

San Francisco Public Library

Strategic Planning Initiative

External Insights Report
January 2024



Gensler



contigo.



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EXTERNAL INSIGHTS REPORT

Introduction

To understand residents' current usage, needs, and aspirations for the future of the San Francisco Public Library, the Strategic Planning team engaged with the public through various methods in the spring and summer of 2023. This work was overseen by Gensler and supported by local community engagement firm, Contigo, and local marketing research firm Corey, Canary, and Galanis (CC&G). These engagements included the following:

Branch User Intercept Surveys

This survey provided quantitative data about usage and future desires while allowing us to speak to a broader range of users.

Analysis of Non-User City Survey

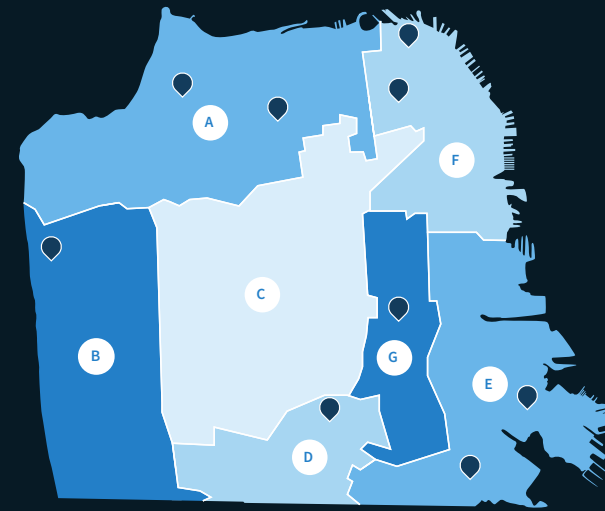
This analysis from non-users of SFPL captured perspectives on why services are not being utilized by residents.

Community Focus Groups

The focus groups provided qualitative data around experiences with the library and how they would like to engage with it in the future.

This report contains the Overarching External Insights (the core themes across all engagements) and the detailed findings from each engagement, with each chapter devoted to a specific type of input.

The insights and data found in this report and insights from the internal staff engagement (to be shared in the appendix of the final strategic plan) generated a holistic understanding of SFPL's current state and future aspirations and served as a foundation for the recommendations in the strategic plan. Note: This document will be included in the appendix of the final plan.



19 Community Focus Groups

With people who live in all 11 districts as well as priority populations. We worked with the Philip Randolph Institute, Chinatown Community Development Center, and the Youth Arts Exchange to support recruitment from priority populations such as:

- Teens
- Disabled Residents
- Chinese speakers
- Filipinos
- Spanish speakers
- Parents
- Elders



2,283

Branch User Intercept Surveys

In 5 different languages (English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, and Tagalog) at all 27 branches and the Main library during open hours, varying days of the week and time of day.



604 Non-User City Survey Responses

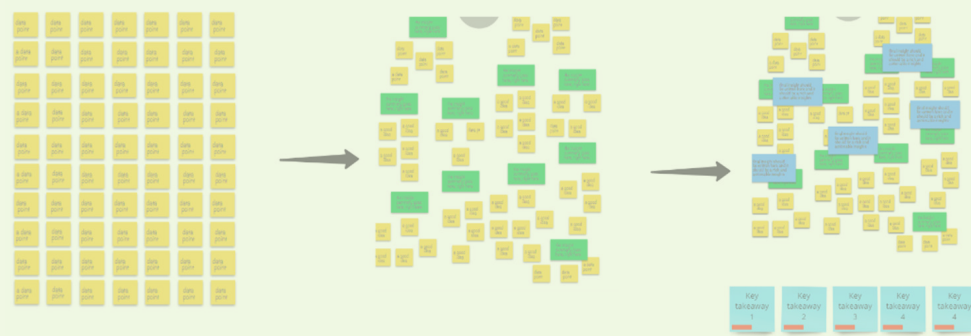
Utilized data from the 2023 bi-annual City Survey which had a total of 2,530 total respondents and 604 non-user respondents.



Overarching External Insights

OVERARCHING EXTERNAL INSIGHTS

Insights Methodology



The consultant team synthesized all of the outputs from the external engagement activities and identified the unifying themes. These themes became a valuable tool for socializing what we learned and informed all recommendations in the Final Strategic plan. In the section that follows, each insight is presented and supported with data and further explanation.

How this section works:

Each page presents one overarching insight, data points, key observations, and possible implications.

Overarching Insight

A concise summary statement based on the qualitative and quantitative synthesis of all engagement data inputs

Data Points

Supporting evidence taken from the engagement activities to support the Overarching Insight

Key Observations

Additional points gleaned from engagement and data that support this insight

Possible Implications

A direction that the engagement findings and data is pointing us in in the development of the final strategic plan

Overarching External Insights
Overarching External Insight

San Franciscans are grateful for the library's essential services: **access to information and resources** and providing a place for **respite and focus**.

01

Top 4 Reasons for Using SFPL
(Branch User Survey)

Books (DVDs, Other Materials)	83%
Printed Copies	35%
Homework & Study Help	19%
Computer Access	19%

Reasons Patrons Love SFPL
(Focus Groups)

- A Hub for the Community
- E-Books & Audiobooks
- Outings & Field Trips
- Author Visits & Exhibits
- Discover & Go
- Adult Workshops
- Arts & Crafts
- Storytime

Key Observations

- Many of those we spoke with are active users and have many positive associations (often over a lifetime), including the library being a vital resource to counter SF's high cost of living. The library is a place where people feel like valued members of society.
- Most use the library to access digital resources, audiobooks, books for their children, and a space for reading, working, or other quiet activities. Low cost printing/copy services were also appreciated for their role in navigating bureaucratic systems affordably.
- Very few asked for additional materials (i.e., books, DVDs, books, magazines, research collections, etc.), except for more children's resources and a wider variety of non-English language materials.
- There is a desire for the library to retain its core services (material access, programming, focus space) while evolving to meet new needs, including additional technology access (i.e., cellphone charging stations to enable two-factor authentication on personal devices, cameras for virtual meetings, etc.) and more private study rooms.

"[F]or better or worse, even if the library is falling short, I'm still going to be there because I value public libraries as an institution. Even though I would love more access in terms of hours, I am grateful it's there..."

ZONE B FOCUS GROUP

Possible Implications

- Continue to invest in digital offerings
- Continue to audit the supply and utilization of materials to better align with community wants/needs
- Explore investment in tools, spaces, and technologies that enable a more digital-forward way of working/studying/daily tasks
- Undertake a more detailed audit of which languages and topics to prioritize when purchasing new materials
- Continue to celebrate the library's role in people's lives, within and without the library's physical footprint

"Once I went to a tea towel workshop... they honored our time... the material and the supplies were of quality. It just makes you feel like someone's looking out for you. And that you yourself are also valuable..."

ZONE G FOCUS GROUP

Community Quotes

Narrative quotations from community engagement to support the Overarching Insight

OVERARCHING EXTERNAL INSIGHTS

Insights Overview

TODAY

Insights 1-4 capture how the library is being used by the community today:

01

San Franciscans are grateful for the library's essential services: **access to information and resources** and providing a place for **respite and focus**.

03

When it comes to access, **It's not just about having a library nearby**.

02

Library locations are conveniently located **to serve most communities in need, but there are still gaps**.

04

As SFPL evolves, current **non-users** may be persuaded to **use the library**.

TOMORROW

Insights 5-9 capture community desires for the future:

05

Above all else, San Franciscans of every age and background want the library to **combat social isolation** by providing **a place for gathering and connecting** with loved ones and neighbors.

07

People look to the library to **provide experiences and opportunities to pursue passions** they couldn't otherwise afford.

09

San Franciscans want SFPL to lean into **all types of skill building and education**, emphasizing **tech know-how, parenting skills, homework support, and literacy**.

06

San Franciscans want the library to build on existing strengths to **help people connect to and navigate the plethora of resources and events** available at the library and beyond.

08

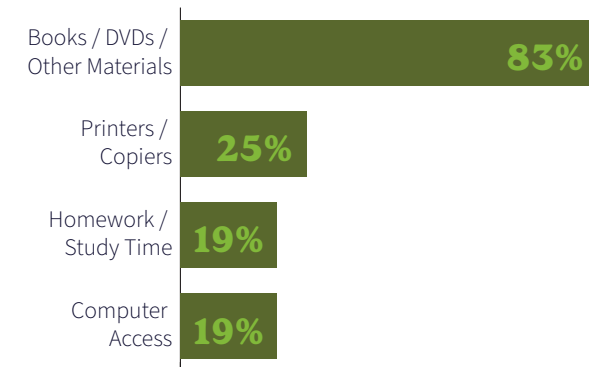
Residents feel that San Francisco's **cultural diversity** should be **amplified and celebrated throughout** every library experience.

San Franciscans are grateful for the library’s essential services: **access to information and resources** and providing a place for **respite and focus.**

01

Top 4 Reasons for Using SFPL

(Branch User Survey)



Reasons Patrons Love SFPL

(Focus Groups)

- A Hub for the Community
- E-Books & Audiobooks
- Outings & Field Trips
- Author Visits & Exhibits
- Discover & Go
- Adult Workshops
- Arts & Crafts
- Storytime

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- Very few asked for additional materials (i.e., books, DVDs books, magazines, research collections, etc.), except for more children’s resources and a wider variety of non-English language materials.
- There is a desire for the library to retain its core services (material access, programming, focus space) while evolving to meet new needs including additional technology access (i.e., cellphone charging stations to enable two factor authentication on personal devices; cameras for virtual meetings, etc.) and more private study rooms.

“Once I went to a tea towel workshop... they honored our time... the material and the supplies were of quality. It just makes you feel like someone’s looking out for you. And that you yourself are also valuable...”

ZONE G FOCUS GROUP

Possible Implications

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- Explore investment in tools, spaces, and technologies that enable a more digital-forward way of working/studying/daily tasks
- Undertake a more detailed audit of which languages and topics to prioritize when purchasing new materials
- Continue to celebrate the library’s role in people’s lives, within and without the library’s physical footprint

“When I walk into a library it gives me confidence...it provides all of these things, more than we ever thought. It’s my place to go. I belong. I have reason to be here. I can get what I need. I don’t have to go to 10 different places. I can learn how to cook here. I can visualize. I can learn culture here.”

ELDERS FOCUS GROUP

Library locations are conveniently located **to serve most communities in need, but there are still gaps.**

The Urgency Index is a cumulative score that accounts for communities with the following:

- Limited English proficiency
- Low educational attainment
- High unemployment
- Limited Internet access
- Distance from jobs/recreational centers
- High population density

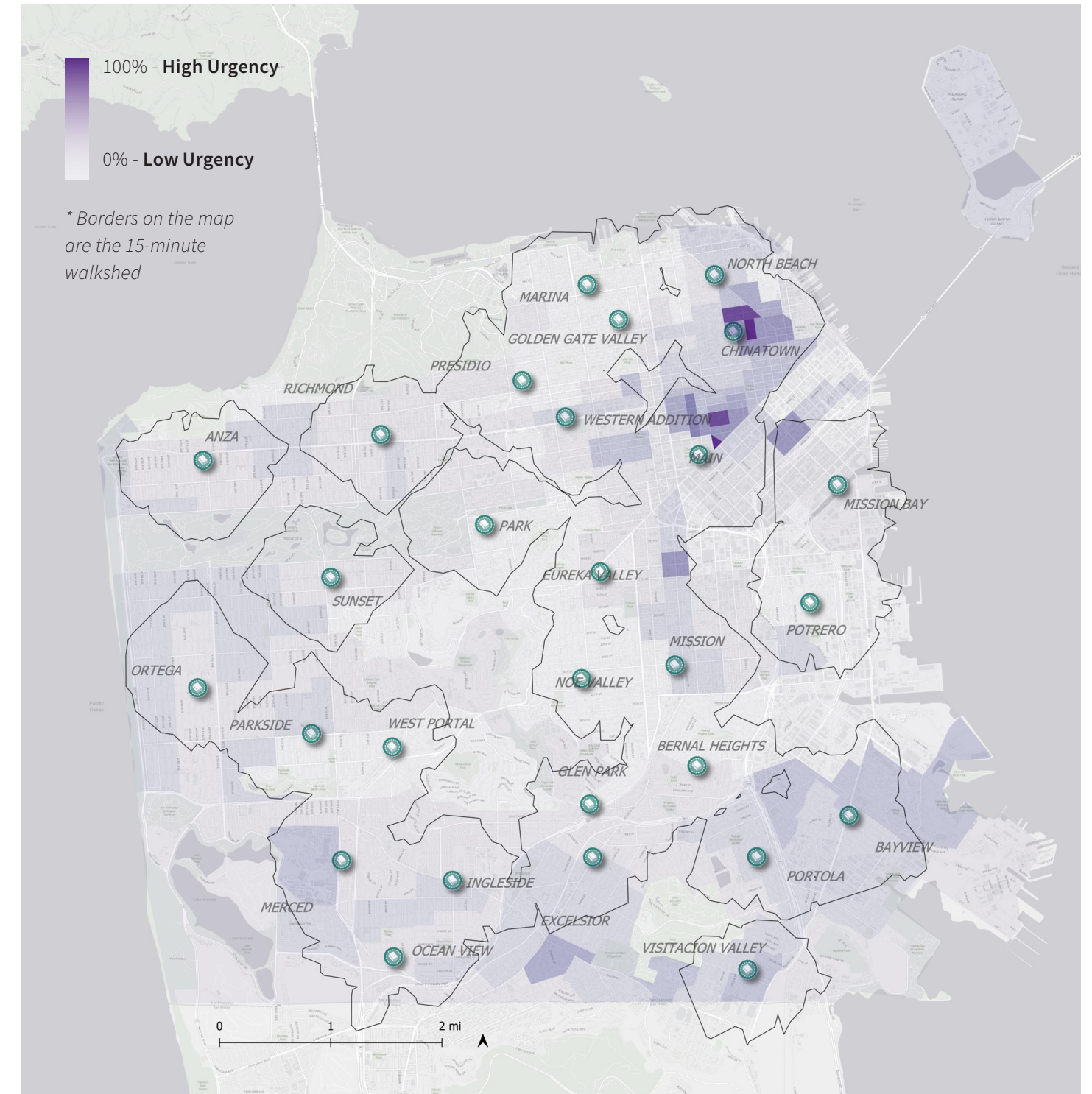
76%

of SF lives within a 15-minute walk of a branch

ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST, 2023

02

Library Urgency Index In San Francisco



When it comes to access, **It's not just about having a library nearby.**

03

Obstacles Hindering Location Use

(Focus Groups)

- Service desired not offered at convenient branch
- Safety Concerns
- Limited Hours

Obstacles Hindering Service Use

(Focus Groups)

- Digital services challenging to navigate
- Limited multilingual resources
- Lack of cultural context in programs & services

Key Observations

- While three-quarters of the population of San Francisco live within 15 minutes of walking distance of a library branch, a few areas with medium-high urgency exist outside of a 15-minute walk, including parts of Excelsior, Bayview, and Visitacion Valley.
- Some expressed concerns that although the library was physically near, they felt unsafe walking to the library, especially with small children.
- Users in the Hunter's Point, India Basin, and Candlestick areas felt they would benefit from an additional library closer than the Bayview branch.
- Many mentioned a desire for extended hours and programs at various times so they could participate when not working.
- There's a strong desire for more programs to be offered outside of the Main Library and to all ages (not just youth.)

Possible Implications

- Investigate ways to bring services to those outside of the 15-minute walkshed, including mobile services, partnerships, and potentially new branches
- Seeks ways to improve perceptions of safety (depending on the audience and the specific external factors.)
- Audit hours against behaviors and routines of target audiences branch-by-branch
- Generate a system-wide approach to programs and services, equitably increasing capacity while still tailoring offerings to each community. Expand unique offerings from Main to the neighborhood branches.
- Re-orient library services with increased consideration of patron lifestyles, acknowledging barriers to usage including work, childcare, school, after school activities, transportation, and open hours.
- Explore ways to better track program demand system-wide and create a process for more responsive programming

"I really wanted to take the resume class, but it isn't offered at my branch and when it's offered at main, I'm busy working at the job I'm trying to leave."

ZONE E FOCUS GROUP

There are members of our community with limited English who would feel more welcomed at the library if things were run in a language, they are fluent in."

ZONE G FOCUS GROUP

As SFPL evolves, current **non-users** may be persuaded to **use the library.**

04

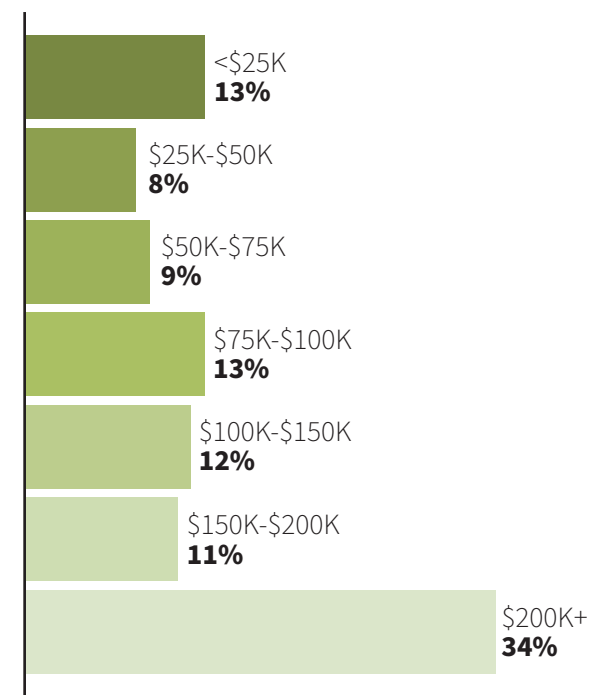
3 Groups Non-Users Fall Into

(Focus Groups)

- Those interested but hindered by cleanliness, safety, or time issues
- Those unaware of the extent of library offerings
- Those who perceive the library is ‘not for me’

Income Breakdown: Library Non-Users

(City Survey 2023: 2,530 total respondents and 604 non-user respondents)



Key Observations

- Library non-users come from all income ranges and include a substantial share of lower-income respondents, pointing to reasons unrelated to income.
- Those in the first subset will most likely respond to new or evolved offerings and enhanced safety measures because it will shift the time/value equation.
- Safety concerns were mentioned in most groups, with some sharing that they no longer visit in person due to health and safety concerns (e.g., being harassed outside the library or encountering feces or needles.) There was also recognition that external partners should address these issues, not staff.
- The second subset thinks of the library as ‘just books’ or for school-age children and expresses interest when educated about additional offerings. Some mentioned that COVID disrupted many paths that typically expose people to the library—significantly, younger populations.
- The last ‘not for me’ subset has little need for free resources and space but could potentially be reached through cultural or more community-centric offerings.

Possible Implications

- Develop a growth- and capacity-building strategy to reach those who will benefit the most from library services, especially those that aren’t enjoying them now.
- Further define non-user groups and identify which groups are most important to target and develop relevant strategies.
- Continue to address tensions around perceptions of safety and security in public spaces with compassionate solutions that ensure all residents feel safe and secure.
- Identify a partnership strategy to address safety concerns without burdening library staff
- Employ communication best practices and audience cultivation strategies to increase library awareness.

“I didn’t know the library did anything besides books and eBooks.”

ZONE A FOCUS GROUP

“It’s hard just to bring kids to have fun because you must be aware of the surrounding[s].”

PARENTS FOCUS GROUP

Above all else, San Franciscans of every age and background want the library to **combat social isolation** by enabling **gathering and connecting** for residents of all ages.

05

Top 3 Desired Library Amenities

(Branch User Survey)

- 36%** a cafe
- 20%** a game room
- 19%** more event spaces

Key Observations

- Respondents across all groups wanted the library to serve as a hub for the community, with particular attention paid to those new to San Francisco and seniors.
- There was a strong desire for intergenerational programming, with respondents of all ages feeling like they would benefit from meeting others across the age spectrum. Intergenerational programming also connects to SFUSD’s Strategic Plan’s emphasis on the role of the community in creating positive student outcomes.
- Participants wanted programming purposely designed to create connections among neighbors, including peer-to-peer support programs, hands-on activities that encouraged conversations, and street fair-type events, but also liked like the idea of activities where they could join with friends and family.
- Respondents also wanted the library to open its spaces more overtly, hosting Neighborhood Association meetings and discussions with local representatives.
- Many spoke to food’s critical role in creating community and interest in the library
- The Roadmap to Downtown SF prioritizes community events, SFPL can support this.

BRANCH USER SURVEY OPEN ENDS

“Creating a space for the community to come together for important events and notices—a meeting room or event space.”

Possible Implications

- Provide more non-traditional library programs, spaces, and resources to support community-building.
- Reallocate existing or create new spaces to host gatherings or community events, for messy or loud activities.
- In branches that are space-constrained, consider using spaces differently at various times of day, allowing for more socializing and connection to happen when there is high demand for this programming, and quieter activities when there is less demand.
- Find ways to encourage the broader community to utilize the library’s spaces.
- Explore ways to introduce culinary capabilities in addition to or beyond a mobile food cart.
- Develop programming where connection is the primary goal.
- Create a more robust partnership strategy around community events with local organizations, public spaces, and institutions.

