

# Patron Satisfaction Survey 2016

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## Executive Summary

At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees and the Long Range Planning Committee, the Lake Bluff Public Library conducted a Patron Satisfaction survey from January 4, 2016 to April 1, 2016. The goals of the survey can be summarized as follows:

- Identify patron needs and interests
- Assess patron satisfaction with existing services and facilities
- Identify areas of service that may be improved in order to more effectively meet patron needs
- Compare the results of the 2016 Patron Satisfaction Survey to the results of the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey.

Feedback about the Library was largely positive. Respondents generally felt that the Library provides excellent service given its size and limitations. As in the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, customer service received the highest satisfaction rating and the rating of the Library as a whole captured the second highest rating.

Respondent feedback indicated lower levels of overall satisfaction with digital resources, Library programming, and the Library website. However, the satisfaction rating for both digital resources and Library programming increased significantly since 2013-2014, with digital resources representing the largest increase in satisfaction in the entire survey.

Although the Library continues to do a good job meeting broader community needs, survey feedback highlighted several areas in need of improvement, many of which are caused by the Library building. Limited collection size, unappealing aesthetics, and a lack of needed features or services are problems that result in lowered expectations and can motivate respondents to use other libraries in lieu of Lake Bluff.

The Library must continue efforts to improve its services and address underlying problems that prevent it from meeting community needs. Continued commitment to evaluation and innovation will be indispensable to the success of these endeavors.

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## 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey

### Findings

The last Patron Satisfaction Survey was conducted from December 5, 2013 through February 7, 2014. Survey data showed generally positive assessments of the Library overall, with customer service receiving the highest rating (4.66 out of 5). The Survey also identified the following areas for improvement:

- Digital Resources
- Library Programming
- Library Website
- Physical Collection/Library Building

The full report for the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey is available online at [http://www.lakeblufflibrary.org/pdf/Patron Satisfaction Survey 2013-2014.pdf](http://www.lakeblufflibrary.org/pdf/Patron%20Satisfaction%20Survey%202013-2014.pdf).

### Follow-up Actions & Other Changes

The following is a brief summary of some of the follow-up actions and other significant changes that occurred following the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey:

- When the Survey opened, the Library was in the process of upgrading the Integrated Library System (ILS) from TLC to Sierra. The Library went live with the new ILS in late March 2014.
  - The Library had access to approximately 10 databases during the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey. In June of 2014, streaming videos were added to the Overdrive collection. In July of 2014, the Library added access to 21 databases from EBSCO. The Library added a subscription to Lynda.com in April 2015. As of this writing, the Library has access to 32 databases.
  - In the fall of 2014, the Friends of the Lake Bluff Library provided the Library with funds for purchasing tablets, eReaders, and a laptop for use in library programs and staff training. The addition of this equipment improved the quality of staff training and instructional technology programs.
  - At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees, the Library began a building study in the summer of 2014. The study was conducted by Engberg Anderson, an architectural firm with expertise in evaluating library buildings. The goal of the study was to find out how the Library is currently using its space and how it might improve its space usage in order to more effectively serve the public. A brief summary of the study's findings is as follows:
    - The Library benefits and suffers from its small scale.
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- All spaces are too small for their current levels of use.
- The building's strategic deficits are driven by its small scale and fragmented form.
- All of the above characteristics result in a space that is functionally and aesthetically challenged.

The building study proposed several different plans to address problems with the existing space. Plan 3+, which includes an addition to the building and improvements to the existing space, was recommended by the Building and Grounds Committee, the full Library Board, and the Library Staff as the best strategic option. At present, the Library does not have enough funds in reserve to complete this project and funding it through a referendum or property tax dollars is not feasible at this time. The Board is currently investigating alternate funding models (including fundraising and grants) and evaluating what improvements can be made with existing resources.

- In March of 2015, the audiobook section was shifted in order to create additional space for the TV Series, Blu-rays, and Foreign Film collections.
  - In April of 2015, parts of the second floor were reconfigured and reorganized to make better use of the space. The Adult Non-Fiction collection was shifted and existing shelving units were moved to create additional space for tables and chairs. The Teen and Graphic Novel collections were moved from their locations on the first floor to larger shelf space upstairs. Adult Fiction was expanded into the shelves formerly occupied by Teen and Graphic Novels. The Friends of the Library donated funds to purchase new tables and chairs for this space.
  - In October of 2015, the Library signed an Intergovernmental Agreement with District 65. Under the terms of this agreement, the Library is able to offer free Lake Bluff Library cards to current District 65 students who reside at eligible unincorporated properties. This agreement facilitates closer collaboration between the Library and the District 65, and will further enrich the education of District 65 students. More detailed information on this program is available at <http://www.lakeblufflibrary.org/d65studentcards.html>.
  - A full redesign of the Library website has not yet been accomplished due to other project timelines. However, the web development team has worked on making incremental changes to the appearance and functionality of the Library website. This includes:
    - Creating About Us and Library Profile & Important Documents pages and a Return on Investment calculator.
    - Major revisions to the appearance, content, and functionality of the Services, Board, FOIA/OMA, and Contact pages.
    - Adjusting the appearance of the main site header.
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- Adding audit reports, budget, usage statistics, and other documents to increase transparency.
  - Adding a News blog and Fun at the Library (program photos) to the homepage.
  - Creating a photo calendar for Library programs for adults, teens, and children.
  - Improvements to internal website maintenance procedures, resulting in more streamlined and timely updates.
  - Since the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, the Library has expanded some staff responsibilities to increase community engagement, outreach, and programming efforts. This has resulted in new programs such as Trivia Night @ Lake Bluff Brewing Company and Beyond the Book @ Wisma, as well as participation in events such as the Farmer's Market, the Arts Festival, and the Lake County Fair.
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## Methodology

In order to provide comparable data, the 2016 Patron Satisfaction Survey asked the same questions as the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, with some minor edits for clarity or accuracy. Survey questions were reviewed by Tim Kregor (Library Trustee), Eric Bailey (Library Director), and Martha Cordeniz O'Hara (Head of Adult Services) prior to survey publication. Survey questions were divided into five general sections: Library building and physical materials, digital resources, programming, overall ratings, and demographics. Survey respondents were asked to describe various aspects of their Library usage and rate their satisfaction with different services. Questions were mostly multiple-choice, with some free response opportunities.

The survey was available online on the Library website from January 4, 2016 to April 1, 2016. The survey was promoted on the Library website, in the print newsletter, in multiple editions of the eNewsletter, at library programs, and on signs throughout the Library. Library staff also promoted the survey at the front desk. All respondents were given the opportunity to enter an optional raffle for a \$100 Amazon Gift Card at the end of the survey. Regardless of raffle participation, survey responses were confidential and anonymous.

Survey responses were counted, summarized, and analyzed by staff members Martha O'Hara and Eric Bailey. Questions about the survey data, analyses, and recommendations should be directed to Eric Bailey via phone (847-234-2540) or email ([ebailey@lakeblufflibrary.org](mailto:ebailey@lakeblufflibrary.org)).

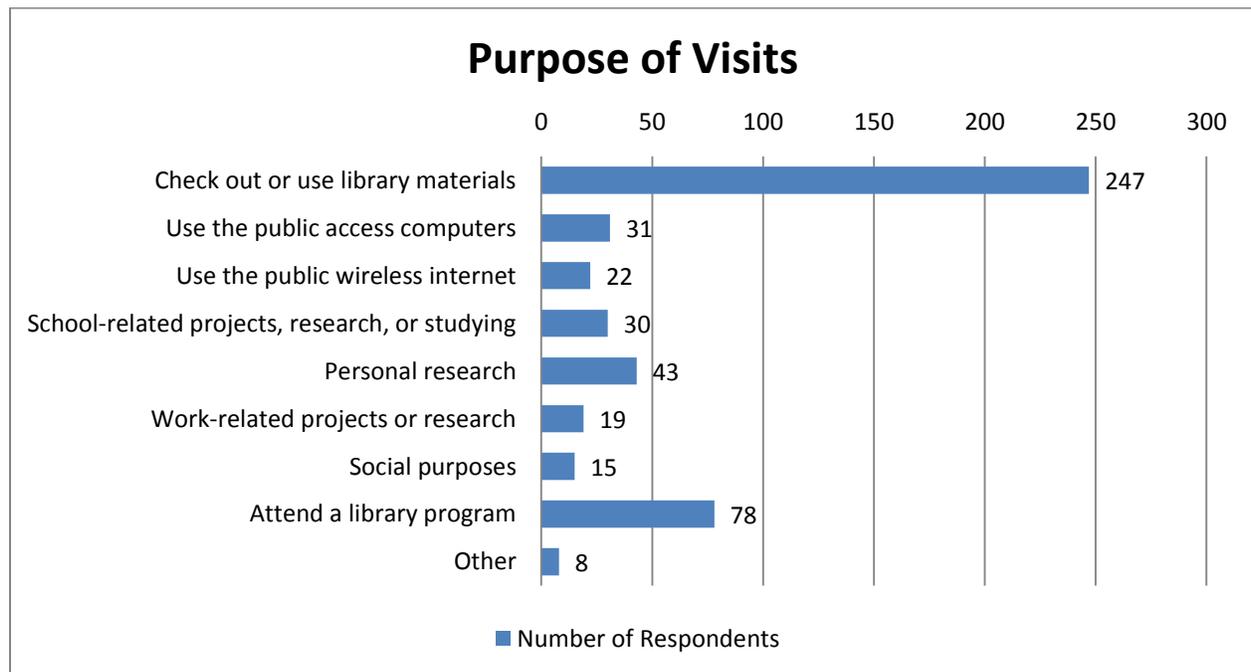
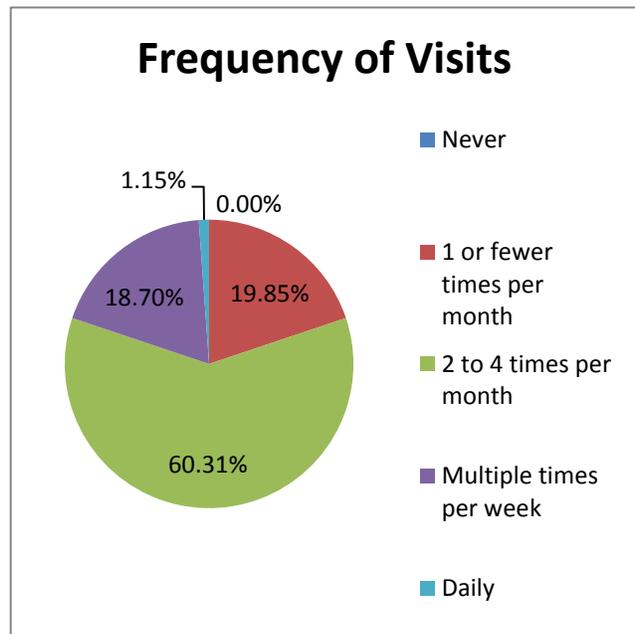
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## Findings

