

I. Research Proposal Cover Page

Title of Proposed Research Attracting and Retaining Non-users to Public Libraries	
Abstract Public libraries exist for the benefit of all people in a community but face the challenge of having a large segment of that community not use them. This is easily seen when comparing the population of an area to the number of people using a library. This study aims to find out who in the Orange County community is not using library resources and find out why they are not using their public library. The scope of the research includes offering an incentive for Orange County residents to complete a brief survey about their use or non-use and perspective of the public library. It is hoped that this study's findings will be used to inform and guide future efforts in programming, marketing, policy, and collection development in ways that will attract and retain current non-users of the OCLS community.	
Project Start Date 9/1/23	Project Completion Date 3/1/24
Amount Requested \$10,690	Proposal Submission Date 7/21/23
Principal Investigators' Names & Affiliations** Margaret Finley, Orange Crate Librarian Ivana Huq, YA Librarian Kimberly McGrath, Outreach Librarian Shannon Reid, Reference Librarian	

II. Statement of Need & Significance of Study

Needs Assessment

The purpose of a public library is to serve its community, and efforts are made to ensure that the library's offerings are relevant, up to date, and accessible to all. However, libraries can only serve the people who connect with them, and there are still many people in the Orlando community who do not make use of the library's offerings or only use library services to a limited extent. The aim of this study is to identify non-users who do not have a library card and therefore have only limited access to library offerings as well as cardholders who have not used their card in over a year. Once identified, they will be surveyed to determine their reasons for not using the library. That information can be used to identify ways the library can expand offerings, services, accessibility, change marketing, or change policy to be more attractive to potential users.

This is particularly important for the Orange County Library System (OCLS) as this work is a continuation of an initiative that started in 2022. During that time, a priority was set of breaking down barriers to service, and efforts to do so included setting up programs with the Farmworkers Association of Florida, the RCMA Zellwood Child Development Center, and Great Oaks Village, a foster home and shelter, to provide card access for people who would not normally have access to a library card. Access is imperative in the OCLS mission, and the rate of active cardholders is below the national average. In 2022, OCLS had 340,160 active cardholders (OCLS, 2022). Meanwhile, the population of Orange County is 1.45 million people (US Census, n.d.), which means that only 23% of the population are actively using library services, compared with the national average of 53% (Horrigan, 2016).

Literature Review

Previous research on the perceptions of non-users of public libraries regarding public libraries' services is limited. Little has been done within the past decade to explore this area, and much of what does exist has taken place abroad.

Even in the 1990s, it was recognized that advances in information and communication technologies were making it easier for people to meet their information needs online rather than relying on a library (Coker, 1993). Around this time, it was found that non-users were more likely to be conservative and prefer staying home to outdoor or social activities (Coker, 1993). Non-users were found to often share the same skills and needs as library users but may simply not have recognized the benefits of the library (Coker, 1993). Other cited factors for non-use of libraries included distance from a person's home to the library, unfriendly or incompetent staff, worn out collections, lack of separate areas for those who wish to study versus those who wish to talk and children's areas, lack of guidance for retrieving resources, and budget cuts reducing library hours (Coker, 1993).

International studies on non-user perceptions of public libraries provide diverse findings, suggesting that reasons for non-use of public libraries may vary a lot by location. A 2009 study using 54 respondents in nine focus groups in Drammen and Oslo, Norway found that non-users tended to have a more conservative view of the library (Evjen and Audunson, 2009). Reasons for not using the library included negative past experiences and a disconnect between materials held at the library and literary tastes (Evjen and Audunson, 2009). Both users and non-users stated that public libraries would require updates to stay relevant, and that the ability to use the library as a meeting space was important (Evjen and Audunson, 2009).

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Results of a 2021 study conducted in Namibia using needs assessment questionnaires, suggestion box forms, interviews, and observations from 586 respondents revealed that factors such as lack of space, untidiness, poor ventilation, irrelevant materials, unhelpful staff, location, poor Internet connection, and excessive noise caused dissatisfaction with library services (Lizazi-Mbanga and Mapulanga, 2021).

