Public Library Services for Strong Communities Report

Results from the 2022 PLA Annual Survey

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Citation

Public Library Association. *Public Library Services for Strong Communities Report: Results from the 2022 PLA Annual Survey.* Chicago: Public Library Association, 2023.

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Chicago, Illinois

Contents

Executive Summary

The results of the Public Library Association (PLA) 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey address the myriad ways libraries nationwide serve and sustain their communities, now and into the future. The survey gathered information about library programs, services, partnerships, and facilities geared towards meeting needs and fostering resilient communities. While public libraries are not the only entities engaged in this work, the survey sought to shed light on how and in what circumstances libraries do engage, independently and through partnerships.

99% of public libraries have summer reading programs

Libraries are a cornerstone of civic and social infrastructure that support strong communities. The results show continuing strengths in core areas such as literacy, education, civic engagement, and public access to information resources. The majority of libraries (68%) offer elections services, such as voter registration, ballot drop-off, or serving as a polling place. Almost all libraries (99%) have summer reading programs for children, teens, and/or adults, which support learning outside of school. Services such as those for GED/diploma students (provided by 59% of libraries) and English language learners (provided by 46% of libraries) support adult learning and literacy.

The survey results also highlight growth in new types of programs and services. An area of focus that has emerged in recent years is workforce development and job-seeker support. 78% of libraries offer job and career services currently and 24% have workforce development programs. To better reach all community members and increase access to library services, 17.5% of libraries have at least one type of mobile programming facility, including bookmobiles, cybermobiles, and mobile job centers.

78% of public libraries offer job and career services

The survey results show both the extent of current partnerships and opportunities for further collaboration. 98% of public libraries have at least one type of partnership with an external organization. However, these partnerships are more likely to be informal (95%) than formal (59%). Building partnerships can benefit the library, the other organization(s) involved, and the community as a whole, enabling the sharing of expertise in working towards common goals.

98% of public libraries have at least one partnership with an external organization

Libraries face significant challenges in maintaining current operations and expanding them to meet growing needs as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Capacity—particularly funding and staffing—remains a persistent issue. Lack of investment in infrastructure also hinders services and access for community members. 40% of library buildings have not undergone major renovations in over two decades (since 2000 or earlier). Community members and staff rely on those aging

buildings daily, and in the event of emergency. Half of libraries (50%) have special designations for emergencies, serving as cooling/warming centers in extreme temperatures, distribution centers during public health emergencies, and/or centers for community members and first responders during disaster recovery.

40% of library buildings have not undergone major renovations in 20+ years

50% of public libraries have special designations for emergencies

For libraries that have renovated their public spaces in recent years, a focus has been on creating or updating programming and meeting spaces, suggesting a continued orientation towards libraries as vital social hubs and learning centers. Since 2011 libraries have added or renovated public meeting rooms (35%), age-specific programming spaces (27%), and large community event spaces (18%). Investment in infrastructure and staff is critical for public libraries to continue to provide a broad range of services that support strong and resilient communities, now and into the future.

About the Survey Data

PLA fielded the Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey in fall 2022. It is the third of a new set of three topical surveys, administered on a rotating annual basis. The 2022 survey was designed in response to the need for better data about the types of programs, services, and facilities available in libraries and how those support community needs. This first year of results provide a baseline so that when we ask these questions again in 2025, we will see how the field has evolved.

PLA invited all U.S. public libraries (at the administrative entity level, as defined by the Institute of Museum and Library Services) to participate in this survey. In total, 1,167 libraries completed the survey, a response rate of 12.6%. The results presented below are weighted to account for differences between the responding libraries and the universe of all U.S. public libraries. All questions on the survey were optional, and the tables in the Detailed Results section include the number of respondents for each question. The percentage estimates reflect the percentage of respondents for a particular question, rather than the percentage of the full sample. See Appendix A for further details of the methodology.

The charts and tables below highlight responses for public libraries overall and by locale type. Locale indicates the level of urbanization of a given location, with libraries divided into the categories of city, suburban, and town/rural. While city libraries are only a small proportion (6%) of all libraries, they serve a large share of the U.S. population (35%). Suburban libraries are 25% of AEs and serve 42% of the population. Town/rural libraries make up the majority of AEs (70%) but serve only 23% of the population.[1]

Community Needs

To set the stage, the first question on the survey asked respondents to identify the most pressing needs in their communities that the library seeks to address through its partnerships, programs, or services. For each option listed, libraries could select currently addressing or planned for future, not both (**Figure 1**). The top three areas libraries are currently addressing fall within core service areas: literacy and educational achievement (84.7%), digital equity (66.6%), and civic engagement (62.4%). The top three areas that libraries plan to address in future are climate change and sustainability (27.5%), accessibility (26.6%), and economic development and job-seeker support (20.7%).
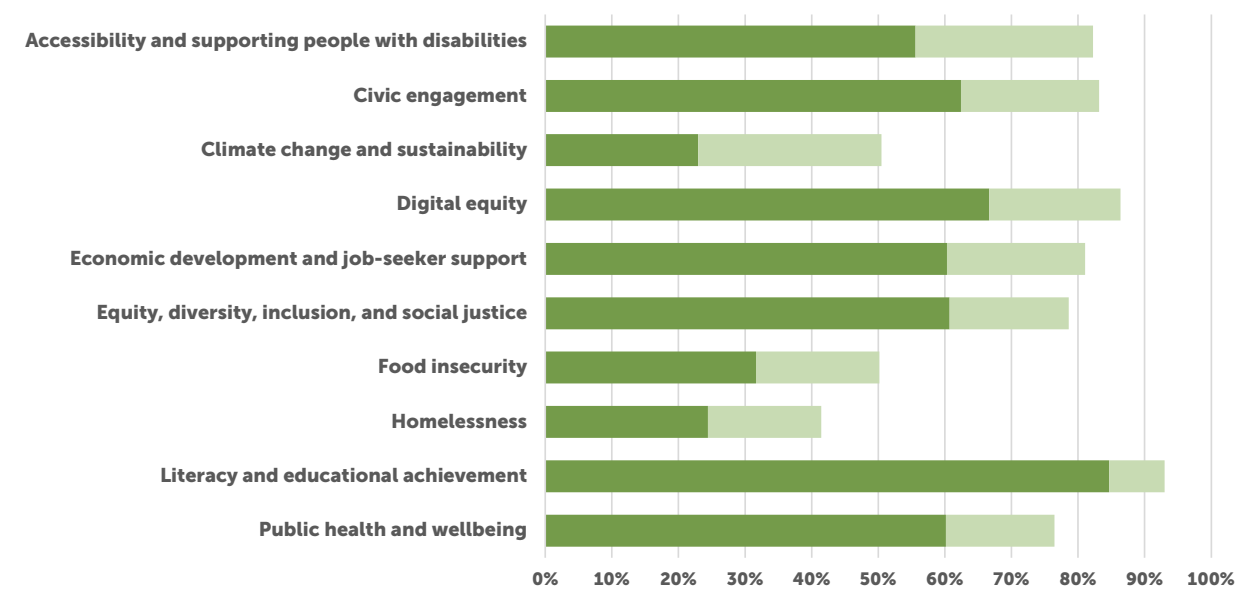

Figure 1: Community needs. See Table 1 below for detailed results.

■ Currently Addressing ■ Planned for Future

The results suggest that libraries are maintaining their focus on facilitating access to and creation of knowledge for all. The results also suggest a trend towards a broader understanding of the roles libraries can play in sustaining communities. Though commonly interpreted as applying primarily to environmental initiatives, sustainable practices sit at the intersection of the environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable.[2] This aligns with the definition of sustainable development put forward by the United Nations: work that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[3] Toward that end, in 2015 the UN member states adopted a set of seventeen **Sustainable Development Goals**. The goals are a call for action, intended to drive economic, environmental, and social progress worldwide. While these are broad global goals, U.S. public libraries already engage in work related to many of the issues they cover, from literacy and digital inclusion to health, justice, and much more.[4] Addressing community needs in areas such as homelessness, food insecurity, and public health aligns with the core values of

librarianship. Engaging in this work is fundamentally about providing access for all and contributing to the strength, sustainability, and resilience of our communities.

Services

As community hubs, libraries are a key point of contact to assist people with access to information and resources. Libraries offer services to assist patrons both formally and informally. Formal services are defined as those specifically planned, promoted, and offered by the library, whether or not they occur at the library or are facilitated by a staff member. Informal services are defined as those for which the library assists patrons as needed or when asked but are not specifically planned or promoted by the library. The survey asked about how libraries assist patrons with government services and other types of support services (**Figure 2**). In most instances, libraries are more likely to provide these services informally.
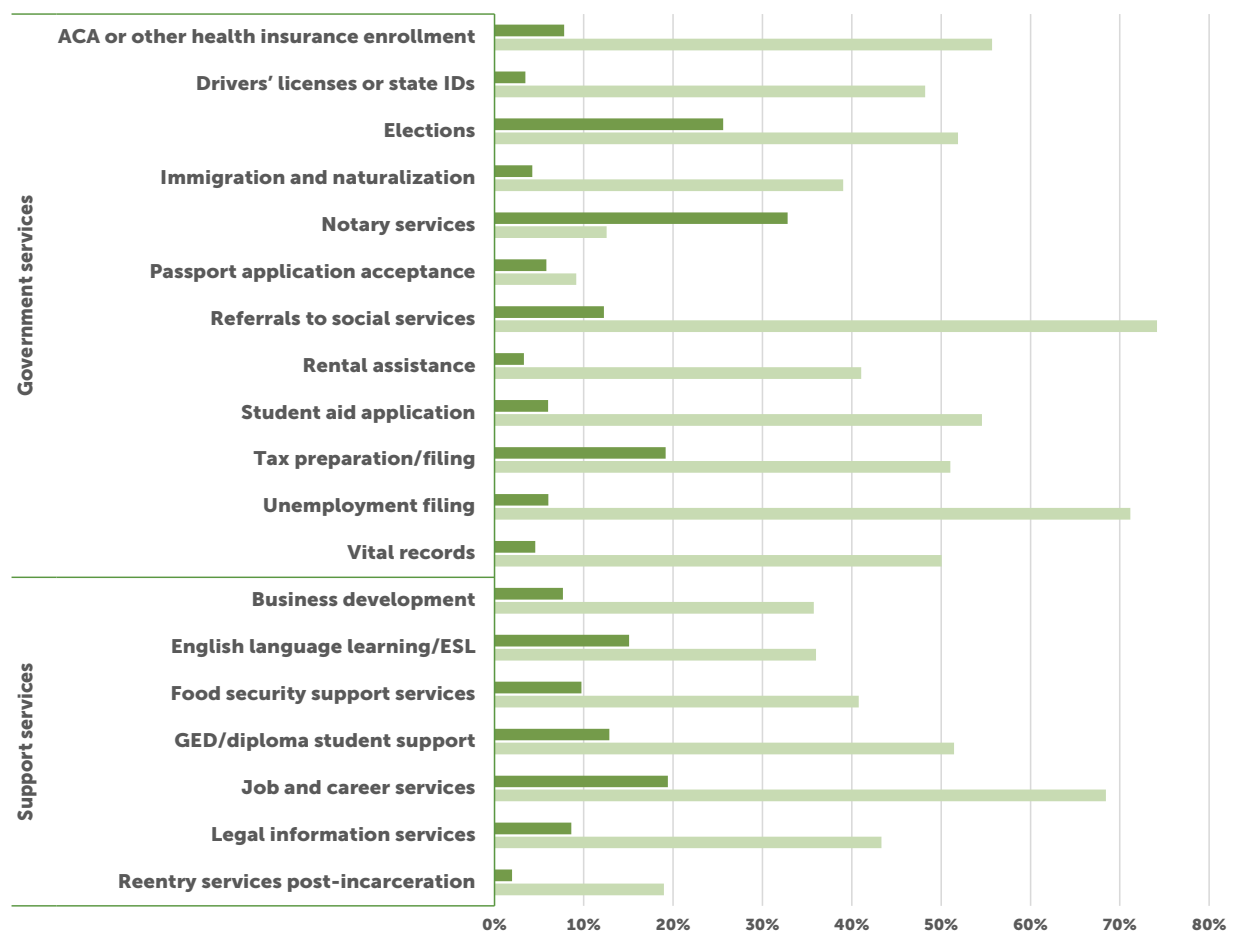

Figure 2: Government and support services. Libraries reported whether they provide these services formally, informally, or both formally and informally. In the chart, formal includes those that selected formal and both, and informal includes those that selected informal and both. See Tables 2 and 3 for detailed results.

■ Formal   ■ Informal

The government services that the most libraries report offering, whether formally or informally, are referrals to social services (78.7%), filing unemployment (72.9%), and elections (68%). These top three categories are the same across all locale types—city, suburban, and town/rural (see Table 2). In terms of other types of support services, job and career services are the most common, offered formally and/or informally by 77.5% of libraries (see Table 3).

As Figure 2 highlights, informal services are more common. These include directing patrons to the appropriate body or resource—a standard practice for reference queries. Asked why services are primarily informal, most libraries indicated it is due to capacity. 73.3% said that they do not have

Food Insecurity

Result: 31.6% of libraries report food insecurity as a community need they currently address, and 18.5% say they plan to address it in future. Current food insecurity support is primarily offered as an informal service by 40.8% of libraries overall.

Why it matters: Food insecurity is defined as lack of access to healthy and affordable food. Factors such as income, access to transportation, and the prevalence of supermarkets with quality food options, all have an effect. These factors are often tied to systemic inequalities. While 10.2% of US households as of 2021 are food insecure, Black and Latinx households are more likely to be food insecure than their white counterparts, and households in rural areas are more likely to be food insecure than those in metropolitan areas.[5] According to **analysis by the Urban Libraries Council**, 15% of public library outlets nationwide are located in food deserts.[6] For libraries, addressing food insecurity can mean both meeting a community need and upholding core values, including a commitment to access for all and empowering patrons.

In practice: Formal public library programs and services that address food insecurity include free summer meals for children/youth, afterschool meals, and partnerships with food banks.

Consider modeling a new program or service at your library after one of these common models. Partnerships also offer a means to expand services through collaboration. Partner with your local school district to provide free meals after school or in the summer, or partner with a community organization, such as a food bank, to become a food distribution site. Fun and educational programming focused on cooking, nutrition, gardening, and more can both provide access to food and empower participants.

No Kid Hungry's Center for Best Practices **has guidance** on starting summer or afterschool meal programs in libraries. Get more ideas from ALA's Programming Librarian, such as the **Farm-2-Library** program at Southern Adirondack Library System or the **Seed Library** at Cleveland Public Library.

