PUBLIC LIBRARY INTERLINK
SHARED ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

Programs and Services | Social and Attitudinal

Submitted to Public Library InterLINK
Prepared by the Social Planning and Research
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Acknowledgement

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Executive Summary

The Public Library InterLINK Shared Accessibility Audit, conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) on behalf of Public Library InterLINK (InterLINK), assesses accessibility within two key library components: **Programs and Services Accessibility** and **Social and Attitudinal Accessibility**. In alignment with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and the BC Library Association's inclusivity goals, this assessment identifies barriers and recommends practical improvements to promote accessible and equitable library environments for patrons with diverse abilities. The findings are based on data from surveys, staff interviews, and document reviews across twelve libraries within the InterLINK consortium.

Key Findings

The audit revealed a foundational commitment to accessibility within participating libraries. Findings also indicated a need to shift from reactive to proactive approaches. Key areas for improvement include:

Programs and Services Accessibility

- The selection and availability of basic assistive technologies and accessible resources were inconsistent across libraries, leading to unequal access for patrons depending on location.
- Barriers persisted due to limited availability of advanced assistive technology, inconsistent staff training, and minimal proactive communication of accessible services.
- Smaller libraries, in particular, relied on ad hoc accommodations due to budget constraints and may be lacking structured systems for accessibility planning, further impacting uniform access to inclusive services.

Social and Attitudinal Accessibility

- Libraries fostered welcoming environments, yet staff training on disability inclusion and accessibility practices was somewhat inconsistent.
- Variability in staff confidence and awareness impacted service quality for patrons with diverse needs.
- Improved cross-departmental communication on available accessibility resources may be needed to increase patron engagement.

Recommendations

The report outlines both *short-term* and *long-term* priorities to enhance accessibility:

Short-term priorities focus on implementing informal, frequent training sessions, promoting accessible resources more consistently, and piloting inclusive programs. These actions are designed to address immediate needs and build a culture of accessibility within library environments.

Long-term priorities include establishing comprehensive accessibility policies, expanding advanced assistive technologies, and embedding accessibility into cross-departmental program planning. Creating consistent accessibility standards across all libraries will help ensure equitable access to resources, regardless of the locations patrons visit.

Conclusion

This report emphasizes that accessibility should be an ongoing commitment, woven into every stage of library service delivery. By addressing both immediate and systemic gaps, InterLINK libraries can foster a truly inclusive environment, positioning themselves as leaders in accessibility and providing a welcoming space for patrons of all abilities. Implementing these recommendations requires a shift in practices, resources, and cultural perspectives, but it is an essential step in fulfilling the libraries' mission to serve all community members equitably.

Definitions of Key Terms

To provide clarity and ensure a shared understanding, the following definitions outline key terms used throughout this report. These terms reflect concepts central to accessibility, inclusivity, and equitable service delivery in library environments.

Accessibility: The design and provision of products, services, environments, or resources to ensure that they are fully usable and meaningful for all people, regardless of ability. Accessibility includes physical, digital, sensory, cognitive, and attitudinal elements that remove barriers and promote equitable participation (United Nations, 2006).

Assistive Technology: Tools or devices that support individuals with disabilities in accessing information or performing tasks. Examples include screen readers, DAISY players, hearing loops, and adaptive keyboards, contributing to a universally accessible experience (Drew, 2024).

Attitudinal Accessibility: The approaches, behaviors, and attitudes within an organization that support the inclusion and full participation of individuals with disabilities. This involves cultivating awareness, understanding, and positive attitudes that contribute to a welcoming and inclusive environment (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023).

Cognitive Accessibility: The design and adaptation of resources, spaces, and programs to support individuals with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, focusing on clarity, ease of navigation, and minimizing cognitive overload to foster an inclusive and user-friendly environment (International Organization for Standardization, 2020).

Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities: Disabilities that impact mental processes such as memory, reasoning, problem-solving, and learning. Examples include intellectual disabilities, developmental delays, autism spectrum disorder, and dyslexia, which can affect how individuals interact with their surroundings (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, n.d.).

Digital Accessibility: The practice of designing digital content, platforms, and tools to be accessible to people with disabilities. This includes compatibility with assistive technologies like screen readers and ensuring content is perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust for all users (World Wide Web Consortium, 2023).

Equity: The principle of ensuring fair access, opportunities, and resources for all individuals by addressing and removing barriers that may create unequal conditions. Equity within accessibility efforts ensures everyone can fully benefit from resources and services (American Psychological Association, 2022).

Inclusive Design: A design approach that considers the diverse needs of all potential users from the outset, creating products, services, and environments that are inherently accessible and usable by everyone without requiring modifications (Interaction Design Foundation, 2024).

Mental Health Conditions: Health conditions that affect an individual's thinking, emotions, or behavior, impacting their daily life and functioning. Examples include anxiety disorders, depression, and bipolar

disorder. Inclusive spaces acknowledge and accommodate the diverse needs arising from mental health conditions (National Alliance on Mental Illness, n.d.).

Neurodivergent Accessibility: Designing environments and programs that support individuals with neurodivergent conditions, taking into account sensory, communication, and processing needs to promote an inclusive and comfortable experience for all patrons (Sargent, 2019).

Neurodivergent Conditions: Conditions where cognitive functioning varies from typical patterns, often including autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and dyslexia. Neurodiversity emphasizes the value of diverse ways of thinking and learning (American Psychological Association, 2022).

Physical Accessibility: The design of physical spaces to be usable by all individuals, ensuring accessible entrances, ramps, clear pathways, adaptable seating, and other features that support safe and comfortable access for everyone, including those with mobility needs (Canadian Standards Association, 2023).

Physical Disabilities: Disabilities that affect an individual's physical functioning, including mobility, stamina, dexterity, or strength. Examples include spinal cord injuries, arthritis, and muscular dystrophy, which may impact how individuals navigate or interact with spaces (United Spinal Association, n.d.).

Proactive Accessibility: An approach to accessibility that anticipates and integrates accessibility needs into planning from the outset, ensuring that spaces, programs, and services are accessible without requiring on-the-spot accommodations (Accessibility at Penn State, n.d.).

Reactive Accessibility: An approach to accessibility that addresses accessibility needs as they arise, typically providing accommodations only upon request, rather than integrating accessibility into the initial design (Microsoft, 2020).

Sensory Accessibility: The design of spaces, programs, and resources to accommodate sensory sensitivities or needs, such as quiet areas, minimal sensory triggers, or sensory-friendly tools, supporting patrons with sensory processing challenges (DeafBlind Ontario Services, 2015).

Sensory Disabilities: Disabilities that affect one or more senses, such as vision, hearing, taste, touch, or smell. Examples include hearing impairments, visual impairments, and sensory processing disorders (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

Social Model of Disability: A framework that views disability as a result of the interaction between individuals with impairments and barriers created by society, emphasizing that disability arises from the environment, not the individual (Oliver, 1990).

Universal Design: A design philosophy that aims to create spaces, products, and services that are inherently accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors, without needing additional adaptations (Center for Universal Design, 1997).

1.   Introduction

The Shared Accessibility Audit project, conducted by SPARC BC, on behalf of InterLINK, was designed to evaluate and enhance accessibility across two key components of library services: Social and Attitudinal Accessibility and Programs and Services Accessibility. This initiative aligns with the goals outlined in the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and the British Columbia Library Association's efforts to promote inclusivity, aiming to reduce barriers for individuals with a range of disabilities. Seven libraries from the InterLINK consortium participated in each audit component, providing a basis for an in-depth case study approach, with findings expected to inform best practices across the entire consortium of 18 libraries.

1.1 Objectives of the Audit

Ensuring accessibility for all patrons is a fundamental goal for the InterLINK consortium. This audit seeks to identify and address barriers that may hinder equitable access to library services, emphasizing inclusive

practices and support for a broad range of disabilities. By prioritizing social and attitudinal accessibility alongside program and service accessibility, the audit aims to enhance the overall library experience, creating a more welcoming and supportive environment for individuals with diverse needs.

The audit's primary objective is to conduct a disability-focused accessibility audit, identifying gaps in staff training and accessibility of programs and services. Through this systematic approach, the audit will uncover and address barriers that hinder full and equitable library access for individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health-related disabilities, as well as neurodivergent individuals.

1.2 Scope of the Audit

This accessibility audit focuses on evaluating two critical components within participating libraries: **Programs and Services Accessibility** and **Social and Attitudinal Accessibility**. The audit aims to assess current practices, identify barriers, and provide actionable recommendations to enhance accessibility, ensuring that library environments are inclusive and supportive of patrons with diverse needs.

Programs and Services Accessibility
This component evaluates how accessible the library's organized events, resources, and ongoing support are for patrons with disabilities.

- **Programs** refer to organized events, classes, workshops, and other scheduled activities designed to engage the community. Accessibility in this context includes considerations for sensory-friendly programming, communication support, and physical and digital accommodations that make these offerings usable and enjoyable for all attendees.

- **Services** encompass the ongoing support provided by the library, including access to physical and digital materials, assistance at service desks, and digital services like online catalogs and e-resources. Ensuring accessible services involves providing assistive technologies, accessible digital formats, and supportive physical spaces, allowing all patrons to utilize the library's resources fully.

Social and Attitudinal Accessibility
Social and Attitudinal Accessibility focuses on the library environment's inclusivity, particularly how staff interactions, organizational culture, and attitudes impact patrons' experiences. This component considers staff awareness and training on disability inclusion, the accessibility of communication, and the presence of welcoming practices that reduce stigma and ensure a respectful, supportive experience for patrons with disabilities. Creating an accessible social environment is as essential as physical and programmatic accessibility, as it fosters a sense of belonging and respect within the library community.

1.2 Audit Methodology and Data Collection

The audit methodology encompassed quantitative and qualitative data collection to capture a comprehensive picture of accessibility practices across the libraries. Key data collection tools included one library patron survey, two staff surveys, staff interviews, and a documentation review.

Library Patron Survey

Administered online and at library locations through physical copies, this survey gathered feedback from a convenience sample.[1] of library patrons (with and without disabilities) on topics that included social/attitudinal and program/service aspects of library accessibility (See Appendix A). A total of 1,010 questionnaires (including 80 physical responses) were collected. However, seven questionnaires were excluded due to non-response to most items and a further 17 excluded due to never visiting a library in the past year. The survey sample used for the analyses highlighted in this report included 986 respondents.

Description of sampled library patrons

The patron survey captured a limited variety of demographic information—namely age and gender. Young people under the ages of 25 made up approximately 10% of respondents, with the majority of sampled patrons reporting ages between 25 and 54 (55.2%) (see Figure 1). Older library patrons, 55 years and older, made up over one-quarter (27.7%) of respondents. Gender was less evenly distributed, with nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents identifying as *female*, 24.9% identifying as *male*, and the remaining respondents (2.1%) identifying as *non-binary*, *transgender*, or *Two-Spirit*.

Figure 1: Age distribution of sampled library patrons

Legend: Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+
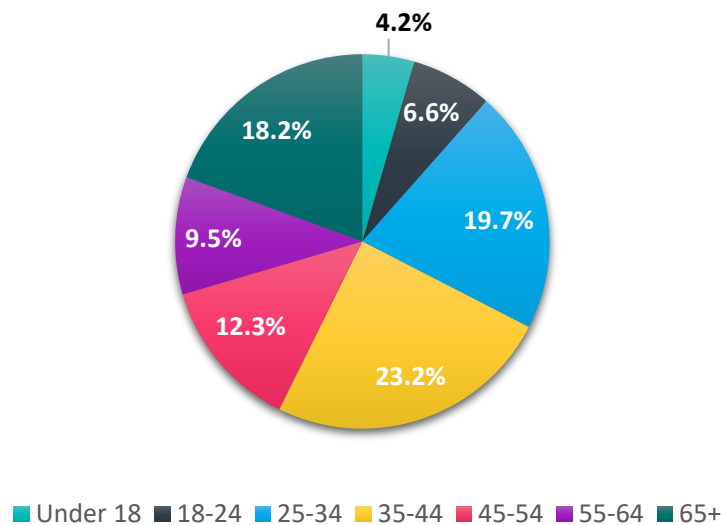
Note: Missing=63 (non-respondents); n=923

Nearly half (46.1%) of respondents in this test sample self-reported having one or more disability. Those with a disability also reported higher levels of library patronage across nine of the twelve library systems listed in the survey (consisting of 48 libraries in total), as illustrated in the figure below.

