

Public Library Staff and Diversity: Results from PLA's 2021 Survey

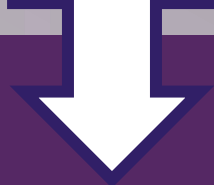
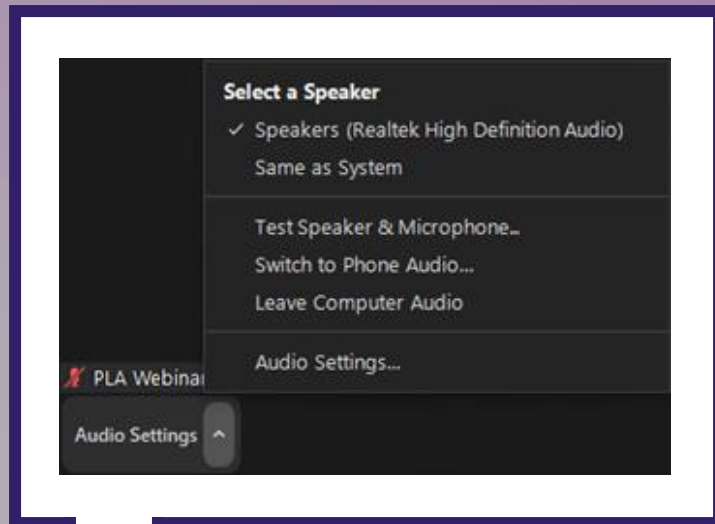
PLA webinar

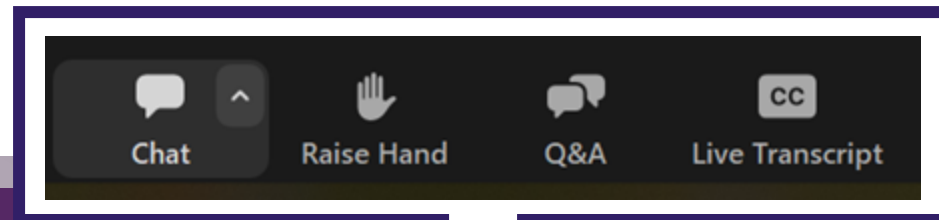
October 4, 2022



Not hearing any audio?

Check your audio settings below—to test your speaker or select a different one.







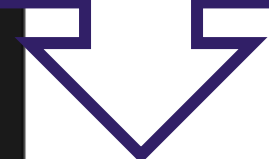
Chat

Who can see your messages?

To: **Everyone** ▼

Your text can be seen by panelists and other attendees

- Hosts and panelists
- ✓ Everyone



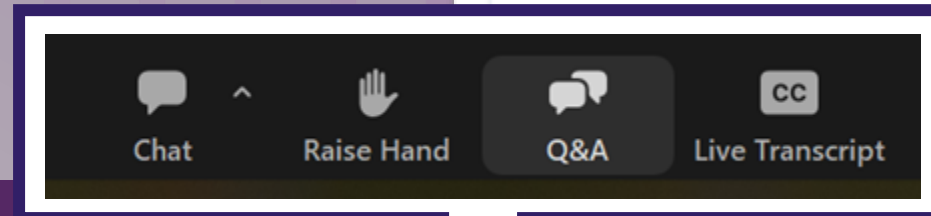
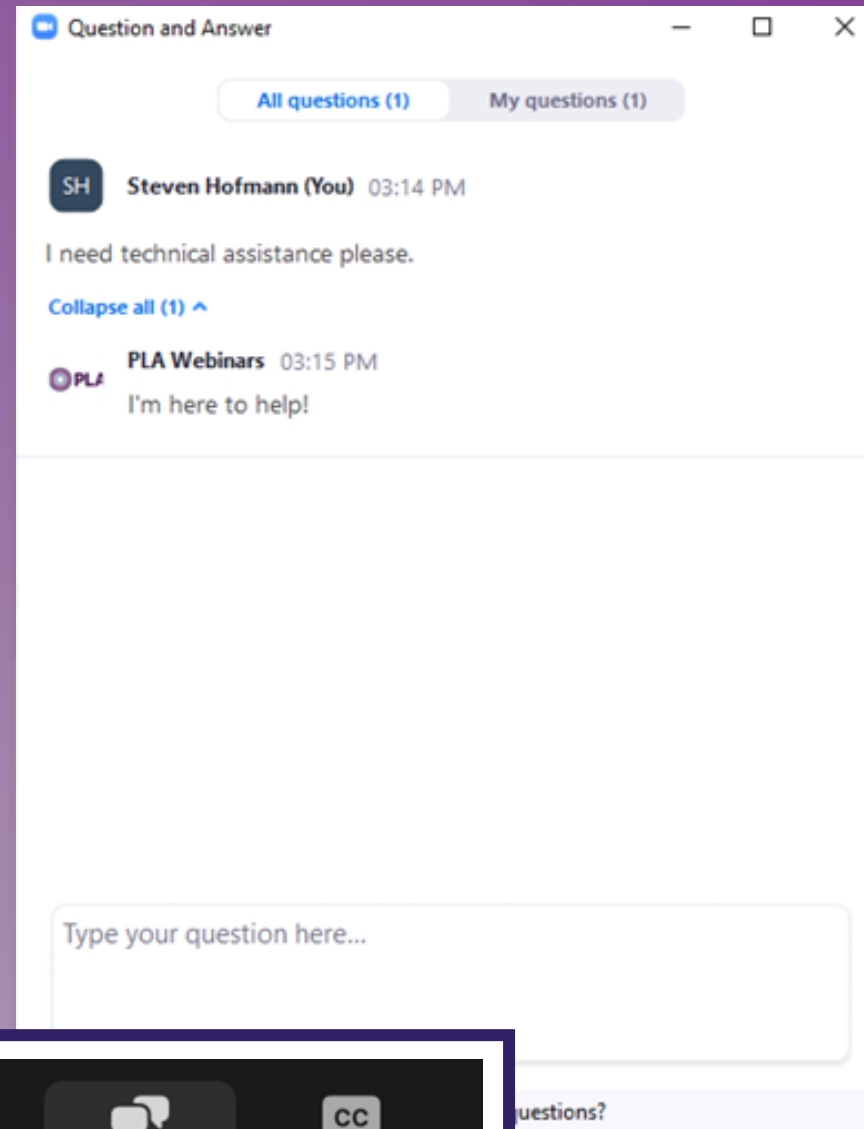
Who can see your messages?

To: **Everyone** ▼

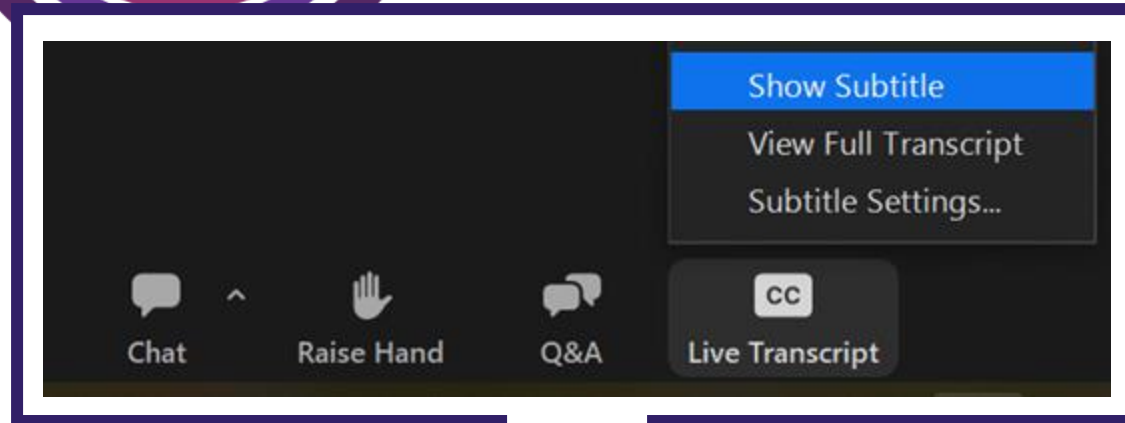
Your text can be seen by panelists and other attendees

Need technical assistance?

