

CIDL

CLARKSTON INDEPENDENCE
DISTRICT LIBRARY

Innovate. Enrich. Educate.

LEARNING REPORT

Provided by **FAST FORWARD**
LIBRARIES 



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Executive Summary

The Clarkston Independence District Library (CIDL) launched a strategic planning process in February 2024. As part of the process, the library devoted a significant amount of time listening to community needs and interests to inform and guide the process. This report represents a summary of the data gathered directly and indirectly using various tools and methods from the community and the library's Board of Directors and staff during this phase of the process. Sections in the report include:

- An introduction and context with library usage statistics and trends, and community demographics,
- A summary and analysis of findings from a community survey,
- A summary of focus groups and interviews,
- A library trends and benchmarking report, and
- An appendix with more complete community demographic data (Appendix A) and a summary and findings from a Strategic Capacity Assessment (Appendix B).

Library Statistics

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many library usage statistics decreased through FY20-21:

- Circulation decreased from 321,627 (FY19-20) to 179,382 (FY20-21) before increasing to 269,646 in FY23-24.
- Door counts decreased from 120,825 visitors in FY19-20 to 41,410 visitors in FY20-21 and 36,163 in FY21-22. Subsequent years saw an increase in visits with FY23-24 reporting 104,954 visitors.
- The number of programs decreased 54% in FY20-21 and remained lower in FY21-22 and FY22-23 before increasing in FY23-24. Attendance at programs also dipped for three fiscal years before increasing in FY23-24. Despite the increases, program numbers remained 10% below FY19-20 and participation remained 19% below FY19-20 in FY23-24.

Usage of in-library technology was affected during the height of the pandemic and after:

- Wi-Fi sessions decreased 75% from FY19-20 to FY21-22. Sessions increased in subsequent years and eclipsed FY19-20 by 3% in FY23-24.
- Computer use also decreased significantly through FY21-22 but increased in subsequent years, and in FY23-24 usage remained 56% below FY19-20.

The number of registered cardholders fell from 15,338 in FY19-20 to 12,983 in FY20-21. Cardholders increased in FY21-22 and FY22-23 before decreasing again to 13,654 in FY23-24, 12% below the pre-pandemic level.



Community Demographics

We reviewed United States Census and American Community Survey data for Independence Township from 2010 and 2022. **Many community demographics changed between 2010 and 2022:**

- The population in Independence Township increased 6.8%.
- Median household income increased 49% and housing values increased 46%.
- The percentage of those living in poverty decreased 1.9%, and home ownership decreased 3.7%.

THE POPULATION IN
INDEPENDENCE
TOWNSHIP
INCREASED 6.8%.

Demographics from 2022 showed an 8.4% increase in non-White residents in the township since 2010. There were small increases in populations of Black, Asian, and Hispanic residents as well as those of two or more races and those of “some other race alone.”

A large majority of the residents in Independence Township speak only English (94%). Only 1.7% of residents speak English “less than very well.”

Education levels in the township included:

- In 2022, just 4.7% of residents had less than a high school degree.
- Of residents, 30.5% had some college or an associate degree in 2022, and 27% had a bachelor’s degree.
- Of residents, 17.6% had a graduate or professional degree in 2022, above the Michigan state-wide level of 12.2%.



Community Survey

A total of 983 individuals completed a community survey in June and July 2024. Of respondents, 10.2% were age 19 and under, 42.7% of respondents have children at home or regularly care for children, and 24.9% of respondents indicated they are retired.

Satisfaction

- Of survey respondents, 92.9% indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- Respondents rated highest satisfaction with the library's customer service and the library facility.
- Respondents indicated they feel getting help from staff and physical materials to check out are of highest value to them (3.5/4).

WHEN ASKED ABOUT FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES, RESPONDENTS RATED PRINT AND DIGITAL MATERIALS MOST HIGHLY.

Library Services

- When asked about future library services, respondents rated print and digital materials most highly (each 3.3/4).
- Programs for adults (3.0), outdoor programs (2.9), and digital streaming collections (2.9) were also of high interest to respondents.
- Respondents with children at home and who care for children indicated high interest in programs for children and outdoor programs.
- Respondents shared things that they like about neighboring libraries, including but not limited to larger selection in physical and digital collections with shorter wait times, face-out browsing for children's shelves, 24-hour hold lockers, and higher limits on DVD check-outs.

Finally, nearly 60.7% of respondents indicated they **learn about what is going on at the library** from the library's website, while 36.4% indicated they learn about the library from the Township Rec Guide, and 31.6% learn about the library from Facebook.



Focus Groups and Interviews

Community focus groups and one-on-one interviews complement the community survey by engaging diverse communities and digging deeper into community aspirations and challenges. Via a small planning team of library staff members, an extensive list of potential interviewees and focus group participants was brainstormed. Those lists were refined to include participants for the four focus groups (with 27 participants) and nine one-on-one interviews.

Top Community Aspirations

1. A cohesive community where people feel connected with one another.
2. Coordination and communication across organizations and community groups.
3. A variety of community outdoors spaces for people of all ages.
4. A vibrant, safe, and walkable downtown.

Top Library Aspirations

1. Increase program offerings for all ages, including those that allow for cross-generational connection.
2. Provide safe and comfortable physical space for community connection.
3. Support the community with technology, language, and information literacy.
4. Increase marketing efforts and visibility of programs and services.
5. Collaborate and partner with community organizations.

Library Trends and Benchmarking

CIDL's location in the western suburbs of Detroit finds it geographically near many other public libraries. Fast Forward Libraries considered eight specific library services and eight IMLS data points for four neighboring libraries and compared them to each other and to CIDL.

Of the eight library services reviewed in the benchmarking report (page 48), CIDL offers seven. The average number of the considered services across the cohort was 5.8/8, so CIDL came in above the average. That said, all libraries in the cohort vary in the ways they provide many of the services offered. For example, CIDL may find the outreach services at Orion Township to be aspirational as they offer multiple opportunities to be seen in the community with their Book Bike, the Orion Center branch, and Little Free Libraries. Services for those with special needs also vary by library, with Rochester Hills offering Memory Café programs and Springfield Township offering Memory Care Kits.

Among the IMLS data points considered were population served, 2022 revenue and expenditures (total and per person), full-time equivalent (FTE) paid staff (total and per 1,000 residents), total Master of Library Science (MLS) staff, and 2022 circulation.

- CIDL had the fourth highest operating revenue in 2022 (\$2,250,605) in the comparison cohort and had the fourth highest operating expenditures (\$1,878,431).
- CIDL had third highest expenditures per person at \$49.94, coming in below Saline and Orion, the two libraries that are closest to CIDL in population served.
- CIDL had the third highest FTE staff of the cohort at 23.6, but the CIDL total paid staff per 1,000 residents fell next to last at 0.6 (tied with Springfield Township and higher than Rochester Hills).
- CIDL's total MLS staff is higher than other libraries of their size (Saline and Orion) and lower than Rochester Hills which serves a much larger population.



- For 2022 circulation, CIDL came in next to lowest, circulating over 162,000 fewer items than Orion and over 86,000 fewer than Saline.

In addition to the comparison of eight specific library services and data across the cohort, we provided **information on some national library trends** including examples of inclusion and accessibility for a variety of audiences, examples of innovative technology use and out-of-the-box community outreach, and examples of libraries with a strong commitment to data, learning, and telling the stories of those in their communities.

Strategic Capacity Assessment

In March and April 2024, Board and staff members completed a Strategic Capacity Assessment to consider various elements of Board and staff capacity to carry out their roles at the library. Forty staff and Board members completed the Assessment which consisted of four parts: Environmental Scan, Core Operations Assessment, Strategic Priorities, and Working Culture.

Environmental Scan

The library's staff and Board members identified **numerous political, economic, social, technology, legal, and library sector issues** that could potentially impact the future of CIDL.

Board and staff members suggested a myriad of factors that could impact the library. They identified political factors such as the polarized environment leading up to the 2024 elections; social and economic factors such as recent inflation, housing and healthcare costs, widening economic gaps, climate change, the need for critical thinking, and aging populations; as well as technological factors such as staying up to date on tech advances, increased use of AI, online shopping replacing brick and mortar stores, patron privacy, and censorship. Board and staff members also listed many library sector topics of interest, such as assisting those with disabilities and neurodiversity, book bans, partnering with local businesses and organizations, and being responsive to community needs.

Core Operations

When asked how the library is doing in specified core operation areas, the highest-rated items included resource sharing (interlibrary loan), school outreach, marketing and communications, and customer service.

Many other core operations were considered:

- The majority of respondents indicated the library is **great or pretty good** at most services.
- Areas that some respondents noted as **ok or needs improvement** included onboarding and orientation, documented training procedures, senior programming, documented operational procedures, and diversity, equity and inclusion practices.
- Of respondents, 41% indicated they **don't know much about** program assessment, 40% indicated they don't know much about data-driven decisional making for internal processes, and 32.5% indicated they don't know much about data-driven decision making for patron facing services.

**THE HIGHEST-RATED
ITEMS IN CORE
OPERATIONS WERE
RESOURCE SHARING,
SCHOOL OUTREACH,
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS,
AND CUSTOMER
SERVICE.**



Strategic Priorities

Staff and Board members were asked to identify current library strengths and opportunities. They **provided many responses and shared strengths such as** programming for various audiences, technology in the Innovations Lab, overall selection in collections, readers advisory, helpful and caring staff, and great management. Respondents **focused on opportunities in these areas, as well**, including but not limited to tech programs and classes, more programs that teach how-to and learning topics, being known as a tech resource, increased outreach services, more marketing of the library, a larger building with more meeting and staff spaces, and a dedicated makerspace with more availability.

Working Culture

In the Working Culture portion of the Assessment, 95% of staff and Board respondents indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with working at the library or serving on the board. Of respondents, 5% were neutral, and no respondents were dissatisfied.

Overall, respondents were **most highly satisfied with** feeling trusted to do their job, autonomy and independence, satisfaction and enjoyment, and a sense of belonging.

Respondents were **least satisfied with** the decision-making process, internal communication, and opportunities for promotion.

Overall Themes

- Community survey respondents and Strategic Capacity Assessment respondents indicated high overall satisfaction with the library.
- Community survey respondents indicated high interest in traditional services such as print and digital collections as well as library programming. Respondents shared many topics for programming and specific collections of which they would like to see more. Growing these services could lead to increased circulation and program participation.
- Board and staff members indicated the desire for the library to be known as a tech resource for the community while focus group and interview participants indicated they also aspire for the library to support the community's growing technology needs.
- CIDL offers a good number of services to the community — as noted by the library trends and benchmarking report — and they can consider ways to expand current services such as outreach options, makerspace accessibility, and added services for those with special needs.
- Focus group and interview participants and Board and staff members indicated opportunities for increased marketing of library services within the community.



Introduction

The Clarkston Independence Township Library (CIDL) serves approximately 37,000 residents in Independence Charter Township, Michigan. The library has been located at 6495 Clarkston Road in Clarkston, Michigan since 1969 with a large addition completed in 1992. In 2012, the library became a district library.

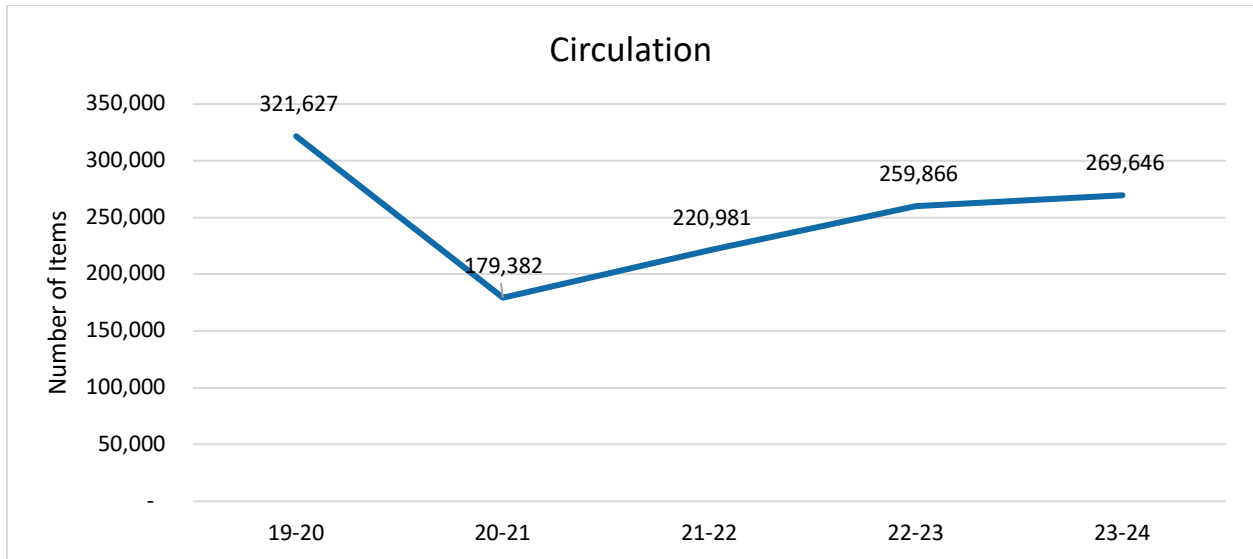
Today, CIDL holds over 113,000 physical books and materials and provides access to over 108,000 digital items as well as a variety of databases. CIDL hosts a wide variety of programs and events for all ages with thousands of participants annually. The library also provides creative maker services, notary service, meeting and study rooms, access to local history resources, exam proctoring, and homebound delivery.

The library is governed by a Board of Trustees with seven members who oversee the library's strategic operations. A dedicated Friends of the Library group shares their time and talents to raise funds for extra resources and programs that are not provided for in the library budget.

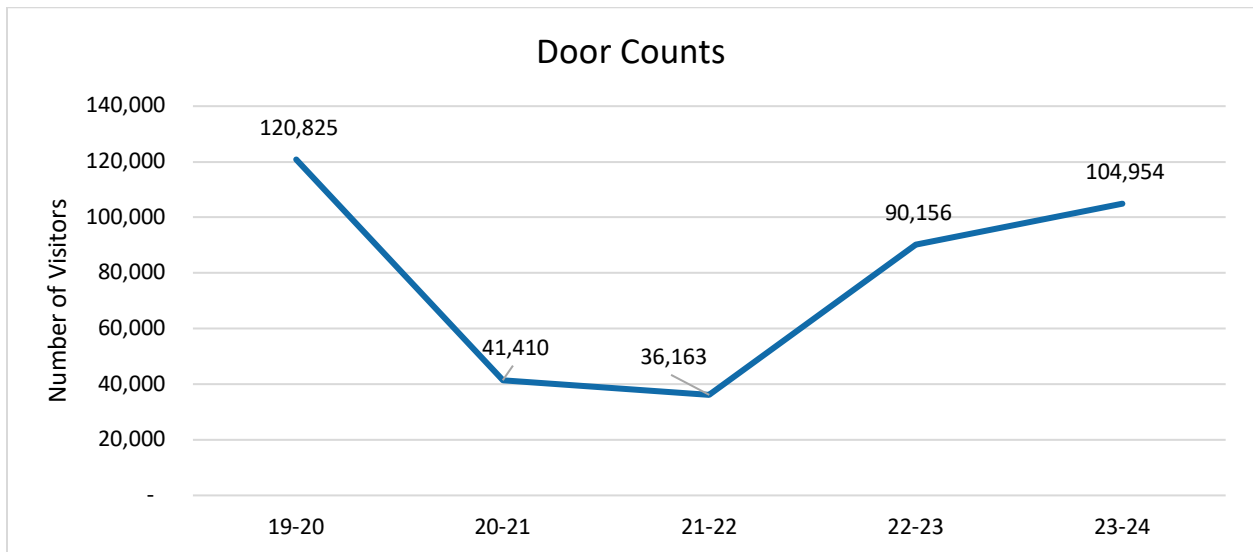


Library Data

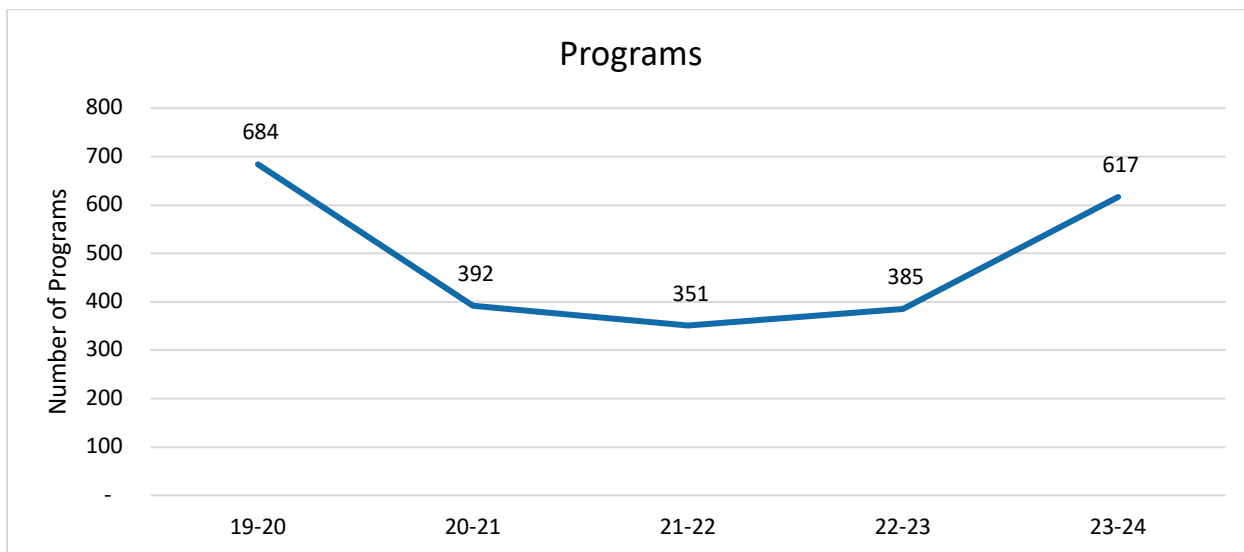
Like other libraries around the country, CIDL's library usage dipped during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY20-21 circulation dropped 57% before increasing each year through FY23-24. FY23-24's circulation remained 18% lower than pre-pandemic circulation levels seen in FY19-20.



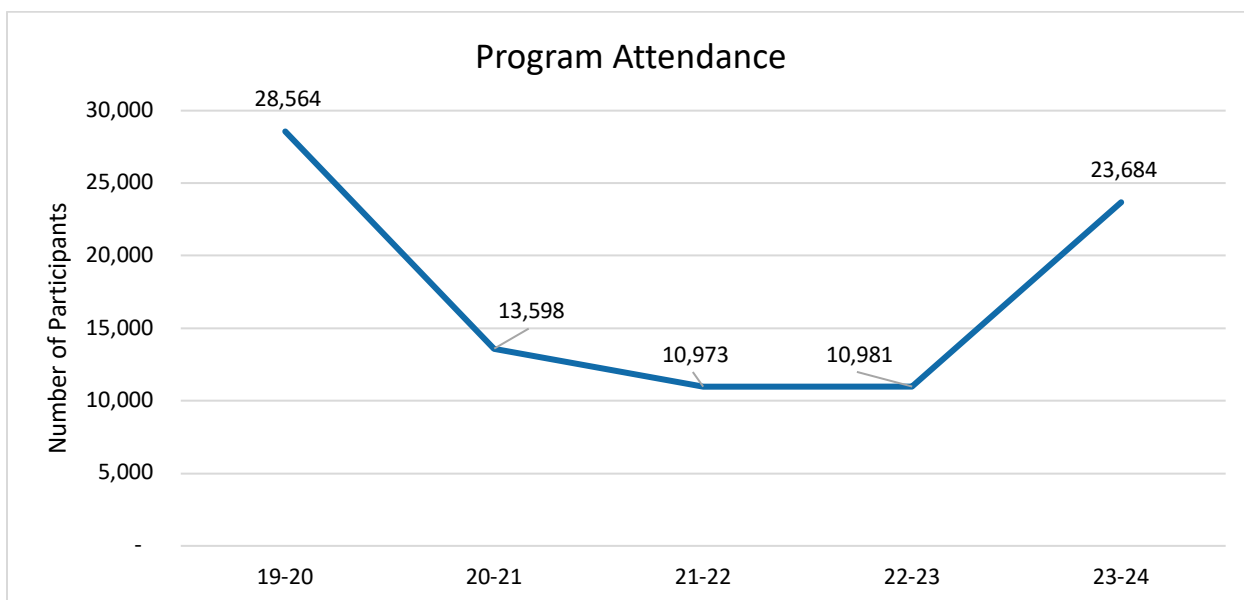
Library visits, indicated by door counts, fell significantly during FY20-21 and FY21-22. Visits increased in FY22-23 and again in FY23-24 but remained 14% lower than FY19-20.



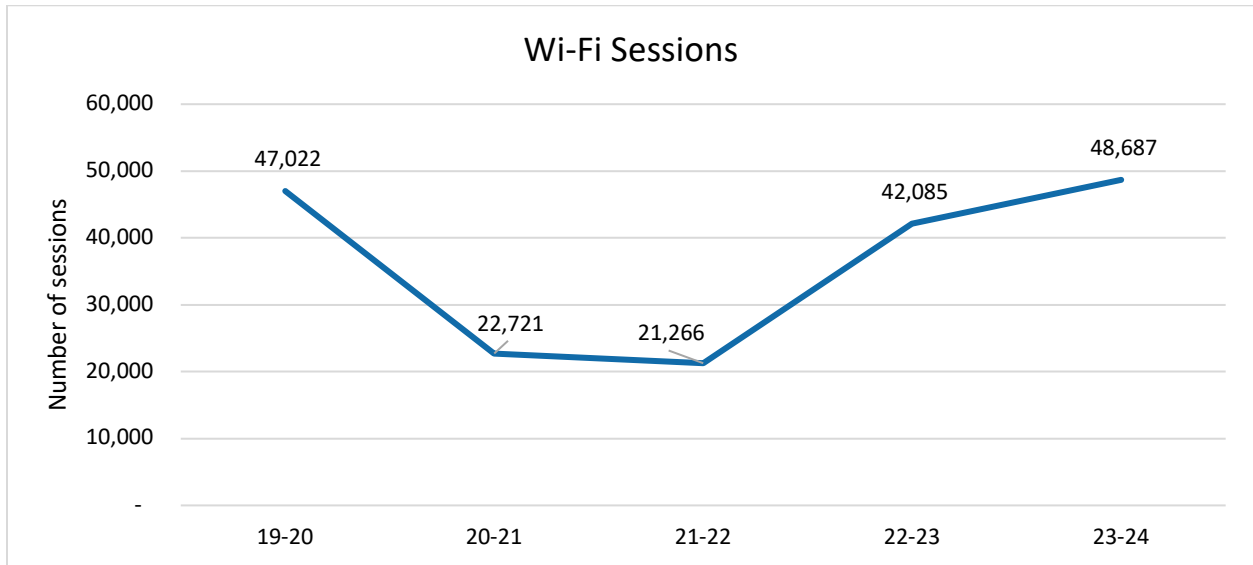
The number of programs decreased 54% in FY20-21 and remained lower during FY21-22 and FY22-23. Programs increased significantly in FY23-24 and remained just 10% below FY19-20.



