How Americans Value Public Libraries in Their Communities

54% of Americans have used a public library in the past year, and 72% live in a "library household." Most say libraries are very important to their communities.

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URL: http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/

Summary of Findings

Americans strongly value the role of public libraries in their communities, both for providing access to materials and resources and for promoting literacy and improving the overall quality of life. Most Americans say they have only had positive experiences at public libraries, and value a range of library resources and services.

The importance of public libraries to their communities

Some 90% of Americans ages 16 and older said that the closing of their local public library would have an impact on their community, with 63% saying it would have a "major" impact. Asked about the personal impact of a public library closing, two-thirds (67%) of Americans said it would affect them and their families, including 29% who said it would have a major impact.

If your local public library closed, what impact would that have on you and your family? On your community as a whole?

Among all Americans ages 16+
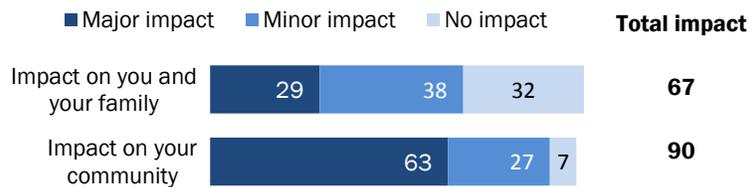
Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Moreover, the vast majority of Americans ages 16 and older say that public libraries play an important role in their communities:

- 95% of Americans ages 16 and older agree that the materials and resources available at public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed;
- 95% say that public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading;
- 94% say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community;
- 81% say that public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.

Meanwhile, while most Americans feel that libraries have done a good job embracing new technology, they are split on whether public libraries are as essential as they were in the past for finding information:

- Just 34% of Americans ages 16 and older of say that public libraries have not done a good job keeping up with new technologies, while 55% disagree.
- 52% of Americans say that people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own, while 46% disagreed.

Though many library services are seen as important, there are varying levels of enthusiasm for different services

Some 91% of Americans say they have had some exposure to libraries in the past, and we asked these respondents a series of questions about the importance of various library services to them and their families.[1]

Americans strongly value library services such as access to books and media; having a quiet, safe place to spend time, read, or study; and having librarians to help people find information. Other services, such as assistance finding and applying for jobs, are more important to particular groups, including those with lower levels of education or household income.

Women, African-Americans and Hispanics, adults who live in lower-income households, and adults with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely than other groups to declare all the library services we asked about "very important." Adults ages 30-64

How important are these library services to you and your family?

Among Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the percentage who say these services are...

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Net
Books and media	54	27	**80**
Librarian assistance	44	32	**76**
Having a quiet, safe place	51	24	**75**
Research resources	47	25	**72**
Programs for youth	45	24	**69**
Internet, computers, printers	33	25	**58**
Programs for adults	28	30	**58**
Help applying for gov't services	29	24	**53**
Help finding, applying for job	30	21	**51**

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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are also more likely than younger or older respondents to say many of the services are "very important," as are parents with minor children.

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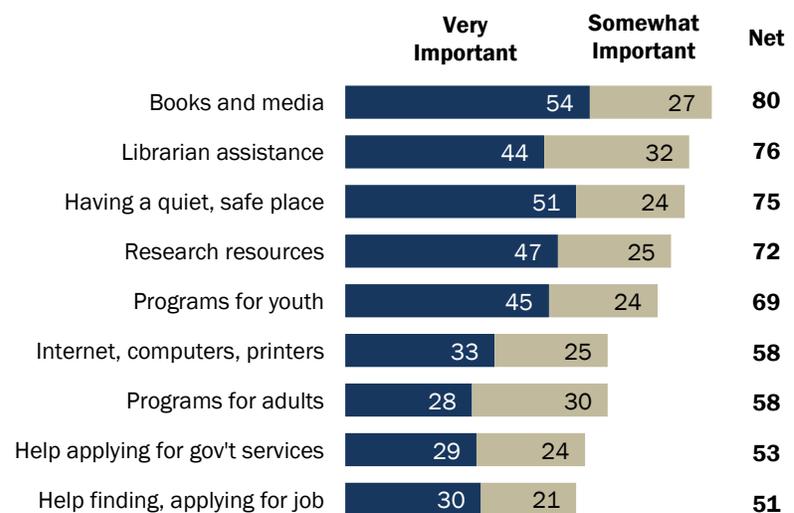
[1] This includes the 86% of Americans ages 16 and older who have ever visited a library or used a library website, and the 54% of Americans who say other members of their household are library users.

Libraries are also particularly valued by those who are unemployed, retired, or searching for a job, as well as those living with a disability and internet users who lack home internet access:

- 56% of internet users without home access say public libraries' basic technological resources (such as computers, internet, and printers) are "very important" to them and their family, compared with 33% of all respondents.
- 49% of unemployed and retired respondents say they librarian assistance in finding information to be "very important," compared with 41% of employed respondents.
- 47% of job seekers say help finding or applying for a job is "very important" to them and their families.
- 40% of those living with a disability say help applying for government services is "very important," compared with 27% of those without a disability.

Most Americans know where their local library is, but many are unfamiliar with all the services they offer.

Libraries are well known in their communities and they are usually easy to get to and relatively easy to navigate. Asked about their ability to access public libraries and public library websites:

- 91% of Americans say they know where the closest public library is to where they currently live; among these respondents, most said the closest public library is five miles or less away from their home.
- 93% of Americans say that it would be easy to visit a public library in person if they wanted to, with 62% saying it would be "very easy."
- Similarly, 82% of Americans overall say it would be easy to use their local public library's website, with 47% saying it would be "very easy."
- 91% of Americans who have ever used a public library say it is not difficult to find what they're looking for, including 35% who say it is "very easy."

How well-informed do you feel about the different services your public library offers?

Do you feel like you know…

All or most	23
Some of what it offers	47
Not much	20
Nothing at all	10
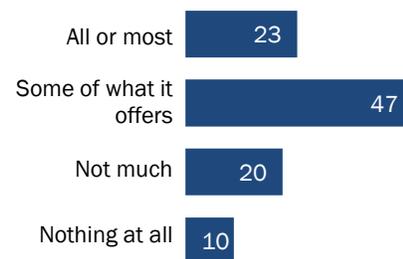
Based on Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

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Despite the fact that libraries are easily available to most, there are large numbers of Americans who say they are not sure about all the services libraries offer. Echoing the findings of our 2012 survey, 23% of those who have ever used a public library said they feel like they know all or most of the service and programs their library offers, while a plurality (47%) said that they know some of what it offers. About one in five (20%) say they don't know very much about what is offered, and 10% say they know "nothing at all."

54% of Americans have used a public library in the past 12 months, and 72% live in a "library household"

Over half (54%) of Americans ages 16 and older have used a public library in some way in the past 12 months, whether by visiting in person or using a public library website:

- 81% of Americans ages 16 and older have visited a public library or bookmobile at one point or another in their lives; 48% of Americans have done so in the past 12 months, down from 53% in 2012.
- 44% of those ages 16 and older have visited a public library website; 30% of Americans have done so in the past 12 months, up from 25% in 2012.

Additionally, among parents with minor children living at home, 70% say that a child in the house has visited a public library or bookmobile in the past 12 months.

Taken together, this means that 72% of all Americans ages 16 and older have either used a public library in the past 12 months or live in a household where another family member or a child is an active recent user of the library.

Most Americans who have ever used a public library have had positive experiences

Among all Americans who have ever used a public library:

- 94% said that based on their own experiences, they would say that "public libraries are welcoming, friendly place."
- 91% said that they personally have never had a negative experience using a public library, either in person or online.
- 67% said that the public library nearest to where they live could be described as a "nice, pleasant space to be"; another 22% say it's an "okay space, but could use some improvements."