Challenges: As with many programs and services, primary challenges include both staffing and funding. Partnerships can help reduce the burden by sharing it across organizations interested in the same goals.

enough staff or partners available to be able to provide the service formally. 69.6% said that patrons do not regularly ask for these types of services, and 58.1% said that other community organizations deliver these services in their own facilities (see Table 4).

Programs

As distinct from services, programs are events organized by the library or its partners and open to patrons an d community members in a group setting. Programs may occur in person or online, at the library's own facilities or another location. The Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) annual Public Libraries Survey (PLS) collects information about the total number of programs offered annually and total attendance at those programs. These figures can be broken down into categories for children (ages 0 to 11), young adults (ages 12 to 18), and other. The PLS does not contain more granular detail about the types of programs libraries offer, a gap that PLA's Services for Strong Communities Survey sought to fill.

Children's programs comprise about half of the total annual programs offered by all public libraries.[7] The most common types of children's programs (**Figure 3**) overall are summer reading (98.8%), early literacy (95.1%), STEAM, or science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (80.3%), and school-aged literacy programs (67.1%). More than half of libraries of all locale types offer these four kinds of children's programs.
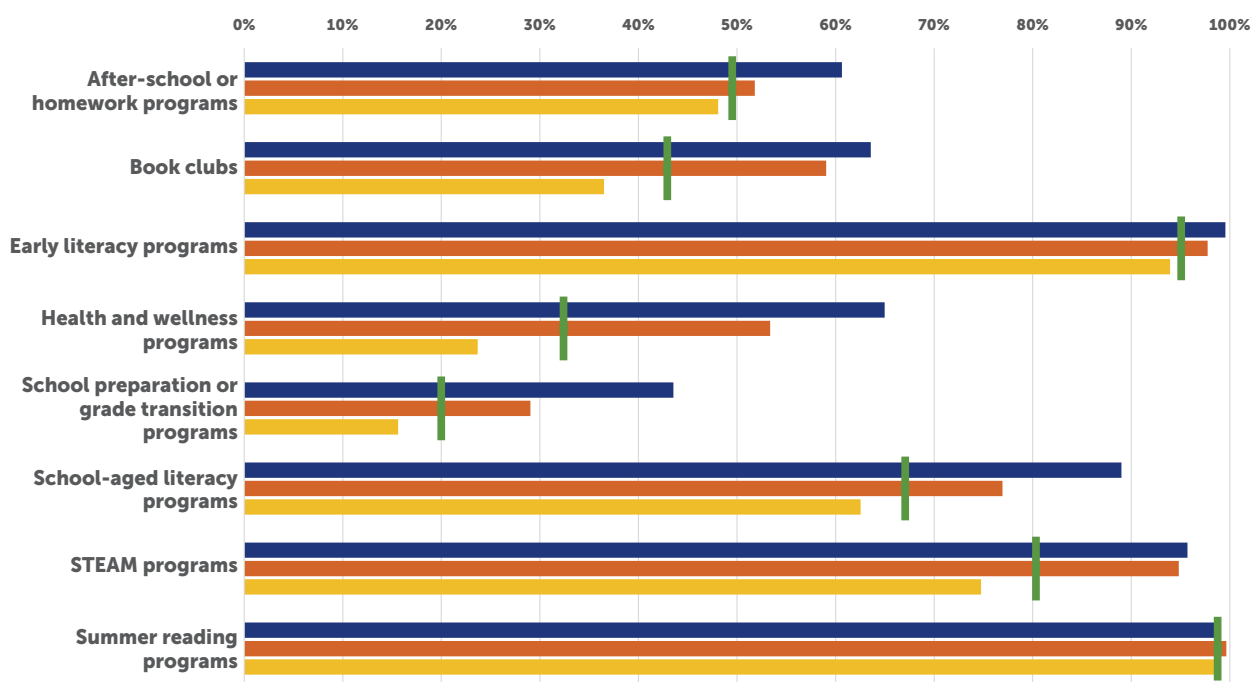
Figure 3: Children's programs. See Table 5 for detailed results.

■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town/Rural ■ Overall
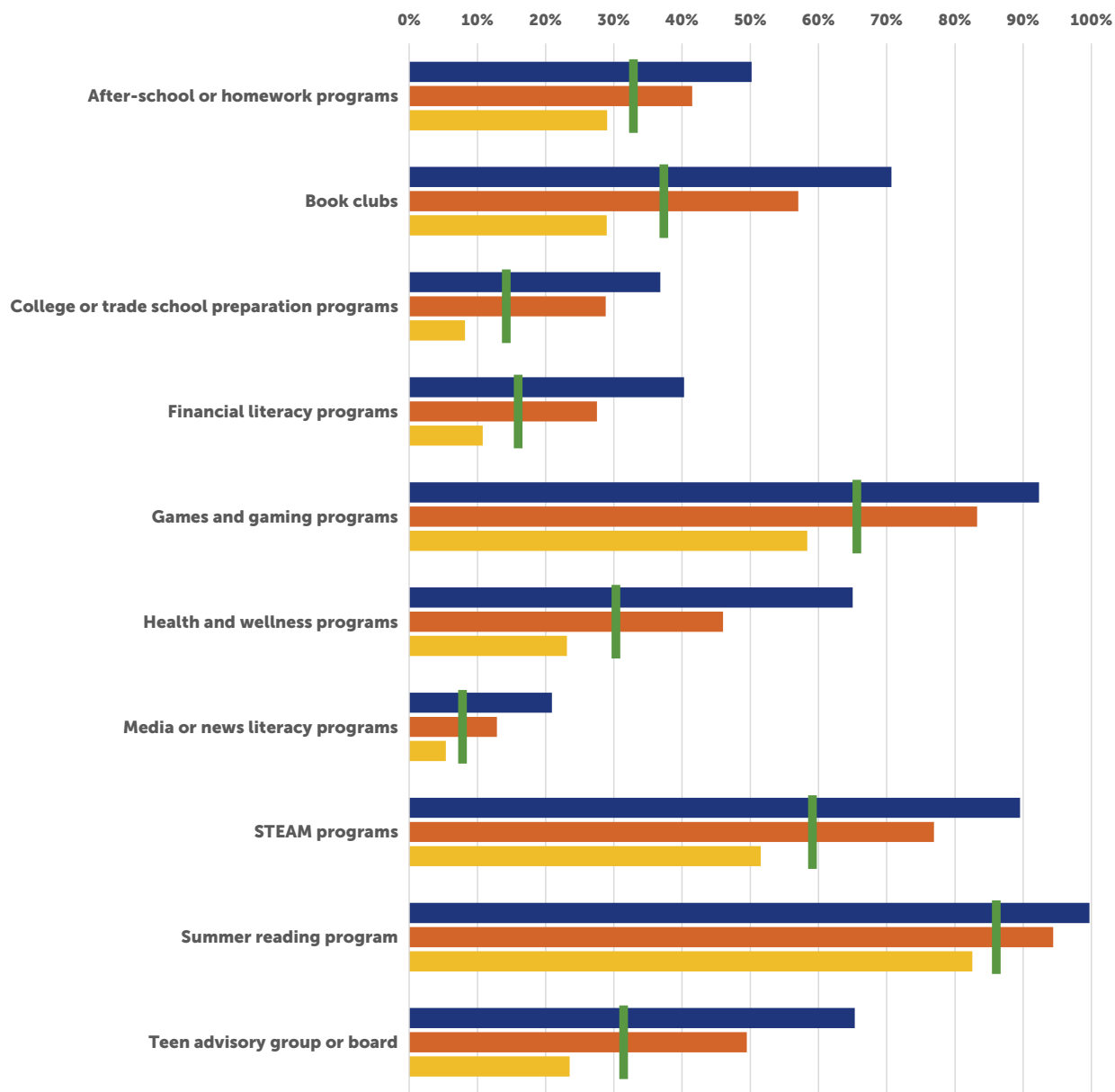
Figure 4: Teen programs. See [Table 6](#) for detailed results.

■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town/Rural ■ Overall

Teen or young adult programs constitute about a tenth of the total annual library programs.[8] Among the types of programs for teens (**Figure 4**), three stand out as by far the most common: summer reading programs (offered by 86.1% of libraries overall), games and gaming programs (65.6%), and STEAM programs (59.1%). These are the three top teen programs for libraries of each locale type as well. The next most common, teen book clubs are offered by only 37.3% of libraries overall.
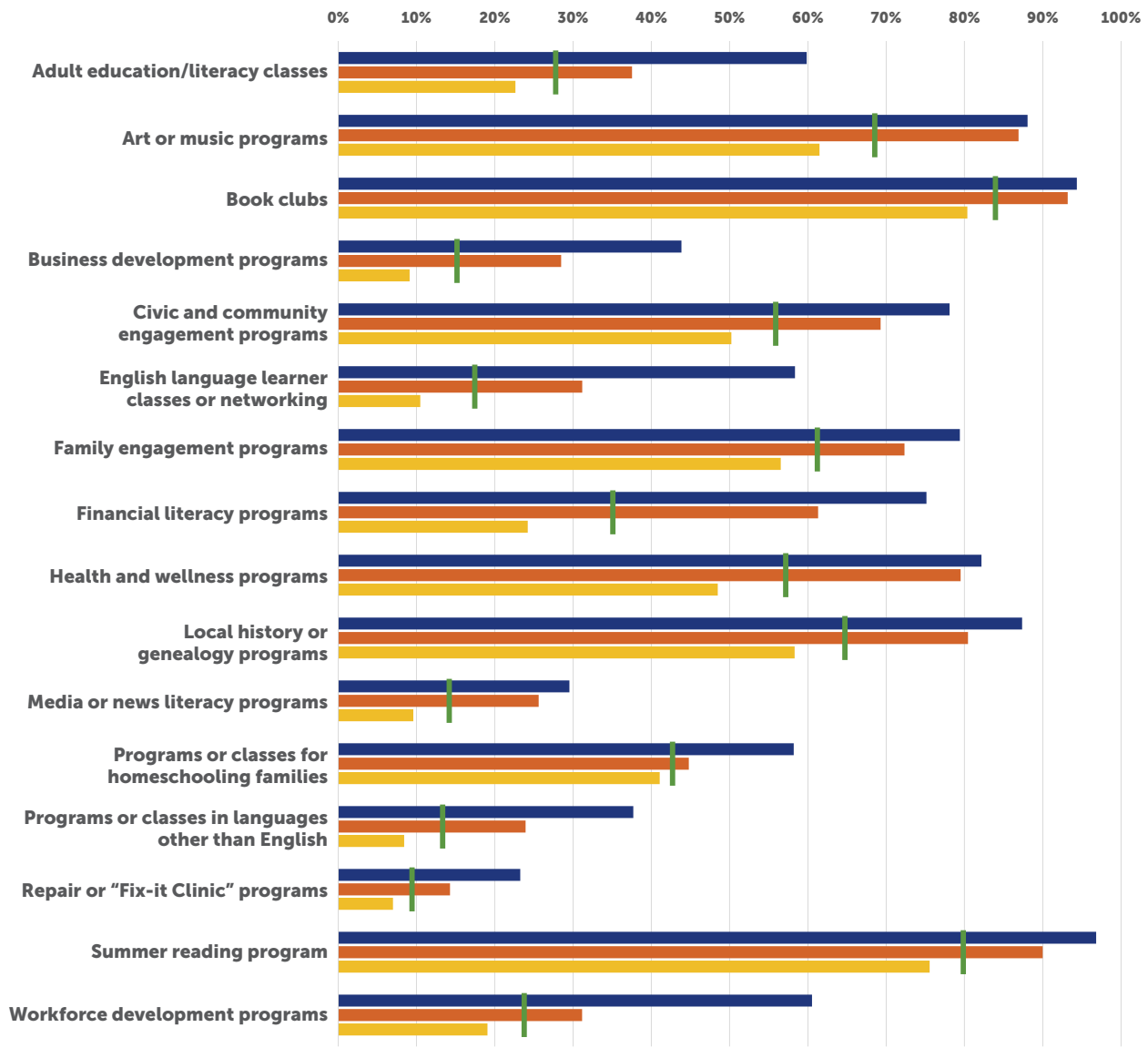
Figure 5: Adult or all-ages programs. See Table 7 for detailed results.

■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town/Rural ■ Overall

The remainder of annual public library programs (about 40%) are not specific to children or young adult audiences, falling into a general or other category.[9] PLA's Services for Strong Communities Survey asked about types of adult or all-ages programs (**Figure 5**). Among the options listed, the top three selections overall and across all locale types are book clubs (84%), summer reading programs (79.8%), and art or music programs (68.5%). The list does not include digital literacy training and technology-related programs because a separate technology survey covers them in greater detail. Based on the results from 2020, 88.3% of public libraries offer digital literacy programming or training for patrons.[10]

Summer reading stands out as a cornerstone event for most public libraries: 99.1% have a summer reading program of some type, whether for children, teens, and/or adults. These programs support

literacy and educational achievement, a core strength of libraries. Summer reading programs offer a fun way to engage patrons—particularly children and young adults—in activities that build literacy and support lifelong learning. Research has shown that these programs can mitigate the learning loss that otherwise happens when students are out of school. Children from low-income households are particularly vulnerable to learning loss and may benefit most from summer reading interventions.[11] A 2017 case study from the Kansas City, Missouri area linked data from the public schools and public library and found that summer reading program participants had better fall reading outcomes compared to their peers.[12] An earlier study had reached similar conclusions: students who participated in summer reading improved their reading compared to matched non-participants.[13] This suggests that not only do summer reading programs reduce learning loss, but they can produce gains. The impact goes beyond test scores: qualitative evidence suggests that participation increases confidence and engagement in reading and learning, valuable outcomes in and of themselves.[14]

While summer reading programs are common in libraries of all types, differences in size and capacity between city libraries and their town/rural counterparts mean that across the board urban libraries are more likely to offer a wider variety of programs. The largest differences occur in specialized adult education programs like those focused on financial literacy and English language learning, which are more common among city libraries compared to town/rural libraries by a margin of close to 50%.

