



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

Approved by vote October 7, 2024; updated May 5, 2025

The mission of the Converse Free Library is to foster a love of reading in the Lyme community. In a welcoming environment, the Library provides services and resources that encourage learning, stimulate curiosity, and invite the sharing of ideas.

Strategic Priorities & Plans

- I. Meeting the Library Needs of an Evolving Community
 - a. Analyze and make use of patron responses to 2021 Community Survey (see Appendix B)
 - b. Prioritize sustainable initiatives when making facility and service decisions for the future
 - c. Continue to clarify school and public library relationship/expectations
 - d. **Timeline**—1 year from the date the Strategic Planning document is approved (deadline: 5/5/2026)
 - e. **Responsible parties:** Strategic Planning Committee members, Director, representative from each of the [other committees](#)
- II. Meeting Infrastructure Costs & Exploring Building Improvements
 - a. Visit and/or consult libraries who've completed renovations for ideas & consideration
 - b. Determine present needs and project future needs for capital improvements:
 1. More meeting & programming space needed
 2. Space for evolving collection
 3. Other needs to be defined
 - c. Identify sources of funding. Determine approaches to replenishing non-Town library funds
 - d. Seek out library design professionals to assess the building, explore possibilities, and provide estimates
 - e. Director will update and maintain spreadsheet of running totals and estimates with timelines

- f. **Timeline**—3 years from date the strategic planning document is approved (deadline: 5/5/2028)
- g. **Responsible Parties:** Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, Director

III. Evaluating Overall Library Staffing Needs

- a. Maintaining and Attracting a Professional Library Staff
 - i. Personnel Committee will research staffing of similar libraries & what's working
 - ii. Director will assess current tasks & configuration – what's missing/needed in our library and present updated configuration
 - iii. Execute a plan of action if changes are needed
 - iv. **Timeline** – 2 years from date the strategic planning document is approved (deadline: 5/5/2027)
 - v. **Responsible parties:** Personnel Committee, Director
- b. Developing a Succession Plan for Library Directorship
 - i. Establish a Succession Planning Committee to develop a thorough, practical plan for future Director searches and hiring
 - ii. **Timeline** – 1 year from date the strategic planning document is approved (deadline: 5/5/2026)
 - iii. **Responsible parties:** Strategic Planning Committee members, Director, and the Succession Planning Committee

Library Profile

Lyme was established by a charter in 1761; the first library was formed on January 20, 1778 and called “the Social Library in Lime.” In 1908, the town voted to support a public library called the Lyme Town Library. By the 1930s, the library had outgrown its space in the Lyme School and the town accepted a bequest to build a separate library building across the street in memory of Sidney Converse, to be called the Converse Free Library (CFL). It was completed in 1936. A large, new section was added to the building in the early 1980s.

The collection today includes close to 38,000 physical items to lend, in the form of books, periodicals, DVDs, books on CD, puzzles, games, and tools. In addition, the library provides access to tens of thousands of free resources through digital downloads, online databases, and a video streaming platform. The library functions in

cooperation with the school library, sharing its resources with the Lyme Elementary School through the efforts of the librarians in each building.

The library offers patrons access to downloadable eBooks, audiobooks and magazines through its membership in New Hampshire Downloadable Books, streaming video through Kanopy, and online access to The New York Times, including its popular Cooking and Games add-ons. The library also makes paper copies of *The New York Times* and *The Valley News* available in its Balch Reading Room daily. Online genealogy research sites are available to use with a library card. Planning for an online archive for local history research is ongoing and when complete will be included in the Digital Public Library of America and the statewide digital library archive overseen by the New Hampshire State Library.

Interlibrary Loan service offers access to books and other library materials from just about every public and academic library in New Hampshire as well as out-of-state libraries. The State Library's van service delivers items from these libraries right to the Converse Free Library twice weekly. In 2023, 6% of checked-out items were lent to other libraries for their patrons; in return, CFL patrons enjoyed nearly 700 books and other items borrowed from other libraries.