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Global Libraries staff at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

About this Report

This report is part of a larger research effort by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project that is exploring the role libraries play in people's lives and in their communities. The research is underwritten by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This report contains findings from a nationally representative survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older fielded July 18-September 30, 2013. It was conducted in English and Spanish on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. For analysis in the report is based on those who have ever visited libraries or used library websites, n=5,393 respondents ages 16 and older, and the margin of error is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

Due to the large sample size, this report includes analyses of subgroups that are normally too small to report, such as Asian Americans. As the survey was conducted in English and Spanish, we were only able to capture the responses of English-speaking Asian Americans, who are not representative of all Asian Americans living in the United States. For instance, a 2012 Pew Research Center survey found that Asian Americans who say they are proficient in English are more likely to be younger, have higher levels of education, and are more likely to have been born in the United States. [2] Learn more at pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans.

Unlike standard Pew Research surveys of adults 18 and older, this report also contains data on Americans ages 16-17. However, any analyses of behaviors based on education level or household income level exclude this younger age group and are based solely on adults ages 18 and older, which is also noted throughout the report.

Disclaimer from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

This report is based on research funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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2 Interviews for the 2012 Pew Research Center survey of Asian Americans were conducted in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Japanese, Korean, and Hindi.

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Section 1: An Overview of Americans' Public Library Use

Most Americans ages 16 and older in the United States have used a public library at some point in their lives, and about half have used a public library in the past year.

A September 2013 Pew Research Center survey finds that 61% of those ages 16 and older have a library card, which is statistically similar to the 63% of Americans who said they had a library card in November 2012. Looking closer at library use, we find:

- 81% of Americans ages 16 and older have visited a public library or bookmobile at one point or another in their lives; 48% of Americans have done so in the past 12 months, down from 53% in 2012.
- 44% of those ages 16 and older have visited a public library website; 30% of Americans have done so in the past 12 months, up from 25% in 2012.

Taken together, 86% of Americans ages 16 and older have ever used a public library, either by visiting a public library or bookmobile in person or accessing a library website. Some 54% of Americans ages 16 and older have used a public library in some way in the past 12 months, including 73% of those with a library card.

Additionally, among parents with minor children living at home, 70% say that a child in the house has visited a public library or bookmobile in the past 12 months. Added up, this means that 72% of all Americans ages 16 and older have either used a public library in the past 12 months or live in a household where another family member or a child uses the library.

This chapter provides some demographic details about each of those library-using groups.

Public library use and library website use

Visiting a public library or bookmobile in person

Some 81% of Americans ages 16 and older have visited a public library at one point or another in their lives, and 48% of Americans have visited a public library or a bookmobile last 12 months. This represents a statistically significant five percentage-point change in public library attendance from late 2012, when 53% of those ages 16 and older said they had visited a library or bookmobile in the previous 12 months. Recent library visitors are more likely to be women, those under age 65, adults who have college degrees, and adults who live in households earning $100,000 or more.

Public library and bookmobile visitors

Among all Americans ages 16+, the percentage who have ever visited a public library or bookmobile in person, and the percentage who visited one in the past 12 months

	% who have ever visited a public library in person	% who visited a library in the past 12 months
All Americans ages 16+ (n=6,224)	81%	48%
a Men (n=2,840)	79	45
b Women (n=3,384)	83[a]	50[a]
Race/ethnicity		
a White, Non-Hispanic (n=4,323)	83[c]	48
b Black, Non-Hispanic (n=697)	80[c]	47
c Hispanic, English and Spanish speaking (n=739)	72	46
d Asian-American, English speaking (n=160)	76	49
Age		
a 16-17 (n=214)	86[e]	59[bcd]
b 18-29 (n=945)	81[e]	48[e]
c 30-49 (n=1,590)	81[e]	52[de]
d 50-64 (n=1,842)	82[e]	46[e]
e 65+ (n=1,526)	77	39
Household income*		
a Less than $30,000/yr (n=1,682)	77	44
b $30,000-$49,999 (n=1,030)	80	46
c $50,000-$74,999 (n=787)	85[ab]	51[a]
d $75,000-$99,999 (n=624)	85[ab]	52[ab]
e $100,000-$149,000 (n=612)	87[ab]	56[abf]
f $150,000+ (n=393)	86[ab]	48
Education attainment*		
a No high school diploma (n=454)	67	34
b High school grad (n=1,667)	77[a]	39[a]
c Some College (n=1,627)	85[ab]	51[ab]
d College + (n=2,225)	86[abc]	58[abc]
Parent of minor		
a Parent (n=1,538)	82	55[b]
b Non-parent (n=4,658)	81	44
Community type		
a Urban (n=1,922)	80	48[c]
b Suburban (n=3,083)	83[ac]	49[c]
c Rural (n=1,219)	77	42

* The household income and education attainment figures are only among adults ages 18 and older.

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter ([a]) or another letter indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Among those who have visited a public library or bookmobile in person in the past year, 14% visit at least once a week, 17% said they visit several times a month, and 26% said they visit at least once a month. An additional 43% of those who have visited a public library in the past year say they visit the library less often than once a month.

Public library website users

Some 44% of those ages 16 and older have ever visited a public library website and 30% say they did so in the past 12 months—up from 25% in late 2012. Groups more likely than others to have used library websites include women, whites and African-Americans, those under age 50, adults with higher educational attainment, adults living in households earning $75,000 or more, parents of minor children, and urban residents.

Among those who have visited a public library website in the past year, 10% say they visit at least once a week, 15% visit several times a month, and 23% visit at least once a month. An additional 52% of those who have visited a library website in the past year say they use the website less often than once a month.

Public library website users

Among all Americans ages 16+, the percentage who have ever used a public library website, and the percentage who have used a public library website in the past 12 months

	% who have ever used a public library website	% who used a library website in the past 12 months
All Americans ages 16+ (n=6,224)	44	30
a Men (n=2,840)	39	26
b Women (n=3,384)	49[a]	34[a]
Race/ethnicity		
a White, Non-Hispanic (n=4,323)	45[c]	31[c]
b Black, Non-Hispanic (n=697)	48[c]	31
c Hispanic, English and Spanish speaking (n=739)	38	26
d Asian-American, English speaking (n=160)	45	30
Age		
a 16-17 (n=214)	49[de]	35[de]
b 18-29 (n=945)	56[cde]	36[de]
c 30-49 (n=1,590)	50[de]	35[de]
d 50-64 (n=1,842)	39[e]	28[e]
e 65+ (n=1,526)	26	17
Household income*		
a Less than $30,000/yr (n=1,682)	41	27
b $30,000-$49,999 (n=1,030)	42	27
c $50,000-$74,999 (n=787)	46[a]	32[a]
d $75,000-$99,999 (n=624)	49[ab]	35[ab]
e $100,000-$149,000 (n=612)	57[abcd]	42[abcdf]
f $150,000+ (n=393)	49[ab]	34
Education attainment*		
a No high school diploma (n=454)	17	10
b High school grad (n=1,667)	33[a]	20[a]
c Some College (n=1,627)	50[ab]	34[ab]
d College + (n=2,225)	60[abc]	45[abc]
Parent of minor		
a Parent (n=1,538)	50[ab]	37[b]
b Non-parent (n=4,658)	42	27
Community type		
a Urban (n=1,922)	48[bc]	33[c]
b Suburban (n=3,083)	44[c]	30[c]
c Rural (n=1,219)	37	24

* The household income and education attainment figures are only among adults ages 18 and older.

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter ([a]) or another letter indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

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Overall public library use and changes over time

Taken together, 86% of Americans ages 16 and older have ever used a public library or library website, and 54% have personally used a library or library website in the past 12 months. This represents a statistically significant five percentage-point decrease from the 59% of Americans who said they had visited a library in the previous 12 months in 2012.[3]

We also asked all Americans who have ever used a public library or visited a public library website (86% of those ages 16 and older) how their library use has changed in the past five years. Some 16% said their library use has increased, and 57% said it has stayed about the same; another 25% said their library use has decreased in that time.

Library households

As noted above, 54% of Americans ages 16 and older have personally used a public library or website in the past 12 months, and a similar proportion (54%) say other members of their household are library users. Additionally, in a separate question asked of parents with minor children living at home, 70% say that a child in the house has visited a public library or bookmobile in the past 12 months. Taken together, this means that 72% of all Americans ages 16 and older have either used a public library in the past 12 months or live in a household where another family member or a child uses the library.

