



# Yolo County Library Stakeholder Survey Executive Summary

November 2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

This report presents findings from three stakeholder surveys conducted by the Yolo County Library (YCL) in 2019, including a customer survey (Patron Survey), a survey of Library staff (Staff Survey), and a set of interviews with Yolo County community organization leaders (Community Leaders Survey). The purpose of these stakeholder surveys is to inform a new strategic plan. As part of this process, YCL Leadership seeks to ensure that prioritization of Library activities and allocation of resources reflect the wishes and needs of the diverse individuals and communities throughout Yolo County.

### Methodology

The YCL system serves approximately 160,963 residents who call Yolo County home. More than 42,747 individuals are YCL patrons (i.e. Library cardholders). For the Patron Survey, an email with an online survey link was sent to 42,747 YCL cardholders. The survey was offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. The email open rate was 58% and a total of 2,346 individuals completed the Patron Survey. The Staff Survey was sent to all YCL employees (~ 50 individuals) and completed by 47 staff members. The Community Leaders Survey was conducted through interviews (later transcribed) with 24 individuals who lead or represent County-focused community organizations.

As with all surveys of this nature, there are limitations to the dataset. While the Staff Survey and Community Leaders Survey had close to 100% participation rates and involved significantly smaller ( $n \leq 50$ ) populations to survey, the Patron Survey consisted of a large population ( $n > 161,000$ ) that was more challenging to reach. As the Patron Survey was voluntary, there was a chance that those who participated in this survey may have had shared characteristics (economically, socially, or other demographic traits) while those who did not respond may have had similar characteristics as well. While the survey was sent to all Library cardholders, it is worth noting that those who responded to the survey were, presumably, more likely to use the Library given their inclination to respond to the survey and offer feedback. Additionally, since the Patron Survey was sent via email, those who responded are likely to be individuals with internet access and time available to complete the survey. Readers are asked to note these self-selection and nonresponse biases as they review the report's findings.

### Profile of Respondents

In total, 2,346 Library cardholders completed the Patron Survey. The Staff Survey was taken by 47 Library staff members, most of whom were permanent (i.e. not "extra help") employees across all the YCL Library branches. A total of 24 community organization leaders were interviewed for the Community Leaders Survey. Naturally, this report's focus is on patrons' responses as this group represents the Library's "customers." Table 1 shows a breakdown of stakeholders surveyed by survey and respondent type.

Table 1: YCL Stakeholder Survey Participants

SURVEY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONDENT TYPE
Patron Survey	2,346	YCL cardholders (survey offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian)
Staff Survey	47	Staff across YCL branches
Stakeholder Survey	24	County-based community organization leaders

### Perception and Use of Library Services

- 94% of Library patrons surveyed agreed that YCL is important to them and their loved ones.
- 96% of patrons surveyed reported that they visit the Library in person or use its free services.
- For the 565 patrons (out of 2,346 total respondents) who said that they rarely or never visit or use the Library, the three most frequently selected reasons were:
  1. The Library branch hours are not convenient (17%).
  2. Patrons prefer to buy their own books and materials (17%).
  3. The Library does not have the materials that are needed or wanted (16%).
- The Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch Library is used significantly more than other YCL branches (67% of patrons surveyed); this is expected given that Davis is the Library’s most populous service area. After that, nearly one-fifth of respondents (17%) said they visit the Arthur F. Turner Community Library and 10% of respondents reported that they use the other YCL branches as their primary library.
- The data reveal that, across all age range groups and branches, Library use among patrons is high, with more than half of patrons visiting their primary branch at least 1-3 times per month. Overall, 59% of respondents reported that they visit the Library very often (4 or more times per month) or often (1-3 times per month). A slightly higher proportion of patrons from the Esparto Regional Library (61%), Winters Community Library (63%), Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch Library (63%), and Knights Landing Branch Library (61%) said they visit their Library very often or often while a somewhat smaller proportion of respondents said they visit the Yolo Branch Library (48%) and Arthur F. Turner Community Library (48%) very often or often. The age group that reported visiting their primary branch most frequently was the 35-49 age range group (64%) followed by the 65+ age range group (62%); the 0-17 age range group (58%); the 50-64 age range group (57%); and then the 18-34 age range group (50%).



- Three-quarters of the 47 staff members surveyed (74%) agreed that the YCL provides services and resources that meet community needs.
- Almost two-third of survey respondents (56%) reported that they would pay additional taxes to expand Library hours and services.

