

NORTHBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
1201 Cedar Ln., Northbrook, IL 60062  
Special Meeting Agenda  
January 20, 2024 9:00 am – Civic

- 1 Call Special Meeting to Order – Mr. Jay Glaubinger
- 2 Board of Trustees Roll Call – Ms. Maura Crisham
- 3 Approval of the Agenda – Mr. Jay Glaubinger
- 4 Public Comments
- 5 Unfinished Business
- 6 New Business
  - 6.1 Strategic Plan Board Retreat
- 7 Adjourn

FINAL VOTE OR ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THE MEETING ON ANY AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT MATTER LISTED ABOVE, UNLESS THE AGENDA LINE ITEM SPECIFICALLY STATES OTHERWISE.

The Northbrook Public Library is subject to the Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend any meetings of the Board and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of these meetings or the facilities are requested to contact Brodie Austin at 847-272-7074 promptly to allow the Northbrook Public Library to make reasonable accommodations for those persons. Hearing impaired individuals may establish TDD contact by calling 847-272-7074.

# Northbrook Public Library: Board Retreat

Saturday, January 20, 2024

9:00 am to noon

**Prior to the retreat – please review the Learning Report and agenda and come prepared to discuss highlighted areas.**

## AGENDA

<b>Getting Started</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome and Setting the Stage</li><li>• Golden Circle Framework</li><li>• Planning process timeline / review of agenda / meeting goal</li></ul>
<b>Learning Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning Report introduction and context</li><li>• Discussion about Learning Report<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Come prepared to discuss:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What was interesting about the Learning Report to you? What stood out to you?</li><li>▪ What is missing from the Learning Report? What additional information do we need to consider as we are building our strategic plan?</li><li>▪ What questions do you have about the Learning Report?</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Strategic Directions</b>	<p><b>Come prepared to share:</b> Based on your experience as a Trustee, the Learning Report data, and other data and feedback the library has received from the community, if you were designing the strategic plan, what do you think should be the <b>top three areas of focus</b> (strategic directions) over the next three years? Why did you select those three areas?</p>
<b>Areas of Focus</b>	<p>After identifying possible strategic directions, we'll spend time digging into each with these guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Why is this area of focus important over the next three years?</li><li>○ What outcome do we hope to achieve in this area? (Consider specific groups here.) (Possible goals.)</li><li>○ What will we need to do (stop, start, continue) in order to achieve the results we want?</li><li>○ How will we know we are making a difference?</li></ul>
<b>Vision and Mission</b>	<p>Brief explanation about the difference between Vision and Mission and how the library will use these statements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Vision:</b> What we hope to see in the community if our work is successful. Focused on tomorrow and what we want to become / the influence we hope to have in the community. (short, concise, and aspirational)</li><li>• <b>Mission:</b> What do we do? Whom do we serve? How do we serve them? Focused on the work we do now to achieve our vision. (a bit longer (but still easily memorized) and more concrete)</li></ul>

	<p><b>Vision:</b> Our patron-focused organization will create a more connected, inclusive, and engaged community in Northbrook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the library is successful in achieving key initiatives, what do we hope we will see in the community? Aspirational and reflective of an ideal future we strive to achieve.</li> <li>• What words/phrases help us convey the impact we aspire to achieve in our community?</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission:</b> The Northbrook Public Library nurtures community and stimulates lifelong learning through innovative, responsive programming, partnerships, resources, and services. We deliver excellent customer service to our patrons to create a welcoming, inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Check in on current mission as a whole:</i> How do we feel about the current mission statement? What do we like? What could be improved?</li> <li>• What concrete things will we do to propel us to our vision? What does it look like when we are doing our best work? Detail the work we are doing, how we are doing it, and who benefits.</li> <li>• What words/phrases help us convey how we are working to achieve our vision?</li> </ul>
<b>Setting Priorities</b>	Review possible strategic directions. Are these the right strategic directions? What is missing? What are we concerned about? What are we excited about?
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap up &amp; answer questions</li> <li>• Clarify next steps</li> </ul>

## Northbrook Public Library Board Retreat - Worksheet

Strategic Planning Timeline		Retreat Agenda
<b>Learn Phase:</b> Community Survey, focus groups and interviews, strategic capacity assessment, and data and demographics review – resulting in Learning Report	July – November 2023	<b>Getting Started:</b> Welcome and Context
<b>Dream Phase:</b> Board and Staff Retreat Sessions	December 2024 – January 2024	<b>Review of Learning Report:</b> Discussion and Questions
<b>Do Phase:</b> Prepare plan, activity plan, and evaluation framework. Board approval.	February – April 2024	<b>Strategic Directions:</b> Narrowing areas of focus
		<b>Areas of Focus:</b> Discussion and Input
		<b>Vision and Mission:</b> Discuss statements
		<b>Setting Priorities:</b> Zoom Out and Focus
		<b>Next Steps:</b> Questions and Wrap-up

The Golden Circle



Learning Report Review		
What was interesting about the Learning Report? What stood out?	What is missing? What other information do we need as we plan for the future?	Questions about the Learning Report?

Strategic Directions – What three areas should the library focus on over the next three years?		

<b>TBD Strategic Directions</b>	<b>Why is this area of focus important in the next three years?</b>	<b>What outcome do we hope to achieve in this area? (Possible goals.)</b>	<b>What will we need to do in order to achieve our goals?</b>	<b>How will we know we are making a difference?</b>

VISION	MISSION
<p><i>Current:</i> Our patron-focused organization will create a more connected, inclusive, and engaged community in Northbrook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the library is successful in achieving key initiatives, what do we hope we will see in the community? Aspirational and reflective of an ideal future we strive to achieve.</li> <li>• What words/phrases help us convey the impact we aspire to achieve in our community?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Current:</i> The Northbrook Public Library nurtures community and stimulates lifelong learning through innovative, responsive programming, partnerships, resources, and services. We deliver excellent customer service to our patrons to create a welcoming, inclusive environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Check in on current mission as a whole:</i> How do we feel about the current mission statement? What do we like? What could be improved?</li> <li>• What concrete things will we do to propel us to our vision? What does it look like when we are doing our best work? Detail the work we are doing, how we are doing it, and who benefits.</li> <li>• What words/phrases help us convey how we are working to achieve our vision?</li> </ul>



**NORTHBROOK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **LEARNING REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

**Submitted by Fast Forward Libraries**

**Amanda E. Standerfer, MA, MLIS;**

**Cindy Fesemyer, MA, MLIS;**

**Laura Huddleston, MLIS;**

**Rachel Fuller, MLIS; Amy Weber, MLIS**

**January 2024**



As part of the strategic planning process undertaken in August 2023, Northbrook Public Library (NPL) devoted a significant amount of time to listening to community needs and interests and received a large amount of feedback and data from the community, staff, and Board. Detailed summaries of that feedback can be found in the full Learning Report. The following are some data findings and highlights to prepare you for the retreat discussion:

### **Overall Themes**

- Community survey input indicated high satisfaction in the library overall and in the library's customer service and convenience.
- Focus group/interview participants and community survey respondents indicated high interest in traditional library services such as physical collections, digital collections, and programming.
- Programming and attendance dropped starting in FY19-20 and a conscious choice to not increase programming to pre-pandemic levels was made in 2021. Community survey respondents indicated the desire for more programs. Added programming was particularly noted in the survey by respondents who live with/care for children.
- Focus group and interview participants indicated the desire for updates to the library building including updated décor, a café, outdoor spaces, comfortable seating, and a potential "expanded footprint". Community survey respondents also indicated interest in these specifics and added suggestions about improvements that aid in access and safety (parking lot, traffic flow, book drop updates).
- Survey rankings revealed contradictory feelings about the library using resources on facilities, however. Despite the high rate of support for sustainable building initiatives, community survey respondents indicated low interest in the library using future resources for facility and technology improvements. On the other hand, when asked to rank services, respondents indicated high interest in "technology for in-library use" and "off-site location(s) for self-serve pick-up/checkout/drop-off of library materials." These contradictions could indicate the need for further community discussion around what facility and technology needs are most desired and how they might impact the use of resources on other desired services such as collections and programs (which rated higher in the survey's future resources question).
- Focus group/interview feedback indicated the desire for the library to represent and celebrate the diverse cultures of the community. The library is in a unique position to help unite the community through enhanced inclusivity in programs, services, and materials. Community survey respondents shared more specifics on how their cultures and interests might be better represented at the library.

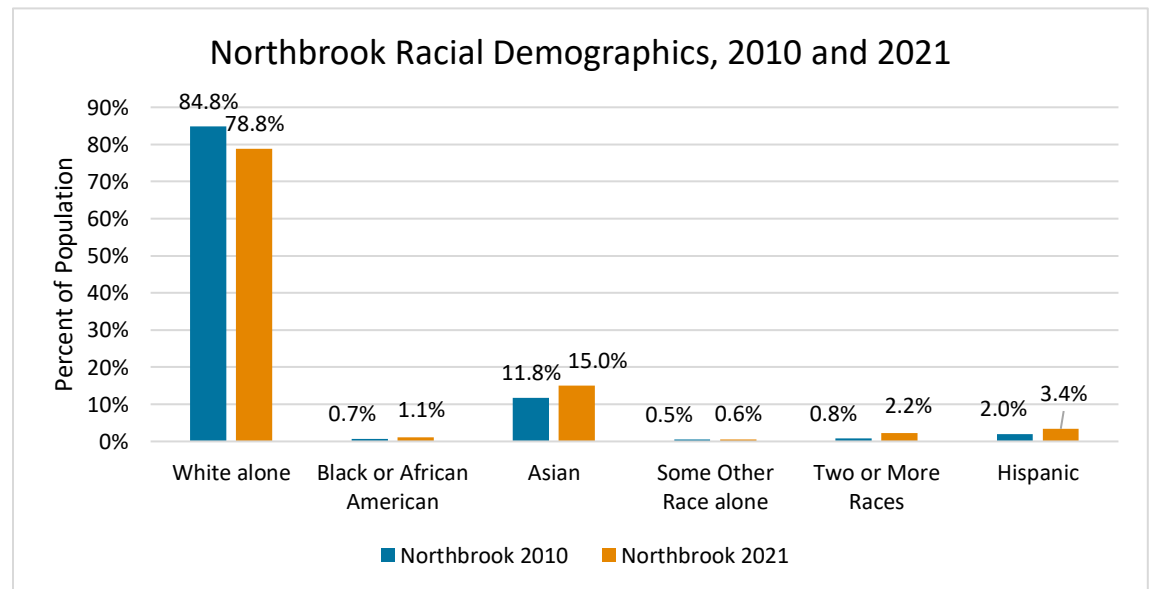
# NPL is serving a larger and more diverse population that is highly educated and speaks a wide variety of languages.

## Community Demographics

US CENSUS DATA	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population	32,922	35,108
Median Household Income (in \$)	113,089	143,506
Below Poverty Level	4.0%*	3.5%
Population 5 years and over	31,244	33,415
English Only	74.4%	76.1%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.3%	7.2%

\*ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates

- Between 2010 and 2021, the population of Northbrook increased 6.6%. Median household income increased 27% from 2010 to 2021 and the average owner-occupied housing value increased 3.3% while the poverty level decreased to just 3.5%.
- 23.9% of the 2021 population in Northbrook spoke a language other than (or in addition to) English.
- 2021 demographics showed a 6% increase in non-white residents in Northbrook since 2010 indicating small increases in Asian, Black, and Hispanic populations and the population of those of two or more races.



## ***Library Strategic Capacity Assessment Highlights***

At a virtual retreat session on December 12, 2023, members of the library's managers, assistant managers, and Planning Team reviewed the Library Strategic Capacity Assessment report and identified key items for the Board and staff members to consider during upcoming retreat sessions. For environmental factors – political, economic, social, technology, legal, and library sector – issues outside of the library that need consideration when planning for the future, the Leadership Team and Planning Team identified [these top issues](#):

### **Overwhelm**

People facing multiple challenges and that impacts the workforce, too; a general feeling that things are harder now compared to 2019; climate change; war and other large global/international issues; threats towards libraries

### **Intellectual Freedom**

Book bans and censorship; collection development; access to information; disinformation; transparency

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Understanding of EDI / being well-informed / pushback of EDI efforts, microaggressions, ADA and accessibility; voting rights

### **Social/Community Issues**

Social isolation impacts patrons and they bring that to the library; technology causing isolation; things feel harder now compared to 2019; the library serving as a third space; safety (staff and patrons); wages; inflation

# 92% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the library overall.

## Community Survey



### Survey Respondent Snapshot:

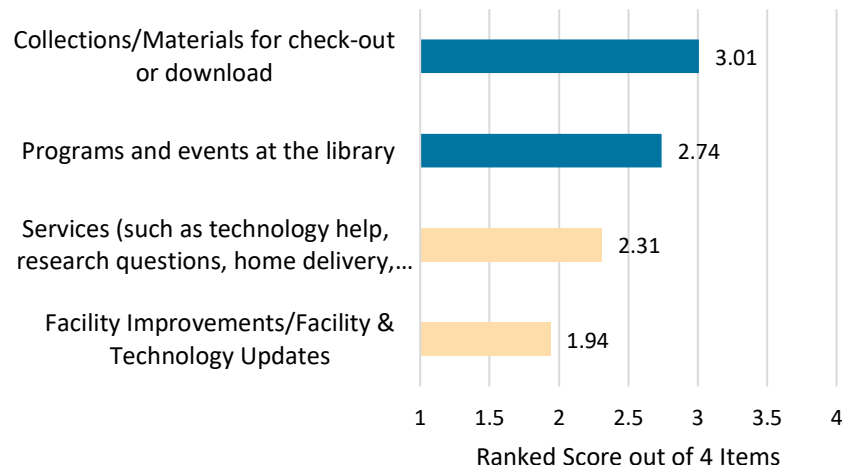
- 95% had an NPL library card
- 71% use the library daily, weekly or every few weeks
- 55% were age 60 or over
- 52% work full- or part-time
- 45% were retired
- 35% were ages 35-59
- 23% live with or care for children regularly
- 7% were under age 35

A total of 1,905 individuals completed a community survey, representing approximately 5.4% of Northbrook's 2021 population.

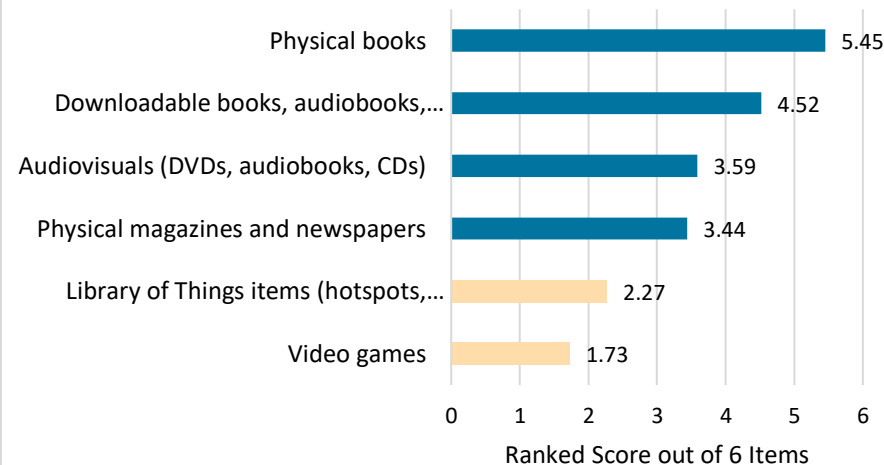
The survey was available in English (1,899 responses), Spanish (3 responses), Korean (3 responses), and Russian (0 responses).

# Top Future Focus Highlights from Community Survey

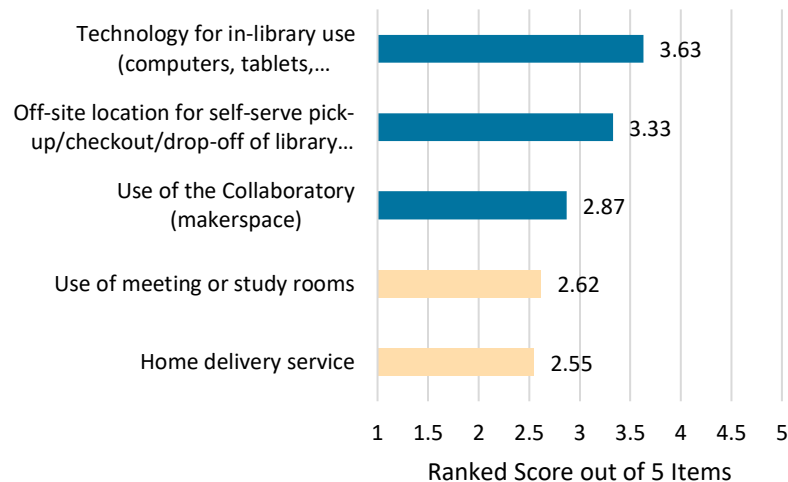
Future Focus Interests to You/Your Family



Collection Types of Interest to You/Your Family



Library Services of Interest to You/Your Family



- **Future Focus:** Respondents ranked collections/materials for check-out or download as their highest interest and facility improvements/facility & technology updates as their lowest interest
- **Collection Types:** Respondents ranked physical books highest followed by downloadable books and materials/streaming collections.
- **Library Services:** Respondents ranked highest interest in technology for in-library use followed by off-site location(s) for self-serve pick-up/checkout/drop-off of library materials.
- **All response options showed some level of interest.**



## Summary of Focus Groups and Interviews

Six essential **Community Themes** rose to the top via community focus groups and interviews:

### **Cultural Inclusivity**

Celebrate and embrace the diversity within the community, fostering connections among multilingual families, diverse religions, and various age groups. Encourage collaboration and communication between Northbrook organizations to break down cultural silos.

### **Community Connectivity**

Transform downtown into a vibrant, destination-worthy area with appealing restaurants, outdoor spaces, and community gathering places. Create walkable and bikeable areas to encourage social interaction and community engagement.

### **Support Vulnerable Populations**

Increase affordable housing options, including senior condos and rental units with on-campus activities and dining options. Support aging in place. Promote mental health supports and destigmatization.

### **Civil Civic Engagement**

Encourage civil community conversations on challenging topics to foster a sense of togetherness and hope for the future through community events. Increase civic engagement by improving transparency in elections and encouraging diverse participation in municipal and school affairs. Advocate for diverse and representative leadership within the community.

### **Communication**

Provide a centralized, well-publicized clearinghouse for community information and volunteer opportunities. Ensure that community communication methods include offerings in multiple languages.

### **Community Development**

Offer more activities and events downtown to make Northbrook a vibrant destination. Attract destination restaurants and retail establishments, implement greenspace and streetscape improvements, and establish gathering areas with music to enhance the overall downtown experience. Advocate for more reliable and affordable public transportation to further facilitate community development. Create walkable and bikeable areas to encourage social interaction and community engagement. Embrace green policies to promote community health.

Three essential **Library Themes** rose to the top via community focus groups and interviews:

**Foster Inclusivity**

Emphasize the library as a core place for multicultural celebrations, offering programs and events in various languages. Offer discussions on challenging topics like racism or mental health to foster empathy and build community connections. Strengthen the library's role as an active and collaborative community partner that supports diverse community groups. Encourage staff engagement with patrons of diverse backgrounds to enhance inclusivity.

**Optimize Physical Space and Location to Make the Library a True Community Hub**

Add comfortable seating for all ages and abilities, more study rooms, better use of outdoor spaces, a café, and vibrant colors to create an inviting atmosphere. Explore expansion of the library's physical footprint and/or consider introducing satellite locations to better serve the community. Consider locating the library within a new municipal campus.

**Maintain Core Services While Exploring New Ones**

Maintain a well-stocked library with books, tech resources, and meeting spaces that cater to diverse interests and needs. Embrace technology trends to enhance the library's relevance. Increase e-book holdings to reduce wait times. Provide more virtual programs. Offer e-resources in multiple languages to enhance digital access. Introduce educational programs such as ACT and SAT prep classes, spelling bees, battle of the books, and vocabulary events.

***For additional data and analysis, see the Learning Report, which contains:***

- An introduction and context with trends and community demographics,
- Highlights from the Library Strategic Capacity Assessment that Board and staff members participated in
- Summary and analysis of findings from a community survey,
- Highlights and findings from community engagement focus groups and interviews, and
- Appendices with more complete community demographic data, 5-year library statistics, a summary of findings from a Strategic Capacity Assessment, and the Zheng Consulting Report – “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: Survey Findings and Report – 2023 Baseline.”

**Key Findings from Zheng Consulting Report – “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: Survey Findings and Report – 2023 Baseline”:**

<b>Highly Effective and Engaged Staff</b>	Library staff are highly motivated and engaged to work at the library, citing extremely positive within-department experiences. Compared to benchmark, library staff report exceptionally higher opportunities, support, resources, and higher perceived pay equity.
<b>Strong Shared EDI Commitment, But Low Capacity Library-Wide</b>	While virtually all staff are aligned on the need for EDI work, burnout is high and capacity is low across the library. This challenge is exacerbated by ongoing pandemic- and sociopolitical-related stress. Staff undertaking EDI-related workstreams find the workload unsustainable, and feel that without changes to how EDI work is distributed, even work that most staff agree is valuable will be unable to be carried out.
<b>Staff-Administrative Management Inequity Drives Overall Inequity</b>	While there are a small number of demographic-related inequities by race and sexuality, the largest driver of overall EDI challenges is the inequity between administrative management and other staff, which influences other inequities at the library. Administrative management’s perception of the current state of the library is misaligned with staff perceptions, leading to challenges with EDI decision-making, communication, and implementation.
<b>Unspoken Consequences In Lieu of Healthy Feedback or Accountability Processes</b>	When issues with projects, performance, or interpersonal relationships arise, particularly at the manager level and above, leaders may default to taking one-sided action to change the outcome rather than openly communicate. For example, in reaction to a perceived incorrect decision taken by a manager, an administrative manager may respond by reducing the decision-making autonomy or requiring more formal permission or sign-off of similar decisions for that manager alone without communicating the reason. While this practice reduces outright conflict, it can damage trust and morale for the affected managers and/or departments and exacerbate inequity.
<b>Over-Scoping and Over-Management of Library-Wide Projects</b>	Library-wide projects are highly criticized by staff. The high number of projects, the heavy reliance on library staff to undertake them, the relative lack of input staff have into project selection and prioritization, and the heavy involvement of administrative management in project minutiae results in a high risk of staff burnout. Staff are strongly aligned on the perception that projects are improperly resourced and rarely completed in a timely manner.

*\*See Learning Report – Appendix D for full Zheng Consulting Report.*





# NORTHBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Submitted by Fast Forward Libraries**

## **LEARNING REPORT**

**Amanda E. Standerfer, MA, MLIS;**

**Cindy Fesemyer, MA, MLIS;**

**Laura Huddleston, MLIS;**

**Rachel Fuller, MLIS; Amy Weber, MLIS**

**January 2024**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Community Data</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Board and Staff Environmental Scan</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Community Survey Summary and Analysis</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Focus Groups and Interviews Summary</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendix A: Community Demographic Profile</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix B: Library Data</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix C: Library Strategic Capacity Assessment Report</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendix D: Zheng Consulting Report – “Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion: Survey Findings and Report – 2023 Baseline.”</b>	<b>71</b>

# Introduction

The Northbrook Public Library (NPL) serves a population of approximately 35,000 in the Village of Northbrook, IL. Located at 1201 Cedar Lane, the library has been in its current location since 1969 with an expansion in 1999, a major renovation in 2015, and a lobby renovation in 2021.

The library holds a physical collection of around 240,000 items and offers patrons access to over 195,000 digital items. Digital and streaming content is available through a variety of platforms and research databases. As a member of Cooperative Computer Systems (CCS), an area library consortium, NPL provides interlibrary loan options to patrons for access to over 5 million items. The library also hosts a wide variety of programs and events for all ages with tens of thousands of participants each year. Patrons can utilize the library's special collection of technology and digital media tools, and the library offers many services such as group study rooms, meeting rooms, a makerspace, home delivery, and museum passes.

NPL received a 5-Star rating from *Library Journal* in 2020, 2021, and 2022; and in 2023 the Village Board approved a resolution affirming Northbrook as a Book Sanctuary Community.

The library is governed by a Board of Trustees with 7 elected members who oversee the library's strategic operations and is supported by an active Friends of the Library organization and a foundation that aids the library financially through solicitation of major gifts and an endowment fund.

# Community Data

The population of the Village of Northbrook increased 6.6% between 2010 and 2021. During that time, the median household income increased 27% and the average housing value increased 3.3%. Homeownership rates are higher in Northbrook as compared to state and national rates, however this percentage decreased 3.5% from 2010 to 2021. The percentage of residents living in poverty decreased 0.5% and, at 3.5%, is lower than the state and national rates.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
Median Age	38.4	38.5	47	49
Median Household Income (in \$)	69,021	72,563	113,089	143,506
Homeownership	64.6%	66.5%	91%	87.5%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied, in \$)	244,900	212,600	553,400	571,400
Below Poverty Level	12.6%	11.8%	4.0%*	3.5%

Racial and ethnic diversity showed a 25% increase in the population who reported as Asian and a 6% decrease by those who reported as “White alone” between 2010 and 2021. Small increases in those reported as Black, Hispanic, and Two or more races contributed also contributed to the increase in diversity. The Asian population in Northbrook is almost three times greater than the national percentage whereas the Hispanic population which has grown continues to be significantly smaller than the US percentage.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Total Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
White alone	68.2%	67.8%	84.8%	78.8%
Black or African American alone	12.6%	14.1%	0.7%	1.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	5.7%	5.7%	11.8%	15.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	5.6%	6.2%	0.5%	0.6%
Two or More Races	7.0%	5.8%	0.8%	2.2%

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Total Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
Hispanic Population	18.4%	17.5%	2.0%	3.4%

The 2023 racial and ethnic diversity of the local school age population<sup>1</sup> exceeds that of the overall population, with all school districts reporting a smaller percentage of White students than that of the overall residents noted above (78.8%). West Northfield SD 31 is the smallest district and has the highest level of overall racial and ethnic diversity (39.4% White) and the highest percentage of students who are considered English language learners (23.1%) and low income (17.6%). Asian students make up the largest minority group in each school district, reported between 14% (SD 28) and 37.9% (SD 31).

IL School Report Card Data	Illinois 2023	Northbrook SD 28 2023	Northbrook SD 27 2023	Northbrook/ Glenview SD 30 2023	West Northfield SD 31 2023	Glenbrook HSD 225 2023
Enrollment	1.9 million	1,830	1,305	1,247	945	5,033
Hispanic	27.5%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	9.9%	11.5%
Black	16.5%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	2.1%	1.3%
Asian	5.5%	14.0%	25%	36.3%	37.9%	21.2%
Two or More Races	4.2%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	10.6%	4.7%
White	45.9%	75.5%	64.9%	53.7%	39.4%	61.3%
English Language Learners	14.6%	6.2%	5.0%	8.1%	23.1%	5.8%
Low Income Students	49.0%	3.6%	- (redacted)	3%	17.6%	14.4%

<sup>1</sup> Districts 30, 31, and 225 are shared between Glenview and Northbrook.

Between 2010 and 2021, there were small decreases in the percentages of those who speak Spanish and Asian/Pacific Islander languages, and a small increase in those speaking other Indo-European languages. 33.9% of Northbrook residents speak a language other than (or in addition to) English; 7.2% speak English “less than very well” and this population decreased 1.1% from 2010 to 2021.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population 5 years and over	310,302,360	12,076,132	31,244	33,415
English Only	78.3%	76.8%	74.4%	76.1%
Spanish	13.3%	13.5%	2.1%	1.5%
Other Indo-European languages	3.7%	5.6%	12.6%	13.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	3.0%	9.8%	7.4%
Other languages	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.2%	8.5%	8.3%	7.2%

71.9% of residents age 25 and older in Northbrook held a Bachelor's degree or graduate/profession degree in 2021, much higher than the state and national percentages. The percentage of those with less than a high school degree (1.8%) is very low and decreased 1.3% since 2010.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population 25 years and older	225,152,317	8,764,878	23,134	25,493
Less than High School graduate	11.1%	10.1%	3.1%	1.8%
HS or Equivalent	26.5%	25.4%	11.2%	10.8%
Some College or Associate's Degree	28.7%	28.3%	20.2%	15.5%
Bachelor's Degree	20.6%	21.8%	34.5%	34.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	13.1%	14.4%	31.0%	37.5%



## Board and Staff Environmental Scan Summary

In a Strategic Capacity Assessment (see full report in Appendix B), Board and staff members 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

Societal divisions and global conflicts, alongside challenges like misinformation, attacks on democracy, and upcoming elections, shape the political landscape, impacting trust in civic organizations and local leadership.

### Economic

Inflation, workforce concerns, disparities in education access, and wealth inequality contribute to fears of recession, while labor movements advocate for fair compensation amid disruptions in supply chains and local development.

### Social

Society grapples with discrimination, mental health issues, diverse identities, and AAPI hate crimes, as well as the implications of climate change, citizenship reframing, and evolving views on truth and equity.

### Technology

The ever-evolving technological landscape presents challenges in AI misuse, digital divides, social media misinformation, and cybersecurity, influencing educational and workplace tech skills expectations.

### Legal

Legal issues encompass censorship, threats to first amendment rights, legislative impacts on library access, and challenges to constitutional rights, posing a direct threat to democratic values.