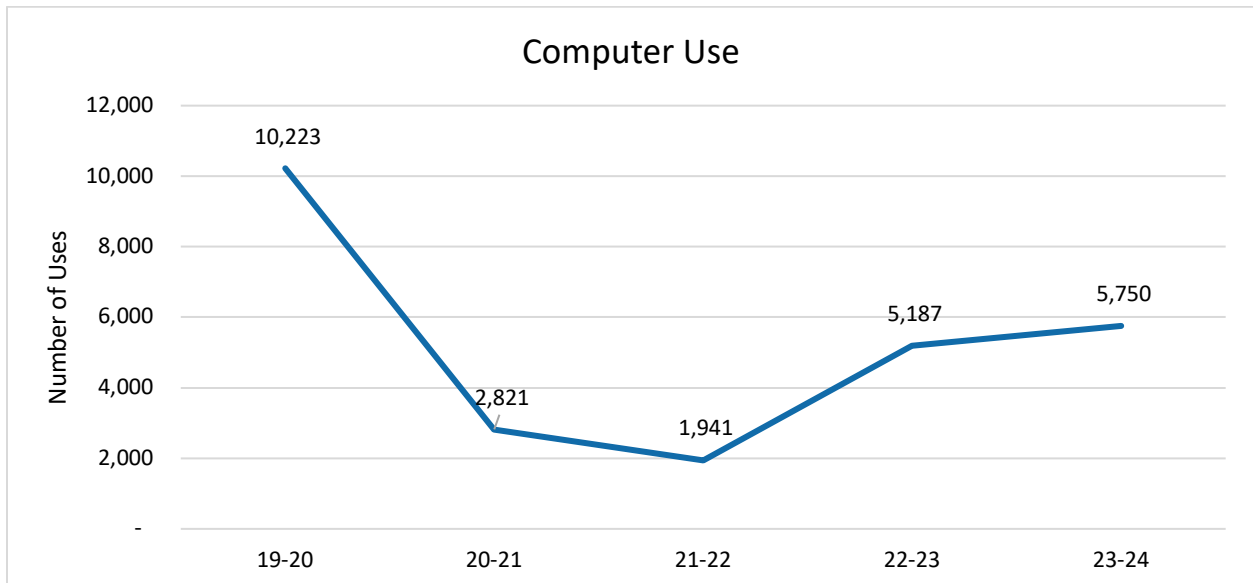
Program attendance followed a similar pattern, decreasing in FY20-21, FY21-22, and FY22-23 before increasing in FY23-24. FY23-24 program participation remained 19% below FY19-20.



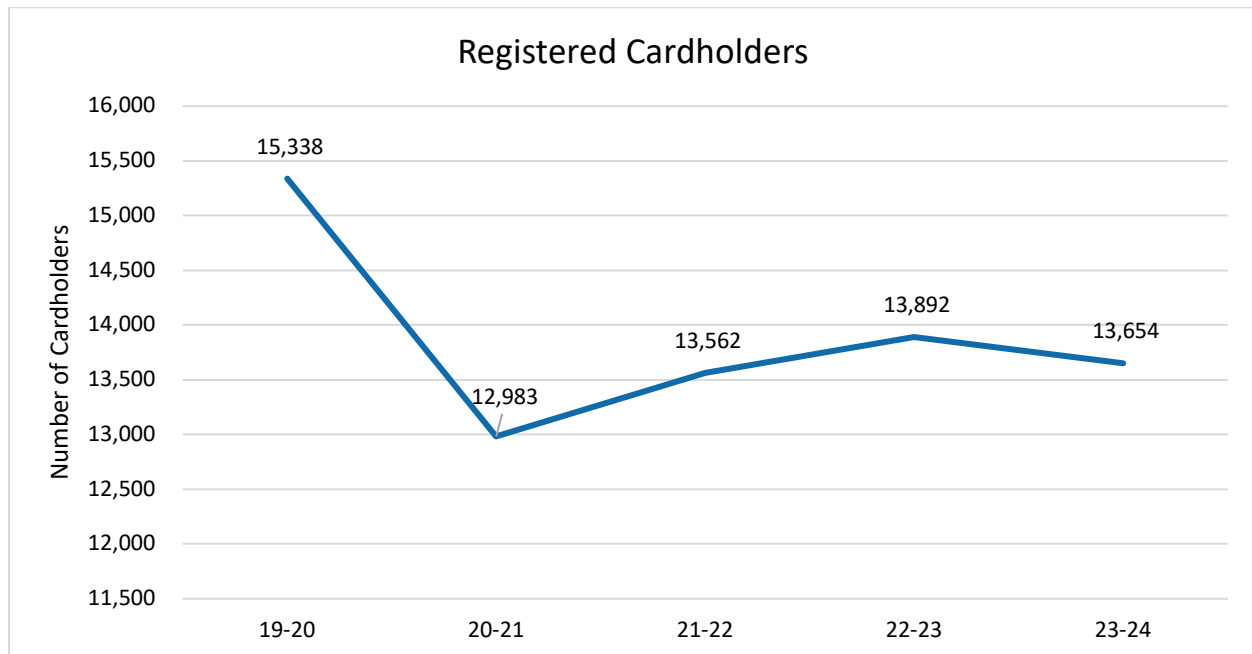
In-library Wi-Fi sessions decreased in FY20-21 and FY21-22. Session increased significantly in FY22-23 and again in FY23-24, coming in 3% higher than the pre-pandemic levels of FY19-20.



Use of library computers decreased substantially in FY20-21 and FY21-22. Usage increased in FY22-23 and again in FY23-24 but remained 56% below FY19-20 usage.



The number of registered cardholders decreased in FY20-21 before increasing slightly in FY21-22 and FY22-23. Cardholders decreased again in FY23-24 and remained 12% below the FY19-20 level.



Community Data

The population of Independence Township increased 6.8% from 2010 to 2022. During this time, median household incomes and housing values also increased 49% and 46% respectively while homeownership decreased over 3%. The poverty level in the township declined nearly 2% from 2012 to 2022 and is lower than both state and national levels.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population	331,097,593	10,057,921	34,287	36,628
Median age	38.5	39.9	39.0	41.4
Median household income (in \$)	75,149	68,505	71,191	106,056
Homeownership	64.8%	72.5%	83.7%	80.0%
Housing value (owner-occupied, in \$)	281,900	201,100	225,600	330,000
Below poverty level	12.5%	13.1%	7.2%*	5.3%

*ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township.



Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic diversity increased in the township between 2010 and 2022 with an 8.4% decrease in those considered white alone. There were small increases in populations of Black, Asian, and Hispanic residents as well as those of two or more races and those of “some other race alone”.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Total population	331,097,593	10,057,921	34,287	36,628
White alone	58.9%	73.5%	91.8%	83.4%
Black or African American alone	12.5%	13.6%	1.7%	5.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0.8%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
Asian	5.8%	3.3%	1.4%	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone	6.0%	1.6%	0.5%	1.3%
Two or more races	8.8%	5.4%	1.8%	6.6%
Hispanic population	18.7%	5.5%	3.3%	5.6%



Language

A large majority of residents in the township speak English only (94%). Only 1.7% of residents ages 5 and over speak English “less than very well,” and less than 3% speak Spanish. All other languages spoken are only spoken by less than 2% of residents.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population 5 years and over	312,092,668	9,505,118	31,753	34,678
English only	78.3%	90.1%	94.4%*	94.0%
Spanish	13.3%	2.9%	2.3%*	2.8%
Other Indo-European languages	3.7%	3.0%	2.6%*	1.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	1.7%	0.5%*	1.2%
Other languages	1.2%	2.3%	0.1%*	0.3%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.2%	3.4%	1.6%	1.7%

*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township.



Education

Education levels in the township increased from 2010 to 2022. Of residents aged 25 and older, 44.6% had a bachelor's degree or a graduate or professional degree in 2022, an increase of 7% since 2010. A combined 24.8% had a high degree or less in 2022, a decrease of 4.1% since 2010 and lower than state and national levels.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population 25 years and older	226,600,992	6,938,439	22,214	24,947
Less than high school graduate	10.9%	8.2%	5.8%	4.7%
High school or equivalent	26.4%	28.4%	23.1%	20.1%
Some college or associate degree	28.5%	32.2%	33.5%	30.5%
Bachelor's degree	20.9%	18.9%	23.5%	27.0%
Graduate or professional degree	13.4%	12.2%	14.1%	17.6%



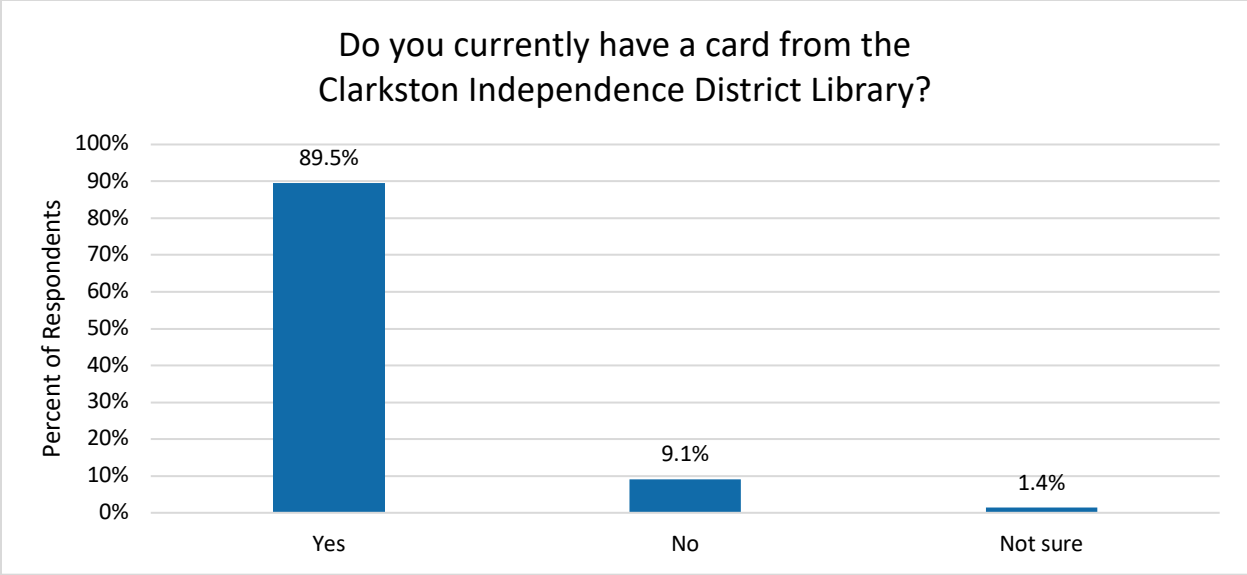
Community Survey Summary and Analysis

As part of their strategic planning process, the Clarkston Independence District Library (CIDL) conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about their patrons' experience with library services, programs, staff, and facilities. A total of 983 individuals completed the survey, representing approximately 2.6% of the 2022 IMLS service area population (37,614).

An important note about the survey responses:

- Respondents sometimes note programs or services they want the library to have but are already offered by the library. We have left these comments in the responses. This indicates an opportunity to better communicate about all the library has to offer. In addition, respondents sometimes offer conflicting opinions about what the library should offer or feel strongly about the library offering something that is not feasible due to cost.
- For open-ended questions, responses are summarized and not in any particular order or with any particular weight except where explicitly noted. When analyzing this qualitative data, we hoped to show the breadth of responses provided by respondents.

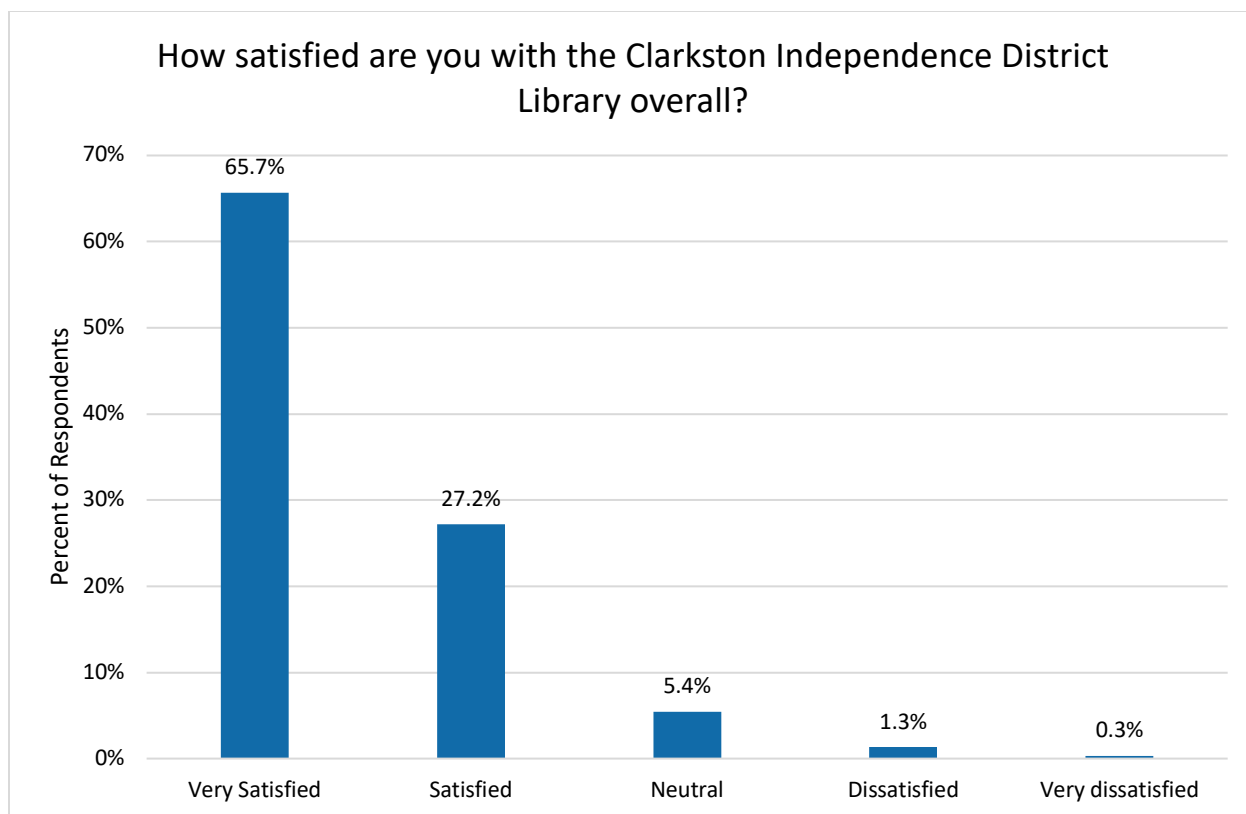




FINDINGS

- A large percentage of respondents indicated they have a library card from CIDL. (89.5%).
- Of respondents, 10.5% either don't have a card or are not sure if they have a card.
- Several respondents indicated they have cards at Waterford, Lake Orion, Genesee, University of Michigan, Springfield Township, Brandon Township, Lapeer, Troy, Fenton, Holly, Berkeley, White Lake, Cass City, Tecumseh, Manchester, Rochester Hills, Central Ridge, Grand Blanc, Sterling Heights, Oxford, Davison, Clawson, Royal Oak, Les Cheneaux, Oakland University, Waukegan, Highland Township, Blair Memorial, Farmington Hills, North Palm Beach (FL), Multnomah County (OR), and Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing (CLAMS) library, Broward County (FL), and Central Ridge.



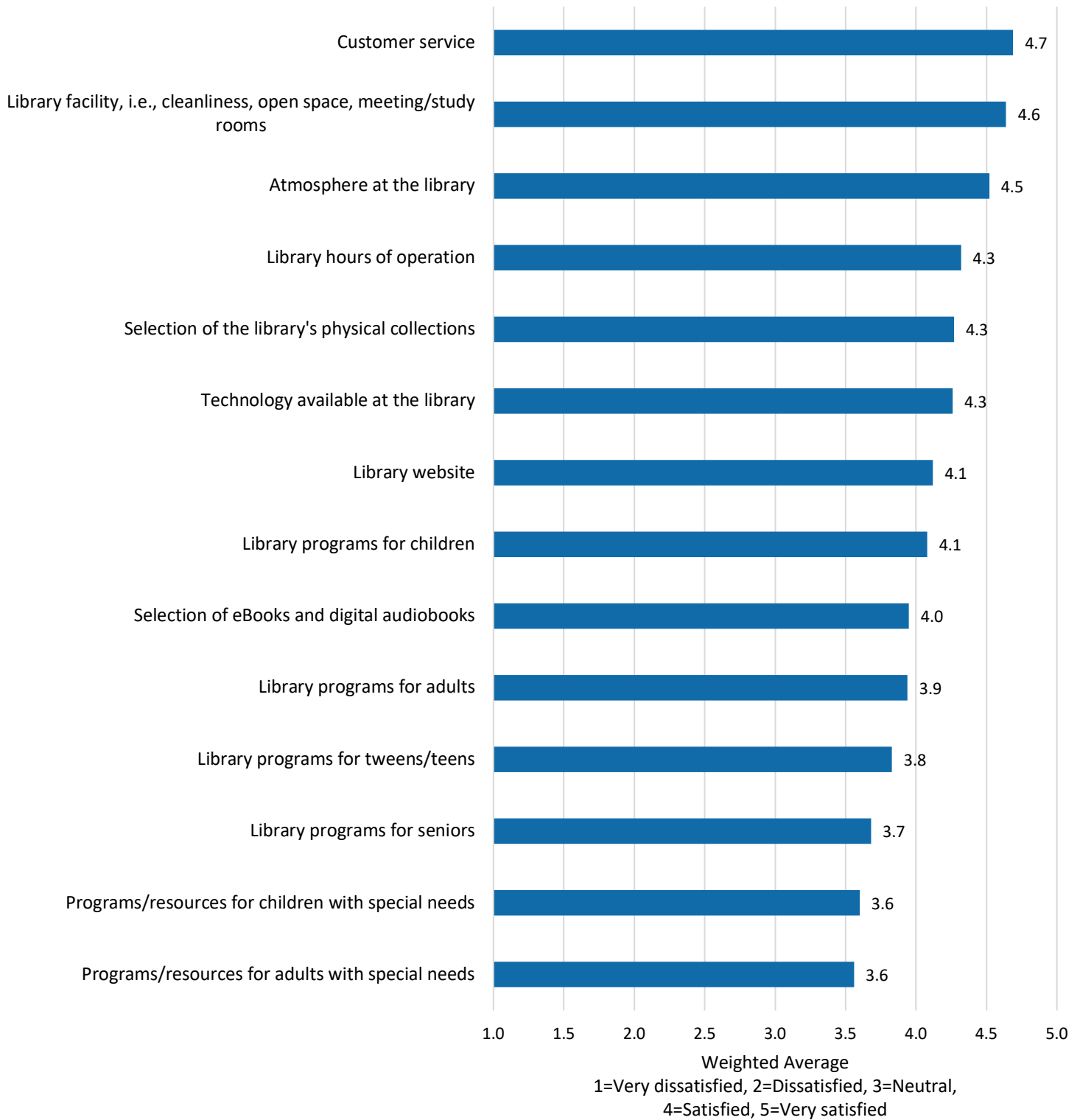


FINDINGS

- 92.9% of all respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- Only 1.6% of respondents indicated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 93.7% of respondents who indicated they live with or care for children under age 18 ($n=420$) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library.
- 89.7% of respondents who commute more than 20 minutes one-way to work ($n=216$) are very satisfied or satisfied with the library.
- 92.8% of retired respondents ($n=239$) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library.
- 94.3% of respondents who work remotely ($n=175$) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library.
- 95.2% of respondents who are ages 14 to 19 ($n=42$) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library.
- 98.2% of respondents who indicated they are age 13 or under ($n=55$) stated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- 80% of respondents who indicated they do not have a card or are not sure if they have a card ($n=103$) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall. Of this group, 17.4% indicated they are neutral.



Please rate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of the library.



FINDINGS

- Respondents rated customer service (4.7/5) and the library facility (4.6) as the items with the highest satisfaction rates.
- Programs/resources for children with special needs and programs/resources for adults with special needs rated lowest (each 3.6).
- Survey respondents ages 13 and under rated customer service highest (4.7), followed by library facility and atmosphere in the library (each 4.6), and **library programs for tweens/teens (4.4)**.
- Retired respondents rated customer service and the library facility highest, each 4.7, followed by the atmosphere at the library (4.6), and **the library hours of operation (4.5)**.
- Respondents who do not have a card (or are not sure if they have a card) rated customer service a bit lower at 4.4 and selections in the library's physical collections at 4.1.

For any items that you clicked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, what can the library do to increase your satisfaction?

Most Frequent Comments

- Limited hours (especially in the summer), website usability, noise levels, limited eBook and audiobook availability, staff customer service.

Collections

- Physical Books: Requests for an increased collection of physical books, particularly popular new releases and series.
- DVDs and Media: Requests for a better selection of DVDs, CDs, and media resources.
- eBooks and Digital Audiobooks: A significant demand for an increased selection of eBooks and audiobooks, with complaints about long wait times and limited availability.
- Christian and Religious Books: Specific interest in expanding the selection of Christian and religious texts.

Atmosphere at the Library

- Children's Area: The noise from the children's section is a recurring issue for patrons who need a quieter environment to study or read.
- General Disruption: There are concerns about noise from staff and other patrons disrupting the library's intended quiet atmosphere.

