Key Findings from the 2019 Patron Satisfaction Survey

Santa Clara County Library District | October 2019

The Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD), in partnership with Harder+Company Community Research, administered a Patron Satisfaction Survey designed to better understand the demographic characteristics of library patrons as well as how patrons use the library. The survey also assessed overall satisfaction with library services and sought recommendations for improving facilities, the timing of programs and services, collections and library access. This report highlights key findings from the survey, which was available in paper and online format from May 20 through June 16, 2019. This survey was a follow-up from the 2016 Patron Satisfaction Survey. Where applicable, the report highlights areas of progress from 2016 to 2019. The last page provides recommendations based on survey findings.

Highlights from the Report

Patrons were overwhelmingly satisfied with library services and their interaction with library staff. Nearly all patrons (97%) reported that Reference Desk Staff and Accounts Desk Staff were friendly and approachable, and 85% of indicated they were highly likely to recommend the library to friends and family.

The majority of patrons visit the library for youth programs and services. Three out of four patrons (75%) ranked programs and services for youth as one of their top three most important reasons for visiting the library.

A majority of patrons are satisfied with the library's current operating hours. In response to the findings from the 2016 Patron Satisfaction Survey, SCCLD underwent a major initiative to increase operating hours across community libraries. In 2019, over half of patrons (57%) were satisfied with the library's hours.
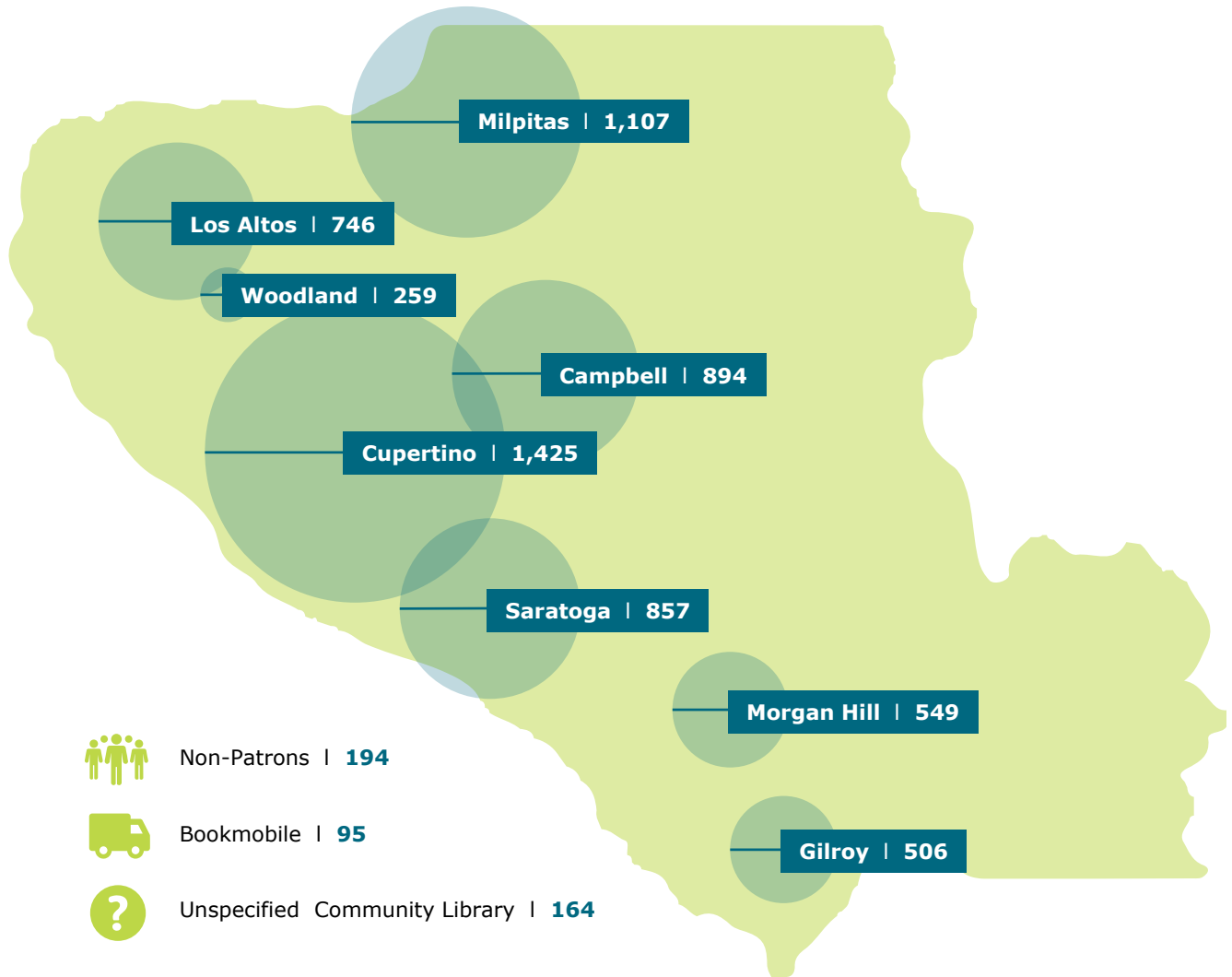
The 2019 Patron Satisfaction Survey Report incorporates the feedback of nearly 7,000 patrons. The survey was available to patrons in five languages (English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese). Significant efforts on the part of library staff nearly doubled the number of total surveys collected between 2016 and 2019 , and there was a 7% increase in responses from patrons whose primary language was not English.
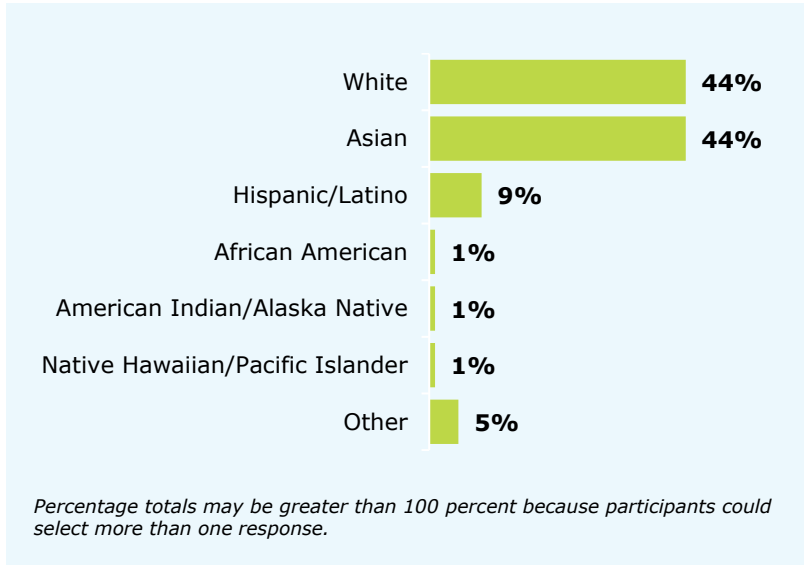
Respondent Characteristics

A total of 6,796 individuals completed the Patron Satisfaction Survey. Nearly all respondents (97%) reported having used the library in the last year; the remaining 3% were identified as "non-patrons" (i.e., those who had not used the library in the last year). The map below displays the number of surveys completed by library location.