Click the "Q&A" icon in the toolbar below, then type your request in the Q&A window.



OPPLA



A screenshot of a video player control bar. The bar is dark with white icons and text. From left to right, there are icons for Chat, Raise Hand, and Q&A. Below these icons are the labels "Chat", "Raise Hand", and "Q&A". To the right of these icons is a "Live Transcript" button with a "CC" icon. A menu is open over the "Live Transcript" button, showing three options: "Show Subtitle" (highlighted in blue), "View Full Transcript", and "Subtitle Settings...".

Public Library Staff and Diversity: Results from PLA's 2021 Survey

PLA webinar

October 4, 2022



Presenters



**Dr. Maria Taesil
Hudson McCauley**

PLA President

Director of Libraries,
Cambridge Public
Library



Dan Hensley

Co-chair, PLA
Measurement,
Evaluation and
Assessment Committee

Coordinator of Adult
Learning, Carnegie
Library of Pittsburgh



Katina Jones

Program Manager,
Evaluation and
Assessment

Public Library
Association



Sara Goek

Project Manager, Data
and Research

Public Library
Association

Agenda

I. Introduction

II. 2021 Survey Results

III. Taking Action

IV. Opportunities for Engagement

V. Q&A

INTRODUCTION

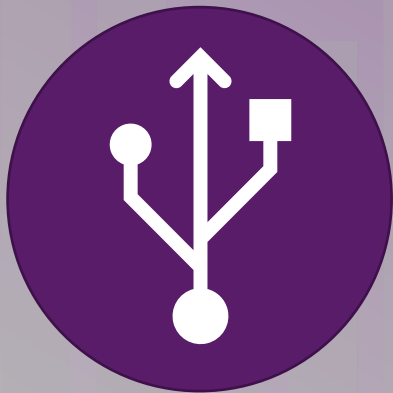
Maria McCauley



PLA Annual Topical Surveys

Rotation of three surveys that complement other existing data collection efforts

Technology
(2020)



Staff & Diversity
(2021)



Services for
Strong Communities
(2022)



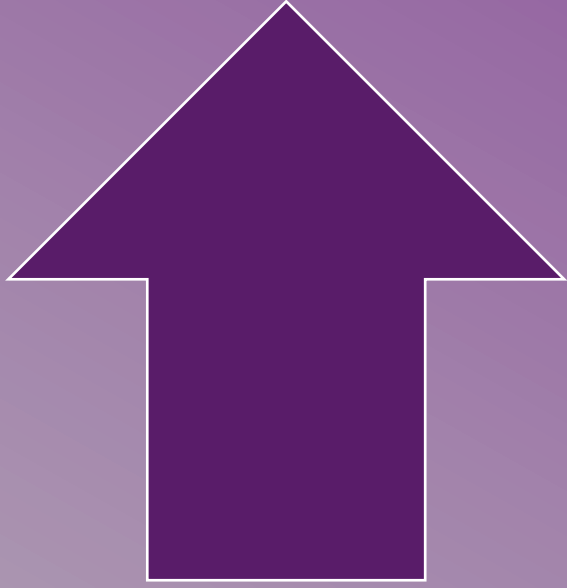
Public Library Association

Public Library Staff and Diversity Report

Results from the 2021 PLA Annual Survey



Report available from:
[https://www.ala.org/pla/
data/plasurveys](https://www.ala.org/pla/data/plasurveys)



Opportunities

- Building on equity, diversity, and inclusion work
- Evolving staff roles



Challenges

- Offering competitive salaries
- Combatting job losses

PLA Strategic Plan 2022-26



2021 SURVEY RESULTS

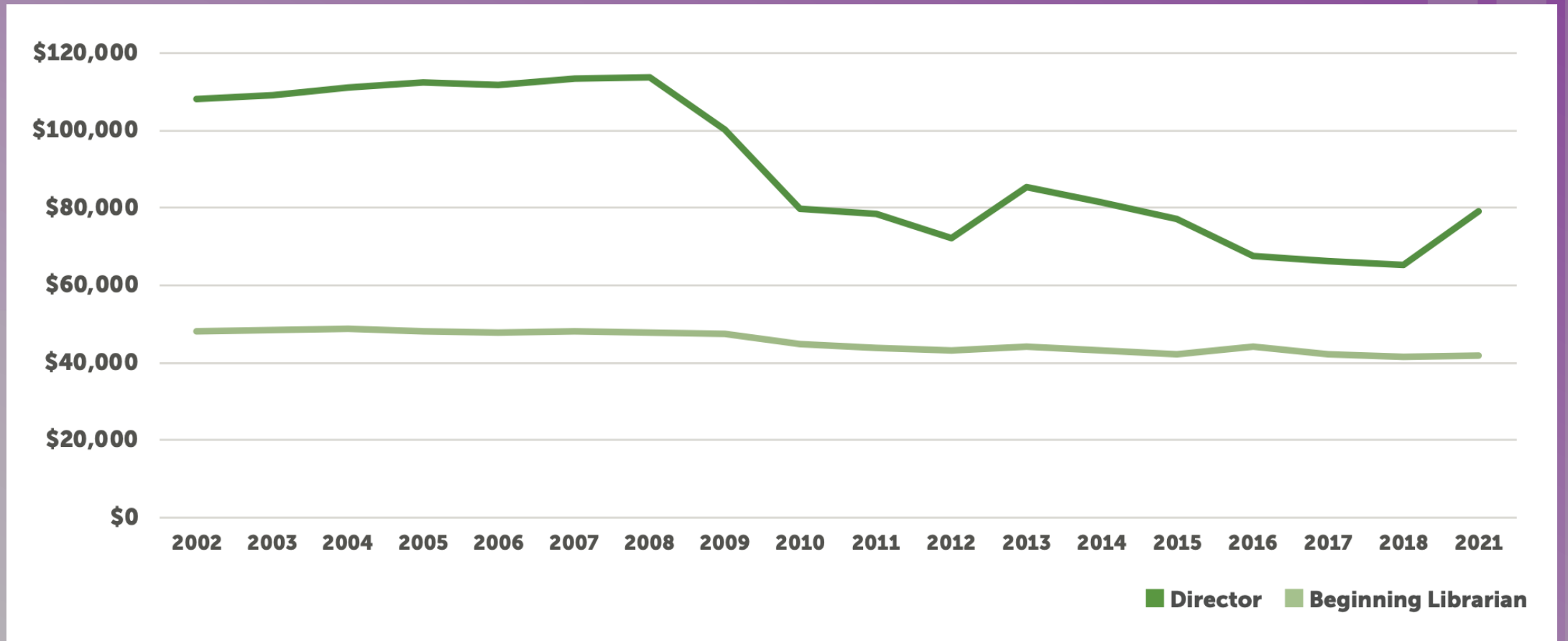
Dan Hensley



About the 2021 Survey

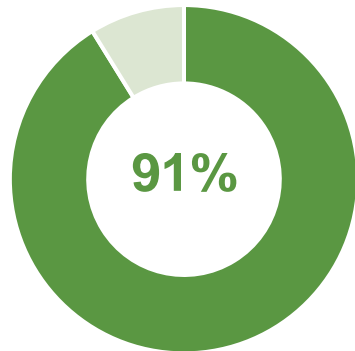
- Administered fall 2021
- All US public libraries invited to participate
- Response rate of 8.4%
- Results are weighted to account for differences between respondents and overall population

