



# LEARNING REPORT

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Provided by **FAST FORWARD**  
LIBRARIES 

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# Executive Summary

The **Auburn Hills Public Library (AHPL)** launched a strategic planning process in February 2025. As part of the process, the library devoted a significant amount of time listening to community needs and interests to inform and guide the process. This report represents a summary of the data gathered directly and indirectly using various tools and methods from the community, the library's Board of Trustees, and library staff during this phase of the process. Sections in the report include:

- An introduction and context with library usage statistics and trends, and community demographics,
- A summary and analysis of findings from a community survey,
- A summary from focus groups and interviews, and
- An appendix with more complete community demographic data (Appendix A), and findings from a Strategic Capacity Assessment completed by Board and staff members (Appendix B).

## Library Statistics

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **many library usage statistics were lower through 2021 and then increased in subsequent years.**

- Circulation of physical items was lower in 2021 but increased in 2022. Physical circulation in 2024 was 124,323, just 3.4% lower than 2020's five-year high level (128,674).
- Digital circulation increased every year from 2020 through 2024, nearly doubling with over 40,000 digital items used.
- Door counts were much lower in 2021 but increased in subsequent years. Door counts in 2024 (77,255) were higher than previous years but remained 13.7% lower than 2020 (89,523).
- The number of library programs was low in 2020 and 2021 (342 programs) but increased in subsequent years reaching 688 programs in 2024.
- Attendance at programs was also low but increased in subsequent years reaching over 15,000 participants in 2024, an increase of 155% from 2020.

**Usage of in-library technology was affected during the height of the pandemic but recovered well.**

- Computer sessions decreased 78.2% in 2021. Usage increased in subsequent years but remained much lower than pre-pandemic usage. Usage in 2024 was 52.7% lower than 2020.
- The number of Wi-Fi sessions decreased in 2021 but increased in subsequent years. Usage in 2024 eclipsed previous use and was 113% higher than 2021.

The number of registered cardholders in 2024 was 2.3% higher than number of cardholders in 2020. Using the IMLS service area population (24,360), the cardholder rate in 2024 was 36.4%.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> IMLS stands for the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



## Community Demographics

We reviewed United States Census and American Community Survey data for the city of Auburn Hills from 2010 and 2023. **Many community demographics changed between 2010 and 2023.**

- The population in Auburn Hills increased 17.7%.
- Median household income increased 58.9%, and housing values increased 60.2%.
- The rate of homeownership decreased 0.9%.
- The percentage of those living in poverty decreased slightly since 2012 (1.9%).

**The population of Auburn Hills increased by 17.7% between 2010 and 2023.**

## Race and Ethnicity

**Demographics from 2023 showed a 7.5% decrease in White residents (56%) in Auburn Hills since 2010.** There were increases in the populations of Asian residents as well as those reported as two or more races and those reported as “some other race alone.” There was a 2.4% decrease in the Black population (12%) during this time and an 0.6% decrease in the Hispanic population (11%).

Compared to the overall Auburn Hills population, school age students in the Avondale School District have a smaller percentage of students reported as White (38.8%) and a larger percentage of those reported as Black (34.8%), Hispanic (12.8%), and Asian (12.2%). In the Avondale School District, 43.2% of students are reported as being low-income.

## Language

**Between 2010 and 2023, there was a decrease of nearly 4.8% in the population of those ages 5 and over who speak only English (76.4%).**

Of the population:

- 8.2% speak “other Indo-European languages.”
- 7.9% speak Spanish.
- 6.3% speak Asian/Pacific Islander languages.
- Only 6.3% of the population ages 5 and over speak English “less than very well.”

## Education

**Education levels in Auburn Hills from 2023 showed a high level of education in a large percentage of the population.**

- The percentage of the population ages 25 and older holding less than a high school diploma in Auburn Hills was 6.8%.
- 19.1% held a high school degree or equivalent, and **27.1% held an associate degree or had some college.**
- **A combined 47% had a bachelor’s degree or a graduate or professional degree in 2023.**



# Community Survey

A total of 394 individuals completed a community survey in March 2025.

## Respondents

- The majority of survey respondents (86.3%) indicated they have an AHPL card.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials (64.6%), and 50.4% indicated they regularly read/use digital books and materials.
- 26.6% of respondents indicated they have or care for children under age 18.
- 34.6% of respondents indicated they are retired.
- Nearly all respondents indicated speaking English at home (96.8%), but respondents also indicated speaking 24 additional languages.

While 96.8% of community survey respondents spoke English at home, an additional 24 languages were reported.

## Satisfaction, Value, and Awareness

- A high percentage of survey respondents (88.9%) indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- Respondents rated highest satisfaction with the library's **customer service and the library facility**.
- Respondents rated **highest usage of traditional services** such as checking out materials and attending programs. They indicated highest **importance** in physical collections and assistance from library staff.
- Respondents indicated they mostly learn about the library from the **library's emails and the website**.

Community survey respondents rated highest satisfaction with the library's customer service and facility.

## Library Services

- When asked about **future library services**, respondents rated **highest interest** in development of outdoor spaces and quiet study spaces.
- Considering **program topics**, respondents indicated **highest interest** in crafting programs, music programs, and performing arts programs. Those with children also rated high interest in parenting/child development programs.
- Overall, respondents rated high agreement with the following statements: **"The library is an important part of the community"** and **"The library is a welcoming and safe place."**





## Focus Groups and Interviews

Community focus groups and one-on-one interviews complement the community survey by engaging diverse communities and digging deeper into library aspirations, community aspirations, and community challenges. A small planning team of library staff members developed an extensive list of potential interviewees and focus group participants. From those lists, 35 community members participated in four focus groups (with 23 participants) and 12 one-on-one interviews.

### Library Aspirations

Overall, people want the library to continue to be an inclusive and welcoming public space, offering programs and collections that serve the entire community, and serving as a technology resource as new trends emerge. Adequate and reliable funding is a necessity for a library that can be a gathering place for the community.

People want the library to continue to be an inclusive and welcoming public space.

1. **Programs and Partnerships:** Continue and expand inclusive programs for all ages and grow partnerships with community organizations.
2. **Funding:** Ensure healthy funding for the library moving forward; secure adequate funding for staff wages to aid in retention.
3. **Physical Space and Collections:** Explore options for a satellite library location; make meeting rooms more readily available; continue to value and expand physical collections.
4. **Community Hub:** The library is *the* community gathering place and offers a welcoming and inclusive environment for all; make sure community is aware of what is happening at the library.
5. **Technology:** Keep up with emerging technology trends such as AI and inform the community about them; continue to provide access to Wi-Fi and internet.

### Community Aspirations

Overall, people aspire to a community that is inclusive and supportive to all residents and provides ample opportunities for people to come together through programs and events. People want to hear about what is going on in the community through multiple communications channels and want to see the city thrive with a revitalized downtown and robust public transportation.

1. **Community Care and Cohesion:** The community honors its diversity and cares for all through strong relationships, access to human services, and opportunities to gather.
2. **Revitalized Downtown:** More thriving restaurants and businesses; more arts events and communication around events; a return of the farmer's market.
3. **Transportation:** Robust public transportation throughout town that is easily accessible for seniors and disabled residents; a walkable and bikeable community that is safe for pedestrians.
4. **Communication:** Community information is easy to find and offered through multiple channels; community information is available in multiple languages.
5. **Recreation and Outdoor Spaces:** Increased programs and activities for all ages at the Community Center and throughout town; an indoor fitness center and pool; preservation of local green spaces and parks.



## Strategic Capacity Assessment

In **March and April 2025**, Board and staff members completed a Strategic Capacity Assessment (included as Appendix B) to consider various elements of Board and staff capacity to carry out their roles at the library. 23 staff members and five Board members completed the Assessment which consisted of four parts an environmental scan, core operations assessment, strategic priorities, and working culture.

### Environmental Scan

The library's staff and Board members identified **numerous global, national, and local factors** that could potentially impact the future of the Auburn Hills Public Library.

- **Global factors** included global conflicts and wars, tariffs and the global economic uncertainty, shifts towards digital media and the role of artificial intelligence, climate change and extreme weather, mis/disinformation, digital divides in communities, and immigration and support for refugees.
- **National factors** included cuts to public funding for education and library services such as elimination of IMLS, political groups who promote censorship, First Amendment rights, national ideological shifts and hostility towards libraries, concerns about corporate media ownership, economic instability and the threat of recession alongside the impact of tariffs, threats to DEI initiatives, and attacks on specific minority communities.
- **Local factors** mentioned by respondents included distrust in public institutions, local book challenges, the importance of strong partnerships with schools, state and local funding for libraries, lack of resources for mental health and homelessness as well as other community needs, job loss, transient workers, economic uncertainty, the library's location being less accessible with a car, need for strong local leadership, and support for library services.

### Core Operations

When asked how the library is doing in specified **patron-facing core operation areas**, the highest-rated items included resource sharing, customer service, collection management, technology for patrons, and digital collections. When asked to rate **internal operations**, respondents indicated positive operations in volunteers, innovations, and financial health. Areas that need work included staff compensation packages, staff performance evaluations, and staff training.

When asked to rate **library services and programming** for different age groups, respondents rated children's programming, children's services, and baby and toddler programming highest. Teen programming and teen services rated as areas that need improvement. Senior programming rated "pretty good" despite having the highest "not sure" ratings.



## Strategic Priorities

Staff and Board members were asked to identify current library strengths and opportunities. They **provided many responses and shared strengths** such as staff that is passionate about serving the community, well-attended programs for all ages, strong partnerships in the community, up-to-date materials, accessible technology, and welcoming spaces.

Respondents **focused on opportunities** in these areas, as well, including but not limited to expanded marketing, mobile services outside of the library and targeted programming, enhanced civic collaboration through outreach and educational sessions, expanded Library of Things, more full-time staff, better signage, and more maker spaces.

## Working Culture

In the working culture portion of the Assessment, **over 70% of staff and Board respondents indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with their work or Board service at the library.**

- Overall, respondents were **most highly satisfied** with feeling trusted to do their jobs, having the training to do their jobs, use of their strengths, and having the tools to do their jobs.
- Respondents were **least satisfied** with their feedback being considered and valued, internal communication, collaboration between departments, and opportunities for promotion.

## Overall Themes

- The population of **Auburn Hills is growing and becoming more diverse.**
- Most community survey respondents **indicated satisfaction with the library overall** and noted the library is a welcoming and important community space. Focus group and interview participants also want the library to continue serving as an inclusive community hub.
- Most community survey respondents indicated **high value in traditional services such as physical and digital collections and assistance from library staff.** Focus group and interview participants also indicated interest in continued expansion of physical collections.
- Board and staff members indicated they feel the library has **strong customer service** as well as strong community partnerships, excellent children's programming, and good volunteer opportunities.
- Focus group and interview participants noted the need to **adequately compensate staff** to ensure retention, and Board and staff survey members also indicated the need for attention to staff compensation.
- Board and staff members as well as focus group and interview participants indicated opportunities to **expand marketing** to ensure the community knows what is happening at the library.





## Introduction

The Auburn Hills Public Library (AHPL) serves approximately 25,000 residents in Auburn Hills, Michigan, a northern suburb of Detroit. The library building is located at 3400 E. Seyburn Drive where it has undergone several renovations and expansions over the years. The last expansion was completed in 1996, a small renovation was completed in 2019, and in 2023 the youth department underwent a major renovation which included — among other improvements — new carpet, new shelving, and new furniture.

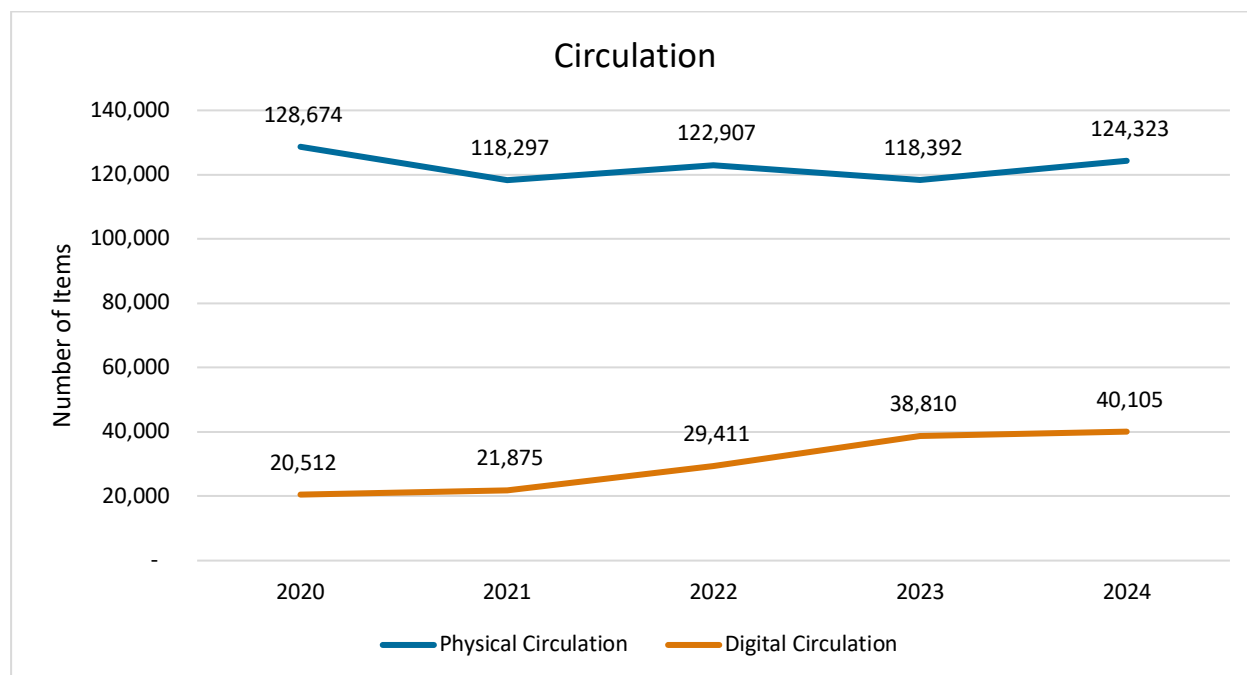
The library holds over 64,000 physical books and materials and provides access to over 85,000 digital items as well as a variety of databases and streaming collections. The library hosts a wide variety of programs and events for all ages with thousands of participants annually. The Auburn Hills Historical Society maintains local history archives located in the lower level of the library which are available by appointment.

The library is governed by a Board of Trustees with six members who oversee the library's strategic operations. A Friends of the Library group volunteers their time and talents to the library through fundraising and advocacy.

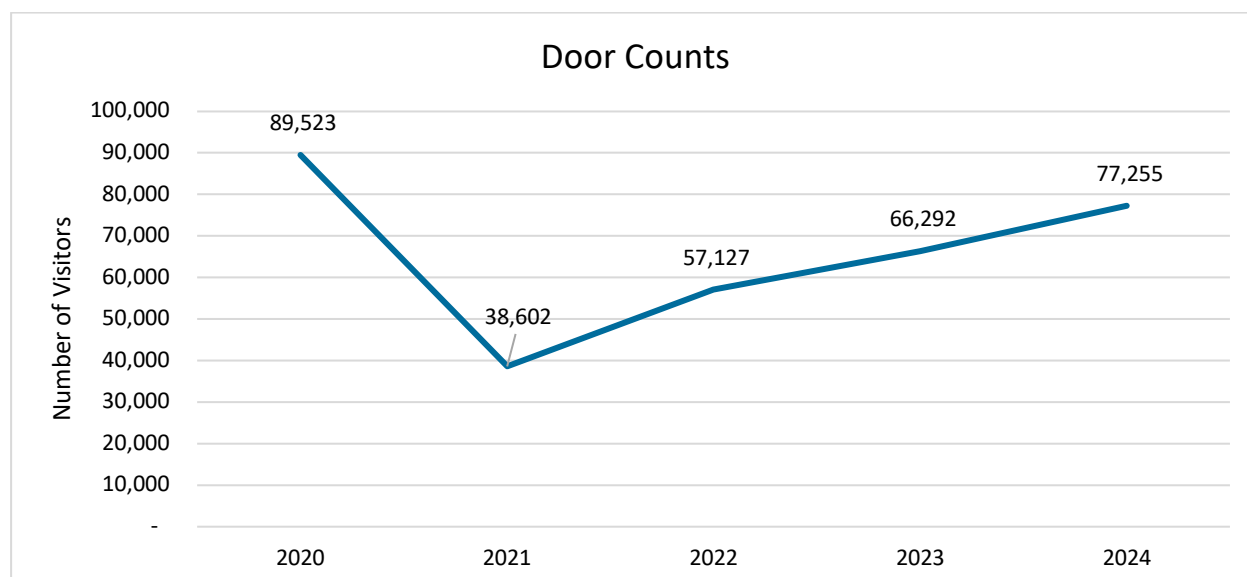


## Library Data

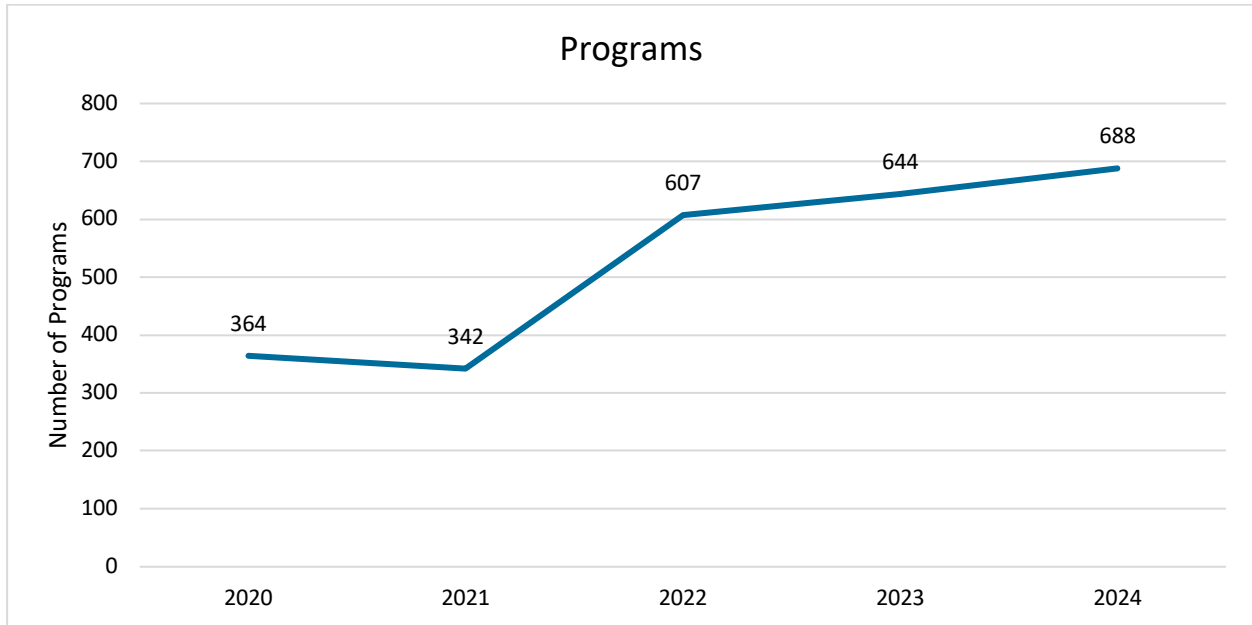
Like other libraries around the country, many library statistics at AHPL were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While 2021 circulation of physical items decreased around 8.1% from the five-year high of 128,674 in 2020, circulation of these items was up in 2024, reaching a level of just 3.4% lower than 2020. Conversely, digital circulation nearly doubled from 2020 to 2024 with over 40,000 digital items circulated in 2024.



