

Wheaton Public Library

2022 Community Survey Report

May 23 – June 30, 2022

Responses were collected via the Wheaton Public Library website and in printed form. 723 total responses were collected. 715 responses were collected online and 8 were collected in print.

Patrons were offered an opportunity to participate in a drawing for one of 4 \$25 gift certificates to the Downtown Wheaton Association.

Comments included in the report are included verbatim except for minor spelling and grammar fixes. Some comments are an excerpt of a longer response, and some comments may be duplicated if they fit into multiple categories.

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Library Use

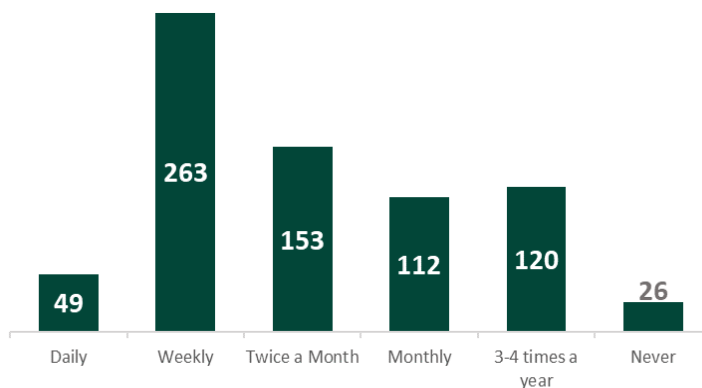
Visitors

- 43% (312) visit the library daily or weekly
- 4% (26) never visit

Covid-19 stopped many people from visiting more frequently. 26 respondents mentioned the pandemic specifically as a reason why they have not been coming, or what we can do to encourage them to visit more often.

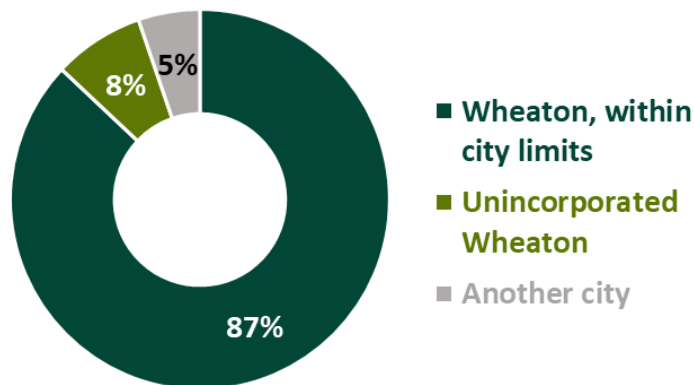
- *I might come more often after COVID is resolved.*
- *Will come more now that Covid restrictions are done.*
- *Permanently enforce pandemic protocol; provide shelves and hooks in bathrooms for purses, coats, books while hand washing.*
- *Usually come more, reduction is due to being high risk for COVID complications*
- *I'm not sure if the library requires masks. I'd feel much safer, especially at times when positivity rate is climbing, if masks were required. Since I haven't been there in person for so long, I'm not sure of the current policy.*
- *We are coming more frequently - COVID stopped us from coming*

In-Person OR Online visits in the Last Year



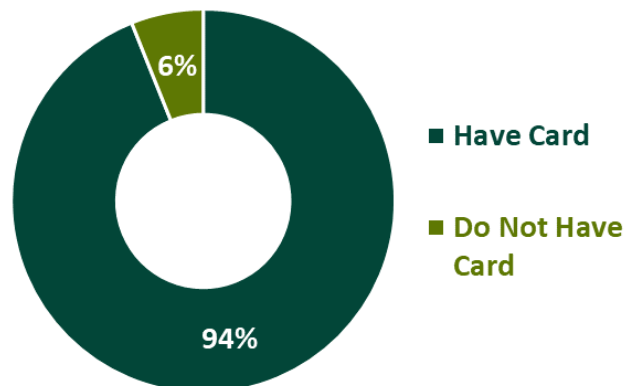
Residency

- 629 respondents live within Wheaton city limits
- 56 live in unincorporated Wheaton
- 38 live in another city



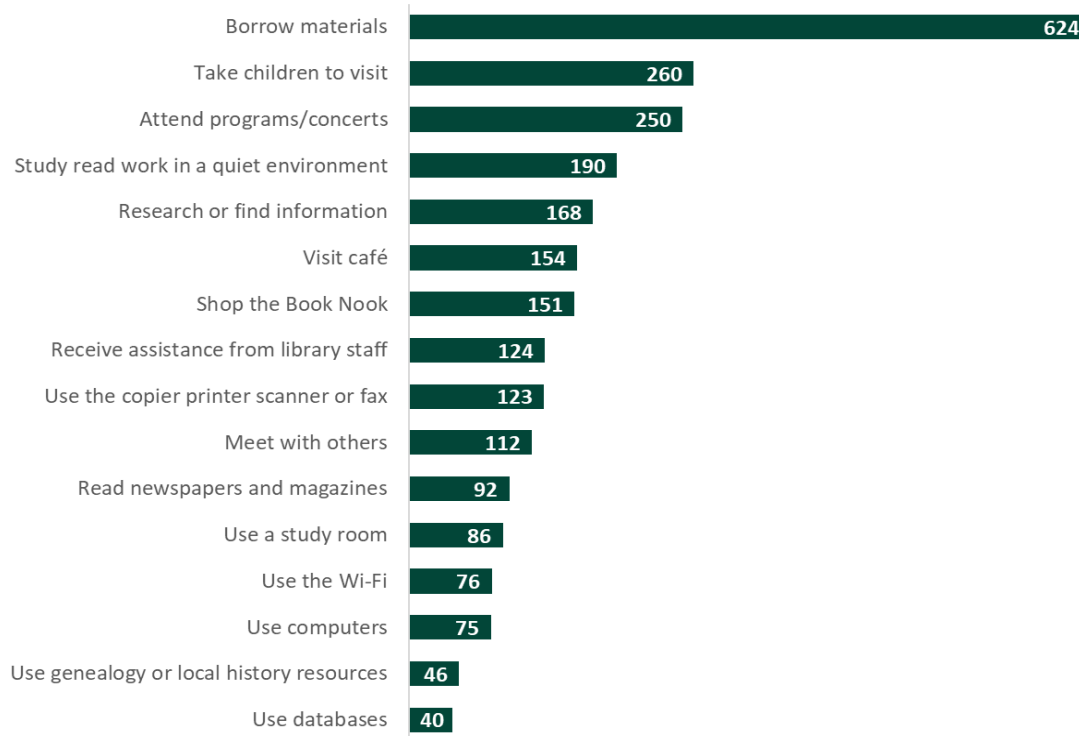
Cardholders

- 679 respondents have a library card.
- 44 do not have a library card
 - 10 Wheaton residents
 - 25 Unincorporated Wheaton residents
 - 9 residents of another city



Visiting the Library

Reasons for Visiting the Library IN-PERSON [Check all that apply]



Open-Ended Question Response (Q2): What can we do to encourage you to use the library more often?