Studies conducted within the U.S. show a similar diversity of factors contributing to non-use of libraries. A comparison of two statewide Wisconsin surveys conducted in 2003 and 2007 revealed that of the 615 respondents, library users were more likely to be female, avid Internet and computer users, active voters, and younger than non-users (Morrill, 2007). The results of this study differ from the Norway survey in that when asked whether eight possible changes would cause a participant to use their library more, the non-users did not respond positively to any of the eight prompts (Morrill, 2007).

Distance from the library, age and school attendance status, use of other types of libraries, and public library expenditure per state capita were found to be relevant factors in an analysis of the U.S. Current Population Survey October 2002: Survey on School Enrollment/Library Use Survey and the Public Libraries Survey 2002 (Sin and Kim, 2008). This study also found that disadvantaged groups such as minorities, recent immigrants, and disabled persons were less likely to use the public library, even after factors such as education and income were held constant (Sin and Kim, 2008).

A ten-year collaboration between Ohio State University and Rutgers University with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and with Jisc, in collaboration with Oxford University and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte examined

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how librarians assist the public with services and resources that work in conjunction with the ways individuals, work, learn, and live, as well as the feasibility of doing so (Silipigni, 2015). Through extensive surveys and interviews, researchers found that with the emergence of modern technologies, some user behaviors have changed while some are constant, but convenience is the top factor in how people meet their information needs (Silipigni, 2015).

While the existing literature provides significant insight into potential factors affecting non-use of the public library, a current, local study is required to pinpoint the specific perceptions of the Orange County community towards the public library. In 2022, the Orange County Library System took the initiative to create a partnership with several organizations to ensure that those residents who worked and lived in the county- but did not have a verified address- could obtain their library card and have access to the library's resources. Based on Census data and the OCLS annual report, only 23% of Orange County residents currently have a library card. This percentage is lower than the national average, and even though the library's initiative of breaking down barriers to service helped to convert some non-users into active cardholders, there is still a need for research to be done on the topic of non-users.

Significance of Study

Daily, libraries face the issue of how to reach out to non-users and turn them into users. This research study will provide insight as to why some people are not using library resources. Findings will hopefully reveal actions that can be taken to turn these non-users into users. By knowing the reasons why, OCLS can accordingly adjust and plan their collections, programs, services, and spaces to attract non-users. With the completion of this study, actions can be taken to attract and retain the 77% of Orange County residents who do not have their library

card.

Research Goal and Research Questions

The ultimate goal of this study is to find out how OCLS can attract non-users to their facilities and services. To study this in-depth, the following research questions were developed:

1. What does the public think the primary functions of a public library should be, and how do these expectations align with their perception of what the library currently is?
2. What factors are preventing community members who do not currently have public library cards and cardholders who have not used their card in over a year from using the library?
3. What are the motivators and barriers to use of the public library which are things the library can address to encourage more active use in the community?

These questions combined will help in understanding what the public thinks their local library should be, why people are not using library services, and what OCLS can do to encourage more people to access the library, all of which are essential in understanding how to attract non-users.

III. Research Design

In preparation for this study, an IRB application will be submitted for approval. To conduct this research once IRB approval is obtained, OCLS will employ several avenues to collect surveys, both passive and active. For passive data collection, OCLS and the City of Orlando have an existing partnership of support, so OCLS will ask the city to include a link to the online survey in one of their upcoming email newsletters, to be scheduled at their convenience anytime within the 60-day timeframe of data collection. Additionally, OCLS will ask the city to

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make a paper version of this survey accessible at City Hall. An envelope will be left at City Hall for any completed surveys and an OCLS employee will call weekly to check in and determine if any completed surveys have been left there for pickup. OCLS will provide copies of the survey and the envelope for collection and replenish as needed. At least 100 surveys are expected to be completed through the email newsletter and at least 20 paper surveys will be completed at City Hall.