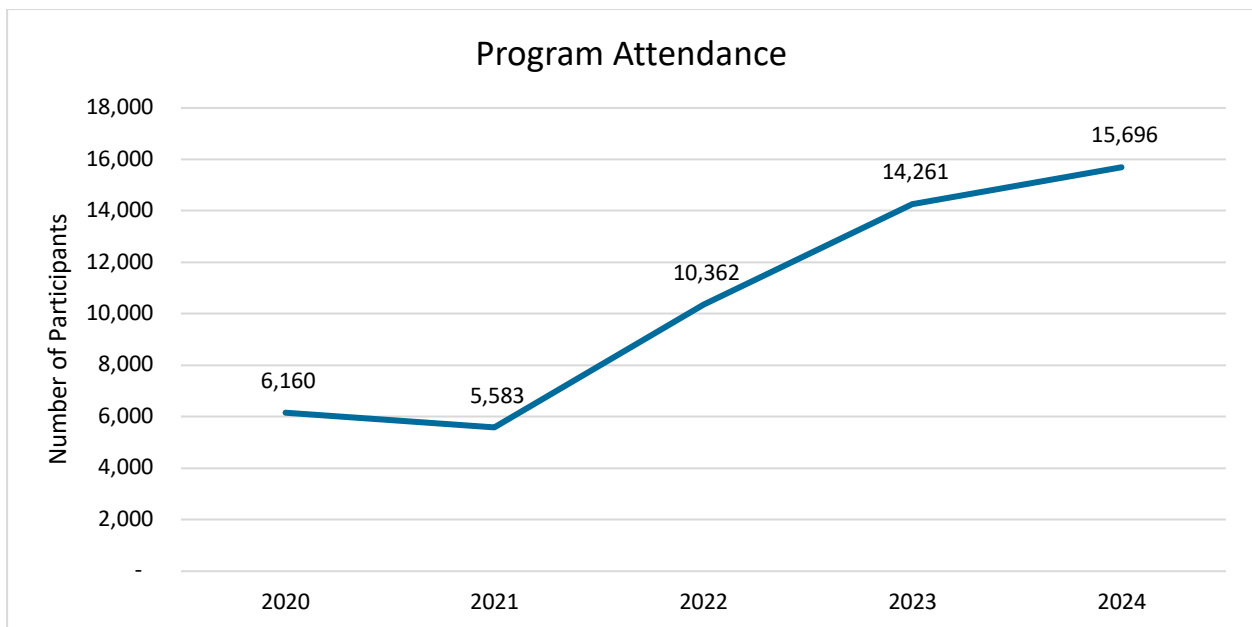
Library visitors, as represented by door counts, decreased 56.9% in 2021 before increasing in subsequent years. By 2024, door counts were higher but remained 13.7% lower than 2020 (it is important to note that 2020 numbers were inflated due to a faulty door counter).



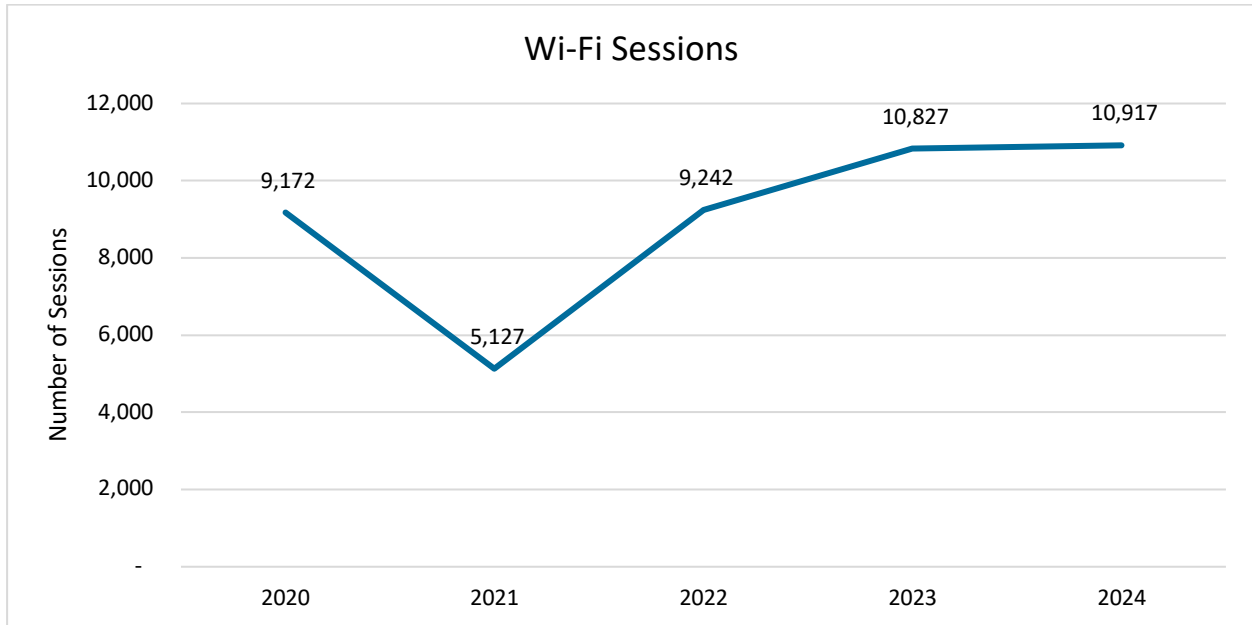
Library program numbers were lower in 2020 and 2021, but increased well in subsequent years. Programs in 2024 were 101% higher than 2021.



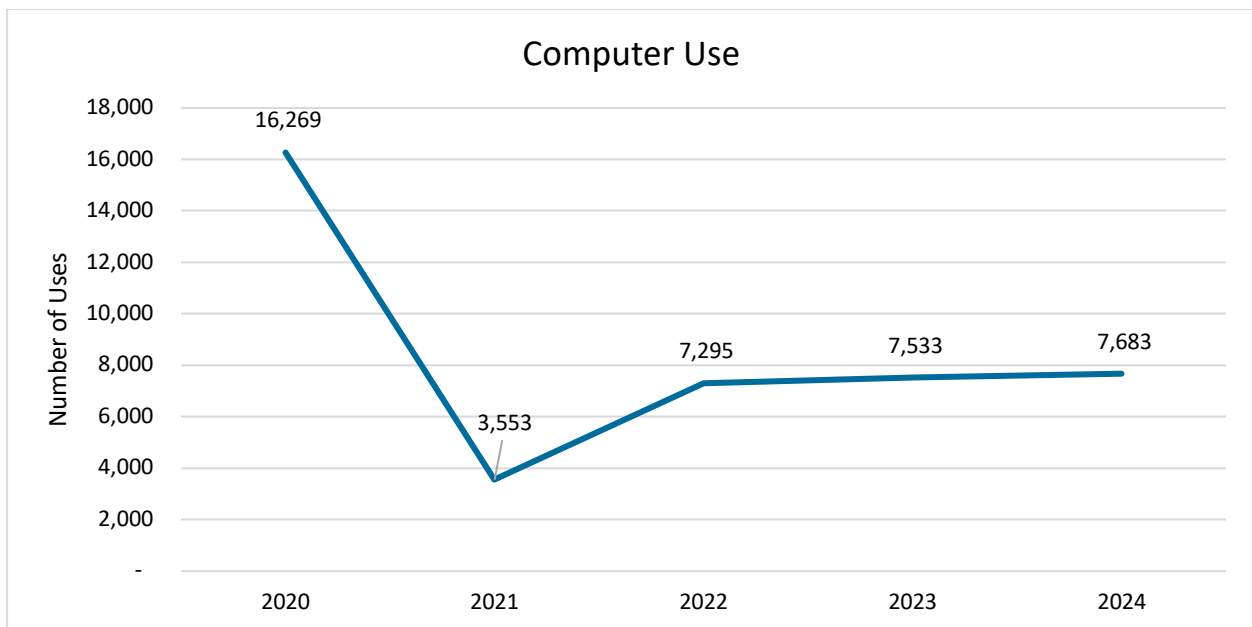
Program participation was also lower in 2020 and 2021 but increased substantially in subsequent years. Participation in 2024 was 181% higher than 2021.



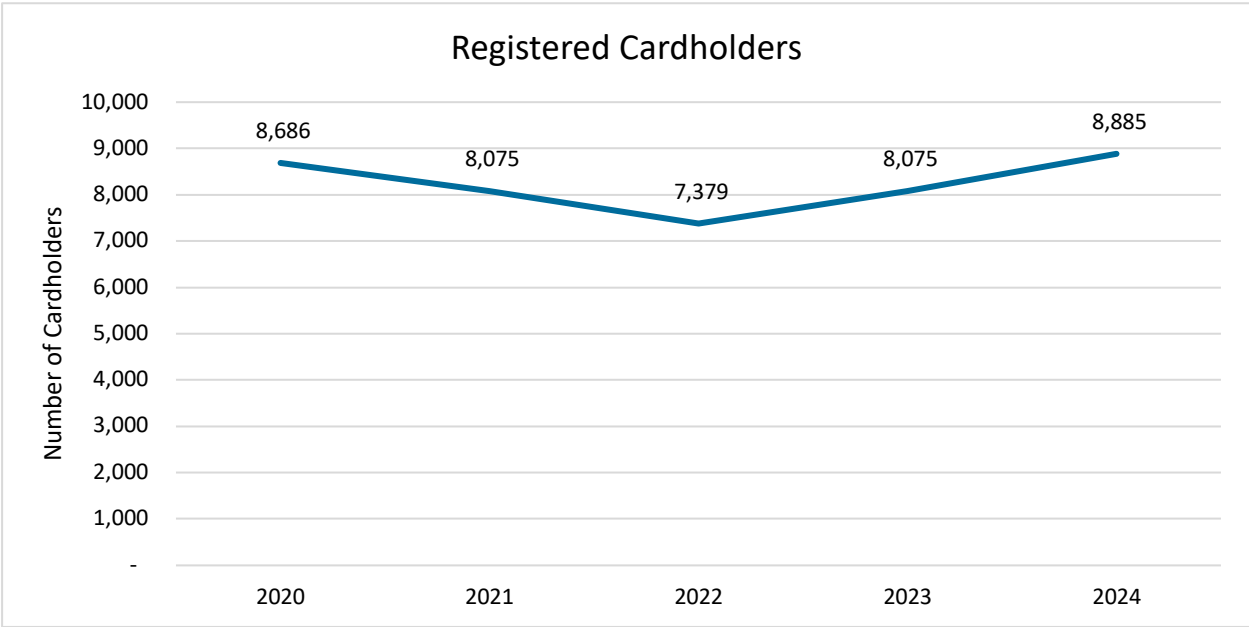
Wi-Fi sessions decreased 44.1% from 2020 to 2021 before increasing 80.3% in 2022 and again in subsequent years. In 2024, sessions were 113% higher than 2021.



In-library computer use decreased 78.2% from 2020 to 2021. While usage increased in 2022, it increased much more slowly in subsequent years, and 2024 usage remained 52.7% lower than 2020.



The number of registered cardholders decreased 15% from 2020 to 2022. Cardholders then increased in 2023 and 2024, eclipsing 2020 cardholders by 2.3% in 2024. Using the 2022 IMLS service area population of 24,360, AHPL had a 2024 cardholder rate of 36%.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> IMLS stands for the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



## Community Data

The overall population of Auburn Hills increased 17.7% from 2010 to 2023. The median household income during this period increased 58.9%, and average housing values increased 60.2%. Despite these increases, homeownership declined 0.9%. The poverty level in Auburn Hills decreased 1.9% from 2012 to 2023.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population	332,387,540	10,051,595	21,162	24,911
Median Age	38.7	40.1	30.5	36.2
Median Household Income	78,538	71,149	49,558	78,727
Homeownership	65%	72.9%	51.8%	50.9%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied)	303,400	217,600	146,000	233,900
Below Poverty Level	12.4%	13.1%	13.1%*	11.2%

\*2012



## Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic diversity increased in Auburn Hills over the past several years. The percentage of the Auburn Hills population reported as White alone decreased 7.5% between 2010 and 2023. The Asian population increased 5.9%, and the Hispanic population decreased 0.6%. The population of those reported as two or more races increased 8%, and those reported as “some other race alone” increased 2%. The Black/African American population decreased 2.4% during this period.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Total population	332,387,540	10,051,595	21,162	24,911
White alone	58.2%	73.0%	63.5%	56.0%
Black or African American alone	12.4%	13.4%	14.4%	12.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%
Asian	5.8%	3.3%	8.6%	14.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone	6.6%	1.8%	2.6%	4.6%
Two or more races	10.7%	6.3%	2.6%	10.6%
Hispanic population	19.0%	5.7%	11.6%	11.0%



## School-Age Population

The racial and ethnic make-up of the Avondale School District student population varies from the overall state population as well as the city population. While 56% of the city's population is White alone, 38.8% of school age students in the district are reported as White. Avondale District student populations of Hispanic (12.8%) and Black students (34.8%) are higher than the percentages of the city population for these groups (11% and 12% respectively). And, while the poverty level in Auburn Hills was 11.2% in 2023, the school district has 43.2% low-income students this year.

MI SCHOOL DATA	Michigan 2024-2025	Avondale School District 2024-
Hispanic	9.5%	12.8%
Black	18.3%	34.8%
Asian	3.7%	12.2%
White	62.4%	38.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6	1.1%
Two or More Races	5.5%	.03%
Low Income Students	50.3%	43.2%

## Language

The percentage of the Auburn Hills population ages 5 and over who speak only English decreased 4.8% since 2010 to 76.4% of residents in 2023. Those speaking Spanish increased just 0.8%; those speaking other Indo-European languages increased just 0.3%, and those speaking Asian/Pacific Islander language increased 3%. Only 6.3% of residents speak English "less than very well", down 2.1% since 2010.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population 5 years and over	313,447,641	9,502,054	19,509	23,860
English only	78.0%	89.8%	81.2%	76.4%
Spanish	13.4%	3.0%	7.1%	7.9%
Other Indo-European languages	3.8%	3.0%	7.9%	8.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	1.7%	3.3%	6.3%
Other languages	1.2%	2.4%	0.6%	1.2%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.4%	3.6%	8.4%	6.3%



## Education

Auburn Hills has a high level of residents with some level of college education or beyond. A combined 47% the population of Auburn Hills residents ages 25 and older held a bachelor's or graduate or professional degree in 2023, higher than both federal and state levels and higher than 2010 levels in Auburn Hills. Including those with an associate degree or some college, 74.1% of the population ages 25 and over has at least some college education. The percentages of those having less than a high school degree or a high school or equivalent degree both decreased from 2010 to 2023.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population 25 years and older	228,434,661	6,967,452	13,207	17,744
Less than high school graduate	10.6%	8.1%	8.9%	6.8%
High school or equivalent	26.2%	28.2%	21.6%	19.1%
Some college or associate degree	28.2%	31.9%	31.5%	27.1%
Bachelor's degree	21.3%	19.3%	22.6%	25.7%
Graduate or professional degree	13.7%	12.5%	15.4%	21.3%

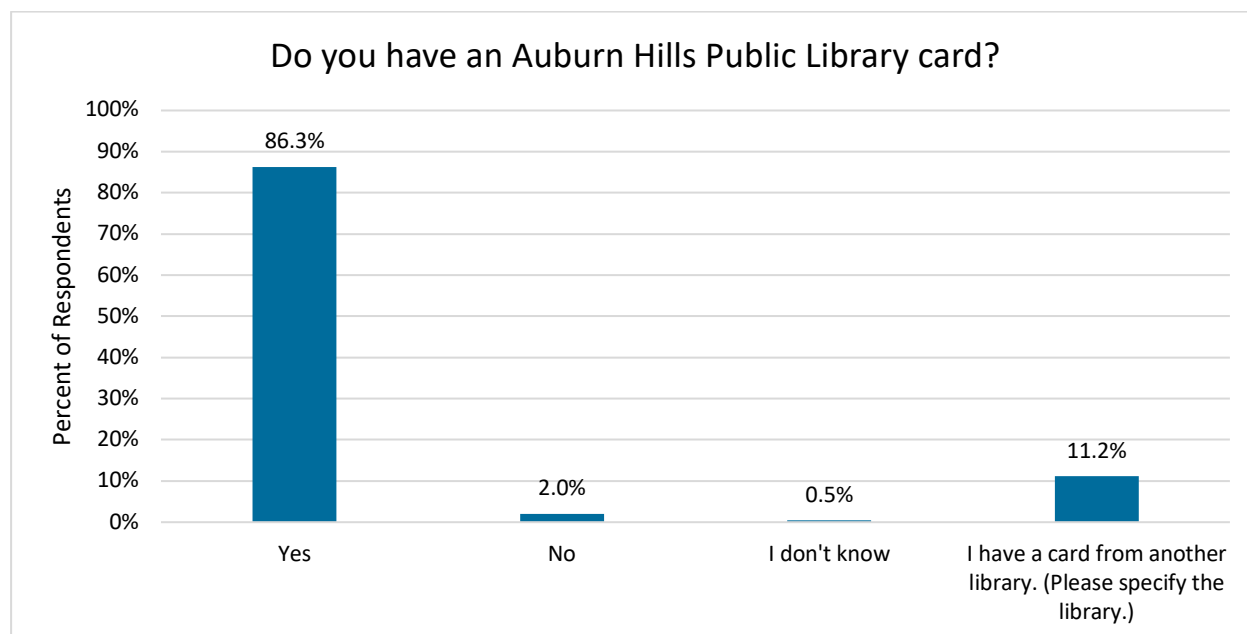


# Community Survey Summary and Analysis

As part of their strategic planning process, the Auburn Hills Public Library (AHPL) conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about their patrons' experience with library services, programs, staff, and facilities. A total of 394 individuals completed the survey representing approximately 1.6% of the 2022 IMLS service area population of 24,360.