Library Facilities

- Space: Requests for better physical spaces, including more study areas, updated facilities, and a more enclosed children's section.
- Comfort and Accessibility: Suggestions for improved comfort (e.g., better heating and cooling), more computer stations, and accommodating special needs.



For any items that you clicked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, what can the library do to increase your satisfaction? (continued)

Available Technology

- Equipment: Interest in more Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout and an in-library 3D printer as well as more public computers.
- Databases and Online Resources: Respondents requested access to Data Axle and Zoom Info.

Website

- Navigation: The website and app are frequently described as confusing or difficult to navigate, especially on mobile devices. Users struggle with finding information, managing accounts, and using search features effectively.
- Performance: Issues with the website being slow or glitchy are commonly reported, and there are frequent complaints about the usability of digital tools.
- Responsiveness: Respondents report that the app is a challenge to use and the website is not responsive to mobile screens, making it difficult to use on a phone.

Customer Service

- Customer Service: Mixed feedback on staff behavior, with some praising helpfulness while others report rudeness, dismissiveness, and a lack of support.
- Outreach: More effective advertising and community engagement about available programs and resources.

Hours of Operation

- Extended Hours: There is a strong desire for extended hours, particularly during evenings, weekends, and summer Sundays. This is seen as crucial for students, working adults, and families. Some respondents mentioned this was a reason they go to other libraries.
- Holiday and Inclement Weather Hours: Confusion about holiday hours and early closures during inclement weather are also mentioned.

Programming

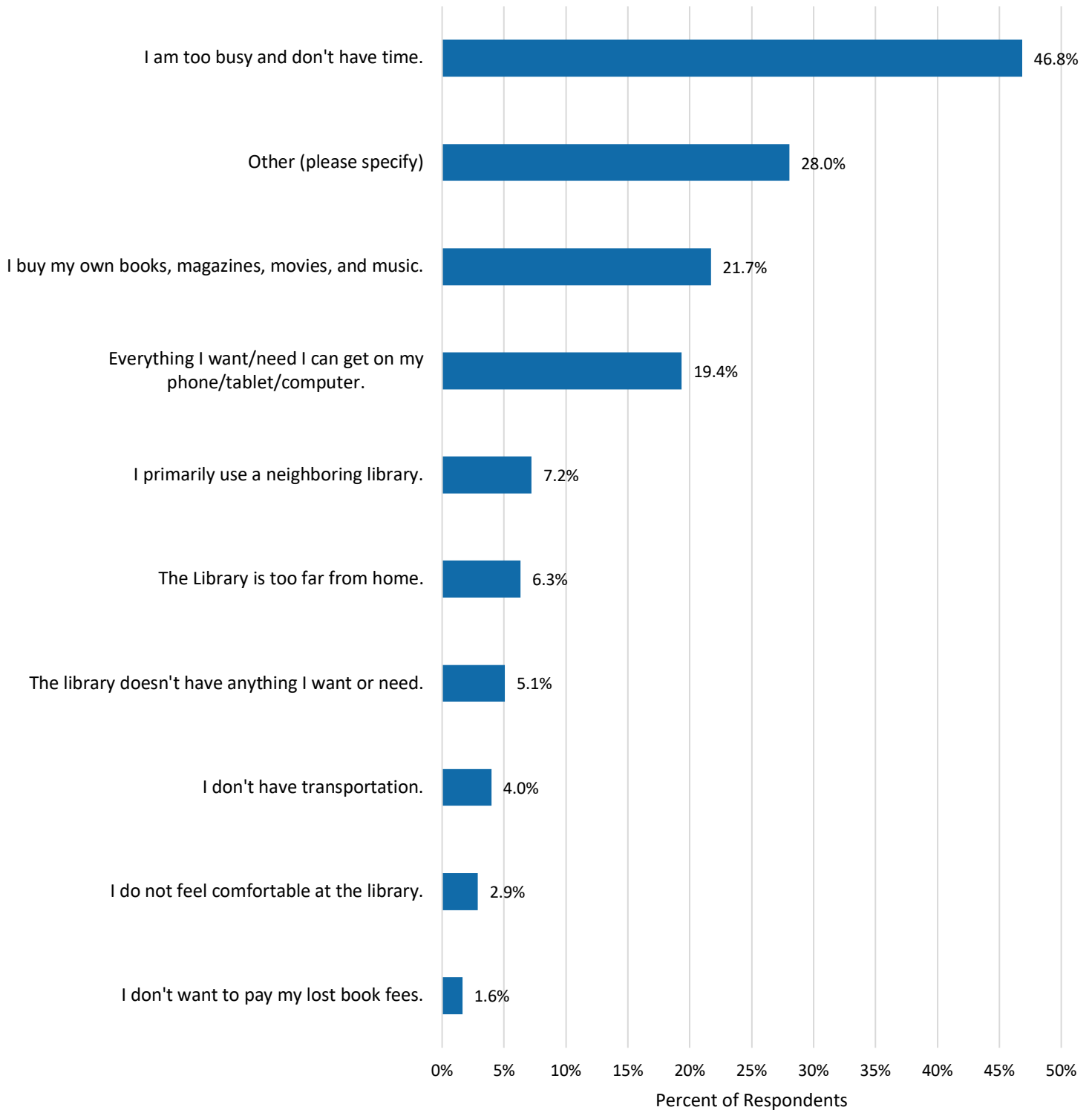
- Timing: More evening and weekend events for various age groups, including pre-kindergarten children and adults.
- Program Variety: Desire for a wider range of engaging and interactive programs, including author talks, crafts, music programs, community events, read-aloud programs by local figures.
- Volume: Comments showed an interest in more programs across age groups.
- Middle Grades and Teens: Requests for more programs and activities for middle school students, teens, and older children.
- Seniors: A need for more senior-focused programs and technology classes.

Programs and Resources for Patrons with Special Needs

- Dyslexia and Special Needs: Calls for more resources and support for dyslexic students and special needs individuals, including dedicated sections and programs, and variable age limits for programs to allow for those with differing needs to participate.
- ASL and Neurodiversity: Interest in more inclusivity programs such as ASL classes for all patrons and specific accommodations for neurodivergent patrons.



What gets in the way of you using the Clarkston Independence District Library? (Check all that apply.)



FINDINGS

- This question was answered by 244 respondents and skipped by 176.
- 46.8% of those who responded indicated they are too busy/don't have time to use the library.
- Less than a quarter of respondents indicated they buy their own books and materials, and less than 20% indicated they get everything they want or need on their phone, tablet, or computer.
- Only 2.9% stated they do not feel comfortable in the library, and only 1.6% indicated they don't want to pay their lost book fees.

Of the 155 respondents that selected "Other (please specify)"

- 51 said that **nothing stops them** from using the library.
- 23 reported that **limited open hours** get in the way of them using the library.
- 17 primarily use the library's **online resources** and do not need to visit in person.
- 15 reported **dissatisfactions with the collection**, noting that the library's selection is lacking and/or wait times are long.
- Other reported reasons included an inconvenient location, poor customer service, noisy atmosphere, a lack of knowledge about how to use the library, and some mentioned they wished they used it more.

If you checked a box in question 5, please tell us how the library might better offer services or programs to you and your family.

Digital and e-Book Accessibility

- Desire for a greater selection of e-books, audiobooks, and digital content across platforms like Libby and Hoopla. There is also interest in improving access to digital resources and streamlining the process for borrowing and managing digital materials.

Library Hours

- Extended library hours, particularly on weekends and Sundays to better accommodate busy schedules, including those of working parents and seniors.

Collection and Material Diversity

- Requests for a broader and updated selection of books, especially Christian literature, new releases, and popular genres, are frequent.

Program and Community Engagement

- There is a desire for more diverse programs, including adult education classes, community events, and activities for all age groups. Specific suggestions include evening events, more family-oriented programs, and greater outreach to single parents and seniors.
- Respondents suggested more convenient program hours for working parents.
- There is interest in greater community engagement through events, book sales, and partnerships with local organizations.
- There are calls for better communication and marketing of library services and events.



If you checked a box in question 5, please tell us how the library might better offer services or programs to you and your family. (continued)

Library Facilities and Comfort

- Feedback indicates a need for improved library facilities, such as more comfortable seating, updated interiors, and better organization of the children's section.

Patron Experience and Convenience

- Suggestions include enhancing the online system for library card registration, book holds, and account management. Some users also express a desire for easier access to book recommendations and a more user-friendly search experience on the library's website.
- Several respondents cited poor customer service experiences.

Personal Challenges and Choices

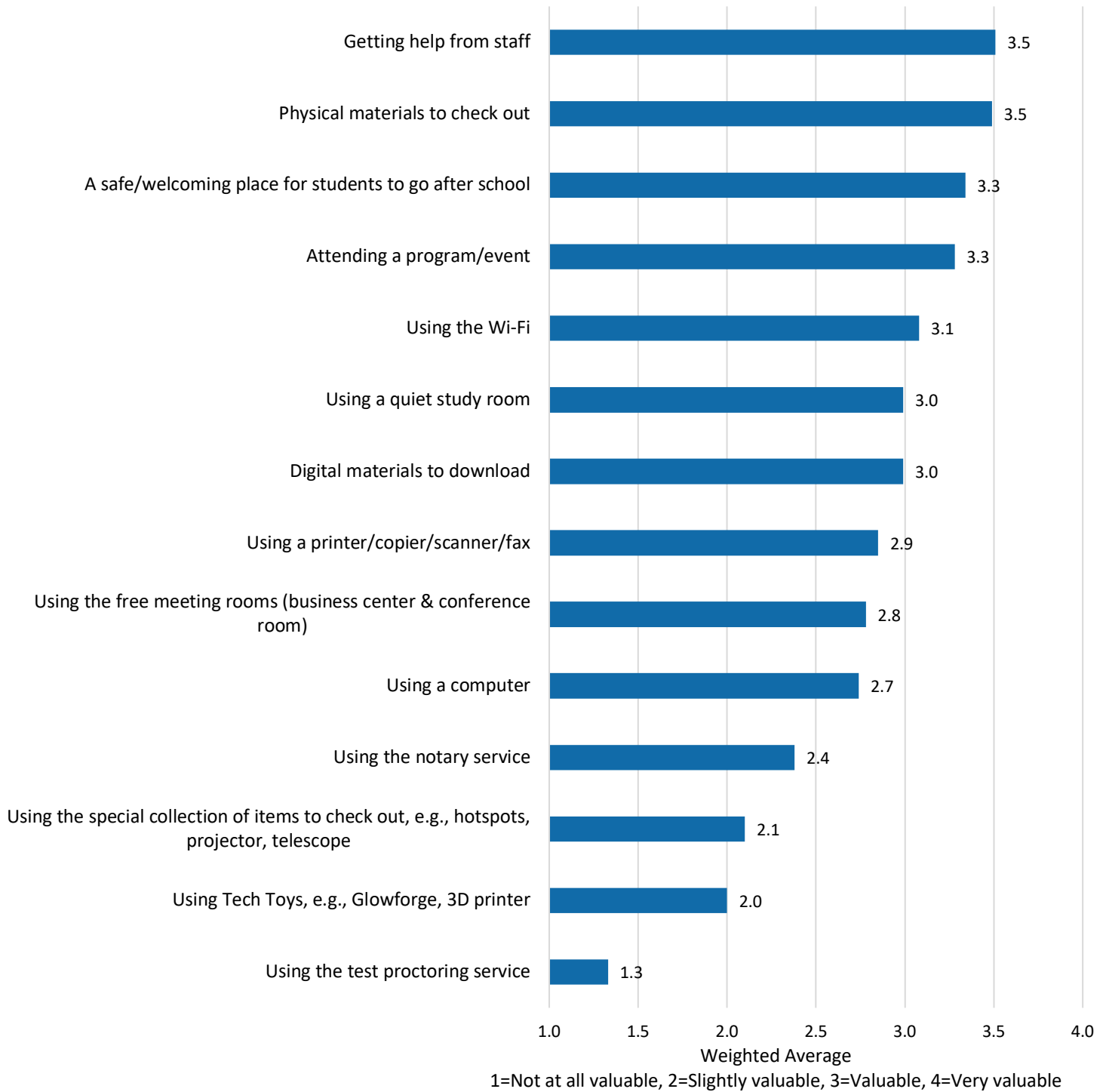
- Many respondents shared that they wished they had more time for the library but were just too busy to take advantage of the services and resources.
- Respondents also mentioned they prefer using private accounts (Spotify, Audible) and purchasing personal copies of books.



Is there another library you use besides CIDL? If so, which library do you visit most often and why?
<p>Brandon Township Library More affordable printing; friendly staff; good selections; is respondent's "home" or "local" library; closer to their residence; great programs and events; more seating; <i>less of a wait for physical and digital materials</i>; nice atmosphere.</p>
<p>Michigan E-Library Better digital selections.</p>
<p>Orion Township Public Library Closer or more convenient to their residence; shorter physical- and digital-item wait times; better selection of teen books, graphic novels, board games, video games, learning bags and kits, children's books, audiobooks; more engaging play area for children; for programs; used book selection; staff engages better with child with special needs; closer to work; is respondent's "home" or "local" library; coffee machine; larger collection; higher limit of how many DVDs can be checked out at once; shelving with face-out browsing for children; friendly staff; 24-hour hold lockers.</p>
<p>Oxford Public Library Closer or more convenient to their residence.</p>
<p>Rochester Hills Public Library Closer or more convenient to their residence or place of work; larger collection.</p>
<p>Springfield Township Library Closer or more convenient to their residence or place of work; friendly staff; larger collection; more space and activities for children; better atmosphere.</p>
<p>Waterford Township Library More Christian fiction selections; conveniently located; nice environment; more technical and historical selections; great selection of DVDs.</p>
<p>Other Libraries Mentioned*: Addison, Arenac County, Blair Memorial, Bloomfield, Broward County (FL), Central Ridge, Charlevoix, Columbus (OH), Commerce Township, Cynthiana, Davisburg, Detroit Public, East Lansing, Farmington Hills, Fenton-Winegarden, Ferndale, Flint, Fort Myers (FL), Grand Blanc, Highland, Holly, Lee County (FL), Manchester District, Maricopa County (AZ), Novi, Ortonville, Petoskey, Royal Oak, Troy, University of Michigan, West Bloomfield, White Lake.</p> <p>*Respondents mentioned that these other libraries were closer to work, where their second homes were located, where their family or children live, or near where they go to school. **Items in italics were mentioned frequently.</p>



Please rate the following library services, collections, programs, and spaces in terms of their value to you and your family.

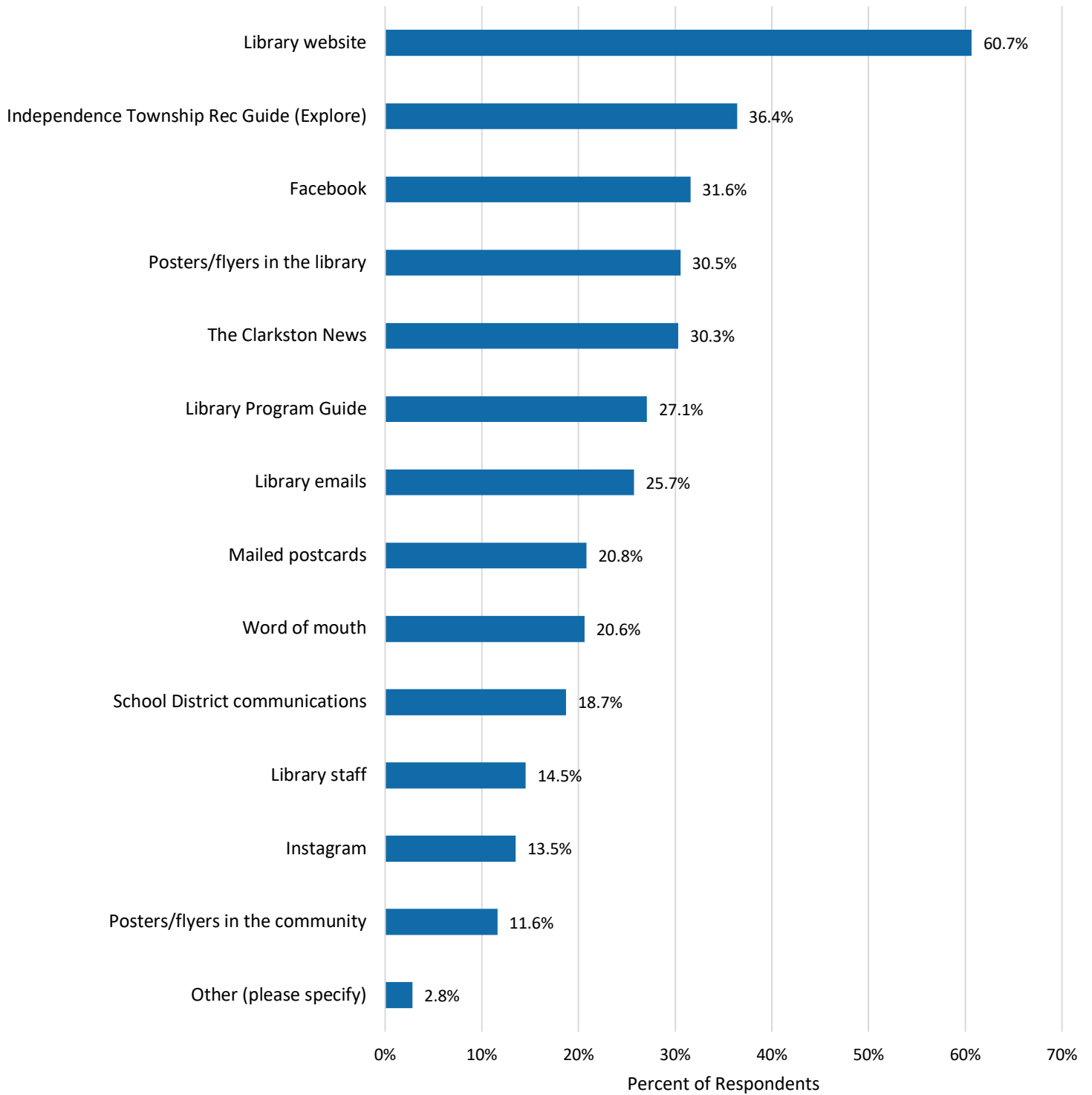


FINDINGS

- Respondents indicated they feel getting help from staff and physical materials to check out are of highest value (3.5/4).
- A safe/welcoming place for students to go after school and attending a program/event were also rated over Valuable at 3.3.
- Using tech toys (2.0) and using the test proctoring service (1.3) were rated of lowest value to respondents.
- Respondents **aged 13 and under** rated getting help from staff and **attending a program/event highest**, each at 3.4.
- Respondents **who live with or care for children under 18** rated physical materials to check out, getting help from staff, and **a safe/welcoming place for student to go after school** of highest value (each 3.5).
- **Retired respondents** rated getting help from staff highest (3.6) followed by physical materials to check out (3.5).
- Respondents who work remotely rated **digital materials to download** more highly at 3.3.
- Respondents **between ages 14-19** rated physical materials to check out highest (3.4) followed by use of **a quiet study room and a safe/welcoming place for students to go after school** (each 3.3)



Where do you learn about library news and events?
(Check all that apply.)



FINDINGS

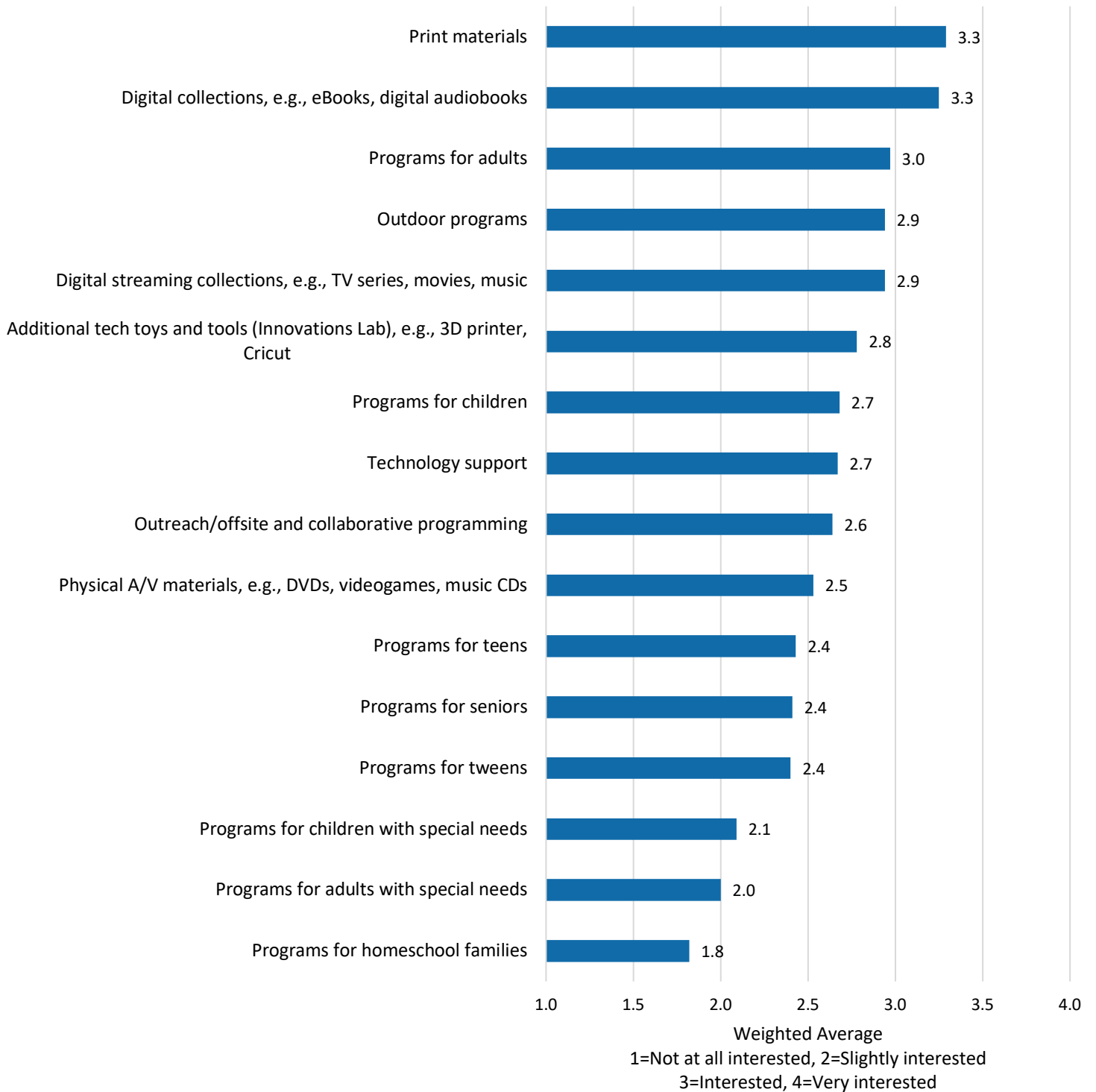
- 60.7% of all respondents indicated they learn about the library from the library website.
- Just over a third of respondents (36.4%) indicated they learn about the library from the Independence Township Rec Guide, and just below a third of respondents (31.6%) indicated they learn about the library from Facebook.
- Less than 15% of respondents learn about the library from library staff (14.5%), Instagram (13.5%), and poster/flyers in the community (11.6%).
- 51% of **respondents ages 13 and under** indicated they learn about the library from the library website. Of this group, 45% indicated they learn about the library from **posters/flyers in the library**.
- 65.7% of **respondents with children** at home or who care for children indicated they learn about the library from the website; 44.4% of this group indicated they learn about the library from **Facebook**.
- 55.7% of **respondents who commute more than 20 minutes one-way** indicated they learn about the library from the **library website**; 38.2% of this group indicated they learn about the library from **Facebook**.
- 62% of **retired respondents** indicated they learn about the library from the **library website**; 47.3% of this group indicated they learn about the library from **The Clarkston News** and 46% indicated they learn about the library from the **Independence Township Rec Guide**.
- 62% of **respondents ages 14-19** indicated they get library news from the library website followed by 47.6% who indicated **poster/flyers in the library** and 40.5% who indicated **word of mouth**. 35.7% of this group noted they get library news from **Instagram**.
- **Other places people learn about the library included:** Stroll Oakhurst Magazine, papers sent home from school, family and friends, signage, sign in front of the library, from staff, from the Chamber.

