

2022-2025
STRATEGIC PLAN



ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The Saline County Library is a public library that enjoys great support from our community, staff, Friends of the Library, and board members. Saline County has a friendly, small-town feel that we appreciate and seek to replicate in our library. Our educated, well-trained staff is committed to providing great service. We currently have 34 full-time and 17 part-time staff members, 11 of whom hold a master's degree. Our Friends of the Library volunteers are advocates in the community, hard workers in the library, and great fundraisers. This year alone, they have volunteered over 600 hours at the library.

Our 20-year-old building in Bryant was renovated in 2018 with new paint, flooring, and furniture. Our Benton branch is beginning the second stage of a remodel to better accommodate our patrons and the community. Just like the schools, the library is funded by property taxes. The library receives 1.7 mills, which averages out to about \$25 per person per year and is the largest part of our \$3 million dollar budget.

With our seven departments, we seek to make the library a place where the community can come together to connect in educational and entertaining programs and services. Our departments consist of Administration, Bryant Branch, Building Operations, Collections, Community Engagement, Public Services, and Youth Services. We know that Saline County is more than just Benton and Bryant, and we want to build on the services we currently provide in order to reach the rest of our county.

We are also part of the Mid-Ark Regional Library System which consists of five libraries: Cleveland County Library, Dallas County Library, Grant County Library, Malvern-Hot Spring County Library, and Saline County Library. Together, we provide resources and materials to members of all five counties.

OUR MISSION

To create unique, enriching experiences that put you at the center of our story.

OUR VISION

Enrich lives. Provide the unexpected. Be more.

OUR CORE VALUES

Be community-focused

- Our community is...EVERYONE. Whoever you are, you matter, and we will do our best to make sure you are welcome.
- We are here to serve by being accessible and inclusive to our community and coworkers.
- We support diversity and growth in all areas.
- We strive for friendly, professional, and trustworthy engagements.

Be creative

- We will set our curiosity free and be open-minded about changing the library world. All ideas are welcome.
- We strive for excellence and making a difference in people's lives.
- We are intentional at finding solutions that are meaningful and impactful to the work environment and community.

Be compassionate

- Open hearts assume the best. Professionalism gives the best. Accountability ensures the best.
- We respect each other and hold each other accountable for a better professional atmosphere.
- We communicate with kindness for continuous improvement of work relationships.

Administration Department consists of the Library Director who oversees the Saline County Library system, the HR Manager who is responsible for facilitating compliance with HR laws and handling the interviewing and hiring process, the Library Manager who oversees the Public Services and Youth Services departments, the Financial Coordinator who is responsible for maintaining the finances of the library, and the Systems Administrator who is responsible for managing the Integrated Library System and overseeing the collection.

Bryant Branch is responsible for all aspects of the Mabel Boswell Memorial Library. The Branch Manager and Assistant Branch Manager direct all activities of the branch including operations, resources, and staff. The Branch Library Assistants are responsible for all public services operations including circulation, reference, and technology help. The Youth Services Librarians maintain the Youth collections at the Branch and host entertaining and educational programs.

Building Operations Department keeps the library looking clean, put-together, and attractive as well as helping the library's technology run smoothly. This department troubleshoots Internet, hardware, and software issues for the staff and patrons and handles everything from vacuuming and dusting to handling basic repairs on the building. They also make sure our networks are secure and coordinate with outside vendors for inside and outside building needs.

Collections Department orders materials and checks deliveries to ensure orders are correct. Then, they catalog materials according to type including adding descriptions, specifying in which collections to put the items, and setting check-out parameters. The Collections Department processes all of the library's materials and makes sure they get to their designated locations.

Community Engagement Department handles all Marketing, Outreach, and Adult Programming needs. The Marketing Department runs the library's social media

pages, creates promotional materials, and keeps the library in the public eye in terms of community partnerships and attending events. The Outreach Coordinator and Community Librarian build and develop community partnerships and oversee the local history and genealogy collection. Adult Programmers are responsible for planning and implementing quality adult programming, both educational and entertaining.

Public Services Department is the first point of contact for our patrons. These staff members greet the public, answer directional and informational questions, and check materials in and out. They maintain the shelves and fill hold requests. The Public Services Department also handles passport and notary services.

Youth Services Department serves our younger patrons including children, tweens, and teens. The Youth Services Department provides entertaining and educational programs and personalized reader's advisory. They also visit local schools to provide storytimes and library card sign-ups. They maintain a fun and educational environment to inspire our youngest patrons.

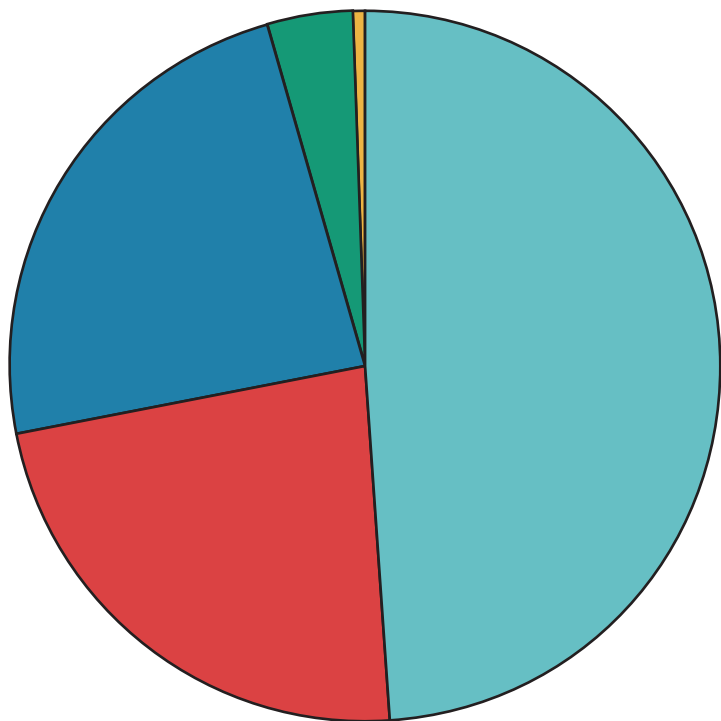
What does it mean to Rewrite Tradition?