To get a sense of the variety of programs libraries offer, we can look at the average number of programs selected from the options in the survey questions about children's, teen, and adult or all-ages programs. Out of the 37 types of programs listed (including "other"), libraries offer an average of 15.8. City libraries offer an average of 23.7 program types, compared to 20 types in suburban libraries and 14 in town/rural libraries. The larger staff size of city and suburban libraries compared to their town/rural counterparts enables a wider variety of program offerings. However, per capita measures tell a more nuanced story. While city libraries offer more annual programs and more types of programs on average, town/rural libraries offer more programs on a per capita basis, making the most of the capacity they have.[15]

Libraries face many challenges and constraints that limit their ability to offer programs and services. 973 libraries responded to an open-ended survey question asking them to identify those challenges. Top among them are staffing (73.4%, n=715), funding (40.7%, n=396), space (25.4%, n=247), and low attendance (14.3%, n=139). While these issues may not solely result from the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects are related, and the results can be interpreted in that context. Many public

Staffing (73%) was named as the top challenge limiting program and service offerings

libraries lost staff during the pandemic and still struggle to hire and retain new staff.[16] They need to focus on maintaining core services and opening hours, and decreased capacity negatively impacts the number and variety of other programs and services libraries can offer. As a suburban library in the Plains shared, "We have really struggled with growing our programming/services responsibilities while

also keeping up with our operational activities (reference, circulation, etc.)." Many other comments echoed these sentiments about increased demands with stagnant or reduced funding and staffing.

Based on the most recent available IMLS Public Libraries Survey data (FY 2020), between FY2019 and FY2020 the total number of annual library programs declined by almost 40% and total attendance declined by 37%.[17] This comes on the heels of more than a decade of extraordinary growth in program offerings. During the pandemic, many libraries diversified the formats of their programs and services, particularly with the addition of virtual or hybrid events, which about half of libraries offered in 2020.[18] Continuing to hold programs in different formats brings its own challenges, as a

RESULTS FOR ACTION

Workforce Development

Result: 60.3% of libraries report economic development and job seeker support as a community need they currently address and 20.7% say they plan to address it in future. Job and career services are offered as formal (9.1%) and informal (58.1%) support services, or both (10.3%). 23.8% of libraries have specific workforce development programs.

Why it matters: As the U.S. continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and shifts towards an increasingly digital economy, many community members benefit from assistance building skills and finding employment. Public libraries help people get workforce ready with everything from basic literacy and digital skills to specialized workshops and career coaching.

In practice: Public libraries can leverage information resources and connections to other local organizations to help jobseekers and adult learners. A report from Measures that Matter, an initiative of IMLS and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), puts workforce-related programs in libraries into three broad categories: *standard services*, such as answering questions, providing computer help, and providing access to the resources patrons need to find and apply to job opportunities; *specialized services*, such as workshops, training, coaching, or support groups; and *community hub services*, including those developed and/or delivered by partners and hosted in the library, such as job fairs or adult education courses.[19]

Capture learning outcomes and patron feedback from workforce development programs using the Job Skills survey in Project Outcome. Use the results to demonstrate how library programs are making a difference. Learn more about public libraries and workforce development with resources from PLA and ALA.

Challenges: As with other programs and services, staff and capacity can be constraints. However, libraries are only one part of the workforce development system in any community. Organizations at the federal, state, and local government level, as well as educational institutions, non-profits and community organizations, all provide workforce development-related services. Libraries can leverage those connections when providing referrals or establishing new partnerships.
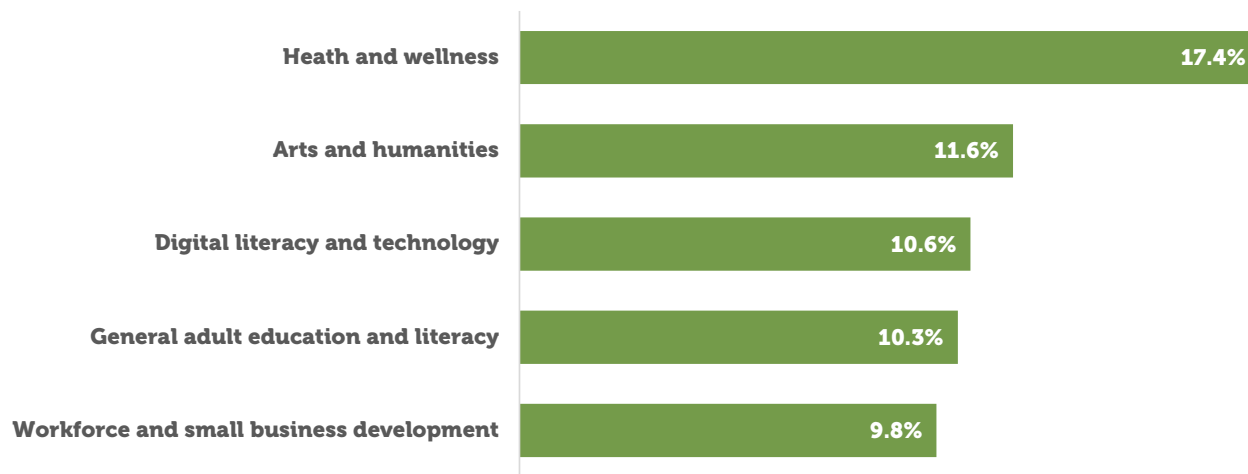
Figure 6: Programs libraries are considering adding or expanding in the next 12 months.

library in the Southwest reported, "[we are] still recovering from pandemic; staff are stretched planning and offering in-person, hybrid, and online programs." In FY21 IMLS began collecting information about synchronous versus asynchronous programs held in-person or virtually. Over time we will be able to see the extent to which libraries return to in-person programming, continue to offer virtual programming, or both.

Survey respondents shared information about the types of programs they would like to add or expand at their libraries in the coming year. 776 libraries responded to this open-ended question and their responses cover a wide range of program types. They highlight the breadth of creativity and community engagement in public libraries, with everything from outdoor nature programs to pop-up outreach programs in underserved neighborhoods to job skills training through virtual reality. Among the types of planned programs, the top responses (see **Figure 6**) focused on:

- health and wellness (17.4%, n=134), such as yoga, cooking, and outdoor activities;
- arts and humanities (11.6%, n=90), such as book talks and music classes;
- digital literacy and technology (10.6%, n=82);
- general adult education and literacy (10.3%, n=80); and
- workforce and small-business development (9.8%, n=76).

7.5% of respondents (n=58) indicated they are not planning to expand their programming in the coming year due to the constraints outlined above.

Partnerships

The survey included a question about formal and informal library partnerships. It originated in 2020 when IMLS, in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research and the Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG), developed a set of questions through cognitive interviews and stakeholder

engagement with state data coordinators and librarians in the field. Ultimately LSWG opted not to include this question on the annual Public Libraries Survey by a narrow vote. However, due to significant interest in learning more about library partnerships, PLA and IMLS collaborated to collect the information on the Services for Strong Communities Survey.

A partnership is defined as "a mutually beneficial arrangement between the library and another entity where both parties assist or support one another and work together toward a shared goal" (see glossary in Appendix C). Partnerships may be formal or informal, with the former established through a written agreement or other documentation outlining expectations. 97.5% of libraries have at least one partnership (**Figure 7**). The most common are with schools or school districts (in 89.7% of libraries), though these are more likely to be informal than formal. Partnerships with state, local, county, or municipal governments are the second most common overall (85.2%), and the most likely to be formal. Partnerships with for-profit businesses and tribal organizations are less common overall and the least likely to be formal. These trends hold true for libraries of all locale types—city, suburban, and town/rural (see Table 9 for details).
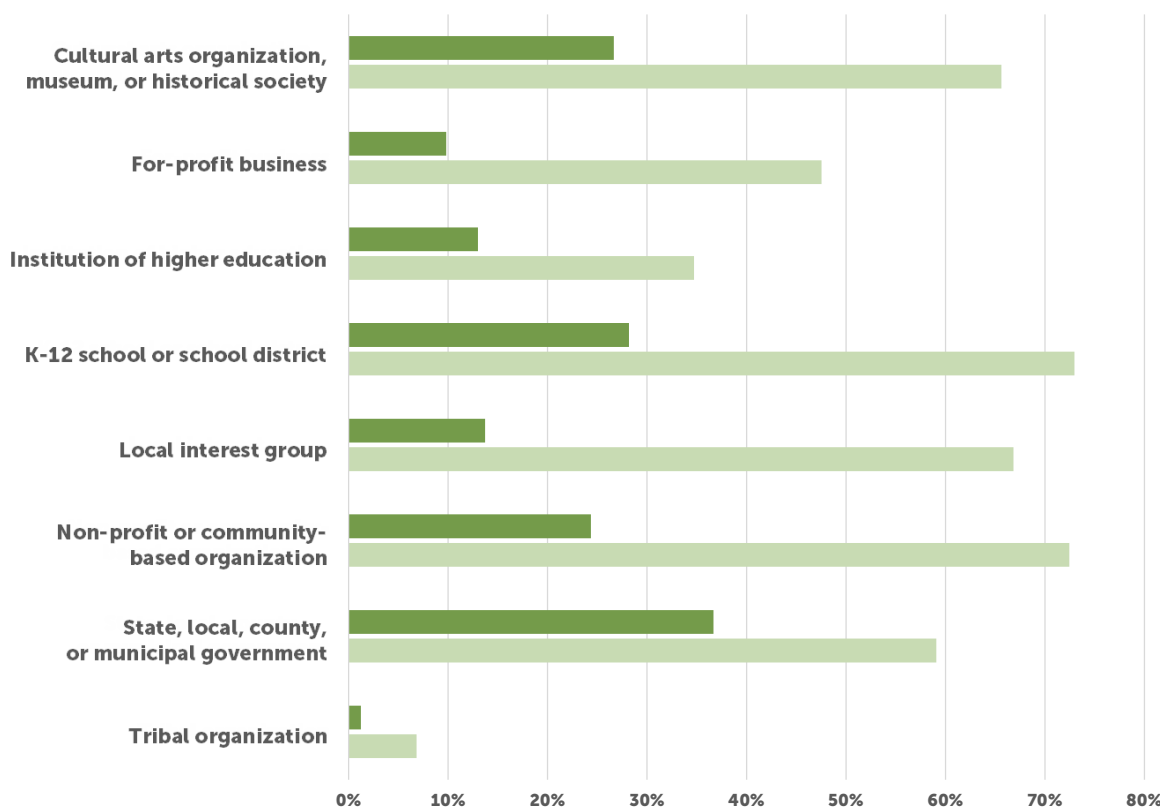

Figure 7: Partnerships. Libraries reported whether they have formal partnerships, informal partnerships, or both formal and informal. In the chart, formal includes those that selected formal and both, and informal includes those that selected informal and both. See Table 9 for detailed results.

■ Formal ■ Informal

A question adapted from the former Public Library Data Service (PLDS) survey asked specifically about partnerships for summer reading programs.[20] The findings (**Figure 8**) align with the results on partnerships more broadly. 94.6% of libraries identified at least one summer reading program partner. The most common partners are non-profit or community-based organizations (64.4%), schools (63.4%), and state library agencies (63.3%).
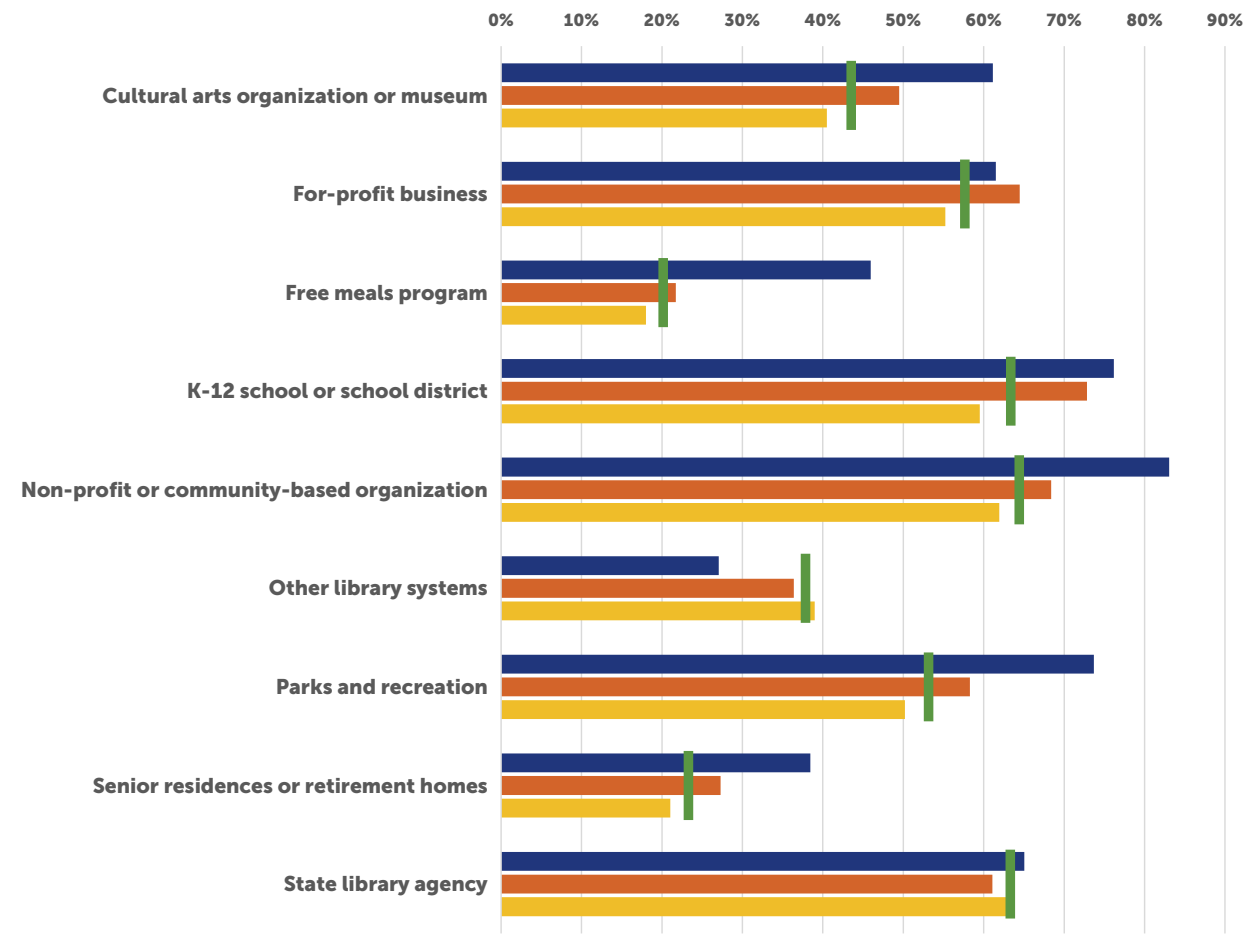
Figure 8: Summer reading program partners. See Table 10 for detailed results.