### **Library Environment and Resources: Perceptions of Patrons and Staff**

- Over 90% of patrons surveyed agreed that the Library is easy to get to (94%); they are treated well by Library staff (93%); and they feel safe and welcome when visiting the Library (92%). After that, 88% of Library patrons agreed that it is easy to find what they need at the Library; 81% of patrons agreed that they value the programs (for all ages) offered at the Library; and 81% of patrons agreed that the Library is an important place for the community to meet.
- Survey data reveal that the Library offers a wide range of services that are important to patrons. Demand for services transcends branches and age groups. Overall, patrons most frequently indicated that the book collection is an important service to them (92%) followed by hours of operation (87%); staff assistance (82%); staff knowledge (82%); Wi-Fi in the Library (73%); online databases (70%); computers in the Library (62%); programs (60%); eBook and eAudiobook collections (60%); adult and family literacy (58%); services and materials offered in a language other than English (48%); children’s story times (48%); volunteer opportunities (48%); DVD and CD collections (45%); job search and career assistance (45%); children’s play spaces (45%); meeting rooms (35%); study rooms (35%); and then magazine and newspaper collections (33%). Each of the 19 Library services listed in the survey question are used and valued by at least one-third of patrons.

Of note, compared to other age groups, a significantly greater proportion of patrons in the 0-17 age group indicated that the following Library services are important to them:

1. Services and materials offered in a language other than English (72% of patrons in the 0-17 age group versus 44%-60% of patrons from other age groups).
2. Volunteer opportunities at the Library (74% of patrons in the 0-17 age group versus 46%-58% of patrons from other age groups).
3. Computers in the Library (78% of patrons in the 0-17 age group versus 62%-68% of patrons from other age groups).
4. Study rooms at the Library (80% of patrons ages 0-17 verses 30%-50% of patrons from other age groups).

- More than half of the 46 staff members responding (54%) agreed that the YCL facilities are safe, clean, and inviting.
- In terms of non-English offerings, two-thirds of staff members surveyed (63%) said that services and collections in Spanish are adequate. Fewer than half surveyed (45%) agreed that Chinese-language services and collections are adequate and only 34% of staff members agreed that the YCL provides adequate services and resources in Russian.
- Over two-thirds of staff members surveyed agreed that the Library meets the needs of: children (89%); families (83%); preschoolers (83%); infants and toddlers (83%); adults (79%); students (68%); and seniors (68%). To a lesser extent, those surveyed said the Library meets the needs of English language learners (66%); online Library users (64%); tweens (55%); job seekers (54%); and users with basic technology needs (53%).
- Fewer than half of the staff members surveyed agreed that the Library meets the needs of the following user groups: teachers (47%); teens (43%); users seeking citizenship/immigration resources (40%); users with special needs (36%); users with advanced technological needs (30%); and business owners (13%).
- Fewer than one-third of staff members surveyed (30%) agreed that Library users are well informed about Library programs and services. Staff commented that Yolo County residents are often unaware of the full scale of Library services and programs. Others suggested that the Library could be more intentional with its marketing of programs and services.

### **Library Online Presence and Access**

- More than two-thirds of patrons surveyed agreed that the Library website is informative and easy to use (69%).
- Three-fifths of staff members surveyed (60%) agreed that the Library website is informative and easy to use, while 32% of respondents were “neutral,” and 9% of staff members fully disagreed. In comments, a few staff members noted that, although the new website is better than the previous one, it is still a challenge to find information on the Library website.
- Neighborhood internet connectivity varies considerably across Yolo County. Compared to 7% of patrons overall, slightly higher than average rates of unreliable internet connectivity are noted by patrons who use the Winters Community Library (14%) and the Yolo Branch Library (16%). Markedly higher proportions of patrons from the Esparto Regional Library (23%), the Clarksburg Branch Library (43%), and the Knights Landing

Branch Library (31%) reported that they do not have reliable internet connectivity in their neighborhood to fully access online Library services. The sample of respondents from the Clarksburg Branch Library (n=14) and the Knights Landing Branch Library (n=13) is too small to generalize, although this observation warrants further consideration.

- Fewer than half of the staff members surveyed (45%) agreed that the Library's Facebook, and Instagram pages are up-to-date, informative, and engaging while 45% of respondents were "neutral" and 9% of respondents disagreed.

