

# ROWLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY



## STRATEGIC PLAN FY2015-FY2020

Approved by the RPL Board of Trustees  
at their regular meeting on September 17, 2013



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## PLANNING METHODOLOGY

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The Director worked in cooperation with an advisor from the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), an independent consultant, the Trustees, the staff, and the public in the creation of this strategic plan. The process, adapted from the Public Library Association's *Planning For Results*, calls for three meetings of the focus group and interim work by the Director and Trustees to compile the information gathered. The director organized and moderated the focus group meetings, made up of members of the Library Trustees, Staff and Friends, a high school student, the Director of the Council on Aging (COA), the Pine Grove Elementary School librarian, and a cross-section of the town's citizens. In addition, an open response opinion survey requesting public input was mailed to every household in Rowley, with the cooperation of the Friends of the Library, and made available online through the Library's website and Facebook page. Visitors to the Library also were encouraged to fill out and submit the survey on site. The results were tabulated and reviewed and compared to the survey from the previous plan. Using this information, the Director and Trustees created the goals for the Library for FY 2015-2020 together with objectives against which we will measure our progress.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Susan Babb, MLS Advisor

Mark Behringer, Trustee

Mary Behrle, Bibliotemps, Independent Consultant

Mary Bright

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Michelle Ford, Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees

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## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

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Rowley is a growth community rooted in New England colonial history. It has evolved from a farming community to a non-farm community with a small amount of retail and industry. Rowley is now primarily a commuter town, with a population of 5965, spread among its 20.03 square miles.

Located in Essex County, with river access to Ipswich Bay and the Atlantic, Rowley is bordered by Interstate Route 95 and bisected by business-lined Route 1 and historic/rural Route 1A. Rowley is bordered to the north by Newbury and Georgetown, to the south by Ipswich, and to the west by Boxford. Its outlying areas are forested with fields and meadows and stonewall-lined country roads, yet just around each bend of the road may be found a cluster of new houses, as the continued building results in dramatic changes to the landscape. The Rowley community values its open space and recreational areas.

Rowley center, on Route 1A, consists of a small number of residences, some of which are historic sites, as well as three churches, the post office, Pine Grove Elementary School, the Town Hall, and the Rowley Public Library, built in 2004. Revitalization has added commercial and residential properties, replacing vacant structures, to build out the commercial enterprises located downtown. The Library Strategic Planning committee believes that the presence of these small retail establishments, including a longstanding pharmacy, coffee/bake shops, and an antique store, will draw people to the center and be beneficial for the Library.

At the time of the 2010 Census the population was split almost 50/50 between male and female residents with a median age of 43.3 years; approximately 21% of the total population fell in the 45 to 54 years range. 26.4% of residents were under 20 and 11.4% of residents were age 65 or older. Rowley remained quite homogenous with 97.4% of the population identifying as White and 75% of households made up of a family. 94% of adults completed high school, and nearly half of adults had attained an associate's degree or higher college education. The median household income was \$79,449 and, of the adult labor force, 54% were employed in manufacturing, professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management, education, healthcare, or social assistance fields.

Many families in town have school-aged children. There are 554 students at Pine Grove Elementary School. At the regional junior/senior high school, there are approximately 1200 students from three area towns, 368 of them from Rowley.

# LIBRARY INFORMATION

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## LIBRARY HISTORY

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Susan and Frederick Todd founded the Rowley Public Library around 1870. Mrs. Benjamin Mighill was the first librarian, and the library was kept in a house owned by the Mighills for thirteen years of her tenure.

In January of 1904, at a special town meeting, the town voted to raise and appropriate money toward the construction of a Town Hall. The library was moved from the Mighill house to what is now used as the Selectmen's room in the Town Hall.

In 1966, at a special town meeting, the Board of Trustees asked for and received the Ezekiel Rogers School building on Wethersfield Street for renovation as a library. The move was made into the building in 1968. At that time, all services for adults and children were on the main floor. In December of 1974 the children's area was moved into the renovated basement.

After years of planning and help from countless citizens, in January 2004 a 13,644 square foot facility opened on Main Street on land that had been donated to the town by the late Mrs. Ruth Lambert Cheney, who specified in her bequest that the town should build a library and a garden there.

In 2007 the Rowley Library became a full member of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, taking advantage of the automated resource sharing, databases, and other online services provided by the consortium. Patrons now can access their account online and are able to order and renew library materials and download audio and ebooks to their computers or devices.

In 2011 the Library received a bequest from the late George P. Bishop in memory of his uncle Lawrence R. Bishop. The will specified that the Library should use the funding "for the purposes of acquiring books and equipment for said Library and for the purposes of providing funds to extend the number of hours that the Library is open to the public." The Library expanded its hours of service from 34 per week to 40 per week.

In 2013 Town Meeting approved a capital request of \$8,000 for the purpose of installing a self-check workstation for the convenience of our patrons. In 2014 the Library will celebrate its 10th year in its new location. The town of Rowley will also be celebrating the 375th anniversary of its incorporation. A community read project is being planned.

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## GOVERNANCE

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The Library is a department of the Town of Rowley governed by an elected nine-member Board of Library Trustees. The Board's authority is derived from Chapter 78, Sections 10 and 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 10 states in part that: "The Board shall have the custody and management of the library...and of all property owned by the town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the Board, and all money or property which the town may receive by gift or bequest...shall be administered by the Board..." Responsibility for library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Board to the Library Director. The director is appointed and directly responsible to the Board, and is an employee of the Town of Rowley.

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## ROWLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

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The mission of the Rowley Public Library is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for all people in the community by providing a welcoming community center, where people of all ages and walks of life can come together for social, cultural, and educational experiences, and by providing informational and recreational resources for community members' enlightenment and enjoyment.

The Board of Trustees supports the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, is committed to providing services to all members of the community without discrimination, and endeavors to present all points of view on current and historical issues.