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[1] Convenience sample: the survey sample included no specific exclusion criteria restricting certain respondents from participating. However, those who did not report visiting a library in the past year were excluded from the sample after data collection.

Figure 2: Past year library visitation by library system (all respondents vs. those with one or more disability)

Chart legend: ■ % no disability (n=531) ■ % w/ disability (n=455)

Data labels by library (no disability, w/ disability):
- Gibsons: 0.8%, 3.3%
- Pemberton: 2.4%, 3.1%
- Squamish: 3.2%, 3.3%
- Bowen Island: 2.4%, 7.3%
- Whistler: 6.2%, 3.7%
- West Vancouver: 4.7%, 6.4%
- North Vancouver: 5.5%, 10.3%
- Surrey: 11.9%, 18.5%
- Richmond: 20.9%, 17.4%
- Burnaby: 19.8%, 28.1%
- Vancouver: 27.9%, 37.1%
- Coquitlam: 51.4%, 35.6%
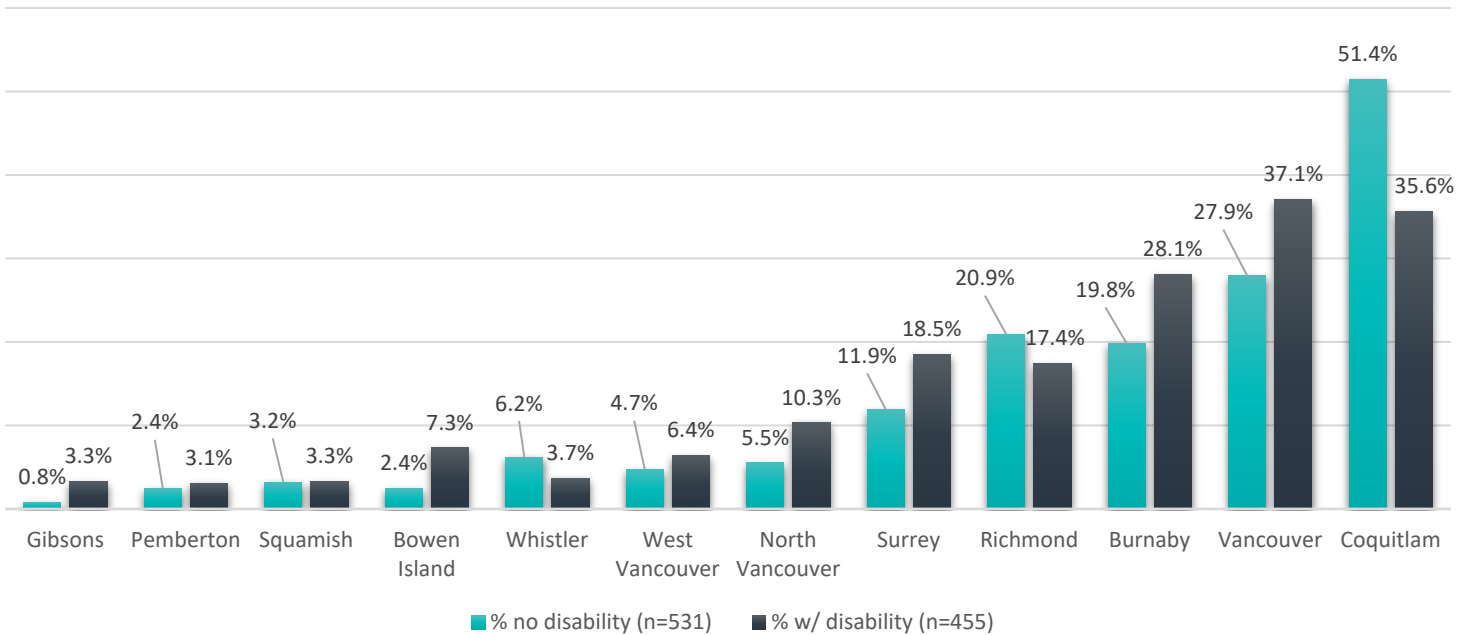
Note: *percentages above are subject to multiple select for those reporting visits to multiple libraries within and across systems over the past year*

Staff Surveys

Two separate staff surveys were administered for this assessment. The first survey collected 110 responses from seven participating libraries[2] and captured feedback relating to *program and service accessibility* (Appendix C). The second survey was administered to staff from a separate, but overlapping cohort of seven participating libraries[3] and collected 138 responses relating to *social and attitudinal accessibility* (Appendix B). Both surveys offer a view into library staff perspectives on accessibility challenges and current practices. North Vancouver City Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Public Library participated in both the programs and services as well as the social and attitudinal surveys.

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[2] *Programs and services staff survey library participants:* Coquitlam Public Library, Gibson and District Public Library, North Vancouver City Public Library, Pemberton and District Public Library, Surrey Public Library, West Vancouver Memorial Public Library, and Whistler Public Library

[3] *Social and attitudinal staff survey library participants:* Bowen Island Public Library, Burnaby Public Library, North Vancouver City Public Library, Richmond Public Library, Squamish Public Library, Vancouver Public Library, and West Vancouver Memorial Public Library

Staff Interviews

A total of 25 interviews were conducted with library staff. Interviews were split to accommodate those libraries interested in the social and attitudinal aspects of accessibility (n=13) (Appendix D) and by those focused on program and service accessibility (n=12) (Appendix E). These interviews provided qualitative insights into how libraries are adapting their spaces, programs, and staff training to accommodate patrons with disabilities.

Documentation Review

Relevant documentation was requested and reviewed for each component. Libraries provided policies, training materials, and internal communications that informed the audit findings. The assessment of social and attitudinal accessibility included materials such as disability awareness training resources, diversity and inclusion policies, and patron feedback. The programs and services accessibility assessment focused on program guides, accessibility statements, and usage data on accessible services, helping to identify both the successes and gaps in current offerings.

1.3 Project Implementation

The survey administration process incorporated both digital and physical formats to maximize accessibility and reach across patron demographics. SPARC BC provided promotional flyers for libraries to distribute, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards, and incentives were offered in the form of virtual gift cards to encourage participation in the patron and staff surveys.

This report aims to present the findings of the audit comprehensively, offering insights and practical recommendations grounded in the principles of *Universal Design* and the *Social Model of Disability*. Through this approach, InterLINK seeks to identify actionable steps that can enhance accessibility and inclusivity across library environments and services so that all patrons can fully engage with and benefit from library resources.

2.   Audit Framework

This audit was guided by the *Social Model of Disability* and the *Seven Principles of Universal Design*, two frameworks central to creating an inclusive and accessible library environment.

2.1 Guiding Frameworks

Social Model of Disability

Disability occurs when a person with an impairment encounters barriers created by society, whether physical or attitudinal. This perspective shifts the view of disability from an individual or medical issue that a person must address alone to a collective responsibility, where society must create equal and inclusive conditions for all people, regardless of impairments (Oliver, 1990). In a library context, this model suggests that patrons face accessibility challenges not because of their impairments but due to inaccessible programs, services, or environments. By applying this model, the audit sought to identify areas where libraries could eliminate barriers, thereby enhancing equitable access to resources and fostering inclusivity.

Seven Principles of Universal Design

The audit also drew upon the Seven Principles of Universal Design, which aim to create environments that are accessible and usable by all people, regardless of age, ability, or other factors (Center for Universal Design, 1997). These principles were applied as follows in the library context:

1. **Equitable Use:** Libraries should provide resources that are equally accessible to all patrons, such as digital and physical materials in alternative formats.

2. **Flexibility in Use:** Library programs and services should be adaptable to accommodate a range of abilities and preferences, for instance, through flexible seating arrangements, adaptable study areas, or customizable digital interfaces.

3. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Information about library services, programs, and accessibility options should be easily understandable for all patrons, including clear signage, simplified program descriptions, and staff trained in clear communication methods.

4. **Perceptible Information:** Important information, such as library events or emergency procedures, should be conveyed through multiple sensory channels (e.g., text, audio, Braille) to accommodate patrons with varying sensory abilities.

5. **Tolerance for Error:** Libraries should minimize unintended actions by providing intuitive systems and trained staff to assist patrons with special needs, allowing users to explore resources with confidence.

6. **Low Physical Effort:** Spaces should be designed to require minimal physical exertion to access or navigate, ensuring doors, aisles, and seating arrangements are accessible to all patrons.

7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Facilities should be designed with appropriate spacing to allow easy access and usability for all, including those who use mobility aids, need assistance, or have sensory sensitivities.

3. Social and Attitudinal Accessibility

3.1 Patron Survey Findings

Quantitative Data Analysis

The patron survey provided valuable insight into the social and attitudinal accessibility experiences of patrons in the library environment. Below are key findings relevant to the library's efforts in fostering an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for patrons with various disabilities.

Disabilities Among Library Patron Respondents

Nearly half of library patrons who responded to the survey (46.2%) self-reported living with one or more disability. As illustrated in Figure 3, those reporting disabilities most often cited difficulties with their mental health, including emotionally, psychologically, or with a mental health condition. This was closely followed by one-third of respondents reporting physical activity limitations (walking, using stairs, and/or using hands and fingers) and those experiencing difficulties learning, remembering, or concentrating (35.8%). Reported difficulties with vision (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses), hearing (even when using a hearing aid), and other disabilities or chronic health issues were less prevalent among respondents with one or more reported disability, but still represented over 15% of those with a disability. Notably, 19.6% of library patrons with disabilities reported having two-or-more disabilities.

Figure 3: Distribution of disability types among library patrons with one or more disability

Disability Type	Percentage
Mental health	37.8%
Learning	35.8%
Physical	34.7%
Seeing	26.2%
Other disabilities	19.8%
Hearing	17.6%
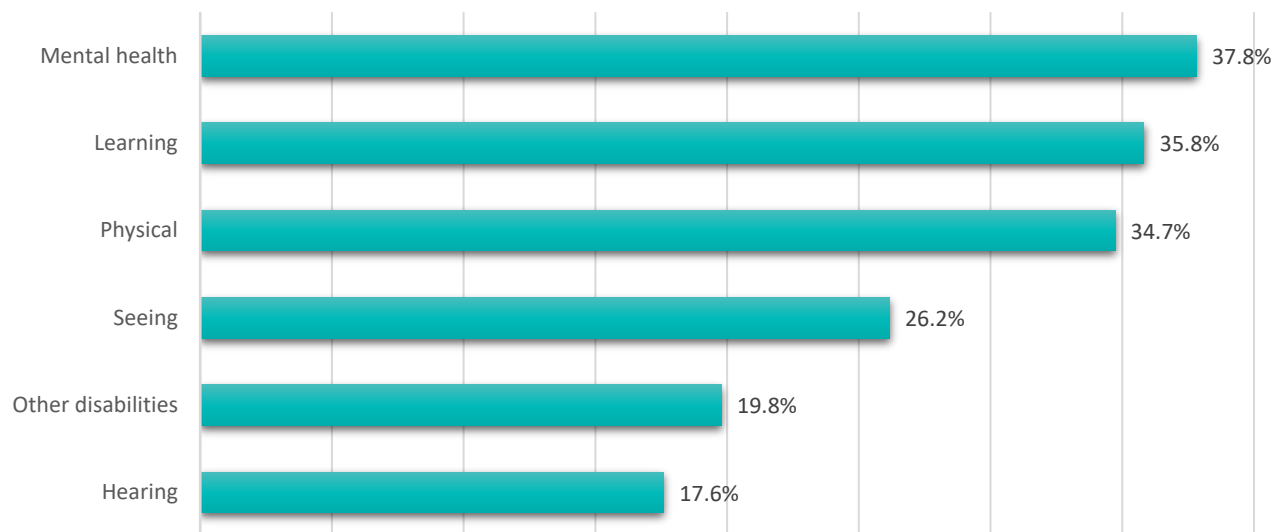
Note: n=455; responses options were multiple select

Among library patrons with at least one self-reported disability, approximately half (48.7%) were between the ages of 25 and 44 (see Figure 4). The number of younger library patrons (24 years of age or younger) with a disability was much smaller, but not unsubstantial (12.5%). Seniors 65 years of age and older also represented a notable proportion of library patrons with at least one disability (18.6%).