### Library Sector

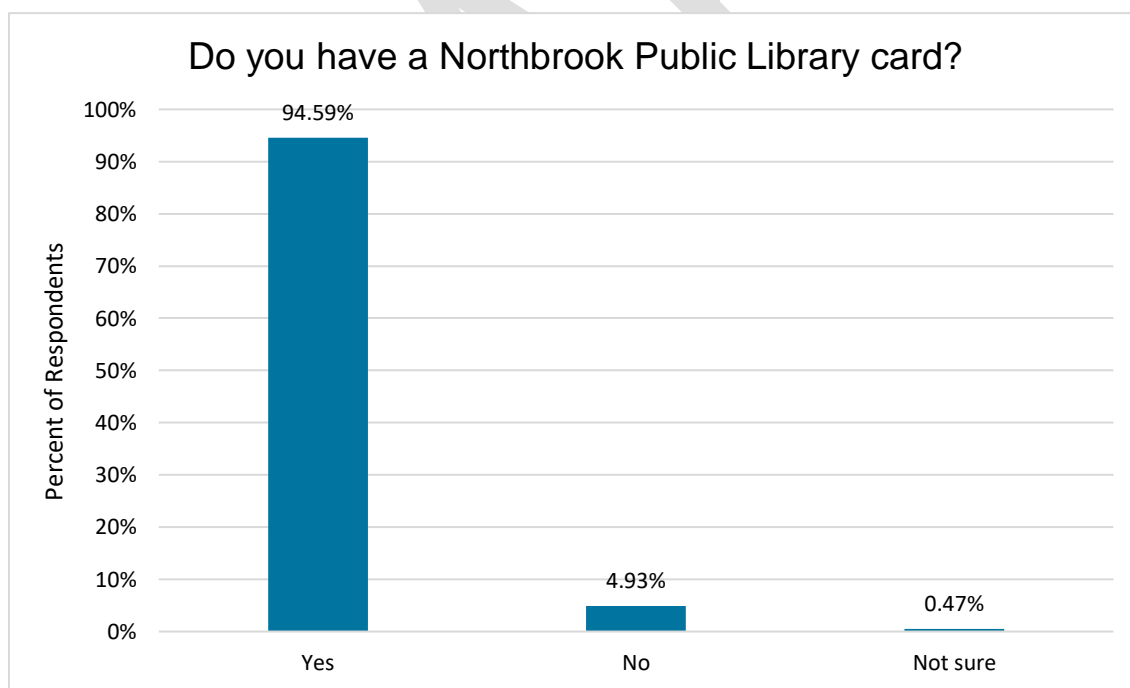
Libraries face safety concerns, censorship attempts, fair wage challenges, diversity issues, and changing perceptions of their role as safe spaces, third spaces, and social gathering places, all while adapting to evolving educational practices.

# Community Survey Summary

As part of their strategic planning process, the Library conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about their patrons' experience with library services, programs, staff, and facilities. A total of 1,905 individuals completed the survey representing approximately 5.4% of the NPL 2021 service area population of 35,108. 55% of survey respondents were age 60 and over while 31% of Northbrook's population is age 60 and over. In addition to English, the survey was offered in Spanish (3 responses), Korean (3 responses), and Russian (no responses).

## Notes 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. When analyzing this qualitative data, we hoped to show the breadth of responses, often through select quotes and comments representing top themes.



### FINDINGS:

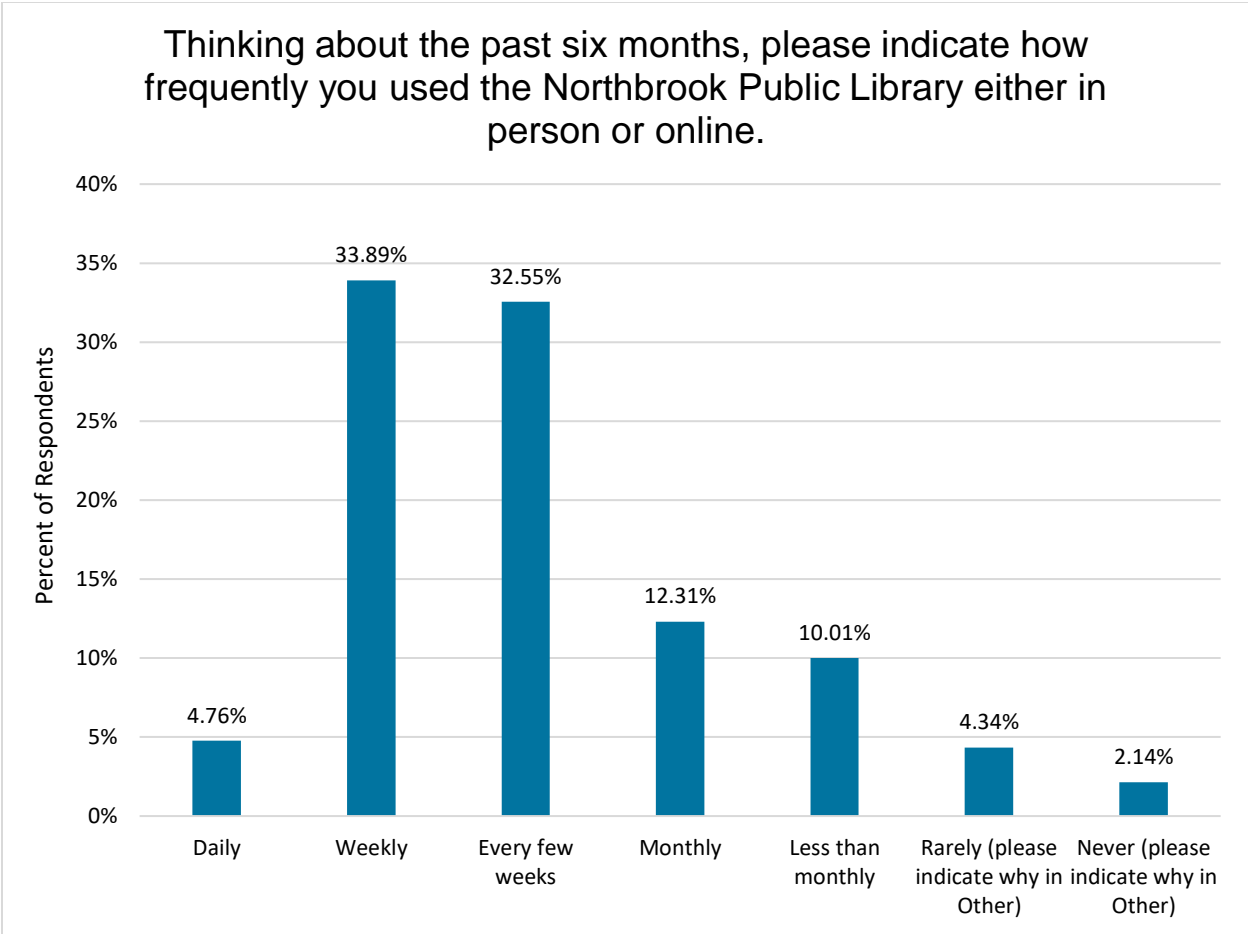
- The majority of survey respondents (94.59%) indicated they have a Northbrook Public Library card.
- 5.4% of respondents indicated they do not have an NPL card or are not sure if they have a card.

**If you have a card from another library, please specify the library:**

- Arlington Heights
- Barrington
- Chicago/CPL
- Cook Library (Libertyville)
- Deerfield
- Eisenhower (Harwood Heights)
- Evanston
- Glencoe
- Glenview
- Grayslake
- Highland Park
- Indian Trails
- Lake Bluff
- Morton Grove
- Mt. Prospect
- Niles
- Palatine
- Prospect Heights
- Skokie
- VAPL/Vernon Area (Lincolnshire)
- Warren Newport
- Wauconda
- Wilmette
- Winnetka/Northfield
- Wooddale

**Other libraries:**

Alexandria, VA; Boca Raton, FL; Broward Co, FL; Charlotte Co, FL; Collier Co, FL; Marion Co/Dunnellon, FL; Mukwonago, WI; Pacific Grove, CA; Santa Barbara, CA; Scottsdale, AZ; school libraries



#### FINDINGS:

- 71.2% indicated they used the library daily, weekly, or every few weeks during the past six months.
- 66.44% of respondents indicated they used the library weekly or every few weeks.
- 22.32% indicated they used the library monthly or less than monthly.
- 6.48% indicated they rarely or never used the library during the past six months.

#### Other (please specify)

**Time/Busyness:** Lack of leisure time; work a lot of hours

**Materials:** I don't read; don't need books; buy my own books; books I wanted weren't available at the library; use Kindle, other online resources; buy my own books so I can mark/write in them

**Access:** Difficulty with mobility/physical disability; older age

**Card:** No card; lost my card; new resident; can't afford annual fees for unincorporated residents; never renewed my card after the pandemic

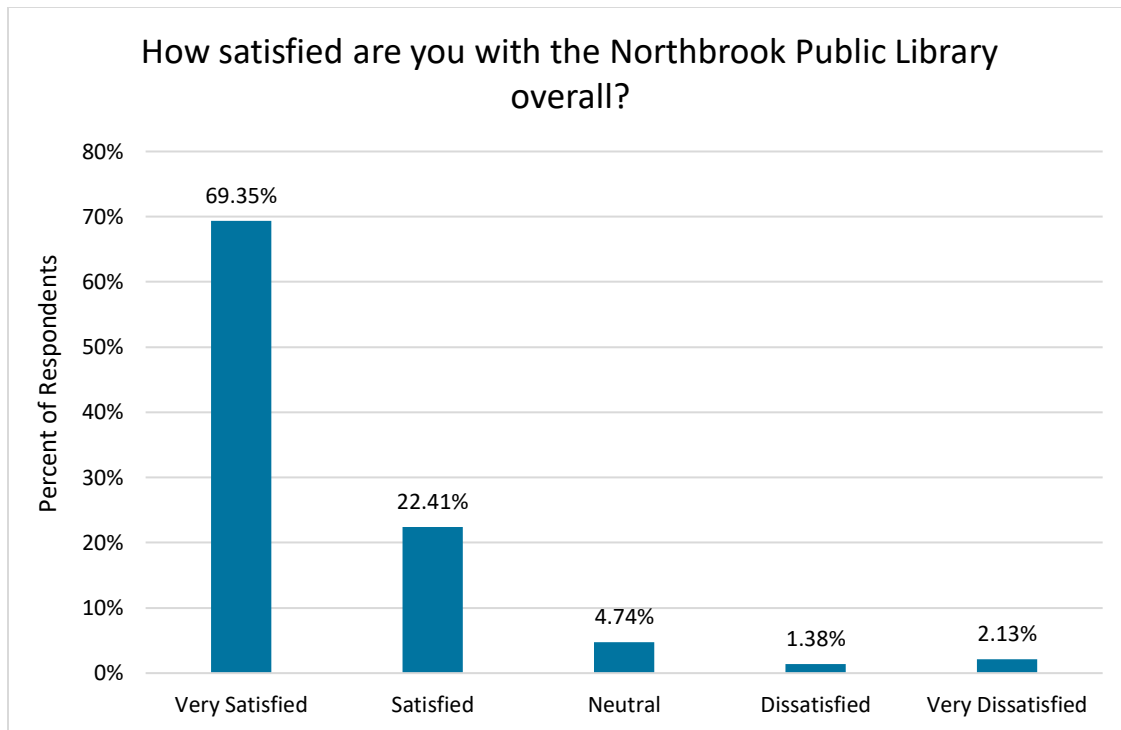
**Use another library:**

- Drive to other libraries for children's programs
- Winnetka; Mount Prospect; Arlington Heights; Northfield; Indian Trails; Deerfield; school libraries

**Other types/frequencies of use:** Several times a week online; every other week; use Libby, hoopla, other online resources; use more during fall/winter; 2-3 times per week; several times a week; every other day; almost every day during the summer; daily use of Libby; bi-weekly; 2 to 3 times a week except in summer

**Select comments:**

- "Time limits on books not long enough."
- "Programming not interesting for my age group."
- "I work in the school district and we've had so many warnings about strict rules regarding usage of the card. I'm afraid to check out anything!!"
- "Can't afford a card. I live in unincorporated Northbrook, but have gone to a few events in the past."
- "My kids are grown."
- "Because I live in Mission Hills and it's absolutely ridiculous that you want to charge me for a library card (\$342.12 for a 1-year card and \$171.06 for a 6-month card)."
- "I prefer going to other libraries. Northbrook can be challenging."
- "Inertia - I think about using it but don't."
- "I used to visit 2 or 3 times a week. After the pandemic, however, I now rely more on streamed media."
- "New baby and not many baby friendly events."
- "Not much was being offered for kids my age (18m), the kids' area is run down. Compared to other nearby libraries poor quality of programs and activities for toddlers."
- "I have gotten out of the habit of using the library. I must start taking advantage of the best library ever."
- "My low vision limits me to audiobooks. I subscribe to Audible. Then I go to hoopla and Libby."
- "Holds for non-Northbrook cards seem to never get fulfilled."
- "Use online sources. NPL online media are too cumbersome to use."



#### FINDINGS:

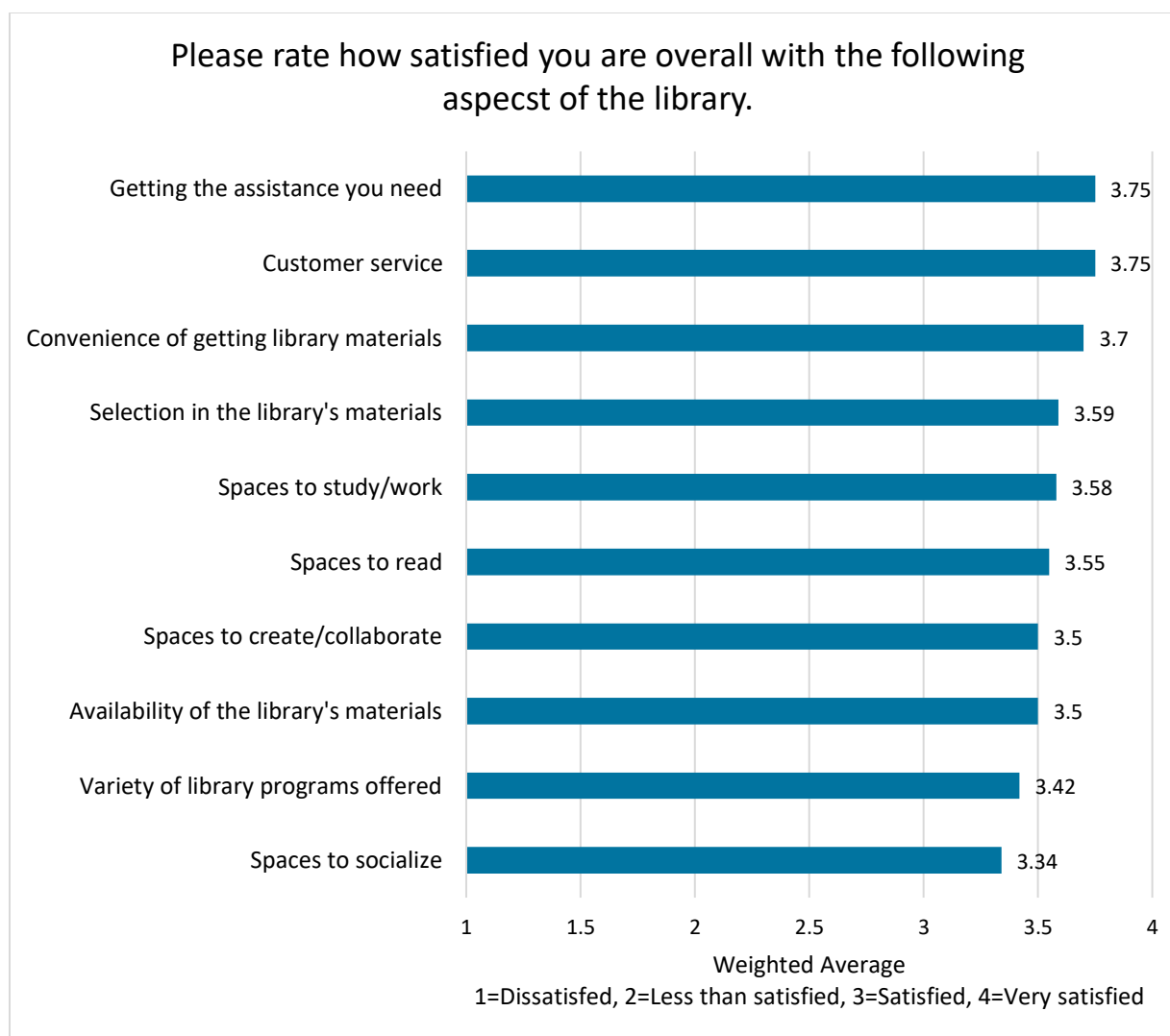
- **91.76% of respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.**
- Only 3.51% of respondents indicated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the library overall.
- 92.59% of respondents who indicated they live with or care for children ( $n=445$ ) were very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- 92.76% of respondents who indicated they are retired ( $n=823$ ) were very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- 91.41% of respondents who indicated they work full-time or part-time ( $n=957$ ) were very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- 94.1% of respondents who indicated they regularly use physical books and materials ( $n=987$ ) were very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- 91.9% of respondents who indicated they work remotely or in a hybrid model ( $n=358$ ) were very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.

**What is one way the library could improve your overall satisfaction? (981 answered this question; 924 skipped this question.)**

- Many respondents requested **easier access to more library collections**. Selected comments that demonstrate these requests:
  - “more availability of newer popular books, especially e-books and audio books”
  - “wider selection of audiobooks and Spanish-language/non-English-language literature”
  - “more availability of popular titles”
  - “Wish that the library’s collection of Libby and Hoopla selections could be increased. Always on a wait list.”
  - “more nonfiction books”
  - “Improve reference selection, adding more investment-related material”
  - “Increase the number of fiction books in the collection as well as DVDs”
  - “add board games”
- Several respondents suggested **increased programming**. In particular, **activities for children, activities for adults, and evening and weekend** offerings were mentioned. Select comments included:
  - “offer more kids programs during the evening/weekend hours so that working families can attend”
  - “more evening programming including movies; speakers”
  - “a regular board game night, video game tournament, crafts, etc.”
  - “more early childhood classes, especially during the summer – they are wonderful!”
  - “tech classes for older adults”
  - “concerts, TED Talks, discussions on current events”
- Several respondents expressed a desire for **more access to – and support in - the Collaboratory**. Select comments included:
  - “larger groups”
  - “offer more in the Collaboratory”
  - “I would really like to understand how to use the items in the Collaboratory but am intimidated by their complexity so I don’t ask.”
  - “more openings for maker classes and not limiting the glass class attendance”
  - “very interested in the Collaboratory (maker space) but have no idea how to use it”
  - “open on all days instead of just some days”
  - “limit Collaboratory use to Northbrook residents in Nov. and Dec.”
- Respondents also mentioned **updates to the facilities**. Select comments included:
  - “manage noise in common area better, soundproof the study rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor”
  - “the landscaping is ugly, in bad shape, and not maintained”
  - “children’s section could be improved greatly”
  - “the outside entrance is not welcoming”
  - “add a commercial coffee/snack caffe [sic] on the ground floor and a bigger seating area”
  - “upgrade the restrooms and water fountains”
  - “more cozy seating areas”
  - “handicap parking is very far away from the doors”

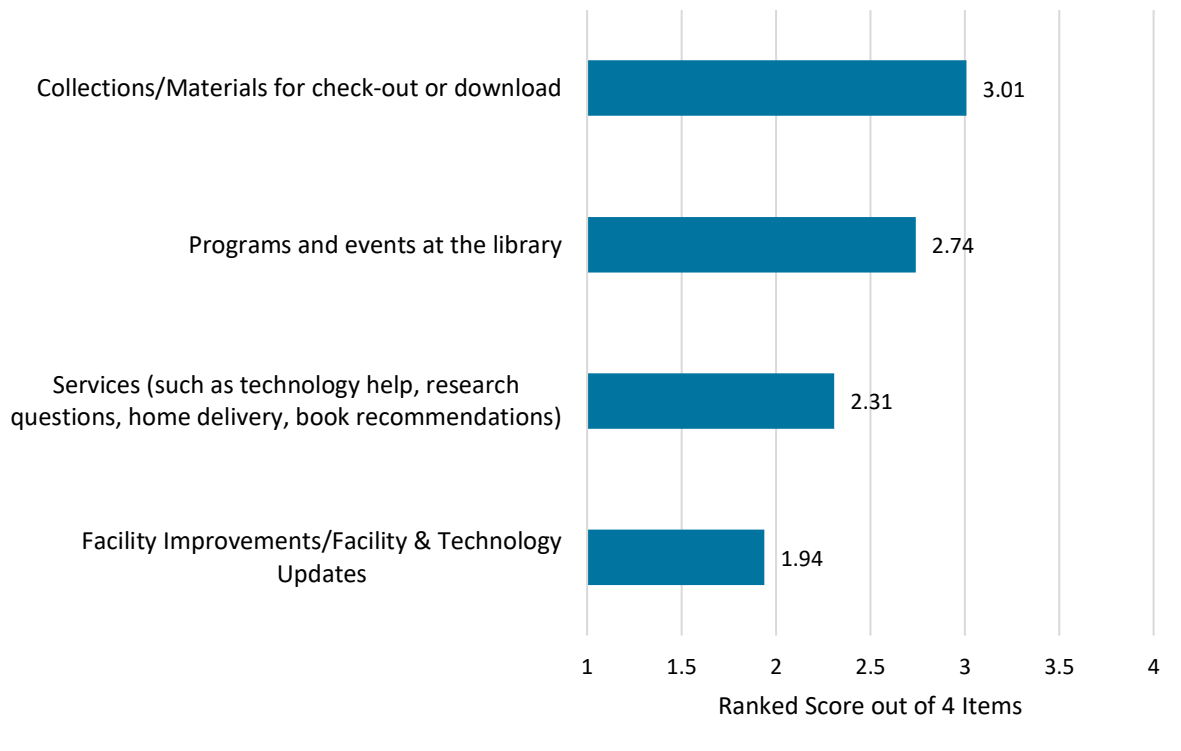
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several respondents suggested <b>increased hours on Sundays</b>. Respondents said: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “More hours on Sunday, even if limited services during this time”</li> <li>○ “more weekend hours”</li> <li>○ “Sunday morning hours”</li> <li>○ “longer hours on Sunday”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents commented on receiving both positive and negative customer service. Some comments suggested <b>better customer service</b> would improve patrons’ experience, while other comments indicated <b>service is satisfactory</b>. Select comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “People that work there could be nicer.”</li> <li>○ “More pleasant staff (I’m excluding the lobby and events people – they are lovely.)”</li> <li>○ “It’s frustrating to go in, ask for assistance, and be treated like a burden.”</li> <li>○ “In youth services, several librarians have come across as annoyed by small children/noise. The children’s area should be energetic!”</li> <li>○ “The staff is extremely helpful.”</li> <li>○ “Library personnel doing a great job.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few respondents expressed thoughts related to <b>content in library materials</b>. Some comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Do not give in to book banners. All people should be represented and find themselves in the library.”</li> <li>○ “Stay out of politics do not take political stands. It is a library. It should be neutral to all political agendas.”</li> <li>○ “Keep doing what you are doing, promoting multicultural + LGBTQ+ books...This is SO IMPORTANT! THANK YOU!”</li> <li>○ “Please stop center staging ‘banned books’. If the library chose to have them, fine, leave it at that.”</li> <li>○ “Leave books with controversial topics on higher shelves, especially in the lobby.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some respondents indicated there was <b>nothing</b> for the Library to do. Select comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I do not have any suggestions. The book selections, projects, family events and staff are amazing!”</li> <li>○ “It’s excellent...the best out of four states we have lived in”</li> <li>○ “We love it and it’s a godsend to stay at home parents!”</li> <li>○ “THE BEST IN THE AREA. LOVE ALL THAT THEY DO.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents indicated the <b>highest satisfaction with getting the assistance they need and customer service (both rated 3.75/4) followed closely by convenience of getting library materials (3.7).</b></li> <li>• Comparatively, respondents indicated the lowest satisfaction with variety of library programs offered (3.42) and spaces to socialize (3.34), however all items rated over 3 (Satisfied).</li> <li>• Respondents who live with or care for children rated variety of library programs offered as their lowest satisfaction at 3.31. 10.88% of this group indicated they are less than satisfied or dissatisfied with the variety of library programs offered and 10.43% chose N/A for this item.</li> <li>• Respondents who are retired indicated highest satisfaction with customer service (3.82) and lowest satisfaction in spaces to socialize (3.44). 54.03% of this group chose N/A for spaces to socialize.</li> <li>• 69.27% of respondents who work remotely or hybrid indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with spaces to study/work, and 27.65% of this group chose N/A for spaces to study/work.</li> </ul>
-----------	---

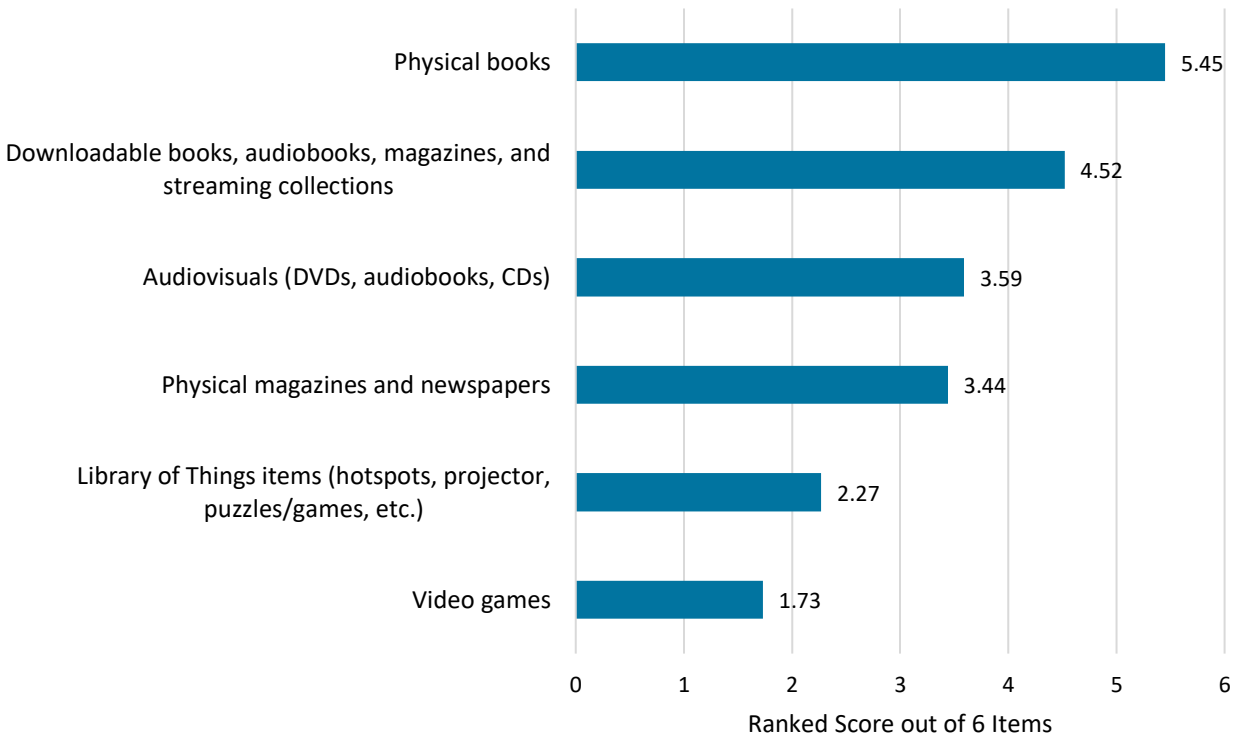
Where should we focus our resources in the coming years?  
Please rank the following based on the level of interest for  
you or your family.



#### FINDINGS:

- Respondents ranked **collections/materials for check-out or download as their highest interest (3.01/4).**
- Respondents indicated lowest interest in facility improvements/facility & technology updates (1.94).
- All sub-groups of respondents ranked these four items in the same order with only slight variations in the ranking scores.

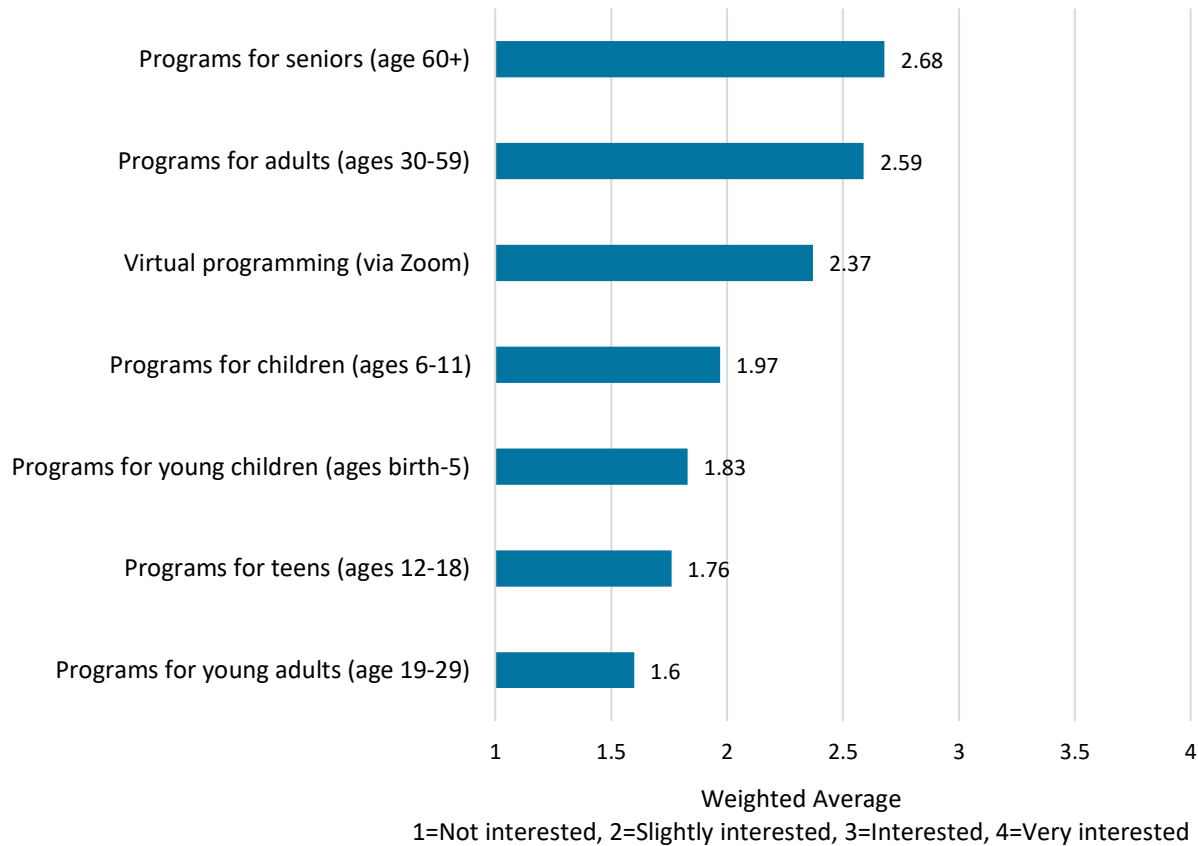
Please rank the following library collections based on the level of interest for you or your family.



