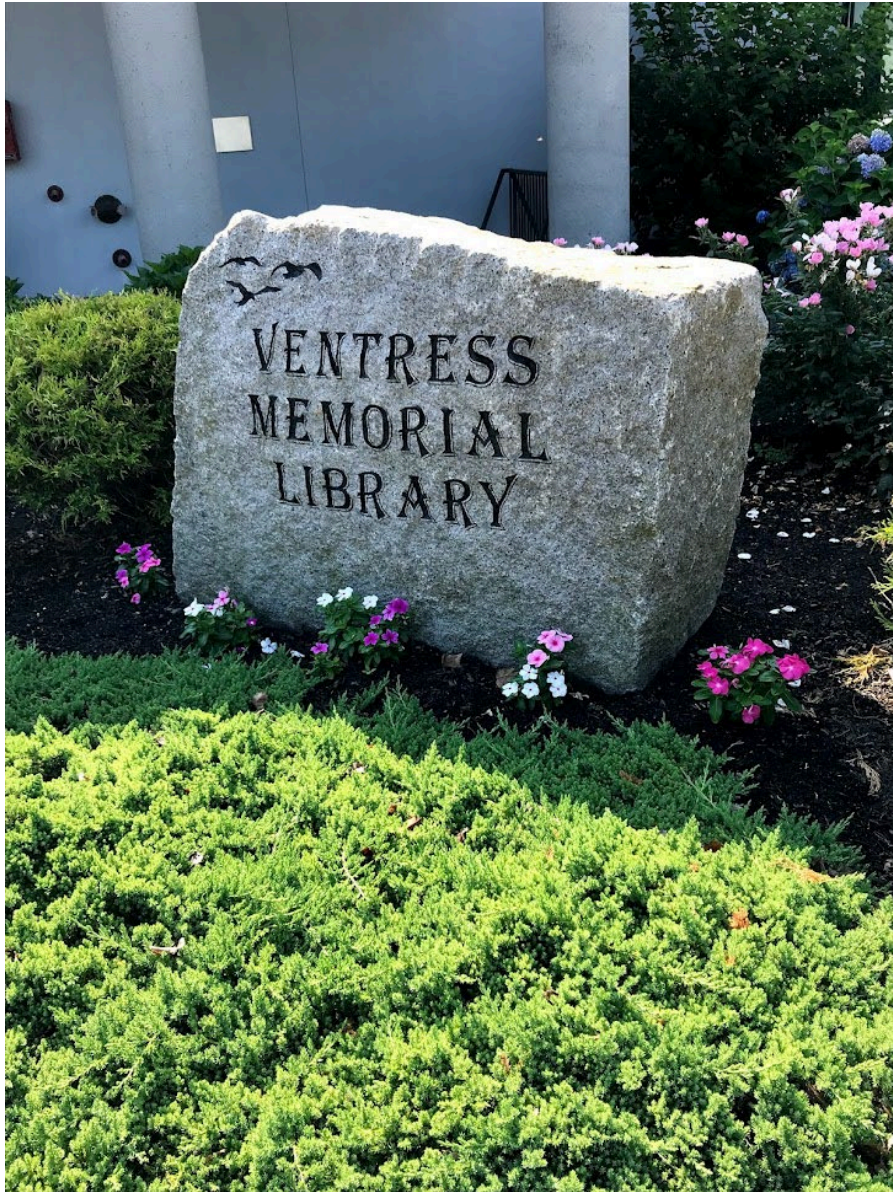


# **Ventress Memorial Library**

## **Strategic Plan**

### **Fiscal Years 2024-2028**



Approved by The Board of Library Trustees June 21, 2023

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Main Entrance Foyer



Library Plaza Program Room



Adult Fiction & DVD's

## Acknowledgements

This strategic plan is the result of numerous hours of work on the part of many people. I wish to thank the library's dedicated Board of Trustees, tireless Friends of the Library, and outstanding staff. I owe an additional debt of gratitude to all 457 community members who took the time to fill out our survey, offering the library priceless insight into how we can improve our service to Marshfield.