In a closer look at household library use, we find:

- 38% of Americans have both used a public library recently and live in a household where family members use the library.
- 18% say that while they themselves have not used a public library recently, a family member does use the library.
- 15% say that they personally have used the library in the past year, but no one else in their family does.

Library card holders

Some 61% of Americans ages 16 and older say they have a library card for a public library. These card holders are more likely to be female, white, under the age of 65, and suburban and urban residents, and are also more likely to have higher levels of education or live in higher income households. About 21% of library card holders did not visit the library in the past 12 months, and 17% of those who have used a public library in the past year say they do not have a library card.

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[3] Note: In November 2012, a follow-up about library use in the past 12 months was asked as separate questions later in the interview, rather than as an immediate follow-up to the "ever" library use question, as done for the 2013 survey.

Section 2: Public Libraries' Importance and Impact

Importance of public library services

Overall, 91% of Americans either have ever used a public library or said another household member uses a public library.[4] We asked these respondents who have personal or family experiences with libraries a series of questions about how important they consider various library services, including various library resources and activities .

There are notable patterns in many of the answers about the importance of library services among those who have personal or family experiences with public libraries. In general, women, African-Americans and Hispanics, adults who live in lower-income households, and adults with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely than other groups to say these services are "very important." Those ages 30-64 are more likely than younger or older respondents to say many of the services are "very important," as are parents with minor children. Urban residents with library experiences are more likely than rural residents to say some services are "very important" to them.

How important are these public library services to you and your family?

Among Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the percentage who say these services are...

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Net
Books and media	54	27	**81**
Librarian assistance	44	32	**76**
Having a quiet, safe place	51	24	**75**
Research resources	47	25	**72**
Programs for youth	45	24	**69**
Internet, computers, printers	33	25	**58**
Programs for adults	28	30	**58**
Help applying for gov't services	29	24	**53**
Help finding, applying for job	30	21	**51**

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Adults 65 and older are the age group most likely to say that none of these library services are very important to them, and generally rate most services as less important overall. For instance, among those ages 65 and older with some public library experience,65% say that having a quiet and safe place to spend time at the library is important to them and their families overall, compared with 75% of all respondents who say this is important.

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[4] This includes the 86% of Americans ages 16 and older who have ever visited a library or used a library website, and the 54% of Americans who say other members of their household are library users.

Even in cases where a majority or plurality of seniors say the services are important to them, their level of enthusiasm is considerably lower than younger Americans. For example, senior citizens with library experience by a 72%-26% margin say that access to free books and media is important to them – a 46-point spread. On the other hand, those ages 30-49 say such access is important by an 85%-14% margin – a 71-point gap.

How important are these public library services to you and your family?

Among Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the percentage who say these services are…

	Not too important	Not at all important	Net
Help finding, applying for job	14	32	46
Help applying for gov't services	14	30	44
Programs for adults	17	24	41
Internet, computers, printers	14	26	40
Programs for youth	9	21	30
Research resources	10	18	27
Having a quiet, safe place	9	15	24
Librarian assistance	9	13	23
Books and media	7	12	18

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Oldest and youngest age groups least likely to say public library services are very important to them and their families

Among Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the % in each group who say these services are "very important"

Books and media

Total	54
16-17	39
18-29	50
30-49	59
50-64	56
65+	48

Quiet spaces

Total	51
16-17	42
18-29	53
30-49	53
50-64	53
65+	42

Research resources

Total	47
16-17	41
18-29	49
30-49	51
50-64	46
65+	36

Youth programs

Total	45
16-17	25
18-29	40
30-49	51
50-64	46
65+	39

Librarian assistance

Total	44
16-17	29
18-29	35
30-49	45
50-64	51
65+	44

Internet, computers, printers

Total	33
16-17	18
18-29	32
30-49	36
50-64	35
65+	26

Job search assistance

Total	30
16-17	34
18-29	31
30-49	33
50-64	30
65+	20

Help applying to gov't services

Total	29
16-17	22
18-29	29
30-49	33
50-64	29
65+	22

Programs for adults

Total	28
16-17	13
18-29	21
30-49	30
50-64	32
65+	28

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Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites and Asian-Americans to say public library services are very important to them and their families

Among Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the % in each group who say these services are "very important"
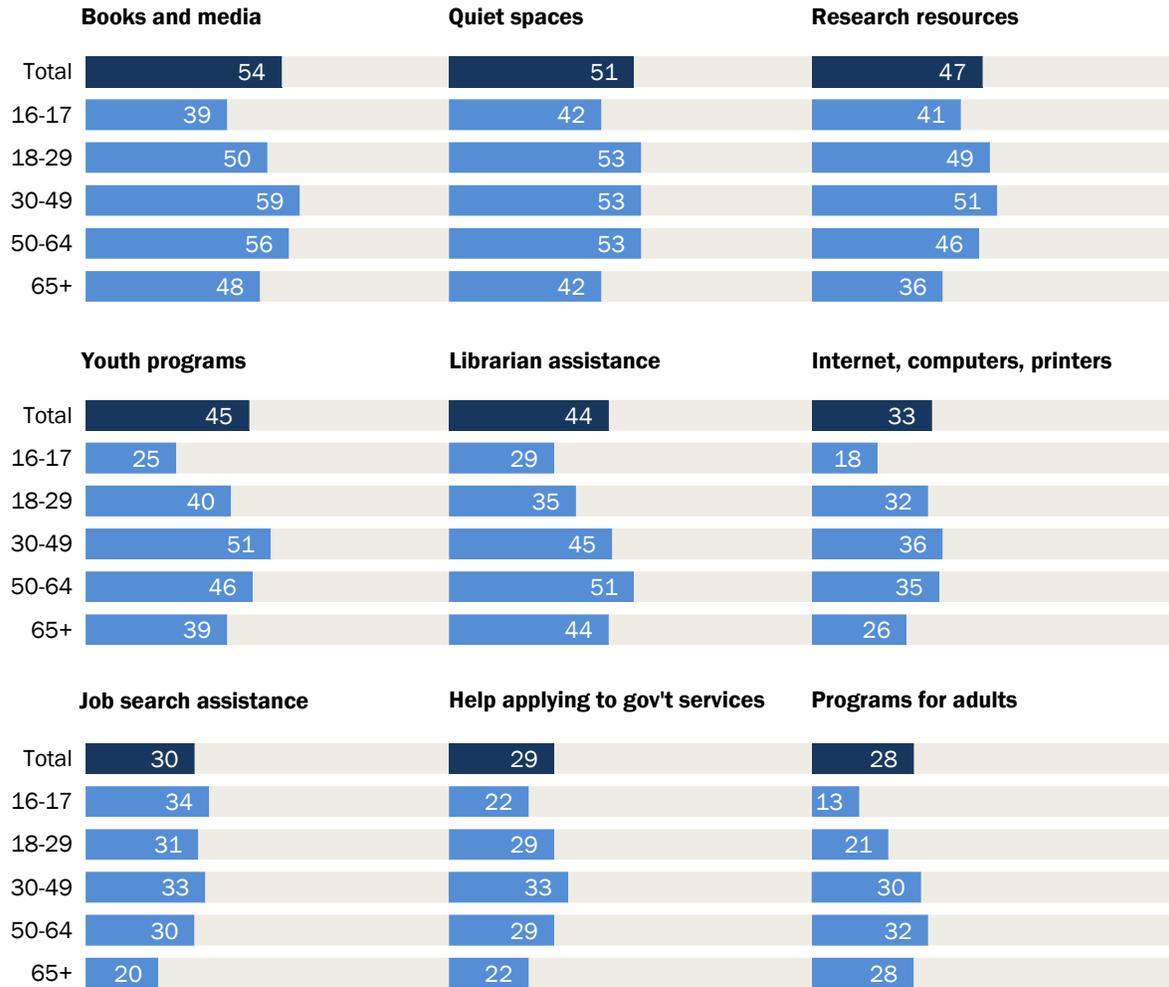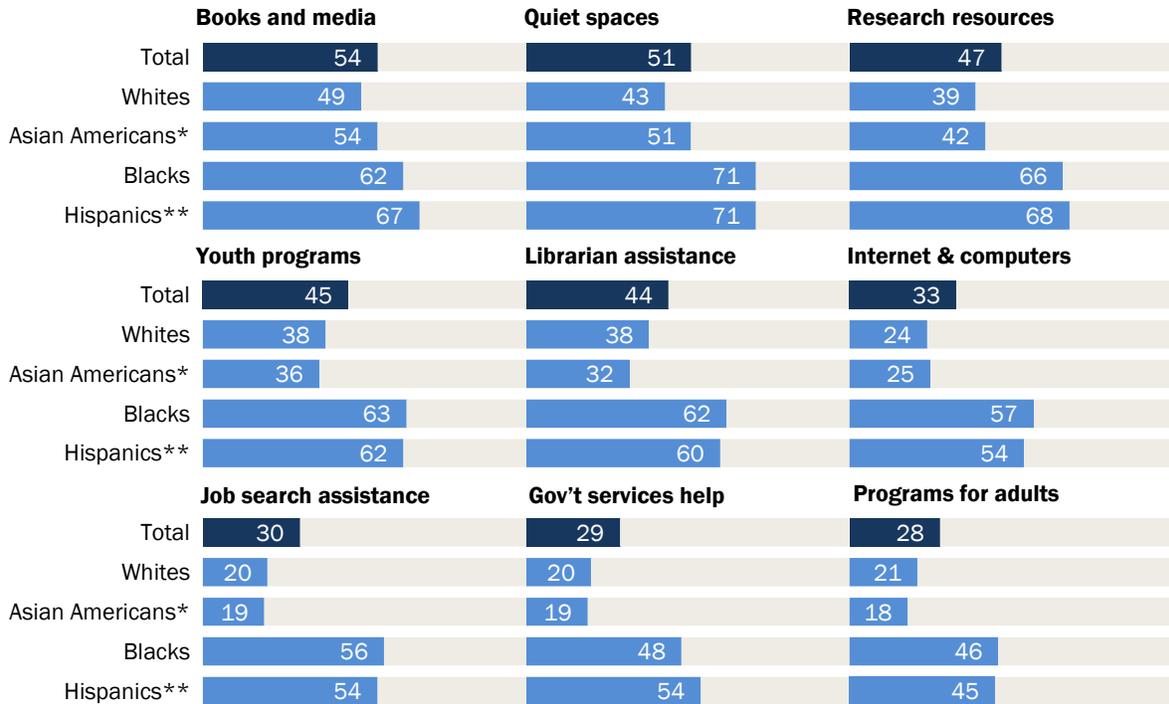
Books and media
Total	54
Whites	49
Asian Americans*	54
Blacks	62
Hispanics**	67