Borrow Materials:

- *Have more copies of new releases so I can get my hands on them faster.*
- *You are doing great! If you do not have something, I usually can get it through LINKin.*
- *We like to read books. Hence, continue the purchase of books. We also have used the CD's, tech equipment (DJ is great for information), magazines, and DVD's.*
- *Continue to get good books/requests for patrons.*
- *Purchase current movies, music CDs and books. There has been a HUGE decrease in the availability of NEW materials at the WPL. I am having to rely on interlibrary loan in order to read more current materials. Often, the new materials is not available for interlibrary loan until a year after release. It's disappointing.*
- *Larger selection of books. More copies of popular books. Better kids books.*
- *Offer more in the areas of movies and audio books*

Take Children to Visit:

- *...Improved children's area and programming. We have three children (ages 8, 5, and 1) and, though we still use the children's area frequently, we feel that it needs a makeover. We would love to see the library invest in a complete remaking of the children's area, like other libraries in the area....*
- *Provide more programming for toddlers on weekends*
- *Continue offering family programs. We love them!*
- *More interactive things for kids*

- *My daughter really liked the story time stations that were available all day. We don't have time to go to story-times during the day and usually go to the library in the evening, so having the stations up with crafts all day let her participate.*
- *More inviting kids space. I appreciate the toys being bought back but I think the lights, decor could be more fresh and inviting. That would make a huge difference.*
- *Never bring back the masks again and put back all of the early childhood playthings.*

Attend Programs or Concerts

- *Have more adult programs. Examples: Cleaning the house-organizing tips, Holiday tips, gift wrapping, art classes, taking photos, cooking vegan and healthy cooking.*
- *Additional children events in the early evening times!*
- *More programming for adults (not just elderly adults or parents of small children). I enjoy history, social issues, & experts on the arts. For example, my favorite past presentations were the underground railroad and a lecture on Picasso.*
- *I would love to have more in-person discussions and webinars. I went to one for the Nature Conservation Foundation and I would definitely go again.*
- *Keep scheduling evening programs for adults. I enjoy the cooking, gardening, history, radio shows.*
- *More DEI programs, more online trivia*
- *Offer more things for seniors*
- *Host more relevant AND interactive discussions. EX: Alzheimer's, simple/low cost home security ideas, yoga in the park, how to age in your home. Use short videos or power points - 5 minutes or less followed by a discussion.*

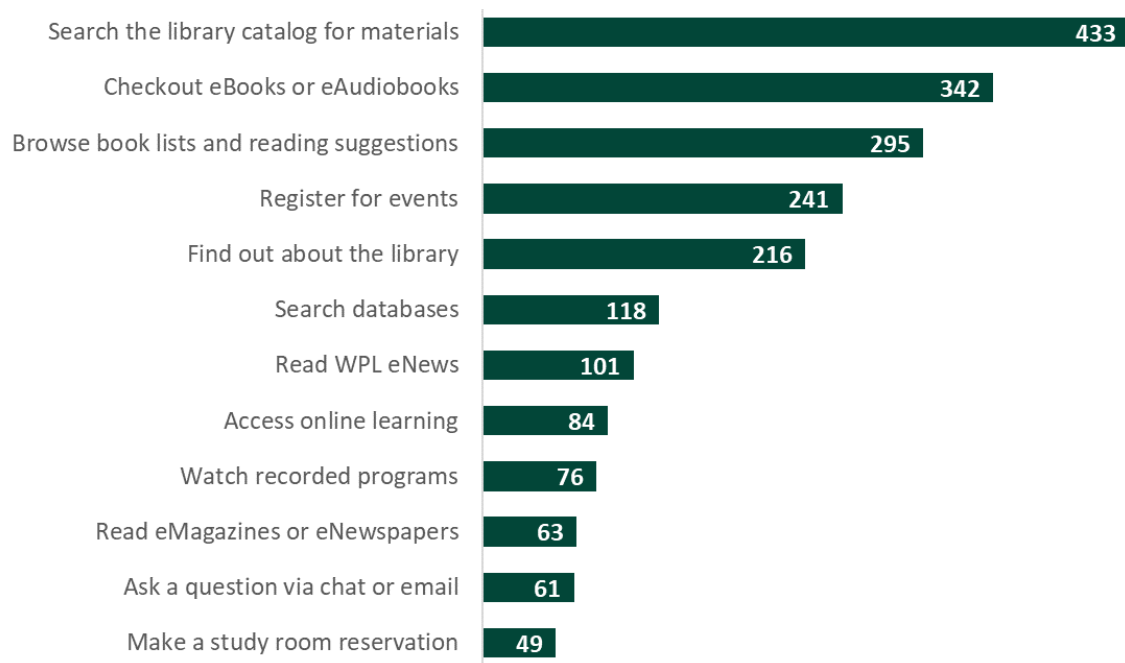
Library Spaces and Café

- *Offer larger meeting space, more comfortable seating/places to lounge and read.*
- *Update the indoor appearance and ambience*
- *Provide greater accessibility to quiet study areas/group meetings*
- *Improved coffee shop. Altiro Coffee has not been good. We liked the old setup better. Altiro's coffee and pastry items have not been very good, the atmosphere/decor is strange, and my interactions with staff have not been the best. Before COVID, we would frequently use the coffee shop because the coffee and pastries were good and the environment was pleasant.*
- *Longer cafe hours*
- *Better hours for library and cafe.*
- *A better cafe. I liked the old cafe better*
- *The cafe is not very good anymore, so we no longer use it. But we frequented it with the old management.*

Technology

- *Offer more tech products. Don't charge for 3-d printing. Offer more tech services and classes like CAD, Cricut, and engraving/etching.*
- *A media studio, like Glen Ellyn's, would be wonderful.*
- *Add a laminator for us to use! Happy to pay a small fee for using.*
- *Have more 3d printers.*

Reasons for Visiting the Library ONLINE [Check all that apply]



Open-Ended Question Response (Q2): What can we do to encourage you to use the library more often?