ZONE D FOCUS GROUP

“I love it when they do the adult crafts projects. And I really miss those... And it was really fun, just doing little things... There’s a real sense of community when you’re doing art projects.”

San Franciscans want the library to build on existing strengths to **help people connect to and navigate the plethora of resources** available from the library, City and broader community.

06

Key Observations

- Many desire a ‘welcome center’ for those new to San Francisco, connecting them to critical resources with an Immigration and Language Center as a core offering.
- Many desire the library to be a resource center where you can learn more about social services from other government and community-based organizations. The public recognized it was not SFPL’s duty to offer these social services, but instead help navigate often duplicative offerings by various organizations.
- Respondents expressed a need for a more user-friendly way to discover and navigate existing library resources.
- Participants are enthusiastic about the library being a gateway for peer-to-peer relationships, including matching those who’d like to speak each other’s languages.
- CBOs and city and county agencies expressed a desire to strengthen and formalize relationships with SFPL, which would be necessary to connect people to their valuable services meaningfully.

Possible Implications

- Explore what services would be needed to greet newcomers to SF effectively.
- Investigate approaches for developing and maintaining a repository of available services within and outside the library.
- Research models of peer matching and facilitation tools and technologies.
- Identify partners and develop a program to test and iterate on models for more comprehensive, coordinated, human-centered collaboration.

“Wu Yee [Children’s Services] helped me apply to schools (SFUSD application). The help is needed. I hope the library will provide more community information besides providing books.”

CHINESE-SPEAKERS FOCUS GROUP (TRANSLATED)

“I’m a US citizen, I’m not going to need that [citizenship center.] But it is good for the community that we have a place where folks can get those questions answered without triggering [scrutiny from authorities.]”

ZONE A FOCUS GROUP

“But for people new to San Francisco, new to America, the library should always be... someplace that you can go to get some resources...”

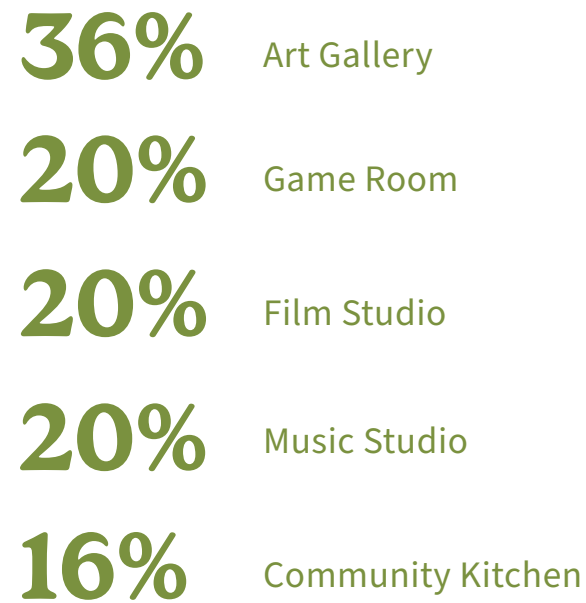
ZONE E FOCUS GROUP

People look to the library to provide even more **experiences and opportunities for patrons to pursue passions** they couldn't otherwise afford.

07

Spaces Patrons would like to see at SFPL

(Branch User Survey)



Key Observations

- Many spoke about their appreciation for how the library helps alleviate some of the financial strain of living in San Francisco, and participants articulated ideas for expanding these types of services in every focus group.
- The parts of the city with the lowest socio-economic mobility (Ingleside, Visticon Valley, parts of Bernal Heights, and Chinatown) could benefit the most from additional no-cost experiences.
- There was an immense appreciation for the exposure provided through outings and free tickets to cultural events. There was also a desire for even more access through offerings geared to all age ranges and more comprehensive packages (i.e., state park entrance + hiking equipment loan)
- Participants wanted to borrow more resources (i.e., tools and musical instruments) that they have limited access to due to economic and space issues.
- People loved the idea of classes that gave them access to high-quality materials and tools and enthusiastic instruction. There was also a strong interest in music classes, exhibits, performances, and cultural events.

Possible Implications

- Prioritize the rollout of new excursions, item loan programs, or equipment at branches where the population is experiencing high need.
- Evaluate the value of equipment loan programs and higher-capital investments (i.e., pod cast studio, film equipment, etc.) to identify best fit with community needs.
- Consider ways to expand excursions and free tickets/passes to a broader population and the partnerships to make that possible.
- Identify adjacencies between existing offerings (and potential new ones) that could be compiled into a comprehensive offering.
- Support material-intensive classes by finding efficient approaches for developing content, sourcing materials, and identifying instructors.
- Find ways to bring performance and exhibition space so they are more accessible.
- Work with SFUSD to develop a pathway for identifying student “sparks” (interests).

“I like the instrument class idea. My son wants to learn the guitar right now, and it is really hard to provide that on a low-income.”

SPANISH-SPEAKERS FOCUS GROUP

“Our technology training classes are really popular. But people need more one-on-one tech support and we don't have the bandwidth to support that.”

BRANCH TOURS

Residents feel that San Francisco’s **cultural diversity** should be **amplified and celebrated** throughout every library experience.

08

“There used to be a Story Corps booth at the public library...Our older adults hold some incredible lived experiences, especially as Black San Franciscans here in the Fillmore, Harlem of the West”

CBO FOCUS GROUP

“I think understanding the culture and how we view the world is important.”

SPANISH-SPEAKERS FOCUS GROUP (TRANSLATED)

Key Observations

- There’s a desire for expert-led programming that explores various topics through a cultural lens. Some suggested that partnerships with CBOs and community leaders were the best way to bring this expertise forward while building with relevant communities.
- SFUSD has emphasized the importance of educating students about the various cultures that make their home in SF, which SFPL can clearly support.
- SFRPD is focused on using park space to reflect and help promote the diverse cultures and communities in San Francisco by creating safe, welcoming spaces. There are ample opportunities for SFPL to collaborate and use libraries adjacent to parks to further this mission.

“A class on Russian novels or one specific novel. There are books I’d love to read with more guidance and [cultural, historical] insight. It doesn’t have to be Russian, I just always wanted to have help with harder books and themes.”

BRANCH USER SURVEY OPEN ENDS

Possible Implications

- Explore ways for the culture of the neighborhood to come through across a variety of touchpoints and spaces.
- Investigate ways to foster cross-cultural exchange.
- Identify specific community partners that can advise around cultural programming and potentially provide ambassador-led program development.
- Further partnerships with SFUSD and SFRPD around cultural education and events.

“San Francisco doesn’t [celebrate/acknowledge Black culture] well. It’s limited to a specific floor on a specific month. This library [Bayview], especially back in the day, had at least a Black space. It should be much more present.”

ZONE E FOCUS GROUP

San Franciscans want SFPL to expand types of **skill building and education, emphasizing tech know-how, parenting skills, homework support, and literacy.**

09

“There are many young people that are first generation graduates that do not know how to look for a job. They do not have a career orientation because maybe their parents didn’t expose them to that.”

ZONE D FOCUS GROUP

“The homework center to help parents and kids out is needed. Parents don’t always know how to help their kids, and they might run out of patience and yell at the kids so that is a huge help for parents.”

SPANISH-SPEAKERS FOCUS GROUP (TRANSLATED)

Key Observations

- A lack of tech savviness was raised as a challenge to accessing library services, social services, and participating in many aspects of daily life. Tech-focused classes and hands-on support is especially critical for low-income individuals and families not digitally literate.
- Programs supporting parents and building care taking skills were popular. Many noted that they need childcare or parallel programming for their children to be able to participate in classes.
- There was immense excitement around a Homework Support program.
- There was a desire for additional literacy support focusing on children and adults (especially in immigrant communities.)
- SFUSD is the highest achieving urban district in the state yet has some of the most significant achievement gaps among student subgroups, including English learners, African Americans, and Latinos. SFPL and SFUSD’s collective commitment to a more equitable city emphasizes the need for collaboration between school-supporting CBOs and their local branches.

“The thing that’s missing is some way to help people work on their reading skills. Every effort needs to be made to improve those skills of youth and adults to help them take their reading comprehension to the next level.”

BRANCH USER SURVEY OPEN ENDS

Possible Implications

- Build on existing programs and partnerships to create more robust tech skills program emphasizing the skills needed to successfully navigate contemporary daily life.
- Explore ways to provide integrated whole-family support, emphasizing simultaneous programs for caretakers and their children in various languages to appeal to immigrant populations.
- Hold discussions with SFUSD and supportive CBOs to identify the most impactful ways SFPL can help close the achievement gap.
- Audit current skill-building programs to better understand which topics are being addressed, for whom, and then realign to better meet community needs.
- Adapt current spaces or create new spaces to offer these skill-building programs and technical infrastructure.

“It should be a knowledge space for everyone. Some programs could be like older kids teaching different topics to the young, benefiting both. It could not just be technical like computer science but also be games such as chess.”

ZONE E FOCUS GROUP

Branch User & Non-User Survey Insights

BRANCH USER SURVEY

Branch User Survey

Methodology Overview

Corey, Canapary & Galanis (CC&G), a San Francisco based marketing research firm, visited all 28 SFPL locations between Monday, April 17, 2023, through Saturday, June 24, 2023, conducting surveys during open hours. Interviewers were positioned near entrances. In limited cases, with librarian permission, interviewers also quietly approached those in the library. Every location was visited a minimum of three times, on different days and at different hours.

A total of 2,283 surveys were completed by SFPL patrons in:

- Chinese (4%)
- English (93%)
- Russian (<1%)
- Spanish (3%)
- Tagalog (<1%)

Patrons had the option of completing the survey:

- With the interviewer (59%)
- Self completed, on paper/online (41%)

Location of completion:

- At branch (94%)
- Online (4%)
- Interlibrary mail (2%)

San Francisco Library User Survey (2023) San Francisco Public Library

The San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) is conducting this survey to better understand what users see as their "library of the future." Thank you for participating! Return when finished or complete online at: <https://sfpl.org/branchsurvey>

USAGE

1. In a typical month, how often do you use SF libraries?

Once a month or less often
 2 - 3 times a month
 4 - 10 times a month
 11 - 20 times a month
 20+ times a month
 First time using
 Don't know

2. What are the **main reasons** you use SF libraries? (check all that apply)

Books / DVDs / other materials
 Wi-Fi access (using personal devices)
 Computer access
 Printers / copiers
 Homework / study time / reference assistance
 Programs / classes / exhibits
 Meetings
 Facilities (restrooms, etc.)
 Other (specify): _____

3. Do you have a San Francisco Library Card?
 Yes
 No

VISION FOR THE FUTURE
 The SF Library system is planning for the future.

4. Please finish this sentence:
 "I would visit SF libraries more often if they offered..."

(Please list 2 or 3 offerings you'd like to see)

ABOUT YOU
 These questions are asked to help ensure we have a broad mix of library users. They are optional.

5. Age: 13 - 17 45 - 54
 18 - 24 55 - 64
 25 - 34 65 and older
 35 - 44

6. Gender: Female Non-binary
 Male Transgender
 Other: _____

7. Ethnicity: (check all that apply)
 Native American or Alaska Native
 Asian or Pacific Islander
 Black / African American
 Hispanic or Latino
 White
 Other (specify): _____

8. Employment: Full-time or part-time
 Student
 Retired
 Unemployed
 Other (specify): _____

9. Annual Household Income:
 \$25,000 or less
 \$25,001 - \$50,000
 \$50,001 - \$75,000
 \$75,001 - \$100,000
 \$100,001 - \$150,000
 \$150,001 or more

10. Language spoken at home (most often):
 English Russian
 Spanish Vietnamese
 Chinese Other (specify): _____


11. Neighborhood where you live: _____

12. Home ZIP Code: _____

13. In addition to books and existing programs, which of the following spaces would you like to see at your SFPL branch to better support your neighborhood and community? Please select **up to 5**.

<input type="checkbox"/> Art Gallery	<input type="checkbox"/> Film Studio	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet Room
<input type="checkbox"/> Business / Career Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Game Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Service Center
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy & History Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling Space
<input type="checkbox"/> Classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Homework Help Station	<input type="checkbox"/> Tech Training Lab
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Teen Hangout Space
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Living Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Café	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Play Space
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Performance Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-Working Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Music Studio	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Podcast Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

14. Other **specific** suggestions for San Francisco's "library of the future"?



Note: CC&G's brief originally called for a minimum of 1,540 surveys to be completed but obtained 2,283 surveys. This much higher number (48% more than targeted) allows for more robust analysis, particularly at the branch level.

SFPL Survey

Comparison of Respondent Demographics with US Census Data

Description	SFPL Survey	2022 ACS Community Survey*
Age		
65 and over	25.8%	18.3%
55 to 64 years	12.2%	12.1%
45 to 54 years	13.3%	13.1%
35 to 44 years	18.9%	16.3%
25 to 34 years	15.9%	19.9%
18 to 24 years***	7.1%	6.6%
under 18**	7.0%	13.7%
Gender		
Female	56.2%	48.7%
Male	41.3%	51.3%
Non-binary/Transgender/Other	2.5%	****
Race/Ethnicity (Multiple responses accepted)		
White	48.4%	49.8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	35.4%	40.8%
Hispanic or Latino	12.4%	15.9%
Black or African American	6.9%	6.6%
Native American or Alaska Native	1.9%	2.2%
Other/Mixed (unspecified)	1.8%	13.6%
Household Income		
\$25,000 or less	21.1%	13.9%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	15.8%	8.5%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	14.2%	7.9%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	13.3%	9.3%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	12.9%	14.2%
\$150,001 or more	22.5%	46.2%
Average (mean) income	\$84,659.00	\$199,900.00

To reduce bias, CC&G:

- Designed the questionnaire to be relatively short, to minimize respondent fatigue and improve the completion and response rate.
- Multilingual versions of the survey to allow for non-English speakers to participate.
- Allowed for in-person, self-administered or online completion of the survey. Allowed respondents to complete using the method most convenient to them.
- Sampled the different branches during different days and time periods.
- Scheduled a comprehensive training session for all surveyor staff who worked on the patron survey.
- Used a “next patron” approach to offering the questionnaire at the branches. So, as long as the surveyor was not engaged with another patron, the next patron entering or exiting would always be offered a questionnaire to eliminate any profile bias in questionnaire distribution.
- Provided each branch with a brief summary of the survey effort and copies of the questionnaire. This allowed branch library staff to be comfortable and familiar with the survey effort in case they were approached by regular patrons and asked about the survey legitimacy.

*The American Community Survey (ACS) provides annual estimates of income, education, employment, health insurance coverage, and housing costs and conditions for residents of the United States.

**For the SFPL Survey, only respondents who appeared to be at least 13 years of age were approached to complete the survey; thus children under 13 are deliberately under-represented.

***With different age categories used by ACS, this is obtained by taking the total % of “18 and over” and subtracting all other age groups.

US Census Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau. “Selected Economic Characteristics.” American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP03?q=DP03&g=050XX00US06075>. Accessed on December 27, 2023.

U.S. Census Bureau. “ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.” American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?q=DP05&g=050XX00US06075>. Accessed on December 27, 2023.

01

Patrons see SFPL as a community creator in two ways:

- Provider of the tools they need to succeed
- Place to establish or re-establish connection with other

02

Resources to improve respondent's economic position were a key consideration which fits directly into SFPL's role around facilitating resilience, as well as access to technology (regardless of income) and increasing access to resources in general.

03

Respondents overall indicated a strong desire for SFPL to bring cultural experiences into their lives. However, rather than something separate and distinct, they were more likely to this in conjunction with the library's role as community hub.

04

Respondents indicated an interest in experiential learning, seeing SFPL as a one-stop 'how to' resource that combines reading materials with hands-on skill building.

BRANCH USER SURVEY

Insights Overview

Patrons see SFPL as a community creator in two ways:

- Provider of the tools they need to succeed
- Place to establish or re-establish connection with other

01

Desires for Community Related Services & Spaces

- Local Café – 36%
- Quiet Room – 28%
- Co-working Space – 19%
- Event Space – 18%
- Homework Help Station – 17%
- Community Kitchen – 15%
- Social Service Center – 14%
- Teen Hangout Space – 14%
- Meeting Room – 13%
- Performance Space – 12%
- Youth Play Space – 11%
- Community Living Room – 9%

Open-ended Comments:

- Community or family events/games night/movie night/puppet shows / board game nights / other events (general) – 7%
- More meeting rooms/study rooms/other separate rooms for focused work/study/remote work – 6%
- Other personal seminars/help (e.g., legal help, housing, document shredding, AA/other support groups, financial help/info, dealing with conflict/personal relationships, citizenship/civics, etc.) – 2%
- More space for events at my branch/remodeled branch/library at another location/don't just hold events at Main – 2%
- More practical resources (e.g., storage space with lockers, package pick up, copying, device charging stations, sell basic office supplies (folders, sticky notes, headphones, etc.) – 1%
- Volunteering opportunities, within the library or elsewhere – 1%

“[G]roups to enable easy community interaction and socialization... our communities are too solitary, people need to meet each other and help each other.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Creating a space for the community to come together for important events and notices—a meeting room or event space.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Resources to improve respondent's economic position were a key consideration which fits directly into SFPL's role around facilitating resilience, as well as access to technology (regardless of income) and increasing access to resources in general.

02

Desires for Community Related Services & Spaces

- Language Center – 19%
- Tech Training Lab – 18%
- Homework Help Station – 17%
- Community Kitchen – 15%
- Social Service Center – 14%
- Business/Career Center – 14%
- Classrooms – 14%
- Citizenship Center – 9%

“Offer more resources for helping people and info about that.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Open-ended Comments:

- More hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%
- Educational/credit classes for school-age kids and adults/tutors or study help/ other accredited educational resources – 3%
- Language classes/clubs (for Spanish, French, ESL, ASL, bilingual classes, English language learners) – 2%
- More DVD players, video game stations, headphones, cameras (for use/check out, computers you can check out) – 2%
- More computers (general) – 2%
- Help/reference/info to better connect with City services, speakers from City departments about services they offer – 2%
- More books/materials in other languages (Dutch, Spanish, Chinese) – 2%
- Job training/job hunting/job application and resume writing assistance – 1%

“...[W]here help/websites/books about sensitive subjects are located and all the free services that are currently being offered.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

“A career center to help with finding a job. Homework help and tutoring for my child.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Respondents overall indicated a strong **desire for SFPL to bring cultural experiences into their lives.**

However, rather than something separate and distinct, they were more likely to this in conjunction with the library’s role as community hub.

03

Desires for Community Related Services & Spaces

- Art Gallery – 34%
- Film Studio – 19%
- Game Room – 19%
- Music Studio – 19%
- Storytelling Space – 17%

Open-ended Comments:

- Intellectual events (Lectures/ author talks/classes/poetry readings or poetry slams/writing classes or groups/debate club) – 11%
- More art/music classes, exhibits, performances, and events – 5%

“More architecture, design, and art programs... more art films and foreign films.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

“A class on Russian novels, or one specific novel. There are books I’d love to read with more guidance and insight—cultural, historical. It doesn’t have to be Russian—I just always wanted to have help with some harder books and themes.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Cultural activities like poetry readings, lectures, films inspired by books, book lecture clubs, or writers’ workshops.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Respondents indicated an interest in experiential learning, seeing **SFPL as a one-stop ‘how to’ resource** that combines reading materials with hands-on skill building.

