

Key Takeaways

Key Demographic info

- 436 respondents completed the survey. We needed 374 responses for a statistically significant result at a 95% confidence level. Our result exceeded that level for the MRSPL population served.
- 74% of respondents live in the City of Falls Church, 18% in Fairfax County (not City of Falls Church), 6% in Arlington and 1% in Alexandria. Other areas represented included McLean/Tysons and Brentwood.
- Most age groups were well represented - 26% were 65 years or older, 24% were 35-44, 18% were 45-54, 10% were 25-34, 15% were 55-64, 2% were under 19, and 1% were 19-24.
- Racial diversity was present in the respondents. The Black or African American and Asian populations were slightly underrepresented segments of the population. The Hispanic population was also somewhat underrepresented in the survey results. All racial groups found in Falls Church were represented and the results overall were typical of what we see in terms of diversity in our surveys.

Library Activity

- 72% of respondents visit the library once a month or more often, 36% visit weekly or more often.
- Of those who don't visit the physical building, over 33% are virtual users, 18% use a different library, 15% say parking is too challenging, 13% never think of the library as an option, 13% prefer to buy and own their own material, and 13% don't live in the area.
- 95% have a library card, of those who don't, most are new to the area or planning to use the library soon.
- Respondents were heavily focused on using the library for materials with 92% using the Library to find a book or magazine and 30% were finding DVDs, CDs and videos.
- Other primary uses were attending a library program (27%), attending a meeting (14%), and a place to escape uncomfortable weather (13%).
- Of those who offered Other Reasons for visiting many cited bringing their children/grandchildren to use the children's area, having a nice "third" place to read or hang out in, and attending book clubs or other programs.

COVID-19 and the Library

- As the pandemic recedes, 69% of respondents indicated they planned to attend an in-person Library program of some size. 4% indicate they prefer virtual programs. Only 6% indicated they didn't plan to attend programs for quite some time and 20% say they don't attend programs.

How people describe the Mary Riley Styles Public Library

- 98% (strongly agreed or agreed) found the Library to be a clean and well maintained place, 97% felt the Library is an important part of the community, 97% found the location to be convenient, and 97% saw it as a physically comfortable place to visit.
- The area people agreed less strongly with was the Library having adequate parking for my needs with a 55% approval (29% strongly agreed and 26% agreed, 9% didn't know or had no opinion on the subject and 25% somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed), the library's hours being adequate for my needs with a 71% approval (39% strongly agreed and 32% agreed, 22% somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed), and having a collection adequate for my needs had an approval of 76% (41% strongly agreed and 35% agreed, and 15% somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed). Of the 16 areas 15 had over 70% positive agreement on the different aspects of the Library.

- There were several comments regarding how much people appreciate the Library and the staff as well as some suggestions for improvements. Some of the other comments have to do with thoughts about the collection, hours of operation, and parking among other comments.

What are the most important issues facing the community?

- The most mentioned issues were not surprisingly associated with affordability of housing in the community. Concerns included keeping up with the community services needed to support the growth, controlling and planning the growth, maintaining a sense of community as the demographics of the community change and some of the environmental concerns that are coming with community growth.
- There were a wide variety of thoughts around different aspects of the Library. Several comments were concerned with maintaining an adequate selection of books.
- Community infrastructure was often mentioned. It was noted that safe walking and bike routes are a concern and there is not adequate public transportation. This issue makes it more difficult to access needed resources especially as the community grows. Increasing levels of traffic and road construction were often mentioned.
- There was some concern around equity, diversity and inclusion issues with many supporting that more efforts need to be made particularly as the community grows in diversity.
- As with many other communities, concerns were also raised around the economy and community funding. Rising taxes and inflation were often mentioned.
- Maintaining a quality educational system was an additional concern.

Library's role in the community

- 9 of the 13 areas had at least 75% or more of the respondents either Strongly Agreeing or Somewhat Agreeing that these items were part of the Library's role in the community.
- It's very clear that the community sees the library taking a major role in Youth Education Support and Promoting the Value of Reading, Services, Enrichment and Entertainment for Children and Youth, Providing Access to General Technology, with Life-long Learning, and Culture and Leisure not falling far behind.
- Areas with less interest were Health and Wellness Activities and Support which scored 42%, Social Work Services in the Library Building, and Providing Access to New and Emerging Technologies which scored 43% and 60% respectively.

Important Library Services

- 17 of the 17 services on the list had 70% or more of the respondents who felt that they were services considered Must Have or things that would be Nice to Have.
- Children's Programs was considered the most important service offered, followed by Digital Content and Small Group Meeting Spaces.
- Services seen as less important were 24/7 Access to Materials, Creative Spaces or Maker Labs, and Notary Services.
- Other services mentioned most often as potentially missing: several comments around the collection and being sure to continue to focus on the books and other physical materials, as well as being sure to keep up with e-materials, ideas for non-traditional materials, many specific program suggestions, a few comments on the spaces, ideas on outreach and partnerships.

Library Programs

- 34% of respondents indicated that they have attended adult programs at the library, 45% attended children's programs, 6% teen programs, and 7% multi-generational programs.
- Most commonly reported reasons for not attending programs: 19% of those who didn't attend programs indicated they were Unaware of the programs available, 10% were Too Busy to attend, 8% indicated they did not find the content relevant to them.

- 73% of respondents indicated program times worked for them. Other suggestions were evenings and weekends for working adults and kids with working parents and daytime programs for seniors and homeschool students.
- Most requested programs are Book Clubs/Discussion Groups, Summer Reading, Author Talks/Programs, Storytimes, Afterschool Kids Programs, Winter Reading Program, Programs for Older Adults, and How-to Classes/Workshops; and least requested on the survey were Video gaming/ E-sports/ E-tournaments, Social Media Apps, Anime/Manga Club, Small Business/Start-ups/Entrepreneurship, Comic-con & Fandom Programs, Teen Advisory Group, and Cooking/Food.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- This was a topic that many people didn't feel they were very informed on so there were large percentages of Neutral and Don't Know Responses.
- The Library seems to be doing the best with Materials where 59% agreed that they were being addressed. The Facility was similar with 60% agreeing it was being addressed.
- Areas with the lowest levels of agreement were Diversity of Staff with 31%, Community Partnerships with 36%, and Outreach with 40%.
- Feelings were that the Library's main roles in equity, diversity, and inclusion issues are Materials that address EDISJ, Education, and a Place for Community Engagement.
- 10% of respondents felt that the Library doesn't have a role in these issues.

What ways do you finding out about prefer to find out about library or community news and events and how do you currently do so?

- The most preferred methods for finding out about library news and events include the Library Website, Emails from the Library, and the Electronic newsletter via website or social media.
- Radio and Newsletter Mailed to my Home were the least preferred information channels.

Other Comments

- There were many very positive comments about the staff, the Library and how they are appreciated as a community resource. The community appreciate that the Library has so much to offer.
- Numerous comments were made about the collection of materials the library offers. Some were very satisfied with the collection while others wanted to see more books and other materials. There were also suggestions regarding the addition of non-traditional materials.
- There were specific program suggestions for both children's/family programs and general programs
- There are concerns about library hours, additional service suggestions and a few comments on the spaces.