One thing is clear- libraries are key to remembering traditions, preserving history and exploring the past. But one thing that is not expected is libraries holding a strong influence in changing habits and constantly evolving to meet community needs.

At the Saline County Library, we focus on being involved in our community, hosting educational and entertaining programs, cultivating engaging experiences, creating lasting connections and providing unexpected, trending and useful materials. It's pretty obvious, this is not your traditional expectation from a local library.

Saline County Library By the Numbers

Data from 2019



Collection Use by Material

- Print Books - 253,705
- eBooks - 118,100
- DVD's - 122,456
- Electronic Resources (Hoopla, Freegal, Kanopy) - 20,540
- Specialty Items (Video games, fishing poles, etc.) - 1,467

Website Visits -

318,880

In-Person Visits -

272,729



Program Attendees

Youth

12,657

Adult

3,966

**Cardholders as
of Sep. 2021 - 47,665**

621

**Passports
Processed**



OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

To make sure the Saline County Library continues to improve for our patrons and the community, we began a new strategic planning process in February 2021.

We began gathering information about the community and its needs after we held a strategic planning committee organizational meeting with some of our staff members. This information-gathering aspect included looking at analytics, staff focus groups, and interviews and surveys with the community.

Using the 2020 Census, we did a thorough analysis of the community and demographics. This showed us different groups in the community based on lifestyle and demographics. We then held staff focus groups over Zoom during the pandemic to get big-picture ideas and ways that our staff thought we could better serve the community.

Starting in July, our administrative staff interviewed key influencers and community leaders across the county to get an idea of what kind of community they want to see. To get a better idea of what our community wanted, we did a Facebook and eBlast survey which was focused on our facilities and space needs, as well as desired services and collections, to which we received 250 responses. Soon after, the strategic planning committee met once more to brainstorm our new measurable goals within the big-ticket ideas based on our findings from the information-gathering portion.

The Saline County Library Strategic Plan 2022-2025 is the result of getting to know our community and its needs in order to better serve the area.



Looking Inward: Staff Focus Groups

We began our planning process by hosting small focus groups with all of our staff members. These focus groups featured questions surrounding how our staff hope to enhance library services and how they would like to see our community grow. A full report of staff responses can be found in Appendix A. Below are key themes that emerged from these focus groups:

Staff members believe it's of vital importance for patrons to easily find what they want and for staff to be helpful.

Staff members desire for the library to enrich lives through knowledge and entertainment.

Staff members would like to expand knowledge of the library and services/resources offered. They would also like to see more outreach for vulnerable populations like the homeless, including expanding our food pantry capabilities.

Staff members envision increasing employee recognition, training, and cross-training. Creating a faster turn-around for putting new items on the shelves would prioritize patron satisfaction.



Community Insights: Key Influencer Interviews

Hearing from prominent members of the community was vital to the development of our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. While we focus on things inside the library, community members are able to point us in the direction of needs that we may not see inside the library. From City Mayors and Chamber of Commerce presidents to local school Superintendents and the hospital CEO, we were able to gain perspective from all areas of Saline County. Interviews can be found in Appendix B.



Community Engagement Manager, Kari Lapp, at a Benton Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting.

"I want to live in a community that is inclusive of everyone. A diverse community with one of education, a place to feels like home."

- Shane Broadway,
VP for University
Relations, ASU LR

"I would like to see the library push inclusivity more by reaching out to fringe population groups and the underserved areas of our community."

- Mayor Allen Scott



Library Assistant: Makerspace, Ashlyn Wilcox, hosting a face painting booth at Picnic in the Park.



Customer Voices:

Patron Surveys

In the next three years, what areas would you like us to improve upon?

- 1) Programs for youth
- 2) Programs for adults
- 3) Downloadable materials
- 4) Physical materials
- 5) Spaces for study and reading
- 6) Community outreach
- 7) Spaces to meet and gather

What role does the Saline County Library play in patrons' lives?

- 1) Leisurely activities
- 2) Personal knowledge and enrichment
- 3) Programs
- 4) Education
- 5) Socialization
- 6) Computers or WiFi
- 7) Meeting space
- 8) Other (example: business research and technology support)

259 patrons answered our patron survey which included questions about what they would like to see in the library and how we can continue to meet their needs in the next three years. Full results, including comments, can be found in Appendix C.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE



JANUARY	Sent out email to Saline County Library staff asking for volunteers for the planning committee.
FEBRUARY	Departments evaluated the success of their goals from the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan.
MARCH	Strategic Planning committee held their first meeting to determine a timeline.
APRIL - JULY	Strategic Planning committee began the research portion which included holding staff focus groups, key influencer interviews, and sending out the patron survey.
JULY	Strategic Planning committee evaluated results from the research portion and explored key themes found within each.
AUGUST	Strategic Planning committee created goals, objectives, and tactics based on results from research portion.
SEPTEMBER	Marketing department began designing the draft.
OCTOBER	Strategic Planning committee approved draft.
NOVEMBER	Library board approved draft and Marketing department sent it to print.
DECEMBER	Marketing department sends Strategic Plan to key influencers and community partners, and prepare to launch the plan.

GOAL 1:

Improve the Collection.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Reduce wait time for materials.

- Reduce holds ratio to 4:1
- Purchase more copies of popular material.
- Process new materials more efficiently.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Make our collections more accessible.

- Add more diverse and inclusive materials available in various formats.
- Create visible directional signage.
- Look into adding more catalog stations in our buildings.

