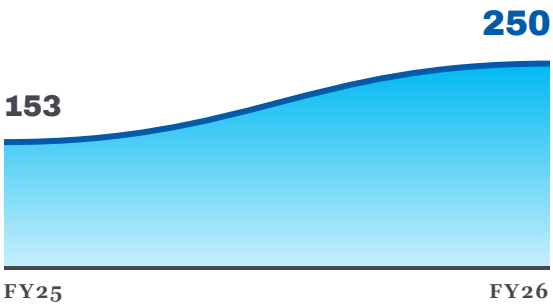


HOMEWORK HELP · CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

+63%

Teen tutoring rose 63% — from 153 to 250 teen tutors helping Westport's kids.

High school students drop in to the Children's Library to help elementary and middle school students with their homework — free, near-peer help from teens who know the work.



+97
more teen tutors than last year

578
teens came to StudyFest for exam-time study help, across 6 events

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

1,000+

people joined the Library for AI education — public conversations paired with hands-on learning.

The "AI & Us" symposium offered a full day of Verso University panels: 90% left more confident in their understanding, and 91% learned something helpful. Other highlights included Raising AI-Ready Kids with Westport Superintendent of Schools Tom Scarice; fully subscribed VersoFest studio workshops creating and editing new music; and fireside chats with Nobel Prize–winning economist Daron Acemoglu and Eline van der Velden, creator of the first AI actress.

IN THEIR WORDS

I knew nothing about the database and found the seminar extremely helpful. It's a tool I'd use.

Program attendee · Anyone Can Use: Genealogy · October 2025



CHAPTER 02

Listen & Respond

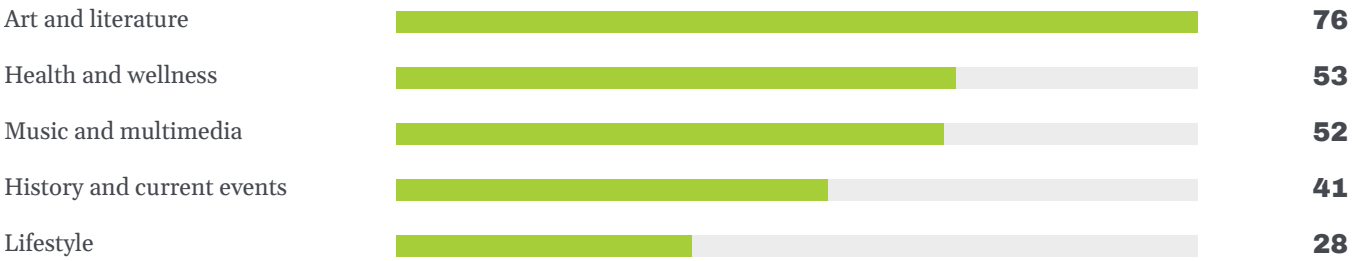
This was the year the Library built more ways to hear from Westport — and Westport used them.

Strategic Plan Goal 2 · Reflect, evolve, and adapt to patrons' needs.

PROGRAM IDEAS

What you asked for is what we offer.

Of the 271 ideas you sent us this year, these five topics led — and each became Library programs, with a few standout examples here. The other 21 ideas were about business and entrepreneurship (12) and technology and innovation (9).



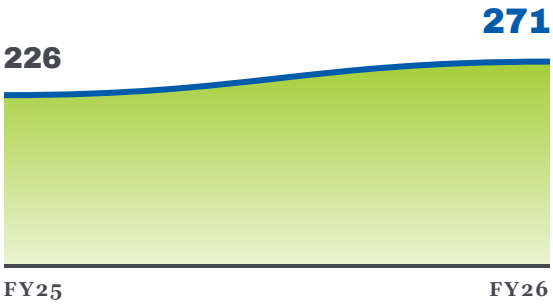
- **Art and literature:** John Sayles on his new book, *Crucible* · January 2026
- **Health and wellness:** Saugatuck Scribes: *Unvaccinated in America* · June 2026
- **Music and multimedia:** Sunday Concert: The Oxalis Trio · April 2026
- **History and current events:** Pulitzer Prize–winning historian Edward J. Larson, *Declaring Independence* · November 2025
- **Lifestyle:** Okay to Delay Device Fair · April 2026

THE PROGRAM PORTAL

+20%

More ideas are coming in than ever — 271 this year, up from 226.

The year-round portal invites everyone into both the idea and the making of Library programs. 246 people sent ideas — 22% more contributors — and 1 in 5 ideas became a real Library program.