Converse Free Library delivers a wide variety of services to its small community. Some of its notable strengths include a devoted, active Board of Trustees; a knowledgeable and friendly staff; a facility with meeting rooms in frequent use; a robust calendar of programs for all ages; computers and related devices for staff and the public; 24/7 wireless internet inside and outside the building; an attractive, informative website and social media presence; art exhibits with work by local artists; and extensive collection of local history and authors. The library's Balch Reading Room attracts many work-from-home individuals who appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and reliable internet connection.

The library and community benefit from the outstanding work of the Friends of Lyme Library, whose fundraising, enthusiastic support, and innovative ideas provide programs for children and adults, furnishings and equipment, and generally enhance the services that the library is able to offer. Library volunteers provided nearly 400 hours of service to the library in 2023: covering and repairing books and discs, keeping our technology up-to-date, ensuring our shelves are neat and tidy, assisting with and presenting programs, lending clerical talents, and more.

The Policy Committee of the Board of Trustees works with the Library Director to review and update all library policies on a well-documented, rotating schedule. The Director maintains and updates Procedures for the smooth running of the library and maintains open communication with other town officials such as the Town Administrator, Select Board members, Chief of Police, Fire Department and FAST Squad, Emergency Management Director, School Principal and Superintendent.

Programs, services, and library news are publicized to the local community in a variety of ways: weekly messages posted to the Lyme ListServ and, on occasion, the Upper Valley ListServ, a semiregular newsletter sent to an email list and printed on request, the Lyme School newsletter, “Pulse of the Pride;” press releases and calendar items in local publications, on the library’s website and social media pages.

Converse Free Library’s total operating revenue for 2023 was \$261,581 (\$148 per capita) with \$215,503 (\$122 per capita) of the funding coming from Lyme taxpayers, the remainder from donations, grants, funds raised by the Friends of Lyme Library, and a trust fund. The library is open 6 days, 36 hours per week. The library employs one full time director plus two regular part time employees. The staffing level at CFL is 1.83 FTE (full time equivalent). The Library Director has a Bachelor’s degree with additional graduate-level coursework in library science, literature, and social work. One staff member has a Bachelor’s degree and the second staff member has a Master’s degree, both in other disciplines. The Library Director receives professional development opportunities through workshops and conferences.

Programming, Partnering, and Outreach

The library frequently partners with local committees, organizations, and businesses for programming, including but not limited to CommunityCare of Lyme, Lyme Parish Nurses, Lyme School, Lyme Nursery School, Conservation Commission, Lyme Historians, Lyme Utility Club, and the Lyme Foundation. It has also partnered with neighboring libraries to provide online programming to a greater number of library patrons. In the winters of 2022-23 and 2023-24, CFL partnered with Canaan Town Library and Plainfield Libraries to present a series of art history programs with Jane Oneail of Culturally Curious, Manchester.

Two book groups, organized and maintained by the Director, meet at least monthly: an online nonfiction book group and the Neighborhood Book Group, which reads fiction and meets in-person. Three other ongoing programs are offered on a weekly

basis and are open to the public: Mah Jongg Mondays, Tech Tuesdays, and Handcrafters Gatherings (Wednesdays). Lyme students enjoy afterschool programming such as monthly movies, chess club, and seasonal craft activities.