Active data collection will be scheduled with Questline, OCLS's internal hotline staff. This department receives calls and texts for information throughout the day but does have downtime. There are 9 people who are Questline Reference Assistants (QRAs) who will all be trained on making outgoing calls to collect interviews during their 5 shifts per week. Calculating an approximate 8-10 minutes to conduct each interview, each QRA will be asked to collect 2 interviews during each shift they work, during downtime between calls and other patron assistance. If time allows for additional interviews, QRAs have the option to do so. During the 60-day collection period, this should equal 720 completed interviews¹. Based on the average downtime for a QRA, 2 completed interviews per shift is a realistic and achievable goal. While all interview information will be captured and collected, priority evaluation of freeform answer analysis will be given to respondents classified as non-users. Non-users are expected to constitute approximately 50% of the completed surveys, per comparative surveys found in the literature review.

Data will be processed using the constant comparative method, by assigning codes to

¹Each QRA works 5 shifts per week. At 2 completed interviews per shift, 5 shifts per week, and 8 weeks of data collection, the 9 employees should equal 720 completed interviews. [2 interviews x 5 shifts= 10 per week, 10 per week x 8 weeks =80 per person, 80 completed interviews per QRA x 9 QRAs conducting interviews = 720.]

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the answers to freeform survey questions to identify repeated concepts and categories throughout the responses. Related categories will be grouped together to identify major themes in the responses.

IV. Project Resources

Personnel

During the process of data collection, there will be three groups of personnel involved. The QRAs will be collecting interviews; the Circulation clerks will be following up with City Hall for collection of paper surveys and transferring paper survey responses to the online form; and the four librarians that make up the research committee will be analyzing the data and sharing results with the Board of Trustees, the CEO, and the department heads and managers. Librarians will periodically review results in a constant comparative method, meeting weekly to identify themes, assess if the data collection is on track, and make adjustments as needed.

When the data collection window has concluded, a full review and analysis will begin.

Personnel hours are estimated to be minimal over the course of data collection. For QRAs, 240 hours over 8 weeks for 9 employees is estimated for this task. Circulation clerks will place one call per week and input completed surveys, with an estimated 20 hours over the course of data collection. Librarians performing data analysis are expected to use 32 hours of time during the data collection process and a probable 60-75 hours beyond that for continued data analysis and reports.

Time

The project is estimated to take a minimum of six months. Data collection will take place over a period of 60 days. While the data is being collected, it will also be reviewed and analyzed

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according to the constant comparative method. Every week, the team of librarians will meet to assess and examine the data. Once all the data has been collected, the team of librarians will study the results over three months. After the three months, three weeks will be spent drafting a report which will be submitted to the Director of OCLS, the Board of Trustees, the CEO, and the department heads and managers. as well as other stakeholders. Within a week of that, a copy of the report will be made available online on the OCLS website for the public to view.

Budget

For this research, OCLS will purchase a list of 6,000 phone contacts for the area of Orange County, Florida from ExactData, at a cost of \$1010 (Amanda, personal communication, June 30, 2023). This list will be used by the Questline department to make outbound calls to collect interviews.

Personnel costs will be minimal, as QRAs will use existing downtime to make the outbound phone interview calls, circulation clerks will have City Hall check-in calls added to their list of duties, and the librarians reviewing the research will reprioritize their time to allow for the weekly meetings of data review. No overtime will be used for this project. QRAs make \$19.00 per hour, so their cost for 240 hours will be \$4,560. Circulation clerks make \$17.10 per hour, so their cost for 20 hours will be \$342. Librarians make \$60,000 per year, which equates to \$28.85 per hour. The librarians' cost for 107 hours will be \$3,089. The total cost for these personnel equals \$8,000.

The incentive given to participants will be one free book, valued at up to \$2, from the library's book sale selections. Participants will be emailed a code that will be redeemable at any of the Orange County Library branches. The Friends of the Library would be asked to provide

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these incentive books and a notice would be sent to all library staff notifying them about the redeemable incentive “coupons.” At \$2 per incentive for the estimated 840 completed surveys, the total for all incentives would come to \$1,680.

The total cost for this study including the list of 6,000 phone numbers, personnel costs, and incentives for study participants equals \$10,690. 