IDEAS THAT BECAME PROGRAMS

A filmmaker's national parks film	*Out There* screening and Q&A · July 2025
JazzFC's offer of a free concert	JazzFC Concert · December 2025
Westport Department of Human Services	Vince Benevento book launch · January 2026
A community member	Emotional Intelligence with Marc Brackett · May 2026

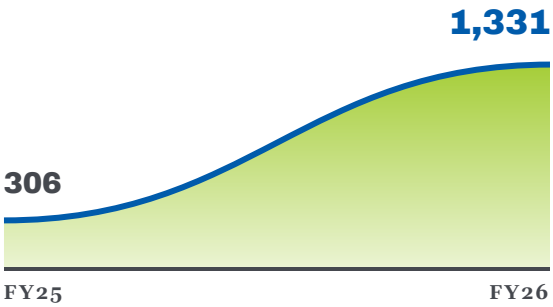
Attendees rated these four programs 9.5 out of 10, on average.

PROGRAM SURVEYS

4×

1,331 program attendees told us what they think — four times the year before.

Short surveys after programs tell us what people valued, and what changed for them: 1,331 responses, up from 306.



WHAT WE HEARD YOU SAY

Westport loves its programs — and is still a community of readers.

9.2/10
Satisfaction, steady: program attendees have rated us above 9 out of 10 for more than a year

18%
New faces: program attendees at the Library for the first time, up from 14%

94%
Library cardholders: even at our programs, Westport is a community of readers

LISTENING, THEN ACTING

What we changed in response

Ideas, interests and feedback are now gathered in one place, ready to shape programs, collections, services and staff training in Year 2.

- **Teen Gaming.** Drop-in gaming in Brooks Place, answering clear interest from under-25s — now building a loyal audience.
- **Deaf & Hard of Hearing story time.** Built with UConn's HELLO Lab, filling a gap in southwest Connecticut.
- **Sensory early opening hours.** For families who find the Library's busiest spaces overwhelming.
- **Collection requests.** 260 of the 329 titles patrons asked for were added to the collection — 79%.

WAYS TO BE HEARD

Three ways Westport shapes its Library.

271
ideas through the program portal, any time of year

1,331
program surveys — and growing

24/7
an always-open feedback form for ideas and comments

IN THEIR WORDS

It's wonderful to see this kind of collaboration between our library and the creative talent we have in our town … a center for the incubation of ideas.

Program attendee · *Screen Time, The Musical*, a program proposed through the portal · July 2025



CHAPTER 03

Create

Westport doesn't just come here to learn. It comes here to make things.

Strategic Plan Goal 3 · Inspire and support creativity.

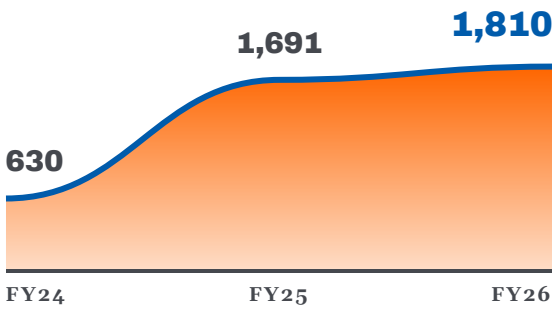
VERSO STUDIOS

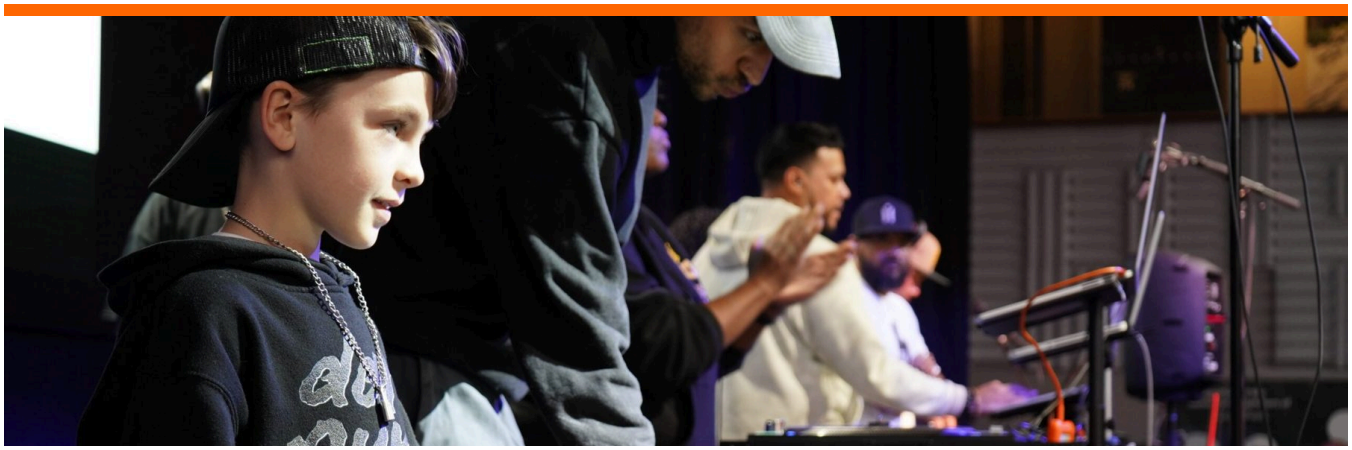
1,810

hours Westport spent making things in Verso Studios this year — nearly three times as many as two years ago.