Website/Catalog

- I don't think I could use it any more than I do! I'm there multiple times a week - I take full advantage of the requesting books online and then picking them up on the shelf for a quick in and out which is very helpful.*
- I feel I already use it extremely often, and love being able to browse the catalogue online and put books on hold in that way!*
- While the website has a New Books & Movies section, it does not seem to have New Video Games or New Music sections. It would be great if the library also maintained a collection of older video game discs, such as the original PlayStation, PS2, GameCube, Wii, etc.*
- Have more genealogy information online*
- I find it difficult to locate a book in the library with the new system. I used to have no problem at all - for many years!*
- Make on line services and website easier to use.*
- Help me figure out how to easily read selected articles I want to access in publications I don't personally subscribe to but the library does.*

eContent

- My primary use is for downloading e-books. The selection and # available continue to get better which will make me use it more often.*
- Nothing, I really enjoy Libby and the movie selection at the library. It's great!*
- Not much! I love the library. Maybe have more ebooks available*
- Access to downloadable digital music if possible. (Jazz and Classical)*
- Offer more online and streaming services such as access to the Digital Library of Illinois (Wheaton Public Library is not listed as an option) and Kanopy (TV and video streaming). As I say this, I do not want to lose what the library already offers however, online and streaming is what people want and where the world is going.*

- *Get access to audiobooks like hoopla or grow the technology books--great selection currently, but could use some more titles.*

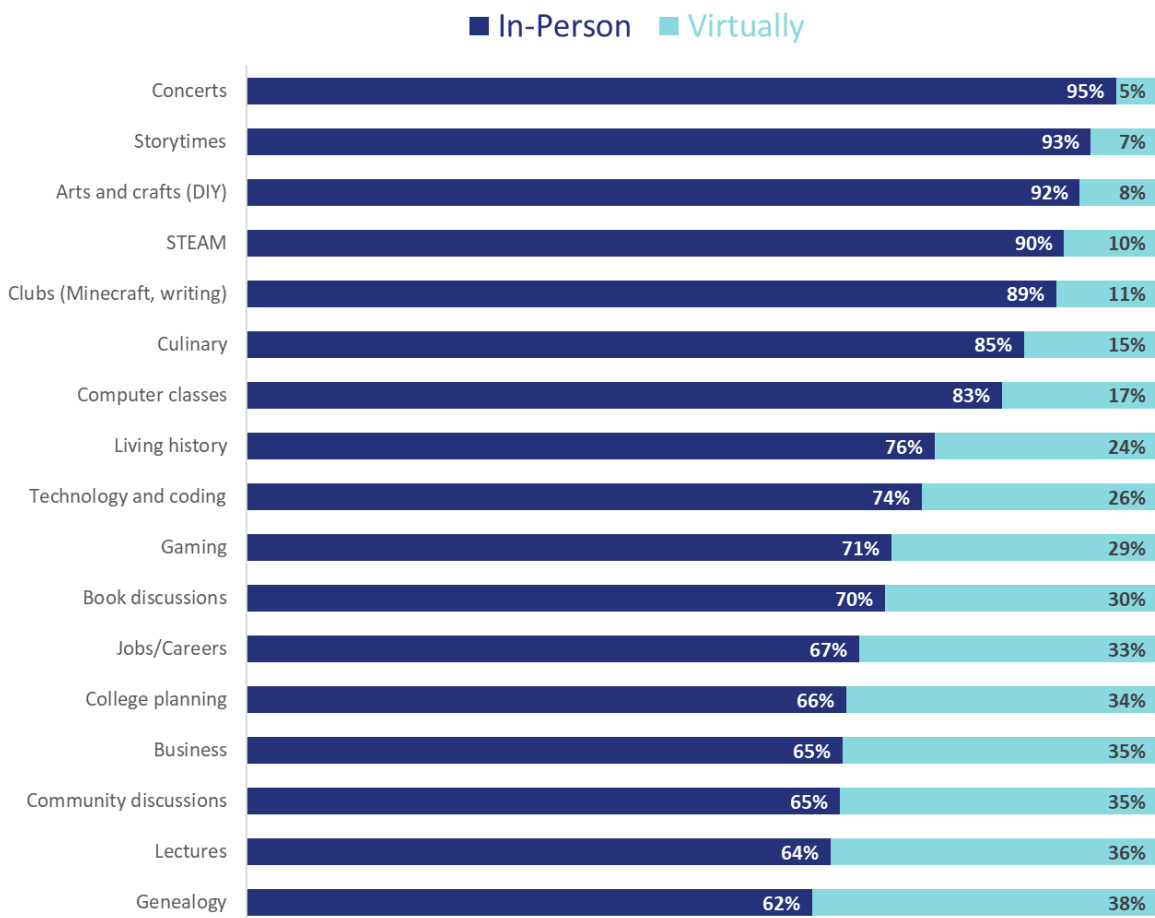
Marketing/Communication

- *Send more emails with upcoming events*
- *Post on social media more often*
- *I'm not sure. I'd like to know about new books or book groups in the community. Perhaps I should sign up for your e-news.*
- *If I got book recommendations for me send in an email I might come in more for me. I usually use the library for my kids and we LOVE it.*
- *There were a lot of interesting things in the WPL newsletter. Keep putting some of these things every month, such as putting your name in for your favorite author's next book. I did not know that you offered this service. And there are/were a lot of different programs offered that sounded interesting.*
- *Continue to promote business programs and remind us about all of the great events*

Programs

Patrons preferred in-person programming without exception. However, when asked to elaborate on their library experience, many respondents expressed their appreciation for virtual programs.

When considering the following PROGRAMS, would you prefer to attend In-Person or Virtually?

