Key Findings from the 2024 Community Survey

Santa Clara County Library District | January 2025

The Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) administered a Community Survey designed to better understand the demographic characteristics of library patrons as well as how patrons use the library. The survey also assessed overall satisfaction with library services and elicited input about collections, programs and facilities.

This report highlights key findings from the survey, which was available in paper and online format from October 28 through December 1, 2024. This survey succeeds the 2016 & 2019 Patron Satisfaction Surveys, with questions that reflect new and different ways patrons engage the Library. The last page provides recommendations based on survey findings.

Highlights from the Report

Patrons have a high satisfaction level when engaging with Library staff and materials. 92% rated staff members as friendly and approachable. 90% rated collections as organized, with materials that look and feel clean.

Patrons are engaged in the varied, diverse set of Library programs. The Library offers many types of programs to fit a wide range of interests. The most popular offerings are art & crafts programs, entertainment & cultural celebrations, and book centered activities.

Patrons are highly connected to SCCLD's Online Library. 48% of patrons visit the Online Library at least once every two to three weeks. 40% used the Online Library for nearly all of their streaming or downloading of premium digital content.
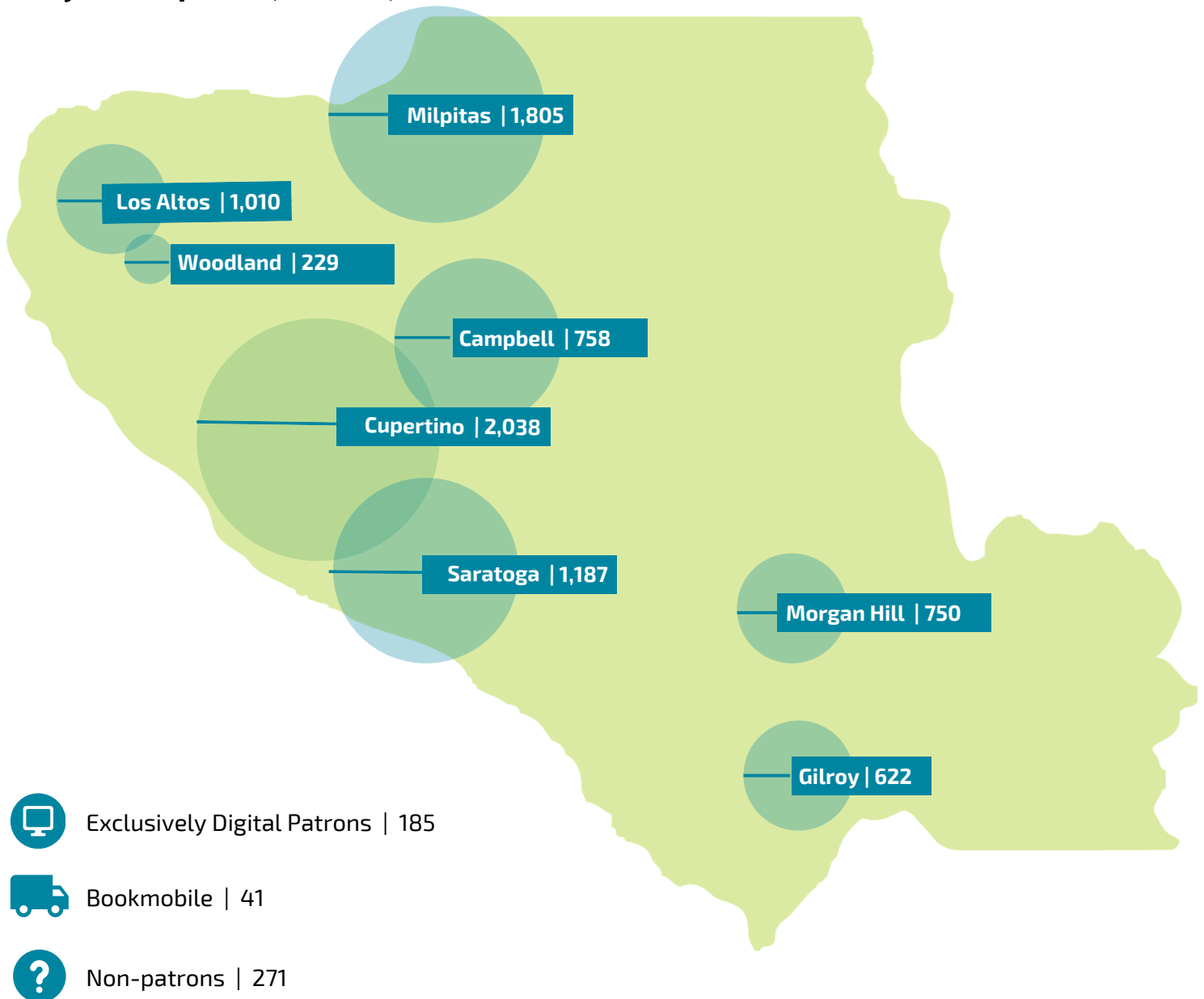
The 2024 Community Survey incorporates the feedback of 10,128 patrons. The survey was available to patrons in four languages (English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese). Significant efforts on the part of library staff led to incredibly high levels of participation throughout SCCLD communities.