877
studio sessions, more than double the 394 two years ago

154
people creating in the studios, up from 58





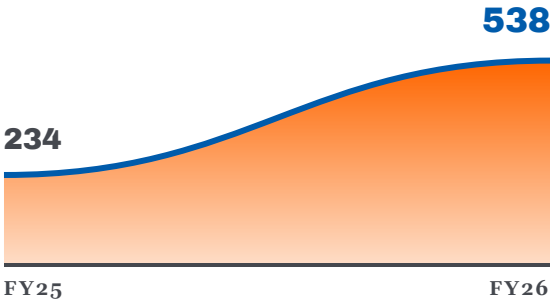
VERSO STUDIOS · PODCASTING

538

podcast sessions this year — more than double last year.

1,071
hours recording podcasts this year

#1
Verso Studios' podcasting tool is now the most-booked resource across our media options

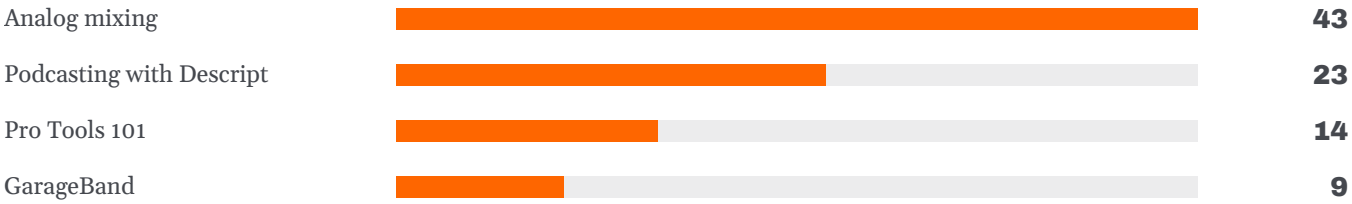


VERSO STUDIOS · FROM TRAINEE TO CREATOR

1 in 4

studio users came back from an earlier year — nearly double the year before.

People learn in a free Community Access Training, then return to record, mix and edit work of their own. 216 free trainings this year, including:



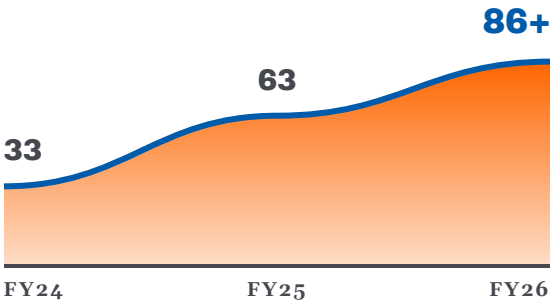


VERSO STUDIOS · MADE IN WESTPORT

86+

original works made by Westport in Verso Studios this year — more than double two years ago.

Podcasts, songs, short films, voiceovers and narrated stories, made by community members with free tools and free training.



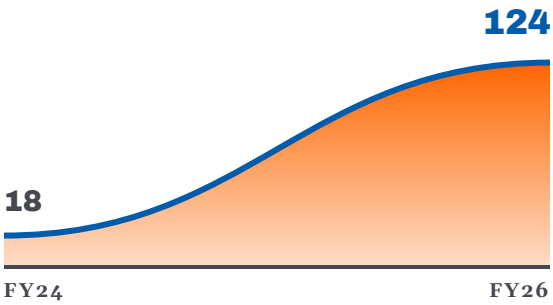
49
podcasts, the largest share

+37%
more original works than last year

THE MAKERSPACE

7×

as many people making things in the MakerSpace as two years ago — from 18 to 124.



602
sessions booked by people working on their own, up from 80 two years ago

138
staff-led MakerSpace trainings, up from 25 two years ago



FEATURE · BY BILL HARMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VersoFest: Five Years of Music, Culture, and Learning

How The Westport Library is bringing people together to learn, create, and experience culture in new ways.

3,200+
registrations · 17 programs · 6 days

93%
see the Library as a hub for innovation

97%
see it as a place for cultural engagement

63%
plan to pursue more creative activities

In March 2026, nearly 700 people filled The Westport Library's Trefz Forum for a sold-out performance by Wyclef Jean. Parents came with children. Teenagers stood alongside adults. People danced, sang, and cheered. At one point, Wyclef invited children onto the stage. Later, he told the crowd, "This library will never be the same."

It was a remarkable night. But it was also something more. It showed what a public library can become when it opens its doors to music, art, and culture. For five years, VersoFest has helped The Westport Library explore that idea.

Since 2022, our annual music and media festival has brought musicians, writers, filmmakers, artists, and creative leaders together with people of all ages. From The Wallflowers, Chuck D, and John Densmore of The Doors to Wyclef Jean, Ani DiFranco, and Susanna Hoffs, the festival has given our community access to some of the most creative voices in music and culture.