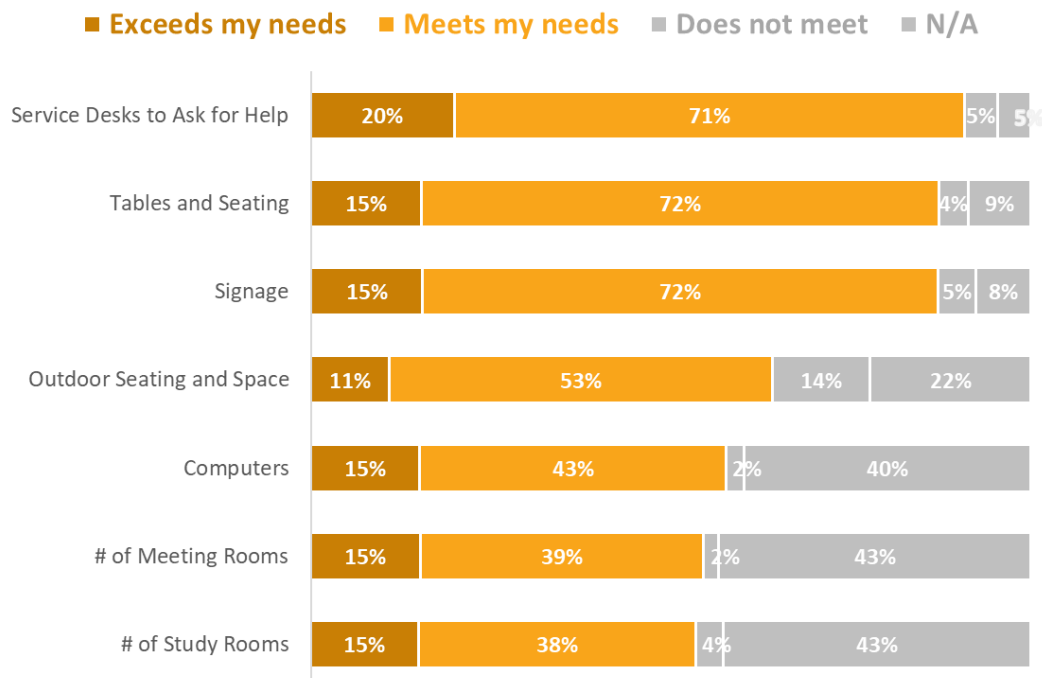


Open-Ended Question Response (Q16): Tell Us More About Your Library Experience

- *I have attended programs in person and via zoom; both were great! I like the virtual option, if I am not feeling well, am out of town, or babysitting the grandkids, I can still attend."*
- *I appreciate that the library has been having some blended classes - online and in person - to accommodate people that are not able to fully return to in-person events due pandemic health concerns.*
- *We love the childrens programs! Very impressed at how the library transitioned to Virtual programs during COVID, instead of cancelling programs. We would love to see more childrens storytimes outside on the plaza!*
- *Library needs to step up their in-person activities and programs for all ages.*
- *The toddler storytime is well planned and executed well! As an elementary teacher, I was impressed with the quality of programming for my two year old.*
- *I love the Wheaton Public Library! I think you offer a lot of programs and are community-oriented.*
- *Bring back evening movies especially film noir -great films selection.*
- *Use the outdoor space more in summer - added concerts, short plays, demo's etc. The living history lectures are always well done. More of them - please.*
- *I think a lot of physical changes done around the Library look really good. I think kids staff need to adjust their thinking with their offerings and recognize that most families now have two parents working. Having all of their programming during regular work hours is frustrating for working parents. Over the years, I have gone to Glen Ellyn and Elmhurst libraries to take advantage of their weekend offerings.*

Building and Space

All spaces in the library received more than 50% of responses that **Exceeded** or **Met** patron needs. The area with the highest percentage that **did not** meet patron needs was Outdoor Seating and Space (14%, or 94 out of 691 responses).



Open-Ended Question Response (Q16): Tell Us More About Your Library Experience

Outside Spaces and Seating

- *While I appreciate the outside drop off chutes, it would be great if there were some way to return materials at any time, without leaving your car. I often am dropping items off at 6 am and don't always want to leave the car.*
- *I have used Glen Ellen's drive-up window and it's great!*
- *Please devise a driveup drop off for books that doesn't require patrons to get out of their cars!!*
- *Can the library please deal with the parking lot situation - library patrons shouldn't have to walk further in rain/snow while apartment residents are using the lot.*
- *We're very grateful to have such a great library. More shade during summer in west Plaza would be wonderful.*

Interior Spaces

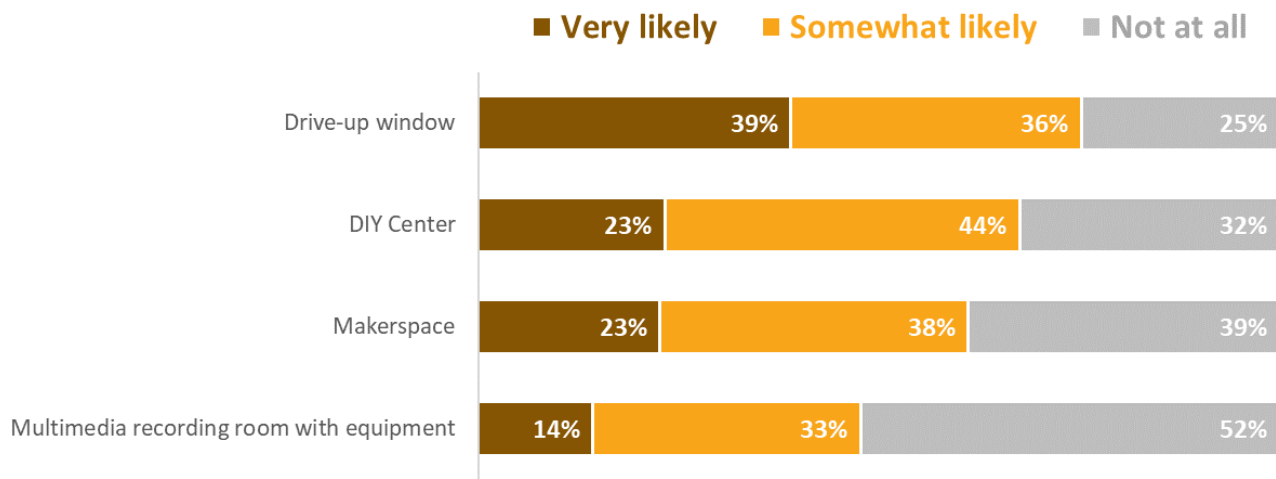
- *The place is ALWAYS neat, clean, and organized.*
- *The various chairs, and table and chair options are comfortable*
- *Love your children's and tween areas!*
- *It's really hard to check out books with children in tow due to no ability to check out down stairs. It concerns me to check out upstairs so close to the doors with a toddler.*
- *Our library has one of the best collections in the entire area but looks older and decrepit compared to all surrounding libraries. The lighting, carpeting, furniture, and overall look is several decades out of style. Every surrounding library is fun and chic when you enter but ours seems to be appealing only to octogenarians. Don't be afraid to make changes.*
- *...However there are several areas that are unattractive and unprofessional looking. The artwork available for borrowing looks messy and possibly hazardous. Work carts in public areas and storage of empty wire book racks look messy and unprofessional. Non-fiction aisle markers are often wrong and shelves empty of books look like a 'going out of business' store. Embarrassing!!*

Study Rooms

- *I know the study rooms are important to the teens in this town.*
- *I come to the library to study in the study room for 3 hours almost daily. Still, since the limit is just 2 hours, I will have to cut my focus and leave the study room at the last half an hour and request an hour extension from the librarian (who is very kind and polite, by the way), if not reserved by someone else. Could you please allow us to request an hour extension through the website? Thank you*
- *I work remotely from home and would love access to study spaces with windows/ability to reserve rooms for longer periods of time to enjoy a quiet work space at the library where I could also take calls as needed.*

Likelihood of using potential spaces and/or services

Respondents were most interested in a drive-up window, or drive-up returns.