Survey Participants (n=6,796)

Milpitas | 1,107

Los Altos | 746

Woodland | 259

Campbell | 894

Cupertino | 1,425

Saratoga | 857

Morgan Hill | 549

Non-Patrons | **194**

Bookmobile | **95**

Unspecified Community Library | **164**

Gilroy | 506

Race/Ethnicity (n=5,388)

Race/Ethnicity	%
White	44%
Asian	44%
Hispanic/Latino	9%
African American	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
Other	5%

Percentage totals may be greater than 100 percent because participants could select more than one response.

The majority of respondents identified as white (44%) or Asian (44%). Less than 10% identified as Hispanic/Latino, African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or another race/ethnicity.

The most common responses for "Other" were Indian (45%), American (21%), Irrelevant (18%), and Middle Eastern.

Progress since 2016 | There was an increase in respondents who identify as persons of color. In 2016, 38% of respondents identified as Asian, 7% as Hispanic/Latino and 4% as another race or ethnicity.

Age (n=5,324)

Age	%
Under 18	5%
18-24	3%
25-44	35%
45-64	34%
65+	22%

Over half of respondents were over age 44—of those, about a third were between 45 and 64 and a fifth were over 65. Less than ten percent of respondents were younger than 24.
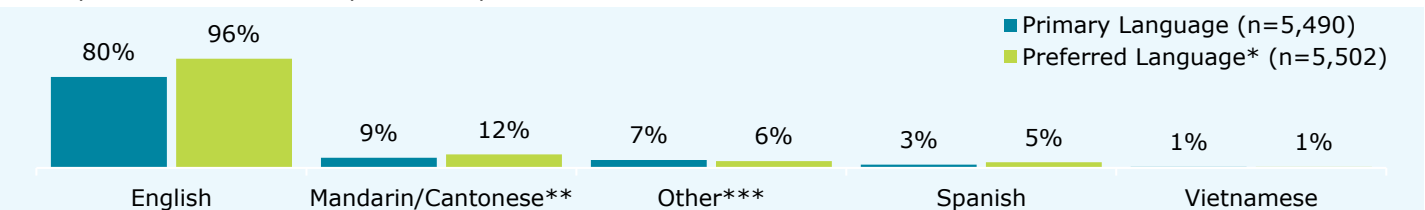
Progress since 2016 | Despite a decrease in the percent of youth who participated in the survey this round, the overall number of youth who responded allows for stable summary statistics. In the 2016 survey, a third of respondents were seniors; the age distribution of adults and older adults this round is more balanced.

Primary Language and Preferred Languages for Library Material

The majority of survey respondents reported they preferred library materials in English; 12% preferred materials in Mandarin or Cantonese, and 5% preferred materials in Spanish. This may indicate the library is reaching a more linguistically diverse population.

Progress since 2016 | Previously only 7% of respondents indicated a preference for materials in traditional or simplified Chinese and 3% preferred Spanish.

Language	Primary Language (n=5,490)	Preferred Language* (n=5,502)
English	80%	96%
Mandarin/Cantonese**	9%	12%
Other***	7%	6%
Spanish	3%	5%
Vietnamese	1%	1%

*Percentage totals for preferred language may be greater than 100 percent because participants could select more than one response.** 8% of library patrons listed Mandarin as a primary language compared to 1% that listed Cantonese, these were combined since both spoken languages can use traditional Chinese text (7% preferred) or simplified Chinese text (5% preferred).***Other includes French (77), Hindi (56), Japanese (41), German (30), Tamil (28), Korean (23), Italian (16), Russian (16), Hebrew (14), Telugu (11), Marathi (9), Gujarati (9).*

How Patrons Use the Library

Library Usage (n=6,436)
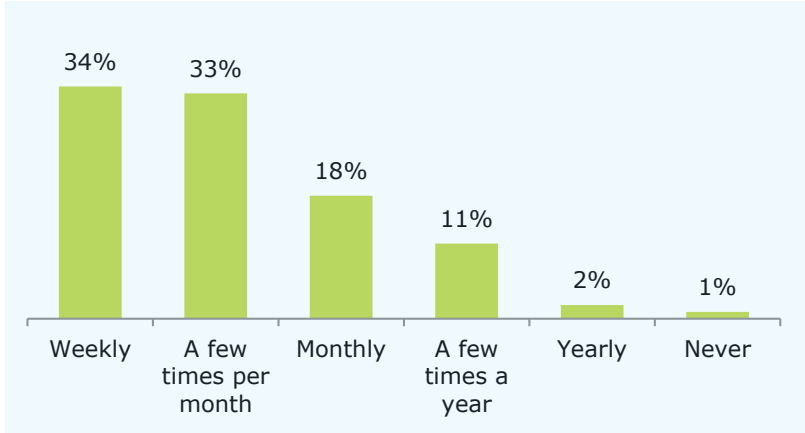
A third of survey respondents visit the library weekly. About half of respondents reported visiting the library in person a few times a month or monthly during the past year.

Progress since 2016 | Compared to the 2016 survey, this year's outreach plan aimed to reach patrons who use the library at different frequencies. This was achieved, as the percent of users who visit the library monthly, a few times a year, or yearly increased by 6%.

