

POLK COUNTY LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027



Polk County Library

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LIBRARY VALUES

GOOD STEWARDSHIP

The library is committed to responsible stewardship of all the resources with which we have been entrusted. We are accountable for ensuring the proper use of funds to deliver quality library services to the county.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The right of the community to information representing all points of view is essential, even when this information is controversial or offensive to others. The library endorses the American Library Association's Bill of Rights.

CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality is necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship.

EXCELLENT SERVICE

The library is committed to our patrons and is responsive to their service needs. The community's opinion and input are welcome in all areas of library service. We consider the impact on the patron in all decisions and strive for fair and equitable treatment of all in the community.

LITERACY AND LEARNING

The library is committed to being the focal point of learning and literacy in the community by providing a wide variety of materials, resources, and services to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs in our community.

GROWTH AND INNOVATION

The library is committed to continuous learning and innovations in the pursuit of excellence. We respond to present situations and anticipate future needs

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Polk County Library System is to improve and enrich the lives of our users through information and recreation. The Library values the citizens of Polk County and responds to their needs by providing clean and inviting buildings, well-organized and up-to-date collections, friendly professional service, and well-trained staff who are committed to the Library vision. Our vision is to be a thriving Library that is an integral part of the community.

COUNTY PROFILE

The Polk County Library serves a population of 32,149 residents. The county has experienced a 3.3% growth over the last decade, which is greater than the average of 2.5% growth for Missouri. Eighteen percent of the county is over the age of 65, and 23% is under the age of 18; both percentages are typical for Missouri. Twenty-two percent of the residents do not have in-home broadband access.

Almost 20% of the county are below the poverty level, far greater than the Missouri average of 13%. According to Kids Count, one quarter of Polk County children live in poverty with 62% receiving free or reduced school lunches. Polk County ranks 68th of Missouri's 115 counties in the economic well-being of its children.

Due the recent pandemic, unemployment has been volatile. However, it currently stands at 5.0 and is trending downward. While predominately rural, several industries have Polk County as their home (Tracker Boats and Missouri Prime Beef Packers among others). Southwest Baptist University and Bolivar Technical College are both located in Polk County. However, only 20% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, far lower than the 29% Missouri average and the 32% national average.

LIBRARY PROFILE

The Polk County Library (PCL) currently has four facilities: Bolivar (The Rayl Family Library), Humansville, Fair Play, and Morrisville.

RAYL FAMILY LIBRARY—BOLIVAR

Polk County first began offering services in Bolivar in the historic Carnegie Library in 1915. After almost 100 years, the building no longer met the needs of the patrons. Funded entirely with donations, the Rayl Family Library opened in 2001. This 13,489 square foot facility, which houses the administration of PCL, features 14 public computers, wireless internet access, meeting spaces, and 2 presentation systems in meeting spaces. Its current physical collection consists of 47,916 volumes.

HUMANSVILLE LIBRARY

Humansville began offering library services in 1934. Its present building was built in 2008 with an expansion in 2017 to add meeting room space. The 2,790 square foot facility features 5 public computers, wireless internet access, and a meeting space with a presentation system. Its current physical collection consists of 13,431 volumes.

FAIR PLAY LIBRARY

Fair Play began offering library services in 2016. The Library currently leases the building from the City of Fair Play. The 800 square foot facility features 4 public computers, wireless internet access, and a meeting space with television. Its current physical collection consists of 8,678 volumes.

MORRISVILLE LIBRARY

Morrisville began offering library services in 2014. The Library currently leases the building from Marion C. Early School. This 600 square foot facility features 3 public computers and wireless internet access. Its current physical collection consists of 6,058 volumes.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

There are several challenges that face the library in the coming years. The goal of a strategic plan is to help administration and the Library Board address these challenges and to set a path for the future.

FACILITIES CHALLENGES

All 4 locations are at maximum capacity of physical volumes. In layman's terms this means that for every item that the library purchases, something has to be removed from the collection. There is no room for growth of the collection. While all 4 locations are currently in good repair, constant maintenance and repair is required to sustain the current conditions.

Besides the need for collection expansion, the Bolivar Library requires more space for meeting rooms and programs. The programs at this location frequently have more participants than the fire codes allow.

The Morrisville Library is located in town with little commercial activity to draw residents. The facility does not have meeting room spaces so programs are held in the main area of the library. The Library is located in a trailer which adds to the utilities cost of the branch.

Fair Play and Humansville Libraries are better situated. Facilities are in good repair with meeting spaces but both are small with no room for additional materials.