### Library Building

#### Usage

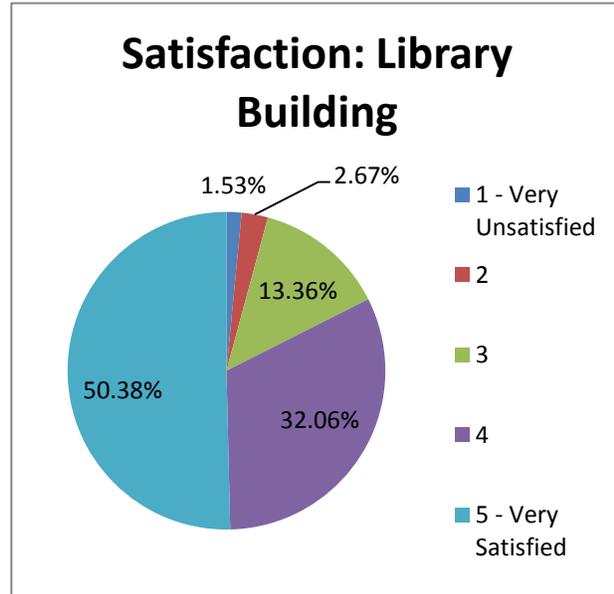
A majority of respondents (60.31 percent) continue to visit the Library 2 to 4 times per month. Respondents primarily visit the Library to check out materials (94.27 percent), attend a Library program (29.77 percent), or to conduct personal research (16.41 percent). Smaller percentages visit the Library to use the public access computers (11.83 percent), work on school-related projects, research, or studying (11.45 percent), and to use the public wireless internet (8.40 percent).



#### Satisfaction

The Library building received an average satisfaction rating of 4.27 out of 5, with 4.20 percent of users reporting low levels of satisfaction. In addition to inadequate facilities and unappealing aesthetics, the building’s lack of comfort emerged as a primary reason for low satisfaction. When asked directly about the library’s space, most respondents (69.47 percent) were satisfied with the amount of space in the

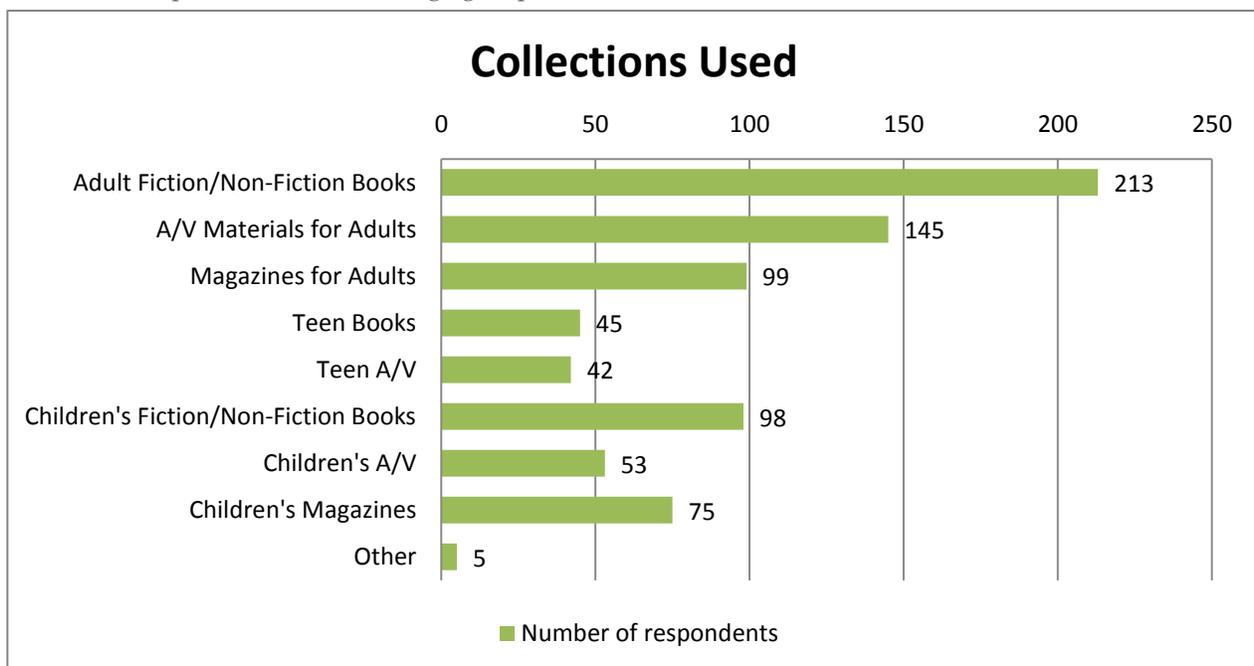
Library; 30.53 percent of respondents stated that the Library needed more space. Respondents who believe the Library needs additional space ranked more seating, quiet study space, additional space for technology, and a dedicated teen space as the most important additions to the Library. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the Library’s current operating hours, 76.34 percent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with current operating hours; 23.66 percent of respondents wanted the Library to expand its hours. Additional evening hours on weeknights was the most requested change to Library hours.