Salaries

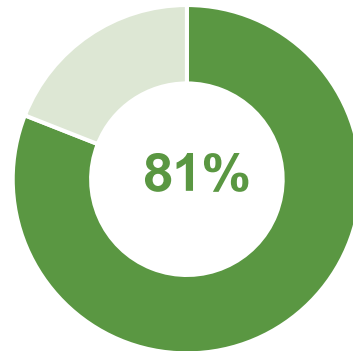


Core Staff Roles

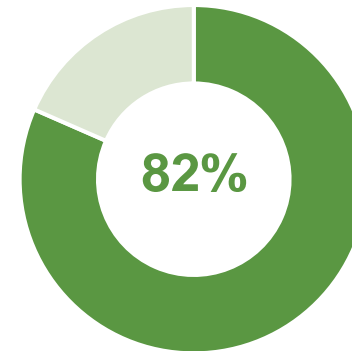
Children's services



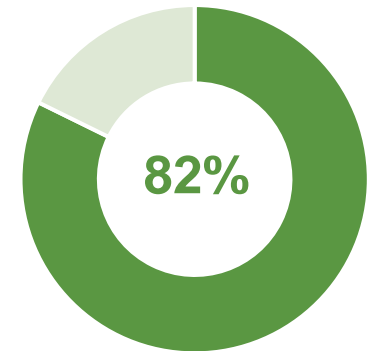
Youth/teen services



Adult services

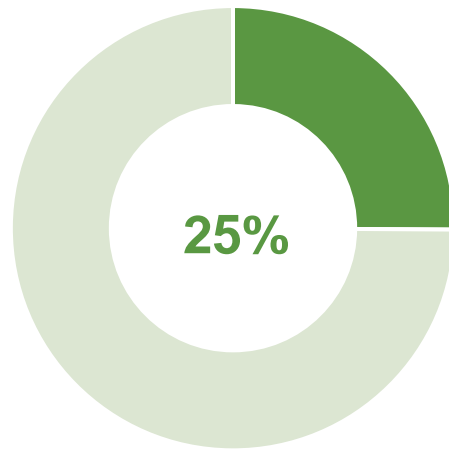


Collection development

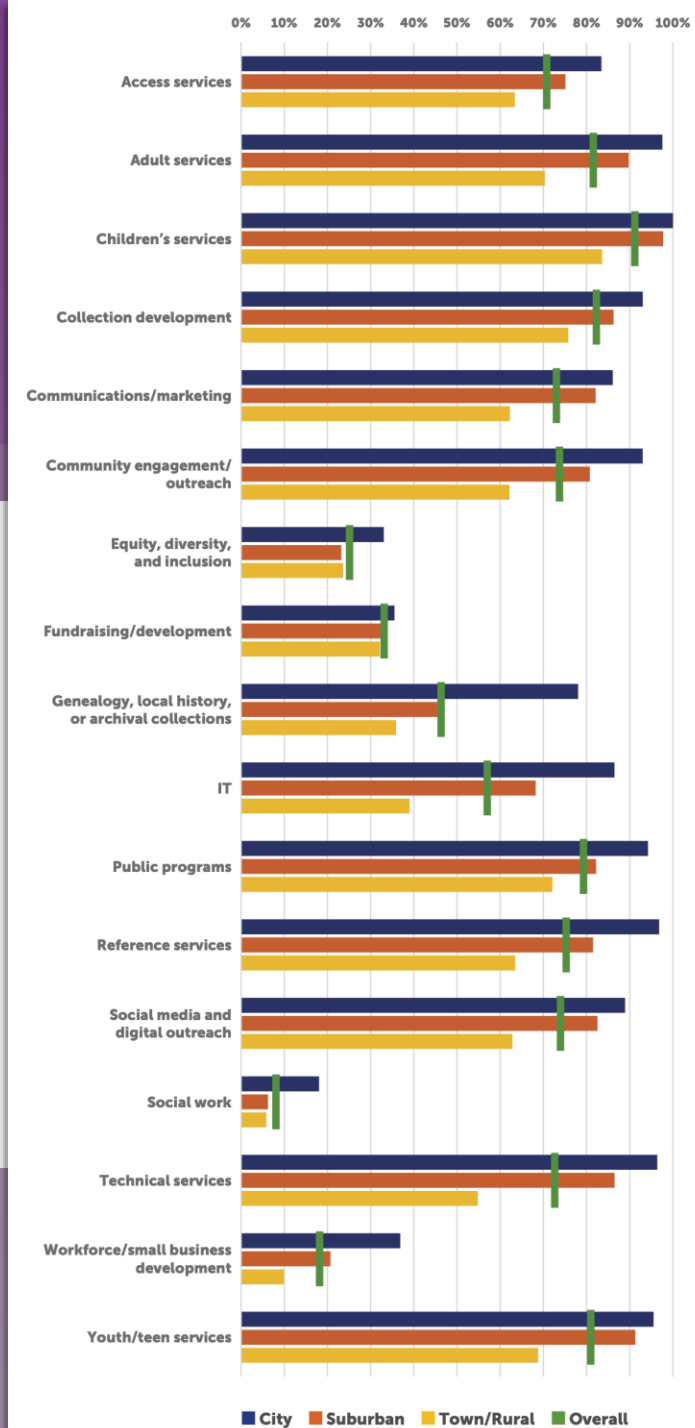
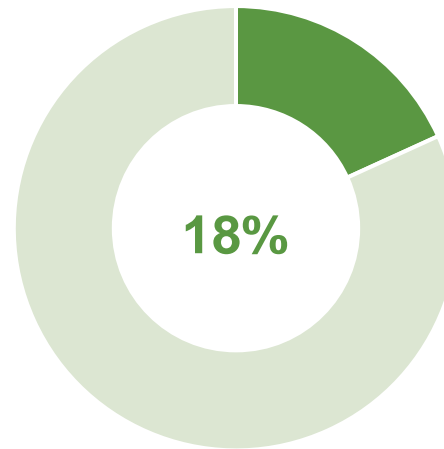