Quiet spaces
Total	51
Whites	43
Asian Americans*	51
Blacks	71
Hispanics**	71

Research resources
Total	47
Whites	39
Asian Americans*	42
Blacks	66
Hispanics**	68

Youth programs
Total	45
Whites	38
Asian Americans*	36
Blacks	63
Hispanics**	62

Librarian assistance
Total	44
Whites	38
Asian Americans*	32
Blacks	62
Hispanics**	60

Internet & computers
Total	33
Whites	24
Asian Americans*	25
Blacks	57
Hispanics**	54

Job search assistance
Total	30
Whites	20
Asian Americans*	19
Blacks	56
Hispanics**	54

Gov't services help
Total	29
Whites	20
Asian Americans*	19
Blacks	48
Hispanics**	54

Programs for adults
Total	28
Whites	21
Asian Americans*	18
Blacks	46
Hispanics**	45

*among English-speaking Asian-Americans
** among English- and Spanish-speaking Hispanics

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Adults living in lower-income households are more likely to say public library services are very important to them and their families

Among <u>adults ages 18+</u> who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library, the % in each group who say these services are "very important"

	Books and media	Quiet spaces	Research resources
Less than $30,000	61	66	61
At least $75,000	49	39	34

	Youth programs	Librarian assistance	Internet & computers
Less than $30,000	56	55	47
At least $75,000	37	33	20

	Job search assistance	Gov't services help	Programs for adults
Less than $30,000	46	44	38
At least $75,000	15	16	18
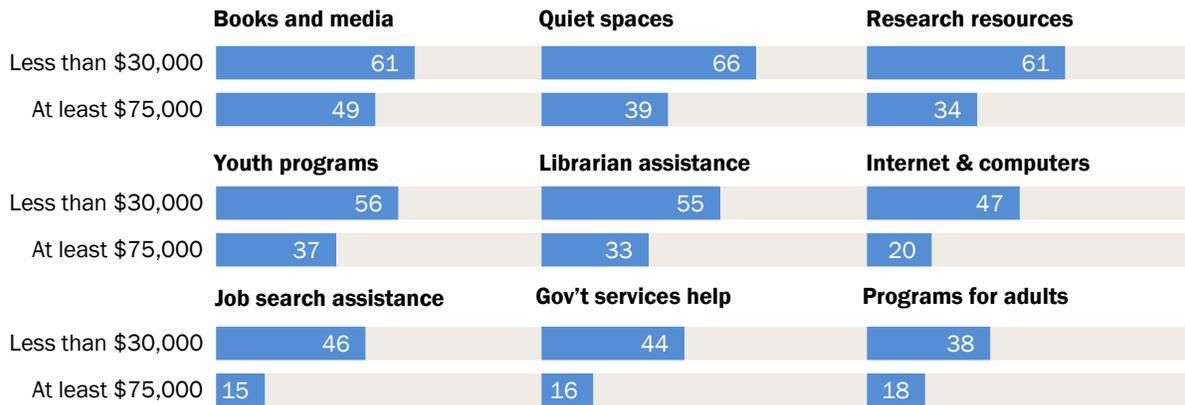
Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey among 6,010 adults ages 18 and older. The survey was conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Individual library services

In addition to our basic demographic analyses, we also explored responses based on a variety of life situations and technology use factors, many of which are strongly correlated with lower households incomes and lower levels of education. These include searching for a job, living with a disability, or lacking home internet access, and are discussed in further detail below.

Using the internet, computers, or printers at a public library

- 42% of those who are currently looking for a job say this is "very important" to them and their families, and 68% of job-seekers say it is either important or very important overall.
- 43% of those living with a disability say this is "very important" (67% say it is important overall), as well as 48% of those with a health problem that makes reading difficult (69% say this is important to them and their families overall).[5]
- 56% of internet users without home access say this is "very important" to them and their family, and 77% say it is important overall.

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[5] Overall, 16% of Americans ages 16 and older say that they have a physical or health condition that makes reading difficult or challenging for them.

Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read, or study at the library

- 61% of job seekers say this having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read, or study at a library is "very important" to them and their families, compared with 49% of respondents who are not currently looking for a job.

Library assistance in applying for government programs, permits, or licenses

- Among those with recent library experience who are unemployed but not retired, 37% say library assistance in applying for government programs, permits or licenses is "very important" to them and their families.
- 40% of those living with a disability say library assistance is "very important," compared with 27% of those without a disability.

Help finding or applying for a job

- 47% of job seekers say receiving help at the library in finding or applying for a job is "very important" to them and their families.
- 42% of those with a health problem that makes reading difficult say receiving help at the library in finding or applying for a job is "very important" to them and their families.

Getting help from a librarian finding information

- 49% of those not in the workforce say receiving assistance from a librarian in finding information is "very important" (including 47% of retired respondents).
- Those living with a disability (56%) or with a health problem that makes reading difficult (59%) are also more likely than others to say that librarian assistance is "very important" to them and their families.

Finally, internet users who lack home internet access are more likely than other respondents to say all of these services are "very important" to them and their families. Non-internet users are also more likely than internet users with home access to say that many of these services are "very important."

Impact of a local public library closing

About two-thirds (67%) of Americans ages 16 and older said that if their local public library closed, it would affect **them and their families**. Some 29% of Americans said that such a closer would have a "major" personal impact, and 38% said it would have a "minor" impact.

Another 32% said their library's closing would have "no impact" on them and their families.