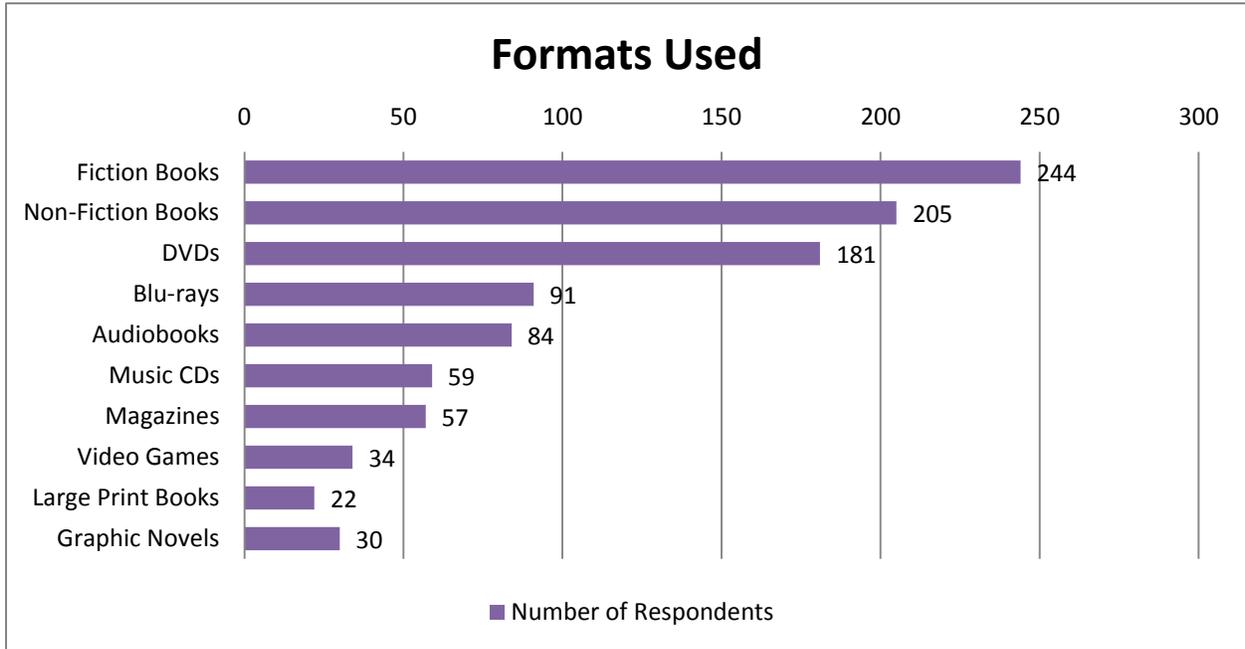


## Physical Materials

### Usage

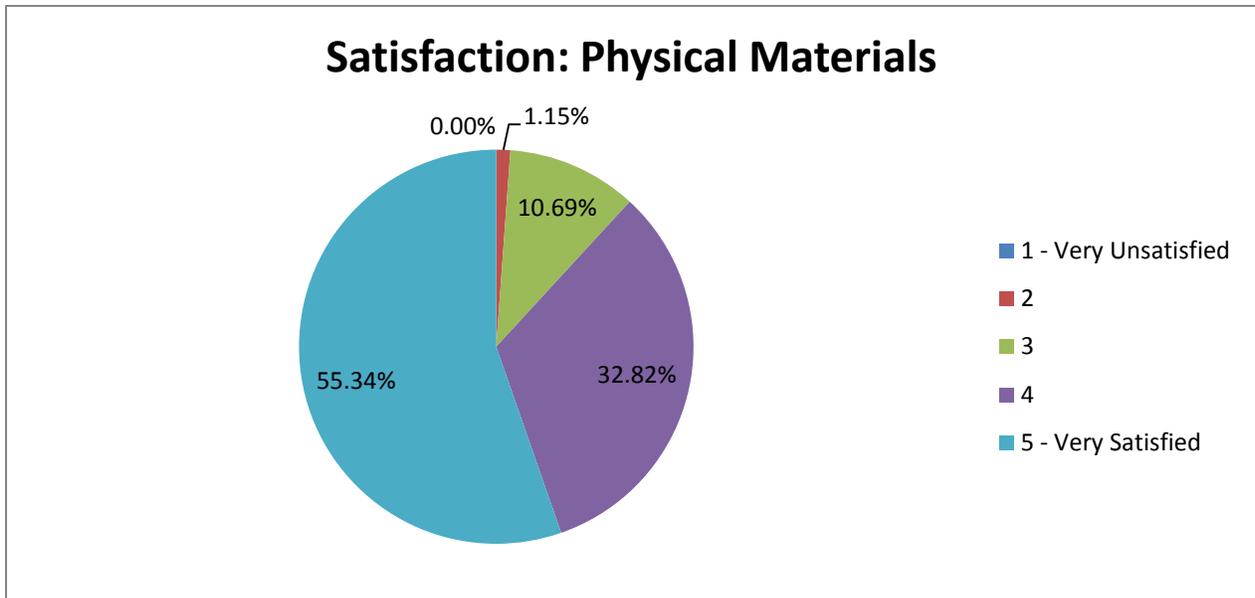
A majority of respondents reported visiting adult collections, with adult fiction and non-fiction books (81.30 percent) and adult A/V (55.34 percent) representing the most usage. The most popular youth collections were children’s fiction and non-fiction books (37.40 percent), children’s magazines (28.63 percent), and children’s A/V (20.23 percent). 39.69 percent of respondents visit the children’s department; 83.65 percent of these respondents report visiting the children’s department with their child or a child in their care. Popular formats for all age groups were fiction books, non-fiction books, and DVDs.





### Satisfaction

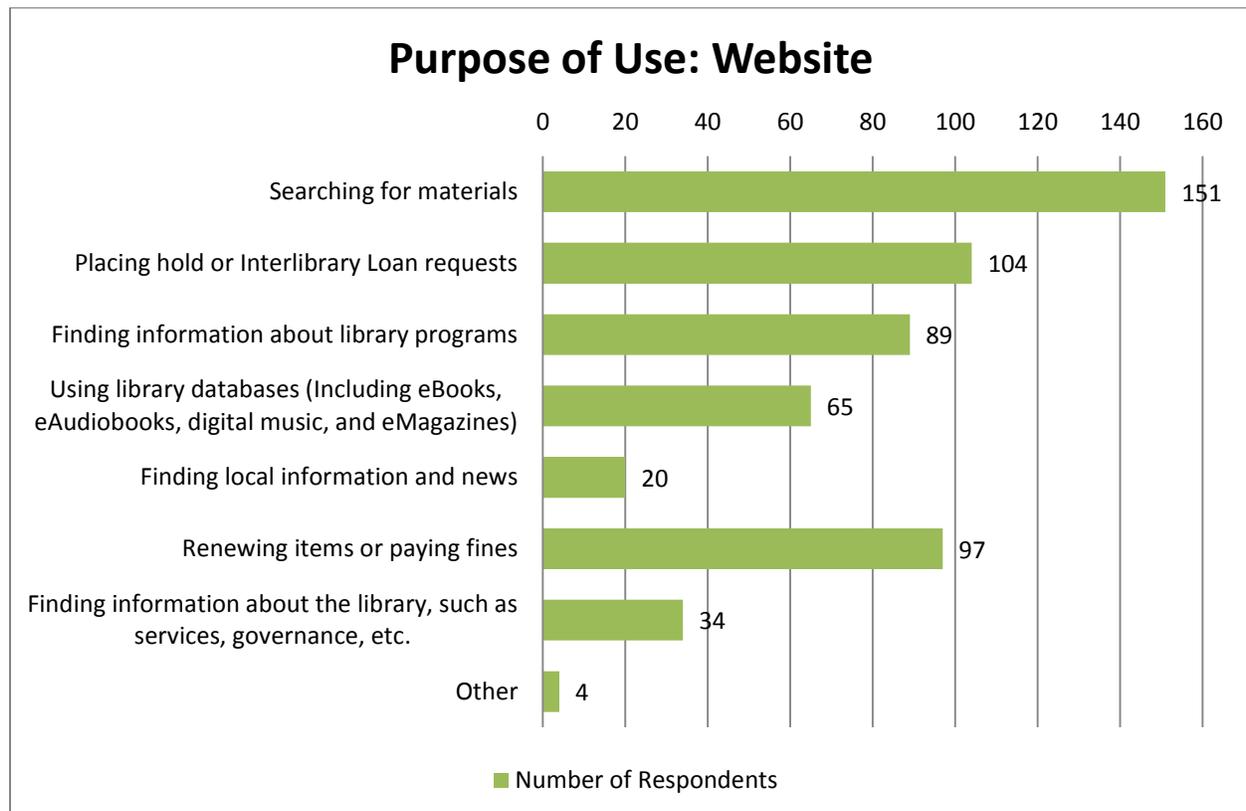
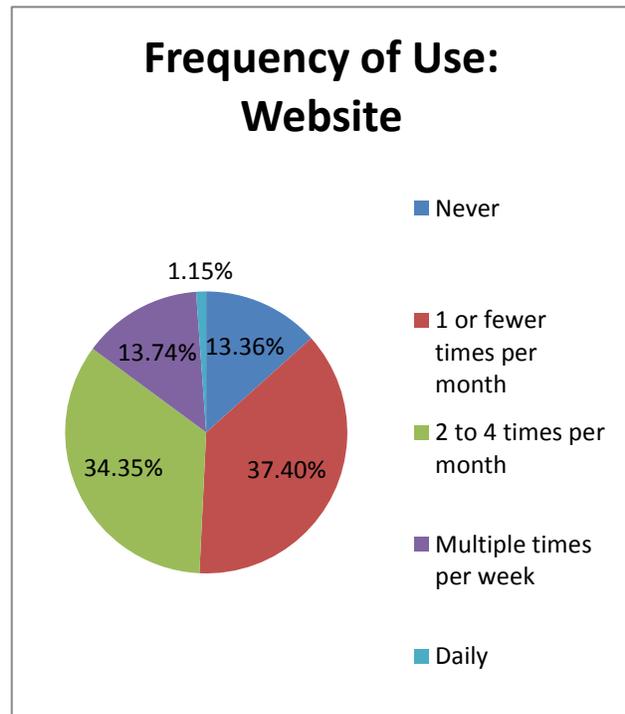
The Library’s physical materials received an average satisfaction rating of 4.42 out of 5, with 1.15 percent of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction. The size of the Library’s collection was the primary reason for low satisfaction; lack of variety and not enough copies of popular items were also concerns.



## Library Website

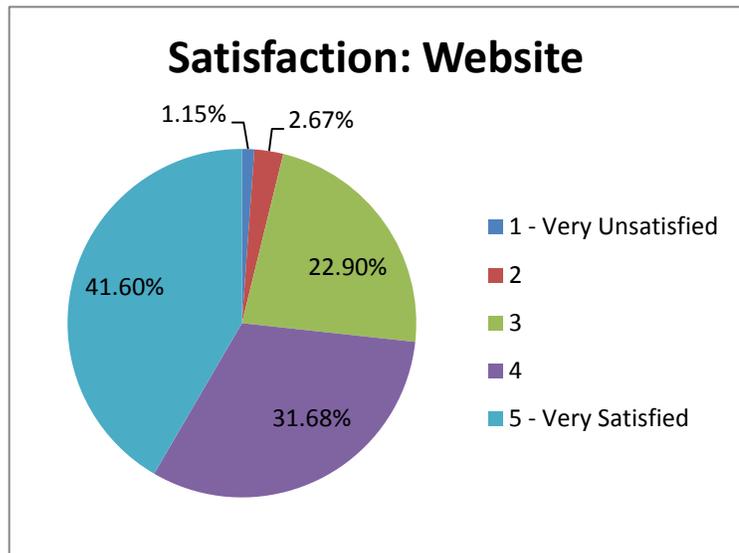
### Usage

Most respondents use the website 1 or fewer times per month (37.40 percent) or 2 to 4 times per month (34.35 percent); 13.36 percent of respondents never use the website. Respondents primarily use the website to search for materials, place hold or Interlibrary Loan requests, renew items, and pay for fines. Infrequent usage of the website (never or 1 or fewer times per month) was primarily driven by personal preference: 44.36 percent of infrequent users prefer to call or visit the Library in person and 40.60 percent say that their usage meets their needs.