Emerging Staff Roles

Equity, diversity, and inclusion



Workforce/small business development



Lost Staff Positions

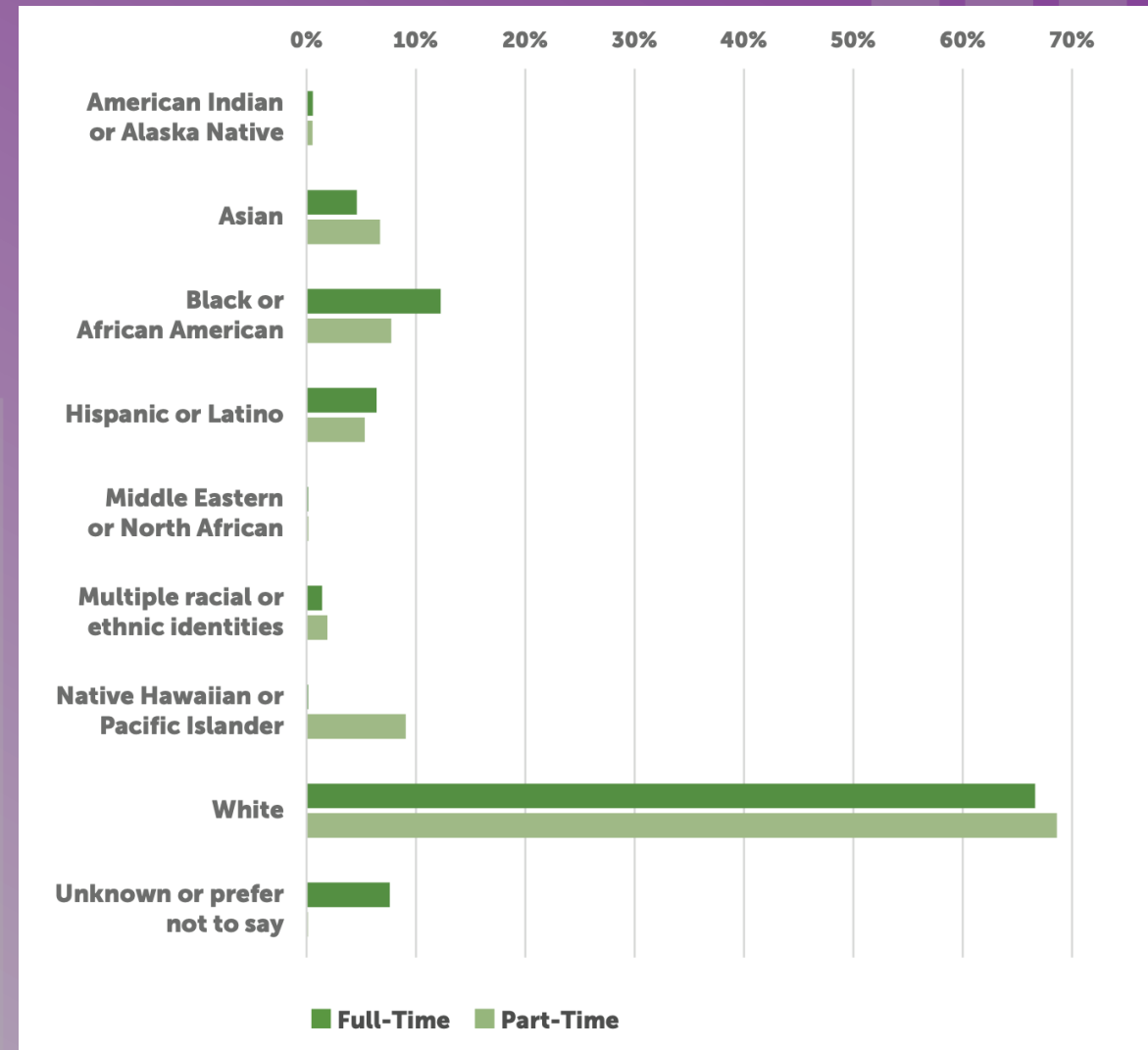
- City and suburban libraries more likely to have lost positions than town/rural libraries
- Reasons given:
 - Staff leaving the workforce and not being replaced (55.3%)
 - Cuts in library service hours leading to reduction in staff hours (21.2%)
 - Budget cuts (14.5%)



27% of all public libraries report that they **lost staff positions** in the prior twelve months.

Representation

- BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented among library workers, compared to the US population as a whole
- Not all public libraries were able to accurately report staff demographic information



“Helping people feel seen and heard—and assisting them in solidifying their place in our society’s fabric—are roles that libraries play in **building community. Our values are essential to our future as institutions, library workers, and library lovers.”**

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada
(ALA President, 2022-23)

“Representation Matters”

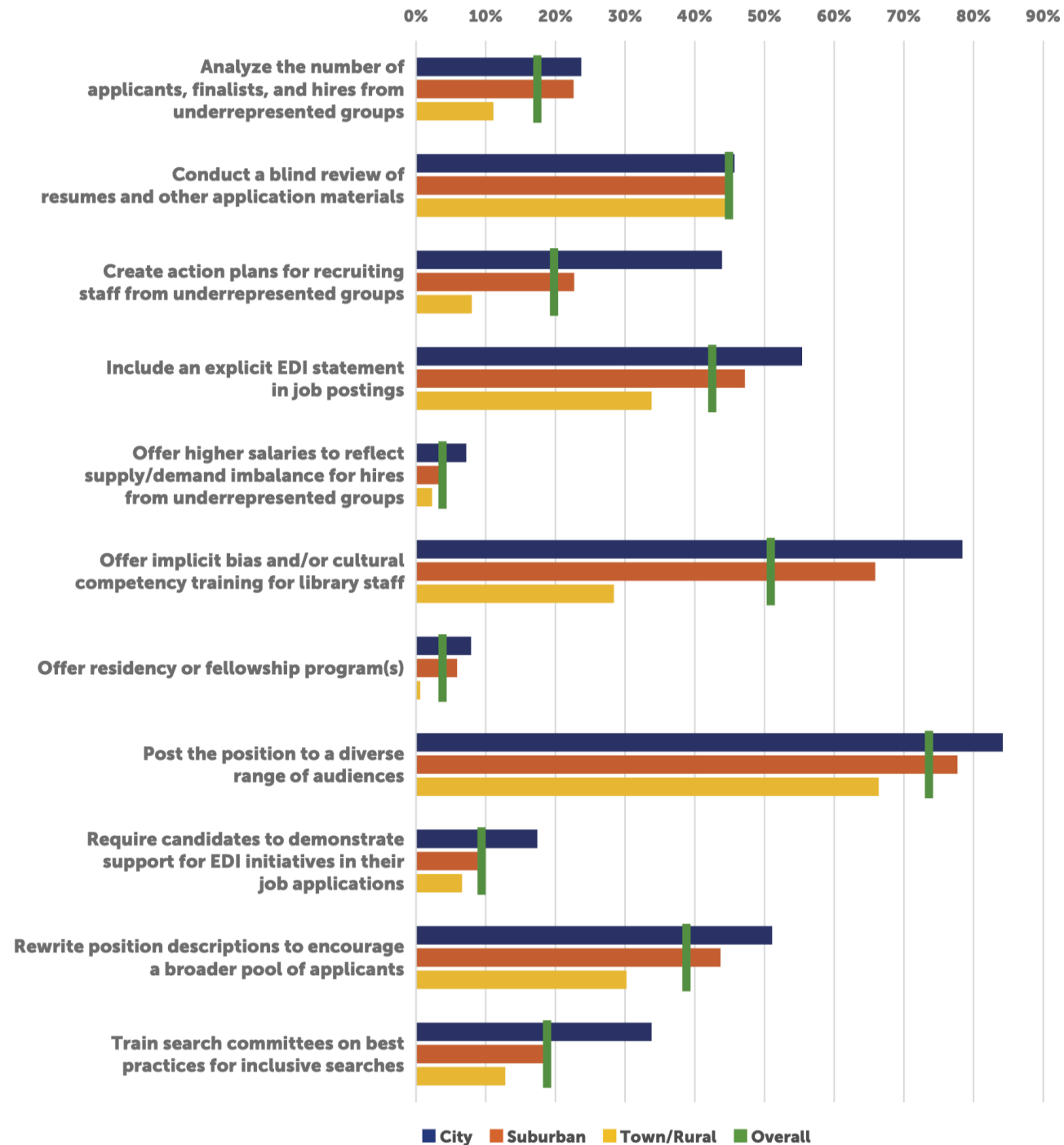
American Libraries

September 1, 2022

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2022/09/01/representation-matters/>