I would like to commend the members of the volunteer Strategic Planning Committee for their commitment and enthusiasm. A huge thank you to:

Emma Anderson  
Deborah Conrad  
Teresa DeLuca  
Lynn Gaughan  
Gregory Guimond  
Michael Maresco  
Erica Ruscio  
Margaret Ward

Gregory Caille  
Wallace Coyle  
Wendy Gardner-Breindel  
Tori Gellman  
Joyce Kinsman  
Sandra Matthews  
Ann-Marie Ward

Respectfully,

Cyndee J Marcoux, Director

*“Great Library - great staff - I see you changing with the times! Keep it up!” – survey response*

*“I want to share a comment that I recently made to the children's librarians... I appreciate the "red carpet treatment" they give to my son whenever he enters the library--they see him, say hello to him, and engage with him in friendly conversation regarding his interests, which they know about because they are always interacting with him (and all the kids) on such a personal and positive level which is so powerful. I appreciate all they do to make the library a fun and welcoming place for the kids to be and learn.” – survey response*

*“Survey makes me realize the Library has more to offer than I knew. I will look at website & sign up for newsletter.” – survey response*



# Introduction

A strategic plan is a considerable undertaking that provides a vision to guide Library services for the next five years. The plan gives the library a focus and prioritizes organizational goals. In addition, the plan lays out what needs to be done and how the library will do it. The previous strategic plan on file with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners was filed in 2016. Due to the Pandemic strategic planning was put on hold for several reasons; staffing shortages, and public safety were the primary reasons. In September 2022, the Board of Library Trustees began the planning for submission of a new strategic plan.

## History of the Library

The Ventress Memorial Library (VML) was founded in 1895 with funds provided by Seth J. Ventress, a Marshfield resident. The original library, called the Marshfield Free Library, was located in the old Town Hall, now the school administration on South River Street. By 1938 the section of the Town Hall used as the Library had become so overcrowded that the library moved to a century old renovated school building on Ocean Street and was named for its benefactor Seth Ventress. In December 1983, renovations were completed on the former First National grocery building, and the Ventress Memorial Library opened in this 19,000 square foot facility. In 2017 an addition was added to the library in the adjacent building. This addition consists of a program room that seats 120 and a conference room that seats 12. In total, the addition added another 2,000 square feet to the library facility.



## Summary of Service Needs

Marshfield is a picturesque coastal community with 5 miles of shoreline and excellent beaches. The current population of Marshfield is approximately 25, 869, according to the United States census bureau. This number surges to more than 42,000 in the summer. The town's rich history dates back to pre-revolutionary war era and is best known as the home of Daniel Webster.

The median age and median family income in Marshfield are slightly higher than the state average. Like many communities in the Commonwealth, the percentage of the population that is over fifty years of age is growing at a faster rate than other segments of the population. This trend is predicted to continue for the foreseeable future. The number of persons in the age range of twenty to fifty years declined in the past decade and it is predicted to continue to decline. This is a key demographic group that the library will need to make a special effort to reach in the future. Public school enrollment has decreased 12.11% over the last five years. However, participation and attendance at children's programs does not reflect this decrease. Use of the children's room and attendance at programs continues to increase. We anticipate this use to increase even more in the next few years due to the following factors:

- 270 new 40B housing units are being built
- A new private school serving special needs students in Grade 7 – 12
- A new preschool run by the Marshfield Public School Department
- A new private pre-school

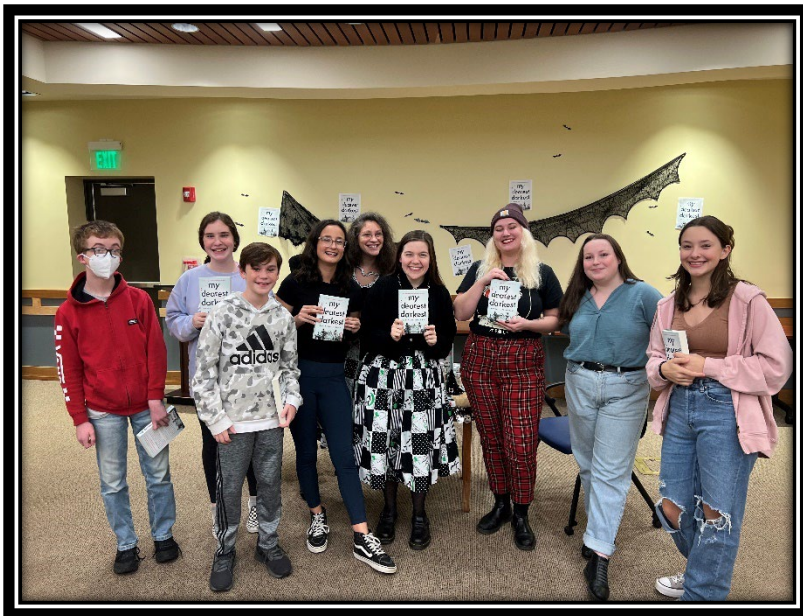
Ventress Memorial Library serves primarily the people of Marshfield, but roughly seven percent of registered borrowers are from other Massachusetts cities and towns. This is most likely due to the large increase in population during the summer months. The library has approximately 7,749 registered borrowers (30% of the total population). Approximately eighty-three percent of these card holders are adults. The remaining seventeen percent are persons under the age of eighteen.