But VersoFest is much more than a concert series. At its heart, VersoFest is about education and lifelong learning. We believe people learn in many ways. They learn by reading books, listening to music, watching films, asking questions, making art, and sharing ideas. Culture is part of how we learn about ourselves and the world around us. That is why music, media, and the arts belong in a modern public library.

When an artist talks about writing a song, we learn about storytelling. When a filmmaker shares how a film is made, we learn about creativity and technology. When a musician talks about the history behind their work, we learn about the people, events, and ideas that shaped our culture.

These artists are not just performers. They are also teachers. And through VersoFest, people do more than watch and listen. They can take part in workshops, meet creative professionals, try new technology, and learn skills they can use in their own lives. That connection between learning and doing is central to our mission.

It is also what makes VersoFest possible at The Westport Library. Our Trefz Forum can become a classroom, a concert hall, a movie theater, or a place for public talks. Verso Studios gives people access to tools for recording music, making videos, and creating podcasts.

Together, these spaces and programs allow the Library to do more than host cultural events. We can help people create culture, too. Our fifth annual VersoFest brought more than 3,200 registrations for 17 programs across six days. The festival included live music, artist talks, films, hands-on workshops, and programs exploring how new technology is changing music and media.

The results tell us that people see the Library in new ways. In our 2026 festival survey, 93% of respondents saw the Library as a hub for innovation. Another 97% saw it as a place for cultural engagement. And 63% said they plan to pursue more creative activities of their own. One attendee shared that a hands-on AI music workshop taught them enough to create a song for an upcoming podcast. That is the kind of learning we want to inspire.

In 2026, the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County also honored VersoFest with a Mark Award for its work in arts, culture, and community life. The recognition marked another milestone in the festival's growth over five years.

Of course, books, reading, research, and quiet study remain at the heart of The Westport Library. They always will. VersoFest does not replace that work. It builds on it. A modern library should help people discover new interests, explore ideas, learn skills, and connect with one another. Sometimes that happens through a book. Sometimes it happens through a conversation, a workshop, a film, or a song.

Culture is not something extra we do at the Library. It is one of the ways we help people learn.

That is what five years of VersoFest have shown us. A public library can be a place where people not only discover the work of others, but find the tools, ideas, and confidence to make something of their own. And that is a future for libraries worth building.

— Bill Harmer, Executive Director

IN THEIR WORDS

A memorable night with a full house, a terrific documentary about our national parks, a remarkable young film maker … and lots of laughter and joy.

Program attendee · *Out There: A National Parks Story* · July 2025





CHAPTER 04

Connect

The place where Westport gathers, meets, talks and takes part in community life.

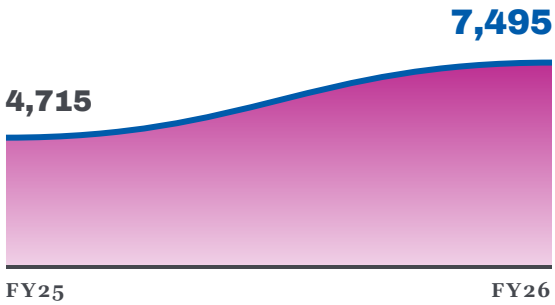
Strategic Plan Goal 4 · Create a more connected community.

CHILDREN AGES 6–11

+59%

more children ages 6–11 came together at Library programs this year — 7,495, up from 4,715.

New recurring series — Friday Fun, Pokémon and Silent Book Club — and a children's librarian dedicated to this age group.



280
programs for ages 6–11, up 55% from 181

2,000+
joined our first Book Character March Madness bracket



WHERE WESTPORT GATHERS

~20,000

meetings held at the Library this year — Scouts, clubs and community groups among them.

People studied, worked, played and planned here. Our rooms are where Westport's groups meet, free and open to the community.

48,418
people at in-person Library programs

1 in 8
Library visits was to a live program

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS · OUTCOMES

After a civic program, Westport is ready to get involved.

Our civic programs do more than inform. Attendees told us what changed for them.



A HOME FOR ALL

97%

experience the Library as a welcoming space.

Whoever you are, you are welcome here — and more people are discovering that for the first time.



COMMON GROUND

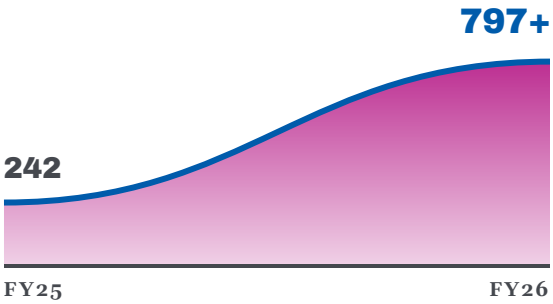
4×

as many Common Ground programs — 8 this year, up from 2.