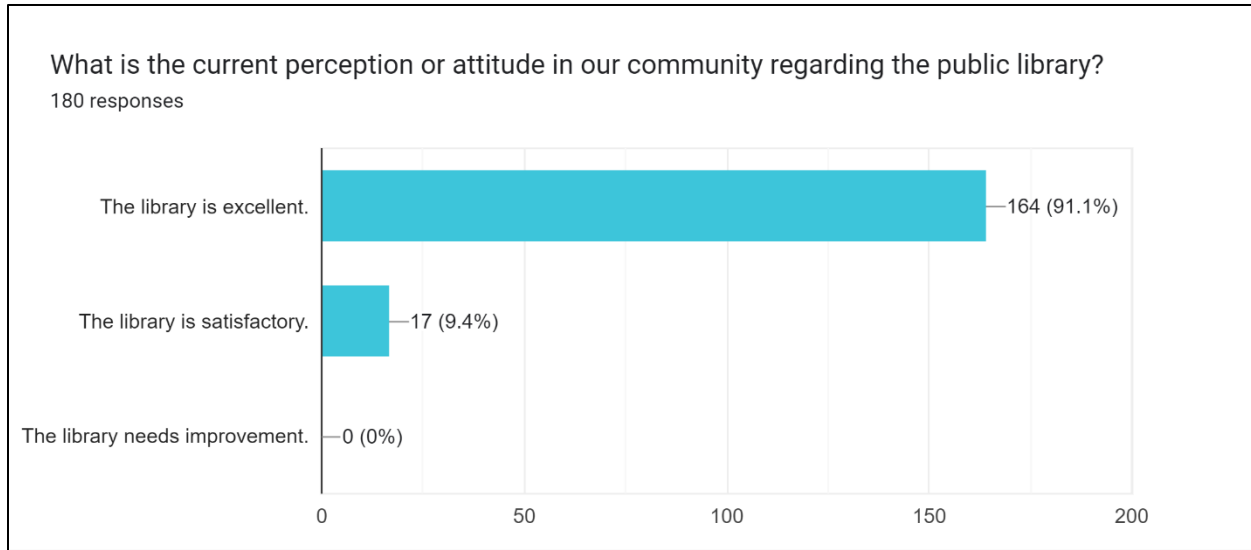
Technology Review

Library Trustees have a standing Technology Committee consisting of two Trustees (currently, one of these is Trustee emeritus) and the Library Director. The committee reviews the library's existing technology and plans what technology equipment to add or replace in the coming year. Trends in technology use are tracked through professional journals, conference attendance, and studies published by the American Library Association and the Pew Research Center: Internet and Technology, among others.

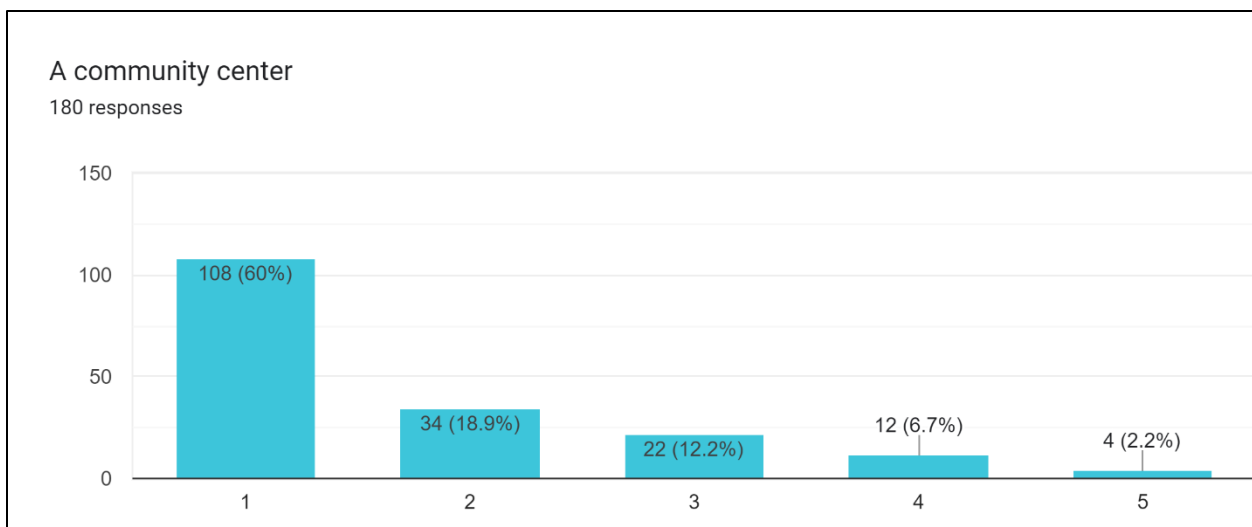
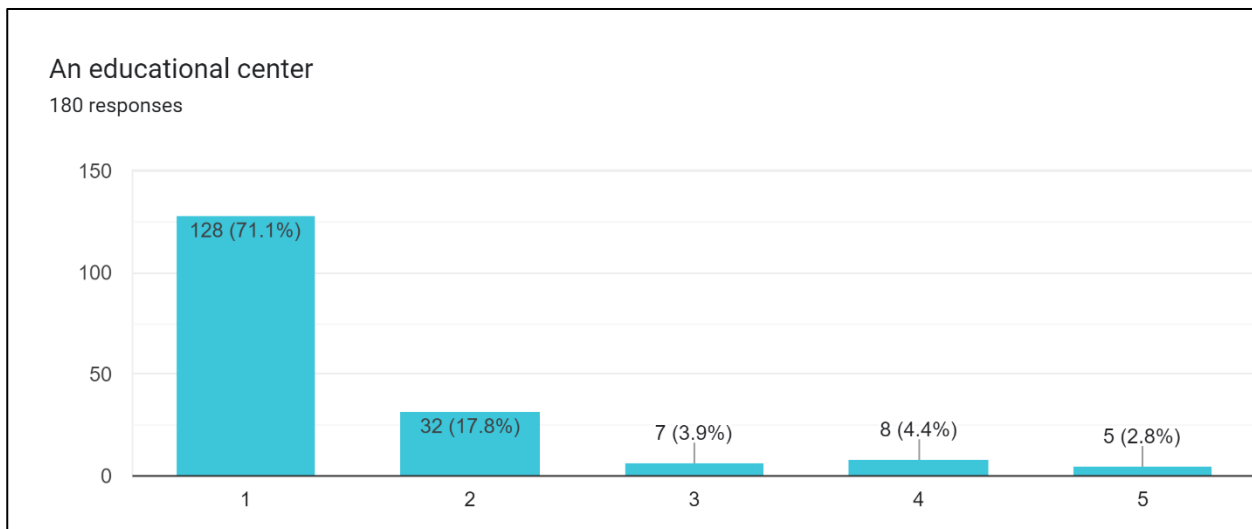
Converse Free Library maintains public access to the following:

- Two desktop and three laptop public computers with internet access
 - Programs include Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher) and Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Wireless high-speed internet access with mesh access points for improved service outside and throughout the building at about 1000 Mbps
- Copier, printer, fax, scanner, laminator - fees charged for some services
- Other technology devices that are available to use or borrow include two desktop computers for searching the library catalog, digital projector, portable DVD and CD players, digital audio recorders, and e-readers.

Select Responses to the 2022 CFL Community Survey (180 total respondents)

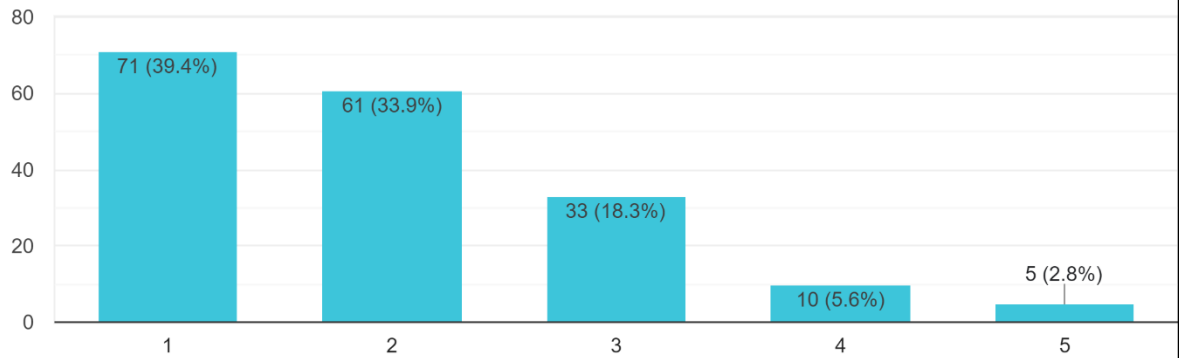


A library plays multiple roles for its constituencies. Please rank the importance of each of the following roles, keeping in mind all segments of our community:



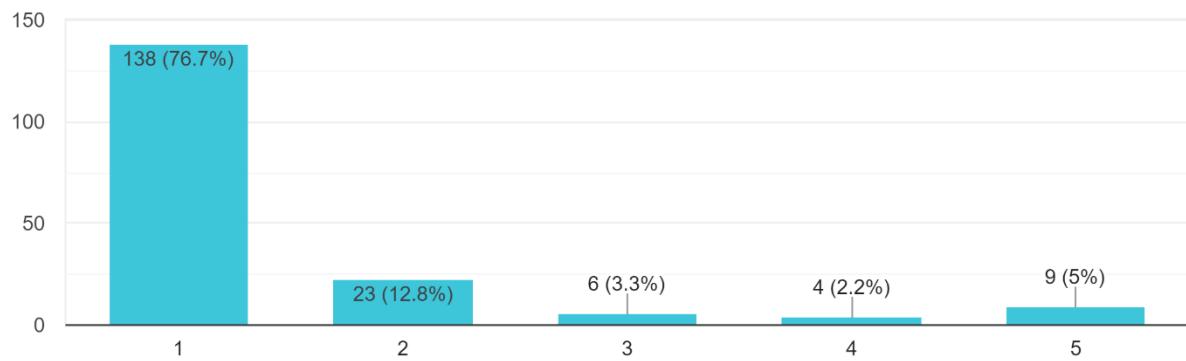
A technology center

180 responses



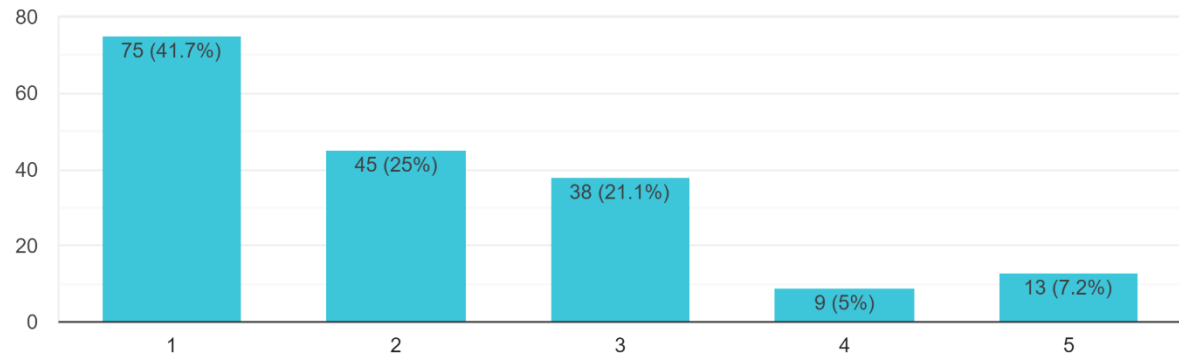
A provider of reliable, fact-based information