Figure 4: Age distribution among library patrons with one or more disability

Age	Percentage
Under 18 years	2.3%
18-24	10.2%
25-34	26.7%
35-44	22.0%
45-54	13.0%
55-64	7.2%
65+	18.6%
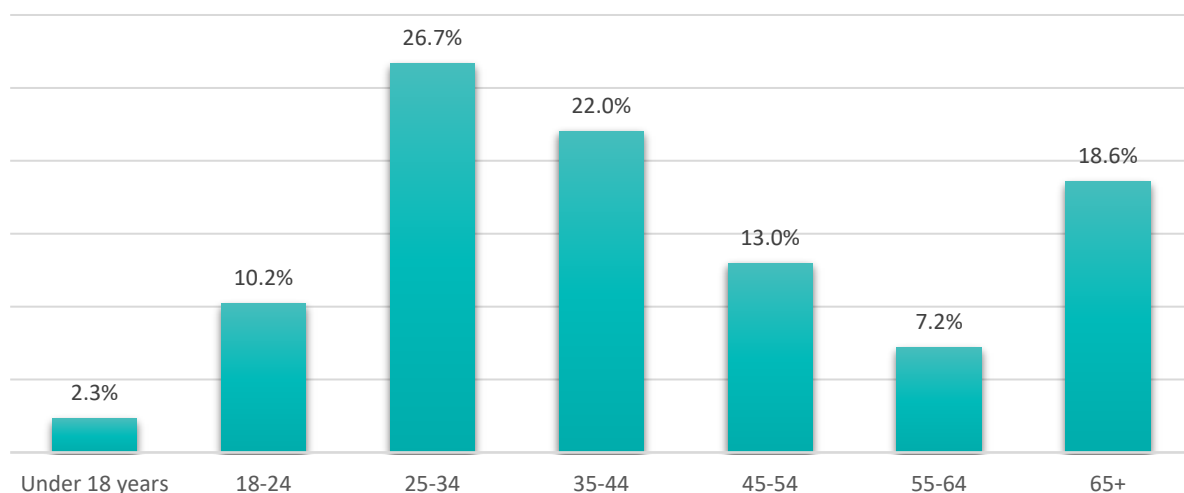
Note: Missing=63 (non-response to age question); n=923

Patterns of self-reported disability also varied by library patron age (see Figure 5). For instance, those under the age of 18 with a disability most often cited mental health difficulties, including emotional, psychological, and other mental health conditions, although nearly 70% of this category was reported by those 25 to 44 years of age. Difficulties learning, remembering, or concentrating was also mostly

represented by young and middle age adults (25-44). Physical disabilities, including difficulties with mobility, presented a demographic shift in focus with nearly one-third represented by seniors (65+). Vision difficulties reflected an age distribution similar to those experiencing learning difficulties. Similar to physical activity difficulties, those reporting other disabilities and chronic health conditions as well as hearing disability were often 55 years of age and older, although approximately 40% were under the age of 45 years.

Figure 5: Age distribution across disability domains
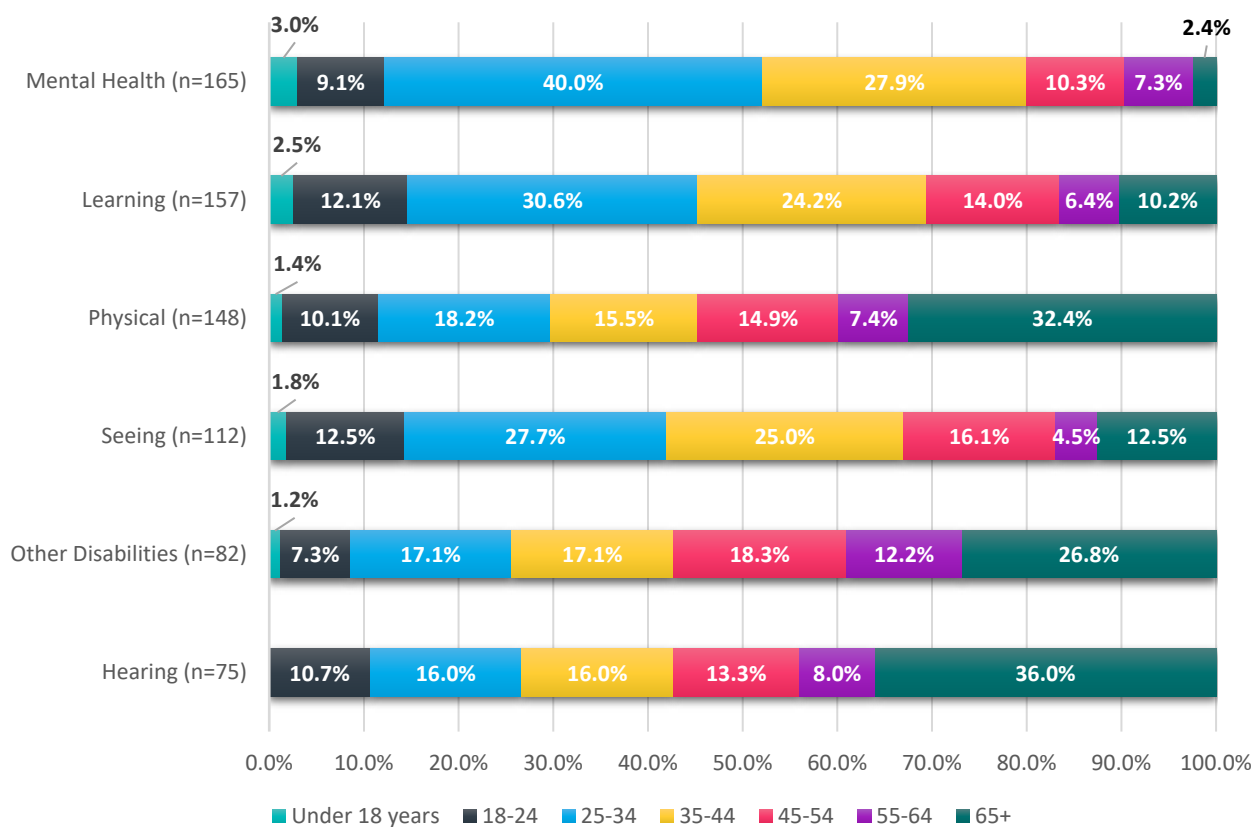
Note: missing=23 (non-response to 'age' question among disability-reporting library patrons); n=432

Accessibility Challenges During Library Visits
Overall, a little over half of surveyed library patrons with a disability (53.4%) reported encountering one or more barrier during library visits in the past year. The majority of those with disabilities who encountered a barrier (67.5%) only reported one or two barriers. It should also be noted that on the basis of individual barriers, only a minority of patrons with disabilities (between 5.7% and 18.2%) experienced difficulties during their past year visits. It is an obvious reflection of the work libraries have done to foster an accessible and inclusive environment and program experience for library patrons, but also presents opportunities for improvement.

Most Common Challenges: As Figure 6 below shows, noise levels (18.2%) and lack of quiet or sensory-friendly spaces (18%) were frequently cited concerns, indicating that library environments, which are typically less noisy public spaces, may consider adjustments to create even more sensory-friendly areas. Accessible seating and workspaces were also reported as challenges by 13.4% of patrons. When examining

barriers by different disability group, it was important to do so as a proportion of said groups due to the different sub-totals in each grouping. For instance, while there were a greater proportion of library patrons with self-reported learning or mental health difficulties noting a lack of quiet or sensory-friendly spaces, it was in part because there were more people in the survey sample reporting these difficulties. However, when comparing within disability groups, a greater proportion of library patrons with other disabilities and chronic health conditions (33.3%) noted this barrier, compared to those with learning (26.4%) and mental health difficulties (29.7%).

Figure 6: Distribution of specific accessibility barriers experienced during visits by library patrons with one or more disability
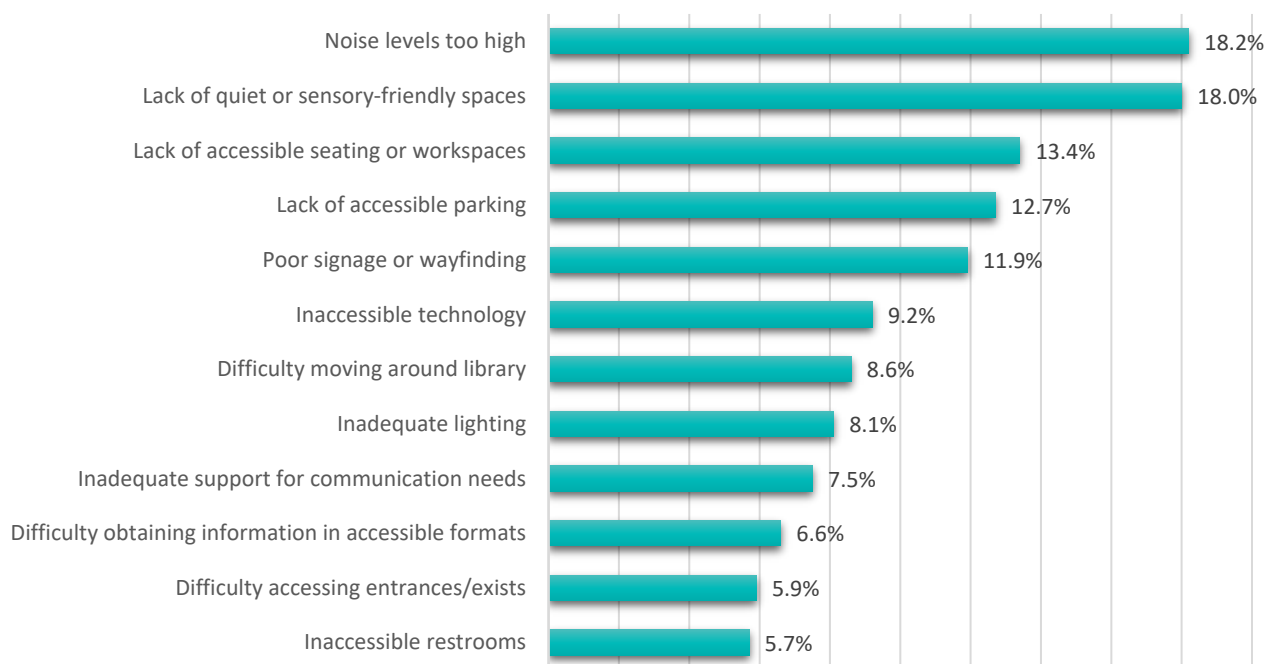
Note: n=455

High Noise Levels: Within specific disability groups, high noise levels was the leading barrier for those self-reporting physical activity limitations (17.7%), hearing impairments (17.5%), and other disabilities and chronic health conditions (37.8%). Although not the leading barrier, high noise levels were also reported by many with learning difficulties (24.5%) and mental health difficulties (22.7%).