MEASUREMENT:

Compare number of materials in collection and circulation ratios; compare days between material arrivals and date processed.



GOAL 2:

Improve the Space.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Create an inviting, welcoming space.

- Incorporate more colors in the buildings.
- Design cozy and comfortable reading spots and meeting areas.
- Research study rooms and spaces.
- Utilize informational and entertaining displays.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Construct an accessible outdoor space.

- Organize reading and social areas.
- Add more landscaping.
- Direct people to our buildings with off-site signage.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Increase staff visibility and morale.

- Greet and recognize patrons.
- Research ways for staff to be more visible.
- Host staff in-service days.
- Participate in interdepartmental training.

MEASUREMENT:

Perform surveys and focus groups.



"I always feel very welcomed when I visit. The staff know my face and which children are mine. They have always been very friendly. They say hello, ask how my day was, tell me what my sons have been participating in. You all do a wonderful job being welcoming and warm."

– Patron

GOAL 3:

Improve Programming and Outreach.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Engage adults.

- Target new adults (20-somethings).
- Host unique, informative programs.
- Partner with adult learning centers.
- Host family-friendly programming.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Collaborate with community groups.

- Bring in community groups for workshops.
- Invite special guest programmers.
- Research neighborhood pop-ups.
- Enhance advertisement of programs.

MEASUREMENT:

Compare adult participation; survey diversity of attendees.



GOAL 4:

Improve Inclusion and Opportunity.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Support the community.

- Provide outreach to English language learners.
- Research community needs and demographics.
- Learn how we can help with food insecurity.
- Initiate programs for the disabled community.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Be available.

- Continue to be fine-free.
- Explore access for after-hours.
- Design an accessible website and catalog.

MEASUREMENT:

Compare number of outreach programs; survey community; audit website building accessibility.





MOVING FORWARD

Learning about community needs and meeting those needs are key goals for us in the next four years. Your feedback is essential. By filling out surveys, leaving comments or reviews on Facebook, or even giving feedback to a staff member, you can tell us how we are doing and how we can improve.

Our promise to you is that we will continue to look for new ways to serve this community. If something is not working, we can change it. We believe there is something for everyone at the library, and we invite everyone to use the library and to grow with us over the next four years as we rewrite tradition.

New innovations in technology have made it an exciting time for libraries. Libraries are offering more services and materials, and delivering them in new ways. You do not have to come into the buildings to use the library anymore! The Saline County Library keeps all patrons in mind when implementing new ideas. We are a library that has something for everyone.

“I’m so impressed with the library and all the creative things they offer for checkout! I love it all!

– Patron



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are proud to have support from Saline County residents and organizations. With help from these community groups, our strategic planning team gathered ideas and prepared an action plan.

We also received contribution from our Facebook followers who interacted on our posts, newsletter subscribers who completed surveys, program attendees who provided feedback, patrons who answered questions, and community partners who committed time to attend and engaging in interviews. A great deal of appreciation goes to our library staff who participated in focus groups, shared ideas, and tried new methods while remaining dedicated to providing great service to the patrons of the library in the midst of the pandemic.

None of this would have been possible without your help. We appreciate your time, energy, and hard work. Thank you!

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Arey, Saline County Judge
Shane Broadway, Saline County Economic Development Committee
Lacey Brooks, Everett Buick GMC
Jason Brown, Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce
Leigh Espey, Saline County Library
Tom Farmer, Benton Mayor
Lanny Fite, State of Arkansas Representative
LaRhonda Fulcher, Adult Education Center
Kim Hammer, Arkansas Senator
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Gary James, Benton Chamber of Commerce

Keith Keck, Saline County Quorum Court
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Truett Smith, City of Bryant
Michael Stewart, Saline Memorial
Julie Syler, Saline County Library
Karen Walters, Bryant School District



APPENDIX A: KEY INFLUENCER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?
2. Why is that important to you?
3. How is that different from how you see things now?
4. What are some things that need to happen to create that kind of change?
5. In your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities you see for Saline County?
6. How does the library help the community?
7. What can the library do to assist in building the community you envision?
8. Do you view the library as more educational or recreational? Do you wish it was different?
9. Regarding library services, do you think there are geographical areas of Saline County that are underserved? Do you think there are population groups that are underserved?

THEMES:

- Be inclusive
 - Have materials readily available for:
 1. Spanish speakers
 2. Underprivileged community
 3. Homeless community
 4. Deaf community
 5. Veterans
 6. People with disabilities
 7. BIPOC/LGBTQ+ communities
- Be all-around supportive of the community
- Better Internet around the community/outlying areas
- Put out some generic community surveys, not so library-focused
- Reach the young adult population
 - We want to keep them here after graduation
- Neighborhood pop-up libraries
- Partner with adult learning centers
- Patrons feel like outlying communities are put on the backburner

"I would love to live in a community that has equity and equality for all. This is important to me because you don't know what you don't know until someone presents it to you. There are a lot of opportunities out there that many may not be aware of, and it's important for everyone to know what is available. If everyone is informed, then everyone is on a fair playing ground."

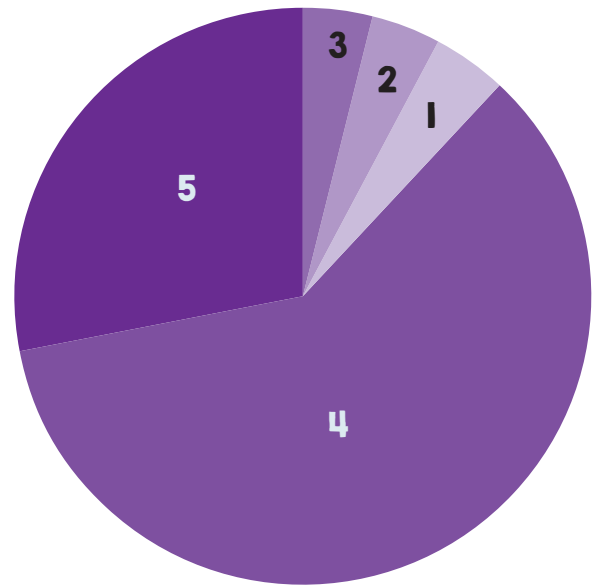
- LaRhonda Fulcher, Adult Education Director for UAPTC

APPENDIX B: STAFF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

1.