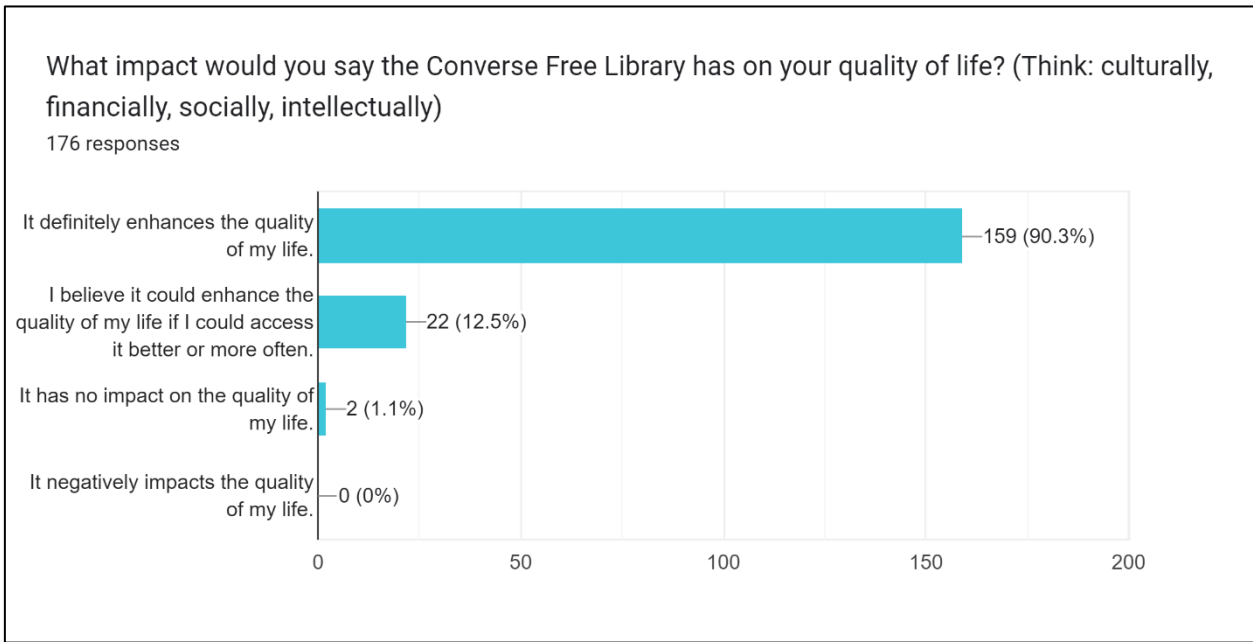
180 responses



A resource for popular culture materials

180 responses





The entire survey results are available by links in Appendix B.

WORKSHEET for 2024-2029 for use by Library Staff and Trustees

Goals, objectives, outcomes, and evaluation method for each strategic priority

Goal: what we want to accomplish

Objective: how we plan to accomplish it

Outcome: how we will know if we did accomplish it

Evaluation: how we will measure results

Meeting Infrastructure Costs & Exploring Building Improvements

Goal:

Objective:

Desired Outcome:

Evaluation:

Maintaining and Attracting a Professional Library Staff

Goal:

Objective:

Desired Outcome:

Evaluation:

Developing a Succession Plan for Library Directorship

Goal:

Objective:

Desired Outcome:

Evaluation:

APPENDIX A: Lyme, NH Demographics and Community and Statistics Digest

Community Profile (see source information at end of section)

Community Contact	Lyme Board of Selectmen Dina Cutting, Town Administrator PO Box 126 Lyme, NH 03768
Telephone	(603) 795-4639
Fax	(603) 795-4637
E-mail	dina@lymenh.gov
Web Site	www.lymenh.gov/Home/
Municipal Office Hours	Select Board: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8-4; Town Clerk: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8-2; Tax Collector: Tuesday, 4-6 or by appointment
County	Grafton
Labor Market Area	Lebanon, NH-VT Micropolitan NECTA, NH part
Tourism Region	Dartmouth-Lake Sunapee
Planning Commission	Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Development	Grafton County Economic Development Council
Election Districts	
US Congress	District District 2
Executive Council	District District 2
State Senate	District District 5
State Representative	Grafton County District 12

Incorporated: 1761

Origin: This was another of the many towns granted along the Connecticut River in 1761. Lyme takes its name from Old Lyme, which lies at the mouth of the Connecticut River. For many years, the town's name was spelled as Lime in official state documents, however this eventually was decreed a misspelling. Most of the original grantees were from Palmer and Brimfield in Massachusetts, or from Londonderry, New Hampshire. Lyme was one of the 16 towns involved in a protracted border dispute with the independent state of Vermont, before it was admitted to the Union in 1791.

Villages and Place Names: Lyme Center

Population, Year of the First Census Taken: 816 residents in 1790

Population Trends: Population change for Lyme totaled 639 over 50 years, from 1,112 in 1970 to 1,751 in 2020. The 2022 Census estimate for Lyme was 1,757 residents, which ranked 150th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density and Land Area, 2022 (US Census Bureau): 32.6 persons per square mile of land area. Lyme contains 53.8 square miles of land area and 1.2 square miles of inland water area.