■ **City**   ■ **Suburban**   ■ **Town/Rural**   ■ **Overall**

While libraries are important community hubs, they cannot fulfill community needs alone nor take the place of other social services, particularly without additional funding. Partnerships offer an opportunity to collaborate with other organizations working towards the same goals. A respondent from a town/rural library in the Southwest commented, "Our library has recently started gaining community partners, which has been a very rewarding experience. As a one-employee library, having another person or group of people to brainstorm and plan programming with is refreshing. These partnerships are always mutually beneficial; it's twice the impact on the community and

half the workload." How partnerships operate depends upon their purpose and local context. They nonetheless offer the benefit of collaborative action, bringing together people and organizations with different areas of expertise to better serve the community.

Facilities

Many libraries rely on aging buildings and infrastructure. 40.3% of library buildings—and 46.3% of town/rural buildings—have not undergone a major renovation since 2000 or earlier. Only 36.3% of library buildings were built or have undergone a major renovation since 2011 (**Figure 9**). Outdated facilities can be a barrier to inclusion. Both library workers and the communities they serve directly experience the effects of aging infrastructure—including limited accessibility, water damage and mold, and energy and technology inefficiency—as well as the impacts of new and renovated facilities.
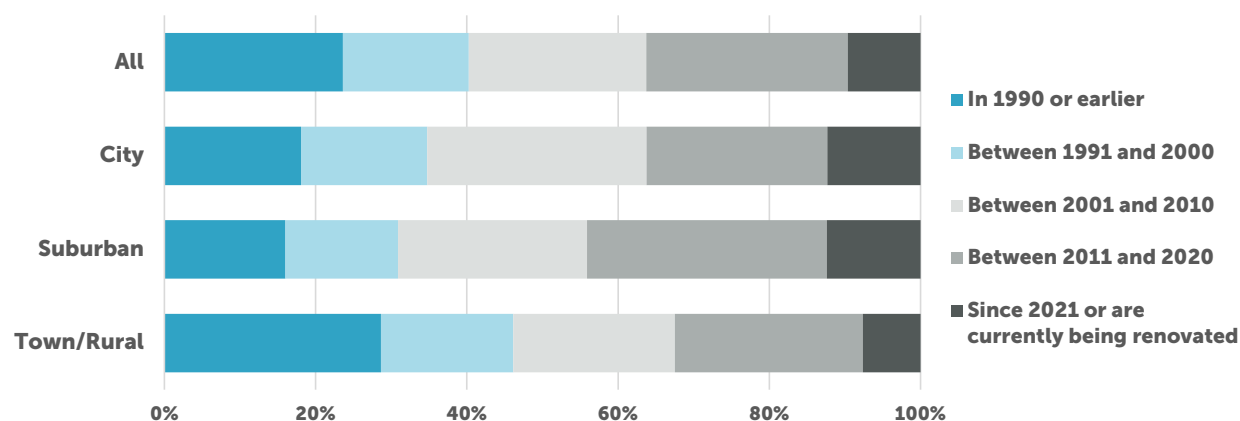
Figure 9: Ages of library facilities. AEs reported the number of locations by the time period in which they were built or underwent their most recent major renovation. The estimates here reflect the percentage of locations in each category as a percent of total locations by locale (weighted). See Table 11 for detailed results.

Additional data provides context for these results. In 1996 the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) replaced the prior Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), in place since 1964. The LSCA focused on funds for building construction and renovation. ALA's 2014 Digital Inclusion survey found that the average opening year of U.S. public libraries was 1970, which fits under the span of the LSCA.[21] The LSTA shifted emphasis to technology, and Congress has not provided dedicated federal funding for library facilities since 1997.[22] The proportion of library buildings that have not undergone major renovations since before 2000 may reflect the change in focus, though more detailed data and further analysis are needed to establish that conclusion. The PLS has captured capital revenue and expenditures for all public libraries since 1989. Capital expenditures as a percent of total library expenditures peaked in 1992 at 13.6%. Capital expenditures per library and per capita (adjusted for inflation) peaked in 2003.[23] Taken together, the data suggest a significant need for current and future investment in public library facilities.

To understand the nature of recent renovations to library facilities, the Services for Strong Communities Survey asked about renovations that have taken place since 2011 and those planned for the future (**Figure 10**). The most common types of renovations that have occurred in the last decade are upgrades to the physical infrastructure, such as the HVAC system, roof, or foundation (53.7%). These are also the most common planned renovations (22.5%). Special-purpose spaces, including maker spaces, art or music studios, and coworking spaces, are the least common overall, though more have been added in city libraries. While city libraries are more likely to have already made these types of renovations, suburban and town/rural libraries are more likely to indicate that they plan to undertake renovations in future.

Another survey question asked about current spaces that can accommodate programs or events (**Figure 11**). These types of spaces fit into three broad categories. First, age-focused spaces include children's spaces in 86.5% of libraries and teen spaces in 55.7%. Second, meeting and social spaces include large meeting spaces or auditoriums that can accommodate 25 or more people (57.4%), mid-size meeting spaces that can accommodate 10-25 people (72.7%), and outdoor programming spaces (57.1%). Finally, creation and training spaces designed to facilitate learning and knowledge creation are less common overall. 20.4% of libraries have maker spaces, including digital production labs, and 32.2% have technology
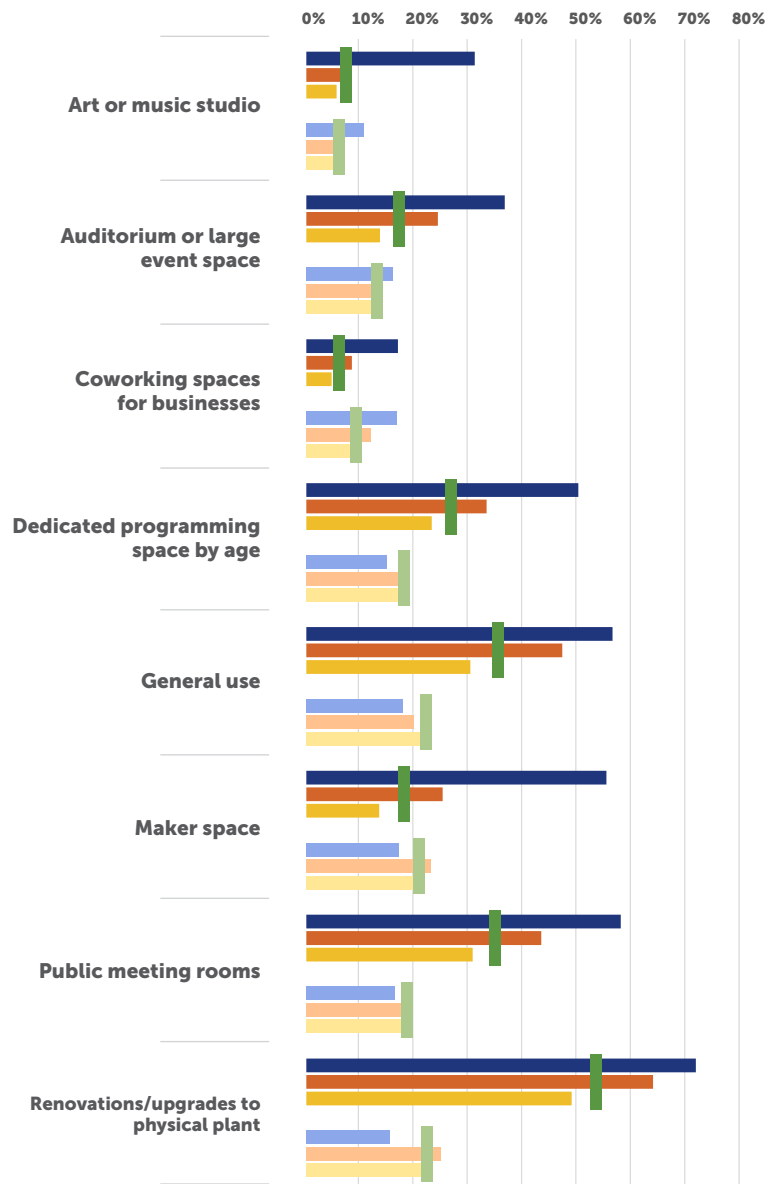

Figure 10: Renovated or added facilities. Facilities that libraries plan to add are in the lighter colors. See Table 12 for detailed results.

Added or renovated: ■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town/Rural ■ Overall
Planned for future: ■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town/Rural ■ Overall

training facilities, such as a classroom or computer lab. In this last category there is a particularly large difference between the facilities available in city libraries and those in their suburban and town/rural counterparts.
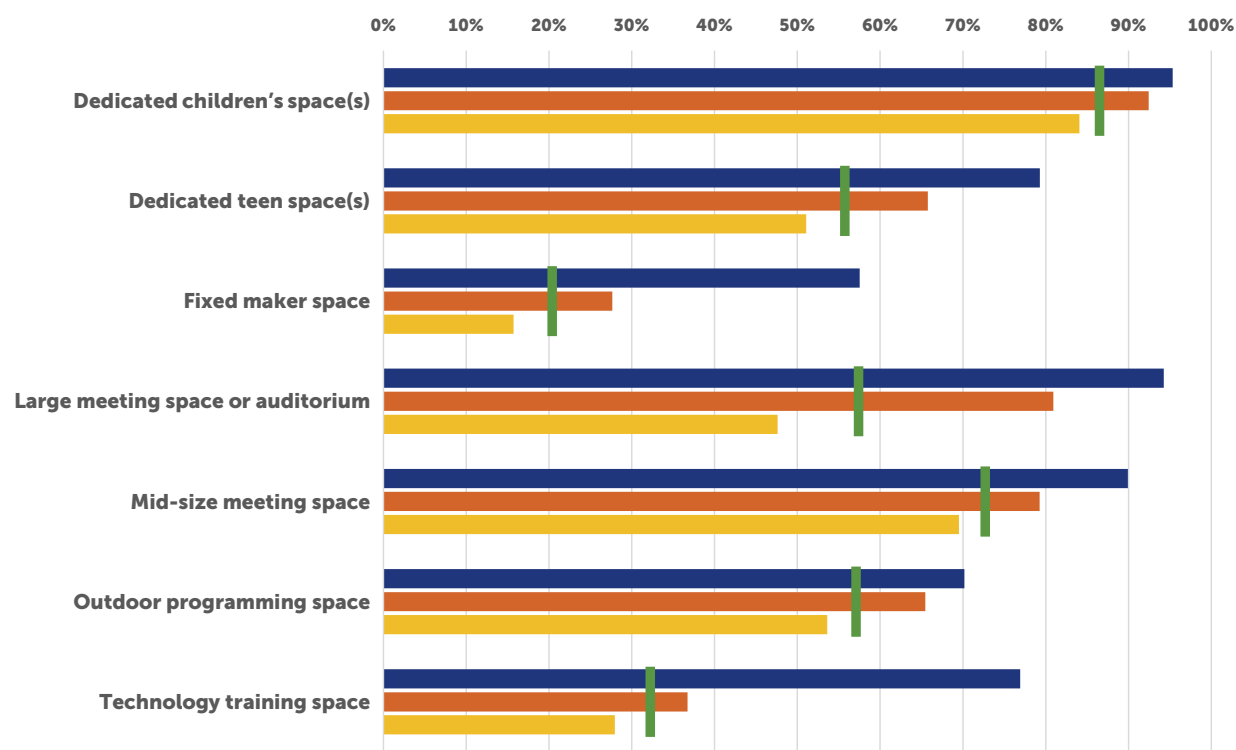
Figure 11: Physical spaces for programs or events. See Table 13 for detailed results.

■ City   ■ Suburban   ■ Town/Rural   ■ Overall

Programs and events do not only happen in library buildings, and many libraries work to bring their services to communities through outreach. The survey asked about specific facilities to offer mobile programming. Overall, 17.5% of public libraries have at least one form of mobile programming facilities (**Figure 12**). 9.2% of libraries report they have a bookmobile, 2.7% have a cybermobile or mobile technology lab, and 0.7% have mobile job centers. The number of official bookmobiles has declined significantly over time. Nationwide, public libraries had 1,140 bookmobiles in 1989 and only 683 in 2020.[24] However, the data from this survey suggest that the types of facilities for outreach have expanded beyond traditional bookmobiles. In addition to mobile job centers and technology labs, in the open-ended responses libraries report engaging in outreach through book bikes, pop-up libraries for community events, mobile kitchens, and vans or other outreach vehicles that support offsite library services.
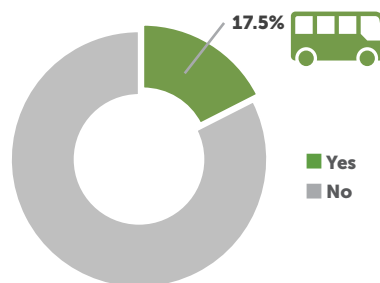
Figure 12: Any mobile programming facilities. See Table 14 for detailed results.