#### FINDINGS:

- Respondents ranked physical books as their highest interest (5.45) followed by downloadable books, audiobooks, magazines, and streaming collections (4.52).
- Respondents ranked video games as their lowest interest (1.73).
- Respondents who live with or care for children rated physical books more highly at 5.56. They also rated video games lowest but at a higher score (1.94).
- Respondents who are retired ranked Library of Things (1.87) and video games (1.57) lower than overall respondents.
- Respondents who work full- or part-time ranked Library of Things fifth in order of interest but their score for this item was higher (2.53) as was the score for this item for respondents who work remotely/hybrid (2.67).

Please rate the program groups below based on the level of interest for you or your family.



#### FINDINGS:

- Respondents were most interested in programs for seniors age 60+ (2.68) and programs for adults ages 30-59 (2.59) which may be due to the 50% of respondents who are aged 60+.
- Respondents were least interested in programs for teens (1.76) and young adults age 19-29 (1.6). This is likely a reflection of fewer respondents from these age groups participating in the survey.
- Respondents who have children at home or care for children ranked programs for children ages 6-11 as their highest interest (2.71) followed closely by programs for adults ages 30-59 (2.69). Their lowest interest was programs for young adults (1.52). We did not collect data on the age of children within households responding.
- Respondents who are retired ranked programs for seniors higher at 3.44 and programs for young adult (1.41) and teens (1.39) lower. This group ranked virtual programming higher at 2.58, their second highest interest.
- Respondents who work full or part-time ranked programs for adults ages 30-59 as their highest interest at 2.81 followed by virtual programming at 2.28.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents who work remotely or in a hybrid model also ranked programs for adults ages 30-59 as their highest interest at 2.9 followed by virtual programming at 2.32.</li> </ul>
--	---

#### Other (comments not ranked by frequency)

##### Program topics:

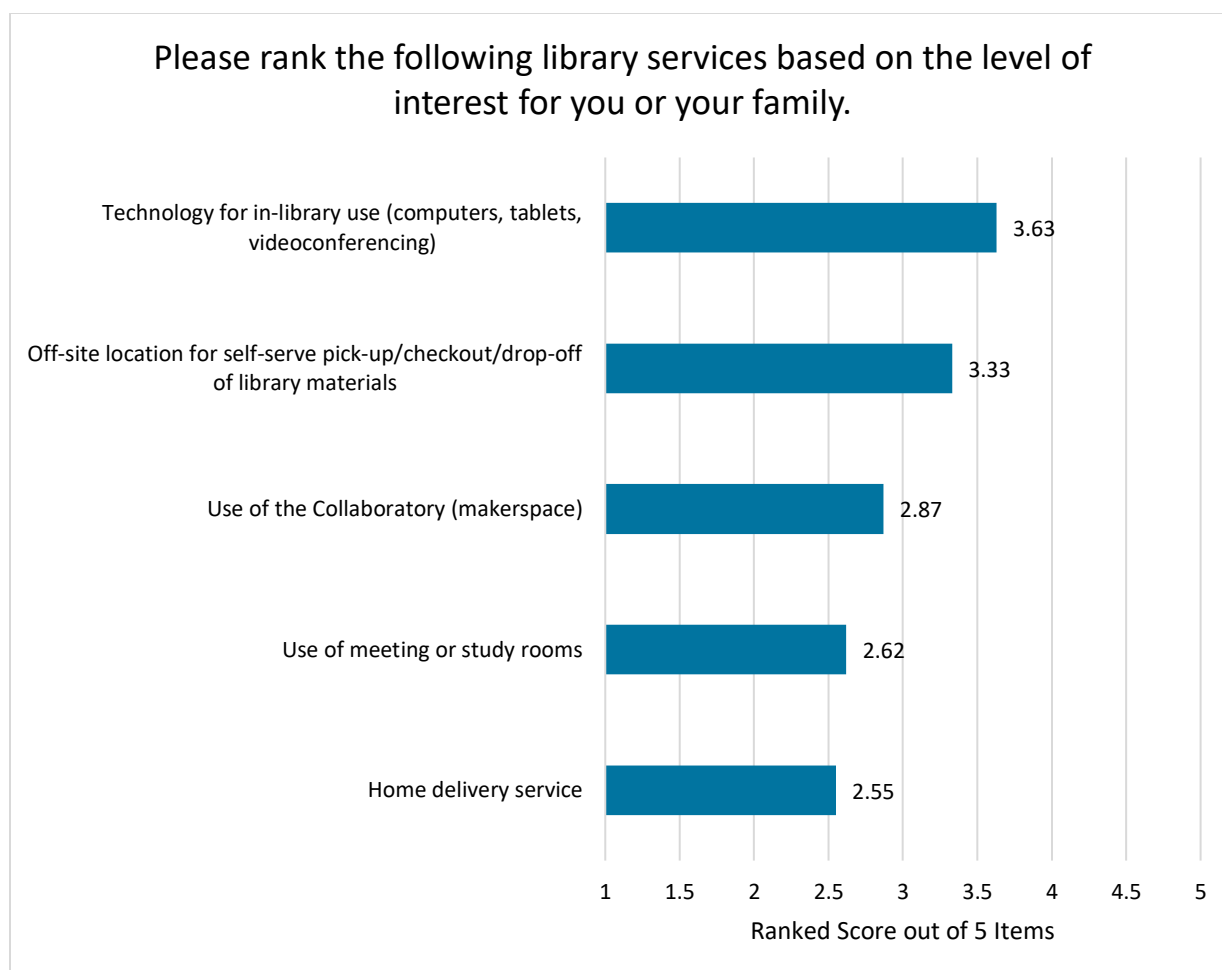
- Book clubs for discussion of controversial subjects; storytimes in other languages; AARP talks/programs; hands-on programs for seniors on wills/trusts, Medicare, etc.; movies; educational events on topics like electric cars; tai chi and yoga online; music performances; book clubs for seniors; more intergenerational book clubs; film festival; hands-on events, i.e., cake decorating; various discussion groups; concerts

##### Program specifics:

- Record programs for future viewing; programs in Spanish; Zoom programs on school holidays; programs for special needs adults; an additional Yoga Chair program each week; Zoom option whenever possible; more children's programs; programs for groups, i.e., neighbors; programs with Covenant Living seniors; fun programs for young children; multigenerational programs; more availability in computer courses; computer course teachers who understand some seniors are more advanced than others; more programs for teens and young adults; programs that can be completed in daylight hours

##### Select Comments:

- "I love the author talks via Zoom! What incredible opportunities."
- "I do not like all the pushing of transgenderism in our local library. I don't think the library is the place to do this."
- "...the library needs to view the daily interactions of its own staff as a Program. The staff are good, smart people. But as it stands, they are literally boxed in to their workstations. Have them get out, roam, approach patrons (especially children). Breed a feeling that the library is a locus of community."
- "My grandchildren enjoy the special movie & programs on the holiday weekends when visiting."
- "I appreciate and attend most of the classical music events at the library."



#### FINDINGS:

- Respondents ranked their highest interest as technology for in-house use (3.63) followed by off-site location for self-service pick-up/checkout/drop-off of library materials (3.33).
- Lowest overall interest was home delivery service (2.55).
- Respondents who live with or care for children ranked highest interest in use of the Collaboratory (3.32) with technology for in-library use (computers, tablets, videoconferencing) second (3.28), and lowest interest in home delivery service (2.28).
- Respondents who work remotely/hybrid ranked use of meeting or study rooms as their second highest interest (3.16) followed by use of the Collaboratory (3.09).
- Respondents who are retired ranked technology for in-library use highest at 3.93 followed by off-site location for self-service tasks at 3.55. This group ranked home delivery service as their third highest interest at 2.84 and use of meeting or study rooms lowest at 2.07.
- Respondents who work full or part-time ranked items in the same order as the overall group (shown in the chart above), but had higher scores for use of the Collaboratory (3.01) and use of meeting or study rooms (2.98).

**What programs, services, or collections could the library add that would be valuable to you and your family? (652 answered this question; 1,253 skipped it.)**

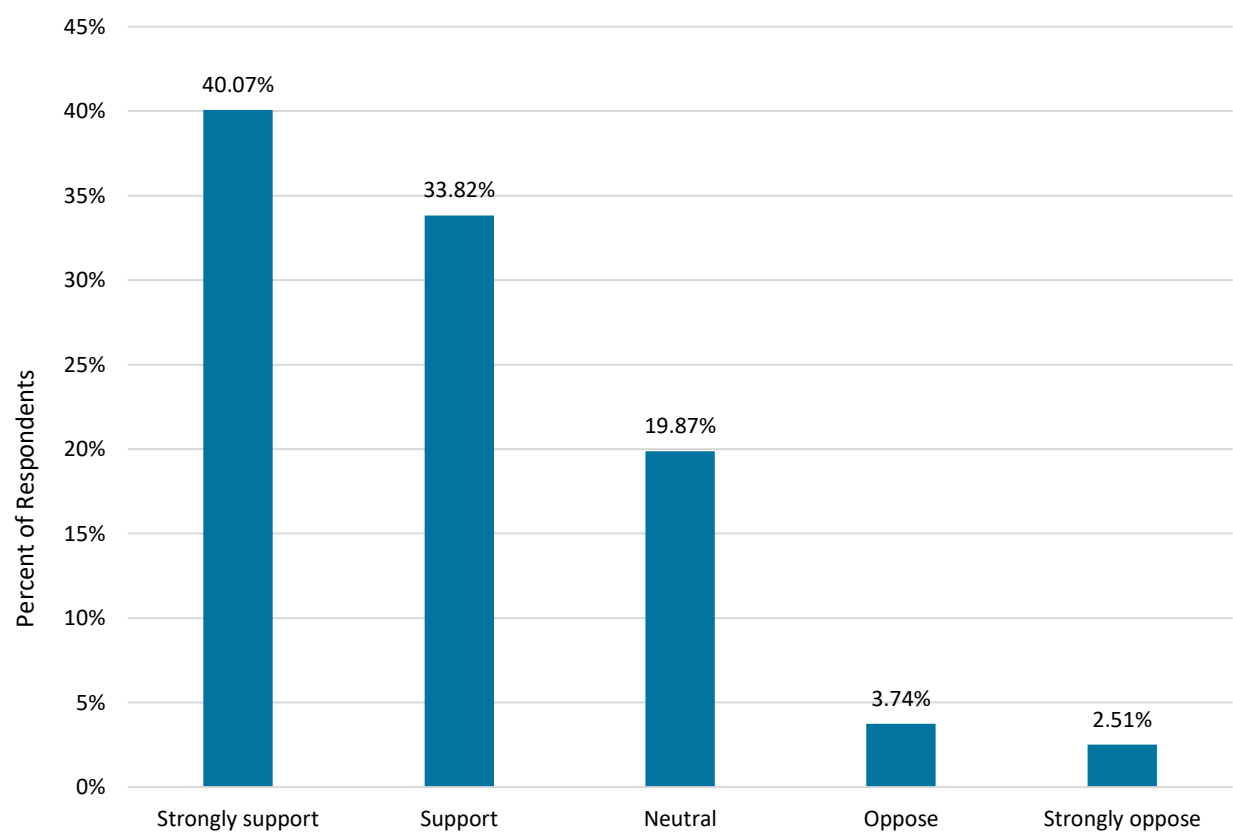
- With regards to programs, respondents requested greater **online access**. Content-wise, **educational programs, arts and culture programs**, and expanded **programs for children** were suggested. Select comments included:
  - “more on line [sic], downloadable programming”
  - “more dual in-person and zoom events”
  - “Finance and banking [programs]”
  - “Environmental programs”
  - “talks from prominent authors and journalists”
  - “Bring back the Northbrook Writes offerings. Maybe host regular write-ins for local writers. More in-person author readings.”
  - “More movies in the auditorium”
  - “Kids classes (art, music, storytime)”
  - “Updated preschool programming”
- With regards to services, respondents expressed a desire for **increased technology support, enhanced delivery services**, and **extended hours**. Some comments included:
  - “more technology assistance times throughout the week”
  - “Technology (phone/computer/software) assistance”
  - “Home pick up delivery. I’m disabled.”
  - “Home delivery service would be sweet.”
  - “book mobile for residents in Northeast corner of Northbrook”
  - “delivery to elementary schools for teachers”
  - “open earlier on Sundays”
  - “Extend weekend hours!”
- When it came to collections, respondents expressed a desire for **more depth and breadth of books and audiovisual materials, increased access to digital materials**, and **adding “nontraditional” items**. Select comments included:
  - “books on stoic philosophy (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, etc[.])”
  - “More Korean books”
  - “Spanish language resources, particularly for early education”
  - “New York Times – [sic] would like to be able to read this online at home”
  - “more recent DVDs in the world language area”
  - “more video games!”
  - “More ebooks and downloadable audiobooks”
  - “greater access to more kindle ebooks”
  - “Foreign language collections kits”
  - “bike tool rental”

**What is one area you would like to see changed in the library's interior or exterior spaces? (591 answered this question; 1,314 skipped it.)**

- Respondents most commonly cited concerns and suggestions related to the **parking lot and book returns**. Select remarks included:
  - “more parking”
  - “Angled parking spots would be helpful given all of the perpendicularity of the parking lot. The loss of space would be worth the value for safety, efficiency, and ease of use.”
  - “Making book pick[-]ups and drop-offs more efficient with a better traffic flow. Instead of going around the building to drop/pick up the books, it would be nice to have a circular driveway on Cedar”
  - “The outdoor drop off bins. Is there another option that could be created so that we do not have to drive into the parking lot and go all the way around the building?”
  - “Solve the wrong way traffic in the parking lot-the disregard of the proper direction for cars”
- Respondents also expressed interest in **outdoor spaces for reading and programming**. A few comments included:
  - “An outdoor area to read in the summer would be nice”
  - “Outdoor study space and reading space and program space. Maybe the outdoor space under the awning could have tables.”
  - “outdoor sitting areas to read. [N]ot just benches.”
  - “An outdoor reading/community area would be great”
- Several respondents expressed a desire for **more cozy spaces and seating options**, while others commented on the **meeting and study rooms and scent in the upper levels**. Respondents commented:
  - “More comfortable places to read”
  - “definitely new chairs to sit at tables, computers, and rooms”
  - “Soft seating [and] more living room type spaces”
  - “More comfortable and inviting snack area”
  - “The meeting rooms are very popular...They are often full during the summer with tutors/students though.”
  - “All the study rooms need to be sound proofed [sic]. I have been in the small rooms and can hear everything in the rooms next to me.”
  - “Something in the air quality on the second floor is strange...musty.”
- Several respondents suggested updates to the **children's area**. Respondents remarked:
  - “The children's area is subpar compared to neighboring suburbs and many Chicago Public Libraries.”
  - The children's area is very bland. It would benefit from a creative redesign to give them cozy spaces to read.”
  - “I'd like to have a space that children can play in. I know a library isn't a playground, but if there could be a playground next door that would be great and if not, a small space indoors that's dedicated to children with interesting games”
  - “The children's space for story time, train track, coloring table area”
  - “the childrens' [sic] corner needs some updating”



The library holds sustainability as a core value and has received a Silver Rating from the Village’s Green Business Checklist program. The library considers sustainable options when planning and undergoing construction projects - decisions are made based



<b>FINDINGS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>73.89% of respondents indicated they strongly support or support the library allocating funds for capital improvement projects to make the library building more sustainable.</b></li><li>• 19.87% of respondents indicated they were neutral.</li><li>• 6.25% indicated they oppose or strongly oppose allocating funds for sustainable building improvements.</li></ul>
------------------	--

**The library has been working to embed our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in our collections, services, programs, and spaces, to make sure that we are able to fully serve all members of our community. Please share your thoughts on how the library might improve or expand its offerings to fully serve the community. (Answered by 516 answered this question; 1,389 skipped it.)**

- Some respondents expressed **support of the library's current EDI efforts**, while others expressed **confusion** and **opposition**. Sample selection of comments included:
  - "Our family is part of a marginalized community that is often discriminated against, and we are so grateful that our library stands for inclusion and respect. We can't thank you enough."
  - "I applaud your efforts to welcome all."
  - "I think the library does a great job regarding EDI. I would want to be sure all of the non English [sic] speakers feel a reason to use the library"
  - "I don't really understand why equity, diversity, and inclusion are constantly discussed. Isn't everyone already welcome at the library?"
  - "Nobody is barred from the library. Books are universal. Spending time and tax money on this is silly."
  - "DEI, gender, transgender, and racial ideologies are divisive and antithetical to living in a pluralistic, democratic society. I am strongly opposed to seeing our tax dollars used to support this nonsense."
  - "discontinue all equity, diversity, and inclusion programs"
- Several respondents commented on **programs**. Select comments included:
  - "Offer some programming or movies with specific DEI themes and advertise it as such"
  - "Hold more event close to what you did for Japanese culture [sic]"
  - "Information programs of wide interest, such as health [topics and] seasonal things that have opportunities for Q & A"
  - "Provide more programs for special needs"
  - "Offer captioning when you show movies"
  - "Please add more Collaboratory classes at night and for kids 10+. It seems that the library caters mostly to the senior citizens and it would be nice to see a better balance."
  - "Consider that not all parents of young children are home during the work week and not all seniors are retired! Programming lags our current culture in this way. Also, given the number of immigrant/first generation Korean, Japanese, Polish, and Russian families in our community, their cultures seem underrepresented, both in materials and programming"
- Several respondents commented on **ensuring a variety of viewpoints and materials were offered in the library's collection**. Select comments included:
  - "Allow all types of material. Not just what's trending now for the current society/community."
  - "Don't ban ANYTHING."
  - Continue to purchase books and materials that focus on the ACTUAL history of diverse groups of people, including BIPOC and LGBTQ+; the books about these groups of people should be by authors who are within these groups of people"

- “Including all ideas means including conservative ones as well. If there are books that suggest liberal ideas, then perhaps also include books that include conservative ideas alongside. Certain conservative ideas are not necessarily always hateful but are born out of a worldview that equally warrant [sic] intellectual pursuit”
- “Increase Spanish language resources, particularly for early education”
- “Include more films, books on diversity, inclusion”
- “more large print books”

- Some respondents expressed a desire for **more inclusive physical spaces and diverse representation**. Respondents made the following select comments:
  - “Be more aware of seniors’ mobility issues”
  - “More tech services for the elderly”
  - “Please make sure all spaces are accessible and bathrooms [are] on each floor. Adjustable height tables and desks would be ideal. I have a child in a wheelchair who loves the library and hope to use it regularly for years to come!”
  - “My mum is hard of hearing and sight, at the back of events she cannot see or follow along easily... could chairs be reserved at the front of events for those with hearing/seeing difficulties as well as those in wheelchairs?”
  - “Could use several more handicap parking spaces. Especially on the east side [sic] of the library. Currently there’s only two spaces on the south end [sic].”
  - “More diverse staff, specifically, librarians and on the board”
  - “more diverse staff members and guest speakers make a visual and tangible impact on the library’s values and commitments”
  - “hire more older people”

**Please share any ways the library might better represent your culture, interests, or viewpoints. (Answered by 361; Skipped by 1,544)**

**Cultures**

- Chinese cultural programs, Chinese New Year activities;
- Korean books including translations of popular books;
- Spanish language books, subtitled movies, early education materials
- Mandarin language books and subtitled movies;
- Jewish related learning opportunities, more content and events for Jewish families;
- Russian storytime;
- Hebrew language books and periodicals;
- More Israeli movies;
- Hispanic heritage month activities;
- Diwali display;
- Holi festival event for kids;
- More on Filipino culture and books in Tagalog;
- Books in Ukrainian and books about Ukraine in English for children and adults, add a display to bring awareness to the war in Ukraine;
- Asian Indian history and programs - not just Hindu but also other religious traditions (Catholic, Sikh, Muslim, Jain, Baha'i), movie nights, book discussions, second generation Asian American identity in books, music, film, etc;
- More Hindi or Indian history books, more Hindi language materials;
- Different meditation classes from various cultures- tai chi, chi gong, yoga nidra, etc.;
- More books about the Baha'i faith;
- Christian holiday displays;
- More programming for those of Muslim faith/background;
- Cooking programs from around the world;
- More international newspapers and magazines;
- Have a cultural fair;
- **Select comments:**
  - "Offer a larger variety of languages in the world language book section."
  - "Highlight more than the Korean and Spanish focus that we currently have."
  - "I'm not sure about NPL's collections, but I find that public libraries don't often have many Christian focused children's books."
  - "My culture prevents me from using the library on Saturday. Longer Sunday hours would help alleviate that."
  - "Include all cultures, holidays We can all learn about other traditions without eliminating holiday decorations original to American celebrations."
  - "More Jewish/Israel content."
  - "I would love to share books and authors from my country and culture if given a chance."

**Interests**

- Local history and genealogy – more local history materials/programs; appreciated access to Ancestry from home and would like to have that again; more genealogy programs;
- Music – Beatles CD sets, jazz guitar/piano, music theory, instruction video or live instructional sessions, sing-alongs for seniors, have a music librarian on staff, keep offering monthly music classes;

- Movies/film – Academy nominated movie viewing in the auditorium with discussions, more new films in the Lucky Day area on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, better “filing” system for films, more weekend movie showings;
- Technology – more help using photo digitizing tools;
- Discussion groups – online, in person, lectures for those ages 55+, facilitated and inclusive discussions;
- Author visits;
- Book clubs – virtual, with discussion for adults and shut-ins;
- Presentations – historical, economic (i.e., IL taxes);
- Culinary experiences;
- Nature and local ecology – promote native plants through education;
- Dance programs;
- Nutrition/healthy living/longevity;
- Climate change and green practices;
- Travel;
- Social/emotional learning – classes about sharing feelings;
- Animals/pets – programs for pet owners;
- Events/outreach/education for the April 2024 solar eclipse;
- Mental health support;
- **Select comments:**
  - “I like the Library of Things and wonder if it could be a model for neighborhood sharing of things. Could you do community outreach to help neighbors develop such programs?”

#### Viewpoints

- Panels or presentations on censorship concerns, particularly books with LGBTQ content and how library funding could be affected by efforts to ban books;
- Appreciate books for young adults on LGBTQ issues;
- More LGBTQ family programming;
- Conservative values – more books by conservative authors;
- Books with a humanistic viewpoint;
- Offer neutral forums for dialogue;
- **Select comments:**
  - “Be neutral”;
  - “How to stand up for Israel.”
  - “Leave politics to politicians...”
  - “I would love to see the older editions of books remain at the library. I have heard that characters are being changed in many classic books in the name of inclusion. I believe it’s important to learn the historicity and evolution of ideas.”
  - “Offer programs that provide education about our democratic processes and the importance of having a government that works for the good of all people and the grave danger that extremism, demagoguery, internet conspiracy theories, lies and false narratives pose to our democracy.”
  - “Reduce the woke propaganda...its [sic] so tiresome and stale.”

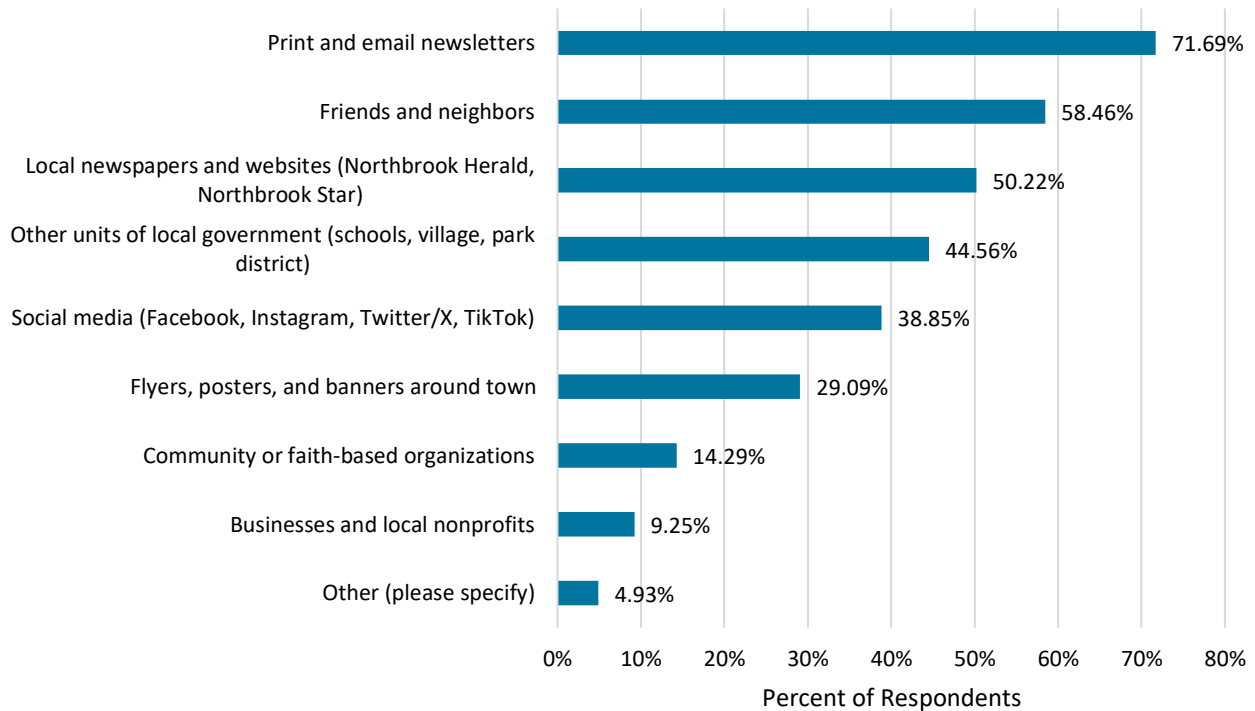
**Other**

- Collaboratory – “using the 3D printer and other tools feels intimidating and complicated”, would like programs to learn how to use;
- Engaging young professionals – associate board to gather their perspectives and keep library relevant to this age group;
- Classes/programs for ages 13-59, for teens and their parents;
- Involve high school kids in dialogue around cultures and viewpoints;
- Get the word out about programs to bolster attendance, advertise discussion groups in library communications;
- More to support the science of reading – phonics and decodable books, move away from “suggested letter grade reading” sign;
- More titles available in audio to accommodate more types of readers;
- Expand recycling programs including corks and other hard to recycle materials;
- Add games to the Library of Things;
- Let patrons vote on type of programs they are interested in;
- Ability for patrons to start social/discussion groups that are open to the public at the library and promoted in library communications;
- Info on student exchange programs;
- Volunteer opportunities for youth;
- Expanded hours;
- Offer as many programs virtually as possible

**Additional select comments:**

- “The new tech you put in for self-check-out is awesome.”
- “I do not expect to have the library represent my culture or viewpoints.”
- “Also, there should be information how one can have demonstration in music, technical, finance realm, etc.”
- “The library should be the community hub for everything cultural and intellectual.”
- “There is too much focus on kids vs. adults.”
- “The library has for decades welcomed everyone, no need to make tee shirts and banners about it. We are a family of color it never crossed our mind that we wouldn't be welcomed in a library in America.”
- “The NB Library is a true beacon of knowledge, joy and progressiveness which is something to be proud of. Excellent in many, many ways; keep it up!!”
- “I think that some of the local libraries (such as Glenview) offer a variety of programming that is not available at Northbrook to my knowledge such as the recent improv workshop.”
- “Stop with the registration for all programs. We didn't use to have to register for movies and concerts.”
- “Please don't "represent my cultural, interests, and viewpoints". Just develop the book collection using the profession techniques librarians have always used. If I want to read something, it may or may not support my views, but I want books written from a variety of viewpoints in the collection. I might also want to read about a culture that is NOT my own.”

Where do you get news and information about the community?  
Check all that apply.



FINDINGS:

- **71.69% of respondents indicated they get news and information about the community from print and email newsletters.**
- 58.46% indicated they get news and information from friends and neighbors.
- 50.22% indicated they get news and information from local newspapers and websites.
- 56.88% of respondents who live with or care for children indicated they get news/information from other units of local government, and 51.05% of this group indicated they get news/information from social media.
- 57.89% of respondents who are retired indicated they get news/information from local newspapers and websites. Only 25.94% of this group indicated they get news/information from social media.
- 62.74% of respondents who work full or part-time indicated they get news/information from friends and neighbors, and 48.6% of this group indicated they get news/information from social media.

### Other places respondents get news and information about the community:

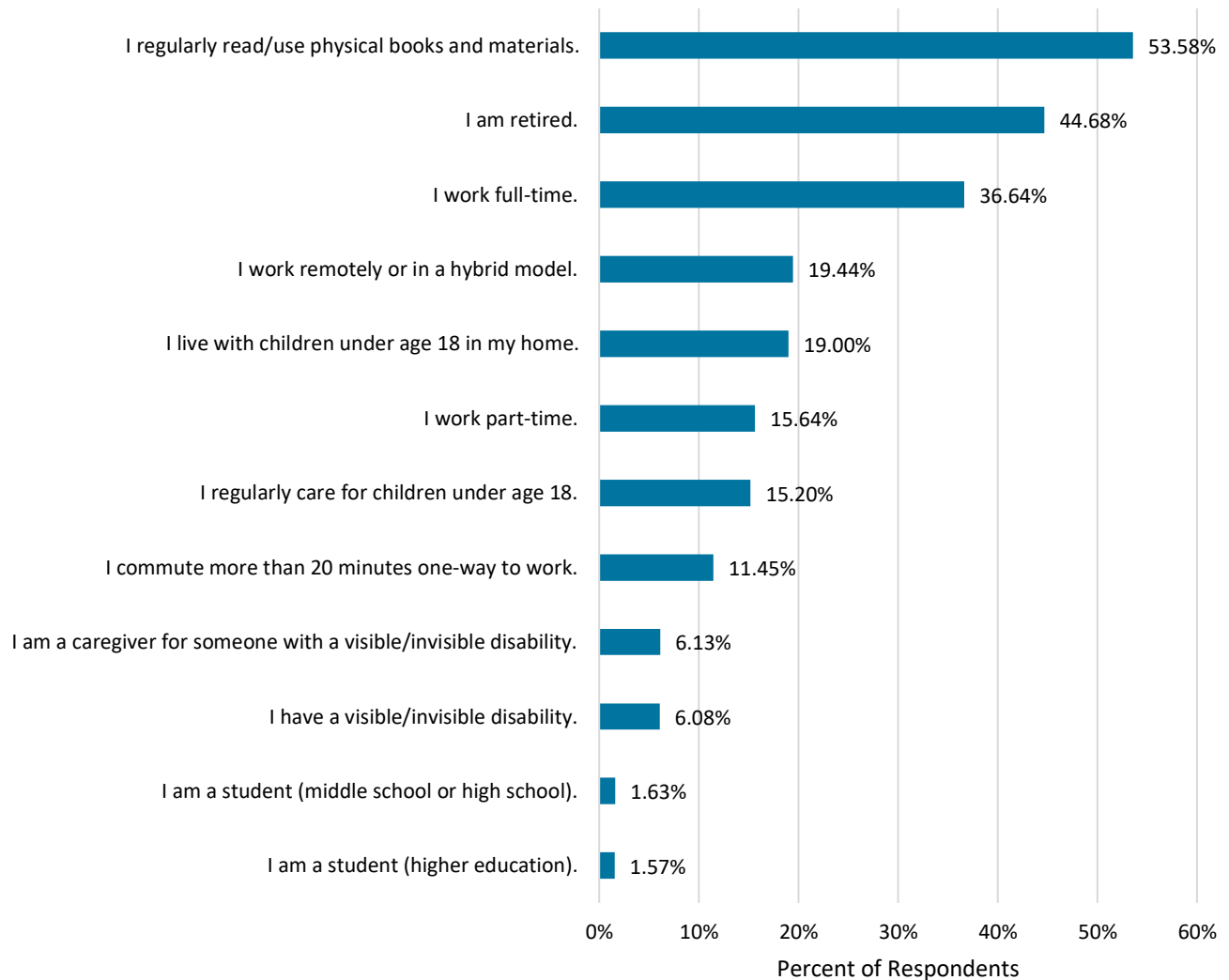
- Friends of the Library
- Northbrook Patch
- Lived experiences
- Northbrook newsletter, village emails and texts
- Chicago Tribune
- NBC5, WTTW, local news outlets
- Library emails, library newsletters
- Local area magazines
- Free local newspapers
- Nextdoor
- Ring
- Northbrook Chamber of Commerce
- Friends, family, colleagues – word of mouth
- Online news apps and radio: NPR, CNN, BBC, NYT, MSNBC
- Simplicity app
- Information boards by library entrance, posted information at the library
- YMCA

### Select Comments:

- “I don't get enough local community information.”
- “We are lacking in Northbrook journalism. Seriously.”
- “It has gotten extremely difficult to get local news. There isn't enough reporting. During the pandemic shutdown, the library stopped buying and receiving a wide variety of newspapers and magazines that did not have on line editions and these have now been lost to history.”