Municipal Services

Type of Government	Selectmen
Budget: Municipal Appropriations, 2021	\$3,413,697
Budget: School Appropriations, 2021-2022	\$7,874,145
Zoning Ordinance	1989/08
Master Plan	1988
Capital Improvement Plan	Yes
Industrial Plans Reviewed By	Zoning Administration

Boards and Commissions

Elected:

Appointed: **[Library should not be listed here!]**

Public Library

Selectmen; Planning

Zoning; Library; Conservation; Recreation; Heritage; Energy

Converse Free

Emergency Services

Police Department	Full-time
Fire Department	Volunteer
Emergency Medical Service	Volunteer
Nearest Hospital(s)	Distance Staffed Beds
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Med Ctr, Lebanon	12 miles 419
Alice Peck Day Memorial, Lebanon	16 miles 23

Utilities

Electric Supplier	NH Electric Coop; VT Public Service
Natural Gas Supplier	None
Water Supplier	Private wells
Sanitation	Private septic
Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant	No
Solid Waste Disposal	
Curbside Trash Pickup	None
Pay-As-You-Throw Program	Yes
Recycling Program	Mandatory
Telephone Company	Consolidated Communications
Cellular Telephone Access	Limited
Cable Television Access	Limited
Public Access Television Station	No
High Speed Internet Service:	
Business	Limited
Residential	Limited

(NH Dept. of Revenue Administration) Property Taxes

2022 Total Tax Rate (per \$1,000 of value)	\$23.98
2022 Equalization Ratio	81.7
2022 Full Value Tax Rate (per \$1,000 of value)	\$19.27
2022 Percent of Local Assessed Value by Property Type	
Residential Land and Buildings	93.0%
Commercial Land and Buildings	4.9%
Public Utilities, Current Use, and Other	2.0%

(ACS 2017-2021) Housing

Total Housing Units	776
Single-Family Units, Detached or Attached	707
Units in Multiple-Family Structures:	

Two to Four Units in Structure

36

Five or More Units in Structure

6

Mobile Homes and Other Housing Units

27

(US Census Bureau) Population (1-Year Estimates/Decennial)

Total Population	Community County	
2022	1,757	91,126
2020	1,745	91,118
2010	1,716	89,118
2000	1,681	81,826
1990	1,533	74,998
1980	1,289	65,806

Demographics, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021

Population by Gender

Male: 800

Female: 858

Population by Age Group		Male	\$126,250	
		Female	\$72,174	
		Individuals below the poverty level	2.4%	
Under age 5	84	(NHES - ELMI)Labor Force		
Age 5 to 19	280	Annual Average	2012	2022
Age 20 to 34	245	Civilian Labor Force	855	822
		Employed	826	803
		Unemployed	29	19
Age 35 to 54	387	Unemployment Rate	3.4%	2.3%
		(NHES - ELMI) Employment & Wages		
Age 55 to 64	251	Annual Average Covered Employment	2012	2022
		Goods Producing Industries		
		Average Employment	80	59
Age 65 and over	411	Average Weekly Wage	\$2,787	\$2,622
Median Age	47.8 years	Service Providing Industries		
		Average Employment	233	235
Educational Attainment, population 25 years and over		Average Weekly Wage	\$801	\$953
High school graduate or higher	98.0%	Total Private Industry		
		Average Employment	313	294
		Average Weekly Wage	\$1,311	\$1,286
Bachelor's degree or higher	67.1%	Government (Federal, State, and Local)		
		Average Employment	75	77
		Average Weekly Wage	\$760	\$1,043
(ACS 2017-2021) Income, Inflation Adjusted \$		Total, Private plus Government		
Per capita income	\$76,485	Average Employment	388	371
Median family income	\$139,474	Average Weekly Wage	\$1,205	\$1,235
Median household income	\$125,156	If "n" appears, data does not meet disclosure standards.		
Median Earnings, full-time, year-round workers				
Education and Child Care				
Schools students attend:	Lyme operates grades K-8; grades 9-12 are tutioned to Dresden Cooperative (Hanover NH and Norwich VT) or Thetford VT			SAU 76
Career Technology Center(s):	Hartford Area Career & Technology Center (VT); River Bend Career & Technical Center (VT)			
Educational Facilities (includes Charter Schools)	Elementary	Middle/Junior High	High School	Private/Parochial
Number of Schools	1			1
Grade Levels	K 1-8			9-12
Total Enrollment	193			124

2022 NH Licensed Child Care Facilities (Bureau of Child Care Licensing):

Total Facilities: 2

Total Capacity: 74

Nearest Community/Technical College: River Valley

Nearest Colleges or Universities: Dartmouth; Franklin Pierce-Lebanon; Upper Valley Educators Institute; Plymouth State