COLLECTION CHALLENGES

As stated in the previous section, all facilities are at maximum capacity. However, the collection is aging. A recent age evaluation of the collection showed that 50% of the Adult Non-Fiction and 37% of the Children's Non-Fiction do not meet current age standards for their section. The age of the collection has been improving over the past 4 years. In 2017, 63% of adult and 50% children collection was outdated; this improvement has been accomplished by purchasing more material and discarding outdated or obsolete material. However, reaching a standard of 75% current materials would take approximately \$100,000, keeping the collection at its current size.

Another stressor on the collection is the increase in online circulation. In the last 3 years, circulation of e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and other downloadable formats has increased by 82%. While this increase is typically good news, an online item costs significantly more than its corresponding physical copy. More funds will need to be budgeted for this content.

CIRCULATION CHALLENGES

Overall circulation has decreased in the last 3 years by 35%. Although a good portion of this drop was due the pandemic of 2020, the library was seeing declines of 3% per year prior to 2020. PCL must work to regain its base patronage.

TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

In a rapidly changing environment, it is a struggle to keep up with technology demands. While computer usage has been decreasing, wireless internet usage has skyrocketed. This increase has put a strain on the bandwidth limits that the Library can afford. In recent years, PCL has upgraded the Internet infrastructure and added more bandwidth to Bolivar and Humansville Libraries. Fair Play Library needs more bandwidth; Morrisville Library is also in need of more bandwidth, but more funds would have to be budgeted.

PCL does have a schedule to replace end-of-life computers using grants through the MO State Library and will continue to replace equipment as necessary.

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES

Prior to 2020, the Library was seeing increases of over 50% per year in programming attendance. All locations, especially the Bolivar Library, do not have the space for some of the larger programs, and attendance had to be restricted with registration. However, the Library will now have to rebuild its audience for in-person programs.

The Library is upgrading its presentation system and sound system to the main meeting room in the Bolivar Library thanks to a grant. The seamless ability to have virtual and internet programs is becoming more vital to the role of the library.

Many libraries have created makerspaces, a space designed and dedicated to hands-on-learning and creativity. The current facilities have no room for makerspaces, and such spaces require materials that can become expensive.

FUNDING CHALLENGES

While PCL is in good financial shape and has run a surplus for the last 4 years, several obstacles are on the horizon that could potentially consume the surplus in a short time span.

The first obstacle is the minimum wage increase to \$12.00 by 2023. The area has seen wages rise faster than the minimum wage increase. Because PCL is a tax funded entity and is a free service; rising wages have put a strain on the library budget. Currently, wages and benefits are 65% of expenses. By the time the library pays for operating expenses (utilities, Internet, office supplies), the only discretionary spending the library has is materials. However, if the library decreases materials, why are we in business?

The Bolivar Library is also in dire need of expansion; while some funds have been set aside for a building project, it will take additional funds to complete such a large project. As mentioned in the collection section, the need for more downloadable content will increase the materials budget at a time when extra funds will not exist. As mentioned in the programming section, updated programming space will also require funding.

BENCHMARK COMPARISON

Four single county library systems that were of similar populations were chosen to compare statistics. Data was compiled using the FY19 Public Library Survey. Polk County Library data used elsewhere in this document may not be the same as the benchmark comparison.

Library	Population	Income	Staff FTE	Hours Open per year
Dunklin County Library	31,953	\$ 834,806	11.80	10,608
Lebanon-LaClede County Library	35,571	\$ 768,384	13.00	3,432
Polk County Library	31,137	\$ 850,145	12.18	9,308
Stone County Library	32,202	\$ 663,015	8.20	7,904
Webster County Library	35,252	\$ 550,644	8.50	4,836