References

- Coker, S. (1993, February 1). Libraries versus users? How and how not to deter library users. *Library management*, 14(2), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000000844>
- Connaway, L. S. (2015). *The Library in the Life of the User: Engaging with People Where They Live and Learn*. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research. <https://doi.org/10.25333/C3SP9X>
- Evjen, S., & Audunson, R. (2009). The complex library: Do the public's attitudes represent a barrier to institutional change in public libraries? *New Library World*, 110(3), 161-174. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800910941356>
- Lizazi-Mbanga, B., & Mapulanga, P. (2021, August 24). Factors that influence attitudes to and perceptions of public libraries in Namibia: User experiences and non-user attitudes. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, 87(2), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.7553/87-2-1968>
- Morrill, J. (2007). The Wisconsin library user (and non-user) II: Outcomes of a second statewide survey (2003 – 2007 comparisons) [Data set]. *Morrill Solutions Research*. https://wplc.info/sites/wplc.info/files/Wisconsin_Library_User_2003-2007.pdf
- Orange County Library System (2022). *Annual Report 2021-2022*. www.ocls.info/sites/default/files/AnnualReport_2022.pdf
- Horrigan, J. B. (2016, September 9). *Libraries 2016*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/09/09/libraries-2016/>
- Sin, S.C. J., & Kim, K.-S. (2008). Use and non-use of public libraries in the information age: A logistic regression analysis of household characteristics and library services variables. *Library & Information Science Research*, 30(3), 207-215. Doi: 10.1016/j.lisr.2007.11.008. https://sinscj.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sin_and_Kim-Use_and_non-use_of_public_libraries.pdf

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US Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Quick facts Orange County Florida*. www.Census.gov/quickfacts/orangecountyflorida

Member Contributions

- Margaret Finley:
 - Starting the abstract
 - Writing the Needs Assessment
 - Locating and summarizing the following 2 sources for Literature Review
 - Morrill, J. (2007). The Wisconsin library user (and non-user) II: Outcomes of a second statewide survey (2003 – 2007 comparisons) [Data set]. *Morrill Solutions Research*. https://wplc.info/sites/wplc.info/files/Wisconsin_Library_User_2003-2007.pdf
 - Clark, L. and Zickuhr, K. (2012, October 4). What can libraries learn from new users (and non-users!) e-reading data from the Pew Internet Project? [Conference presentation]. Library 2.012 Convention. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2012/10/04/what-can-libraries-learn-from-new-user-and-non-user-e-reading-data-from-the-pew-internet-project/>
 - Not included in final literature review, but contributed to our group's understanding of past studies
 - Creating the following questions:
 - What purpose do you think the library should serve in/for your community?
 - What would you like to see in our expanding Library of Things for checkout?
 - What would you prefer libraries refer to you as users?
 - What are the other reasons you do not use the library?
 - If you had a past unpleasant experience at the library, please describe it.
 - (Adding options to some questions, specific to Orange Co Library)
 - Caught error in Significance of Study
 - Caught errors in using personal pronouns throughout paper
 - Writing the Personnel and Budget section for Draft 2
 - Writing the Script (Narration) for the Presentation for slides 1,2,3,4
 - Editing Draft 2 to fix source citation issue.
- Ivana Huq:
 - Adding a couple of sentences to the Abstract
 - Writing the Significance of Study
 - Organizing References/Sources into APA format
 - Locating and summarizing the following sources for Literature Review
 - Sin, S.C.J., & Kim, K.-S. (2008). Use and non-use of public libraries in the information age: A logistic regression analysis of household characteristics and library services variables. *Library & Information Science Research*, 30(3), 207-215. Doi: 10.1016/j.lisr.2007.11.008. https://sinsci.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sin_and_Kim-Use_and_non-use_of_public_libraries.pdf
 - Evjen, S., & Audunson, R. (2009). The complex library: Do the public's attitudes represent a barrier to institutional change in public libraries? *New Library World*, 110(3), 161-174. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800910941356>