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Respondent Characteristics

A strong majority (90%) of Survey Participants reported having used the library in person in the last year. The map below displays the Library location survey participants visited most in the past 12 months. 2% of patron respondents are exclusively Online Library users, and 3% have been marked as non-patrons since they do not visit the Library in person or online.

Survey Participants (n=9,990)

Milpitas | 1,805

Los Altos | 1,010

Woodland | 229

Campbell | 758

Cupertino | 2,038

Saratoga | 1,187

Morgan Hill | 750

Gilroy | 622

Exclusively Digital Patrons | 185

Bookmobile | 41

Non-patrons | 271

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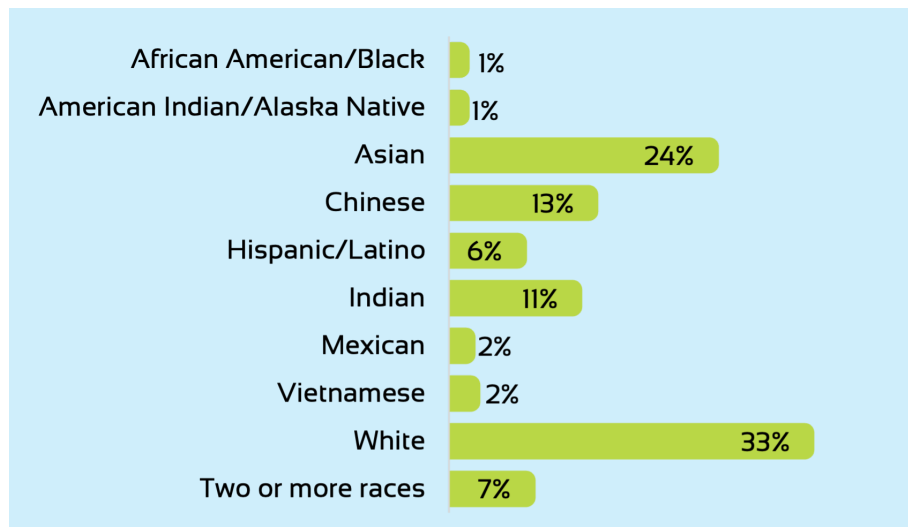
Survey Participants (n=9,968)

The typical U.S. Census response options for race and ethnicity were expanded to reflect the diversity of SCCLD communities. The most common responses are white (32%) or Asian (24%). Following these are Chinese (13%), Indian (11%), Hispanic/Latino (8%), and Two or more races (7%).

Progress since 2019. The 2024 survey reflects a revised approach to collecting race and ethnicity information providing a more detailed understanding of participants' race and ethnicity. 2024 data indicates that survey participants are more racially and ethnically diverse as a group, compared to 2019.

Race/Ethnicity	%
African American/Black	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
Asian	24%
Chinese	13%
Hispanic/Latino	6%
Indian	11%
Mexican	2%
Vietnamese	2%
White	33%
Two or more races	7%

Age (n=10,081)

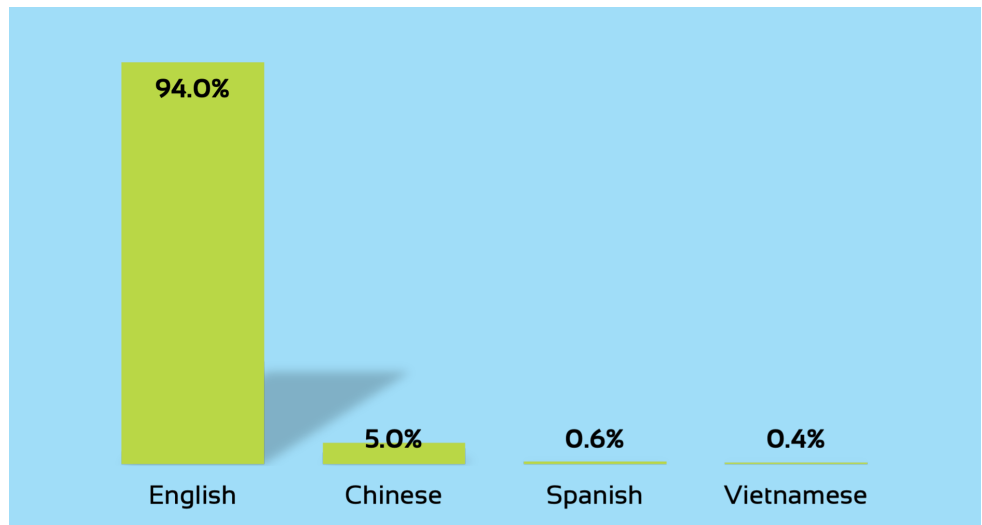| Age	%
Up to 23 years	6%
24 - 44 years	42%
45 - 59 years	34%
60 - 79 years	17%
80+ years	1%

Age groupings are based on prevailing definitions of U.S. generations, such as Millennials (20-44 years), Generation X (45-59 years), and Baby Boomers (60-79 years).