Preferred Programs (n=5,338)

SCCLD offers a range of classes and programs for community members of all ages. Survey respondents were asked to choose three programs or services they or their children find most important. Three fourths of survey respondents (75%) prefer programs for children and youth under the age of 18, with 31% preferring programs for school-age children. Just over a third (35%) preferred classes or programs for adults age 18 through 64, and 22% preferred technology classes. For more data on preferred programs by community library, please refer to the survey databook.
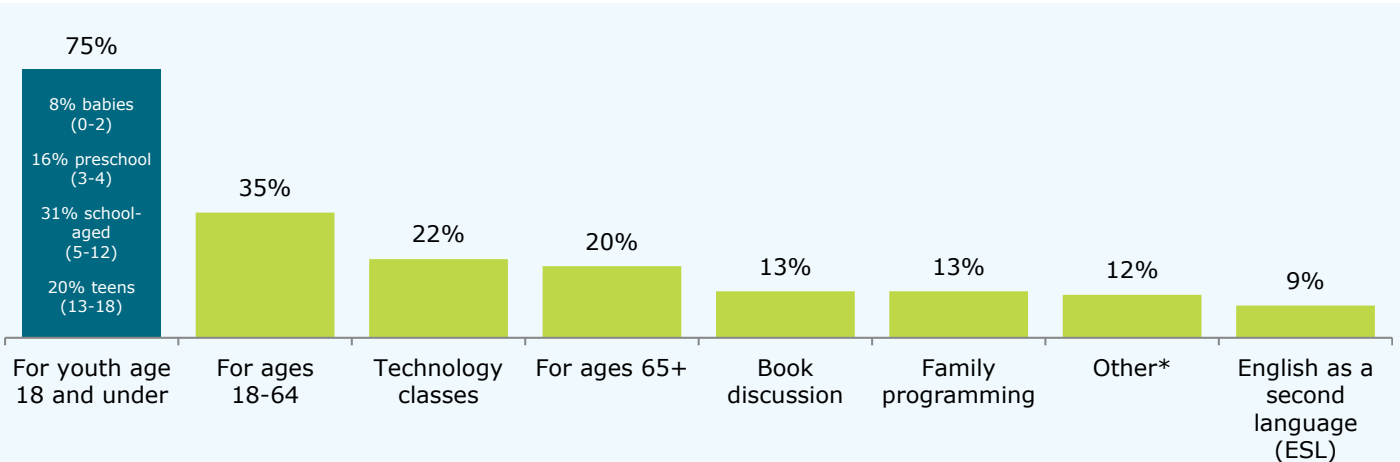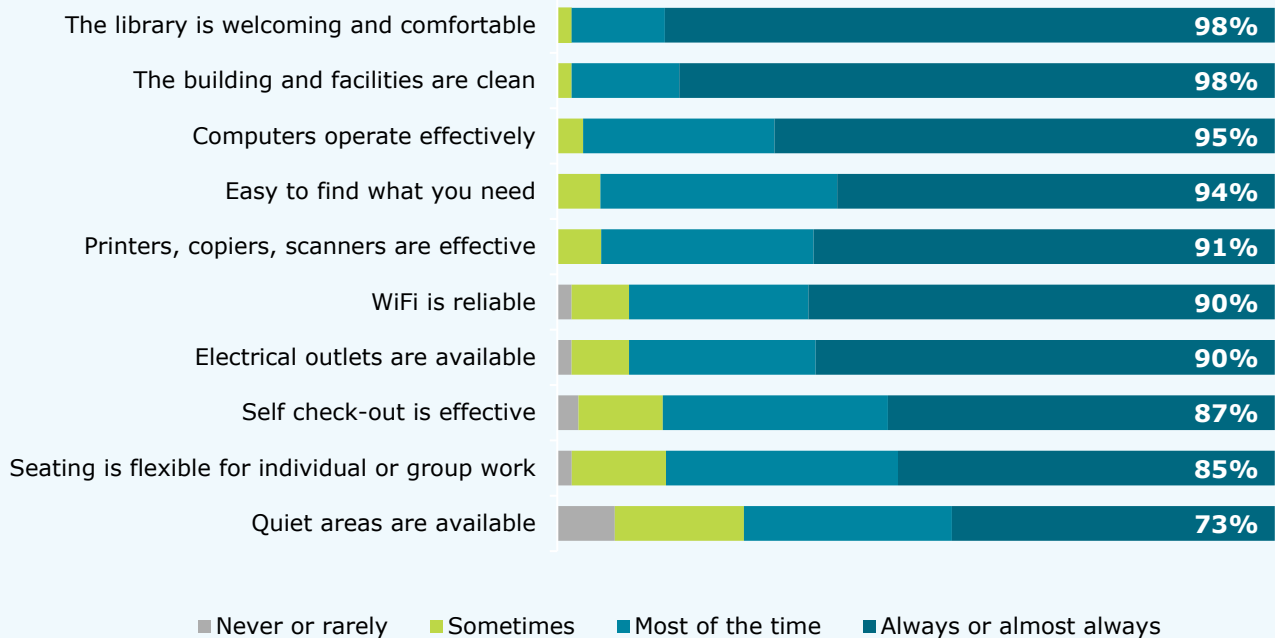

Percentage totals may be greater than 100 percent because participants could select more than one response.

*Other includes Social Services (59), Book sale (42), Digital Materials (42), Recommendations (36),Educational Services (30), Discussion Group (28), Account Services (27), Fewer than Three (21).

Facilities (n=6,091)

Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time" or "Always or almost always."

The library is welcoming and comfortable	98%
The building and facilities are clean	98%
Computers operate effectively	95%
Easy to find what you need	94%
Printers, copiers, scanners are effective	91%
WiFi is reliable	90%
Electrical outlets are available	90%
Self check-out is effective	87%
Seating is flexible for individual or group work	85%
Quiet areas are available	73%