Desires for Community Related Services & Spaces

- Language Center – 19%
- Tech Training Lab – 18%
- Community Kitchen – 15%
- Genealogy and History Hub – 12%
- Podcast Room – 10%

“Maybe arts and crafts, jewelry making, design... something hands-on.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Open-ended Comments:

- More books/materials on a specific genre or subject – 8%
- Classes/tools/resources for crafting, knitting, sewing, 3D printing, using tools, other ‘maker’ resources – 5%
- Computer classes/technology instruction (AI, programming, podcasts, software, etc.) – 4%
- Meditation/yoga/tai chi/exercise or movement/other similar classes/programs – 1%
- Cooking classes, healthy eating classes/resources – 1%
- History/travel classes and programs/ connect virtually with people at other libraries – 1%

“It should be a knowledge space for everyone. Some programs could be like older kids teaching different topics to the younger ones and their peers, benefiting both of them. It could not just be education and technical like computer science, but also be like games such as chess.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

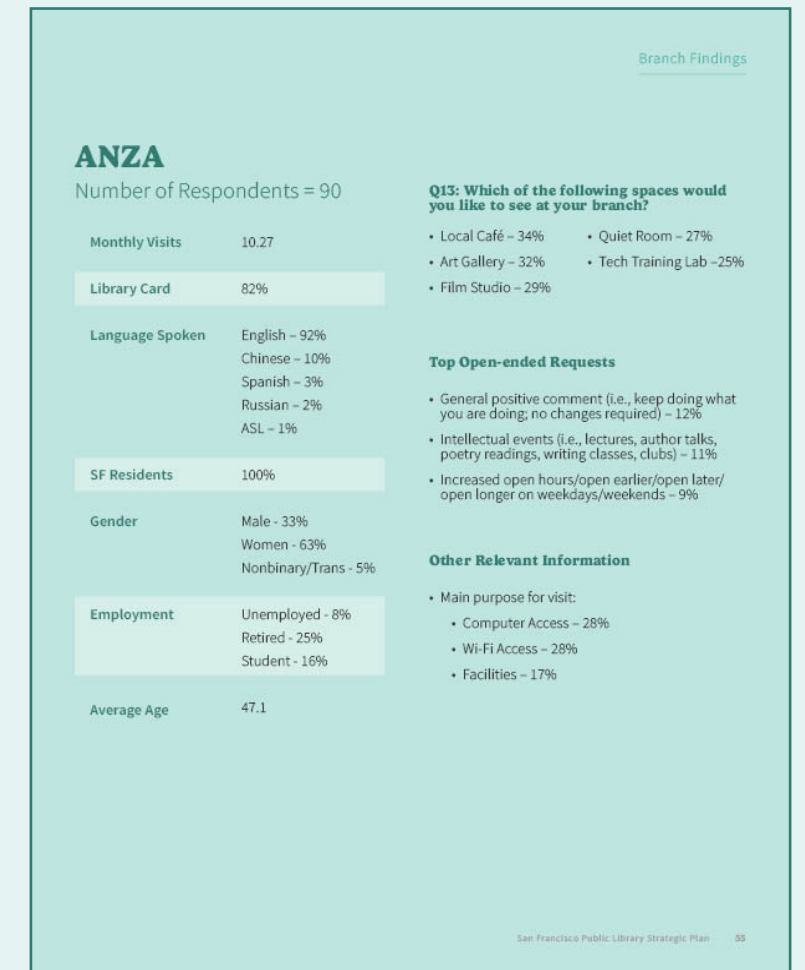
“Information and hands-on training, like navigating the web, and updated tech talks—ChatGPT or Bard.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

04

Every Branch in this document has one page with specifics on:

- Usage
 - Monthly Visits (average days per month) – from Q1
 - % of Library Card holders – from Q3
 - Languages spoken – from Q10
 - SF residents – from Q11/Q12
 - Gender: men (M), women (W), transgender/nonbinary (N/T) – from Q6
 - Employment status – from Q8
 - Age (average) – from Q5
- Multiple choice responses selected from Q13
- Open-ended* responses from Q4, Q13, and Q14
- Other relevant information about the branch



BRANCH USER SURVEY

Library Patrons Key Findings by Branch Location

* Percentages from open-ended responses may seem lower across the board but should not be discounted or compared with those from Q13. Q13 had primarily pre-printed responses, whereas the open-ended responses were written in unaided from Q4, Q13, Q14.

For open-ends AND Q13 (current and future needs), percentages are based ONLY on SF residents.



MAIN

Number of Respondents = 170

Monthly Visits 10.27

Library Card 82%

Language Spoken

- English - 91%
- Spanish 14%
- Chinese - 8%
- Russian - 2%
- Tagalog – 1%
- Farsi – 1%
- Italian – 1%
- Hindi – 1%
- Indonesian – 1%
- Bengali – 1%
- Croatian – 1%

SF Residents 77%

Gender

- Male – 54%
- Women – 41%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 5%

Employment

- Unemployed – 19%
- Retired – 16%
- Student – 14%

Average Age 45.6

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 34%
- Art Gallery – 32%
- Film Studio – 29%
- Quiet Room – 27%
- Tech Training Lab – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment (i.e., keep doing what you are doing; no changes required) – 12%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 11%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Computer Access – 28%
 - Wi-Fi Access – 28%
 - Facilities – 17%



ANZA

Number of Respondents = 90

Monthly Visits 5.71

Library Card 99%

Language Spoken

- English – 92%
- Chinese – 10%
- Spanish – 3%
- Russian – 2%
- ASL – 1%

SF Residents 100%

Gender

- Male – 33%
- Women – 63%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 5%

Employment

- Unemployed - 8%
- Retired – 25%
- Student – 16%

Average Age 47.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 51%
- Art Gallery – 41%
- Quiet Room – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Community or family events, other events – 16%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 14%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 11%

Other Relevant Information

- This branch had the lowest average number of monthly visits across all library locations.
- Respondents were less likely to say they visited to access Wi-Fi on their personal device - 9%



BAYVIEW

Number of Respondents = 67

Monthly Visits 6.77

Library Card 88%

Language Spoken
 English – 91%
 Chinese – 15%
 Spanish – 2%
 French – 3%

SF Residents 95%

Gender
 Male – 50%
 Women – 47%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 3%

Employment
 Unemployed – 15%
 Retired – 15%
 Student – 17%

Average Age 42.0

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 36%
- Homework Help Station – 34%
- Business/Career Center – 34%
- Music Studio – 33%
- Tech Training Lab – 33%
- Local Café – 30%
- Film Studio – 26%
- Quiet Room – 26%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 13%
- Educational/credit classes for all, tutoring, other educational resources – 10%
- Community or family events, other events – 10%
- More study rooms/private meeting rooms – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Computer Access – 52%
 - Print/Copy – 54%

NOTE: These are highest shares for both, systemwide.



BERNAL HEIGHTS

Number of Respondents = 113

Monthly Visits 8.46

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 93%
 Spanish – 11%
 Chinese – 10%
 Tagalog – 2%
 French – 1%
 Portuguese – 1%
 Hebrew – 1%

SF Residents 96%

Gender
 Male – 32%
 Women – 64%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 4%

Employment
 Unemployed – 6%
 Retired – 19%
 Student – 12%

Average Age 46.3

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 44%
- Art Gallery – 40%
- Quiet Room – 33%
- Coworking Space – 28%
- Film Studio – 25%
- Music Studio – 25%
- Game Room – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 15%
- Community or family events, other events – 11%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%
- General positive comment – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- N/A



CHINATOWN

Number of Respondents = 87

Monthly Visits 9.52

Library Card 92%

Language Spoken
 English – 67%
 Chinese – 53%
 Spanish – 2%
 Tagalog – 1%
 French – 1%
 Vietnamese – 1%
 Hindi – 1%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 49%
 Women – 50%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment
 Unemployed – 4%
 Retired – 38%
 Student – 19%

Average Age 48.4

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 35%
- Local Café – 33%
- Event Space – 27%
- Quiet Room – 26%
- Film Studio – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 8%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 7%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 7%
- More books/materials on a specific genre or subject – 7%
- More materials/services/programs for children – 7%
- Other ideas/comments – 7%

Other Relevant Information

- This branch had the 2nd highest share of retirees systemwide (38%.)



EUREKA VALLEY

Number of Respondents = 90

Monthly Visits 9.28

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 98%
 Spanish – 3%
 Chinese – 2%
 French – 1%
 German – 1%
 Ukrainian – 1%

SF Residents 97%

Gender
 Male – 51%
 Women – 42%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 7%

Employment
 Unemployed – 9%
 Retired – 35%
 Student – 6%

Average Age 50.8

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 38%
- Local Café – 34%
- Quiet Room – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 20%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 10%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 7%
- More books/materials on a specific genre or subject – 7%
- Community or family events, other events – 7%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Check out books or other materials – 96% (highest share systemwide)
 - Homework/reference assistance – 6% (lowest systemwide)
- Nonbinary patrons – 7% (highest systemwide)



EXCELSIOR

Number of Respondents = 79

Monthly Visits 8.2

Library Card 95%

Language Spoken
 English – 74%
 Chinese – 20%
 Spanish 18%
 Tagalog – 4%
 Russian – 1%
 Ukrainian – 1%
 Thai – 1%

SF Residents 97%

Gender
 Male – 50%
 Women – 49%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment
 Unemployed – 7%
 Retired – 20%
 Student – 18%

Average Age 47.2

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Homework Help Station – 32%
- Local Café – 32%
- Language Center – 31%
- Quiet Room – 31%
- Game Room – 31%
- Art Gallery – 25%
- Music Studio – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 7%
- General positive comment – 7%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 10%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 7%
- Computer trainings, general technology training – 7%

Other Relevant Information

- 97% of respondents live in San Francisco; another 3% live elsewhere in the Bay Area



GLEN PARK

Number of Respondents = 70

Monthly Visits 5.97

Library Card 93%

Language Spoken
 English – 91%
 Chinese – 9%
 Spanish – 7%
 Japanese – 1%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 27%
 Women – 69%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 4%

Employment
 Unemployed – 4%
 Retired – 43%
 Student – 6%

Average Age 53.6

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 35%
- Quiet Room – 27%
- Local Café – 24%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 12%
- General positive comment – 11%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- Patrons at this branch were less likely to use programs/classes/exhibits (7%.)
- This branch had the highest share of retirees systemwide (43%.)
- This branch had the highest share of users identifying as women across all locations (69%.)



GOLDEN GATE VALLEY

Number of Respondents = 70

Monthly Visits 8.13

Library Card 91%

Language Spoken

- English – 95%
- Spanish – 4%
- Russian – 4%
- Chinese – 3%
- Tagalog – 3%
- German – 1%
- Japanese – 1%
- Ilocano – 1%

SF Residents 95%

Gender

- Male – 32%
- Women – 67%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment

- Unemployed – 4%
- Retired – 30%
- Student – 11%

Average Age 46.7

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 54%
- Language Center – 31%
- Coworking space – 30%
- Art Gallery – 27%
- Quiet Room – 27%
- Film Studio – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 14%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 11%
- General positive comment – 10%
- More audiobooks, e-books, DVDs, CDs, access to online resources – 10%
- More books/materials on a specific genre or subject – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Patrons at this branch were less likely to use programs/classes/exhibits (7%.)
- This branch had the second-highest share of users identifying as women across all locations (67%.)



INGLESIDE

Number of Respondents = 68

Monthly Visits 7.34

Library Card 90%

Language Spoken

- English – 76%
- Chinese – 32%
- Spanish – 8%
- Russian – 5%
- Vietnamese – 3%
- Tagalog – 2%
- French – 2%
- German – 2%
- Korean – 2%
- Cambodian – 2%
- Other – 2%

SF Residents 100%

Gender

- Male – 46%
- Women – 52%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 2%

Employment

- Unemployed – 9%
- Retired – 17%
- Student – 29%

Average Age 44.3

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 43%
- Quiet Room – 40%
- Art Gallery – 37%
- Tech Training Lab – 27%
- Language Learning Center – 24%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 18%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 13%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 8%
- Other ideas/comments – 7%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Homework/reference assistance – 28% (highest systemwide)
 - Computer Access – 28%
- This branch had the third-highest student population systemwide (29%.)
- This branch had the lowest share of retirees (17%.)



MARINA

Number of Respondents = 71

Monthly Visits 9.63

Library Card 87%

Language Spoken

- English – 90%
- Spanish – 7%
- Chinese – 4%
- Italian – 3%
- Tagalog – 1%
- Portuguese – 1%
- German – 1%
- Romanian – 1%
- Turkish – 1%

SF Residents 91%

Gender

- Male – 39%
- Women – 60%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment

- Unemployed – 9%
- Retired – 29%
- Student – 13%

Average Age 47.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 42%
- Quiet Room – 37%
- Local Café – 35%
- Storytelling Space – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 16%
- General positive comment – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Wi-Fi Access – 25%



MERCED

Number of Respondents = 112

Monthly Visits 7.85

Library Card 96%

Language Spoken

- English – 82%
- Spanish – 8%
- Chinese – 2%
- Tagalog – 2%
- Russian – 2%
- Armenian – 1%
- Polish – 1%

SF Residents 95%

Gender

- Male – 44%
- Women – 55%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment

- Unemployed – 8%
- Retired – 25%
- Student – 16%

Average Age 47.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 41%
- Quiet Room – 37%
- Art Gallery – 30%
- Film Studio – 27%
- Game Room – 27%
- Tech Training Lab – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- More books/ materials of a specific genre or subject – 16%
- More meeting rooms/study rooms/rooms for focused work/study/remote work – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Wi-Fi Access – 25%



MISSION

Number of Respondents = 88

Monthly Visits 7.2

Library Card 95%

Language Spoken
 English – 86%
 Spanish – 23%
 Chinese – 3%
 French – 2%
 Vietnamese – 1%
 German – 1%
 Farsi – 1%

SF Residents 98%

Gender
 Male – 45%
 Women – 50%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 5%

Employment
 Unemployed – 7%
 Retired – 18%
 Student – 10%

Average Age 45.8

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 37%
- Art Gallery – 37%
- Quiet Room – 37%
- Community Kitchen – 24%
- Music Studio – 24%
- Homework Help Station – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- More books/ materials of a specific genre or subject – 14%
- General positive comment – 15%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Computer Access – 7% (second-lowest systemwide)



MISSION BAY

Number of Respondents = 79

Monthly Visits 9.72

Library Card 91%

Language Spoken
 English – 86%
 Spanish – 8%
 Chinese – 6%
 Korean – 4%
 Russian – 3%
 Other – 3%
 French – 1%

SF Residents 96%

Gender
 Male – 51%
 Women – 46%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 3%

Employment
 Unemployed – 12%
 Retired – 24%
 Student – 3%

Average Age 45.3

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 32%
- Coworking Space – 31%
- Art Gallery – 28%
- Quiet Room – 28%
- Business/Career Center – 22%
- Film Studio – 21%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (lectures/author talks/classes/poetry readings or poetry slams/writing classes or groups/debate club) – 15%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 8%

Other Relevant Information

- Lowest share of students systemwide (3%.)



NOE VALLEY

Number of Respondents = 85

Monthly Visits 7.41

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 100%
 Spanish – 4%
 Chinese – 1%
 French – 1%
 Italian – 1%
 Arabic – 1%

SF Residents 99%

Gender
 Male – 30%
 Women – 68%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 2%

Employment
 Unemployed – 8%
 Retired – 29%
 Student – 5%

Average Age 52.0

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 32%
- Coworking Space – 31%
- Art Gallery – 28%
- Quiet Room – 28%
- Business/Career Center – 22%
- Film Studio – 21%
- Tech Training Lab – 27%
- Language Learning Center – 24%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 16%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 16%
- General positive comment – 10%
- More audiobooks, e-books, DVDs, CDs, access to online resources – 10%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Checking out materials – 92%
 - Print/Copy – 25%
 - Programs, classes, or exhibits – 20%



NORTH BEACH

Number of Respondents = 63

Monthly Visits 7.41

Library Card 92%

Language Spoken
 English – 94%
 Chinese – 5%
 German – 3%
 Italian – 3%
 Spanish – 2%
 French – 2%
 Portuguese – 2%
 Japanese – 2%
 Dutch – 2%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 52%
 Women – 48%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 0%

Employment
 Unemployed – 5%
 Retired – 26%
 Student – 10%

Average Age 47.7

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 39%
- Quiet Room – 31%
- Art Gallery – 29%
- Coworking Space – 25%
- Event Space – 23%
- Storytelling Space – 23%
- Meeting Room – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 15%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 17%
- General positive comment – 12%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 10%
- Keep books/don't go fully automated/keep a human touch/avoid AI – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- N/A



Number of Respondents = 170

Monthly Visits	7.71
Library Card	89%
Language Spoken	English – 81% Chinese – 26% Spanish – 7% Vietnamese – 2% Korean – 2%
SF Residents	90%
Gender	Male – 41% Women – 59% Nonbinary/Trans – 0%
Employment	Unemployed – 2% Retired – 19% Student – 31%
Average Age	42.7

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Tech Training Lab – 35%
- Local Café – 32%
- Art Gallery – 30%
- Game Room – 27%
- Homework Help Station – 27%
- Business/ Career Center – 27%
- Quiet Room – 22%
- Storytelling Space – 22%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 11%
- More materials/services/programs for children (general) – 8%
More security/more enforcement of library rules/less tolerance of disruptions – 8%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Homework/reference – 27%
- Highest share of students system-wide (31%)



Number of Respondents = 90

Monthly Visits	7.81
Library Card	94%
Language Spoken	English – 75% Chinese – 35% Spanish – 2% Russian – 2% French – 1% Vietnamese – 1% Korean – 1% Mongolian – 1% Other – 4%
SF Residents	95%
Gender	Male – 34% Women – 64% Nonbinary/Trans – 2%
Employment	Unemployed – 8% Retired – 18% Student – 17%
Average Age	43.6

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 36%
- Homework Help Station – 25%
- Local Café – 33%
- Teen Hangout Space – 25%
- Quiet Room – 33%
- Tech Training Lab – 24%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 13%
- More meeting rooms/study rooms/other separate rooms – 13%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%
- More materials/services/programs for babies/toddlers/preschoolers – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Homework/reference – 27%
- Highest share of respondents identifying as full-time parents or caregivers (4%)



PARK

Number of Respondents = 63

Monthly Visits 10.18

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 98%
 Spanish – 5%
 Chinese – 2%
 Tagalog – 2%
 Thai – 2%
 Amharic – 2%

SF Residents 96%

Gender
 Male – 49%
 Women – 48%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 3%

Employment
 Unemployed – 8%
 Retired – 22%
 Student – 10%

Average Age 45.7

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 42%
- Quiet Room – 35%
- Art Gallery – 29%
- Coworking Space – 27%
- Event Space – 27%
- Meeting Room – 23%
- Community Performance Space – 21%
- Genealogy and History Hub – 21%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 17%
- General positive comment – 10%
- More books/materials on a specific genre – 10%
- More areas/more comfortable areas for reading/study – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Print/Copy – 43%
 - Meetings – 10%



PARKSIDE

Number of Respondents = 62

Monthly Visits 9.63

Library Card 88%

Language Spoken
 English – 79%
 Chinese – 25%
 Spanish – 12%
 Tagalog – 3%
 Portuguese – 3%
 Russian – 2%
 French – 2%
 Vietnamese – 2%

SF Residents 97%

Gender
 Male – 36%
 Women – 57%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 7%

Employment
 Unemployed – 11%
 Retired – 27%
 Student – 15%

Average Age 42.8

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Music Studio – 32%
- Game Room – 28%
- Local Café – 26%
- Art Gallery – 26%
- Storytelling Space – 26%
- Quiet Room – 25%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Community or family events/games night/movie nights (general) – 14%
- More art/music classes, exhibits, performances, and events – 11%
- Classes/tools/resources for crafting, knitting, sewing, 3D printing, using tools, and other ‘maker’ resources – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- MPrograms/classes/exhibits higher share of reasons for visiting (25%) vs systemwide (16%)



PORTOLA

Number of Respondents = 71

Monthly Visits 9.68

Library Card 99%

Language Spoken

- English – 51%
- Chinese – 40%
- Spanish – 11%
- Vietnamese – 4%
- Other – 3%
- French – 1%
- Indonesian – 1%
- Ukrainian – 1%

SF Residents 77%

Gender

- Male – 32%
- Women – 67%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 1%

Employment

- Unemployed – 16%
- Retired – 7%
- Student – 25%

Average Age 39.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Game Room – 33%
- Quiet Room – 32%
- Art Gallery – 30%
- Homework Help Station – 30%
- Local Café – 26%

Top Open-ended Requests

- More materials/services/programs for children (general) – 14%
- More books/materials on a specific genre or subject – 12%

Other Relevant Information

- Main purpose for visit:
 - Computer Access – 27%



PORTRERO

Number of Respondents = 71

Monthly Visits 7.67

Library Card 81%

Language Spoken

- English – 85%
- Spanish – 13%
- Chinese – 8%
- German – 3%
- Farsi – 2%
- Japanese – 2%
- Hindi – 2%
- Marathi – 2%

SF Residents 100%

Gender

- Male – 46%
- Women – 54%
- Nonbinary/Trans – 0%

Employment

- Unemployed – 3%
- Retired – 32%
- Student – 7%

Average Age 49.0

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 38%
- Local Café – 32%
- Music Studio – 23%
- Community Kitchen – 21%
- Film Studio – 21%
- Genealogy and History Hub – 21%
- Storytelling Space – 20%
- Social Service Center – 20%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 14%
- More materials/services/programs for kids (general) – 11%
- Classes/tools/resources for crafting, knitting, sewing, 3D printing, using tools, and other ‘maker’ resources – 11%

Other Relevant Information

- N/A



PRESIDIO

Number of Respondents = 65

Monthly Visits 7.44

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 97%
 Spanish – 6%
 Farsi – 3%
 Russian - 2%
 French – 2%
 Thai – 2%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 34%
 Women – 65%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 2%

Employment
 Unemployed – 3%
 Retired – 39%
 Student – 3%

Average Age 51.4

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 39%
- Art Gallery – 36%
- Event Space – 31%
- Coworking Space – 24%
- Language Center – 21%
- Quiet Room – 19%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 26%
- General positive comment – 15%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 11%
- More meeting rooms/study rooms/other separate rooms – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Higher share of retirees than systemwide
- Low share of students –3%



RICHMOND

Number of Respondents = 89

Monthly Visits 8.44

Library Card 95%

Language Spoken
 English – 87%
 Chinese – 18%
 Spanish – 8%
 Portugese – 5%
 Russian – 2%
 Vietnamese – 2%
 Other – 2%
 Tagalog – 1%

SF Residents 95%

Gender
 Male – 37%
 Women – 63%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 0%

Employment
 Unemployed – 5%
 Retired – 19%
 Student – 13%

Average Age 43.8

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 46%
- Quiet Room – 29%
- Art Gallery – 26%
- Storytelling Space – 26%
- Coworking Space – 23%
- Language Center – 23%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 16%
- More materials/services/programs for children (general) – 12%
- General positive comment – 10%
- More meeting rooms/study rooms/other separate rooms – 9%

Other Relevant Information

- Highest share of users identifying as employed systemwide (68%.)