The library is a member of the Old Colony Library Network, a member-driven, member-run network of twenty-six public and three academic libraries with reciprocal lending rights. The library pays a yearly fee to participate in the network. Aside from the ability to share collections and lend through the delivery system, which allows each library to expand the breadth of its individual collection, the network also shares a software system with updates and technical service maintained through a headquarters. The network provides training and assistance with technical service and cataloging, and seeks out potential new services and areas for growth that can be shared amongst members.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Friends of the Library group. This group of enthusiastic volunteers work diligently all year to raise funds to assist the library. They provide the majority of the library's museum passes, they offer additional funding for library programs and they donate thousands of dollars every year for library materials.



Friends Trivia Night Fundraiser



Q & A with Author of My Dearest Darkest Kayla Cottingham



Jeanne Horan Art Gallery



Teen Zone



# Planning Process

The planning process was informed by research and analysis provided by the library director. The director attended a Strategic Planning Workshop during the February 2020 PLA conference. She also collected an extensive amount of information from a variety of sources including the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Mass.gov, State and Federal reports prepared for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The research results provided an overview of library operations, a profile of the community, and an analysis of users and patterns of library use.

This strategic plan was designed using the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) Three Meeting Model. The director invited an assortment of library trustees and staff, library users, town officials, school department representatives, a council on aging representative, friends of the library, and teen volunteers.

A Strategic Planning Committee was formed. The committee consisted of four Trustees, the Library Director, Circulation & Volunteer Coordinator, Head of Adult Services Librarian, Teen Services Librarian and Head of Youth Services Librarian, Furnace Brook Middle School Librarian, 3 representative community members, 2 members of the Friends of the Library and 2 teen volunteers. Committee members ranged in age from 16 – 82, had lived in Town for a wide range of years.

The committee members met for an orientation and SOAR exercise on October 15, 2022. This two and half-hour meeting was very productive. We learned that library users want more of the services we already provide and more. Committee members were provided with a list of sample mission statements and asked to select their top three choices in order of preference to the library director. The results of their input led to the following Mission Statement:

*“The Ventress Memorial Library is a community hub that inspires and empowers all to access knowledge, culture and social connections.”*

To obtain input from the Marshfield community a survey was created by library staff. The survey was distributed to all Marshfield card holders via an email blast from the Old Colony Library Network. A link to the survey was announced on Facebook and a popup link was available on the library’s website. Print copies of the survey were available at the Town Hall and Council on Aging.

We had 457 respondents take our survey, with 93% of the responses submitted online and 7% completing paper surveys. Results from the survey provided the information used to create this document.

A meeting of the Library Board of Trustees and community members was scheduled to review a Strategic Plan draft developed by library staff. After input from the Trustees, library staff will revise the draft for presentation to the Strategic Planning Committee. Once the plan is approved by the committee it will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees once again for final approval, and ultimately, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.



Library Legislative Day



GeenaRose Nethercott - Thistlefoot



Summer Reading Slime Day



Adult Wreath Making Workshop

# Mission Statement

The Ventress Memorial Library is a community hub that inspires and empowers all to access knowledge, culture and social connections.

## Vision Statement

The Ventress Memorial Library supports the whole community to promote personal growth. The Library provides a welcoming setting that inspires learning and recreation through resources, services and programs, while maintaining a comfortable and confidential environment.

