

2021 Public Library Staff and Diversity Survey



Introduction

The Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), is conducting this survey to better understand library staff roles, hiring and retention practices, and equity, diversity, and inclusion work in public libraries across the nation. The *Public Library Staff and Diversity Survey* gathers information about staff and staff-related policies within your library system.

We ask that you respond to questions at the **library system** (administrative entity) level. Some questions ask about whether your library offers resources/services in "at least one location." In these instances, please note that **location** refers to a building that is usually open to the public and provides services to the community (e.g., lends books, offers public access to computers, etc.). Unless otherwise stated, your responses should reflect the **current situation** within your library system at the point in time when you are completing this survey.

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

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

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

Additional Survey Information

What type of information does this survey collect?

The Public Library Staff and Diversity Survey asks for information about your library's staff and policies and practices related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. The main sections on the survey are: Salaries and Hours; Library Roles; Staff Representation, Hiring, and Retention; and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Who should complete the survey?

One person should complete the survey on behalf of a single library system (administrative entity). Often that person is the library director, administrator, or data coordinator. However, you may need to work with the HR department that serves your library to complete some of these questions.

How do I enter my library's responses?

Log into your library's account at <https://librarybenchmark.org/>. Click on "Surveys" in the menu, and then you will see this survey listed under "Open Surveys." The survey will remain open through January 14, 2022.

Why should my library complete the survey?

Data about staffing and diversity are among the top requests PLA hears from public library leaders. Your participation will help make the results powerful and actionable for your library and library staff across the country. Your input will enable PLA and ALA to provide nationally representative data to engage and inform elected officials, the media, and funders about public library initiatives and staff needs. PLA also will share aggregate results widely with the field, develop tools for peer comparison, and plan relevant professional development opportunities. In addition, the survey questions may inspire new ideas for your library. The data we collect in 2021 will serve as a baseline and when we next ask these questions (in 2024), we will see how the field has evolved.

How long will it take?

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

How will the survey results be used?

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