The most common responses are Millenials (42%) and Generation X (34%). Fewer responses are from Baby Boomers (17%) and Generation Z (6%).

Progress since 2019. Survey participation by age is consistent compared to 2019. With a revised approach to age groupings, SCCLD can now consider this data in relation to research about each generation.

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Primary or Preferred Language (n=10,032)

The majority of survey respondents reported their primary or preferred language to be English. 5% prefer Chinese, and less than 1% preferred Spanish or Vietnamese. The library continues to reach a linguistically diverse population. Among survey participants, 47% are familiar with the Library's materials that are offered in languages other than English.

Hi!

嗨

Hola!

	94.0%	5.0%	0.6%	0.4%
	English	Chinese	Spanish	Vietnamese

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How Patrons Use the Library
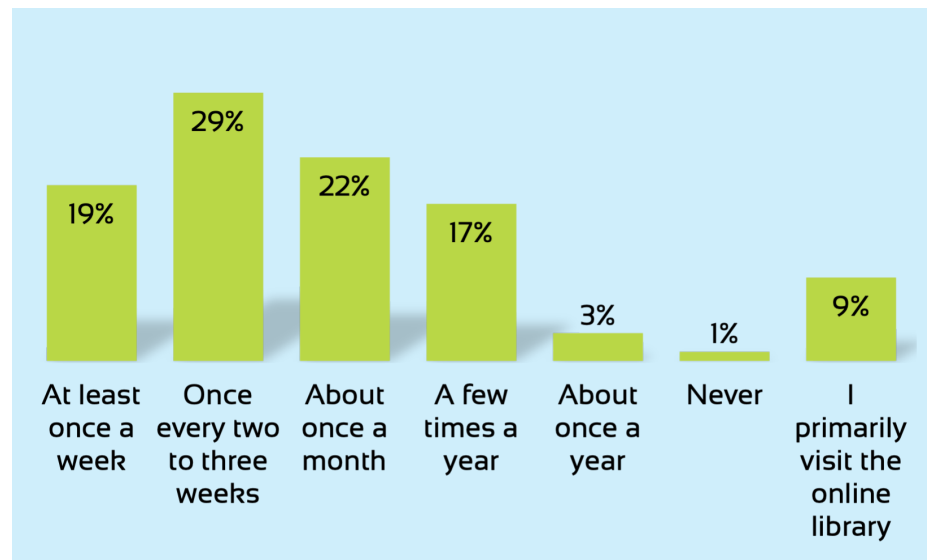
Library Usage - In Person (n=9,082)

70%
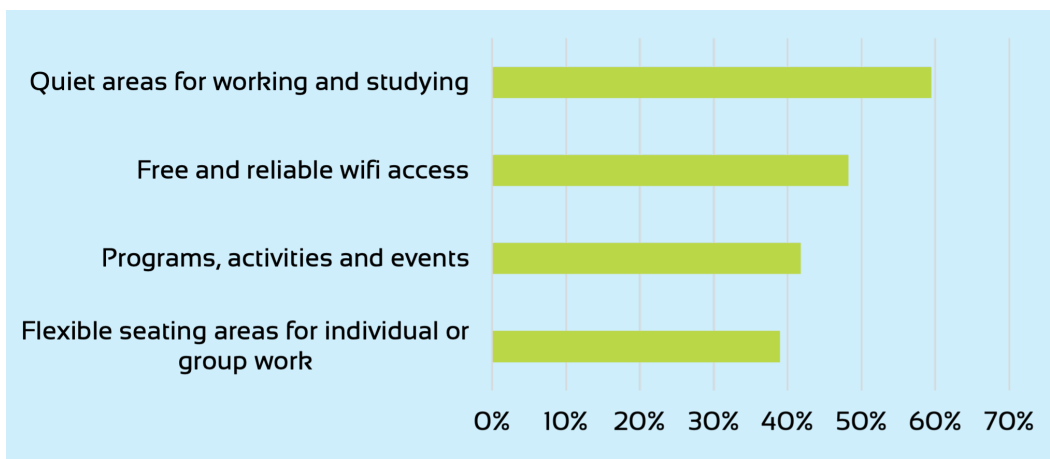of survey respondents **visited the Library in the past month**

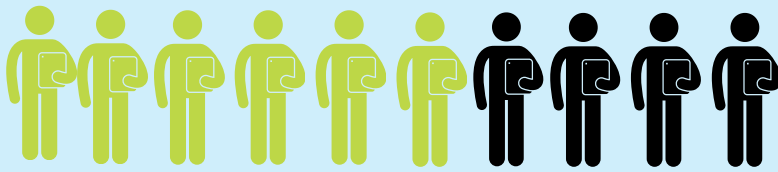70% of survey respondents visit the Library at least once per month with 19% of those visiting the Library weekly.