SUNSET

Number of Respondents = 78

Monthly Visits 7.74

Library Card 96%

Language Spoken
 English – 78%
 Chinese – 22%
 Spanish – 8%
 Tagalog – 1%
 Vietnamese – 1%
 Indonesian – 1%
 Kannada – 1%

SF Residents 77%

Gender
 Male – 42%
 Women – 58%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 0%

Employment
 Unemployed – 9%
 Retired – 33%
 Student – 22%

Average Age 47.5

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 40%
- Art Gallery – 36%
- Quiet Room – 29%
- Music Studio – 29%

Top Open-ended Requests

- More books/materials (general) – 11%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 9%
- General positive comment – 9%
- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 8%

Other Relevant Information

- Higher share of both students and retirees than overall



VISTACION VALLEY

Number of Respondents = 68

Monthly Visits 10.43

Library Card 85%

Language Spoken
 English – 55%
 Chinese – 41%
 Spanish – 15%
 Tagalog – 3%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 45%
 Women – 54%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 2%

Employment
 Unemployed – 12%
 Retired – 20%
 Student – 23%

Average Age 42.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Game Room – 47%
- Art Gallery – 42%
- Quiet Room – 33%
- Homework Help Station – 30%
- Music Studio – 30%
- Tech Training Lab – 28%
- Film Studio – 28%
- Language Center – 27%

Top Open-ended Requests

- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 15%
- Community or family events//other events (general) – 12%

Other Relevant Information

- Higher share visiting for computer access, homework/reference assistance, and programs/classes/exhibits than overall



WEST PORTAL

Number of Respondents = 110

Monthly Visits 7.39

Library Card 94%

Language Spoken
 English – 92%
 Chinese – 13%
 Spanish – 5%
 Portuguese – 2%
 Thai – 1%
 Montenegrin – 1%

SF Residents 92%

Gender
 Male – 34%
 Women – 65%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 2%

Employment
 Unemployed – ?%
 Retired – ?%
 Student – ?%

Average Age 42.1

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Art Gallery – 35%
- Quiet Room – 23%
- Local Café – 29%
- Tech Training Lab – 21%

Top Open-ended Requests

- Intellectual events (i.e., lectures, author talks, poetry readings, writing classes, clubs) – 14%
- General positive comment – 14%
- Community or family events/games night/movie night/puppet shows/board game nights/other events (general) – 10%

Other Relevant Information

- Heavier emphasis on materials, less emphasis on computers, printers, and Wi-Fi, compared with results overall



WESTERN ADDITION

Number of Respondents = 73

Monthly Visits 7.66

Library Card 96%

Language Spoken
 English – 94%
 Spanish – 6%
 Russian – 2%
 French – 10%
 Japanese – 1%
 Amharic – 1%

SF Residents 100%

Gender
 Male – 33%
 Women – 63%
 Nonbinary/Trans – 5%

Employment
 Unemployed – 1%
 Retired – 28%
 Student – 14%

Average Age 47.9

Q13: Which of the following spaces would you like to see at your branch?

- Local Café – 38%
- Teen Hangout Space – 26%
- Art Gallery – 33%
- Coworking Space – 20%
- Quiet Room – 27%
- Tech Training Lab – 20%

Top Open-ended Requests

- General positive comment – 20%
- More books/materials of a specific genre or subject – 14%
- Increased open hours/open earlier/open later/open longer on weekdays/weekends – 12%

Other Relevant Information

- Greater emphasis on materials and homework/reference assistance than visits systemwide

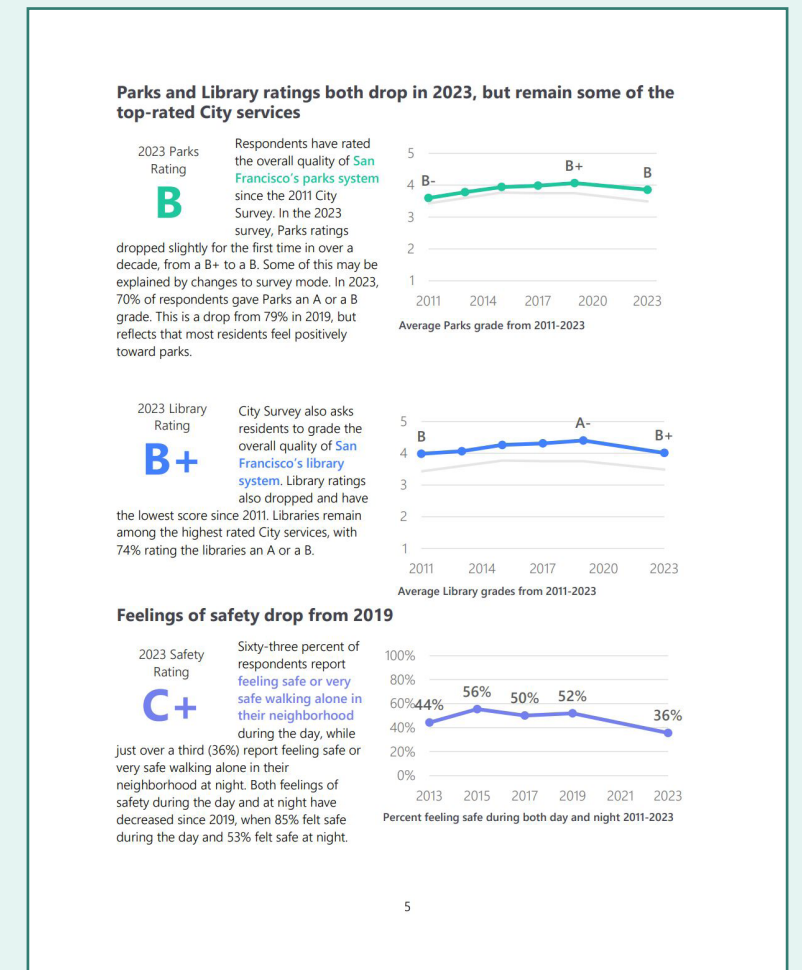
In addition to learning more about patrons who already use library locations, this study also sought to learn more about San Francisco residents who DO NOT use the SFPL.

Library Non-User Analysis was completed using the 2023 City Survey, in which San Francisco residents aged 18+ were asked about their opinions on many City services, including the San Francisco Public Library.

- Between October and December 2022, the City and County of San Francisco surveyed 2,530 San Francisco residents on their use of and satisfaction with City services. InterEthnica and EMC Research administered the survey online, over the telephone, and in-person.
- Respondents were asked three separate library usage questions.
- Out of 2,530 respondents, 604 (630 weighted) said they do not use the San Francisco Public Library (including the main, any branch library, or any online resources in the past 12 months.)
- During the survey, these respondents were asked why they did not use SFPL. Their open-ended responses were reviewed and analyzed by CC&G.
- CC&G also reviewed demographics of library non-users, particularly in comparison to City Survey respondents as a whole.

NON-USER CITY SURVEY INSIGHTS

Library Non-Users

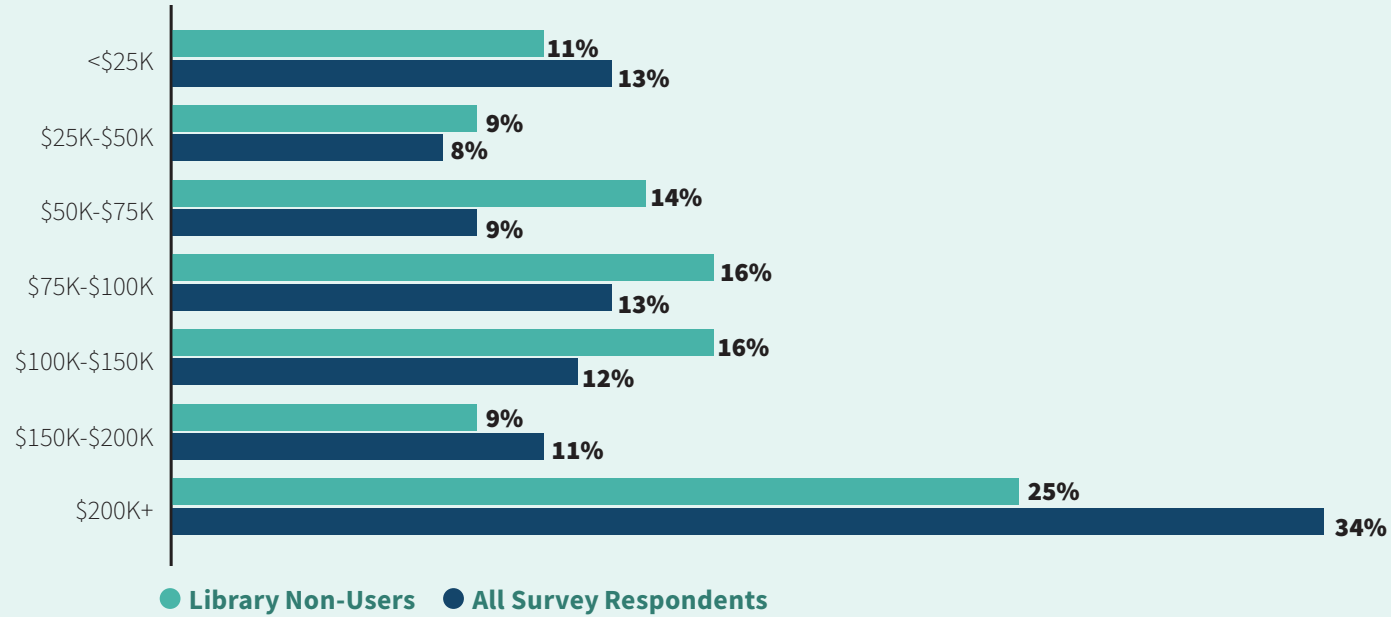


* Percentages from open-ended responses may seem lower across the board but should not be discounted or compared with those from Q13. Q13 had primarily pre-printed responses, whereas the open-ended responses were written in unaided from Q4, Q13, Q14.

For open-ends AND Q13 (current and future needs), percentages are based ONLY on SF residents.

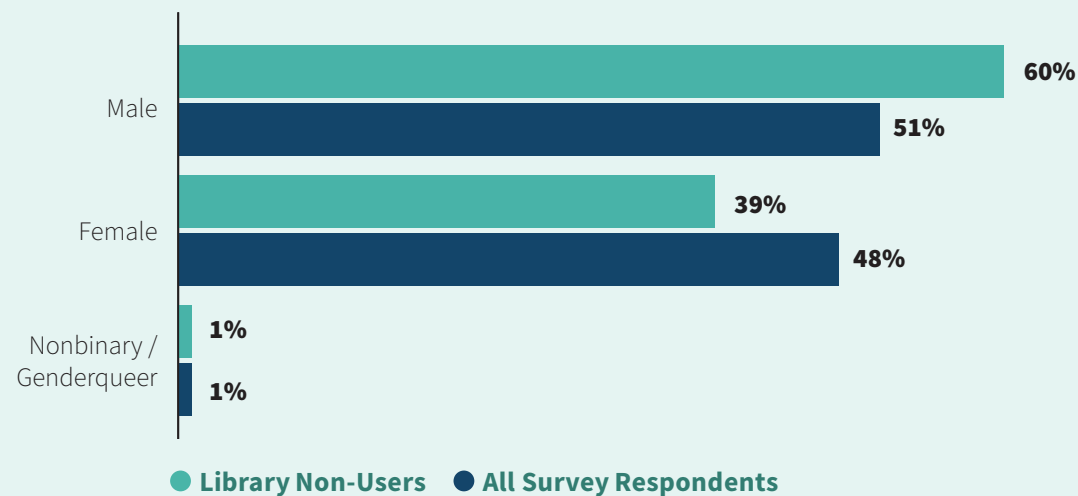
Non-Users & Income

The bar graph below shows the **breakout of incomes among both library non-users and survey respondents overall**. While those earning over \$100,000 are about 50% of respondents overall, they represent a slightly higher share (57%) of library non-users.



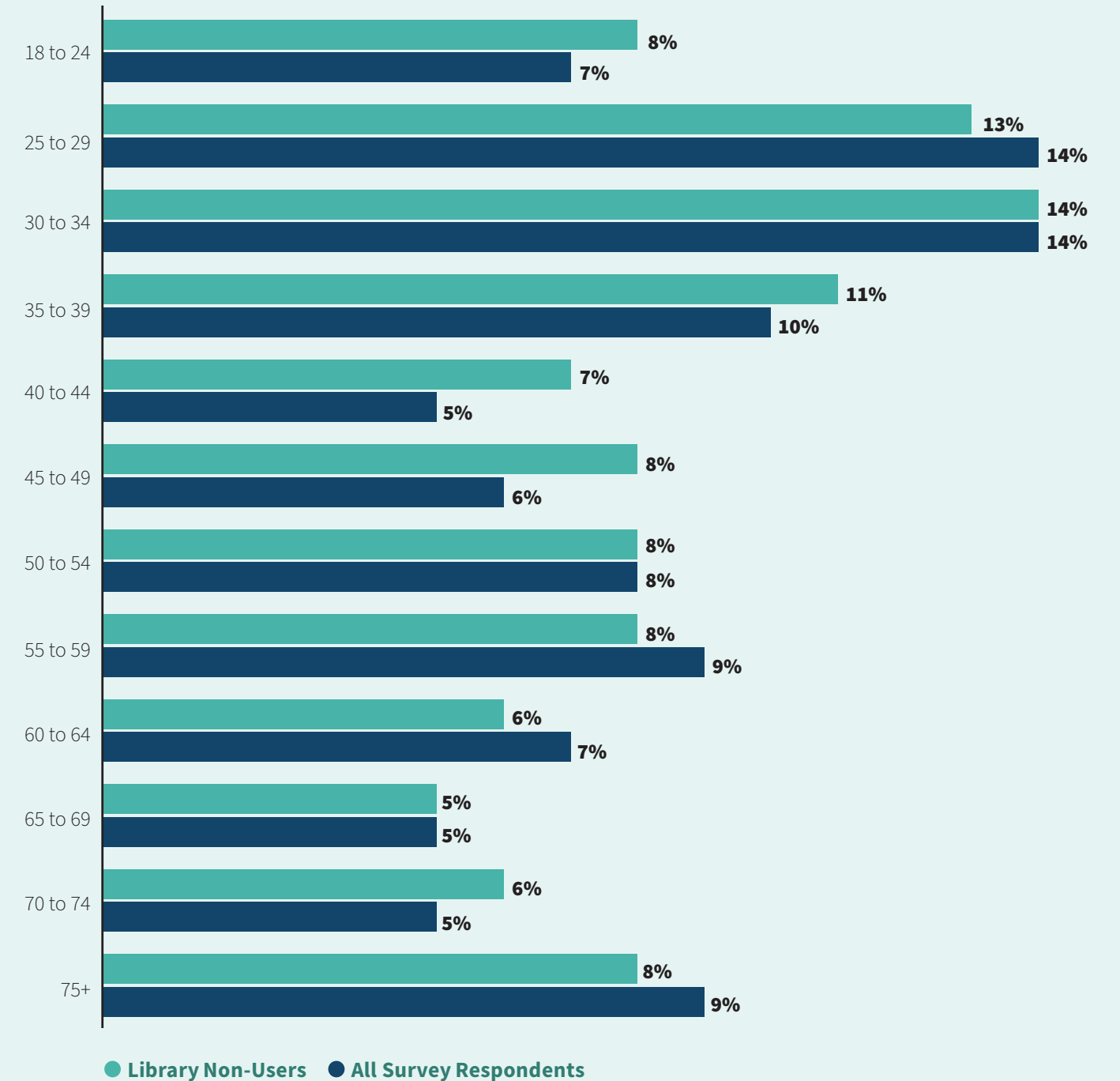
Non-Users & Gender

The bar graph below shows gender breakdowns among both City Survey 2023 respondents overall and library non-users. By gender, **men are more likely to be non-users than other genders**.



Non-Users & Age

The bar graph below shows the **breakout of ages between both library non-users and survey respondents overall**. Library non-users tend to be slightly older. Note: because City Survey was conducted among respondents at least 18 years of age, the share of library users/non-users under 17 is not represented below.



Why don't residents use SFPL?

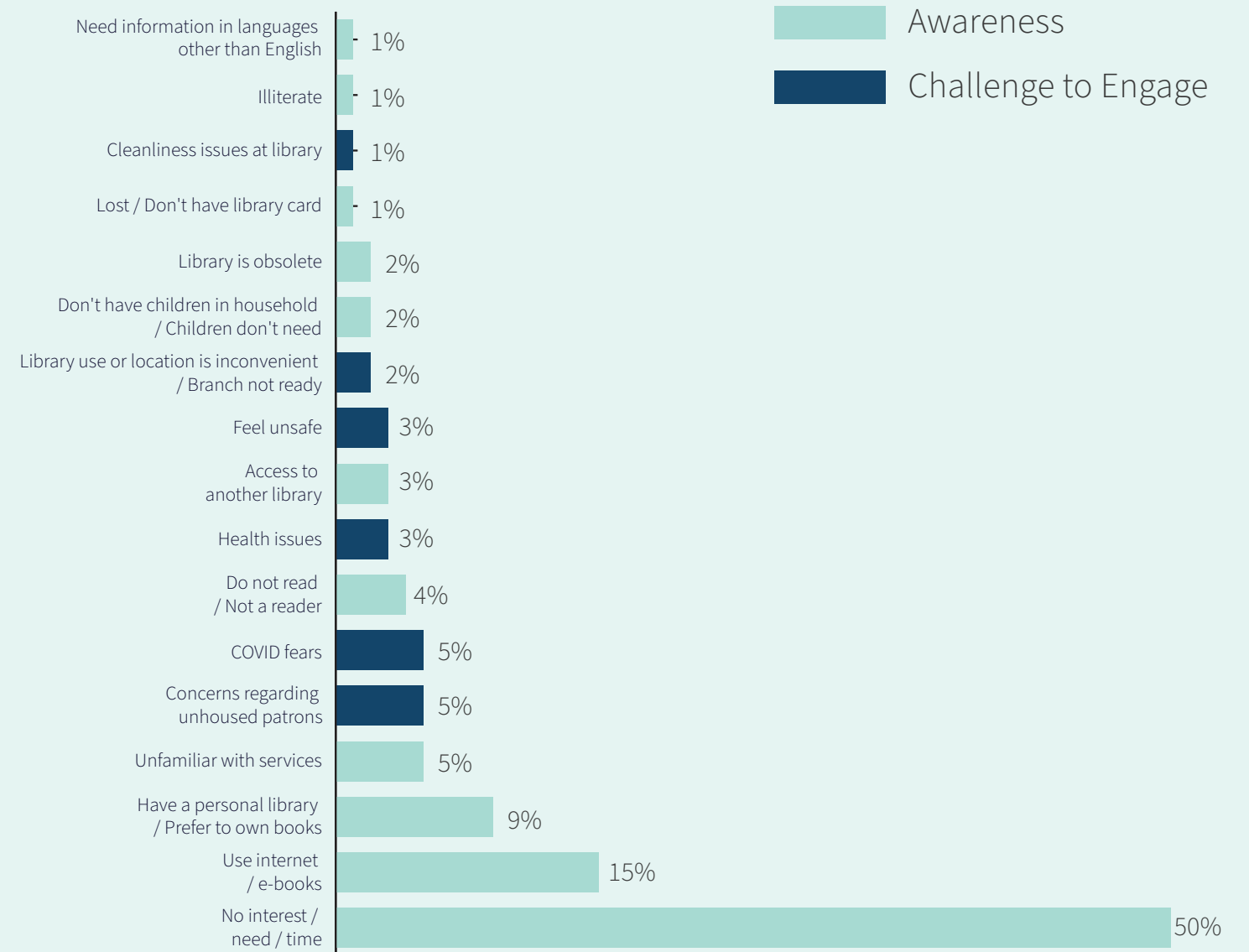
Respondents were asked **WHY** they do not use the library, and their answers can be summarized into two important categories:

- They are **not aware** of what San Francisco Public Library offers (need education/awareness on current/future offerings.)
- They have **concerns about the library** which are similar to/ reflected in the patron survey (need to know problems are being addressed.) See more about this in the next section.

This is good news!

It indicates that when SFPL formulates changes based on both internal and external insights, current non-users will also be reached, and may be persuaded to use SFPL.

Why haven't you visited SFPL during the last 12 months?



Base: 604 unweighted/ 630 weighted (indicate do not use SFPL)

Multiple responses accepted

50% of all respondents who don't use the library cite having **no interest, need or time.**

This response was nearly universal, with very few demographic differences among respondents when looking at breakdowns by age, educational attainment, and language spoken in the home.

When differences do exist, they may be unexpected:

Parents of Children

Parents of children were slightly MORE likely to provide this response (61% of respondents with children aged 0–5 years and 56% of respondents with children ages 6–17 years) than those who are not parents (48%).

However, the total number of parents by age group is quite small, and thus more directional than statistically reliable.

Those earning \$50-200K

Those earning \$50,000 to \$200,000 were somewhat more likely to provide this response (57%/56%) than those with lower incomes (40%–45%).

