

# Sunstar Public Library

## Collection Needs Assessment

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LIS 6511 - Fall 2019



## Collection Needs Assessment: Sunstar Public Library

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Sunstar Public Library (SPL) is a simulated public library which serves the metropolitan area of Sunstar, FL. The SPL is located on Main Street, in Sunstar's small downtown region.

Sunstar is a mid-sized suburban city in Central Florida, approximately 50 miles west of Orlando. The city was founded in 1878, and its primary industry was citrus farming. In 1955, the Sunstar Paper Mill was constructed, and the city boomed; its population nearly doubling between the periods of 1940 and 1960. Families traveled across the state to work at the mill. However, due to the 2008 recession, the Sunstar Paper Mill permanently closed its doors, leaving hundreds of families in the area without work. Some of them fled to Orlando or Tampa, but some chose to or had to stay, and are still struggling to find steady work. Now, Sunstar's previously vibrant downtown thoroughfare consists of vacant lots and abandoned buildings.

The Sunstar Public Library was built in 1961, during the height of Sunstar's population boom. It is located in an 8,000 sq. foot building neighboring Sunstar City Hall. Library card applications are at an all-time low, while applications at other SCLS member libraries are subtly rising due to general population growth in Central Florida ("Florida's Changing Population," 2018).

Sunstar's previously vibrant downtown thoroughfare consists of vacant lots and abandoned buildings

As a public institution, the Sunstar Public Library is primarily funded through residents' property taxes, and is maintained through the City of Sunstar. Thus, many large-scale budget decisions are approved by the city council, and financial decisions must be carefully accounted for. The library has a small, but dedicated Friends group, which is made up primarily of long-time Sunstar residents, many of them retired teachers and librarians themselves. They hold monthly fundraising events, but their efforts are a negligible portion of the library's collection development budget. In addition, the Sunstar library receives a small amount of state and federal funding, which includes the grant that warranted this shift in the library's **collection.**



## Collection

There are approximately 20,000 titles on record. The average age of the collection is 30 years old. A small group of willing volunteers (Friends of SPL) are currently working at weeding out the materials with broken bindings and rubbed raw spines. The library has an extensive section catering to those interested in agriculture and manufacturing. Additionally, SPL houses a treasury of local historical documents, including audio cassette tapes of oral history projects featuring some of Sunstar's notable residents. The library subscribes to several periodicals and displays the newest issue in a multitiered shelving unit. Magazines range from AARP to Reader's Digest to People to Farm and Dairy. Daily print newspapers are also available for viewing. Currently, the library receives three: the Orlando Sentinel, the Miami Herald, and the Tampa Bay Times.

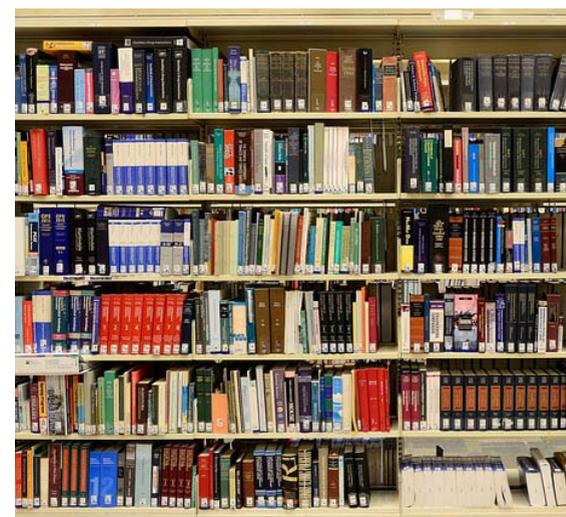
SPL has a room dedicated to storing and viewing microfilm and microfiche. Many of the local genealogy records are only available on microfilm. Due to Sunstar's more than 100 year history, this somewhat obsolete medium is still valued by the community. However, only one of the three microfilm viewing stations is currently operational. The Friends group has been tasked with the upkeep of these resources.

The most popular items in the library's collection are fiction novels. Many are titles from the New York Times Best Seller List. The adult fiction section of the library spans six 15 foot double-sided shelving units. All books are available in English with a standard font size. There are a few large print copies of classics such as: Gone With the Wind, The Great Gatsby, Frankenstein,

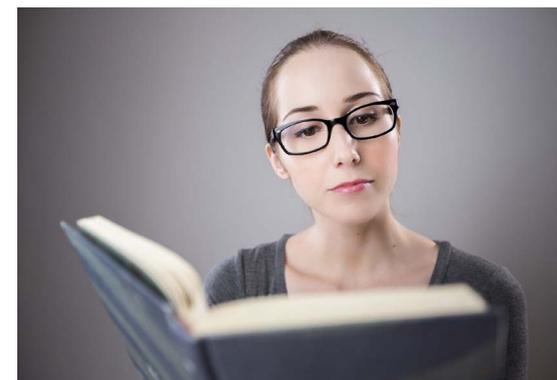
and To Kill a Mockingbird. Young adult and kids' fiction books are also popular items at the check-out station. Again, classics (Little Women, Hardy Boys, The Secret Garden, and The Wizard of Oz) are frequently seen in the arms of the older clientele.

Additionally, the library has an extensive selection of books by Florida authors and proudly features Patrick Smith's A Land Remembered in its original format as well as the graphic novel version. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Ernest Hemingway, Jimmy Buffet and even Lauren Groff are showcased.

Currently, gaps in the library's collection are being filled through interlibrary loans. While these options have made a difference, the staff at SPL has agreed it's certainly more cost-effective in the long run to shift the collection in order to reflect the changes in Sunstar's residents and their needs.



mill workers who came to the area in their 20s, during the period of time when the Sunstar Paper Mill was being constructed. Many of them live locally, within walking distance from Sunstar's downtown district. Weekly, there is a regular meeting of former mill employees who use the conference room to play Mahjong. The members share the responsibility of providing transportation, supplies, refreshments, and recruitment. Before and after the weekly Mahjong gaming session, some of the players browse the library's collection of novels, looking for new titles and old favorites.



However, a heightened cost of living in the Orlando metro area has been steadily pushing young people and families further from the city core, which has, in turn, brought some new life into Sunstar. In the last ten years alone, Sunstar's under-40 population has nearly doubled. This would be great news for the library, but the lower property tax rates in Sunstar means that the library receives inadequate funding to deal with the new influx of families expecting frequent children's programming and storytime. Many of the younger residents of Sunstar work either in hospitality, retail, or the medical field, representing a shift away from the city's agricultural and manufacturing roots.

There has also been an increase in demand for Spanish and ESL materials, due to an uptick in native Spanish-speakers in Sunstar. The few ESL materials Sunstar has to offer are worn ragged or lost, forcing patrons to either order the items from other libraries through interlibrary loan.

According to the most recent census data, the city of Sunstar has an unemployment rate of 9% of the available workforce. Over the last twelve month period, the percentage of available jobs has decreased. However, it has been projected that within the next ten years, the future job growth of this area will increase to nearly 30% ("Bushnell, FL Employment Data," 2018).

A nearby technical college hosts a monthly clinic using the small bank of computers, hoping to provide a global audience for their students and the community at large. Instructors guide participants through the process of filling out online applications and writing resumes. This service is offered free of charge for anyone age 18 or above.

Sunstar Public Schools and the Sunstar Public Library have a partnership allowing students and their families limited access to many of the library's services, meaning students in any of Sunstar's public schools have the option of getting a library card, without proof of residence. Additionally, various media specialists have planned visits to SPL to familiarize students with what the library has to offer. These partnerships serve as the first tentative steps towards change and revitalization for both SPL, and the city of Sunstar as a whole.

## Why a Needs Assessment and Why Now?

Public libraries have long been considered a cornerstone of the community they're in, particularly during revitalization efforts. That idea drives the changes slated for Sunstar's public library. According to Fulton: "Downtown libraries rank with retail and entertainment complexes as redevelopment anchors in cities like San Francisco, Seattle, Nashville, and Memphis. Ironically, many of the historic downtown libraries--originally situated outside the commercial core--are today well-positioned to anchor new development projects because downtown has expanded around them in the intervening decades" (1999). Modern public libraries are spaces to serve the community in a wide variety of ways: from providing free internet access to promoting childhood literacy. The City of Sunstar believes that making an investment in their city's library will pay off in a rise in property taxes, which in turn expands the library's purchasing power and brings more titles and services to their patrons.