## Note on Survey Responses

- Respondents sometimes note programs or services they want the library to have but are already offered by the library. We have left these comments in the responses. This indicates an opportunity to better communicate about all the library has to offer. In addition, respondents sometimes offer conflicting opinions about what the library should offer or feel strongly about the library offering something that is not feasible due to cost or other outside factors.
- For open-ended questions, responses are summarized and not in any particular order or with any particular weight except where explicitly noted. When analyzing this qualitative data, we hoped to show the breadth of responses provided by respondents.

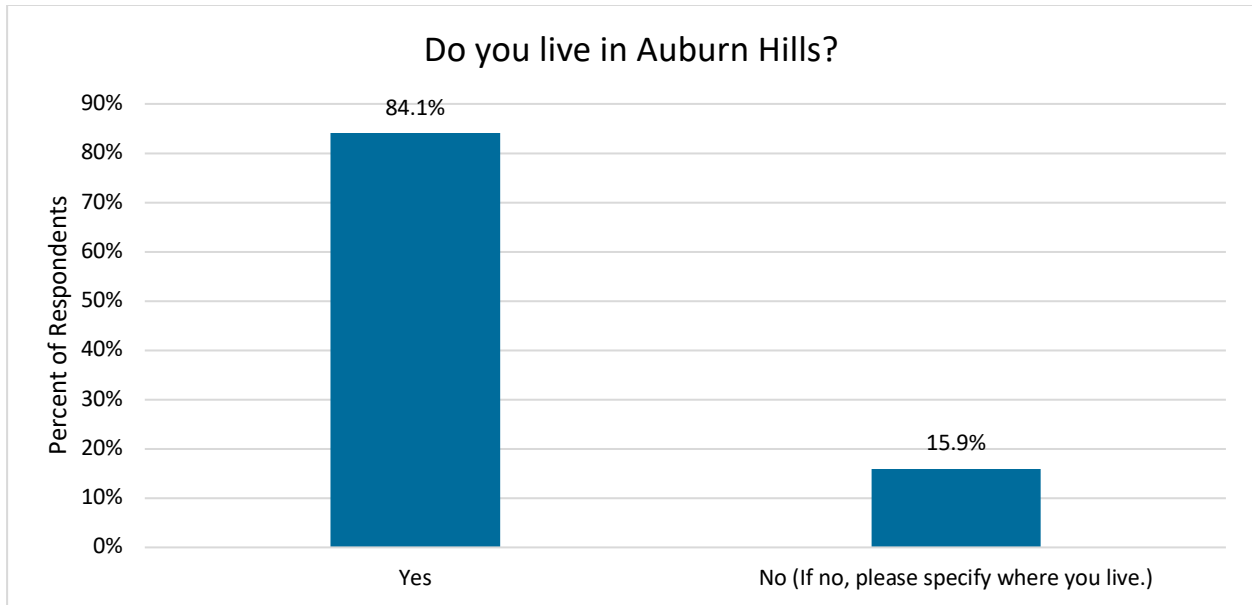


## FINDINGS

- **A majority of respondents indicated they have a card from AHPL (86.3%).**
- Just 2.5% don't have a card or aren't sure if they have a card, and 11.2% have a card from another library.
- Other libraries where respondents have a card include Rochester Hills, Pontiac, Bloomfield, Brighton, Southfield, and Orion.



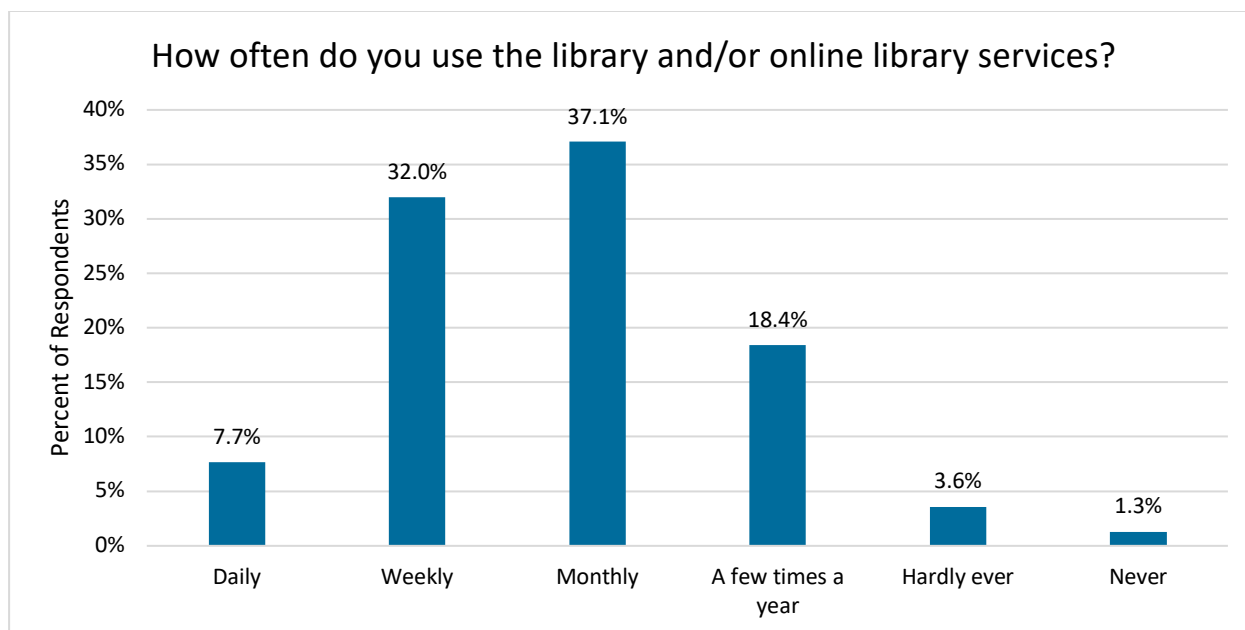




## FINDINGS

- A large majority of survey respondents indicated they live in Auburn Hills (84.1%).
- 15.9% of respondents indicated they live elsewhere: Rochester Hills, Oakland Township, Pontiac, Bloomfield Township, Brighton, Southfield, Troy, Orion Township, Lake Orion, and Carlisle, PA.

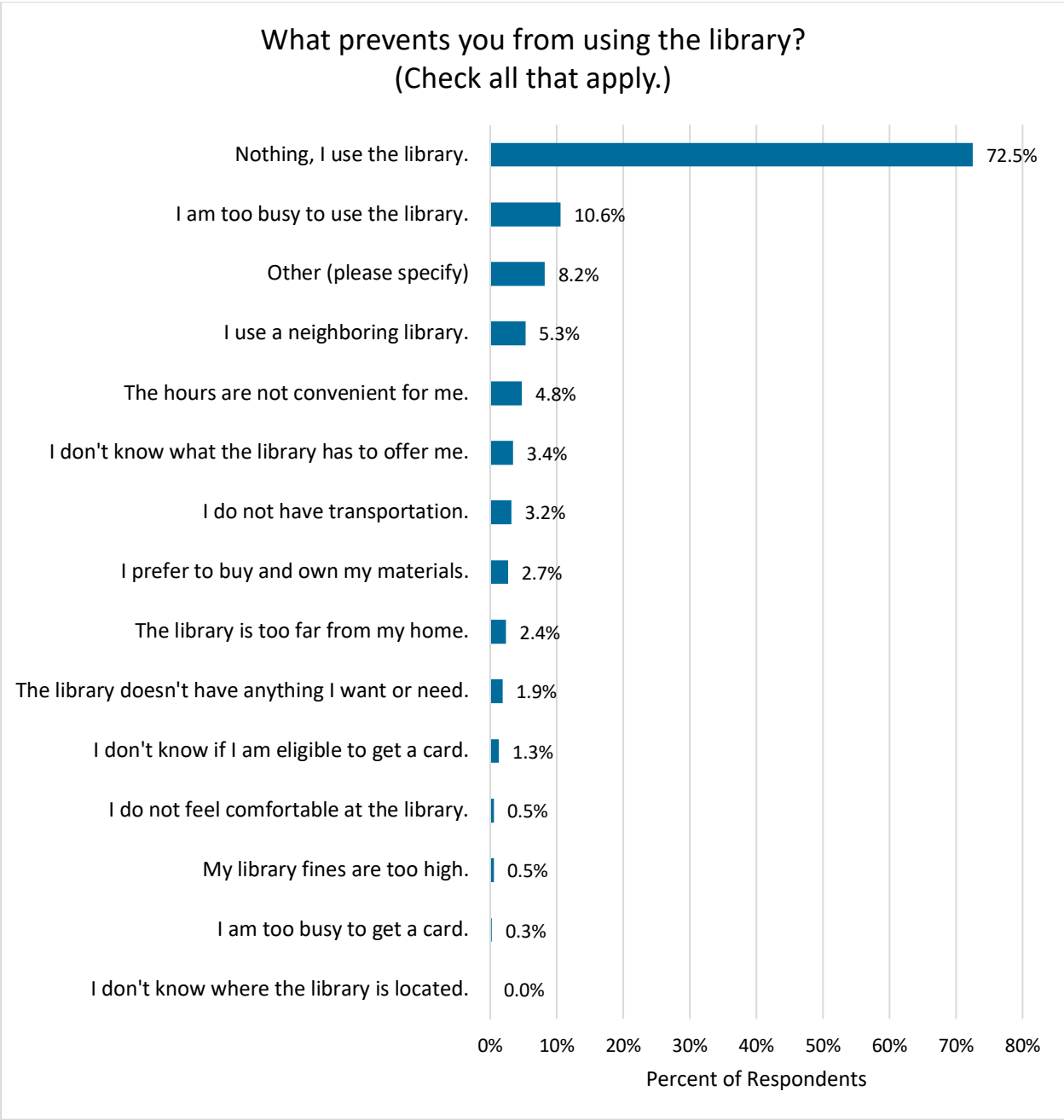




## FINDINGS

- **A combined 76.8% of respondents indicated they use the library daily, weekly, or monthly.**
- Just 4.9% indicated they never or hardly ever use the library, and near 20% use the library a few times a year (18.4%).
- **81.9% of respondents who have children or care for children ( $n=105$ )** indicated they use the library daily, weekly, or monthly.
- **72% of retired respondents ( $n=134$ )** indicated they use the library daily, weekly, or monthly.
- **77.7% of those who work full-time or part-time ( $n=215$ )** indicated they use the library daily, weekly, or monthly.
- **75.8% of respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills ( $n=62$ )** indicated they use the library daily, weekly, or monthly.





**FINDINGS**

- **A large majority of respondents indicated nothing prevents them from using the library (72.5%).**
- 10.6% indicated they are too busy to use the library.
- 5.3% indicated they regularly use another library, and 4.8% indicated the library’s hours aren’t convenient for them.
- Over 30 respondents shared other reasons, summarized below.

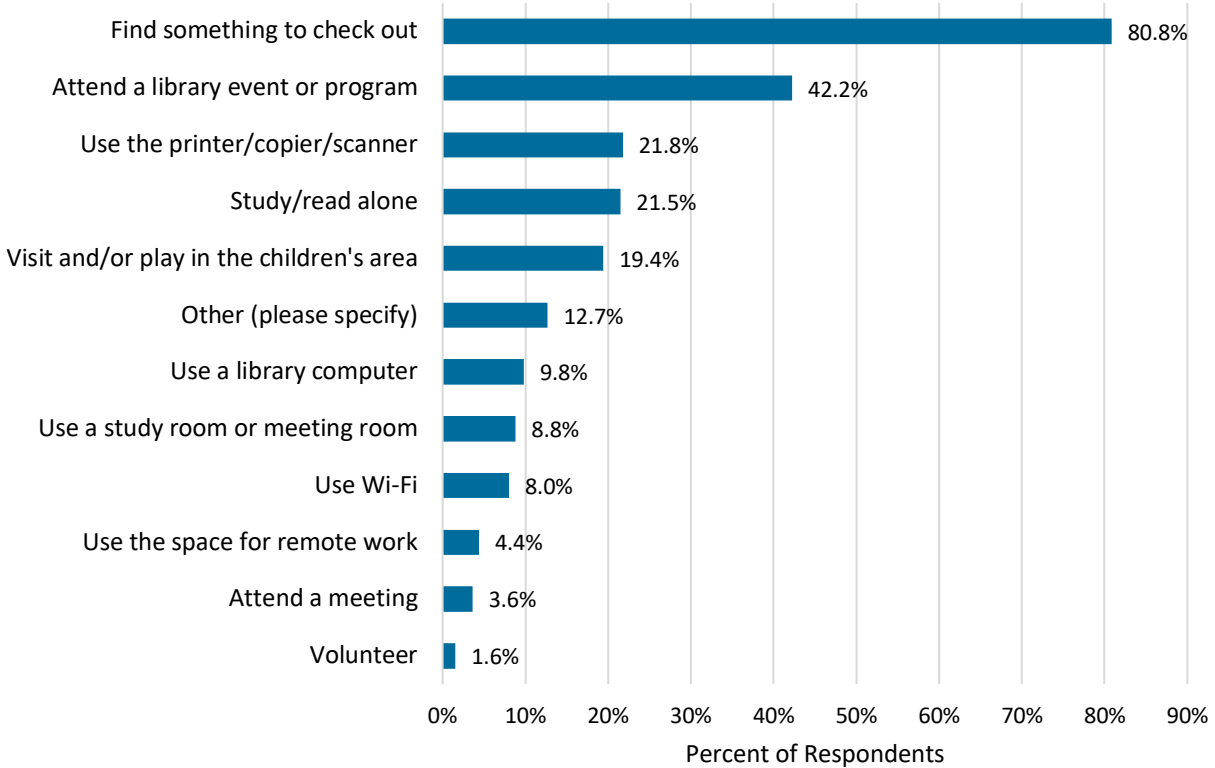


**Of respondents, 8.2% indicated other reasons they are prevented from using the library, including:**

- I live on the other side of the city and returning books on time is a challenge.
- I use the app to get digital content; read on my Kindle; use Libby.
- I forget about going to the library.
- I do not drive.
- Would like more for teens and adults (most services for children/tweens and senior).
- The library needs a better layout and shelf signage.
- I use the RH location more often.
- There are limited materials I want to use.
- Work schedule.
- The library needs air purifiers.
- The library needs to explain and advertise how they sanitize and keep materials clean.
- I was told I have to pay for a card.
- I work too much.
- Too many other demands of life.
- The library is the only one who uses my driver's license number.
- The library needs more handicapped parking.
- The non-fiction section is too small.
- The library needs more study rooms/spaces.
- The library hours are not conducive for students, should be open more on weekends and later in the evenings.
- Some areas of the library have internet connectivity issues.
- I spend part of the year in FL.
- I am disabled and the [city] sidewalks are never patched so it prevents me from walking (and I do not drive).



### Why do you come to the library? (Check all that apply.)



### FINDINGS

- **A large majority of respondents indicated they come to the library to find something to check out (80.8%).**
- **Less than half of respondents indicated they come to the library to attend a library event or program (42.2%).**
- Just under 20% indicated they come to the library to visit/play in the children's area (19.4%), but **60.6% of those who have or care for children indicated they come to the library to use the children's area.**
- Less than 10% indicated they come to the library to use a library computer (9.8%), use a study or meeting room (8.8%), or use Wi-Fi (8%).
- **78.9% of those who have or care for children** indicated they use the library to attend library events or programs.
- **36.6% of retired respondents** indicated they use the library to attend library events or programs.
- **45% of respondents who work full-time or part-time** indicated they use the library to attend events or programs.
- **41.9% of respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills** indicated they use the library to attend events or programs; 67.7% of this group use the library to check out materials.
- **12.7% indicated other reasons they come to the library, listed below.**