Lack of Quiet or Sensory Friendly Spaces: As noted previously, the largest proportion of reporting of this barrier was among those with other disabilities and chronic health conditions (33.3%). Over one-quarter of those with a learning difficulty (26.4%) or mental health concern (29.7%) also reported a lack of quiet or sensory friendly spaces as their group's leading barrier.

Environmental and Physical Barriers: Physical accessibility within library spaces varied according to reported barriers by different disability groups. Inaccessible restrooms were most notably by 14.3% of those with vision impairments and 11.1% of those with other disability and chronic health conditions. Difficulty accessing entrances and exists was not a highly reported barrier, although 11.4% of those with physical activity difficulties (the highest proportion within any disability group) did report it. Moreover, a

larger proportion of those with visual impairments (15.1%) and physical mobility difficulties (13.9%) reported difficulty moving around libraries than other disability groups. A lack of accessible parking was reported as a barrier by nearly a quarter of those with visual impairments (23.5%) and 15.8% of those with physical mobility difficulties. Finally, a lack of accessible seating or workspaces was reported by a greater proportion of patrons with vision impairments (21%) and those with other disabilities and chronic health conditions (20%) than other disability groups, although closely followed by those with learning (18.4%), hearing (17.5%), and physical difficulties (17.1%).

Additionally, **inadequate lighting** was cited as a barrier by a greater proportion of patrons with vision impairments (16.8%) and those with learning difficulties (16%) than other disability types, such as physical activity limitations (8.9%). Reports of **poor signage or wayfinding** were reported by a greater proportion of those with mental health difficulties (19.8%) and vision impairments (16.8%).

Patron Experience

Overall, library patrons felt welcomed and expressed high levels of satisfaction with staff support, particularly in helpfulness and availability, though feedback indicated opportunities for enhanced and consistent accessibility training across staff:

Patrons with one or more disability generally felt welcomed, with 82.1% rating their experience as a 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 to 5 (see Figure 7 below). The proportion of this level of satisfaction (4 to 5) was, however, lower when compared to library patrons without a disability (89.4%).

Figure 7: On a scale of 1-5, how welcomed do you feel when you visit the library? (patrons with a disability vs. patrons without a disability)
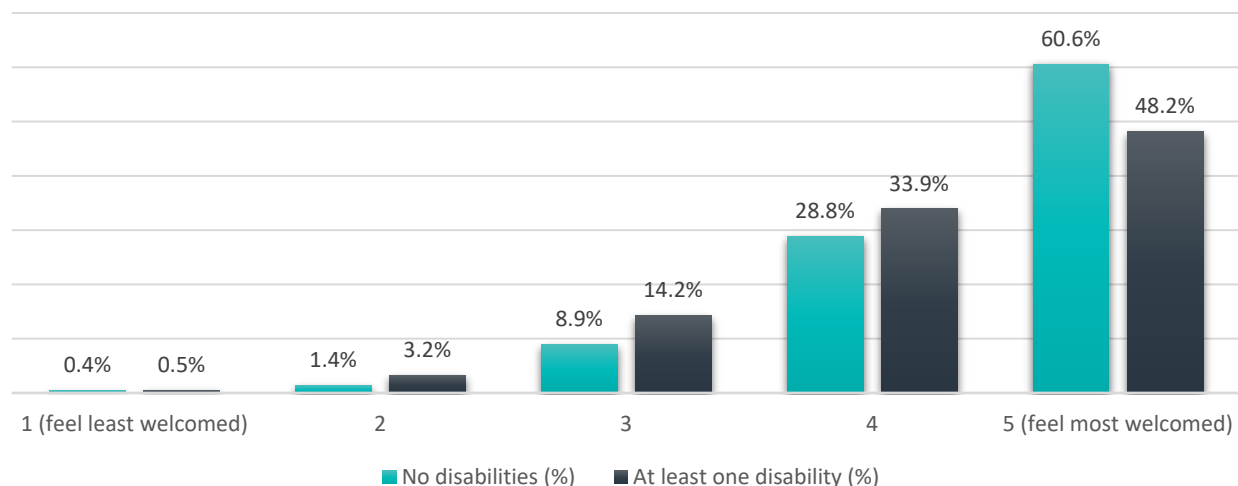
Note: Missing=32 (non-respondents); n=954

When focusing on individual disability groups among library patron respondents, 75% or more expressed high levels of positive sentiment (4 or 5) regarding libraries' welcoming atmospheres (see Figure 8). Patrons with mental health concerns and other disabilities, such as chronic conditions and injuries, felt the most welcomed, with over 80% of each group reporting sentiment levels of 4 or 5. While limited, patrons with vision impairments did feature a higher proportion (25%) of neutral or negative sentiments, compared to other groups. Further targeted engagement with this patron group as well as consideration of how those

with vision impairments experience specific aspects of libraries, including the environment, programs and services, may help to identify practical opportunities for improvement.

Figure 8: On a scale of 1-5, how welcomed do you feel when you visit the library? (library patron disability groups)
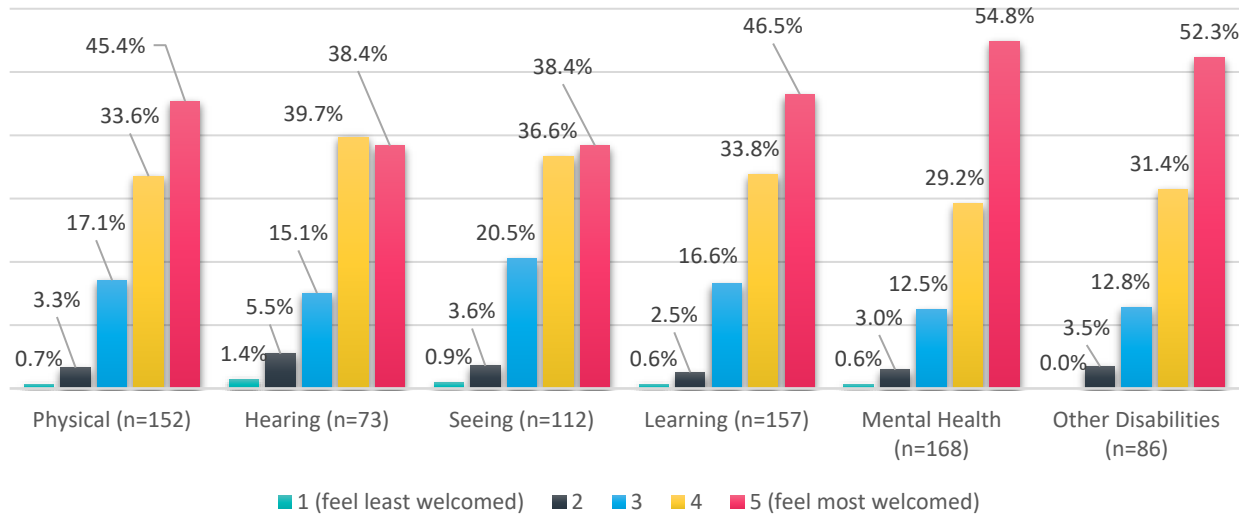
Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

As shown in Figure 9 below, a majority of library patrons with at least one disability (54.4%) rated staff helpfulness as excellent (5 – most helpful), and 28% rated it as good (4 out of 5). Overall, library patrons without a disability reported slightly higher satisfaction with the helpfulness of staff.

Figure 9: On a scale of 1-5, how helpful have library staff been during your visits? (patrons with a disability vs. patrons without a disability)
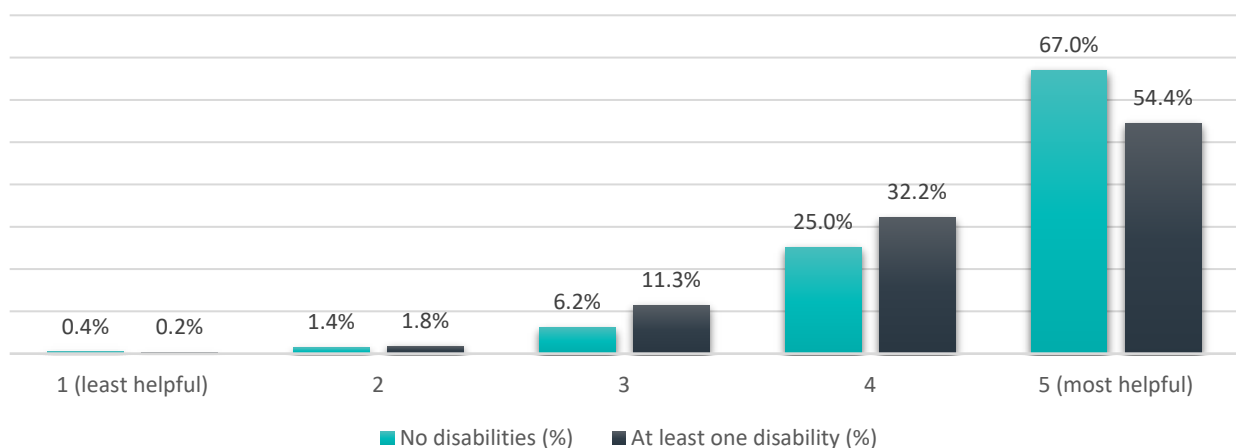
Note: Missing=30 (non-respondents); n=956

The vast majority (over 80%) of each disability group reported high levels of sentiment (4 or 5) when reflecting on the helpfulness of staff (see Figure 10). This is strong, reinforcing result of libraries'

commitment to customer service to those who may need different forms of support. Patrons with physical disabilities, mental health concerns, and other disabilities reported the highest levels of positive sentiment. However, those with hearing and vision impairments reported slightly higher levels of neutral or negative sentiments. This potentially indicates an opportunity to focus on patrons with sensory difficulties who may require more direct communication support to foster increased accessibility and inclusion at libraries.

Figure 10: On a scale of 1-5, how helpful have library staff been during your visits? (library patron disability groups)
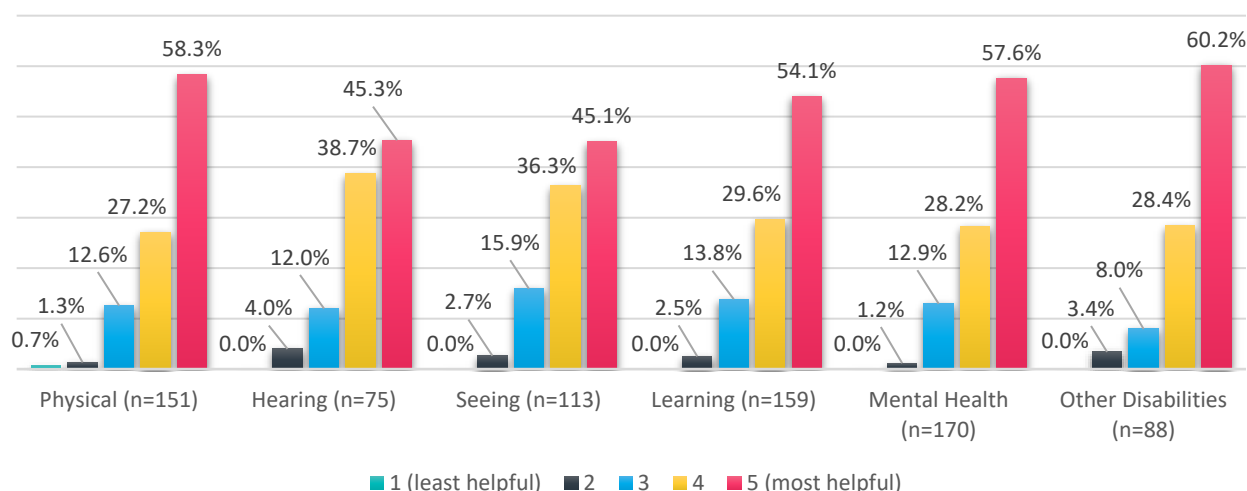
Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

The ease of locating staff when needed received positive responses from the vast majority of library patrons with at least one disability, with 83.9% rating this aspect as a 4 or 5 (see Figure 11). While patrons without a disability were more likely to rate their experience as excellent (5 out of 5) than those with a disability, their overall experiences at the threshold of 4 to 5 was generally comparable.