Where in the community do you get news about other local events?

- **Clarkston News:** This is the most frequently mentioned source. Many residents rely on the local newspaper for updates on community events and news.
- **Facebook:** Social media, particularly Facebook, is a major source of information. Many people get news through community groups, pages, and posts.
- **Word of Mouth:** Personal recommendations and discussions with neighbors and friends also play a significant role in spreading information.
- **School and Township Communications:** Newsletters, emails from schools, and township guides are important for reaching families and individuals.
- **Flyers and Posters:** Physical notices posted around town and distributed at local events or businesses are another common source.
- **Other Media:** Some people also use other local media sources such as Instagram, local radio, and online community forums.
- **Emails:** Community updates and event notifications via email were mentioned by several respondents.



We are thinking about where to focus our resources in the coming years.
Please rate the items below based on your interest for you or your family.



FINDINGS

- Respondents indicated highest interest in print materials and digital collections (each 3.3/4). Programs for adults (3.0), outdoor programs (2.9), and digital streaming collections (2.9) were also of high interest to respondents.
- Respondents indicated lowest interest in programs for children with special needs (2.1), programs for adults with special needs (2.0), and programs for homeschool families (1.8).
- Respondents aged 13 and under rated **programs for tweens and programs for teens** highest (each 3.5).
- Respondents ages 14-19 rated **programs for teens** highest at 3.1.
- Respondents who care for or live with children rated digital collections and print materials highest (each 3.3) followed by **outdoor programs** (3.2) and **programs for children** (3.1).
- Respondents who commute more than 20 minutes one-way rated **digital collections** highest at 3.4 followed by print materials at 3.2.
- Retired respondents rated print materials (3.4) and **programs for seniors** (3.3) as their highest interests.
- Respondents who work remotely rated **digital collections** highest at 3.5.
- Respondents who do not have a card or are unsure if they have a card rated digital collections, outdoor programs, additional tech toys and tools, programs for adults, and print materials each at 3.0.

Other (Please specify your ideas for additional library services.)

Programs

- Cultural events; hands-on activities for children; more programs for ages 9-12; winter reading program; classes on the Cricut and 3D printer; more collaborative events; outdoor activities for adults; something for homeschoolers

Program Topics

- Gardening; cooking; crafts; author visits; book clubs; English conversation groups for adults

Technology

- Monitors that can be hooked up to laptops for working at the library; an additional digital whiteboard; tech help for seniors; digitization and conversion technology for use; telescope

Collections

- Cricuts for check out; tool rental; additional digital periodicals; allow patron collection recommendations; more books; more hand-on learning kits for kids; more Kindle books; more copies of eBooks; CD players and read along books for kids

Services

- Soldering and woodworking tools; resumé assistance; job board and job searching assistance; monthly legal aid clinic; spaces for teens to work on projects; more passes to local attractions; children's play space; therapy dogs



Please provide more detail as to what programs, services, or collections would be valuable to you and your family.

Programming

- There's a strong interest in expanding programs for kids, including sensory events, art and craft sessions, science and nature activities, and interactive learning kits.
- More programs tailored to various age groups (preschoolers, elementary, tweens, and teens) are frequent. This includes activities like summer reading programs, cooking classes, and STEM-related events.
- More reading programs: storytimes for children, book clubs for young adults and adults.
- Activities that bring together different age groups and cater to children with special needs and who are homeschooled.
- Outside movie nights.
- Programs specifically for those with Autism and other different needs.
- Many patrons, especially seniors, express a need for more training in using new technology and digital tools as well as more opportunities to engage with one another.
- Programs in different languages, e.g., more Spanish storytimes.
- Expanding services to include a broader range of community needs, such as programs for different ethnicities and LGBTQIA+ resources, is highlighted, e.g., ESL classes.
- Intergenerational programming.

Collections

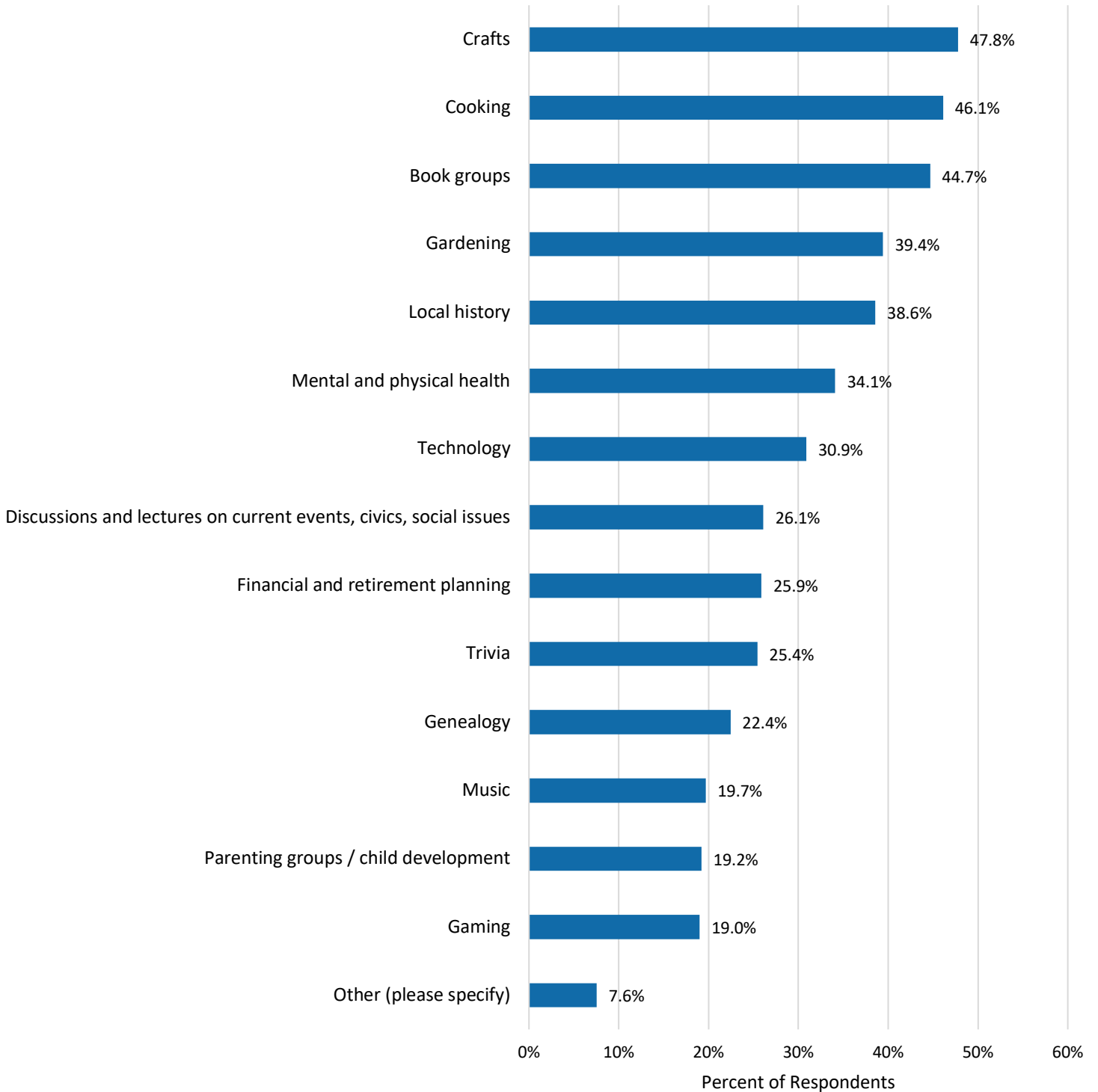
- Increasing the availability of e-books, audiobooks, and digital resources. This includes improving access to popular titles and addressing long wait times.
- Interest in tech toys, tools, and maker space equipment like 3D printers, laser cutters, and VHS or DVD converters is noted.
- Patrons request more copies of bestselling books, large print books, a broader selection of magazines and research materials, digital periodicals, and video games.
- Expanded DVD collection, adding foreign films and documentaries.
- There is a call for more materials and programs that reflect cultural diversity, including foreign language books and Christian materials.
- Collection materials that support book clubs.
- Learning kits, baking items, and other "things" for check-out
- Updated non-fiction collection
- More early reading/easy reader books

Services

- Facilities: Suggestions include improving the availability of office supplies, providing more space for studying and tutoring, and a "sprucing up" of the children's area.
- Patron Experience: Some feedback suggests revising the due date system for borrowed materials to reduce stress and improve the user experience.
- New Resources: Offer shredding service, job hunting tools, genealogy tools, educational or learning apps



Considering future programs for library patrons, what program topics would you attend at the library? (Check all that apply.)



FINDINGS:

- 47.8% of respondents indicated interest in crafting programs, and 46.1% indicated interested in cooking programs. Book groups followed closely, with 44.7% of respondents.
- Less than 20% of respondents indicated interest in programs about music (19.7%), parenting/child development (19.2%), and gaming (19%).
- 65.5% of respondents aged 13 and under indicated interest in **craft programs**, and 56.4% of this group indicated interest in **gaming programs**.
- 56.4% of respondents who have children at home or care for children indicated interested in **craft programs**; 51.6% of this group indicated interest in **cooking**, and 48.9% indicated interest in **book groups**.
- 50.5% of respondents who commute more than 20 minutes one-way indicated interest in **book groups**.
- 56.3% of retired respondents indicated interest in **local history programs**, and 42.8% of this group indicated interest in **discussions and lectures on current events, civics, and social issues**.
- 69.2% of respondents between ages 14 to 19 indicated interest in **cooking programs**.

Other programs topics of interest included:

Children's and Teen Programs: Homeschool activities; Lego meet ups; family events; teen game night.

Life Skills: Self-care; self-esteem; canning; how to make probiotic food; preparing for climate changes; career help, e.g., resume and cover letter writing, job hunting; health promotion; physical health, e.g., nutrition and fitness; baking; financial literacy; mindfulness.

Culture: Spanish conversation class; DEI and civil rights; cultural events; opera; Christianity; indigenous peoples.

Arts, Crafts, Recreation, and Play: Swapping/trading art supplies; art and drawing; more Dungeons and Dragons nights; maker events with vendors, demos, training; 3D printing; geocaching; yoga on the lawn; Euchre night; board games; murder mystery; basketball; plant swap; free swap of items such as craft supplies or home goods; quilting; quests/treasure hunts.

Academic Subjects: Group for writers; science and nature for citizen scientists; new advances in astrophysics; U.S. and world history; foreign languages.

Books: Book bingo; book recommendation nights.

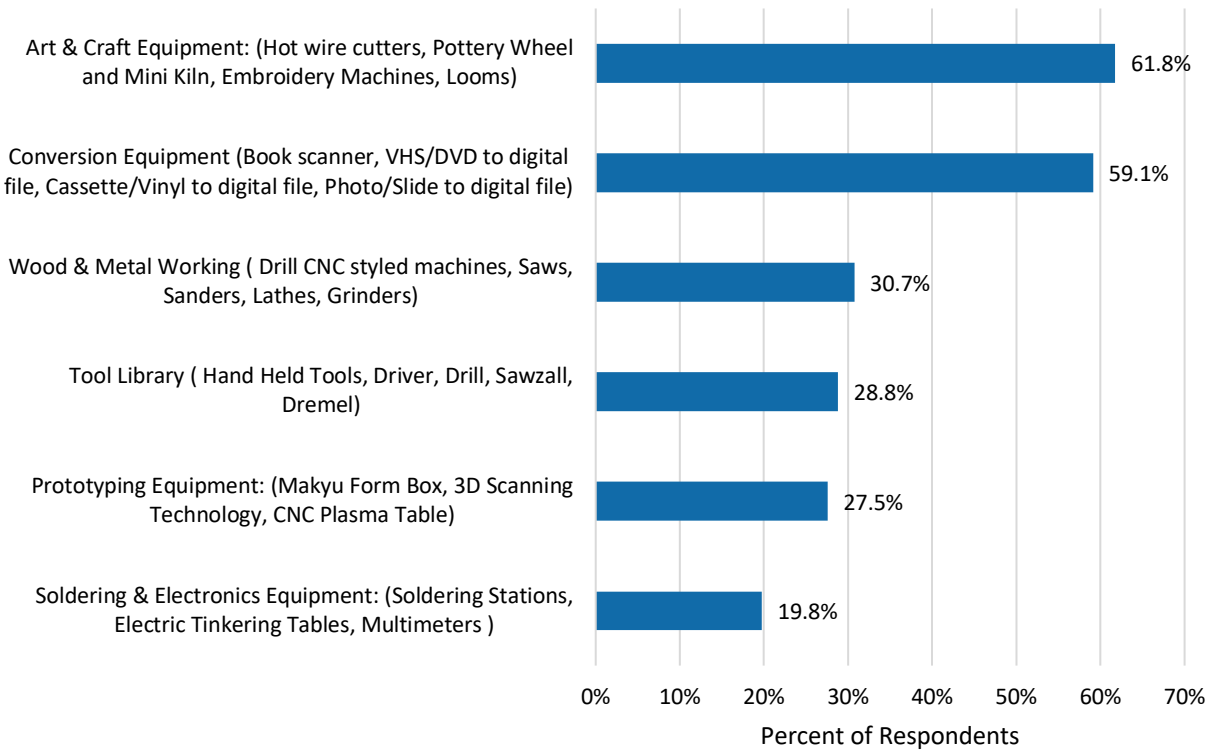
Social: Mom groups.

Other: Psychics; hypnosis; lectures; talks/discussions; animal visits; special needs outreach event.

Non-Program Suggestions: Do not over-compete with the senior center; more middle school and adult books in Spanish.



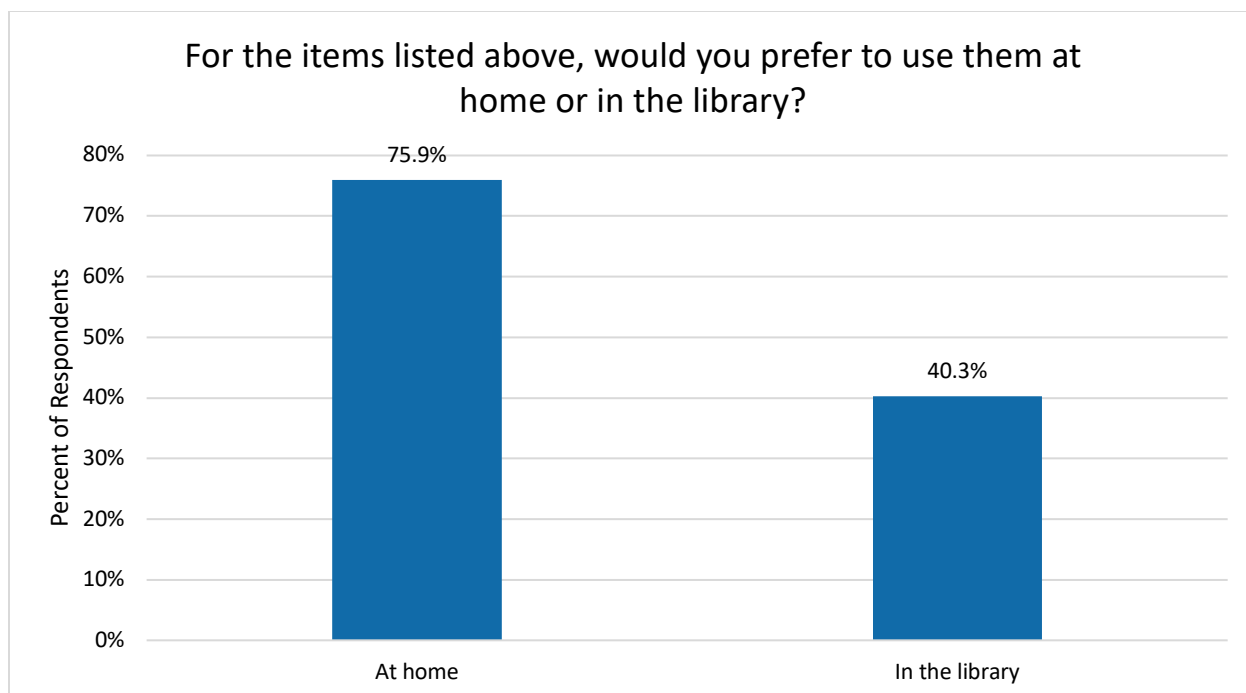
Which of the following categories or specific items would you use if the library had them available? (Check all that apply.)



FINDINGS

- 61.8% of respondents indicated they would use art and craft equipment, and 59.1% indicated they would use conversion equipment.
- Many fewer respondents indicated they would use soldering and electronics equipment (19.8%).
- 81.8% of respondents aged 13 and under and 79.4% of those ages 14-19 indicated they would use **art and craft equipment**.
- 68.3% of respondents who have children at home or care for children indicated interest in **art and craft equipment**.
- 62% of respondents who commute more than 20 minutes one-way indicated interest in **conversion equipment**.
- 76.9% of retired respondents indicated they would use **conversion equipment**.
- Other tools noted: Take home crafts for adults; book binder; leather working tools; tool library; pottery wheel; embroidery lessons; tools for repairing Apple devices; large format printer; baking/cooking items; projector and screen; Adobe products on library computers; sewing machine; color blindness glasses; drones; instruction on all tools; band saw; energy efficiency items, e.g., power consumption meter.



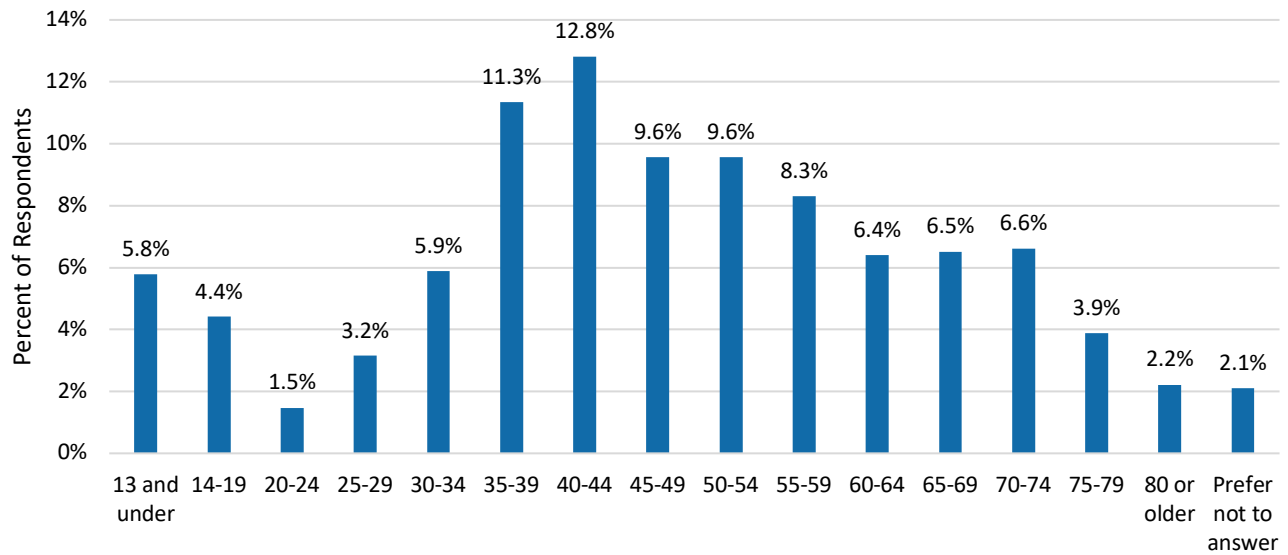


FINDINGS

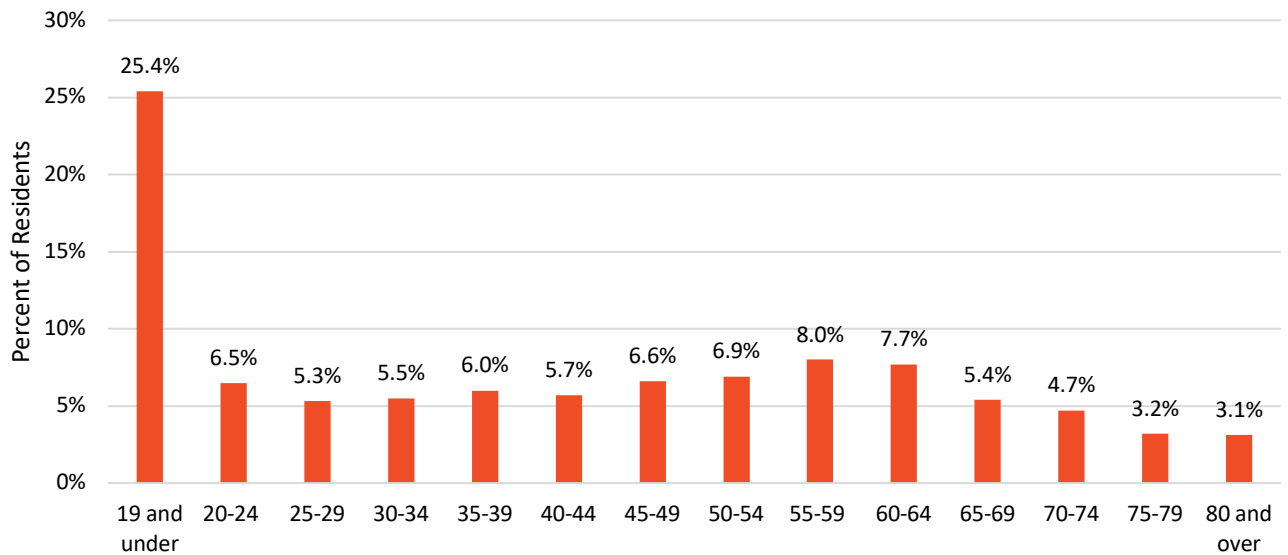
- Over three-quarters of respondents indicated they would prefer to use the items listed in the previous question at home.
- 40.3% of respondents indicate they would prefer to use the items in the library.
- 76% of respondents aged 13 and under indicated they would like to use these items at home, and 32% indicated they would use the items in the library.
- 70.3% of retired respondents indicated they would like to use items at home, and 42.4% indicated they would use items in the library.
- While 73% of respondents as 14-19 indicated they would prefer to use these items at home, 54.1% also indicated they would use the items in the library.