With all this in mind, the city of Sunstar submitted an application for a state grant to renovate their older building and to update their outdated collection. They have recently received notice that their proposal has been approved. Mirroring the remodeling of the library building itself, the library's collection will also be undergoing changes to reflect the change in user needs, which is long overdue. Though Sunstar's population and demographics are rapidly shifting, and will continue to transform throughout the revitalization process, this needs assessment project speaks to the community's needs at this very moment, rather than planning for items that may be used in the distant future: what Biblarz, Bosch, & Sugnet call "just-in-time" solutions (2001).

*Modern public libraries are spaces to serve the community in a wide variety of ways: from providing free internet access to promoting childhood literacy*



## 2 METHODOLOGY

A variety of different strategies were employed to gather information about and from the community. The goals of this assessment include having a clear picture of the current demographics of the city, understanding its evolution, evaluating this change in relation to the usage of the library at the present time, and finally identifying what upgrades are required -either to the building or the collection- to better serve Sunstar's community, which finds itself in the middle of an economic and cultural transformation. This assessment is supported by qualitative and quantitative methods. The former allows to make generalizations by identifying patterns, while the latter provides insights to interpret the situation and highlights solutions.

In our qualitative approach, we pay attention to the context by reviewing the socio-economic structure of the city where the library is located. As we are using qualitative methods, our participation - and perception- on the research should be protected from biases. For that matter, this assessment uses a variety of methods, each one of them organized and planned independently by a different member of the team in an effort to avoid groupthink bias.

### 1.-Gathering Data

The first step is to gather data that helps identify past and current trends in library usage. As stated in the introduction, the city of Sunstar has a large senior population, but this percentage is rapidly decreasing due to the fact that young families, including immigrants, are moving into the area. For that reason, and in order to have the most accurate information, data is gathered from two sources: primary and secondary.

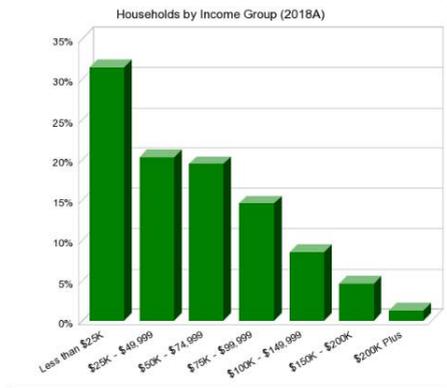
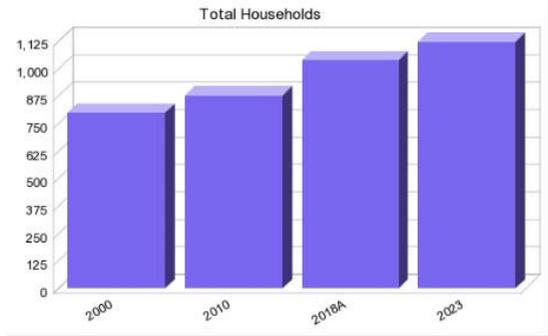
Chronologically, the first data collected for this assessment is secondary data. As Dudden (2007) suggests, it is more effective to start with secondary data because it takes less effort and it can be used to support primary data. The analysis of these results provide guidance on how to decide the best primary data we need to collect to better serve the patrons. Additionally, these secondary data sources are primarily quantitative, which affords us the opportunity to ground our more qualitative primary data (Goertzen, 2017). It should be noted that, since our library scenario is imagined, our quantitative data is roughly based on the town of Bushnell, FL.

**1.1-Secondary Data**

The following are the secondary data sources used to describe the community’s current conditions:

**1.1.1-Latest Census Information and Demographic Data**

According to the 2010 Census, Sunstar’s total recorded population was: 1,716 residents. The annual population estimated in that census for the year 2018 is: 2,313. In 2010, 592 families were reported from which 68.7% had children under 18 years. 7.8% families had children under 6 years of age. The 2010 Census also reported a gender distribution of 52.3% female and 47.7% male.



**1.1.2-Local Statistics Gathered by City Departments**

According to city officials, records show that in 2017, the city of Sunstar has a population distributed as follows:

**Distribution**

- 98% urban
- 2% rural
- 48.8% Males
- 51.2% Females
- Median resident age: 56.4 years
- Median household income: \$32,784
- Residents living in poverty: 25%

**Ethnicities**

- 23.4% White
- 62.0% Black
- 18.5% Hispanic
- 43.8 % American Indian

**Schools**

- 2 Public Elementary Schools
  - 245 children enrolled
- 2 Public Middle Schools
  - 195 students
- 1 Public High School
  - 305 students
  - Graduation Rate: 47%
- 1 Technical College
  - 215 students
  - Graduation Rate: 56%

**Internet Access**

According to city officials, 53% of the households have Internet access at home.

**Population Distribution by Education Level**

- High School Diploma: 58%
- College Graduate: 18%
- Beyond College: 5%

**1.1.3- Local Businesses Data**

As of 2016, data reported by the Sunstar Chamber of Commerce, business in Sunstar are distributed as follows:

- 8 Manufacturing
- 1 Wholesaler
- 37 Retail stores
- 10 Financial institutions
- 5 Real estate agencies
- 12 Professional/tech. services
- 3 Public administration offices
- 14 Healthcare/social assistance
- 2 Establishments:
  - for arts & recreation
- 12 Accommodation/food srvs
- 11 Other services
  - (except public administration)

**1.1.4- Previous Needs Assessment Performed by the Library**

The 2000 SPL circulation report states that 65% of the books were checked out by adults, fiction being the main request (78%). The children’s section represented 3% (120 titles) of the whole collection (3956 titles). There were 3 computers at the library at the time of the report. However, there is no data of their usage. The 2000 assessment didn’t include the number of SPL’s daily visitors.

**1.1.5- Previous Library Staff Surveys**

Librarians have requested, for the last 3 years, a budget distribution to improve and increase the children’s and young adult collection. The collection lacks a diverse and inclusive approach to reflect the variety of cultures and ethnicities that are now present in the city. Additionally, Sunstar is primarily a low-income/impooverished area. In their surveys, librarians mention the need to increase computer training programs to help members of the community improve their chances of getting new jobs, either by filling out online employment forms or as learning Microsoft Office software. Librarians also emphasize, for the past few years, a need for collaboration with social service agencies since the majority of the jobs currently available do not pay a living wage, forcing people onto government support programs like food stamps (SNAP), and WIC.

**1.1.6- Course Offerings at Local City College**

- Sunstar technical college currently offers the following programs:
- Associates:**
    - Associate of Science Business Administration
    - Associate of Science Emergency Medical Services
    - Associate of Science Nursing
    - Associate of Science Veterinary Technology
    - Associate of Science Paralegal

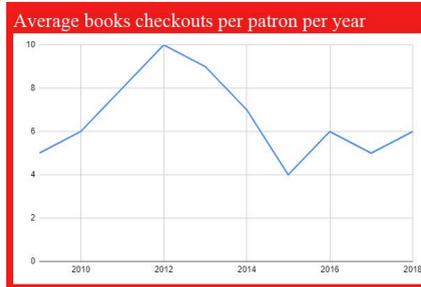
- Bachelors**
  - Bachelor of Science Business Management
  - Bachelor of Science Nursing

**1.1.7- Current Computers Usage by Patrons**

Currently there are 4 computers at the library in use daily with an average of 80 people per week requesting access. The computers are available for patron usage full-time, except when they need maintenance. WiFi is free at the library and some patrons come with their own mobile devices to perform online tasks.

**1.1.8- Current and Historic Library Circulation Statistics, Which Include Physical and Digital Items**

According to the data analyzed, there is a noticeable drop in the number of checkouts per year since 2012.