The mission of the Saline County Library is to create unique, enriching experiences that put you at the center of our story. The Saline County Library reflects this well. (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

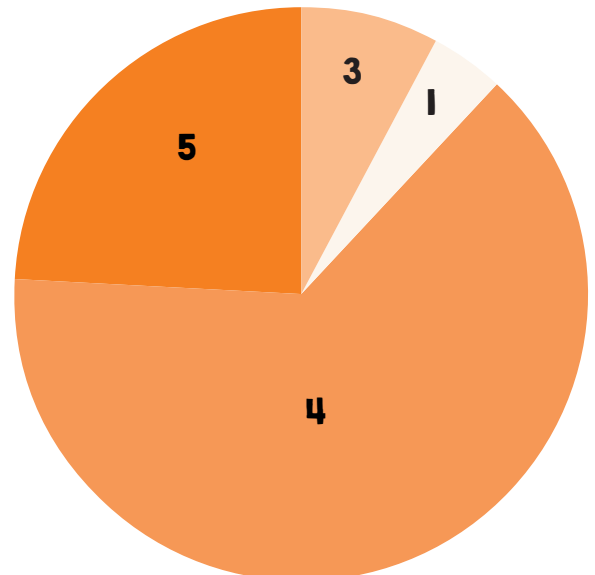
- 1 (Strongly disagree) - 4%
- 2 (Disagree) - 4%
- 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) - 4%
- 4 (Agree) - 60%
- 5 (Strongly agree) - 28%



2.

The vision of the Saline County Library is to “Enrich lives. Provide the unexpected. Be more.” The Saline County Library reflects this vision well. (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

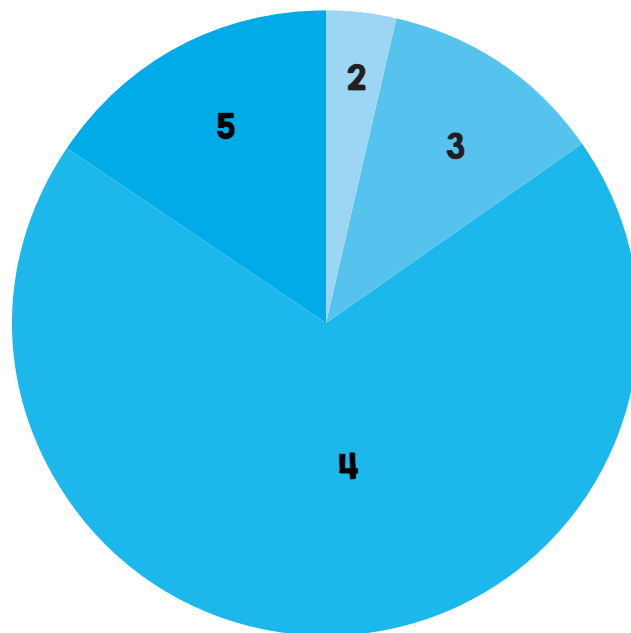
- 1 (Strongly disagree) - 8%
- 2 (Disagree) - 0%
- 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) - 4%
- 4 (Agree) - 64%
- 5 (Strongly agree) - 24%



3.

My department accomplished its 2019-2021 Strategic Plan goals.
 (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

- 1 (Strongly disagree) - 0%
- 2 (Disagree) - 4%
- 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) - 12%
- 4 (Agree) - 72%
- 5 (Strongly agree) - 16%



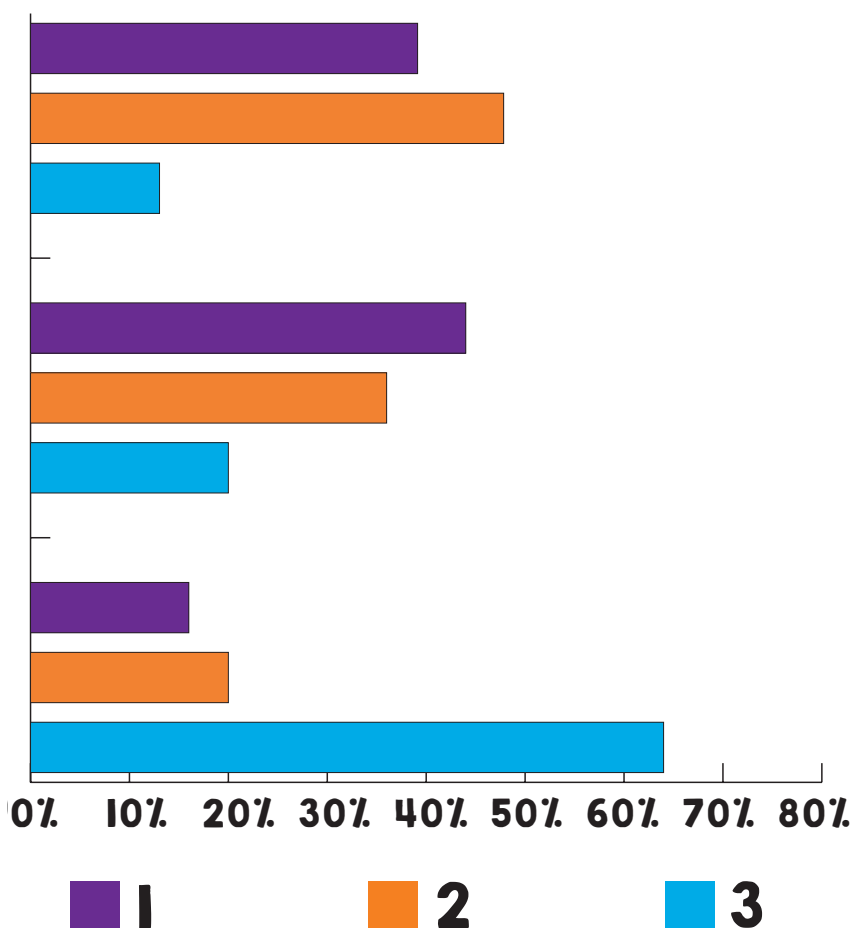
4.