### **Current and Anticipated Library Use**

- The demand for various Library services and programs is expected to increase or stay at steady rates for the next few years. Library patrons indicated that they plan to do the following more often or at about the same rate in the next three years:
  1. Visit the Library in person to borrow items (93%)
  2. Use the Libraries website (92%)
  3. Ask Library staff for assistance (89%)
  4. Borrow an eBook, eAudiobook, eMagazine, or other online resource (79%)
  5. Attend a Library program (70%)
  6. Use Wi-Fi in the Library (67%)
  7. Read or study in the Library (64%)
  8. Use an online learning resource from the Library website (63%)
  9. Use a computer in the Library (53%)
  10. Use a meeting room for a community event (52%)
  11. Visit the Library to socialize (47%)
  12. Use children's materials, spaces, and programs (45%)
  13. Receive computer or new technology assistance (36%)
  14. Participate in adult or family literacy tutoring sessions (21%)
  15. Receive homework help (21%)

Response trends across age groups did not vary significantly *except* for the 0-17 age group, who plan to use the Library more frequently in the near future. Relative to the YCL average, Library users ages 0-17 were significantly more likely to say that, in the next three years, they will do the following more often or at about the same rate as in 2019:

1. Use an online learning resource from the Library website (80% of users ages 0-17 versus 63% of YCL users overall)
2. Use a computer in the Library (80% of users ages 0-17 versus 53% of YCL users overall)
3. Use Wi-Fi in the Library (78% of users ages 0-17 versus 67% of YCL users overall)
4. use a meeting room for a community event (73% of users ages 0-17 versus 52% of YCL users overall)
5. Use children's materials, spaces, and programs (65% of users ages 0-17 versus 45% of YCL users across all age groups)
6. Receive homework help (63% of users ages 0-17 versus 21% of YCL users overall)

7. Participate in adult or family literacy tutoring sessions (63% of users ages 0-17 versus 24% of YCL users overall)
8. Visit the Library to socialize (58% of users ages 0-17 versus 47% of YCL users overall)
9. Receive computer or technology assistance (51% of users ages 0-17 versus 36% of YCL users overall)

### **Library Strengths, Areas for Improvement and Challenges**

- The following are the Library's strengths as of 2019 (based on 43 staff members' open-ended responses):
  1. The staff (mentioned by 37% of respondents) – Respondents commented on staff members' welcoming attitudes, approachability, passion and interest in growing, great work environment, and customer service skills.
  2. The Library's emphasis on diversity and inclusion (mentioned by 21% of respondents) – Staff members noted that YCL makes a concerted effort to engage people and communities of diverse backgrounds. Some referenced the Library's efforts to reach out to marginalized groups.
  3. The Library's focus on community (mentioned by 9% of respondents) –The Library was described as responding proactively to community needs and wishes and offering a true sense of community to patrons.
  4. Providing access to technology and resources in a range of formats (mentioned by 9% of respondents) – A few respondents said that the Library's greatest strength is the technology, including the digital offerings and free technology use.
  
- The following will be Library strengths in 2022 (based on 40 staff members' open-ended responses):
  1. The staff (mentioned by 25% of respondents) – Respondents indicated that staff will be the Library's greatest strength in three years.
  2. The Library's inclusion of diverse communities (mentioned by 20% of respondents) – Staff members said the connection to diverse groups along with outreach to marginalized populations in the County will remain a strength.
  3. The variety of programs and resources that serve a broader base of users (mentioned by 20% of respondents) – The ability to serve more patrons representing broader demographics was described as a likely strength in 2022.
  4. Effective resource management (mentioned by 20% of respondents) – A few staff members noted that the Library's greatest strength in three years will be its streamlining of practices, goal-setting, and effective budget management.

- According to 45 staff members responding, the following are current challenges for the Library as of 2019:
  1. Staffing (mentioned by 24% of respondents) – Staff members said that recruiting and retaining Library staff and managing workloads is the greatest challenge in 2019.
  2. Engaging youth (mentioned by 13% of respondents) – Developing programs for teenagers and getting more youth to simply use the Library was described as a present-day challenge.
  3. Funding (mentioned by 13% of respondents) – Staff members noted the challenge of limited funding alongside the need for more staff and greater demand for Library programs.
  4. Capacity and efficiency (mentioned by 11% of respondents) – Staff members indicated that overcrowding and lack of physical space at the Library is a current challenge, while others said that there is not enough capacity for the Library to offer all the services it seeks to provide.
  5. Communication and teamwork (mentioned by 9% of respondents) – Staff members said that the Library is doing more with fewer resources and that there ought to be better communication among the YCL branches and between Library leadership and staff (inter-branch and intra-branch).
  6. Outreach and marketing (mentioned by 7% of respondents) – Some staff members stated that there is not enough outreach and partnerships with other groups and organizations, while others said that more people could benefit from simply knowing about all the Library’s resources.
  7. Engendering and welcoming and safe Library environment (mentioned by 4% of respondents) – A few respondents said that the homeless population at the Library creates an unwelcoming environment and that there ought to be greater enforcement of the Library Code of Conduct.
  8. Reaching and engaging the diverse populations in the community, including marginalized groups (mentioned by 4% of respondents) – Staff members noted the challenge of engaging and supporting economically disadvantaged groups and undertaking outreach to inform all community members of the Library’s many resources and services.
  