Women, adults ages 30-64, and parents are among the groups most likely to say that their local public library's closing would have a "major" impact on them and their families. Many other groups are also more likely to say their library's closing would have a major personal impact:

If your local public library closed, what impact would that have on you and your family? On your community as a whole?

Among all Americans ages 16 and older

■ Major impact   ■ Minor impact   ■ No impact   **Total impact**

	Major impact	Minor impact	No impact	Total impact
Impact on you and your family	29	38	32	**67**
Impact on your community	63	27	7	**90**

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.
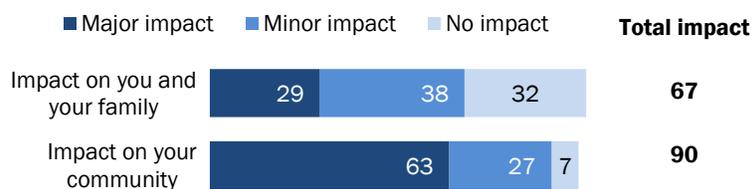
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- Adults who have not graduate high school are particularly likely to say that their library's closure would have a major impact on them and their family (35%).
- Adults living in households earning less than $30,000 per year are the most likely of any income group to say that their library's closure would have a major impact on them and their family (34%).
- 37% of those living with a disability say it would have a major personal impact, compared with 28% of other respondents.
- Unemployed respondents are more likely than employed respondents to say that their local public library's closing would have a "major" impact on them and their families (31% vs 28%)

The vast majority (90%) of Americans said that the closing of their local public library would impact their **community as a whole**, with 63% saying it would have a major impact and 27% said it would have a minor impact. Just 7% said it would have "no impact" on their community.

Women are more likely to say their local public library's closing would have a major impact on the community than men (70% 55%), and adults ages 30 and older are more likely than younger respondents to say there would be a major impact.

Impact of public library closing on you and your family, by age group

Among all Americans ages 16 and older

Impact on you & your family

	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
16-17	17	45	61
18-29	19	40	60
30-49	31	40	71
50-64	34	35	70
65+	32	32	64

Impact on your community

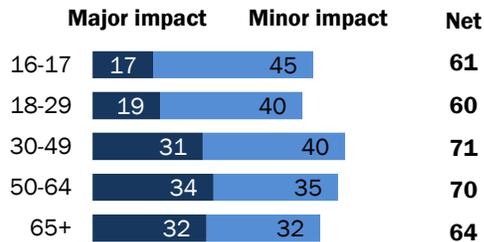|	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
16-17	43	50	93
18-29	52	36	88
30-49	68	25	92
50-64	68	22	90
65+	64	23	87

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.
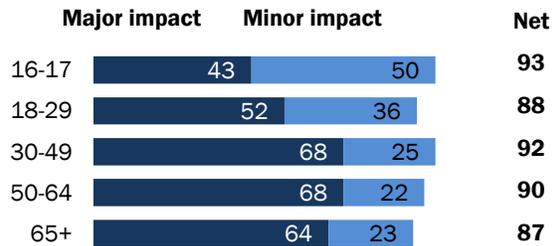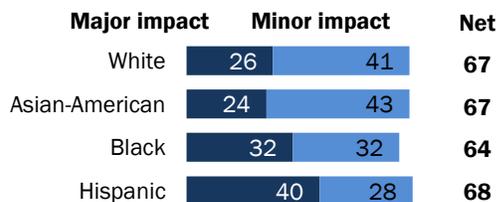
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Meanwhile, parents are more likely than non-parents to say their library's closure would have a major impact, and adults with at least some college experience are more likely to say there would be at least a minor impact overall, compared with those with lower levels of education.
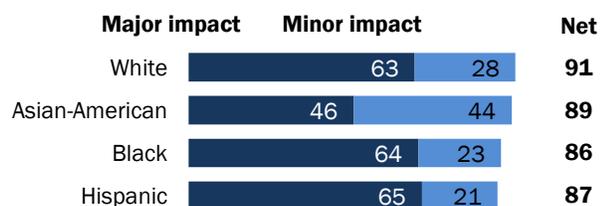
Impact of public library closing on you and your family, by race/ethnicity

Among all Americans ages 16 and older

Impact on you & your family

	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
White	26	41	67
Asian-American	24	43	67
Black	32	32	64
Hispanic	40	28	68

Impact on your community

	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
White	63	28	91
Asian-American	46	44	89
Black	64	23	86
Hispanic	65	21	87

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Impact of public library closing on you and your family, by education level

*Among American **adults ages 18** and older*

Impact on you & your family

	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
Less than HS	35	25	**60**
HS grad	28	35	**63**
Some college	28	39	**68**
College grad	32	42	**74**

Impact on your community

	Major impact	Minor impact	Net
Less than HS	56	22	**79**
HS grad	60	27	**88**
Some college	65	26	**92**
College grad	69	25	**94**

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey among 6,010 adults ages 18 and older. The survey was conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.
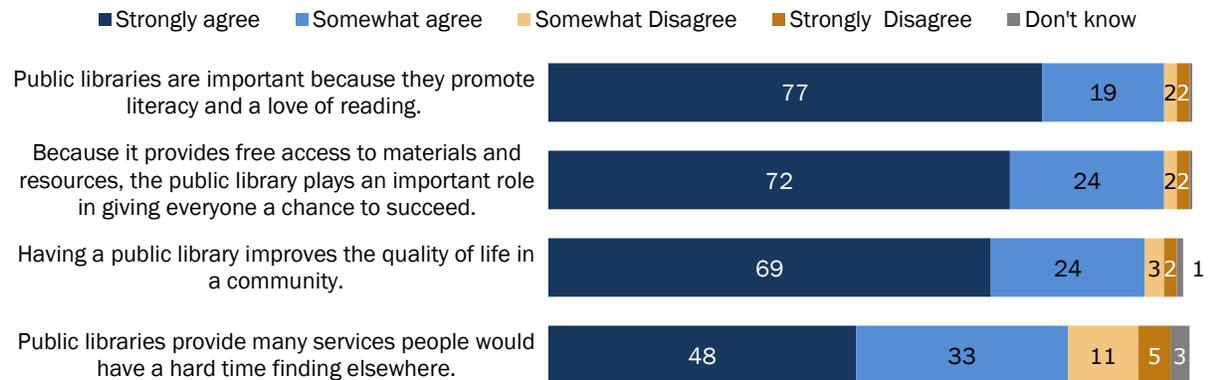
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Section 3: Perceptions of Public Libraries

Americans' perceptions of public libraries

Public libraries' roles in their communities

Among Americans ages 16+, the percentage who agree or disagree with each statement

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Don't know

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	77	19	2	2	
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	72	24	2	2	
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	69	24	3	2	1
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	48	33	11	5	3

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.
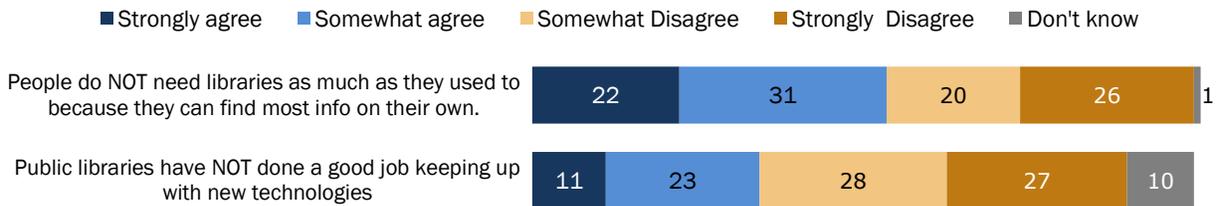
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The vast majority of Americans ages 16 and older say that public libraries play an important role in providing free access to materials and resources, promote literacy and a love of reading, and improve the overall quality of life in a community:

- 95% of Americans say that "because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed," including 72% who say they "strongly agree" with this statement. Those living in urban or suburban areas are more likely to strongly agree with this statement than those living in rural areas.
- 95% of Americans say that "public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading."
- 94% of Americans say that "having a public library improves the quality of life in a community." Among adults, college graduates are more likely than those with lower levels of education to strongly agree with this statement.