Free and open to every idea, so Westport can talk, and work, together. With partners including TEAM Westport, Westport Sunrise Rotary and CT Mirror.

797+
attendees, up from 242

+229%
more people at Common Ground programs



WEEK AFTER WEEK

Our biggest audience is the people who come back every week.

Free weekly and recurring groups are the Library's largest program audience — a steady, reliable place to see familiar faces and connect through learning. Among them: Chess Club (46 sessions), Spanish Conversation (44 sessions, one of six language groups), Sit & Stitch (24 sessions, new this year), Lego Club (every month), five book groups and two writers' groups.

20
groups

400+
sessions

4,704
people joined

IN THEIR WORDS

It was very well organized and definitely helped foster a sense of belonging knowing there are events like these in the community!

Program attendee · New Haven Chinese Cultural Cooperative concert · September 2025



CHAPTER 05

Your Investment at Work

What Westport's public and private support makes possible — in books, rooms, programs and help, free for everyone.

WHAT IS YOUR LIBRARY WORTH?

$31.72M

in estimated annual value to the Westport community.

A family leaves the Children's Library with a stack of books. Upstairs, someone uses a conference room for a Zoom job interview. Down the hall, a local nonprofit holds a meeting. A student asks a librarian for help finding reliable information for a school project. In Verso Studios, another patron learns how to record a podcast. These are everyday moments at The Westport Library. But each provides something valuable that a community member might otherwise have to spend money on.

BEYOND DOLLARS

This is what we can do when we all help support the Library. Our $31.72 million estimate shows what people might have to pay for these books, programs, and services someplace else. It doesn't mean people saved that much money.

We can't put a price on a child learning to love books or a community member taking pride in learning a new skill.

That is where our work has the most value and impact. We help people learn, grow, and connect.

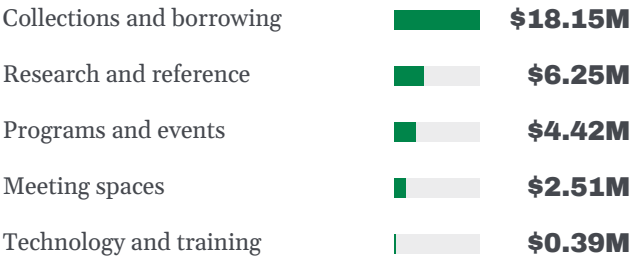
HOW WE COUNTED

17 services. Every use counted. Each given the price you'd pay elsewhere.

We used the idea behind the American Library Association's Library Value Calculator, which helps people see what Library services might cost elsewhere.

$9,200

Every hour we're open, $9,200 in free books, answers, rooms and programs goes to Westport — that's what this year's use would cost elsewhere.



Estimated annual value $31,719,490

EVERYDAY VALUE

What people might otherwise pay for — free at the Library.

The Library's value goes far beyond books and other materials.

$18.2M
in borrowing — 257,045 books, plus music, movies, digital books and interlibrary loans

$2.51M
in meeting and conference rooms for nonprofits, community groups, Town departments and residents

$3.41M
in answers — librarians answered 136,274 questions people could trust

$4.42M
in programs — 44,090 visits to adult and youth programs, and 162,688 views of program recordings

113,000+
uses of our online research tools

4,500+
times our staff helped people with computers and technology

FINANCIALS · FY2025–26

Where the money comes from, and where it goes

The Town of Westport provides the foundation. Donors, investments and events make the rest possible. Most of every dollar goes to the people who serve Westport, and to the books, programs and spaces they make possible.

Revenue & support

Town appropriation	$5,939,493
Investment income	$1,488,173
Contributions & grants	$1,088,768
Special events (net)	$555,990
Fines & fees	$524,842
Miscellaneous income	$55,691
Café & retail (net)	$29,714
Total revenues	**$9,682,671**

Expenses

Compensation	$5,375,459
Materials & programs	$1,323,315
Occupancy	$602,583
Depreciation	$539,223
Information technology	$209,309
Professional fees	$139,165
All other (insurance, office, conferences, travel, misc.)	$318,585
Total expenses	**$8,507,639**

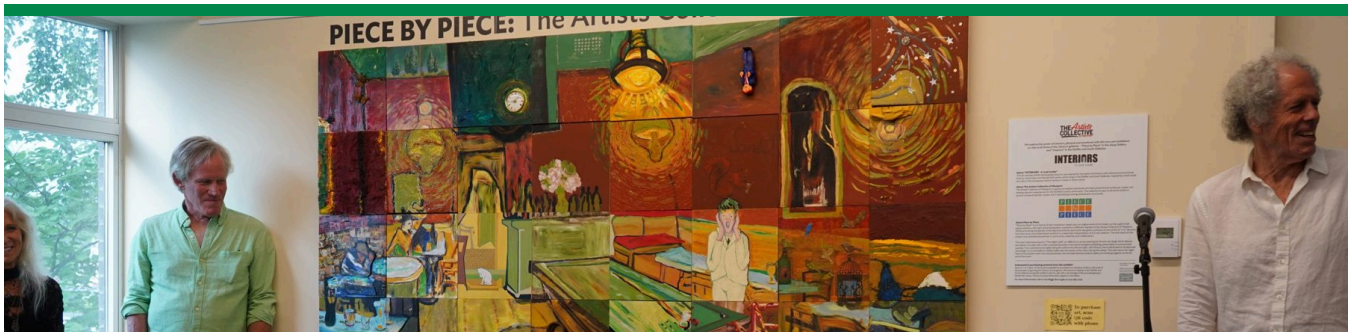
Net assets without donor restrictions	$24,285,672
Net assets with donor restrictions	$5,862,653
Total net assets	**$30,148,325**