- According to 34 staff members responding, the following are anticipated challenges for the Library in 2022:
  1. Accommodating an increase in demand for Library resources, programs, and materials alongside changing reading formats (mentioned by 18% of respondents) – Respondents predicted that the greatest challenge in 2022 will be greater demand from users for a variety of Library offerings, including eBooks and other digital materials.
  2. Technology (mentioned by 21% of respondents) – Keeping pace with rapid technological advances will be a challenge in three years, according to some staff members.



3. Staffing (mentioned by 15% of respondents) – Some respondents said that recruiting and retaining staff and merely sustaining staffing levels to match the workload will remain a difficulty.
  4. Reaching out to, engaging, and assisting economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups (mentioned by 15% of respondents) – Staff members felt that there will be challenges with outreach to “have-not” groups.
  5. Funding (mentioned by 12% of respondents) – Staff members noted that a future challenge will be rising costs alongside limited budget and staff.
- Patrons indicated that the Library could improve by doing the following:
    1. Adding books, DVDs, CDs, etc. (48%)
    2. Adding more eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, etc. (47%)
    3. Changing hours of operation (22%)
    4. Offering new or different literary or cultural programs (21%)
    5. Something "other" than what was listed (20%)
    6. Offering new or different adult programs (19%)
    7. Offering new or different senior programs (19%)
    8. Offering new or different children's programs (16%)
    9. Eliminating late fees for adults (16%)
    10. Providing more technology instruction (14%)
    11. Offering more adult volunteer opportunities (13%)
    12. Offering new or different teen programs (12%)
    13. Adding study rooms or spaces (12%)
    14. Offering more volunteer opportunities (11%)
    15. Cleaning buildings more often (9%)
    16. Providing services in languages other than English (9%)
    17. Offering more or better research assistance (6%)
  - Patrons said they would like the Library to add the following (based on open-ended responses): books; eBooks; eAudiobooks; Spanish-language materials and services; quiet spaces/study rooms; technology help/training; senior programs; kids programs; teen programs; toddler programs; adult programs; more hours of operation; foreign language books; more square footage; parking; better/more Wi-Fi; online transaction opportunities; more security/management of homeless people at the Library; a teenager section; foreign films; popular books; and cleaner restrooms.
  - According to 33 staff members responding, the Library should add:
    1. Programs for specific age groups (mentioned by 33% of respondents) – Staff members said the Library should add programs for teenagers. One respondent suggested adding an SAT program for teens. Two respondents proposed adding programs for seniors, such as senior art classes. Some recommended adding programs for adults, such as adult “interactive programs.” One respondent simply said the Library could have more programming to support “adult community

building.” Others stated that the Library could add programs for elementary school age children.

2. Outreach to disadvantaged populations (mentioned by 15% of respondents) – Staff members recommended adding services for disabled individuals, people with special needs, at-risk individuals, or people who lack transportation to the Library.
  3. Technology services (mentioned by 12% of respondents) – Staff members said that the Library should add various technology services, like computer assistance, more staff (versus volunteers) to provide computer help, and technology training programs for email, Microsoft, and so on.
  4. Career and job search assistance (mentioned by 6% of respondents) – Respondents recommended adding college and career assistance programs or job search services at the Library.
  5. Credit card machines (mentioned by 6% of respondents) – Two staff members stated that the Library should add credit card machines at branches.
- More than two-thirds of staff members surveyed agreed that the following services should be expanded or enhanced:
    1. Online payment for Library fees and fines (83%)
    2. Partnering with local schools (83%); partnering with nonprofit agencies (77%)
    3. EBooks and eContent (74%); citizenship/immigration resources and programs (70%)
    4. Family literacy resources and programs (68%)
  - Patrons said they would like the Library to stop doing the following (based on open-ended responses): nothing (as in; the Library should continue providing all of its current programs and services); allowing homeless people to loiter/hangout; charging late fees; letting people eat inside the Library; allowing loud talking/noise; allowing kids to run around/being a playground for children; allowing the parking lot to be used for non-Library use (school, park events); allowing kids to play shooting or violent games; issuing Library cards at the circulation desk/free-for-all line at the circulation desk; having only videos/computer games in the kids section; providing insufficient time for computer use; closing early; allowing people to use study rooms for extended periods; having comics in the children's section; allowing unrestricted internet use in the children's section; closing early on Fridays; preventing adults who have fines from checking out material; having separate accounts for children and parents; and keeping damaged books in circulation.
  - According to 30 staff members responding, the programs or services that YCL should reduce or eliminate are:
    1. Nothing/none (mentioned by 27% of respondents) – More than one-quarter of respondents reported that they could not identify any program or service that the Library should reduce or eliminate.