Public libraries and technology

Among Americans ages 16+, the percentage who strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Don't know

People do NOT need libraries as much as they used to because they can find most info on their own.	22	31	20	26	1
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies	11	23	28	27	10

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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We also asked for respondents' views on the importance of public libraries at a time many Americans are increasingly connected through the internet and mobile devices—and others remain offline altogether. Though respondents were generally split on whether libraries are as essential for finding information today, a majority of Americans think that that public libraries have "done a good job" keeping up with new technologies; most said that public libraries provide many services that people would have a hard time finding elsewhere:

- 81% of Americans ages 16 and older agree overall that "public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere," including 48% who say they "strongly agree" with this statement. Adults who did not graduate high school are more likely to strongly agree than college graduates, as are adults living in lower income households compared with those in households earning at least $75,000.
- 52% of Americans overall say that "people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own." Adults with lower levels of education and those living in lower-income households are most likely to strongly agree that libraries are not as necessary for information needs.
- 34% of Americans overall think that "public libraries have not done a good job keeping up with new technologies," while 55% disagree. Adults who did not graduate high school are more likely to agree with this statement overall than those with higher levels of education. Recent library users, particularly those who have used a library website in the past 12 months, are significantly more likely to say that libraries *have* done a good job keeping up with new technologies.

In general, women and adults ages 30-64 express the strongest positive views about public libraries, as do respondents who have used a public library in the past. African Americans and

Hispanics are also more likely than whites and English-speaking Asian Americans to have strongly positive views about libraries, though Hispanics are also most likely to strongly agree that libraries are not as needed today or that libraries have not kept up with new technologies.

Americans who both use public library and have family members who use libraries are most likely to express strong positive views, although Americans who live in library households but themselves have not used a library recently are also more likely than those with no recent library exposure to express strong positive views.

Access to public libraries

In order to learn more about public libraries' accessibility to their communities, we asked a series of questions about people's experiences around visiting public libraries and using library websites.

We find that the vast majority (91%) of Americans say they know where the closest public library is to where they currently live; among these respondents, most said the closest public library is five miles or less away from their home.

How far away is the closest public library?

Among Americans ages 16+, the % in each group who say they know where the closest public library is to their house, and how far away it is

	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Yes, know where it is	**91**	**87**	**91**	**94**
5 miles or less	72	75	74	59
6-10 miles	13	9	13	20
11-20 miles	4	2	4	11
20+ miles	1	1	1	4
Not sure	**9**	**13**	**8**	**6**

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

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Overall, 93% of Americans say that it would be easy to visit a public library in person if they wanted to, with 62% saying it would be "very easy" and 31% saying it would be "easy." However, there was some variation by race/ethnicity, community type, and other factors:

- Whites are most likely to say it would be "very easy" to visit a public library in person (67%), compared with 59% of blacks, 44% of English-speaking Asian Americans, and 47% of English- and Spanish-speaking Hispanics.
- Americans living in rural (9%) or urban (7%) areas are more likely to say it would be difficult to visit a public library in person, compared with 5% of those living in suburban areas.
- Among those living with a disability, 15% overall say it would be difficult to visit the library, compared with 5% of non-disabled respondents.

- 10% of unemployed respondents, including 11% of those who are retired, say it would be difficult to visit the library overall, compared with 4% of employed respondents.

When it comes to accessing a public library website, 82% of Americans say that it would be easy to use the website of a local public library overall, with 47% saying it would be "very easy" and 35% saying it would be "easy". In addition:

- About half (51%) of whites and 47% of blacks say it would be "very easy" to use the website of a local public library, compared with 33% of Hispanics.
- Among those living with a disability, 25% overall say it would be difficult to visit the library website, compared with 11% of non-disabled respondents.
- Some 20% of unemployed respondents (including those who are retired) say it would be difficult to visit the library overall, compared with 10% of employed respondents.

Awareness of public library services and ease of findings things

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library, 23% said they feel like they know all or most of the services and programs at their public library, while a plurality (47%) said that they know some of what it offers. Another 20% said they don't know much about their public library's service, and 10% said they know nothing at all. These findings are generally consistent with the results of our November 2012 survey.[6]

How well-informed do you feel about the different services and programs your public library offers?

Do you feel like you know…

Response	Value
All or most	23
Some of what it offers	47
Not much	20
Nothing at all	10

Based on Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

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Adults ages 30-64 generally felt more aware of library services than younger or older respondents, as did women and parents with minor children living at home. Whites and blacks were also more likely than Hispanics and English-speaking Asian Americans to say they are aware of at least some of the services offered by their public library. Adults with at least some college experience generally felt more informed about the services and programs their public library offers than those with lower levels of education. There were no significant differences by household income.

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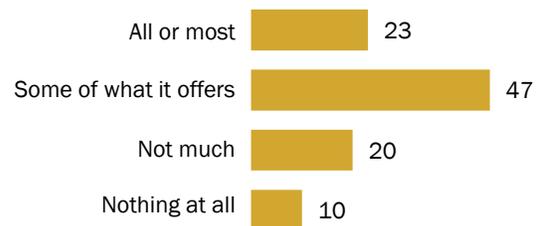
[6] Library Services in the Digital Age, Part 4: What people want from their libraries
http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/part-4-what-people-want-from-their-libraries/

How well-informed Americans ages 16+ say they feel about public library services, by age

Overall, how well-informed do you feel you are about the different services and programs your public library offers? Do you feel like you know…

		All or most	Some of what it offers	Not much	Nothing at all
a	**16-17**	21	39	26[cde]	14[d]
b	**18-29**	18	46	24[cde]	12[cd]
c	**30-49**	26[ce]	46	19	9
d	**50-64**	25[b]	49[ae]	18	8
e	**65+**	22[b]	45	18	13[cd]

Based on Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

How well-informed Americans ages 16+ say they feel about public library services, by race/ethnicity

Overall, how well-informed do you feel you are about the different services and programs your public library offers? Do you feel like you know…

		All or most	Some of what it offers	Not much	Nothing at all
a	**White**	24	47[d]	19	9
b	**Asian-American**	18	42	25	13
c	**Black**	22	53[abd]	17	8
d	**Hispanic**	20	41	24[ac]	13[ac]

Based on Americans ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

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How well-informed American adults ages 18+ feel about public library services, by education

Overall, how well-informed do you feel you are about the different services and programs your public library offers? Do you feel like you know…

		All or most	Some of what it offers	Not much	Nothing at all
a	Less than H.S.	16	43	22[d]	15[cd]
b	High school grad	20	44	22[d]	13[cd]
c	Some college	24[ab]	47	19	9[d]
d	College degree	27[ab]	51[ab]	16	5

Based on Americans ages 18+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,200)

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Americans say it is usually easy to find

We also asked those who have ever visited a public library in person how easy or difficult it usually is to find what they're looking for when they visit a public library. Most (56%) say it is generally "easy" to find what they're looking for, and an additional 35% say it is "very easy." Another 5% say it is "difficult," and 1% say it is "very difficult." In general, adults with higher levels of education, particularly college graduates, were more likely to say it is easy to find what they are looking for at the library.

Experiences at public libraries

Among those who have ever used a public library, 67% said that the public library nearest to where they live could be described as a "nice, pleasant space to be." Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to say their library is pleasant space: 74% of those 65 and older say this, compared with 61% of 16-17 year-olds.

In response to a separate question, an overwhelming majority of Americans who have ever used a public library (94%) said that based on their own experiences, they would say that "public libraries are welcoming, friendly place." Just 4% disagreed .

what they are looking for when they are at a public library

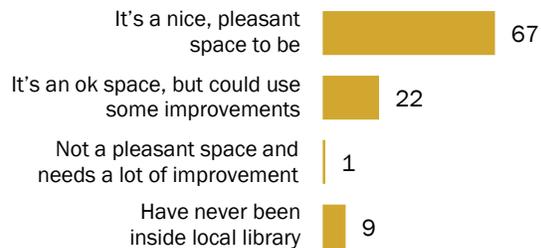|	
Very easy	35
Easy	56
Difficult	5
Very difficult	1
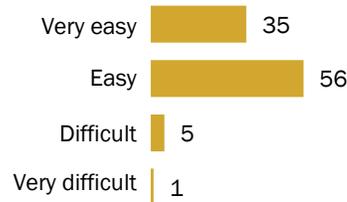
Based on ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

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Most describe local public library's physical condition positively

If you had to describe the physical condition of the public library nearest you, would you say...