In emergencies, libraries often serve as community resource and recovery centers. They provide a safe place for people to gather, connect, and access information and technology. Overall, half (50.0%) of all libraries have emergency designations within their communities. 36.5% serve as cooling or warming centers in extreme temperatures. 21.4% serve as distribution centers during public health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. 16.6% serve as a hub for community members or first responders during disaster recovery. Other emergency designations include designated shelter during storms or severe weather events and evacuation and reunification location for schools and community members. Emergency designations are more common in city and suburban libraries than their town/rural counterparts. No community is immune from potential disaster: establishing community partnerships and planning ahead can make libraries a vital part of both the resilience and recovery process.[25]

Libraries can model resilience when it comes to implementing sustainable practices in their facilities. A survey question asked about types of green or energy-saving initiatives libraries currently have in place (in at least one location for libraries with multiple outlets) and plans to add these elements in future (**Figure 13**). Overall, 89.8% of libraries indicate they have at least one type currently.
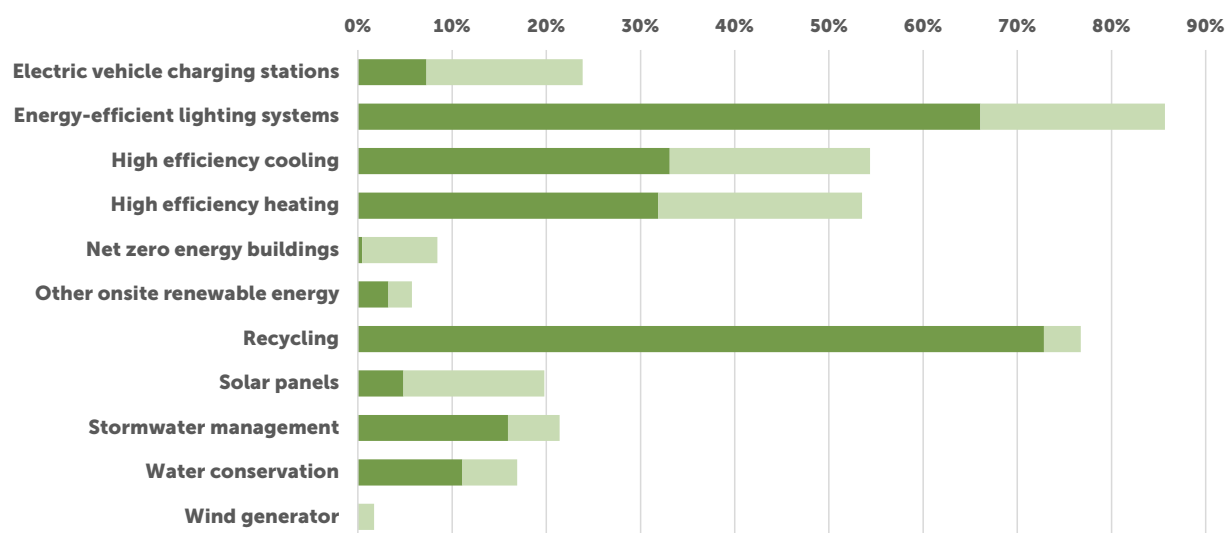
Figure 13: Green or energy-saving initiatives. See Table 16 for detailed results.
■ In place currently   ■ Planned for Future

Recycling (73.8%) and energy-efficient lighting (66.1%) are the most common current initiatives. Only about a third of libraries have high efficiency cooling (33.1%) or heating (31.9%) currently, though another 21% plan to add one or both in future. 7.4% of libraries have one or more types of renewable energy now, including solar, geothermal, or wind power, and 15.6% plan to add renewable energy in future. Currently 7.3% of libraries have electric vehicle charging stations and 16.6% plan to add them in future. Other initiatives beyond those listed include: composting; renewable and efficient building materials; and landscaping to support water conservation, native plants, and/or pollinators.

Renewable Energy Sources
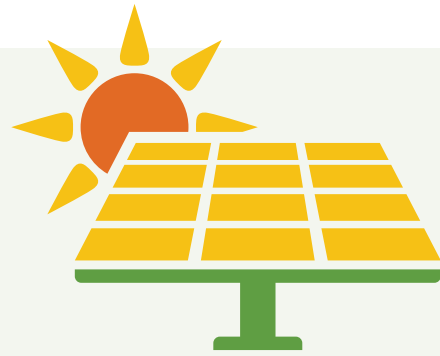
Result: 23% of libraries are currently addressing climate change and sustainability within their communities, and 27.5% plan to do so in future. Currently only 7.4% of libraries have onsite renewable energy (solar, wind, or other form, such as geothermal), and 17.2% plan to install it in the future.

Why it matters: Libraries lead by example to demonstrate sustainable solutions and their value for future community resilience. In addition, the energy used in buildings comes at a cost, for the budget and the environment, and investment in renewable energy leads to long term savings.

In practice: Adding renewable energy sources to existing library facilities will incur upfront costs and bring long-term savings. To offset the initial costs, libraries can seek external sources of funding. At the federal level, available incentives include clean energy tax credits, which are available to tax-exempt entities **under the Inflation Reduction Act**. Libraries could be eligible for energy-efficient buildings, clean vehicles (such as bookmobiles), electric vehicle charging, and renewable energy production (such as solar panels). Search the **Climate Program Portal** to identify federal funding resources for energy efficiency, renewables, and electric vehicles.

Many states have their own initiatives to support the installation of renewable energy, including both grants and tax incentives. Look for options in your state using the **Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency**. Private entities and energy utilities in your state or local area may also offer grants.

If your library anticipates planning major renovations, renewable energy and other sustainable building practices could be incorporated in the process at that time. To help you make the case for the upfront investment, use **an online calculator** to estimate the monthly and long-terms savings.

Challenges: Any improvements to facilities incur costs. While grants and other funding exist that can support these types of initiatives, it will take time and effort to seek those opportunities.

Additional resources:

- The **US Green Building Council** manages the LEED certification program and has local chapters. They also provide **many resources** where you can learn more.
- Use resources from **ENERGY STAR for commercial buildings** to compare the energy use at your library to a national norm. Tracking energy use over time can help identify buildings that are inefficient and make the case for upgrades.
- The **Sustainable Libraries Initiative** has many resources and a certification program for libraries.
- ALA's **Sustainability Round Table** also provides resources and opportunities to engage with others in this work.

Evaluation

As libraries consider how best to meet community needs and how to capture the impact of their work, evaluation is critical. The survey asked about four common types of evaluation: community needs assessments, outcome-based evaluations, output measures, and patron satisfaction surveys. Evaluating output measures, such as circulation, visits, and program attendance, is most common, practiced by 91.3% of libraries overall. This is unsurprising, as all public libraries must at a minimum collect and report output statistics to their states for the annual IMLS Public Libraries Survey. 65.1% of libraries report that they engage in community needs assessments, whether through patron surveys or analysis of community data, such as census data. 64.8% of libraries administer patron satisfaction surveys either annually or in relation to specific programs or services.
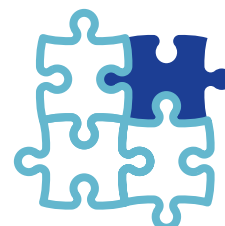
29% of public libraries engage in outcome measurement

Less than a third of libraries (29%) engage in outcome measurement, which aims to capture their impact on patron learning and behavior. PLA's performance measurement initiative began in 2013 and led to the development of the free **Project Outcome** toolkit (launched in 2015), with the goal of making outcome measurement more common across the library field. While we do not have similar data from before 2013, these results suggest there is still room for growth. Capturing outcomes can help libraries tell the story of not only how much they do, but also how patrons benefit from engagement with the library.

Conclusion

Public libraries face pressure on many fronts, from reduced funding and staffing to an unprecedented number of censorship attempts. Despite these challenges, libraries continue to strengthen their communities, working to ensure that all residents have the resources they need for learning, health, job skills, digital access, and more. As ALA President Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada writes in the 2023 *State of America's Libraries* report, "our library story is the story of our communities. We grow, adapt, and change for their needs and we focus our services on the values and ideals of our communities."[26] The results from PLA's Services for Strong Communities Survey demonstrate that statement.

Reflecting on current circumstances and looking forward, many respondents identified challenges and opportunities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. A respondent from a town/rural library in New England observed that "Covid has changed the landscape for us and it's still hard to tell whether or not some things will be changing permanently." While use of digital materials has increased, they found that in person visits have decreased. Going forward, "Love for the library is still there, so I think it's just a matter of exploring new ways to be a part of people's lives." A suburban library respondent

in the Mid East reflected, "We have and continue to brainstorm ways to engage our community and get them to visit the library and make use of our many services. The future is unwritten, but also uncertain."

If the data from PLA's past three annual surveys—on technology, staff and diversity, and services—demonstrates anything it is the responsiveness and adaptability of public libraries and library workers under challenging circumstances. Those traits will help public libraries play an active role in the future, whatever it may bring.

Notes

1. Institute of Museum and Library Services, Public Libraries Survey (FY 2020): **imls.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey**.

2. American Library Association, "Core Values of Librarianship" (2019): **ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues.**

3. United Nations, "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future" (1987), section 3.27: **un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf.**

4. Project Outcome, "Public Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals" (2023): **projectoutcome.org/surveys-resources/sustainable-development-goals** (free access; login required).

5. United States Department of Agriculture, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2021*, Economic Research Report Number 309 (September 2022), p.17, table 2: **ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=104655**.

6. Urban Libraries Council, white paper, "Food is a Right: Libraries and Food Justice" (Jan 2023), p.5: **urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC-White-Paper_Food-is-a-Right_2023.pdf.**

7. 52% in FY20, about the same proportion as pre-pandemic. IMLS PLS FY20.

8. 10.4% in FY20, about the same proportion as pre-pandemic. IMLS PLS FY20.

9. 37.6% in FY20. IMLS PLS FY20.

10. Public Library Association, *2020 Public Library Technology Survey Summary Report* (2021), pp.6-8: **ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/data/PLA-2020-Technology-Survey-Summary-Report.pdf**. The Technology survey will be administered again in fall 2023.

11. J.S. Kim and D. M. Quinn, "The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8: A meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions," *Review of Educational Research* 83 (2013): 386–431, **doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483906**.

12. Jennifer A. Boden, Karin Chang, and Meghan Ecker-Lyster, "Linking Incongruent Data Sources: A Case Study of a Summer Library Program," Library Assessment Conference Proceedings (2018): **libraryassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/34-Boden-Chang-Ecker-Lyster-LinkingIncongruentData.pdf.**

13. L.A. Taylor Knight, H. Aghababa, J. Quan & P. Oslund, "An Evaluation of Kansas City Reading Programs for Turn the Page Kansas City," Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium (Feb. 2014).

14. S. Roman, D.T. Carran & C.D. Fiore, "The Dominican Study: Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Reading Gap," Dominican University (June 2010). For a recent example of the outcomes of a library's summer reading program, see: West Fargo Public Library, "Summer Boost Impact Report" (2021): **westfargolibrary.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/484.**

15. Based on the reported legal service area population, in FY20 city libraries held an average of 11.6 total annual programs per 1,000 people, compared to 24.3 in suburban libraries and 33.8 in town/rural libraries. The national average was 30.1 total annual programs per 1,000 people.

16. Public Library Association, *Public Library Staff and Diversity Report: Results from the 2021 PLA Annual Survey* (2022): **ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/data/PLA_Staff_Survey_Report_2022.pdf**.

17. IMLS PLS FY19, FY20. The PLS has included total annual library programs since FY2004 and the number grew every year from 2004 to 2019. Not all libraries report on the same fiscal year, so the impact of the pandemic is likely to be even greater. See also: IMLS, "Access to Public Library Services and Materials during the First Nine Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic," May 2023, **imls.gov/publications/research-brief-access-public-library-services-and-materials-during-first-nine-months**.

18. PLA, *2020 Public Library Technology Survey Summary Report* (2021), pp.7-8.

19. Measures that Matter, "Public Libraries' Role in Workforce and Small Business Development" (Oct. 2022): **measuresthatmatter.net/research/public-libraries-role-in-workforce-and-small-business-development-a-look-across-ten-public-library-systems/**; American Library Association, "America's Libraries: Essential Partners in Workforce Development & Career Services": **ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/Workforce/Workforce_web_032621-1.pdf.**

20. While this question was asked in the past, unfortunately the PLDS results are not directly comparable. The PLDS results were not weighted and the special sections each year (including the 2016/FY2015 section focused on summer reading) tended to have lower response rates than the survey as a whole.

21. American Library Association, "After Access: Libraries and Digital Empowerment" (2015), **ala.org/tools/research/digitalinclusion.**

22. American Library Association, "ALA acclaims re-introduction of Build America's Libraries Act" (Jan. 29, 2021): **ala.org/news/press-releases/2021/01/ala-acclaims-re-introduction-build-america-s-libraries-act**; ALA Data Brief, "America's public libraries need billions of dollars for construction and renovation" (May 2021): **ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/libfunding/fed/public%20library%20construction%20needs.pdf**.

23. Capital revenue/expenditures are funds related to site acquisition; new buildings; additions to or renovation of library buildings; furnishings, equipment, and initial collections (print, nonprint, and electronic) for new buildings, building additions, or building renovations; computer hardware and software used to support library operations, to link to networks, or to run information products; new vehicles; and other one-time major projects. IMLS PLS 1989-2020, **imls.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey**.

24. IMLS PLS 1989-2020, **imls.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey.**

25. New Jersey State Library, "The Librarian's Disaster Planning and Community Resiliency Guidebook: Librarians Fulfilling Their Role As Information First Responders" (2016): **https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/disaster_planning/.** Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, "Introduction: There's More to the Story," *The State of America's Libraries 2023* (ALA, 2023): **ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/state-of-americas-libraries-report-2023-web-version.pdf.**

2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities
Detailed Results

The tables below contain detailed results for each question on the survey by library locale (city, suburban, and town/rural) and nationally. For multiple choice or check-all-that-apply questions, the percentage of respondents who selected each positive response is reported. The final row in each table reports the total number of respondents who answered that question on the survey. All results are weighted. See Appendix A for a description of the survey and analysis methodology.

To explore the results further and create custom tabulations, access the full dataset with a subscription to Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends (**librarybenchmark.org**).

Table 1. Community needs

Question: Thinking about your community's most pressing needs and priorities, which of the areas below is your library currently wstriving to address with partnerships, programs, or services, or are developing plans to address in the future?

	City		Suburban		Town/Rural		Overall	
	Currently Addressing	Planned for Future	Currently Addressing	Planned for Future	Currently Addressing	Planned for Future	Currently Addressing	Planned for Future
Accessibility and supporting people with disabilities	72.2%	21.5%	62.1%	21.4%	52.5%	28.6%	55.6%	26.6%
Civic engagement	74.3%	16.1%	65.7%	20.9%	60.6%	21.0%	62.4%	20.7%
Climate change and sustainability	33.7%	29.6%	28.5%	29.1%	20.5%	26.9%	23.0%	27.5%
Digital equity	85.9%	8.8%	69.5%	16.8%	64.5%	21.3%	66.6%	19.7%
Economic development and job-seeker support	84.7%	10.6%	63.9%	20.1%	57.6%	21.6%	60.3%	20.7%
Equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice	77.3%	16.4%	70.9%	15.3%	56.4%	18.8%	60.7%	17.9%
Food insecurity	50.5%	14.1%	33.3%	15.7%	29.9%	19.7%	31.6%	18.5%
Homelessness	71.1%	15.3%	29.4%	17.9%	19.9%	16.8%	24.4%	17.0%
Literacy and educational achievement	95.3%	2.5%	85.8%	7.2%	83.7%	9.1%	84.7%	8.3%
Public health and wellbeing	76.2%	11.5%	67.1%	14.9%	56.9%	17.1%	60.1%	16.3%
Other community needs	15.0%		10.5%		10.3%		10.6%	
Total question responses	151		385		631		1167	

Table 2. Formal and Informal government services

Question: Does your library offer formal services to assist patrons with any of the following government services? If not formally offered and delivered by the library, do you informally assist patrons with any of these services?