**Satisfaction**

Respondents gave the website an average satisfaction rating of 4.10 out of 5, with 3.82 percent of respondents indicating low levels of satisfaction. Confusing navigation, lack of mobile/tablet compatibility, and a preference for calling or visiting the Library in person were the primary reasons for dissatisfaction. Among this group, 30 percent indicated specific frustration with features of the online catalog, which is separate from the Library website.



**Online Catalog**

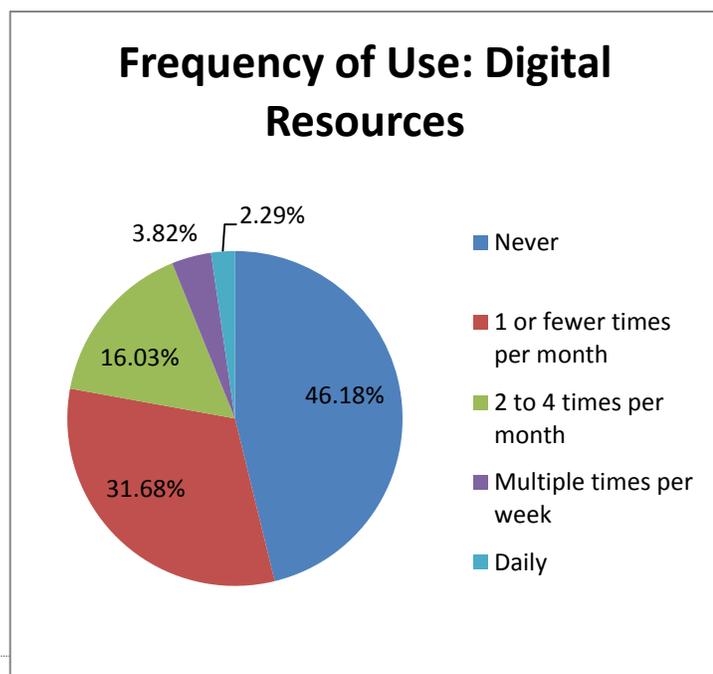
**Usage and Satisfaction**

Most respondents report some usage of the online catalog—32.44 percent use the online catalog between 2 and 4 times per month and 29.39 percent use the catalog 1 or fewer times per month. 28.63 percent of respondents said that they never use the online catalog. As with the Library website, usage of the online catalog is driven primarily by personal preference: most infrequent users stated that they prefer to call or visit the Library (42.11 percent) or that their current usage meets their needs (38.82 percent).

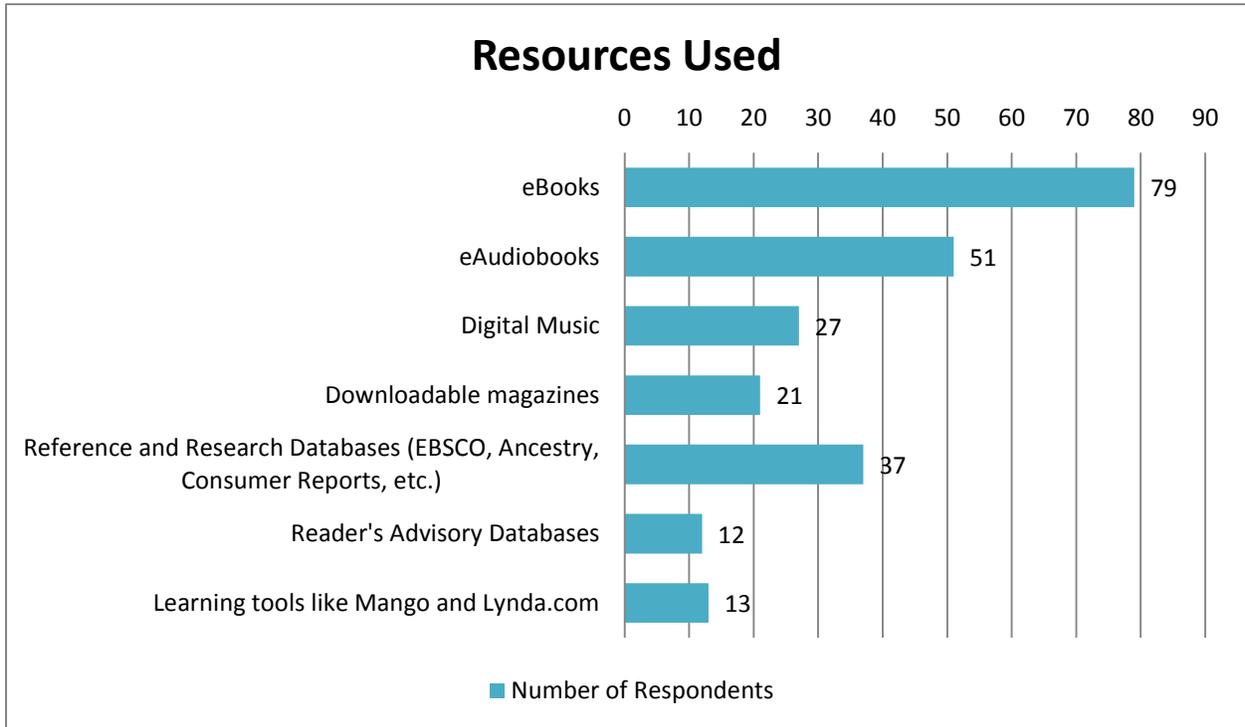
**Digital Resources**

**Usage**

A plurality of respondents (46.18 percent) said that they never use the Library’s digital resources, while 31.68 percent use digital resources 1 or fewer times per month. Of respondents reporting infrequent usage (never or 1 or fewer times per month), 76.86 percent prefer print resources over digital and 52.07 percent say that their usage meets their needs. Difficulty setting up devices,

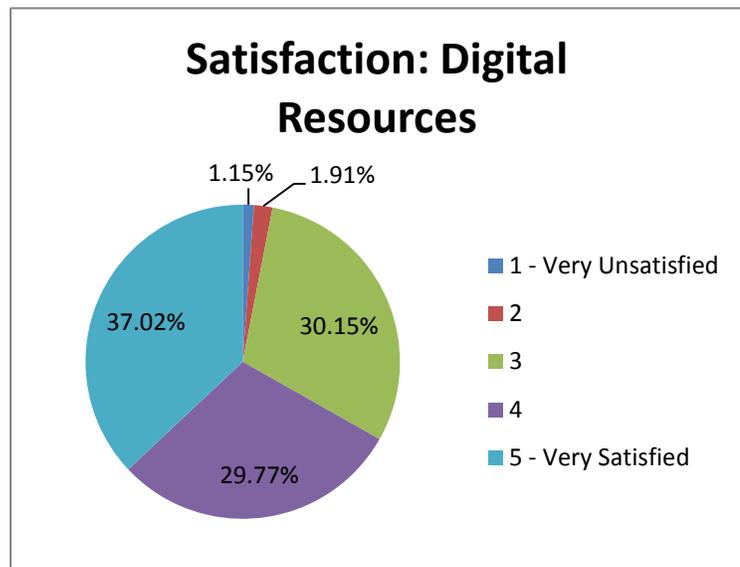


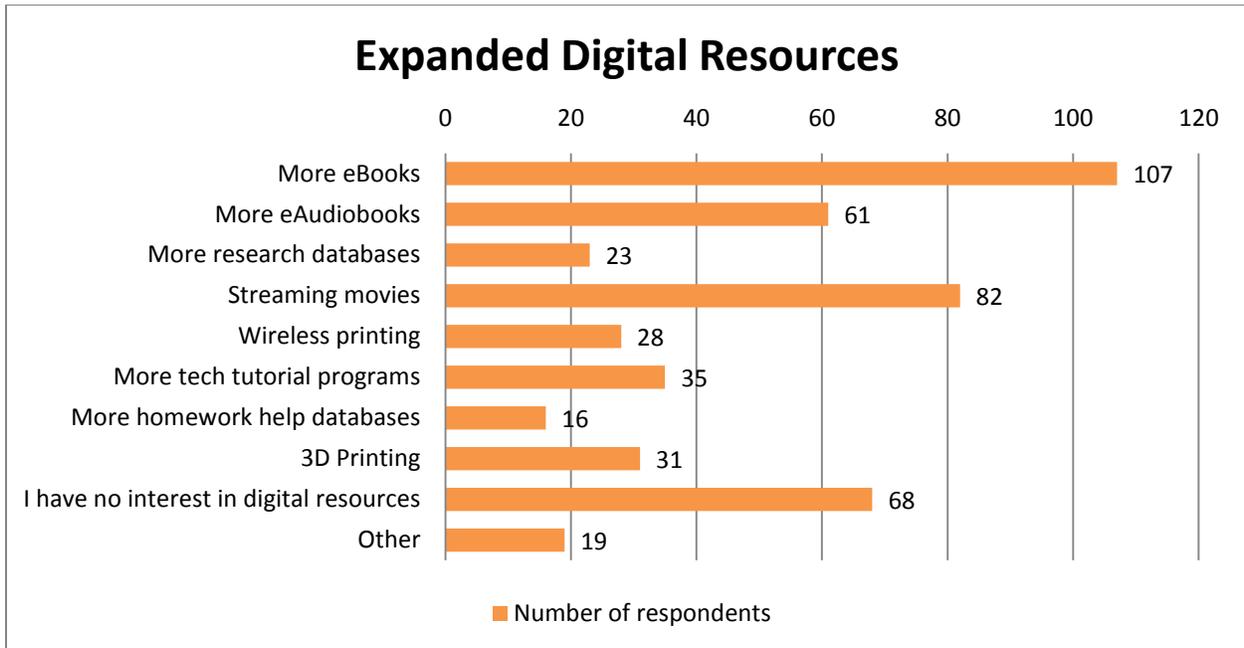
difficulty using or accessing digital resources, and lack of familiarity with digital resources were concerns for a minority of infrequent users. Respondents who use the Library’s digital resources more than “never” primarily use eBooks (56.03 percent), eAudiobooks (36.17 percent), and reference and research databases (26.24 percent).



