

Get Loud for Libraries

Community Engagement Report Overview | November 2023



Background

In January 2023, the Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) initiated its "Community Conversations With The City Librarian" sessions, marking the beginning of a broad community engagement effort. This project was a response to possible budget cuts in Milwaukee. To enhance and deepen this engagement, MPL also launched the "Get Loud for Libraries" campaign, a complementary initiative designed to expand the collection of community insights and input.

Project Overview



Milwaukee Public Library launched a project called "Get Loud For Libraries" in April of 2023, which concluded in August 2023



The project was designed to focus on what community members value most about current programs and services, as well as explore desires for future offerings



Surveys and events were made available in multiple languages and in various parts of the City of Milwaukee with access, equity, and inclusion as a cornerstone

Input and feedback was collected using randomized incentives and gathered through various channels which included:



Online surveys



Paper Surveys



Listening Sessions



Engagement Events



Survey Engagement Overview

4,378

Milwaukee residents completed online or paper surveys.

3,459

Visited a Milwaukee Public Library in the past year.

919

Had not visited a Milwaukee Public Library in the past year.

21.2%

Individuals Lived Near North Cluster Libraries

Branches Include: Atkinson, Capitol, Good Hope, Villard Square

43.8%

Individuals Lived Near Central Cluster Libraries

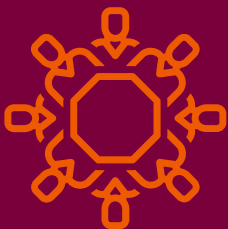
Branches Include Center Street, Central, East, Washington Park, Martin Luther King Dr.

35%

Lived Near South Cluster Libraries

Branches Include: Mitchell Street, Bay View, Zablocki, Tippecanoe

Event & Listening Session Overview



22

Listening sessions and community engagement events hosted



450+

Attendees and actively participating individuals engaged

Sessions focused on hard-to-reach and historically underrepresented communities including:

55+

Older Adults



Youth



Whole Families



BIPOC



ESL



LGBTQAI+

When Looking At Patron & Non-Patron Responses Separately

Top Responses For Most Valued Programs & Services From Surveying Current Patrons (3,459 Respondents)

A patron was identified as anyone who had been to the library within the 12 months prior to taking the survey.



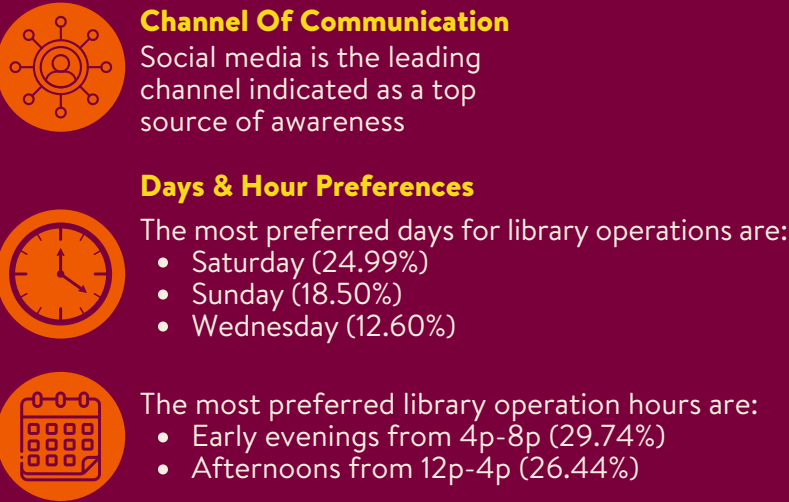
Top Responses For Programs Of Interest From Surveying Non-Patrons (919 Respondents)

A non-patron was identified as anyone who had yet to go to the library within the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

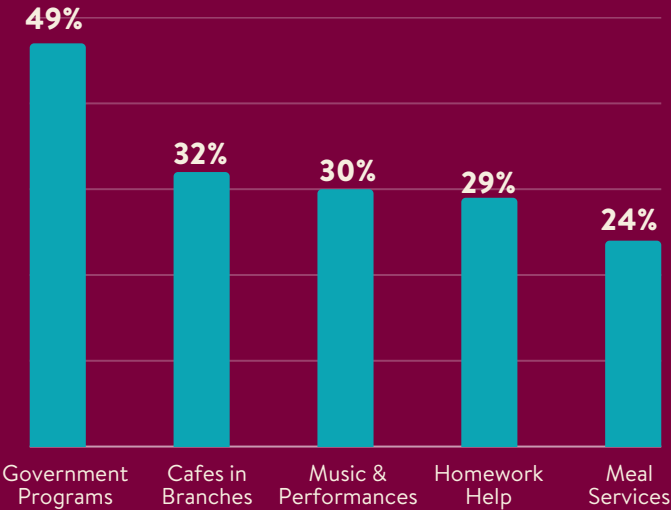


When Looking At Patron & Non-Patron Responses Combined

Communications & Operational Preferences



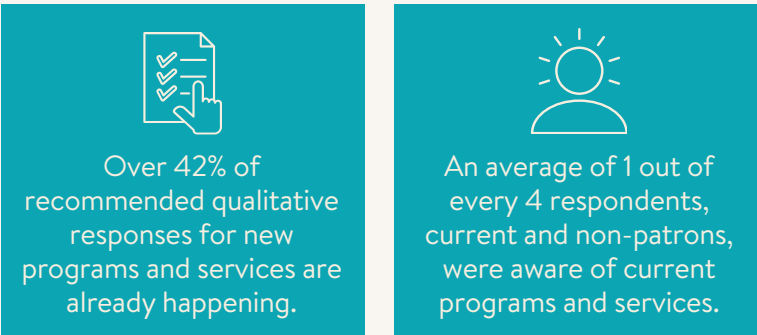
Most Desired Programs To Expand



Inclusivity & Investment



Current Offerings & Recommendations



Throughout the campaign, over 4,000 individuals recounted their cherished library experiences. Here are some of those moments:



Discovery and Joy in Learning

"I remember being so excited to go to the library because I could borrow all the books and movies I wanted... then I heard a room of laughter and I followed it [to] a crowd of children and a magician with a bunny. I had so much fun laughing at the magician's tricks and making new friends."



Intergenerational Connection and Appreciation

"His eyes, I'm telling you, it lit up... he was telling me about what he saw and the history... it's good that I'm trying to learn more about it and know that his services weren't in vain... Shared with me some of his personal favorites, which I rented out that day."



Accessibility and Enrichment

"We didn't have a lot of money, but going to the library cost nothing... we'd spend hours there... being excited to go back again the following weekend to borrow more books and return the ones that I had. It just was such an amazing experience."



Community and Personal Growth

"It's where I took my grandchildren for storytelling... The list is endless... the Milwaukee Library was part of me growing up in Milwaukee and is still part of me now at the age of 66."



Nurturing Creative Talent

"Our local library actually had someone come in and teach us how to draw... it was free for me to be able to join and to make my skills better."



Milestone and Independence

"My favorite library memory is my daughter getting her first library card... She was so excited... she signed the back of a card with a Sharpie in like, huge big black letters... it was a really exciting day."

The more than 4,000 stories shared illustrate the profound impact of libraries as centers for learning, cultural enrichment, and community connection. These narratives showcase the library's vital role in fostering curiosity, creativity, and unity among diverse groups, highlighting their ongoing importance in enriching and inspiring our lives.