Figure 11: On a scale of 1-5, how easy is it to find staff to help you? (library patron disability groups)
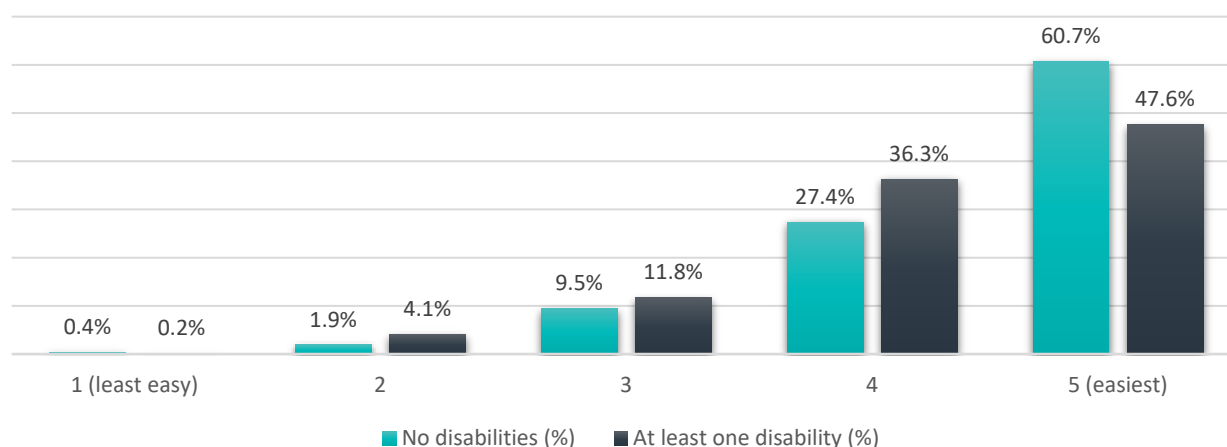
Note: Missing=31 (non-respondents); n=955

Most groups of library patrons with disabilities reported finding staff to be relatively easy. Patrons with physical disabilities, mental health concerns, and other disabilities, such as chronic health conditions, were most convinced of the ease of finding library staff (see Figure 12). Patrons with sensory difficulties, including hearing impairments and vision impairments reported having less ease in finding staff for assistance. For instance, between 20%-25% of those with hearing and vision impairments reported neutral or negative levels of ease (0 to 3) in finding staff to help them.

Figure 12: On a scale of 1-5, how easy is it to find staff to help you? (patrons with a disability vs. patrons without a disability)
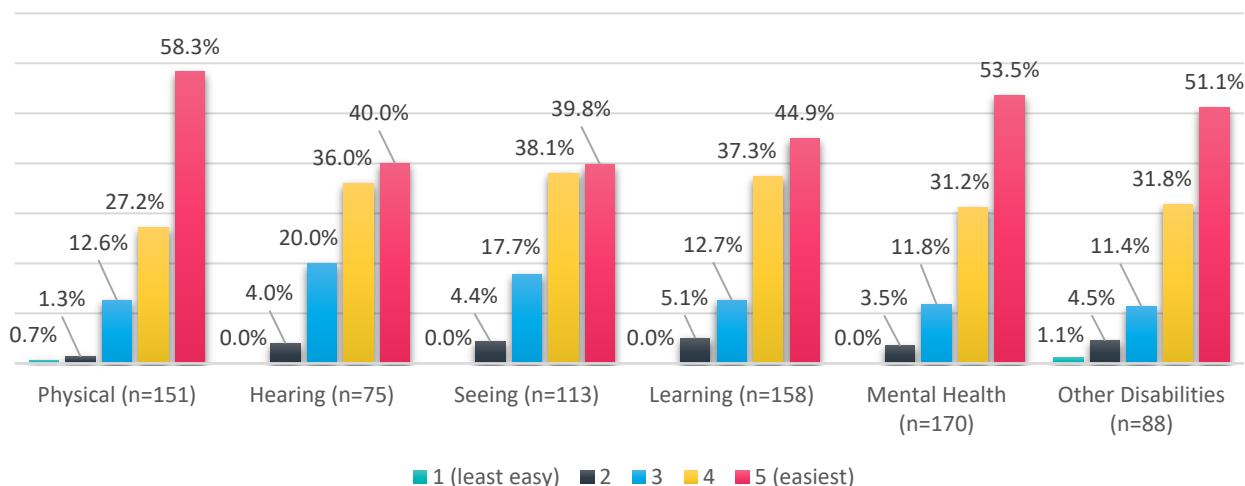
Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

Despite the generally high levels of satisfaction, the qualitative feedback from library patrons highlighted the potential benefit of staff training opportunities to help address specific accessibility challenges. The following section provides a summary of these key insights.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The open-ended survey responses provided deeper insights into the areas where library accessibility and inclusion could be enhanced, from a library patron perspective. In particular, library patrons provided feedback on the areas of physical accessibility, digital accessibility and assistive technology, staff training, inclusive programming, and community engagement and collaboration.

Physical Accessibility Enhancements

"When I tried to attend a class but couldn't find it, I asked the staff, and they let me know where it was. But it could be more comfortable if the signage were clearer, especially for those with visual or learning disabilities." – Library Patron

Patrons frequently suggested improvements to the library's physical layout and infrastructure to accommodate diverse needs.

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Suggestions included regular audits of the physical space, installation of wide automatic doors, accessible restroom facilities, and height-adjustable desks.

- **Navigation and Safety:** Feedback indicated a need for tactile markers for visually impaired patrons and quiet, sensory-friendly spaces for neurodiverse individuals sensitive to noise and light.

- **Furniture and Layout:** Calls for rearranging furniture to ensure wheelchair access and providing height-adjustable seating for patrons with mobility challenges were common.

Digital Accessibility and Assistive Technology

"The library's commitment to assistive technology could be improved. I often have to search for someone to help me with the technology, and not everyone is familiar with the features available." – Library Patron

Respondents noted various ways in which digital accessibility could be improved to create a more inclusive environment.

- **Accessible Websites:** Patrons emphasized the need for screen reader compatibility, adjustable font sizes, and descriptive alt text for website images.

- **Assistive Technology:** There were frequent requests for screen readers, magnifiers, Braille keyboards, and closed captioning on library media. Additional hearing aids and assistive listening devices were also suggested to support patrons with hearing impairments.

Staff Training and Awareness

"I think the library could provide more support for staff to understand patrons with disabilities. I often feel I have to explain my needs in detail, which is sometimes exhausting." – Library Patron

Patrons expressed a need for more comprehensive disability awareness and inclusion training for library staff.

- **Disability Awareness:** Training on assisting individuals with various disabilities, including sign language basics, was seen as essential. Patrons highlighted the importance of staff understanding the diverse needs of neurodiverse individuals and those with physical limitations.

- **Customer Interaction:** Patrons desired empathetic, flexible, and approachable interactions. Personalized assistance based on individual needs was highly valued, particularly for sensitive discussions.

Inclusive Programming and Events

Suggestions for improving inclusivity extended to programming and events.

- **Disability-Focused Programs:** There was a strong interest in programs specifically designed for patrons with disabilities, such as sign language classes, sensory-friendly Storytimes, and inclusive book clubs.

- **Hybrid and Remote Participation:** Patrons suggested that offering virtual event participation options would be beneficial for those unable to attend in person, enhancing access through online book clubs, recorded sessions with captioning, and virtual tours.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

> *"If the library could collaborate with disability organizations, it might help staff understand the unique needs of people with different abilities and make the library even more welcoming." – **Library Patron***

Patrons recommended increased community engagement to strengthen accessibility efforts:

- **Collaborations with Disability Organizations:** Involving disability-focused groups in planning and decision-making was viewed as an effective way to enhance accessibility initiatives.

- **Enhanced Communication:** Requests for clearer communication about available accessibility services were common. This included visible signage, accessible informational pamphlets, and clear online explanations of services available to people with disabilities.

3.2 Library Staff Survey Findings

Quantitative Data Analysis
The quantitative data analysis of the 138 responses to the staff survey on the ***social and attitudinal accessibility*** of libraries provides insight into library staff members' experiences, training backgrounds, and confidence levels in delivering accessible and inclusive services. Key findings reveal notable trends in training participation, department representation, and varying levels of confidence among staff in meeting the needs of patrons with disabilities.

Staff Experience
Staff years of service were varied, with 28% having 1-3 years of experience and 25% having over ten years of experience in library service. This diversity in experience level indicates a mix of both newer and long-standing perspectives on accessibility needs within the library environment.

Departmental Representation

The highest representation came from reference and information services (46%), followed by adult services (34%) and children's services (29%). These departments are highly patron-facing, suggesting a significant number of staff with direct involvement in patron accessibility experiences. Most staff members (76%) interact with patrons with disabilities on a daily or weekly basis, highlighting the importance of consistent accessibility training to support these frequent interactions.

Confidence in Providing Inclusive Services

As Figure 13 demonstrates below, confidence levels among staff in delivering inclusive services were mixed: 42% rated their confidence at a moderate level (3 out of 5), while 30% rated their confidence as high (4 out of 5), and only 12% felt very confident (5 out of 5). This highlights an opportunity to enhance accessibility training and resources.

Staff who received three or more types of accessibility training were 4 times more likely to feel comfortable addressing concerns of patrons with disabilities (69.7%) compared to those with fewer training sessions.

Figure 13: On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you in your team's ability to provide inclusive and accessible services to patrons with disabilities?
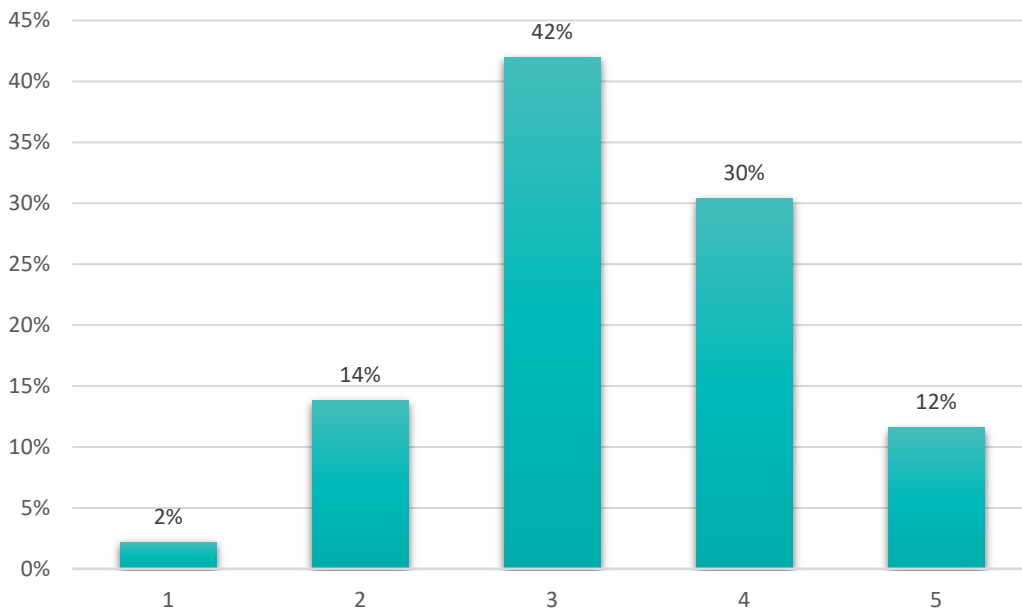
Note: n=138

Accessibility Training

Focus Areas of Accessibility Training: Among library staff who received accessibility training in the past year (57%), the most common disability-focus areas included mental health conditions (33%), neurodivergent conditions (25%), and sensory disabilities (24%). Training on cognitive or intellectual disabilities and physical

disabilities was less common, reported by 19% and 16% of staff, respectively, highlighting potential areas for further development to ensure comprehensive support across all disability types.