Progress since 2019. Compared to the 2019 survey, there is more representation of Library patrons whose visits in person are more occasional by nature. There is a 34% increase in the 2024 responses for those who visit the Library monthly or a few times a year which is important to also reach less frequent library users. This increase was achieved through planned outreach efforts and timing of the survey release.

19%	29%	22%	17%	3%	1%	9%
At least once a week	Once every two to three weeks	About once a month	A few times a year	About once a year	Never	I primarily visit the online library

Reasons People Spend Time at the Library in Person (n=8,959)

In addition to accessing physical collections, there are a broad range of options for in-person visitors to spend time at the Library. Adult survey respondents indicated a wide variety of Library features that are reasons for them to spend time at the Library. The chart below represents the top four reasons.

Quiet areas for working and studying
Free and reliable wifi access
Programs, activities and events
Flexible seating areas for individual or group work

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

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Library Usage - Online Library (n=9,061)

62% of survey respondents **visited the Online Library in the past month**

The 2024 Survey is the first time SCCLD has tracked frequency of use of the Online Library. This question reflects that an ever-growing segment of residents stream and download many eBooks, audiobooks, movies and music through the Library. 29% of respondents use the Online Library at least once weekly, and 19% use it once every two to three weeks.

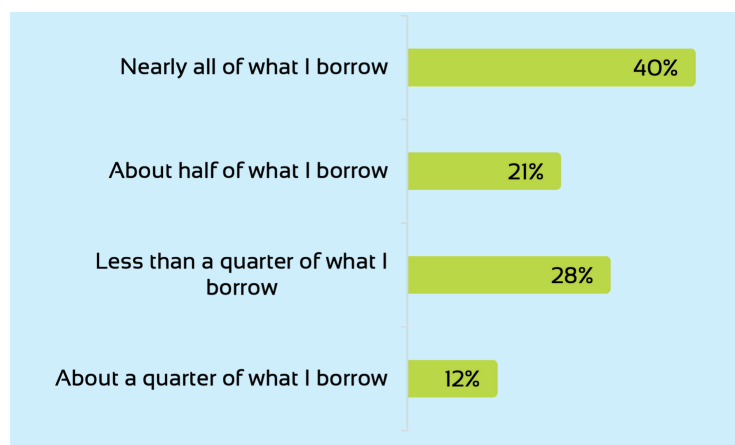| Category	Percentage
At least once a week	29%
Once every two to three weeks	19%
About once a month	14%
A few times a year	16%
About once a year	5%
Never	17%
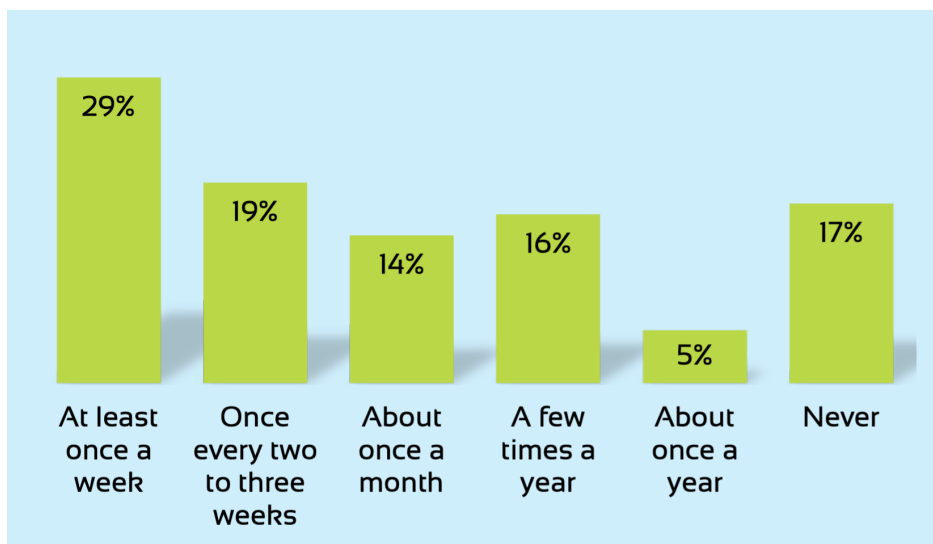
The Online Library as Part of Patrons' Digital Media Experience (n=9,335)

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on how much of their overall downloading or streaming of eBooks, audiobooks, movies and music happens through the Library. For those patrons who do use the Online Library, access to premium content is a significant part of their overall digital media experience.