### Satisfaction

Digital resources earned an average satisfaction rating of 4.00 out of 5, with 3.05 percent of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction. Lack of materials in the eBook/eAudiobook collections and lack of access to needed digital resources were the primary causes of low satisfaction. Respondents were most interested in adding more eBooks, eAudiobooks, and streaming movies to the digital resource collection. Only 25.95 percent of respondents indicated no interest in digital resources.

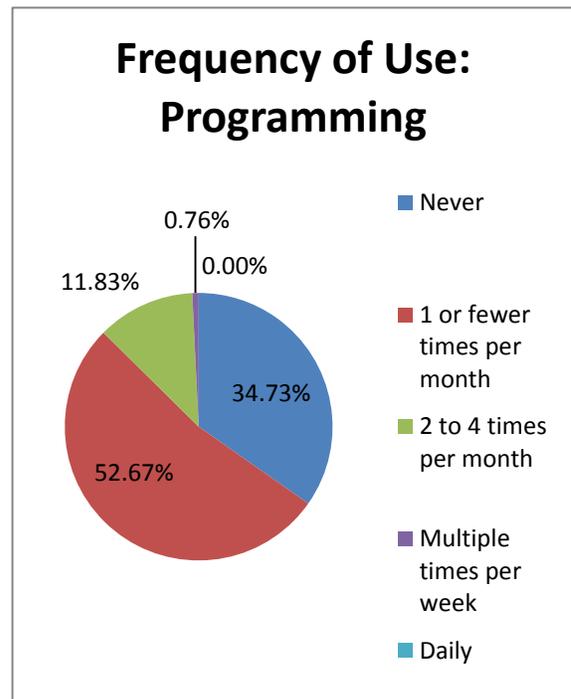


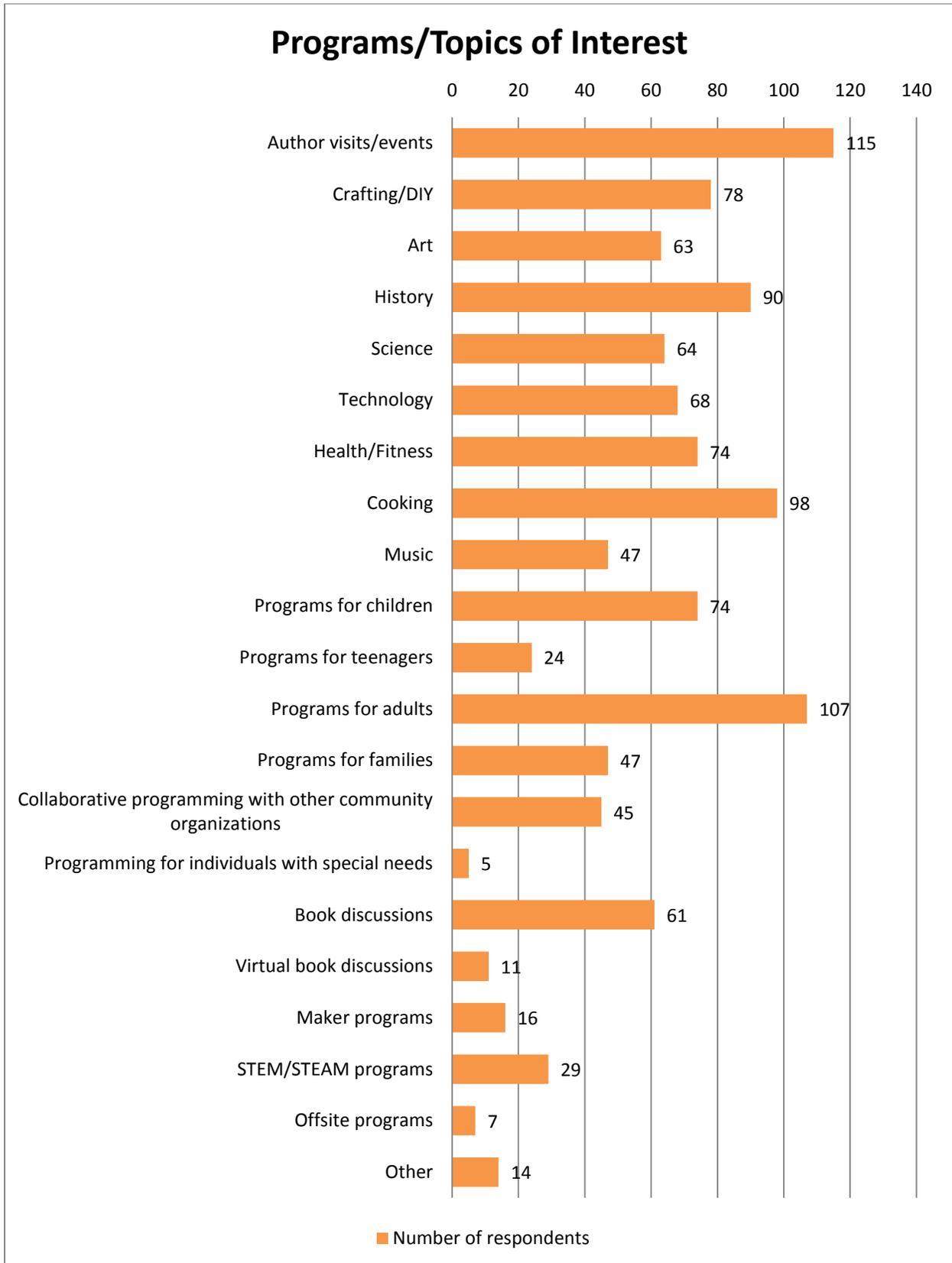


## Library Programming

### Attendance

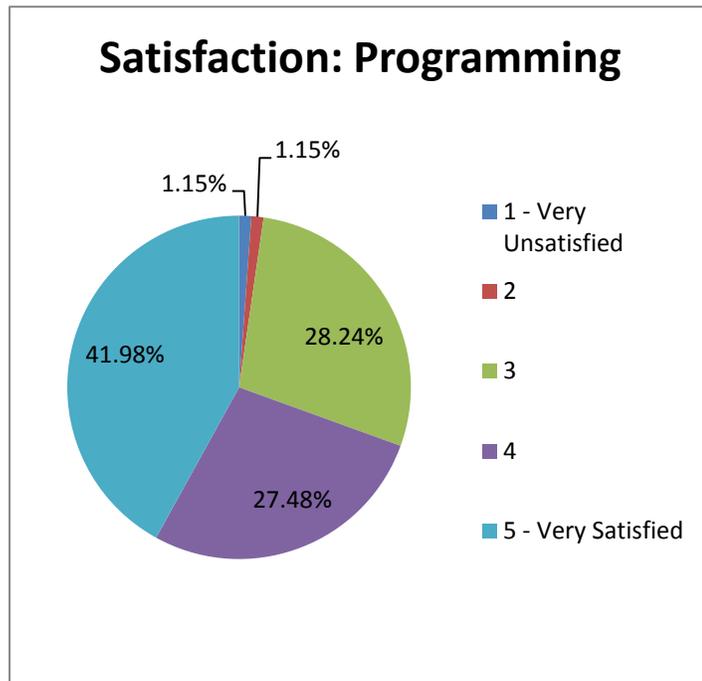
A majority of respondents (52.67 percent) attend Library programs 1 or fewer times per month; 34.73 percent of respondents report never attending Library programs. Infrequent attendance is primarily driven by scheduling concerns—41.48 percent of infrequent program attendees would like to attend, but do not have time and 31.00 percent said that programs are not offered at convenient times. Lack of interest in programs offered was a concern for 26.20 percent of respondents. Respondents who attend programs more than “never” most frequently attend lectures, craft programs, and special events. Respondents indicated high levels of interest in author visits, programs for adults, cooking, and history programs.