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## SUPPORT

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The Friends of the Library, a 501(c)3 charity association is an active group with 135 members. They hold several fundraisers throughout the year and provide support for the summer reading program and programming for adults including computer classes, a moderated book club, and other cultural and educational events. The Friends also purchase museum passes and finance organic landscaping of the lawn and gardens. They publish a monthly electronic newsletter, "Do Dates." The Friends helped the Strategic Planning Committee by including the community survey in their annual membership appeal, which was mailed to every household in Rowley.

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## DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING LIBRARY SERVICES

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The Library's 13,644 square foot facility opened on Main Street in January of 2004. It is fully handicapped accessible and was built for a projected 20 year build-out. The Ruth Lambert Cheney children's garden was dedicated in the summer of 2006 and is maintained by Friends of the Library volunteers and funding, along with the rest of the organically-landscaped grounds.

The Library is open 40 hours per week, including three mornings, four afternoons and evenings, and a half day Saturday. The staff is made up of 14 people and 4 substitutes, whose hours combined equal almost 4 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Only the Director is full time (35 hours/week). In addition, 84 volunteers contributed almost 800 hours of time in FY13. Staff performed an estimated 7,748 reference transactions, and patron visits numbered 37,799 in FY13.

The collection consists of 37,887 books, 210 periodical volumes, 1,801 audios (books and music on CD and cassette), 1,845 videos (DVD and VHS), 273 electronic resources (CD-ROMs and video games), and 38 kits, as of July 2013. We also have access to 2,728 downloadable audiobooks and 3,422 e-books through our consortium subscription to the Overdrive Media Service. Circulation in FY 13 totaled 47,241 items.

There are three meeting rooms and one quiet study room available for public use. The largest meeting room seats 65 and has a kitchen and audiovisual equipment including a wireless microphone system, LCD projector, and a DVD/VHS player and screen. The meeting rooms were used 508 times in FY13. There were 268 Library-sponsored programs, attended by 4,382 people. These included author visits, classes, lectures, workshops, crafts, story times, and the summer reading program, sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

There are 14 public computing workstations; all have the Library catalog, Internet access, and the full MS Office Suite and are networked to a laser printer. Usage averaged 250 times per week in FY13. There is a wireless Internet connection throughout the building. The Library also offers a fax machine and photocopier for public use for a nominal fee.

## COLLECTION

Material	Adult & YA* FY07	Adult FY13	YA FY13	Children's FY07	Children's FY13	Total FY07	Total FY13
Books	22,843	19,314	3,930	11,026	14,643	33,869	37,887
Downloadable e-books**	0	3,422	0	0	0	0	3,422
Audios	1,043	1,336	65	239	400	1,281	1,801
Downloadable audiobooks**	938	2,728	0	0	0	938	2,728
Videos/DVDs	902	1,126	0	616	719	1,518	1,845
CD-ROMS & videogames***	51	172	34	60	67	111	273
Kits	7	7	0	0	38	7	60

\*Adult and YA were counted as one group by the Board of Library Commissioners until FY11.

\*\* Downloadable e-books and audiobooks statistics cannot be broken down by age level.

\*\*\*Videogames were added in 2012

## CIRCULATION

Material	Adult & YA* FY07	Adult FY13	YA FY13	Children's FY07	Children's FY13	Total FY07	Total FY13
Books	12,707	15,025	2,118	10,715	17,095	23,422	34,056
Downloadable e-books**	0	323		0		0	323
Serials	749	1,654	87	70	377	819	2,118
Audios	1,826	2,171	79	366	373	2,192	2,623
Downloadable audiobooks**	141	665				141	665
Videos/DVDs	2,855	4,945	44	2,335	1,759	5,190	6,748
CD-ROMS & videogames***	36	117	244	136	70	172	431
Museum passes	35	245	n/a	n/a	n/a	35	245

\* Adult and YA were counted as one group by the Board of Library Commissioners until FY11.

\*\* Downloadable e-books and audiobooks statistics cannot be broken down by age level.

\*\*\* Video games were added in 2012

## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 3.00 and 4.00 specify minimum standards and funding requirements for public libraries in the Commonwealth. Adherence to these is required in order to remain eligible for state grants. The program is administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). For libraries serving communities with a population such as Rowley's the regulations are as outlined below. Full information on the CMR pertaining to libraries is available by searching online (<http://mblc.state.ma.us/>).

Libraries serving communities with populations between 5,000 and 9,999 must:

- Be open to all residents of the Commonwealth.
- Make no charge for normal library service.
- Be open a minimum of 25 hours per week, including some evening hours.
- Employ trained library personnel, including a Chief Librarian who is a college graduate with special training in the basic library techniques.
- Expend a minimum of 19 percent of the library's total budget on library materials.
- Lend books to other libraries in the Commonwealth and extend privileges to the holders of cards issued by other public libraries in the Commonwealth on a reciprocal basis.
- Provide The Board of Library Commissioners with an annual report.

Request for flexibility: The Board of Library Commissioners allows for flexibility in the case of a library that is open more hours than required: A library that is open the required hours for a larger population group may, by request of the Library Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees, expend the required materials expenditure for that population group. The Rowley Library is open 40 hours per week and thus is required to spend only 16% on materials using this flexibility waiver.

These regulations specify minimum requirements. The Rowley Public Library is open 40 hours per week, including four evenings and four mornings year round. The Director holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Studies (MLIS). Funding supports our present staffing and hours and meets the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) but needs to increase in order to support our five-year plan.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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**Goal 1: The RPL contributes to the improvement of the quality of life in Rowley by acting as a hub for cultural events and providing educational opportunities for all members of the community.**

- *Objective 1.1* The Rowley Library will offer cultural and/or informational events each year appealing to all ages, including children, tweens and teens, families, adults, and seniors.
- *Objective 1.2* The Rowley Library will partner with the Council on Aging (COA) to engage senior citizens and educate them about library offerings.
- *Objective 1.3* The Rowley Public Library cooperates with Pine Grove Elementary and Triton Regional Middle/High School to support student needs.
- *Objective 1.4* The Library will foster partnerships with other organizations in the community, including co-sponsoring additional programs.