Largest Businesses	Product/Service	Employees	Established
Dartmouth Skiway	Ski area	75	
Town of Lyme	Municipal services	25	1761
Dowd's Country Inn	Bed & breakfast	28	
Lyme School District	Education	50	
Loch Lyme Lodge	Hotel	2 Full-time/7 Seasonal	
Estates & Gallup	General contractors	32	
Lyme Inn	Bed & breakfast	2	
Crossroads Academy	Education	28	
Wagner Forest Management, Ltd.	Forest management	12	

Employer Information Supplied by Municipality

Transportation			(ACS 2017-2021) Commuting to Work	
Road Access	US Routes		Workers 16 years and over	785
	State Routes	10	Drove alone, car/truck/van	67.1%
Nearest Interstate, Exit I-91 (VT), Exit 14			Carpooled, car/truck/van	11.3%
	Distance	3 miles	Public transportation	0.0%
Railroad		No	Walked	0.4%
Public Transportation		No	Other Means	0.4%
			Worked at home	20.8%
Nearest Public Use Airport, General Aviation			Mean Travel Time to Work	22.4 minutes
Lebanon Municipal	Runway	5,496 ft. asphalt	Percent of Working Residents:	(ACS 2017-2021)
Lighted?	Yes	Navigational Aids? Yes	Working in community of residence	32.7%
Nearest Airport with Scheduled Service			Commuting to another NH community	53.8%
Lebanon Municipal	Distance	16 miles	Commuting out-of-state	13.5%
Number of Passenger Airlines Serving Airport		1		
Driving distance to selected cities:			Recreation, Attractions, and Events	
Manchester, NH		85 miles	X	Municipal Parks
Portland, ME		177 miles		YMCA/YWCA
Boston, MA		135 miles		Boys Club/Girls Club
New York City, NY		282 miles		Golf Courses
Montreal, Quebec		193 miles		Swimming: Indoor Facility
				Swimming: Outdoor Facility

	Tennis Courts: Indoor Facility		Campgrounds
X	Tennis Courts: Outdoor Facility	X	Fishing/Hunting
	Ice Skating Rink: Indoor Facility	X	Boating/Marinas
	Bowling Facilities	X	Snowmobile Trails
	Museums	X	Bicycle Trails
	Cinemas	X	Cross Country Skiing
	Performing Arts Facilities	X	Beach or Waterfront Recreational Area
	Tourist Attractions		Overnight or Day Camps
X	Youth Organizations (i.e., Scouts, 4-H)	X	Nearest Ski Area(s): Dartmouth Skiway
X	Youth Sports: Baseball	X	Other: Appalachian Trail
X	Youth Sports: Soccer		
	Youth Sports: Football		
X	Youth Sports: Basketball		
	Youth Sports: Hockey		

Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NH
Employment Security, October 2023. Community
Response Received 5/13/22
Retrieved 5/22/2024; see Source s on p. 9

APPENDIX B

Converse Free Library Statistics, 2022 & 2023: attached

APPENDIX C

Community Survey and Results, 2022:

Converse Free Library Community Survey 2022 (for reference only; do not complete)

<https://forms.gle/VqpEQRdoCzVWZLye9>

Results in spread sheet form

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eS8PCMngHu18dk2OaCm3ntjwpgEwKW8H/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115681177950607473887&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Comments only, with suggested replies and/or clarifications

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sxrSZeJUuh-EQZyoH72FZiDxENw4F4v98nyMoMFozGo/edit?usp=sharing>

SOURCES

Converse Free Library website:

<https://lymenhlibrary.org/>

Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau; New Hampshire Community Profiles: Lyme (New Hampshire state government website)

<https://www2.nhes.nh.gov/GraniteStats/SessionServlet?page=Community.jsp&SID=1&city=000528&cityName=Lyme>

Lyme Town Reports, [2022](#) and [2023](#)

[New Hampshire State Library Annual Statistics](#)

Strategic Planning documents from Cook Memorial Library, Tamworth, and others.

[United Nation Sustainable Development Goals for 2030](#)