Not all respondents gave enough detail to clearly indicate what was behind their response. However, a small share who did often reflect underlying motivations which the library can address. These groups are detailed on the adjacent page.

Serious time crunch: parenting, job/economic stress, or other issues mean that they are simply struggling to do everything required in a particular day.

"That's a good question. I should. I don't read that much, I don't have the time."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I work too much but I'd love to go to the library soon."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"... I have a library room in my house with books I buy on Amazon or eBooks."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Do not think of the library as anything more than 'just books' or something to use if you are a school age student. Unaware of what the library already offers.

"I think the library is only for little kids and I can only read well in Spanish."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I'm an older person without children."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I probably should just haven't had a need to, I buy the books I want and use the Internet."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Those open to new offerings shift their perception of value over time, driven by personal interest rather than just seeing libraries as book-centric spaces.

"No outreach or compelling reason to make me want to visit the library."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"No need for the library, don't know where Spanish books are."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I haven't needed to, but I'm glad they're available for those who do."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Concerns from Patrons & Non-Users

NOTE: While these percentages are low, some branches stress the importance of some of these requests for better services from the libraries.

Behavior, Safety, & Cleanliness

Among patrons:

- 2% said they wanted to see more security, better enforcement of library rules, and/or less tolerance of disruptions.
- 1% mentioned they would like issues around unhoused patrons to be better managed
- 1% stated quiet policies were not being enforced and/or the library was too noisy
- 1% of patrons asked the library to deal better with disruptions from kids
- 1% of patrons asked that cleaning be done more thoroughly and/or more often

Among non-users:

- 5% indicated they do not use SFPL out of fear of COVID
- 5% indicated they do not use SFPL because of issues around unhoused patrons
- 3% cited health issues
- 3% cited safety issues
- 1% cited uncleanliness

Additional Notes:

- Several respondents indicated that other city departments or services should be introduced so that the library is not overly burdened by managing issues surrounding unhoused patrons
- While some respondents associated these issues with the Main, several branches had a higher share of respondents noting such issues

Technology & Change

Among patrons:

- 3% stated they wanted to be sure the library kept physical books, kept real people as librarians, and avoid 100% automation (8%–10% of patrons at Anza, Mission, and North Beach)

Additional Notes:

- A few respondents expressed concerns about the cost of implementing so many new things and wondered whether this would come at the expense of basic services such as accessing books and materials. They appeared less positive about any suggested new offerings as they feared it would come at the expense of existing services.

Basic Requests

Among patrons:

- 2% requested more books and magazines
- 5% requested more materials/services for children
- 1% asked for better wayfinding in the libraries and navigating the library website for online resources
- 1% asked for better parking
- <1% better transit access

Community Focus Group Insights

FOCUS GROUPS

Community Focus Group Overview

Focus group discussions were held from Wednesday, May 31, 2023, through Wednesday, July 26, 2023. **Contigo planned and conducted all 19 groups.** CC&G gave feedback during planning, observed 5 of the groups, and conducted the analysis.

This section presents qualitative findings from focus groups, combining input protocols. **These groups were selected by SFPL** in collaboration with consultants, focusing on DE&I interests, not representing all users or residents.

The content is a summarized overview; detailed data is available in source documents including notes, transcripts, and audio. These groups produced qualitative results, which **provide directional information, rather than statistically reliable.**

Friends of the Library and the Community Based Organization group discussions were conducted slightly differently due to their unique perspectives.

A total of 19 focus groups were conducted in:

- Chinese - 1 group
- English - 17 groups
- Spanish - 1 group

Patrons had the option of completing the survey:

- In-person – 8 groups
- Online – 11 groups

Respondents were asked about several key issues, including:

- Participants' historical and current use of the library
- Reaction and ranking to potential offerings
- Organizations that SFPL could partner with/learn from
- Issues and barriers hindering/reducing library use

Community Partners:

To help recruit local participants from priority populations, Contigo partnered with three community organizations: A. Philip Randolph Institute, Chinatown Community Development Center, and the Youth Arts Exchange.

Focus groups fell into 3 categories:

1) Outreach Zones:

- Zone A/District 1 and 2
- Zone B /District 4 and District 7/Parkside
- Zone C/District 5 and District 8 (LGBTQ+)
- Zone D/District 11 (Latinx & African Americans)
- Zone E/District 10 (African Americans) x2
- Zone F/District 3 and District 6 (Filipino)
- Zone G/District 9 (Latinx)

2) Priority Populations:

- Teens
- Disabled Residents
- Chinese speakers
- Filipino
- Spanish speakers
- Parents
- Elders

3) Partner Organizations:

- CBOs (x2)
- Friends of the Library (x2)

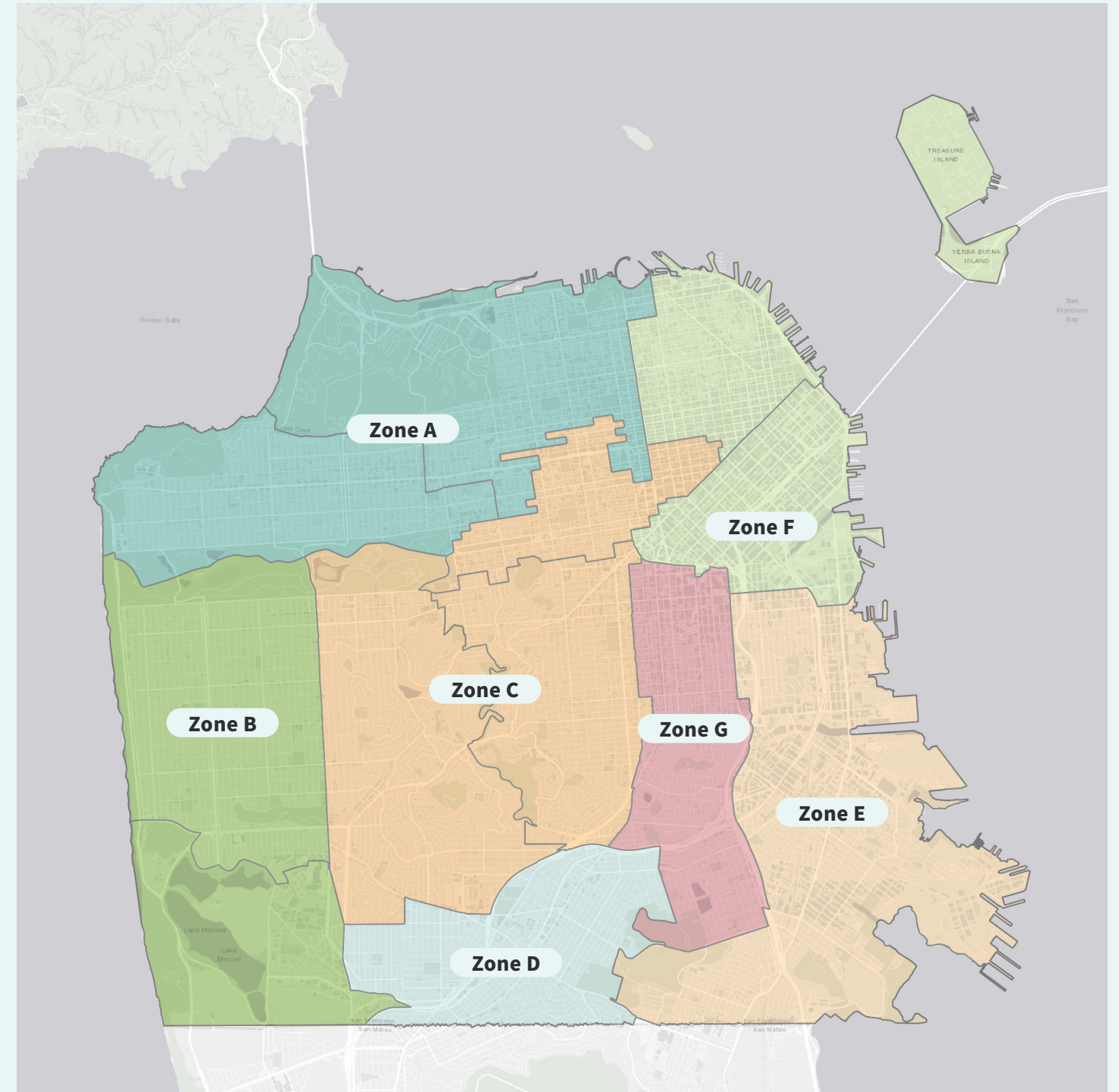
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Community Focus Group Overview

Zone

District

Zone A - Northwest	District 01 – Seacliff, Outer Richmond, Inner Richmond District 02 – Presidio, Presidio Heights, Marina
Zone B - Western	District 04 – Inner, Outer Sunset District 07A – Parkside
Zone C - Central	District 05 – Western Addition, Haight Ashbury District 07B – West of Twin Peaks District 08 – Noe Valley, Castro and Upper Market & Diamond Heights
Zone D - South	District 11 – Excelsior, Ocean View, Outer Mission, Ingleside
Zone E - Southeast	District 10 – Bayview, Hunters Point, Potrero, Dog Patch, Visitacion Valley
Zone F - Northeast	District 03 – Chinatown, Financial District and Russian Hill District 06 – Tenderloin and South of Market (SOMA)
Zone G - South Central	District 09 – Mission



COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Notes and Cautions About these Findings

Focus Group Purpose

This report reflects the findings from the 19 focus groups.

By their nature, focus groups do not provide statistically significant data. Rather, they provide qualitative (directional) data. Numbers, percentages, etc. should not be taken as statistically representative, nor used for quantitative analysis.

Moreover, these were truly hybrid focus groups and community outreach events, incorporating protocols from each type of input.

Focus Group Quotes

In addition, focus group participant audiences were selected by SFPL working with Contigo and other Strategic Plan consultants.

These audiences are those SFPL wished to focus on, with many being communities of concern in the interests of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I.) This means they are not representative of all SFPL users, nor of all San Francisco residents.

Analysis Framework

What follows is a summary of findings. For more details, please see the source documentation, which includes notes, transcripts, and audio files for each group, as well as overall focus group theme summaries.

For a quantitative framework in which to place results, see the Branch User and Non-user Survey insights.

Focus Group Quotes

Quotes used in this report are taken directly from the group transcripts, with standard editing conventions used (e.g., brackets to indicate words inserted for clarity not in the quote, ellipses to indicate missing words from the quote).

In some cases, it is not clear whether the same or a different person is speaking, even though a train of thought continues, so some quotes may be the result of more than one speaker.

Quotes which are translated from the original language are noted as such; these quotes are taken from the translation and not directly from transcripts.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Insights Overview

01

The need for equitable access to library services came up in 18 of 19 focus groups. A range of discussion topics raised challenges with accessing both physical libraries and online library services.

02

The need for language access and cultural competency was raised in 17 of 19 groups, both in the context of existing service capacity and desired service offerings.

03

Parents and some non-parents indicated the need for support of children and families. Parents strongly desire to connect with other parents, and non-English speaking parents/caregivers who share the same language. (18 of 19 groups)

04

The high cost of living in San Francisco surfaced in many discussions. SFPL provides crucial services to residents living under financial strain, and appreciation for this type of service as well as ideas for expansion were articulated in every focus group.

05

In every focus group there was a resounding desire for programming and spaces that facilitate connections among neighbors from opportunities to be civically engaged and informed, cultural celebrations, preventing social isolation, and a desire to connect with others in the same demographic group (e.g., elders, other parents.)

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS
Key Themes

Physical & Virtual Access

The need for equitable access to library services came up in 18 of 19 focus groups. A range of discussion topics raised challenges with accessing both physical libraries and online library services.

Location Access	In both focus groups conducted in-person at the Linda Brooks-Burton Library, participants shared that for those using public transportation it takes two buses to get to that branch if traveling from Hunters Point, India Basin, or Candlestick. Targeted use of the bookmobile in these areas was suggested. Participants in District 11 also stated that a library branch is not close to their homes. [10]
More Offerings	A mechanism for requesting offerings seen at other branches or the Main branch was requested. [6]
Extended Hours	Requested both at the Main Library and other branches. Two participants noted they prefer extended hours be allocated before new offerings are budgeted. [8]
Digital Divide	Raised as a challenge to accessing library services and other important services. It was noted that several social service programs require an online application, such as the SFUSD's free and reduced lunch program. This example illustrates the compounding challenges of the digital divide for low-income individuals and families who are not digitally literate. [11]
Charging Stations	Access to cell phone charging stations was raised as an important and often overlooked equity issue. Participants stated that many websites, including email accounts, require or recommend a two-step authentication with access to a cell phone to complete the login process. People visiting the library in the latter part of the day often need to charge their phones. [5]
Improved Communication	All groups indicated offerings and programs needed to be better publicized. Many people shared recommendations relating to the library's communication, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass transit advertising (i.e., bus shelter/on-bus, etc.) • Partnering with CBOs and SFUSD to reach a broader audience • Posters with QR codes to improve access to programs and solicit input • Sharing program information via SMS/text • Bulletin boards on branch exteriors • Improving search functionality on SFPL.org • Continuing the hard-copy newsletter • Hiring Promotoras as 'community liaisons' and youth from the community to work at the library and educate residents about how to access available services [19]
Improved Digital Communication	Need for website to more clearly communicate what services, programs and events are available [6]

Language Access & Cultural Competence

The need for language access and cultural competency was raised in 17 of 19 groups, both in the context of existing service capacity and desired service offerings. Participants requested more in-language staff support and the following services:

Diverse and Bilingual Staff	Respondents of all backgrounds spoke about the importance of staff members from a variety of backgrounds with the ability to speak multiple languages. [11] One participant claimed HR/union rules prohibited some bilingual staff serving patrons in-language if they did not have the language skill in their approved job responsibilities. If this statement is true, then it may be worth revisiting policies that discourage bilingual staff from serving patrons in their native language.
Cultural Competency	Respondents in the Spanish-speaking group stressed the importance of bilingual staff with cultural roots in the language due to the need for cultural competency, which was said to be more important than the language skills.
Programming and Books in Language	Strong desire for more programming in languages other than English, as well as desire to for an expanded number of books offered in each language.
Language Center	For patrons learning English, as well as patrons learning other languages. On multiple occasions it was suggested that the library facilitate the connection of patrons. For example, that a Spanish speaker seeking to learn English be connected with an English speaker seeking to learn Spanish, to facilitate an exchange of tutoring and conversational practice. [10]
Citizenship Center	For immigrants seeking information and resources to become a US citizen, including preparation/support for the civic questions for the naturalization test. [9]
Multi-cultural displays & events	Learning about the variety of cultures represented in San Francisco's diverse population was desired and not just during heritage months. Cultural displays year-round in branches with a strong presence of certain cultures in the surrounding community are desired. [15]
Language Translation	Broadly mentioned as the library either offering or facilitating access to English language translation, translating social and other forms/applications for new immigrants, and non-native English speakers. At least one respondent suggested using translation software to bridge the gap between non-bilingual staff and non-English speaking patrons as needed. [10]

*Numbers in [brackets] denote quantity of groups in which a topic was discussed.

Family Support

Parents and some non-parents indicated the need for support of children and families. Parents strongly desire to connect with other parents, and non-English speaking parents/caregivers who share the same language. (18 of 19 groups)

Team Spaces / Game Rooms	The need for teen spaces and programming was voiced both by parents and teens themselves. Many reported not using the library as much in middle and high school because they have less free time, but a relaxing environment where snacking and conversing was permitted would be welcome, in addition to a homework center. Teens and parents alike requested the availability of games to play at the branch or to checkout. A dedicated space for games was requested. [15]
Homework Help	Parents of all backgrounds requested homework support for students. Elders also cited the need for this, noting that grandparents often end up raising children as well as concerns about helping kids in their community catch up academically. [13]
Interactive Spaces & Kids Programming	Included in this section is the feedback that children's offerings are targeted at school-age children and there is a need for programming for toddlers. [14]
Childcare	Parents would like the ability to partake in adult activities or work at the library, which could be facilitated by the accessibility of onsite childcare. Gyms were provided as examples of what parents might enjoy accessing during a specified period of time while children are cared for. [5]
Music / Media Education	Music education was described as being cost prohibitive. Both access to a music studio, such as The Mix at the Main Library, and music lessons/access to instruments to test a child's comfort with an instrument were requested. [10]
School Application Support	The library was seen as well poised to deliver in-language support to families needing assistance with completing the School District's enrollment application, which some parents experience as non-intuitive and challenging due to the school lottery assignment process. [2] Better partnership with SFUSD was discussed across multiple groups, including the Teen group.
Parenting Support for First-Generation Families	Immigrant parents in the Spanish-focused group shared the unique challenges experienced in their households that made parenting classes, parent and youth support groups, and culturally competent mental health services necessary. Similar sentiments were also expressed in the D11 group.
Tech Support	Children learning technology for the first time in school are said to need tech support, which parents would like assistance with providing. [11]

Support Services

The high cost of living in San Francisco surfaced in many discussions. SFPL provides some crucial services to residents living under financial strain, and appreciation for this type of service as well as ideas for expansion were articulated in every focus group.

Lending Library	To provide access to tools, kits (i.e., fun robot building), and instruments. [6]
Workforce Development	For all ages (teens through seniors.) CBOs would like workforce development for staff as they struggle with employee retention, given the limited salary/benefit packages they operate with. [14]
Access to Social Services	The need for access to information for a range of social services is desired and seen as essential for supporting the unhoused. The library is also a general one-stop location for anyone seeking help with mental health, housing, or other social services issues. A number of respondents made clear that they did not want the library to offer these, but to make them easier to find and possibly facilitate service providers being in the library to answer questions. [13]
Experiential Ladder of SFPL Services	It was suggested in many groups that the library work to engage residents of all ages so that the library can be seen as an essential institution for all, not just for children or parents.
Computer Copying / Printing	Many residents experiencing financial strain remarked that printing services were vital to their ability to navigate bureaucracies they encounter every day. [13]
Financial Literacy / Tax Preparation	The desire for financial literacy was raised by many Participants who desire to work toward greater economic security. [6]
Community Workers	It was noted that the employment and use of community workers as Promotoras, teen internships, and senior workers could help on multiple levels both by provided part-time employment, while also helping to improve connections with the community and outreach efforts. [6]

**Numbers in [brackets] denote quantity of groups in which a topic was discussed.*

Community Connections

In every focus group there was a resounding desire for programming and spaces that facilitate connections among neighbors from opportunities to be civically engaged and informed, cultural celebrations, preventing social isolation, and a desire to connect with others in the same demographic group (e.g., elders, other parents.)

Clubs and Activities for Seniors	Seniors spoke to the challenges of isolation, and the need for activities that help them both socialize and exercise their cognitive functions. Art and STEM classes were mentioned. Current library offerings were said to be for children and not open to adult participants. [11]
All-Ages Excursions/Field Trips	Many seniors requested fun, educational trips for the same reasons above, but so did participants of all ages. Parents also appreciated going on excursions with their children. Many currently available excursions were also said to be closed to adult participation. Discover and Go was appreciated by many participants. [10]
Multi-Generational Programming	Many participants, young and old, requested multigenerational programming and noted the lack of offerings designed for participants of all ages. [5]
Art Gallery	Together with the suggestion for branch art galleries came the request that local artists be invited to display work at their neighborhood branch. [10]
Local Café	For gathering over food.
Community Living Room	With conversing allowed. [9]
Co-working Spaces	Places where it is permissible to speak and take video calls. [7]
Game Room and Teen Room	Teen spaces with bean bag chairs, snacking and conversing allowed. A game room (for bingo and chess, for example) were welcome, together with clubs.

Community Connections (cont.)