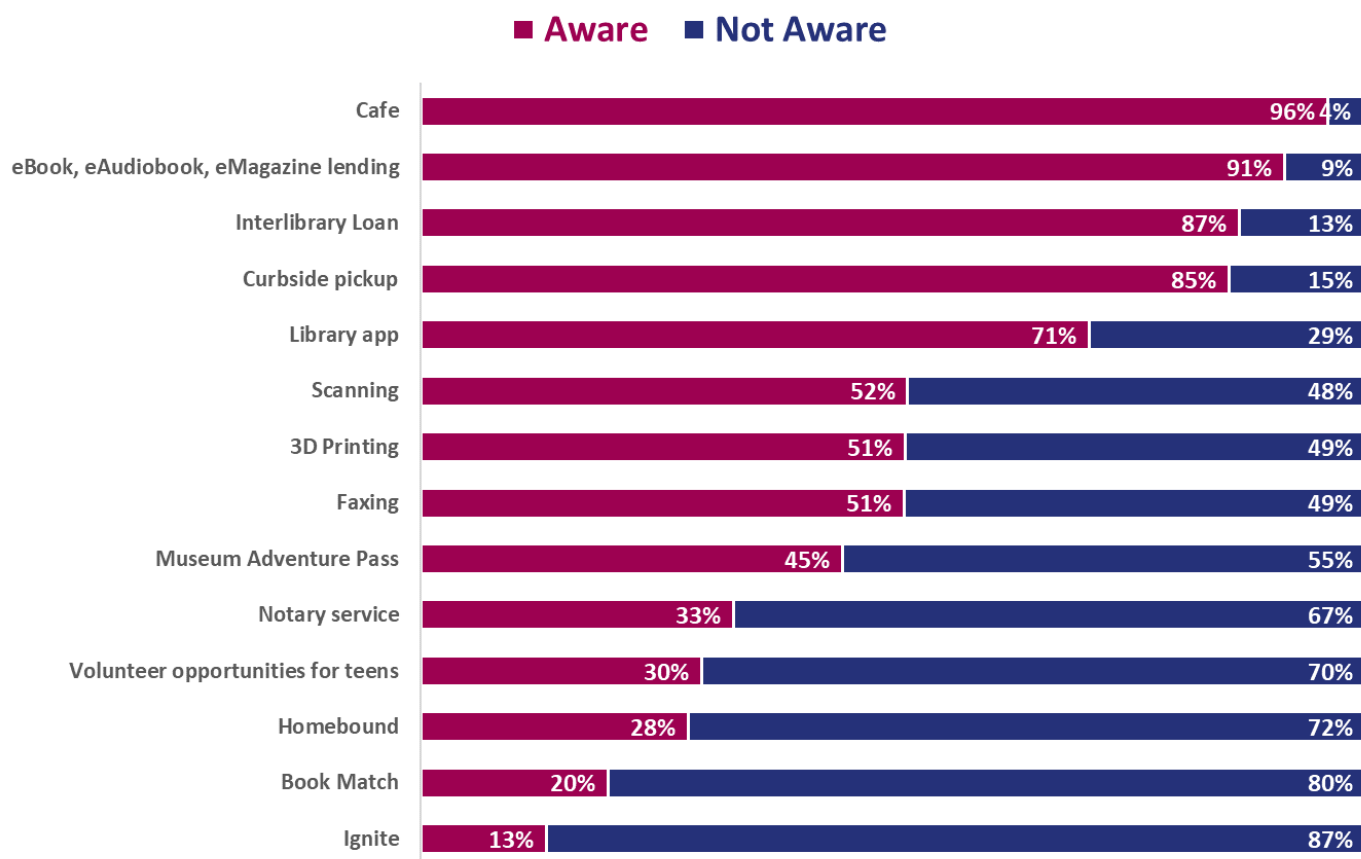


Open-Ended Responses from Q2 and Q16

- *Make returning books to the library easier! It is SO LONG OVERDUE for this library to have a drive-up book return*
- *Drive-up book return*
- *I think trying to expand the services into new areas like recording or crafting is not necessary. Keep it simple. Focus the time and energy on what you are already doing well. Don't chase relevance.*
- *Return boxes outside the community center instead of inside would be SO much more convenient for those of us more of a distance away from the library as well as wanting to do it outside of community center hours or with little kids in the car.*
- *... When the library was last renovated, the decision was made to make it as inconvenient as possible for users to return books....*
- *... I also love that you are inquiring about crafting tools. There are some things I think my eldest would enjoy but how would I even figure out how to get him into woodworking or something without your programs. Thank you!*