It's a nice, pleasant space to be	67
It's an ok space, but could use some improvements	22
Not a pleasant space and needs a lot of improvement	1
Have never been inside local library	9

Based on ages 16+ who have ever used a public library (n=5,393)

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Similarly, 91% of those who have ever used a public library said that they personally have never had a negative experience using a public library in person or online, while 9% said they had. Some groups were more likely to report negative experiences, including 16-17 year-olds (14%) and students (12%). Self-employed respondents (17%), job seekers (13%), and those living with a disability (12%) were also more likely to say they have had a negative experience at a public library.

Survey Questions

Gates Libraries Typology Survey

Final Topline   10/2/2013

Q13   Do you have any physical or health conditions that make reading difficult or challenging for you?

	CURRENT	
%	16	Yes
	84	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

[READ TO ALL:] On a different topic...

EMINUSE Do you use the internet or email, at least occasionally?

INTMOB Do you access the internet on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile handheld device, at least occasionally?[7]

	USES INTERNET	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
Current	86	14
November 2012[8]	85	15
December 2011[9]	82	18

HOME3NW Do you ever use the internet or email at HOME?

Based on all internet users [N=5,320]

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current	90	10	*	*
November 2012	90	10	0	*

[READ TO ALL:] Next, I have some questions about public libraries. In answering these questions, please think only about public libraries, NOT school or university libraries.

Q17 Do you have a library card for a public library?[10]

	CURRENT		NOV 2012	DEC 2011
%	61	Yes	63	58
	39	No	36	42
	*	Don't know	*	*
	*	Refused	*	*

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[7] In November 2012, an internet user was someone said yes to any of three questions: INTUSE, EMLOCC or "Do you access the internet on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile handheld device, at least occasionally?" (INTMOB).

[8] November 2012 trends based on the Gates Library Services Survey, conducted October 15 – November 10, 2012 among those age 16 or older [N=2,252, including 1,125 cell phone interviews].

[9] December 2011 trends based on the Gates Reading Habits Survey 2011, conducted November 16–December 21, 2011 among those age 16 or older [n=2,986 people age 16+, including an oversample of 317 e-Reader only owners, 300 tablet computer only owners and 119 e-Reader/tablet computer owners].

[10] December 2011 question wording was: "Next, I have some questions about public libraries ...Do you have a library card?"

Q18 Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements about public libraries [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	72	24	2	2	1	*
b. Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	11	23	28	27	10	1
c. People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	22	31	20	26	1	*
d. Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	48	33	11	5	3	*
e. Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	77	19	2	2	1	*
f. Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	69	24	3	2	1	*

Q19 If you, personally, wanted to [INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER], would that be very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult for you?

	VERY EASY	EASY	DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Visit a public library in person	62	31	5	2	*	*
b. Use the website of a local public library	47	35	9	5	4	*

Q20 If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on... [INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER]?

	MAJOR IMPACT	MINOR IMPACT	NO IMPACT	(VOL.) COMMUNITY DOES NOT HAVE A PUBLIC LIBRARY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. You and your family	29	38	32	*	1	*
b. Your community as a whole	63	27	7	*	3	*

Q21 Have you, personally, EVER...[INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER], or is this something you've never done? [IF YES: Have you done this in the past 12 months?][11]

	TOTAL YES, HAVE DONE THIS	IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	NOT IN PAST 12 MONTHS	NO, HAVE NEVER DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Visited a public library or used a public library bookmobile IN PERSON						
Current	81	48	33	19	*	*
November 2012	84	53	30	16	*	0
b. Used a public library WEBSITE[12]						
Current	44	30	14	56	*	*
November 2012	39	25	14	61	*	*

Q22 How often do you visit public libraries or bookmobiles in person? Would you say... [READ 1-4][13]

Based on those who visited a public library in person in the past 12 months

	CURRENT		NOV 2012
%	14	At least once a week	15
	17	Several times a month	19
	26	At least once a month	28
	43	Less often	38
	*	(DO NOT READ) Don't know	*
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused	*
	[n=3,006]		[n=1,238]

Q23 How often do you use a public library website? Would you say... [READ 1-4][14]

Based on those who used a public library website in the past 12 months

	CURRENT		NOV 2012
%	10	At least once a week	12
	15	Several times a month	15
	23	At least once a month	27
	52	Less often	46

[11] In November 2012, follow-ups about the past 12 months were asked as separate questions later in the interview, rather than as immediate follow-up probes, as done for the current poll. Trend results shown here have been recalculated based on Total respondents.

[12] In November 2012, item wording was "Gone on a public library WEBSITE."

[13] Response categories in November 2012 were slightly different: "Every day or almost every day, at least once a week, several times a month, at least once a month or less often". Results shown here for "At least once a week" reflect combined trend results "every day or almost every day" and "at least once a week."

[14] November 2012 question wording and response categories were slightly different: "How often do you use a public library website, for any service? Would you say every day or almost every day, at least once a week, several times a month, at least once a month or less often?" Results shown here for "At least once a week" reflect combined trend results "every day or almost every day" and "at least once a week."

*	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
0	(DO NOT READ) Refused

[n=1,894]

*
*

[n=587]

Q24   Over the past five years, has your own use of the public library, either in-person or online, [READ 1-3; ROTATE 1-2]

Based on those who have ever used a public library [N=5,393]

CURRENT

%		
	25	Decreased
	16	Increased
	57	Stayed about the same
	1	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused

Q25   Does anyone else in your household ever visit a public library or bookmobile or use a public library website?

CURRENT

%		
	54	Yes, someone in household visits or uses library
	44	No one in household visits or uses library
	2	Don't know
	*	Refused

Q26 Thinking just about you and your family, how important, if at all, is each of the following library services? How about...[INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]? Is this very, somewhat, not too, or not at all important to you and your family?

Based on those who have ever used a public library or a household member ever uses the public library [N=5,661]

		VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a.	Access to free books and media	54	27	7	12	1	*
b.	Resources to do research for school or work	47	25	10	18	*	*
c.	Using the library's internet, computers or printers	33	25	14	26	1	1
d.	Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	51	24	9	15	*	*
e.	Programs or events for children or teens	45	24	9	21	1	*
f.	Programs or events for adults	28	30	17	24	1	*
g.	Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	29	24	14	30	3	1
h.	Help finding or applying for a job	30	21	14	32	2	1
i.	Getting help from a librarian finding information	44	32	9	13	1	*

Q27 Overall, how well-informed do you feel you are about the different services and programs your public library offers? Do you feel like you know...[READ 1-4][15]

Based on those who have ever used a public library

	CURRENT		NOV 2012
%	23	ALL or MOST of the services and programs your library offers	24
	47	SOME of what it offers	47
	20	NOT MUCH of what it offers	21
	10	Nothing at all	7
	1	(DO NOT READ) Don't know	1
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused	*
	[n=5,393]		[n=1,981]

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[15] November 2012 question was asked of Total respondents. Trend results shown here are based only on those who have ever used a public library.

Q28   Based on your own experiences, would you say... [READ AND ROTATE 1-2]

Based on those who have ever visited a public library in person [N=5,078]

CURRENT

%		
	94	Public libraries are welcoming, friendly places
	4	Public libraries are NOT welcoming and friendly places
	1	(DO NOT READ) Sometimes welcoming/friendly, sometimes not
	1	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused

Q29   Have you, personally, ever had a NEGATIVE experience using a public library, either in person or online?

Based on those who have ever used a public library [N=5,393]

CURRENT

%		
	9	Yes
	91	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

Q30   And in your experience, is it usually very easy, easy, difficult, or very difficult to find what you're looking for when you visit a public library?