Please rank each of the following SCL objectives by how well you think we achieved them in the past 3 years.

Design welcoming physical and digital spaces to make using the library easy and tailored to your busy lifestyle.

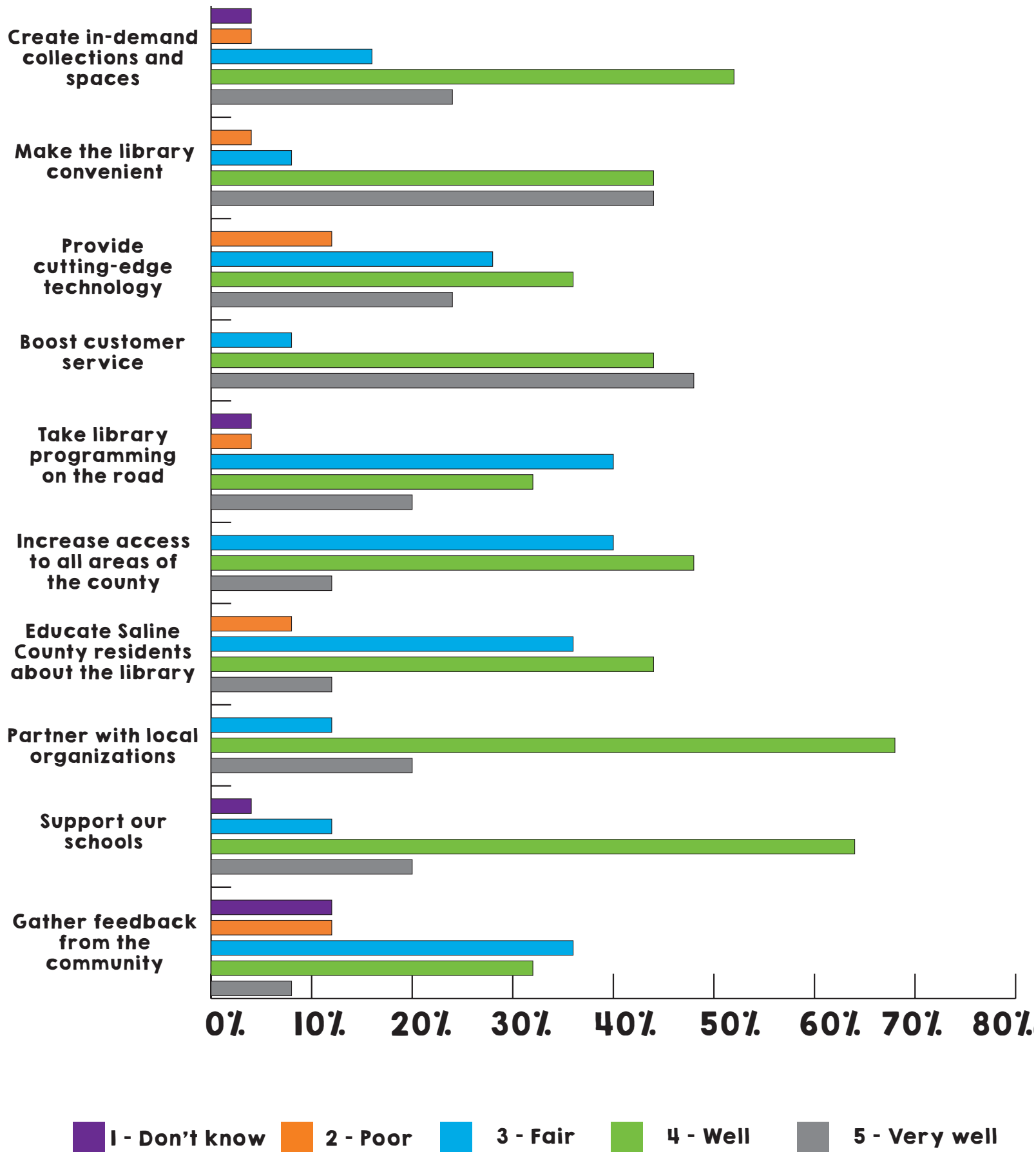
Expand our library services to reach more people in more ways.

Unite the county by supporting people, schools, organizations, and businesses.



5.

Below is a list of our 2019-2021 Strategic Plan goals. Please rate on a scale from 1-5 how well we achieved these goals. (1 = Don't know, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Well, 5 = Very well)



6. What do you think is most important to a patron's library experience? Please rate these aspects from 1 being most important to 8 being least important.