	City			Suburban			Town/Rural			Overall		
	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both
ACA or other health insurance enrollment	7.7%	60.7%	7.4%	5.0%	57.1%	4.1%	2.5%	48.8%	4.4%	3.3%	51.2%	4.5%
Drivers' licenses or state IDs	1.9%	48.2%	4.2%	1.9%	45.8%	0.9%	1.3%	46.2%	2.2%	1.5%	46.2%	2.0%
Elections (e.g., voter registration, ballot drop-off, polling place)	35.4%	32.2%	24.0%	25.8%	41.7%	14.7%	11.8%	43.3%	6.9%	16.1%	42.4%	9.5%
Immigration and naturalization	6.8%	54.1%	10.3%	2.5%	49.1%	2.4%	1.6%	31.9%	1.6%	2.0%	36.8%	2.2%
Notary services	41.4%	7.5%	6.2%	40.2%	7.2%	5.2%	23.1%	7.7%	4.8%	27.8%	7.6%	5.0%
Passport application acceptance	16.5%	8.1%	1.1%	8.9%	8.0%	2.2%	2.8%	8.2%	0.6%	4.8%	8.2%	1.0%
Referrals to social services	18.6%	53.9%	23.8%	7.6%	67.5%	9.7%	2.7%	66.9%	6.0%	4.6%	66.5%	7.7%
Rental assistance (e.g., Section 8)	9.5%	53.7%	7.4%	1.7%	47.8%	2.0%	0.9%	35.7%	1.4%	1.5%	39.3%	1.8%
Student aid application (e.g., FAFSA)	6.2%	51.4%	9.8%	4.3%	54.1%	4.2%	1.7%	50.0%	2.9%	2.5%	51.0%	3.5%
Tax preparation/ filing	23.8%	40.6%	19.2%	22.8%	36.5%	8.2%	7.8%	46.4%	6.1%	12.0%	43.8%	7.2%
Unemployment filing	2.5%	66.2%	8.5%	1.7%	72.0%	1.0%	1.7%	65.3%	5.1%	1.7%	66.9%	4.3%
Vital records	3.5%	58.1%	5.2%	3.5%	51.5%	1.3%	1.7%	45.8%	2.5%	2.2%	47.7%	2.4%
Other government services	13.9%			8.8%			10.4%			10.2%		
Total question responses	151			385			631			1167		

Table 3. Support services

Question: Does your library offer any of the following support services?

	City			Suburban			Town/Rural			Overall		
	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both
Business development	15.3%	38.1%	19.5%	6.4%	44.5%	3.2%	2.4%	27.7%	2.9%	4.0%	32.0%	3.7%
English language learning/ESL	28.3%	31.4%	19.1%	18.1%	36.5%	8.9%	6.4%	29.2%	2.9%	10.1%	31.0%	5.0%
Food security support services	10.5%	35.6%	14.8%	6.9%	39.2%	4.3%	4.9%	36.0%	3.3%	5.6%	36.7%	4.1%
GED/diploma student support	23.7%	47.3%	11.5%	6.3%	51.3%	5.6%	6.5%	43.9%	5.3%	7.2%	45.8%	5.6%
Job and career services	24.8%	38.4%	30.4%	11.6%	62.0%	12.9%	7.3%	58.2%	8.2%	9.1%	58.1%	10.3%
Legal information services	10.8%	51.3%	11.8%	4.9%	44.7%	2.9%	4.8%	37.5%	3.2%	5.1%	39.8%	3.5%
Reentry services post-incarceration	5.7%	38.0%	2.7%	0.4%	22.5%	1.2%	0.9%	15.2%	0.8%	1.0%	18.0%	1.0%
Other support services	9.3%			6.5%			4.4%			5.1%		
Total question responses	**151**			**385**			**631**			**1167**		

Table 4. Reasons for not offering formal services

Question: If the library assists patrons with government and other support services primarily on an informal basis, for what reasons are these services not offered formally? Check all that apply.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Not enough trained staff or partners available to provide formally	73.8%	70.1%	74.3%	73.3%
Other community agencies are adequately delivering the service in their facilities	74.2%	60.3%	56.4%	58.1%
Patrons do not regularly inquire of the library for these services	36.0%	66.6%	72.7%	69.6%
Other	15.5%	7.0%	7.2%	7.5%
Total question responses	**140**	**362**	**604**	**1106**

Table 5. Children's programs

Question: Does your library offer any of the following types of programs for children? Children are defined as those ages 0 to 11.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Book clubs for children	63.6%	59.0%	36.5%	42.9%
Children's after-school or homework programs	60.6%	51.8%	48.1%	49.5%
Early literacy programs (e.g., play & learn, storytime, etc.)	99.6%	97.7%	93.9%	95.1%
Health and wellness programs (e.g., yoga for kids)	65.0%	53.4%	23.7%	32.4%
School preparation or grade transition programs	43.5%	29.0%	15.6%	20.0%
School-aged literacy programs	89.0%	76.9%	62.5%	67.1%
STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs for children	95.7%	94.8%	74.8%	80.3%
Summer reading program for children	98.4%	99.6%	98.5%	98.8%
Other children's programs	28.2%	14.9%	13.7%	14.6%
Total question responses	**151**	**385**	**631**	**1167**

Table 6. Teen programs

Question: Does your library offer any of the following types of programs for teens? Teens are defined as those ages 12 to 18.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Book clubs for teens	70.7%	57.0%	29.0%	37.3%
College or trade school preparation programs	36.8%	28.8%	8.2%	14.2%
Financial literacy programs for teens	40.3%	27.5%	10.8%	16.0%
Games and gaming programs	92.3%	83.3%	58.3%	65.6%
Health and wellness programs (e.g., Adulting 101, cooking programs)	65.0%	46.0%	23.1%	30.3%
Media or news literacy programs for teens	20.9%	12.9%	5.4%	7.8%
STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs for teens	89.5%	76.9%	51.5%	59.1%
Summer reading program for teens	99.7%	94.4%	82.6%	86.1%
Teen advisory group or board	65.3%	49.5%	23.5%	31.4%
Teen after-school or homework programs	50.2%	41.5%	29.0%	32.9%
Other teen programs	22.6%	15.1%	12.2%	13.4%
Total question responses	**151**	**385**	**631**	**1167**

Table 7. Adult or all-ages programs

Question: Does your library offer any of these adult or all-ages programs?

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Adult education/literacy classes	59.8%	37.5%	22.6%	27.8%
Art or music programs	88.1%	86.9%	61.5%	68.5%
Book clubs	94.4%	93.2%	80.4%	84.0%
Business development programs	43.8%	28.5%	9.1%	15.2%
Civic and community engagement programs	78.1%	69.3%	50.2%	55.9%
English language learner classes or networking	58.3%	31.2%	10.5%	17.4%
Family engagement programs	79.4%	72.3%	56.5%	61.2%
Financial literacy programs	75.1%	61.3%	24.2%	35.1%
Health and wellness programs	82.2%	79.5%	48.5%	57.2%
Local history or genealogy programs	87.4%	80.4%	58.3%	64.7%
Media or news literacy programs	29.5%	25.6%	9.6%	14.2%
Programs or classes for homeschooling families	58.2%	44.8%	41.1%	42.7%
Programs or classes in languages other than English	37.7%	23.9%	8.4%	13.3%
Repair or "Fix-it Clinic" programs	23.3%	14.3%	7.0%	9.4%
Summer reading program	96.8%	90.0%	75.6%	79.8%
Workforce development programs	60.5%	31.2%	19.1%	23.8%
Other adult or all-ages programs	23.9%	18.5%	15.4%	16.5%
Total question responses	**151**	**385**	**631**	**1167**

Table 8: Average number of types of programs

The results in this table are derived from the responses to the three survey questions about children's, teen, and adult or all-ages programs, as reported in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Children's programs (out of 9 options)	6.4	5.8	4.7	5.0
Teen programs (out of 11 options)	6.5	5.3	3.3	3.9
Adult or all ages programs (out of 17 options)	10.8	8.9	6.0	6.9
All program types (out of 37)	**23.7**	**20.0**	**14.0**	15.8

Table 9. Partnerships

Question: Does your library have a partnership with any of the following types of entities? Partnerships may be formal or informal: A FORMAL partnership occurs when there is a written agreement or other documentation that outlines the expectations of both parties (e.g., an MOU, email, bylaws, etc.) and may serve as a binding document. An INFORMAL partnership occurs when the library and another entity have a non-binding agreement (e.g., verbal) or longstanding relationship where each party supports or assists the other but does not formalize the agreement in writing.

	City			Suburban			Town/Rural			Overall	
	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal	Both	Formal	Informal
Cultural arts organization, museum, or historical society	25.4%	44.6%	28.3%	20.8%	55.8%	13.5%	13.6%	55.1%	8.9%	15.8%	54.8%
For-profit business (e.g., restaurant, bookstore, etc.)	15.2%	44.1%	11.9%	7.2%	50.8%	6.3%	4.6%	41.0%	2.9%	5.7%	43.4%
Institution of higher education (including vocational schools and academic libraries)	20.4%	41.3%	20.7%	10.2%	35.0%	5.5%	6.9%	27.6%	3.5%	8.2%	30.0%
K-12 school or school district (including public, charter, and private schools)	27.2%	43.3%	28.9%	20.4%	61.0%	15.1%	14.9%	62.9%	9.2%	16.7%	61.5%
Local interest group (e.g., quilters guild, poetry club, etc.)	13.7%	60.7%	16.5%	10.7%	71.7%	7.8%	6.8%	57.8%	4.3%	8.0%	61.2%
Non-profit or community-based organization (e.g., charity, foundation, advocacy group, faith-based organization, Lion's Club, rotary, VFW, etc.)	21.1%	44.0%	30.1%	15.7%	61.2%	14.9%	11.3%	61.8%	9.4%	12.8%	60.9%
State, local, county, or municipal government (e.g., employment office, health and human services department, police, tourism department, parks and recreation, etc.)	30.1%	31.1%	37.3%	28.5%	46.2%	19.2%	21.3%	46.5%	10.0%	23.3%	45.7%
Tribal organization (e.g., tribal government, tribal council, etc.)	2.6%	9.2%	3.4%	0.5%	7.4%	0.1%	0.4%	5.5%	0.8%	0.5%	6.1%
Other	9.5%			4.9%			4.1%			4.5%	
Any partnership of any type	100.0%			99.7%			96.7%			97.5%	
Total question responses	151			385			631			1167	

Table 10. Summer reading program partners

Question: If your library offers a summer reading program, do you partner with any of the following types of organizations on that program?

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Cultural arts organization or museum	61.1%	49.5%	40.5%	43.5%
For-profit business	61.5%	64.5%	55.2%	57.7%
Free meals program	46.0%	21.7%	18.0%	20.2%
K-12 school or school district	76.2%	72.8%	59.5%	63.4%
Non-profit or community-based organization	83.1%	68.4%	61.9%	64.4%
Other library systems	27.1%	36.4%	39.0%	37.8%
Parks and recreation	73.7%	58.3%	50.2%	53.1%
Senior residences or retirement homes	38.4%	27.3%	21.0%	23.3%
State library agency	65.0%	61.1%	63.9%	63.3%
Other summer reading partners	13.5%	4.9%	8.0%	7.5%
Any summer reading partners	**97.7%**	**96.1%**	**93.9%**	**94.6%**
Total question responses	**151**	**385**	**628**	**1164**

Table 11. Ages of library facilities

Question: How many of your current library locations were built or received a major renovation within the last four decades?

The table shows the percentage of total locations (outlets/branches) reported in each category by locale.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
In 1990 or earlier	18.1%	16.0%	28.8%	23.7%
Between 1991 and 2000	16.7%	14.9%	17.5%	16.7%
Between 2001 and 2010	29.0%	25.0%	21.5%	23.5%
Between 2011 and 2020	23.9%	31.7%	24.9%	26.7%
Since 2021 or are currently being renovated	12.3%	12.4%	7.6%	9.6%
Total question responses	**151**	**385**	**631**	**1167**

Table 12. Recently renovated or added facilities

Question: Please indicate whether your library has recently (since 2011) added or renovated any of the following types of spaces or are currently developing plans to do so in the future. If your library is in the midst of making any of these additions, choose the "Added or renovated" option.

	City		Suburban		Town/Rural		Overall	
	Added or renovated	Planned for Future	Added or renovated	Planned for Future	Added or renovated	Planned for Future	Added or renovated	Planned for Future
Art or music studio	31.4%	10.9%	8.7%	7.2%	6.0%	6.0%	7.8%	6.5%
Auditorium or large community event space	36.9%	16.3%	24.6%	14.1%	14.0%	12.9%	17.5%	13.3%
Coworking spaces for businesses	17.3%	17.0%	8.8%	12.2%	5.1%	8.3%	6.5%	9.6%
Dedicated programming space by age	50.4%	15.3%	33.6%	19.3%	23.5%	18.3%	27.0%	18.4%
General use (for staff or the public)	56.7%	18.2%	47.5%	20.1%	30.6%	23.4%	35.7%	22.4%
Maker space (including digital media production lab)	55.6%	17.4%	25.5%	23.2%	13.8%	20.7%	18.4%	21.1%
Meeting rooms for public use	58.2%	16.6%	43.6%	20.0%	31.0%	18.8%	35.2%	19.0%
Renovations/upgrades to physical plant (e.g., HVAC system, roof, foundation, etc.)	72.1%	15.8%	64.2%	25.2%	49.2%	22.1%	53.7%	22.5%
Other recent or planned additions	28.7%		24.4%		20.1%		21.5%	
Total question responses	151		385		631		1167	

Table 13. Physical spaces for programs or events

Question: Do any of your library locations currently have any of the following types of physical spaces that can accommodate in-person programs or events?

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Dedicated children's space(s)	95.3%	92.4%	84.1%	86.5%
Dedicated teen space(s)	79.3%	65.8%	51.1%	55.7%
Fixed maker space (e.g., digital media lab, FabLab, etc.)	57.5%	27.7%	15.7%	20.4%
Large meeting space or auditorium (for more than 25 people)	94.3%	80.9%	47.6%	57.4%
Mid-size meeting space (for approximately 10-25 people)	89.9%	79.3%	69.5%	72.7%
Outdoor programming space	70.2%	65.5%	53.6%	57.1%
Technology training space (e.g., classroom or computer lab)	76.9%	36.7%	28.0%	32.2%
Other spaces for programming	13.6%	11.8%	9.7%	10.4%
Any program/event spaces	100.0%	99.4%	96.8%	97.5%
Total question responses	150	385	631	1166

Table 14. Mobile programming facilities

Question: Does your library have any of the following types of facilities to offer mobile programming?