**Goal 2: The RPL is a welcoming community center and contributes to a vibrant Rowley center by providing both formal and informal social gathering space for members of the community.**

- *Objective 2.1* The Library will endeavor to find funding to increase hours open by 10% by FY20.
- *Objective 2.2* The Rowley Library will endeavor to find funding to increase staffing levels by 10% by FY20.
- *Objective 2.3* Patrons find the library staff to be warm and friendly, and they receive excellent customer service.

**Goal 3: The RPL provides resources to the community for both informational and recreational needs.**

- *Objective 3.1* Library patrons find the Rowley Public Library's website informative and up-to-date, as expressed in a survey to be carried out in FY20.
- *Objective 3.2* Patrons have the opportunity to participate in online collaborative and interactive groups utilizing social networking software, by FY20.
- *Objective 3.3* Patrons express that the Rowley Public Library collection meets their needs, and that they receive library materials from outside sources (the MVLC, ILL) in a timely fashion, as expressed in a survey to be carried out in FY20.
- *Objective 3.4* The Local History and Genealogy collections are more accessible and receive 20% more use, by FY20.

**Goal 4: The Rowley Library staff will make and keep citizens aware of its diverse current and future offerings and services.**

- *Objective 4.1* Staff will be knowledgeable about Library services and feel confident in their ability to provide support.
- *Objective 4.2* Staff will keep citizens informed, through a variety of media, of new and existing products and services.

## ACTION PLAN FOR FY15

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**Goal 1: The RPL contributes to the improvement of the quality of life in Rowley by acting as a hub for cultural events and providing educational opportunities for all members of the community.**

- *Objective 1.1* The Rowley Library will offer cultural and/or informational events each year appealing to all ages, including children, tweens and teens, families, adults, and seniors.

Action Item 1.1.1 Special events for adults will be held at least monthly, in addition to ongoing classes/series/book clubs.

Action Item 1.1.2 There will be two events for tweens/teens in each season: fall semester, spring semester, and summer.

Action Item 1.1.3 Offerings for children will include after-school programs and family programs in addition to story times for preschoolers.

- *Objective 1.2* The Rowley Library will partner with the Council on Aging (COA) to engage senior citizens and educate them about library offerings.

Action Item 1.2.1 An annual open house/library tour for seniors will be held and online offerings demonstrated.

Action Item 1.2.2 Outreach sessions at the Council, senior housing, and Sea View Nursing Home will be offered and implemented.

- *Objective 1.3* The Rowley Public Library cooperates with Pine Grove Elementary and Triton Regional Middle/High School to support student needs.

Action Item 1.3.1 Library staff will partner with Reading Specialist and Reading Recovery Specialist to provide materials to support their students outside school hours.

Action Item 1.3.2 Items on the Massachusetts Children's Book Award and Summer Reading lists will be purchased and housed in a display each year.

Action Item 1.3.3 Classes will be encouraged to arrange field trips to tour the Library and receive instruction from the Youth Services team.

Action Item 1.3.4 Discovery Kits will be promoted for classroom, home school, and lifelong learning use.

Action Item 1.3.5 Youth Services associate will continue to work with Rowley Family Connection and support their programming, including traveling story time and Lego Club.

- *Objective 1.4* The Library will foster partnerships with other organizations in the community, including co-sponsoring additional programs.

Action Item 1.4.1 The Library will partner with Triton Middle and High School service clubs to establish a pool of community service volunteers and provide projects for them to complete.

Action Item 1.4.2 The Library will partner with the Rowley Historical Society to increase variety of materials and formats offered in Local History room.

Action Item 1.4.3. The Library will partner with the Rowley Historical Society to increase awareness of historical resources offered by the Society and RPL.

Action 1.4.4 The Library will sponsor an annual Community Read project, “Rowley Reads,” with support from the Friends and other community organizations.

**Goal 2: The RPL is a welcoming community center and contributes to a vibrant Rowley center by providing both formal and informal social gathering space for members of the community.**

- *Objective 2.1* The Library will endeavor to find funding to increase hours open by 10% by FY20.

Action Item 2.1.1 The Board of Trustees and Library Director will review municipal budget and request increases through the Personnel Board, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen.

Action Item 2.1.2 The Board of Trustees and Library Director will review available bequest and/or discretionary funds for use if municipal budget funds are not possible.

- *Objective 2.2* The Rowley Library will endeavor to find funding to increase staffing levels by 10% by FY20.

Action Item 2.2.1 Board of Trustees and Library Director will review municipal budget and request increases through the Personnel Board, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen.

Action Item 2.2.2 The Board of Trustees and Library Director will review available bequest and/or discretionary funds for use if municipal budget funds are not possible.

- *Objective 2.3* Patrons find the library staff to be warm and friendly, and they receive excellent customer service.

Action Item 2.3.1 Library Director will review customer service policy with staff annually.

Action Item 2.3.2 Library Director will arrange training sessions for staff to ensure that they are well versed in all applications on Library computers and technology offered for circulation.

**Goal 3: The RPL provides resources to the community for both informational and recreational needs.**

- *Objective 3.1* Library patrons find the Rowley Public Library’s website informative and up-to-date, as expressed in a survey to be carried out in FY20.

Action Item 3.1.1 Staff will post content updates weekly.

Action Item 3.1.2 Library Director will investigate an online calendar software to display events.

- *Objective 3.2* Patrons have the opportunity to participate in online collaborative and interactive groups utilizing social networking software, by FY20.

Action Item 3.2.1 The Library Staff will maintain newly-acquired book announcements online.

Action Item 3.2.2 Library Director will investigate an interactive online service where patrons will have the ability to submit book reviews and comments and share ideas, etc.

- *Objective 3.3* Patrons express that the Rowley Public Library collection meets their needs, and that they receive library materials from outside sources (the MVLC, ILL) in a timely fashion, as expressed in a survey to be carried out in FY20.

