



Richland Community Library Learning Report

November 2021

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Community Overview & Context

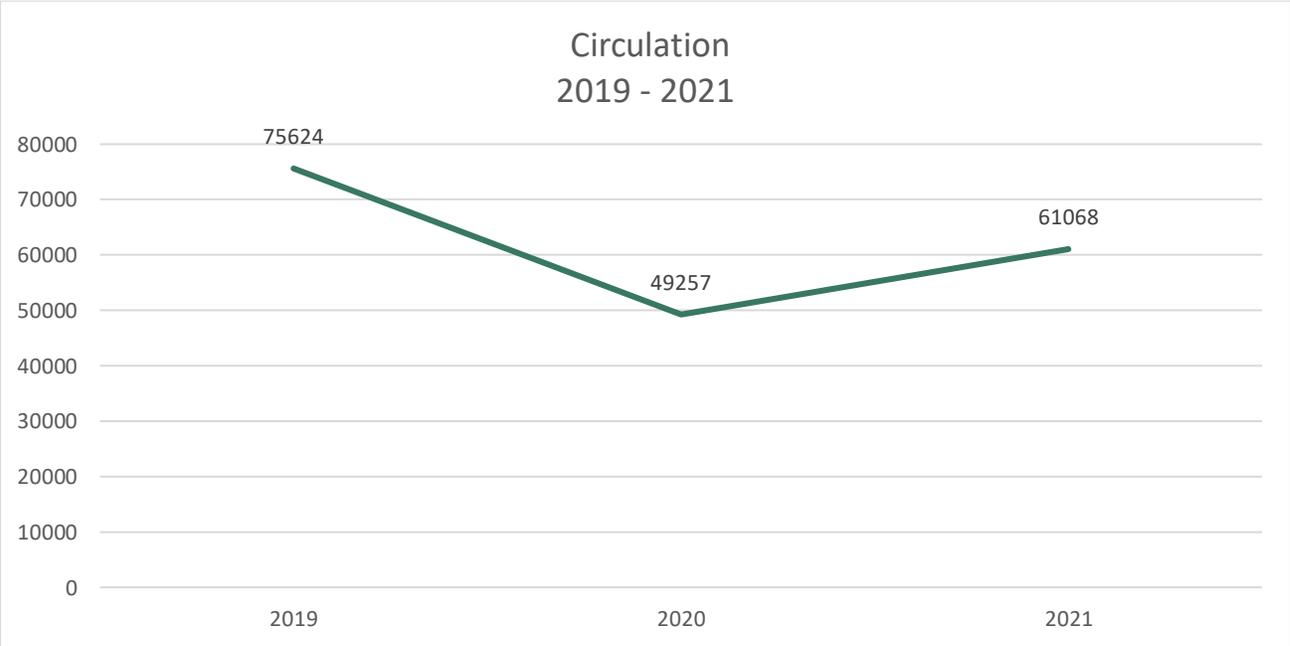
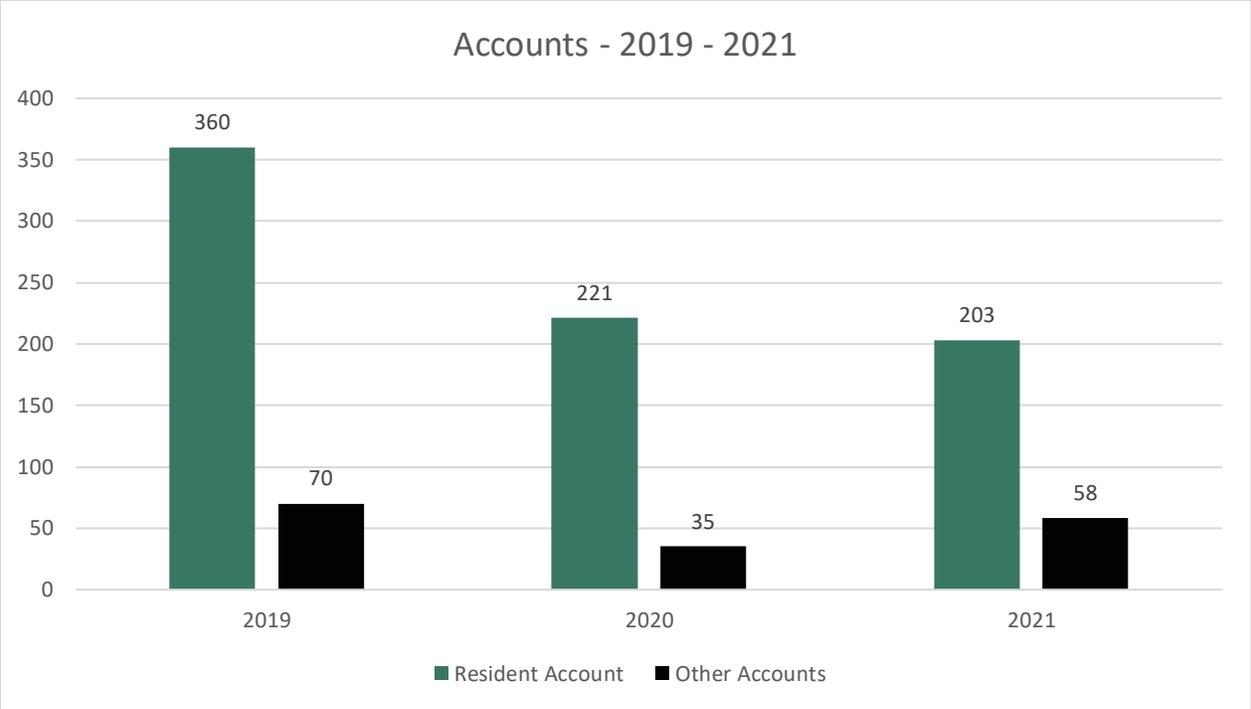
The Richland Community Library is located in the Village of Richland, a town tucked among fertile prairie in Richland Township, part of Kalamazoo County, Michigan. Richland Township sits 8 miles outside of the City of Kalamazoo in Southwest Michigan. What is now the Village of Richland, was originally founded in 1830, as settlers displaced the Potawatomi tribe. Today the village is known for its peaceful living, recreation and school systems.

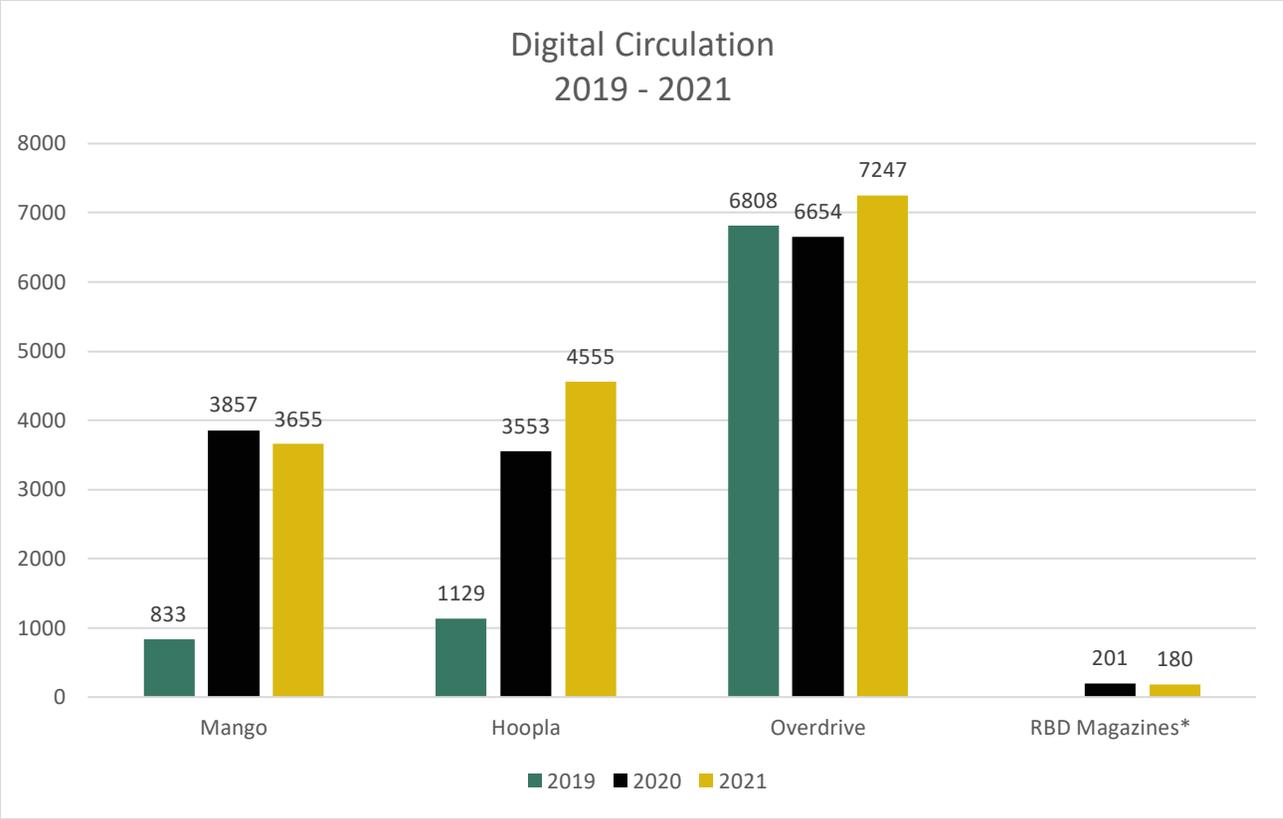
RCL serves a population of 8,693 in Richland Township according to the 2020 census. The Village of Richland has 946 residents. The library had 3,503 registered cardholders and a total circulation of 59,258. The library was visited 34,016 times and the library's website was visited 75,798 times. The collection size was 53,917, with 13,331 digital items, including eBooks, audio recordings, and downloadable/streaming movies. The library also offered 47 virtual and recorded programs.