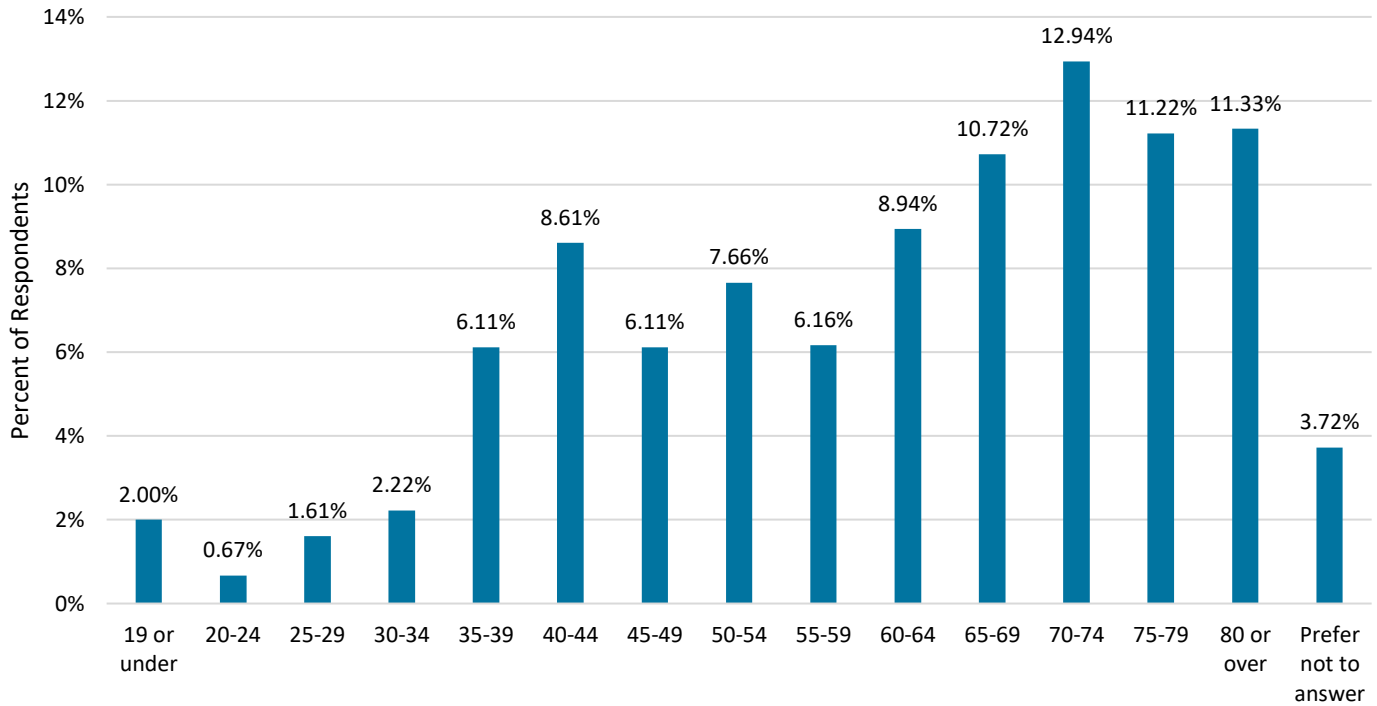
Please choose all statements below that describe you.



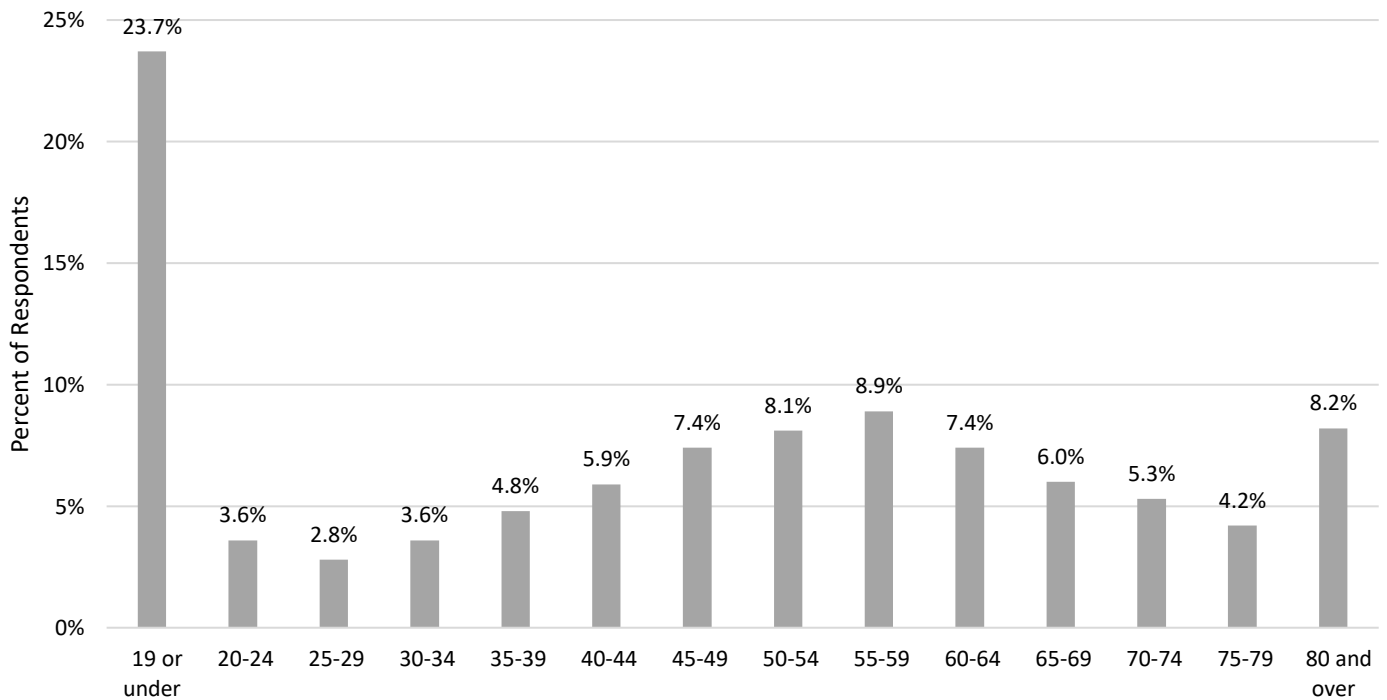
**FINDINGS:**

- The majority of respondents (53.58%) indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials.
- 52.28% of respondents indicated they work full- or part-time, and 44.68% indicated they are retired.
- A combined 23.3% of respondents indicated they live with children under age 18 and/or regularly care for children. (Some respondents chose both statements.)
- 12.21% of respondents indicated they live with a visible/invisible disability or are a caregiver for someone with a disability.
- Just 3.2% of respondents indicated they are a student in middle/high school or higher education.

### What is your age? (Optional)



### 2021 Northbrook Age Distribution

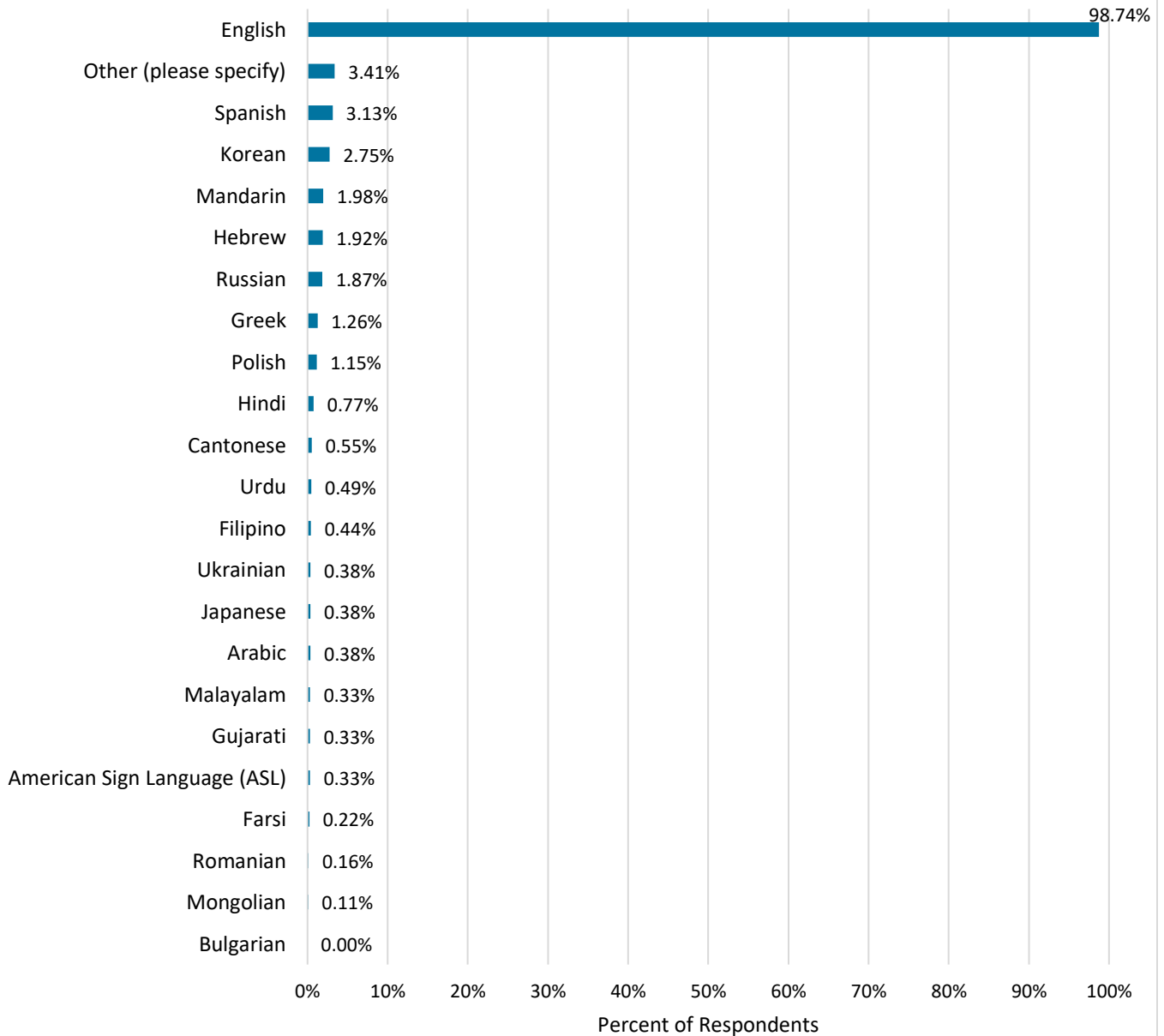


**FINDINGS:**

- 55.15% of survey respondents were age 60 or over, whereas 31.1% of residents are age 60 or over.
- Only 6.5% of respondents were under age 35, and 33.7% of residents are under age 35.
- 34.65% of respondents were ages 35 to 59, and 35.1% of residents are ages 35 to 59.

DRAFT

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



#### FINDINGS:

- The large majority of respondents (98.74%) indicated they speak English at home; however, 35 different languages were indicated by respondents in addition to English.
- 3.41% of respondents indicated they speak other languages not listed above including: French, German, Assyrian, Yiddish, Tamil, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese, Czech, Taiwanese, Finnish, Gaelic, Dutch, Marathi, Tagalog, Latvian, Punjabi

## OVERALL FINDINGS:

- **Nearly 95% of respondents have an NPL card, and a majority of respondents (71.2%)** indicated they used the library daily, weekly, or every few weeks during the past 6 months.
- 52.28% of respondents indicated they work full- or part-time. 44.68% indicated they are retired, and 55.15% of survey respondents were age 60 or over. A combined 23.3% of respondents indicated they live with children under age 18 and/or regularly care for children. Only 6.5% of respondents were under age 35. Respondents speak 35 languages in addition to English, although nearly 99% indicated they do speak English at home.
- **91.76% of respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.**
- **Respondents shared ways the library could improve their satisfaction, including but not limited to:** increased availability and selection of popular library collections, increased programming and more evening and weekends programs, more access to and support in the Collaboratory, updates to the facility including the children's area, and expanded hours.
- Respondents indicated **highest satisfaction** with getting the assistance they need and customer service (each rated at 3.75/4) followed closely by convenience of getting library materials (3.7).
- **Lowest satisfaction** was indicated for the variety of library programs offered (3.42/4) and spaces to socialize (3.34). Respondents who indicated they live with or care for children rated the variety of library programs lower at 3.31. All ratings were still at or above the satisfied rating for these categories.
- **Considering the future focus of library resources**, respondents ranked collections/materials for check-out or download as their highest interest (3.01/4). Overall, the lowest ranked interest was facility improvements/facility & technology updates (1.94).
- **In terms of collection types**, respondents ranked physical books highest (5.45/6) followed by downloadable books and materials/streaming collections (4.52). Video games ranked lowest (1.73).
- **When asked to rank library services**, respondents indicated highest interest in technology for in-library use (3.63/4) followed by off-site location for self-serve pick-up/checkout/drop-off of library materials (3.33). Home delivery service was rated as the lowest overall interest (2.55), however retired respondents ranked this choice as their third highest interest at 2.84. Respondents who live with or care for children ranked use of the Collaboratory as their highest interest (3.32).
- **Respondents shared suggestions for changes to the library's interior and exterior spaces, including but not limited to:** improvements to the parking lot and book returns, addition of outdoor seating and program spaces, expanded comfortable seating, and updates to the children's area.
- **Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73.89%) indicated they strongly support or support the library allocating funds for capital improvement projects to make the library building more sustainable.**
- **When asked to share thoughts about how the library might improve their equity, diversity and inclusion efforts**, respondents shared suggestions about programs, materials/collections, and physical spaces; however, the majority of respondents skipped this question (1,389 out of 1,905).
- **While some respondents shared a wide variety of cultures, interests, and viewpoints** that they would like to see better represented at the library, the majority of respondents also skipped this question (1,544 out of 1,905.)
- **71.69% of respondents indicated they get news and information about the community from print and email newsletters.**

# Focus Groups and Interviews Summary

## Why focus groups and interviews?

Most strategic planning efforts include community surveys to learn about the library resources, programs, and services that are most important to area residents. This information helps the library strategically move into the future knowing they will be connecting people with the resources they want and need. 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. The consultants at Fast Forward Libraries augmented survey results with focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The overall goal of the focus groups and interviews, conducted early in the planning process, is to ensure the library hears from diverse peoples who may not typically respond to a library survey and from targeted stakeholders within the community.

## Overall themes

Six essential **Community Themes** rose to the top via community focus groups and interviews:

- **Cultural Inclusivity:**
  - Celebrate and embrace the diversity within the community, fostering connections among multilingual families, diverse religions, and various age groups.
  - Encourage collaboration and communication between Northbrook organizations to break down cultural silos.
- **Community Connectivity:**
  - Transform downtown into a vibrant, destination-worthy area with appealing restaurants, outdoor spaces, and community gathering places.
  - Create walkable and bikeable areas to encourage social interaction and community engagement.
- **Support Vulnerable Populations:**
  - Increase affordable housing options, including senior condos and rental units with on-campus activities and dining options.
  - Support aging in place.
  - Promote mental health supports and destigmatization.
- **Civil Civic Engagement:**
  - Encourage civil community conversations on challenging topics to foster a sense of togetherness and hope for the future through community events.
  - Increase civic engagement by improving transparency in elections and encouraging diverse participation in municipal and school affairs.
  - Advocate for diverse and representative leadership within the community.
- **Communication:**
  - Provide a centralized, well-publicized clearinghouse for community information and volunteer opportunities.
  - Ensure that community communication methods include offerings in multiple languages.
- **Community Development:**
  - Offer more activities and events downtown to make Northbrook a vibrant destination.

- Attract destination restaurants and retail establishments, implement greenspace and streetscape improvements, and establish gathering areas with music to enhance the overall downtown experience.
- Advocate for more reliable and affordable public transportation to further facilitate community development.
- Create walkable and bikeable areas to encourage social interaction and community engagement.
- Embrace green policies to promote community health.

Three essential **Library Themes** rose to the top via community focus groups and interviews:

- **Foster Inclusivity:**
  - Emphasize the library as a core place for multicultural celebrations, offering programs and events in various languages.
  - Offer discussions on challenging topics like racism or mental health to foster empathy and build community connections.
  - Strengthen the library's role as an active and collaborative community partner that supports diverse community groups.
  - Encourage staff engagement with patrons of diverse backgrounds to enhance inclusivity.
- **Optimize Physical Space and Location to Make the Library a True Community Hub:**
  - Add comfortable seating for all ages and abilities, more study rooms, better use of outdoor spaces, a café, and vibrant colors to create an inviting atmosphere.
  - Explore expansion of the library's physical footprint and/or consider introducing satellite locations to better serve the community.
  - Consider locating the library within a new municipal campus.
- **Maintain Core Services While Exploring New Ones:**
  - Maintain a well-stocked library with books, tech resources, and meeting spaces that cater to diverse interests and needs.
  - Embrace technology trends to enhance the library's relevance.
  - Increase e-book holdings to reduce wait times.
  - Provide more virtual programs.
  - Offer e-resources in multiple languages to enhance digital access.
  - Introduce educational programs such as ACT and SAT prep classes, spelling bees, battle of the books, and vocabulary events.

## Methodology and Results

### Mapping Northbrook

Community mapping is a process that encourages people to brainstorm and list the many organizations and stakeholders that make up their diverse communities. Library staff mapped their communities to inform selection of focus group and one-on-one interview participants. The expertise of local library staff provided essential insight in raising up diverse voices.

Via a small planning work group made up of 4 library staff members with deep ties to the community, a long list of possible interviewees and focus group participants was brainstormed. Those lists were refined to include participants for the 6 focus groups and 11 one-on-one interviews detailed below. This mapping exercise gave Fast Forward Libraries consultants a library perspective and sufficient

comprehension of area assets and community needs, revealing which marginalized groups and/or non-library users may be absent from library discussions. From that local-level base of knowledge, library leadership prioritized community participants, and set focus groups and interview priorities.

The opinions captured through these engagement methods—focus groups, interviews, and surveys—will enhance current library services and allow the library to further explore new innovative and inclusive services in the communities across the Northbrook Library service area.

## Focus groups

Virtual and in-person focus groups were scheduled for 60 minutes and lasted between 50 and 90 minutes each. They were roughly structured according to the Harwood Institute's Aspirations Exercise. 5 in-person focus groups took place November 8 - 9, 2023. Flip charts and markers were used to record the conversations. The 1 virtual focus group relied on Google JamBoard to record the conversation.

What are your **ASPIRATIONS** for your community?



Google JamBoard brainstorm from a virtual focus group

Cindy Fesemyer of Fast Forward Libraries facilitated five focus groups as part of the strategic planning community engagement effort and Teen Librarian Stephanie Bremner facilitated one. 34 people took part in the 6 focus groups. The groups included people representing:

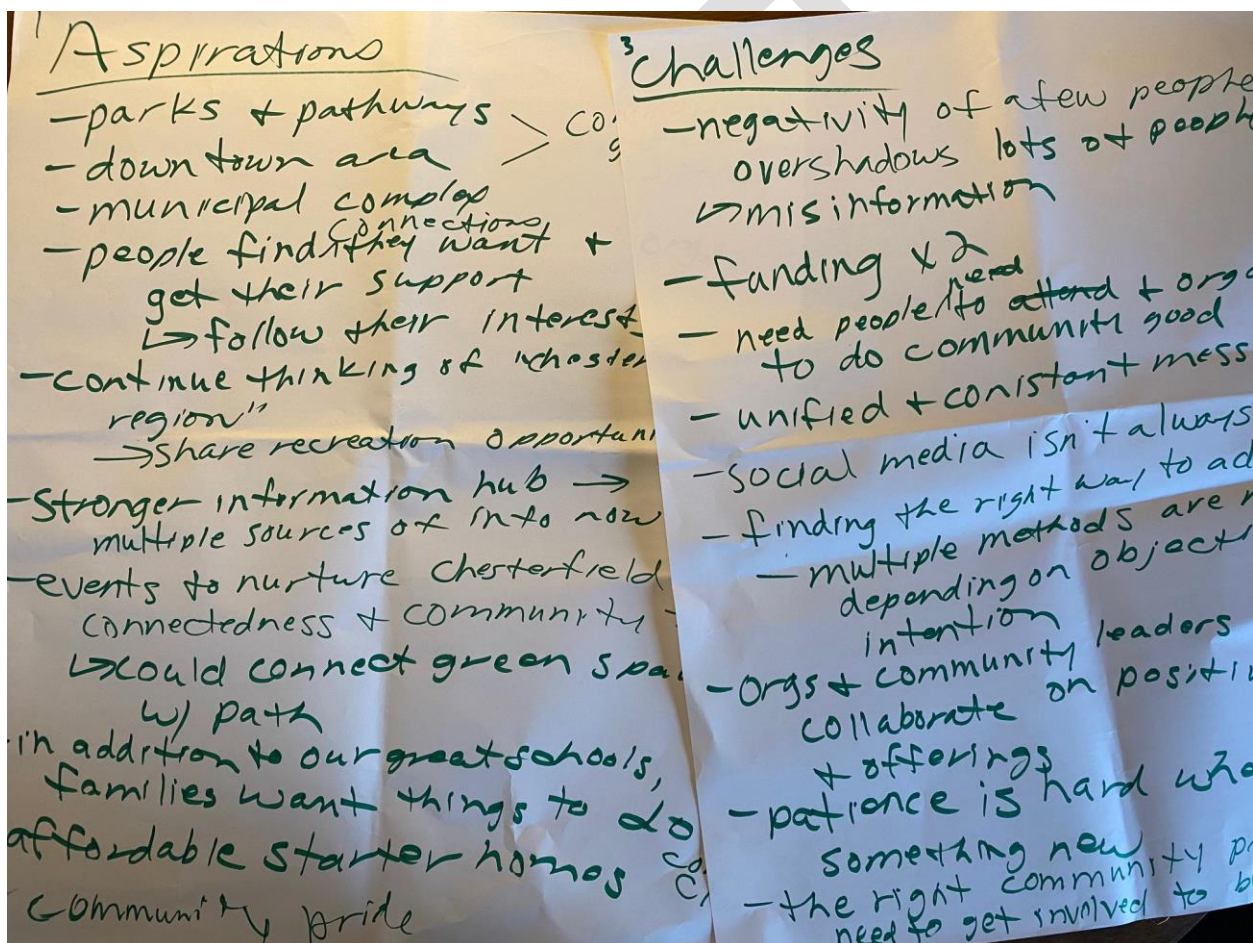
- Korean Bookclub and the Korean Education Center
- Crestwood Retirement Home
- Northbrook Clergy Association



- Chamber of Commerce
- Racial Awareness in the Northshore (RAIN)
- Teens

The focus groups brought people together to share their opinions on their community via a facilitated meeting. 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?



Flip chart brainstorm from an in-person focus group

## ***Summary of focus group aspirations, challenges, and opportunities for change***

### **Top COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS from Community Focus Group Discussions**

These themes collectively reflect a desire for a more inclusive, vibrant, and interconnected community that addresses the needs and aspirations of various demographic, racial, and cultural groups.

- **Cultural Diversity and Inclusion:** Foster acceptance of differences, including cultures, religions, and lifestyles. Organize multicultural events and celebrations throughout the year to promote understanding and respect for diverse cultures. Leadership should remain diverse and representative.
- **Support Vulnerable Populations:** Increase affordable housing options for all, including senior condos and rental units with activities and dining options on campus. Support aging in place. Promote mental health support and destigmatization. Consider the library as a potential location for a social service center.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage civil community conversations on tough topics. Foster a sense of togetherness and hope for the future through community events.
- **Communication:** Provide a single, well-publicized clearinghouse for community information and volunteer opportunities. Ensure that methods of community communication include offerings in multiple languages.
- **Community Development:** Offer more activities and events downtown to make Northbrook a vibrant destination. Attract more destination restaurants and retail establishments. Implement streetscape improvements and establish gathering areas with music to enhance the overall downtown experience. Advocate for more reliable and affordable public transportation.

### **Top COMMUNITY CHALLENGES from Community Focus Group Discussions:**

The challenges underscore the importance of cultural humility, acknowledging social and racial issues, and prioritizing effective communication and implementation of plans.

- **Social Issues:** Challenges with social and racial issues, including the disintegration of civil society, fear-related incidents, and book banning concerns. Difficulty navigating social interactions with diverse populations. Concerns about the impact of COVID-19 leading to desocialization.
- **Community Engagement:** Burnout and frustration among local change-makers.
- **Language Barriers:** Language barriers affect access to local amenities. Local communications and business signage are not offered in different languages.
- **Housing Affordability:** Housing is expensive to own and rent. There is a shortage of first-home stock. Gentrification concerns, including the presence of large mansions next to smaller homes. Local workers cannot afford to live in the community.
- **Community Planning:** Lack of a comprehensive planning process to secure grants and build a destination Northbrook. Concerns about downtown living, including insufficient parking, unattractive strip malls, and the need for private property improvements. Limited availability of vacant building lots, leading to the necessity of demolishing existing structures for new development. Need for diversified transportation options beyond Uber and taxis.

### **Top THINGS THAT NEED TO CHANGE from Community Focus Group Discussions:**

- **Cultural Inclusivity and Awareness:** Promote cultural inclusivity by establishing cultural liaisons, sharing information in multiple languages, and advertising local events and information in

diverse outlets. Encourage encounters between people of different backgrounds, breaking down silos of race, economics, and religion.

- **Transparent information sources:** Encourage better public awareness of where to find reliable information about Northbrook. Address a lack of factual information in village newsletters, promoting transparency in political issues, and providing more news-oriented content.
- **Community-building:** Shift the community mindset towards change as a constant process, not an abrupt switch. Foster empathy to better understand each other. Acknowledge differences, embrace change, and confront bias.
- **Business and Retail Strategy:** Prevent displacement of existing small businesses. Address vacant retail spaces with incentive packages for growth. Improve relationships between property owners and tenants. Collaborate with neighboring towns to provide comprehensive regional services.

### **Top LIBRARY ASPIRATIONS from Community Focus Group Discussions:**

Though focus group discussions centered around community living, many participants shared their dreams for the library.

- **Library Spaces and Amenities:** Enhance the library's physical space by introducing more comfortable seating for people of all ages and abilities, adding more study rooms, add vibrant colors to brighten things up.
- **Educational Support:** Introduce ACT and SAT prep classes, spelling bees, battle of the books, and vocabulary events. Expand prize offerings for summer and winter reading programs.
- **Technology and Digital Access:** Increase e-book offerings to reduce wait times. Lend gaming consoles. Provide more virtual programs. Offer e-resources in multiple languages.
- **Multicultural Community Events:** Emphasize the library as a core place for multicultural celebrations, offering programs and events in various languages. Forge partnerships with cultural organizations to help promote multicultural programs.

### **Interviews**

Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes and lasted 20-45 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 *Dialogue on Public Libraries, and report, Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, (2014) and resulting *Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library* (2017).

Participants joined interviews via telephone or a consultant-provided Zoom link. Cindy Fesemyer conducted 11 interviews as part of the strategic planning community engagement effort. The individuals interviewed included stakeholders throughout Northbrook, from elected officials to community organizers.

### **Participants were asked about themselves, their community, and their library:**

- 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?

Themes and key take-aways arising from the interviews are organized into Community Aspirations and Library Aspirations categories—what interviewees most want for their communities and what they most want for their library.

### ***Interview Summary***

The interviews highlight various aspirations and opportunities for the wider Northbrook community and for the library specifically. Here is a summary of the key points:

#### **Top COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS and Opportunities from Interviews**

These themes reflect a community aspiration for a safe, inclusive, and vibrant environment, emphasizing downtown revitalization, cultural inclusivity, sustainable development, and active civic engagement.

- **Community Wellbeing:** Maintain a safe and comfortable environment for raising kids with ample opportunities. Prioritize the emotional and physical wellbeing of citizens, including empathy for mental health issues. Enhance police department training in emotional care. Embrace green policies for community health.
- **Cultural Inclusivity:** Celebrate our diverse and inclusive community, fostering connections between multilingual families, diverse religions, and different age groups. Encourage collaboration and communication between Northbrook organizations to break down existing cultural silos.
- **Gathering Places:** Transform downtown into a vibrant, destination-worthy area with cool restaurants, outdoor spaces, and community gathering places. Create walkable and bikeable areas to encourage social interaction.
- **Civic and School Engagement:** Increase civic engagement by improving transparency in elections and encouraging diverse participation in municipal and school affairs. Open schools to the public to foster a sense of community through education.