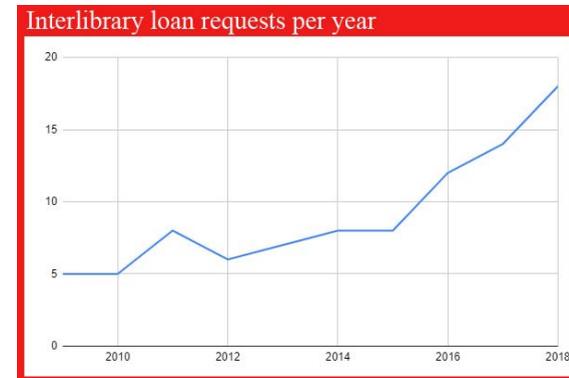
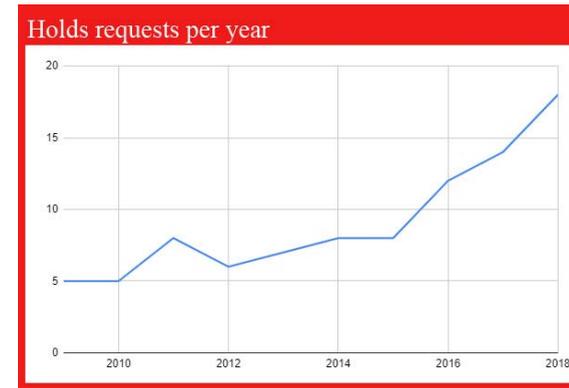


**1.1.9- Number of Users Entering the Library Daily**

Currently, there are 1857 library card holders which represent about 58% of the Sunstar population. The library doesn't have an efficient way to count the number of visitors. However, there have been few occasions, during 2018, in which volunteers gave flyers to patrons entering the library. Extrapolating the number of flyers and estimating the change in number of visits at certain hours, it has been possible to roughly calculate the number of patrons per day. According to that data, SPL visitors by year are estimated to be 1134.



**1.1.10- Holds and Interlibrary Loan Requests**



**1.1.11- Current Collection Distribution by Genre and Age Group**

The table below shows the current distribution of the collection items per genre as well as the percentage of checkout from the current collection.

Adult Fiction Books		Adult Non Fiction Books		Children and YA Books	
Distribution by genre	Checkout*	Distribution by genre	Checkout*	Distrib. by age group	Checkout*
Romance: 18%	43%	Politics: 15%	55%	Preschoolers: 50%	87%
Mystery: 35%	32%	Memoir: 25%	40%	Middle Schoolers: 20%	28%
Historic Novel: 8%	6%	History: 8%	35%	Young Adults: 30%	43%
Fantasy: 5%	25%	Biography: 10%	38%		
Adventure: 5%	15%	Science: 2%	20%		
Magical Realism: 1%	10%	Humanism: 1%	13%		
Science Fiction: 1%	18%	Travel: 1%	10%		
Short Stories: 4%	17%	Cooking: 10%	55%		
Graphic Novels: 2%	35%	Lit., Poetry, Drama: 2%	14%		
Novels: 10%	30%	Essays: 2%	5%		
Westerns: 12%	49%	Technology: 10%	47%		
		Business: 10%	68%		
		Health: 4%	62%		

\* Percentage of the books checkout within each genre



## 1.2-Primary Sources

Once all the secondary data is gathered and analyzed, it is time to continue with the primary sources. Collecting information from primary sources targets the following factors:

- ◆ Do the members of the community know the information services that the library currently offers?
- ◆ What are the collection needs that the library is not providing at the present time?
- ◆ What location improvements are necessary to encourage the use of the library collection?
- ◆ What additional materials could the library offer to promote an increase in both circulation and community engagement?
- ◆ What barriers are preventing the community from using library collection?
- ◆ Do the community members feel represented at the library?

### 1.2.1 Surveys

The surveys target different groups in order to obtain a broad range of answers, interests, and needs. It is important to have this full view to recognize the areas that need improvement, the ones that need marketing, and the ones that can be dropped. Online, mail, and in-situ surveys were utilized in an effort to obtain as representative a sample as possible (Biblarz, Bosch, & Sugnet, 2001). In the case of highschoolers, the surveys were distributed by their teachers during class. Consent forms were sent to their parents as well.

#### 1.2.1.1: Current and Potential/Low-Use Patrons

A survey for current library users was made available at the front desk and is offered to every person who checked out a book. It was also posted on the website for patrons to fill out online, with a notice about the survey posted on the library's computers. In addition, surveys were mailed to every household within the library's service area, including those of non-regular patrons or those who do not use the library very often, or at all. Surveys were offered in English and Spanish.

The survey included 14 multiple choice questions and 3 short-answer format.

This anonymous questionnaire was intended for every adult in a household. The adult filled out information for children, except highschoolers who were encouraged to fill it out themselves.

See sample online [Survey](#) in the Appendix

#### 1.2.1.2: Special Survey for Teachers in Local Schools

Teachers and librarians are natural partners, and Sunstar has a close relationship with the city's public schools. Many libraries are now beginning to fully embrace this change, tearing down the walls between public schools and public libraries. An excellent example of a recent partnership that Sunstar aspires to is Nashville's "Limitless Libraries" program (Peet, 2017). However, that partnership requires communication and understanding. Surveying teachers provided the opportunity to recognize children's information needs.

See data in the appendix.

#### 1.2.1.3: Survey for High School Students to be Delivered at School

In addition to the survey available in homeroom/advisory class, an online version of the survey was also available.

See appendix for details.



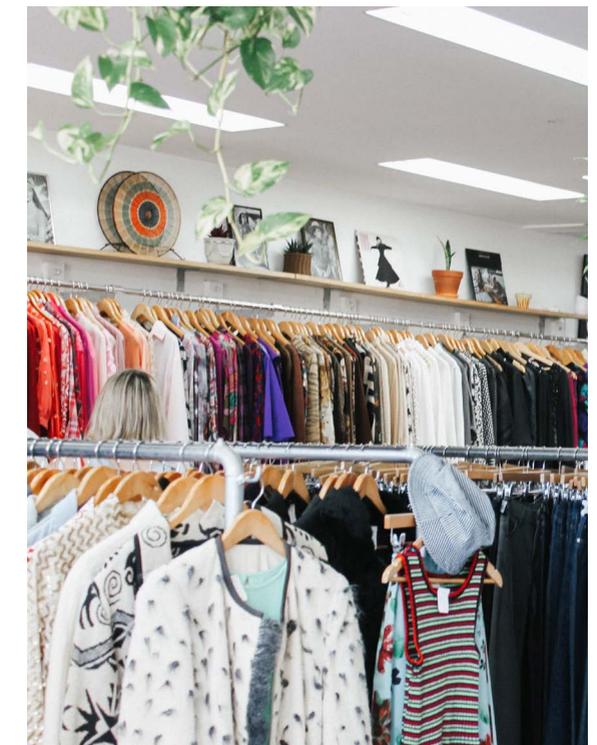
#### 1.2.1.4: Survey for Technical College

The partnership between the local technical college (Sunstar Tech) and the library introduces new users to the library through their monthly clinic, which teaches a variety of job training topics such as resume-building and interview skills. Assessing the students' usage of the clinic and whether it has expanded their overall library usage can help dictate what services can be offered to better serve this demographic, such as a course reserve. The surveys were available online through the college's website and will additionally be distributed during the clinic held at SPL.

See appendix for details

#### 1.2.1.5: Business Manager Surveys

Obtaining information from local businesses will inform what knowledge areas need to be reinforced by the library. It will also highlight what databases are needed in the community and the job training topics that the library could focus on when revitalizing the collection. This survey will also give us a brief look at the demographics of Sunstar's workforce, which is valuable when considering this workforce's information needs. As these business owners are typically very busy, we employed a variety of different distribution methods to ensure a representative sample: direct-mail surveys, phone surveys, and digital surveys sent through email (de Vaus, 2014).