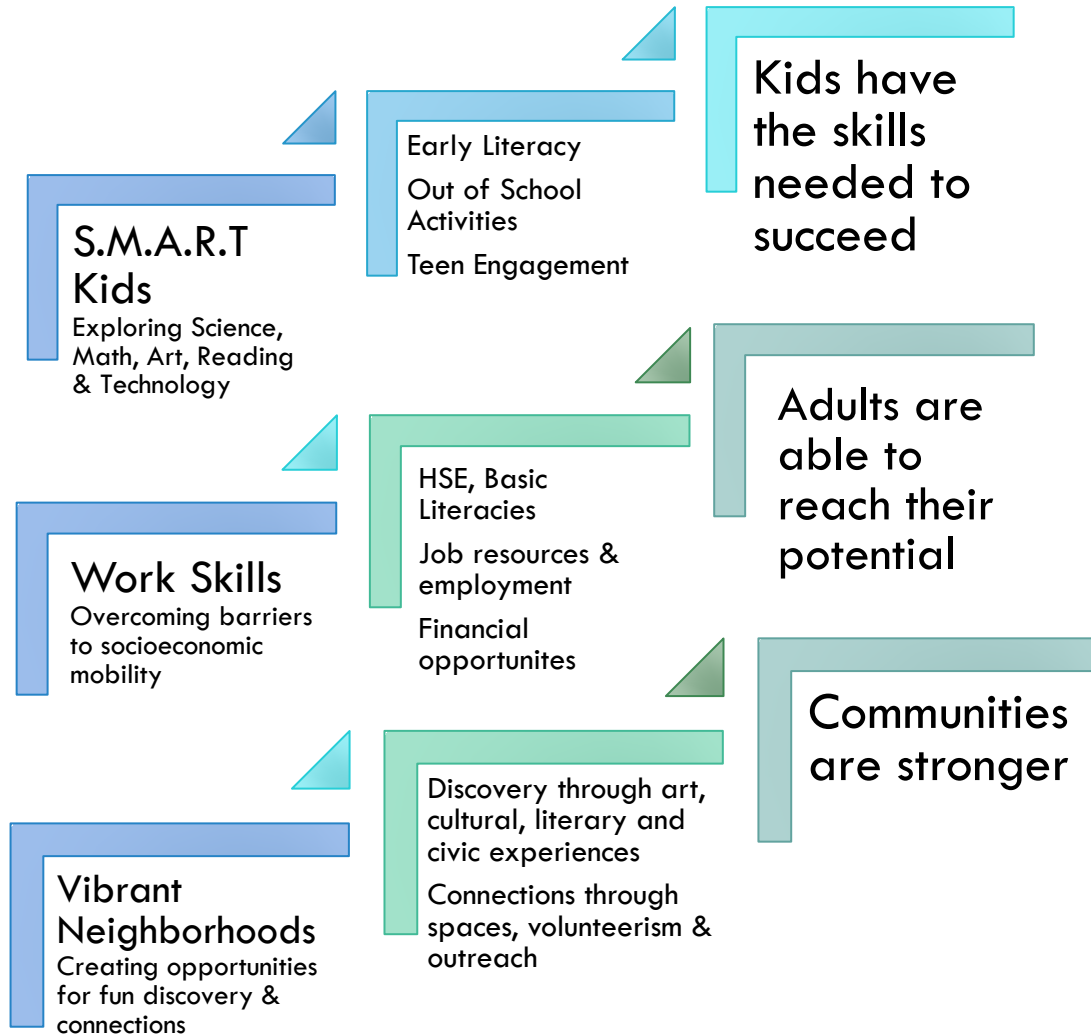
Library	Registered Borrowers	Annual Library Visits	Program Attendance	Uses of Computers
Dunklin County Library	21,465	90,052	3,010	61,583
Lebanon-LaClede County Library	28,620	139,138	23,255	22,084
Polk County Library	17,077	94,418	6,397	22,403
Stone County Library	8,998	45,183	4,233	11,714
Webster County Library	10,291	91,862	5,630	12,550

Library	Collection Expense	Total Collection	Total Circulation	Circ per Capita
Dunklin County Library	\$ 66,298	336,676	295,424	9.25
Lebanon-LaClede County Library	\$ 121,496	164,123	177,627	4.99
Polk County Library	\$ 90,206	163,937	177,825	5.71
Stone County Library	\$ 80,072	131,827	35,397	1.10
Webster County Library	\$ 63,076	147,854	135,222	3.84

PCL compares favorably with other libraries of similar service areas. In most categories, PCL ranks in the top 1 or 2. There is room for improvement in the number of registered borrowers (library card holders). Only 55% of county residents have a library card; statewide average is 60%. Total collection is another area that could improve; this number does incorporate digital content.

FOCUS AREAS

Library staff analyzed data from the community scan, library scan, patron and material data from our ILS (circulation program) and a community survey. This process established three strategic focus areas where the Polk County Library can have the greatest impact on the residents of Polk County.



S.M.A.R.T. KIDS

S.M.A.R.T. Kids connects youth with opportunities that inspire curiosity in Science, Math, Art, Reading and Technology at the library, ensuring they have the skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century. Youth services staff, community volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to develop S.M.A.R.T. Kids programs, focusing on three age groups: Early Childhood (0-5), School-aged (6-12) and Teens (13-17).