#### **Top LIBRARY ASPIRATIONS and Opportunities from Interviews**

These aspirations underscore the importance of the library as a community hub, emphasizing inclusivity, engagement, and adaptability to meet the evolving needs of Northbrook residents.

- **Community Inclusivity:** Strengthen the library's role as an active and collaborative community partner, supporting diverse community groups. Focus on inclusivity without engaging in political polarization, providing a space for everyone regardless of their opinions. Increase opportunities for staff engagement with patrons of all cultures to provide a more welcoming atmosphere for all. Collaborate with community organizations in offering inclusive services.

- **Build Community Through Programs:** Offer community discussions on difficult topics like racism or mental health to foster community building and empathy. Encourage long-term, ongoing conversations to strengthen community bonds.
- **Library Growth:** Explore expanding the library's physical footprint and/or introducing satellite locations. Consider locating the library within a new municipal campus.
- **Enhance Library Atmosphere:** Explore the addition of a café. Continuously improve upon the architectural warmth of the library.
- **Maintain Core Services While Exploring New Ones:** Maintain a well-stocked library with books, tech resources, and meeting spaces that cater to diverse interests and needs. Address accessibility concerns. Make better use of outdoor spaces. Embrace technology trends.

## **Limitations and strengths of community assessment activities**

### **Limitations**

Focus groups always have talkers and listeners. Despite the best efforts of the facilitator, some of the talkers took over portions of the discussions. To remedy that, the facilitator watched body language and called on those who weren't finding opportunity to interrupt the conversation or called on those who hadn't spoken in a while.

Northbrook's population was well represented in community focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The exception to this was the lack of voices from Black and Hispanic communities. Special thanks to our English/Korean translator.

### **Strengths**

The community mapping exercise that began the community engagement portion of this project had three library staff members and one trustee participate, representing deep community connections across the diversity of the area. It is clear that the library is well connected and trusted. Focus group participants represented diverse people who were most likely not represented in community survey results, from teens to seniors. Kudos to the Northbrook mapping team for nurturing the community relationships that resulted in such diverse opinion gathering!

To the one, each interviewee and member of a focus group was open and honest about their opinions and ideas.

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.

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.

# Appendix A

## Community Data

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
Median Age	38.4	38.5	47	49
Median Household Income (in \$)	69,021	72,563	113,089	143,506
Homeownership	64.6%	66.5%	91%	87.5%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied, in \$)	244,900	212,600	553,400	571,400
Below Poverty Level	12.6%	11.8%	4.0%*	3.5%

Sources:

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [DP04](#), [S0101](#), [S1101](#), [S1701](#), [S1901](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [DP04](#), [S0101](#), [S1101](#), [S1901](#)

\*ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S1701](#)

## Diversity

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Total Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
White alone	68.2%	67.8%	84.8%	78.8%
Black or African American alone	12.6%	14.1%	0.7%	1.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	5.7%	5.7%	11.8%	15.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	5.6%	6.2%	0.5%	0.6%
Two or More Races	7.0%	5.8%	0.8%	2.2%

Sources:

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Total Population	329,725,481	12,821,813	32,922	35,108
Hispanic Population	18.4%	17.5%	2.0%	3.4%

Sources:

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

## School Age Diversity

IL School Report Card Data	Illinois 2023	Northbrook SD 28 2023	Northbrook ESD 27 2023	Northbrook/Glenview SD 30 2023	West Northfield SD 31 2023	Glenbrook HSD 225
Enrollment	1.9 million	1,830	1,305	1,247	945	5,033
Hispanic	27.5%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	9.9%	11.5%
Black	16.5%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	2.1%	1.3%
Asian	5.5%	14.0%	25%	36.3%	37.9%	21.2%
Two or More Races	4.2%	4.8%	4.3%	4.3%	10.6%	4.7%
White	45.9%	75.5%	64.9%	53.7%	39.4%	61.3%
English Language Learners	14.6%	6.2%	5.0%	8.1%	23.1%	5.8%
Low Income Students	49.0%	3.6%	- (redacted)	3%	17.6%	14.4%

Illinois State Board of Education School Report Card Data for Northbrook SD 28 [2023](#), Northbrook SD 27 [2023](#), Northbrook/Glenview SD 30 [2023](#), West Northfield SD 31 [2023](#), Glenbrook HSD 225 [2023](#)



## Employment & Poverty

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2012	Northbrook Village 2021
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	166,672,597	6,686,514	15,955	17,366
Employed	59.6%	61.0%	57.2%	58.7%
Unemployed	3.5%	4.0%	3.6%	1.6%
Armed Forces	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	36.4%	34.7%	39.2%	39.7%
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2012	Northbrook Village 2021
All People	12.6%	11.8%	4.0%	3.5%
Under 18 years	17.0%	15.8%	4.0%	2.6%
18 to 64 years	11.8%	11.1%	3.6%	3.2%
65+ Years	9.6%	9.0%	5.2%	5.2%

Sources:

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [DP03](#), [S1701](#)

ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [DP03](#), [S1701](#)

## Education

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population 25 years and older	225,152,317	8,764,878	23,134	25,493
Less than High School graduate	11.1%	10.1%	3.1%	1.8%
HS or Equivalent	26.5%	25.4%	11.2%	10.8%
Some College or Associate's Degree	28.7%	28.3%	20.2%	15.5%
Bachelor's Degree	20.6%	21.8%	34.5%	34.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	13.1%	14.4%	31.0%	37.5%

Sources:

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#)

## Language

US CENSUS DATA	US 2021	IL 2021	Northbrook Village 2010	Northbrook Village 2021
Population 5 years and over	310,302,360	12,076,132	31,244	33,415
English Only	78.3%	76.8%	74.4%	76.1%
Spanish	13.3%	13.5%	2.1%	1.5%
Other Indo-European languages	3.7%	5.6%	12.6%	13.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	3.0%	9.8%	7.4%
Other languages	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.2%	8.5%	8.3%	7.2%

Sources: S0601, S1601

ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#), [S1601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S0601](#), [S1601](#)

## **Disabilities**

<b>US CENSUS DATA</b>	<b>US 2021</b>	<b>IL 2021</b>	<b>Northbrook Village 2012</b>	<b>Northbrook Village 2021</b>
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	324,818,565	12,646,857	32,489	34,537
Hearing Difficulty	3.5%	3.0%	2.3%	3.6%
Vision Difficulty	2.3%	2.0%	2.8%	1.5%
Cognitive Difficulty	5.1%	4.3%	3.3%	2.0%
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.7%	6.1%	3.2%	4.5%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.6%	2.3%	3.2%	1.9%
Independent Living Difficulty	5.7%	5.3%	3.2%	3.4%

Sources:

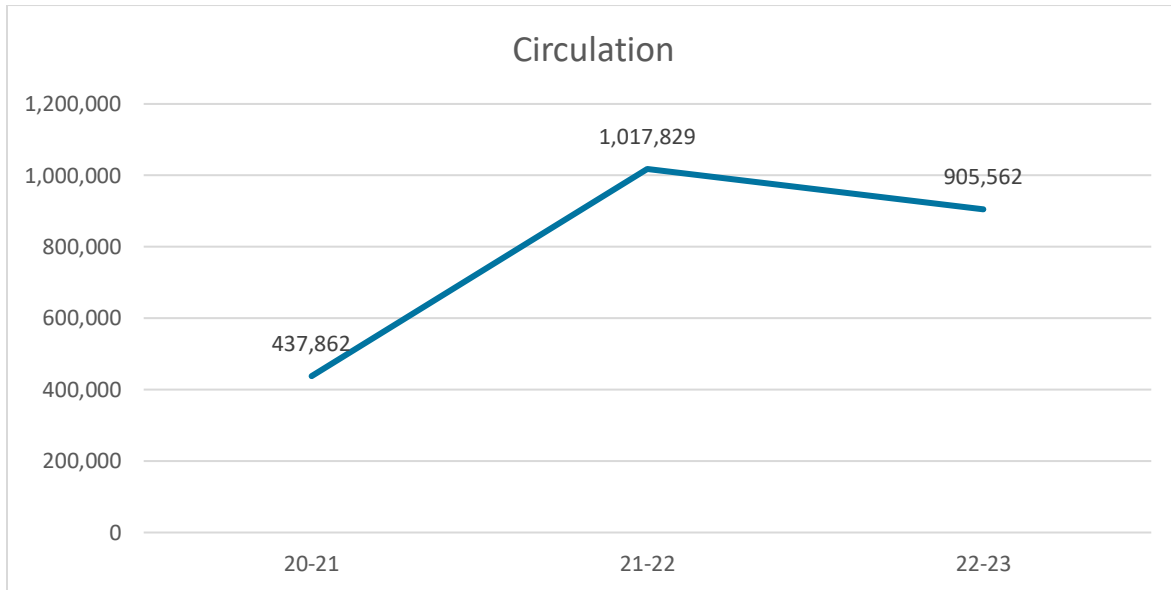
ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S1810](#)

ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for US, IL, and Northbrook Village [S1810](#)

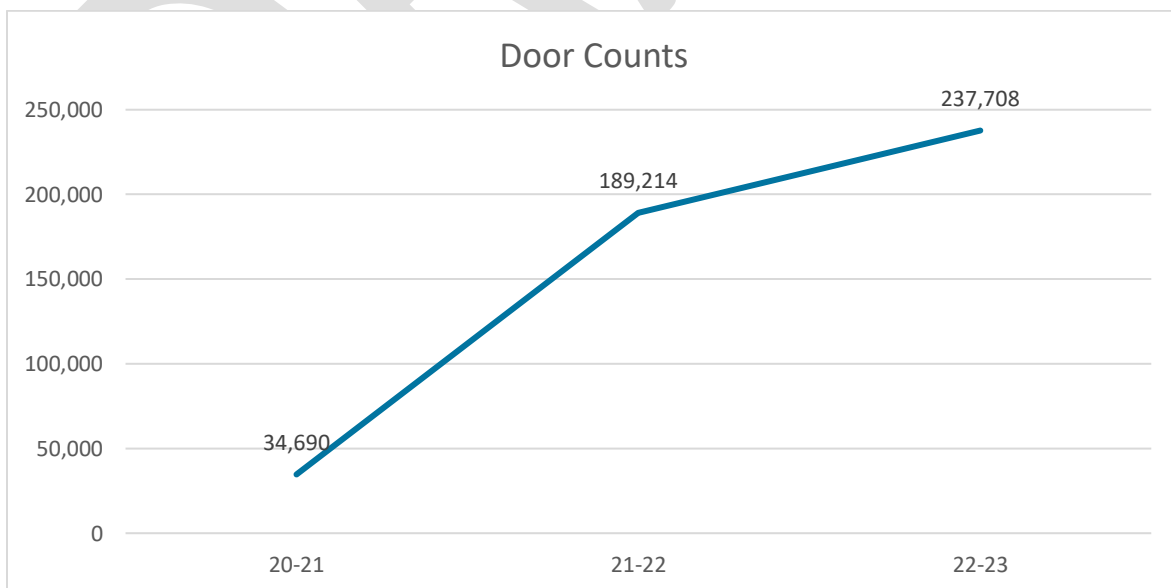
# Appendix B

## Library Data

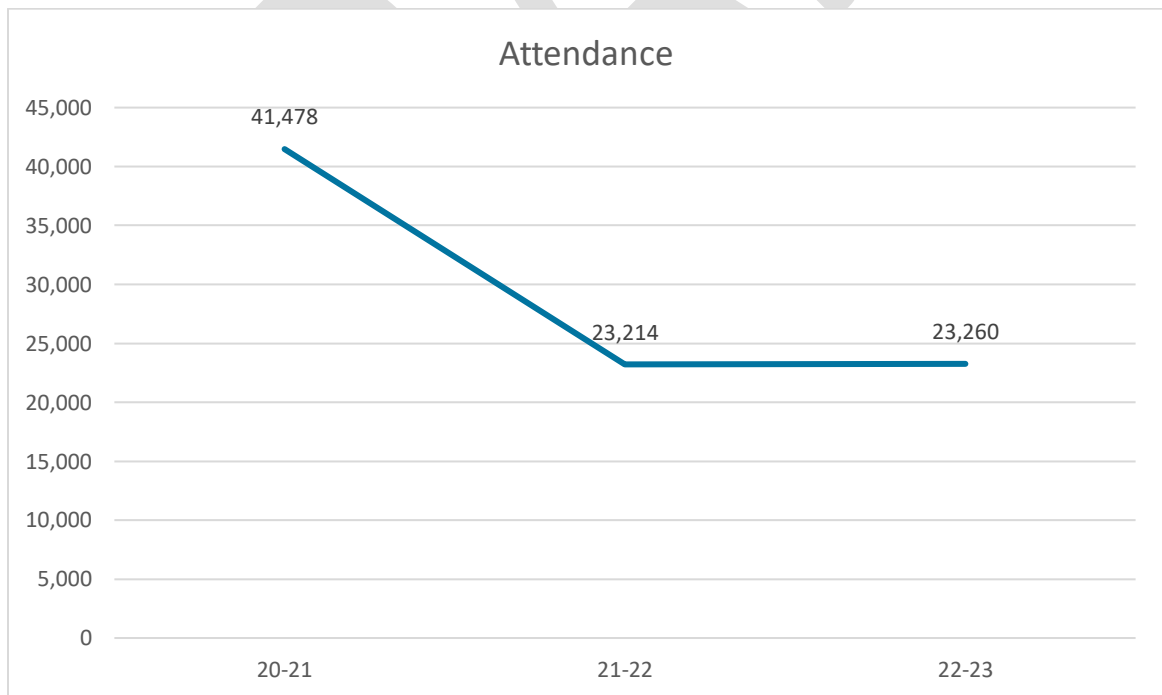
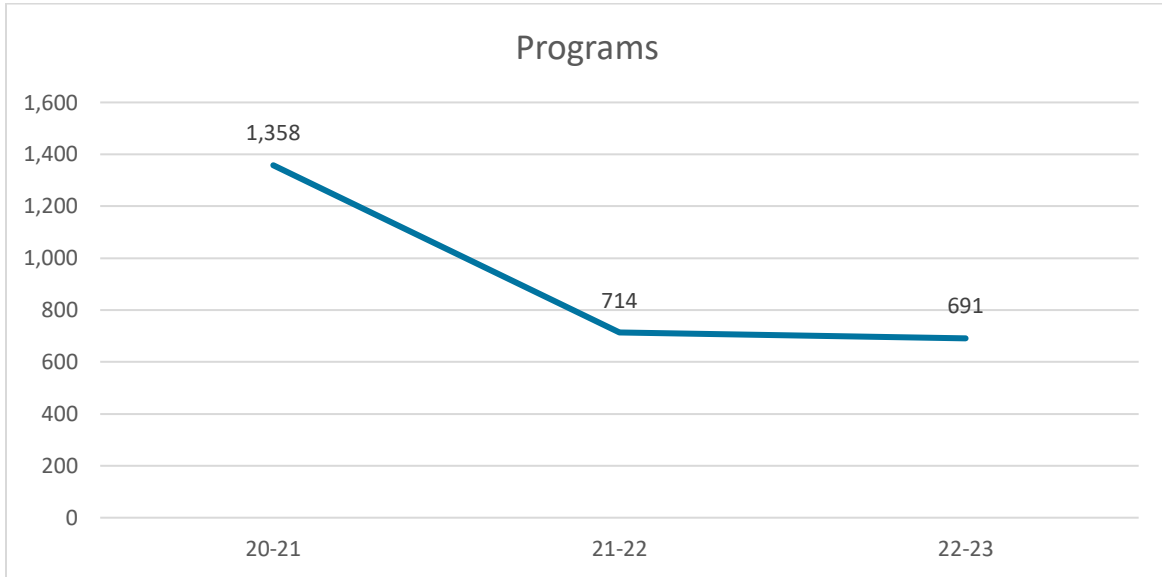
Like other public libraries around the country, Northbrook Public Library's usage statistics were negatively affected during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Total circulation (physical and digital) continued to drop in FY20-21 before increasing substantially in FY21-22 to 1,017,829. Circulation has now recovered to its pre-pandemic levels.



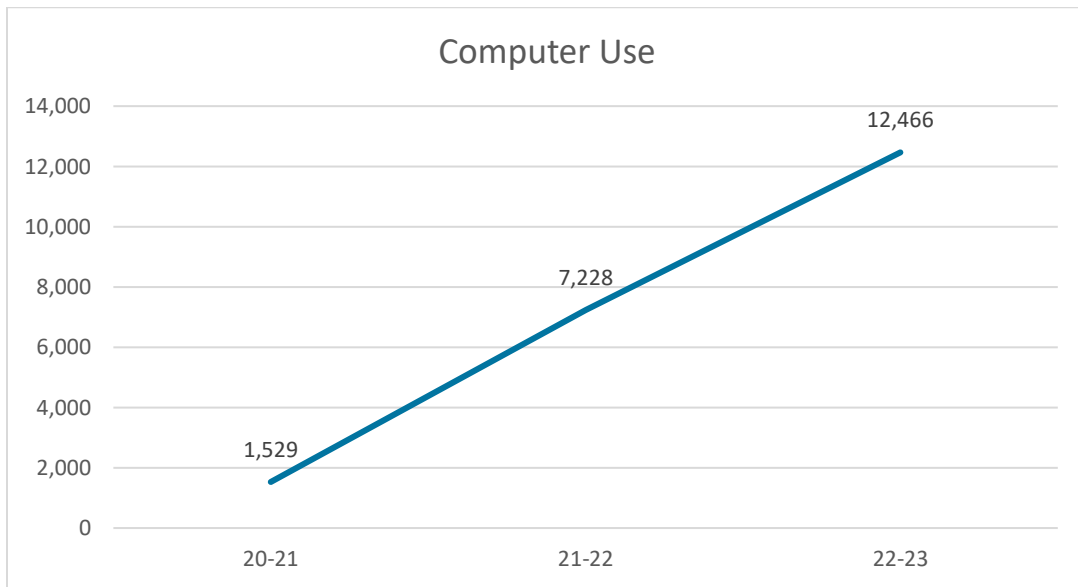
The number of visitors to the library building, as measured by door counts, increased in FYs 21, 22, and 23.



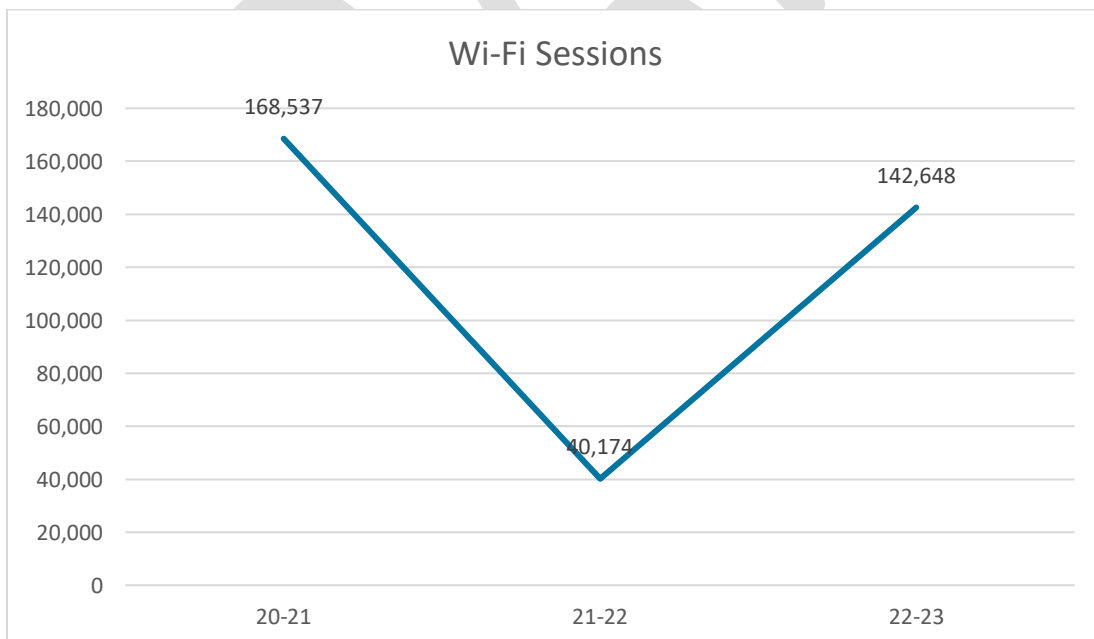
The number of programs and attendance at programs has declined since FY21. Prior to the pandemic, the programming departments had developed a plan to slowly pull back from the high amount of programming being done. The pandemic caused a significant shift in programming and a deliberate choice was made to reduce programs due to staffing shortages, prior plans, and reduced patron interest in the past two years.



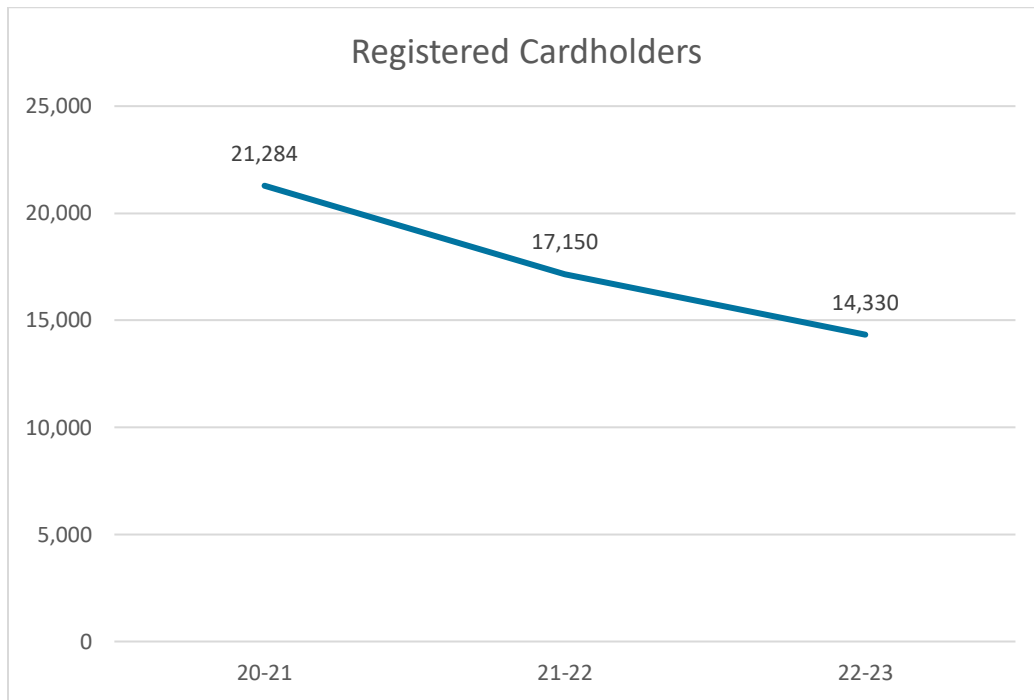
Prior to the pandemic we were seeing a gradual decrease in computer usage. Usage in FY20-21 was 1,529 uses before increasing in FY21-22 and again in FY22-23. Due to an overall decrease in usage over 5-years, we have removed a number of computers from the floor.



Wi-Fi usage in FY23 was 142,648, which remains lower than pre-pandemic data.



Registered cardholders decreased steadily over the past five fiscal years. Data management clean up (purging expired cards) accounts for some of the decrease. For FY23, the library had 14,330 registered cardholders.





# Appendix C

## Northbrook Public Library

### Library Strategic Capacity Assessment Report

Prepared by Fast Forward Libraries

Updated 01-03-24

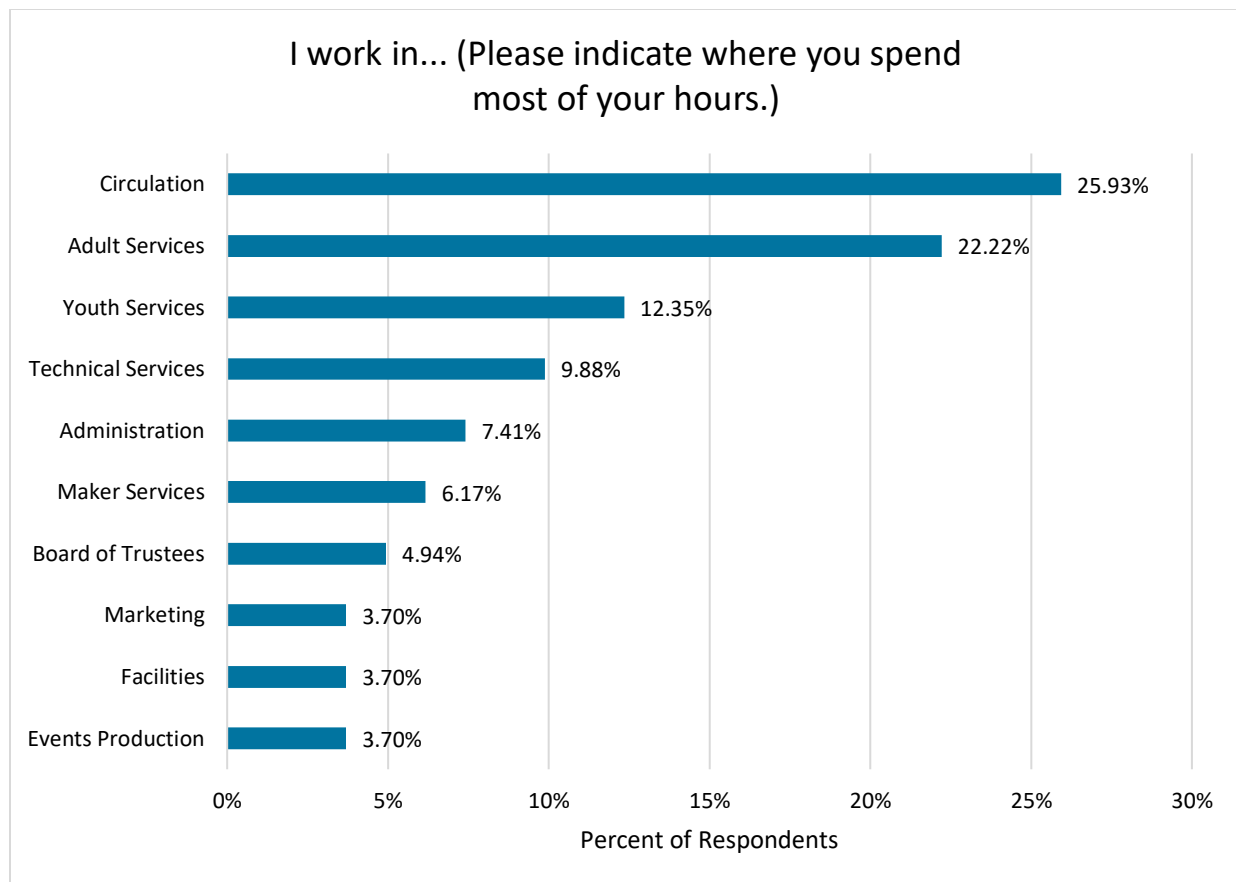
Northbrook Public Library is engaging in a strategic planning process and asked for staff and trustee input into the process using a Library Strategic Capacity Assessment.

Fast Forward Libraries conducted the Assessment to consider various elements of staff and trustee capacity to carry out their roles at the library. 77 staff members and four 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 NPL serves the community.
- **Core Operations Assessment:** To rate respondent level of knowledge and comfort with of various core library operations and also give feedback about how the library can evolve these aspects to be more robust.
- **Staff Capacity (Staff Only):** To rate how various factors increase or decrease their capacity to do their job at the library and ideas for how to increase capacity.
- **Project Capacity:** To rate the importance of various factors when making decisions related to library-wide projects.

The last two sections are related to an action step in implementing Zheng Consulting's recommendations from the "Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Survey Findings and Report - 2023 Baseline - Insights and Recommendation for Future Action."

The following report is a summary of Assessment findings for further discussion planned for December 2023.



**FINDINGS:**

- The breakdown of responses by department reflects the distribution of staff in the library with Circulation as the largest department and Marketing, Events Production, and Facilities as the smallest.

## Environmental Scan Summary

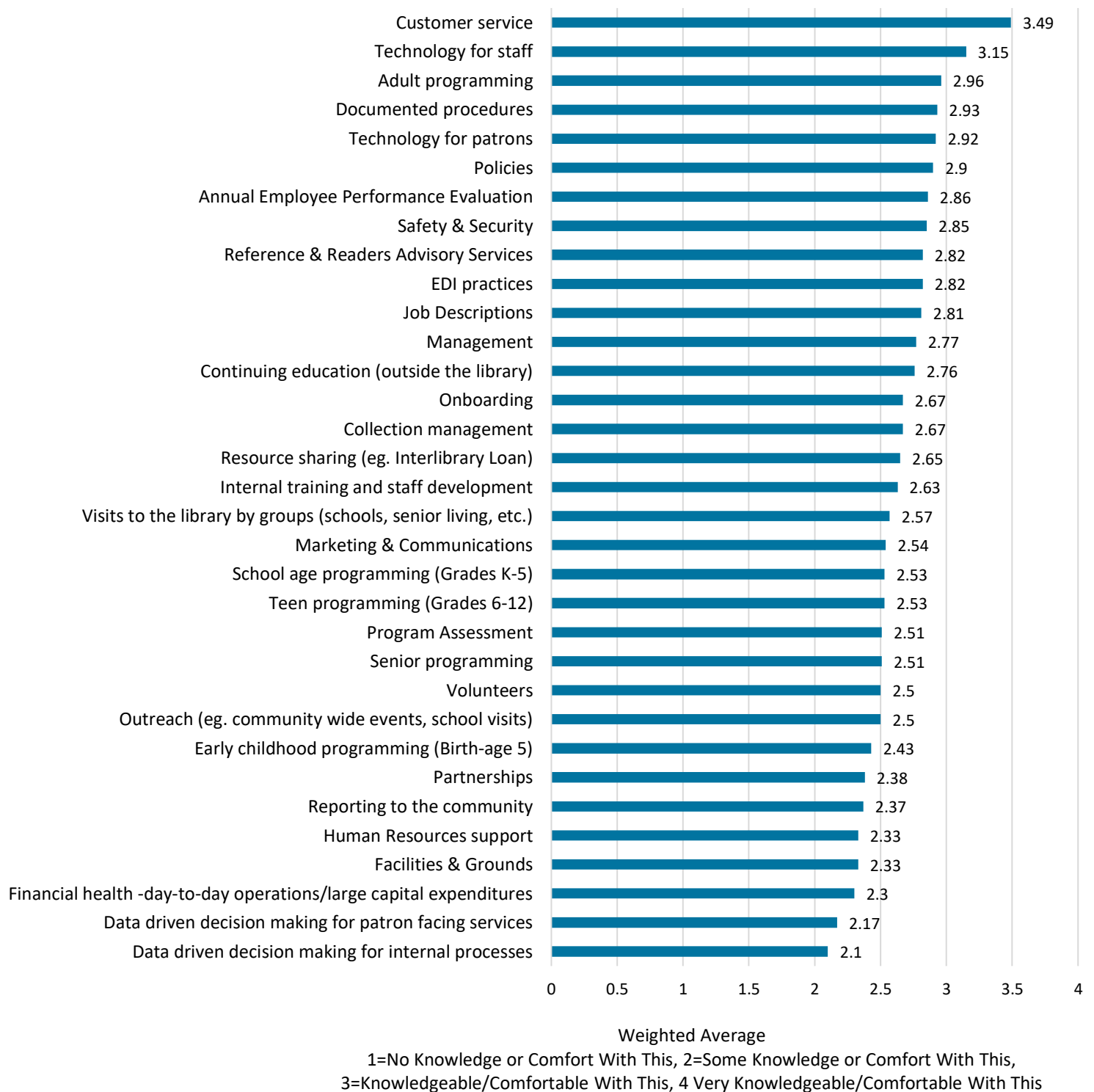
Respondents were asked to consider the environment that the library operates in – the world, country, and community – and identify those factors outside of the library that might influence how the library operates in the future. Responses are summarized below.