Action Item 3.3.1 Library Staff will select materials in various formats in accordance with the standards of the collection development policy, using both professional and popular review sources, as well as patron recommendations.

Action Item 3.3.2 Patron recommendations/requests may also be met through network transfers, the Massachusetts Virtual Catalog, or OCLC Interlibrary loan requests, mediated by the Massachusetts Library System.

- *Objective 3.4* The Local History and Genealogy collections are more accessible and receive 20% more use, by FY20.

Action Item 3.4.1 Seniors will be invited to create oral and or video histories in order that their firsthand knowledge of the community is captured and preserved.

Action Item 3.4.2 Items in the collection will be prioritized and options for digitizing items in the local history room will be investigated by end of FY15.

Action Item 3.4.3 A Genealogy club will meet at least once per quarter throughout the year.

Action Item 3.4.4 Library Staff will create a web guide to online, free genealogy resources.

**Goal 4: The Rowley Library staff will make and keep citizens aware of its diverse current and future offerings and services.**

- *Objective 4.1* Staff will be knowledgeable about Library services and feel confident in their ability to provide support.

Action Item 4.1.1 A document of core competencies will be established and implemented, by 2015.

Action Item 4.1.2 Staff will participate in continuing education opportunities at least two times per calendar year by 2015.

- *Objective 4.2* Staff will keep citizens informed, through a variety of media, of new and existing products and services.

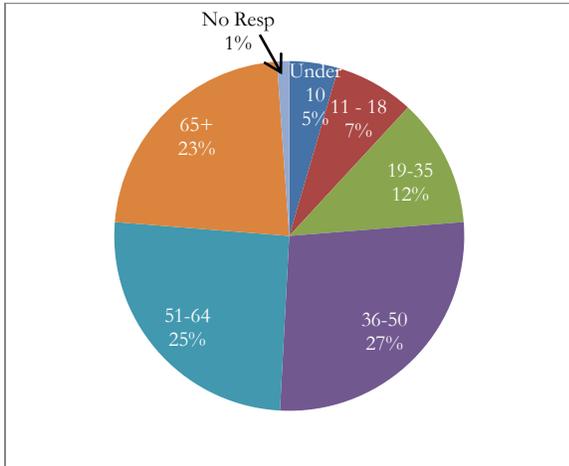
Action Item 4.2.1 Staff will continue to send two press releases per month to print sources, cable tv, and local web sites (e.g., wickedlocal).

Action Item 4.2.2 Staff will use online social media to keep patrons informed of Library news and events.

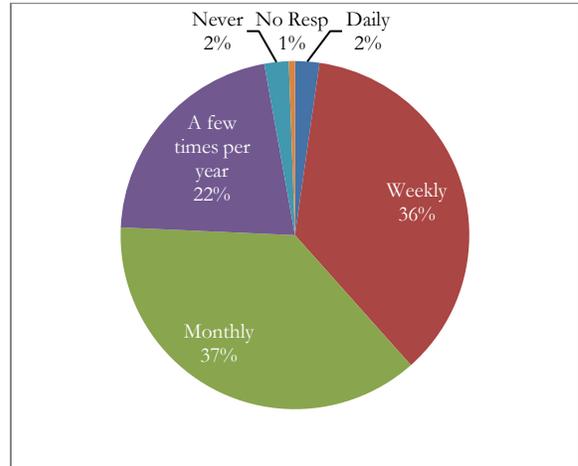
Action Item 1.2.3 Staff will create video tutorials for online resources and make them available online.

## TOWN-WIDE SURVEY

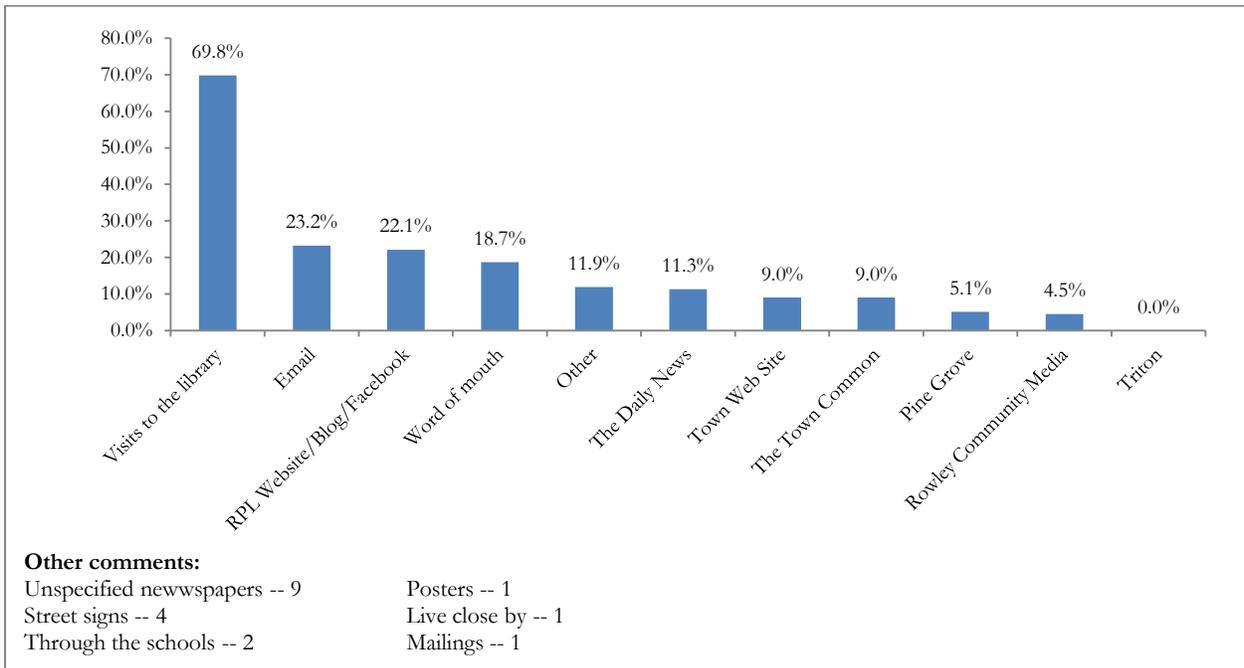
What describes your age?