WORK SKILLS

Work Skills provides educational opportunities and job seeking services that address obstacles to socioeconomic mobility and employability, ensuring adults are able to advance their lives and reach their potential. Adult services staff, community volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to develop and enhance ESL (English as a Second Language), HSE (High School Equivalency), Basic Literacies (reading, numeracy and computer skills), job readiness, employment and financial empowerment resources.

VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

Vibrant Neighborhoods creates opportunities to connect with each other and the library through art, cultural, literary and civic experiences that make communities stronger. Community engagement staff, volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to enhance library-hosted and community-hosted cultural events.

STRATEGIC GOALS



STRATEGIC GOAL: OPERATIONS

GOAL: MANAGE RESOURCES TO ENSURE BUILDINGS ARE WELCOMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND LIBRARY STAFF ARE EQUIPPED TO PROMOTE S.M.A.R.T. KIDS, WORK SKILLS, AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: LIBRARY BUILDINGS WILL RECEIVE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ENHANCE VISUAL APPEAL AND CREATE A MORE CONDUCIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Expand and reorganize Bolivar's children's area to include a dedicated child-friendly area for children's programming, maker spaces, more educational and imaginative toys, and craft area; enclose the children's area at Bolivar to maintain a quieter volume in the library.
- Allocate space for adult learning including literacy, computer help, job search/workforce assistance, and lifelong-learning makerspaces.
- Evaluate the reorganization of all facilities to create more seating, quiet study areas, and improved functionality.
- Improve the atmosphere to present a more inviting teen area for after-school hang-out, gaming, programs, etc.
- Expand Bolivar Library for more meeting and programming spaces, and for more efficient staff areas.
- Evaluate shelving for library materials by considering the update shelving style to create more usable shelf space for materials.
- Replace limited-access computers in children's section with digital early literacy stations.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: LIBRARY GROUNDS WILL RECEIVE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ENHANCE VISUAL APPEAL, OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING SPACE, AND AFTER-HOURS WI-FI ACCESS

- Explore adding a story walk path, a "reading garden" with shade and outdoor seating, and/or a playground with gymnasium or interactive learning equipment to encourage the usage of outdoor library spaces.
- Expand outdoor seating options for patrons for use of the Wi-Fi network and providing more benches or tables on the library grounds.
- Relocate the Bolivar book drop so that patrons can return items from their vehicle.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: MAINTAIN CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE OF LIBRARY SPACES

- Explore cleaning contract services.
- Evaluate maintenance needs of each facility yearly.
- Build money in budget to cover more extensive maintenance.
- Inspect all facilities monthly for cleanliness and maintenance.
- Replace carpet and paint interior of Humansville library.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: INCREASE TOTAL HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND CORE LIBRARY COMPETENCIES TRAINING BY 10% ANNUALLY

- Set up a tracking system for all professional development.
- Include section on professional development in annual personnel performance evaluation
- Schedule more conferences for staff as funds allow.

- Hold monthly circulation staff meetings in small in-person or virtual groups.
- Provide basic library technology training to new staff. New staff will be trained in basic troubleshooting approaches: checking connections of cables at ports, using “task manager” to close programs, restarting devices, etc.
- Connect technology-challenged staff with training opportunities to improve basic computer skills in specific areas.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 5: EVALUATE ALL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR BETTER ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

- Evaluate workflow of circulation staff for better efficiency.
- Hire possible additional staff:
 - Bolivar Library assistant staff
 - Bolivar children’s department staff during peak hours
 - Part time marketing position
 - Environmental services/janitorial/maintenance staff member

STRATEGIC GOAL: COLLECTION & SUPPORT

GOAL: DELIVER AND MAINTAIN MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY TO ENSURE LIBRARY STAFF CAN PROMOTE S.M.A.R.T. KIDS, WORK SKILLS, AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: A TECHNOLOGY PLAN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE UPDATED TECHNOLOGICAL SERVICES.