Multi-use Spaces	To be used for community events (including movie viewing) and meeting rooms for outside groups, such as neighborhood associations. [14]
Outdoor Work and Leisure Spaces	With conversing and eating allowed. These spaces were seen as important given the recent pandemic experience. [6]
Kids' Spaces and Activities	Desire for interactive play spaces for children with conversing allowed. These spaces were said to be important for the development of motor skills in the 0-5 population, as well as older children. [11]
Community Kitchen	Many people stated a community kitchen would be helpful for those who live in units without these facilities, as well as for people exploring culinary careers. [6]
Art and Craft Workshops, Spaces	Participants said art and craft activities and spaces that make crafting materials available would be appreciated. Some shared they have enjoyed these activities in the past, and particularly appreciated doing it in a workshop with quality materials offered. One person likened it to an informal date night activity with a spouse. However, Participants noted these offerings were not as prevalent as pre-COVID. [6]
Book Club	Participants indicated a desire for book clubs in both English and other languages. People would like to connect over currently popular books and with others in their demographic groups, such as other elders and others that speak the same language. [7]

**Numbers in [brackets] denote quantity of groups in which a topic was discussed.*

Other Factors Impacting Use

Five topics came up repeatedly that did not fit into one of the broader categories previously listed:

Safety	Participants spoke to the need for library entrances to be maintained safely and clear of obstructions. The issue of safety outside and inside the library was raised overall, with Participants suggesting the library work with other public agencies to connect people with social services. It was acknowledged that this is also challenging for library staff. [16]
Genealogy / History Hub	Many patrons had prior experience accessing genealogy services at the library, while others were unaware of it but interested in the service. [12] There was a key equity component to some comments; many elders had important lived history in San Francisco, and those experiences were being lost as they pass on without recording their experiences. This was particularly mentioned by those in African American communities.
Quiet Room	Many people noted the need for a quiet room to work, study, and/or take virtual calls without interrupting others. [10]
Digital/Audio Books	This was the most mentioned topic across all groups, with many participants in the teen and disability groups particularly remarking on the importance of digital media access. [12]
Collaborative Partnerships with CBOs	CBOs were seen as important partners, and it was suggested that efforts be made to explore ways to co-sponsor offerings both at the library, at special events, and in other community spaces.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS
Group Summaries

Community Based Organizations

Number of Participants = 17

Key Takeaways

- Most participants had recent or current experience collaborating with the library. They see **ongoing collaboration as important and necessary** – both for the library and their organizations.
- Many respondents in both groups mentioned **technology needs** – how-to for seniors and others new to technology, increasing access to technology for those groups who currently have insufficient access, teaching residents about how to avoid online scams, etc.
- For youth particularly, but also for residents in general, some respondents pointed out a true need for the library to bridge the gap between ‘just Googling’ and **conducting credible research**, or the added benefit of having the library act as a teacher to show and provide context (vs watching a YouTube video alone). This was also discussed in non-tech areas – where community members go right by the library and just **don’t know what the library offers** and how it can help them.
- In both groups, being able to **use library space for meetings, classes, and events** in the community was cited as a huge plus. Some participants asked for flexibility in allowing some programs to run outside regular library hours, particularly on weekends.
- Respondents in both groups also emphasized the importance of **personal relationships in maintaining and sustaining successful collaboration**. They cited library staff turnover, as well as regular turnover in the nonprofit sector, as factors that often stall or block collaborative efforts.
- Underlining collaboration was continuing pressures on community-based organizations. **Maximizing both the CBO’s budgets and the library’s** was considered crucial to meet both challenging financial constraints and increasing needs

“Once you have a staff person that’s at the library, you have that contact, like, they are good to go.”

CBO GROUPS

“...[I]t’s not until I get like a flyer... it’s great, but we never know about it. Dropping off your flyers, it’s not partnering...”

CBO GROUPS

“...[T]here used to be a Story Corps... our older adults... hold incredible lived experiences, especially as Black San Franciscans here in the Fillmore, Harlem of the West.”

CBO GROUPS

“...[T]eenagers... don’t even know of the different curated... information that’s at the different libraries. I think when our young people are... working on school projects... all they do is go on the Internet and do their research. They don’t even have knowledge of how the library can help with their projects.”

CBO GROUPS

Friends of the Library

Number of Participants = 25

Key Takeaways

- Friends of the Library had a **positive outlook on their relationship with the library** and want to act in partnership with the library as it implements new programs and concepts.
- Some participants said **FOL had an easier time reacting** as needs changed - particularly in marketing, advocacy, and fundraising.
- Some participants noted that the FOL **need to do a better job of highlighting when they are involved in programs** (e.g., a book club facilitated among school librarians and the library, which FOL was part of), but also extend their relationship building so the public is more aware of what they are doing and not just library staff; this could pave the way to working more closely at the branch/community level
- Some participants talked about **barriers within the library system**; this included resistance to change, aversion to scrutiny/review, and inherent bureaucracy (as the library is a City department with regulations that have to be followed)
- Both groups raised the impact of COVID and how it increased the need for the library to reach out to residents, particularly younger people.
- **Security was also noted as an issue, particularly at Main**; some participants said it was no longer a good place for families with children; others said it was important for the library to involve the Department of Public Health or other departments to offer appropriate intervention rather than trying to expand library services into an area beyond library expertise
- The most popular **future library services** include Language Center, Social Services Center, Citizenship Center and Youth Play Space

“I think we have a great relationship with the Main library, but I would love to see us get closer with the individual branches... at the individual branches, they don’t know about us.”

FOL

“I still want to read books, I want that traditional library experience... Not [to] run from tradition, but also be receptive to some of the changes, right?”

FOL

“...I think the library does a good job with families, kids, and seniors. But... there’s a huge cross section... young adults without children, [with a] career, I don’t know that that space is filled out as much...”

FOL

“...[T]he library can kind of react and attack, programming that addresses issues that the community is interested in... that’s a huge strength. But... you don’t see that kind of nimbleness in other sections of the library. [I]nfrastructure investment, I think, is difficult... as opposed to programming.”

FOL

Zone A (D1 and D2)

Number of Participants = 10

Key Takeaways

- Most Participants are library users and have a **positive view** of the library.
- The **myriad of free services the library system offers** is greatly valued, particularly in light of San Francisco's cost of living.
- Participants indicated the library serves as a **hub of community**, not only for those new to SF and new to the country, but also for seniors and others who have become more isolated.
- A need for **programming for seniors** came up regularly throughout this group.
- Many Participants who use the library regularly were surprised they did not know about some existing services, indicating **better communication about library offerings is needed**.
- Participants also raised the issue of **space needs**, particularly in relation to quiet spaces, co-working spaces, and multi-use spaces.
- A number of participants asked for **more library hours**; both earlier and later hours were requested.
- Among potential future services, the **tech lab, citizenship center, business center and genealogy services were all popular**.
- Expanding **outdoor spaces** was also mentioned by Participants. This desire was rooted in both an aesthetic appeal and as a way to mitigate noise and build in flexibility for those visiting with children.
- Participants **utilizing social media** as a way to appeal to potential younger users who haven't had the brick-and-mortar library experiences older generations have had.

"I didn't know the library did anything besides books and eBooks."

ZONE A

"...[M]y 3-year-old loves the childrens' section of the local branch. So if there's ever a time that you can't find a certain... Amelia Bedelia book or something, it's probably because it's in my living room."

ZONE A

"...[S]ome of the... groups... are great resources that the library could probably partner with in terms of increasing awareness. A lot of what I know about the library is me saying, 'I don't know how to do X,' and someone saying, 'Well, you know, the library has that.'"

ZONE A

"I'm a US citizen, my family are US citizens, I'm not going to need that [citizenship center.] But it [is] good for the community that we have a place where folks can go and get those questions answered without... triggering [scrutiny from authorities.]"

ZONE A

Zone B (D4 and D7)

Number of Participants = 6

Key Takeaways

- Participants suggested offering **language-specific programming** as a way of attracting a broader audience.
- Participants also mentioned the need for connection and community. They wanted to see programming that combines **opportunities to both learn and enhance community**. Sponsoring a chess or other tournament where novices could learn from others was an attractive suggestion to the group.
- **Extending library hours** was something many spoke to. This was **preferred to adding new services**.
- Making the **website, digital ordering and events more easily and fluidly accessible** on digital platforms is something that came up again. The **events feature** came up as particularly cumbersome to search. People stated it is often hard to find events listed in the newsletter.
- Having more access and **information about spaces/rooms available** within the SFPL system was requested. Some suggested a catalogue with specific details about the physical spaces in each library.
- **Digital literacy classes for all ages and early childhood parenting** were offerings that some had accessed in the past and appreciated and are interested in.
- Restoring some of the pre-COVID services, like **game rentals and game availability**, was mentioned by some.
- **Better outreach for scheduled events and activities** was frequently raised by Participants. People reported having to **hunt for information** rather than information coming to them.

"I find the website's current filter function for events that are going on to be really unwieldy and counterproductive. Any event that I know I've read in the print copy."

ZONE B

"...[F]or better or worse, even if the library is falling short, I'm still gonna be there. Because I... value public libraries as an institution. I would love more access... [but I'm] grateful it's there in the first place."

ZONE B

"I don't often see programming in language[s] other than English. Even at our branches, where we have like large identity populations... maybe there's bilingual, trilingual science on the shelving, but even then, I don't often see... a class or... a community event. It's generally expected it's going to be... conducted in English."

ZONE B

Zone C (D5 and D8)

Number of Participants = 8

Key Takeaways

- The **use of space for community** was raised by participants in different ways. This included hosting teen or young adult evening open houses to share about library services.
- Several participants suggested **ways to both broaden community activity at the library and expand staff diversity**, such as sponsoring student interns to introduce them to possible careers as well as helping them become familiar with the services the library offers, as well as hosting or partnering with other institutions like Glide, Dream Keepers Initiative, 826 Valencia.
- **Senior workshops**, particularly digital literacy, were requested, as well as **other senior focused events** such as bingo, game nights, or film events, which offer more of a social outlet and a way of reducing isolation.
- Several participants liked the idea of the library using its space to **host regular informational or community meetings with supervisors or other City leaders and representatives**.
- Similar to other groups, some participants in this group also liked the idea of **programming that was available for people of all ages (0–100)**, as well as **programming that facilitated family involvement** (such as programming child and parent/adult events occurring at the same time).
- Participants indicated they would very much like to see **more of the authors or exhibits that appear at the Main library** rotate through the smaller neighborhood sites.

“I love to read physical books. But I think I also love the community and the exposure to things that I don’t know that I don’t know.”

ZONE C

“...[M]aybe creating like a peer-to-peer association, people that frequent the library can be there as volunteers, and just be there to help, for those who don’t use the library that much or maybe don’t know how to access things.”

ZONE C

I was wondering if a little more marketing could help a lot of people know about what’s happening... because I mostly find out about events happening in the City through different pages on Instagram that tell you a list of things happening. And the library page... on Instagram does mention the events happening, but probably they could partner with bigger pages.”

ZONE C

“...[W]e need to have those connections, our community centers, I think [it] is a great resource for everybody to tap into. I think the library should be having conversations with these community centers, like Ella Hill Hertz, Booker T. Washington... and also having open forums which, again, the Main library is great at doing that, but they’re not having it rotate throughout the rest of the... library system.”

ZONE C

Zone D (D11)

Number of Participants = 9

Key Takeaways

- Some participants indicated there is an unmet or underserved need for **adult literacy courses, especially for immigrant communities**.
- Participants suggested driving more traffic to the library by **stacking or parallel scheduling events**/offerings for children and adults or adults and seniors.
- **Elder isolation** came up on multiple occasions, but so too did the desire for opportunities for seniors to engage in **physically and intellectually stimulating activities**. This included seniors who are recent immigrants and/or face linguistic barriers.
- Several participants mentioned **outings and field trips as positive experiences**, and asked that the library schedule more of this type of activity.
- Participants also emphasized that **outreach and communication should not just be digital**.
- Many participants indicated programming and **events provide a way for the community to come together** – with author talks, festivals, music, dance classes, cooking classes, and art classes all fitting into this framework.
- Some participants also suggested **parenting classes**, both for new parents and those who have recently immigrated.
- A few participants mentioned the need for **career transition, entry, and counseling, as well as practical employment skills** like resume building, and job hunting. These were particularly suggested in order to help newcomers, early career adults, or first generation college students.
- Several participants really appreciated **free tickets to cultural and sports events**.

I cannot sit and read a book, because I think I’m too ADD, but I discovered audiobooks and oh my god, I’ve read so many audiobooks... one of the best things about the library is that everything is for free.”

ZONE D

“...[A]dult crafts projects... I really miss those. I remember sitting in this room and just being ‘round with different people. And I actually made my husband come to one of them. And it was really fun, just doing little things that we were doing with scissors, and it just feels comfortable as the sense of community.”

ZONE D

“...[S]o many young people that are first gen[eration] graduates do not know how to look for a job. Maybe their parents didn’t expose them to that, parents might be immigrants, their parents may not be professionals. And they don’t have anybody to look to for that.”

ZONE D

“...[I]n order to support my family, I took three jobs every day. So it’s really hard for me to... make some time to come to the library. [If] I do have some free time, I prefer to just sleep, it’s really hard.”

ZONE D

Zone E (D10)

Number of Participants = 24

Key Takeaways

- Respondents would like **services more broadly offered** – for example, seniors would like to also attend excursions, arts programs, and STEM classes currently only being offered to youth; there was particular interest in having **excursions open to all ages**.
- Participants also wanted **some programming offered at the Main to be offered at branches**, so it is more accessible to them. The resume writing workshop was noted as one example.
- Some participants wanted the library to act as a **central repository for the multiple community calendars which currently exist** – so information is all in one place.
- Similarly, some respondents said the library should act as a **repository for social services resources** – somewhere they can go to learn more about programs which might help. One participant noted they were not aware until recently that there is a program for some people to receive free Clipper cards, for example – and would want the ability to learn about things like that.
- Both D10 groups emphasized having **community meeting space/teen hangout space**, ensuring people of all ages, including youth, felt they had welcoming, comfortable space within the library.
- Respondents in both groups noted the area **(D10) needs another library**. Participants pointed out that the Sunset has 3 libraries, but the Bayview only has one – and that it takes two buses to get to the existing library if someone lives in the India Basin or Candlestick areas of the neighborhood.
- Respondents mentioned many organizations that might be **good partners for the library** include the Bayview YMCA, Rafiki, Family Resource Center, Southeast Health Services, Wu Yee, and Renaissance Center.

“San Francisco doesn’t do that too well [celebrate/acknowledge Black culture], in my opinion... When I asked about it [they] say, ‘Oh, it’s on the third [floor],’ I go the third floor... [and] I see these big giant cats and gold and koi... I feel like this library [Bayview], especially back in the day, did at least have a Black space.”

ZONE E

“...[Y]ou need just to go out [of] the house, go to the library, you know, someplace that you can go, say... get some resources, you can connect, and not worry about what’s going on in the outside world.”

ZONE E

“...I haven’t seen any gardening class down here. And I understand there’s differences in people having the ability to garden and that kind of thing. But [SF] is diverse and it’s not the same as it always has been, and I think that they might be making assumptions about what people’s interests are.”

ZONE E

Zone F (D3 and D6)

Number of Participants = 6

Key Takeaways

- Respondents see **the library as a connecting point**, where you could meet people in your neighborhood who shared similar interests.
- Participants said the library needed **space dedicated to youth/children**, which would relax noise restrictions and be more welcoming.
- Participants asked for **resources that would help new immigrants** and non-English/limited English speakers, including having bilingual staff.
- Participants wanted resources on loan/use in library that would give them opportunities they would not have otherwise (due to economic/space considerations); this included **tools, musical instruments, and access to the video lab**.
- Respondents also wanted to **gain or improve certain skill sets** through the library— including career development, tech, reading comprehension, and communication skills such as de-escalation.
- Respondents also asked for **childcare or parallel programming** (where parents could attend programs at the same time as their children.)
- Some respondents stated the **library should act as a resource center**, where someone could go to find out what social services are available.
- **Better search features for the website** were requested as well, particularly for adult offerings. Some suggested using QR codes to help make the website function better.
- Respondents also wanted library staff, displays, and book collections to **reflect the neighborhood year-round—not just for heritage months**.

“...[T]here’s just not a lot of space for a kid to be a kid still, you know... I wish that we did have a few more spaces built in... where the library didn’t feel like... I have to be silent and like tiptoe around when I’m here.”

ZONE F

“Having a safe space that’s kind of neutral for... families or people to meet with someone, I think is really crucial.”

ZONE F

“For me... one thing that’s missing is... some way to help people work on their reading comprehension skills. Not only of youth, but also of adults, to help them take their reading comprehension to the next level.”

ZONE F

“[T]he day may come when it may not always get all the money that we want. So I would like to keep social service activities with the Department of Social Service... I would like to keep certain activities that are already offered through adult education... from being duplicated in the library. And what I would like is to know that the research librarians have strong referrals for people... to know about... social services.”

ZONE F

Zone G (D9)

Number of Participants = 6

Key Takeaways

- Most respondents said they use the library, though with a heavy emphasis on school and youth related purposes. In addition, several respondents used the library for audiobooks, crafts, and other materials and activities.
- **Tech literacy and training for all age groups** was mentioned by most respondents. One respondent pointed out that tech help was important so adults could access app-based social services and programs. Access to printers, laptops, and CDs was also considered important.
- The **library is viewed as a vital resource for space**—with access to quiet spaces to read, work, or relax a premium. One respondent noted borrowing books is important for those with limited living space.
- One respondent suggested **part-time outreach ambassadors** from a joint CBO/library partnership as a way of **increasing language-based assistance, cultural familiarity and trust** to bridge the service gap.
- Activities such as **field trips**, both during the school year and throughout the summer, were important to respondents. Field trips may have been discontinued during the pandemic but were **viewed very positively** within the community.
- **Hobbies, crafts and maker activities** received positive feedback, especially the high quality of the materials used for workshops and enthusiasm of the staff/instructors.
- Respondents really wanted a section of the library that **loans tools, musical instruments, and games, as well as media/film studio access**. These would help respondents participate in these activities, which might **otherwise be prohibitively expensive**. Respondents wanted games particularly as part of an indoor play/family space.
- Finding a way to offer **childcare service or some parallel parent/child activities** was suggested as a way to increase attendance..

“I know that a lot of these organizations have like [community health workers.] ...[W]here people feel comfortable connecting with somebody in their language, learning more about the services that the library already has, because there are a lot of services that [the] library already has.”

ZONE G

“I remember once I even went to this tea towel workshop. [T]hey honored our time... the time was quality, and the material and the supplies were of quality. So it just makes you feel like someone’s looking out for you, and that you yourself are also valuable...”

ZONE G

“...I think sometimes our community of... people of color, we might go into spaces and not necessarily want to ask a question. It doesn’t mean folks come off disrespectful. I think it’s just more that there’s a disconnect. But I think if you go into a place where you could get free coffee, and it doesn’t even have to be the fancy coffee, just have a free coffee... [D]rop in, and then there’s books there as an option.”

ZONE G

Spanish Speakers

Number of Participants = 25

Key Takeaways

- Among future library offerings, the **citizenship center and language center** were popular with many respondents.
- The **homework help station** was something both parents and youth liked. Parents indicated they often did not feel they could always provide the homework support their children needed, while youth indicated that some parents became frustrated when trying to help kids with homework.
- Participants indicated a **strong need for links to supportive services**, particularly in terms of housing, mental health, youth services, and financial literacy.
- While having Spanish speaking staff was important, some respondents indicated that having **staff who were culturally aware/knowledgeable, or ideally shared the same cultural background, was more important than linguistic skills**.
- A number of respondents indicated they feel welcome when receiving services as well as **sharing food** (and attached strong cultural significance to the sharing of food).
- Offering **music lessons** through the library was also a popular idea among respondents. Several participants indicated that this was something they could not offer on their own due to the high cost of an instrument, lessons, etc.
- Respondents suggested that demographic data be used to **place libraries where there are underserved communities**. They said there are many services at the Main, but most other libraries do not have the same offerings. Several respondents indicated they **usually leave their neighborhood to visit a library location**.
- Community organizations mentioned as **possible library partners include** Compass, Homeless Prenatal program, CARECEN SF (Central American Resource Center), YMCA, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (based in Oakland)

“The language center is a great idea. There are a lot of parents that don’t have time and money for language education.”

SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUP (TRANSLATED)

“The homework center to help parents and kids out is needed. Parents don’t always know how to help their kids and they might run out of patience and yell at the kids, so that is a huge help for parents.”

SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUP (TRANSLATED)

“I like the instrument classes idea. My son wants to learn the guitar right now, and it is really hard to provide that on a low income.”

SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUP (TRANSLATED)

“I think it is very important that they speak our language, so we feel welcomed. I think it has more to do with the culture, that we are understood as Latinos. I think understanding the culture and how we view the world is important.”

SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUP (TRANSLATED)

Filipino Group

Number of Participants = 11

Key Takeaways

- Respondents would like to see **more Filipino language materials at the library, and Filipino-speaking staff** (particularly for elderly who are less likely to speak English)
- Participants suggested **cultural activities** at/in conjunction with the library (**not just for Filipino culture**, but other cultures as well, in order to learn about other cultures)
- Participants also suggested **field trips as a possible way to reach more residents**, as well as a **bookmobile** in order to reach seniors who had difficulty getting to the physical library location
- Multiple respondents indicated that safety had become an issue since the pandemic; several noted they no longer visit in person due to **health and safety concerns** (e.g. being harassed outside the library or encountering feces or needles)
- A number of respondents **spoke highly of the online/digital offerings** of the library; these appeared to be widely used
- When asked about potential new services at the library, group respondents indicated the most interest in a **Citizenship Center, Language Center, and Local Café.**
- Community organizations mentioned as **possible library partners include** Bayanihan Equity Center (BEC), Galing Bata, YMCA, BiSHoP (Bill Sorro Housing Program), South of Market Community Action Network (SOMACAN), SFUSD, and Westbay/United Playaz

“...[D]uring the pandemic, reading books online, doing your homework online [was really being emphasized]... They’re being forgotten about, but we’re also seeing that literacy scores are really, really low. We have ninth graders who are reading at third grade level.”

FILIPINO GROUP

“[W]e don’t go [to the library] any more. It’s about the homeless. Because my mother is scared of the, you know, the everything, right there. Also the cleanliness.”

FILIPINO GROUP

“My top one would be the language center. Whenever I go into the library and see like different books or audio books in other languages makes me so happy, I wish that there was Filipino or Tagalog stuff readily available.”

FILIPINO GROUP

“I’m a school counselor at a high school. And I know that a lot of our students like to go to different community centers or even like the library... where there is some kind of social services around mental health, and even mental health-like workshops. Sometimes community spaces feel safer than schools.”