The effects of the pandemic on library services shows when comparing data from the previous year. From FY 19-20 to FY 20-21, the library saw visits to the physical library decrease by around 18,000, but the website visits increased by over 30,000. To respond to the needs of the community, RCL increased its digital resource collection from 10,684 items to 13,331.

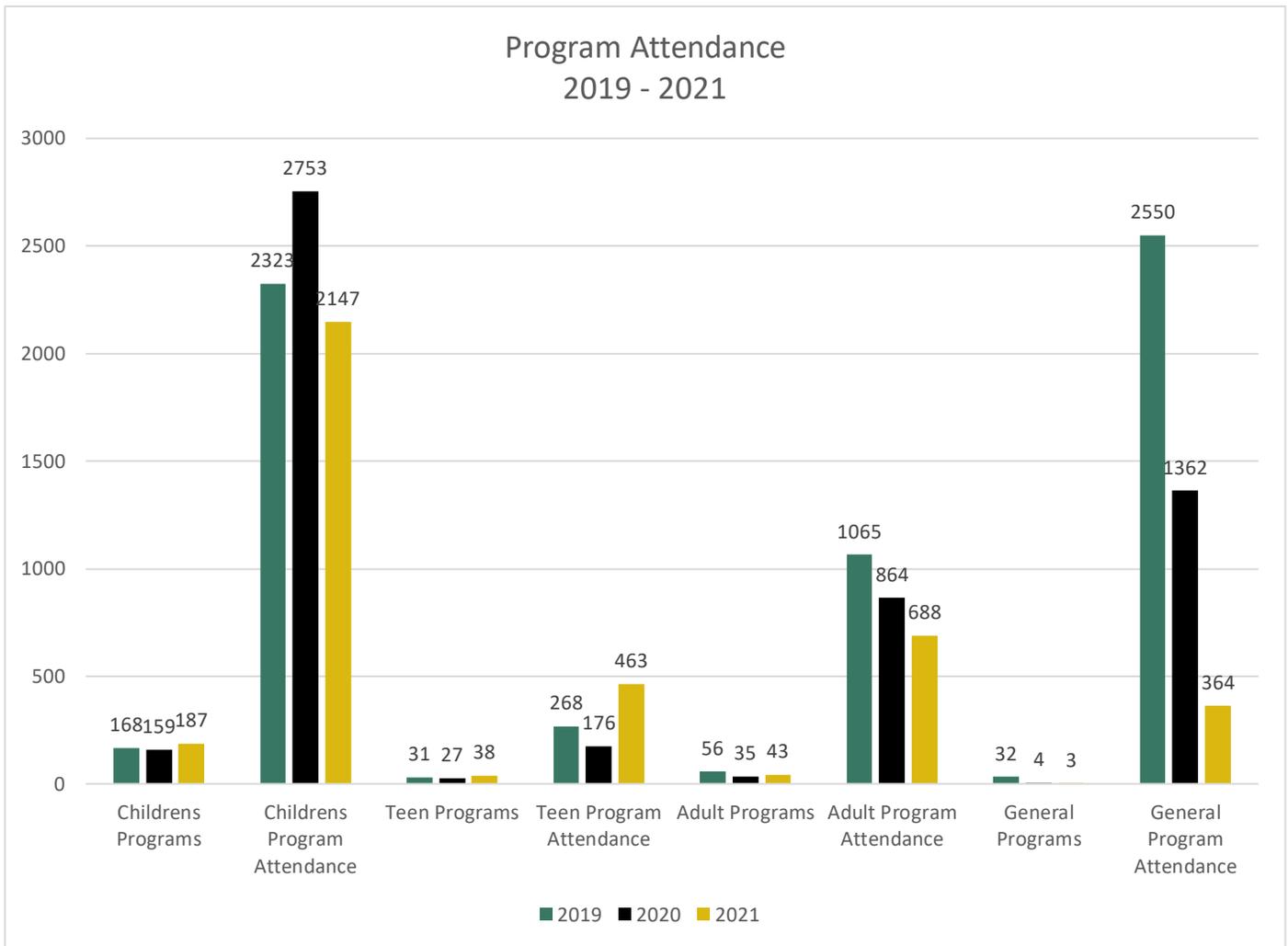
While program numbers and attendance were understandably down in 2020, the 2021 numbers show that there is an appetite for library programs and that pre-pandemic levels of service and attendance are attainable.

The below charts show trends in library usage between 2019 and 2021.





*RBD Magazines was added in June 2020.



Census data from the Richland Township and the Village of Richland indicates that it is an economically healthy area with a population that skews older (40.3, 48.3 years) than the state and national averages (39.7, 38.5). The median income in Richland Township is \$87,008 and in Richland Village \$74,219. Homeownership is very high at 82.4% and 84% respectively.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population	328,239,523	9,965,265	8,220	772
Median Age	38.5	39.7	40.3	48.3
Median Household Income	\$ 62,843	\$57,144	\$87,008	\$74,219
Homeownership	64.10%	71.20%	82.4%	84.00%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied)	\$ 217,500	\$ 154,900	\$217,900	\$ 184,100
Below Poverty Level	13.40%	14.4%	8.8%	7.9%
Average Household Size	2.62	2.47	2.59	2.21
Average Family Size	3.23	3.07	3.12	2.79

These economic indicators are not surprising given the community’s high level of education on average. Close to 80% of the population have “some college” in their background, and 50.4% of residents in Richland Township, 46.5% in Richland Village, have a bachelors, graduate or professional degree.

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population 25 years and older	220,622,076	6,813,480	5,425	560
Less than 9th Grade	5.1%	2.9%	1.2%	0.0%
9th-12th Grade, no diploma	6.9%	6.3%	2.8%	2.7%
HS or Equivalent	27.0%	28.9%	17.0%	12.5%
Some College	20.4%	23.4%	18.6%	25.4%
Associates Degree	8.5%	9.4%	9.9%	13.0%
Bachelors Degree	19.8%	17.7%	29.8%	27.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12.4%	11.4%	20.6%	18.8%

The unemployment rates in Richland Township and Richland Village are significantly low at .9% and .8%. This is probably due to the level of education and also the number of retirees in the community.

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	5.6%	.9%	.8%

Diversity data shows that the population is mostly white.

US CENSUS	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Total Population	328,239,523	10,077,331	8693	946
White alone	61.63%	73.88%	85.63%	92.28%
Black or African American alone	12.40%	13.66%	4.36%	1.37%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.12%	0.61%	0.37%	1.16%
Asian alone	6%	3.32%	1.68%	1.16%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	.21%	0.03%	0.03%	0.00%
Some Other Race alone	8.42%	2.20%	1.31%	0.85%
Two or More Races	10.21%	6.30%	6.61%	3.17%

As the 48.3 average age of Richland Village hints towards, there is almost double the amount of people over 65+ in that community versus the state and national average. Richland Township

has only slightly more people over 65% than the national average, and many more school aged children than Richland Village.

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
65 to 69 years	5.3%	5.6%	9.1%	8.7%
70 to 74 years	4.3%	4.2%	4.0%	5.6%
75 to 79 years	3.0%	2.9%	2.6%	5.1%
80 to 84 years	1.9%	2.0%	2.6%	5.1%
85 years and over	1.9%	2.1%	1.0%	4.9%
Total over age 65	16.4%	16.8%	19.3%	29.4%

Around a third of people in Richland Village live alone, with a large portion being age 65+. In Richland Township, fewer people live alone than the national, state and village average.

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Householder Living Alone	27.9%	29.6%	24.3%	33.0%
65+ Householder Living Alone	11%	11.9%	10.3%	20.3%

Additional demographic data can be found in the Appendix of this report.

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan considers the broader context in which an organization exists and identifies key issues that potentially impact the future of the organization. To kick off the Library’s strategic planning process, elements of the environmental scan were identified during sessions with staff and library board members in September 2021 and are summarized below.

- **Political:** Political polarization has caused concerns regarding community division and opposition to library COVID policies. Patrons seem antagonistic towards each other, and environments feel unstable and exhausting. The library must consider working with the local community and government for increased library funding.
- **Economic:** Economic inequality came up multiple times in discussions. There’s a disconnect between workers and employers in the community, creating both unemployment and unfilled jobs. Supply chain issues due to COVID are affecting patrons. There may be budget cuts to community institutions, including the library. Inflation has created challenges for many people. The Richland area leans towards fiscally conservative.
- **Social:** There is division in the Richland community, especially in the school district. Kids need access to technology and safe places to go after school. During the COVID-19 pandemic people have become more isolated, and children have had their education

disrupted. Now people want both online and in-person library services and programming. There's also a need for ensuring viewpoints are balanced in the collection to fit the diverse outlooks of the community.

- **Technological:** The cost of technology creates a digital divide among the community and also makes library budgeting challenging as technology constantly evolves. There is an increased demand for digital services at Richland. A lot of people are using the library for WIFI access.
- **Legal:** The library must continue to consider first amendment rights, privacy rights, intellectual property rights, and copyright law, particularly how these rights and laws shift are complicated with technological change and government regulation. Public Health mandates related to the pandemic must be integrated into the everyday activities of the library. The library must also consider local elections and tax laws and how that affects their community and the institution.
- **Library Sector:** Libraries generally have been investing in more updated technology and loaning out a variety of digital devices. Due to the pandemic, many libraries offered STEM kits or craft kits for kids to learn new skills at home. They have also been building "Library of Things" initiatives that loan out tools and other items. Many libraries have gone fine-free to increase usage. Because many people have access to technology and digital media from home, libraries have become spaces where people expect to socialize in an aesthetically pleasing environment with amenities like coffee shops.