- Assess the budget and the needs of the community for the acquisition of new technology programs, software, and/or equipment.
- Create an inventory of technology, including purchase date, maintenance issues, upgrades for devices.
- Create a technology plan for future technology that includes updates for library technology on a cycle using age, frequency of maintenance, and functionality as evaluation criteria.
- Seek out grant opportunities to fund cyclical technology updates.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: INCREASE PUBLICATION AGE OF NONFICTION COLLECTION TO 65% CURRENT MATERIALS BY FY27

- Weed each section of the library collection each year.
- Purchase current library material.
- Conduct age evaluations yearly to monitor areas that are not meeting standards.
- Look for deficiencies in the collection and purchase items as needed.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: INCREASE THE CIRCULATION OF MATERIALS TO BETTER MEET PATRON DEMAND BY 5% ANNUALLY

- Promote Missouri Evergreen, including app, and continue to provide patrons the items needed through Interlibrary loan.
- Investigate reciprocal borrowing agreement with Cedar County and other ME libraries.
- Offer a broader range of materials for a “library of things” in the community; circulate various usable items (e.g. tools, cookware, educational toys, gardening equipment/seed share, etc.).
- Add more materials, technology, and resources for disabled or impaired persons (and caregivers).
- Promote materials with displays, Facebook posts, and other methods.

- Create reader's advisory programs or similar programs that will increase the usage of materials.
- Provide a more inclusive collection of materials and resources.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: INCREASE THE LIBRARY'S DIGITAL BRANCH AND RESOURCES USAGE BY 5% ANNUALLY

- Increase budget for digital resources, as funds allow.
- Create workshops on library digital resources.
- Create a Book-a-Librarian program for one-on-one training of library resources.
- Evaluate current and future digital resources yearly.
- Promote digital resources with targeted marketing.
- Offer more online support and resources for homeschooling parents and children.

STRATEGIC GOAL: PATRON EXPERIENCE

GOAL: DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT PROVIDE PATRONS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND PROVIDE LEISURE TIME THROUGH THE LIBRARY AND ITS PARTNERS

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: ON THE NEXT COMMUNITY SURVEY, MORE RESIDENTS WILL RESPOND THAT THEY ENCOUNTERED KNOWLEDGE OF LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FROM PLACES OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

- Create a marketing and outreach plan to improve publicity and visibility of library programs, services, materials, and resources.
- Assess the performance of the advertisement efforts of specific programs and initiatives at designated time(s) in the year.
- Plan more off-site programs and community events.
- Increase visibility by improving marketing, increasing networking, and establishing community partnerships in more towns and locations in Polk County.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: INCREASE LIBRARY PROGRAM ATTENDANCE COUNT BY 10% ANNUALLY

- Provide more school-related services and programs for tutoring and homeschooling needs.
- Provide more career prep, workforce development and lifelong learning services and programs.
- Provide more STEAM programs for all age groups.
- Provide more community programs focusing on the Art in STEAM.
- Provide more passive or asynchronous programming.
- Explore new in-house library services like passports and photo digitization.
- Explore the purchase of gaming systems for programming.
- Evaluate the prize structure for reading incentive programs like Summer Reading Program.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE LIBRARY CARD HOLDER BY 5% ANNUALLY

- Promote library cards to all schools every year, including educator cards and ecards
- Increase participation at community festivals.
- Lobby Missouri Evergreen to change policy on expiration dates.
- Promote Library Card Month with activities/gifts for those who sign up.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: EXPAND PROGRAMMING AND SERVICE OPTIONS TO UNDERSERVED DEMOGRAPHICS AND PATRON WITH ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES

- Explore the formation of a youth advisory committee to develop programming for teen patrons.
- Increase programming opportunities for tween and school age library patrons.
- Increase development of programs, or redesign existing programs, with options for special needs communities: children with sensory or developmental disorders, adult patrons with special needs or accessibility challenges, etc.
- Expand service options for those who do not have access to technology or Internet.

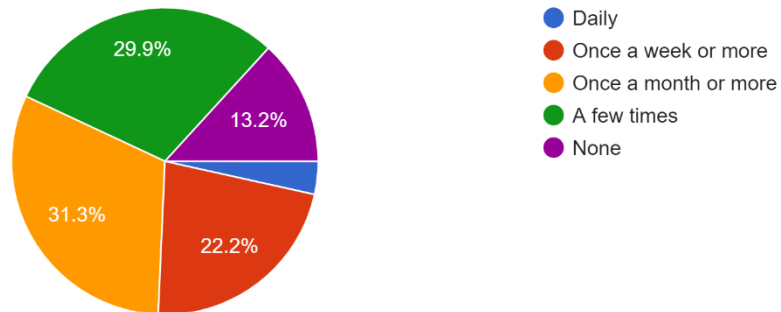
APPENDIX

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Polk County Library 2021 Community Survey