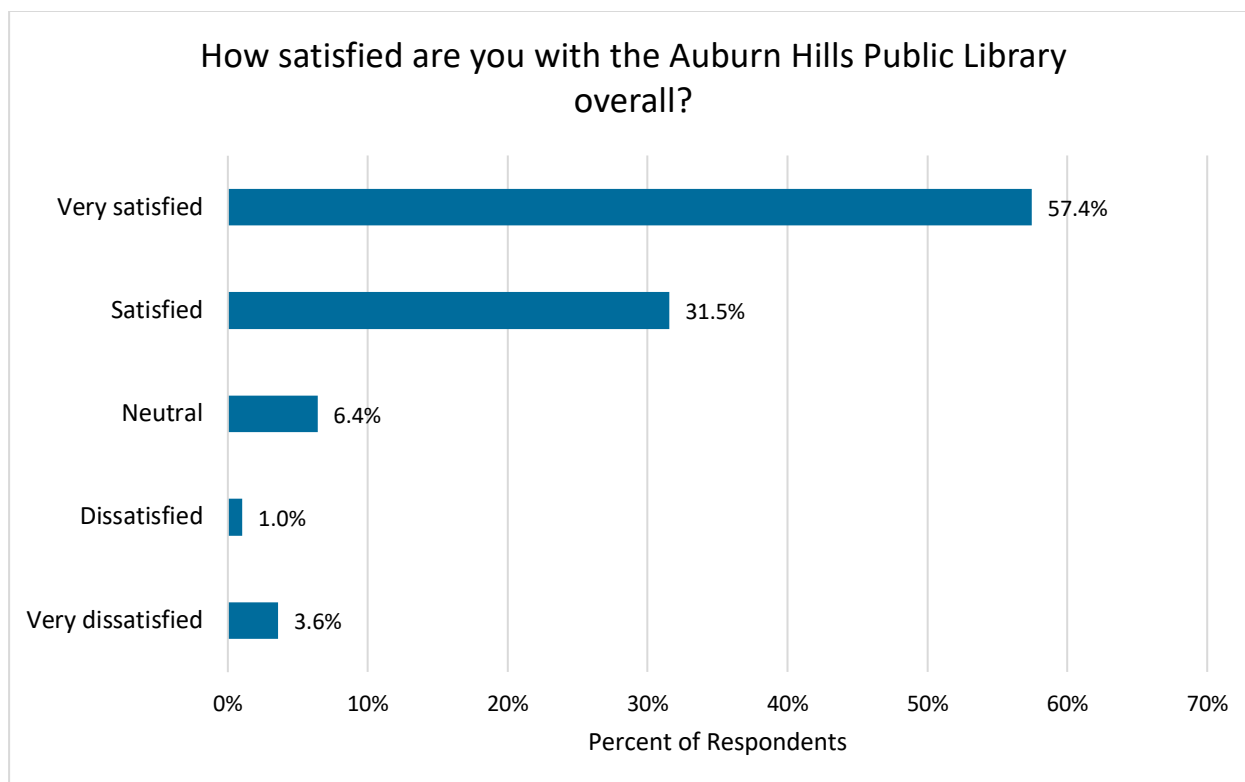




#### Other reasons respondents use the library included:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To pick up holds.</li><li>• To bring my grandchildren.</li><li>• To study/write in a nice atmosphere.</li><li>• To check out movies and TV shows.</li><li>• To use/interested in using a Cricut machine.</li><li>• To take classes.</li><li>• For tech support.</li><li>• To enjoy the silence.</li><li>• To attend Bingo.</li><li>• To renew my card.</li><li>• To read magazines and newspapers.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To buy used books.</li><li>• To tutor an ESL student.</li><li>• To trade puzzles.</li><li>• To look through the new titles on display.</li><li>• To attend children's activities.</li><li>• To donate books.</li><li>• To look at board games.</li><li>• The library comes to me.</li><li>• To de-stress and unwind.</li><li>• To browse the books for sale.</li><li>• To use the Shred-It box.</li></ul> |
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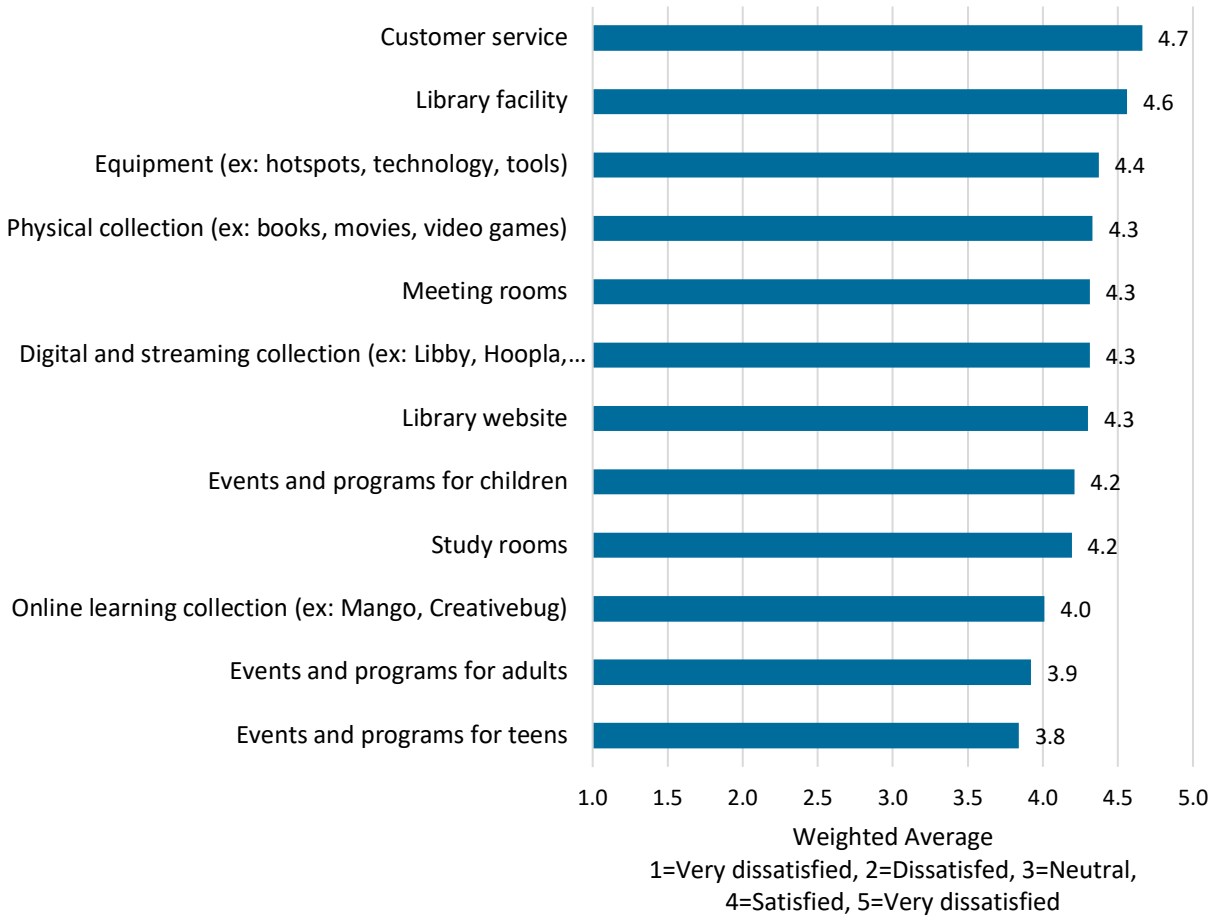


## FINDINGS

- **A combined 88.9% of respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.**
- Only 4.6% indicated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- **89.5% of respondents who have or care for children** indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied overall.
- **87% of retired respondents** indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied overall — **6.9% of this group indicated they are very dissatisfied.**
- **90.7% of respondents who work full-time or part-time** indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied overall.
- **88.7% of respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills** indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied overall.



Please rate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of the library.



## FINDINGS

- **Respondents indicated highest satisfaction with the library's customer service (4.7/5) followed by the library facility (4.6).**
- Events and programs for adults (3.9) and events and programs for teens (3.8) rated lowest, but all items rated near or over 4.0 (Satisfied).
- **Respondents who have or care for children** rated the library facility and customer service each at 4.6/5. This group rated digital and streaming collections at 4.5, followed by physical collections at 4.4. This group also rated events and programs for children at 4.2 and events and programs for teens at 3.8, the same as the overall group of respondents.
- **Retired respondents** rated slightly lower satisfaction in several items: equipment at 4.3; and the library website, meeting rooms, physical collections, and digital collections all at 4.2.
- **Respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills** rated the library facility and customer service highest, each at 4.7.



**For any items that you clicked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, what can the library do to increase your satisfaction?**

**Collections**

- More African American authors and urban/YA books.
- Increase physical book selection and diversity.
- Expand non-fiction, periodicals, large print, and Christian book sections.
- Add genre stickers back to adult fiction section.
- Separate Teen and Adult graphic novels.
- Improve digital library (Libby/Hoopla):
  - Better audiobook selection,
  - Easier access and account reliability,
  - More new/popular books with shorter wait times.
- Improve selection on Libby, Hoopla, and streaming collections.
- Make USA versions of magazines like *Money Magazine* available.

**Facilities and Spaces**

- Add more private, soundproof study rooms or cubicles.
- Provide enclosed/computer-equipped rooms for tutoring or lessons.
- Better seating and comfortable areas for studying.
- Need a closed room for printer/computer users.
- Increase number and quality of meeting/study rooms.
- Larger bookstore space, especially nonfiction area.
- Add more charging stations on tables.
- Improve shelf labeling for accessibility.
- Drive-up book return box at sedan height for easier access.
- Air purifiers and better ventilation in rooms.
- Increase number of handicapped parking spots near entrance.

**Technology and Digital Access**

- Fix Libby account issues and access problems.
- Website should allow easier card lookup and browsing.
- Room booking/calendar system is confusing and clunky.
- Ensure consistent and full Wi-Fi coverage.

**Operations and Policies**

- More consistency in storytime librarians.
- Keep private rooms actually private (ceiling noise concerns).
- Increase renewal period for books.
- Allow interlibrary transfers to AHPL even if not available there.
- Offer free printing for younger AH residents (e.g., under 26).
- Remove or address perceived political content or staff actions.



**For any items that you clicked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, what can the library do to increase your satisfaction? (continued)**

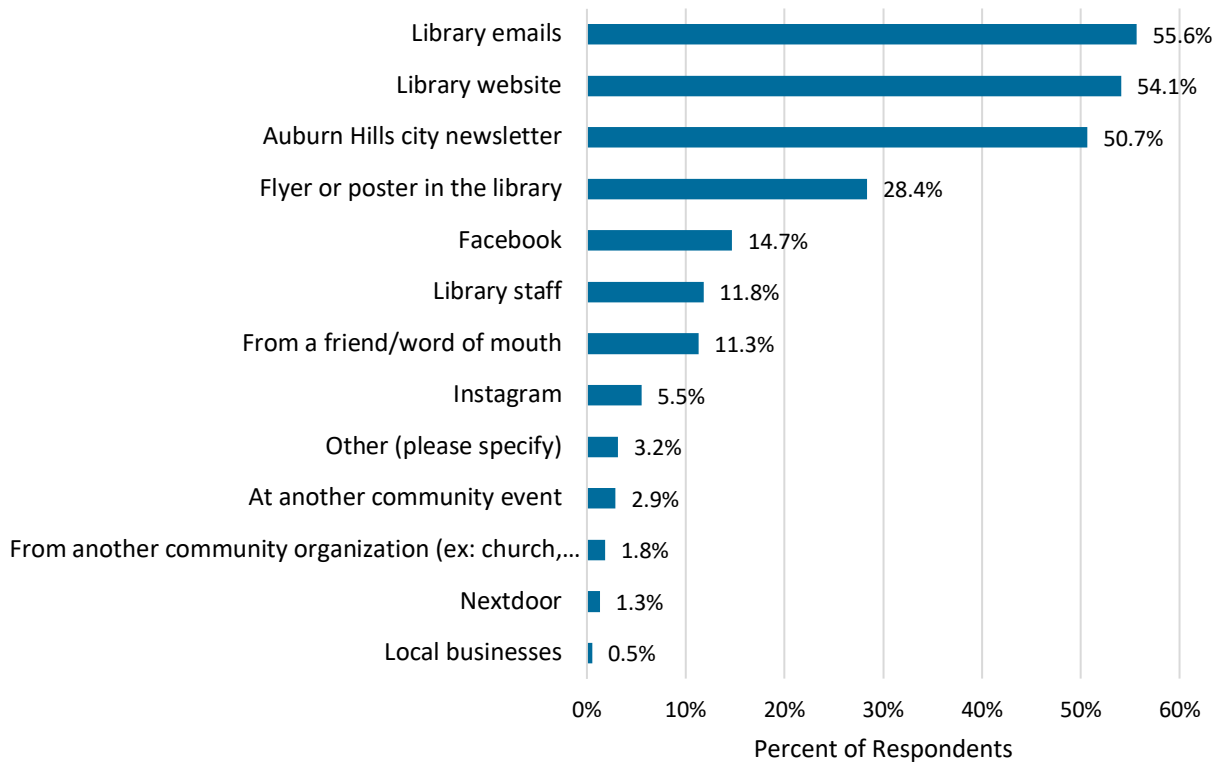
**General Sentiments**

- Many expressed love and appreciation for the library.
- Some feel the physical space needs upgrades or more coziness.
- Mixed opinions on modernization and interior design.
- Frustrations with availability of items, both physical and digital.





Where do you learn about what is going on at the library?  
(Check all that apply.)



## FINDINGS

- A majority of respondents indicated they learn about what is going on at the library from library emails (55.6%) and from the library website (54.1%).
- The Auburn Hills city newsletter was also indicated as a method of learning about the library by over half of respondents (50.7%).
- Just 14.7% indicated they learn about the library from Facebook.
- **64.4% of respondents who have or care for children** indicated they learn about the library from the library website, followed by 53.9% of this group who indicated they learn about the library from the Auburn Hills newsletter.
- **56.6% of retired respondents** indicated they learn about the library from library emails, and 54.3% of this group indicated they learn about the library from the Auburn Hills newsletter.
- **57.6% of respondents who work full-time or part-time** indicated they learn about the library from the library website, and 54.7% of this group learns about the library from library emails.
- **Other ways respondents learn about what is going on at the library included:** Announcement boards on the grassy median; from the staff who deliver books; social media; from Friends of the AHPL; from the Avondale school district; emails.



## Where are other places that you get news about the Auburn Hills community?

### City and Library Publications

- Auburn Hills quarterly magazine, seasonal booklet (most frequently mentioned).
- City newsletters and library newsletters.
- Mailings (direct mail, community booklets).
- AHPL's calendar or catalog of events.

### Digital Platforms

- Facebook (most frequently mentioned social media).
- Instagram.
- Twitter.
- Websites (City, Library, AHPL).
- Email blasts, city emails.
- Social media, in general.
- Neighborhood apps (Nextdoor).

### Community and Local Places

- Auburn Hills Community Center (both physical and newsletter, mailings).
- Schools (kids' schools, flyers, events).
- Posters/flyers downtown or in restaurants, salons, etc.
- Signs and boards along roads (e.g., Squirrel Rd medians).
- Oakland County brochures and *Oakland Press*.

### Word of Mouth

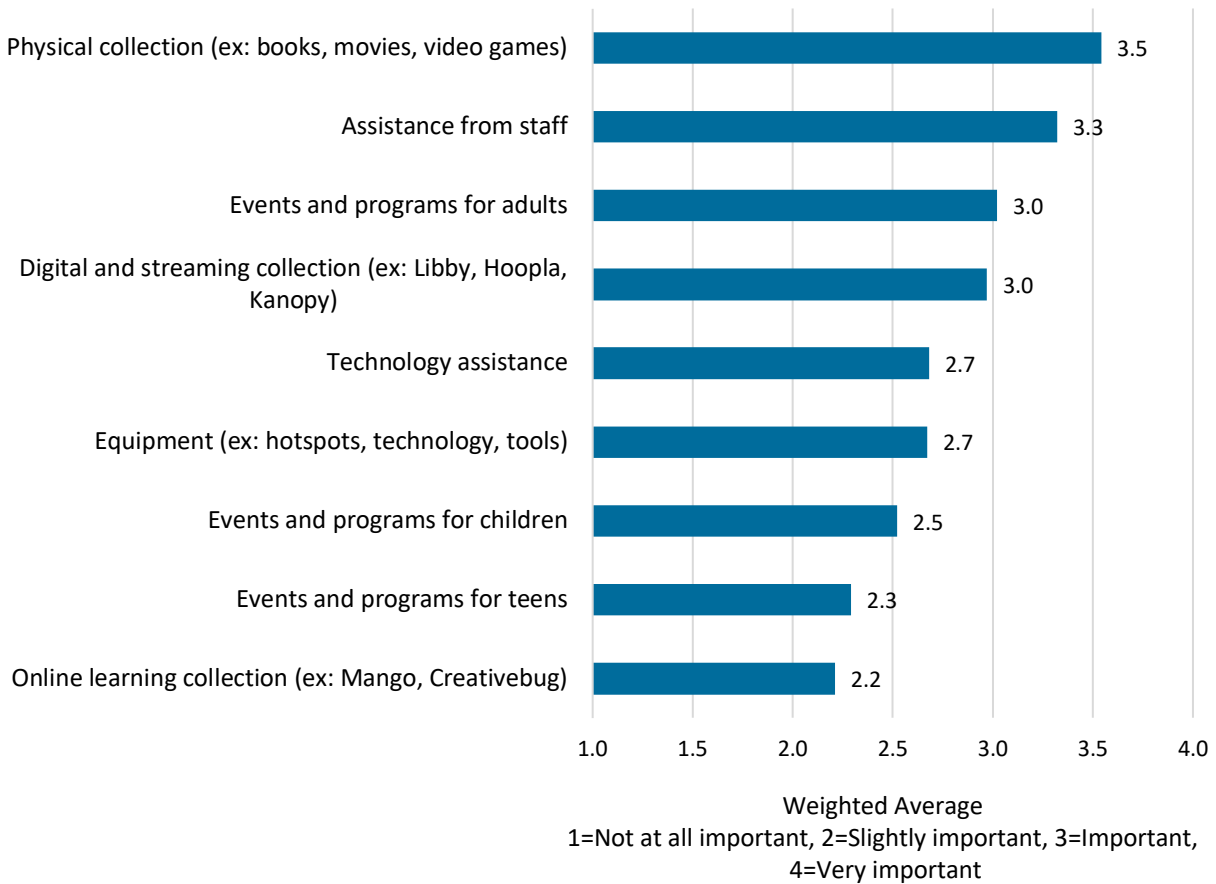
- Friends and neighbors.
- People at the library.
- Library staff outreach (e.g., visits to Heritage in the Hills).

### Events and Meetings

- School board or city hall meetings.
- Events and flyers at or around events.
- Community traditions like the monster hunt.



### How important are the following library services to you and your family?

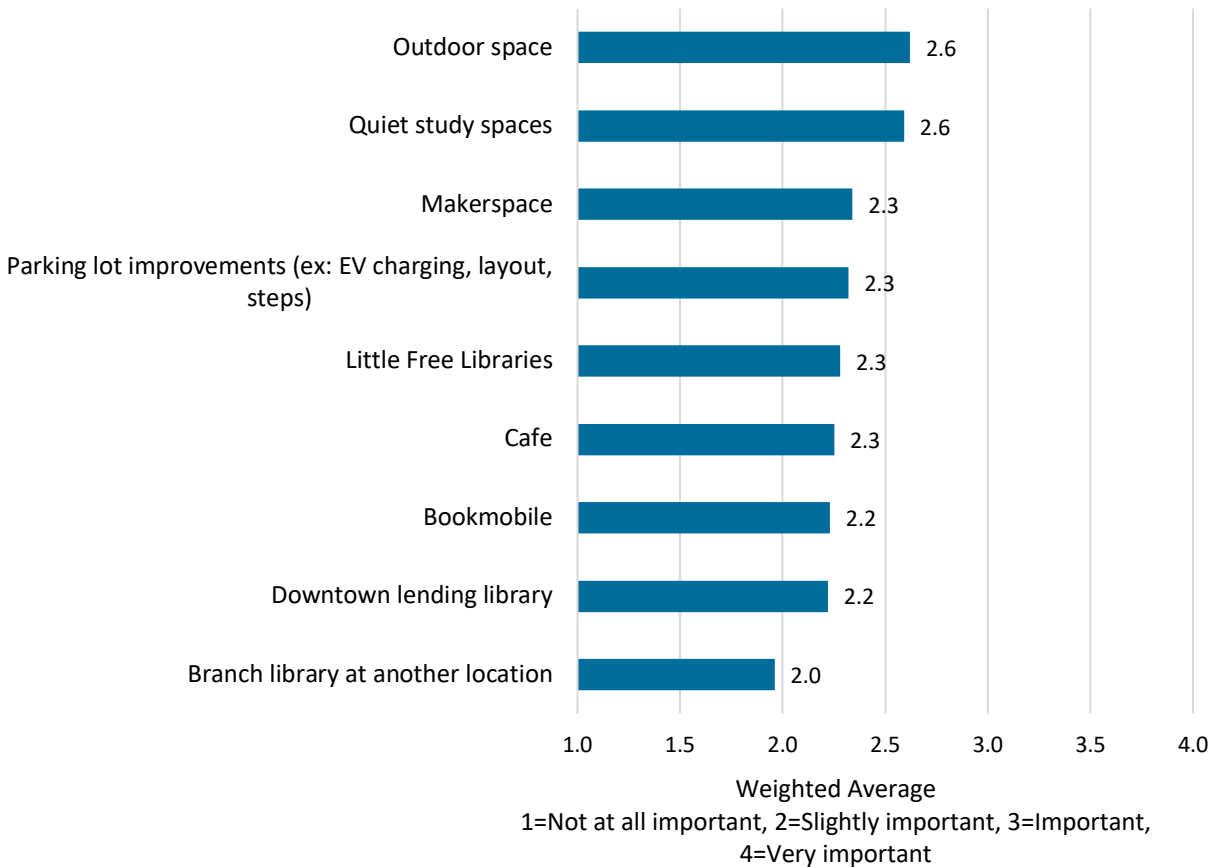


#### FINDINGS

- **Respondents rated highest importance for physical collections (3.5/4) and assistance from staff (3.3).**
- Events and programs for adults rated at 3.0, but events and programs for children rated 2.5 and events and programs for teens rated 2.3.
- **Respondents who indicated they have children or care for children** rated higher importance in programs for children (3.3) and programs for teens (2.7).
- **Retired respondents** rated higher importance in assistance from staff (3.5). This group also rated physical collections at 3.5 but rated digital and streaming collections lower at 2.6.
- **Respondents who work full-time or part-time** rated physical collections highest at 3.6, followed by assistance from staff and digital and streaming collections, each at 3.2.
- **Respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills** also rated physical collections highest at 3.6.