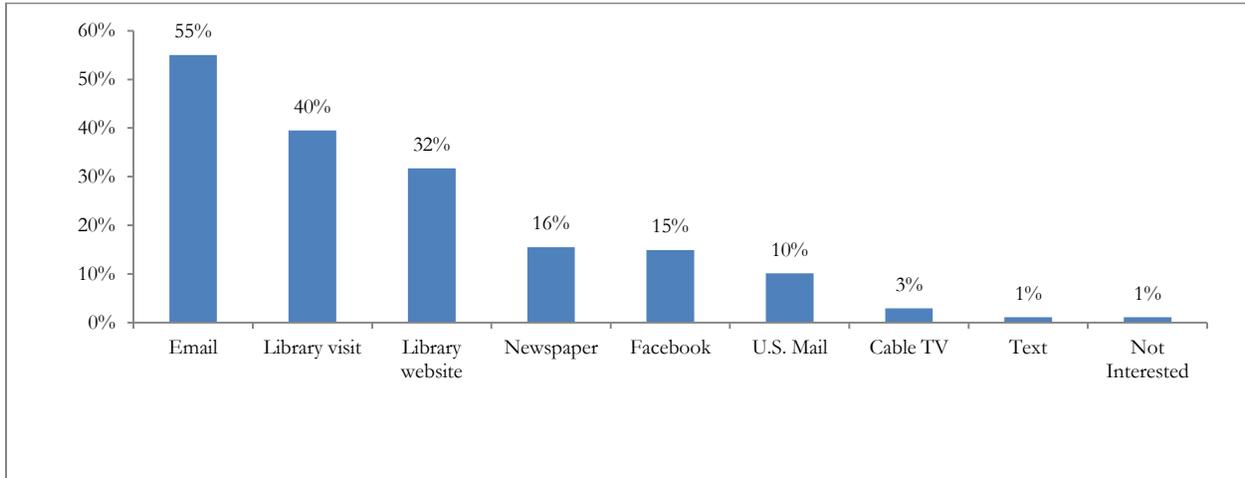
How often do you visit RPL?



How do you usually hear about the RPL's offerings?



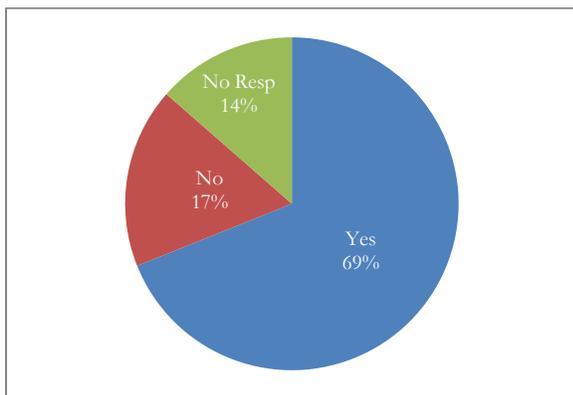
How would you prefer to learn about RPL offerings?



If you do not use the RPL, what are some of the reasons you do not?

- Hours – 8
- Collection – 4
- Go to neighboring library – 3
- No Transportation – 2
- Too Busy – 2
- Schedule conflict – 1
- New to town - 1
- Geared towards older/younger people – 1

Do the current library offerings meet all of your needs?

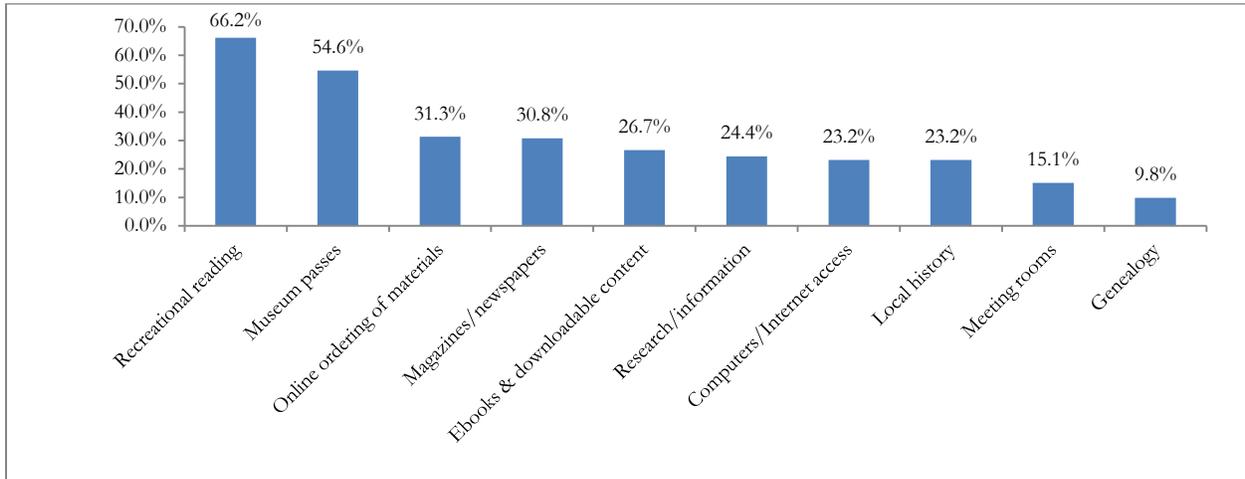


What offerings would you like to see added to the RPL?