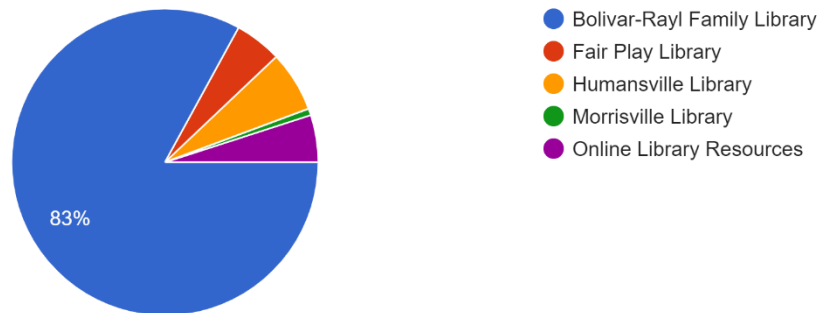
How often have you/your family visited a Polk County Library facility in past 12 months.

144 responses



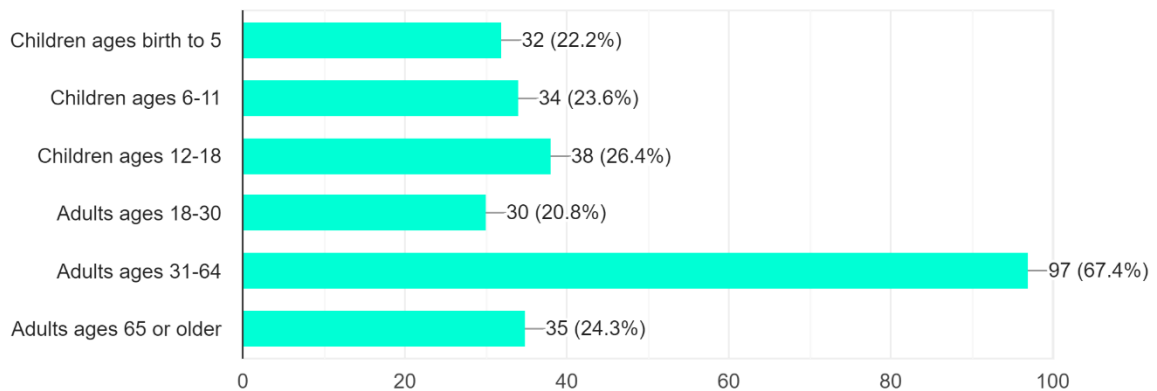
Library Branch Most Often Used

141 responses



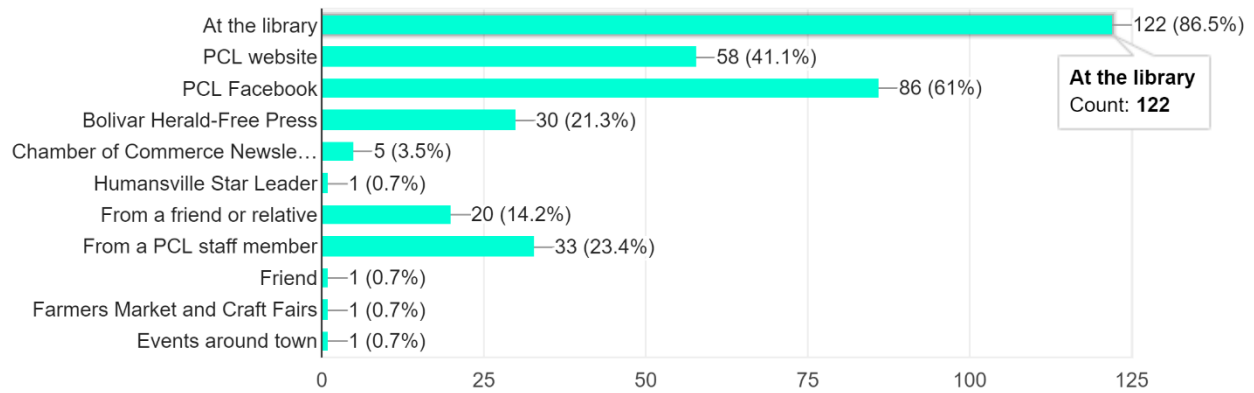
What age groups currently live in your household? Check all that apply