■ Never or rarely   ■ Sometimes   ■ Most of the time   ■ Always or almost always
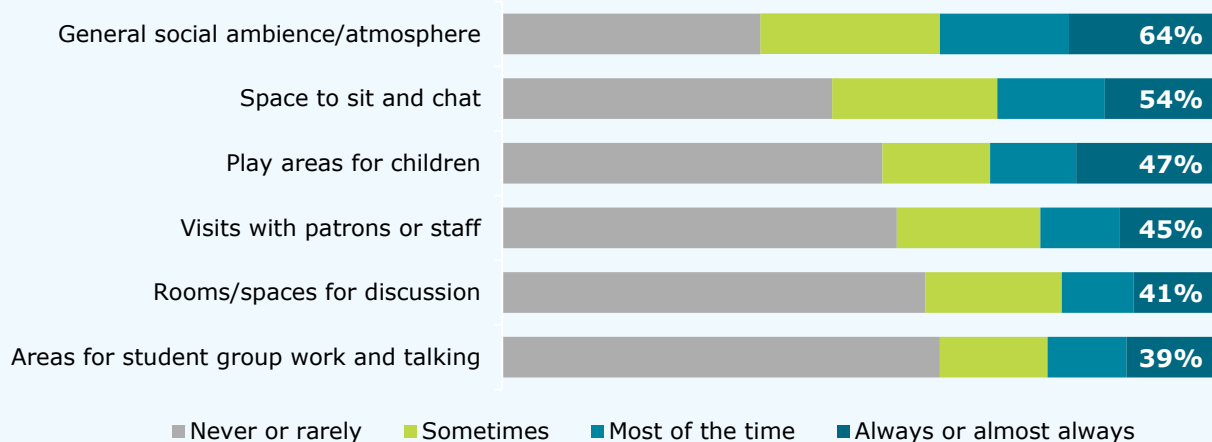
The vast majority of patrons were satisfied with the quality of library facilities. Nearly all patrons reports the library was welcoming and comfortable (98%), the buildings and facilities were clean (98%), and the computers operated effectively (95%). Patrons were less satisfied with the self check-out, seating, and availability of quite areas.

Progress since 2016 | There was a 5% increase in patrons who reported the computers to be effective.

How Patrons Use the Library as a "Social Space" (n=5,518)

Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time," "Always or almost always," or "Sometimes."

General social ambience/atmosphere	64%
Space to sit and chat	54%
Play areas for children	47%
Visits with patrons or staff	45%
Rooms/spaces for discussion	41%
Areas for student group work and talking	39%

■ Never or rarely   ■ Sometimes   ■ Most of the time   ■ Always or almost always

The most popular form of socializing was enjoying the general ambience and atmosphere (64%), followed by using the library as a space to sit and chat (54%)

Spotlight: Library Staff

98% agree

**Accounts staff** are friendly and approachable*

97% agree

Reference staff are friendly and approachable*

One of the clearest findings to emerge from the Patron Satisfaction Survey was the high degree of appreciation for library staff. Nearly all respondents reported that accounts staff (98%) and reference staff (97%) are friendly and approachable. *Excludes survey respondents who responded "Don't know."

Further, as described in the above *Facilities* section, 98% of patrons find the library welcoming and comfortable. While this is partially attributable to a library's physical environment, the social atmosphere cultivated by staff also deserves recognition.

In addition, when respondents were asked to identify their top three programs and services, in-person interactions with library staff (57%) and in-person account services (44%) were the most popular library features. For comparison, all other programs and services made it to the top three of patron preferences on average 16% of the time.

57%	44%	16%
Reference librarian assistance	In-person account services	Average of all other programs and services
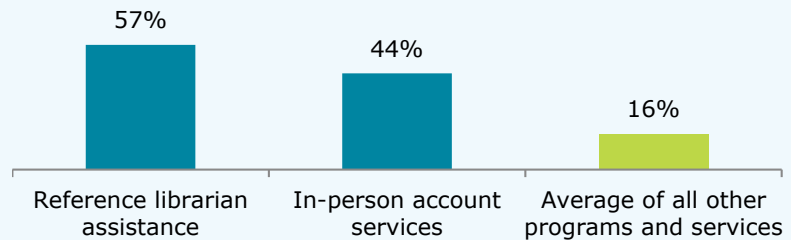
85% of respondents indicated they would be **highly likely to recommend the library** to family or friends.*

74 SCCLD's Net Promoter Score** of 74 is **significantly higher than most comparable industries** (see table).

This high Net Promoter Score indicates that users are highly likely to recommend the library to others.

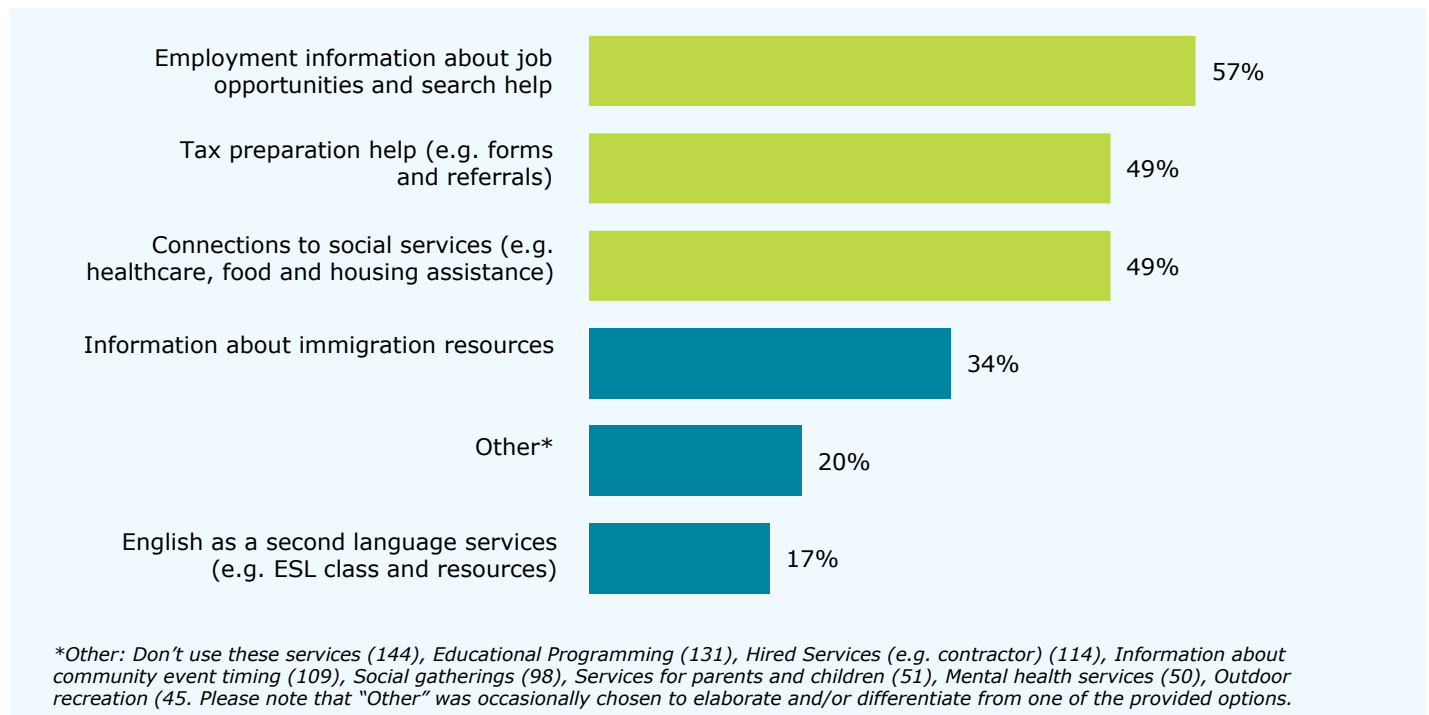| Other Industries [i]	NPS
SCCLD	74
Ecommerce	63
Construction	59
Legal Services	57
Consulting	53
Hosting	32
Insurance	28
Restaurants	17
Hospitality	4

On a scale of 1 to 10 of how likely patrons would be to recommend library services, a score of 9 or 10 is considered "highly likely".