<b><u>Political</u></b>	<b><u>Economic</u></b>	<b><u>Social</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarization/division, both locally and nationally;</li> <li>• Global conflicts and wars, i.e., Ukraine, Israel/Palestine/Gaza, Middle East, Central America, Africa, Asia;</li> <li>• Humanitarian crises;</li> <li>• Mis/disinformation;</li> <li>• Concept of “wokeness” and “culture wars”;</li> <li>• Book bans/censorship attempts;</li> <li>• Politically-based violence and hate crimes;</li> <li>• Mass shootings/gun violence;</li> <li>• Right-wing extremism;</li> <li>• Upcoming 2024 elections;</li> <li>• Local shifts in leadership at local government level;</li> <li>• Diminished trust in civic organizations, i.e., schools, libraires, government;</li> <li>• Attacks on voting rights;</li> <li>• Attacks on democracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflation;</li> <li>• Quiet quitting;</li> <li>• Access to education and information;</li> <li>• Funding concerns;</li> <li>• Wages that keep up with private sector pay;</li> <li>• Rising labor movement demanding fair compensation;</li> <li>• Disruption of supply chain;</li> <li>• Community consensus on how taxes are allocated is a matter of concern, particularly in light of opposition from anti-tax groups;</li> <li>• Growing wealth inequality is generating tension among various socioeconomic groups.</li> <li>• Fears of recession;</li> <li>• Local development and construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, bias, racism, bigotry, antisemitism;</li> <li>• Mental health and trauma concerns and challenges;</li> <li>• Gender identity and expression;</li> <li>• Increase in racial/ethnic diversity;</li> <li>• Disability needs;</li> <li>• Language barriers;</li> <li>• Aging population vs. decreasing birthrate;</li> <li>• Rise of AAPI hate crimes since 2020;</li> <li>• Increasing diversity;</li> <li>• Jewish population in Northbrook;</li> <li>• Korean population in Northbrook;</li> <li>• Climate crisis and response;</li> <li>• Recognizing similarities instead of differences;</li> <li>• Long-term impact of COVID-19/Long COVID and disability;</li> <li>• EDI inequities;</li> <li>• Microaggressions;</li> <li>• People care less about being polite;</li> <li>• Anti-LGBTQ bias and transphobia;</li> <li>• Unhoused populations;</li> <li>• Refugee and migrant populations;</li> <li>• Social isolation;</li> <li>• Reframing of citizenship/patriotism;</li> <li>• Ideas/concepts of “what is true?”;</li> <li>• EDI pushback</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Technology</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantly evolving, staying up-to-date;</li> <li>• AI and machine learning – use and misuse, using author’s works to generate AI content;</li> <li>• Technology gap/digital divide, generation gap in tech knowledge;</li> <li>• Streaming media;</li> <li>• Social media mis/disinformation;</li> <li>• Digital media and eBooks;</li> <li>• Technology causing isolation;</li> <li>• Cyber security concerns;</li> <li>• Changing trends in educational technology;</li> <li>• Changing expectations in workplace tech skills</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Censorship and first amendment rights;</li> <li>• Rise in legislation aiming to limit access to library materials and criminalize library work/workers;</li> <li>• Attacks on constitutional rights;</li> <li>• Legislation determining what can and can’t be taught</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Library Sector</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety of staff and patrons;</li> <li>• Public library threats/bomb threats;</li> <li>• Increase in negative interactions due to censorship attempts;</li> <li>• Wages that keep up with private sector;</li> <li>• Keeping up with staffing needs to prevent overwork/burnout;</li> <li>• Diversity in staffing;</li> <li>• Libraries as a “safe space”;</li> <li>• Libraries as a “third space”;</li> <li>• Perceived value of library services by community;</li> <li>• Board and administration being removed from day-to-day library work;</li> <li>• State libraries pulling out of ALA;</li> <li>• Library as a social gathering place for teens;</li> <li>• Accessibility services and needs;</li> <li>• Keeping up-to-date on educational practices</li> </ul>
--	---	--

## Core Operations Summary

Please rate based on your personal level of knowledge or comfort of each of the areas.

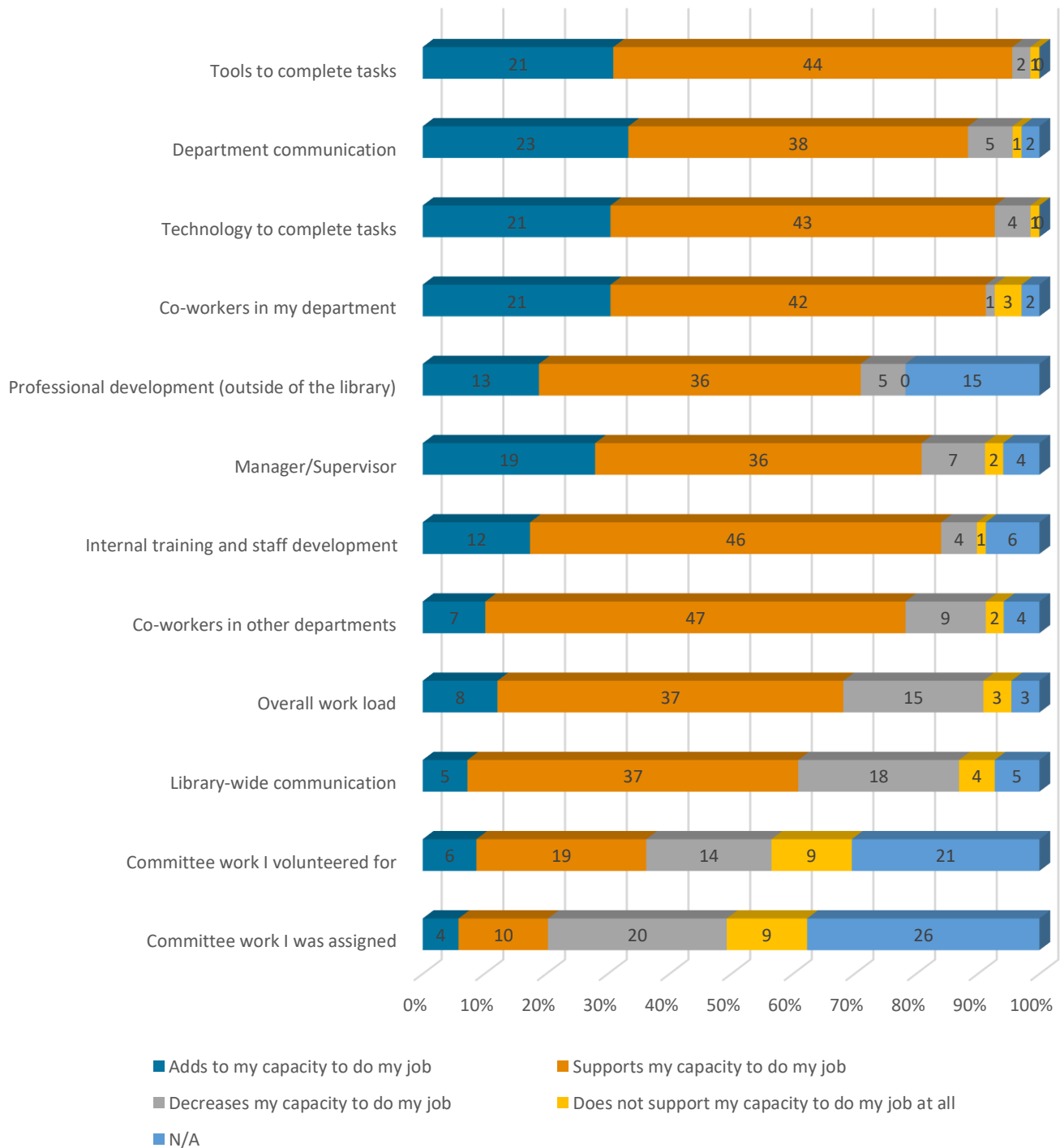


## FINDINGS:

- Respondents overall are most knowledgeable/comfortable with customer service (3.49/4) followed by technology for staff (3.15) and adult programming (2.96).
- Respondents rated lowest knowledge and comfort with the library's financial health (2.3), data driven decision making for patron facing services (2.17), and data driven decision making for internal processes (2.1).
- Circulation staff ( $n=21$ ) indicated higher knowledge/comfort with customer service (3.59) and resource sharing (2.91).
- Youth Services staff ( $n=10$ ) indicated higher knowledge/comfort with school age programming (3.8), early childhood programming (3.6), customer service (3.6), technology for staff (3.44), teen programming (3.4), reference & readers advisory services (3.4), and EDI practices (3.3).
- Adult Services staff ( $n=18$ ) rated customer service at 3.53, adult programming at 3.44, reference & readers advisory services at 3.35, and senior programming at 3.27.
- Administrative staff ( $n=6$ ) rated customer service higher at 3.83, safety and security at 3.8, policies at 3.8, and EDI practices at 3.
- Technical Services staff ( $n=8$ ) rated job descriptions at 3.17, technology for patrons at 3, technology for staff at 3, resource sharing at 2.8, and both customer service and EDI practices at 2.75.
- Marketing, Facilities, Events, and Makerspace staff (*combined*  $n=14$ ) indicated their highest knowledge and comfort as customer service (3.75) followed by adult programming (3.36).
- Trustees ( $n=4$ ) rated highest knowledge and comfort with financial health of day-to-day operations and large capital projects (3.5) and EDI practices (3.25).

## Staff Capacity Summary (Staff Only)

Please rate the below elements of your job based on the impact the item has on your capacity to carry out your work at the library.



## FINDINGS:

- Overall, staff rated tools to complete tasks (3.25), department communication (3.24), technology to complete tasks (3.22), and co-workers in my department (3.21) as the elements that add the most capacity to do their jobs.
- Staff rated library-wide communication (2.67), committee work I volunteered for (2.46) and committee work I was assigned to (2.21) as the lowest-capacity elements.
- Circulation staff rated the elements that add the most capacity to do their jobs as tools to complete tasks (3.41), manager/supervisor (3.41), and internal training and staff development (3.4). The elements Circulation staff rated as the lowest-capacity elements are committee work I was assigned (2.43) and committee work I volunteered for (2.55).
- Youth Services staff rated department communication (3.5), co-workers in my department (3.4), and manager/supervisor (3.2) as their highest-capacity elements. The lowest-capacity elements for Youth Serves are committee work I volunteered for (2.25) and committee work I was assigned (2.29).
- Adult Services staff rated department communication (3.29), professional development (outside the library) (3.15), co-workers in my department (3.14), and tools to complete tasks (3.13) as their highest-capacity elements. They rated library-wide communication (2.64) below committee work I volunteered for (2.89).
- Administrative staff rated technology to complete tasks (3.33), professional development (outside the library) (3.25), and tools to complete tasks (3.17) as their highest-capacity elements. They rated overall workload (2) as their lowest rated element.
- Tech Services staff rated their highest-capacity elements as technology to complete tasks (3.25) and internal training and staff development (3.14). They rated committee work I volunteered for (2.00) and committee work I was assigned (2.33) as lowest-capacity elements.
- Marketing, Facilities, Events, and Makerspace staff rated co-workers in my department (3.5), department communication (3.38), and tools to complete tasks (3.33) as their highest-capacity elements. They rated library-wide communication (2.17) and committee work I was assigned (2) as their lowest-capacity elements.



## What would most increase your capacity to do your job?

### More Training/Continuing Education/Professional Development

#### Staffing Specifics

- Accurate job descriptions;
- Careful hiring;
- Pay raise; retaining and paying workers fairly;
- Tools to help staff stay organized;
- Being able to work remotely;
- A more focused role/responsibilities – capacity spread less thin;
- Steady and moderate workload; a more consistent workload; consistency in tasks;
- More hours off-desk and with fewer interruptions;
- Having managers make more decisions;
- Less time spent in meetings;
- Would be easier to be organized with an assigned desk instead of frequent swapping;
- Sufficient staffing in my department; additional staff;
- Not more than 5 programs booked in a single week

#### Communication and Culture

- Take staff suggestions seriously;
- Let staff volunteer to do what interests them;
- Having a clear sense of how decisions are reached by being looped in at earlier stages and throughout the process;
- Having established procedures followed consistently;
- Less time spent on committee work;
- Compliments, appreciation, recognition
- Being respected by management;
- Less fear of making a mistake;
- Better communication with manager;
- Clarity on library's internal and external mission and culture;
- Less micromanaging and overall increased trust in staff;
- More library-wide transparency and more equity of treatment among staff

#### Projects

- More projects to work on that do not depend on library-wide, inter-department effort;
- Having an active voice at the beginning of project or library-wide changes;
- If projects and tasks didn't get hung up on needing someone from administration to respond/approve/meet;
- Clearly defined deadlines, schedules, and responsibilities, especially on projects;
- Creating some hierarchy in terms of which projects are of high priority and more of a streamlined process for communicating project needs;
- Being given more intradepartmental projects and tasks;
- Faster decision making from Admin for projects and tasks

#### Other

- Having the right technology and knowledge;
- Not having to participate in a committee;
- If the East Desk was less exposed;
- Streamlined procedures and efficient use of technology for committees, project management, scheduling, timesheets, etc.
- Continued feedback from evaluations and fellow colleagues

## What is the top item decreasing your capacity to do your job?

### Staffing Concerns

- Inadequate staffing; lack of/loss of qualified persons willing to work for pay offered; not hiring for people who leave and expecting others to cover;
- Some managers and co-workers not pulling their weight;
- Shifting and transitioning of roles and responsibilities;
- Department manager focusing on their own department instead of others;
- Doing too much and not getting enough support; total amount of work required in my job;
- Lobby vs. workroom responsibilities;
- Being involved in too many activities;
- HR tasks assigned to me or others;
- Ongoing planning and presentation of programs without enough staff;
- Having to cover desks that staff aren't comfortable with or hired for

### Hours/Schedules

- Part-time position doesn't allow for capacity to do more and lead/influence;
- Working exclusively at night and not being compensated for working nights;

### Communication and Culture

- Discomfort from demeaning remarks from co-worker;
- Inability to effect change to improve conditions for myself or for my department;
- General low morale;
- Tasks that are dependent on other staff get tabled and contribute to burnout;
- Lack of library-wide communication and lack of transparency;
- Decisions seem to be made for unknown reasons and with little warning which causes stress;
- Communication/information flow from manager is lacking;
- High expectations from co-workers do not align with resources/training available;
- Micromanaging and inconsistent communication

### Projects and Meetings

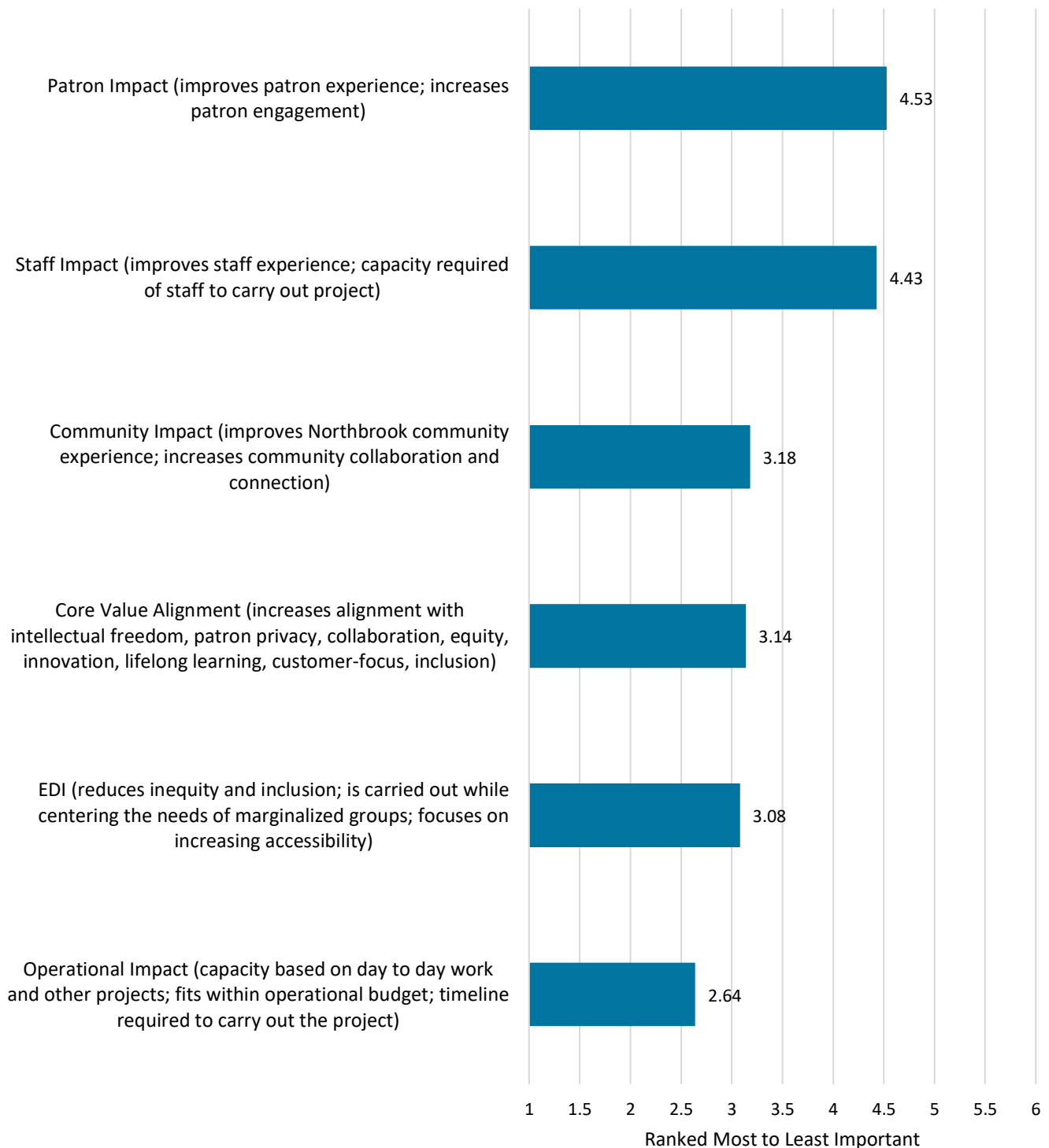
- Adding new projects and tasks that I wasn't consulted about nor brought in early in the process on;
- Interdepartmental/library-wide projects that get started and don't get completed;
- Working on outside resources that the library volunteers for;
- Time spent in meetings; too many meetings; meetings are too long and get off topic; inefficient meetings;
- Lack of communication/defined schedule & responsibilities from assigned projects involving other departments;
- Projects outside of my job responsibilities;
- Committee work

### Other

- Overuse of technology is inefficient, i.e., signing into several platforms throughout the day;
- Continuing education;
- Being unaware of things that are happening library-wide;
- Decisions being passed up instead of being made by staff;
- If it is too cold in the lobby;
- When co-workers leave the shelves messy; when items are missing;
- Dealing with computers and other tech problems;
- Communico is difficult/not intuitive

## Project Capacity Summary

How important are the below factors when initiating new library-wide projects? Rank the following in order of most to least important.



## FINDINGS:

- Respondents indicated highest importance for patron impact (4.53) – improving patron experience and increasing patron engagement.
- Respondents indicated second highest importance for staff impact (4.43) – improving staff experience and capacity required of staff to carry out the project.
- Respondents indicated lowest importance for operational impact (2.64) – capacity based on day-to-day work and other projects, fitting within operational budget, and the timeline required to carry out the project.
- Circulation staff indicated highest importance for staff impact (4.76) followed by patron impact (4.71). Their lowest importance was operational impact (2.24).
- Youth Services staff indicated highest importance for staff impact (5) followed by core value alignment (4.38). Their lowest importance was community impact (1.75).
- Adult Services staff indicated highest importance for patron impact (5.25) followed by staff impact (4.63). Their lowest importance were core value alignment and EDI (both 2.31).
- Administrative staff indicated highest importance for core value alignment (4.83) followed by patron impact (3.67). Their lowest importance was community impact (2.67).
- Tech services staff indicated highest importance for patron impact (5) and staff impact (4.75). Their lowest importance was core value alignment (1.5).
- Marketing, Facilities, Events, and Makerspace staff indicated highest importance for staff impact (4.15) and patron impact (4). Their lowest importance was operational impact (2.54).
- Trustees indicated highest importance for patron impact (5.25) and community impact (4.75). Their lowest importance was EDI (1.5).

One of the recommendations from the Zheng Consulting report is to pause at least half of library wide projects. In talking with staff, we have learned that we don't have a shared understanding of what constitutes a library wide project.

When you think of the term library wide project, what projects either past, present, or future, come to mind?

*Items in bold were mentioned by more than one respondent.*

- **One Book One Northbrook**
- **Summer and Winter Reading Programs**
- **EDI (training, consultant, committee)**
- **Volunteer Program**
- **Strategic Plan**
- **Library of Things**
- **Shifting collections; reclassifying collections**
- **Lobby Collections**
- **Design Thinking**
- **Collection Development Policy**
- **Switching from Evanced to Communico**
- **Building repairs, structural changes, renovations, construction projects, capital projects**
- **Parking lot surfacing/project**
- **Remodeling with extensive after work**
- **Lobby remodel**
- **Security cameras**
- **Job descriptions**
- **Staffing Analysis**
- **Salary benchmarking/Pay Equity analysis**
- **Hiring Audit**
- **RFID**
- **Staff Development Day**
- **New ILS; migration from SirsiDynix to Polaris**
- **TEDx events**
- **Find More Illinois**
- Safety and security training
- School library cards
- NCOA
- Recycling Project
- Updated COVI-related processes and procedure created during lockdown
- Security consultant
- Cedar Lane Landscaping
- First floor popular collection
- Circulation lockers
- Civic Zoom Room
- Response to the Blackberry report ("never happened")
- Response to the Zheng report

- 80s month
- Rock Music month
- Climate Action Plan
- Revising evaluation process
- Forming wellness committee
- Creation of curbside pickup
- CAP committee
- Having everyone be PICs vs a smaller group with all the training it entails
- Star Wars Day
- Finals café
- Lunar eclipse
- Tiny art
- Changing of organizational structure; merging of departments
- Yearly audit

- “Anything tied to committee work or anything that involves a workgroup.”
- “Projects that involve staff from more than 2 departments and last more than a few weeks.”
- “Any committee involvement in a staff development or safety/security day.”
- Any project undertaken by a committee that has impact on people outside that committee (like zero waste guidelines for events).”
- “When I think library-wide projects I think of events and programs the library offers to patrons.”
- “Is there a list of projects? I have no knowledge of current projects.”
- “Any kickoff event, events in a series, committee work, development of a new service, development of a new procedure (particularly if it inter-departmental or takes more than 2 meetings to make decisions on).”
- “I think many staff call the EDI work an on-going project, but I don't as projects should have definitive completions or endings and EDI work is constant and ongoing. The recent EDI survey and the Strategic Planning process are projects that fall under that.”
- “Are library wide projects something all staff are required to participate in? Do we need library wide projects?”
- “As a Trustee, it's not easy to answer this, but I would define a "library-wide project" would be one that involves every department and a high percentage of staff members. For example, ideally strategic planning would be a library-wide project.”



# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Survey Findings and Report **2023 Baseline**

Insights and Recommendations  
for Future Action

**Zheng Consulting**

Lily Zheng  
Alexis Victor

September 28, 2023

# Executive Summary

## Key Findings

### **Highly Effective and Engaged Staff**

Library staff are highly motivated and engaged to work at the library, citing extremely positive within-department experiences. Compared to benchmark, library staff report exceptionally higher opportunities, support, resources, and higher perceived pay equity.

### **Strong Shared EDI Commitment, But Low Capacity Library-Wide**

While virtually all staff are aligned on the need for EDI work, burnout is high and capacity is low across the library. This challenge is exacerbated by ongoing pandemic- and sociopolitical-related stress. Staff undertaking EDI-related workstreams find the workload unsustainable, and feel that without changes to how EDI work is distributed, even work that most staff agree is valuable will be unable to be carried out.

### **Staff-Administrative Management Inequity Drives Overall Inequity**

While there are a small number of demographic-related inequities by race and sexuality, the largest driver of overall EDI challenges is the inequity between administrative management and other staff, which influences other inequities at the library. Administrative management's perception of the current state of the library is misaligned with staff perceptions, leading to challenges with EDI decision-making, communication, and implementation.

### **Unspoken Consequences In Lieu of Healthy Feedback or Accountability Processes**

When issues with projects, performance, or interpersonal relationships arise, particularly at the manager level and above, leaders may default to taking one-sided action to change the outcome rather than openly communicate. For example, in reaction to a perceived incorrect decision taken by a manager, an administrative manager may respond by reducing the decision-making autonomy or requiring more formal permission or sign-off of similar decisions for that manager alone without communicating the reason. While this practice reduces outright conflict, it can damage trust and morale for the affected managers and/or departments and exacerbate inequity.

### **Over-Scoping and Over-Management of Library-Wide Projects**

Library-wide projects are highly criticized by staff. The high number of projects, the heavy reliance on library staff to undertake them, the relative lack of input staff have into project selection and prioritization, and the heavy involvement of administrative management in project minutiae results in a high risk of staff burnout. Staff are strongly aligned on the perception that projects are improperly resourced and rarely completed in a timely manner.



# Strategic Recommendations

**The library should seek staff feedback on library-wide projects and pause the projects with the worst impact:effort ratio as soon as it is able to, for at least one year.**

Across the board, library staff are overextended by work that isn't included in their job descriptions. While to some extent the emotional burden of this work can be mitigated with better communication and transparency, the most impactful way to increase staff capacity and overall project efficacy requires *doing less*. To ensure that the library maintains a focus on the highest-impact projects, administrative management should survey library staff and commit to pausing at least half of ongoing projects so the remainder can be properly prioritized.

**The library should formalize and communicate the decision-making roles and responsibilities of different library constituents.**

To ensure that staff are aligned on the different roles and responsibilities of non-manager staff, managers, administrative management, and the board, HR should take the lead in formally documenting and communicating this information to staff. This documentation can also be used as a guide to assess whether de facto decision-making processes or staff responsibilities align with expectations, and if they do not, inform changemaking efforts to rectify inequities.

**The library should invest in management, communication, and feedback upskilling for administrative management.**

To improve administrative management's ability to effectively and consistently collaborate, communicate, and lead in an inclusive and equitable way for the library, the NPL should invest in evidence-based management, feedback, and communication training for them. To ensure accountability for learning and improvement, specific questions can be added to their existing performance evaluation or to the 2024 EDI survey for staff to assess improvement.

**The library should reassess and redistribute EDI-related workstreams between the volunteer EDI committee, managers, and administrative management, with HR and managers taking a greater role in the process.**

Given the high volume of EDI-related work, the EDI committee, managers, and administrative management should work together to document and redistribute EDI workstreams to share the responsibility and distribute the burden appropriately. For example, the EDI committee can take on EDI event programming, managers can take on integrating EDI into their departmental work, and administrative management can take on EDI-related library-wide policies, processes, and culture. In particular, the NPL could benefit from a stronger HR presence to own personnel-related work, including many EDI-related workstreams.

**The library should organize and engage in regular staff dialogues with peer institutions.**

Either every quarter or twice a year, the library should organize recurring facilitated dialogues with other libraries facing similar challenges on topics including staff wellness, burnout prevention, and patron-related best practices. These dialogues can help staff build community, share and gain perspectives on EDI and related work, and develop in their roles.

# Introduction

In late-Q2 2022, Northbrook Public Library (NPL) engaged with Zheng Consulting (ZC), a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion consulting and assessment firm, to develop and administer a two-year EDI assessment, following exploratory assessment work conducted by The Blackberry Collection (TBC), another EDI consulting firm. Zheng Consulting built on TBC's previous work to create a customized EDI survey via the CultureAmp platform and supplemented the data it collected with TBC's After Action Report, follow-up conversations with library managers, the chairs of the EDI committee, and members of administrative management, and additional anonymous staff feedback submitted through a Google Form.

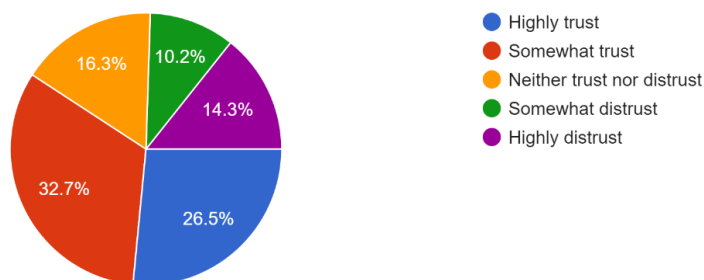
This report summarizes: 1) Northbrook Public Library's 2023 Baseline Survey development and key factors, 2) high-level survey results and the Research Questions developed in response by Zheng Consulting 3) Zheng Consulting's deep dive analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and 4) Zheng Consulting's recommendations for action and next steps.