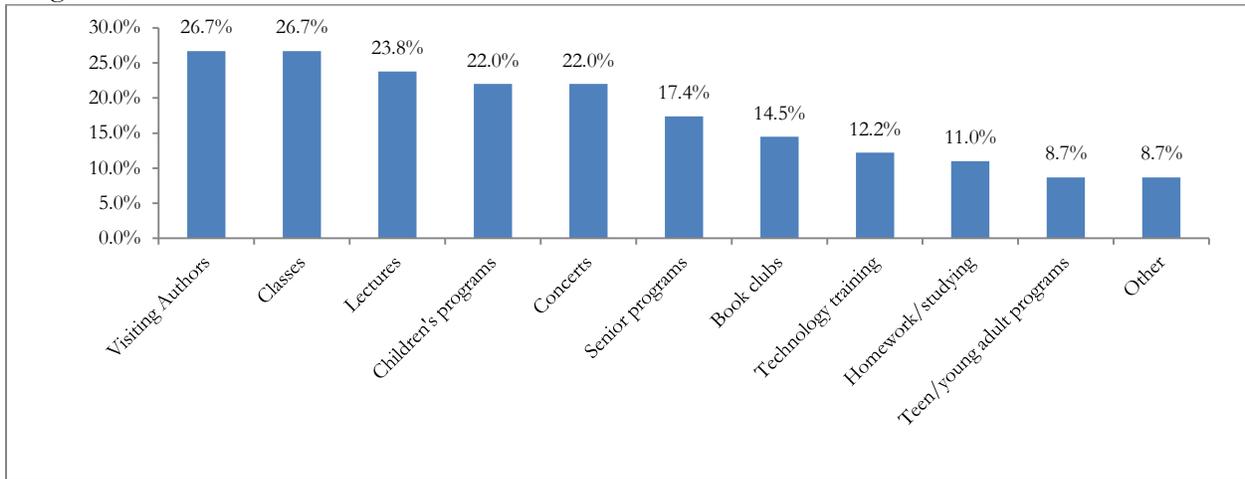
- Larger collection – 23
- Longer hours – 2
- Increase programs – 9
- Young Adult - 2
- New computers – 2
- New website – 1
- Save money – 2
- UMASS system access - 1

Which of the following offerings and events are you most interested in?

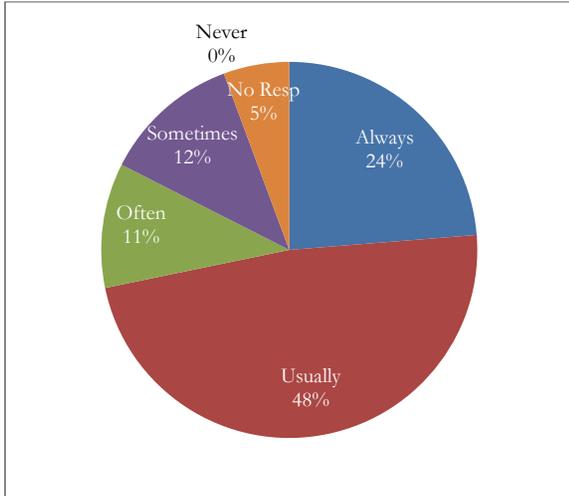
Materials:



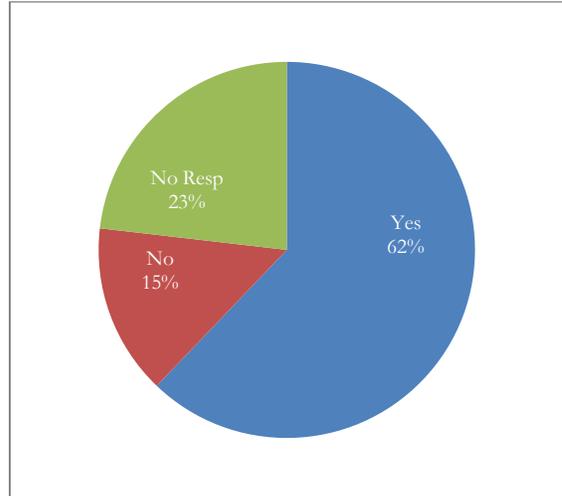
Programs/Services:



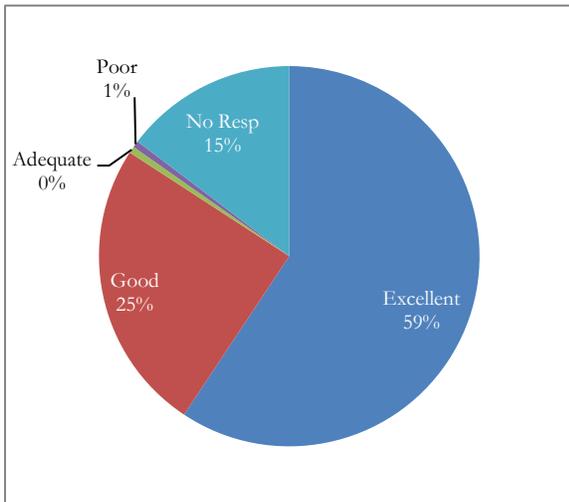
In recent library visits, describe how often you found what you were looking for.



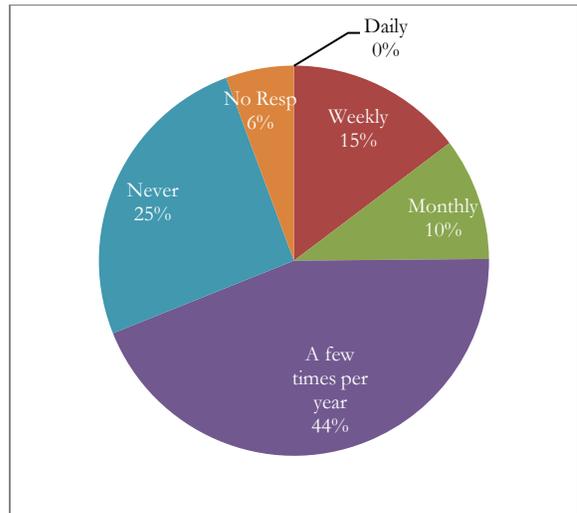
Have you asked the library staff for help using library resources?



Rate the assistance you received:



In the past year, how often have you visited libraries in other towns?