WITH GRATITUDE

893

donors kept The Westport Library free and open to all.

Every gift — from the Compo Circle to the Cornerstone Circle — is part of everything in this report. Thank you. To make a gift, visit westportlibrary.org/give.



FY2025–26 · WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you.

Everything in this report — every story time, studio session, conversation and book — was made possible by the people below. Your generosity keeps The Westport Library free and open to all.

Cornerstone Circle

$50,000+

Anonymous
Jocelyn & Walter Barandiaran
Robert Elson
Julie & Rob Haroun
Terry & Lance Lundberg
Paula & Tom McInerney
Roz & Bud Siegel
Estate of Jerry A. Tishman
Winston Foundation, Inc.
Lauri & Michael Friedland
Marylin & Arthur Levitt

Legacy Circle

$25,000+

Nancy Jones Beard Foundation
Steve & Diane Parrish
The Pollack Family
Tannen Foundation Inc.

Leaders Circle

$10,000+

Anonymous (2)
The Berg Family
DNR Laboratories
Gerber Family Foundation
Lydia & Richard Kalt
Markus-Quinsee Family Foundation
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Stephanie Ercegovic & Brian Foster
Joan & Ted Gillman

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Ann Sheffer & Bill Scheffler
Suno Inc.
Verrill Dana, LLP
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Jesup Circle

$2,500+

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Candace & Tom Banks
George Barrett
Andrea & Evan Berkley
BMW of Bridgeport
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Broder Orland Murray & DeMattie LLC
ComForCare Home Care
Common Circles
Connecticut Humanities
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Nancy & Glenn DeKraker
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WSHU
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$1,000+

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Lee & Duane Bollert
Diana Bowes & James Torrey
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Aileen & Jeffrey Brill
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Peter Cawley
Patrice & Lloyd Clareman
Leslie Close
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Connecticut Orthopedics
Connecticut Retina Consultants
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Ellen Lautenberg & Doug Hendel
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The Dave Hokin Foundation
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Williams Loughridge
Lovely Bride
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Lux Bond & Green
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Nancy Zucconi
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Marite Ashley
Sonia Attkiss
Elizabeth Auber
Meredith Bach
Suzanne Bannister
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Richard Wingate
Russell Wolfson
Paula & Joseph Ziskin

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$250+

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Katie & Robert Augustyn
Cathy & Paul Badeski
John F. Beckmann
Tracy Benton
Julie & Paul Bonington
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Ellen & Paul Cahill
Melissa & Adam Cahn
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Amanda & Vincenzo Castellano
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Ann Jones Cole
Ive & Bob Covaci
John C. Davidson
Ginger & Jim Donaher
Toni Donahue
Sabrina Eliasoph
Ekaterina Elson
Katlyn Engel
Meredith Gershon & Howard Fetner
Thomas Fiffer
Susan Finkelstein
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Sooo-z Mastropietro & Micah Goldberg
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Stacey Goodwin
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Barry Greenberg

Gregg Greenberg
Ilka Gregory
Bobby Groat
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Suzanne & Robert Harwood
Heather Hayes
Valerie & Jerry Held
Sheila & Adam Helfant
Myra Hess
Suzy Hooper
Janet & Leonard Horowitz
Caroline Huber
Donna & David Hyman
Courtney Jabaut
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Jennifer Joyce
Alysa & Jim Kabakow
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Shree & Ken Levin
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Stefanie & Stephen Shackelford
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Barbara Stevens & Jim Stoner
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John Van Zanten
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Robyn Levy & James Weisz
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UP TO $249

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Walmart Foundation

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Kawa Ni
Kindred Spirits
Kneads
Marcia Selden Catering
Parag Shah
Spotted Horse
Walrus Alley
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Heyman Endowment for International Videos
Reader's Digest Endowment for Books
Sheffer Endowment for Visual and Performing Arts
Smilow Endowment for Children's Services
John and Kay Stein Memorial Endowment

Tribute gifts

GIFTS MADE IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF SOMEONE

In appreciation of

Dr. Vikram Reddy
Marcia Schorer
Tessa Smith McGovern
Verso Studios

In celebration of

Joan Curran, on the birth of her grandson
Deanna Saltzman's birthday
Mark Silverstein's birthday
Stacy Waldman's birthday