Based on those who have ever visited a public library in person [N=5,078]

CURRENT

%		
	35	Very easy
	56	Easy
	5	Difficult
	1	Very difficult
	2	Don't know
	1	Refused

Q31   If you had to describe the physical condition of the public library nearest you, would you say... [READ 1-4]

Based on those who have ever used a public library [N=5,393]

CURRENT

%		
	67	It's a nice, pleasant space to be
	22	It's an okay space but could use some improvements
	1	It's not a pleasant space and needs a lot of improvement
	9	Have you never been inside your local library
	1	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused

Q32 Do you happen to know where the CLOSEST public library is to where you currently live, or are you not sure?

	CURRENT	
%	91	Yes, know where it is
	9	Not sure
	*	Refused

Q33 Approximately how many miles from your home is the closest public library? Would you say... [READ 1-4]

Based on those who know where their closest public library is located [N=5,726]

	CURRENT	
%	79	Five miles or less
	14	Six to 10 miles
	5	11 to 20 miles
	1	More than 20 miles away
	*	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
	*	(DO NOT READ) Refused

Q35 In the past 12 months, (has your child/have any of your children) visited a public library or bookmobile? Please do not include school libraries.

Based on parents of children under age 18

	CURRENT		NOV 2012
%	70	Yes	70
	29	No	29
	1	Don't know	2
	*	Refused	0
	[n=1,538]		[n=584]

Methods

Pew Research Center Library Survey

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International for the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

October 2013

Summary

The Pew Research Center Library Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 6,224 people ages 16 and older living in the United States. Interviews were conducted via landline (nLL=3,122) and cell phone (nC=3,102, including 1,588 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The interviews were administered in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source from July 18 to September 30, 2013[16]. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for results based on the complete set of weighted data is ±1.4 percentage points. Results based on the 5,320 internet users[17] have a margin of sampling error of ±1.5 percentage points.

Details on the design, execution and analysis of the survey are discussed below.

Design and data collection procedures

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications.

Numbers for the landline sample were drawn with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

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[16] Twenty-one pretest interviews conducted on July 18 and 19 were included in the final data file since no changes were made to the questionnaire. Full data collection started on July 22.

[17] Internet user is defined as those accessing the internet occasionally, sending or receiving email, and/or accessing the internet on a cell phone, tablet, or other mobile handheld device.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from July 18 to September 30, 2013. As many as 10 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Interviewing was spread as evenly as possible across the days in field. Each telephone number was called at least one time during the day in an attempt to complete an interview.

For the landline sample, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest male or female ages 16 or older currently at home based on a random rotation. If no male/female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest person age 16 or older of the other gender. This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender when combined with cell interviewing.

For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was age 16 or older and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular respondents were offered a post-paid cash reimbursement for their participation.

Weighting and analysis

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. The sample was weighted to match national adult general population parameters. A two-stage weighting procedure was used to weight this dual-frame sample.

The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns.[18] This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.

The first-stage weight for the ith case can be expressed as:

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[18] i.e., whether respondents have only a landline telephone, only a cell phone, or both kinds of telephone.

$$WT_i = \left[\left(\frac{S_{LL}}{F_{LL}} \times \frac{1}{AD_i} \times LL_i\right) + \left(\frac{S_{CP}}{F_{CP}} \times CP_i\right)\right.$$
$$\left. - \left(\frac{S_{LL}}{F_{LL}} \times \frac{1}{AD_i} \times LL_i \times \frac{S_{CP}}{F_{CP}} \times CP_i\right)\right]^{-1}$$

Where S_{LL} = the size of the landline sample

F_{LL} = the size of the landline sample frame

S_{CP} = the size of the cell sample

F_{CP} = the size of the cell sample frame

AD_i = Number of adults in household i

LL_i=1 if respondent has a landline phone, otherwise LL=0.

CP_i=1 if respondent has a cell phone, otherwise CP=0.

The second stage of weighting balances sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced to match national population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region (U.S. Census definitions), population density, and telephone usage. The Hispanic origin was split out based on nativity; U.S born and non-U.S. born. The White, non-Hispanic subgroup was also balanced on age, education and region.

The basic weighting parameters came from the US Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey data.[19] The population density parameter was derived from Census 2010 data. The telephone usage parameter came from an analysis of the July-December 2012 National Health Interview Survey.[20] [21]

Weighting was accomplished using Sample Balancing, a special iterative sample weighting program that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using a statistical technique called the *Deming Algorithm*. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population. Table 1 compares weighted and unweighted sample distributions to population parameters.

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[19] ACS analysis was based on all people ages 16 and older excluding those living in institutional group quarters (GCs).

[20] Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July-December, 2012. National Center for Health Statistics. June 2013.

[21] The phone use parameter used for this 16+ sample is the same as the parameter we use for all 18+ surveys. No adjustment was made to account for the fact that the target population for this survey is slightly different than a standard 18+ general population survey.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Gender			
Male	48.2	45.6	48.1
Female	51.8	54.4	51.9
Age			
16-24	15.2	13.5	15.7
25-34	17.0	11.7	16.7
35-44	16.9	12.8	16.5
45-54	18.4	16.7	18.2
55-64	15.8	19.6	15.8
65+	16.7	25.7	17.1
Education			
HS Graduate or Less	44.5	37.7	43.9
Some College/Assoc. Degree	29.8	26.2	29.5
College Graduate	25.7	36.1	26.6
Race/Ethnicity			
White/not Hispanic	66.3	71.1	66.6
Black/not Hispanic	11.5	11.2	11.6
Hisp - US born	7.5	6.5	7.5
Hisp - born outside	7.4	5.4	7.2
Other/not Hispanic	7.3	5.8	7.2
Region			
Northeast	18.1	16.5	17.7
Midwest	21.5	24.3	22.2
South	37.1	36.7	37.1
West	23.3	22.4	23.1
County Pop. Density			
1 - Lowest	19.9	24.1	20.3
2	20.0	20.5	20.2
3	20.1	21.3	20.2
4	20.0	18.3	19.8
5 - Highest	20.0	15.7	19.5
Household Phone Use			
LLO	6.5	4.9	6.0
Dual - few, some cell	35.9	50.7	36.7
Dual - most cell	18.3	18.7	18.5
CPO	39.3	25.7	38.8

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. PSRAI calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or deff represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from unequal weights. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.25.

PSRAI calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n, with each case having a weight, w_i as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i^{2}}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i \right)^{2}} \qquad formula\ 1$$

In a wide range of situations, the adjusted *standard error* of a statistic should be calculated by multiplying the usual formula by the square root of the design effect ($\sqrt{deff}$). Thus, the formula for computing the 95% confidence interval around a percentage is:

$$\hat{p} \pm \left(\sqrt{deff} \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right) \qquad formula\ 2$$

where $\hat{p}$ is the sample estimate and n is the unweighted number of sample cases in the group being considered.

The survey's *margin of error* is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample— the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ±1.4 percentage points. This means that in 95 out every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 1.4 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

Response Rate

Table 2 reports the disposition of all sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents

in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:[22]

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made[23]
- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 10 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 13 percent.

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[22] PSRAI's disposition codes and reporting are consistent with the American Association for Public Opinion Research standards.

[23] PSRAI assumes that 75 percent of cases that result in a constant disposition of "No answer" or "Busy" are actually not working numbers.

Sample Disposition

Landline	Cell	
116,709	61,496	Total Numbers Dialed
5,165	1,052	Non-residential
4,316	225	Computer/Fax
30	0	Cell phone
70,002	25,290	Other not working
5,084	497	Additional projected not working
32,113	34,432	Working numbers
27.5%	56.0%	Working Rate
1,695	166	No Answer / Busy
8,341	6,795	Voice Mail
116	50	Other Non-Contact
21,961	27,421	Contacted numbers
68.4%	79.6%	Contact Rate
843	3,543	Callback
17,666	19,219	Refusal
3,452	4659	Cooperating numbers
15.7%	17.0%	Cooperation Rate
204	228	Language Barrier
0	1,250	Child's cell phone
3,248	3,181	Eligible numbers
94.1%	68.3%	Eligibility Rate
126	78	Break-off
3,122	3,103	Completes
96.1%	97.5%	Completion Rate
10.3%	13.2%	Response Rate