Services

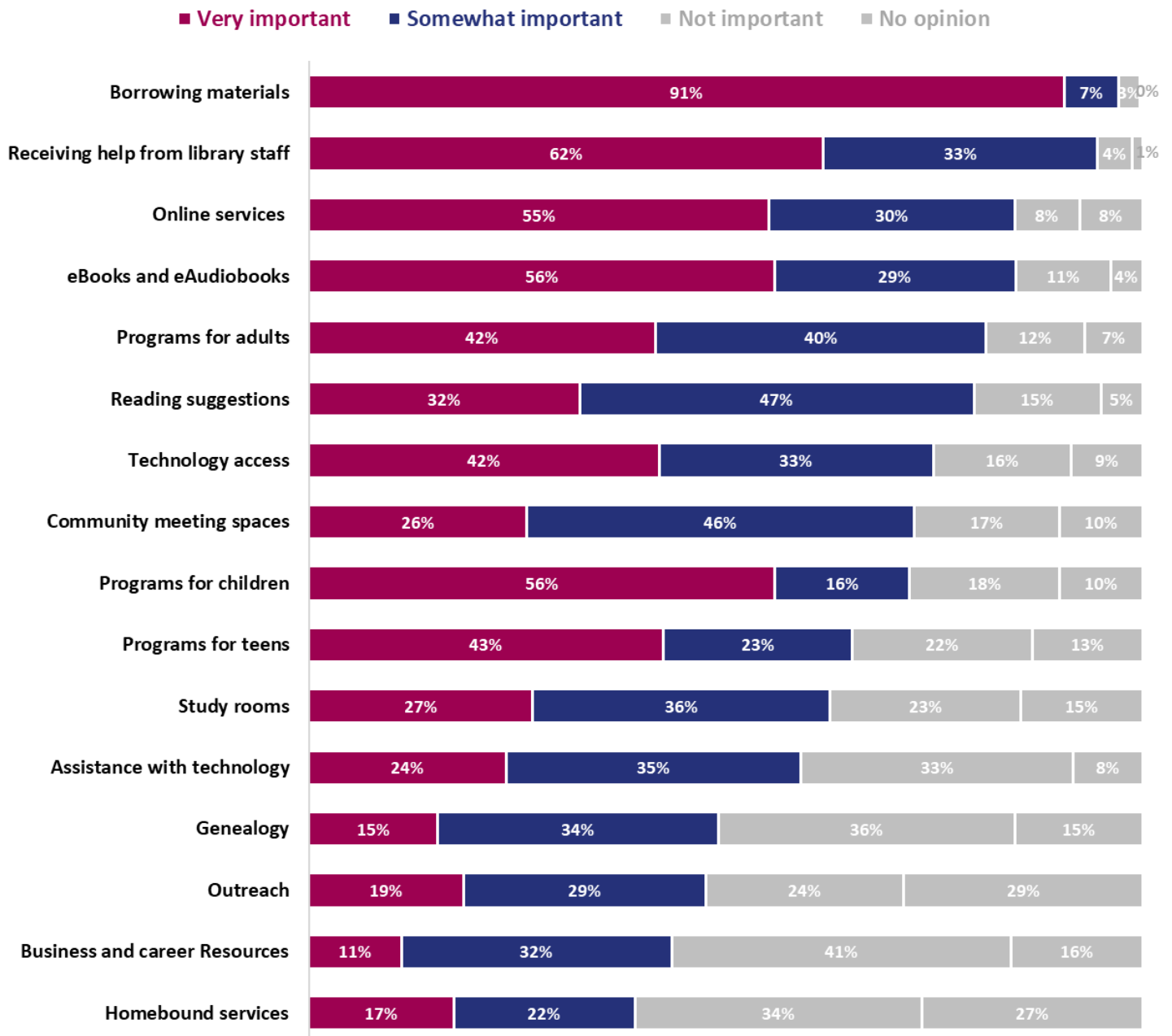
Respondents were most **AWARE** of the café and services pertaining to materials and collections (eContent, ILL, Curbside and the library app). They were **NOT AWARE** of teen volunteer opportunities, homebound, Book Match and Ignite. Book Match and Ignite (BRC rebranding) are the newest services, both debuting in 2022.



Open-Ended Responses from Q2 and Q16

- *I appreciate your fine inter-loan service.*
- *I am answering questions for the entire community of seniors who live at Marian Park in Wheaton, and do not have cars to travel to the Wheaton Library. We have from 3 to 6 senior residents who take advantage of these visits. They appreciate when the library visits and brings books and DVD's for the residents to borrow. We are thankful for their support.*
- *If I got book recommendations for me send in an email I might come in more for me. I usually use the library for my kids and we LOVE it.*
- *Love the app and how easy it is to use, find resources, reserve, and check out.*
- *I love that the library has a 3D printer.*
- *Offer an opportunity to suggest books for the library to get (or make it known where to do so)*

How important are the following library services to you?

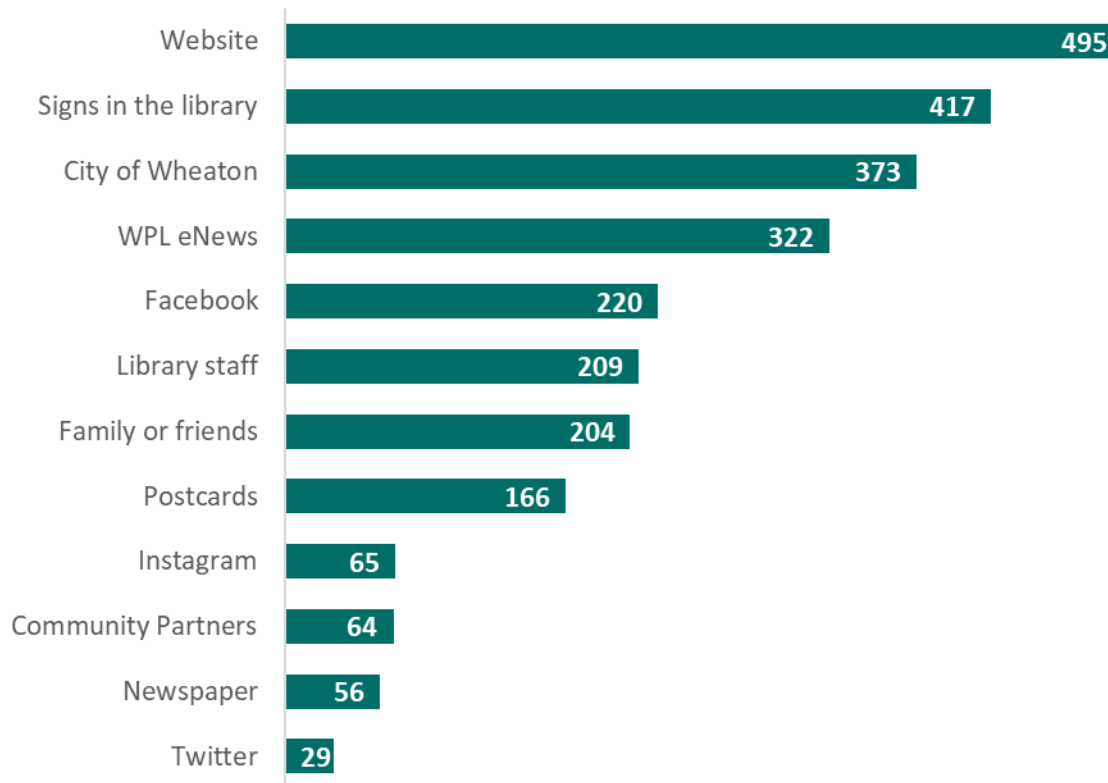


Open-Ended Responses from Q2 and Q16

- *I very much appreciate being able to place holds online from our library and other libraries too. In person, everyone is always friendly and helpful. I am grateful for all that you currently offer.*
- *My experiences have always had an element of personal interaction with library staff. I think staff to patron contact is very important. I also think knowledge of current technology is very important as I rely on library staff to know it all!*
- *As a new member of the Wheaton community by almost two years, I feel very fortunate to have the Wheaton Public Library as a resource to me. the staff is friendly and I've had an opportunity to check out laptops and to learn more about computers. Plus, your library has great book to read, fiction and non-fiction, as well as audio books. These features I truly enjoy.*

Receiving Information and Supporting the Library

How do you receive information about the library [Check all that apply]?

