Public Library Services for Strong Communities:
Results from PLA’s 2022 Survey

PLA webinar
July 11, 2023
Presenters

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Staff Training and Development Coordinator, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

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Director, Tualatin Public Library

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Public Library Association

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Project Manager, Data and Research
Public Library Association
Agenda

I. Introduction
II. 2022 Survey Results
III. Taking Action
IV. Opportunities for Engagement
V. Q&A
INTRODUCTION

Jerianne Thompson
PLA Annual Topical Surveys

Rotation of three surveys that complement other existing data collection efforts

Technology (2020)
Staff & Diversity (2021)
Services for Strong Communities (2022)
Public Library Services for Strong Communities Report
Results from the 2022 PLA Annual Survey

Report available from:
https://www.ala.org/pla/data/plasurveys
About the 2022 Survey

• Administered fall 2022
• All US public libraries invited to participate
• Response rate of 12.6%
• Results are weighted to account for differences between respondents and overall population
Strengths

• Most libraries provide programs and services to support literacy and civic engagement, such as summer reading and voter registration.
• Most libraries have partnerships with other organizations, supporting their work and community ties.

Challenges

• 40% of library buildings have not undergone major renovations in over two decades.
• Capacity – particularly funding and staffing – remains a persistent issue.
PLA Strategic Plan 2022-26

Professional Growth
PLA offers inclusive pipelines and pathways for the professional growth of all library workers.

Transformation
PLA works with and for public libraries as they evolve to become more responsive to and reflective of ever-changing community needs.

EDISJ
PLA centers equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in working with and for libraries as places of equitable opportunity.

Advocacy & Awareness
PLA is the national voice for championing public libraries as a public good.

Organizational Excellence
PLA is the most trusted and innovative public library membership organization.
2022 SURVEY RESULTS
Dan Hensley
Meeting Community Needs, *Sustainably*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage Currently Addressing</th>
<th>Percentage Planned for Future</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and supporting people with disabilities</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change and sustainability</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital equity</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development and job-seeker support</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecurity</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and educational achievement</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public health and wellbeing</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Services

Top government and support services:

- Referrals to social services (78.7%)
- Job and career services (77.5%)
- Filing unemployment (72.9%)
- Elections (68%)
- GED/diploma student support (58.7%)
Top Programs

Children
- Summer reading
- Early literacy
- STEAM

Teens
- Summer reading
- Games and gaming
- STEAM

Adults / All-Ages
- Book clubs
- Summer reading
- Art or music

99% of libraries have a summer reading program

City libraries are able to offer a wider variety of specialized programs
40.3% of library branches have not had major renovations since 2000 or earlier.
Program/Event Facilities

Physical spaces for programs or events

- Dedicated children’s space(s)
- Dedicated teen space(s)
- Fixed maker space
- Large meeting space or auditorium
- Mid-size meeting space
- Outdoor programming space
- Technology training space

Mobile programming facilities

- 17.5% Yes
- 82.5% No
Green or Energy-Saving Initiatives

- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Energy-efficient lighting systems
- High efficiency cooling
- High efficiency heating
- Net zero energy buildings
- Other onsite renewable energy
- Recycling
- Solar panels
- Stormwater management
- Water conservation
- Wind generator

Graph showing the percentage of initiatives currently in place and planned for future.
Evaluation

Outputs: 91.3%
Community needs: 65.1%
Patron satisfaction: 64.8%
Outcomes: 29.0%

www.projectoutcome.org
TAKING ACTION

Sara Goek
Advocacy

• Pandemic recovery
• Funding to increase capacity and improve facilities
• Increasing awareness of how libraries support community needs and resilience
• Increasing awareness of emerging roles, such as in workforce development and food security
Results for Action

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

In practice:
• Formal programs: free summer meals for children/youth, afterschool meals
• Partnerships with food banks

Resources:
• Urban Libraries Council white paper (2023)
• No Kid Hungry’s Center for Best Practices
• ALA Programming Librarian
Result: 60.3% of libraries report economic development and job seeker support as a community need they currently address and 20.7% say they plan to address it in future. Job and career services are offered as formal (9.1%) and informal (58.1%) support services, or both (10.3%). 23.8% of libraries have specific workforce development programs.

In practice:
- Standard services, such as reference services and technology access
- Specialized services, such as workshops and coaching
- Community hub services, such as job fairs and adult education courses

Resources:
- IMLS & COSLA Measures that Matter report
Renewable Energy

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

**In practice:**
- Seek federal and state funding or tax exemptions to help with upfront costs
- Use an online calculator to estimate long-term savings

**Resources:**
- Climate Program Portal
- US Green Building Council
- ALA SustainRT and the Sustainable Libraries Initiative
Learn More

• Read the survey reports: https://www.ala.org/pla/data/plasurveys
• Access data via Benchmark: librarybenchmark.org
ENGAGEMENT

Katina Jones
ABOS Survey

Partnership between ABOS, PLA, and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)

Questions cover the structure of outreach services within the library, as well as types of homebound services, outreach by mail, early literacy outreach, and other community services that libraries provide

Complete the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ABOS2023
2023 Technology Survey

Questions cover:
• Public Access Technology
• Infrastructure
• Digital Literacy and Training
• Staff Support and Budget for Technology
2023 Technology Survey

• Survey opens in September for 3 months
• All library directors will get an invitation via email and print
• Once it opens, find it in the “Surveys” page in your library’s Benchmark account at librarybenchmark.org
• Need help? Email plabenchmark@ala.org
LIBRARY METRICS AND TRENDS

The newest tool for data-driven planning and advocacy in libraries

librarybenchmark.org
Data sets include:

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

Background about Benchmark:
www.ala.org/pla/data/benchmark
Use Cases

- Children’s programming
- Facilities improvements
- Ebook readers for accessibility
- Hiring a language specialist
## Benchmark Access

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Public libraries have access to:</th>
<th>Free Access</th>
<th>Subscription</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLA annual surveys</td>
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<td>PLA annual survey reports with national results</td>
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<td>Your library’s responses to past PLA and PLDS surveys</td>
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<td>Selected data visualizations with peer comparisons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Account and contact management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data-related resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive data dashboards with 100+ unique visualizations of PLA, PLDS, IMLS, and census data</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custom report builder with historical metrics</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create custom peer groups for tailored benchmarking</td>
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Public Libraries

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

**Cost per year:**

- $400

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

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Group: Consortium / State Library Agency

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

**Cost per year:**

- $3000 for up to 10 libraries, and $200 for each additional library.

10% discount available for ALA organizational members.

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Corporate

Companies, vendors, or other organizations.

**Cost per year:**

- $1,800

10% discount available for ALA organizational members.
Finally, don’t forget to…

• Read the 2022 *Services for Strong Communities Report*

• Check out the data and resources at [librarybenchmark.org](http://librarybenchmark.org)

• Tell your colleagues: free PLA *webinar* on July 11

• Complete the *2023 Technology Survey* this fall!

Questions? Email [plabenchmark@ala.org](mailto:plabenchmark@ala.org)
THANK YOU!

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