SOAR Analysis

A SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) narrows the focus from an environmental scan to consider the organization specifically. This exercise helps identify potential directions to explore during the strategic planning process. SOAR elements were identified during sessions with staff and library board in September 2021 and are summarized below.

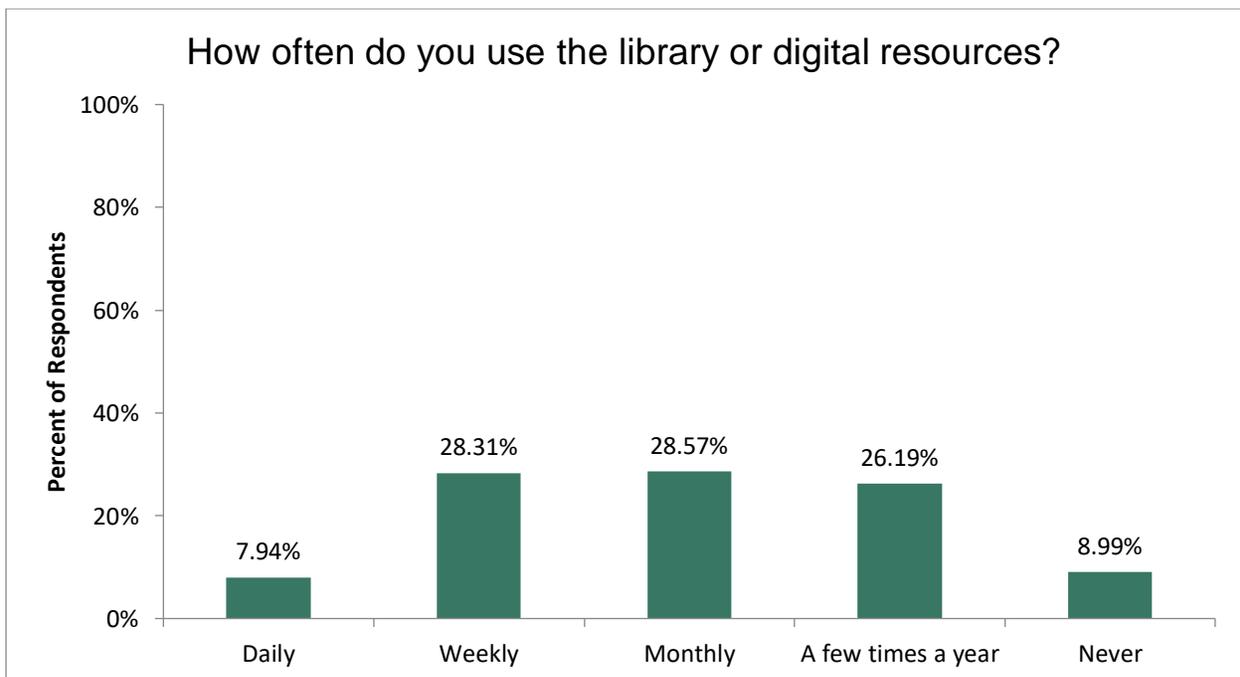
- **Strengths:** The library's programming is highly regarded, particularly the children's programming. Staff are friendly, knowledgeable, and responsive to patrons. The library has built deep connections within the community at large, thanks in part to strong outreach efforts and a committed Friends of the Library group. The library is great at getting materials and new releases. The location is central to the community and RCL's social media strategies are strong.
- **Opportunities:** The library could benefit from more staff, longer hours, and more space. Room for coffee nook, meeting spaces, a technology lab, a teen space, remote work/study rooms might increase usage of the library by certain groups. The library could align their software offerings with what schools are using and also offer one-on-one tech support. Many patrons don't know about interlibrary loan, so increasing awareness about this program and others through social media, library tours, and other

methods would be helpful. The library could offer more free programming and specialized programming for seniors.

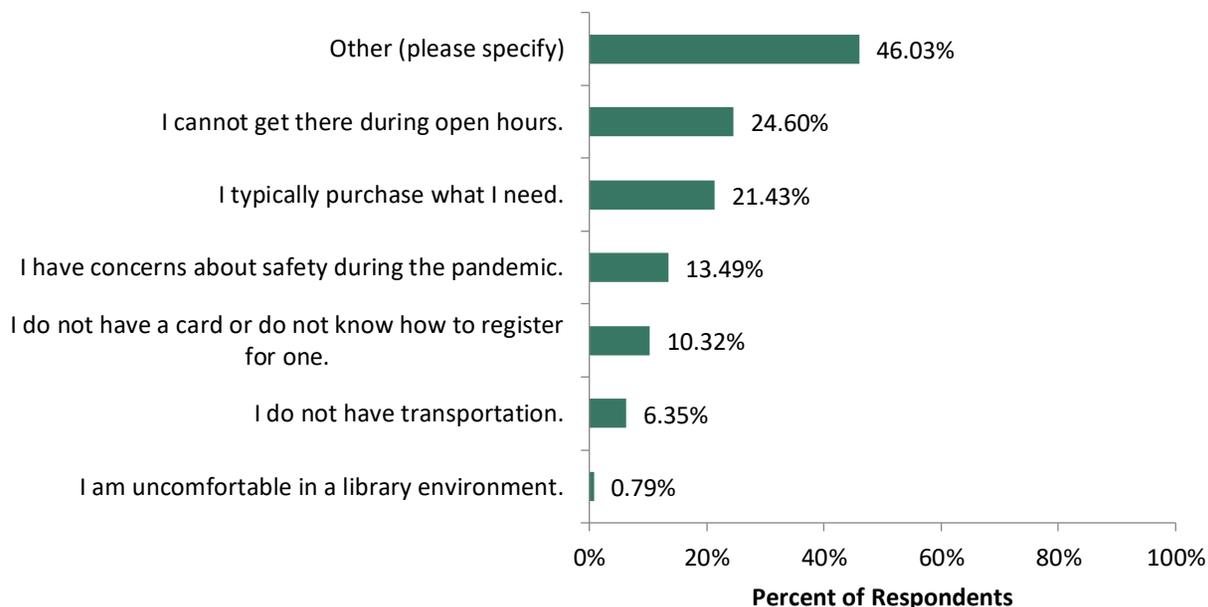
- **Aspirations:** Become a community center where people feel welcome and in which community members want to invest. Increase awareness about resources at the library and within the community. Keep people engaged throughout their lifetimes—everyone has a library card!—by being responsive to community needs. Create partnerships to expand impact and increase services to teens and non-English speakers.
- **Results:** If the library can achieve its goals, the library will become a community center and “safe space” that the community will want to invest in it. Increases in circulation, knowledge of the library, and staff will indicate a strong fiscal and social position. The community will feel more unified, and more people will become involved with the library’s mission.

Community Survey

As part of their strategic planning process, the Richland Community Library (RCL) conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about current and future collection, services, programs, and facilities. The survey was broadly distributed through the library’s website, direct email to patrons, and social media platforms. In addition, a print version of the survey was available at the library. A total of 383 individuals completed the survey.



If you do not use the library or its resources, help us understand why. (Check all that apply.)

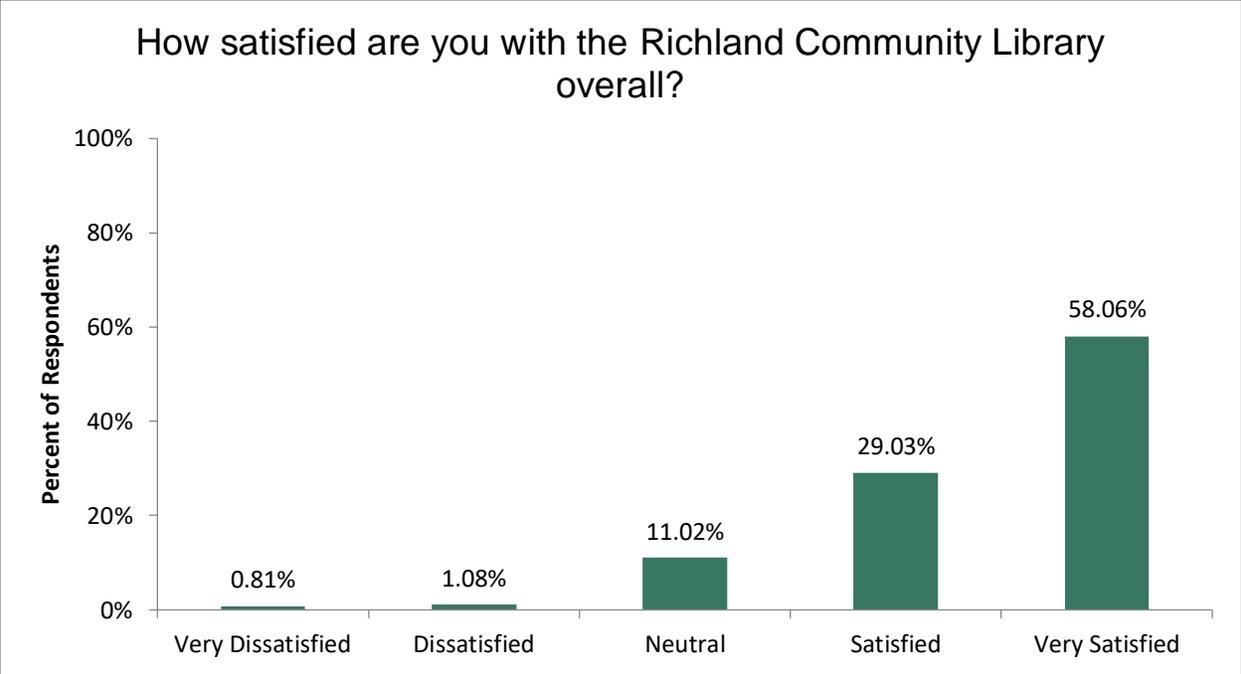


Other reasons you do not use the library or its resources:

- Limited hours of operation; unsure of location; appointment required; it is a challenge keeping track of hours and restrictions right now; and getting a card required payment of ex-spouse's late fees
- COVID impacted visits; care giver unable to leave home; and protective parents
- Limited selection; nothing of interest; outdated collections; checkout limits; and purchased own materials (physical and digital)
- Not enough time; too busy; forget; not always in town; and moved out of the area
- Not a fan of books or reading; library is perceived as boring; no positive experiences with the librarians;

FINDINGS:

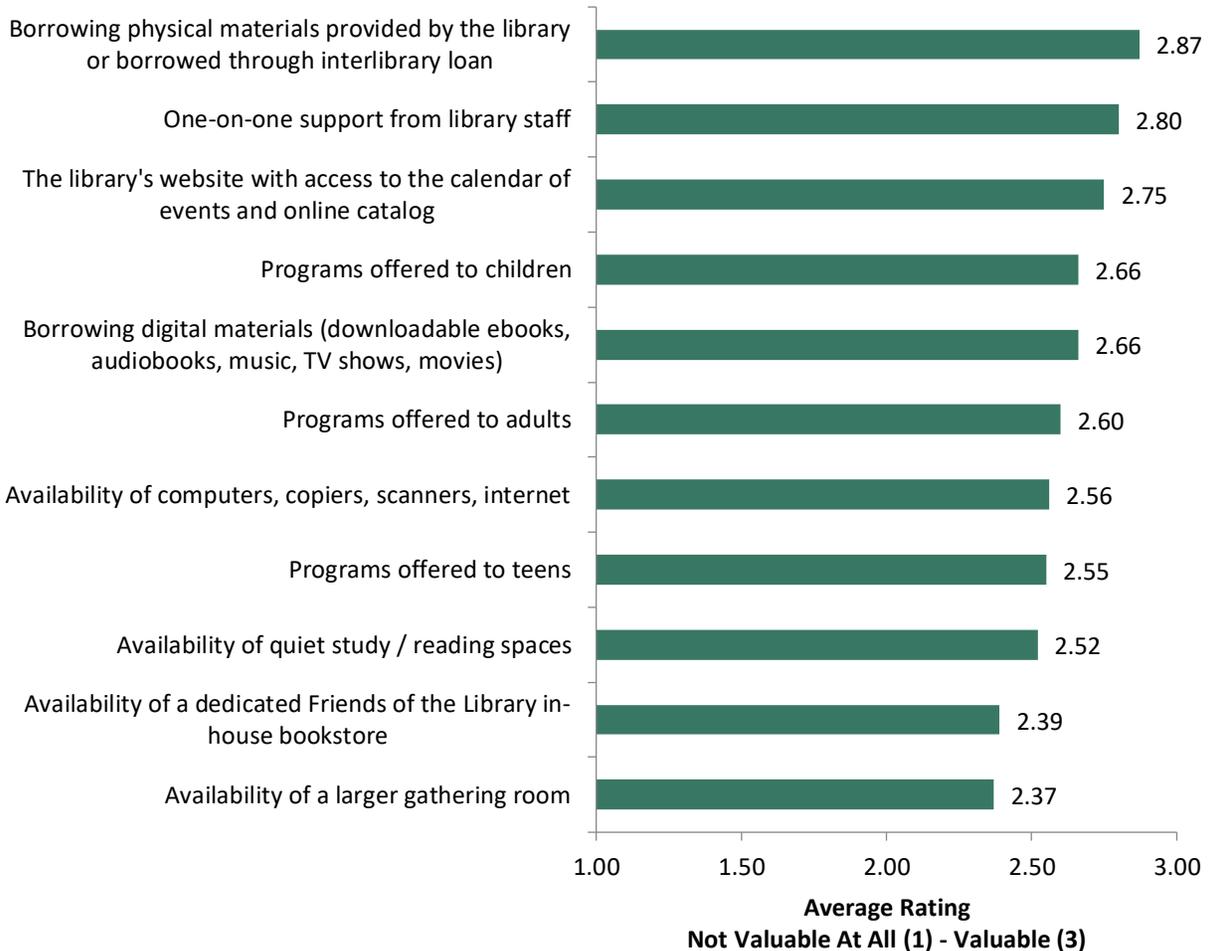
- Over one-third of respondents (36%) use the library or digital resources as least weekly, which may be the result of COVID restrictions on the hours of operation. Nearly two-thirds (65%) use the library at least monthly.



FINDINGS:

- A majority of respondents (87%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the library overall.

We would like to know how you value services, collections, programs, and spaces that might increase your overall satisfaction. Please rate the value of each below.



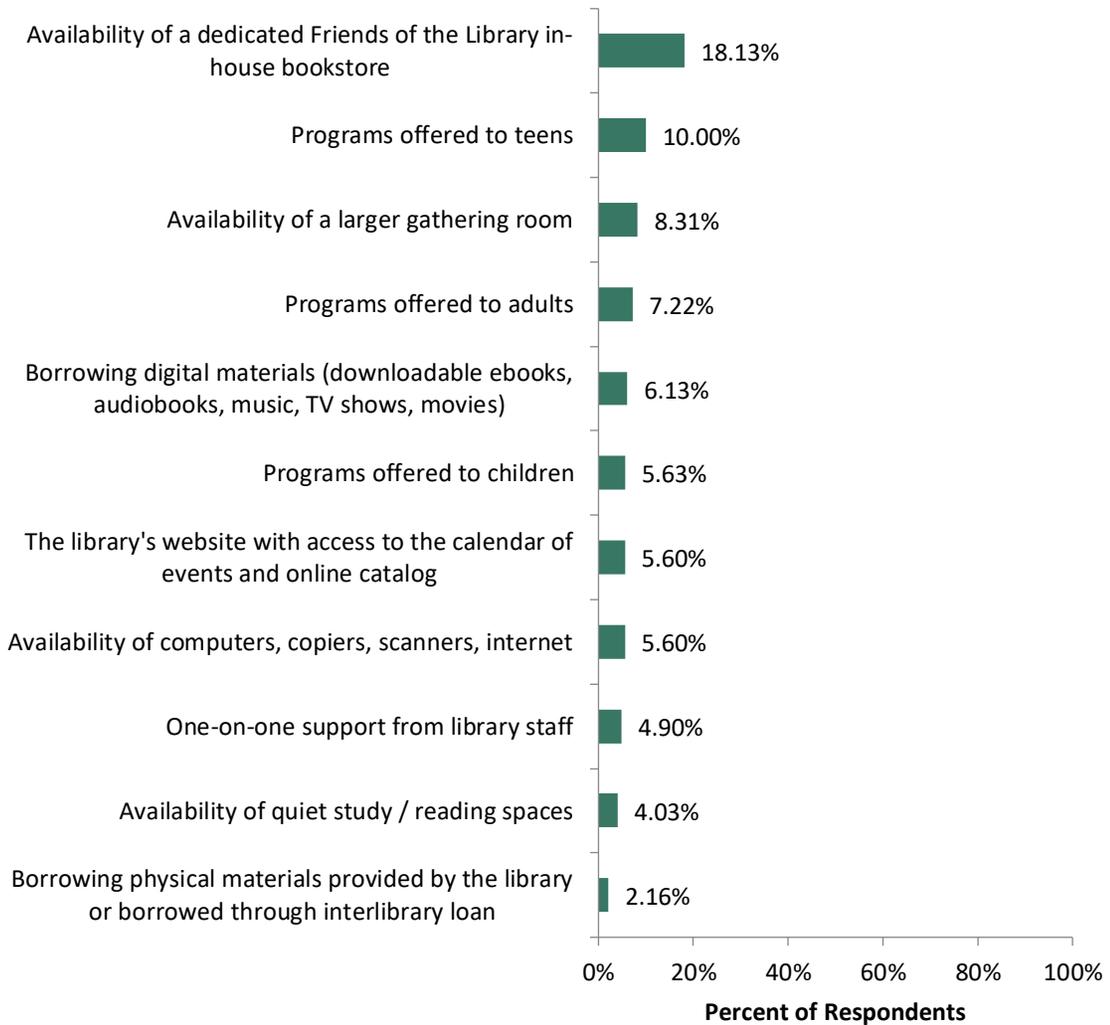
Other ways the library might increase your satisfaction:

- Expand collections, including popular books; digital books; digital audiobooks; upper elementary fiction; scary short books; manga; popular read alouds; children’s books, including chapter books; and Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout
- Expand or improve programs, including interesting programs; political programs; election issues; reading buddies; improve the toddler/children weekly programs; more local history; cooking; art activities; Battle of the Books for middle grade students; discussion of books available for each grade level; and expand teen events outside the realm of pop culture and social issues
- Friendlier children’s librarian; less wait for new releases; easier to find what you need; open on Sundays and Mondays; increase hours of service; increase in technology;

update members on hours and restrictions; increased collaborations with community agencies as well as businesses and schools; provide opportunity to suggest new books and materials; and no fees for membership

- Expand space to include meeting rooms to reserve; small study rooms; food and drink area; and expanded teen space