Category	Percentage
Nearly all of what I borrow	40%
About half of what I borrow	21%
Less than a quarter of what I borrow	28%
About a quarter of what I borrow	12%

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Library Collections

Satisfaction with Book Collections (n=9,313)

Patrons shared that their experiences with the book collections are very positive, demonstrating an overall high level of satisfaction when they borrow books from the Library.
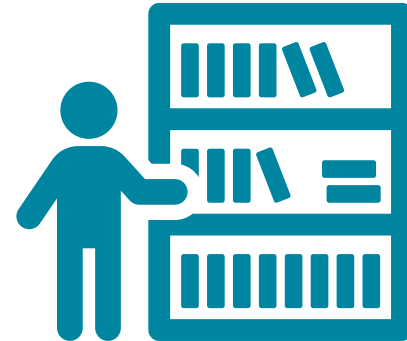
Percentages indicate participants who selected "Most of the time" or "Always or almost always."

Books are in good condition. **89%**

Books are available in a variety of genres. **89%**

A wide range of appealing books are available. **87%**

When I place a book on hold, the wait time is reasonable. **77%**

Books are available in the language(s) I prefer. **77%**

■ Always or Almost Always, Most of the time   ■ Sometimes   ■ Rarely or Never   ■ Don't Know
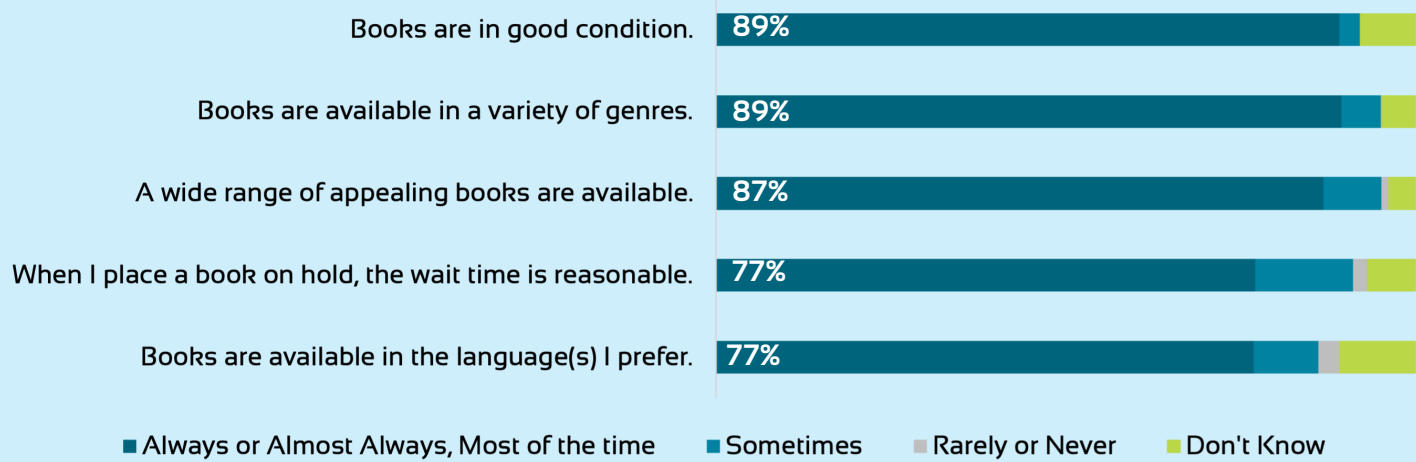
Library Usage - Online Library (n=9,023)

53% use the online library content more now than before the pandemic

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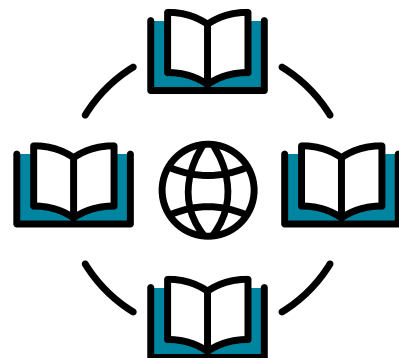
Familiarity with Resources (n=9,329)

Survey participants indicated their familiarity with a range of Library collections.

The responses to this question will help the Library in its marketing of these collections.

Resource	Very Familiar
eBooks and downloadable audiobooks	45%
Materials in a language other than English	15%
Park visit passes	13%
Streaming video and music	10%
Digital magazine subscriptions	9%
Online newspapers	9%