What is your age? (Optional)



Independence Township 2022 Age Distribution

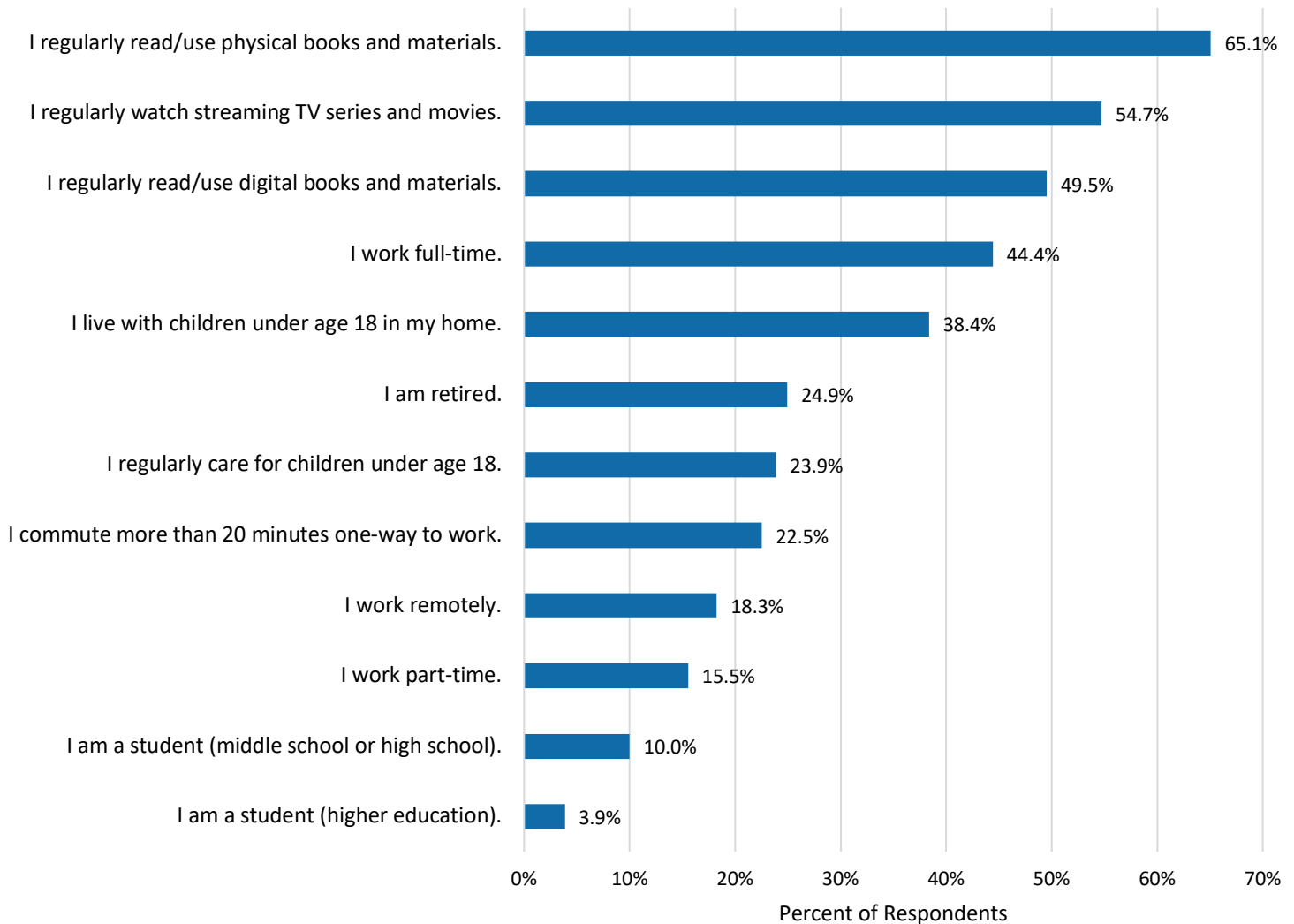


FINDINGS

- 10.2% of survey respondents were aged 19 and under, and 25.4% of the township 2022 population was age 19 and under.
- 51.6% of respondents were ages 35 to 59, and 33.2% of the township population was ages 35 to 59 in 2022.
- 25.6% of respondents were aged 60 and over, and 24.1% of the township population was aged 60 and over in 2022.



Please choose all statements below that describe you.

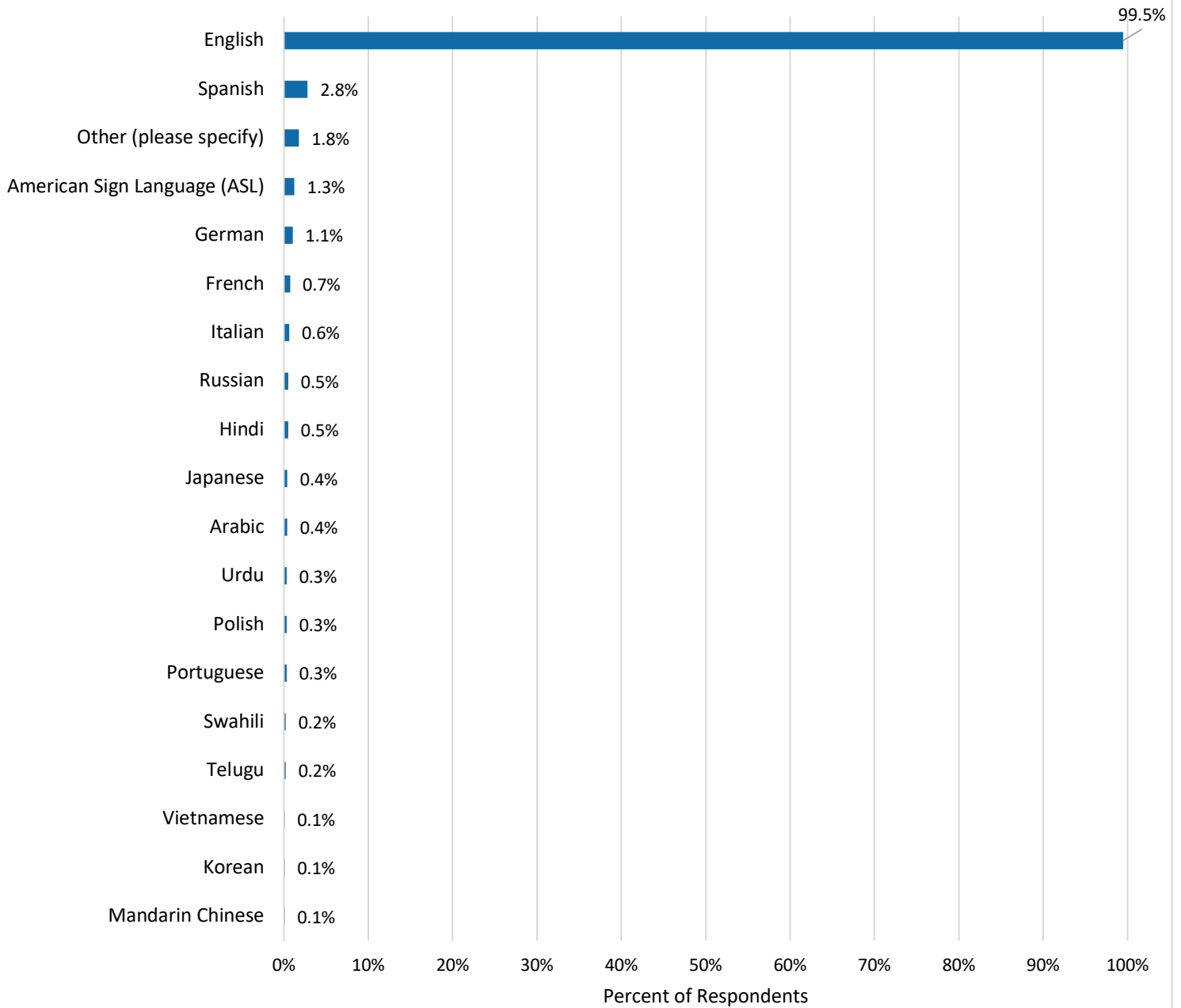


FINDINGS

- A majority of respondents (65.1%) indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials and regularly watch streaming TV series and movie (54.7%).
- Nearly 50% indicated they also read/use digital books and materials.
- A combined 59.9% indicated they work full- or part-time, and 24.9% indicated they are retired.
- 10% of respondents indicated they are a student in middle school or high school.
- A combined 42.7% indicated they live with children under 18 or regularly care for children under 18 (some respondents chose both).
- 18.3% of respondents indicated they work remotely.



What languages are spoken in your home? Please check all that apply. (Optional)



FINDINGS

- Nearly all respondents indicated they speak English at home (99.5%).
- Just 2.8% of respondents indicated they speak Spanish at home.
- Other languages specified by respondents included: Hmong, Romanian, Macedonian, Albanian, Odia, Gaelic Irish, Greek, Tagalog, Malayalam, Ojibwe, Lakota, Swiss, Turkish.



OVERALL FINDINGS

Respondents

- 89.5% of respondents indicated they have a CIDL card; 10.5% do not have a card or are not sure if they have a card.
- A majority of respondents (65.1%) indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials and regularly watch streaming TV series and movie (54.7%).
- A combined 42.7% indicated they live with children under 18 or regularly care for children under 18, and 24.9% indicated they are retired.
- 99.5% of respondents indicated they speak English at home, and 2.8% of respondents indicated they speak Spanish at home.
- A combined 10.2% of respondents were age 19 and under, and 10% of respondents were in middle school or high school.

Satisfaction, Value, and Awareness of Services

- 92.9% of all respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- Respondents rated customer service (4.7/5) and the library facility (4.6) as the items with the highest satisfaction rates.
- Respondents shared many ways the library might increase their satisfaction, including but not limited to extended library hours, increased collection of popular and new release books, increased selection of eBooks and digital audiobooks, more evening and weekend programs, more hotspots for check-out, and updates to the library website to aid in navigation and ease of use.
- Respondents indicated they feel getting help from staff and physical materials to check out are of highest value to them (3.5/4). They also shared many other programs, services, and collections that would be valuable to them.
- Respondents indicated reasons why they sometimes use other libraries, including but not limited to larger selection in physical and digital collections with shorter wait times, face-out browsing for children's shelves, 24-hour hold lockers, and higher limits on DVD check-outs.
- 60.7% of respondents indicated they learn about what is happening at the library through the library's website.

Interest in Future Services

- Respondents indicated highest interest in print materials and digital collections (each 3.3/4). Programs for adults (3.0), outdoor programs (2.9), and digital streaming collections (2.9) were also of high interest to respondents.
- Respondents aged 13 and under and those between ages 14-19 all indicated high interest in programs for tweens and teens.
- Respondents with children at home and who care for children indicated high interest in programs for children and outdoor programs.
- Retired respondents indicated high interest in programs for seniors.
- 47.8% of respondents indicated interest in crafting programs, and 46.1% indicated interest in cooking programs. They also shared many other program topics of interest.



Focus Groups and Interviews Summary

In support of CIDL's strategic planning process, 27 people took part in the four focus groups and nine people participated in one-on-one interviews.

Advantages of Small-Group Community Feedback

Most library strategic planning efforts include community surveys to learn what is most important to area residents. While beneficial, surveys are typically completed by people who are already aware of library services. To hear opinions from people *not* represented in that group, other methods are required. **This is where focus groups and one-on-one interviews come in.** These methods ensure the library hears from diverse people who may not typically respond to a survey or be aware of the library, it also allows the library to hear from targeted stakeholders within the community.

Methodology and Process

Focus Groups

Three in-person focus groups and one virtual focus group were scheduled for 60 minutes and lasted 65 to 90 minutes. Focus groups were roughly structured according to the Harwood Institute's Aspirations Exercise. In-person focus groups took place in the library and in the community on May 8 and 9, 2024. Flip charts and markers were used to record the conversations. Google JamBoard was used to record the virtual conversation.

Focus group questions center wholly on the *community* the library serves, not the library itself. By asking participants about the wider community the library gets information about community needs and wants and is more easily able to craft innovative, out-of-the-library-box goals for the coming years. Focus groups took place with Chamber of Commerce members, representatives of various area nonprofit and service organizations, the Friends of the Library and past Library Trustees, and Pastor to Pastor.

The facilitator asked people to brainstorm and discuss the following questions:

- What are your aspirations for your community?
- What challenges do you face in trying to reach those aspirations?
- What needs to change to overcome those challenges to achieve your aspirations?

Focus Group Limitations

Focus groups always have talkers and listeners. To ensure that everyone had a chance to share their thoughts, the facilitator consciously invited quieter participants to engage in the process.

A couple of focus group conversations fell through. This may point to an opportunity to strengthen community relationships, especially with organizations serving the more vulnerable communities in the area.

Focus Group Strengths

To the one, each interviewee and member of a focus group was open and honest about their opinions and ideas. Participants were respectful of others' opinions. Focus group participants were able to dig deep into topics as they bounced ideas off each other, expanding upon some ideas and quickly moving away from others. Even when people disagreed with each other, they were not disagreeable. Healthy conflict helped elevate resulting conversations within some of the focus groups.



People who did more listening to the discussion often encapsulated the conversation for the group when given the opportunity. The facilitator found their summaries very useful.

Focus group participants represented diverse ages, races, and economic backgrounds and represented geographical diversity across the county.

Interviews

Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes and lasted 15-40 minutes each. They were loosely structured according to the SOAR method which collects Strengths, Aspirations, Opportunities, and Results. Due to time constraints, emphasis was placed on the opportunities and aspirations portions of the method. The SOAR method comes from the Aspen Institute's *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, (2014) and resulting *Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library* (2017).

Participants joined interviews in-person, via telephone, or via a consultant-provided Zoom link. The individuals interviewed included stakeholders throughout the library's service area.

Participants were asked about themselves, their community, and their library using the following questions:

- What do you do for a living? How do you spend your days?
- Where do you live? How long have you lived there?
- What kinds of changes have you seen in your community in that time?
- What do you want for your community?
- What's an ideal future for your community 10 years down the road?
- Do you yourself utilize the library? How often, and in what ways?
- What do you want for your library?
- What an ideal future for the library 10 years down the road?



Small-Group Feedback Summaries

Library Aspirations

This summary of top community aspirations was collected from community focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews.

Conversations around people's aspirations for the library reveal several common themes that highlight the evolving role of libraries in communities. **These themes illustrate a vision the library as a dynamic community hub that provides educational, cultural, and social resources while fostering inclusivity, innovation, and collaboration.**

Top Library Aspirations
1. Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase programs and services for seniors, including intergenerational programming.• Host larger events that bring the whole community together and consider other venues for large events.• Consider live music performances that could appeal to all ages.• Consider more programs with popular authors and speakers.• Offer more outdoor programs and activities for all ages.
2. Physical Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide study rooms and meeting rooms for groups and individuals.• Create a cool, comfortable, and safe atmosphere for teens to gather.• Provide comfortable seating with access to natural light.• Consider outdoor spaces and gardens for reading and program areas.
3. Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow emerging technology trends (such as AI) and provide opportunities for the community learn about new tech.• Continue offering public computers.• Teach people how to find reliable information and determine what is legitimate and not legitimate.
4. Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase marketing and visibility of programs and services.
5. Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with the schools to support literacy.• Serve as a bridge to human and social service resources through organizational partnerships. Partner with service agencies and churches to provide referrals and determine gaps in services, especially for mental health services.• Collaborate with community organizations for programming inside and outside of the library.• Become a clearinghouse for community, social, and human services.



Community Aspirations

This summary of top community aspirations was collected from community focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews.

Conversations around community aspirations reveal several common themes that reflect the diverse needs and priorities of the county. **These themes highlight the community's aspirations for a more connected and vibrant community with more downtown and outdoor activities for all ages, and easy ways to learn about what's going on in town.**

Top Community Aspirations
1. Community Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clarkston should have a variety of places to meet and interact with others, including large community gathering places such as a community center and community pool.More neighbors knowing neighbors and helping each other out.Opportunities for parents to connect with other families.
2. Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaboration between community groups, businesses, and nonprofits, working together across organizations.Coordinated efforts to welcome new residents and share local information.Be part of an assistance network to connect people in need with those who can help.
3. Vibrant Downtown <ul style="list-style-type: none">Community support of local small businesses — shop local.Less traffic downtown with infrastructure to make the area safe for pedestrians.More free parking downtown.Access to the arts, including public art installations, with more music and arts venues.Continue residential growth patterns while being mindful of and celebrating the history of Clarkston.
4. Outdoor Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase walkability with a priority on safety and consider creating walking maps to raise awareness.Connect existing walking and bike paths to connect opposite sides of town and expand bike trails to other communities.More lake access and public green space; protect existing parks and green spaces amidst growth.Additional outdoor recreation facilities for children and teens such as a public pool, skate park, etc.



Community Challenges

This summary of top community challenges was collected from community focus group discussions.

The list of community challenges highlights several recurring themes that affect the area's development, connectivity, and overall quality of life. **These themes reflect the community's need for improved communication that helps build a tighter community fabric, and a balance between business development and protection of natural spaces.**

Top Community Challenges
1. Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no community newspaper or single source of community information.• Difficult to connect people to resources that may help them.• Lack of communication between city officials and community; municipal information can be difficult to find.
2. Community Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desire for a central location and/or common goal to bring people together.• Neighbors don't know neighbors, connecting again has been difficult post-COVID.• Residents are busy and don't have time to for community events and other points of connection.
3. Local Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balancing the protection of natural habitats with the need for growth and development.• Balancing the modernization of downtown with historic preservation.• Small businesses face challenges with staffing, parking, and competition with online retailers like Amazon.• New development of condos and apartments needs to be affordable.• No local grocery store.



Necessary Changes

Community focus group discussions identified top areas that need to change in the community. The list of changes needed in the community highlights the community's aspirations for a more engaged, connected, and thriving community with proactive leadership and strong communication channels.

Necessary Changes
1. Strengthening Community Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage community engagement and connectivity.• Encourage a sense of mutual support and ways to give back among residents.• Create many “entry ramps” for people to combat loneliness.• Create a sense of loyalty and pride in Clarkston’s local businesses and resources.
2. Leadership for Change <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a network of movers and shakers that are open to leading and sustaining community change.• Need a common vision and mission for community to work toward.
3. Communication and Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communication channels from local organizations to help create demand for programs, events and resources.• Gather and act on input from community members with diverse voices.



Library Sector Trends and Benchmarking

Methodology and Process

Exploring library trends across the country can help libraries of all sizes keep up to date with the larger sector. When reviewing **Library Sector Trends**, we considered services at Michigan libraries and libraries around the country. Some libraries we reviewed are larger than CIDL — their services are included here as aspirational examples and to demonstrate the breadth of services being provided across the nation. Trends considered here include services that fall in the following categories:

- Community-centered services.
- Dedication to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Innovative uses of technology.
- Out-of-the-box community outreach.
- Commitment to data and learning.

As part of our benchmarking exercise, we conducted **Services Benchmarking** with a cohort of four nearby public libraries. Two libraries are very similar to CIDL (Saline and Orion Township) in terms of service population, budget, and capacity for services. One larger library (Rochester Hills) has been added for aspirational purposes. One smaller library (Springfield Township) has been added since CIDL frequently partners with them due to an overlap in service population created by the Clarkston Community School District. CIDL, Saline, and Orion Township are all Class 5 libraries, while Rochester Hills is Class 6, and Springfield Township is Class 4.

The Services Benchmarking chart is followed by **Data Benchmarking** using 2022 IMLS data, the most recent available. Charts comparing operational expenditures, staffing levels, circulation, and populations served across the regional cohort of libraries are included at the end of this report.

Library Sector Trends

Community-Centered Services

The COVID-19 pandemic required public libraries to adapt like never before, listening to community and providing services that meet needs in new and unprecedented ways. Public libraries consult with their communities about health, well-being, and basic social needs, and implement solutions with heart and creativity.

Morton Grove Public Library (IL) hosts [“Walk Morton Grove”](#) to encourage teens and adults to track their steps throughout September. Participants can earn prizes and the total step count will be tallied for all participants. Programs about healthy walking, nature walks, and a bird walk will be held alongside the month-long step tracking program. **Detroit Public Library (MI)** partners with [Vision to Learn](#) to offer free eye exams and glasses for students ages 4 to 21. Vision to Learn brings their mobile clinic to library locations and is funded through local foundations and business partners.