144 responses



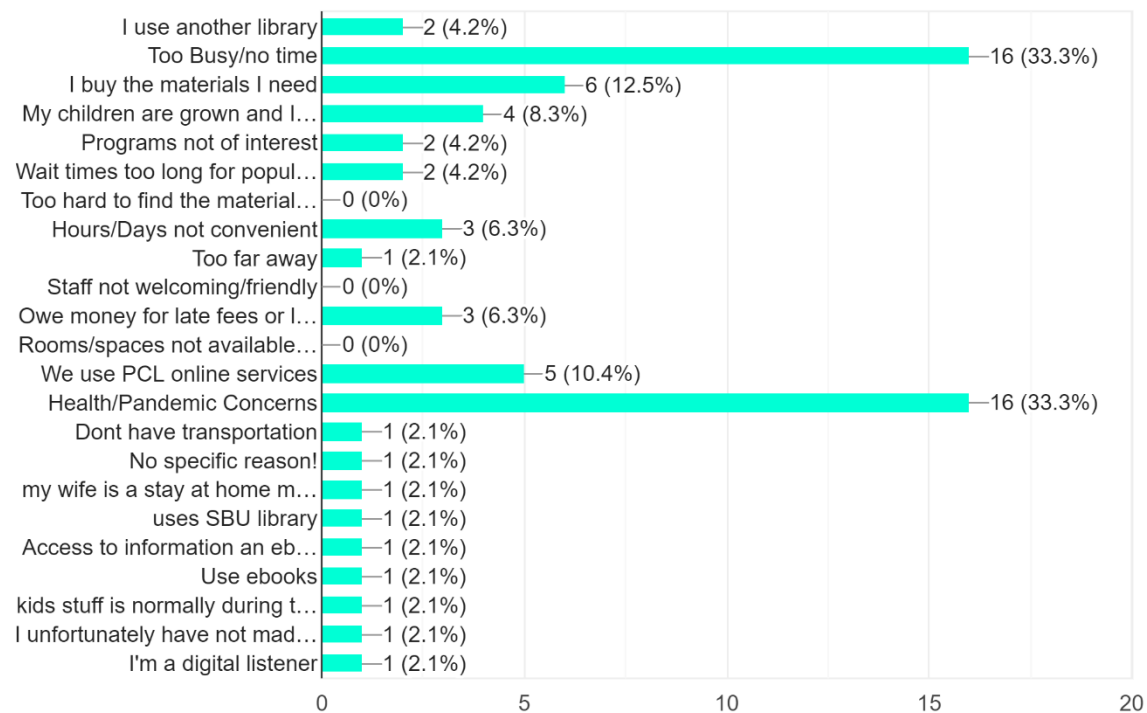
Where have you encountered information about PCL services and programs? Check all that apply