Legend: ■ Very Familiar ■ Familiar ■ Unfamiliar
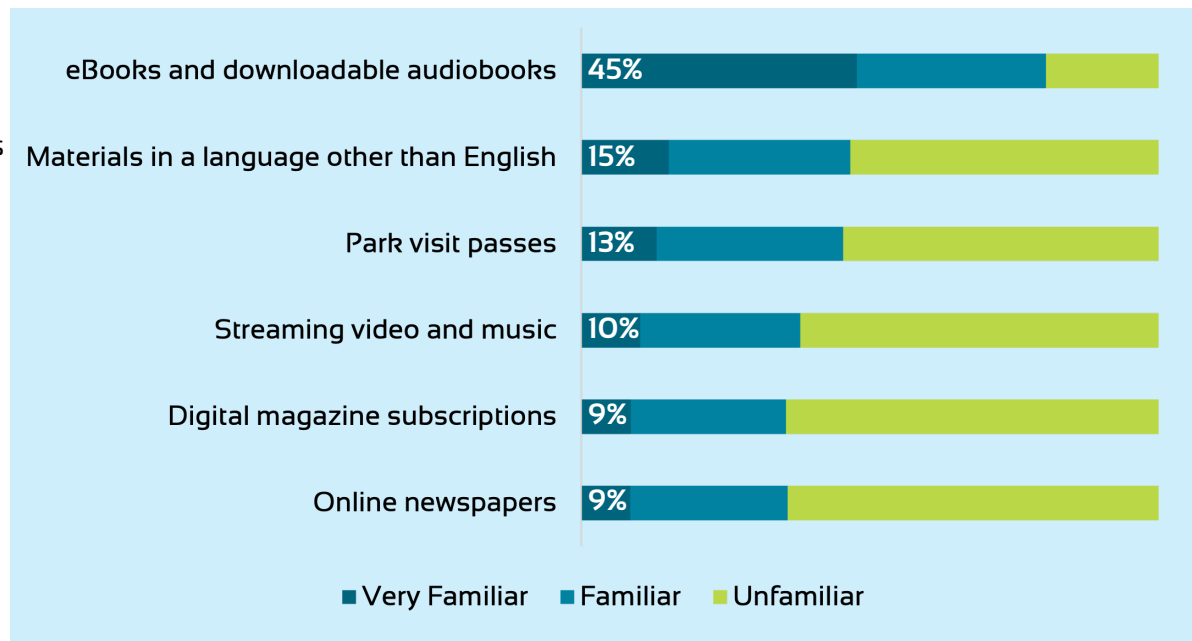
Familiarity with Online Resources (n=9,313)

Survey participants indicated their familiarity with a range of Library collections. The responses to this question will help the Library prioritize how it will increase awareness of these collections.

Resource	I know a lot about this and tell other people
eBooks	33%
Downloadable audiobooks	27%
Streaming video	8%
Streaming music	5%
Homework help for youth	5%
Subject-specific databases	4%
Career development tools	4%

Legend: ■ I know a lot about this and tell other people ■ I know a lot about this ■ I have heard of this, but I don't know much about it ■ I didn't know about this at all

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Purchasing Patterns (n=8,673)

Respondents indicated how they would prioritize increases in purchasing across these collections. There is strong interest in directing any additonal available funds towards materials in languages other than English, followed by park visit passes.

	Top Priority	High Priority	Lower Priority	Lowest Priority
Materials in languages other than English	47%			
Park visit passes	39%			
Bestseller newly released eBooks & downloadable audiobooks	8%			
Bestseller newly released books	6%			
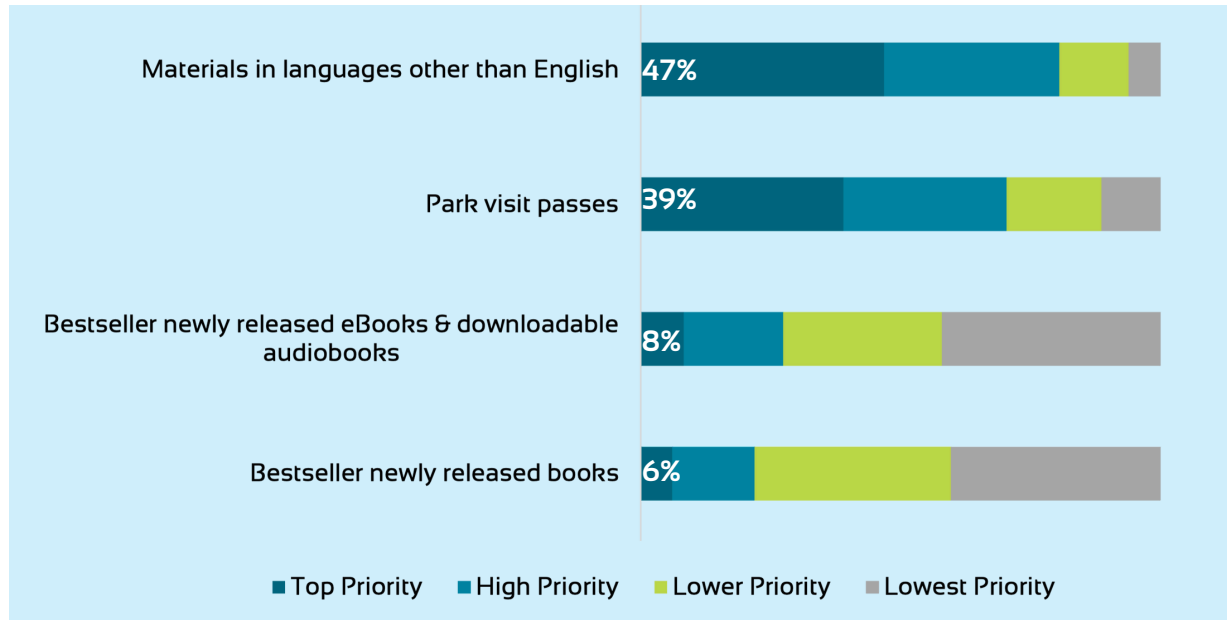
Balancing Library Collection Investments (n=9,257)

Respondents considered how the Library balances purchasing decisions with environmental impacts and wait times. There is considerable support for an approach that values environmental sustainability.