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Bookmobile	35.8%	10.4%	7.2%	9.2%
Cybermobile or mobile technology lab	10.2%	5.7%	1.3%	2.7%
Mobile job center	5.2%	1.1%	0.3%	0.7%
Other mobile programming facilities	21.1%	9.9%	6.4%	7.9%
Any mobile programming facilities	53.6%	21.5%	14.0%	17.5%
Total question responses	151	385	631	1167

Table 15. Emergency designations

Question: Does your library have any of the following emergency designations within your community?

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Cooling/warming center in extreme temperatures	50.3%	50.4%	31.2%	36.5%
Distribution center during a public health emergency	30.9%	27.6%	18.8%	21.4%
Hub for community members or first responders during disaster recovery	19.2%	19.0%	15.7%	16.6%
Other emergency designations	11.2%	10.0%	7.5%	8.2%
Any emergency designations	66.1%	63.7%	44.6%	50.0%
Total question responses	151	384	629	1164

Table 16. Green or energy-saving initiatives

Question: Please indicate whether your library currently has these green or energy-saving initiatives in place in at least one location, or whether your library has plans to add these in the future.

	City		Suburban		Town/Rural		Overall	
	In place currently	Planned for Future	In place currently	Planned for Future	In place currently	Planned for Future	In place currently	Planned for Future
Electric vehicle charging stations	28.3%	20.0%	12.5%	27.5%	4.3%	12.9%	7.3%	16.6%
Energy-efficient lighting systems (e.g., LEDs)	75.2%	17.2%	76.7%	16.1%	62.1%	20.9%	66.1%	19.6%
High efficiency cooling	39.2%	18.8%	35.3%	26.1%	32.0%	19.9%	33.1%	21.3%
High efficiency heating	36.6%	19.2%	36.0%	24.8%	30.3%	20.8%	31.9%	21.6%
Net zero energy buildings	3.2%	12.5%	0.7%	10.0%	0.2%	7.1%	0.4%	8.0%
Other onsite renewable energy (e.g., geothermal)	10.0%	4.6%	5.3%	4.2%	2.2%	1.8%	3.2%	2.5%
Recycling (for staff or patrons)	84.6%	3.5%	85.7%	3.8%	68.0%	4.0%	72.8%	3.9%
Solar panels	15.9%	17.2%	7.5%	20.4%	3.3%	13.1%	4.8%	14.9%
Stormwater management	34.7%	6.7%	29.2%	8.7%	10.5%	4.4%	15.9%	5.5%
Water conservation	30.6%	9.3%	14.6%	7.1%	8.7%	5.2%	11.1%	5.8%
Wind generator	0.6%	1.5%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	1.7%
Other green or energy-saving initiatives	10.3%		8.3%		6.8%		7.3%	
Total question responses	151		385		631		1167	

Table 17. Evaluation

Question: How does your library evaluate the impact of its programs, services, partnerships, and facilities? Select all that apply.

	City	Suburban	Town/Rural	Overall
Community needs assessment (by patron surveys or community data analysis)	73.1%	67.8%	63.8%	65.1%
Outcome evaluation (using Project Outcome or other tools)	41.2%	31.1%	27.5%	29.0%
Output measures (circulation, door count, program attendance, etc.)	100.0%	95.0%	89.6%	91.3%
Patron satisfaction surveys (annual or service/program-specific)	84.0%	69.8%	62.0%	64.8%
Other	8.6%	7.9%	6.9%	7.2%
Total question responses	148	376	618	1142

Appendix A. Methodology

Sample

The 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey collected data at the administrative entity (AE) level as defined by IMLS. The AE was used as the sample unit because of the extensive data about each AE available from the annual IMLS Public Libraries Survey (PLS). The original sample frame was based on the FY 2020 PLS public use data file. PLA modified the sample to include eight (8) tribal libraries and thirteen (13) new libraries that were open in fall 2022 but will not be in the PLS sample until FY 2021, 2022, or 2023. PLA also removed 13 libraries that IMLS reported were permanently or temporarily closed. The survey was open for three months between September and December 2022. In total 9,246 libraries were eligible to participate in the survey and 1,167 completed it, for a response rate of 12.6%. Four libraries (one tribal, one law library, and two new libraries) were given a weight of 0, effectively excluding them from the national weighted analysis due to their lack of other PLS variables used for weighting. Thus, the weighted results presented in the report are based on a total of 1,163 completed surveys.

Table A1 below outlines the percentage of respondents by four key characteristics—locale, region, legal basis, legal service area population, and administrative structure—compared to the percentage of public libraries (AEs) nationwide with each of those characteristics (based on the FY 2020 IMLS Public Libraries Survey). The section on analysis and weighting below describes how the final estimates were calculated to account for these differences.

Table A1

	Survey Respondents	All AEs
Locale		
City	12.9%	5.7%
Suburban	33.0%	25.4%
Town/Rural	54.1%	68.9%
Region		
Far West	8.1%	5.7%
Great Lakes	23.5%	20.4%
Mid East	15.4%	16.7%
New England	12.4%	13.7%
Plains	12.9%	17.2%
Rocky Mountains	5.0%	4.2%
Southeast	13.6%	12.6%
Southwest	9.1%	9.3%
Outlying Areas	0.0%	0.0%

	Survey Respondents	All AEs
Legal Basis		
County or City/County	14.1%	11.1%
Library District	17.1%	15.2%
Municipal	48.1%	52.7%
Nonprofit	13.0%	14.4%
Other	7.7%	6.6%
Legal Service Area Population		
< 10,000	39.8%	57.1%
10,000–24,999	18.9%	19.1%
25,000–99,999	24.7%	17.1%
> 100,000	16.4%	6.2%
Other	0.3%	0.4%
Administrative structure (outlets)		
Multiple outlets	31.6%	18.9%
Single outlet	68.1%	81.1%
Other	0.3%	---

Survey Design

The 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey was developed primarily by PLA's Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Committee (MEAC). One question on the survey (about the types of entities that libraries partner with) was designed and tested by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in conjunction with the American Institutes for Research and the Library Statistics Working Group. Three questions (two about services and one about green or energy-saving initiatives) had been asked on PLA's former Public Library Data Services annual survey, though in somewhat different formats. A reference copy of the full 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

PLA staff invited volunteers to participate in field-testing the survey in July 2022. 15 libraries completed the field-testing process. For each section of the survey, they were asked to evaluate its level of difficulty and to share any feedback about how the questions could be clarified or improved. PLA staff also solicited input from ALA partners, including the Public Programs Office (PPO), the Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPA), the Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA), and the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS). In consultation with PLA staff, MEAC reviewed all feedback and determined the final version of the questions for the survey.

The 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey opened on September 16, 2022 and closed on December 17, 2022. PLA staff sent printed invitations to all libraries in the sample and attempted to email all public library directors (though not all may have received the message due to missing or outdated email contact details). In addition, the survey was publicized via PLA's e-news,

website, and publications. Several reminders were sent via email while the survey remained open. Responses were collected through PLA's data platform, Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends (**librarybenchmark.org**).

Analysis and Weighting

This section outlines the procedure used to calculate weights for the 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey. Because all public libraries were invited to complete the survey and the response rate was 13 percent, nonprobability sample weighting was used to calculate final weights for responding libraries.[1] This quasi-randomization approach corrects for selection bias—the sample differs from the rest of the population such that the results from the sample cannot be projected to the full population—by using a probability-based reference sample to estimate pseudo-inclusion probabilities for the responding libraries. In this case, the sample of responding libraries was combined with the reference sample of nonresponding libraries. This combined sample covered the total population of US public libraries (administrative entities) open in fall 2022.

Weights were assigned to 1163 libraries that (1) responded to the survey and (2) had data in the PLS. For a given responding library, the final weight was calculated by:

1. Coding the libraries in the reference sample as 0 and responding libraries as 1.
2. Assigning a probability sample weight to libraries in the reference sample ($w = N/n$) and the libraries that responded to the survey ($w = 1$)
3. Adjusting the weight of the libraries in the reference sample to account for the nonnegligible percentage (13%) of libraries that responded to the survey:

$$w_i^* = w_i \frac{\widehat{N} - n_{np}}{\widehat{N}}$$

Where w_i is the weight for each library i in the reference sample s_{ref}, $\widehat{N} = \Sigma_{S_{ref}} w_i$, and n_{np} is the sample size of the responding libraries (the nonprobability sample).

4. Fitting a binary regression using the following library characteristics from the PLS to predict the probability of being in the sample of responding libraries:

   - **ADMIN** — Administrative structure (single or multiple outlets)
   - **PLA_LEGBAS** — Legal basis category (County or City/County, Municipal, Library District, Nonprofit, Other)
   - **PLA_LOCALE** — Locale (Town/Rural, Suburb, City)
   - **PLA_REGION** — Region (New England, Mid East, Great Lakes, Plains, Southeast, Southwest, Rocky Mountains, Far West, Outlying Areas)
   - **POPU_LSA** — Population of legal service area

- **TOTOPEXP** — Total operating expenditures
- **TOTSTAFF** — Total FTE of paid employees

5. Calculating the inverse probability for each library that responded to the survey (1/P).

1163 libraries were assigned weights following this process. An additional four libraries not represented in the PLS were assigned a weight of 0, for a total number of 1167 libraries in the analytic sample.

The PLS population-level data was used to check how effective weighting was for estimating population averages across a number of variables. For example, the average number of bookmobiles in the library population was .074. Before weighting, the average number of bookmobiles in the sample of responding libraries was .186 (*se* = .022) which suggests that the number of bookmobiles was overrepresented in responding libraries. After weighting, the estimated average number of bookmobiles in the population was .079 (*se* = .008)—much closer to the population average. These results indicate that the weights were effective in reducing selection bias.

Note

1. Valliant, R., Dever, J.A., & Kreuter, F. (2018). *Practical tools for designing and weighting survey samples.* Springer. **doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93632-1**

Appendix B. Survey Reference Copy

2022 Survey
Public Library Services
for Strong Communities

Public Library ASSOCIATION

Survey: librarybenchmark.org | Deadline: December 10, 2022

The Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), is conducting this survey to better understand how public libraries across the nation serve and contribute to sustaining their communities now and into the future. The *Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey* gathers information about your library's programs, services, partnerships, and facilities that are geared towards meeting needs and fostering resilient communities. While public libraries are not the only entities engaging in sustaining communities, this survey aims to understand how and in what circumstances libraries do engage, through their own efforts and partnerships.

We ask that you respond to questions at the **library administrative entity** level. This is the same level at which you report annual statistics to your state library agency. Some questions ask about whether your library offers resources/services in "at least one location." A **location** refers to your single main library or any of your library branches that are usually open to the public and provide services to the community (e.g., lends books, offers public access to computers, etc.). Additionally, unless otherwise stated, your responses should reflect the **current situation** within your library at the point in time when you are completing this survey. A glossary of terms is available with the survey instructions.

Your input will help to ensure that findings from the survey reflect the unique characteristics of your library as well as similar libraries across the country. In addition, your responses will enable PLA to provide nationally representative data to inform elected officials, the media, and funders about public library initiatives and needs. Findings from the survey will be analyzed and reported in aggregate across all public libraries and in groups of similar libraries. PLA will use results from the survey to advocate on behalf of public libraries at the national level. In addition, PLA will make a summary of aggregate results freely available on its website to share the results widely. Results will be incorporated into the *Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends* data tool.

The survey does not request your name or the names of any staff members, and your library's survey responses will remain private. To read ALA's privacy policy, please visit http://www.ala.org/privacypolicy.

It should take 30-45 minutes to complete this survey. You do not need to complete the survey in one session. Rather, you may save your responses and return to the survey at another time. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the project team at plabenchmark@ala.org.

Additional Survey Information

What type of information does this survey collect?

The main sections on the Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey are: Services, Programs, Partnerships, and Facilities. The 19 survey questions are multiple-choice, select-all-that-apply, and open-ended; no questions on this survey ask you to report any annual output measures.

Who should complete the survey?

One person should complete the survey on behalf of a single library at the administrative entity level. Often that person is the library director, administrator, or data coordinator. However, you may need to work with other staff or library branches to complete some of these questions.

How do I enter my library's responses?

Log into your library's account at https://librarybenchmark.org/. Click on "Surveys" in the menu, and then you will see this survey listed under "Open Surveys." The survey will remain open through Saturday, December 10, 2022.

Why should my library complete the survey?

Your participation will help make the results powerful and actionable for your library and libraries across the country. Your input will enable PLA and ALA to provide nationally representative data to engage and inform elected officials, the media, and funders about public library initiatives and community needs. PLA also will share aggregate results widely with the field, develop tools for peer comparison, and plan relevant professional development opportunities. In addition, the survey questions may inspire new ideas for your library. The data we collect in 2022 will serve as a baseline, and when we next ask these questions (in 2025), we will see how the field has evolved.

How long will it take?

We estimate the survey will take 30 to 45 minutes to complete. However, you may need to gather some information from colleagues before or during the process. We recommend reviewing all the questions beforehand to help you prepare.

How will the survey results be used?

The survey results will be incorporated into the Benchmark data dashboards, so your library will be able to see how you compare to your peers and to other libraries in the United States. PLA will publish a report summarizing the aggregate results on the PLA website and will use the survey results to advocate on behalf of public libraries at the national level.

2022 Survey
Public Library Services
for Strong Communities

This document is a copy of the survey *for reference purposes*. Please enter responses in your library's account in Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends.

Section 1: Community Needs

1. Thinking about your community's most pressing needs and priorities, which of the areas below is your library currently striving to address with partnerships, programs, or services, or are developing plans to address in the future? If any areas are not applicable at this time, please select N/A.

	Currently Addressing	Planned for future	N/A
Accessibility and supporting people with disabilities	○	○	○
Civic engagement	○	○	○
Climate change and sustainability	○	○	○
Digital equity	○	○	○
Economic development and job-seeker support	○	○	○
Equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice	○	○	○
Food insecurity	○	○	○
Homelessness	○	○	○
Literacy and educational achievement	○	○	○
Public health and wellbeing	○	○	○
Other community needs (please describe):			

Section 2: Services

Formal services are those specifically planned, promoted, and offered by the library. The service may occur in the library or another facility, and the person providing the support may or may not be a member of the library staff. These services are often delivered one-on-one.

Informal services are areas in which the library assists patrons as needed, including by appointment, but the library does not specifically plan or promote this type of support. Assistance may or may not be provided by a member of the library staff and may be considered by your library as reference or referral transactions.

2. Does your library offer formal services to assist patrons with any of the following government services? If not formally offered and delivered by the library, do you informally assist patrons with any of these services?