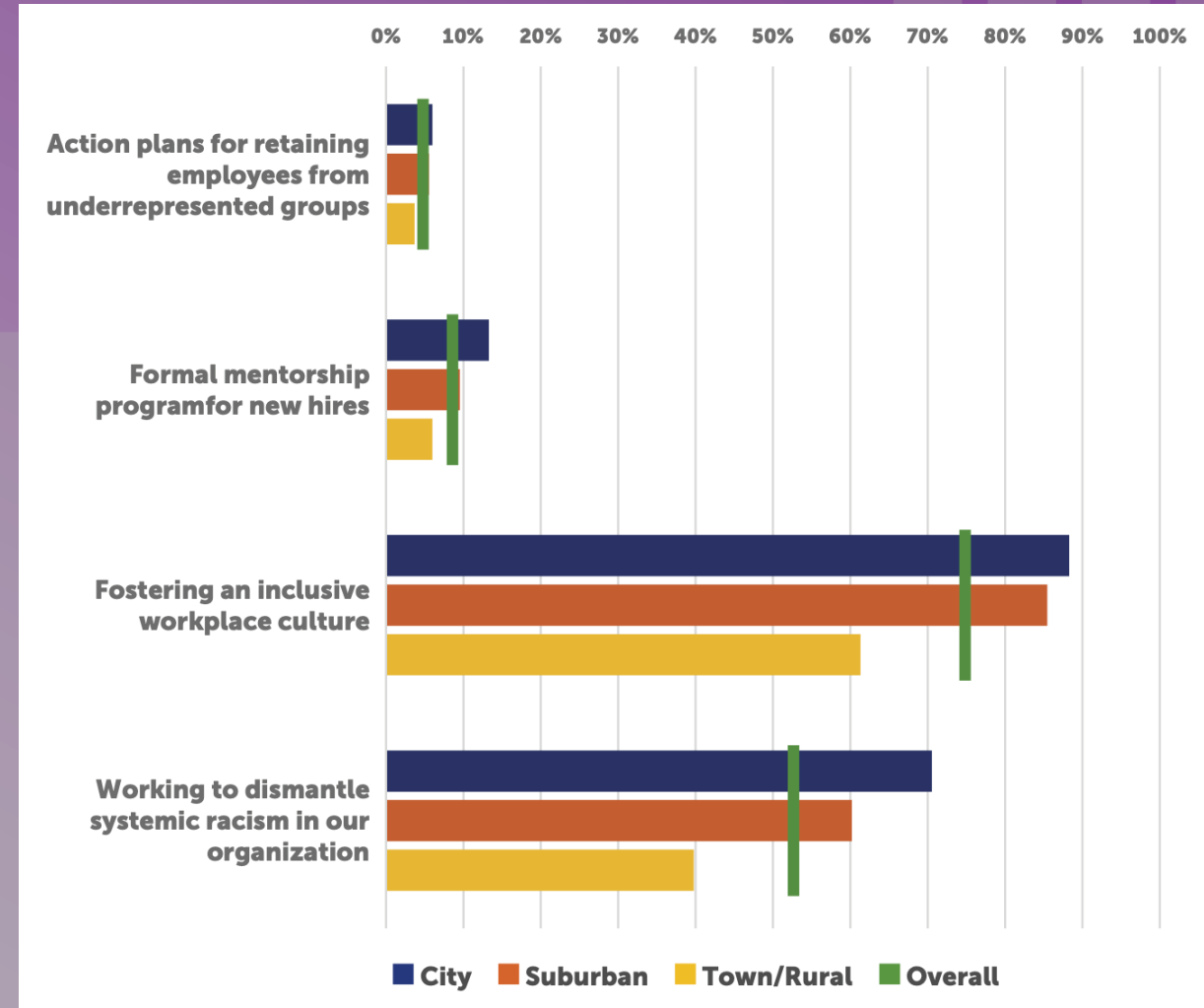
Hiring Strategies

- **91.7%** of libraries report using at least one strategy for hiring staff from underrepresented groups
- These hiring strategies can benefit *everyone* by improving practices and transparency



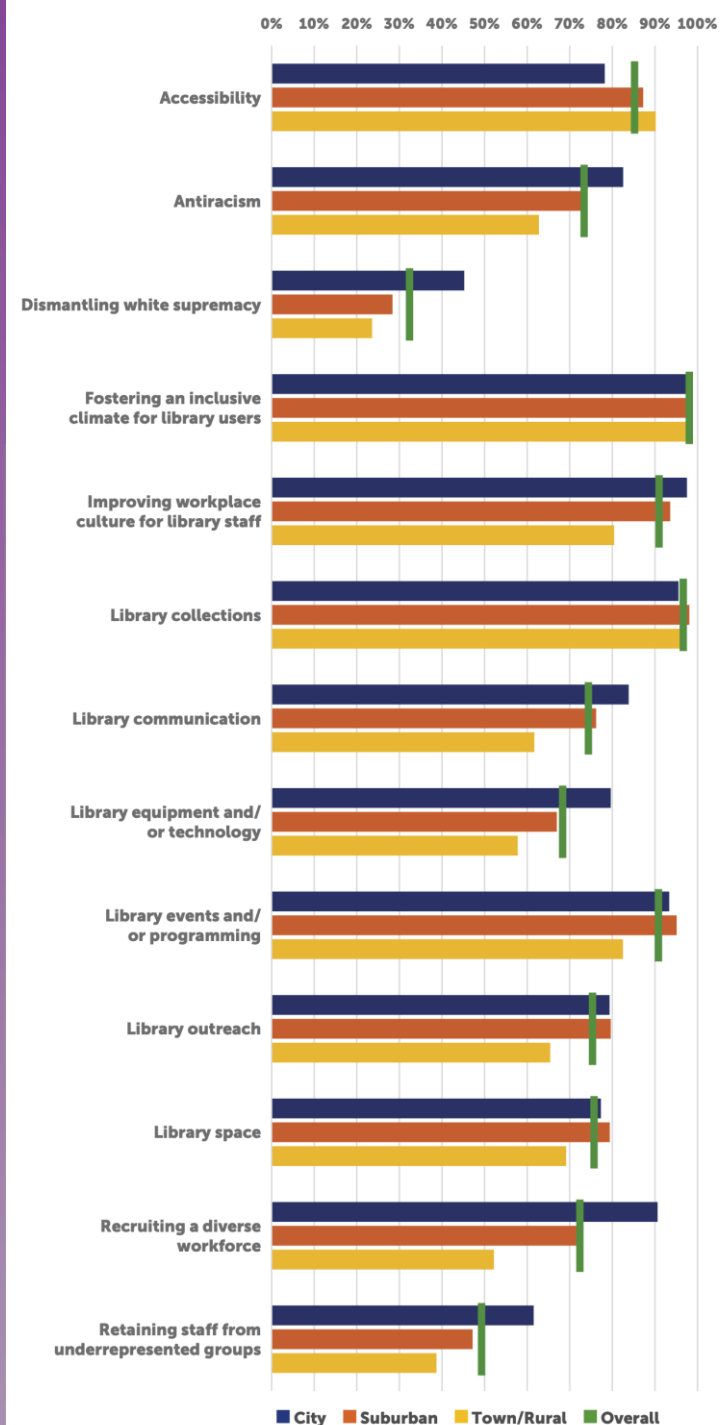
Retention Strategies

- **79%** of libraries use at least one strategy to retain staff from underrepresented groups