- 1. Being able to easily find what they want**
- 2. Having staff be helpful**
- 3. Accessible website and catalog**
- 4. Well-planned programs**
- 5. New items in the collection**
- 6. Areas to study and/or socialize**
- 7. Providing outreach events and library card sign-ups**
- 8. Getting in and out quickly**

7. Describe a community need we meet well.

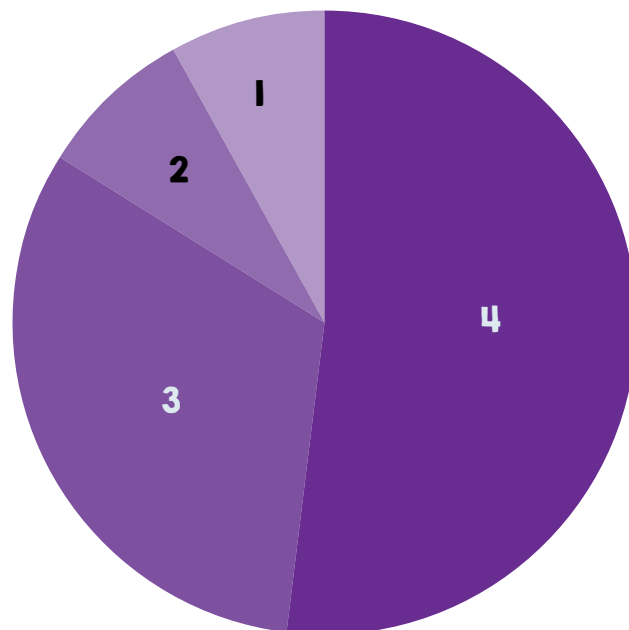
- All of the changes to the collection and catalog give patrons increased access to materials: genre-fying the J and non-fiction collection, expanding the Spanish language collection, joining Mid-Ark, reallocating money from print to digital, new library of things items.**
- Moved large print upstairs to be more accessible to those patrons that regularly read these.**
- Adapting to the coronavirus. Providing a computer and internet place.**
- Normally we offer high quality children's programs that no one else can match and have a place for parents, especially homeschoolers, to socialize.**
- We were able to update our website well to allow easiest user access**
- Gaining feedback & insight from the community**
- Providing access during the pandemic.**
- Homeschool programming**
- We enrich lives in the community through knowledge and entertainment.**
- School support and outreach**
- DVDs**
- I think we have done an awesome job during the Corona Virus at keeping the community involved with the library. Especially with the limitations/rules we have to abide.**
- Access to free forms of entertainment (reading, movies, craft kits...)**
- The youth and kids**
- Letting people know what we have available**
- Aside from the disaster that was 2020, we do a lot of amazing youth programs, which our families love.**
- Homeschool families**
- Youth interaction**
- Adapting to the new normal of the pandemic, and providing curbside service**
- Providing digital resources**
- Homeschool Families**
- Access to online resources**
- Providing quality programs and materials for patrons.**

8. Describe a community need you would like to see met

- Expand knowledge of the library and services/resources offered
- Improve Makerspace items and usage. We have many items in there that patrons/staff don't know about or use.
- Educating the public in how to navigate the library
- More inclusion of patrons with special needs and patrons who don't have internet at home.
- More people need to learn about the benefits of a library. I met someone who didn't know the library had movies!
- Reaching Seniors, College Students, & Special Needs Community more.
- Spanish speakers
- Reaching more of the county with our resources and being able to engage more people in our great programs.
- A website that is easier to navigate and less cluttered
- Art and Sculpture
- Help finding the local animal strays a good and loving home
- Free community meeting space for groups or clubs
- People with special needs
- I would like to see more outreach for vulnerable populations like the homeless. Creating and advertising the food pantry was a good start, but I feel there's more we can do.
- Young adults 18-25
- Providing library services to outlying areas of the county & underserved populations in Benton & Bryant
- Adult interaction
- Programming for all ages
- Expand Collaboration with Middle/Junior/High Schools
- I would like to see us expand our pantry capabilities.
- Outside activities

9. How do you prefer to get feedback from patrons?

- 1 - SCL Help - 8%
- 2 - Facebook - 8%
- 3 - In-Person - 32%
- 4 - Surveys - 52%



10. Are there any other areas we could improve on in the library for our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan?

- I think we have a great staff and an even greater leader. Our library is truly a remarkable place and I feel lucky to work here!
- Increase employee recognition, training, and cross-training. Create a faster turn-around for putting new items on the shelves available for patrons. Continue research on how employees can successfully help patrons during coronavirus. Include a variety library employees in community events.
- Making the library more friendly to Spanish speakers and the Deaf community.
- Getting real feedback from a variety of community members--not necessarily library users.
- Prioritizing patron satisfaction
- Keep virtual programming going Include key players in Aging Community, Job Seekers, & Juvenile Detention Facility Invite school principals to be a part of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan
- Develop a Communication Plan in-house of the Strategic Plan that is a living document that identifies key point of contact staff
- Socially distanced services for parts of the community outside Benton/Bryant
- Continue to grow being part of the community's dream.
- Declutter/storage options
- To get out in the community more and to be a guiding light to those people that need us. we need to reach out to the parts of the community that we normally do not reach.
- Outreach to lesser served areas of Saline County.
- Programming that reaches past the arts and crafts. Let's find as many areas as we have genres to engage in.
- Improve in-library signage, genrefy adult fiction
- Expand the statistics chart. Explain how we adapted to serving our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Showcase the Summer Reading Program, the Winter Reading Program, and our use of Sora in our partnership with local schools. Spotlight library staff members and board members who have been a part of the library for 20+ years and share stories/quotes from them as well as ask what they see for our future.
- Our online connections and virtual programs seem like they will continue to be a strong and permanent part of our library. I think we need more focus and expansion in this area.
- More cohesive and patron-centered programming.