2. Under-utilized programs (mentioned by 17% of respondents) – Some staff members said that certain programs, such as adult programs, teen programs, or community programs, are not well attended and, therefore, perhaps are unnecessary. One respondent noted that the Library would need to first assess which programs are not well-attended or used and then eliminate programs based on this assessment.
  3. Staff-intensive programs (mentioned by 10% of respondents) – It was suggested that the Library should reduce or eliminate programs for which there are insufficient staff.
  4. Overdue fines (mentioned by 7% of respondents) – Two staff members felt that late fines could be eliminated, with one respondent noting that fines create a barrier for people wanting to use the Library.
- Staff members (n=37) indicated that they would purchase the following services and resources with \$1,000:
    1. Audiobooks and eBooks (mentioned by 11% of respondents) – Staff members said that, with \$1,000, they would add electronic resources like eBooks and eAudiobooks. One respondent stated that these resources do not require much staff time and “there is a huge demand for these items.”
    2. Computers (mentioned by 8% of respondents) – Respondents said they would add more ChromeBooks, laptops, or additional desktop computers to the Library if they had \$1,000.
    3. Adult Discovery Kits (mentioned by 8% of respondents) would be a worthwhile addition to the Library.
    4. Literacy Kits (mentioned by 5% of respondents) – Two staff members said they would use \$1,000 to purchase preschool literacy kits for the Library.
    5. Water fountains to fill water bottles (mentioned by 5% of respondents) –Staff members reported that, if they had \$1,000 to spend for the Library, they would purchase water fountains to allow patrons to refill water bottles.
    6. Resources for English Language Learners (mentioned by 5% of respondents) – Two respondents indicated that, with \$1,000, they would purchase books and audio resources for English language learners.
  - Staff members (n=36) indicated that they would purchase the following services and resources with \$10,000:
    1. Programs for teenagers (mentioned by 11% of respondents) –Respondents said that the Library could introduce more programs for teenagers, conduct more outreach to teens or, as one respondent noted, add “something that will grab their attention.” Two staff members felt that the Library could have more “teen spaces.”
    2. Computers (mentioned by 11% of respondents) – Respondents said that, with \$10,000, they would purchase ChromeBooks, laptops, and desktop computers for the Library.

3. Digital resources (mentioned by 8% of respondents) – eMagazines, databases, eBooks, Hoopla, eResources, and eAudiobooks were suggested Library additions.
  4. Bookmobile (mentioned by 8% of respondents) – A few staff members commented that they would allocate \$10,000 toward a bookmobile to go places like migrant centers (Madison Migrant Center) and senior centers. One respondent said this would be beneficial “because there are areas of Yolo that don’t get services.”
  5. Digitization of materials (mentioned by 6% of respondents) – Respondents stated that they would use \$10,000 to digitize newspapers, including microfilmed newspapers. One staff member would do this “because they [digitized materials] are a popular resource and it would save the Library collection space.”
  6. Personnel (mentioned by 6% of respondents) – Two staff members said that they would spend \$10,000 to hire more Library personnel to conduct activities like outreach and off-site programming and offer patrons more “personalized service.”
- County-based community leaders, representing a range of nonprofit and government organizations (n=24) were interviewed and asked about the greatest challenges in their community. The most frequently cited challenges were: insufficient housing/housing availability and affordability; polarization among groups/the need to bring people together; transportation; and fiscal stability.
  - Community leaders most commonly stated that the Library’s role in addressing their community’s challenges are through serving as the safe community gathering place that it is. Some respondents suggested that the Library could form more partnerships (with schools, employment resource centers, and other nonprofits), while others mentioned that the Library could do more to publicize its services. Other ideas included: expanding school libraries in conjunction with YCL; building a South Davis Library; creating more awareness about services other than book borrowing (E.S.L., literacy programs, etc.); finding ways to encourage early childhood literacy and learning; offering computers; offering job assistance; running a countywide reads program; working with school PTAs; and providing more evening hours.
  - When asked how the Library can support their needs and interested, community leaders shared that the Library could keep doing what it is doing to support them; disseminate information and ensure everyone is aware of YCL services; continue to forge partnerships throughout the County, including with schools and U.C. Davis; and offer more programs for young people (e.g. mentoring programs).