141 responses

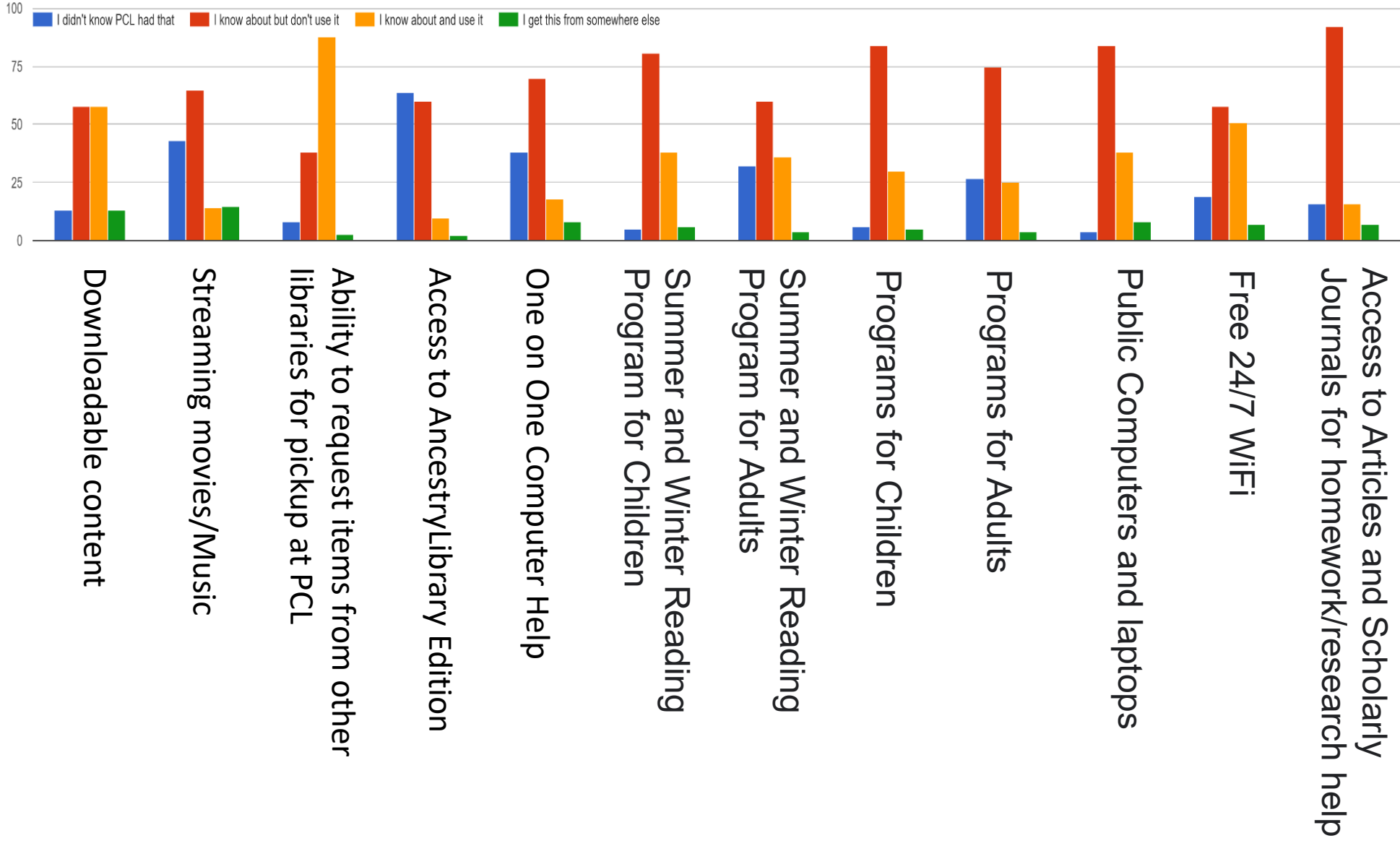


If you have not visited our library in the 6 months, please let us know why (check all that apply)

48 responses



On the following questions, Please indicate which statement best fits your experience with resources at PCL



Facilities: The library is currently considering expansion or new locations. Which location fits your needs the best?

136 responses



Please list any services or programs you would like PCL to offer:

(3) homeschooling resources

(2) Maker Space

Drive through window for picking up reserved books

An educational toy lending library

Sensory kits- headphones, weighted lap pads, etc.

gardening/seedshare

Adult Programs

(6) book clubs (evening, movie/book adaptation)

Author readings or visits

Sign language class

different computer programs, ie quick books, Facebook, things like that.

offer classes for adults in learning more art, music etc

Children Programs

after school tutoring

Homeschooling events

Sensory friendly programming

disabled children programs

playing musical instruments

Any extra children's programs would be great

More Crafts for tweens

In your opinion or experience, where could PCL use improvement

Building:

- (2) self check out at the Bolivar Branch
- reading areas for adults, coffee bar
- (4) Remodel, especially of the children's area...

I know space is limited but a full designated child's room too would be great. One where you see through the door/window which will help with noise from them.

- If Bolivar is expanded, a drive thru pickup window for holds?
- more small private rooms
- Expanded children's section
- And 4 year old's request- PLEASE bring back the fish tank!
- A pleasant hope location would be good

Adult Programs

- adult programs
- evening programs
- Would be nice to have some free classes in person/online

Children Programs

- More programming for children
- After school tutoring
- Summer Reading Program prizes-better completion prizes for adults and kids
- More of a reading focus in the Summer/Winter Reading Program (so participants can complete it by just reading, without having to do other activities/programs).

Materials

- (3) More graphic novels, anime
- More complete series
- (2) More audiobooks
- (3) More DVD's
- board books could be improved
- More materials
- Audiobooks & ebook library with BIPOC women authors
- Increase classics;
- (2) More large print
- Your children's supply of books should be at least twice as large!
- get new fiction books faster
- More digital books available. Love the audiobooks you have available.

- (5) Later or Expanded Hours
- (3) Publicity to the community

Miscellaneous Comments:

The intake process, I have brought books back and then been told weeks later I had books) movies over due, and DID NOT. And this was not a once or twice thing. It honestly keeps me away from library as often as I'd like.

Becoming more engaging with the community. Polk county is expanding and as you're considering the possibility of expansion, now is the time to engage and connect with the communities that make up the area. Understand the community, figure out what the needs are, tackle tough issues (social, political, local, national, and global), and be that resource of legitimate and unbiased information for the people.

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Make it easier to not have to have card on person when using facility services and not have to renew membership often.