Specific Accessibility Training Areas: In the past year, staff training focused predominantly on mental health first aid (17%) and disability awareness (16%), along with techniques for addressing attitudinal barriers (18%). Training in critical areas like universal design (4%) and sensory-friendly programming (6%) was comparatively lower, indicating areas where additional support and development may be needed. (see Figure 14 on next page).

Figure 14: In the past year, what types of training have you received related to accessibility and inclusivity?

Training area	%
Addressing attitudinal barriers	18%
Mental health first aid training	17%
Disability awareness training	16%
Use of assistive technologies	12%
Emergency procedures for patrons with disabilities	12%
Customer service for patrons with disabilities	11%
Designing inclusive programs and events	7%
Communication techniques for assisting patrons with disabilities	7%
Accessibility software training	7%
Sensory-friendly programming	6%
Creating accessible digital content	4%
Universal design principles	4%
Physical accessibility training	2%

Note: n=138

Library Policies Supporting Inclusivity
Responses were moderately positive regarding policies supporting inclusivity: 43% rated the library's inclusivity policies as adequate (3 out of 5), while 31% rated them as strong (4 out of 5). These ratings suggest a perception that while some policies are in place, additional support may be necessary to strengthen inclusivity.

Training Effectiveness
As Figure 15 demonstrates, effectiveness ratings of the current training programs in preparing staff to serve patrons with disabilities showed room for improvement, with 38% rating it low (2 out of 5) and 36% giving a moderate rating (3 out of 5). This finding suggests that more comprehensive and targeted training programs could enhance staff preparedness.

Figure 15: On a scale of 1-5, how effective do you think the current staff training programs are in preparing you to interact with patrons with disabilities?
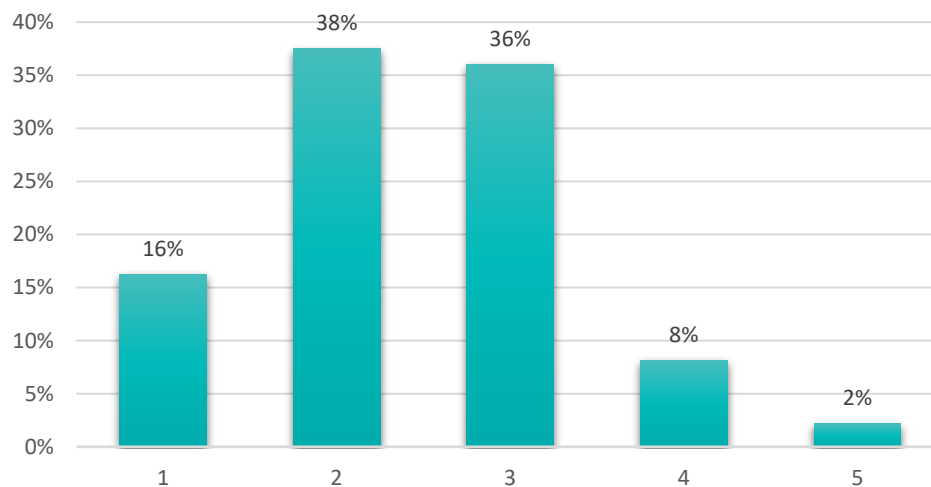
Note: n=138

Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

When asked if the library fosters a welcoming environment, 40% rated it as moderate (3 out of 5), while 35% rated it positively (4 out of 5). This reflects that many staff members believe the library is inclusive, but there is still potential for improvement. For instance, a significant 75% of staff reported observing barriers to accessibility or inclusivity within the library, indicating a widespread perception of obstacles that hinder a fully accessible environment.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The open-ended responses from the staff survey provide insights into the current state of social and attitudinal accessibility in the library environment, particularly in terms of training, attitudes, and inclusivity for patrons with disabilities. Key themes are summarized below.

Inconsistency in Accessibility Training

Irregular Training Schedules: Staff responses highlighted a lack of consistency and regularity in accessibility training. Many staff members reported that training is offered infrequently or only as needed, leading to gaps in knowledge and a lack of preparedness in serving patrons with disabilities. Some staff could not recall the last time they received training, while others were unsure if any formal accessibility training was ever provided.

Optional and Reactive Training Approach: Training was often offered as optional or on an ad hoc basis, dependent on individual initiative or immediate departmental needs rather than a comprehensive, proactive strategy. This lack of a consistent, mandatory training structure means that staff members may not have the foundational skills needed to address accessibility issues effectively.

Need for Expanded and Inclusive Training Content

Gaps in Disability-Focused Training: While training on certain social issues, such as homelessness and mental health, was more commonly provided, accessibility training specific to disabilities was less frequently offered. Staff expressed a desire for a more balanced training approach, with comprehensive coverage of various disabilities, including physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, as well as practical training on assistive technologies and inclusive programming.

Lack of Awareness of Training Opportunities: Many staff members were unaware of existing training opportunities, with frequent mentions of uncertainty about whether such programs were available. This indicates a need for improved communication and outreach regarding accessibility training, ensuring that all staff are informed about available learning opportunities and the importance of these skills for serving patrons with disabilities.

Staff Desire for Structured and Hands-On Training

Desire for Regular and Mandatory Training: Many staff members advocated for structured, mandatory training sessions on accessibility, particularly for front-line staff who engage directly with patrons. There was a call for training to be integrated into onboarding and regularly refreshed to ensure that staff stay informed and capable of supporting diverse accessibility needs.

Preference for Hands-On, Practical Training: Staff expressed a preference for training that incorporates real-life scenarios, role-playing, and interactive components rather than lecture-based formats. These practical methods would allow staff to build confidence and gain experience in handling situations they encounter with patrons with disabilities. Suggestions included training led by experts or other staff members with lived experiences and workshops focused on specific accessibility challenges within library spaces.

Need for Holistic and Library-Specific Training

Tailored Training for Different Roles: Staff suggested that accessibility training should be tailored to specific roles within the library, recognizing that different departments and positions have unique needs and interactions with patrons. Additionally, the importance of library-specific training, such as navigating physical spaces and understanding digital accessibility tools, was emphasized, as these skills are directly applicable to the library setting.

Desire for Support from Management: A recurring theme was the need for greater support from library leadership in prioritizing accessibility training. Staff expressed frustration over limited resources, time

constraints, and management's lack of focus on accessibility. Suggestions included allocating dedicated time for training, enhancing resources, and embedding accessibility training into organizational priorities to create a consistently inclusive environment across all library branches.

3.3 Library Staff Interviews Findings

The analysis of interviews with thirteen library representatives across seven libraries provided in-depth insights into social and attitudinal accessibility practices, challenges, and innovations in service delivery for patrons with disabilities. These findings highlight a range of approaches, including accessibility accommodations, responsibility for accessibility, staff training needs, and emerging areas for improvement in creating an inclusive and welcoming library environment.

General Accessibility Approach

Libraries are prioritizing physical accessibility by ensuring wide aisles, accessible restrooms, automatic doors, and wheelchair-friendly spaces. Larger libraries with more resources are able to adopt formal policies, while smaller libraries often respond reactively to accessibility challenges due to limited resources. Some libraries demonstrated proactive efforts, with initiatives such as Richmond Public Library's Sensory Sundays and mobile library services like the "RPL to Go Van," which delivers library resources to underserved communities.

Responsibility for Accessibility

Accessibility responsibilities are typically decentralized, with tasks often falling to chief librarians or being shared among staff. Larger libraries, like Burnaby's Home Library and Accessible Services (HLAS) department, offer more structured support, while smaller libraries rely on informal processes to address accessibility needs as they arise. The lack of centralized leadership can lead to fragmented management of accessibility improvements, especially in smaller branches with fewer staff.

> *There isn't a single person responsible for accessibility at the library, but rather a shared responsibility among the staff. – Library staff from a smaller library*

Staff Training and Support

Formalized accessibility training is lacking in most libraries, with training limited to general customer service and technical skills. Although some libraries offer mental health first aid and autism-related training, comprehensive training on disabilities, particularly for invisible disabilities, remains limited. Staff expressed a need for disability-specific training to increase confidence in assisting patrons with cognitive and sensory impairments.

Feedback Mechanisms and Community Engagement

Libraries generally rely on informal methods, such as in-person feedback and online forms, to gather input from patrons. Few libraries actively seek feedback specific to disability needs, limiting their understanding of these patrons' unique challenges. Larger libraries are more likely to involve community partners in gathering accessibility feedback, while smaller libraries typically depend on staff observations and verbal exchanges.

Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

Libraries strive to foster inclusive environments through respectful and dignified interactions with patrons. Although they prioritize treating patrons equally, physical limitations and limited formal policies sometimes challenge efforts to support patrons with disabilities. Training on handling sensory sensitivities and neurodivergent behavior was identified as an area of need.

Emergency Preparedness

While general evacuation plans are in place, few libraries have specific provisions for patrons with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments. Larger libraries like Richmond and Burnaby have designated staff to assist patrons in emergencies, but current plans often overlook accommodations for invisible disabilities, underscoring the need for inclusive emergency preparedness procedures.

> *The library has designated staff to manage evacuations and assist patrons who need help in an emergency. However, there are no specific guidelines in place for addressing the needs of patrons with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities during evacuations. – Library staff*

Innovations and Areas for Improvement

Libraries with more resources can implement creative accessibility solutions, such as dedicated sensory-friendly hours and mobile library services. There is an opportunity for libraries, especially smaller ones, to improve by expanding assistive technologies, adopting structured feedback mechanisms, and developing formalized training to enhance support for patrons with disabilities.

3.4 Document Analysis

Many libraries have foundational policies and initiatives that address general inclusivity. However, the integration of accessibility perspectives—especially tailored to social, physical, and sensory accessibility—remains an area with considerable potential for growth.

Accessibility in Policies and Core Guidelines

Most libraries include accessibility in general EDI policies, yet explicit guidance on accessibility often appears as a secondary focus. For example, Richmond Public Library's Accessibility Plan (2023-2033) is integrated into broader EDI policies but could benefit from detailed, actionable steps specific to accessibility barriers. Similarly, West Vancouver Memorial Library aligns its Accessibility Plan with District policies, incorporating accessibility goals but without distinct, library-specific guidelines that address the unique needs of patrons with disabilities.

Many policies, such as the "Access to Library Services without Fear" at Vancouver Public Library, emphasized inclusivity broadly but lack targeted sections on accessibility practices. Including clearer language and expectations around physical and sensory accessibility within such policies could enhance staff understanding and provide patrons with disabilities a more transparent outline of the library's commitment to accessibility.

Accessibility-Focused Staff Training

While many libraries provide general EDI training, fewer have adopted in-depth modules dedicated to accessibility. Larger libraries, like Vancouver Public Library, offer training on using adaptive equipment, such as screen readers and DAISY players, and training on dementia-friendly services; however, even these offerings are typically limited to a few specific accessibility needs.