### 1.2.3: Focus Groups

The strength of focus groups is that they allow fluid, real-time interaction with patrons, which helps target decisions (Walden, 2014). For some individuals, surveys may be considered time consuming and irrelevant. Nonetheless, they express the willingness of discussing with others their opinions and views. Three brief focus groups were conducted closed-doors, in a meeting room within the library. The duration was stipulated to be 30 minutes long. Each group included a different moderator, which is an individual outside the library. The volunteer moderators were: an HR manager from a local business, a school teacher, and a working professional. Groups included 1 teacher, 2 stay-at-home parents, 2 local workers, 1 city official, 1 local organization representative (e.g. a pastor) and 1 college student. There was also a high school age focus group, with high school teachers, counselors, and students in the group. We tried to phrase questions as Glitz (1998) suggests, making them effective for participants to answer directly.

#### Questions Group 1:

1. When you need to find information where do you go for an answer? Please tell us about the different options you may use.
2. Imagine you have never been at the library. What would you like to ask a librarian?
3. If you have previously been here, how do you move around. Tell us what you usually do when you are here
4. Have you visited our online catalog? Is it easy for you to use? Is there something you don't like?
5. When you look for books at the library -either here or online- do you usually find what you are looking for?
6. What is it that you read the most?

The same type of focus group was held for those who have not visited the library as well. Taking place in the same manner as the other focus groups, it was held in a high school class room, as was consensus among those in the groups. The moderators were one of the high school teachers, a social worker, and a local counselor. Groups included unemployed and underemployed people, homeless, and other underserved populations.

#### Questions Group 2:

1. When you need to find information where do you go for an answer? Please tell us about the different options you may use
2. Never having been to a library, what would you ask a librarian?
3. What are the barriers (if any) that prevent you from going to the library?
4. What are the main reasons you have not been to the library, assuming there are no barriers?

### 1.2.4 Interviews

The interviews were performed in person and over the phone. The purpose was to have a friendly conversation to discover informational needs that may not be clearly extracted from the surveys. Interviews were intended to be a plan for a longer term assessment. It will allow librarians to foresee future needs that might not be reflected in survey responses. All interviews were encouraged to be recorded for future review. Interviewers prepared a report of the main ideas suggested and discussed during the conversation. The basic questions included in the interview are listed below. However, as these were unstructured interviews, librarians had the opportunity to expand on a particular idea if they considered it appropriate for the needs assessment process.

The 8 people selected for interviews are:

- ◆ **One director of the community technical college**
- ◆ Three teachers from local schools. One elementary, One middle-school and one high-school teacher
- ◆ Two media center librarians from local schools
- ◆ One human resources manager from a local business
- ◆ One city official



### Main questions

- ◆ According to you and your target audience, what do you think are the most pressing information needs right now?
- ◆ What do you think the library should be offering in its collection?
- ◆ Do you consider the library as your partner? Why, or why not?
- ◆ What do you see in the future of our community?

### 1.2.5 Presentations and Panel Discussions at Schools and Local Groups

During this broad community forum, we prepared two presentations at the local YMCA, which were open to the public and advertised through local media. The first forum featured our library director, one school principal and one media center librarian as panelists for an open discussion about the information needs of the community. The second discussion panel was conformed by our library director, the president of the local Chamber of Commerce, and a city official to discuss the costs and value of the library, as well as where we need to focus when reviewing and improving our collection.

The purpose of these panel discussions was to give other groups the possibility to express their needs and concerns in regards to the library collection.

### 1.2.6 Direct Observations Inside the Library

Librarians were requested to keep notes and observations of the behavior of patrons at the library in regards to their search for information, using a Libwizard page for ease of use. We wanted this to be the least intrusive of the techniques, while making librarians more aware of the library's space and patron behavior.

This technique was used to gather details that may not be shared in interviews or surveys, but relevant when deciding on aspects of the collection. To ensure an appropriate amount of variety, this observational data was gathered on different days of the week and at different points throughout the day (Becker, 2012).

Staff were prompted to notice whether children stay in their area or if they prefer to go elsewhere in the library. Do adults prefer to browse the shelves or do they go directly from the catalog to the book and leave? What sections of the stacks get the most foot traffic? Do people prefer to read inside or do they enter, check out, and leave quickly?

These are some of the aspects that we hope librarians will notice and disclose in this assessment.

## 3 FINDINGS

Historic data shows a low percentage use of most of the collection genres. Additionally, the increasing number of interlibrary requests suggest that the collection needs an update. Sunstar Library collection is, on average, 30 years old and the arrival of newcomers and young families is pushing for new materials and topics.

### 1.2.1.1 Current Adult Library Users

Sunstar librarians collected 853 surveys -both online and offline- from adults in Sunstar households, which represents approximately 30% of the current city population. Those surveys provided a broad look of current status and needs from city patrons.

Summarizing, these are our findings:

- ◆ Current patrons visit the library an average of once a week and check out less up to 3 books per month. Children's books check-outs average is between 6-15 per month.
- ◆ 55% of the adult patrons come for checking out books, 25% to use the computers, 5% for WiFi and 15% for other services.
- ◆ The main language spoken in the households are distributed as:
  - ◆ 65% English, 25% Spanish, 9% Native American, 1% other language.
  - ◆ 35% of respondents admit not knowing about the digital collection. The number of patrons not accessing the digital collections -including the one that didn't know about it - is higher to 42%
- ◆ The main requests from the patrons is the need of Spanish books for adults. The children's section has a large number of languages other than English but not the adult section. Another request for patrons indicated the need of Native American history as well as local history.
- ◆ Although many people didn't answer the questions of gender and race, we can extract from the ones that this is a diverse population. Answers reflect a distribution of 10% Black, 15% White, 12% Latino/Hispanic, 8% Native Americans, and 5% indicated other ethnic group as well as 5% LGBTQA.

### 1.2.1.2 and 1.2.1.3 Survey for Teachers and High School Students

Local public school teachers and high school students were presented with the option of completing a paper survey at the school site or to have the privacy of their home while completing the survey online. Each survey recipient was given a unique user ID to keep from duplicating results. The response rate of the administered surveys for teachers and students respectively is 107 (82%) and 253 (83%). All responses are indicated as percentages.

The compiled and analyzed data shows the following notable insights: .

- ◆ Respondents are interested in enhancing the technology programs and access. In addition to the tallied responses, the open-ended responses show both teachers and students indicated an interest in coding, robotics, and STEM/STEAM activities.
  - ◆ 25% of students visit the public library to use the computers.
  - ◆ SPL has a deficit in materials for ELL users. 6% of teachers utilize these resources and have identified the lack of ELL material as a barrier to full access.
  - ◆ 70% of teachers promote the public library in their classes. However, 75% of high school students responded “Almost Never” as the number of times they visit the library at the school and SPL.
  - ◆ Student interest in fiction topics and genres such as graphic novels (85%), science fiction (65%), thrillers (85%), and horror (75%) is not matched with what is currently available for the patrons. 2% of the SPL collection consists of graphic novels with a check-out percentage at 85%.
  - ◆ The results allow some insight as to what teachers and students think will influence an increase in circulation for these target groups. The hi-lo books engage reluctant readers by tapping into high interest/age-appropriate subject matter at a lower reading level and is one viable suggestion for increasing circulation.
  - ◆ There is some level of satisfaction with what the location offers: appropriate climate control and lighting. Users are overwhelmingly not satisfied with the limited array of vending machines and refreshment options. Implementing a coffee shop style atmosphere is a current trend and meets the desires of flexible seating options, additional work space, and a facility to informally communicate a community notification system.
- (See Appendix for figures displaying data)

### 1.2.1.4 and 1.2.1.5 Survey for Technical College Partnership and Business Managers

This survey received responses from 78 students, some of whom took the survey online, but the majority of whom submitted the survey in-person, after the monthly clinic. We also included responses from 3 of the instructors from the technical college who facilitate the clinic. The surveys distributed to local business owners/managers incurred 32 responses, with a response rate of 41%. Most of the responses were from the surveys sent by direct mail (20 responses, or 62.5%), with the least responses coming from email (4 responses, or 12.5%).