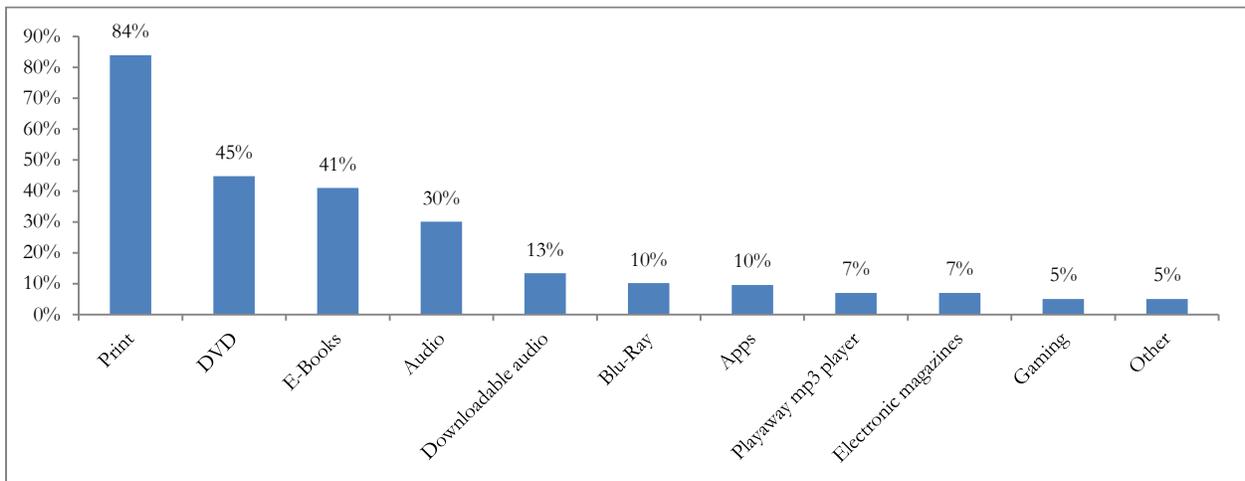
What are some of the reasons you visit other libraries?

- Collection – 48
  - Books - 16
  - Audio/Visual - 6
  - Movies – 6
  - Newspapers - 3
  - Museum Passes – 2
- Location - 25
- Hours – 7
- Programming – 5
- History/Genealogy – 2
- Story Time – 2
- Computers - 2

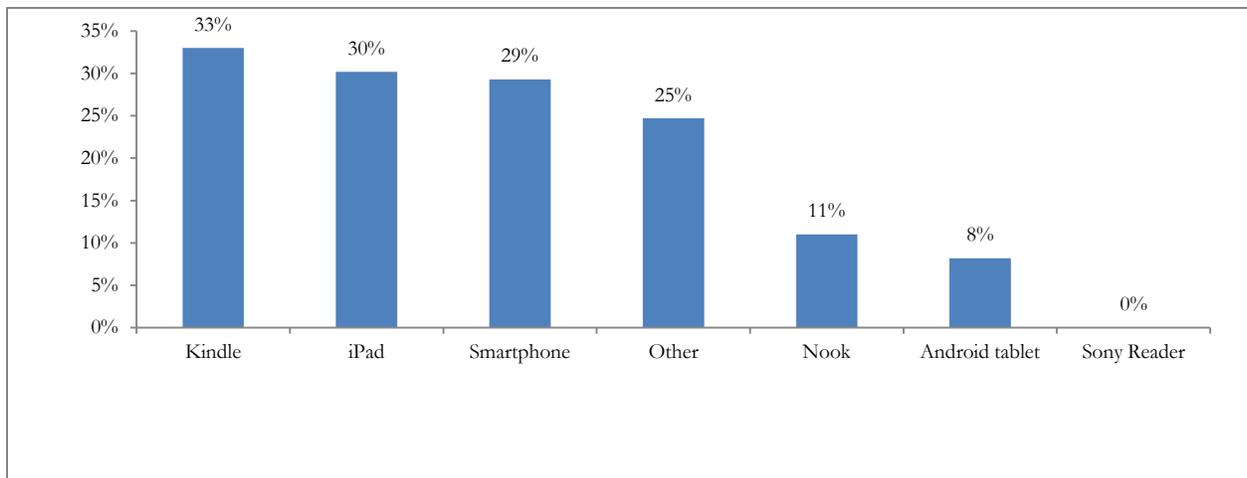
To help the RPL select appropriate materials, tell us how you choose your reading materials.

- Reviews – 16
- Browse – 9
- Recommendations – 7
- Best Sellers – 7
- New Books - 4
- Internet – 4
- Genre – 4
- Amazon – 3
- Preferred Author – 3
- Young Adult - 4
- Children's – 3
- Large Print – 3
- Mystery – 3
- Non-Fiction – 3
- Advertisement – 2
- Audio – 2
- Classics – 1
- Essays – 1
- Fantasy/ Sci -Fi – 1
- History – 1

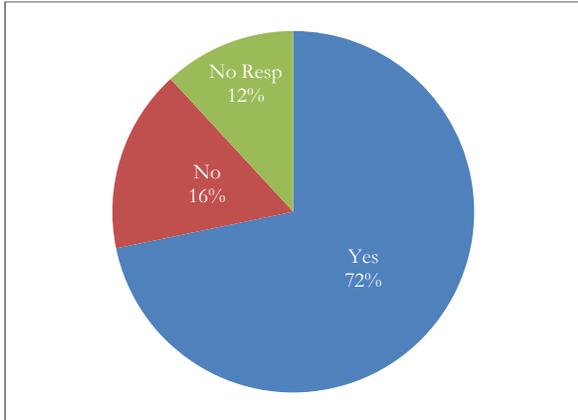
What formats are you interested in reading/listening/viewing materials?