I don't mind waiting slightly longer for popular physical books, if this means the Library can buy fewer copies and lessen its carbon footprint.	I think it is important to keep wait times for popular books to a minimum.	I think it is important to keep wait times for eBooks to a minimum.
48%	27%	25%

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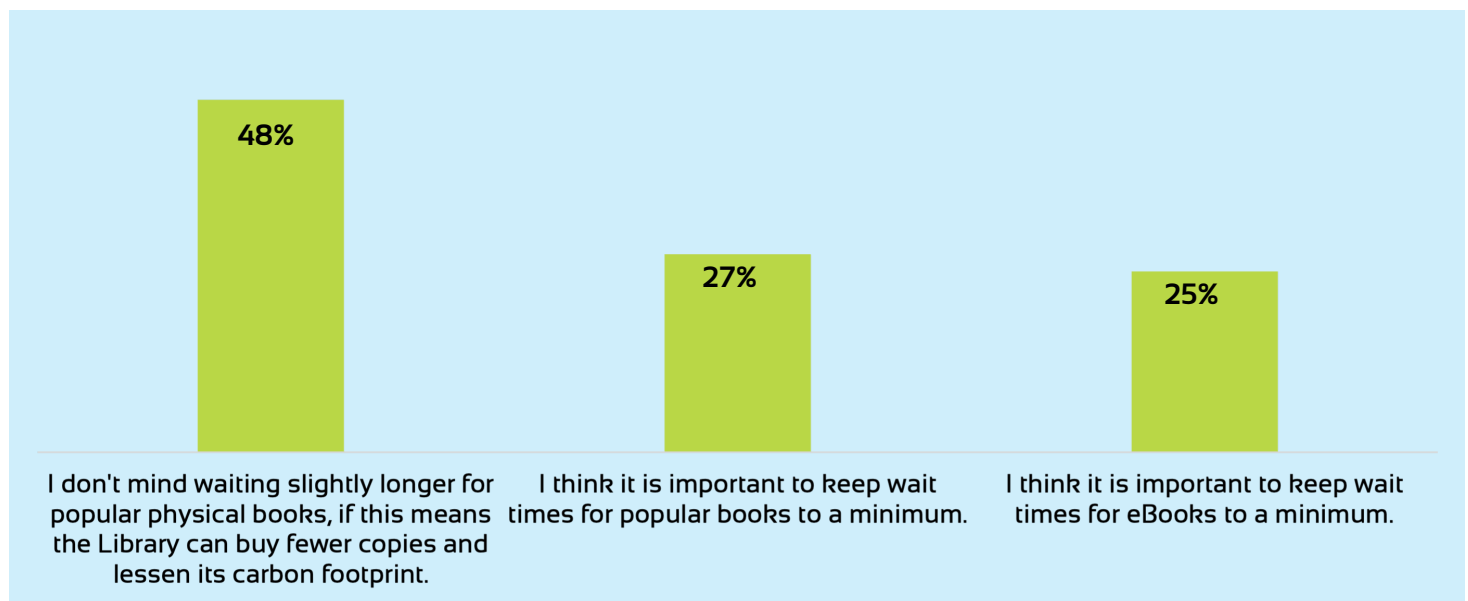
The Patron Experience

Survey results show there to be a high level of satisfaction with Library facilities. For instance, most patrons indicate they feel like the shelves are organized.

A great majority of patrons agree that Library materials look and feel clean.

The Library is a community destination. As such, people see it as a place where they will find comfortable and inviting seating areas, along with clean restrooms.

Library Facilities (n=9,025)

Statement	Always, Almost Always, Most of the Time
Library shelves are organized.	91%
Library materials look and feel clean.	89%
Seating areas are comfortable and inviting.	82%
Library restrooms are clean.	77%
Computers for public use are in good working order.	58%

Legend: ■ Always, Almost Always, Most of the Time   ■ Sometimes   ■ Rarely or Never   ■ N/A