Kalamazoo Public Library (MI) is partnering with COPE Network to provide [community education events](#) about substance use disorder overdose prevention and rescue. The programs will provide information to help reduce stigma associated with substance abuse, teach community members how to respond to overdose, and provide free Naloxone.



With the understanding that for those who don't have enough food, "every other need they have is going to seem secondary," **addressing food insecurity** is another aspect of health and well-being that is being tackled by public libraries across the country ([American Libraries, June 2023](#)). With local support **Charleston County Public Libraries (SC, CCPL)** added community fridges at three library branches in 2021 to provide easier access to free, fresh produce, a trend that expands on the idea of a small food shelf or pantry for shelf-stable foods which many libraries have added in recent years. Addressing the high incidence of high blood pressure among South Carolina residents, **CCPL** also offers [blood pressure kits](#) for check out at all branches through a partnership with the American Heart Association.

The May 2023 edition of American Libraries piece "[Period. End of Story.](#)" highlights the benefits of offering access to free period products at public libraries. In California, recent state legislation requires public schools, state universities, and community colleges to offer free period supplies in restrooms. **San Mateo County Libraries (CA)** wanted to join this effort to improve access and [began providing period products](#) early in 2023. The library also provides resources addressing period poverty and menstrual equity.

Orion Township Public Library (MI) partners with local schools on an initiative called [ThinkLink](#). Through ThinkLink, all students and teachers at Lake Orion Community Schools have an OTPL library card which can be used to access resources in person and online. OTPL school liaison librarians work with teachers and deliver requested materials to the schools. The program expands public library access to students and teachers who live outside the township.

Dedication to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility for All

Commitment to equal access to library services is a basic tenet for public libraries. Going beyond this foundational value to advance various types of equity, diversity, and inclusion can mean different things to different communities, and public libraries across the country are approaching and demonstrating their dedication to these values in different ways.

In Michigan, the **Ann Arbor District Library (AADL, MI)** supports [an ongoing initiative to address anti-Black racism](#) in their community while providing resources for learning and support. Local artists contributed to a Black Lives Matter mural at the library, and the library holds a discussion series to provide for intentional community discussion. AADL also partners with the local African-American Cultural and Historical Museum on a [living oral history project](#) that gathers stories, interviews, and other features, making them available digitally alongside other historical collections.

Detroit Public Library (DPL, MI) hosted many [Juneteenth events](#) in 2024 including storytimes, lectures, make-and-take crafts, cake decorating, a Family Freedom Day Festival, and parades at different branches. DPL also has an [African American booklist](#) through which librarians review and recommend titles about and by African Americans. The list has been published annually for over 50 years and includes titles for all ages. Considering other types of inclusion and equity needs, DPL is home to [Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#) at their Douglass Branch which has Braille books, descriptive DVDs, audio newspapers and magazines, and large print materials among other items and events that accommodate those with a variety of physical access needs. Nearby **Farmington Community Library (MI)** provides a [Disability Pride Month Book list](#) for adults.

Rochester Hills Public Library (RHPL, MI) provides [citizenship and immigration resources](#) through their Citizenship Collection. This collection includes study materials and other information needed for



naturalization and green card eligibility. RHPL provides resources and references for local ELL classes and world language materials, as well.

Increasingly, public libraries are asked to provide welcoming and safe spaces for families with children on the autism spectrum. In the May 2022 edition of *American Libraries*, Annemarie Mannion explores the growing need for these services and the sense of support and inclusion that results from libraries' efforts (14). Accessibility collections can include therapeutic toys and sensory-rich manipulatives for young children as well as literature for adults and children on disability topics and items that support skill development. Mannion notes that staff at the **Sunderland Public Library (MA)** discovered that 5% of the community's public school student population had an autism spectrum diagnosis and decided to add an accessibility support collection. **Arlington Heights Memorial Library (AHML, IL)** added an [accessibility support collection](#) of 350 items. Within the first month, 50% of the collection was checked out (15). The AHML accessibility support collection is provided alongside programming designed for families of children with differing abilities. Librarians recommend consulting the regional disability community to find out what is already available and most needed before curating a collection.

Similarly, [sensory support kits](#) are available at **Grand Rapids Public Library (MI)** for children needing extra support while visiting the library. Items are for use in-house and include: a weighted vest, fidget and therapy toys, emotion flashcards, and noise reduction headphones, among other items. To address many varying inclusivity needs, **Orion Township Public Library's (OTPL, MI)** [Diversity Collection](#) offers collections in different languages, memory kits, discovery kits, Braille books, large print collections, and more. Like Grand Rapids, **OTPL** also offers in-library [sensory kits](#) that include items such as noise-cancelling headphones, weighted lap pads, a wobbly cushion, and many fidget items for use in-house on a trip to the library. A smaller sensory kit is available for check-out.

Innovative Technology

Use of technology is now synonymous with most public library services. In the [2023 Public Library Technology Survey](#), the Public Library Association (PLA) reports that 95% of libraries now offer digital books and e-audiobooks, nearly half of libraries lend internet hotspots, 39.5% of libraries have maker production equipment, and 57.5% offer streaming and downloadable media.

Many libraries are applying technology in new ways to meet emerging community needs. When the pandemic created new barriers to healthcare access, video calls with healthcare providers became more common. But without the adequate connectivity or hardware at home even this solution was out of reach for many. Enter, public libraries. "We have the fastest internet in town, we're used to helping people with this kind of stuff, and we respect privacy," noted a Texas library director in the September 2023 *Library Journal* article ["Call a Doctor: COVID-Generated Library Telehealth programs Continue to Grow."](#) American Rescue Plan funding made the [NJHealthConnect@YourLibrary](#) program possible through the New Jersey State Library. The program trained New Jersey libraries to carry out telehealth programs in their communities. As a leader of the program, **East Brunswick Public Library (NJ)** implemented [Just For The Health Of It!](#) to promote health equity, part of which shares iPads with partnering libraries in NJ in order to promote telemedicine access and health literacy.

In Michigan, the **Detroit Public Library (DPL, MI)** offers laptops for check out for up to 90 days as part of their ["Laptop To Go" program](#). The DPL assistant director for marketing and communications noted, "being able to use computers and the internet at home is even more crucial with hybrid work schedules



and virtual meetings.” DPL also offers “Hotspots To Go” and tech support on-site and by phone to assist with using the devices.

Rochester Hills Public Library’s (MI) makerspace (the [Eureka Lab](#)) does not require a library card to use the tools but does require an appointment. Makerspace hours extend into the evenings Monday through Thursday and until 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. A digital media conversion station, 3D printers, (a resin printer and a filament printer), a button press, a laser cutter, and more tools are available with nominal fees charged for materials. At the **St. Charles Public Library District (IL)** the makerspace ([STC Creative](#)) offers a Sound Studio alongside their makerspace where patrons can record audio for podcasting. In Illinois, **Aurora Public Library District** now hosts an [eSports](#) lab that is open seven days a week. A library card is required, and library computer use policies apply to the lab which allows three-hour sessions.

Out-of-the-box Community Outreach: Pop-Ups, StoryWalks, and More

Taking the library “on the road,” offering alternative locations in the service area, and finding new ways to reach people in their daily life outside of the library means thinking differently about the ways that public libraries work and serve the community.

Bethlehem Area Public Library (PA) has a unique [stationary satellite location](#) known as “Books on the Hill.” This bookmobile that doesn’t move brings the library directly to the community in an easily accessible location without adding a new facility. **Peoria Public Library (IL)** features [StoryWalks](#) at three of their five branches. They are funded by community members, local civic organizations, and the Friends of the Library. **Springfield Township Library** in Davisburg, MI has a [Storybook Trail](#) with an updated story every season. The trail starts near the library parking lot and continues about two-thirds of a mile near a local playground and looping back to the library. The trail is funded in part by the local Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends of the Library.

San Mateo County Libraries (CA) expanded access to digital materials by implementing [eBook Stops](#), located at libraries, parks, recreation centers, and human service agencies in the area. The locations have a QR code that can be scanned for instant access (no library card or app needed) to thousands of eBooks and eAudiobooks for children, teens, and adults in English and Spanish. This service is available at the “point of need” for community members and broadens awareness and availability of digital materials to those who might not know about them.

Middle Georgia Regional Library (GA) provides the region with a unique [Library WOW \(Without Walls\)](#) service that will provide a pop-up library at events and locations by request. A community engagement coordinator provides access to the Library WOW services in Bibb and surrounding counties. **Chelmsford Public Library (MA)** takes their library on the road during warm seasons, visiting schools, parks, senior centers, and specific neighborhoods. They publish a calendar for the [Pop-Up Library](#) stops and can also attend community events and businesses.

Commitment to Data and Learning

Public libraries are well-known for measuring the basics of their services circulation, programs, door counts, and computer sessions, to name a few. Numerical usage statistics are expected, with increases celebrated as proof of a thriving library. But data isn’t just numbers, and increased usage doesn’t always tell the whole story. What type of data should a public library collect and how can they best learn from patron feedback and other qualitative data that goes beyond the number of materials a patron checks out?



During their centennial celebration, **Rochester Hills Public Library (MI)** is asking community members to share their library stories in their [100 Stories Project Story Exchange](#). Patrons' favorite library memories and thoughts about what the library will be like in 2124 will be archived to be part of the library's history.

When **Ann Arbor District Library (AADL, MI)** was named a five-star library by Library Journal for the 15th year in a row, Library Journal [spoke with their leadership](#) to learn more about their approach to this success. AADL director, Eli Neiburger, noted they have a "responsive relationship with patrons" and "get tons of feedback through all channels about everything we do and don't do." This commitment to seeking input, listening, and responding to patron needs indicates a culture of evaluation and learning that leads to growth and success. AADL's Annual Report is available on their website as an [infographic](#).

In California, [Palo Alto City Library](#), [San Mateo County Libraries](#), and [San Jose Public Library](#) each offer the community the opportunity to *Share Their Story* through website forms. San Mateo County Libraries specifically ask for a one sentence and San Jose and Palo Alto both allow patrons the opportunity to upload a photo or illustration that tells their story. San Jose's form allows the sharer to choose the branch location they most use or that pertains to their story. These opportunities to share positive feedback with the library can help inform library staff and, ultimately, the community if the stories are shared out via social media or through an annual reporting process – providing the opportunity for different kinds of learning and expanded awareness about the library.

Aurora Public Library District (IL) takes the idea of stories a bit further and invites community members to participate in their [Community Voices](#) initiative. Residents can share their own stories by responding to given prompts and the library will display select stories as an exhibit that is built around specific meaningful heritages and identities. The most recent call for submissions was for those of South Asian heritage.



Services Comparison Chart

All libraries in the regional cohort offer a wide variety of services in their communities. For the **Services Benchmarking** exercise we chose to focus on eight services that serve a variety of needs: learning services; access to technology; civil services; and services that reach underserved populations.

For services easily located on each library’s website, we have marked an “X” in their row. If our research team was unable to find a service on a library’s website, we assumed it was not offered and left the box on the chart blank. Thus, the library may offer the service, but we were unable to find information about it. Additional unique services are noted in the “Other” column for each library.



	Notary	Makerspace	Outreach Services	Wireless Printing	Library of Things*	Services for Special Needs	Mango**	1000 Books Before Kindergarten	Other
Orion Township	X	X	X Home delivery, Orion Center branch, Book Bike, Little Free Libraries	X	X "More Than Books"	X Special Needs Adult Programs (SNAP); Sensory Kits	X	X	ELL conversation groups, exam proctoring, book discussion kits.
Saline	X			X			X	X	LOTE4kids, multiple book lists for all ages, New Baby Packets.
Rochester Hills		X "Eureka Lab"	X Bookmobiles, mini-branches at senior locations	X	X "Innovative Items"	X Oakland Talking Book Service @ RHPL; Memory Café programs	X "Pronunciator"		50 Books in a Year, citizenship resources, Explore with RHPL - curated lists, Bright By Text, Book Bundles, Youth catalog.
Springfield Township			X Storybook Trail			X Memory Care Kits	X	X	Battle of the Books with CIDL and schools, exam proctoring, die cut machine.
Clarkston Independence	X	X Use of "Tech Toys" by appointment	X Homebound delivery, Little Free Libraries	X	X "CIDL Vault"	X Kulture City Certified, Inclusion Crew	X "Transparent"		Exam proctoring, literacy kits, Battle of the Books with Springfield Township and schools.

*Or technology for check out.

**Or another language-learning platform.

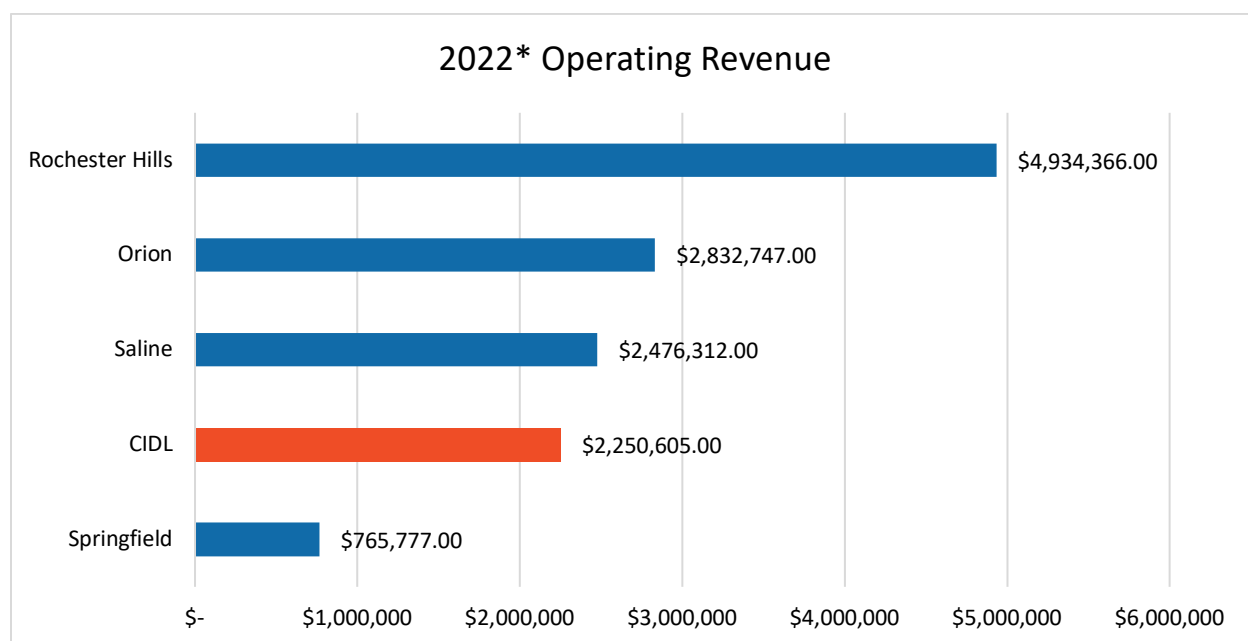
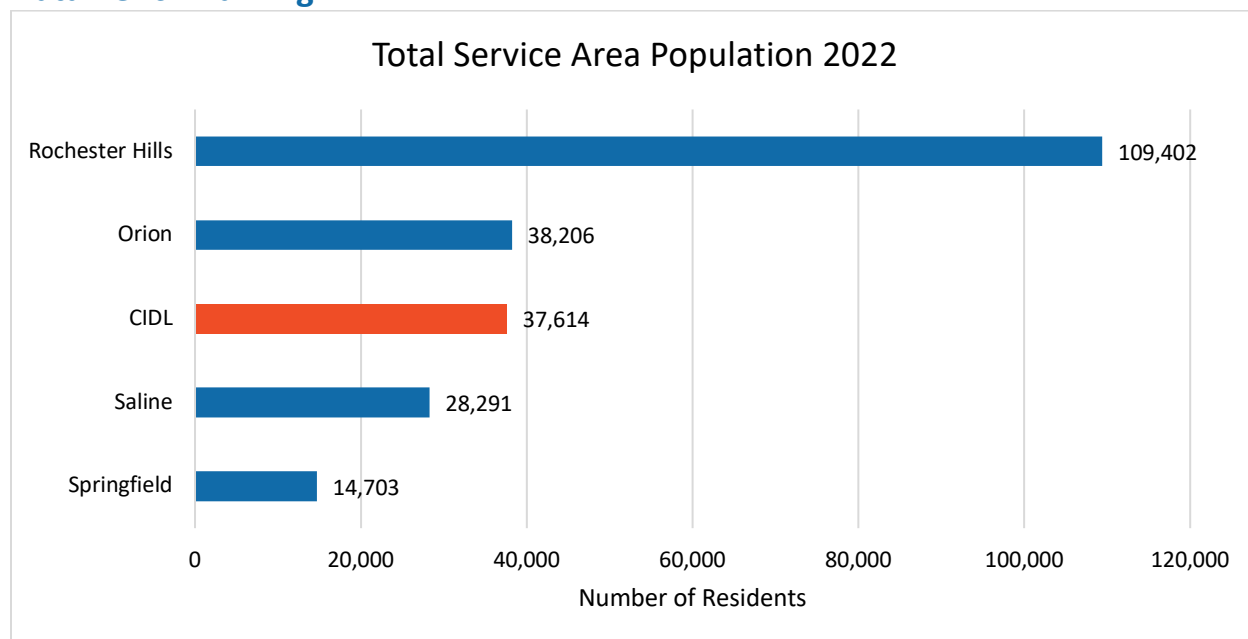


FINDINGS

- **CIDL** has a good number and variety of services for the public in addition to traditional collections and programming.
- **Orion Township (OTPL)** offers all of the services reviewed and some services are offered in different ways or to serve different audiences. For instance, for outreach services OTPL offers a Book Bike and a small branch at the Orion Center alongside Little Free Libraries and homebound delivery.
- **Rochester Hills** is the largest service area and has all services reviewed except for a notary service. Rochester Hills has more than one bookmobile and offers “mini-branches” at senior living and socialization locations, as well.
- **CIDL** offers homebound delivery but does not have a branch or “mobile” library.
- **Saline, Springfield Township, and OTPL** all offer 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, a popular program that helps parents track their reading with young children and celebrates the kids for “reading” prior to entering school.
- All libraries in the cohort offer some type of language learning platform.
- Services for special needs vary by library and are offered by four of the five libraries.
- **Rochester Hills** is the only library that offers a youth-specific catalog.
- No libraries in the cohort offer passport services or voter registration.
- **OTPL, CIDL, and Rochester Hills** each offer a special collection of items for check-out (i.e., a Library of Things or technology items). These libraries also offer makerspace services, but CIDL’s maker services are only offered by appointment.



Data Benchmarking

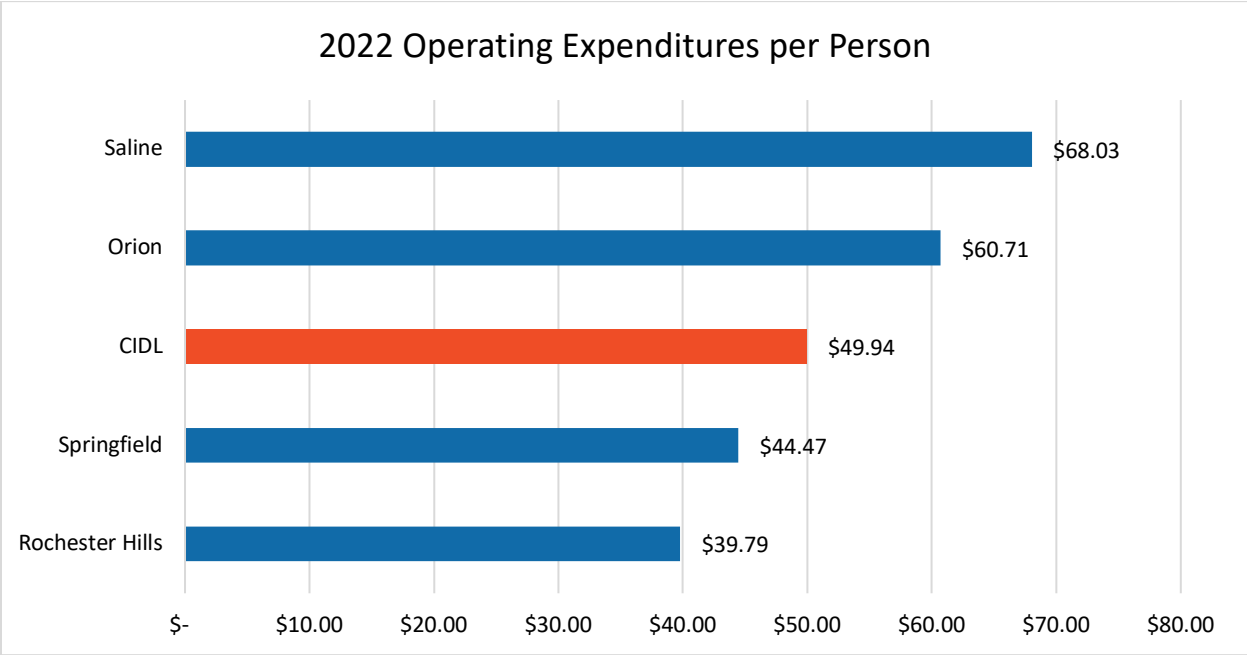
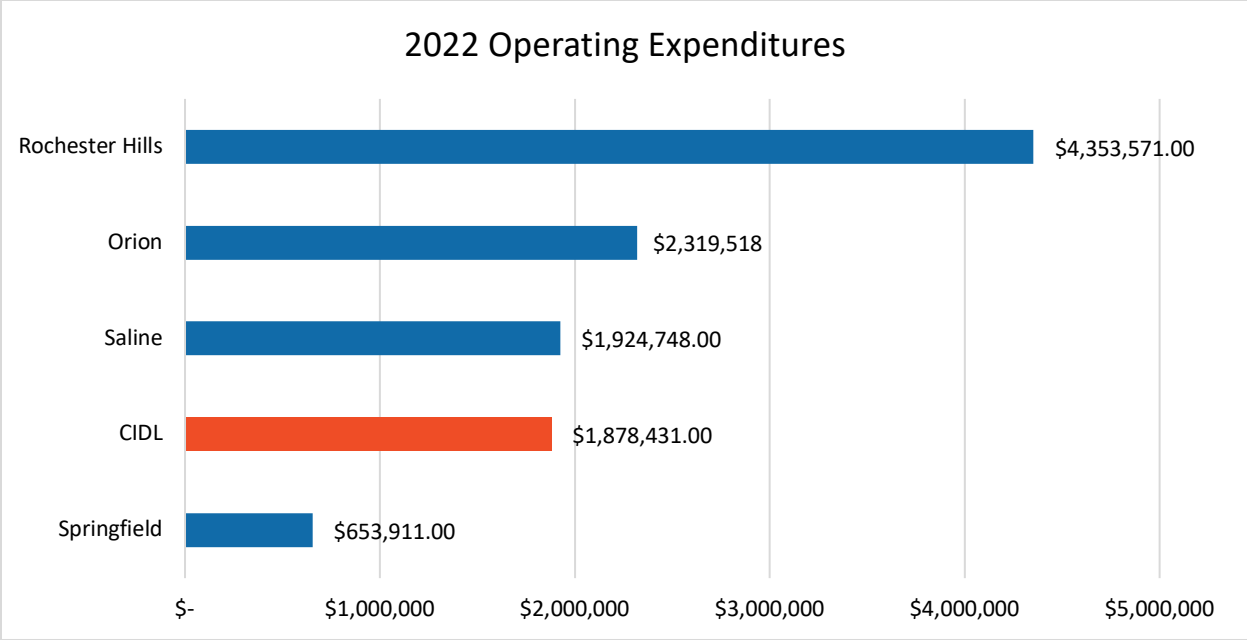


*2022 is the most recent IMLS data.