### How important do you think the following potential services would be to you and your family?

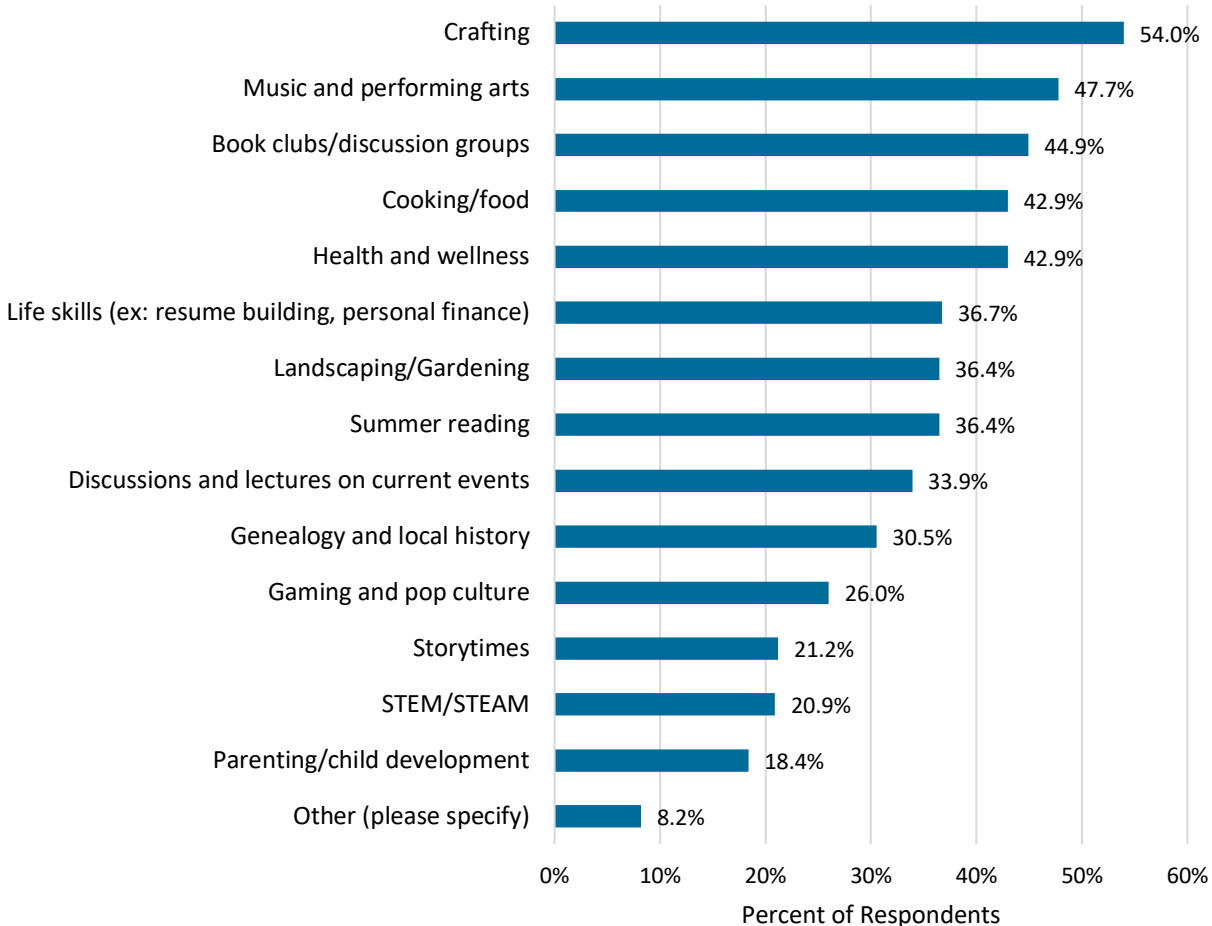


### FINDINGS

- **Respondents rated outdoor space and quiet study spaces as highest importance, but these rated just 2.6/4.**
- Potential services of lowest overall importance were a bookmobile (2.2), a downtown lending library (2.2), and a branch library at another location (2.0).
- No items rated at or over 3.0 (Important).
- **Respondents who have children or care for children** rated outdoor space higher at 2.8 followed by quiet study spaces at 2.5.
- **Retired respondents** indicated their highest importance as quiet study spaces (2.6) followed by parking lot improvements (2.4).
- **Respondents who work full-time or part-time** rated outdoor space higher at 2.8, followed by quiet study spaces and makerspace, each at 2.6.



What types of programs would you or your family like to attend at the library?  
(Check all that apply.)



## FINDINGS

- **A majority of respondents indicated interest in crafting programs (54%).**
- Lowest interest was indicated for parenting/child development (18.4%), but **50% of respondents who have children or care for children** indicated interest in this topic. This group rated higher interest in summer reading (58%), storytimes (51%), and STEM/STEAM topics (46%).
- **Retired respondents spread out their interests a bit more, with no majority choosing any topic.** 43.5% of this group indicated interest in discussions and lectures on current events; 42.6% indicated interested in both crafting and health and wellness; and 39.3% indicated interest in music and performing arts.
- **63.2% of respondents who work full-time or part-time** indicated interest in crafting programs, followed by 52.7% of this group who indicated interest in music and performing arts and 51.2% who indicated interest in book clubs/discussion groups.



## What additional programs, services, or collections could the library add that would be valuable to you and your family?

### Books and Collections

- More classics and reference books.
- More Christian fiction (for all ages).
- Larger Spanish collection.
- More large print books.
- More financial magazines/newspapers (e.g., *The Atlantic*, *Financial Times*).
- NYT Bestseller list on AHPL site.
- More horror books in kids' section (or clearly labeled).
- More books in adult fiction.
- More BookTok materials.
- Add October Daye series by Seanan McGuire.
- More nonfiction bestsellers.
- More mysteries.
- More diverse authors; celebrate heritage months.
- More Christian authors/books.
- LGBT collection.
- Radical feminist authors (e.g., Andrea Dworkin).

### Technology and Digital Access

- Ability to check past checkouts online.
- More laptops/tablets available for checkout.
- More youth computers.
- More tech-related classes (AI, general technology).
- Adult ESL classes during the day.
- Online borrowing frustrations (long waits).
- Career/job services, resume workshops.
- SAT/test prep.
- Podcast about library updates (offer to host).
- Monthly NYT book list to help with Libby/Hoopla.
- Add self-checkout/book drop drive-up for handicapped users.
- Bring back remote return (e.g., near Great Lakes Crossing).

### Programs and Events

- More adult programs and young adult (20s–30s) groups.
- Travel events to regional libraries.
- Outdoor summer concerts.
- More events for kids and teens, i.e., book clubs, life skills.
- Preschool programs after work.
- Crafting space clarity.
- Craft offerings, like sticker/planner clubs.
- Lectures, local author events.
- Music performances, chess club, jigsaw area.



**What additional programs, services, or collections could the library add that would be valuable to you and your family? (continued)**

**Programs and Events continued**

- Gardening, home improvement, women's health/finance/self-defense topics.
- Senior citizen programs (tech, chess, ESL).
- More writers' groups.
- Cooking classes tied to books.
- Monthly book delivery for seniors.
- Halloween traditions (Monster Hunt).
- Art shows, photo/craft competitions.
- Storytime for broader age range (0–5).
- More frequent book sales with clear hours.
- Cultural diversity events.
- Spanish conversation group.
- Technology and career workshops.
- Card/board game clubs (including Pokémon, Magic, etc.).
- YouTube club for teens.
- More inclusive teen/tween programming (knitting, crochet, art).
- Programming that bridges the interest gap between kids and adults.

**Accessibility and Amenities**

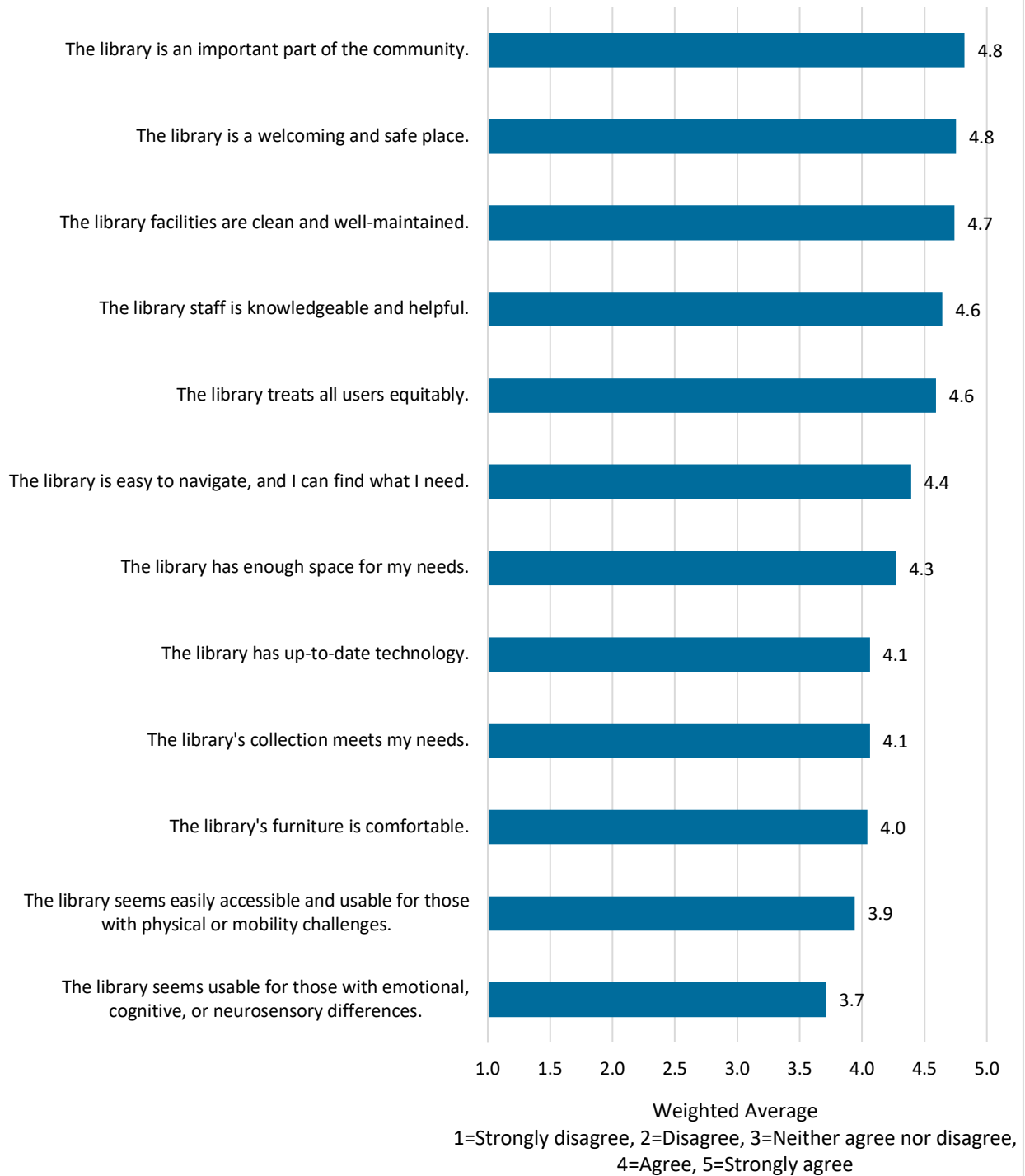
- Transportation or bus options to the library.
- More flexible hours, especially for adults with busy schedules.
- Cafe, more study/collaborative space (like other libraries).
- Drive-up return options, especially for handicapped users.
- Better partnerships with other libraries (e.g., Rochester, Bloomfield Hills).
- ADA-friendly and senior-friendly updates.
- Personal/lending items (electronics, crafts, cleaning gear, tools).
- Crafting tools like Cricut.

**Community and Connection**

- Strong appreciation for past youth engagement and school connections.
- Desire to connect with the community and build relationships.
- Interest in volunteering.
- Events that promote civic engagement (e.g., meeting elected officials).
- Advertising community center programs at the library.
- More collaborative events with small/local businesses.



Thinking about the Auburn Hills Public Library, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following.



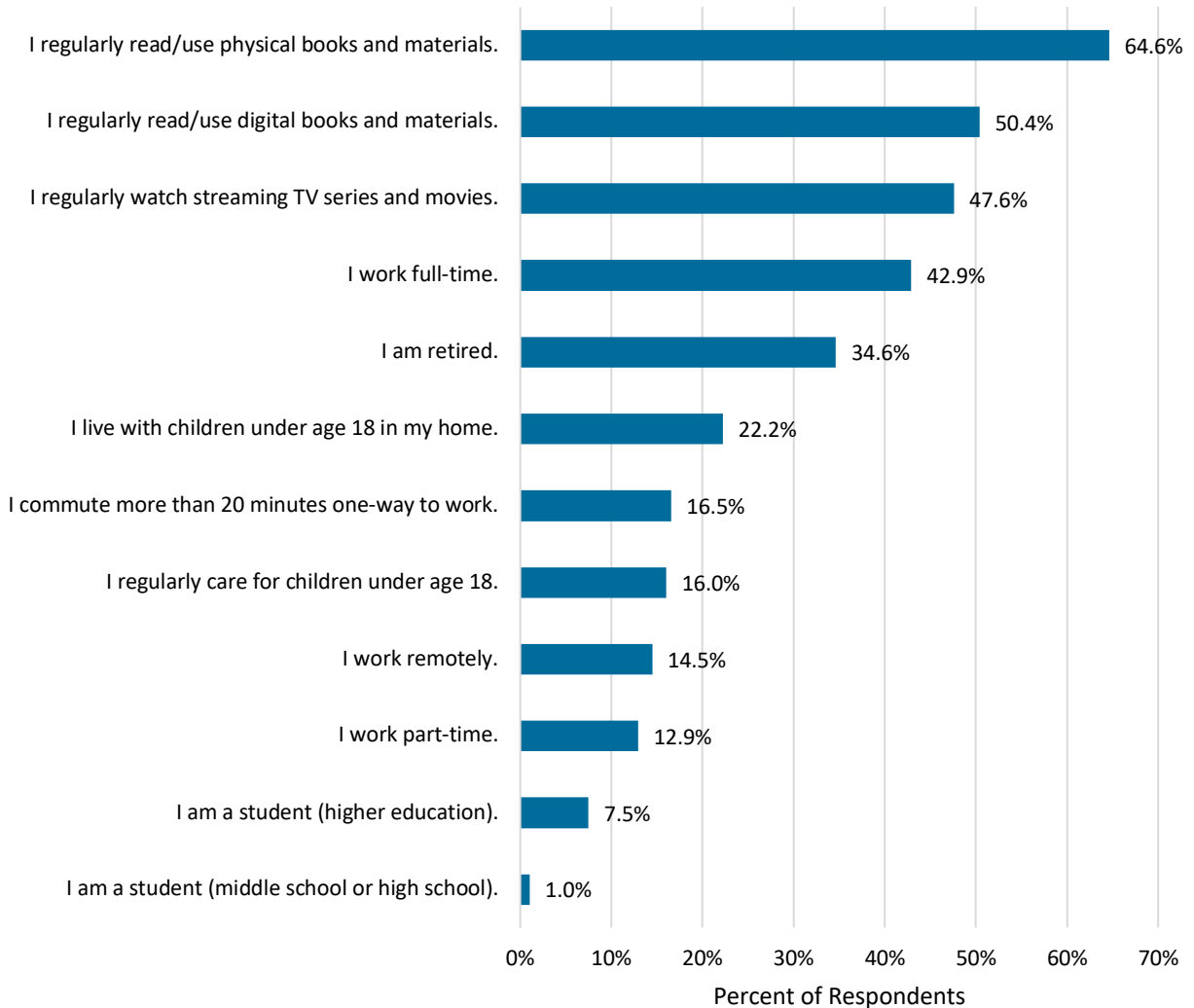


## FINDINGS

- Respondents indicated strongest agreement with “The library is an important part of the community” and “The library is a welcoming and safe place” (each 4.8/5).
- “The library facilities are clean and well-maintained” rated highly at 4.7; and “The library staff is knowledgeable and helpful” and “The library treats all users equitably” each rated 4.6.
- Lowest agreement was indicated for “The library seems easily accessible and usable for those with physical or mobility challenges” (3.9) and “The library seems usable for those with emotional, cognitive, or neurosensory differences” (3.7).
- All items rated near, at, or above 4 (Agree).
- **Retired respondents** rated higher agreement with “The library is an important part of the community (4.9).
- **Respondents who do not live in Auburn Hills** rated very strong agreement for “The library is an important part of the community” at 4.95.