**Satisfaction**

Library programming earned an average satisfaction rating of 4.08 out of 5, with 2.29 percent of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction. Primary causes of low satisfaction were lack of interest in programs, lack of variety of programs, and not enough programs. Ideas for new program opportunities were included in the free response sections.



**Overall Satisfaction**

**Library Overall**

The Library received an average overall satisfaction rating of 4.48 out of 5, with the majority of respondents (90.46 percent) giving a rating of 4 or 5. Low satisfaction was reported in 1.15 percent of respondents. Low satisfaction was driven by concerns about service constraints, particularly small collection size. Concerns about service constraints—particularly in regard to the size of the collection and the state of the library building—were also shared by respondents who reported high levels of satisfaction.

**Customer Service**

Customer service received an overall satisfaction rating of 4.71 out of 5, with the majority of respondents (93.89 percent) giving the library a rating of 4 or 5. This was the library’s most highly rated service. The words most frequently used to describe library staff were helpful, friendly, and great. A total of 1.15 percent of respondents reported low levels of satisfaction. Respondents who reported low levels of satisfaction were concerned about the level of staff friendliness, politeness, and helpfulness.

**Improvement Priorities**

Respondents were asked to select one element of library services that they are most interested in improving. Most respondents prioritized improvements to physical resources: physical materials (33.97 percent) and Library building (25.95 percent) captured the largest number of votes. Improvements to digital/downloadable materials was a priority for 21.76 percent of users, while programming (11.07

percent), virtual spaces (3.82 percent), and other digital services (3.44 percent) were a concern to smaller percentages of respondents.

### **Additional Concerns**

#### **Staffing**

Some respondents expressed concern with the number of staff members working at any given time. One respondent suggested that it would be more effective to spread out staff schedules so that the Library could be open more.

#### **Fish Tank**

Two respondents expressed concerns about the fish tank in the children's department. These respondents felt that fish tank was not particularly child friendly, as it is easily accessible to children, but children are also asked not to touch or tap on the tank.

#### **Collection Development**

A number of respondents expressed confusion or curiosity about collection development at the Library. Respondents were most interested in learning how materials are selected for the Library collections. Some respondents wanted to know why the Library didn't carry all of the recent titles featured in publications like *The New York Times* or the mailer for the Lake Forest Bookstore. Another respondent noted that she often has to request books that she knows will be of interest to others. Respondents also had questions about how materials are weeded from the collection.

#### **Reciprocal Access**

Some reciprocal cardholders would like to be able to access more of the Library's digital resources, particularly eBooks.

#### **Renovation**

The location of the entrance continues to be a concern for some respondents. Several respondents noted that they preferred the entrance in its former location; it was also suggested that the Library reopen the old entrance and use it as a second entrance.

## **Demographics**

### **Gender**

The majority of respondents were women (69.89 percent), with men representing 27.86 percent. A total of 2.29 respondents preferred not to disclose their gender.

### **Age**

Most survey respondents were adults (ages 18 and older), with individuals ages 35 to 49 representing the largest age demographic (33.97 percent). Individuals ages 50 to 64 accounted for 25.95 percent of

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respondents and individuals ages 65 and older made up 24.43 percent of respondents. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 34 accounted for 11.45 percent of respondents. Children and teenagers accounted for 4.20 percent of respondents: 3.44 percent were teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 and 0.76 percent were children ages 11 and under.

### **Race**

83.59 percent of respondents were white. 8.78 percent of respondents preferred not to disclose their race. Individuals of Asian descent represented 4.58 percent of respondents; 1.15 percent of respondents identified with a race or background not listed as one of the choices. Black or African American respondents and American Indian or Alaska Native respondents each accounted for 0.76 percent of respondents.

### **Education**

87.02 percent of respondents have completed a Bachelor's degree or higher—28.63 percent have earned a Bachelor's degree, 11.83 percent have done some post-graduate work, and 46.56 percent have completed a graduate degree.

### **Employment**

Most respondents are either employed full-time (34.73 percent) or are retired (23.66 percent). 10.31 percent of respondents work part-time and 7.25 percent are self-employed. 8.40 percent of respondents indicated that their employment situation was not described by any of the listed options; most of these respondents described themselves as homemakers or stay-at-home parents.

### **Children or Teenagers in Household**

A majority of respondents do not have any children ages 0 to 12 (60.31 percent) or teenagers ages 13 to 18 (80.15 percent) in their household. Respondents that have children or teenagers in their household had between 1 to 6 children and 1 to 3 teenagers, with 1 and 2 being the most common selections.

### **Library District**

A majority of respondents (82.82 percent) have Lake Bluff Library cards. 17.18 percent have library cards issued by other libraries, with Lake Forest and North Chicago representing the largest number of reciprocal cardholders. (28.89 percent each). No respondents reported not having a library card or not knowing which library issued their card.

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## Conclusions

### Library

At 4.27 out of 5, the average satisfaction rating for the Library building is roughly comparable to the rating it received in the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey (4.29 out of 5). The number of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction increased from 2.50 percent 2013-2014 to 4.20 percent in 2016. However, other survey feedback shows that the Library building may not be meeting user needs as effectively as the satisfaction rating implies.

When asked directly about the Library's space, 30.53 percent of respondents said that the Library needs more space. This represents an increase from 2013-2014, when 20.22 percent of respondents stated that the library needs more space. Respondents who were interested in expanded Library space were most interested in more seating, quiet study space, and additional space for technology.

A majority of respondents (69.47 percent) indicated that they were satisfied with the amount of space in the Library building; however, a significant number of these respondents provided contradictory statements in the free response sections. Fifty-one respondents who said they were satisfied with the amount of space in the Library building later requested features that cannot be offered within the footprint of the existing building. In total, 131 (50.00 percent) of respondents expressed either direct (80 respondents) or indirect interest in an expanded Library building (51 respondents). These numbers represent a fairly significant shift from the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey: more respondents overall are interested in an expanded Library building and more respondents asking for expanded space directly.

Improvements to the Library building were also identified as a priority in the final survey question, which asked respondents what part of the Library they would most like to improve. 25.95 percent of respondents wanted to see improvements to the Library building; however, an additional 33.97 percent of respondents want to see improvements to the physical materials, an improvement that is directly impacted by the Library building and space available.

There is also ample evidence that the Library's limited space lowers users' expectations: "for such a small library," "given the size of the building," and "considering your limitations" preceded many positive comments about the Library. Other users reported exclusively visiting Lake Forest Library or other neighboring library districts to meet specific needs. Several respondents mentioned that the Library building was not as nice as other library buildings on the North Shore. One respondent who recently moved to Lake Bluff stated, "I have used other libraries on the [North Shore] and ours seems to need physical updating and investment."

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Several respondents expressed concerns about the Lake Bluff History Museum's use of space in the Library building. These respondents were concerned that the space used by the Museum is disproportionate to the Museum's operating hours and the services offered to the community.

A majority of respondents were satisfied with the Library's current operating hours. Dissatisfaction with operating hours was driven by accessibility: dissatisfied respondents pointed out that the Library's current schedule is not accessible to working people. Others noted that more evening hours would be beneficial to students who use the Library to study.

## Physical Materials

Physical materials saw an increase in overall satisfaction since the 2013-2014 Survey, increasing from 4.26 to 4.42. The number of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction also decreased slightly from 1.84 percent to 1.15 percent. However, actual satisfaction with physical materials seems to be more complex than the satisfaction rating would suggest. Of the 231 respondents who reported high levels of satisfaction (a rating of 4 or 5), 98 respondents requested improvements to the physical collection in the free response section or selected physical materials as the area that they would most like to improve. There is also evidence to suggest that the limitations of the physical building negatively impact respondents' expectations: multiple respondents noted that the constraints of space affect the size of the physical collection. Again, positive comments about the physical collection were often preceded by "for such a small library" or "given the constraints of your space."

The constraints of a small collection also frustrate some respondents and can inhibit usage. One respondent noted, "Lake bluff library [sic] is a smaller library and oft n [sic] doesn't offer the book I'm looking for at that moment, so I end up visiting Lake Forest." Another respondent suggested increased collaboration with Lake Forest Library, as "most of the books are never there." Other respondents report that they have to visit other libraries or place Interlibrary Loan requests in order to meet some specific needs.

Usage patterns have not changed significantly since the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey. Again, the popularity of adult materials among respondents is consistent with the demographic data of survey respondents, who were mostly adults. However, more respondents (39.69 percent) reported using children's collections or visiting the children's department in 2016 than in 2013-2014 (30.51 percent). Among respondents who use the children's department, 83.65 percent are parents or caregivers, compared to 73.49 percent in 2013-2014. Use of children's collections also increased since 2013-2014, with children's magazines capturing the largest overall increase by 24.95 percentage points.

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## Library Website

Usage patterns have shifted slightly since the 2013-2014 Satisfaction Survey. Most notable is the number of respondents who report using the website 2 to 4 times per month, which decreased from 42.28 percent in 2013-2014 to 34.35 percent in 2016. However, the number of respondents who use the website 1 or fewer times per month increased by 5.05 percentage points to 37.40 percent. The number of respondents who never use the website also increased from 9.56 percent to 13.36 percent. It is important to note that infrequent usage appears to be driven by personal preference: most infrequent users stated that they prefer to visit the library in person or that their level of usage met their needs.