FILIPINO GROUP

Chinese Speakers (Cantonese)

Number of Participants = 10

Key Takeaways

- Most respondents use the library themselves or bring their children.
- There was a desire among some respondents **to bring back more of the in-person programs** that disappeared during COVID (e.g. toddler space).
- Respondents also wanted **space for separate uses**, but emphasized they wanted separate areas (e.g. teen, young children) more **communal by having adjoining areas.**
- When asked about existing services, respondents said they wanted **clearer, more consistent ways to assess the reading level of materials, and/or categorize books by reading level first.** One respondent said the letter grading system for reading level was for the librarian’s purpose only and not really useful to patrons.
- They would also like an **app or QR Code to access library programs** and services in one central place (as well as more easily locating materials).
- Several respondents said staff could be improved; some participants indicated that **Chinese speaking staff was at times discourteous**, while English speaking staff was more helpful and friendly but limited by language.
- **They noted a number of community organizations were vital resources;** these included Chinatown CDC (where the focus group was held) as well as Chinatown Progressive Association (CPA), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), APA Heritage Foundation, Chinese Culture Center, and YMCA; respondents said these organizations provided a variety of services including English classes, parenting classes, renters information, practical help with citizenship, and basic needs like food and diapers

“A suggestion for libraries: create Facebook and WeChat groups for reading themes. Have an open offer for writing/photo submission on some themes such as the life of newcomers, etc. so it is specific to us, or have regular galleries.”

CHINESE-SPEAKING GROUP

“I like the CD section and always borrow movies for weekends. Also I like the individual space because our family can spend time together. We live in a single room (SRO) which is very small space.”

CHINESE-SPEAKING GROUP

“Wu Yee helped me apply [to] schools [with the SFUSD application.] The help is needed. I hope the library will provide more community information besides providing books.”

CHINESE-SPEAKING GROUP

“I am not familiar with navigation of libraries. I hope there is some kind of guidance on how to choose books by reading levels.”

CHINESE-SPEAKING GROUP

“Please improve the staff’s attitude to make patrons feel welcome. I asked three staff to locate what I needed and everyone told me they were about to get off work.”

CHINESE-SPEAKING GROUP

Parents

Number of Participants = 10

Key Takeaways

- The parents group were **mostly regular users of the library**, and usually used both physical library locations and online offerings.
- When looking at the list of future/potential library offerings, **parents prioritized a lot of different things**, with most offerings getting at least one or two votes but no one item getting votes from more than half the group.
- Respondents **wanted library offerings that encompassed every role in their lives** – that is, for their entire family unit, for their kids, and for themselves (both as parents and as individual adults)
- For children, parents wanted **tech and homework resources** most, as well as access to books and materials
- Respondents asked for **children’s offerings that went ‘beyond story time’** – which might include motor skill development or hands-on learning for older kids who consider themselves ‘non-readers’
- For themselves, **coworking space, outdoor working space, and quiet space** were mentioned – with an emphasis on a quiet space to get work done; one parent mentioned borrowing textbooks from the library as she returned to school.
- They also wanted **services that were useful for them as a family unit**, and/or brought a community together (including families) and called out Sunday Streets as an example of a community event

“Sometimes on the street there will be like a homeless people or people like wandering around, yelling or shouting... that is hard. To just bring two kids to have fun. Because you have to be aware of... the surrounding[s].”

PARENTS

“[N]ow that she’s older, mostly I take her so I don’t have to keep a buying those graphic novels that kids fly through in two min[utes] and are like \$15 a book.”

PARENTS

“I have two kids... So pretty much it’s like I bring them too. They don’t like to [read] but I like them to join the workshop so they could play with other people and also learn something new, rather than just the school stuff.”

PARENTS

Parents (cont.)

Key Takeaways

- Parents also asked for **services that are more complete/rounded** – e.g. the ability to check out/rent camping equipment along with getting free park passes for camping
- When asked about **community organizations to partner with**, parent suggestions included SF Bike Coalition (which the library already partners with), as well as Larkin St. Youth Services, Huckleberry Youth Services, Glide, SF Parents, and Glen Park Rec Center.
- **Safety is a concern for parents**, in light of encountering disruptive/antisocial homeless in the area surrounding library branches.

“...[O]r quiet rooms, that I really like. . . That’s really nice, especially, when home life can be a little loud.”

PARENTS

“I’m sort of envisioning like at my son’s preschool they have little, like, balance beam and other things for like gross motor skills.”

PARENTS

Teens

Number of Participants = 16

Key Takeaways

- Most teens said they **used the library more when they were younger** (elementary or middle school)
- Limited computer time, being logged out after a set time, and possibly not getting a computer were key concerns; some also cited **having what they need online, which is accessible at home**, as being the reason why they don't use the library/don't use it as much
- **Distance from the library** was also a factor in reduced use for some respondents (e.g. home or school is now further away).
- A number of respondents mentioned some **collaboration/coordination with schools would be helpful** – which would also partly address distance issues. Suggestions included having a book return for library books at their school.
- **Making the physical library more suitable** – tailoring it to the local community, remodeling outdated sites, or expanding smaller locations – were all mentioned as important improvements.
- Respondents also suggested a number of ways to **use tech to improve library offerings** – most notably, using technology to **help users find a particular book** or subject when at a physical location

“...[M]ore in the past I used to [go to the library], but now I don't really because I prefer reading online.”

TEENS

“I use it sometimes. But I also use it as like, kind of stuck with a bunch of time to kill. [I] like comfortable seats. I go there and I'll do my homework.”

TEENS

“So I went to the library pretty often for my historical essay. [I] find that if... [there's] targets to help us search for the books... [it would] be easier for the user experience in the library.”

TEENS

Teens (cont.)

Key Takeaways

- Most indicated some **sort of ideal space was important** – though how that was defined varied within the group; for some, it was a quiet space free of distractions; for others, outside space; many cited a place to hang out with friends
- Having **a location which reflected the community**, including having materials in languages they speak and staff which looked like them, were also important to respondents.
- Among future library offerings, the **most popular amenities were** Teen Hangout Space, Genealogy and History Hub, Homework Help Station, Community Kitchen, Community Living Room, and Event Space. Other suggestions included an Art Studio and supplies, speaking training, writing support, and career counseling.

“I think [tech]... does change how I do my homework a lot because it distracts me so much. So it kind of like drags on. So I usually go to the library after school, because, like, no phones [allowed.]”

TEENS

Elders

Number of Participants = 11

Key Takeaways

- Most respondents are **active users of the library** and have a lot of positive experiences there
- Although the top library services from the list are mentioned, many participants wanted many of the services, not only for themselves, but for others in the community.
- **Among potential library amenities, elders showed the most support for** Homework Help Station, Tech Training Lab, History and Genealogy Hub, Community Living Room, Coworking Space, Citizenship Center, and Podcast Room.
- Participants specifically mentioned that things like the Community Living Room and even Coworking Space were **important for the social aspect**, both in terms of **being with their community and avoiding isolation**.
- Elders said the **Tech Training Lab served a vital need** – helping those who had not developed technical skills catch up with modern uses.
- Other offerings were important because they were seen as **addressing large needs within their community** (Citizenship Center, Homework Help Station); Homework Help Station was seen as one way to help the many elders raising grandchildren.
- Several community organizations were mentioned as **good community partners, including** Booker T. Washington Community Center, YMCA, and Swords to Plowshares.

“...[S]ome migrants... have a total misunderstanding of how our system works, and there’s no one to really teach it. So people are very confused and... really don’t know how to send money back home... or they go to a place that charges graft. [The] Citizenship [Center] can [change that.]”

ELDERS

“...[A]nd then also, the homework help station because it’s so many grandparents raising kids. And my third one was a social service center because I love it. A couple years ago I was amazed that Kaiser did not have [a] support [group for grieving.]”

ELDERS

“When you walk into a library [ideally] it gives me confidence. When it provides all of these things, more than we ever thought that they will. It’s my place to go. I belong. I have reason to be here. I can get what I need. I don’t have to go to 10 different places. I can learn how to cook here. I can visualize. I can learn culture here.”

ELDERS

Residents with Disabilities

Number of Participants = 8

Key Takeaways

- Most respondents in this group indicated a **high level of library use**, as well as a very positive regard for the library.
- Suggestions focused on **making the library more accessible for residents with a variety of disabilities**, from enhancing books by mail to offering autistic–welcoming events and providing a shuttle service to help people access the physical library locations.
- Participants in this group stressed the **importance of audiobooks and online offerings**. For participants with difficulty accessing physical spaces, the audiobooks and online services were particularly important.
- Many group participants can access the physical library space, however, and stressed the **importance of library events, particularly those done in partnership** with other organizations.
- When asked about **potential library amenities**, the group was most excited about a Quiet Room, Tech Training, Storytelling Space, Community Kitchen, and Podcast Room.
- Respondents also suggested adding future amenities that included a **Job Development Center** and a **Mobile Shower**.

“...[A]n autistic, autism focused group [is needed.] So like stimming is encouraged, noises are okay. If you want to wear your pajamas, and wear your headphones, and have your back to the rest of the people, that’s fine.”

DISABLED RESIDENTS

“...[The] library has a wonderful program called... library by mail. The problem with this program is, one can either get books sent to you, too, and return them. Or people can go to the branches and check out their own books. It’s not both and should be both.”

DISABLED RESIDENTS

“...[T]hey offer a certificate in Microsoft Office... The issue is the SFPL site is so cumbersome. It’s so overgrown. Many librarians don’t know about the Microsoft Office program, because they can’t find it on the website... And good lord, the San Francisco Public Library could seriously use... a sitemap.”

DISABLED RESIDENTS

EXTERNAL INSIGHTS REPORT

Conclusion

The Overarching External Insights represent a consolidated summary of first-hand learnings from all external community engagement, including the Branch User Intercept Surveys, Analysis of Non-User City Survey Responses, and Community Focus Groups.

The insights and data found in this report and insights from the internal staff engagement (to be shared in the appendix of the final strategic plan) generated a holistic understanding of SFPL’s current state and future aspirations. They served as a foundation for the recommendations in the strategic plan. Note: This document will be included in the appendix of the final plan.

The final strategic plan will be delivered in March 2024 and will include the following components:

Vision

SFPL’s Vision Statement represents our view for the future of San Francisco and articulates desired community outcomes resulting from our efforts.

Mission

The Mission Statement is what SFPL does to achieve our Vision. It represents the purpose of the organization based on our role in the community.

Values

SFPL strives to embody these values in all that we do.

Strategic Priorities

Derived directly from community feedback, these priorities outline specific roles SFPL will embody to best serve the community.

Organizational Shifts

These shifts in our service model are guidelines that will internally direct us in realizing our Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Priorities.

Appendix

Resource materials such as industry best practices, case studies, supporting research, and documentation of engagement activities.

OVERARCHING EXTERNAL INSIGHTS

TODAY

01

San Franciscans are grateful for the library’s essential services: **access to information and resources** and providing a place for **respite and focus**.

02

Library locations are conveniently located **to serve most communities in need, but there are still gaps**.

03

When it comes to access, **It’s not just about having a library nearby**.

04

As SFPL evolves, current **non-users** may be persuaded to **use the library**.

TOMORROW

05

Above all else, San Franciscans of every age and background want the library to **combat social isolation** by providing **a place for gathering and connecting** with loved ones and neighbors.

06

San Franciscans want the library to build on existing strengths to **help people connect to and navigate the plethora of resources and events** available at the library and beyond.

07

People look to the library to **provide experiences and opportunities to pursue passions** they couldn’t otherwise afford.

08

Residents feel that San Francisco’s **cultural diversity** should be **amplified and celebrated throughout** every library experience.

09

San Franciscans want SFPL to lean into **all types of skill building and education**, emphasizing **tech know-how, parenting skills, homework support, and literacy**.

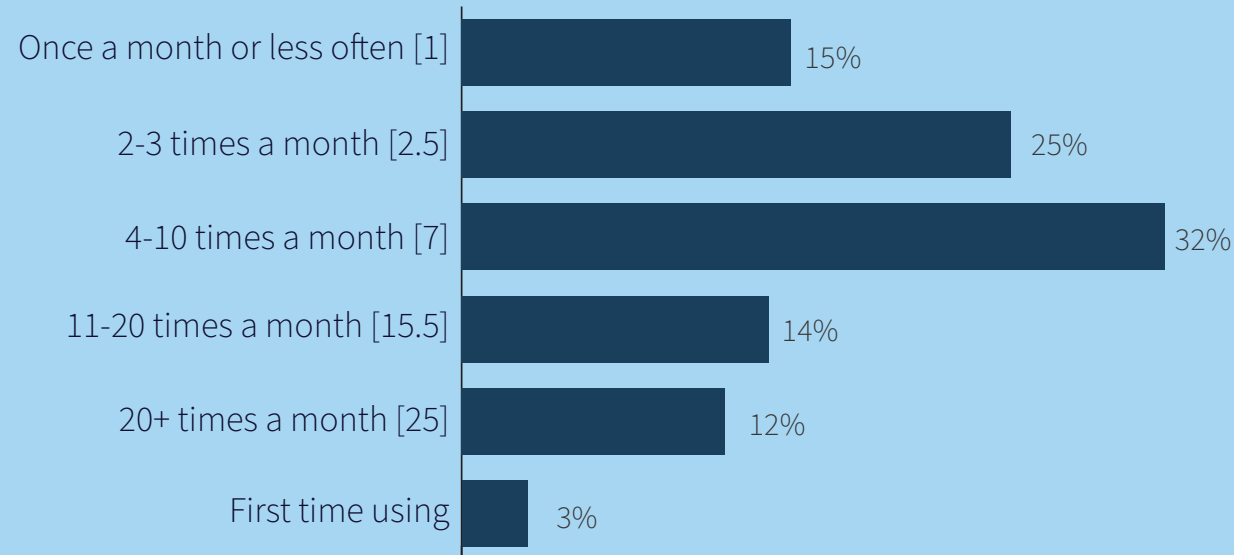
Appendix

BRANCH USER SURVEY

Question by Question Results

Q1: In a typical month, how often do you use the San Francisco libraries?

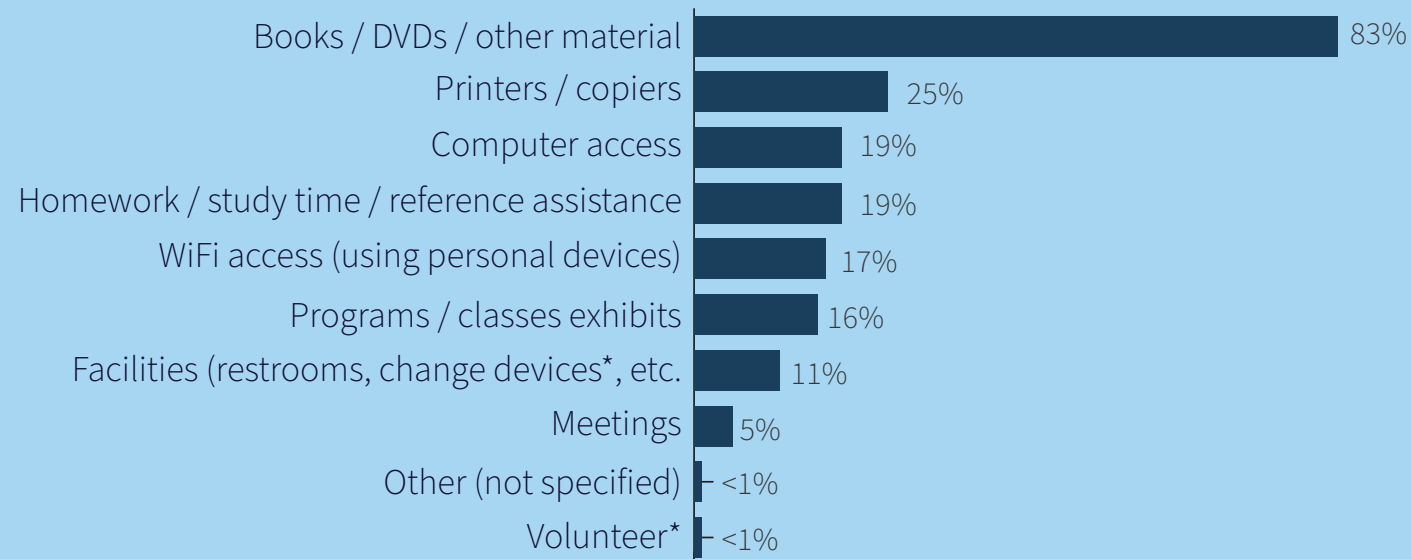
Base: 2,283



Mean (average) number of days per month: 8.3

Q2: What are the main reasons you use the San Francisco libraries?

Base: 2,283



Multiple responses accepted not on the original survey written in by respondents

Q3: Do you have a San Francisco Public Library Card?

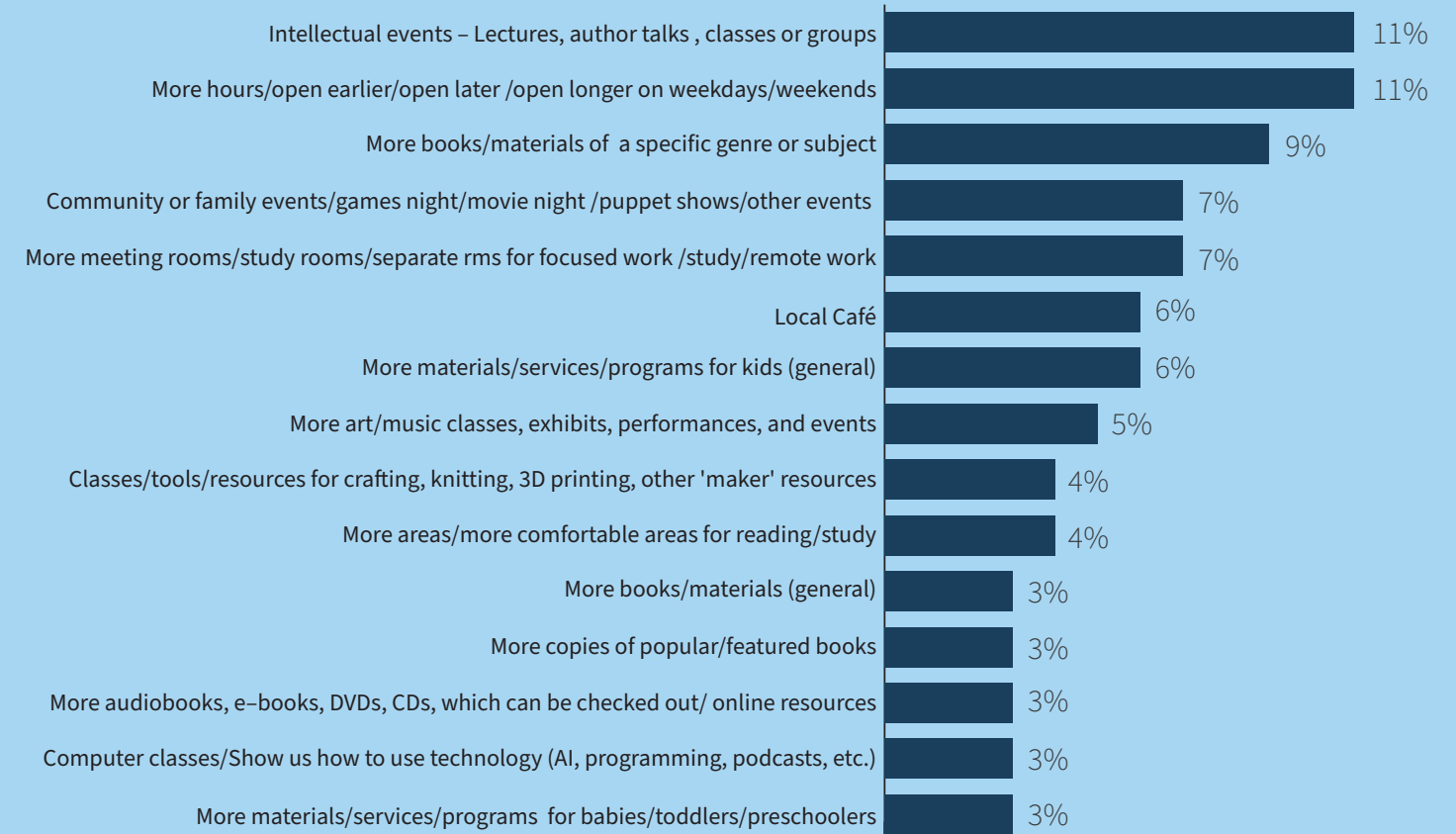
Base: 2,283



Q4: Please finish this sentence: "I would visit SF libraries more often if they offered..."

Caution: A number of respondents gave the same answer for Q4, Q13, and/or Q14.