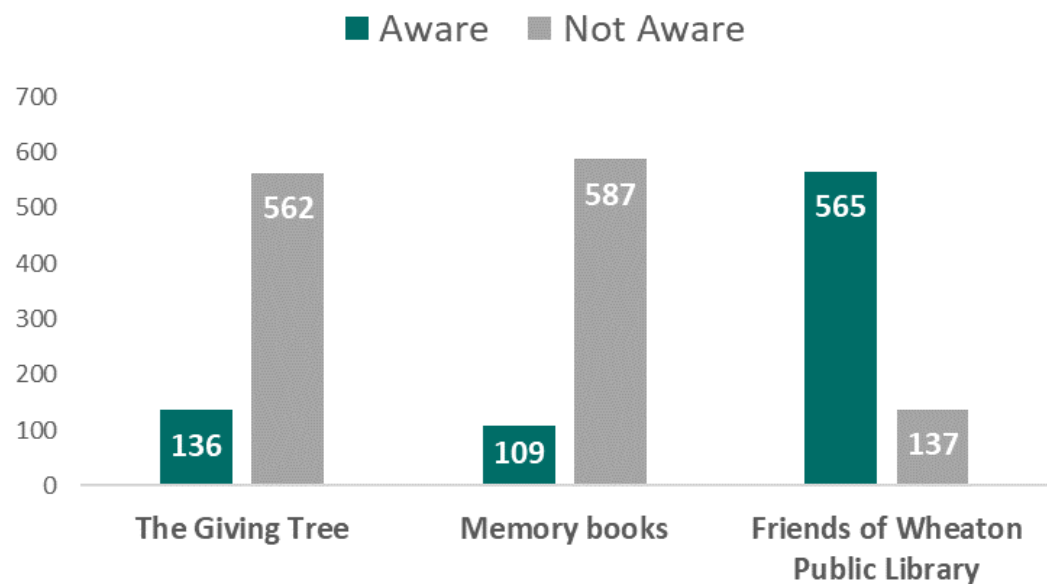


Open-Ended Responses from Q2 and Q16

- *I love the library!!! Also, I didn't see this mentioned, but I really like the flyers that have the quarterly events listed. It's easier for me to see at a glance what programs will be available, even though I sign up via the computer.*
- *I am grateful for the WPL! I believe that many people don't understand all it has to offer and maybe publicity about that would increase appreciation for this great facility.*
- *... Promotional graphics are exceptional....*
- *I also like the printed newsletter that comes to my house. It wasn't listed with ways I learn about the library.*
- *This survey is horribly flawed. "How do you get information about the library?" is a bad question, as was at least one other that assumes there is an answer. I DO NOT get information about the library, so I had to pick a random answer of "by signs in the library." This mailer is the first time I've ever received information about the library (and this survey).*
- *I didn't know when it had re-opened and when it was operating normally. Better communication would be helpful.*
- *Mail the quarterly booklet with all the activities once again. With a paper copy on my table, I can make quarterly plans which include library activities. If the booklet is on a table on my house, I will remember to check for all the activities. I do not think about the library when I am at my computer or iPad, and the font is much too small to read on my iPhone...*

Are you aware of the following ways to support the library?

Respondents were largely unaware of the Giving Tree (81% unaware) and Memory Books (84% unaware). However, most respondents were aware of the Friends of Wheaton Public Library.



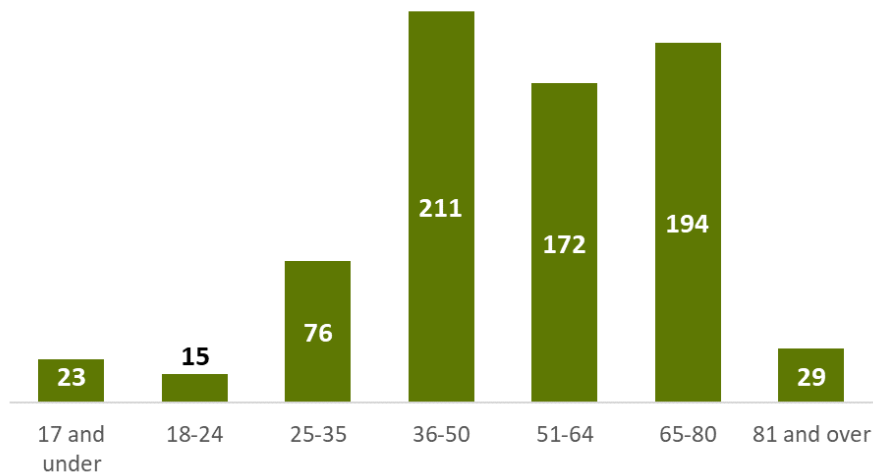
Open-Ended Responses from Q2 and Q16

- *I love the library. The Friends of the Library area is an area I especially enjoy.*
- *My favorite day of the year is the Library Book Sale Friends Preview. :)*
- *Really appreciate all the hard work that Friends do for the Book Nook.*
- *...We do, however, LOVE the book nook where we can buy books very inexpensively. When we do not find any of the books on our list, we go to the book nook and try to buy a couple so we don't leave emptyhanded.*