Our data from the surveys distributed to both business owners and students at the technical college illustrates the following points:

- ◆ There is a strong preference (46.15% of all total responses) for nonfiction materials focusing on business, health/science, and technology.
- ◆ 90% of the students who attend the monthly clinic would like a course reserve provided for the classes. This means providing a small collection of business and textbooks on-hand for the courses taught in the clinic.
- ◆ There is a positive relationship between students attending the monthly clinic and their overall library usage. 74.5% of students feel they use the library more often after utilizing the job clinic services.
- ◆ There was not a large demand for ESL materials when asked about information needs for students’ future careers (8.3%). This may come down to the sample, however, since many of the clinic’s participants happen to be native English speakers.
- ◆ 60% of all students reported interest in small business materials and online small business databases such as ReferenceUSA and A-to-Z for their future careers. This is an important indicator of students’ future plans, and will be important in determining where to direct our attention to strengthen both this partnership and Sunstar’s economy.
- ◆ The majority of businesses that participated in the library’s survey were in retail (28%), followed by food service (22%) and food service (18.75%).
- ◆ Coinciding with the answers from students, the majority of business owners surveyed ranked materials focused on small business/entrepreneurial skills as the most useful library resources for their employees (25%), followed closely by online databases (18.75%).
- ◆ ESL materials also ranked highly with business managers, which reflects the rising rate of Spanish-speakers in Sunstar’s workforce.
- ◆ 45.6% of new hires are 25-30 years old, which coincides with recent population data.
- ◆ Most employees in the surveyed businesses have graduated high school, with some going on to the technical college for their Associates degree. However, roughly 22% of employees had only completed K-8th grade, without high school diplomas. This is illustrative of the educational level of the workforce, and thus, their information needs.
- ◆ 41% of employers surveyed used job sites such as Indeed and Monster to accept job applications.

See Appendix for figures displaying data

### 1.2.3: Focus Groups

Regarding the three focus groups held, there were some consensus in answers among the three adult groups for certain questions. For the second question regarding what one would ask a librarian if they had never been to a library, the local workers and stay-at-home parents stated that they would first ask what services were offered, as well as what genres of books. They also asked what newspapers were carried and then asked how they could go about obtaining a library card. The teacher(s) and college student(s) asked what academic journals were offered, as well as what online collections are available regarding those journals and also e-books. The city official and local organization representatives said that they would ask if the library carries a collections on state histories as well as authors living in the state.

Regarding where they go when they need to find information, answers varied depending on what they do for a living. The city official(s) stated that they utilize their support staff when looking for answers. When asked, they stated that they are not sure what steps the support staff takes to answer those questions, other than using an internet search engine. The teachers and college students stated that they would first turn to their respective school's library, then utilize their local public library if the answer could not be found otherwise. The local workers stated that they ask their peers questions they have and if that does not work, they go to the local public library and utilize their services. For local organization representatives, their answers depended upon their position. The pastor stated they would first turn to their Bible for answers first, then would use secular newspapers, books, and magazines to answer their questions. The union leader said they would utilize their support staff to answer information questions they may have, and indicated that their support staff uses archived newspapers and microfiche when available for research. The youth baseball coach also uses archived newspapers and microfiche. The stay-at-home parents stated they mainly utilize internet search engines on their mobile phones, as they did not have the privilege of regular mobility. Those in the groups who had recently been to the library stated that when they come, they first browse for new titles if they are there for leisure and head straight for the non-fiction, biographies, and periodicals when looking for specific information. The stay-at-home parents stated that depending on the day of the week, they go to the children's section for story time and often check out books from that section.

All of the members of the three groups said that they had used the library's online catalog before. The students, teachers, and stay-at-home parents found it easy to use, as they had gotten to know the workings of the catalog from frequent use. The rest in the groups stated that they were aware of it, but did not know how to navigate it. They stated that sometimes they had to take roundabout ways to find the information in the online catalog that they were looking for instead of having subsections in the drop-down menu. All members of the three groups also stated that they had no problems finding what they were looking for, although the baseball coach stated that there is one newspaper of a nearby city that they needed which was not located at the library. Those who utilized the microfiche also lamented the fact that only one of the three stations is in use.

Regarding reading habits, the stay-at-home parents said that they read mostly periodicals and children's books. The organizational representatives used the periodicals (mainly newspapers with specialty magazines being a close second), as did the local official(s). The local workers read mostly fiction for leisure and how-to books to save on home improvements, fix vehicles, and care for their companion animals. Some interviewed used the large print fiction section as well as the large print non-fiction section. The teacher(s) and student(s) also mainly read fiction for leisure.

In the high school student group, participants stated that they used an internet search engine on their devices and/or used their local library when seeking answers and information. The public library is a secondary plan for them if their respective school library does not have the answers they are looking for. Some mentioned that for school assignments pertaining to history, they were likely to use the public library's local history section and/or their non-fiction section, as they have larger collections on these topics than their respective school library does. Consensus of question asked that if one was imagining they had never been to the public library before, what they would ask were two main questions: "What books do you have on [insert school assignment here]? Do you have books by [insert YA author here]?"

Students stated that when they come to the library, they mainly stay in the teen commons area, taking books they need for school assignments or leisure reading there. Almost none of the students were aware of the online catalog and were pleasantly surprised to learn of its existence. They agreed that using this service would be helpful for them regarding book and journal collections. About two thirds of the students asked said that they found what they were looking for at the library. The others who said they could not stated it was because what they were looking for was either too esoteric or not requested enough to be carried at the library. The students reported that what they read at the library was made up of essentially three genres: Anime, college prep manuals, and history books. Some of the questions asked in the focus groups were not applicable to the group of people who had never been to the library. Each group consisted of a non-traditional college student, two immigrants of differing ethnicities, two houseless people, one Indigenous and one Black person, and a trans person. Most were at a loss or did not know where to go for information on questions that they had, or did not have the means or peers to answer them if asked. The non-traditional college student said that recently they had been using their community college's library, but before that did not know. Social service agencies were also used by a majority of people as a source of finding information. In addition to asking what kinds of books and collections were available, the predominant questions they wanted to ask a librarian focused around how to obtain a library card. The trans person asked about getting one with their preferred name instead of their dead/birth name, the houseless people asked how they could get one without having a proof of address. A couple of the immigrants confided that they were undocumented, and could not get proper identification. When asked what they read the most, the majority response was periodicals and fiction books. Some reported that they did not read regularly and two stated that they were illiterate.

### 1.2.4 Interviews

Regarding the first question concerning target audience and pressing information needs, the human resources manager and the city official felt that it was important that people are informed about local issues and continuing education opportunities, as it makes them more informed citizens politically and professionally, enhancing their quality of life. All but two of the school librarians felt that a revamped online periodicals database offerings were very much needed; the elementary for magazines, middle and high school more academic-oriented articles, the community technical college for specialty periodicals related to each field offered. The media center librarians expressed a need for more documentaries, specifically of repressed histories. All of the school librarians and director felt that their course books and materials should be on reserve at the library, in case they could not afford books or the children's books (for example) read in class had been checked out of the school library. The human resources manager expressed a need for works that promote cultural awareness and the city official said that along with a local history collection would be beneficial.

The community technical college director did not feel that the library was in partnership with the college, but did mention that if the library were to add a course reserve to its collection, that would change. The city official emphatically felt that the library was a partner for them, as libraries and city officials often have good working relationships. The three K-12 teachers saw a partnership, but only with the library as a bridge between school years, offering collections that students cannot check out during the summer. The high school librarian did add that that public library did have a partnership with them as far as college prep collections. The human resource manager did not see a partnership, wondering what collections the library offered that would dovetail with human resource's needs. The media center librarians did not see a partnership, lamenting the public library's lack of contemporary media collections. All of them expressed a vision of a future of a well-informed community, both in general and in specific local matters. The human resources manager and city official felt this would lead to a better quality of life for their peers. The school librarians saw it as their job to show their students how to seek knowledge in a variety of forms and how to think critically, contributing to the successful future of their students and thus the community.



### 1.2.5 Panel Discussions

The purpose of the panel discussions was to perform thematic analysis. By keeping them as a flowing conversation, we allowed different groups to express their needs and concerns. The meetings were audio recorded and main points were gathered summarizing the events.