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- Writing and formatting the member contributions section
- Creating and editing the Google Forms doc survey to submit to the professor, writing the introduction/description of the survey, adding the survey to the appendix
 - Creating the following questions
 - What services do you use the library for?
 - What is the main reason you do not go to the library?
 - What services do you want to see your library provide?
- Writing the beginning sentence, last sentence, and the following questions- “What does the public think a library should be?” of the Research Goal/Questions section
- Editing Survey for Draft 2 as recommended by the professor
- Adding the sentence about survey incentives in Budget section (as group decided in meeting)
- Writing the Time section of Draft 2
- Adding the revised Survey to Appendix for Draft 2
- Editing Project Resources slide to add info about personnel, time, and budget
- Writing the narration for Introduction for Presentation, writing the narrations for Project Resources section in Presentation, writing narrations for conclusion slide in the Presentation.
- Copying Shannon’s suggested narration for Lit Review and Sig. of Study from group Discussion section to Presentation
- Copying Margaret’s narrations from Discussions section of Group to Presentation.
- Narrating slides 5-7 of Presentation
- Re-doing narration for Slide 6 to reflect changes in Draft
- Writing note to play audio in Slide 1 of presentation.
- Kimberly McGrath:
 - Locating and summarizing the following sources for Literature Review
 - Fernández-Ardèvol, M., Ferran-Ferrer, N., Nieto-Arroyo, J., & Fenoll, C. (2018). The public library as seen by the non-users. *El Profesional de La Informacion*, 27(3), 659–670. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2018.may.19>
 - Not included in final literature review, but contributed to our group’s understanding of past studies
 - Sbaffi, L., & Rowley, J. (2015). Public libraries and non-users: A comparison between Manchester and Rome. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 47(2), 104–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000613503679>
 - Not included in final literature review, but contributed to our group’s understanding of past studies
 - Connaway, L. S. (2015). The Library in the Life of the User: Engaging with People Where They Live and Learn. *Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research*. <https://doi.org/10.25333/C3SP9X>
 - Gathering secondary sources
 - Creating meeting links for the group meetings
 - Ongoing editing
 - Creating the following demographic questions:
 - Do you reside in Orange County?
 - How would you describe your gender identity?

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- What category includes your age?
- What is your ethnicity?
- How many people (including yourself) live in your household?
- Are there children under 18 in the household?
- If you have children under 18, what are their ages?
- What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- What is your current marital status?
- What is your current employment status?
- Which category includes your total household income?
- Creating the PowerPoint presentation slides, adding Research Questions slide and making edits to Presentation
- Shannon Reid:
 - Writing the Literature Review
 - Locating and summarizing the following sources:
 - Coker, S. (1993, February 1). Libraries versus users? How and how not to deter library users. *Library management*, 14(2), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000000844>
 - Lizazi-Mbanga, B. & Mapulanga, P. (2021, August 24). Factors that influence attitudes to and perceptions of public libraries in Namibia: User experiences and non-user attitudes. *South African Journal of Library and Information Science*, 87(2), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.7553/87-2-1968>
 - Pasting Ivana's APA format citations from the Member Contributions section into the References section
 - Creating the following questions for the survey:
 - Under "What are some of the services that you use the library for?", adding an option for "I never use the library."
 - Are you aware of the existence of your local public library?
 - How often do you use the public library?
 - How could your public library improve?
 - Drafting Research Questions (agreed upon by all members)
 - Revising Draft 1 based on Dr. Andrews' comments
 - Adding IRB submission info to Research Design section
 - Adding coding results processing info to Research Design section
 - Adding estimated completed surveys from City Hall and email newsletter to Research Design section
 - Adding total cost for incentives to Budget section
 - Adding personnel salaries and total cost to Budget section
 - Grammar and format editing of multiple sections and overall document
 - Editing slides, adding sources, and adding personnel costs for Presentation
 - Narrating slides 1-4 of Presentation

Appendix- Survey Questionnaire

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LIS6271 Public 3 Survey Design

LIS6271 Public 3 Survey Design

We are a public library located in Orange County, Orlando, Florida. We are interested in learning more about non-users of the library and finding out what we can do to attract them. These questions have been developed by a team of librarians who have been tasked with researching this study. Please note that all survey responses will remain anonymous. Information collected from this survey will be reviewed and analyzed in order to best adapt our library to suit the needs of both users and non-users of the public library. If you have any questions, or if you would like to see a copy of the research study once it is completed, please feel free to email ihuq@usf.edu or contact any of our researchers.