# Service Responses

To create this plan, input was solicited from the Strategic Planning Committee, staff, trustees, Friends, town officials, and the public via surveys and meetings. Over 470 people participated in the process, and the following issues were identified as priorities across all the groups.

1. Physical Space – Users will have a library facility that is welcoming, comfortable and accessible to all.
2. Customer Experience – Foster an organizational culture of continuous improvement.
3. Marketing/Community Awareness –Increase community engagement and awareness of library services.
4. Collections – Maintain a comprehensive, current collection that satisfies varied community needs and interests.
5. Lifelong Learning – Offer high quality, diverse and informative programs that address the desire for self-directed personal growth and continued lifelong learning for all ages
6. Technology – Library users will have access to current information technology.

## **Physical Space**

Goal 1. Provide an inviting space for all users to enjoy.

Objective 1.1 The Board of Library Trustees and Library Director will work with the Town Facilities Department to determine and maintain the needs of the building.

Activity: Invite the Facilities Director to at least 3 Board of Library Trustee meeting per year to discuss building issues.

Objective 1.2 Improve the overall interior space.

Activity: Renovate restrooms

Activity: Add comfortable seating for all ages

Activity: Improve lighting and electrical capacity throughout the building

Objective 1.3 Improve the overall exterior space (IE: Landscape and gardens).

Activity: Maintain library grounds utilizing volunteers

Activity: Evaluate and maintain exterior of the building

Objective 1.4 Continuously evaluate the space for optimum use.

Activity: Evaluate and make recommendations for improvements.

Activity: Identify possible areas to designate as quiet spaces.

Objective 1.5 Explore ways to Expand and improve the Children's area.

Activity: Hire space planner to evaluate Children's area for possible improvements.

Objective 1.6 Improve signage throughout the building.

Activity: Provide a map of library to assist patrons.

Activity: Research and purchase professional signage.



## Customer Experience

Goal 2. Library patrons will be assisted by trained and educated staff whose knowledge of available resources has been increased to meet community needs.

Objective 2.1 Library users will receive superior customer service.

Activity: The Library will implement bi-annual all-staff training to assist in providing exemplary customer service.

Objective 2.2 The Library will encourage and provide funding for professional growth.

Activity: Identify professional development opportunities, including webinars and conferences that staff may attend.

Objective 2.3 Library administration will work with the Human Resources department to review and revise job descriptions as appropriate.

Activity: Review job descriptions for accuracy and revise as necessary.

Activity: Enlist library staff to assure job descriptions reflect current duties.

Activity: Submit revised job descriptions to Human Resources for approval.

Objective 2.5. Library administration will investigate expanding night and weekend hours to meet community needs.

Activity: Review current staffing levels to determine if changes could provide coverage of extended hours,

Activity: Seek additional funding to expand service hours, offering more or longer hours.



Reading Therapy Dog Rocco Working at Circulation Desk!

## Marketing & Community Awareness

Goal 3. Increase public awareness of library offerings.

Objective 3.1 Develop a comprehensive, consistent, and unified marketing plan.

Activity: Investigate best practices for a sustainable marketing plan.

Activity: Work with available free resources to promote library services (IE: community cable channel and local radio).

Activity: Use social media to reach Millennial patrons.

Objective 3.2 Increase the library's presence in the community.

Activity: Library staff will participate in local community events when possible.

Activity: Revive the Pop-up Library.

Activity: Continue to work with the Council on Aging to promote and expand homebound services.

Activity: Seek alternative spaces within the community to hold library programs.

Objective 3.3 Promote the library's local history collection and resources.

Activity: Develop a relationship with the Marshfield Historical Commission.

Activity: Partner with local historians to promote the Historical Room Collection.

Activity: Plan programs featuring local historians.

Activity: Increase the library's Digital Commonwealth presence.



Pop-up Library at Stellwagen Brewery

## **Collections**

Goal 4. The library will maintain print, audio visual, electronic, and object collections that serve the intellectual, recreational, and practical needs of the community as well as represent the varied interests of the community.

Objective 4.1 Materials budget allocations will align with patron usage, current interest, and format popularity.

Activity: Review materials budget allocations at the beginning of each fiscal year and adjust allocations as warranted.

Objective 4.2 Increase availability of popular physical and digital materials.