They include the following:

1. The need for a more diversified collection that provides materials in other languages and from other cultures. The library was seen by patrons to portray mainly a White Protestant Western culture and that there is little representation of other views. This applies to books and other media like DVDs and Audiobooks.
2. Patrons request materials and services to help them to be more competent in the use of computers and software
3. New innovative books for management and leadership
4. Young adults don't see themselves identified with the library in their current state. There is no connection between what they need for school and the collection
5. The online access to the catalog was seen as useful and easy to use. Although seniors and young adults prefer to come to the library than reading online material at home
6. Patrons are satisfied with the list of best sellers offered at the library



### 1.2.6 Direct Observations Inside the Library

In regards to direct observations inside the library, our findings suggest that children prefer to stay together close to the children computer area. They talk and share books constantly. They also like browsing the shelves, especially those decorated with drawings and other artifacts. However, librarians noticed that all the books strategically located on tables and lower shelves got the most attention and were checked frequently. Librarians think that having books piled on a table with accompanying materials get the most actions among kids. Even topics that are not checked out frequently or are in a different language, they go out after they are placed on a table. It seems enticing to children to grab books that others have been curious. These observations apply similarly to young adults, who were evasive to librarians' book suggestions, but were prone to grab books placed in corners that also display posters and poems on the walls. Children and young adults interact enthusiastically between themselves which makes the afternoons (after school) the most active hours. Our main suggestion is to reconsider the area for minors with shelves having open spaces and showing some of the book covers. More tables and additional artifacts like posters, art pieces, and toys are enticing if rotated frequently. Instead of chairs, less informal seating arrangements, like bean bags could help get kids to spend more time at the library.

As for the adults, librarians report that some don't browse on the shelves, except for the new arrivals display, which is the most active area. Usually they sit on the computer catalog or request information to the reference librarian for selecting books.

Seniors and children remain at the library the longest time. Middle aged population, on the other hand, usually pick up materials and leave almost immediately. Considering the latter, is necessary to devise ways to promote new items outside the library, online and offline, to make it easy for working adults to find new items in the collection quickly. The population between 25 and 60 years old are looking not only for best sellers and latest novels. They are interested in the latest political and management books which can be seen for the long hold lists. Increasing the availability of these two topics and promoting them outside the library could, according to the local librarians, increase engagement and library visit frequency.

### 1.2.7 Key Informants

As previously stated, the library assistants were used as key informants to supplement the direct interviews with librarians. They reported that during the day, the library was mostly used by the paper mill retirees, houseless people, and adults utilizing GED preparatory materials. There was an influx of parents and before school aged children in the late mornings on story days. Those who checked out books checked out mostly large print fiction, mystery, and children's books. During the after school time, teens comprised the majority of patrons at the library and checked out anime and reference materials. The evenings were mostly filled with working class people who worked during the day. They mostly checked out children's books in Spanish, adult non-fiction Spanish language works, fiction, and reference materials. On Saturdays, working parents with school aged children and working class people comprised the majority of library patrons. The collections checked out by them are previously stated. The library assistants reported that those who took the most surveys were parents that had brought their children to story time and the retirees.

Teachers and media center librarians also collected information from students and colleagues and delivered them to the library for their analysis.

Business owners provided input of their environment and the main needs for their employees

City officials offer statistical data to support new ideas in regards to collection development. In short, this needs assessment study analyzed information from the businesses, educators, students, local government, and librarians, as well as small groups to obtain the inclusive conclusions to make the library a place for everybody

# 4 NEXT STEPS

The shifts in the population mirror the needed shifts in the library's collection and physical space so that the Sunstar Public Library serves as the hub of the community. To satisfy and improve the information needs and interests of current users, SPL must become more relevant and up to date. To enrich the Sunstar Public Library, increase visitors, and circulation, our findings suggest the following:

- ◆ Promote awareness of resources and services provided.
- ◆ Develop a cost effective partnership with the public schools and available volunteer groups to provide frequent and enticing programming: story time, high interest workshops/clinics, networking opportunities, multicultural materials, and events to foster familiarity with SPL.
- ◆ Plan, in conjunction with school teachers, for materials that support school needs, especially in STEAM areas
- ◆ Increase access to technology: computers, tablets, online databases, and digital collection materials.
- ◆ Create tutorials in different formats and languages
- ◆ Renovate and repurpose usable space to increase visitors and patron usage as well as to enhance the overall SPL experience.
- ◆ Update the library's collection to meet the needs of the community. This update must be more inclusive of cultures and identities.
- ◆ There should be a clear path to guarantee a continuous effort to renovate the collection in regards to technology and business management

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# 6 MEMBER CONTRIBUTION

This part has been deleted for privacy purposes

# 7 APPENDIX

## Part A: Sample Surveys 1.2.1.1: Current and Potential Patrons

### Patrons Survey

We are in the process of updating our collection. Thanks for taking the time in answering this questionnaire. We assure you the information is completely confidential. You can bring it to the library and leave it in the comments box at the entrance. All questions are optional. However, the more answers Sunstar Library gets, the better it will serve you. This questionnaire is intended for every adult member of your household. Highschoolers are encouraged to fill out the survey they receive at school.

1. How many times per month do you visit the library?

- Mark only one oval.
- Never
  - less than 5 times
  - 5 to 10 times
  - More than 10 times

2. What is the main reason for you to visit the library?

- Mark only one oval.
- Checkout materials
  - Use Computer
  - WiFi Access
  - Other Services

3. What language is mainly spoken at home?

- Mark only one oval.
- English
  - Spanish
  - Native American
  - Asian Language
  - Other

4. In average, how many books per month do you check out from the library?

- Mark only one oval.
- Less than 3
  - 4 to 10
  - More than 10

5. Are there children less than 13 years old in your household?

- Mark only one oval.
- Yes
  - No

6. In average how many children books are checked out per month in your household?

- Mark only one oval.
- 0-5
  - 6-15
  - More than 15

7. What are your favorite books to read?

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8. Are you familiar with our digital collection?

- Mark only one oval.
- Yes
  - No

9. Have you accessed our digital collections through the website?

- Mark only one oval.
- Yes
  - No

10. If yes, where do you access the digital media?

- Mark only one oval.
- Home
  - Work
  - Library
  - Other

11. How many digital audiobooks/eBooks do you download per month?

- Mark only one oval.
- Less than 3
  - 4 to 10
  - More than 10

12. Do you know about other media materials offered at the library?

- Mark only one oval.
- yes
  - No

13. Do you know we can place holds for you from other libraries?

- Mark only one oval.
- Yes
  - No

14. What materials would you like the library to offer that it does not currently provide?

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15. Are there any barriers that prevent you from using the library, such as transportation, lack of representation of your demographic, language, or other reason(s)?

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16. What is your ethnicity/race?

- Mark only one oval.
- Black
  - White
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - Asian
  - Other
  - Prefer not to answer

17. How do you identify yourself?

- Mark only one oval.
- Female
  - Male
  - LGBTQIA
  - Prefer not to answer

**Teachers Survey**

Teachers: What are the main subjects that you think the public library should focus on?

- More events
- Information about learning a trade
- Coding
- Etiquette
- Information technology
- Budgeting
- Local history

Teachers: Which particular authors and books would your students like to see at the library?