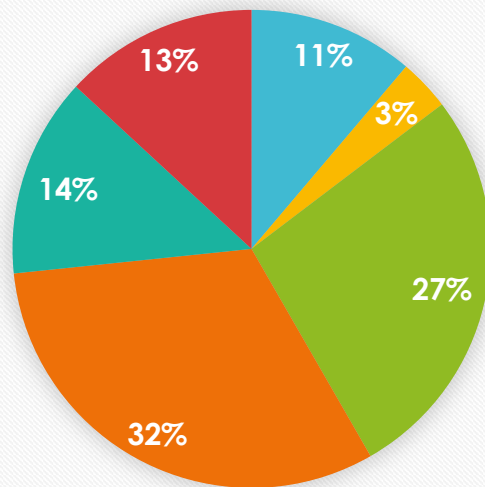
APPENDIX C: PATRON SURVEY FINDINGS

2022-2025 Strategic Plan Patron Survey

From 259 Patrons

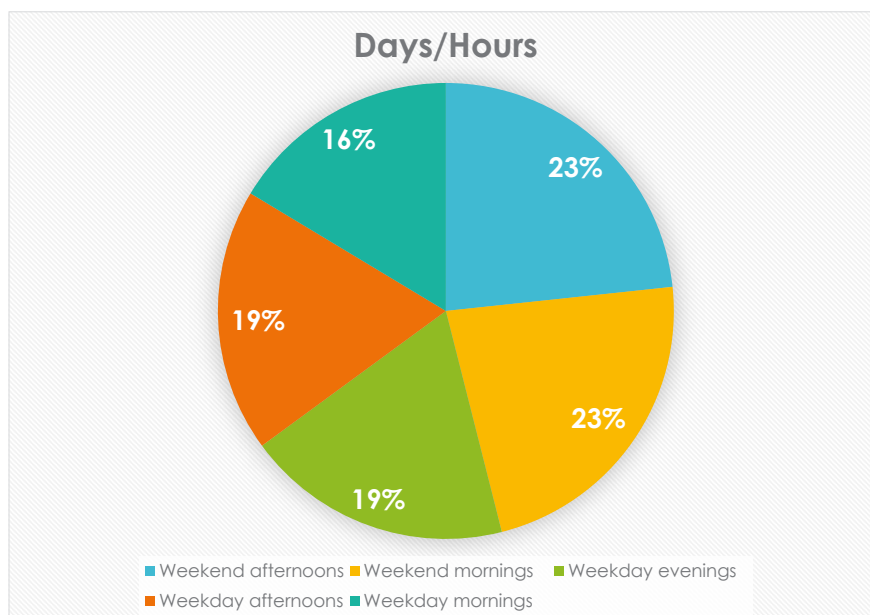
What is
your age
range?

Age Range of Patrons

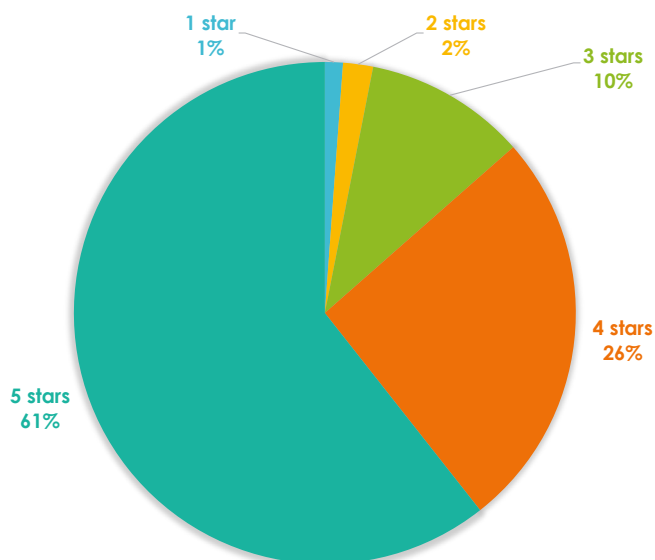


■ 18 and under ■ 19-29 ■ 30-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60+

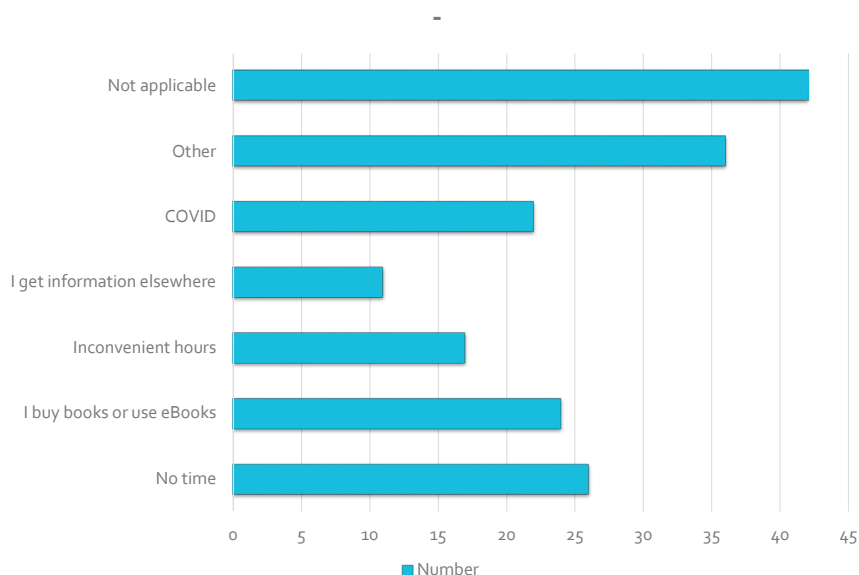
What are the best hours/days for you to run errands?