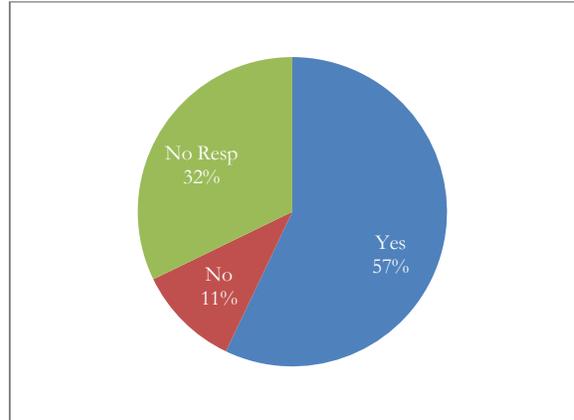
What devices are you using to access library materials and information?



Have you visited the RPL website?

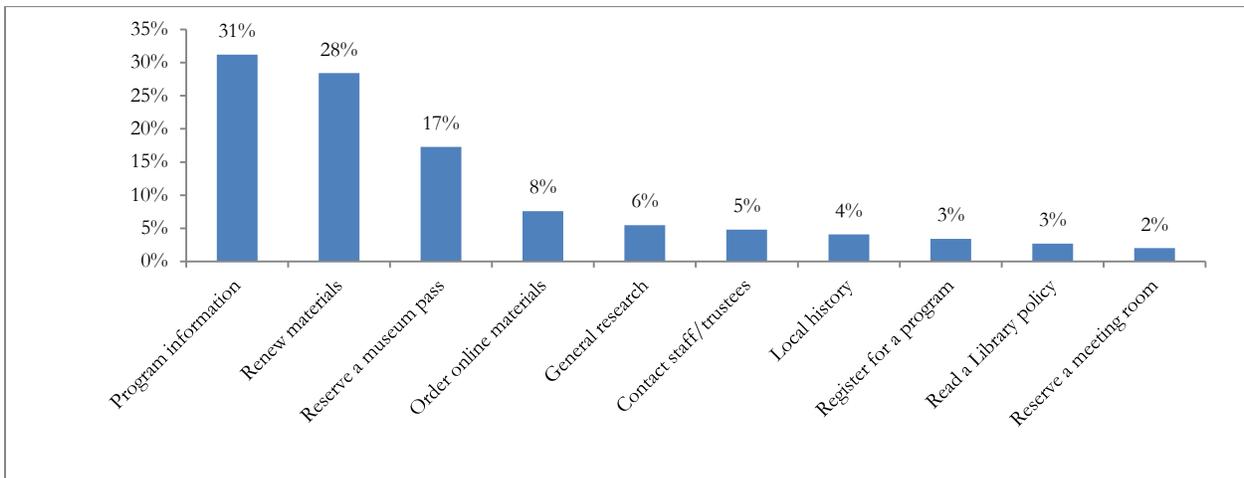


If so, were you able to find all of the information you were looking for?

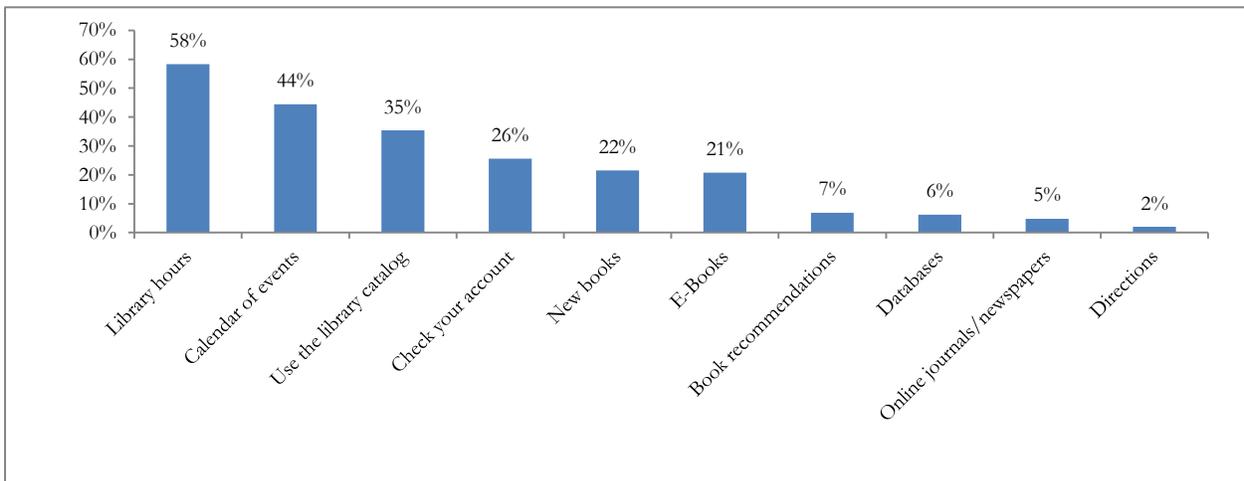


What was the reason for visiting the RPL website?

Perform an action:



Find information:



What specific improvements would you like to see added to the website?

- Organize content – 6
- More eBooks/ease of download – 4
- Make reservations for museum passes & meeting rooms – 3
- No Changes – 3
- Prompt updates – 2
- More information about programming – 2
- Ease of log on/ Password memory & user id vs. card # - 2
- Book Descriptions – 1
- Calendar – 2
- Compatibility with mobile devices – 1
- EBSCO Discovery Service – 1

What could the library do to become a greater asset to the community?

- Increase Hours – 19
- Doing a great job! – 14
- Increased programming – 13
  - Programs for kids – 4
- More books/ebooks – 3
- Improve customer service – 1
- Children's Literacy – 1
- Reduce Spending – 1
- More Facebook posts - 1
- Art Exhibits - 1

Are there any other helpful comments you wish to share with the Trustees?

- Great Job/Great staff – 10
- Same Hours – 3
- More Hours – 2
- Young Adult and/or SAT Prep course – 3
- More Facebook - 2
- Generate revenue/secure endowments – 1
- Raise books from bottom shelf – 1
- Cemetery program – 1
- More scientific journals - 1

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## ALA BILL OF RIGHTS

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The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.