- The Fault in Our Stars (John Green)
- The Hate U Give (Angie Thomas)
- Looking for Alaska (Peter Jenkins)
- 13 Reasons Why (Jay Asher)

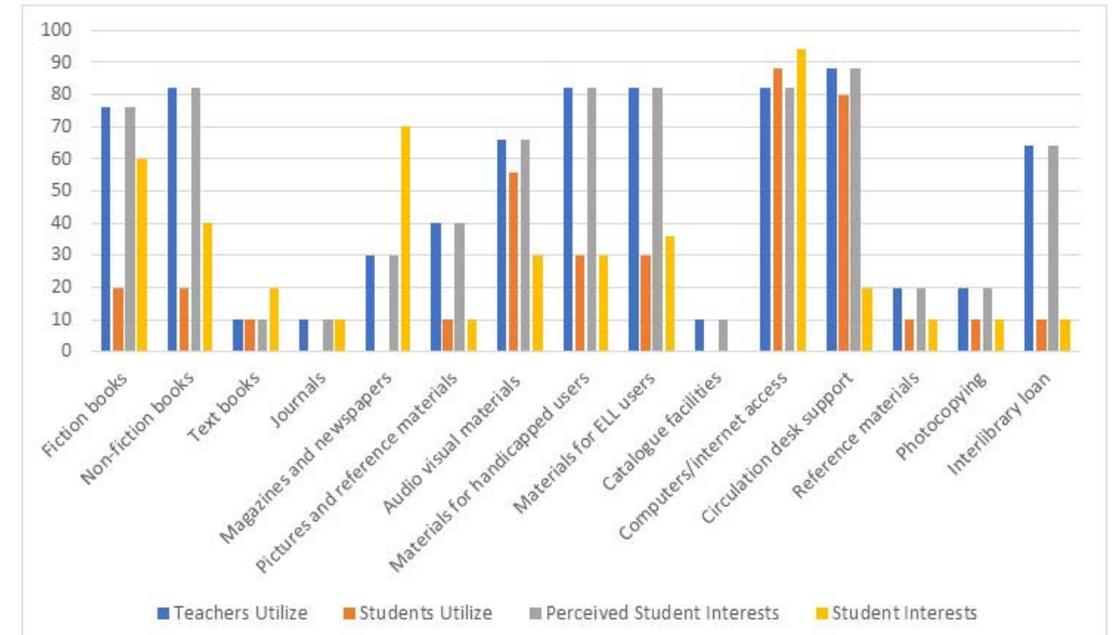
Teachers: Which after school activity do you think will help the academic performance of children at school?

- Test prep
- Tutoring
- Social/Emotional Learning
- Quilting
- Book Clubs
- Coding
- Robotics
- STEM and STEAM

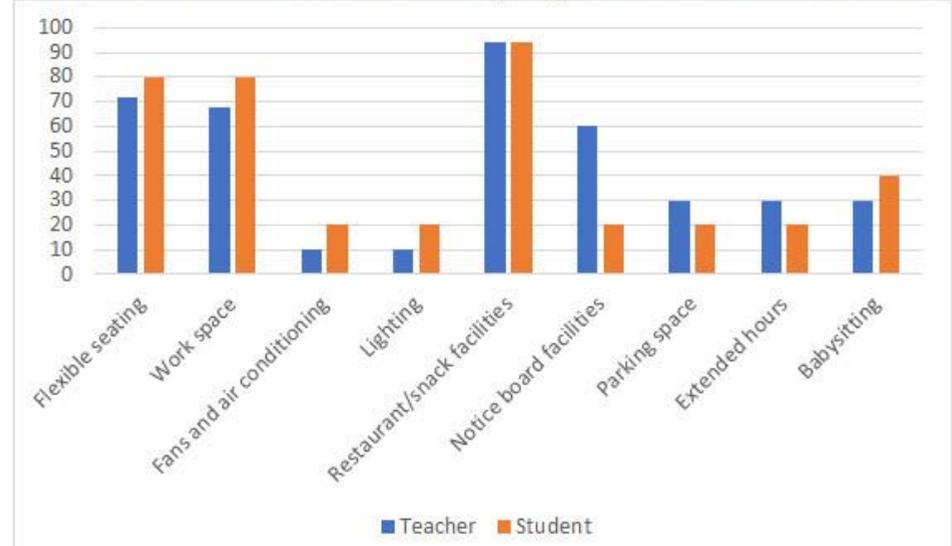
**Data and Graphs - Students and teachers surveys results**

**Teacher and High School Student Survey Findings**

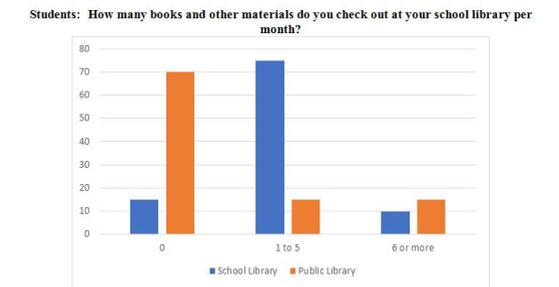
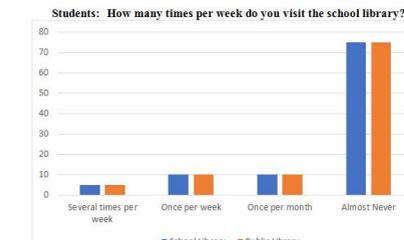
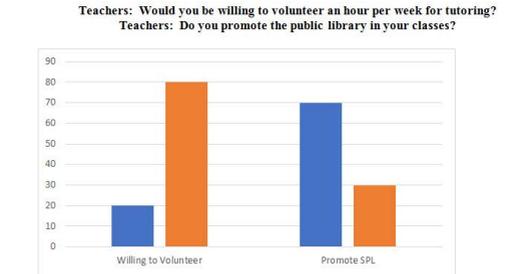
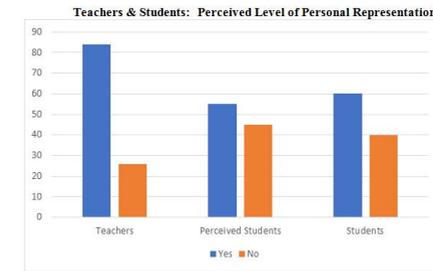
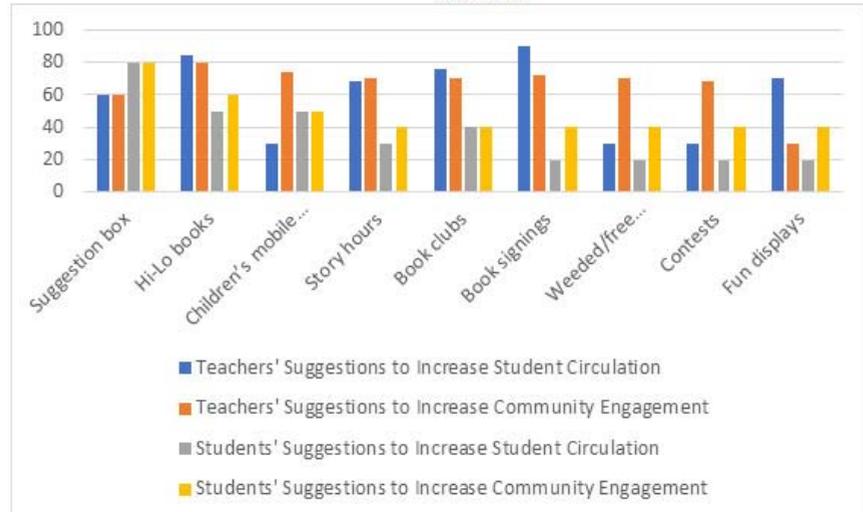
**Teachers & Students: Level of Utilization of Information Services from SPL for Lesson/Project Planning and Completion**