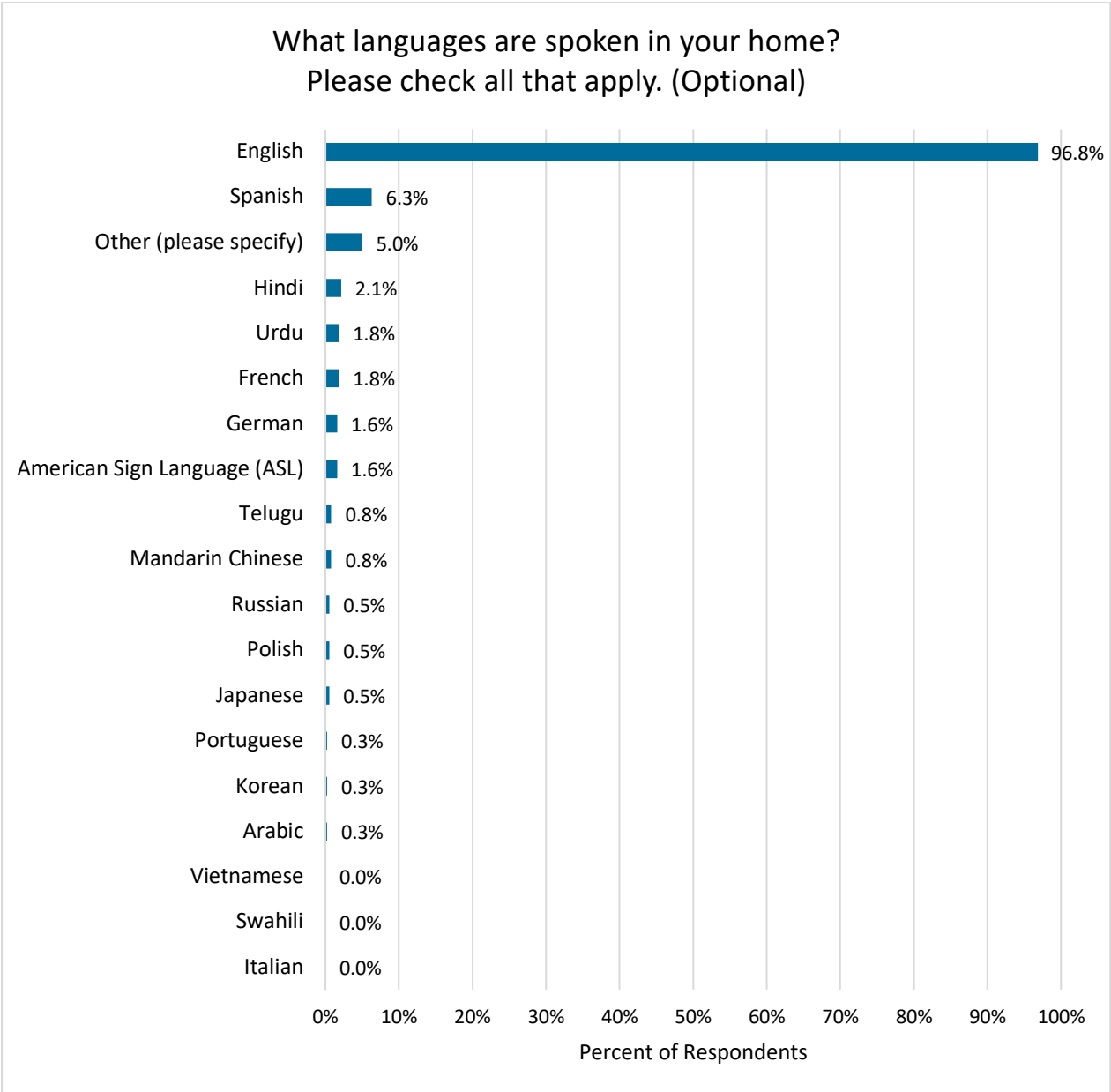
Please choose all statements below that describe you.



## FINDINGS

- A majority of respondents indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials (64.6%) and regularly read/use digital books and materials (50.4%).
- More respondents indicated they work full-time (42.9%) than are retired (34.6%). A combined 55.8% indicated they work full-time or part-time.
- A combined 26.6% indicated they have children under age 18 or regularly care for children under age 18 (some chose both).
- Nearly half of respondents indicated they regularly watch streaming TV series and movies (47.6%).





## FINDINGS

- **A large majority of respondents indicated they speak English at home (96.8%).**
- 6.3% indicated they also speak Spanish at home.
- A combined 12.9% indicated they also speak other languages, and 5% shared additional languages they speak at home: Romanian, Croatian, Gujarati, Chaldean, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Macedonian, Dutch, and Ukrainian.
- Respondents indicated they speak a total of 24 languages in addition to English.



## OVERALL FINDINGS

### Respondents

- The majority of respondents (86.3%) indicated they have an AHPL card; 2.5% indicated they do not have an AHPL card or are not sure if they have a card. 84.1% live in Auburn Hills.
- 11.2% have a card from another library, and 15.9% live outside of Auburn Hills.
- A majority of respondents indicated they regularly read/use physical books and materials (64.6%); 50.4% indicated they regularly read/use digital books and materials.
- A combined 26.6% of respondents indicated they have children under age 18 or regularly care for children under age 18.
- 34.6% of respondents indicated they are retired, and 55.8% work full-time or part-time.
- Nearly all respondents indicated speaking English at home (96.8%); but 6.3% of respondents indicated they also speak Spanish at home. Respondents indicated speaking 24 languages in addition to English.

### Satisfaction, Usage, Importance of Services

- 88.9% of all respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
- Respondents rated highest satisfaction with customer service (4.7/5) and the library facility (4.6).
- A large majority of respondents (80.8%) indicated they use the library to check out materials, and 42.2% of respondents indicated they come to the library for programs.
- Respondents rated physical collections as the library service of highest importance to them (3.5/4) followed by assistance from staff (3.3).
- A majority of respondents (55.6%) indicated they learn about the library from the library's emails followed by 54.1% who learn about the library from the website.

### Interest in Future Services

- Respondents rated highest importance in outdoor space and quiet study spaces (each 2.6/4) as potential future services. These rated highest but did not reach 3 (Important). Retired respondents rated moderate importance in parking lot improvements (2.4), and respondents who work full-time or part-time rated quiet study spaces and a makerspace each at 2.6.
- 54% of respondents indicated interest in crafting programs, followed by 47.7% who indicated interest in music and performing arts programs. 50% of respondents who have children or care for children indicated interest in parenting/child development programs.
- Respondents shared many programs, collections, and services that they are interested in seeing at the library.
- Overall, respondents rated high agreement with the following statements (each 4.8/5): "The library is an important part of the community" and "The library is a welcoming and safe place."



# Focus Groups and Interviews Summary

In support of the Auburn Hills Public Library's strategic planning process, **23 people took part in four focus groups and 12 people participated in one-on-one interviews.**

## Methodology and Process

### Advantages of Small-Group Community Feedback

Most library strategic planning efforts include community surveys to learn what is most important to area residents. While beneficial, surveys are typically completed by people who are already aware of library services. **To hear opinions from people *not* represented in that group, other methods are required. This is where focus groups and one-on-one interviews come in.** These methods ensure the library hears from diverse people who may not typically respond to a survey or be aware of the library and allows the library to hear from targeted stakeholders within the community.

### Community Mapping

Participants for focus group and interviews were identified by a small team of library staff members with deep and diverse connections to the community. After extensive brainstorming, this team sorted potential participants to ensure a wide diversity of opinion was represented. Invitations to participate in interviews and focus groups were issued by library staff members.

### Focus Groups

One virtual and three in-person focus groups were planned and completed. Attendance numbers for the focus groups varied from 2 - 9 people. The focus groups lasted 55 - 75 minutes. Participants included local parents, retirees, members of the downtown development authority and local government representatives. The in-person focus groups took place April 8 - 9, 2025 and the virtual focus group was on April 15, 2025.

Focus groups were roughly structured according to the Harwood Institute's Aspirations Exercise. Focus group questions center wholly on the *community* the library serves, not the library itself. By asking participants about the wider community the library gets information about community needs and wants and is more easily able to craft innovative, out-of-the-library-box goals for the coming years.

The facilitator asked people to brainstorm and discuss the following questions:

- What are your aspirations for your community?
- What challenges do you face in trying to reach those aspirations?
- What needs to change to overcome those challenges to achieve your aspirations?

### Interviews

Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes and lasted 15-35 minutes each. Interviewees included educators, local government, parents, business owners, Friends of the Library, and local nonprofits. Interviews were loosely structured according to the SOAR method which collects strengths, aspirations, opportunities, and results. Due to time constraints, emphasis was placed on the opportunities and aspirations portions of the method. The SOAR method comes from the Aspen Institute's *Rising to the*



*Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, (2014) and resulting *Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library* (2017).

Participants joined interviews via telephone or via a consultant-provided Zoom link. The individuals interviewed included stakeholders throughout the library's service area.

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

- What do you do for a living? How do you spend your days?
- Where do you live? How long have you lived there?
- What do you want for your community?
- What's an ideal future for your community 10 years down the road?
- Do you yourself utilize the library? How often, and in what ways?
- What do you want for your library?
- What an ideal future for the library 10 years down the road?

### **Small Group Limitations**

Focus groups always have talkers and listeners. To ensure that everyone had a chance to share their thoughts, the facilitator consciously invited quieter participants to engage in the process and started with a round-robin discussion.

Of the six planned focus groups, four were carried out as group discussions, one had zero participants, and the other had a single participant who was interviewed instead.

### **Small Group Strengths**

Each interviewee and member of a focus group was open and honest about their opinions and ideas. Participants were respectful of others' opinions, even when those opinions varied.

Focus group participants were able to dig deep into topics as they bounced ideas off each other, expanding upon some ideas and quickly moving away from others. Even when people disagreed with each other, they were not disagreeable. Healthy conflict helped elevate resulting conversations within some of the focus groups.

People who did more listening to the discussion often encapsulated the conversation for the group when given the opportunity. The facilitator found their summaries very useful.



# Small-Group Feedback Summaries

## Library Aspirations

Overall, people want the library to **continue its focus on programs, collections, and technology, while strengthening community partnerships and physical access** to all in the community.

### Top Library Aspirations

#### 1. Programs

- **Continue with and expand on current programming:** Continue robust programming including craft programs, kids' programs, and more, and consider adding additional programming including more author programs.
- **Focus on literacy:** Continue early literacy focus and consider full family literacy offerings, especially in the after-work hours.
- **Variety of times and locations:** Consider more evening and weekend youth programs for working families; hold more programs out and about in the community to meet people where they are at.

#### 2. Funding

- **Staff wages:** To retain helpful, friendly and engaged staff, increase staff wages to be on par with other city wages; consider a wage study to determine appropriate library wages.
- **Millage:** Keep passing new millages when necessary; plan for future millages to ensure continued funding for services.
- **Fundraising:** Hold fundraising events and utilize current alternate funding options such as Friends of the Library.

#### 3. Physical Space and Collections

- **Library location:** Consider satellite library locations such as a downtown kiosk or mobile library that visits different neighborhoods.
- **Physical collections:** Physical items are highly valued and should continue to be offered in a variety of formats and languages; consider expanding the size of the physical collection, especially adult books, large print and the Library of Things.
- **Meeting rooms:** Provide more meeting room spaces for community groups to gather.

#### 4. Community Hub

- **Partnerships:** Build and maintain strong partnerships with local schools, the city, OU, the community center, and community groups; provide an access point for local human services organizations to reach existing and new clients.
- **Physical meeting place:** Be *the* hang out spot for the community, providing a central place to come together that is welcoming to all; embrace being a safe and comfortable place for kids to be after school.
- **Community-building events:** Host community conversations around local topics of interest; work with the city to provide opportunities to learn about civics and be involved in community projects; hold more community-wide events.
- **Community awareness:** More marketing and outreach efforts to inform community members of what is going on at the library.



## Top Library Aspirations (continued)

### 5. Technology

- **Technology trends:** Keep up with and inform the community about current technology trends such as AI.
- **Tech instruction:** Provide technology classes for all ages as well as one-on-one technology help.
- **Internet and Wi-Fi:** Continue to offer internet and Wi-Fi for the community.





## Community Aspirations

Auburn Hills residents **envision a welcoming, inclusive community that celebrates its diversity, supports and cares for all residents, and comes together for community events.** They aspire to see a revitalized downtown, improved public transportation, and enrichment and recreational activities for all ages.

### Top Community Aspirations

#### 1. Community Care and Cohesion

- Honor the diversity in Auburn Hills.
- Community members have their basic needs met through affordable housing, access to food, and access to mental and physical health services.
- Support for seniors is abundant and easy to access.
- Community is connected through trusting relationships, fostered in part by community gatherings that bring people together in person.
- Service agencies work together to make sure all have access to care.

#### 2. Revitalized Downtown

- Downtown Auburn Hills attracts local restaurants and businesses so that residents can support local businesses instead of having to go elsewhere.
- Bring back a local farmers market.
- Wider communication about downtown events.
- Continue to explore arts opportunities downtown such as programs in the amphitheater.
- Businesses coming into downtown are chosen intentionally to develop the area in the way the community desires.

#### 3. Transportation

- A robust public transit system offers access around town and to popular destinations.
- Public transportation is accessible and easy to use for seniors and disabled residents.
- Bike and walking paths to make Auburn Hills safe for pedestrians and bikers to get around town.

#### 4. Communication

- A city calendar provides easy-to-find information about community events in one convenient location.
- Community messages are shared in multiple languages.
- Community information is dispersed through multiple channels both physical (such as signage and newsletters) and digital (such as social media, online calendars, and the city website).

#### 5. Recreation and Outdoor Spaces

- Expand programs and activities for youth and families, especially in evenings and on weekends.
- Build an indoor athletic facility with a public indoor pool.
- More spaces for teenagers to hangout and be together.
- Preserve local parks and green spaces.
- Expand Community Center offerings to serve people of all ages.



## Community Challenges

Auburn Hills faces barriers to progress **due to limited economic resources, challenges getting around town, and limited civic engagement.**

### Top Community Challenges

#### 1. Economic Issues

- Not enough funding for community goals.
- Not enough incentives for businesses to come into town; the city is not growing its industrial base.
- Multiple long-term building vacancies, such as the YMCA.
- Not enough affordable housing.

#### 2. Access and Navigation

- Not enough parking downtown and parking is often not accessible at parks.
- The city is disjointed geographically making it hard to get around.
- Lack of wayfinding signage.
- Accessible kayak launches are difficult to find.

#### 3. Community Participation

- Not enough volunteers for community groups and events as current volunteers age.
- People don't know about available programs and services.



## Necessary Changes

Residents envision an Auburn Hills that is **bustling, cohesive, and well-informed**. They want strong communication systems, safe and easy methods to get around, and inclusive communities.

Necessary Changes	
<b>1. Getting Around Town</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve pedestrian safety and "bike-ability" with a system of paths and sidewalks.</li><li>• Improve traffic flow around town to reduce congestion.</li><li>• Develop a robust transit system.</li></ul>
<b>2. Connected Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More meeting places for all age groups, particularly tweens, teens, and seniors.</li><li>• More community events such as festivals, music, parades and fireworks that take place throughout Auburn Hills.</li><li>• A revitalized Community Center that is welcoming and provides more space and programs for all ages.</li><li>• Create a true "community feel."</li><li>• Stronger connection between the city and university.</li></ul>
<b>3. Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overhaul resident communications methods.</li><li>• A monthly newsletter replaces the annual catalog, possibly an email with links to register.</li><li>• More awareness of the parks and events at parks.</li><li>• More informational events about public and senior safety.</li></ul>



# Community Demographic Data (Appendix A)

## Community Data

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population	332,387,540	10,051,595	21,162	24,911
Median Age	38.7	40.1	30.5	36.2
Median Household Income	78,538	71,149	49,558	78,727
Homeownership	65%	72.9%	51.8%	50.9%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied)	303,400	217,600	146,000	233,900
Below Poverty Level	12.4%	13.1%	13.1%*	11.2%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [DP04](#), [S1901](#), [S0601](#), [S1701](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [DP04](#), [S1901](#), [S0601](#)

\*ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S1701](#)



## Diversity

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Total population	332,387,540	10,051,595	21,162	24,911
White alone	58.2%	73.0%	63.5%	56.0%
Black or African American alone	12.4%	13.4%	14.4%	12.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%
Asian	5.8%	3.3%	8.6%	14.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone	6.6%	1.8%	2.6%	4.6%
Two or more races	10.7%	6.3%	2.6%	10.6%
Hispanic population	19.0%	5.7%	11.6%	11.0%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S0601](#)



## Employment and Poverty

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	168,567,852	5,002,850	12,151	14,950
Employed	159,808,535	4,712,135	11,217	14,187
Unemployed	8,759,317	290,715	934	763
Armed Forces	1,287,774	5,414	11	0
Not in Labor Force	97,537,893	3,147,074	5,028	6,581
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2012	Auburn Hills City 2023
All People	12.4%	13.1%	13.1%	11.2%
Under 18 years	16.3%	17.5%	18.1%	15.0%
18 to 64 years	11.6%	12.6%	12.8%	10.9%
65+ Years	10.4%	9.3%	3.9%	8.5%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [DP03](#), [S1701](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [DP03](#)

ACS 2012 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S1701](#)



## Education

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population 25 years and older	228,434,661	6,967,452	13,207	17,744
Less than high school graduate	10.6%	8.1%	8.9%	6.8%
High school or equivalent	26.2%	28.2%	21.6%	19.1%
Some college or associate degree	28.2%	31.9%	31.5%	27.1%
Bachelor's degree	21.3%	19.3%	22.6%	25.7%
Graduate or professional degree	13.7%	12.5%	15.4%	21.3%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [S0601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S0601](#)

## Language

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2010	Auburn Hills City 2023
Population 5 years and over	313,447,641	9,502,054	19,509	23,860
English only	78.0%	89.8%	81.2%	76.4%
Spanish	13.4%	3.0%	7.1%	7.9%
Other Indo-European languages	3.8%	3.0%	7.9%	8.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	1.7%	3.3%	6.3%
Other languages	1.2%	2.4%	0.6%	1.2%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.4%	3.6%	8.4%	6.3%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [S0601](#), [S1601](#)

ACS 2010 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S0601](#), [S1601](#)



## Disabilities

US CENSUS DATA	US 2023	MI 2023	Auburn Hills City 2015	Auburn Hills City 2023
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	327,425,278	9,944,298	22,040	24,726
Hearing Difficulty	3.6%	3.8%	2.5%	2.9%
Vision Difficulty	2.4%	2.2%	1.8%	1.7%
Cognitive Difficulty	5.4%	6.2%	4.9%	5.2%
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.7%	7.2%	6.2%	5.1%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.6%	2.7%	2.4%	1.9%
Independent Living Difficulty	5.9%	6.5%	4.8%	4.8%

Sources:

ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates for US, MI, and Auburn Hills City [S1810](#)

ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates for Auburn Hills City [S1810](#)

## School Age Diversity

MI SCHOOL DATA	Michigan 2024-2025	Avondale School District 2024-2025
Hispanic	9.5%	12.8%
Black	18.3%	34.8%
Asian	3.7%	12.2%
White	62.4%	38.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6	1.1%
Two or More Races	5.5%	.03%
Low Income Students	50.3%	43.2%

Sources:

MI School Data K-12 Grade [Student Enrollment Counts](#)





# Strategic Capacity Assessment Report (Appendix B)

Auburn Hills Public Library (AHPL) is engaging in a strategic planning process and asked for staff and Trustee input using a Library Strategic Capacity Assessment.