FINDINGS

- Rochester Hills (Class 6) has the largest library service area population in the cohort, and Springfield Township (Class 4) has the smallest.
- Orion, CIDL, and Saline are all Class 5 libraries based on their service area populations.
- CIDL's 2022 operating revenue was less than both Orion's and Saline's.

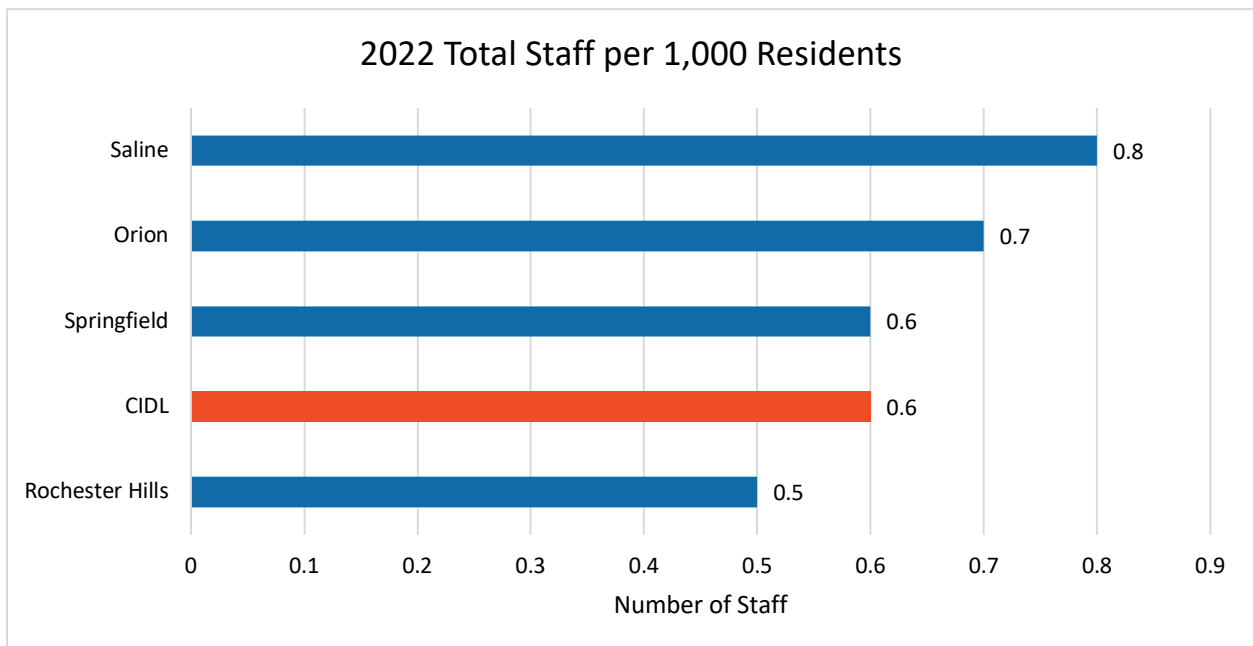
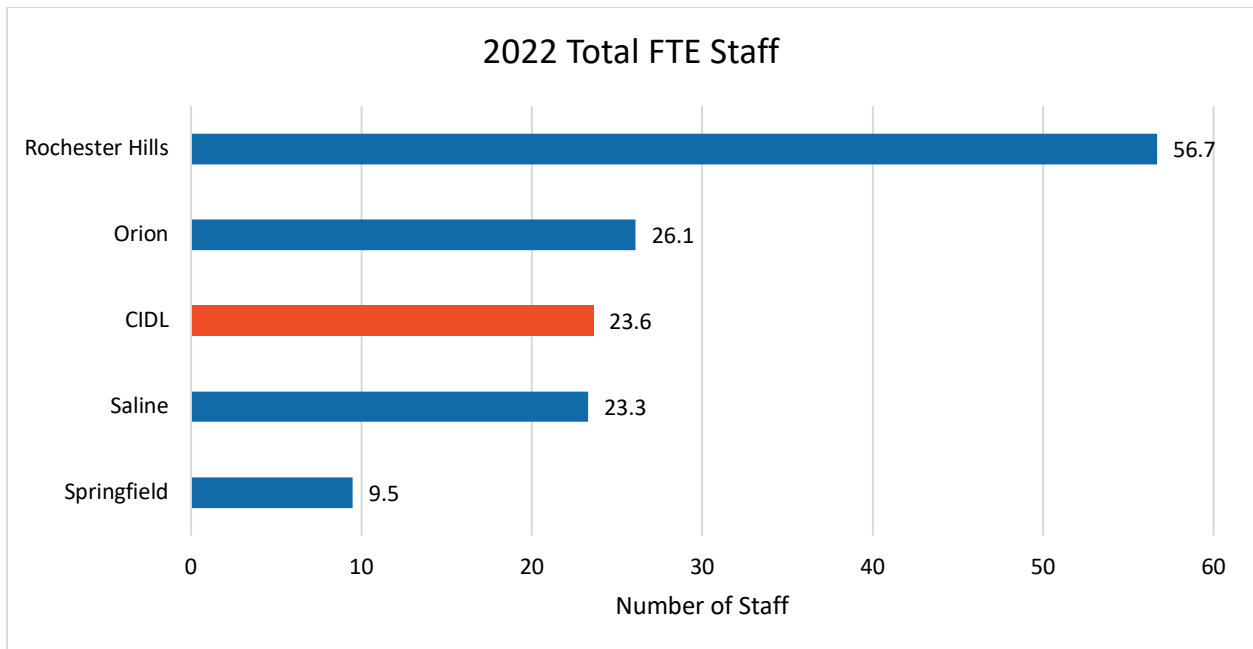




FINDINGS

- CIDL's operating expenditures in 2022 were lower than those of the other libraries in their class.
- Although Rochester Hills has the highest revenue and expenditures, their spending per person is the lowest of the cohort at \$39.79.
- CIDL's spending per person falls in the middle of the cohort but is also less than both Orion and Saline.

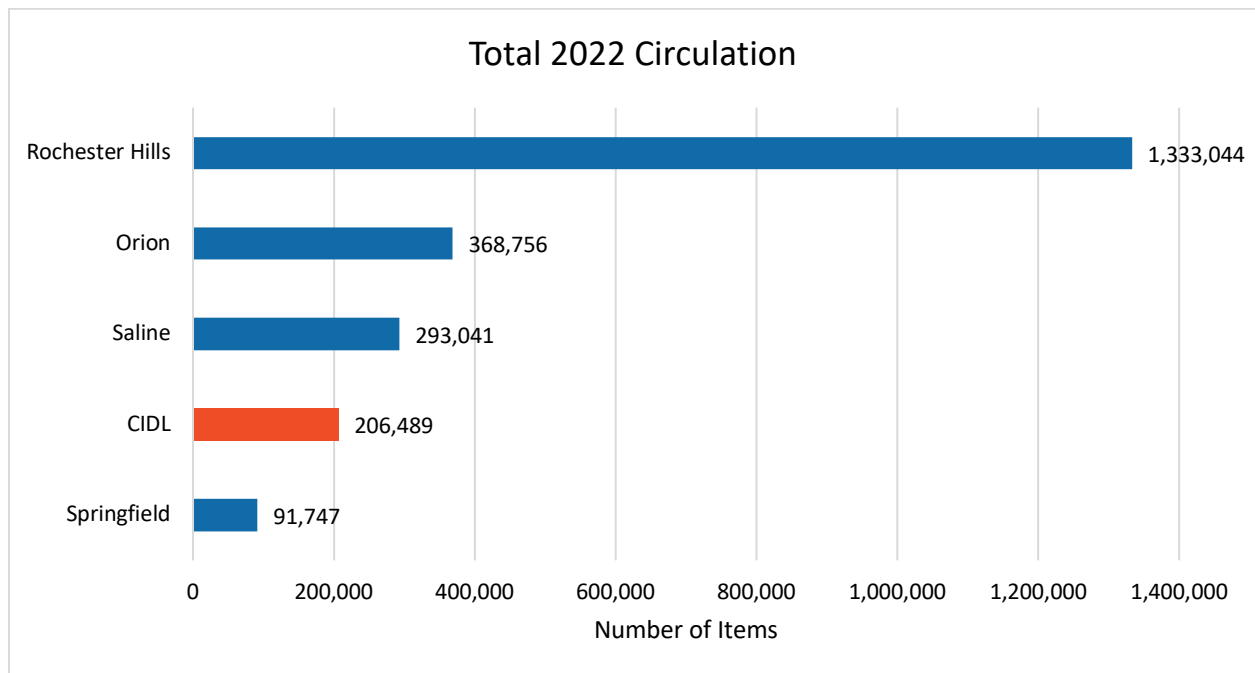
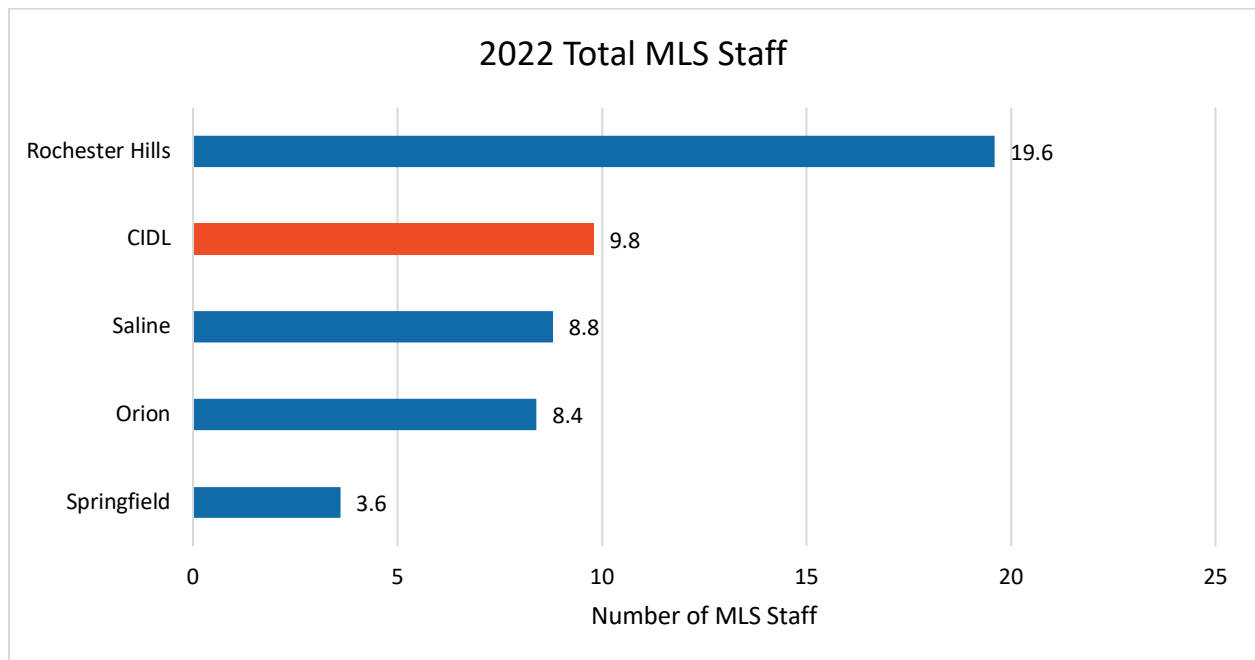




FINDINGS

- CIDL's total full-time equivalent (FTE) staff (23.6) falls in between Orion and Saline but staffing per 1,000 residents falls below both Saline (0.8/1,000) and Orion (0.7/1,000).
- While Rochester Hills is the largest library and therefore has the most staff (56.7), their staffing per 1,000 residents is the lowest in the cohort at 0.5/1,000.





FINDINGS

- CIDL has more Master in Library Science (MLS) level staff (9.8) than both Saline (8.8) and Orion (8.4).
- CIDL's 2022 circulation was 56% below Orion's and 35% below Saline's.



Appendix A – Community Demographic Data

Community Data

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population	331,097,593	10,057,921	34,287	36,628
Median Age	38.5	39.9	39.0	41.4
Median Household Income (in \$)	75,149	68,505	71,191	106,056
Homeownership	64.8%	72.5%	83.7%	80.0%
Housing Value (owner-occupied, in \$)	281,900	201,100	225,600	330,000
Below Poverty Level	12.5%	13.1%	7.2%*	5.3%

Sources:

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [DP04](#), [S1901](#), [S0601](#), [S1701](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [DP04](#), [S1901](#), [S0601](#), [S1701](#)

*ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S1701](#)



Diversity

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Total Population	331,097,593	10,057,921	34,287	36,628
White alone	58.9%	73.5%	91.8%	83.4%
Black or African American alone	12.5%	13.6%	1.7%	5.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0.8%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
Asian	5.8%	3.3%	1.4%	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone	6.0%	1.6%	0.5%	1.3%
Two or more races	8.8%	5.4%	1.8%	6.6%
Hispanic population	18.7%	5.5%	3.3%	5.6%

Sources:

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S0601](#)



Employment & Poverty

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	167,857,207	5,013,611	17,760	19,604
Employed	59.6%	57.7%	62.6%	64.3%
Unemployed	3.4%	3.7%	6.3%	2.4%
Armed Forces	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	36.5%	38.5%	31.1%	33.2%
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2012	Independence Charter Township 2022
All People	12.5%	13.1%	7.2%	5.3%
Under 18 years	16.7%	17.8%	10.5%	6.8%
18 to 64 years	11.7%	12.7%	6.6%	5.1%
65+ Years	10.0%	9.0%	2.7%	3.7%

Sources:

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [DP03](#), [S1701](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [DP03](#)

ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S1701](#)



Education

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population 25 years and older	226,600,992	6,938,439	22,214	24,947
Less than high school graduate	10.9%	8.2%	5.8%	4.7%
High school or equivalent	26.4%	28.4%	23.1%	20.1%
Some college or associate degree	28.5%	32.2%	33.5%	30.5%
Bachelor's degree	20.9%	18.9%	23.5%	27.0%
Graduate or professional degree	13.4%	12.2%	14.1%	17.6%

Sources:

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S0601](#)



Language

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2010	Independence Charter Township 2022
Population 5 years and over	312,092,668	9,505,118	31,753	34,678
English only	78.3%	90.1%	94.4%*	94.0%
Spanish	13.3%	2.9%	2.3%*	2.8%
Other Indo-European languages	3.7%	3.0%	2.6%*	1.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	1.7%	0.5%*	1.2%
Other languages	1.2%	2.3%	0.1%*	0.3%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.2%	3.4%	1.6%	1.7%

Sources: S0601, S1601

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [S0601](#), [S1601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S0601](#)

*ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S1601](#)



Disabilities

US CENSUS DATA	US 2022	MI 2022	Independence Charter Township 2015	Independence Charter Township 2022
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	326,147,510	9,949,793	35,557	36,509
Hearing Difficulty	3.6%	3.8%	3.4%	3.1%
Vision Difficulty	2.4%	2.2%	1.1%	1.4%
Cognitive Difficulty	5.3%	6.0%	3.8%	3.0%
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.7%	7.2%	4.7%	4.0%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.6%	2.8%	1.7%	1.7%
Independent Living Difficulty	5.8%	6.4%	4.4%	3.4%

Sources:

ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Independence Charter Township [S1810](#)

ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates for Independence Charter Township [S1810](#)



Appendix B – Strategic Capacity Assessment

Clarkston Independence District Library (CIDL) is engaging in a strategic planning process and asked for staff and trustee input into the process using a Library Strategic Capacity Assessment.

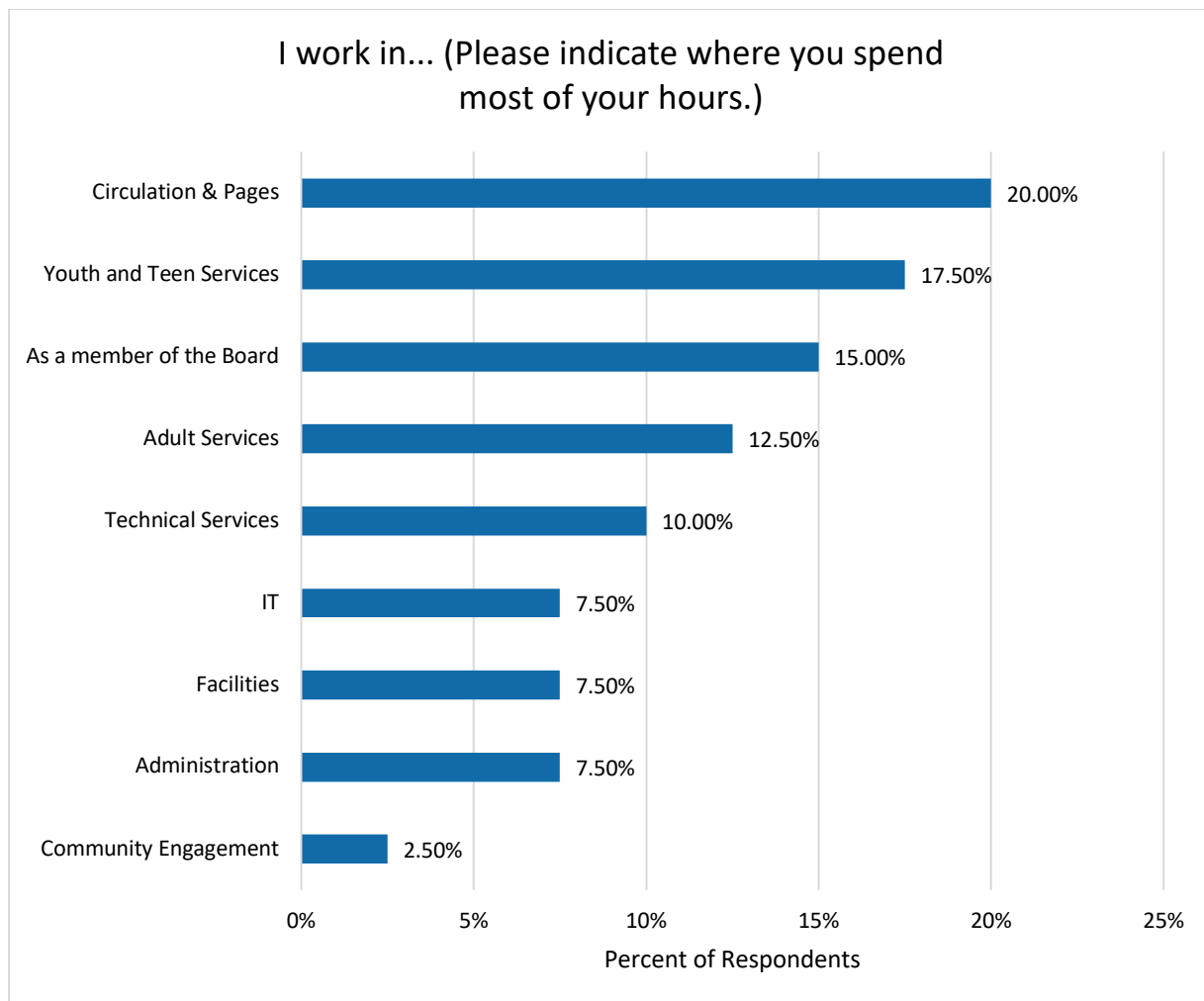
Fast Forward Libraries conducted the Assessment to consider various elements of staff and trustee capacity to carry out their roles at the library. 34 staff members and 6 trustees completed the Assessment. The Assessment consisted of four parts:

- **Environmental Scan:** To identify various factors at play in our world, country, state, and community that may impact how CIDL serves the community.
- **Core Operations Assessment:** To rate how well the library is doing with various core library operations and also give feedback about how the library can evolve these aspects to be more robust.
- **Strategic Priorities:** To share current library strengths and potential opportunities for future impact.
- **Working Culture:** To learn more about how Staff members work together and to help us understand potential areas for organizational development.

For open-ended questions, responses are summarized and not in any particular order or with any particular weight. When analyzing this qualitative data, we hoped to show the breadth of responses provided by respondents, including comments by individual respondents.

The following report is a summary of Assessment findings for further discussion planned for April 2024.





FINDINGS

- A combined 37.5% of respondents indicated they work in circulation, as a page, or in youth and teen services.
- 15% are trustees, and 12.5% work in adult services.
- The remaining staff departments represented a combined 35% of respondents.