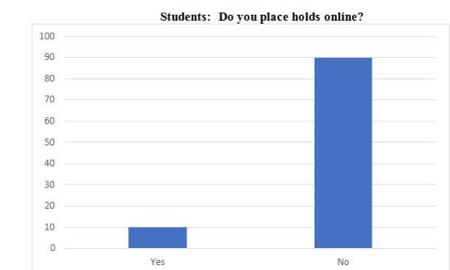
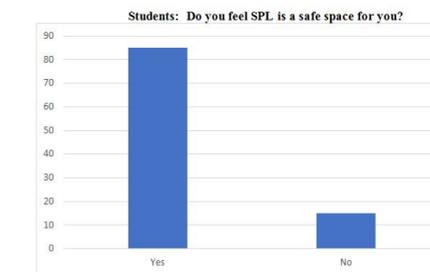
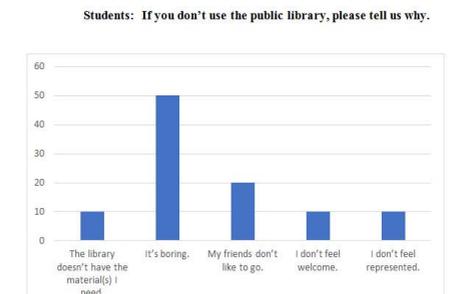
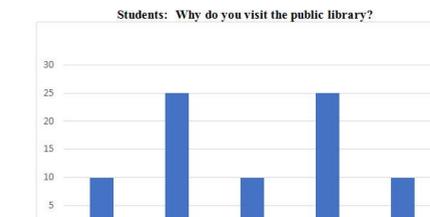
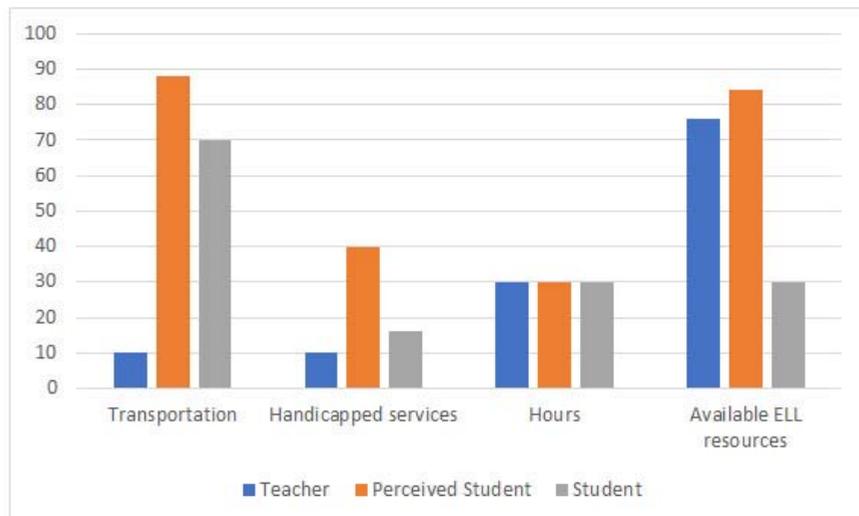
**Teachers & Students: Desired Necessary Improvements to the Current SPL Location**



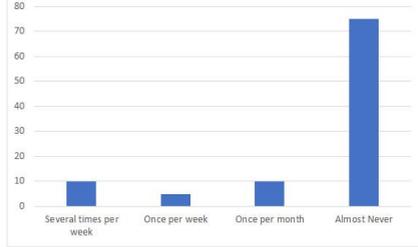
**Teachers & Students: Suggested Additional Materials to Promote Increased Circulation by Students**



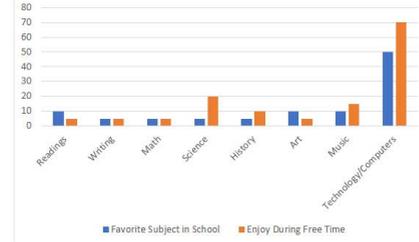
**Teachers & Students: Barriers are preventing full access to the library services?**



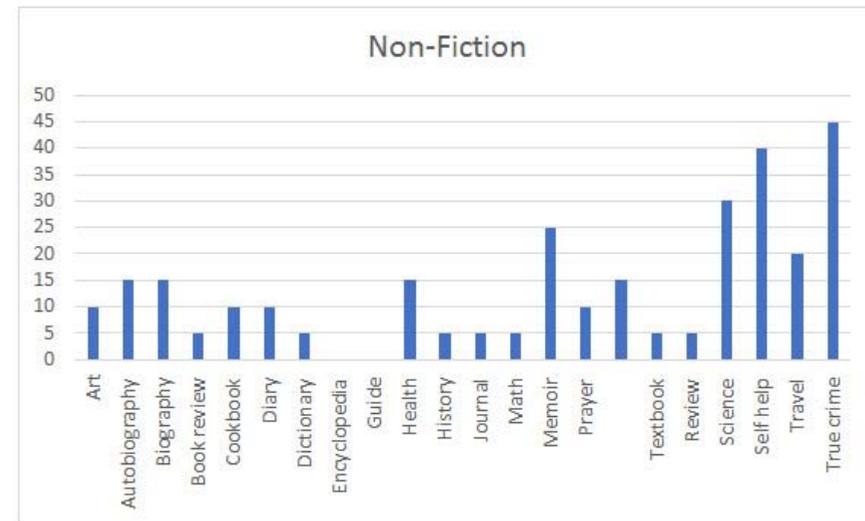
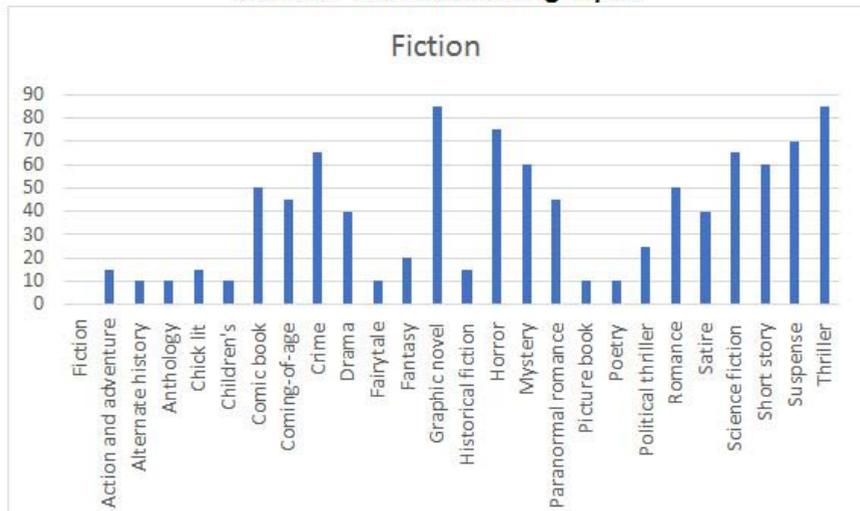
Students: How often do you check out digital audiobooks or eBooks through SPL?



Students: What is your favorite subject in school?

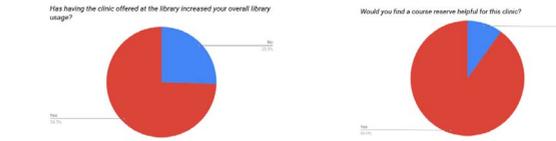


Students: Favorite Reading Topics



### Clinic Participation

Figure 1.2.1.4a: Clinic Participation and Library Usage



What genres of nonfiction books would you be most interested in checking out from the library? Check all that apply.

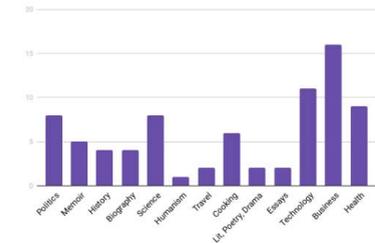
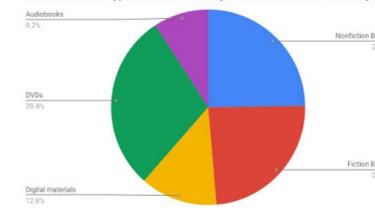
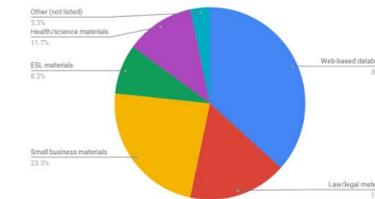


Figure 1.2.1.4.c: Material Types Checked Out by Students

If so, what other types of materials do you check out from the library?

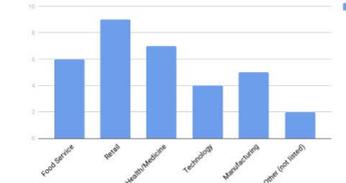


What other library materials would be useful to you in your new career?

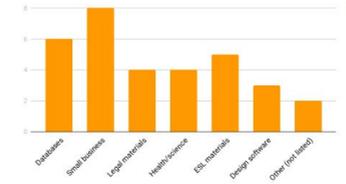


### Businesses Survey

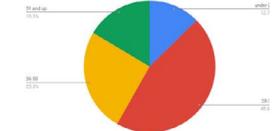
What industry does your business belong to?



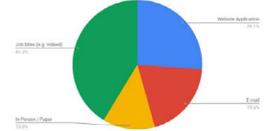
Would you find the following resources useful for your business and/or employees?



What is the average age of new hires?



How are you currently receiving employment applications?



What special knowledge or skills do your employees need to work for your organization?