Activity: Evaluate the library's collection development policy annually.

Activity: Monitor the patron holds report and purchase additional titles based on holds ratio.

Activity: Run bi-monthly holds reports in Libby and purchase additional digital materials when possible.

Objective 4.3 Increase the "Library of Things" collection.

Activity: Purchase the most requested "Things" from the Strategic Plan survey.

Activity: Survey patrons yearly to verify satisfaction with available items.

Objective 4.4 Continue ongoing analysis and maintenance of the collection.

Activity: Circulation staff will evaluate the condition of returned materials, informing selectors of items that need to be discarded or replaced.

Activity: Selectors will evaluate, weed, and update the collections they are responsible for based on the guidelines set forth in the Collection Development Policy.

Objective 4.5 Increase patron awareness and use of the library's collections.

Activity: Library staff will continue to create eye-catching displays that tie into upcoming programs, staff recommendations, popular authors, bestsellers, and current events.

Activity: Create and distribute book lists based on popular authors, series, or topics for all age groups.

## **Lifelong Learning**

Goal 5. Stimulate curiosity and imagination for all ages.

Objective 5.1 Provide informal learning opportunities for everyone.

Activity: Investigate new programs based on community feedback.

Activity: Seek grant funding for presenters and programs of interest.

Activity: Support local social and interest group activities.

Objective 5.2 Support formal learning for all ages.

Activity: Provide summer reading programs.

Activity: Collaborate with the Marshfield Public School Department to provide resources and materials that support educational needs.

Activity: Investigate and implement new educational programs and services based on community input and staff expertise.

Objective 5.3. Engage, serve, and empower teens.

Activity: Develop relationship with middle and high school teachers to complement student's educational needs.

Activity: Continue to increase programs of interest based on feedback from teens.

Activity: Explore programs and services to support underserved teen populations.

Objective 5.4 Promote early literacy and provide children's programming to enhance educational and recreational programs for ages birth through 11.

Activity: Continue to provide popular programs by age groups; birth through 5 years and 6 through 11 years of age.

Activity: Investigate and implement new programs for age groups; birth through 5 years and 6 through 11 years of age.

Objective 5.5 Ensure access to lifelong learning opportunities to underserved populations.

Activity: Investigate and provide programs and services for the library's ESL population.

Activity: Investigate and provide programs and services for patrons with developmental disabilities, neurodivergence and other cognitive abilities.



## **Technology**

Goal 6: The library will anticipate and respond to the community's everyday technology needs and support the technology and digital literacy of all Marshfield residents.

Objective 6.1 Evaluate and define the community's technology needs.

Activity: Utilize relevant toolkits, participate in continuing education and stay abreast of new technology.

Objective 6.2 Develop a digital literacy framework that will support technology services and resources.

Activity: Develop handouts and other print materials to be made available in the Resource Area that answer common technology questions.

Activity: Develop website content that answers common technology questions.

Activity: Curate lists of digital resources that address common technology questions.

Objective 6.3 Provide formal training and one-on-one technology training.

Activity: Develop and offer standalone technology classes that address common questions and are offered at a variety of times.

Activity: Seek adult volunteers who can provide scheduled one-on-one technology help at a variety of times.

Objective 6.4 Support the continued development of the Makerspace.

Activity: Formally track and evaluate existing Makerspace usage.

Activity: Improve promotion of the services available in Makerspace.

Activity: Explore additional Makerspace software and technologies with input from community.

Activity: Expand Makerspace operating budget to support additional software and materials.

# Approval

The Board of Trustees of the Marshfield Public Library voted unanimously at their meeting on June 21, 2023 to adopt this plan and to submit it to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for their approval.



Teen Halloween Lock-In



Fantastic Fairy Houses

# Appendix

## Survey Comments

“I love the Ventress Library and I am grateful to have it in the town. This library has helped so many families through COVID.”

“Ventress is a wonderful place for the community. Hopefully the library gets a little more investment in staff and books. Everyone there is kind and helpful.”

“The people of the library are great. Thank you!”

“Thank you for allowing us to share. Our library is such a valuable space, not just for the resources and services, but also because of the courtesy extended, which can make a visitor feel like an integral part of a community.”

“Book selection is very lacking compared to other local libraries.”