Not sure/not aware of these services

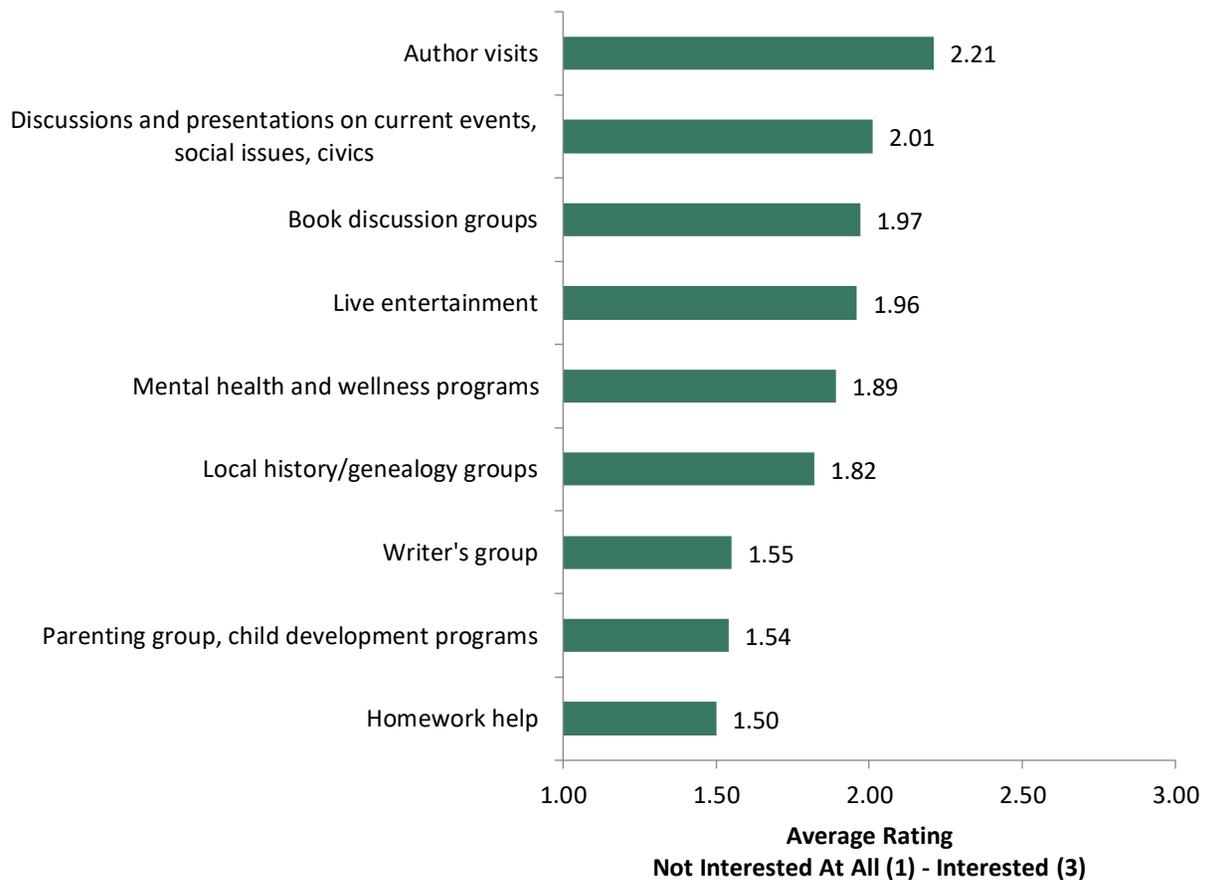


FINDINGS:

- Respondents placed a higher value on more traditional library services: borrowing materials (both physical and digital), online card catalog, and programs for children.

- Respondents placed a lower value on dedicated spaces for studying and larger meeting rooms, often noting that there are other venues that could accommodate meetings.
- Less than 20% of respondents were unaware of each of the library's services.

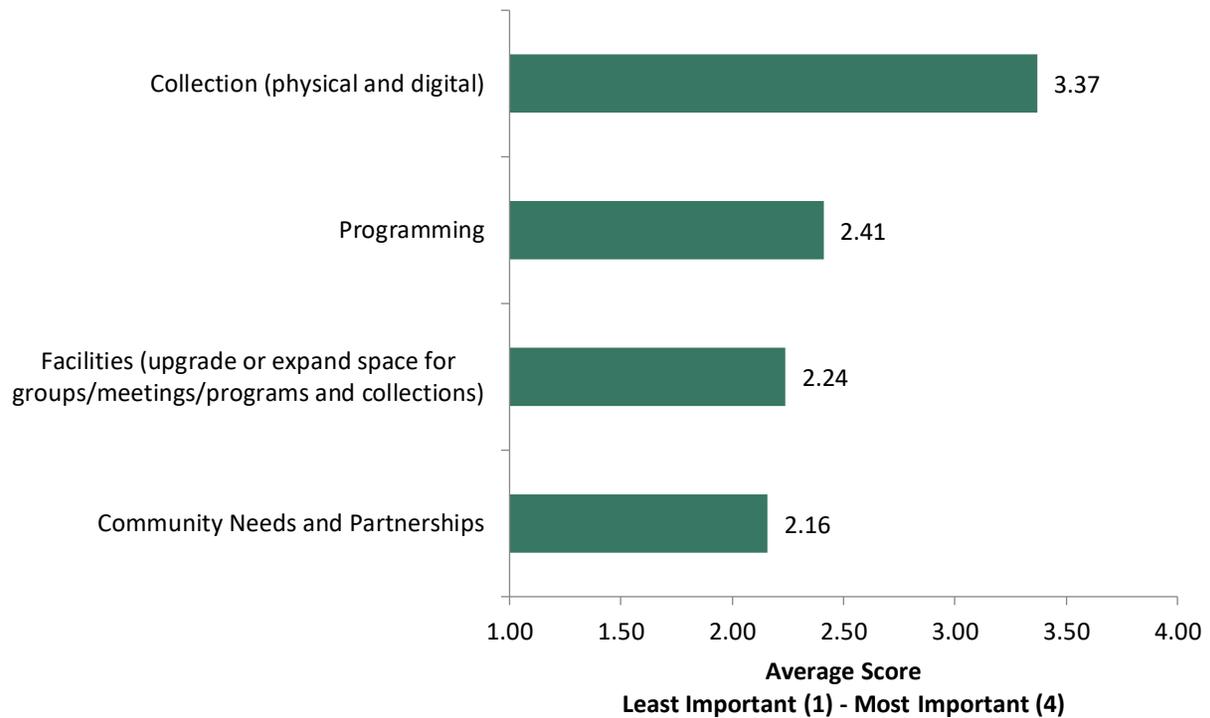
Please rate how interested you are in the following programs and partnerships.



Other programs and partnerships you are interested in:

- Film rentals; arts and crafts; trivia night; game night
- Children's programs (pre-k, kindergarten, homeschooling)
- Partnership with local nurses to provide opportunity for parents to ask developmental questions

Please rank where you think the library should focus its resources over the next 3-5 years?



FINDINGS:

- Respondents are much more interested in having the library expand collections and programming around reading; they are less interested in community partnerships.

What is the most important thing the library can do for the community in the next 3 to 5 years to meet community needs?

Respondents provided suggestions related to **collections**:

- Provide quality literature; ensure up to date physical and digital collections; expand book collections, including children’s books, best sellers, and award-winning books; offer a wide range of materials, books, DVDs; offer materials to support homeschooling as well as college and job searches; offer video games, Xbox, and PlayStations; and loan out items (e.g., tools, sewing machines) and tickets (e.g., zoo, gardens)

Respondents provided suggestions related to **programs**:

- Offer programs that inspire creativity and encourage reading; and provide opportunities for community members to gather and interact

- Topics suggested include educational programs; student study groups; older students mentoring younger children; helping those in need; helping students with learning disabilities; author visits and workshops; book discussions; improve toddler programs; DNA and genealogy; yoga; pottery; more reading programs; interest groups; Christmas cookie decorating; magic show; puzzle contest; travel seminars; self-improvement; technology courses; events for all age groups; toddler story times; saving money; making money; eating healthier; and reducing stress

Respondents provided suggestions related to **services**:

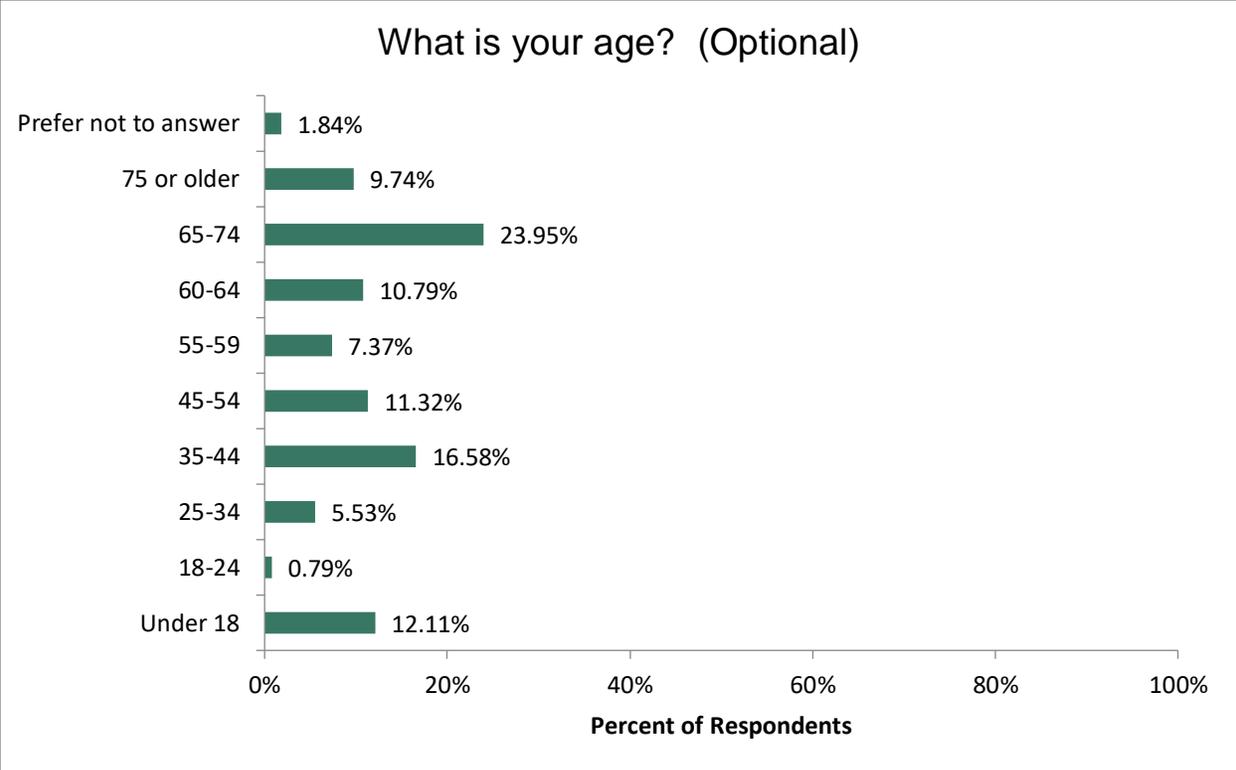
- Continue digital services; organize and catalog the materials in the history room; move Richland historic collections to the Restored Community Hall; start Richland Historical Group; expand genealogy services; offer home delivery and/or home pick up; provide computer, internet, and printer access; become a digital resource center; provide technology assistance; establish a used bookstore; provide assistance locating physical and digital items; become an information hub for social services; provide access to other libraries; offer regular reading recommendations for various age groups; provide an in house tutor; and obtain a 3D printer