Smaller libraries, like Bowen Island, emphasize general inclusivity training (e.g., Safe Harbour: Respect for All) but may lack resources for specific accessibility-focused modules. Adding training tailored to interacting with patrons with disabilities—covering a spectrum from mobility and sensory challenges to neurodivergent needs—could equip staff more comprehensively across library types and sizes.

Feedback Mechanisms and Accessibility-Specific Improvements

Libraries have been gradually introducing feedback systems to capture accessibility-related experiences, but these are often embedded within general patron feedback processes. West Vancouver Memorial Library, for example, collects feedback on accessibility but lacks a targeted mechanism to specifically address the experiences of patrons with disabilities. Regular, dedicated accessibility surveys or feedback tools could provide more actionable insights and help libraries refine their accessibility practices proactively.

Smaller libraries, facing resource limitations, may rely on informal feedback. By incorporating accessibility questions in regular surveys or leveraging existing partnerships for support, they could enhance their responsiveness to accessibility needs without needing extensive new infrastructure.

Opportunities for Growth: Enhancing Accessibility within EDI Frameworks

While EDI policies have laid a strong foundation, greater differentiation is needed between inclusivity as a general concept and accessibility as a distinct focus. Expanding EDI frameworks to include specific accessibility policies—such as clear guidelines for sensory-friendly spaces, standard adaptive technology, and dedicated accessibility feedback—would bring accessibility to the forefront within library settings.

Libraries could benefit from incorporating accessibility as a formalized area in EDI training programs. Developing accessible service standards, educating staff on a range of disabilities, and offering practical strategies for supporting patrons with mobility, sensory, and neurodivergent needs would strengthen staff capacity to provide truly inclusive services.

3.5 Implications

The analysis of social and attitudinal accessibility revealed several themes. Notable implications of key findings from patron and staff surveys, open-ended responses, and interviews are outlined below.

1. High Proportion of Patrons with Disabilities

A substantial segment of surveyed library patrons, 46.2%, reported having at least one disability, including mental health difficulties, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, vision impairments, hearing disabilities, and others. This representation highlights a key opportunity to continue fostering the developing tailored accessibility measures that address the diverse needs of patrons across library services. Variation in how certain groups of library patrons with distinct disabilities—particularly how they engage with programs and services and experience the library environment—may serve as a helpful guide in targeted improvement.

2. Challenges in Program Participation Due to Multiple Barriers

Barriers were reported by patrons who encountered obstacles in program participation, with common issues including:

- **Communication Barriers**: Difficulty obtaining accessible information about programs and events, particularly for patrons with sensory disabilities. Patrons with hearing (26.3%) and vision (31.9%) impairments featured the highest reports of difficulties with communication barriers. Engaging directly with patrons to understand preferred communication approaches would be a useful precursor.

- **Technological Barriers**: Limited availability of assistive technologies and adaptive computer equipment, affecting patrons' ability to engage with digital library resources. Patrons with vision impairments (34.5%) and mental health concerns (27.3%) reported the highest levels of difficulty with technological barriers. Resourcing a full range and scale of assistive technologies can be cost-prohibitive. However, future investment could consider prioritizing groups with greater reported technological barriers.

- **Physical and Environmental Barriers**: Obstacles such as limited accessible parking were identified most often by patrons with physical disabilities and vision impairments. Further engagement with these library patrons may help reveal practical solutions to improve the accessibility of library environments, which overall featured high levels of physical accessibility.

- **Attitudinal Barriers**: Some patrons reported feeling that staff lacked awareness of specific accessibility needs, indicating an area where more understanding and empathy could enhance the overall library experience. Approximately one-third (30.3%) of those with vision impairments reported encountering attitudinal barriers, which was the highest proportion out of the various disability categories.

3. Noise Levels and Sensory Comfort as Accessibility Concerns

High noise levels and the lack of quiet or sensory-friendly areas were prominent issues for patrons with learning (24.5%) and mental health difficulties (22.7%). This reportedly impacted their comfort and ability to fully access library spaces and programs. In addition, a third or more (37.8%) of patrons with other disabilities and chronic health conditions reported on these barriers. Further study may be required to understand how the needs of these groups may be met. However, these findings provide an indicator of the key groups libraries may want to engage with to inform future planning.

4. Physical Accessibility Challenges in Library Environments

Physical barriers were identified in library spaces, including difficulties accessing entrances, restrooms, and furniture layouts. Patrons with physical disabilities as well as sensory issues, such as hearing and vision, were particularly affected by physical accessibility challenges. Specific findings included:

- **Accessible Seating and Layout**: Limited seating options and challenging layouts were noted, particularly by patrons with vision impairments and other disabilities and chronic health conditions. Patrons with mobility impairments also indicated a need for height-adjustable desks and clearer pathways. Patrons with physical disabilities and those with hearing impairments experienced a similar proportion of physical accessibility barriers (~17%). Those with vision impairments reported the highest proportion (21%) of difficulties with accessibility seating and workspaces. Each of these

findings provide reasonable indications for future accessibility improvements to library environments.

- **Lighting and Signage**: Inadequate lighting was mostly cited by patrons with vision (16.8%) and learning (16%) disabilities, pointing to areas where environmental adjustments could improve navigation and accessibility for these patrons. Notably, patrons with vision impairments contributed the highest reports of a **lack of accessible parking** (23.5%), compared to other disability groups (average of 15.2%), potentially indicating that signage and wayfinding could be a related barrier.

- **Difficulty moving around the library**: Maneuvering library environments were less commonly cited as a physical accessibility challenge, compared to other challenges. This represents a point of success for library accessibility. Among those patrons most likely to report challenges moving around libraries, those with vision impairments (15.1%) and those with a physical disability (13.9%) stood out. Engaging patrons with vision impairments and physical disabilities for feedback as well as reviewing best practice standards for accessible indoor environments could help inform practical improvements.

5. Positive General Patron Experience with Room for Improvement in Staff Support

Overall, patrons with disabilities reported feeling welcomed and generally rated their interactions with staff positively in terms of helpfulness and availability. Qualitative feedback highlighted a need for more consistent accessibility awareness among staff, with particular mention of training gaps related to disability-specific needs and inclusive customer service practices. While a minority, patrons with sensory impairments more often reported challenges engaging with staff, which may indicate a need for more proactive forms of staff engagement.

6. Variability in Accessibility Training and Confidence Among Staff

Staff responses reflected mixed levels of confidence in providing inclusive services, with training participation highly variable, indicating potential opportunities to expand formal and informal accessibility training and resources. Key findings from staff surveys and interviews included:

- **Inconsistent Accessibility Training**: Training was often reactive and limited in scope, with some staff indicating they lacked adequate preparation for assisting patrons with disabilities. Less than half of staff reported receiving any formal accessibility training within the past year.

- **Departmental Differences**: Staff in patron-facing roles, such as reference services, were more likely to encounter accessibility challenges regularly, but training and support in these areas were reported as inconsistent and infrequent.

- **Positive Impact of Multifaceted Training**: Staff who received training on multiple accessibility topics reported higher confidence in supporting patrons with disabilities, suggesting that diverse and frequent training enhances staff preparedness and confidence.

7. Feedback Mechanisms and Engagement with Patron Input

While larger libraries often employed formal feedback mechanisms and community partnerships to assess accessibility needs, smaller libraries relied on more informal, verbal feedback. The centralized tracking of accessibility-related feedback was limited, pointing to an opportunity for more structured approaches to collecting and responding to accessibility feedback from patrons.

4. Programs and Services Accessibility

4.1 Patron Survey Findings

Quantitative Data Analysis

The analysis of quantitative survey data from library patrons (n=986) reveals several insights into the *accessibility of library programs and services* for respondents with disabilities (n=455). This section focuses on the accessibility of services and programs provided, their utilization rates, and barriers patrons encounter.

Disabilities and Library Utilization

Disability Representation: Nearly half of surveyed library patrons (46.2%) reported having at least one disability, with mental health difficulties, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities being the most common. In addition, nearly one-fifth of all survey respondents (19.6%) reported having two or more

disabilities. These findings suggest a significant portion of library patrons may benefit from accessible resources and services tailored to various disability needs.

Book Loans and Inter-Library Loans: Book loans were the most utilized service, with 80.3% of all respondents engaging with this service. Approximately 43% of those reporting book loans also reported living with one or more disability. Book loan service utilization was highest among those with mental health difficulties (15.9%), physical difficulties (15.3%), and learning difficulties (13.6%). Inter-library loans were reported by over one-third of all surveyed library patrons (37.2%). Approximately 47% of those reporting the use of inter-library loans had one or more disability, with physical disabilities (20.2%), mental health concerns (17.7%), and learning difficulties (15.5%) being the types most often associated with this group of library patrons.

Awareness and Utilization of Accessibility Services

Awareness and Use: As Figure 16 below illustrates, 33% of patrons indicated they use library services or resources designed to support people with disabilities, with 6% unaware of the services or resources offered. Only 22% of respondents used accessible services for themselves, and 11% used them on behalf of someone in their care.

Figure 16: Do you use library services or resources designed to support people with disabilities?

Yes, for someone in my care ■ Yes, for myself ■ Unsure ■ I am unaware of any ■ No
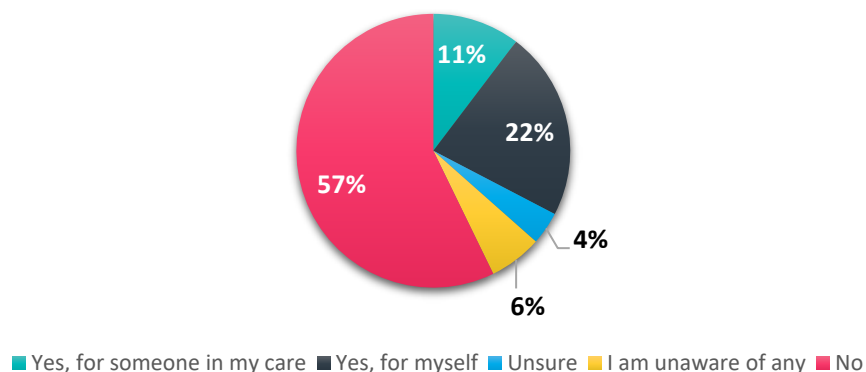
  Note: Missing=9; n=977

Accessible Services: As shown in Figure 17, accessible services were overwhelmingly used by those with one or more disability, although many patrons without a disability used these services (presumably for those in their care). Most accessed libraries' accessible collections (e.g., large print books, audiobooks). This was followed by assistive reading devices, for example screen magnifiers, zoom text, and magnifying glass domes and accessible computer equipment, such as adjustable computer desk, keyboard with keyguard, large print keyboards, and touchpad mice. Patrons with vision impairments featured the largest proportion (42%) of assistive reading devise use. Home delivery, assistive software, and assistive listening devices were less represented in survey responses, but still composed about 10% of utilization among patrons with disabilities. For instance, less than 20% of those with hearing impairments reported using assistive listening devices at the library. Low uptake in use of these resources may reflect limited awareness, availability, or variety of technologies matching patron needs.

Figure 17: Over the past year, which of the following accessible library services or resources have you, or someone in your care, used?