“Overall, we are so happy with the ability to get books from other libraries so we don’t have to drive around town for them.”

“We love the library and always want to support it and the staff!”

“I’ve really enjoyed the Ventress Library since moving to Marshfield 1.5 years ago!”

“Staff is amazing. There is a welcome feeling when you come in.... I am the daughter of a library director and I like to say I was raised in a library. Ventress is wonderful and I really appreciate the drive to become even better.”

“Ventress seems right on track... OCLN network is outstanding.”

“The technical staff are extremely knowledgeable, good communicators, and very courteous.”

“The teen room for my daughter is just what she needs and is awesome! Thank you!”

“Everything is great! Mostly use the children's section and everyone is always so helpful!”

“I just want to say how lucky we are in this town to have such a great resource. I also love the art work in the library it has inspired me to learn watercolor painting.”

“The entire library could use a bit of a facelift! But the space is creative, clean and has nice displays despite this!”

“The puzzles are a great way to pass the time in the winter and interlibrary loans are so helpful. Thank you!”

“My son loves the programs you have like Pokémon and reading to Rocko. He is 7, I would love to see more programs/classes for that age.”

“My child has had wonderful experiences with the children's librarians and the programs they have available for the kids. I have been happy to see an increase in the variety of adult programs over the past year, too.”

“Always enjoy the programs! Keep up the great work. Would love to see more authors.”

“I have to say the trivia nights at the Stellwagen Brewery have been excellent. Love the library prizes they give out and trivia host makes it challenging and fun. Would love this to be a permanent thing.”

“The programs are fun and easy to participate in. The adult programs are interesting and thoughtful. We are able to attend everything from art class to yoga class and all for no cost. I love how accessible they make all the activities. We absolutely loved the recent drumming class, wreath making class, and the offsite trivia is our favorite event of all.”

“I think the curbside service should continue even without Covid. I also would like a drive-up location for book donations rather than having to go into the library. The bin outside does not benefit the library.”

“I would love to see updates and expansions for our library. When I compare it to other libraries around which I grew up, our library seems far behind the times.”

“Everyone tries, but it is still a grocery store - not like other towns with their beautiful buildings!”

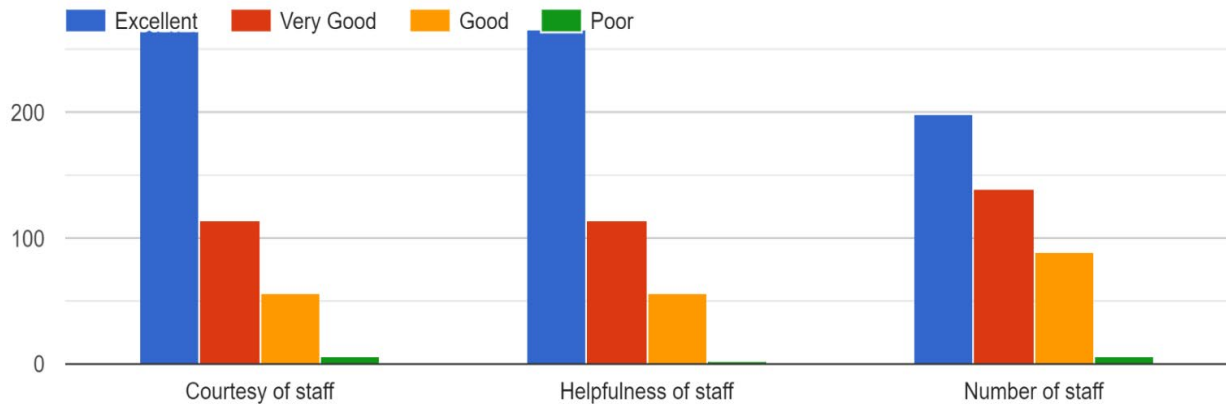
“Forget new carpeting and tear down the whole building!! In this day and age, the building and grounds area a disgrace and embarrassment!!! Would you agree? It is such a depressing sight! Thanks for asking.”



## Survey Results

### Staff

How would you evaluate library staff?



Overall staff ratings were higher than any other section in entire survey. For courtesy, only 6 rated us poor, and for helpfulness, only 2 rated us poor. And while “Excellent” scored at 60% or higher for those two categories, it drops 15% when patrons rated the number of library staff.