**The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a standard, validated measure for measuring patron satisfaction and loyalty, and is determined by subtracting the percentage of customers who are detractors (giving a score lower than 6) from the percentage who are promoters (giving a score of 9 or 10). What is generated is a score between -100 and 100 called the Net Promoter Score.*
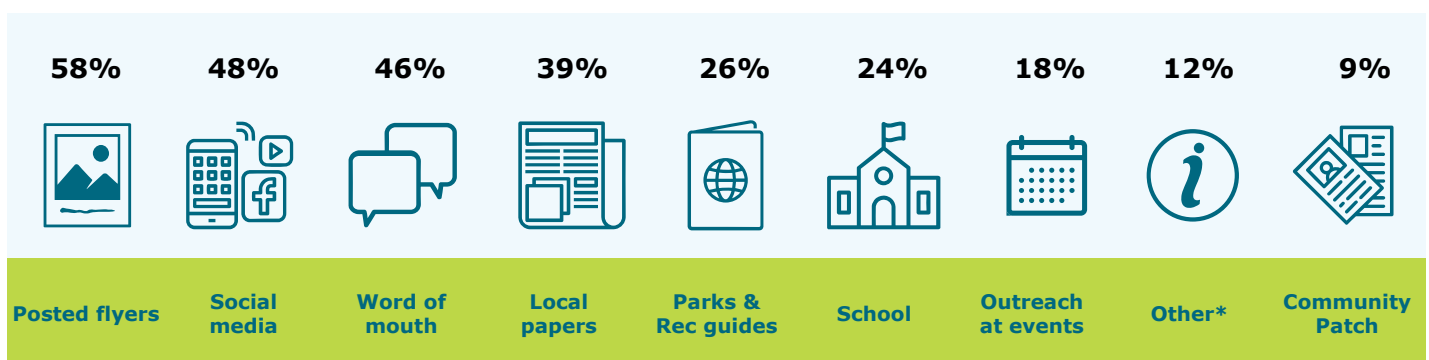
i. "NPS Benchmark, Average Score per Industry". *Retently*. 2019.

Referrals and Services that Can Help Patrons or Someone They Know (n=4,906)

Before releasing the 2019 survey, the evaluation team conducted two focus groups with 20 library patrons to learn about suggested topics for further exploration. Patrons identified that libraries often provide information about connecting to other important services. When survey respondents were asked which referrals or connections would be helpful to them or someone they know, the most popular responses were information about employment (57%) taxes (49%) and social service (49%). One fifth of respondents provided other ideas such as educational programs, contractors, and social gatherings (see "other" description below).

Category	Percentage
Employment information about job opportunities and search help	57%
Tax preparation help (e.g. forms and referrals)	49%
Connections to social services (e.g. healthcare, food and housing assistance)	49%
Information about immigration resources	34%
Other*	20%
English as a second language services (e.g. ESL class and resources)	17%

*Other: Don't use these services (144), Educational Programming (131), Hired Services (e.g. contractor) (114), Information about community event timing (109), Social gatherings (98), Services for parents and children (51), Mental health services (50), Outdoor recreation (45. Please note that "Other" was occasionally chosen to elaborate and/or differentiate from one of the provided options.

Accessing Information About Community Events and Resources (n=5,820)

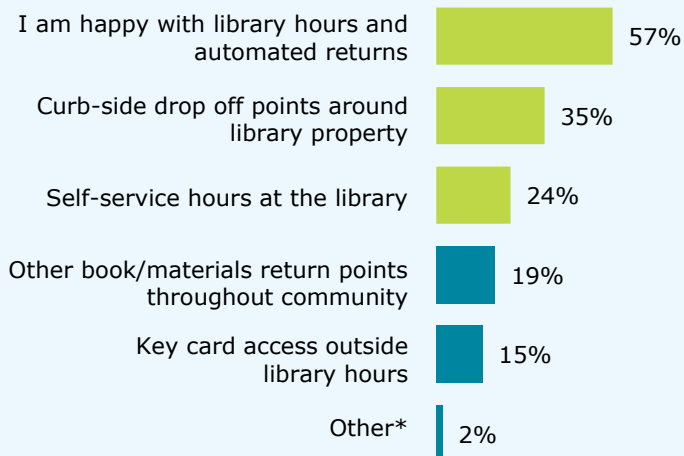| Posted flyers	Social media	Word of mouth	Local papers	Parks & Rec guides	School	Outreach at events	Other*	Community Patch
58%	48%	46%	39%	26%	24%	18%	12%	9%

Over half of respondents reported that flyers were one of the primary ways they access information about community events and resources. The next most frequent methods for accessing information were social media, word of mouth, and local papers.

*Other: Online (194), Email (159), Newsletter (34) Other social (30), City Resources (28), Paper Mail (21), Other flyers (8).

Progress since 2016 | The previous version of this question asked how patrons learn about library services and was used to improve patron outreach.