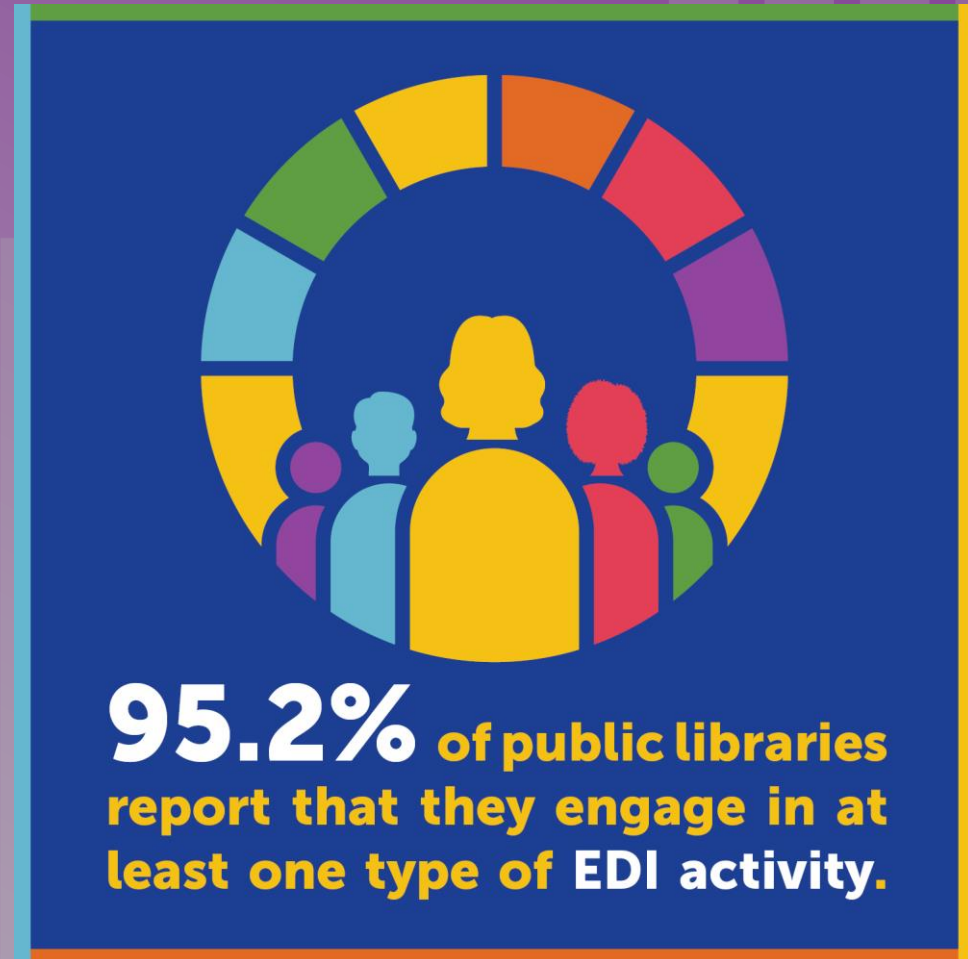
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goals

- **26.6%** of libraries have formal, written goals for EDI
- Top formal goal areas:
 - Fostering an inclusive climate for library users (98.1%)
 - Library collections (96.7%)
 - Improving workplace culture for all library staff (91%)
 - Library events and/or programming (90.8%)



EDI Activities

- Top types of activities:
 - Focusing collection development on better representing diverse authors and perspectives (87.9%)
 - Supporting staff participation in EDI training or professional development (78.5%)
 - Analyzing the demographics of local communities for use in planning (76.0%)



TAKING ACTION

Sara Goek



Advocacy

- Pandemic recovery
- Funding for staff positions
- Increasing awareness and addressing stagnant salaries
- Increasing awareness of emerging roles, including in workforce and small business development

Results for Action



Advocating for
Staff



Reviewing
Résumés



Job Interviews



Accessibility

Advocating for Staff

Result: 27.2% of public libraries lost staff positions in the previous year.

Why It Matters: Libraries depend on people to provide vital resources, services, and programs to their communities. The uncertainty of the pandemic combined with factors including budget cuts and hiring freezes has had a negative impact on public library staffing levels. The demands of other responsibilities, including caregiving, also likely had an impact on staff leaving the workforce.



In Practice: At the local level, libraries will need to make the case to their stakeholders, including the board and/or local government, about the necessity of filling vacant positions and opening new positions to meet current needs. Peer comparison data can help with this. Use this report and the data available in Benchmark (librarybenchmark.org) to explore how your library's staff numbers, roles, and other metrics compare to those of your peers. For example, if your library has fewer staff and lower salaries than other similar libraries, that could help you make the case for hiring additional staff. You can also show how reduced staffing has affected the library's offerings and outputs if you are seeing a reduction in the number or types of programs compared to pre-pandemic years. Engaging in advocacy at the state and national level can help garner support for libraries and library funding at a larger scale.⁴ Providing better support for staff to reduce burnout, increasing flexibility, and creating opportunities for growth at your library can also improve the work culture and environment, mitigating some of the reasons staff leave.⁵

Limitations: The decision to fill vacant positions or open new ones may be outside the library's control and subject to budget constraints.

Reviewing Résumés

Result: 44.9% of libraries overall conduct blind reviews of résumés or other application materials in the hiring process.

Why it matters: Reducing the potential for bias or discrimination to occur in the hiring process can help ensure that the candidates considered for a position are those with the best skills and experience. A blind review of résumés and other application materials offers one way of reducing potential bias. A blind review means removing identifiable characteristics from a résumé, including such elements as name, gender, and educational institutions. This matters because research has shown that discrimination can occur because of the applicants' name or gender.¹³

In practice: The department or person responsible for accepting applications could redact or remove identifying information from applications before sharing them with the hiring manager or search committee. Alternatively, applicants could be asked to omit some information—such as the names of educational institutions they attended—in the materials they submit.¹⁴

Limitations: Despite scrubbing some details, there may still be clues about an applicant's identity in the materials reviewed, and bias can still factor into other stages of the hiring process.



Job Interviews

Results: While 50.9% of libraries overall report offering implicit bias and/or cultural competency training for staff, only 18.8% explicitly train search committees on best practices for inclusive hiring.