Although the website's satisfaction rating increased from 4.02 to 4.10, the general assessment of the library website was relatively tepid. Some respondents expressed frustration with the site, but it is perhaps more significant to note that unlike many other aspects of the library's services, the website did not receive any specific praise. Poor mobile and tablet compatibility was one of the chief frustrations for respondents who expressed dissatisfaction or concerns about the library website. Respondents also requested more reader's advisory information available on the library website, particularly popular titles or recommended reads. Additionally, the separation between the library website and the online catalog is not always clear to respondents. Several respondents stated that they were frustrated with the library website, but described problems or features that were part of the online catalog.

## Online Catalog

Usage patterns for the online catalog are overall similar to what was reported in 2013-2014. Like the website, infrequent use of the online catalog appears to be primarily driven by personal preference, with most infrequent users saying that they prefer to call or visit the library or that their level of use meets their needs.

As mentioned in the previous section, some respondents were unclear about the distinction between the library website and online catalog, which may mean that respondents may not accurately describe their usage of the online catalog. For example a number of respondents reported that they never use the online catalog, but stated that they primarily use the website to search for materials, renew items, or utilize other functions that are available through the online catalog.

Finally, some respondents were frustrated by the fact that the Library's online catalog is not connected to other libraries in the area.

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## Digital Resources

Usage patterns for digital resources are overall similar to usage patterns reported in 2013-2014; satisfaction, however, has increased from 3.78 to 4.00. The impact of confusing or inconvenient procedures has decreased significantly from 2013-2014, when it had a much larger impact on both satisfaction and frequency of use. It is likely that this change is a product of improvements to Overdrive's software, as well as an increase in the number of respondents who regularly use tablets and mobile devices. The Library has also made efforts to promote digital resources and improve technological instruction in the last year. Although respondents report having fewer problems accessing digital resources, a number of respondents indicated that continued and increased technology instruction and support would be helpful.

The usage patterns reported in this survey do not necessarily provide an accurate representation of respondent interest in digital resources: while usage was not necessarily strong, only 25.95 percent of respondents said that they have no interest in digital resources. Additionally, the Library's statistical reports on digital resource usage show consistent increases in usage, particularly for eBooks and eAudiobooks. It is also important to note that the overall satisfaction with digital resources has increased since the 2013-2014 Survey. While there is still room for improvement, these numbers show that the Library's increased investment in digital resources has resulted in a digital collection that more effectively meets patron needs.

## Library

## Programming

Overall satisfaction with Library programming has increased from 3.93 to 4.08 since 2013-2014. More significantly, the number of respondents who say they never attend library programs decreased from 44.49 percent to 34.73 percent. A majority of respondents (52.67 percent) also report that they attend programs one or fewer times per month, compared to a plurality of 47.43 percent in 2013-2014. The number of respondents who attend programs 2 to 4 times a month has increased from 6.62 percent to 11.83 percent. The library has seen similar increases in overall program attendance, particularly for fiscal year 2015-2016. In fiscal year 2015-2016, the library had 6,510 people attend 359 programs, a 14.70 percent increase in programs offered and 9.65 percent increase in attendance from the previous year. Adult Programming saw significant increases: the number of programs increased by 55.68 percent and attendance increased 73.50 percent from the previous year.

Infrequent program attendance and low satisfaction with programming continue to be driven by scheduling concerns—specifically, scheduling conflicts and lack of time. In the free response section, several respondents noted that more evening programming would make programs more accessible, especially for working individuals. Arranging for childcare was also identified as an obstacle for some

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adults. One respondent suggested that it would be helpful if the library offered concurrent programs for parents and children so that parents don't have to arrange for a sitter. Youth Program attendance is also impacted by schedule concerns. Several respondents indicated that additional timeslots for storytime would be helpful for working parents who wish to attend storytime with their child, as well as for children who attend preschool in the mornings.

In general, respondents expressed an interest in more programs, although some respondents had more specific suggestions for topics. Suggestions included genealogy, programs for homeowners, writing groups, STEM/STEAM programs, maker or other hands-on programs, and technology tutorials. Several respondents noted that some sort of Library tour or Library orientation would be extremely helpful. Baby/toddler storytimes and programming for babies and toddlers in general were also requested by several respondents.

As in the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, existing promotional strategies are effective for most respondents. However, lack of awareness of Library programs continues to be a concern for some respondents. Suggestions for increasing program promotion focused primarily on ways that the Library could remind patrons of upcoming programs, such as custom email notifications that alerted users to an upcoming event that might be of interest. The ability to quickly add events to calendars on mobile and tablet devices was also a requested feature.

## Overall Satisfaction

### Library Overall

The Library's overall satisfaction rating increased from 4.38 to 4.48; the number of respondents reporting low levels of satisfaction dropped from 1.84 to 1.15 percent. As in the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, the feedback suggests that the Library is more successful at meeting broader needs than it is at meeting specific needs. Additionally, a lot of respondent feedback demonstrates that respondents are not only aware of the Library's limitations, but that they adjust their usage and expectations as a result of these limitations. Positive feedback that begins with "Considering your limitations..." does speak highly of the Library's efforts with the resources it has; however, it also highlights the fact that the Library's deficits impact user expectations.

### Customer Service

As in 2013-2014, customer service was the most highly rated category in the Patron Satisfaction Survey— even higher than the overall rating of the Library. The customer service rating increased from 4.66 to 4.71, with low satisfaction dropping from 1.84 percent to 1.15 percent of all respondents. Free response comments were overwhelmingly positive. The Library continues to do extremely well in this area.

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## **Improvement Priorities**

This was the only new question added to the 2016 Patron Satisfaction Survey, so results from this year cannot be compared to the 2013-2014 Survey. Respondents are most interested in improving physical materials (33.97 percent). However, it is important to note that any significant improvement to the Library's physical materials—whether it's expanded collections, more titles, more copies of popular books, or more books on certain subjects—would require additional space that the Library does not have in its existing footprint. A total of 25.95 percent of respondents were most interested in improvements to the Library building. The feedback on this question highlights the fact that the Library requires significant improvements to its physical resources.

## **Additional Concerns**

### **Staffing**

Staffing levels were also a concern for some respondents in the 2013-2014 Satisfaction Survey, although respondents in 2013-2014 were more concerned that staff members were not using their time for work-related efforts. These concerns were not specifically mentioned in the 2016 Survey—respondents mostly made general comments about high staffing levels. These comments seem to indicate that the roles and responsibilities of Library staff members are perhaps not communicated clearly to or understood by the public. There is also some concern that the Library could more effectively distribute staff time by expanding operating hours.

### **Fish Tank**

Concerns about the fish tank were driven by conflict between accessibility of the tank and the Library's expectations of how children should interact with the tank. Respondents felt that it was not realistic or fair of the Library to put a very attractive and interesting feature in reach of young children and expect them not to try to touch or interact with the tank.

### **Collection Development**

Many respondents who asked questions or expressed concerns about collection development at the Library seemed to be under the impression that the Library is being secretive or purposely unforthcoming about how materials are selected for the shelves. Although the Library is not intentionally secretive about any aspects of collection development, no organized effort has been made to increase transparency, possibly due to perceived lack of interest from the public. The responses on the survey indicate that public interest in this area may be more significant than originally thought and that increased transparency would be well-received.

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***Reciprocal Access***

Access to digital resources—specifically eBooks—continues to be a concern for respondents who use Lake Bluff in lieu of their home library.

***Renovation***

Some respondents prefer the former location of the main entrance and feel the new location is less convenient. The fact that the old entrance's walkway and stairs have not been removed or minimized likely exacerbates this.

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## Recommendations

### Library Building

The Library has invested a lot of time and effort on analyzing and gathering information about the Library building. Feedback from the 2016 Survey provides additional nuance to how the building functions and how effectively it meets patron needs. The negative impact of the building on both usage and user expectations must be taken seriously by both Library and Village leadership. An adequate public library facility is aligned with community goals and further enriches the community's investment in top-notch education.

If the decision is made to move forward with a building project, the Library needs to be conscious about how potential changes are discussed. Survey feedback clearly shows that many respondents are more likely to think of the Library in terms of features and services, rather than just space. In order to effectively communicate the need for a remodeled and expanded building, the Library needs to discuss the end result in terms of features rather than space. Focusing on results like larger collections of physical materials, comfortable seating, or study areas or meeting room space will more effectively demonstrate how an improved building would meet needs that are not currently being met.

While a large number of respondents seemed to be in favor of building improvements, one or two survey respondents stated that the Library building was fine and did not need to expand. It is important that the Library be aware that there may be some opposition to a building project, even among Library users. It is extremely important that the Library actively engages with community members who may think that a building project is not necessary. Creating opportunities for these individuals to discuss their concerns with the library may help address concerns and increase community buy-in.

The Library is currently in the process of evaluating the possibility of expanded hours. Although the details still need to be finalized, expanding hours should be within the current operating budget. Additionally, this is an action that would increase the Library's accessibility to the community in general, and especially for patrons who work during the day. Expanding hours is also a good faith effort that demonstrates commitment to expanding Library access and resources.

### Physical Materials

The Library cannot significantly improve or expand its collection of physical materials within the existing building. This assessment was corroborated by the recent building study conducted by Engberg Anderson. Any collection expansion would require eliminating or seriously reducing an existing collection. The existing collection is made up of titles that are being used—collection managers do not

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have the shelf space to keep titles that do not circulate—and significant reductions would amount to a reduction in the scope of the overall collection and quality of Library service. In short, expanded physical collections require investment in an expanded building.