## Survey Development & Factors

For many of its EDI assessment projects, Zheng Consulting first conducts an exploratory assessment to understand the issues most relevant to an organization, then customizes its surveys to reflect these priorities. For the Northbrook Public Library, ZC opted to skip this exploratory assessment due to the prior work that The Blackberry Collection, another EDI consulting firm, had completed. Noting the tension following the end of NPL's partnership with TBC, ZC chose to instead gauge library staff's willingness to share additional feedback. This survey revealed that while a notable percent of library staff had lost trust in administrative management, staff largely trusted the EDI committee, their managers, and ZC to undertake additional EDI work. Based on this feedback, ZC proceeded with the baseline assessment.

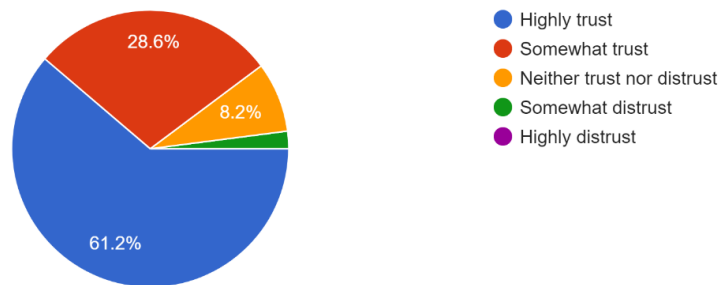
For this next stage of EDI work, how much do you trust that library administration will help the NPL make progress?

49 responses



**Figure 1. Of the staff that responded to the Zheng Consulting Trust Survey, roughly 60% trusted library administrative management, with roughly 25% distrusting or highly distrusting.**

For this next stage of EDI work, how much do you trust that Lily will help the NPL make progress?  
49 responses



**Figure 2.** Of the staff that responded to the Zheng Consulting Trust Survey, roughly 90% trusted Lily and Zheng Consulting, with 2% distrusting or highly distrusting.

ZC took additional effort to ensure that the Zheng Consulting EDI survey recognized and built on the previous work undertaken by TBC. The final survey, which also integrated feedback from library partners working with ZC (Kate Hall, Michelle Mistalski, and Sara Scodius) consisted of 34 rating questions, 3 qualitative questions, 7 demographic questions, and 4 organizational questions. Rating questions collected data on 9 factors:

**Belonging:** The degree to which people feel valued, respected, part of a greater whole and safe to take risks or fail.

**Voice:** The degree to which people feel safe offering feedback and feel it is taken seriously.

**Fairness:** The degree to which people feel equally treated and evaluated.

**Enablement:** The degree to which people feel supported to succeed in their jobs.

**Decision Making:** The degree to which people feel represented and included in decisions impacting them.

**Representation:** The degree to which people feel their workplace and leadership is set up to reflect their community.

**Leadership:** The degree to which leaders are succeeding at ensuring a respectful workplace, offering feedback and coaching, and enabling a functional workplace.

**Engagement:** The degree to which people feel positively toward and participate in the workplace.

**Community:** The degree to which community members (patrons) feel included and members of the organizations feel supported in interacting with them.

The survey ran for two weeks and collected 90 responses for a high total response rate of 90%. Survey findings can be found on the following page.

# Survey Findings

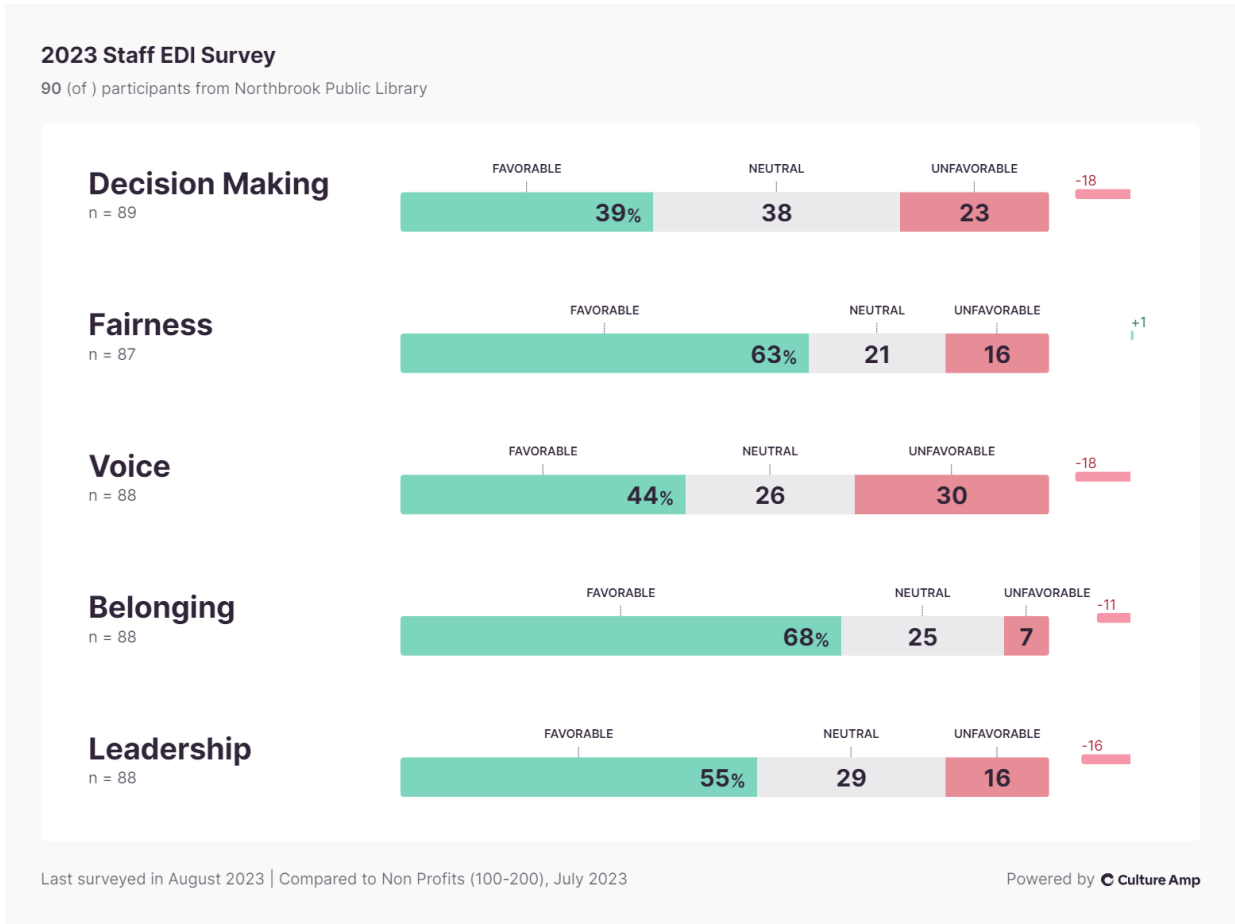


Figure 3. An overview of the five most impactful factors on the 2023 DEI Survey. Green scores indicate the percentage of positive responses. Grey scores indicate neutral responses, and red scores indicate negative responses. The Comparison column lists the degree to which NPL's scores differ from the benchmark for similar organizations.

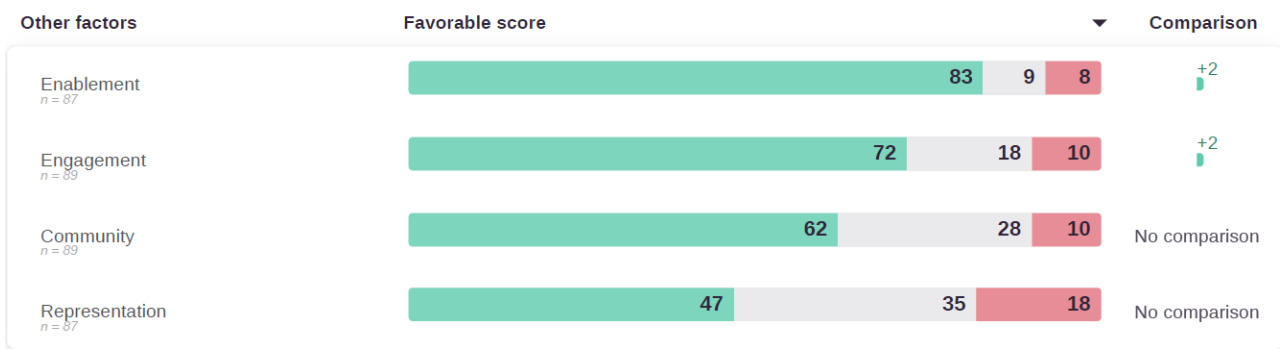







Figure 4. An overview of the four remaining factors and their scores on the 2023 DEI Survey, Enablement (83% positive), Engagement (72% positive), Community (62% positive), and Representation (47% positive).

Focus	Impact	Question	Factor	Favorable score	Trend	Comparison
	 VERY HIGH	When there are career opportunities at the library, I am aware of them n = 88	Fairness	6 <div> <div></div> <div>77</div> <div>13</div> <div>1</div> </div>	No trend	+22
	 VERY HIGH	I have access to the resources, tools, and information I need to do my job duties well n = 88	Enablement	7 <div> <div></div> <div>90</div> <div></div> <div></div> </div>	No trend	+16
	 HIGH	I am motivated and engaged to do my best working here n = 89	Engagement	12 <div> <div></div> <div>74</div> <div>19</div> <div></div> </div>	No trend	+9
	 HIGH	I believe that my total compensation (base salary+any bonuses+benefits) is fair, relative to similar staff roles here n = 88	Fairness	17 <div> <div></div> <div>57</div> <div>25</div> <div>18</div> </div>	No trend	+7

### 2023 Staff EDI Survey

90 (of ) participants from Northbrook Public Library

#### “I would recommend the Northbrook Public Library as a great place to work”

Engagement

Category	Count	Percentage
FAVORABLE	75	83%
NEUTRAL	10	10%
UNFAVORABLE	7	7%

+2

An important metric called an employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is calculated by subtracting the percentage of neutral or negative scores from the percentage of strongly positive scores, to identify the percentage of staff likely to highly recommend working at the NPL. A “good” eNPS is 10-30, and a “great” eNPS is 30-50. The library’s eNPS score is **11** (28% strongly positive, 17% neutral or unfavorable), putting it at risk of not being able to attract top talent.

The NPL has a number of areas where it is substantially below benchmark, with the largest challenges in **Leadership, Voice, and Decision Making**. Staff reported a poor or ambiguous relationship to the board, were highly critical of project resourcing, and noted poor two-way communication, decision making, and safety to share critical feedback.

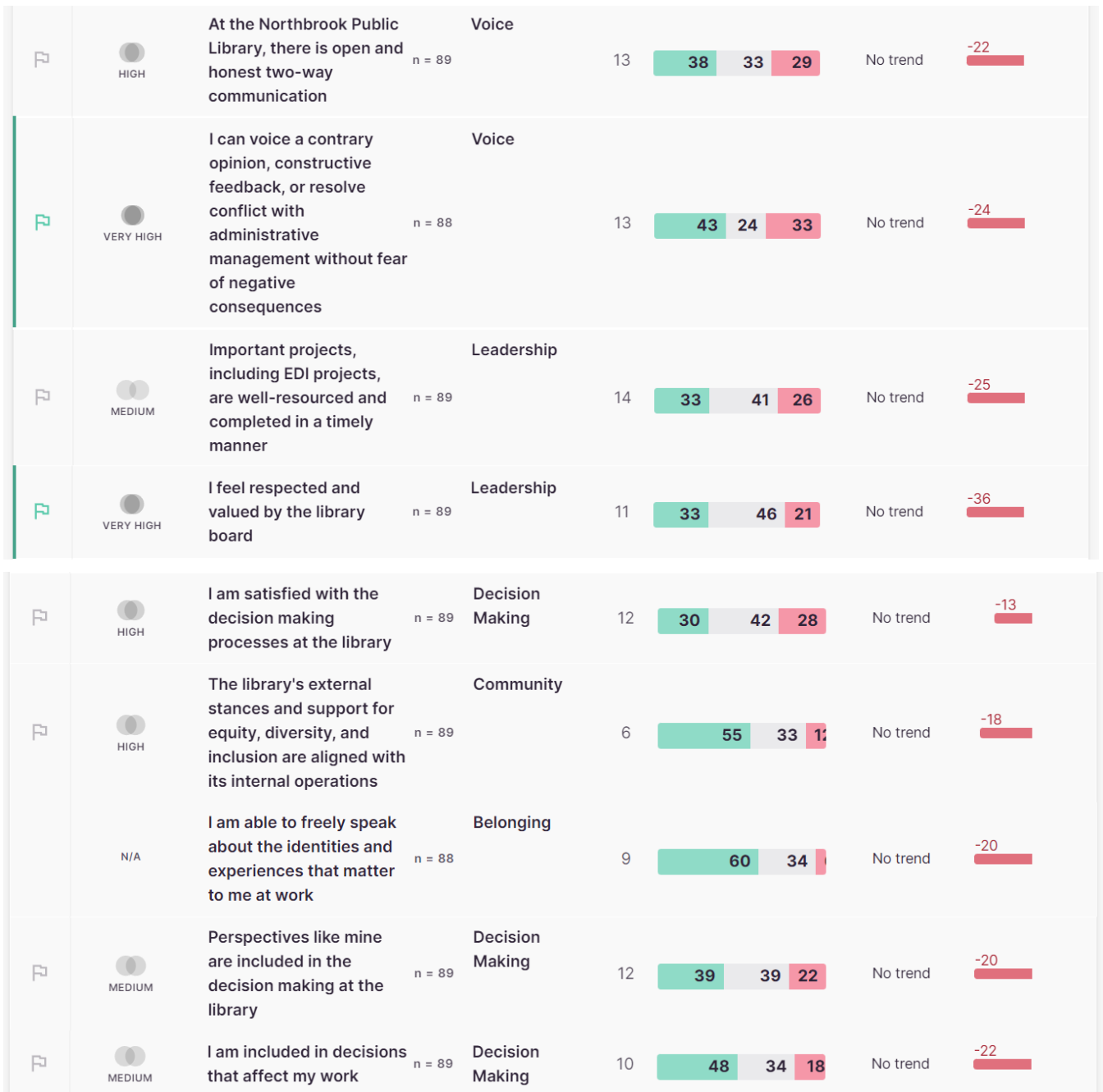


Figure 7. Scores for the questions on the survey where the library scored the most lower than benchmark. See alt text for specific questions and their scores, and the accompanying CultureAmp full questions report for all questions and scores.

# Qualitative Data Analysis

Following the Demographic Analysis, Zheng Consulting reviewed the 181 qualitative answers to the 3 narrative questions, the 341 additional comments left on individual questions the CultureAmp survey, the dozen or so additional comments from anonymous feedback forms, and additional comments shared during supplementary focus groups with staff of various levels at the library.

All data was analyzed using a **Grounded Theory Methodology** in which holistic interpretations of each data point on its own, then in the context of all other comments, form emergent patterns in the data that are developed and evolve as more data is analyzed. Where patterns contradicted each other (e.g., comments indicated the presence of *both* strongly positive and strongly negative experiences with administrative management), additional interpretations of the data were explored (e.g., staff experience of administrative management is generalized from their relationship with the specific member of administrative management they engage with most frequently).

## 1. Strong Staff-Manager Relationship, At a Cost

Nearly every positive comment left on the survey referenced the strong relationships, support, trust, and camaraderie staff felt toward their managers and within their departments, but managers themselves shared common concerns of burnout, exclusion from decision-making, and challenging relationships with administrative management.

*“My manager is genuinely empathetic and interested in how I am doing.”*

*“My manager is very supportive and helpful to all of us in this department.”*

*“When people are upset about a decision made by administrative management, then managers end up being the ones who need to address it.”*

## 2. Dysfunctional Library-Wide Decision Making

Library-wide decisions were widely critiqued as being opaque, unresponsive, and disingenuous. A common concern is that decisions are “pre-decided,” but staff are still solicited for feedback in the hopes that they will “organically come to” the pre-decided decision. This pushes staff, especially those with marginalized identities, to disconnect from decision making processes or simply “give up” on sharing their disagreement. Staff also shared concerns about the heavy delays affecting library-wide decisions and the implementation of feedback, noting that decisions that they expected could be made at the manager level would frequently go through multiple rounds of administrative management review before being made.

*“Feedback processes are often performative: I’m being included, but the decision is already made.”*

*“We seem to swing from asking for lots of input on things that are unimportant to staff, to asking for no input on things that could affect staff greatly.”*

*“Decision-makers are relying on being able to ‘empathize’ with marginalized groups instead of giving them a seat at the table.”*

### 3. Inconsistent Distribution of Resources and Responsibilities

Several staff members shared the perception that resources, workload, remote working benefits, and decision-making influence differs by department, and that valuable resources seem allocated for unclear or inconsistent reasons. Some staff shared stories of colleagues receiving preferential treatment due to having a library degree, while others shared stories of colleagues being underpaid compared to others despite having both more degrees and more experience. A common theme was the perception of favoritism and inconsistent process once administrative management gets involved, in which formal processes can both deny some staff/departments requests for changes to resources, remote working benefits, roles, or responsibilities, but also be waived for some staff/departments without explanation. Administration management shared their awareness of this and discussed the value of additional and more consistently applied processes.

*"There are opportunities that were created for specific people in mind and regardless of whether or not they were shared internally, those who applied were rejected."*

*"The way workloads are divided depends on how friendly you are with administrative management."*

*"There's so much work being delegated that employees no longer know what administration, managers, or assistant managers do anymore."*

*"Our processes are not being maintained or overseen to make sure they're being consistently applied."*

### 4. Burnout from the Quantity and Management of Library-Wide Projects

Staff members, including but not limited to EDI committee volunteers, shared the same interpretation that library-wide projects are often taken on regardless of staff wishes and over-assigned to a small pool of library staff volunteers, with universal staff burnout listed as the single biggest obstacle to successful EDI work. Several comments indicated that while they assumed many of these projects could have been primarily led and undertaken by administrative management, with opportunities for input from staff, in actuality the dynamic is reversed. Most projects are primarily delegated to a volunteer staff to undertake (with a relatively small group of consistent volunteers), but are slowed down by cumbersome administrative management approval processes, and disengagement from other staff. These dynamics contribute to frustration and lower staff morale.

*"Most of our major projects ultimately depend on the same small pool of people leading and completing most of the work, while other staff consistently disengage."*

*"It is impossible for us to create enough space to complete projects, because everything is important and everything needs to happen immediately. Staff are burned out and no one has the bandwidth."*

*"We do not sufficiently conclude one project before starting others. Rather than taking time to research and decide if a request or complaint is worth addressing and if we have the time and resources to do it, projects are started without any real idea of what they will involve."*

*"While we are told we can say no to new projects or programs, oftentimes we are also instructed by administration to work on projects they deem a high priority without asking for feedback about capacity first from staff."*



## 5. Low Psychological Safety Stemming from Lack of Trust

The lack of trust in administrative management was a core theme in the qualitative data, with staff attributing their lack of trust to low transparency, poor responses to conflict or critique, project-related decisions (to start or end projects) and the perceived practice of administrative management making important resourcing or even employment decisions based on their liking or disliking of individual staff members. Few staff members feel safe sharing contrary opinions or critical feedback. Many staff cite their fear of retaliation as a primary reason, with a small number of comments indicating personal experiences of being treated differently by administrative management after sharing critique or engaging in conflict. As a result, conflict or critique tends to occur informally and passively, rather than directly. While members of administrative management are aware of this and indicate their intention to build trust and welcome critique, this intention isn't yet aligned with the existing impact.

*"Many staff fear retaliation for voicing opinions that do not support administrative management's decisions."*

*"Oftentimes critical information is shared too late and once rumors and side discussions have already begun among staff, making it harder to counter misinformation."*

*"Sometimes members of administrative management will voice their opinion, and then ask for a vote. Most people will not feel safe voicing a contrary opinion. How can you get an honest vote if everyone already knows how administrative management wants the vote to go?"*

## 6. Lack of Administrative Management Cohesion

A surprising proportion of staff, including members of administrative management themselves, mentioned the lack of alignment among the administrative management team. Different communication styles, working relationships, and decision-making styles among the team lead to challenges engaging with the staff community at large, with individual staff-related interactions, and with library-wide decision-making. Because staff often have preferences in which members of administrative management they seek out or communicate with, and members of administrative management can be more or less proactive with sharing this information with other administrative managers, the overall communication and decision-making of this team can feel severely impaired.

*"I'm unsure of what is happening with administrative management for them to not all be on the same page when they speak to the rest of the employees. It often sounds like three different answers, or no answers at all."*

*"I can't answer whether I feel respected by administrative management as a whole. I feel varying levels of respect from each one of them."*

*"One member of administrative management has always answered my questions and been helpful for me, but other members of administrative management seemed like they didn't understand things that were their responsibility to, and couldn't answer my questions."*

These qualitative themes, in conjunction with comprehensive quantitative data analysis, were used to fully address and answer the 10 Research Questions.

# Demographic Analysis

This analysis shows the average difference between the highest-scoring group and the lowest-scoring group for each demographic or organizational category. The larger the score, the more inequity. Scores with an asterisk (\*) next to them are not statistically significant (meaning that they are not likely to be reflective of systemic inequities at the library).

Category	Variation	Context
Department	47.8 pts	Worse experiences for Maker Services; better experiences for Administration & Events Production
Race	31.8 pts	Worse experiences for members of 2 or more races; no other systemic racial disparities
Staff/Mgr/Admin Mgmt	31.6 pts	Better experiences for Administrative Management; similarly worse experiences for Managers <sup>1</sup> and Staff
Age	25.9 pts	Worse experiences for staff between 25-34, no other systemic age-related disparities
LGBTQ+	17.8 pts	Worse experiences for LGBTQ+ staff, particularly in Decision-Making, Engagement, and Representation
Tenure*	17.2 pts	
Income*	17 pts	
Disability*	14.6 pts	
Caregiver Status*	10.7 pts	
Hybrid/Remote*	6 pts	
Religion*	5.8	
Gender*	3.8 pts	

**Figure 8. Survey factors, ranked by their impact on inequity at the NPL. Factors marked with an asterisk have point variations that are not statistically significant.**

On average, analyzing any data from two or more groups will reveal some differences. For example, the Decision Making score for White staff is 42 out of 100, and for Asian staff it is 37. While both these scores are low, one is 5 points higher than the other. To determine whether the difference in scores is due to a *systemic inequity* or within the realm of “normal,” Zheng Consulting applies a statistical analysis to all survey scores by demographic traits (gender, race, LGBTQ+ status, disability, caretaker status, religion, income), and organizational traits (department, tenure, manager/non-manager/admin management, and hybrid vs. remote).

<sup>1</sup> Managers refers to anyone at NPL who supervises other staff and is not a member of the Administrative Management team, including supervisors, assistant managers, and managers.

Zheng Consulting found systemic inequities by **department**, with Maker Services having significantly worse experiences than other departments and Administration and Events Production having significantly better experiences than other departments, and by **administrative management status**, with administrative managers having significantly more positive experiences than both managers and non-manager staff.

We also identified isolated inequities by **race**, with members of two or more races having significantly worse experiences than staff from all other racial backgrounds (no disparities were found between any other racial groups), **age**, with staff between 25-34 years old having significantly worse experiences than staff from all other age groups. Finally, we found inconclusive evidence of inequities by **LGBTQ+** status, with the possibility that LGBTQ+ staff have worse experiences than non-LGBTQ+ staff. We explored this issue further in our deep dive.

Following the remainder of our analysis, we were able to conclude that staff do not experience *systemic* mistreatment or difference in their experiences due to their tenure, income, ability, caregiver status, hybrid vs. remote status, religion, or gender. Keep in mind that this analysis aims to identify systemic, library-wide issues. Individual library staff may have experienced mistreatment on the basis of their gender, race, disability, caretaker status, income, LGBTQ+ identity, or age that aren't reflected in this analysis, and if so, ZC unequivocally recommends immediately resolving these incidents.

## Research Questions

Initial data analysis, additional open questions related to scores on the sub-questions within each factor, and focus group feedback led Zheng Consulting developed **10 Research Questions** to guide our data deep-dive:

1. **Why does administrative management have such different experiences compared to other staff?**
2. **How does one's department impact a staff member's experience at the NPL?**
3. **What makes some staff fear retaliation for speaking up?**
4. **Why do some staff feel disrespected or devalued by the library board?**
5. **What prevents projects from being well-resourced and completed in a timely manner?**
6. **What drives how workloads are assigned?**
7. **What prevents the library's internal constituent groups (staff, administrative management, board) from being seen as representative or accountable to the community?**
8. **How does race impact a staff member's experience at the NPL?**
9. **What are the unique needs of patron-facing staff?**
10. **To what extent is there a generational gap at the NPL, and if so, how does it manifest?**

These Research Questions each dive deeper into an aspect of staff experiences integral to fully understanding NPL's EDI baseline. Each question is answered with both quantitative and qualitative data in order to direct the bulk of Zheng Consulting's in depth inquiry, and the process of answering Research Questions enables Zheng Consulting's Key Findings and Strategic Recommendations.

# Research Results

To answer each of the ten research questions, Zheng Consulting conducted additional quantitative and qualitative analysis with all data (including the After Action report from The Blackberry Collection), cross-referencing where possible. Our answers to each research question are below.

## 1. Why do administrative management have such different experiences from other staff?

Across every single high-level factor, administrative management has dramatically more positive experiences, with the largest gaps in Decision Making (gap of 61 points), Voice (gap of 44 points), and Representation (gap of 34 points). These gaps occur consistently across both *personal experience* (meaning that admin management has more positive experiences) and *perception of NPL* (meaning that admin management is more likely to evaluate NPL as a whole more positively). For example, 100% of administrative management believe their total compensation is fair, and 100% of administrative management believe that people from all backgrounds are treated fairly at NPL. By comparison, roughly 60% of non-admin management staff believe their total compensation is fair, and roughly the same percentage believe that people from all backgrounds are treated fairly at NPL.

Factor	Overall	Non-Mgr	Mgr.	A. Mgmt	Factor	Benchmark	Non-Mgr	Mgr.	A. Mgmt
Decision Making	39	38	31	92	Decision Making	72	38	31	92
Fairness	63	61	59	85	Fairness	63	61	59	85
Voice	44	45	31	75	Voice	66	45	31	75
Community	62	64	53	83	Community	70	64	53	83
Enablement	83	85	69	92	Enablement	84	85	69	92
Belonging	68	68	62	81	Belonging	84	68	62	81
Leadership	55	55	51	80	Leadership	75	55	51	80
Engagement	72	72	69	83	Engagement	71	72	69	83
Representation	47	47	43	81	Representation	77	47	43	81
Internal NPL Comparison					Nonprofit 100-200 2023 Benchmark				

Figure 9. Breakdown of factor scores and benchmarks for administrative management, managers, and other staff.

Quantitative data suggests that there are substantial “objective” differences in access to decision-making and autonomy between administrative management and other staff, and possibly as a result, substantial differences in perceptions of fairness, psychological safety, and belonging. Qualitative data indicates that members of administrative management are aware of decision-making challenges, but may be underestimating these challenges’ impact on the workplace, the normality of these challenges, and the concern they cause staff.

As a note, where administrative management and other staff *do not* have substantially different experiences are in workload, burnout, and perception of communications. Administrative managers were just as likely as other staff to report feeling overwhelmed by their workload and burned out as a result, and were similarly critical of the library’s communications being “open, honest, and 2-way.”

## 2. How does one's department impact one's experience at the NPL?

### 2023 Staff EDI Survey

90 (of ) participants from Northbrook Public Library

#### Department

		Overall Northbrook Public L.	Circulation	Adult Services	Technical Services	Youth Services	Administration	Maker Services	Not Specified	Events Production	Marketing and Cc	Maintenance
No. of responses	90	26	17	9	9	8	8	6	3	n/a	n/a	
Decision Making	39%	33	39	52	41	79	17	33	56	n/a	n/a	
Fairness	63%	70	64	64	62	78	35	48	80	n/a	n/a	
Voice	44%	53	39	44	41	76	4	33	78	n/a	n/a	
Community	62%	64	65	58	67	81	44	50	92	n/a	n/a	
Enablement	83%	85	96	78	93	76	63	67	89	n/a	n/a	
Belonging	68%	76	82	53	75	72	41	50	83	n/a	n/a	
Leadership	55%	59	58	49	60	77	38	48	73	n/a	n/a	
Engagement	72%	74	82	63	70	83	58	67	100	n/a	n/a	
Representation	47%	47	52	64	28	88	13	30	92	n/a	n/a	

Last surveyed in August 2023

Powered by  Culture Amp

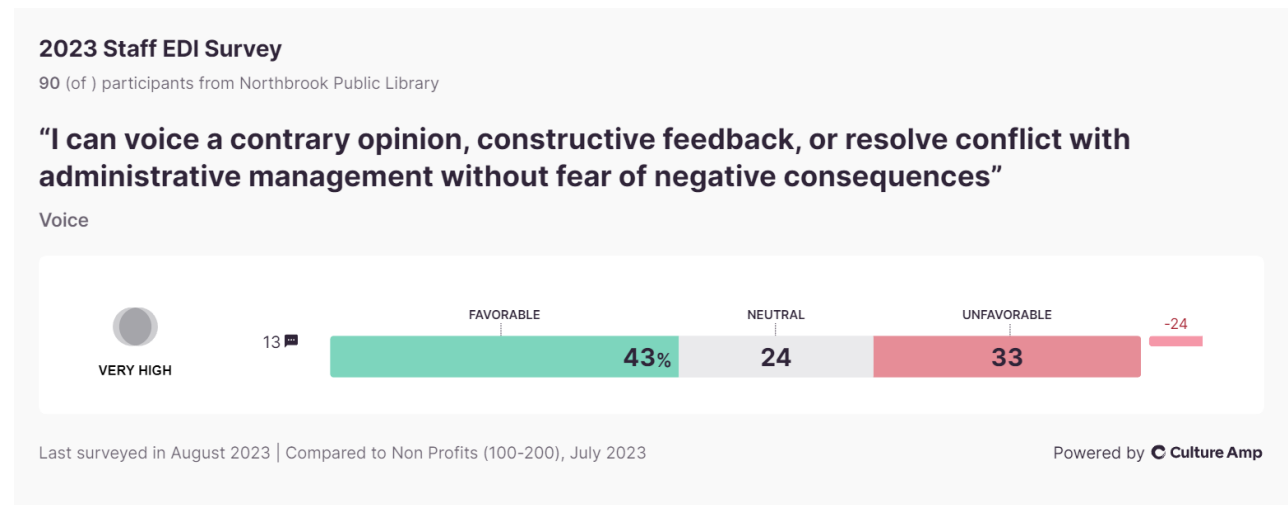
**Figure 10. Score breakdowns for all survey factors by department. Maker Services has notably lower scores, while Administration and Events Production have notably higher scores compared to other departments' whose scores are similar to each other.**

While different departments have different experiences, we found that only a few of these differing experiences are due to specific department-related favoritism or antagonism. **In particular, we found strong inequities affecting Maker Services, which has more negative experiences compared to other departments and critically low scores in 7 out of 9 survey factors.** These negative experiences are attributed to greater barriers targeting members of the department (including longer periods of time required to authorize decisions), perceived retaliation and disrespect, and impositions on staff time from not only administrative management, but other departments.