	Yes, formal	Yes, informal	Yes, both	No
ACA or other health insurance enrollment	◯	◯	◯	◯
Drivers' licenses or state IDs	◯	◯	◯	◯
Elections (e.g., voter registration, ballot drop-off, polling place)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Immigration and naturalization	◯	◯	◯	◯
Notary services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Passport application acceptance	◯	◯	◯	◯
Referrals to social services	◯	◯	◯	◯
Rental assistance (e.g., Section 8)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Student aid application (e.g., FAFSA)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tax preparation/filing	◯	◯	◯	◯
Vital records	◯	◯	◯	◯
Unemployment filing	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other government services (please indicate if formally or informally provided):				

3. Does your library offer any of the following support services?

Note: This list of support services purposefully does not include digital literacy services (e.g., assistance with devices or online resources) as those services are part of the PLA Technology Survey.

	Yes, formal	Yes, informal	Yes, both	No
Business development	●	○	○	○
English language learning/ESL	○	○	○	●
Food security support services	○	○	○	●
GED/diploma student support	○	○	○	●
Job and career services	○	○	○	●
Legal information services	○	○	○	●
Reentry services post-incarceration	○	○	○	●
Other support services (please indicate if formally or informally provided):				

4. If the library assists patrons with government and other support services primarily on an informal basis, for what reasons are these services not offered formally? Select all that apply.

☐ Not enough trained staff or partners available to provide formally
☐ Other community agencies are adequately delivering the service in their facilities
☐ Patrons do not regularly inquire of the library for these services
☐ Other reasons (please describe):

Section 3: Programs

Programs are defined as events, or a series of events, organized by the library or its partners that are open to the library's patrons and community members. Programs may be held in-person or virtually, on- or off-site. Unlike the services described above, programs are offered to a group of patrons, not one-on-one.

5. Does your library offer any of the following types of programs for *children*?

Children are defined as those ages 0 to 11.

	Yes	No
Book clubs	○	○
Children's after-school or homework programs	○	○
Early literacy programs (e.g., play & learn, storytime, etc.)	○	○
Health and wellness programs (e.g., yoga for kids)	○	○
School-aged literacy programs	○	○
School preparation or grade transition programs	○	○
STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs	○	○
Summer reading program	○	○
Other children's programs (please describe):		

6. Does your library offer any of the following types of programs for *teens*?
Teens are defined as those ages 12 to 18.

	Yes	No
Book clubs	○	○
College or trade school preparation programs	○	○
Financial literacy programs	○	○
Games and gaming programs	○	○
Health and wellness programs (e.g., Adulting 101, cooking programs)	○	○

	Yes	No
Media or news literacy programs	◯	◯
STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs	◯	◯
Summer reading program	◯	◯
Teen advisory group or board	◯	◯
Teen after-school or homework programs	◯	◯
Other teen programs (please describe):		

7. Does your library offer any of these *adult* or *all-ages* programs?

	Yes	No
Adult education/literacy classes	◯	◯
Art or music programs	◯	◯
Book clubs	◯	◯
Business development programs	◯	◯
Civic and community engagement programs	◯	◯
English language learner classes or networking	◯	◯
Family engagement programs	◯	◯
Financial literacy programs	◯	◯
Health and wellness programs	◯	◯
Local history or genealogy programs	◯	◯
Media or news literacy programs	◯	◯
Programs or classes for homeschooling families	◯	◯
Programs or classes in languages other than English	◯	◯
Repair or "Fix-it Clinic" programs	◯	◯

Summer reading program	○	○
Workforce development programs	○	○
Other adult or all-ages programs (please describe):		

8. What challenges or constraints most limit your library's ability to expand program offerings?

9. What type of programs is your library considering adding or expanding in the coming 12 months?

Section 4: Partnerships

10. Does your library have a partnership with any of the following types of entities?

A **partnership** is a mutually beneficial arrangement between the library and another entity where both parties assist or support one another and work together toward a shared goal. Partnerships are different from professional courtesy or cooperation, where the library assists another entity but does not receive assistance in return (or vice versa). Examples of partnerships may include (but are not limited to) sponsoring activities or events together; working together jointly to develop and deliver programs or services; and sharing costs for staff, resources, or programming. Note that partnerships do not include grants received, contractors or vendors hired by the library, or in-kind donations.

Partnerships may be formal or informal:

- A **formal partnership** occurs when there is a written agreement or other documentation that outlines the expectations of both parties (e.g., an MOU, email, bylaws, etc.) and may serve as a binding document.
- An **informal partnership** occurs when the library and another entity have a non-binding agreement (e.g., verbal) or longstanding relationship where each party supports or assists the other but does not formalize the agreement in writing.

	Yes, formal	Yes, informal	Yes, both	No
Cultural arts organization, museum, or historical society	○	○	○	○
For-profit business (e.g., restaurant, bookstore, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Institution of higher education (including vocational schools and academic libraries)	○	○	○	○
K-12 school or school district (including public, charter, and private schools)	○	○	○	○
Local interest group (e.g., quilters guild, poetry club, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Non-profit or community-based organization (e.g., charity, foundation, advocacy group, faith-based organization, Lion's Club, rotary, VFW, etc.)	○	○	○	○

State, local, county, or municipal government (e.g., employment office, health and human services department, police, tourism department, parks and recreation, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Tribal organization (e.g., tribal government, tribal council, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Other (please describe):				

11. Summer Reading program partners:

If your library offers a summer reading or summer library program, do you partner with any of the following types of organizations on that program?

	Yes	No
Cultural arts organization or museum	○	○
For-profit business	○	○
Free meals program	○	○
K-12 school or school district	○	○
Non-profit or community-based organization	○	○
Other library systems	○	○
Parks and recreation	○	○
Senior residences or retirement homes	○	○
State library agency	○	○
Other summer reading partners (please describe):		

Section 5: Facilities

For this section, we ask that you continue to respond to questions at the **library administrative entity** level. This is the same level at which you report annual statistics to your state library agency. For these questions, please note that **location** refers to your single main library or any of your library branches that are usually open to the public and provide services to the community (e.g., lends books, offers public access to computers, has set hours, etc.).

12. How many of your current library locations were *built* or received a *major renovation* within the last four decades?

Total Number of Locations	0
Built or Last Major Renovation Year	Count of locations
In 1990 or earlier	
Between 1991 and 2000	
Between 2001 and 2010	
Between 2011 and 2020	
Since 2021 or are currently being renovated	

13. Please indicate whether your library has recently (since 2011) added or renovated any of the following types of spaces or are currently developing plans to do so in the future. If your library is in the midst of making any of these additions, choose the "Added or renovated" option.

	Added or renovated	Planned for future	N/A
Art or music studio	○	○	○
Auditorium or large community event space	○	○	○
Coworking spaces for businesses	○	○	○
Dedicated programming space by age	○	○	○
General use (for staff or the public)	○	○	○
Maker space (including digital media production lab)	○	○	○
Meeting rooms for public use	○	○	○

Renovations/upgrades to physical plant (e.g., HVAC system, roof, foundation, etc.)	○	○	○
Other recent or planned additions (please describe):			

14. Do any of your library locations currently have any of the following types of physical spaces that can accommodate in-person programs or events?

	Yes	No
Dedicated children's space(s)	○	○
Dedicated teen space(s)	○	○
Fixed maker space (e.g., digital media lab, FabLab, etc.)	○	○
Large meeting space or auditorium (for more than 25 people)	○	○
Mid-size meeting space (for approximately 10-25 people)	○	○
Outdoor programming space	○	○
Technology training space (e.g., classroom or computer lab)	○	○
Other spaces for programming (please describe):		

15. Does your library have any of the following types of facilities to offer mobile programming?

	Yes	No
Bookmobile	○	○
Cybermobile or mobile technology lab	○	○
Mobile job center	○	○
Other mobile programming facilities (please describe):		

16. Does your library have any of the following emergency designations within your community?

	Yes	No
Cooling/warming center in extreme temperatures	◯	◯
Distribution center during a public health emergency	◯	◯
Hub for community members or first responders during disaster recovery	◯	◯
Other emergency designations (please describe):		

17. Green or Energy-Saving Initiatives: Please indicate whether your library currently has these green or energy-saving initiatives in place in at least one location, or whether your library has plans to add these in the future.

	In place currently	Planned for future	N/A
Electric vehicle charging stations	◯	◯	◯
Energy-efficient lighting systems (e.g., LEDs)	◯	◯	◯
High efficiency cooling	◯	◯	◯
High efficiency heating	◯	◯	◯
Net zero energy buildings	◯	◯	◯
Recycling (for staff or patrons)	◯	◯	◯
Solar panels	◯	◯	◯
Stormwater management	◯	◯	◯
Water conservation	◯	◯	◯
Wind generator	◯	◯	◯
Other onsite renewable energy (e.g., geothermal)	◯	◯	◯
Other green or energy-saving initiatives (please describe):			

Section 6: Final Thoughts

18. How does your library evaluate the impact of its programs, services, partnerships, and facilities? Select all that apply.

☐ Community needs assessment (by patron surveys or community data analysis)

☐ Outcome evaluation (using Project Outcome or other tools)

☐ Output measures (circulation, door count, program attendance, etc.)

☐ Patron satisfaction surveys (annual or service/program-specific)

☐ Other evaluation methods (please describe):

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19. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Please take a moment to describe any other issues or concerns related to how your library is addressing current and future community needs that were not reflected in this survey. In particular, please explain challenges or successes and trends you are watching for the future.

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Appendix C. Survey Instructions and Glossary

**2022 Survey
Public Library Services
for Strong Communities**

PublicLibrary
ASSOCIATION

Instructions

Log into your library's Benchmark account (librarybenchmark.org) to enter your responses for the 2022 Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey. Please submit your responses by **Saturday, December 10, 2022**.

Click on "Surveys" in the menu at the top and select "2022 Services Survey." You do not need to complete the survey in one session. Rather, you may save your responses and return to the survey at another time. It should take 30-45 minutes to complete this survey on behalf of your library.

We recommend using the **Survey Worksheet** (a PDF form) to collect responses before entering them in the online form. This form is provided for your convenience and contains FAQs about the survey.

We ask that you respond to questions at the **library administrative entity** level. This is the same level at which you report annual statistics to your state library agency. Some questions ask about whether your library offers resources/services in "at least one location." A **location** refers to your single main library or any of your library branches that are usually open to the public and provide services to the community (e.g., lends books, offers public access to computers, etc.).

Unless otherwise stated, your responses should reflect the **current situation** within your library at the point in time when you are completing this survey.

One person should submit the survey on behalf of a single library administrative entity. Often that person is the library director, administrator, or data coordinator. However, you may need to work with other staff or library departments to complete some of these questions.

A glossary of terms can be found below.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the project team at plabenchmark@ala.org.

Glossary

The terms below are organized by the section of the survey in which they appear.

Community Needs

Libraries are key partners in the work of supporting their communities, where they play a big role in helping provide knowledge, understanding, and resources in support of **community needs**. These needs are often identified or accessible in local community metrics, indices, and assessments, or even within the library's own data. Use this question to specify how your library is supporting your community in addressing these needs.

For example:
- If your library is an area of the country prone to natural disasters (wildfires, hurricanes, extreme temperatures), do you partner with community groups to offer disaster preparedness programs? Do you have generators for the library? These types of activities would fall under "Climate change and sustainability."
- Are your locations polling places? Do you have staff who notarize mail-in ballots? Have you provided space for listening sessions conducted by your local elected officials? All these activities would fall under "Civic engagement."

Services

Formal services:
- are those specifically planned, promoted, and offered by the library,
- may occur in the library or another facility,
- may or may not be provided by a member of the library staff, and
- are often delivered one-on-one.

Informal services:
- are those in which the library assists patrons as needed, including by appointment,
- are services not specifically planned or promoted by the library,
- may or may not be provided by a member of the library staff, and
- may be considered by your library as reference or referral transactions.

Services can be offered both formally and informally. For example, if the library has a promoted partnership with AARP to provide tax preparation services to seniors by appointment (a formal service), and library staff also help direct patrons to online sites to find the tax forms they need (an informal service).

Programs

Programs defined as events, or a series of events:
- are organized by the library or its partners,

- are open to the library's patrons and community members,
- may be held in-person or virtually, on- or off-site, and
- are offered to a group of patrons, not one-on-one or passively.

Summer Reading Program refers to any of the variety of names for the library program offered during the summer to any age group – i.e., Summer Learning Program, Summer Library Program, etc.

Children are defined as those ages 0 to 11.

Teens are defined as those ages 12 to 18.

Partnerships

A **partnership** is a mutually beneficial arrangement between the library and another entity where both parties assist or support one another and work together toward a shared goal. Partnerships are different from professional courtesy or cooperation, where the library assists another entity but does not receive assistance in return (or vice versa).

Examples of partnerships may include (but are not limited to) sponsoring activities or events together; working together jointly to develop and deliver programs or services; and sharing costs for staff, resources, or programming. Note that partnerships do not include grants received, contractors or vendors hired by the library, or in-kind donations.

Partnerships may be formal or informal:

- A **formal partnership** occurs when there is a written agreement or other documentation that outlines the expectations of both parties (e.g., an MOU, email, bylaws, etc.) and may serve as a binding document.
- An **informal partnership** occurs when the library and another entity have a non-binding agreement (e.g., verbal) or longstanding relationship where each party supports or assists the other but does not formalize the agreement in writing.

A library could have both formal and informal partnerships with a single entity. For example: the library may begin a formal partnership requiring an MOU with their local K-12 school district to offer library accounts to all students, while continuing the informal annual visits from summer school classes to their local branch for Summer Reading Program prize pick up.

Summer Reading Program refers to any of the variety of names for the library program offered during the summer to any age group – i.e., Summer Learning Program, Summer Library Program, etc.

Facilities

Location refers to your single main library or any of your library branches that are usually open to the public and provide services to the community (e.g., lends books, offers public access to computers, has set hours, etc.).

Major renovation generally refers to one-time major projects. It may or may not require extended closure of a location, or utilize only capital revenue to complete, but generally refers to more than moving collections or refreshing furnishings and equipment.

Final Thoughts

Evaluating Impact

A **Needs Assessment** is a systematic process for determining the gaps between current and desired conditions, where the discrepancy between the two must be measured to appropriately identify the need. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to correct a deficiency.

Outcome Evaluation refers to the quantitative or qualitative measures of change in an individual as a result of participating in a program or utilizing a service. *What good did the library do? How have patrons been changed as a result of their interaction with the library?*

Output measures capture how much the library does, such as the number of programs offered and the number of people who attend them.

Satisfaction surveys ask patrons about their level of satisfaction with the services or experiences provided.

Additional Questions?

Need further clarification on a question or response option, please contact the project team at plabenchmark@ala.org.