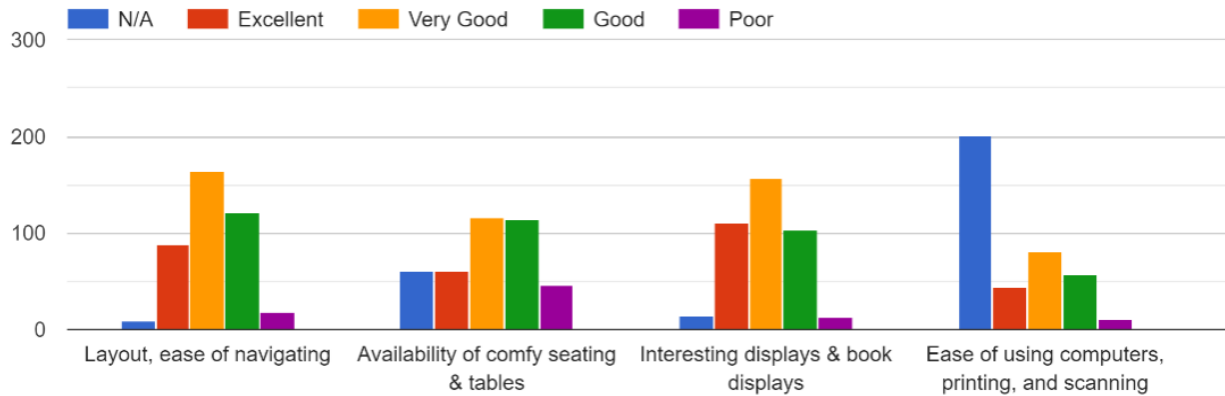
Courtesy - 442 responses (Poor = 1%, Good = 13%, Very Good = 26%, Excellent = 60%)

Helpfulness - 439 responses (Poor = <1%, Good = 13%, Very Good = 26%, Excellent = 61%)

Number - 434 responses (Poor = 1%, Good = 21%, Very Good = 32%, Excellent = 46%)

## Physical Space

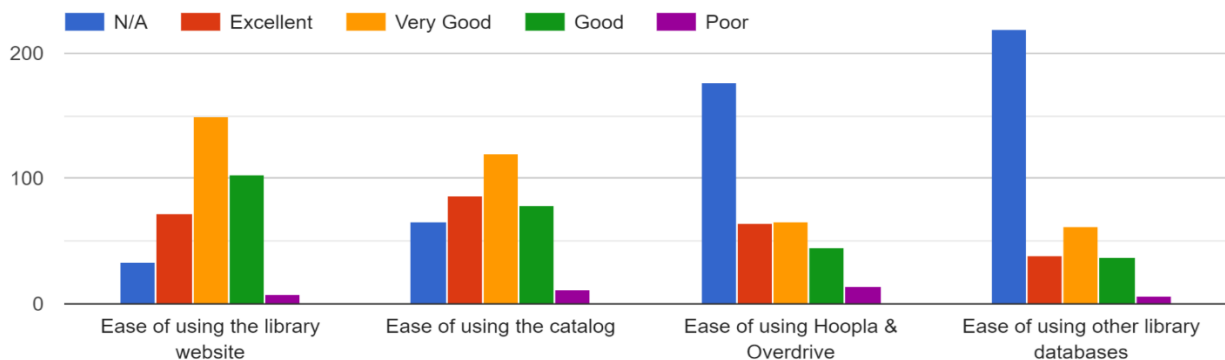
How would you evaluate the library's physical space?



Comfy Seating was the top question we scored “Poor” on out of all questions in survey and one of the lowest scores for “Excellent.” The Children’s Room had the second most scores of “Poor” even though it outflanked several physical categories in ratings of “Excellent.” The Teen Room and the Makerspace were the only physical categories where “Excellent” scored the highest.