Respondents provided suggestions related to the **building**:

- Create a bigger space; create quiet spaces for reading and studying; expand the teen room with space to study; create inviting learning spaces for small group meetings; offer meeting space; and attach a new drop box to the building

Respondents provided **other** suggestions:

- Expand hours of operation; expand marketing; raise awareness of library offerings and programs; advertise events in multiple places (e.g., school flyers); find ways to invite people into the library; be a safe place for families; work with local schools to get more people reading; reduce barriers for students to get a library card; make it fun for children to be there; host fundraisers to support local football teams; support freedom of speech; participate in community activities; stay relevant; continue to employ people who listen and guide patrons to resources; and create a more welcoming children's library



Please share any additional comments or suggestion you have.

Respondents provided comments and suggestions related to **collections**:

- Expand book collections (e.g., Pegasus series, Titans series, scary murder, science fiction) and movie collections; allow DVD checkouts; allow additional renewals on MEL; expand Hoopla selection and checkouts per month; and start lending items (e.g., tools, cooking appliances)

Respondents provided comments and suggestions related to **programs**:

- Continue adult summer reading programs; replace the Read Squared app for the kids' summer reading program; host a yearly community-wide read with other neighboring libraries; add classes on computers, technology, music, sewing, and woodworking; and create kits to check out to learn a new skill

Respondents provided comments and suggestions related to **children**:

- Expand children's programs and events; expand materials and programs for tweens and teens; expand teen room; partner with local schools and provide each student with a library card; create a program where older children help younger children; consider adding an area for children with severe anxiety; make the children's area more interactive and valuable; incorporate movement during the weekly children's program; and consider Rising Reader boxes and Book Bag options like Otsego Library

Respondents provided comments and suggestions related to the **building**:

- Library building is beautiful and clean; add a book drop in the front of the library that can be accessed from a car; add a computer terminal in the history room; expand Wi-Fi beyond the building; and expand hours of operation

Respondents provided **other** comments and suggestions:

- Focus on literature, reading, and community; curate a collection that represents diversity beyond the community; train staff on anti-racism and culturally responsive pedagogical practices; step away from divisive social issues; offer new programs and adopt new technologies to remain relevant; host a scavenger hunt alongside community events (e.g., Halloween in the Park) to encourage people to visit the library
- Respondents appreciate the library's presence in the community; appreciate the how well the library is managed; appreciate the service to the community during COVID; appreciate the friendly, welcoming, knowledgeable, and helpful library staff; and appreciate the interlibrary loan service and reserving books online

OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:

- Based on the survey responses, the library is viewed as an asset to the community. Respondents would like to see increased access, namely through expanded hours of operation. While COVID disrupted services, respondents still appreciate what services the library can provide. Clearly communicating the current restrictions and library availability may increase visits.
- Respondents placed an emphasis on reading and learning for all ages, but especially children. They would most like to see the collections expand and mentioned partnerships with local schools. Respondents also suggested reducing barriers for students to access library cards. Over half of the respondents are aged 55 or older, which may account for the lower ratings related to children and student services.

Staff & Board Survey

For the Learning Report, we conducted a survey of Board and staff members to provide an opportunity for initial input into the process beyond the environmental scan and SOAR analysis. Six Board members and 7 staff members participated. Below is a summary of their responses for each question.

What is your favorite thing about working at the library or serving on the Board?

- **Public Service:** helping a diverse set of community members, learning about people's needs, interacting with patrons, being involved in the community, making the community better

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships: Co-workers, fellow board members, patrons, community members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership: Supporting the library's growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job satisfaction: Friendly team, warm and collaborative environment, opportunity to be creative and inspired, joy of being surrounded by books

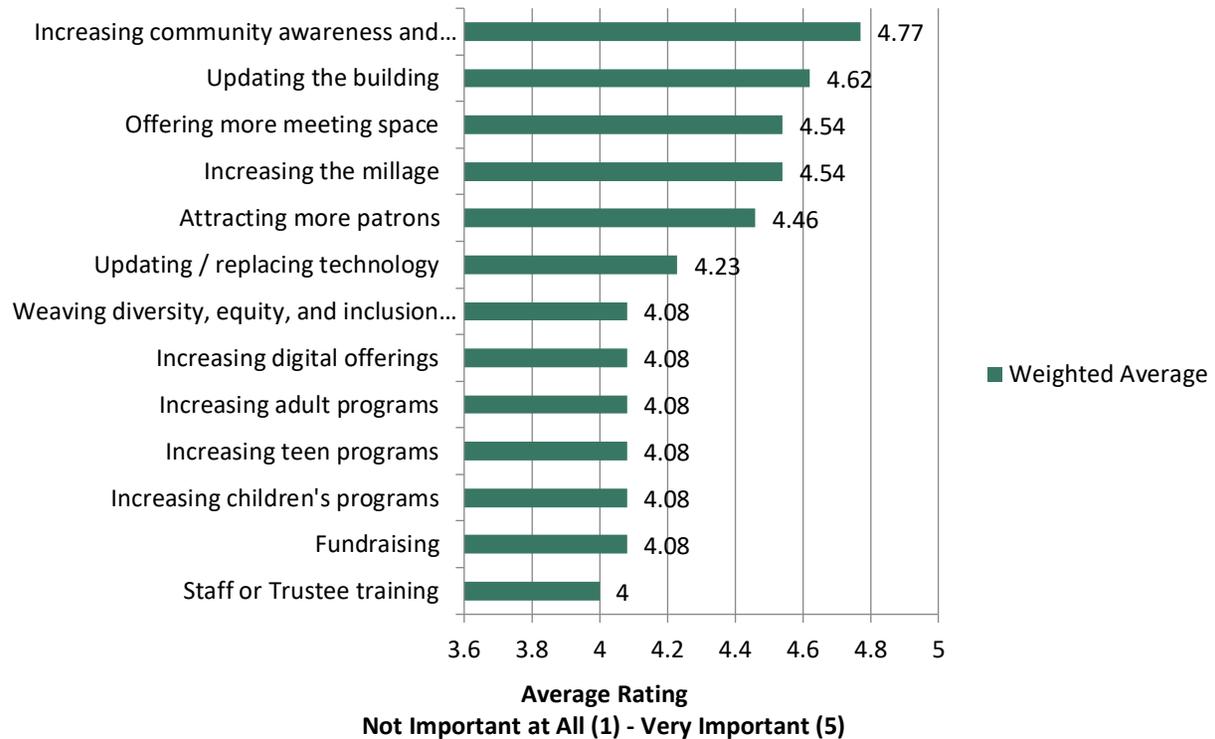
<p>What's working well at the library? What are we good at?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and Services: Creative programming that draws many people, especially kids programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community: Outreach, open communication, support from community members and Friends group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff: Friendly, customer-focused, responsive to patron needs, good at problem-solving, knowledgeable, creative, collaborative

<p>What could use some improvement? What keeps you from enjoying your experience with the library more fully?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities and Services: Need for teen space, meeting rooms, longer hours, larger building, coffee shop, study areas, delivery services, dropbox, and more access to new releases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness: Need for better communication to community members about services and programming, especially
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff: Need for better pay, more frequent internal communication, training about collection development

<p>How could the library help you better perform/succeed in your role at the library? What do you need to be a better Board/Staff member?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff: More time for staff side projects like professional development and trainings, investment in higher wages to attract great candidates, frequent communication, technology training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board: A designated space for the board to meet, continued support from the Director and Library staff

<p>What could the library do to address unmet community needs?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach: School visits, provide services to people who cannot get to the library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness: Better promotion about services and offerings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback: Gather patron feedback during strategic planning and integrate information into decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services and Programming: Literacy programs, partnerships with social services

When you consider the library's future, how important are each of the following items?



FINDINGS:

- All items were rated on average important to very important.
- Increasing community awareness, updating the building, offering more meeting spaces, and increasing the millage were the more important priorities for board and staff.
- Staff and trustee training, fundraising, and increasing children's programs were rated the least important priorities. This could be the case because the children's programming has been referenced often as one of RCL's greatest strengths; staff and board feel very supported by the library director about their roles, and increasing the millage takes priority over other strategies for financial stability.

Any other comments you want to share related to the future of the library?

- Quiet study spaces, technology spaces, and teen spaces should be a priority
- "I feel honored to work here and honestly love love love my job."
- "I hope we can improve our physical space."