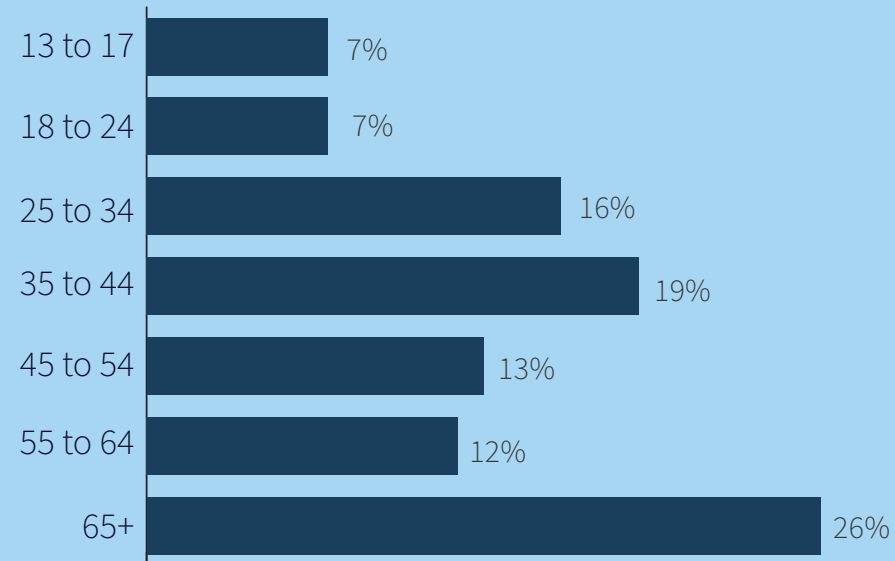
Base: 1,736 (left a comment)



Note: Open ended question. Responses were coded into categories. Only categories receiving at least 3% of responses are shown. See tables for a full list.

Q5: Age

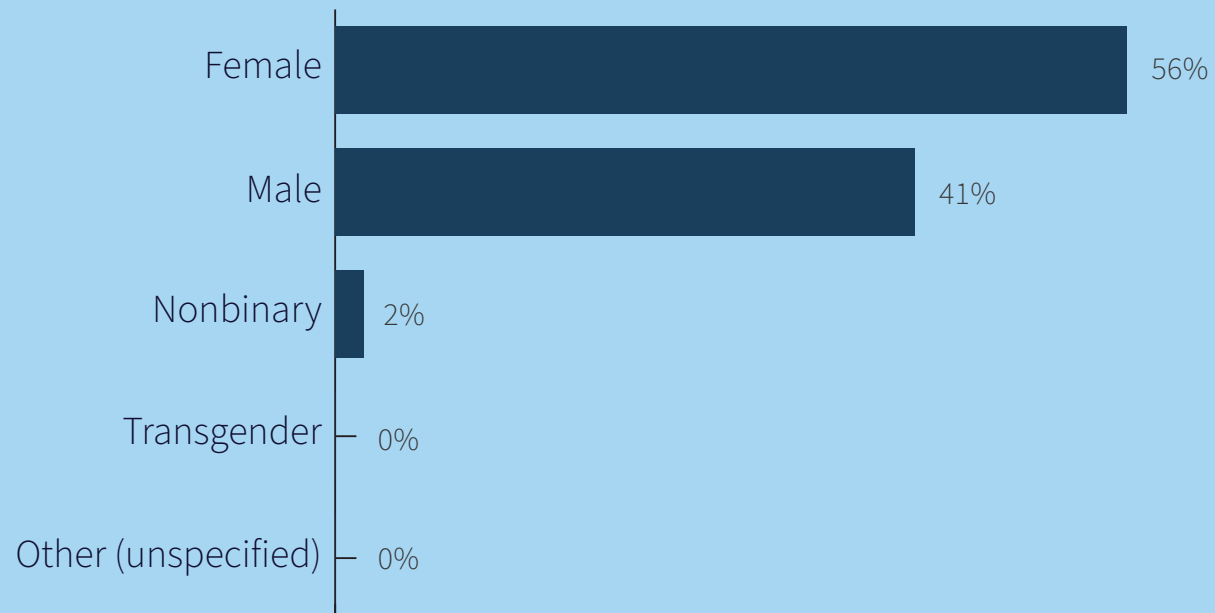
Base: 2,283



Mean (average) age: 46.6 years

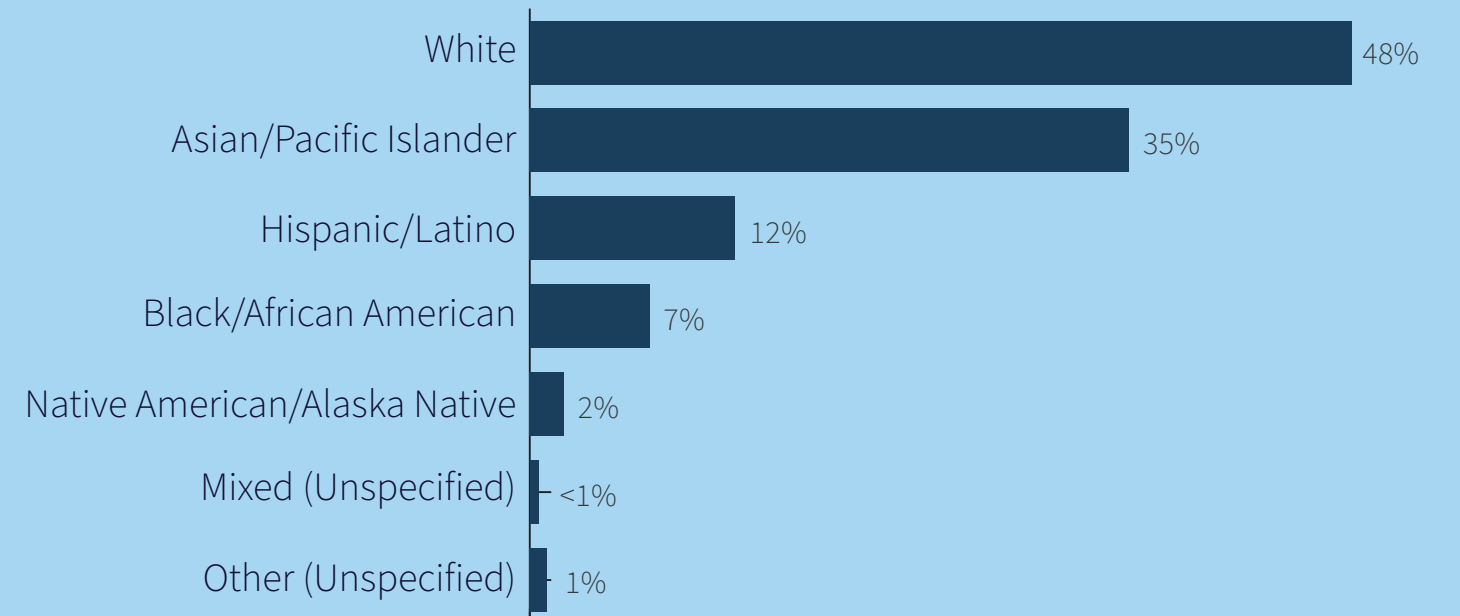
Q6: Gender

Base: 2,283



Q7: Ethnicity

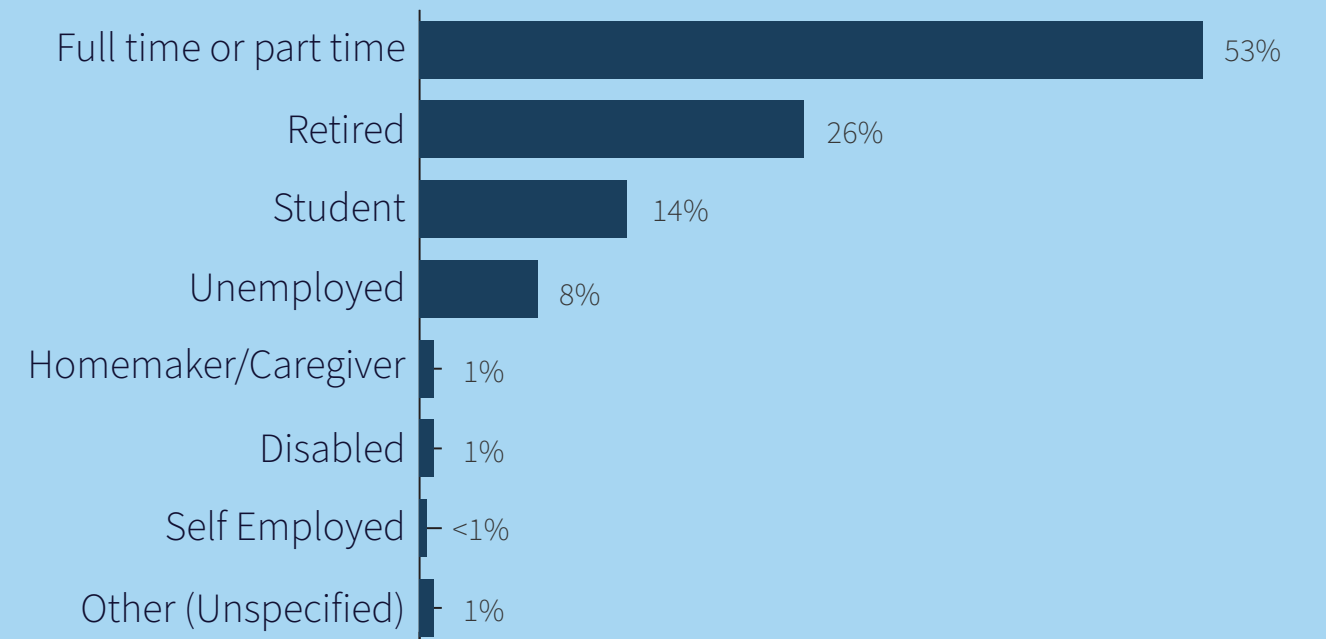
Base: 2,283



Multiple responses accepted

Q8: Employment

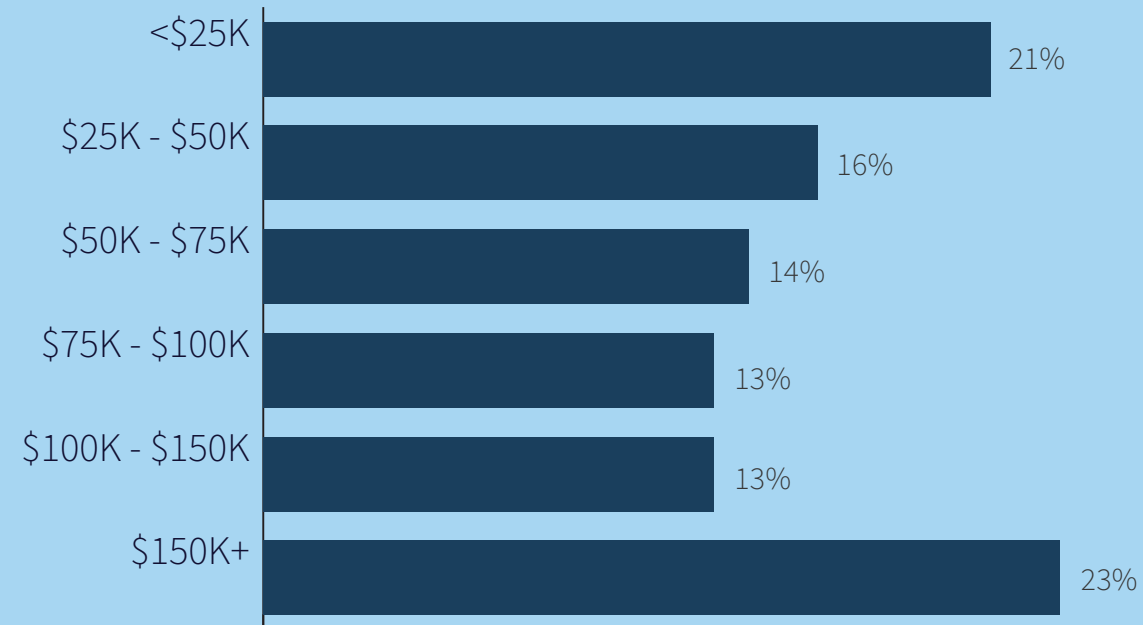
Base: 2,283



Multiple responses accepted

Q9: Annual Household Income

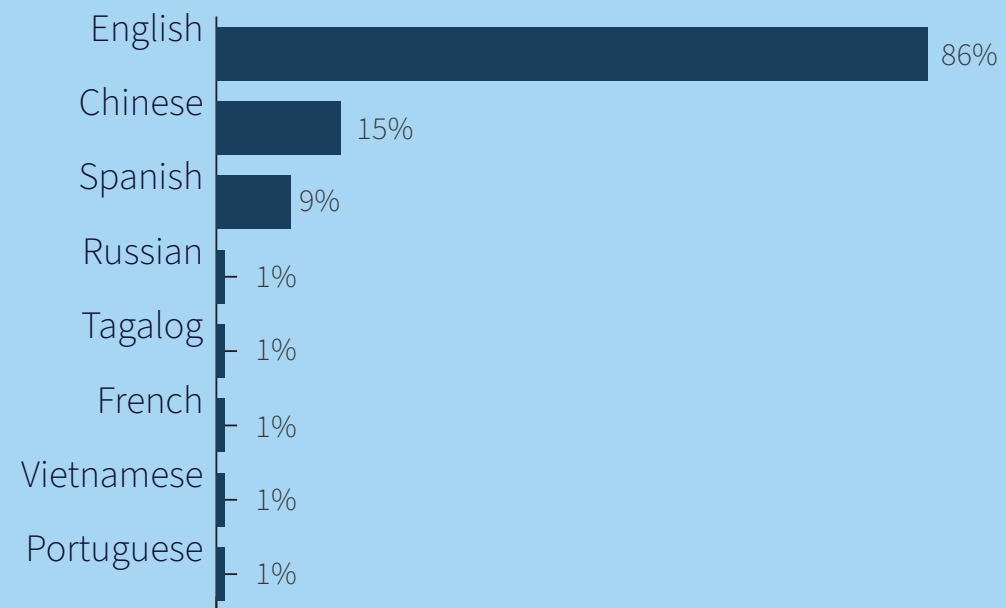
Base: 2,283



Mean (average) household income: \$84,659

Q10: Language Spoken at Home (Most Often)

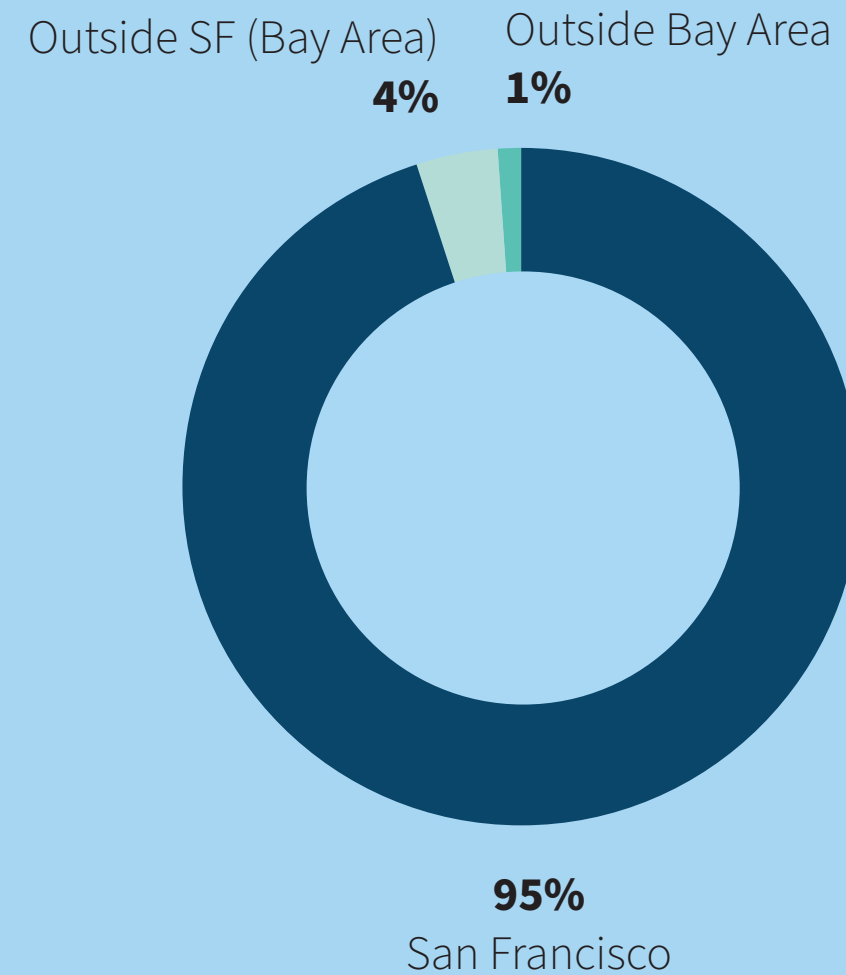
Base: 2,283



Multiple responses accepted.
Only languages receiving at least 1% of responses are shown. See tables for a full list.

Q11/Q12: Home Location

Base: 2,283

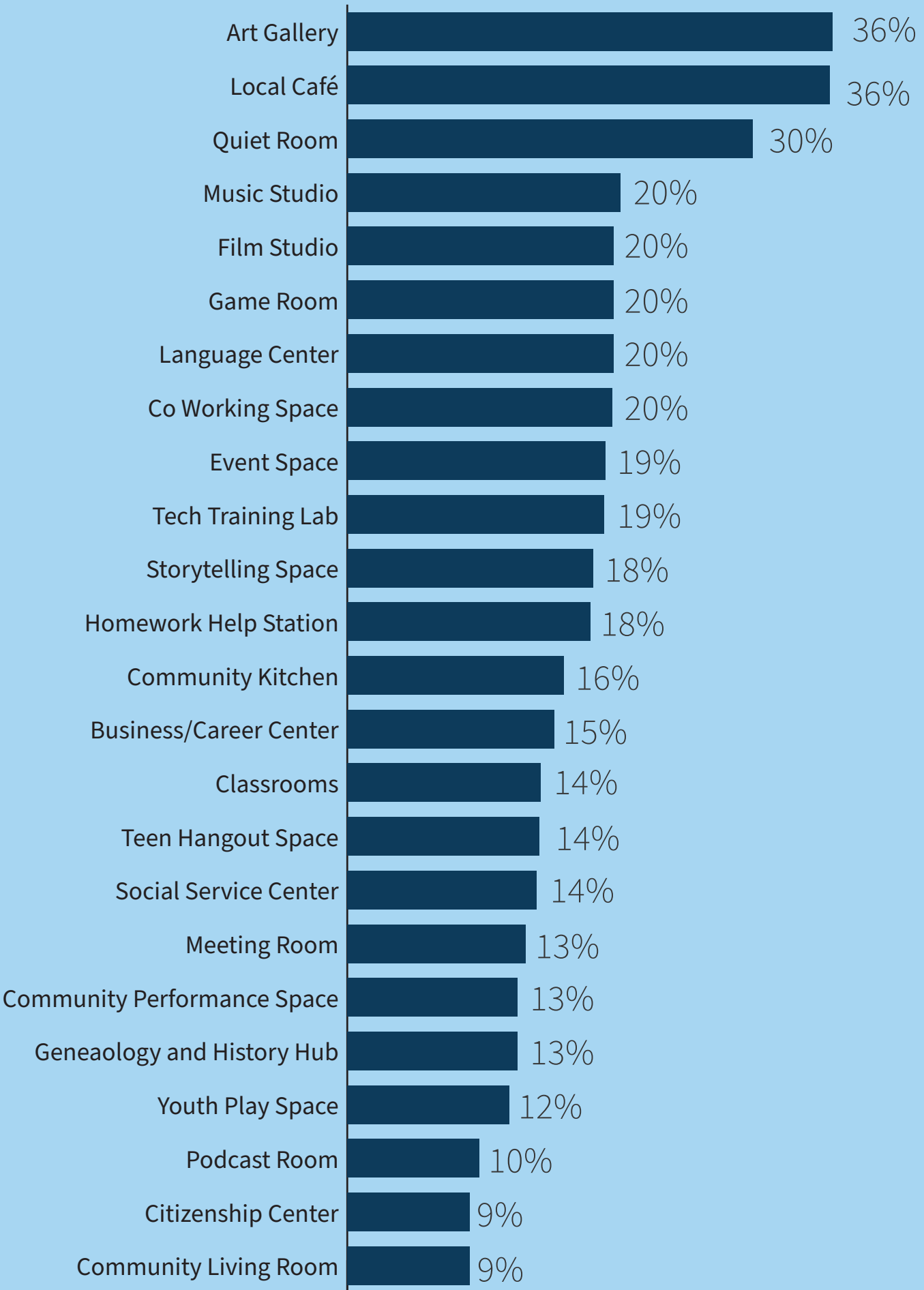


Q13: In addition to books and existing programs, which of the following spaces would you like to see at your SFPL branch to better support your neighborhood and community?

Base: 2,092 (left a comment)

Note: This was a closed ended question with additional open ended responses possible. Responses were coded into categories (starting with closed ended answers). Only categories receiving at least 3% of responses are shown. See tables for a full list.

Caution: A number of respondents gave the same answer for Q4, Q13, and/or Q14.



Q14: Any other suggestions for San Francisco's "Library of the Future"?

Base: 760 (left a comment)

Note: Open ended question. Responses were coded into categories. Only categories receiving at least 3% of responses are shown. See tables for a full list.

Caution: A number of respondents gave the same answer for Q4, Q13, and/or Q14.