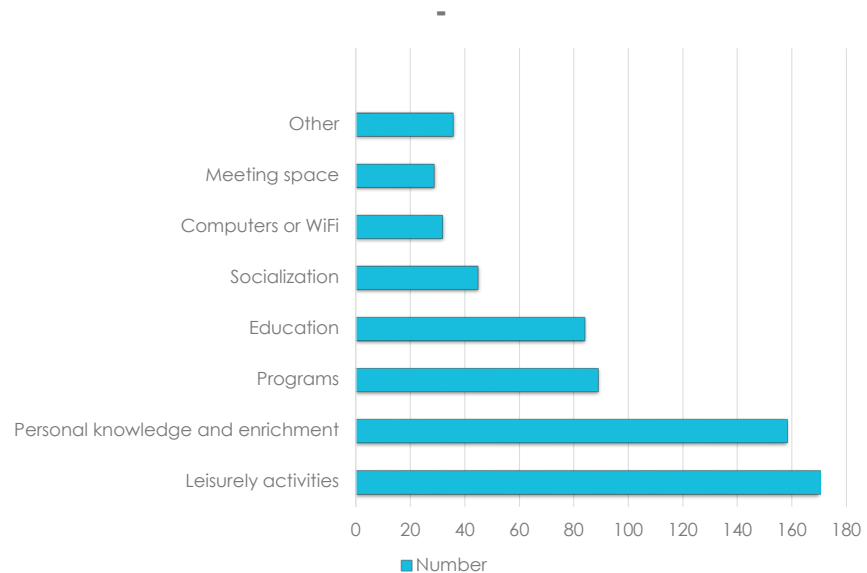
How would you rate our customer service?



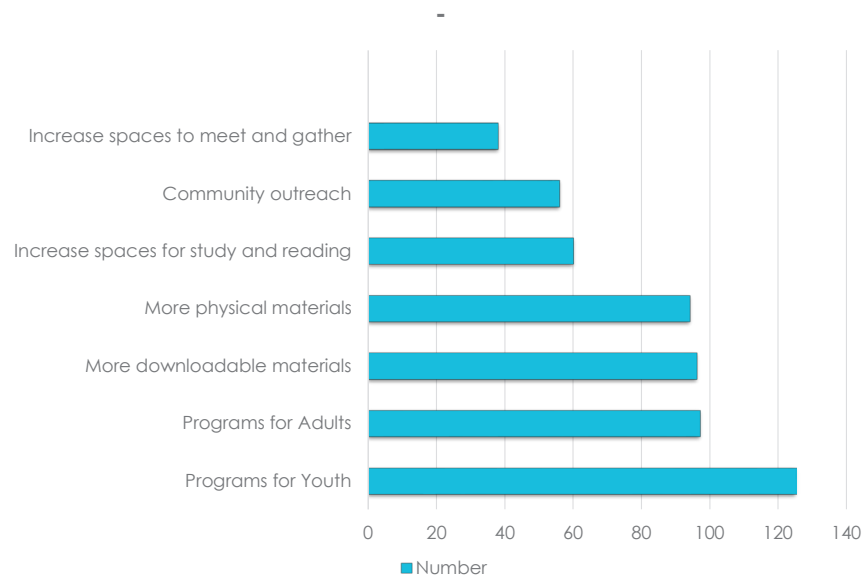
If you have not visited SCL in the last 2 years, why?



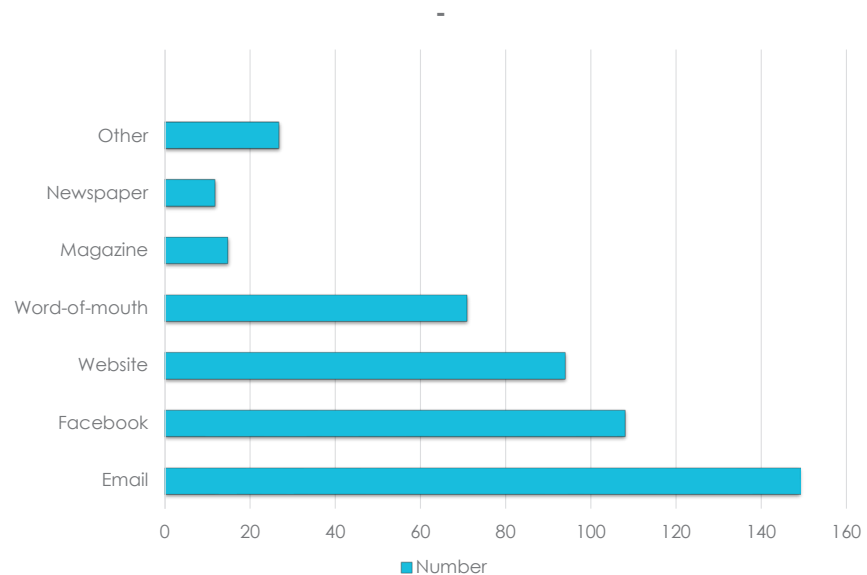
What role does SCL play in your life?



In the next 3 years, what would you like us to improve upon?



How do you hear about library happenings?



Positive Comments

"I'm so impressed with the library and all the creative things they offer for checkout! I love it all!"

"I love it all! You guys come up with better ideas than I ever would! So creative!"

"I always feel very welcomed when I visit. The staff know my face and which children are mine. They have always been very friendly. They say hello, ask how my day was, tell me what my sons have been participating in. You all do a wonderful job being welcoming and warm."

"I have loved your online presence during the pandemic. Keep that up!"

"I have no complaints at all. The library is amazing. So much better than the ones in our previous city."

"I wouldn't make any changes. I find it hard to feel welcomed and comfortable anywhere but since the first day, I felt like I belong and mattered in the library."

"I've been to many libraries (California, Florida, Texas) and Saline Library is one of the best. However I recall visiting a library in California with a nice outdoor playground for kids."

"The library system is already "inviting and friendly."

"I already feel it's very welcoming. Very friendly staff and comfortable atmosphere."



Bob Herzfeld Memorial Library

1800 Smithers Drive
Benton, AR 72015
(501) 778-4766

Mabel Boswell Memorial Library

201 Prickett Road
Bryant, AR 72022
(501) 847-2166



www.SalineCountyLibrary.org

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SALINE COUNTY LIBRARY
Rewrite tradition.