Most other departments are treated similarly to one another, and experience common challenges including frustrations with how workloads are divided, exclusion from decision-making, and low safety to share critical opinions. Administration and Events Production both have extremely high scores in 8 out of 9 survey factors, but Administration's high scores are likely because it includes the four members of administrative management who have overwhelmingly positive experiences at the library. We were unable to find a clear explanation for Events Production's high scores, and cannot rule out the potential for these scores to be due to chance given the small number of people (3) who shared their experiences via the survey.

While these issues are unlikely to be directly tied to department-wide favoritism or antagonism, the survey showed a number of differences between departments. **Circulation** has a low score in Decision Making driven by low satisfaction with decision-making processes, exclusion from decision making, and exclusion of perspectives. **Adult Services** has the highest scores in Enablement and Engagement and the near highest score in Belonging compared to all other departments, but the lowest scores in evaluation of two-way communication, and low scores in perception of timely project completion. **Youth Services** had the lowest scores in perception of representation, access to information, and perception of timely project completion, but similarly high scores in Enablement and Belonging. **Technical Services** has the highest scores in Decision Making, but the lowest scores in Community, Enablement, Belonging, Leadership, and Engagement, driven by low perceptions of respect, challenges with manager feedback, and lack of support addressing patron conflict.

### 3. What makes some library staff fear retaliation for speaking up?



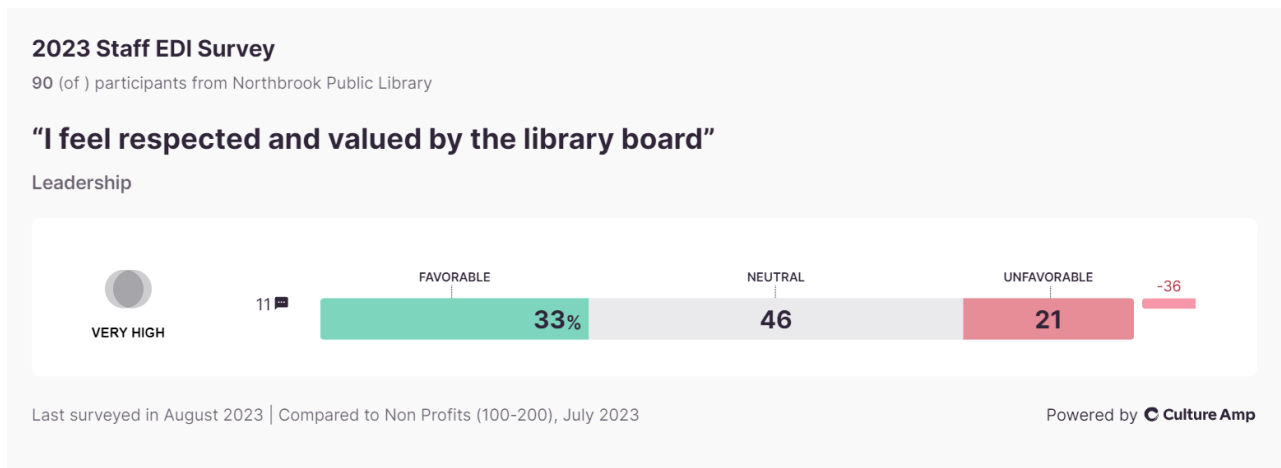
**Figure 11. Score breakdown for "I can voice a contrary opinion, constructive feedback, or resolve conflict with administrative management without fear of negative consequences (43% positive, 24 points below benchmark).**

Only 43% of library staff feel like they can disagree or share constructive feedback with administrative management without fear of retaliation, 24 points below benchmark. This occurs for several reasons:

1. **Library Culture of Conflict Avoidance**, where even between peers the default is often to share feedback indirectly, passively, or not at all.
2. **Low Transparency and Inconsistent Communication**, where the default approach is for administrative management to share little information regarding issues (like sudden terminations), even when it may affect many staff members.
3. **Staff Experiences of Retaliation**, where real incidents of administrative management responding poorly occur, and then become magnified as they are passed around by staff as a warning. This is exacerbated for staff who may already not feel as supported at the library, with lower scores for hybrid staff (18) compared to in-person staff (46), and Asian, Latine, or mixed staff (33, 20, and 20, respectively) compared to White staff (47).

While some attempts from administrative management have been made to repair trust and working relationships, these efforts have not yet succeeded.

#### 4. Why do staff feel disrespected or devalued by the library board?



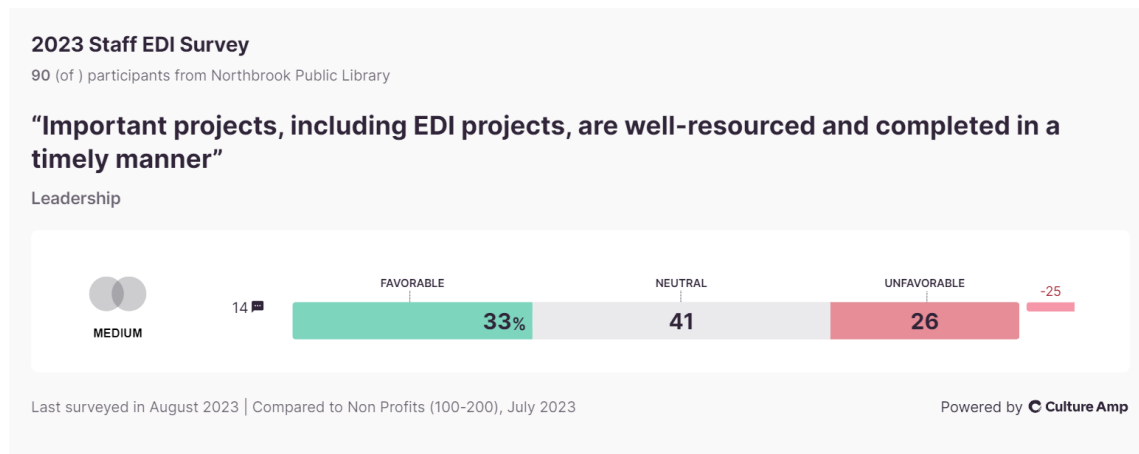
**Figure 12. Score breakdown for "I feel respected and valued by the library board (33% positive, 36 points below benchmark).**

In general, only 33% of staff actively feel respected and valued by the library board, with 46% of staff not having enough of a relationship with the board to answer positively or negatively, and 21% of staff feeling actively disrespected and devalued by the board. This question had the largest neutral scores out of all the survey questions, likely because many staff don't have a relationship with the board or board members, and don't expect to have such a relationship.

However, we found that the negative scores are likely tied to specific interactions staff members have witnessed during streamed board meetings, involving individual board members making disrespectful comments about staff members or marginalized groups. These incidents may be shared by staff who, in looking for support and affirmation from the board, were concerned that they found the opposite.

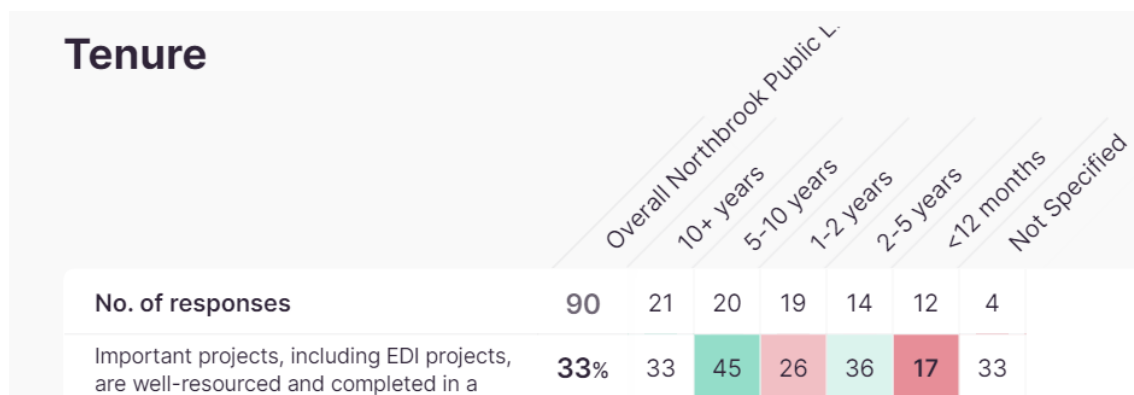
We also found that some frustration directed at the board related to staff feeling like there wasn't a strong advocate for staff during board meetings, and no one during board meetings that actively pushed back when disrespectful comments are made about staff members.

## 5. What prevents projects from being well-resourced and completed in a timely manner?



**Figure 13. Score breakdown for “Important projects, including EDI projects, are well-resourced and completed in a timely manner” (33% positive, 25 points below benchmark).**

Perceptions of project resourcing and timeliness are split dramatically by role, with 29% of non-management staff and 20% of managers feeling positively, but 100% of administrative management feeling positively. Because some staff members remarked that slow project completion times were normal for library environments, we conducted an additional analysis into tenure, expecting that if mismatched expectations were the issue, people with a longer tenure at Northbrook would feel more positively about project resources and timelines.

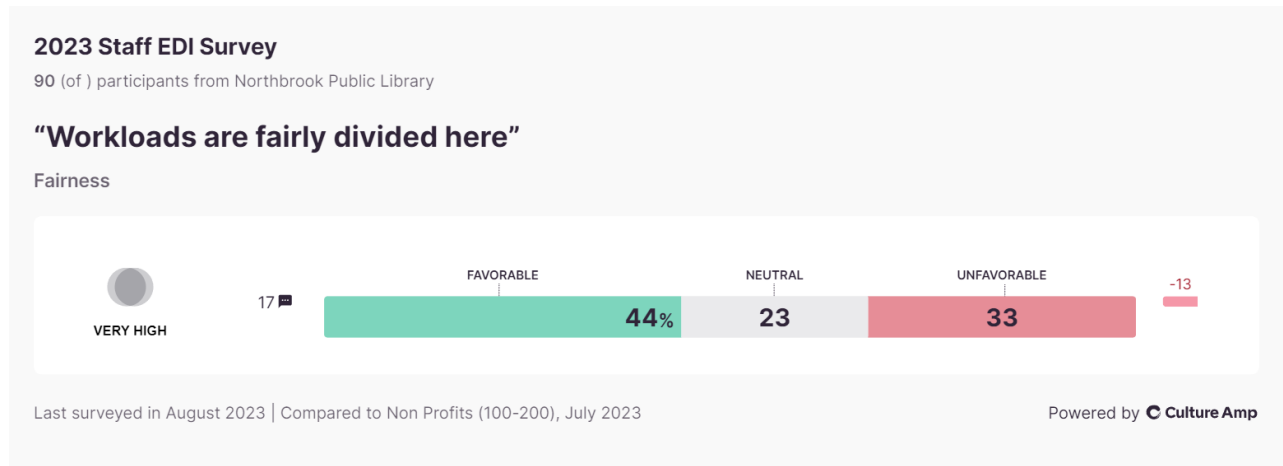


**Figure 14. Score breakdown for “Important projects, including EDI projects, are well-resourced and completed in a timely manner” by tenure. All scores are under 50%.**

Notably, while all groups scored under 50—indicating that project resourcing and timeliness was perceived to be an issue by staff of every tenure level—staff who have worked at the library for less than 2 years have the lowest scores. This suggests that both interpretations hold weight: that some newer staff’s expectations may be higher for how long library-wide projects may take, but at the same time, the challenges that all staff indicate are very much real. The high volume of library-wide projects, the assignment of projects despite staff capacity or interest, the overwork of a small pool of the same staff volunteers, the high delegation of project minutiae to volunteers, and the heavy requirement of administrative management approval and oversight all contribute to the problem. .



## 6. What drives how workloads are assigned?



**Figure 15. Score breakdown for “workloads are fairly divided here” (44% positive, 13 points below benchmark).**

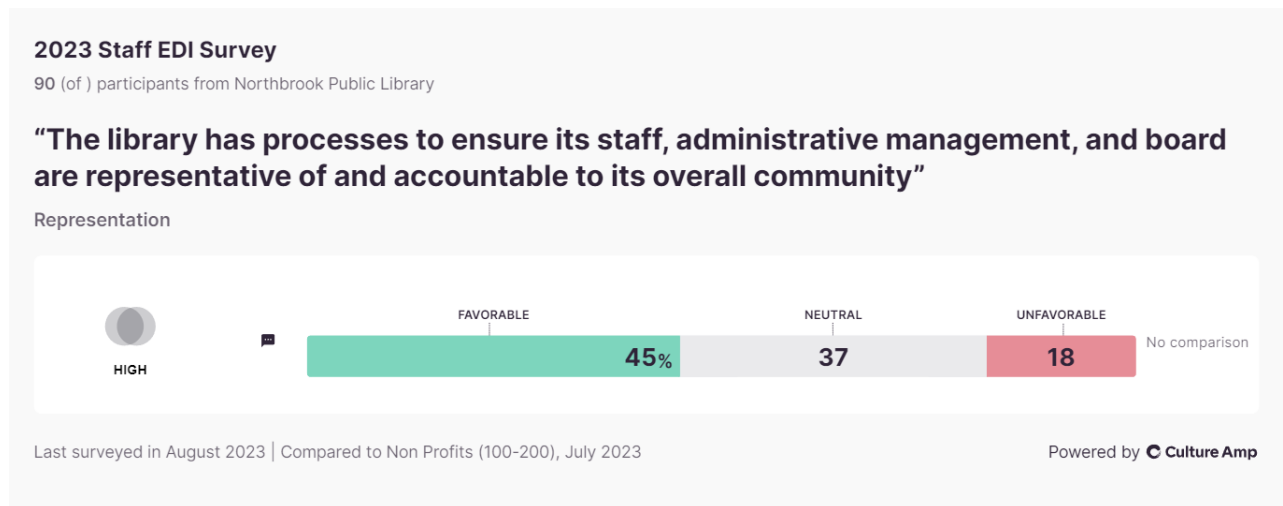
The low scores for workload fairness across all dimensions—whether department, tenure, administrative management status, in-person vs. hybrid, status, etc.—suggests that this is a structural issue across the library. The only organizational factor that impacts workload assignment is **department**, with Maker Services most likely to feel like their workloads are unfair. Interestingly, **income** is also a determining factor in the perception of a fair workload, with those earning less than \$20,000 dollars a year with the highest perception of fairness. This suggests that workloads are broadly perceived as unfair by paid, full-time staff across the entire library.

From qualitative data, we found that staff had several related interpretations for how workloads are assigned. These include the assertions that:

- A. While all managers and departments can be assigned heavy workloads, workloads, resourcing, and autonomy varies by managers’ and departments’ working relationships with administrative management
- B. While within-department workloads are relatively equitable, library-wide projects involving committees and administrative management participation are highly work intensive
- C. Where there is volunteer work not directly related to people’s roles, the same small group of people tends to volunteer for taking it on, often out of a belief that “if I don’t do it, no one will.”
- D. When volunteers have demonstrated that they can perform this work, they can be formally or informally assigned to do similar work in the future

Taken together, this suggests that while most managers are able to equitably divide work among their teams, not all managers are assigned the same quantity of work, are given the same resourcing/staffing available to complete, or are granted the decision-making autonomy to choose how the work happens. On top of this, when library-wide projects occur, a relatively small group of overworked staff tends to end up working on them—whether due to being selected, volunteering, or being peer pressured—resulting in highly inequitable distribution of work across the library.

## 7. What prevents the library's internal constituent groups from being representative and accountable to the community?



**Figure 16. Score breakdown for “the library has processes to ensure its staff, administrative management, and board are representative of and accountable to its overall community” (45% positive).**

While the library's racial demographic numbers roughly reflect the local community (Northbrook's racial demographics are roughly 79% White, 15% Asian, and 3% Latine/Hispanic, while the library staff population indicated by the survey is roughly 75% White, 10% Asian, and 6% Latine/Hispanic), and the library has many LGBTQ+ staff, a large proportion of staff recognize that the library is not yet representative and accountable to the community, and identify the importance of racial equity. This heightened awareness may be due to highly salient stories about negative interactions with NPL patrons who have made disparaging comments about historically underrepresented groups.

Where staff from marginalized groups identify issues is not only in the overall numbers of staff from marginalized communities, but also the relatively low access to decision-making that staff from these communities experience, the low representation of staff from marginalized communities in leadership positions, the perception that internal library systems (like promotion and hiring) are inequitable, and the concern across many staff that the administrative management and the board are not sufficiently acting with marginalized staff concerns in mind. Staff want not only to see people like them represented within the library, but have their needs met as a result of decisions made with their feedback and input.

## 8. How does race impact a staff member's experience at the NPL?

		Overall Northbrook Public L	White	East Asian, Sou...	Two or more ra...	Latine or Non-...	Not Specified
No. of responses	90	67	9	5	5		
Decision Making	39%	42	37	20	27		
Fairness	63%	67	47	36	80		
Voice	44%	46	44	7	40		
Community	62%	64	58	40	75		
Enablement	83%	83	81	80	93		
Belonging	68%	72	61	45	75		
Leadership	55%	57	58	32	56		
Engagement	72%	75	74	40	80		
Representation	47%	51	47	0	60		

**Figure 17. Score breakdown for all survey factors by race.**

Statistical analysis suggests that there are unlikely to be systemic differences in experiences for White, Asian, or Latine/Hispanic staff, given the similarity of scores across different factors. For mixed or multiracial staff, whose worse experiences were statistically significant, we found similar concerns to those that other staff shared around decision making, input and voice, and higher standards regarding what a safe and representative library might look like.

Even though there may not be systemic differences in staff experiences by race, we found that a consistent concern was the presence of racial acts of exclusion (also known as microaggressions) from other staff and patrons. On the staff side, the incidents staff reported tended to involve staff members minimizing the existence or impact of racism and the importance of EDI efforts. Several survey comments corroborated this, with some expressing that EDI was a waste of time and effort and others minimizing the need for this work. While only a small number of comments referred to these outlier incidents, their impact on staff experiences can be large. Many more comments noted that while challenges remain, the majority of NPL staff are making efforts to treat all staff fairly and equitably.

## 9. What are the unique needs of patron-facing staff?

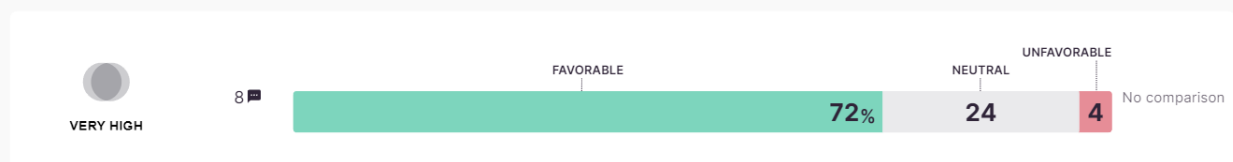
Patron-facing staff mentioned several instances where NPL patrons have made disparaging comments about marginalized groups or library events related to EDI. Notably, despite some qualitative comments mentioning that patron-facing staff feel actively unsupported, many other comments mention the opposite, and quantitative data reflects this: only 4% of survey respondents feel actively unsupported.

### 2023 Staff EDI Survey

90 (of ) participants from Northbrook Public Library

#### "I feel supported in addressing and resolving conflict with patrons, when it occurs"

Community



Last surveyed in August 2023 | Compared to Non Profits (100-200), July 2023

Powered by **Culture Amp**

**Figure 18. Score breakdown for the question, "I feel supported in addressing and resolving conflict with patrons, when it occurs" (72% positive, no benchmark).**

Where patron-facing staff do mention consistent needs, they refer to wanting more formal support from administrative management—not in helping to resolve individual patron incidents, but in establishing things like a formal library-wide statement committing to EDI that can be referenced by staff, patron policies, and expectations for when to escalate their response to patron behavior.

## 10. To what extent is there a generational gap at the NPL, and if so, how does it manifest?

One assertion that came up several times in survey responses was that there is a gap in expectations and experiences related to age or generation. To understand whether this was the case, we analyzed survey scores by age and found that, excepting staff between 18-24 (many of whom are part-time workers), staff under 35 tend to have worse experiences, particularly related to **Voice, Belonging, Engagement, and Representation**.

Age		Overall Northbrook Public Library								Non Profits (100-200), July							
		35 - 44	25 - 34	55 - 64	45 - 54	18 - 24	65+			35 - 44	25 - 34	55 - 64	45 - 54	18 - 24	65+		
No. of responses		90	19	19	14	12	12	9	5	90	19	19	14	12	12	9	5
Decision Making	39%	40	30	43	56	28	52			57%	40	30	43	56	28	52	
Fairness	63%	65	52	63	73	68	70			62%	65	52	63	73	68	70	
Voice	44%	43	25	48	58	53	63			62%	43	25	48	58	53	63	
Community	62%	62	57	63	73	65	67			n/a	62	57	63	73	65	67	
Enablement	83%	86	75	83	81	97	93			81%	86	75	83	81	97	93	
Belonging	68%	76	55	61	73	77	83			79%	76	55	61	73	77	83	
Leadership	55%	59	47	56	67	48	71			71%	59	47	56	67	48	71	
Engagement	72%	79	54	76	86	75	81			70%	79	54	76	86	75	81	
Representation	47%	56	24	54	65	40	72			n/a	56	24	54	65	40	72	

**Figure 19. Score breakdown for all survey factors, by age, comparing to overall library scores on left, and benchmark, on right.**

This age cohort expects the library to take more effort to include staff opinions, seek and use staff feedback, recognize the contributions of individual staff members, and achieve EDI outcomes. They have lower tolerance for what other staff members may view as common issues within libraries, like slow decision-making, but also may be more willing to share feedback.

It is important to note that while other age cohorts may have more positive scores, for most survey factors these scores are still below benchmark. Our interpretation is not that other age cohorts are satisfied with the NPL, but rather that the 25-34 age cohort feels the most strongly toward issues that everyone shares.

# Recommendations

This section sums up Zheng Consulting's recommendations based on our analysis of the Northbrook Public Library's scores on the 2023 Baseline EDI survey. While these recommendations may not entirely address every EDI challenge or inequity identified, we believe that these are actions that will have the most impact, and can be followed through on within a year to achieve measurable progress. In crafting these recommendations, we also incorporated the suggestions from The Blackberry Collection, and staff recommendations for taking action as shared through the survey.

**Recommendation #1: The library should seek staff feedback on library-wide projects and pause the projects with the worst impact:effort ratio as soon as it is able to, for at least one year.**

One of the most consistent points of feedback received is that staff are doing too much, and that staff across the library are struggling with overwork and burnout. Given the library's trend of taking on more and more "highly urgent, highly important" projects, the simplest way to reduce overwork and burnout is to reverse this trend.

Instead, the library should put in the effort to prioritize which of its projects are genuinely the most urgent and important, and recommit to a smaller set of projects that are less likely to overwhelm staff. To figure out these priorities, staff should be surveyed—and to ensure that staff time and effort in sharing their feedback is respected, administrative management must commit beforehand to relinquishing control over which projects the library will eventually decide on, and which it will pause.

We recommend asking staff to evaluate every existing (and proposed) project by its perceived impact and the perceived effort it will take to achieve. Projects can be ranked according to their effort-to-impact ratio, with the bottom half ranked projects paused for a year. This process can also be an opportunity for administrative management to pilot a different way of making decisions, in which staff have more feedback.

**Recommendation #2: The library should formalize and communicate the decision-making roles and responsibilities of different library constituents.**

Many members of staff have expressed confusion and frustration with the different roles and responsibilities that non-manager staff, managers, individual members of administrative management, administrative management more generally, and the board have in ensuring the operation and decision-making around the library. Staff concern is both that these responsibilities are not consistent, and also that some staff's de facto role and responsibility are not aligned with their intended role and responsibility.

HR should take the lead in formally documenting and communicating this information to staff, and working with all staff—including members of administrative management—to assess whether de facto decision-making processes or staff responsibilities align with expectations, and if they do not, work together with individual staff members to make their roles equitable. This recommendation should be the first step in a larger effort to implement more transparent and consistent HR processes across the library, to make the staff experience more consistent.

**Recommendation #3: The library should invest in management, feedback, and communication upskilling for administrative management.**

While not every critical comment was actionable, many comments referred directly to ways in which administrative management can do better at communicating transparently, pushing decision-making down where possible while making decisive top-down decisions where necessary, and giving and receiving potentially critical feedback. Our assessment confirmed that these are strong areas for growth for administrative management, and we recommend that administrative management seek out evidence-based management and communication training to improve their skills.

To ensure that this investment results in changed behavior, accountability for learning, and improvement, we recommend that specific questions be added to their existing performance evaluation, allowing others to assess their improvement, and that the board approves an incentive plan tying higher scores on the 2024 EDI survey to a 5% of base salary bonus, greater vacation time, or an equivalent incentive.

We make this recommendation in recognition that it is ultimately every staff member's responsibility to own their responsibilities within their role, and communicating, collaborating, and leading successfully is the responsibility of administrative management. Where additional resources are needed to upskill administrative management we recommend they be procured, but accountability lies with administrative management to demonstrate growth and success.

**Recommendation #4: The library should reassess and redistribute EDI-related workstreams between the volunteer EDI committee, managers, and administrative management, with HR and managers taking a greater role in the process.**

The more siloed and volunteer-driven EDI work, the greater the risk of burnout and the lower the likelihood of integration with an organization. If EDI is a priority for the NPL, we strongly recommend that key partners, including administrative management, the EDI committee, and all department managers, come together to reassess the EDI work to be done and redistribute it where needed to share the responsibility. For example, the EDI committee can take on EDI event programming, managers can take on integrating EDI into their departmental work, and administrative management can take on EDI-related library-wide policies, processes, and culture.

To support this, we recommend that the NPL also use this opportunity to rethink how EDI work is undertaken at the library. Our findings suggest that EDI committee members want the opportunity to give specific feedback on library-wide EDI projects (like an advisory board would), without the responsibility to undertake these projects on their own, and tend to have interest and capacity in volunteer activities like cultural events.

To enable this shift, a far greater portion of EDI work at the library should become led by administrative management and HR, with the EDI committee in an advisor role. HR can and should be the primary leader in building equitable and inclusive policies and processes, as well as identifying and administering learning and development to staff, and we also recommend ensuring that HR is resourced and supported to do so—potentially by hiring another HR specialist to assist.

**Recommendation #5: The library should organize and engage in regular staff dialogues with peer institutions.**

Finally, we recommend that the library organize recurring facilitated dialogues with other local library staff facing similar challenges, at least twice a year and ideally once a quarter. These facilitated dialogues can touch on topics including staff wellness, burnout prevention, EDI initiatives, and patron-related best practices, and be a valuable forum for staff to build community, share and gain perspectives on EDI and related work, and develop in their roles.

We make this recommendation to help staff feel a greater sense of connection with their roles and their profession, to support staff mental health and resilience navigating through the sociopolitical tension of the moment, and as a learning and development opportunity. We recommend at least the first few dialogues (if not all of them) consider bringing together administrative management from both libraries for their own conversation separate from the conversation non-administrative management staff have, then the staff from each respective library reconvening to share learning afterwards.



# Conclusion

The vast majority of staff—83%—identify the Northbrook Public Library as a great place to work. The library is highly effective at supporting staff to do their jobs, has competent department managers that ensure high performance, and offers more opportunities than peer institutions. Its EDI challenges and areas to grow are primarily in its decision making, communication, and workload division. Quantitative and qualitative data support the conclusion that the library's existing processes can be opaque, passive, reactive, and inequitable, resulting in a strong divide between administrative management and staff.

Successful progress for the library will require a careful balance between recognizing staff excitement for EDI work and ensuring that the work itself respects the limited capacity available at present. We believe that our recommendations, if followed through, strike that balance and will create meaningful impact within a year's time. The goal is not only to reduce some of the inequities we identified, but also make the overall library experience more positive for all staff. We hope this report has helped highlight some of the complex strengths and weaknesses for the library at present, and illuminated a path forward to make tangible progress.

**Zheng Consulting**

Lily Zheng  
Alexis Victor

# Appendix

## On Data and Statistical Significance

Almost all quantitative data contains variation. On average, women's scores may be different from men's scores, for example. To identify whether this variation is *meaningful*, and likely the result of a systemic difference in experiences (rather than random chance or isolated individual experiences), Zheng Consulting conducts statistical analyses on disaggregated survey scores. We use a common standard in quantitative research called a *p-value*, which is a number between 0 and 1. If the p-value from our analyses is *.05 or lower*, we can conclude that the difference isn't a coincidence and that there is a strong possibility for a disparity. If the p-value is *between .05 and .10*, we conclude that there is a weak possibility for a disparity. If the p-value is *higher than .10*, we cannot confidently conclude that there is a disparity.

Our preliminary analysis aimed to identify statistically significant variation on the basis of demographic traits (gender, race, LGBTQ+ status, disability, caretaker status, religion, income), and organizational traits (department, tenure, manager/non-manager/admin management, and hybrid vs. remote). We found the following:

- There is not likely to be a library-wide gender disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide disability disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide caretaker status disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide class (income) disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide age/generational disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide tenure disparity. (p-value > .10)
- There is not likely to be a library-wide hybrid vs. remote disparity. (p-value > .10)

**There is strong evidence for a library-wide departmental disparity negatively affecting Maker Services (p-value <.05), and weak evidence for a library-wide departmental disparity positively affecting Administration and Events Production. (p-value < .10)**

**There is strong evidence for a library-wide leadership role disparity positively affecting administrative management, compared to managers and non-manager staff. (p-value <.05)**

**There is strong evidence for a library-wide racial disparity negatively affecting members of two or more races. (p-value < .05)**

**There is inconclusive evidence for a library-wide LGBTQ+ disparity negatively affecting members of the LGBTQ+ community. (p-value ~.10)**

## On Benchmarks

The CultureAmp platform includes hundreds of built-in benchmarks. While no library-specific benchmark exists, Zheng Consulting considered three benchmarks (Information Services, July 2023, Non Profits (100-200), July 2023, and Government North America 2022). All benchmarks had similar scores, and ZC chose the benchmark that seemed to offer the most useful comparisons for the NPL.