In honor of

Stacy Bass & Wendy Brown
Maxine Bleiweis
Bruce Gaylord
Helen Guttenplan & Libraries
Bill and his fabulous team
Bill Harmer's 10 years anniversary leading the library
Sandy & Peter Kolbrener
The Librarians
Nick Maraglino
Steve Parrish
Rachel Rothman-Cohen
Sprinkles, Dazzle and Cupcake
Sharon & Andrew Tate
Julie Whamond

In memory of

Lester Becker
Adrienne Beckmann
Alan John Borner
Kathryn Brooks
Cindy Clarke
Jonathan Cunitz
Emily Duvoisin
Stephen Eliot
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Leonard & Margery Fisher
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Randy Herbertson - Co-Chair of the Development Committee as a non-Trustee member, pursuant to Section 4.3 of the Association's Bylaws.

Community partners

WESTPORT ORGANIZATIONS THAT MET, LEARNED AND GATHERED HERE

ABC of Westport
League of Women Voters of Westport
Near & Far Aid Association
Saugatuck Scribes
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Sip N Chat Group
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Startup Westport
Sustainable Westport
TEAM Westport
Town of Westport
Westport Annual Book Sale
Westport Artists
Westport Board of Finance
Westport Book Shop
Westport Center for Senior Activities
Westport Downtown Association
Westport EMS
Westport Fire Department
Westport Garden Club
Westport Girl Scouts
Westport Journal
Westport Parks and Recreation
Westport Public Schools and PTA
Westport Special Education Parents' Series
Westport Sunrise Rotary
Y's Men of Westport
Y's Women of Westport

FY2025–26 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Sources and notes

Where every figure in this report comes from, chapter by chapter. Fiscal year 2025–26 runs from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. Comparisons are with the year before unless a note says otherwise.

00 · Welcome

Westport showed up

401,495 visits, 136,274 questions answered (129,324 the year before) and 336,313 items borrowed, from the Library's FY2025–26 service statistics as reported to the Connecticut Public Library Survey. "Per minute" and "per hour" figures divide each total by the Library's 3,433 total annual service hours (Connecticut Public Library Survey; 205,980 minutes). Visits: 1.95 a minute, shown as 2. Questions: 39.7 an hour, shown as 40. Items borrowed: 1.63 a minute, shown as 1.6. Items borrowed include 256,207 physical items and 80,106 e-media.

Six times the national rate

Visits per capita: annual visits divided by population, as the State of Connecticut calculates it. Westport: 401,495 visits ÷ 27,996 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 estimate) = 14.3. National: over 800 million public library visits in 2023 (Institute of Museum and Library Services) ÷ a 2023 U.S. population of 334,233,854 (U.S. Census Bureau) = 2.4. Because IMLS rounds its total, the national rate is approximate (about 2.39–2.45); six times holds across that range.

Nearly 1 in 2 residents

10,158 adult and 3,343 child cardholders with a Westport address, from the Library's patron records, compared with the town's population: 13,501 ÷ 27,996 = 48.2%.

Open longer

Weekly opening hours: Westport 69 a week (Connecticut Public Library Survey, item 2.4), compared with a statewide average of 48 (Connecticut State Library annual statistics, 2025). 69 ÷ 48 = 1.44, shown as 44% longer.

What changed for Westport

Goal 1: Summer Learning Clubs and Camp Explore post-program surveys. Goal 2: program portal submissions. Goal 3: Verso Studios booking records (Skedda). Goal 4: Civic Engagement post-event surveys. All figures from the Library's Strategic Plan indicators, FY2025–26.

01 · Learn

Summer reading

Children's, teen and adult summer reading sign-ups and books logged, FY2025 compared with FY2026, from the Library's summer reading program records.

Summer Learning Clubs and Camp Explore

Outcome percentages from post-program surveys of participating families and students.

Teen tutoring and StudyFest

Near-peer tutoring: teen tutors (ages 12–18) helping students ages 6–11, 250 in FY2025–26, up from 153 in FY2024–25 (+63%). StudyFest: 578 teens across 6 exam-period events (630 across 4 the year before). Source: Program Statistics (annual "Track in spreadsheet"), FY2021–22 to FY2025–26. Students served is tracked inconsistently and is not reported.

Verso University

1,862 registrations and 119 courses, from Library program registration records. Outcome percentages from Verso University post-course surveys.

AI education

"AI & Us" symposium: 90% reported greater confidence and 91% learned something helpful, from the post-event survey.

Reading

E-book checkouts 31,325 (26,557 the year before, +18%) and 80,106 e-book, e-audio and e-video checkouts in all, from the Library's digital platform reports.

02 · Listen & Respond

The program portal

271 ideas from 246 people (226 ideas the year before), and the share that became programs, from the Library's program portal records.