Library Access

Most Useful Alternative Options for Extra Library Access (n=4,705)

I am happy with library hours and automated returns — 57%

Curb-side drop off points around library property — 35%

Self-service hours at the library — 24%

Other book/materials return points throughout community — 19%

Key card access outside library hours — 15%

Other* — 2%

*Percentage totals may be greater than 100 percent because participants could select more than one response. *Other: Alternate drop-off suggestions (47), Other card access (24), Other self-service (21), Current system works (16). Please note that "Other" was occasionally chosen to elaborate and/or differentiate from one of the provided options.*
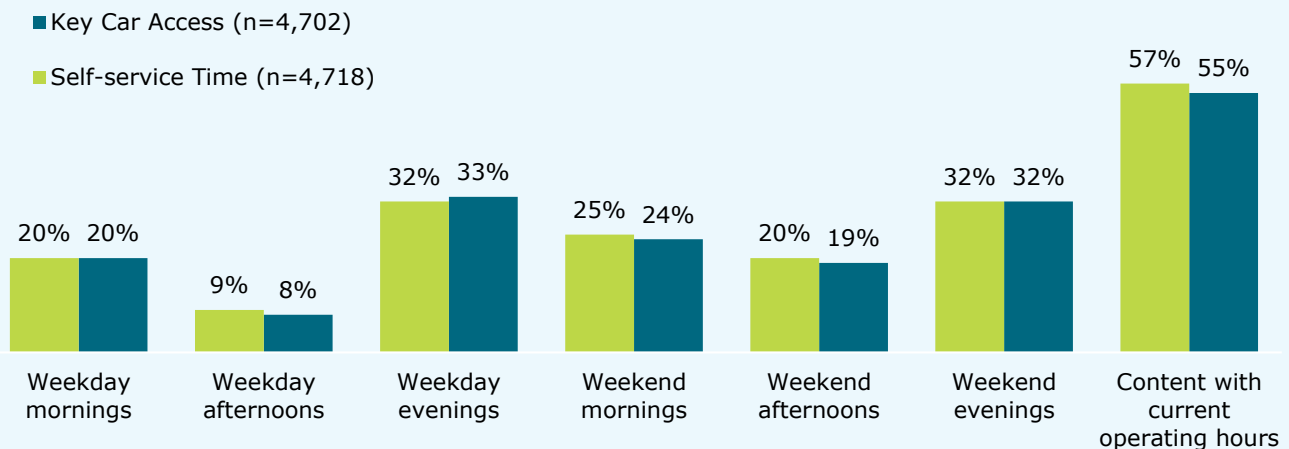
While most library patrons (57%) reported that current hours and automated returns met their library access needs, additional curbside drop-off points adjacent to the library were the most popular alternative form of access (35%).

Self-service hours and return points throughout the community were also identified as alternatives (24% and 19%, respectively).

Progress since 2016 | In response to the results of the 2016 Patron Satisfaction survey, community libraries underwent an initiative to increase hours of operation to better meet patron's needs. This year, most users (57%) indicated they were happy with current library access options including hours and automated returns.
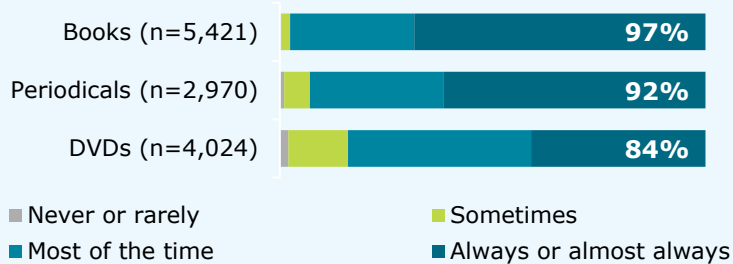
Alternate Library Access (n=4,705)

Respondents were asked when they would like the library to offer alternative access through Key Card Access and Self-service Time. Most patrons were content with current operating hours (55-57%). The second most popular option for alternate access was tied at weekday evenings (32% for self-service and 33% for key card access) and weekend evenings (32% for both self-service and key card access).

■ Key Car Access (n=4,702)
■ Self-service Time (n=4,718)

	Weekday mornings	Weekday afternoons	Weekday evenings	Weekend mornings	Weekend afternoons	Weekend evenings	Content with current operating hours
Self-service Time	20%	9%	32%	25%	20%	32%	57%
Key Car Access	20%	8%	33%	24%	19%	32%	55%

Collections

Materials are in good condition

Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time" or "Always or almost always ."

Books (n=5,421) **97%**

Periodicals (n=2,970) **92%**

DVDs (n=4,024) **84%**

- Never or rarely
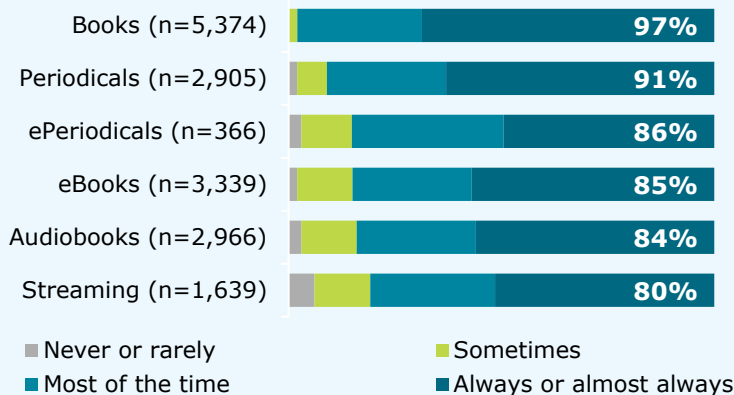- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always or almost always

With respect to the condition of library collections, respondents indicated the highest levels of satisfaction with books and periodicals, and slightly lower levels of satisfaction with DVDs.

Progress since 2016 | There was a 7% increase in the number of respondents who reported DVDs are always clean and the number of respondents claiming this is "never" or "sometimes" true fell 3%.

Collections are available in a variety of genres

Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time" or "Always or almost always ."

Books (n=5,374) **97%**

Periodicals (n=2,905) **91%**

ePeriodicals (n=366) **86%**

eBooks (n=3,339) **85%**

Audiobooks (n=2,966) **84%**

Streaming (n=1,639) **80%**

- Never or rarely
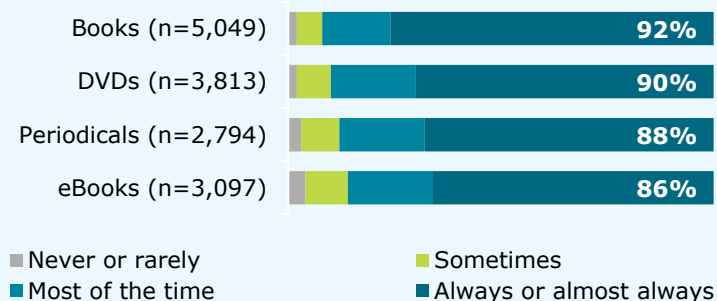- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always or almost always

Overall, survey respondents were satisfied with the variety of genres represented in library collections. They expressed the greatest satisfaction with variety of books and periodicals, and slightly lower levels of satisfaction with the variety of e-books, audiobooks and digital streaming.