Fast Forward Libraries conducted the Assessment to consider various elements of staff and Trustee capacity to carry out their roles at the library. Four Trustees and 23 staff members completed the Assessment for a total of 27 participants.

The Assessment consisted of four parts:

- **Environmental Scan:** Identifies various factors at play around the globe, nationally, and locally that may impact how AHPL serves the community.
- **Core Operations Assessment:** Evaluates how well the library is performing in key areas and provides an opportunity for feedback on how these operations can be improved.
- **Strategic Priorities:** Ascertains current library strengths and identifies potential opportunities for future impact.
- **Working Culture:** Helps to understand about how staff members work together and touches on potential areas for organizational development.

## Report Use

The Assessment report is designed to provide the strategic planning process with a summary of the feedback garnered from library staff and Board members specifically on the areas noted above. The report summarizes all responses but purposefully does not provide any recommendations or editorialization — the purpose of the report is to provide data for robust discussions during forthcoming strategic planning workshops and meetings.

## Note About Survey Responses

- Respondents sometimes supply feedback that is contradictory or may be technically incorrect. These comments are still included in the report. These responses may indicate an opportunity to better communicate with staff and the Board.
- Respondents sometimes offer suggestions about library operations that may not be feasible due to cost or legal restrictions.
- For open-ended questions, responses are summarized and not in any particular order or with any particular weight except where explicitly noted. In an analysis of qualitative data, we hoped to show the breadth of responses provided by respondents.



## Environmental Scan

Staff and Board respondents were asked to consider the environment in which the library operates — the world, country, and community — and identify outside factors that may influence how the library operates in the future. Responses are summarized below.

### When you consider the global environment in which the library operates — what are some outside factors that may influence the library?

#### Technology and Information Access

- Several respondents mentioned trends toward digital books, online resources, and artificial intelligence.
- A few noted inequities in internet and device access.
- Misinformation and disinformation were highlighted as global challenges libraries can help address.

#### Political and Economic Factors

- Multiple responses cited global and national political instability, including war and conflict.
- Several mentioned tariffs and economic uncertainty, particularly related to the auto industry and its potential impact on the local patron base.

#### Environmental Issues

- A few responses referenced climate change and extreme weather as influencing patron needs and library content.

#### Demographics and Community Needs

- Several mentioned the library's role in supporting immigrants and refugees who come to the community for a variety of reasons, but specifically for jobs.
- Language barriers and cultural diversity were noted as important considerations.



**When you consider the national environment in which the library operates — what are some outside factors that may influence the library?**

**Federal Library Funding**

- The most frequent concern was the reduction or elimination of federal funding, especially IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) funding.
- Several noted that funding cuts would impact library services, including participation in programs like MeLCat.
- Some mentioned concerns that local communities may be forced to take on more financial responsibility as national support declines.

**Censorship and Book Bans**

- Many respondents brought up book bans, censorship, and efforts to criminalize librarians.
- Several pointed to specific groups (e.g., Moms for Liberty) and political movements pushing for censorship at the national level.
- A few mentioned threats to First Amendment rights and the impact on library content.

**Political Climate and Government Actions**

- A number of responses cited the current political administration, national ideological shifts, and increased hostility toward libraries.
- Concerns included efforts to shut down or defund national library agencies, as well as the politicization of library services.
- Concerns about corporate media ownership limiting access to fair and unbiased information.

**Economic Conditions**

- Several mentioned economic instabilities including inflation, recession, and the impact of tariffs.
- These issues were linked to reduced funding and decreased access for patrons due to transportation costs or fewer resources.

**Social Issues and DEI**

- A few responses pointed to threats to DEI initiatives, attacks on the LGBTQ+ community, and the mental and emotional health of both patrons and staff in a hostile environment.
- Concerns about patron privacy, especially regarding the material patrons' check out.



**When you consider the local environment in which the library operates — what are some outside factors that may influence the library?**

**Diversity and Trust Issues**

- Respondents noted the community's diversity, but some comments highlighted fears among patrons about giving personal information due to distrust in public institutions.
- There were concerns expressed about local book challenges.

**Community Needs and Resources**

- Several comments pointed out the growing population of displaced community members who feel underserved and poorly treated.
- Respondents highlighted the lack of resources for mental health, homelessness, and other community needs.

**Partnerships and External Relationships**

- Respondents emphasized the importance of strong partnerships with local schools to promote the library.
- Comments stressed the need for state and local funding, though challenges were raised regarding banned books and political pressures.
- Some respondents expressed frustration with local government relationships, citing communication issues and a lack of support from city officials.

**Economic and Demographic Shifts**

- Economic changes, such as job cuts and loss of local industry, were mentioned by respondents as a potential driver for more patrons needing library resources or leaving the area.
- Several comments pointed to a growing number of transient workers due to the automotive industry and new construction projects.
- Respondents noted the increasing need for library services amid economic uncertainty and displacement.

**Library Accessibility**

- Respondents highlighted the challenge of the library's location not being easily accessible without a car, limiting its reach to some community members.

**Local Environmental Factors**

- Comments pointed to ongoing construction in downtown Auburn Hills (business developments, new apartments), which may influence patronage.

**State and Local Funding**

- Several comments emphasized the library's reliance on business taxes for funding, with challenges tied to local tax structures, as well as concerns about cuts to state funding.
- Respondents stressed the need for stronger local leadership and support for library services.

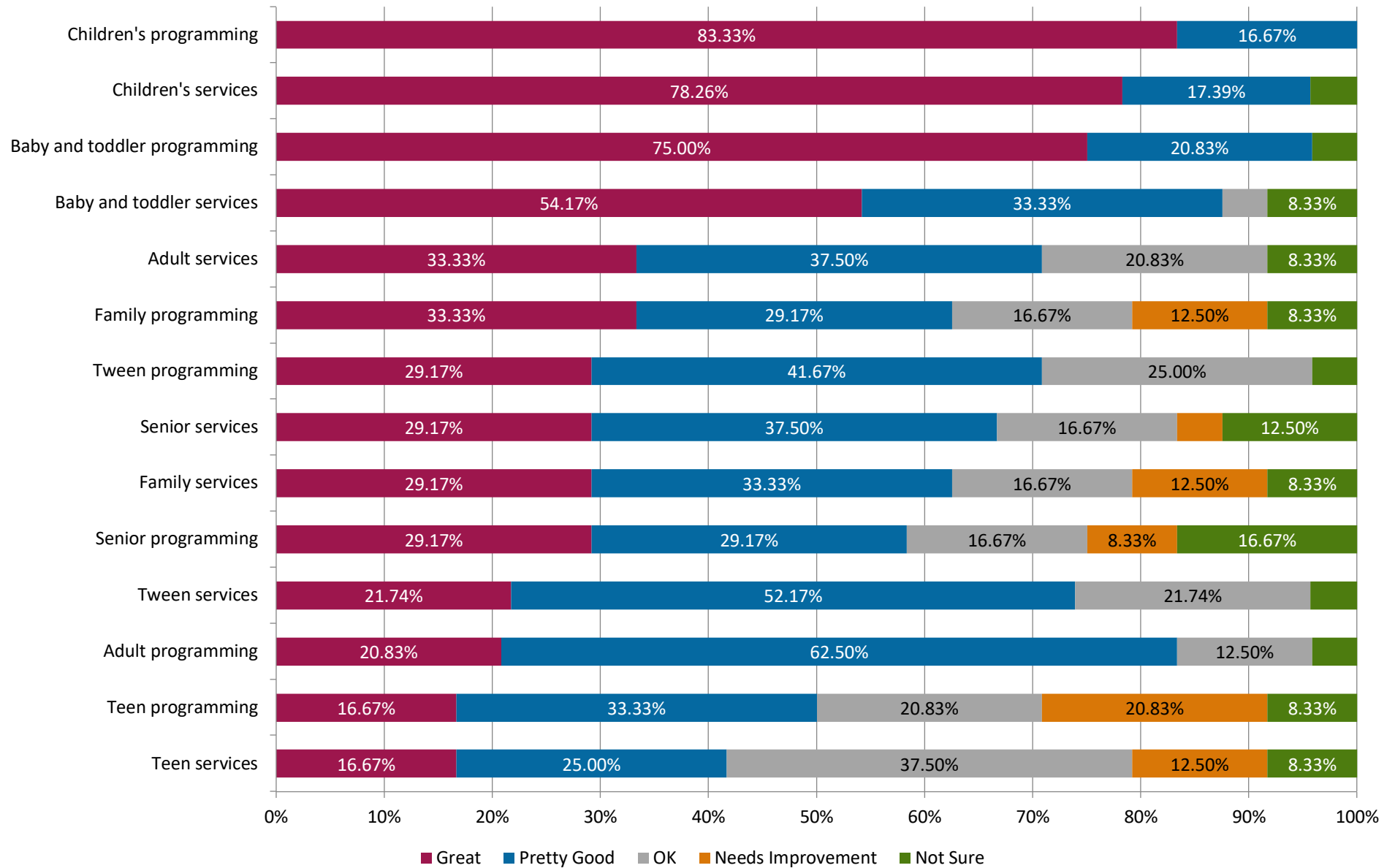


## Core Operations Assessment

Assessment participants were asked to rate how well the library is doing with various core operations and to provide feedback about how the library can evolve these aspects to be more robust.



## Rate how well you feel the library is doing in **providing services and programming to each age group.**



## FINDINGS

- Participants responded most positively to **children's programming**, with 83% reporting that the library was doing "Great" in this area.
- **Children's services** and **baby and toddler programming** also received positive reporting with 78% and 75% of respondents selecting "Great" for these areas, respectively.
- All respondents selected either "Great" or "Pretty Good" for **children's programming**, **children's services**, and **baby and toddler programming** — these areas received zero "OK" or "Needs Improvement" ratings.
- **Teen programming** received the most "Needs Improvement" ratings with 21%.
- **Senior programming** received the most "Not Sure" selections (17%), indicating an opportunity for increased communication about this area.

### For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about age-specific services and programming, what can the library do to improve?

#### Tweens

- Several respondents described tweens as an underserved and developmentally unique group.
- Concerns were raised about the quality, visibility, and engagement level of tween programming.
- Some suggested that this age group needs more intentional outreach to encourage reading and participation.

#### Teens

- Many respondents noted that teen services had been neglected in recent years, but they expressed optimism about positive changes underway with new staff in place.
- Some felt that current programming was not well-advertised or that teens seemed disengaged.
- One respondent voiced concern about a possible removal of the Student Lounge.
- Others suggested that teen programming would benefit from a unifying theme or stronger focus to draw interest

#### Adults

- Respondents saw signs of positive transformation in adult programming, though some felt that further improvements were dependent on increased staffing.
- One respondent encouraged the library to experiment with unique or one-time programs to gauge interest.

#### Seniors

- Respondents consistently highlighted a lack of senior-specific programming, as well as concerns about physical accessibility (e.g., high book shelving).
- Some pointed out the need for technology support and digital literacy programs for seniors.
- A few respondents speculated that the library may be competing in this area with the nearby community center which also provides senior services.



**For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about age-specific services and programming, what can the library do to improve? (continued)**

**Families**

- Multiple respondents felt that family programming is limited, with most offerings segmented by age group.
- Suggestions included monthly family-friendly events such as crafts or board game nights, and more inclusive events like an all-ages Summer Reading kickoff.
- Some emphasized the need for greater coordination across departments to design family-wide experiences.

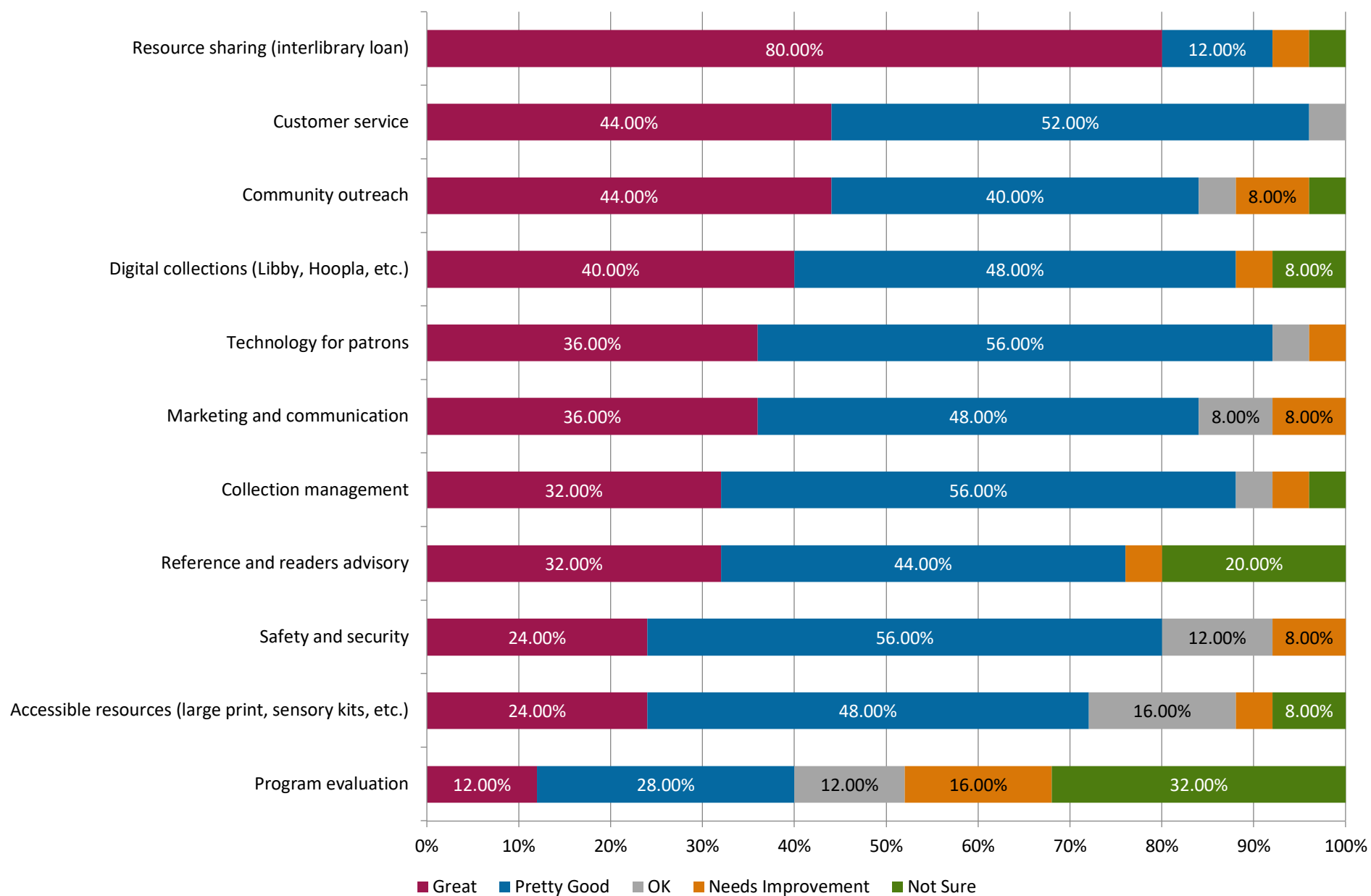
**Additional Suggestions**

- One respondent specifically suggested creating a private space for breastfeeding mothers to encourage more attendance at baby programming.
- Respondents recommended increasing collaboration between departments.
- Respondents called for the development of intergenerational and family-oriented programs.
- One suggestion was to add a librarian who is passionate about tween, teen, and family services.
- Others noted the importance of better advertising for youth programming and improved accessibility for seniors, both physically and digitally.
- A few respondents encouraged the library to try out new programming ideas, even on a trial basis.





## Rate how well you feel the library is doing in each **patron-facing area**.



## FINDINGS

- **Resource sharing (interlibrary loan)** was rated most positively by respondents with 80% reporting that the library was performing “Great” in this area.
- **Customer service** was also rated highly with 96% of respondents ranking this area as “Great” or “Pretty Good.”
- **Collection management, technology for patrons, and digital collections (Libby, Hoopla, etc.)** all received highly positive ratings with over 88% of respondents selecting either “Great” or “Pretty Good” in these areas.
- Respondents reported that **program evaluation** was the area that needs the most improvement, with 16% of respondents selecting “Needs Improvement.” Notably, program evaluation had the most “Not Sure” ratings out of all the areas (32%), which shows an opportunity for improved communication about this topic.
- **Reference and readers advisory** is another area which may benefit from increased communication or reevaluation as 20% of respondents selected “Not Sure.”

**For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about patron-facing services, what can the library do to improve?**

### **Programming and Collections**

- Respondents expressed a desire for more technology-related programming, including classes on AI tools like ChatGPT, social media, and basics like Excel and PowerPoint.
- There were calls for more diverse authors in the collection, and for expanded accessibility collections that better serve patrons with disabilities.
- Several respondents pointed to the limited Large Print and adult sensory collections, suggesting these need to grow to meet patron needs.

### **Outreach and Community Engagement**

- Some respondents noted that adult community outreach is minimal, with most efforts focused on homebound delivery and limited offsite programs due to staffing constraints.
- One concern was raised about perceived inequities in outreach, with a note about outreach being limited to gated communities and private schools.
- One respondent felt certain groups — low-income and non-English-speaking populations — were being underserved and would benefit from more targeted outreach.
- One respondent praised the homebound and senior outreach, saying it was stronger than at other area libraries.

### **Communications and Marketing**

- Respondents noted that communication with patrons could be improved, especially around facility issues like elevator outages or internet disruptions.
- There was a suggestion that event reminders be sent to improve attendance, especially for programs with early registration.
- Some suggested greater social media engagement to highlight the library’s collections and build community relationships.



**For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about patron-facing services, what can the library do to improve? (continued)**

**Program Evaluation and Follow-Up**

- Respondents emphasized the need for structured program evaluation, both formal and informal.
- Some called for post-event staff debriefs to discuss what went well and what could improve.
- Suggestions included gathering written program feedback and using positive comments in promotional materials.