Environmental Scan Summary

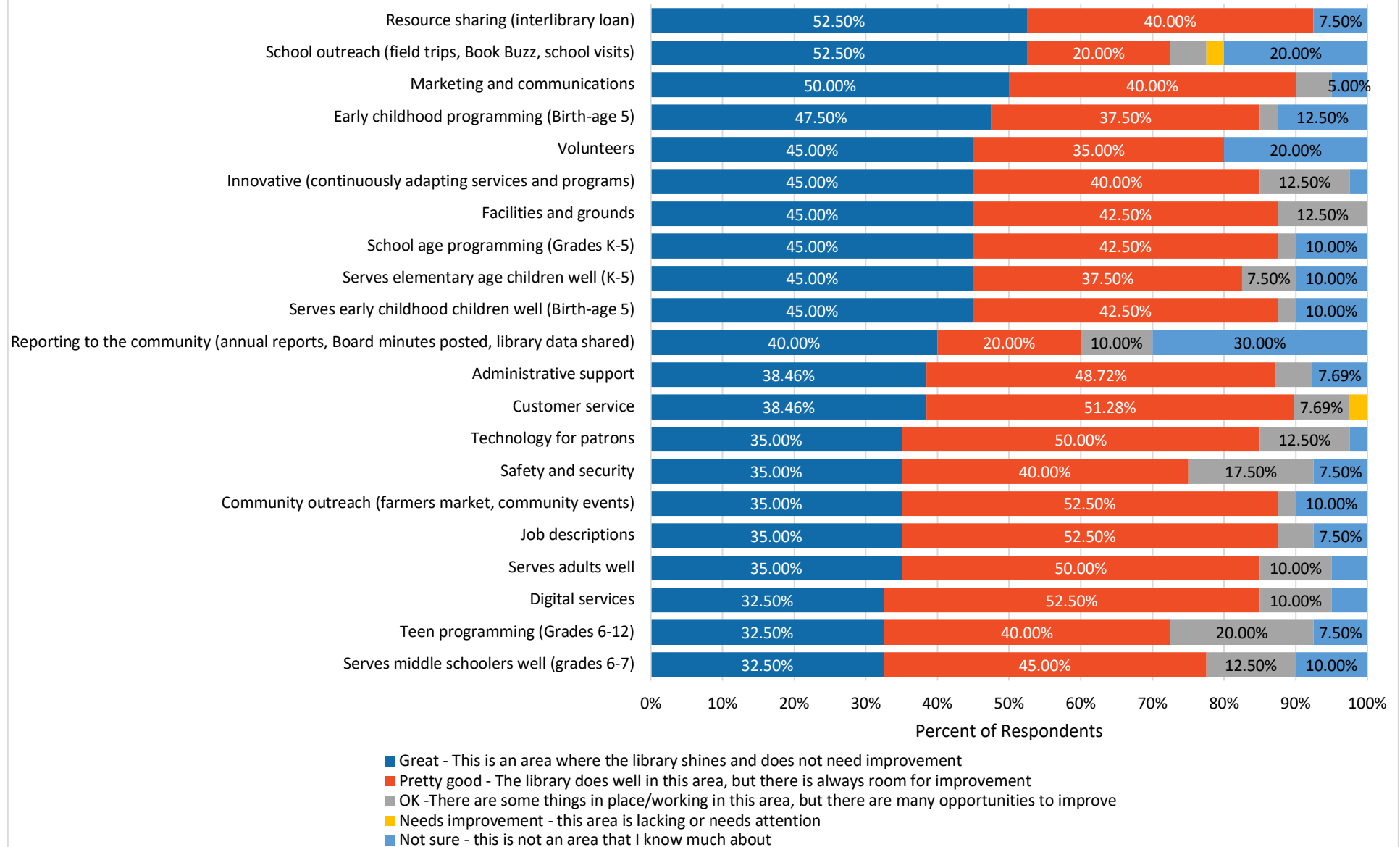
Respondents were asked to consider the environment that the library operates in – the world, country, and community – and identify those factors outside of the library that might influence how the library operates in the future. Responses are summarized below.

Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global wars/conflicts. • Village politics. • Misinformation. • Reproductive justice. • Geo-political concerns. • Growing distrust of institutions. • Political division. • Upcoming 2024 elections – local, state, and national. • Library as a politically neutral space. • Immigration. • Decline of traditional media outlets/sources. 	Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty. • Removal of property tax support for libraries. • Socioeconomic and housing diversity. • Widening economic gap • Funding resources. • Inflation and overall cost of living increase. • Housing costs. • Healthcare costs and mental healthcare costs and availability. • Jobs needing specialized skills or experience for hiring or promotions. 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and social unrest. • People looking for connection. • Incivility and lack of empathy • Culture of conformity. • Decreasing literacy. • Lack of critical thinking. • Aging population. • Teaching all aspects of history and science. • Climate changes. • Understanding generational differences. • School safety. • Education levels. • “Parents’ rights” movement and impacts. • Secular/non-secular viewpoints. • Mental healthcare needs. • Health and well-being of the community.
Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping up with tech changes/advances. • Widening of the digital divide. • AI concerns and positive uses. • Social media influences and issues – lack of attention span as a result. • Apps for everything. • Online businesses replacing stores. • Automated services 	Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright abuse. • Censorship. • Securing patron information/privacy. • Freedom of speech/information. 	Library Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting those with disability and/or neurodiversity. • Publishing trends and prices. • Violence against library workers. • Book bans. • Partnering with local organizations and businesses. • Library as a respite from perceived need to conform. • Security policies to protect staff and public. • Permanent makerspace. • Listening to what community needs. • Library building improvements.

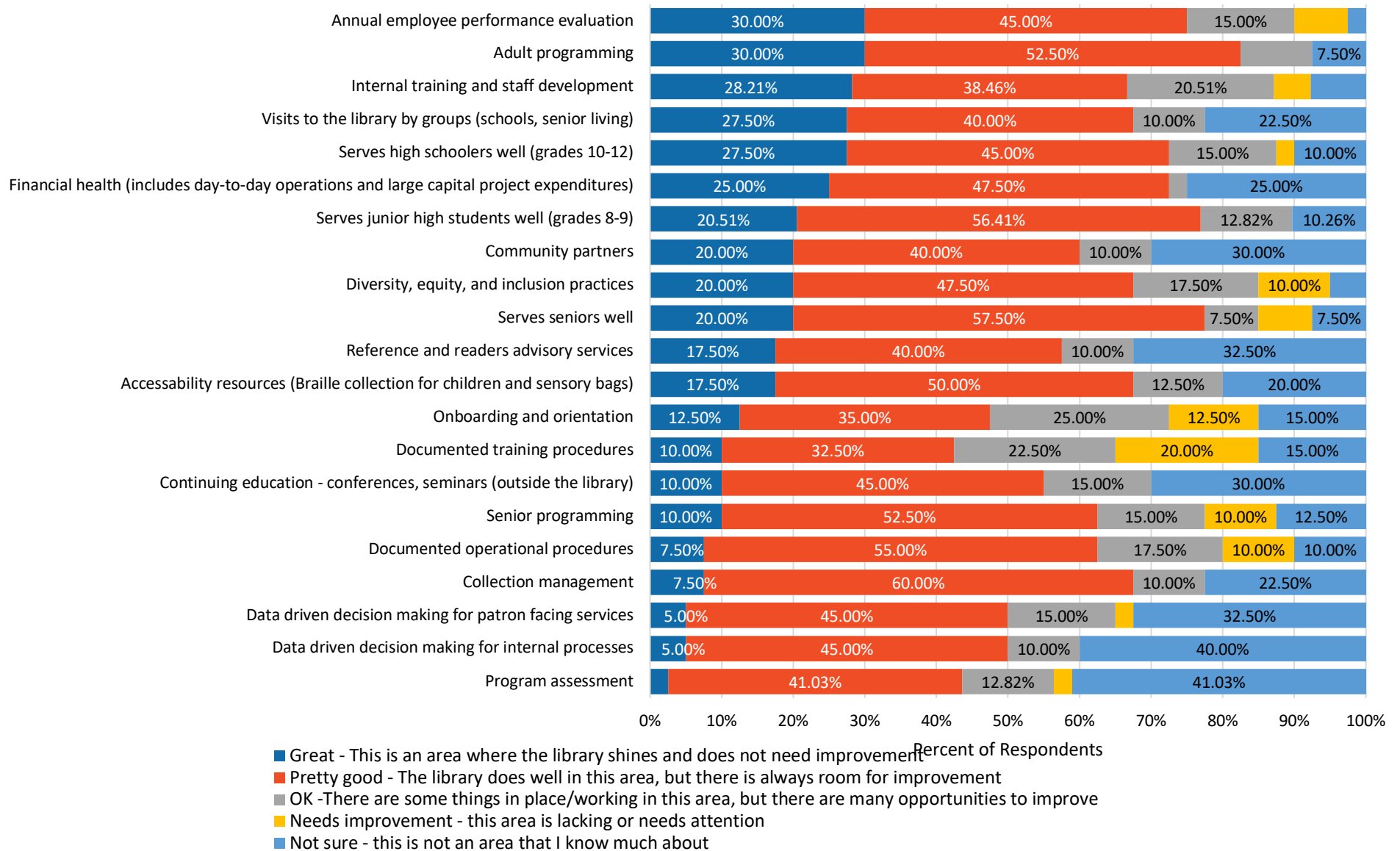


Core Operations Assessment

Rate how well you feel the library is doing in each area:



Rate how well you feel the library is doing in each area, continued:



FINDINGS

- 92.5% of respondents indicated that resource sharing (ILL) is great or pretty good, with 52.5% indicating it is great.
- 52.5% indicated school outreach is great, and 20% indicated it is pretty good. 20% indicated they don't know much about this item.
- 90% of respondents indicated that marketing and communications are great or pretty good.
- 89.74% of respondents indicated that customer service is great or pretty good.
- 87.5% indicated job descriptions are great or pretty good, and 85% indicated digital services are also great or pretty good.
- 82.5% felt that adult programming is great or pretty good, and 77.5% felt that service for seniors is great or pretty good.
- 47.5% indicated onboarding and orientation are great or pretty good.
- 45% of respondents indicated both data driven decision making for patron facing services and data driven decisions making for internal processes are great or pretty good.
- 42.5% indicated documented training procedures are great or pretty good with 20% indicating this needs improvement.
- 43.59% indicated that program assessment is great or pretty good, with just 2.56% indicating this category as great. 41.03% indicated they don't know much about program assessment.
- Only 7.5% indicated that collection management is great, but 60% indicated it is pretty good.

For anything that you rated OK or needs improvement, what are ways the library can improve in these areas?

Programs:

More diversity programming; more programs for seniors; more in person teen/tween programs; implement internal surveys and standard data collection processes to assess programs.

Collections:

Automate some collection development regarding popular authors/series.

Services:

Tax preparation assistance; more school outreach in the upper-level schools; more outreach services to schools in general by school outreach staff; address inclusion of those with invisible disabilities and accessibility challenges.



For anything that you rated OK or needs improvement, what are ways the library can improve in these areas? (continued)

Staffing:

Standardized onboarding and training for new employees; encourage and pay for staff attendance at workshops and conferences; more safety and inclement weather measures and training for staff; more training procedures for circulation staff; full-time staff should know how to set-up new accounts, charge and refund fines, check/out MeL items, and process holds; de-escalation procedures; improve staff evaluations and provide opportunity for staff to evaluate managers/supervisors; add an adult programming planner/assistant; include actionable plans with follow-through on staff evaluations; more consistency from management in how things are handled; need internal chat capabilities for staff; more communication about policy changes and updates; assure employees have enough training before being responsible for patron interactions.

Other:

More welcoming atmosphere; up-to-date handicap bathrooms and parking; more input from the public about what they want/need; add a separate area for young children; a larger building that would allow for more specialized services; work with neighbor libraries to improve/round-out offered services; update staff software and hardware; more documentation for complaints (staff and patrons); better system for program assessment; new staff laptops; more study rooms; more services for high school ages/teens.

Please share any other thoughts you have about the library's core operations related to the items above or other areas of core operations not covered.

- Ensure a wider knowledge base, i.e., more than one staff person knows how to do things (cross training).
- Ensure consistency in policies and procedures as well as onboarding.
- Improve communication to assure consistent customer experiences.
- Find ways to use collected data to inform decision making.
- Provide updated software for staff, i.e., Microsoft Teams.
- Not all programs need 2 or 3 staff members to run them.
- Need more consistency and communication between departments.
- More programs for ages 8-12.
- Improve overall community awareness about library services in an attempt to attract more users before asking for more money from the community.



Strategic Priorities Summary

STRENGTHS: What are current library strengths? What are things the library does that currently make a difference to community members?
<p>Programs: Programs for children and preschoolers is excellent; adult book club and programming is great; summer reading program draws a lot of participants; good support of early literacy; wide variety of programs for all ages</p>
<p>Collections and Technology: Technology in the Innovations lab; the Vault; games to check out; overall selection of collections in multiple formats; good technology assistance; wide variety of collections</p>
<p>Services: Wide range of services: outreach, notary, reference, wi-fi, meeting and study spaces; great readers advisory; good relationship with the schools; printing; notary service</p>
<p>Staffing: Great staff with great ideas that benefit the community; staff are friendly, helpful, creative, caring; excellent marketing efforts; solid core staff of librarians; staff works well together; excellent customer service; dedication and passion to help patrons; great management; belief in the purpose of the library.</p>
<p>Other: Being a community space, in general; nice teen lounge; strong Board; Friends of the Library group; great support for preschool age group and seniors; people know they can get what they came for; library has a positive reputation in the community; great social media presence; provide a safe space for teens; clean and organized facility; open late/good operating hours; great partnerships and visibility</p>



OPPORTUNITIES: What opportunities does the library have to make a greater impact in the community? What might be a stretch, but would position the library as a vital community resource?

Programs:

Speakers and programs on everyday issues (job search, how-to topics); occasional “star” speakers to educate on emerging topics; partners for off-site adult programming; more online programs on a variety of subjects for learning; tech programs/classes; more programs for youth to learning skills, i.e., sewing, cooking; more classes on taxes, law, social services, health.

Collections and Technology:

To be known as a tech resource beyond current capacity; make more media technologies available; VR opportunities and spaces.

Services:

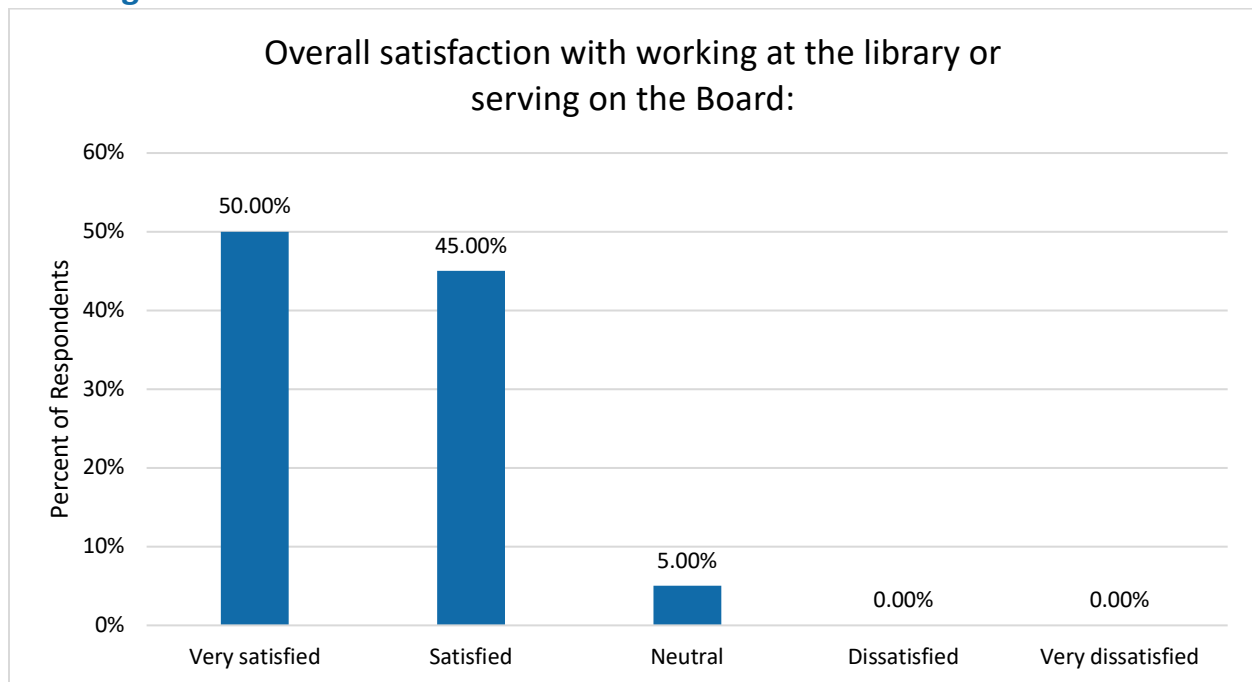
Offer tutoring services; increased outreach services to underserved community members; more outreach and marketing into the general community, i.e., postcards, inserts in the Clarkston News; more contact with seniors who are shut in.

Other:

Outdoor area spaces with picnic area, playground; new community partnerships; **larger building for more services, meeting spaces, more collections, programs, and staff space**; getting the right information into the right hands to benefit community; market the library as a safe place for exploration and growth; **a dedicated makerspace with all equipment available and more staff trained on usage**; foster a community center feel; connect more with people in Independence Township; improve what we already have in place, (as opposed to doing more).



Working Culture

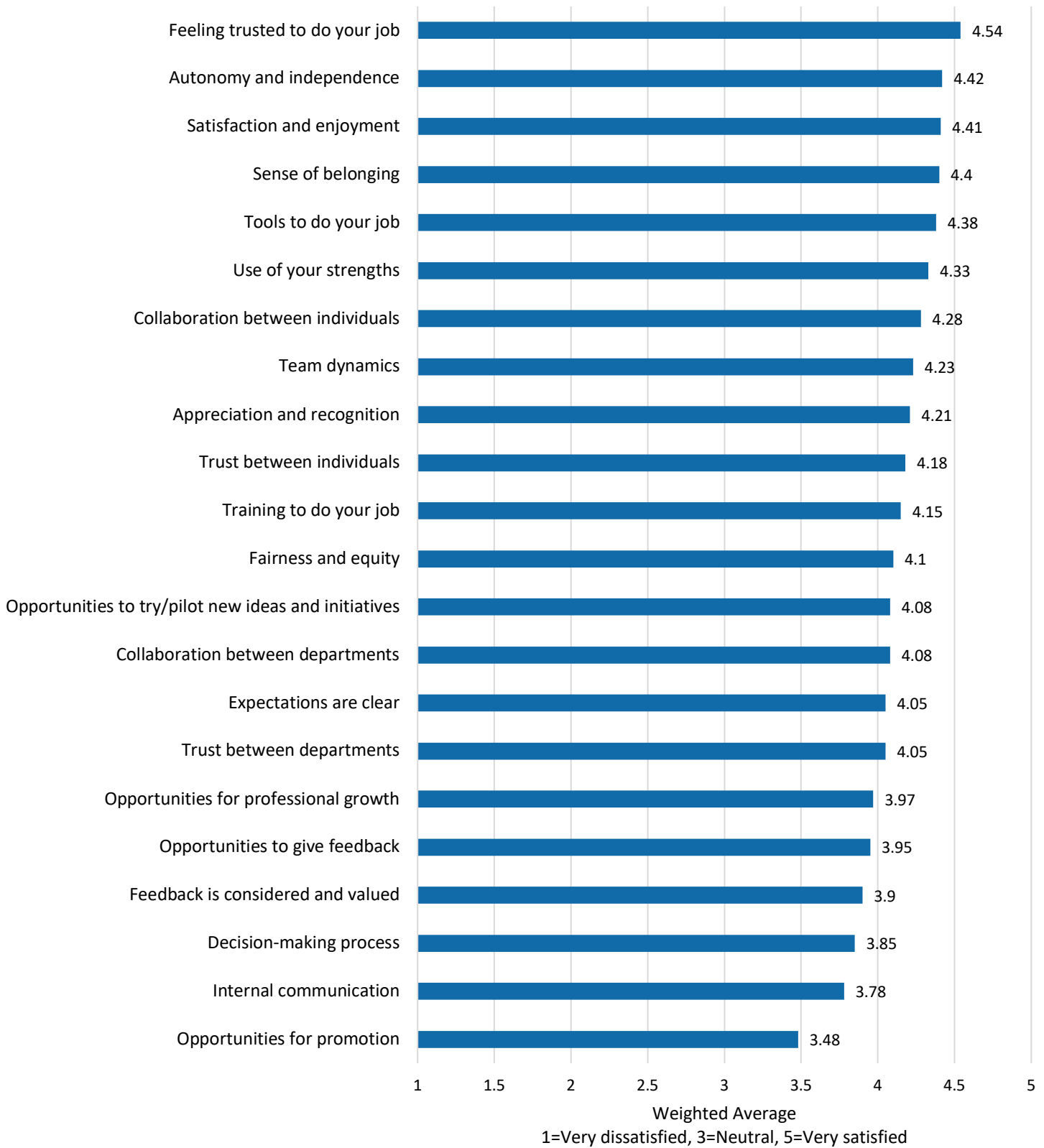


FINDINGS

- 95% of respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with their work at the library or their Board service.
- Just 5% were neutral and no respondents indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



Please rate how satisfied you are with these elements of the library's culture:



FINDINGS

- Respondents were most satisfied with being trusted to do their jobs (4.54/5), autonomy and independence (4.42), and satisfaction and enjoyment (4.1).
- Respondents were least satisfied with the decision-making process (3.85), internal communication (3.78), and opportunities for promotion (3.48). These each rated below 4 (Satisfied).

What are some key ways you think the library can improve the working culture?

Staffing and Training:

Continue to invest in department leaders; a limited number of full-time positions means there is limited opportunities for promotion in some departments; department head training; more cross-training and collaboration between departments; hire an HR manager; opportunities for inter-departmental programming.

Culture and Communication:

Stricter definitions between work and outside relationships; re-evaluate how staff are treated; minimize cliques; managers should be more direct with critical feedback; offer more positive feedback/appreciation; continue group staff activities; more knowledge of what other departments are doing; express gratitude to staff on a regular basis; more collaboration between departments; more consistent internal communication, especially for important information; give clear expectations; fewer passive aggressive emails; share information with everyone in a department so that all are on the same page; more emphasis on positive work culture.

Individual efforts:

Take pride in work at an individual level; be prepared to accept feedback; do not allow some staff members to take advantage of flexible work hours and work environment.

Other:

Need more space for optimal working culture; make sure we have everything we need to do our jobs, i.e., Polaris on all computers, more available workstations, more space to store program materials; more tangible perks for staff, i.e., snacks, beverages; better value part-time staff; dive deeper into safety need for individuals, departments, and the whole library; more emphasis on equity and inclusion issues, i.e., how these affect physical and mental health.