Progress since 2016 | There was a 4% increase in satisfaction with e-book variety.

Materials are available in the languages patrons prefer

Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time" or "Always or almost always ."

Books (n=5,049) **92%**

DVDs (n=3,813) **90%**

Periodicals (n=2,794) **88%**

eBooks (n=3,097) **86%**

- Never or rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always or almost always

Respondents also weighed in on their satisfaction with the languages in which library materials are available. They expressed high satisfaction in language availability overall, particularly with regard to books, DVDs and Periodicals.

Progress since 2016 | While satisfaction in book language offerings fell 3%, this could be a reflection of the more linguistically diverse pool of survey respondents in 2019.

Digital Resources (n=4,849; n=2,065)

91% of survey respondents **visited the website in the past 12 months**
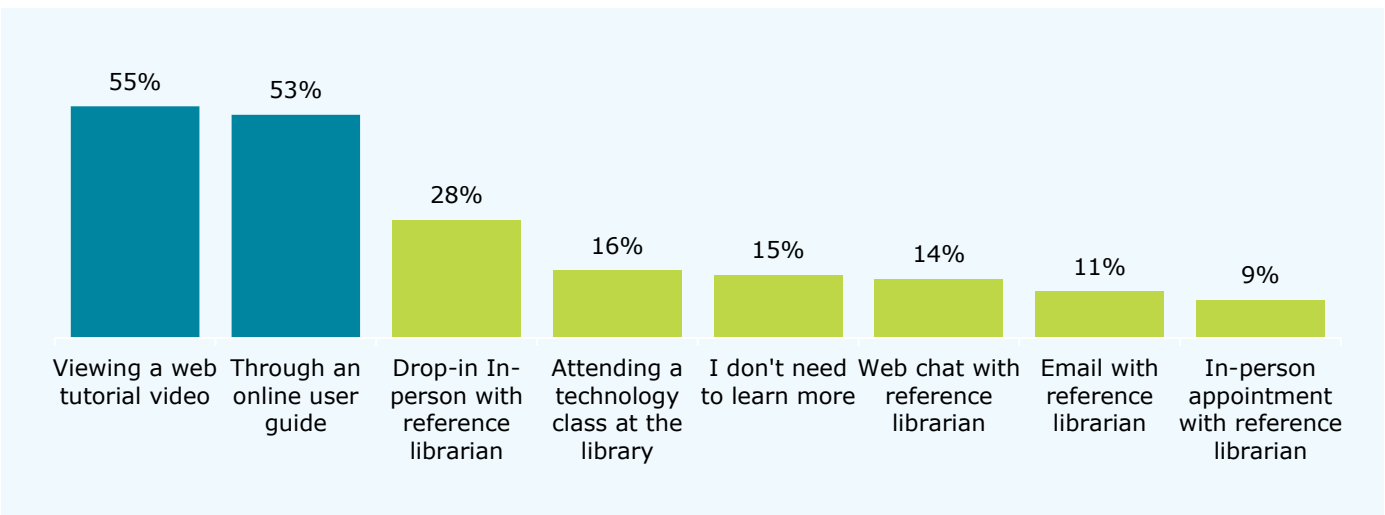
70% of patrons **do not have difficulty accessing e-materials**
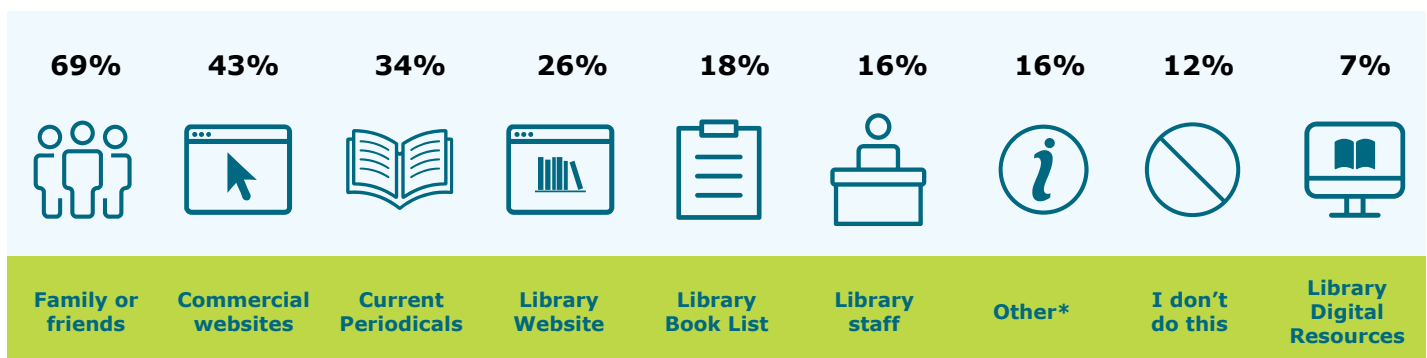
How Patrons Learn about Accessing e-materials (n=599)

For patrons who said they had difficulty accessing e-materials, the two most popular options for learning more about them were by viewing a web tutorial video (55%) and through an online user guide (53%).

Viewing a web tutorial video	Through an online user guide	Drop-in In-person with reference librarian	Attending a technology class at the library	I don't need to learn more	Web chat with reference librarian	Email with reference librarian	In-person appointment with reference librarian
55%	53%	28%	16%	15%	14%	11%	9%

How Patrons Get Recommendations about Reading Materials (n=4,758)

Family or friends	Commercial websites	Current Periodicals	Library Website	Library Book List	Library staff	Other*	I don't do this	Library Digital Resources
69%	43%	34%	26%	18%	16%	16%	12%	7%

Family or friends were by far the most popular resource for book recommendations (69%), followed by commercial websites like Amazon (43%) and recommendations from modern periodicals like the New York Times books lists (34%). However, after these options, library resources make up the next three top spots.