Why It Matters: In job interviews, perceptions of candidates may be affected by affinity bias—our tendency to like those with whom we share identities or characteristics, whether we attended the same school or follow the same sports team. While that may create a feeling of rapport in an interview, it is not a reliable means of evaluating a candidate’s skills or ability to contribute to a team.

In practice: Have a clearly structured interview, use the same set of questions for all candidates, and follow a standard rubric to guide how the responses are evaluated.¹⁵ Train staff and search committees to be aware of potential implicit biases and make discussion of bias an explicit part of a hiring process. Ruchika Tulshyan recommends beginning an interview debrief with the question, “Where could bias be showing up in this decision?”¹⁶ While potentially awkward at first, it opens space for honest discussion of where perceptions of a candidate originate.

Limitations: Raising awareness, discussing bias, and having a structured interview process in place may all help disrupt bias among search committees. However, training alone may not be enough, and certainly not if it’s treated as a one-and-done item.



Accessibility

Result: 59.8% of libraries conduct periodic reviews of their website and digital presence, and 65.9% conduct periodic reviews of their physical space to ensure inclusivity and accessibility.

Why It Matters: Accessibility audits are evaluations of how accessible a library's physical and digital spaces are. Conducting an audit regularly can help identify changes needed to make the library more inclusive.

In practice: Audits can take different forms, including self-assessments, external reviews, and/or surveys of library users. For physical and virtual spaces, improving accessibility is about making the space easier to navigate, whether with a wheelchair or a screen reader. For physical spaces, check that facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). One tool available for that purpose is the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities (adachecklist.org). For audits of virtual resources, tools exist that can automatically evaluate web content and identify areas for improvement in design and navigation. The Web Accessibility Initiative provides a list of tools and resources (w3.org/WAI). ALA resources related to accessibility can be found at ala.org/advocacy/diversity/accessibility.

Limitations: Keep in mind that audits can go beyond a checklist of minimum standards to also ask about the quality of access provided. As technology changes, patrons' expectations for accessible design may also change. Adding a budget line to address accessibility needs can help with regular updates.



Additional Resources: Data

- Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends: librarybenchmark.org
- ALA-APA Salary Survey: <https://ala-apa.org/salary-survey/>
- Data about the library profession:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/sara.goek>
 - Demographics of library workers from the American Community Survey
 - ALA JobLIST ads

Additional Resources: EDI

ALA resources

- <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>
- Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework (2022)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Scorecard for Library and Information Organizations (2021)
- Office of Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services

Other resources

- Maryland State Library EDI resources:
<https://marylandlibraries.libguides.com/c.php?g=1018501&p=7377349>
- Urban Libraries Council, Trigger Terms resource:
<https://www.urbanlibraries.org/resources/harmful-detours-and-healing-redirects>

ENGAGEMENT

Katina Jones



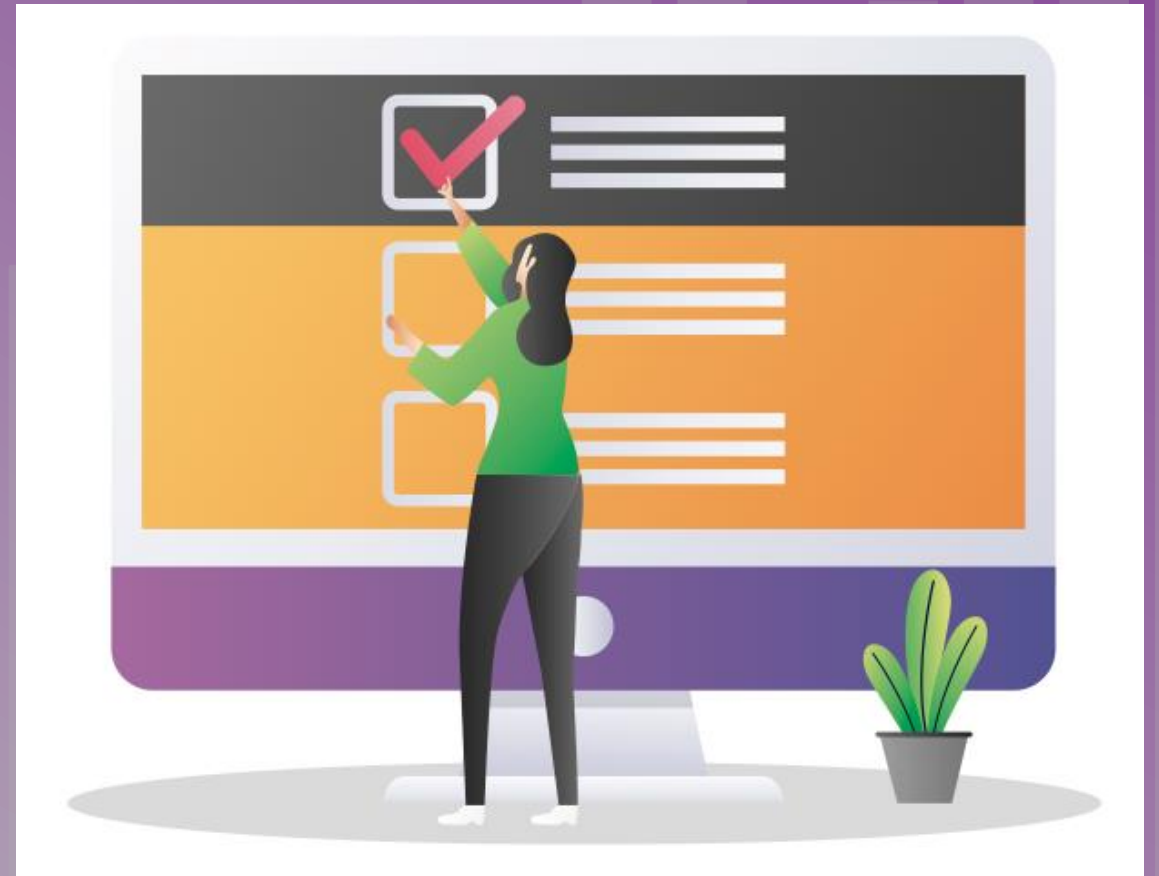
Contribute to action based on the survey results

- Share staffing and EDI resources you have found useful:
<https://forms.gle/GDqCfnPGzvhibx3L4A>
- Write for *Public Libraries* magazine or *Public Libraries Online*:
<https://www.ala.org/pla/resources/publications/publiclibraries/writeforpl>

2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey

19 questions focused on:

- Community needs
- Programs
- Services
- Partnerships
- Facilities



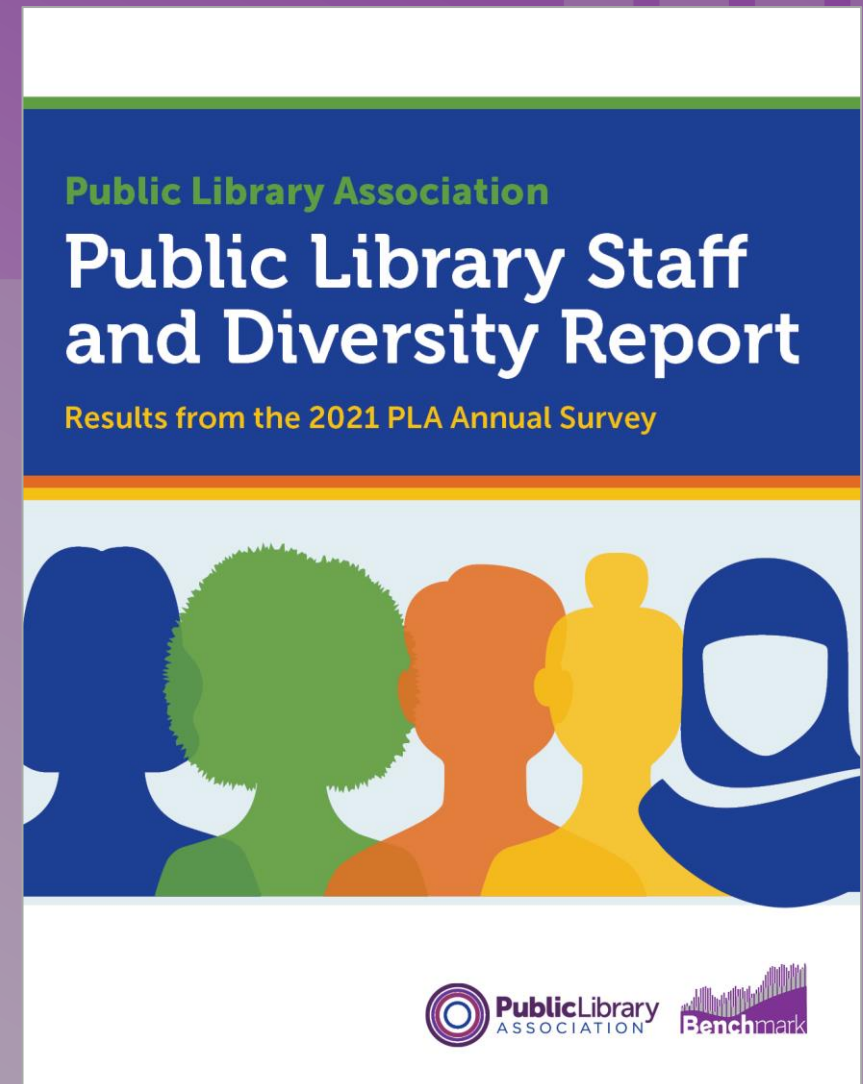
2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey

Win a free PLA 2024
conference registration!

- Survey closes **December 10**
- Find it in the “Surveys” page in your library’s Benchmark account at librarybenchmark.org
- All library directors should have gotten an invitation via email and print
- Need help? Email plabenchmark@ala.org

Data Access

- Read the survey reports:
<https://www.ala.org/pla/data/plasurveys>
- Access data via Benchmark:
librarybenchmark.org

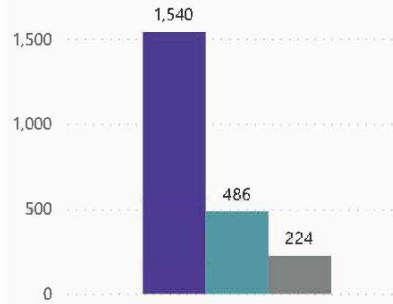


Summary Data

PUBLIC LIBRARY is a (locale type) library in the (Region) administered by a (legal basis). The library serves a population of #####. It is part of peer group #.

Programs & Services: Number of Library Programs

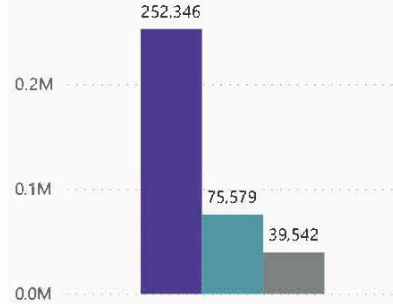
● Your Library ● Peer Group Median ● All Median



*Data Source: IMLS Public Libraries Survey (2019)

Collections: Total Collection Use

● Your Library ● Peer Group Median ● All Median



*Data Source: IMLS Public Libraries Survey (2019)

Filters

Survey Year

Most Recent

Below filter changes Peer Group

Peer Group Name

Primary Peer Group

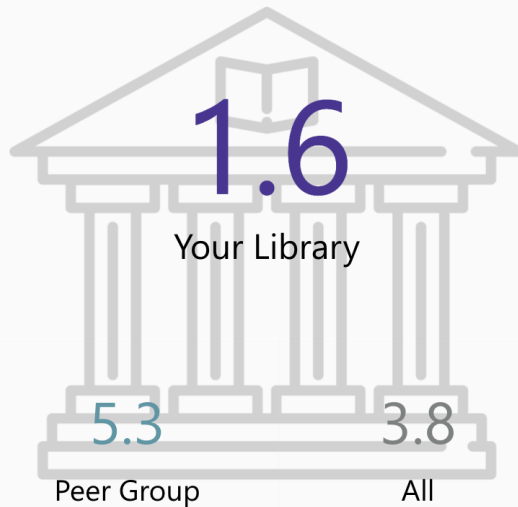
Below filters change 'All' Data Point

Locale

All

Region

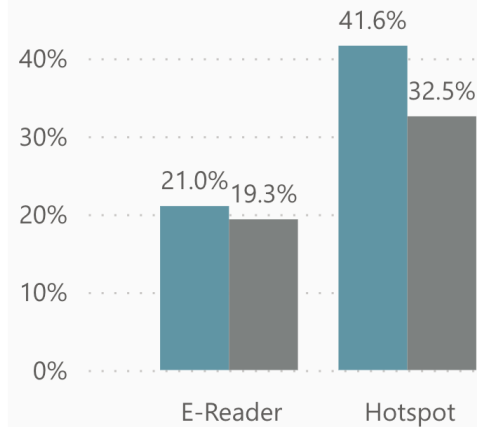
Library Visits per Capita



*Data Source: IMLS Public Libraries Survey (2019)

Off-Site Technology

● Peer Group ● All



*Data Source: PLA Technology Survey (2020)

Data sets include:

- New PLA Topical Surveys
- Historic PLDS data
- IMLS Public Libraries Survey
- Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Background about Benchmark:

www.ala.org/pla/data/benchmark



Benchmark Access

All public libraries have **free access** to:

- View select data visualizations with peer comparisons
- Complete surveys from PLA
- See your library's responses submitted to past PLA and PLDS surveys
- Manage contact information and preferences
- Access data-related resources

Subscribers also get access to:

- A robust set of interactive data dashboards with visualizations and filters
- A custom report builder that includes all historic metrics
- The ability to create custom peer groups for benchmarking

Survey
participant
discount!



Public Libraries

Subscriptions and surveys are handled at the administrative entity (system) level and may include branch libraries.

Cost per year:

\$400

10% discounts available for PLA organizational members and for **survey participants** (for a combined 20% off!)



Group: Consortium / State Library Agency

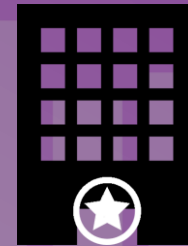
Access for up to 10 libraries. Additional libraries can be added at a discounted rate.

Cost per year:

\$3000 for up to 10 libraries, and \$200

for each additional library.

10% discount available for PLA organizational members.



Corporate

Companies, vendors, or other organizations.

Cost per year:

\$1,800

10% discount available for PLA organizational members.

Finally...

- Please complete the **2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey!**
- Questions? Email plabenchmark@ala.org



THANK YOU!