## Digital Library

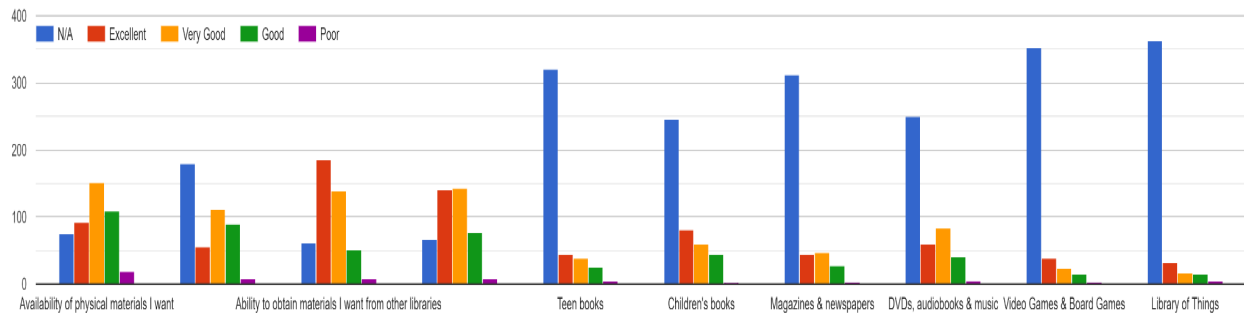
Please evaluate the library's online presence in the following areas.



365 of 457 survey respondents self-reported using one or more of the digital resources, with a few “Other” selections cleaned up for clarity: Website - 291

## Physical Collection

Please evaluate the library's collection in the following areas.

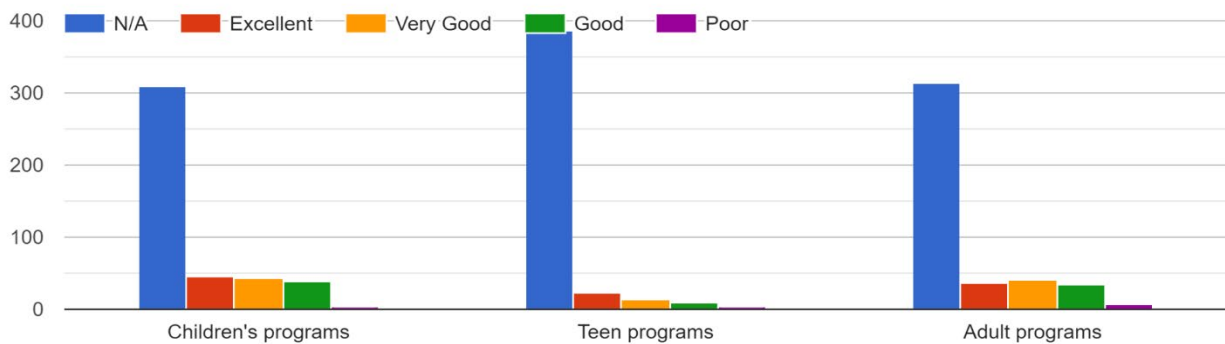


Availability of physical items - 372 responses (Poor = 5%, Good = 29%, Very Good = 41%, Excellent = 25%)

Availability of digital items - 264 responses (Poor = 3%, Good = 34%, Very Good = 42%, Excellent = 21%)

## Programs

Please evaluate the library's programs in the following areas.



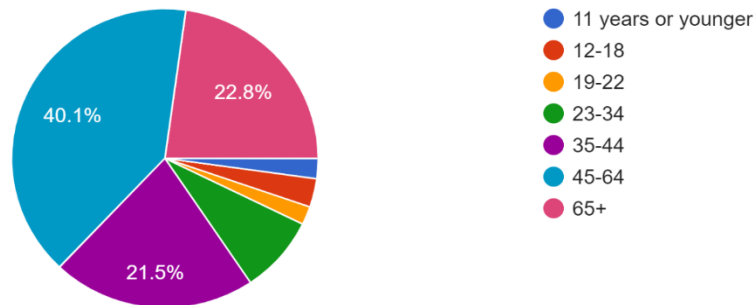
Kids Programs - 130 responses (Poor = 2%, Good = 30%, Very Good = 33%, Excellent = 35%)

Teen Programs - 49 responses (Poor = 6%, Good = 19%, Very Good = 29%, Excellent = 47%)

## Survey Demographics

What age range do you fall under?

456 responses



Adults: 93% of respondents (of that, 70% are working age) | Youth & Young Adults: 7%

\* **Most survey takers primarily use the library as a library.** 407 are physical library users; of that, 93% drive to the library

## Library Use