When collections are placed on hold, the waiting period is reasonable. (n=4,774)

95%

90% 90%

88%

Periodicals
(n=4,767)

Books
(n=4,777)

DVDs
(n=4,774)
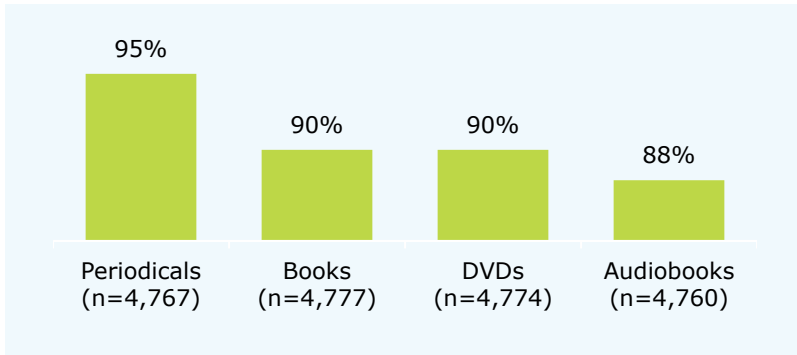
Audiobooks
(n=4,760)

A large majority of respondents agreed that the waiting period for periodicals, books, DVDs, and audiobooks that are placed on hold is reasonable

Progress since 2016 | The number of respondents reporting reasonable book hold times increased 2% and the number reporting reasonable DVD holds increased 9%.

Agree or disagree? Library fines and late fees deter patrons. (n=4,741)

Mostly
Agree
7%

Completely
Agree
4%

Somewhat
Disagree
13%

Completely
Disagree
76%
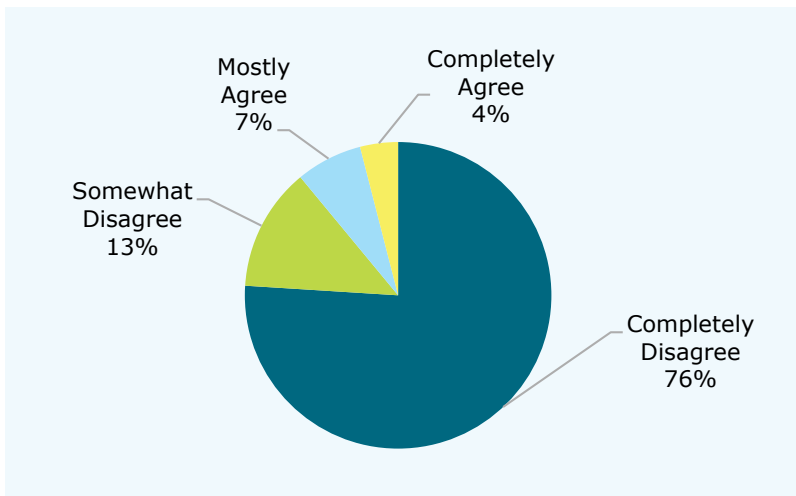
The majority of respondents did not consider late fees and fines a deterrence to library use.

In fact, only 11% of respondents state that "Library fines or late fees on materials have deterred me from using the library in the past 12 months."

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings from the Patron Satisfaction Survey:

1 **Explore strategies to make improvements to collections and facilities**

Collections

- **Consider producing and promoting more web content** to instruct patrons on e-material use - especially online video tutorials and user guides.

- **Offer digital material in a wider variety of languages.** Patrons expressed limited availability of *digital material* in alternative languages. In addition to the languages in which the survey was implemented (English, Spanish, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese), French, Hindi, and Japanese which were the highest "other" responses for preferred language of materials.

Facilities

- **Explore opportunities to enhance seating.** While there are limitations on the changes SCCLD can make to libraries' physical structures, SCCLD has been systematically looking for opportunities to enhance seating. Data from this survey suggests that SCCLD should continue to explore this opportunity.

- **Consider adding on property curb-side drop-off points for patrons to make returns.** These may be particularly beneficial for community libraries with limited parking.

2 **Explore strategies to make targeted improvements to its programs and services**

Programming

- **Ensure sufficient youth programming and cross check report results** with preferred times by community library location. SCCLD could also examine the timing and frequency of program offerings, since this year's survey included additional questions about the preferred timing and frequency of services for patrons' favorite programs.

- **Consider other methods for advertising adult programming and technology classes.** Adult programming (ages 18-64) and technology classes were also in high demand. SCCLD could consider advertising using the methods patrons identified as being effective including identifying high traffic public space outside the library for flyering, exploring ways to better utilize social media, and ensuring event postings are easily accessible via the website.

Services

- **Explore way to help patrons with service connections and learning.** Focus groups with library patrons revealed that libraries often connect individuals with social services, and the survey revealed that help around ESL and tax needs are valued by patrons. We recommend that SCCLD pursue community partnerships for libraries to provide additional information on employment, taxes, social services, and immigration resources. Easily accessible and well-promoted resources could assist community members in need of these vital services.

- **Consider analyzing card holder data to better understand the SCCLD patron base.** Of the patrons who responded to the 2019 Patron Satisfaction Survey, 9% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 1% identified as Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander. According to the U.S. Census [ii] statistics for Santa Clara County, 25% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, 3% identify as Black or African American, and about 1% as American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander. Since county statistics do not align perfectly with library district demographics, SCCLD could consider analyzing card holder zip code data to construct the appropriate demographic comparison by patron census tract. Having a better sense of target patron demographics will help to make outreach, collections, programs, and services culturally relevant and to meet the needs of the diverse population of patrons.

3 ## Explore strategies to expand already-successful practices

Policy

- **Continue to invest in services and strategies that work well.** In particular, one of the major takeaways from the survey was that patrons greatly appreciate the friendly and approachable staff services, with between 97-98% reporting this to be the case for both accounts staff and reference staff. We recommend additional research to identify exactly what staff are doing that patrons appreciate. This would allow SCCLD to identify and distill their unique staff services.

  Additionally, while appointment-based reference help is not in high demand, if you are considering pursuing this service, it will require much publicity and a strong roll-out, since most patrons are ambivalent about the option. Finally, it's good news that library fines and late fees do not seem to be a great deterrent for those who took the survey. Depending on the costs of changes to fine systems, weigh this evidence along with existing studies of fines' disproportionate impacts.

Staff Support

- **Continue to foster a culture that supports library staff** and ensures that patrons as well as the broader community, are aware of the library's excellent customer service. SCCLD might consider incorporating graphic messaging into library environments to showcase their strong patron services. Excellent staff services create a warm, social ambience. The district staff should also continue reaching outside of the library to further promote the excellent features of the library that are greatly appreciated by patrons and keep people coming back!

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ii. United States Census Bureau Quick Facts. July 2018.

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