**OVERALL
SURVEY
FINDINGS:**

- The staff and board are proud to work with RCL because of its commitment to the community and friendly atmosphere. RCL has talented, dedicated staff who are always developing creative programming. Staff and board feel very supported by library leadership and prepared to do perform their jobs well.
- Multiple staff members noted that investing in staff pay and training will increase staff satisfaction and attract high quality professionals to open positions.
- Internal and external communications were discussed frequently in the survey. Staff and board members rated community awareness of programs and offerings as the most important priority.
- Increasing the number of specialized spaces in the library, like meeting rooms, study nooks, teen spaces, etc., is very important to staff.
- Library staff and board members are happy to be going through the strategic planning process to learn more about the needs of their community. They want to continue being innovative and responsive.

Focus Groups and Interviews

In November 2021, the library led a series of in-person and virtual focus groups. A total of 30 people attended hour-long sessions to talk about the future of the library, with another 5 providing feedback via phone or email.

Richland Community Library is very valued by the community. Focus group participants raved about inter-library loan, MEL-CAT, staff service, and the large selection of books, eBooks and digital resources. The library hosts a good diversity of programming, especially programs that serve teens and children. Having a “small town” library in a central location is very special. It acts as a community space that’s accessible to everyone. The staff’s background in education was highlighted as uniquely helpful.

When asked how RCL could attract more patrons, multiple participants suggested increased and/or different hours, better communication strategies, and parental involvement. Lack of open hours in the evening means that many working people cannot get to the library for programs or other services before it closes. Being closed on Sunday and Monday limits access to technology for job seekers. RCL could consider opening later a few days a month and/or opening one Monday a month. Regarding communication, much of the community may not understand all the library has to offer—far more than just books. While RCL’s social media was cited as being helpful, participants wanted more email and direct mail marketing and more outreach to residents of the area via community events, Bookmobiles, homebound services, and local partnerships (schools, juvenile detention center, community centers, etc.). The library

should target new residents in the area and create more opportunities for volunteering. Participants noted that young people are not thinking about physical books in the same way as previous generations. They may view the library as “old”. Adding computers to the kids’ section, offering tutoring and technology programming, going to schools to talk about broader offerings and enlisting parents to support their children’s reading efforts could help attract more young people to the library. Offering more programs for youth, early readers, and babies can help as well. Participants raved about the quality of the staff, volunteers, partners, and board who should be better prepared to advocate and promote the library’s offerings to their personal networks.

To encourage lifelong learning, participants believe the library should continue to offer programs, collections, and services that serve people of all ages. The kids area and craft drop-ins are already strengths, but RCL could make space for more books and up-to-date materials; offer technology classes (Linux, Raspberry Pi, etc.), history, and health programming; and implement more competitive kids programming like scavenger hunts and Battle of the Books. There should be in-person and virtual programming for optimal access. Communicating the library’s offerings in different modalities (e-newsletters, social media, print flyers, etc.) for different audiences is important to keep people of all ages engaged. The library should focus on leveraging local artists and authors for their programming and develop programming partnerships with other community organizations (Kalamazoo Literacy Council, Richland Area Community Center, e.g.) in the area. Creating opportunities for people to socialize and build community at the library will cement it as a place-to-be. One way to do this would be to create more outdoor gathering spaces at the library and host more community events. One participant said that patrons should be able to check-out materials and books during evening programs. Multiple other participants acknowledged that staff capacity must be considered when deciding priorities and next steps.

Responses in the community survey indicated that the library needs more space to serve the community. When asked what spaces they would like for the library to expand, participants suggested the following:

- Outdoor gathering spaces
- Meeting rooms
- Expanded book collection space
- Expanded computer lab
- Makerspace/Tech lab
- Book sale room/used book room
- Magazine exchange
- Quiet reading spaces
- Teen space (said Presbyterian church may host them)
- Expanded children’s area
- More bathrooms
- History room
- Concert space/music room
- Craft space

To increase hours and expand the collection, the RCL will need an increased operational millage. To advocate for this change in the community, participants suggest messages about educational opportunities, technology access, building expansion, and community needs. The library should communicate more about how it supports children and youth educational development, especially because the community is typically supportive of increasing taxes for education. Not everyone in the community can afford purchasing technology, streaming services, books, and other materials, so the library should be framed as an essential community resource that supports everyone, no matter their background. Infrastructure updates and expansion are tangible and easily identifiable funding needs that could be emphasized, especially given the updates of other local libraries (Plainwell, e.g.). One participant emphasized the need to create different messages for different audiences depending on what the audiences value. Also, it will be important to be transparent about how funds are being used. Participants also suggest finding grants and seeking funding from patrons to supplement increased millage needs. The library should use data to make their arguments and show how many people in the community rely on the library. To get the word out, the library should leverage their partnerships and volunteer networks.

When asked for additional suggestions for RCL, participants offered the following recommendations:

- Amazon return box at the library
- Partnership with community center
- More copies of popular books
- More involvement with community partners about community-wide planning
- In-person programming as soon as possible
- Special hours for immunocompromised people during the pandemic
- More organized and robust volunteer program
- More electrical outlets
- Book weeding to free up space
- More communications and outreach (large district)
- More children's programming
- Partnerships with schools
- Welcoming atmosphere for kids
- Fundraising through local employers and large donors
- More SciFi books
- Tutoring
- More hours
- Day programming for seniors
- Book clubs
- Cosplay events

When asked what words participants would use to describe the library to someone visiting from another community, participants said:

- Cozy
- Welcoming
- Friendly/Warm
- Fun
- Comfortable
- Classic
- Personal
- Inviting
- Inclusive
- Easy
- Small
- Service-Oriented
- Accessible
- Community
- Reading
- Resources
- Small
- Under-resourced
- Accommodating
- Helpful
- Walkable
- Beautiful
- Exceptional

Community Organizations Strategy Overview

Gull Lake Community Schools is currently undergoing a strategic planning process. On their website’s mission page, the district writes: “we work to create strong lasting partnerships with parents and guardians and believe that together we assure a high-quality education that encompasses academics, the arts, and athletics.” With these goals in mind, the RCL could work more closely with the school district to align arts and learning programs with the instructional goals of the school.

Ascension Borgess Hospital’s goals for community health for 2020-2022 focus on decreasing racism and discrimination in the organization, increasing access to mental health assistance, and increasing access to primary care physicians. Partnering with Ascension for health-focused programming and providing materials about how to access appropriate healthcare could benefit the Richland Community Library’s most vulnerable communities.

Gull Lake Area Community Volunteers help a variety of organizations that share missions with the Richland Community Library (i.e. school district, township, etc.). Given Richland’s reliance on volunteers, the GLACV could be a good partner to tap into an active volunteer base that already has communication pathways and organizational policies in place.

The United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region invests a lot of resources in early childhood literacy and reading initiatives. Research has shown that early reading abilities prepares students to achieve in high school and beyond. Connecting with the United Way on these initiatives could support the early learning needs of kids in the Richland area. The local United Way is also committed to helping individuals reach economic stability. An essential part of securing quality employment is through technology access which RCL can support for the members of its community.

The Richland Area Community Center provides a lot of educational and cultural programming to the community. During focus group conversations, people emphasized RCL should not try to compete with RACC with programming, but instead they should work together to fill each other's gaps. RCL could also use RACC's events as opportunities to promote their services and build deeper relationships within the community.

These community organizations represent a small portion of current and potential partners for the library. During the implementation phase of the library's strategic planning process, library staff should review partner relationships to determine which ones to deepen or others that need more investment. Looking for common goals, like community engagement around education and lifelong learning, will be key for a satisfying partnership experience for all those involved.

Resources Reviewed:

- Ascension Borgess Health Implementation Plans 2020-2022
<https://healthcare.ascension.org/-/media/healthcare/compliance-documents/michigan/2019-ascension-borgess-chna-implementation-strategy.pdf>
- Gull Lake Area Community Volunteers: <https://glacv.org/about/>
- Gull Lakes School District: <https://www.gulllakecs.org/district>
- Richland Area Community Center: <http://www.richlandareacc.org/about-the-racc/>
- United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region:
<https://changethestory.org/education/>

Appendix: Community Data

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population	328,239,523	9,965,265	8,220	772
Median Age	38.5	39.7	40.3	48.3
Median Household Income	\$ 62,843	\$57,144	\$87,008	\$74,219
Homeownership	64.10%	71.20%	82.4%	84.00%
Housing Value (Owner-occupied)	\$ 217,500	\$ 154,900	\$217,900	\$ 184,100
Below Poverty Level	13.40%	14.4%	8.8%	7.9%
Average Household Size	2.62	2.47	2.59	2.21
Average Family Size	3.23	3.07	3.12	2.79

Age Distributions

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total population	328,239,523	9,965,265	8220	772
Under 5 years	1940,4835	571,094	511	26
5 to 9 years	19690437	591,065	486	44
10 to 14 years	21423479	623,334	532	46
15 to 19 years	21353524	661,499	858	52
20 to 24 years	21468680	704,793	408	44
25 to 29 years	23233299	668,583	389	28
30 to 34 years	22345176	599,192	378	26
35 to 39 years	21728259	593,892	537	54
40 to 44 years	20186586	571,478	392	38
45 to 49 years	20398226	637,077	521	44
50 to 54 years	20464881	680,181	561	44
55 to 59 years	21484060	718,008	484	57
60 to 64 years	20984053	678,726	582	43
65 to 69 years	17427013	561,644	746	67
70 to 74 years	14148548	413,773	330	43
75 to 79 years	9759764	288,168	212	39
80 to 84 years	6380474	195,685	210	39
85 years and over	6358229	207,073	83	38