## Library Website

The website has undergone fewer overall changes since the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, especially in comparison to other aspects of Library services. This is largely due to a number of unexpected delays that were encountered with the redesign of the Library website. In lieu of a major overhaul, the webmaster has made smaller, incremental changes to site design, function, and content. While these changes have improved the website, the overall user experience with the library website needs to be improved. The change that would result in the most improved user experience is mobile and tablet compatibility.

As recommended in the 2013-2014 Patron Satisfaction Survey, redesigning the Library website should also include a plan or process for its ongoing evaluation and development. Continuing the use of ongoing incremental redesign should also be explored as a means for maintaining a modern and responsive site. The web development team should continue to pursue improvements to internal procedures in order to make website updates more timely and efficient.

## Online Catalog

Personal preference has a significant role in how often the online catalog is used. The Library should do its best to accommodate these preferences, while also making sure that patrons have the ability and resources to effectively use the online catalog should they choose to do so. The Library should continue to expand its resources for the online catalog, as well as promote existing resources and tutorials that are available on the Library website. Incorporating more formal and informal instruction on the online catalog into general Library services may also be particularly helpful for patrons who value working directly with a staff member.

Several patrons expressed disappointment and frustration with the fact that the catalog is not linked to other libraries. The Library has not previously been able to join a cooperative catalog due to the cost, but it may be beneficial to periodically reevaluate and investigate the cost of membership. The Library should continue to monitor user experience with the online catalog and take the opportunity to make improvements when the opportunity presents itself. Evaluation of the online catalog should occur on an ongoing basis.

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## Digital Resources

There is no conclusive evidence to suggest any community-wide preference for digital resources over print resources and vice versa. Increased usage statistics and a higher satisfaction rating suggest that the Library's efforts to expand digital resources in the last two years have helped meet community needs more effectively than in 2013-2014. The Library should continue to invest in and maintain the existing digital resource collection. If possible, additional funding for eBooks, eAudiobooks, and streaming videos should be provided in order to meet patron interest and increase availability of eMaterials. The Library could also look into adding additional platforms for eMaterials, such as Hoopla, 3M, or Axis 360.

Finally, the Library must increase efforts to promote digital collections. The Library should expand written handouts, instructions, and other information about digital resources both in the Library and on the Library website. More regular demonstrations of digital resources should be offered as the programming schedule permits. Additionally, the Library should pursue comprehensive training on digital resources for all staff members to further improve and expand in-library assistance with digital resources.

## Library Programming

Efforts to expand Library programming have been extremely successful and should be continued, along with community engagement efforts. The library should continue to pursue programming partnerships with community organizations and encourage interdepartmental collaboration within the Library as appropriate.

Schedule conflicts present the largest obstacle for program attendance. The library should evaluate its current programming schedule, identify demographics that may not be served by current program times, and make reasonable modifications to increase accessibility. Evening editions of popular daytime programs and concurrent programming for Youth and Adults are some potential solutions to concerns raised in the survey. The possibility of increasing programming for babies and toddlers should be investigated and evaluated by Youth Services staff.

Existing strategies for promoting programs are effective for most patrons (especially those who are already involved in the library), but the library may want to investigate additional strategies to promote programs, particularly through social media and digital marketing. More convenient and streamlined digital marketing efforts should be explored to further expand and increase programming audience.

Finally, several respondents suggested more Library orientation tours, open houses, or events to better showcase and promote the Library. The Library should investigate the possibility of adding these events

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to the programming schedule. This also aligns well with a variety of the marketing and public relations goals described throughout this report.

## Overall Satisfaction

### Library Overall

Similar to the recommendation of the previous survey, the Library should maintain its high standard of service and continue to capitalize on its strengths. Survey feedback should be read by both Library staff and Library trustees in order to further expand overall understanding of how the Library meets patron needs. Ideas and suggestions from the survey should be acted on as appropriate. Additionally, the Library needs to make strong efforts to address some of its weaknesses as identified by survey respondents. Issues that inhibit or negatively affect Library usage should be prioritized. The Library should continue to solicit feedback from the community outside of the biennial Patron Satisfaction Surveys.

### Customer Service

This category continues to be the Library's strongest asset. The Library should continue existing practices that prioritize friendly and personalized customer service. While a minority of respondents reported negative experiences with customer service, these comments are valuable tools in identifying ways in which the Library could improve. The Library should also take steps to ensure that patrons feel empowered to share their concerns about their Library experience with the circulation manager, director, or other appropriate party. Providing clarification—whether in the form of a formal policy or customer service statement—on how patrons can express concerns with the Library may help ensure that the Library is able to productively address patron concerns. Additionally, periodic review of policies and practices should be conducted in order to ensure that the Library is providing the maximum quality of service.

As in the previous survey, respondents identified Library staff as the Library's greatest asset. Continued investment in hiring and retaining quality staff members should be a priority, along with regular evaluation of job descriptions, hours, and salary.

### Improvement Priorities

Ultimately, the most requested improvements to the physical collection (more books, broader range of titles, more copies of books) require an expansion of the Library building. The Library does not have enough space in the existing building to make significant expansions to any single collection without eliminating or reducing another. Expanding the physical building is the most effective change the Library can make in order to the most needs for the most patrons, as it would allow the Library to address the

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concerns of 59.92 percent of respondents: those who wanted improvements to physical materials and those who wanted improvements to the building.

### **Additional Concerns**

#### ***Communications & Public Relations***

The Library has effective strategies in place for regularly communicating time-sensitive events, such as program and Library news, to the public. However, many survey responses—particularly those that had questions about staffing levels and collection development—highlight the potential benefits of a more cohesive and strategic approach to communications for services that are not time-sensitive. The Library should develop communication strategies for services that are not being promoted through existing channels. This must be an interdepartmental effort in order to ensure that the resulting communication strategy is both accurate and effective. In addition to ensuring more robust communication from the Library, the Library should also work to increase opportunities for patrons and community members to provide feedback. These opportunities could range from comment boxes at the Library to a patron advisory board.

#### ***Staffing***

The Library needs to make a stronger effort to communicate staff roles and responsibilities to the public. Behind-the-scenes tours or open house events may provide a good opportunity for the public to ask questions about Library functions, as well as see another side of the Library. In addition to special events, the Library should also look into creating ways for this information to be accessible on an ongoing basis. Digital media could be a great asset in this endeavor—the Library could offer a virtual tour of the Library or film short video interviews with staff or Board members. A “Meet the Staff” feature on the Library website or in other publications may also contribute to this effort.

The Library is currently evaluating the possibility of expanding operating hours. The results of this analysis should be available later this summer.

#### ***Fish Tank***

The fish tank is a beloved feature of the children’s department, but its current location might not be ideal. The possibility of relocating the fish tank within the children’s department should be investigated. A location that is still visible, but not necessarily immediately accessible might help address respondent concerns while still including the tank as part of the department.

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### **Collection Development**

Increased access to information about collection development could do a lot to address questions and concerns, as well as further clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff members. There are a number of good options for sharing this information. Written FAQs made available on the Library website and in the Library building are a good place to start. Given the complexity of the topic, an infographic or short video may also be an engaging way to present this information. The Library could also work on engaging patrons who are concerned about the fact that they often have to place purchase requests for items—for example, including an optional “where did you hear about this?” field on purchase requests might allow collection managers to get a better sense of how patrons hear about new materials. Increasing opportunities for patron feedback—perhaps through a patron advisory board or events like open houses—might also be a way to distribute information about collection development or capture additional patron feedback.

### **Reciprocal Access**

The Library’s practice in regard to digital resources is consistent with the practices of neighboring libraries. It is also reflective of terms and restrictions established by software and database vendors: as a general rule, vendors offer subscriptions based on the size of the community served. Reciprocal access is not included. At a minimum, adding reciprocal access to digital resources would require a significant policy change from the library’s vendors. Adding reciprocal access to digital resources would represent an additional cost to the Library, especially for services like Overdrive, Freegal, and Zinio. Any effort to expand access to reciprocal borrowers would likely need to include a fee to offset the costs of additional users.

Reciprocal borrowers may access digital resources through their home library and with the exception of My Media Mall, Freegal, Zinio, and Lynda.com, all of the Library’s digital resources are available to any patron using the Library computers or public wifi.

Circulating pre-loaded eReaders may also be an effective way to expand digital services to both Lake Bluff cardholders and reciprocal borrowers. However, the startup costs associated with this collection are fairly significant: it is important that a demonstrated need for this collection is established prior to investing any Library funds in this effort.

### **Renovation**

The new location of the entrance is still a concern for some respondents. Converting the old entrance into a secondary entrance is not a possibility at this time, as the old entrance currently serves as an emergency exit for the first floor. In terms of general building security, a single public entrance and exit makes it easier for staff to effectively monitor the building. There are other steps that the library can take to alleviate some concerns with the old entrance, such as removing or minimizing the old stairs and

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walkway to better direct traffic. The old entrance is also more conveniently located in terms of parking—most of the Library’s available on-street parking is located in front of the old entrance. While the locations of these spots may not be something that the Library can change, creating additional parking near the new entrance should be a change that the library is prepared to make if the opportunity arises.

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