1. Do you reside in Orange County?

Mark only one oval.

- Part of the year
 Year round
 No

2. How would you describe your gender identity?

Mark only one oval.

- Male
 Female
 Nonbinary
 Prefer not to answer
 Other: _____

3. Which category indicates your age?

Mark only one oval.

- 18 and younger
 18-55
 55 and over

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4. What is your ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Asian- Eastern
- Asian- South/Southeast
- Hispanic
- Black
- Native American
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

5. Are there children under 18 in your household?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

6. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Mark only one oval.

- Master's degree or above
- Bachelor's degree
- High school diploma/GED
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

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LIS6271 Public 3 Survey Design

7. What is your current employment status?

Mark only one oval.

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Disabled
- Retired
- Prefer not to answer

8. Which category includes your total household income?

Mark only one oval.

- Under \$50,000
- Over \$50,000

9. Are you aware of all 15 public library locations around the county?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

10. How often do you use the public library?

Mark only one oval.

- Daily
- Once or more per week
- Once or more per month
- Never

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11. What are some of the services that you use the library for? (You may choose more than one service.)

Check all that apply.

- Checking out books and materials
 - Attending programs such as storytimes, crafts, book clubs
 - To have a space to study or work
 - To use the computer or printer
 - To check out a wireless hotspot for use at home
 - To have a place to read books
 - To read the newspapers and magazines
 - To pick up tickets from the Local Wanderer program
 - To use the children's area
 - To use the Young Adult/Teen area
 - To ask reference questions/find out information about a topic from a librarian
 - To use meeting rooms for meetings or as private study space
 - To use the Melrose Center (video production studio, audio production studio, simulators, etc)
- (Makerspace)
- To shop in the Friends of the Library bookstore
 - To meet with the social worker on staff
 - To do genealogy research at the West Oaks branch
 - To get a passport
 - To use the Brainfuse service for free online tutoring
 - I never use the library,
 - Other: _____

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12. What is the main reason you don't go to the library?

Mark only one oval.

- The library does not have material that I'm interested in
- The library is too far for me
- I don't have transportation
- The library intimidates me
- I've had a bad past experience at the library
- I don't like the location
- I use another library (school, neighboring county)
- I buy my own books and materials
- I'm not aware of any services the library provides that I would use
- Other: _____

13. What are other reasons you don't go to the library? (You may choose more than one reason.)

Check all that apply.

- The library does not have material that I'm interested in
- The library is too far from me
- I don't have transportation
- I've had a bad past experience at the library
- I don't like the location
- I use another library (school, neighboring county)
- I buy my own books and materials
- I'm not aware of any services the library provides that I would use

14. If you've had a negative experience at the library, please describe the encounter.

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15. Are you satisfied with your public library services? Please explain.

16. What services do you want to see your library provide?

17. How could your public library improve?

18. When referring to you, what designation would you prefer the library use?

Mark only one oval.

- Patron
- Customer
- User
- Other: _____

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19. What purpose do you think the library should serve in/for your community? (Check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- Research facility
- Entertainment
- Community connection
- Resource access
- Other: _____

20. How often do you talk about the library with your friends and family?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Sometimes
- A few times
- Never

21. How often to do repost from or engage with the library social media?

Mark only one oval.

- All of the time
- Sometimes
- A few times
- Never

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LIS6271 Public 3 Survey Design

22. What would you like to see in our expanding Library of Things for checkout? (You may choose more than one selection.)

Check all that apply.

- Sewing machines
- Canning supplies
- Chess sets
- iPads
- Crafting kits
- Karaoke Machine
- D&D sets
- Birdwatching sets
- Other: _____

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