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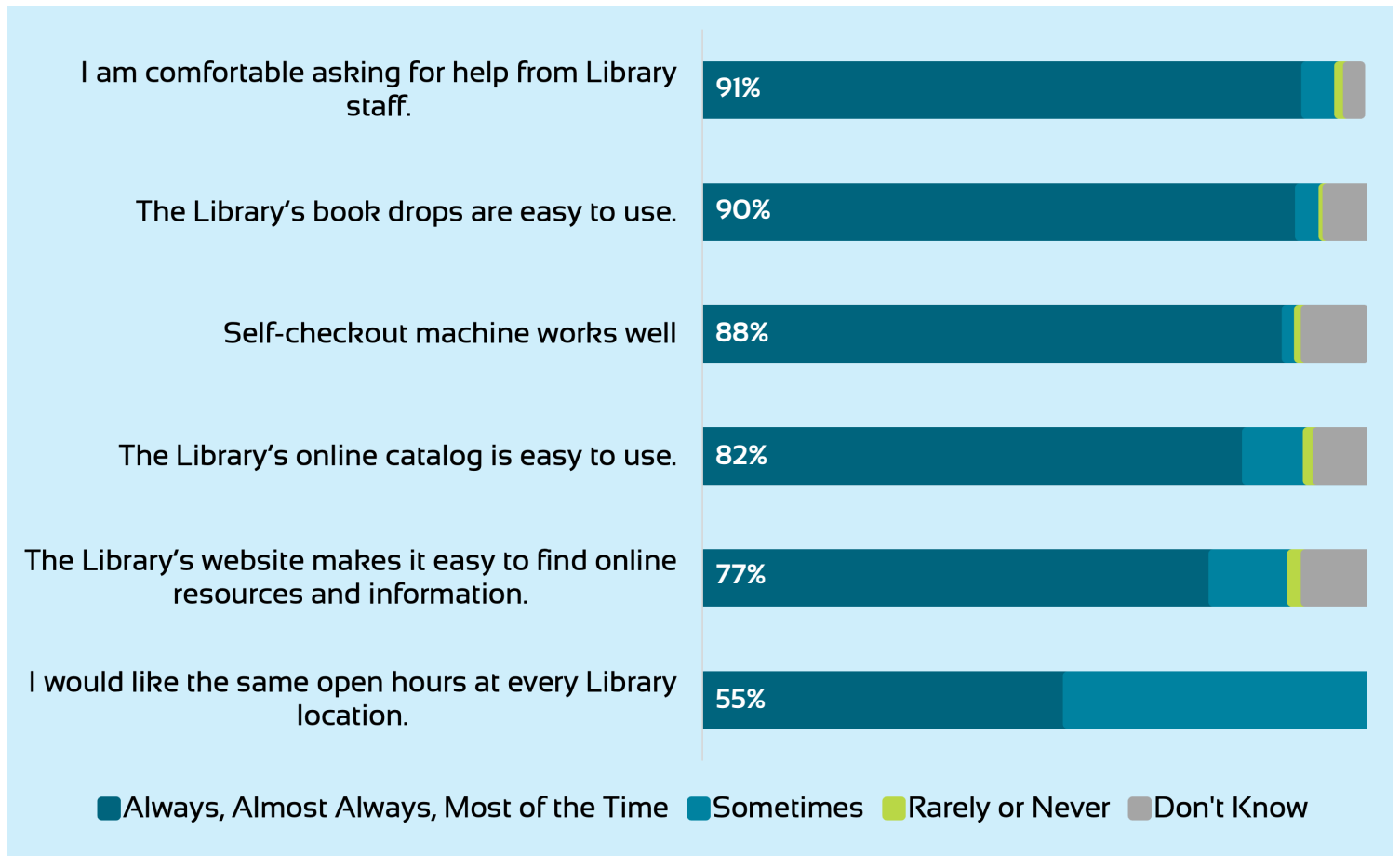
Library Features (n=9,323)

Survey participants responded to a range of statements about Library features. There continues to be consistently positive feedback about the Library staff. Responses show 91% of participants feel comfortable asking for help from Library staff.

Statement	Always, Almost Always, Most of the Time
I am comfortable asking for help from Library staff.	91%
The Library's book drops are easy to use.	90%
Self-checkout machine works well	88%
The Library's online catalog is easy to use.	82%
The Library's website makes it easy to find online resources and information.	77%
I would like the same open hours at every Library location.	55%

Legend: ■ Always, Almost Always, Most of the Time ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely or Never ■ Don't Know

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Strategic Plan

Reflection on Steps Being Taken to Activate the Plan (n=8,768)

Survey respondents shared their outlooks on the steps the Library is taking to activate its strategic plan. There is significant support for interactive children's learning spaces and cultural celebration programs.

Interactive learning spaces for children — 69%

Reflecting the community through programming, such as cultural celebrations — 67%

The launching of passport services at select Library locations — 62%

Renovations to outdoor spaces on Library grounds to elevate the patron experience — 51%

More meeting spaces — 48%

■ Very important or important   ■ Slightly important   ■ Not important

Library Mission Statement (n=8,779)

Responses show that components of the Library's mission statement has widespread resonance for community members.

My experiences with the Library make me feel like I belong. — 87%

The Library helps me discover new ideas and information. — 86%

My experiences with the Library make me feel connected to my community. — 80%

Programs and opportunities through the Library connect me to new experiences. — 73%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree   ■ N/A

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