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total population	328,239,523	9,965,265	8220	772
Under 5 years	5.9%	5.7%	6.2%	3.4%
5 to 9 years	6.0%	5.9%	5.9%	5.7%
10 to 14 years	6.5%	6.3%	6.5%	6.0%
15 to 19 years	6.5%	6.6%	10.4%	6.7%
20 to 24 years	6.5%	7.1%	5.0%	5.7%
25 to 29 years	7.1%	6.7%	4.7%	3.6%
30 to 34 years	6.8%	6.0%	4.6%	3.4%
35 to 39 years	6.6%	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%
40 to 44 years	6.1%	5.7%	4.8%	4.9%
45 to 49 years	6.2%	6.4%	6.3%	5.7%
50 to 54 years	6.2%	6.8%	6.8%	5.7%
55 to 59 years	6.5%	7.2%	5.9%	7.4%
60 to 64 years	6.4%	6.8%	7.1%	5.6%
65 to 69 years	5.3%	5.6%	9.1%	8.7%
70 to 74 years	4.3%	4.2%	4.0%	5.6%
75 to 79 years	3.0%	2.9%	2.6%	5.1%
80 to 84 years	1.9%	2.0%	2.6%	5.1%
85 years and over	1.9%	2.1%	1.0%	4.9%

Diversity

US CENSUS	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Total Population	331,449,281	10,077,331	8693	946
White alone	204,277,273	7,444,974	7444	873
Black or African American alone	41,104,200	1,376,579	379	13
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	3,727,135	61,261	32	11
Asian alone	19,886,049	334,300	146	11
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	689,966	3,051	3	0
Some Other Race alone	27,915,715	221,851	114	8
Two or More Races	33,848,943	635,315	575	30

US CENSUS - Hispanic	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Total Population	331,449,281	10,077,331	8693	946
Hispanic Population	62,080,044	564,422	301	18

US CENSUS	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Total Population	328,239,523	10,077,331	8693	946
White alone	61.63%	73.88%	85.63%	92.28%
Black or African American alone	12.40%	13.66%	4.36%	1.37%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.12%	0.61%	0.37%	1.16%
Asian alone	6%	3.32%	1.68%	1.16%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	.21%	0.03%	0.03%	0.00%
Some Other Race alone	8.42%	2.20%	1.31%	0.85%
Two or More Races	10.21%	6.30%	6.61%	3.17%

US CENSUS - Hispanic	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Total Population	331,449,281	10,077,331	8693	946
Hispanic Population	18.7%	5.6%	3.5%	1.9%

Marital Status

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total (Ages 15+)	263,845,370	8,179,772	6,691	656
Never Married	88,059,061	2,723,864	1833	151
Married	126,823,545	3,926,291	3928	352
Separated	5,045,412	98,157	33	0

Widowed	15,274,971	490,786	274	58
Divorced	28,642,381	940,674	622	95

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total (Ages 15+)	263,845,370	8,179,772	6,691	656
Never Married	33.4%	33.3%	27.4%	23.0%
Married	48.1%	48%	58.7%	53.7%
Separated	1.9%	1.2%	0.5%	0%
Widowed	5.8%	6.0%	4.1%	8.8%
Divorced	10.9%	11.5%	9.3%	14.5%

Income

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Households	120,756,048	3,935,041	3179	349
Less than \$10,000	6.0%	6.6%	7.4%	4.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.3%	4.4%	1.4%	0.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	8.9%	9.6%	5.6%	6.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.9%	9.8%	6.2%	6.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.3%	13.5%	8.3%	14.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.2%	18.3%	14.3%	18.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.7%	12.7%	11.6%	17.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15.1%	14.2%	20.8%	19.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.8%	5.6%	11.7%	7.2%
\$200,000 or more	7.7%	5.2%	12.6%	4.6%
Median income (dollars)	\$ 62,843	\$57,144	\$87,008	\$74219
Mean income (dollars)	\$ 88,607	\$78,400	\$113,500	\$88,643

US CENSUS DATA	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Households	120,756,048	3,935,041	3179	349
Less than \$10,000	7,245,363	259,713	235	14
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5,192,510	173,142	45	3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	10,747,288	377,764	178	21
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10,747,288	385,634	197	23

\$35,000 to \$49,999	14,852,994	531,231	264	51
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20,770,040	720,113	455	65
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15,336,018	499,750	369	62
\$100,000 to \$149,999	18,234,163	558,776	661	69
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8,211,411	220,362	372	25
\$200,000 or more	9,298,216	204,622	401	16
Median income (dollars)	\$ 62,843	\$ 57,144	\$87,008	\$ 85,217
Mean income (dollars)	\$ 88,607	\$ 78,400	\$113,500	\$ 115,463

Employment & Poverty

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	163,555,585	4,948,824	4240	365
Employed	154,842,185	4,654,930	4203	362
Unemployed	8,713,400	293,894	37	3
Armed Forces	1,073,907	4,179	0	0
Not in Labor Force	95,033,388	3,096,766	2191	285
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL				
US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
All People	42,510,843	1,398,527	723	61
Under 18 years	13,377,778	425,886	1093	25
18 to 64 years	24,545,633	836,544	658	20
65+ Years	4,587,432	136,097	411	16

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Civilian Labor Force (16+)	63.0%	61.5%	65.9%	56.2%
Employed	59.6%	57.8%	65.4%	55.7%
Unemployed	3.4%	3.7%	0.6%	0.5%
Armed Forces	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Not in Labor Force	36.6%	38.5%	34.1%	43.8%
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL				
US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
All People	13.40%	14.4%	8.8%	7.9%
Under 18 years	18.50%	19.9%	13.3%	18.0%
18 to 64 years	12.60%	14.0%	8.0%	4.9%
65+ Years	9.30%	8.4%	5.0%	7.1%

Housing

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Homeownership Rate	64.00%	71.20%	82.4%	84.00%
US CENSUS	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Housing Units	140,498,736	4,570,173	3483	421
US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Households	120,756,048	3,935,041	3179	349
Married Couple family	58,198,771	1,853,456	1898	170
Cohabiting Couple	7,572,122	259,010	NA	11
Male Householder	21,526,258	730,733	64	37
Female Householder	33,458,897	1,091,842	337	131
Householder Living Alone	33,649,597	1,164,019	772	115
			327	71
65+ Householder Living Alone	13,259,766	467,411		

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Homeownership Rate	64.00%	71.20%	82.4%	84.00%
US CENSUS	US 2020	MI 2020	RT 2020	RV 2020
Housing Units	140,498,736	4,570,173	3483	421
US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Households	120,756,048	3,935,041	3179	349
Married Couple family	48.2%	47.1%	59.7%	48.7%
Cohabiting Couple	6.3%	6.6%	NA	3.2%
Male Householder	17.8%	18.6%	2.0%	10.6%
Female Householder	27.7%	27.7%	10.6%	37.5%
Householder Living Alone	27.9%	29.6%	24.3%	33.0%
			10.3%	20.3%
65+ Householder Living Alone	11%	11.9%		

Education

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population 25 years and older	220,622,076	6,813,480	5425	560
Less than 9th Grade	11,284,290	194,755	67	0
9th-12th Grade, no diploma	15,187,971	431,435	153	15
HS or Equivalent	59,472,748	1,967,316	924	70
Some College	45,044,698	1,591,358	1010	142
Associates Degree	18,712,207	643,446	539	73
Bachelors Degree	43,646,104	1,207,829	1617	155
Graduate or Professional Degree	27,274,058	777,341	1115	105

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population 25 years and older	220,622,076	6,813,480	5,425	560
Less than 9th Grade	5.1%	2.9%	1.2%	0.0%
9th-12th Grade, no diploma	6.9%	6.3%	2.8%	2.7%
HS or Equivalent	27.0%	28.9%	17.0%	12.5%
Some College	20.4%	23.4%	18.6%	25.4%
Associates Degree	8.5%	9.4%	9.9%	13.0%
Bachelors Degree	19.8%	17.7%	29.8%	27.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12.4%	11.4%	20.6%	18.8%

Language

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population 5 years and over	304,930,125	9,394,171	7709	746
English Only	238,982,352	8,480,376	7390	729
Spanish	40,709,597	280,327	125	3
Other Indo-European languages	11,136,849	269,746	117	14
Asian/Pacific Islander languages	10,727,303	162,581	77	0
Other languages	3,374,024	201,141	0	0
Speaks English less than "very well"	25,615,365	321,655	22	10

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Population 5 years and over	304930125	9,394,171	7709	746
English Only	78.4%	90.3%	95.9	97.7%
Spanish	13.4%	3.0%	1.6	0.4%
Other Indo-European languages	3.7%	2.9%	1.5	1.9%

Asian/Pacific Islander languages	3.5%	1.7%	1.0	0.0%
Other languages	1.1%	2.1%	0.0	0.0%
Speaks English less than "very well"	8.4%	3.4%	.3%	1.3%

Disabilities

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population with a Disability	40,335,099	1,401,370	648	88
Ambulatory Difficulty	20,751,212	714593	270	31
Cognitive Difficulty	15,255,847	555207	175	21
Hearing Difficulty	11,396,410	384915	163	33
Independent Living Difficulty	14,266,400	507232	173	29
Self-Care Difficulty	7,940,844	275551	31	7
Vision Difficulty	7,470,094	221379	145	18

US CENSUS	US 2019	MI 2019	RT 2019	RV 2019
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population with a Disability	40,335,099	1,401,370	648	10,734
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.9%	7.7%	3.5%	4.2%
Cognitive Difficulty	5.1%	6.0%	2.3%	2.8%
Hearing Difficulty	3.6%	3.9%	2.0%	4.3%
Independent Living Difficulty	5.8%	6.6%	2.8%	4.6%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.6%	3.0%	.4%	.90%
Vision Difficulty	2.3%	2.2%	1.8%	2.3%