Demographic Information

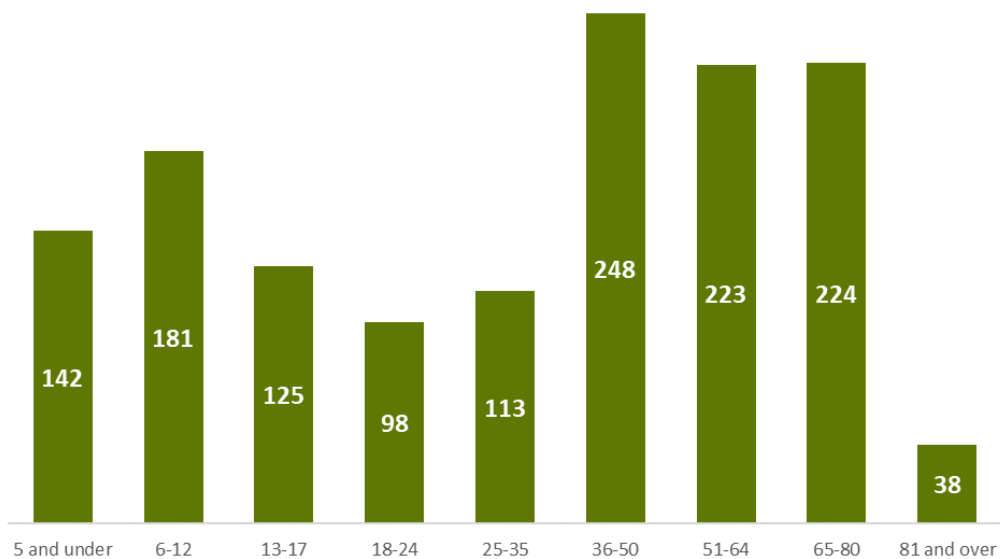
Age of Survey Takers

80% of survey takers were between 36 and 80 years old.



Ages of People in Household

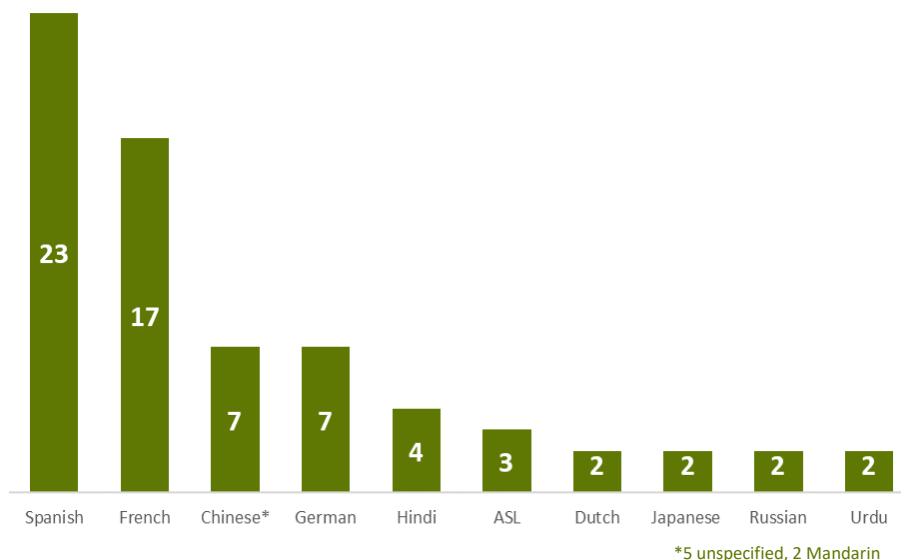
Total number of people represented was 1392.



Languages Spoken

60 respondents indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home. 14 respondents spoke 2 or more languages in addition to English.

Languages with 1 response include: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Croatian, Esperanto, Greek, Korean, Latin, Malayan, Nepali, Polish, Scottish Gaelic, Swedish, and Ukrainian



Areas for Improvement

Children's Books by Topic

- *Childrens books are often hard for me to find. I go in looking for dinosaurs not authors and unless they are new or displayed I can't find any. I think for little kids (esp toddlers) having theme sorted books is easier. Whereas middle schoolers are looking by author.*
- *Categorize the childrens books by topic!!! Feelings, characters, holidays, etc. They are currently categorized by author and its AWFUL! No child is asking their parents for books by a certain author! I no longer visit Wheaton and now visit Warrenville library due to this issue. PLEASE FIX!!!*
- *I think you guys are wonderful and have a great system. However I think it would benefit the children if the books were in categories instead of call numbers. Like all Disney books together, all sports books together etc. just a suggestion!*
- *For little kids I would suggest the books be grouped by subject and not author*

Expanded Programming Times

- *Provide more programming for toddlers on weekends*
- *Additional weekend programs for kids.*
- *More family/kids programs on the weekends. We visit just on weekends since during the week is hard with work and school.*
- *Childrens events that occur at same time as adult events*
- *We like the storytimes and stations but they're only available sometimes. More play and reading programs for kids would be great.*

- *More story times for children during the weekends or evenings*

Programs for Younger Adults

- *Offer more programs for young adults. I'm interested in a lot of teen activities & groups, but am too old for them. And nearly all the adult programs are educational and aimed at older adults. It would be amazing to have better opportunities to participate in activities I actually find engaging*
- *Have more workshops and classes that are geared for younger adults*
- *More adult events that would interest a younger crowd*
- *I would love to see more variety in programming and services for younger adults. I mostly use the library right now to borrow materials and as a quiet workspace, but I wish there were more options for crafting, technology, social, and entertainment-based programs.*
- *Expanding e-book options, especially for younger adults looking for newer authors*

Book Return and Pickup

- *Make returning books to the library easier! It is SO LONG OVERDUE for this library to have a drive up book return*
- *Drive up book return*
- *Return boxes outside the community center instead of inside would be SO much more convenient for those of us more of a distance away from the library as well as wanting to do it outside of community center hours or with little kids in the car.*
- *Some close short time 10-15 minute spots to pick up holds (no browsing). The Wheaton Park District has something like this at the Community Center.*
- *I do not know; it's more of a me problem. I do think it'd be nice to have some drop boxes around town for easier book returns. Would also like to see a bigger ebook selection.*
- *Audiobooks solve a problem that has long bothered me--the book return slots. When the library was last renovated, the decision was made to make it as inconvenient as possible for users to return books. Those slots along the driveway have to be the stupidest idea ever--they are an insult to library users, which is why I rarely take out hardcopy books anymore from the Wheaton library (I use other local libraries). Obviously, they were designed for the convenience of the library staff who can sit inside and process returns, while the library users are double-parking in a narrow entranceway and trudging to find the right slot in driving rain and snow. It's an embarrassment that a library that wants to be well-regarded by its patrons would show so little regard for their safety and convenience. Fire the engineer who thought of it and devise a better plan for people to return their books!!!*
- *I feel like it is hard for me as a parent to get into the library and get what I would like to read. Occasionally there are books by topic near the front of the library and it is much easier for me to grab something for me to read than to have to track it down upstairs or somewhere far from the children's department or the checkout stations.*