Ideas that became programs

Four FY2025–26 programs that began as program portal submissions (Monday.com), with ratings from each program's post-event survey: *Out There* 9.6 (23 responses), JazzFC Concert 9.8 (25), Vince Benevento book launch 8.5 (7), Emotional Intelligence with Marc Brackett 8.7 (3). "9.5 out of 10" is the average across all 58 responses. Professional publishers' submissions are not included.

What you asked for

Ideas by topic from the Program Approval Form (WPForms), entries dated July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026: 271 ideas from 246 people (226 from 202 the year before). Art and literature 76, health and wellness 53, music and multimedia 52, history and current events 41, lifestyle 28, business 12, technology 9. Each example is an FY2025–26 program from the Program Submissions to Programs Overview.

Program surveys

1,331 survey responses (306 the year before) across all FY2025–26 surveys: post-event 879, civic engagement 149, Verso University 91, Summer Learning 30, Camp Explore 27, VersoFest 155. Satisfaction: 9.16 out of 10, above 9 for more than a year (shown as 9.2). First-time attendees: 18% in FY2025–26 (155 of 857 post-event respondents), up from 14% in FY2024–25. Library cardholders: 94% of program attendees who responded.

Collection requests

260 of the 329 titles patrons requested were added (79%), from the Library's purchase-request records.

03 · Create

Verso Studios and the MakerSpace

Hours, sessions, unique users, podcast sessions and Community Access Trainings, from the Library's room-booking system (Skedda): Media Space Usage Data, FY2023–24 to FY2025–26. Fiscal years run July to June.

Returning users

"1 in 4" means people who used Verso Studios in an earlier year and came back: 25% of users in FY26, 13% in FY25.

MakerSpace

Unique users compare the two full fiscal years FY23–24 (18 people) and FY25–26 (124 people): +106 people, about +589% (6.9×), shown as 7×.

Original works

Source: a project-by-project tally of Verso Studios original works, FY2023–24 to FY2025–26, built from the Raw Source Data tab of the Media Space Usage file prepared by Tory (Skedda bookings, FY2023–24 to FY2025–26). One work is one creator and one project; repeat sessions on the same project count once. Projects made by or for the Library are not included, which brings the tally's totals of 35, 67 and 90 to 33, 63 and 86. The count is a minimum: some recording-studio work is booked outside Skedda. FY2025–26: 49 podcasts, 8 songs and 29 other works (film, voiceover, narration).

VersoFest

More than 3,200 registrations (3,242) for 17 programs over six days, from the Library's program registry. 93%, 97% and 63%, from the VersoFest 2026 festival survey.

VersoFest feature

Written by Bill Harmer, Executive Director.

04 · Connect

Children 6–11

Program attendance for ages 6–11, FY2025 compared with FY2026, from Library program attendance records.

Where Westport gathers

Nearly 20,000 room reservations across meeting and conference rooms, from the Library's booking records. Program attendance as reported to the Connecticut Public Library Survey.

Week after week

20 weekly and recurring groups met 403 times, with 4,704 attendees in all, from Program Statistics, FY2025–26 (Weekly Recurring Groups). Largest by attendance: Italian Conversation (938) and Spanish Conversation (621).

Civic programs

56%, 59%, 72% and 77%, from Civic Engagement post-event surveys.

Feel welcome

97% figure comes from the VersoFest 2026 attendee survey and applies to VersoFest attendees. First-time attendees (14% in FY2024–25 → 18% in FY2025–26) from post-event surveys.

Common Ground

Partners: TEAM Westport and Westport Sunrise Rotary (committee members) and CT Mirror (program content). 2 programs and 242 attendees in FY2024–25; 8 programs and 797 attendees in FY2025–26. Three FY2025–26 programs have no attendance count, so the total is shown as "797+".

05 · Your Investment at Work

$31.72 million in value

FY2025–26 use of 17 services (Connecticut Public Library Survey, Library circulation, database and program records, YouTube Analytics), priced with values adapted from the American Library Association's Library Value Calculator. Not verified household savings or return per tax dollar. "$9,200 every hour" = $31,719,490 ÷ 3,433 service hours ($9,240), rounded down.

Financials

The Financial Report, FY2025–26 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). "All other" expenses combine insurance ($149,512), office expenses ($49,524), conferences ($31,971), travel ($8,921) and miscellaneous ($78,657).

Board and community partners

Board of Trustees: 2025–26 roster (Board photo sheet). Community partners: Westport organizations that used Library space in FY2025–26, from the Library's room-use records.

Donors

893 donors from the FY26 Impact Report donor list (Development, July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). A couple, family or family foundation listed on one line counts as one donor; anonymous donors are counted individually.

In their words

Patron quotes

The quote at the end of each chapter is a verbatim, anonymous comment from a post-program survey, matched to programs that began as program portal submissions (Program Submissions to Programs Overview, FY2025–26). Long quotes are shortened with an ellipsis (…); no words were changed.