**Safety and Security**

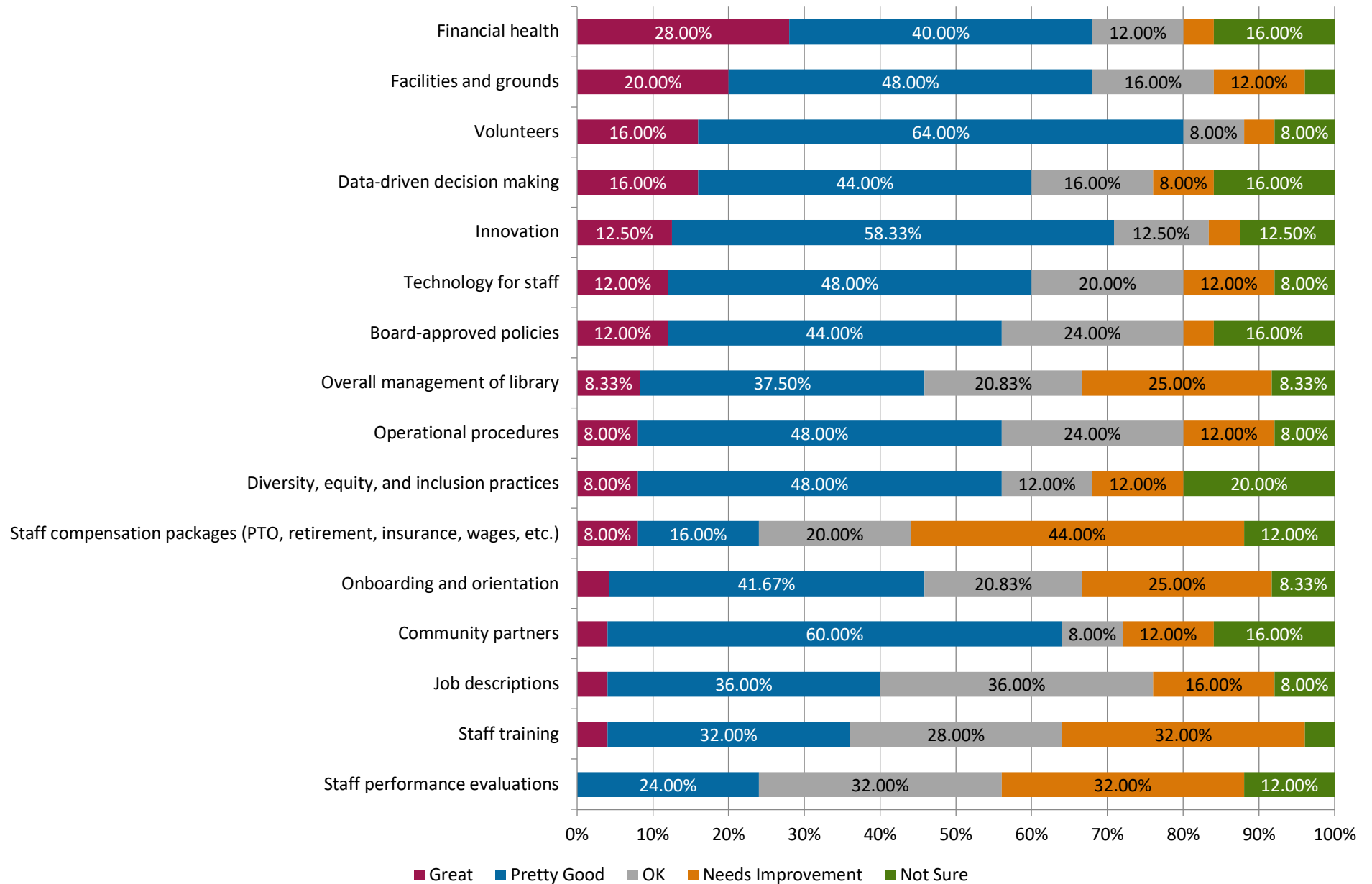
- Respondents mentioned non-functioning security gates, leading to unintentional (and sometimes permanent) loss of materials.
- Staff unfamiliarity with emergency procedures was noted, such as administering Narcan or responding to bleeding injuries.
- Some respondents called for refresher training on emergency protocols.
- There was a desire for safety issues to be communicated more transparently.

**Customer Service**

- Respondents noted inconsistency in customer service, particularly when patrons need help navigating the building or finding material.
- Some felt staff lacked initiative, often pointing rather than walking patrons to a location or solution.
- There were calls for a more proactive approach to patron support.



## Rate how well you feel the library is doing in each area related to **internal operations**.



## FINDINGS

- **Volunteers** was rated most positively by respondents with 80% reporting that the library was performing “Great” or “Pretty Good” in this area.
- **Innovation** also performed well with 71% of respondents selecting either “Great” or “Pretty Good.”
- **Financial health** had the most “Great” rankings with 28% of respondents selecting this option.
- **Staff compensation packages (PTO, retirement, insurance, wages, etc.)** had the lowest ranking on average (1.86/4). This area also had the highest number of “Needs Improvement” rankings with 11 (44%). This was followed by **staff performance evaluations** (1.91/4) and **staff training** (2.08/4) — 32% of respondents rated both areas as needing improvement.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion practices** had the highest level of unawareness with 20% of respondents selecting “Not Sure.”

**For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about internal operations, what are ways the library can improve in these areas?**

### Compensation and Staffing

- There is widespread dissatisfaction with staff compensation. Respondents noted that wages do not reflect the cost of living or the responsibilities of the work.
- Part-time staff were specifically highlighted as underpaid and lacking benefits.
- A compensation study is currently in progress, and some respondents expressed cautious optimism, while others questioned whether its recommendations would be implemented.

### Evaluations

- Staff evaluations were widely criticized as confusing, inconsistent, and lacking impact.
- One comment described end-of-year evaluations as unhelpful; some respondents preferred more continuous feedback.
- Several comments expressed frustration with the emphasis on self-evaluations and the lack of meaningful consequences or rewards.

### Training and Onboarding

- Respondents report that training is inconsistent, with some departments offering little to no formal instruction.
- Onboarding processes vary greatly by department and are often incomplete.
- Multiple respondents recommended standardized onboarding checklists and department-specific training.

### Job Descriptions and Roles

- Some respondents reported not receiving job descriptions until recently.
- There is concern that current descriptions are vague or generic and don't reflect the actual work being done.
- Some expressed the hope that issues around job descriptions, evaluations, and training will improve as part of the ongoing process.



**For anything that you rated "OK" or "Needs Improvement" in the above section about internal operations, what are ways the library can improve in these areas? (continued)**

**Internal Communication and Oversight**

- Respondents noted a lack of communication between departments and from leadership.
- Information is not easily accessible or centralized, making cross-departmental coordination difficult.
- Some respondents expressed a lack of trust in library leadership and cited poor follow-through on staff input.

**Facilities and Technology**

- Several comments mentioned poor parking conditions and inadequate recent facility upgrades.
- Concerns were raised about outdated or insufficient technology, including shared take-home laptops.

**Additional Suggestions**

- A few respondents were unsure whether community partnerships existed.
- Better department-specific training, including short sessions on tech tools and onboarding support.
- Creation of a system for internal communication and documentation, to help staff understand expectations across departments.
- A clearer, more accountable evaluation process that connects feedback to professional development and advancement.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share about the library's core operations that has not already been covered?**

**Internal Communications and Staff Satisfaction**

- Internal communication is described as poor, with important information not making it beyond the coordinator level. One respondent reported that staff often find out about expectations months after procedural changes have been made.
- There is concern that management does not take staff satisfaction seriously. One respondent expressed concerns that continuing with current practices will lead to disengagement.
- Another respondent noted that some staff have expressed dissatisfaction with the work environment.



## Strategic Priorities

Respondents were asked to share current library strengths and potential opportunities for future impact.

### What are the library's current strengths? Or, what does the library do well that makes an impact in the community?

**Programming:** Widely praised across departments — especially youth, children, and family programs. Events are engaging, well-attended, and reflective of community interests.

**Community Engagement:** Strong outreach and partnerships, including involvement with local businesses, schools, and broader community functions.

**Staff:** Described as caring, helpful, engaged, and passionate about serving the community despite being short-staffed.

**Technology and Resources:** Offers accessible technology (computers, printers, crafting equipment) and specialized services like the Library of Things and the seed library.

**Collections:** Frequently updated and diverse, meeting community needs.

**Marketing:** Creative, effective, and aligned with the library's tone and mission.

**Facilities and Atmosphere:** Safe, welcoming, and comfortable space that patrons enjoy.

**Leadership and Innovation:** Some noted strong leadership and openness to innovation, with efforts to improve and grow.

**Website and Communication:** A redesigned website and strong communication with the Board were mentioned positively.

**Where are there opportunities for the library to make a greater impact in the community? Put another way, what might be a stretch, but would position the library as a vital community resource?**

**Expanded Outreach and Access:** Multiple respondents suggested satellite branches, a bookmobile, or pop-up libraries to serve areas like downtown Auburn Hills, schools, and neighborhoods where transportation is a barrier.

**Partnerships:** Opportunities to strengthen relationships with local schools (especially Avondale), Oakland University, city departments, and businesses.

**Targeted Programming:** Suggestions to offer more resources and programs for underserved groups — especially tweens, teens, new adults, ESL patrons, and adult learners.

**Library of Things Expansion:** Interest in growing this collection with tools, gardening supplies, and other practical items, particularly to support transitory or space-limited community members.

**Community Engagement and Promotion:** Calls for increased marketing and community education to raise awareness about library services and offerings — many felt that current patrons don't realize everything the library provides.

**Staffing and Support:** Some respondents saw opportunities in hiring more full-time staff and improving resources to support staff wellbeing.

**Facility Enhancements:** Ideas included better signage around the city campus and creating more maker spaces.

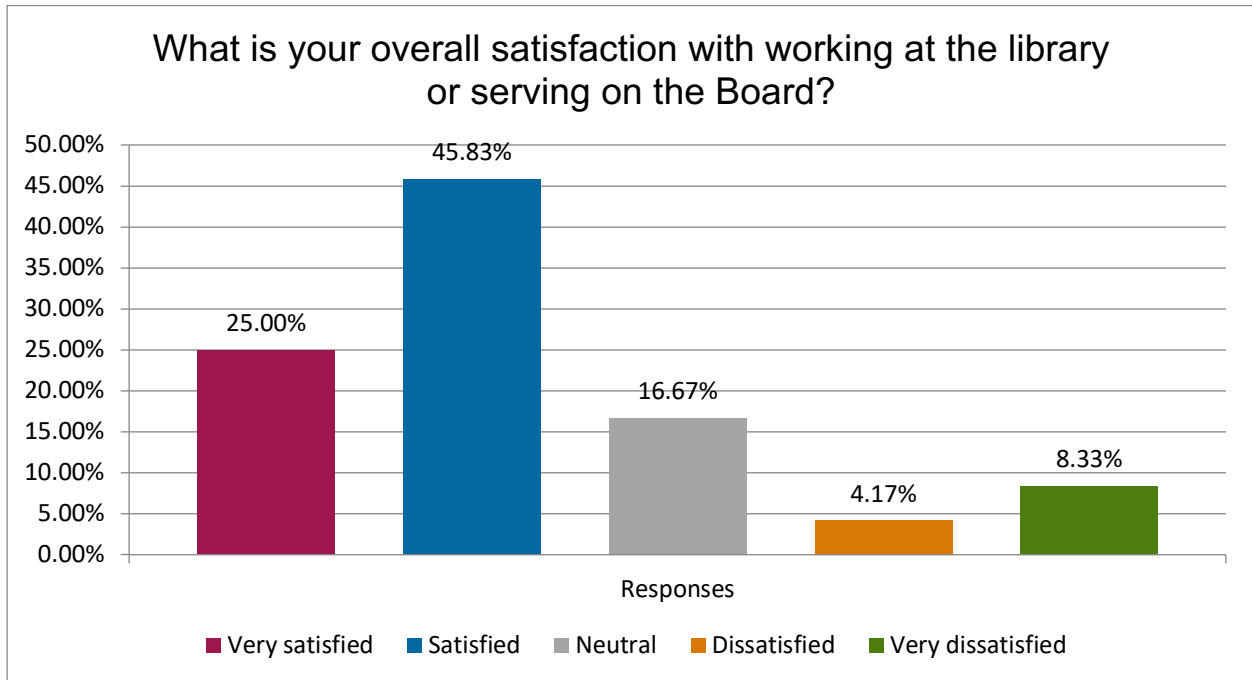
**Civic Collaboration:** Suggestions to work more closely with the city and involve city staff or officials in library events and outreach.





## Working Culture

Participants were surveyed to learn more about how staff members work together and to help us understand potential areas for organizational development.

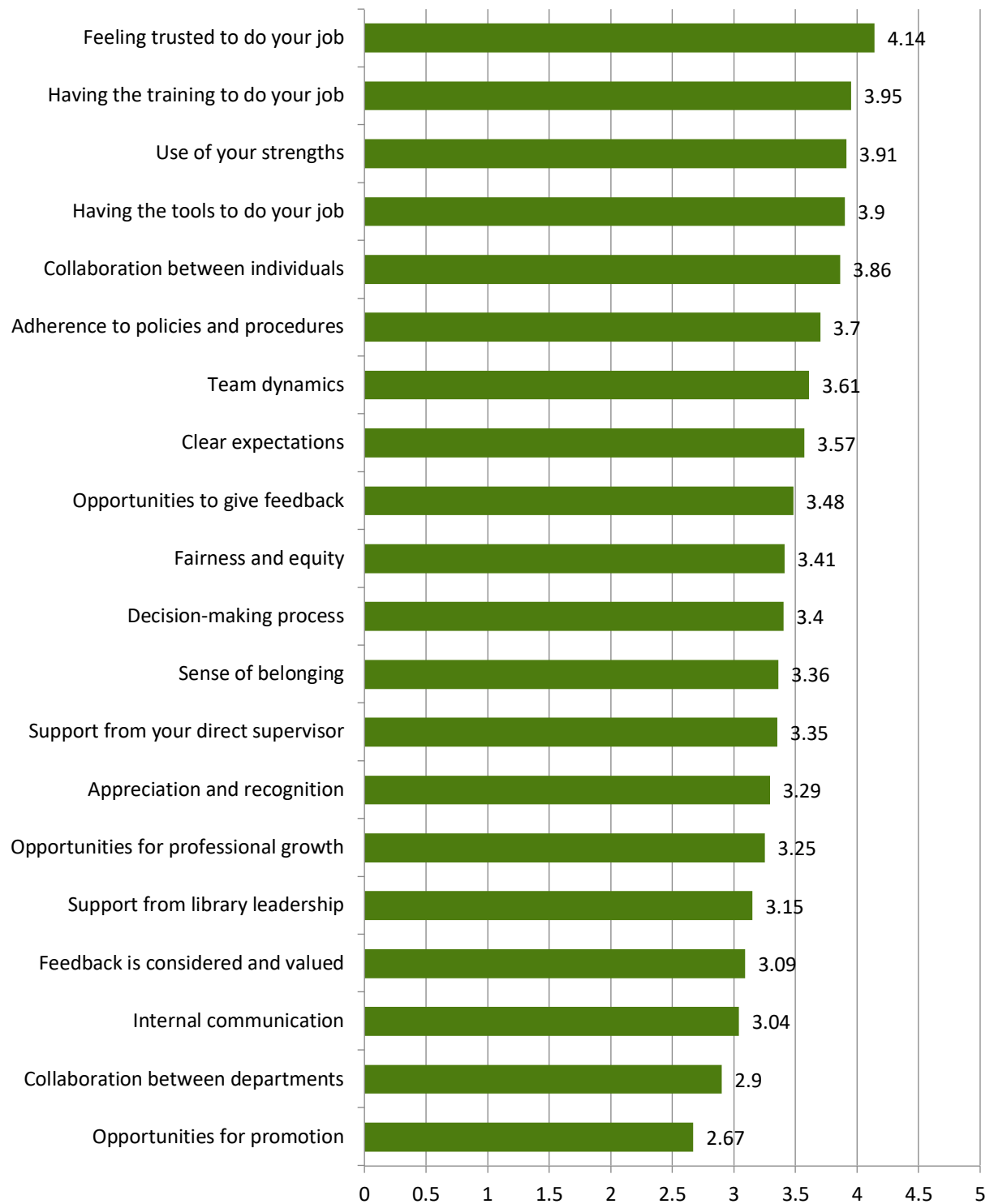


### FINDINGS

- The most respondents selected “Satisfied” (46%,  $n=11$ ).
- Three respondents reported they were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” about working at the library or serving on the Board.



Please rate how satisfied you are with these elements of the library's working culture.



Weighted Average

1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied



## FINDINGS

- Respondents were most satisfied with **having the training to do your job**, with 83% selecting either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” (zero respondents selected “Very Dissatisfied”).
- Respondents were also highly satisfied with **feeling trusted to do your job** (78% selecting either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied”), **collaboration between individuals** (74%), and **use of your strengths** (73%).
- Respondents reported highest levels of dissatisfaction with **feedback is considered and valued**, with 44% selecting either “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied.”
- Respondents were also dissatisfied with **collaboration between departments** (44% selecting either “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied”) and **internal communication** (35%).

### How can the library improve the working culture?

**Stronger Communication:** Respondents emphasized the need for more open, transparent, and consistent communication — both between departments and from leadership. Suggestions included daily updates, clearer information sharing, and more visibility from coordinators and managers.

**Accountability and Fairness:** Multiple comments expressed frustration that some staff are not held accountable for their work habits, while others are left to carry the burden. Respondents called for consistent standards, better oversight, and equitable expectations across all levels.

**Listening and Responsiveness:** Many felt that staff concerns — especially about wages, workload, and the overall work environment — are repeatedly dismissed or ignored. There is a strong desire for leadership and the Board to listen, take feedback seriously, and act on it meaningfully.

**Workplace Culture and Morale:** Some described the environment as cliquish, isolating, or hierarchical, contributing to low morale. Suggestions included fostering inclusion, reducing favoritism, and creating more peer connection — especially for those who feel isolated or unsupported.

**Leadership and Trust:** Several noted a lack of trust in leadership and called for more equitable management practices, clarity in roles, and support from supervisors and the Board. Leadership style was described by some as too “top-down” or disengaged.

**Recognition and Support:** Respondents wanted recognition for their collective contributions rather than singling individuals out. There were also calls for more training, clearer paths for promotion or role shifts, and overall stronger support for staff wellbeing and development.