Legend: ■ At least one disability (%) ■ No disabilities (%)

Accessible collections: 32.7% / 19.2%
Assistive reading device: 16.5% / 2.3%
Accessible computer equipment: 14.7% / 5.8%
Home delivery: 11.9% / 2.6%
Assistive software: 10.3% / 1.3%
Assistive listening device: 8.8% / 0.6%
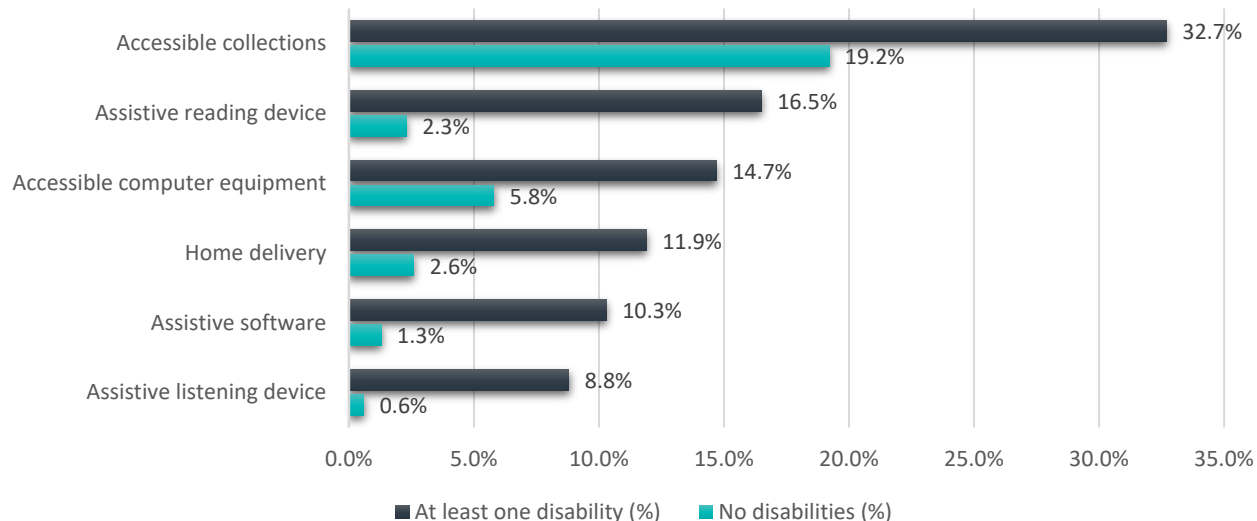
Note: n=986

Accessible Collections: Resources such as large print books and audiobooks, are essential for patrons with vision difficulties, with 48% of this group relying on these materials. This group is just over three times more likely to use accessible collections compared to other patrons, highlighting the critical role of these materials in ensuring library access for visually impaired users.

Caretakers of Library Patrons with Disabilities: Nearly one-third (31.7%) of those reporting use of library services or resources designed to support people with disabilities identified themselves as caretakers (see Figure 18). Service and resource utilization among this group was varied, although accessible collections (55.4%) and assistive reading devices (43.6%) were most often cited. When asked what accessibility services or resources were most important, caretakers similarly reported assistive reading devices (29.7%) and accessible collections (26.7%), with accessible computer equipment (14.9%) and home delivery (13.9%) being notable mentions.

Figure 18: Disability services or resource use among caretakers of disabled library patrons

Assistive listening devices: 19.8%
Home delivery: 21.8%
Accessible software: 32.7%
Accessible computer equipment: 32.7%
Assistive reading devices: 43.6%
Accessible collections (e.g., audiobooks, braille, e-text, DVDs, large print, etc.): 55.4%
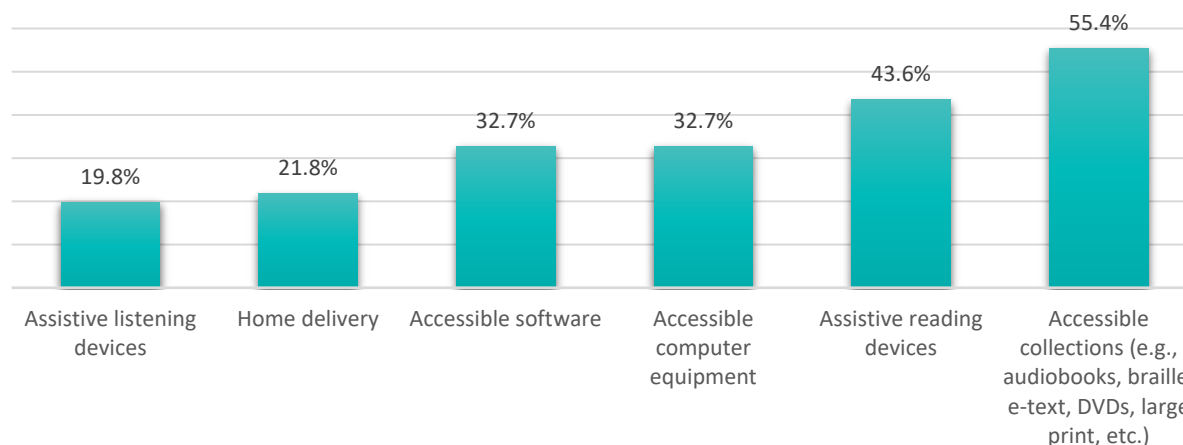
Note: n=101

Rating of Library Services and Program Accessibility

Variety of Services: Respondents with one or more disability rated the variety of services for persons with disabilities positively, with 43.7% rating it a 4 and 30% rating it a 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 (see Figure 19). This indicated satisfaction with available services overall.

Figure 19: On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate the variety of services and resources offered for persons with disabilities at the library? (patrons with one or more disability)
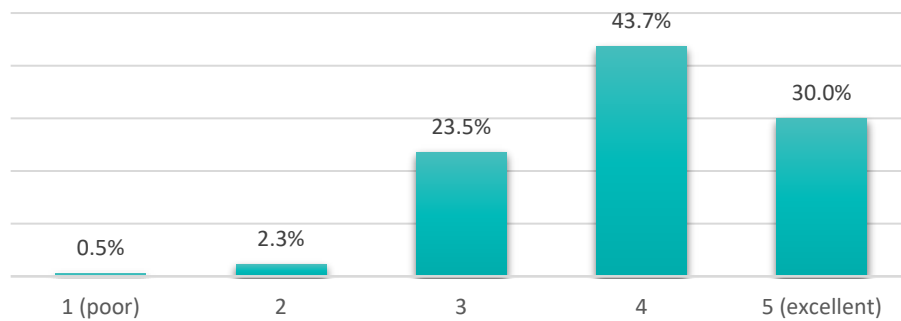
Note: Missing=25 (non-respondents); n=430

Despite the strong overall satisfaction with the variety of services and resources offered for persons with disabilities, some differences in self-reports were noted between individual library patron disability groups. The greatest majority of patrons with hearing (74.3%) and vision (75%) impairments reported being most satisfied (scoring 4 or 5) with the variety of services and resources for people with disabilities at the library (see Figure 20). However, over a third (34%) of those with physical disabilities scored the variety of disability services and resources as neutral or poor (1-3).

Figure 20: On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate the variety of services and resources offered for persons with disabilities at the library? (library patron disability groups)
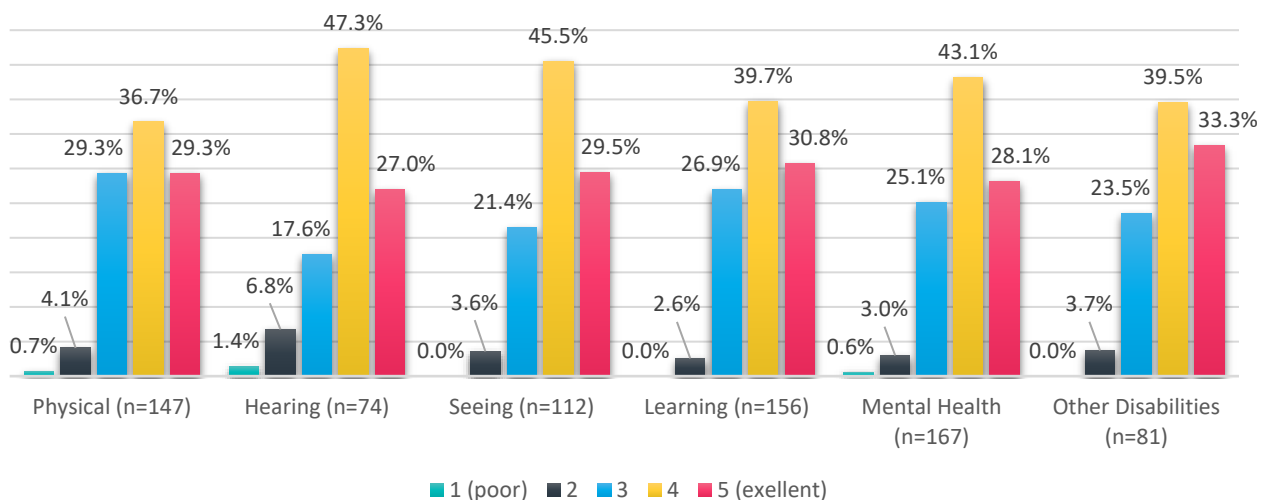
Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

Ease of Accessing Programs and Services: On the accessibility of library programs and services, 43.1% of patrons with a disability rated ease of access a 4, and 24.2% rated it a 5, reflecting a generally positive perception (see Figure 21). However, with approximately one-third rating service accessibility a 3 or lower, there remains potential to address gaps in service delivery and communication for patrons with disabilities.

Figure 21: On a scale of 1-5, how easy do you think it is for people living with disabilities to access the library's programs and services? (patrons with one or more disability)
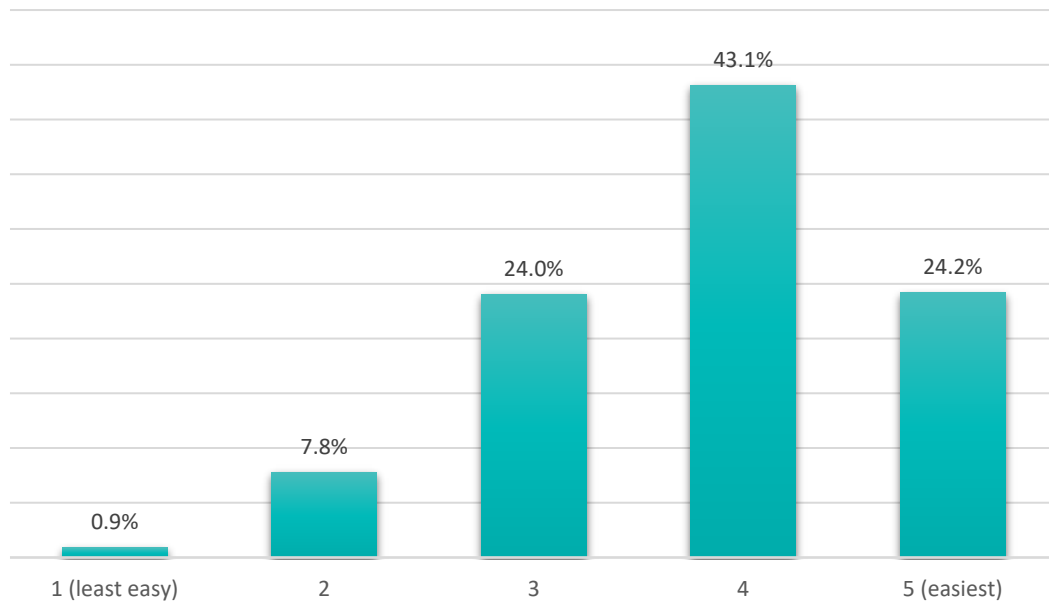
Note: Missing=25 (non-respondents); n=434

When examining sentiments on ease of access to library program and services, individual library patron disability groups demonstrated considerable variability. For instance, the highest reports of satisfaction (4 or 5) with the ease of access to programs and services for people with disabilities were among library patrons with hearing (68.4%) or vision (68.1%) impairments (see Figure 22). In contrast, library patrons with physical disabilities (38%) and learning difficulties (39.7%) reported the highest levels of either neutral or negative sentiments (1 to 3) regarding the ease of accessing programs and services for those with disabilities.

Figure 22: On a scale of 1-5, how easy do you think it is for people living with disabilities to access the library's programs and services? (library patron disability groups)
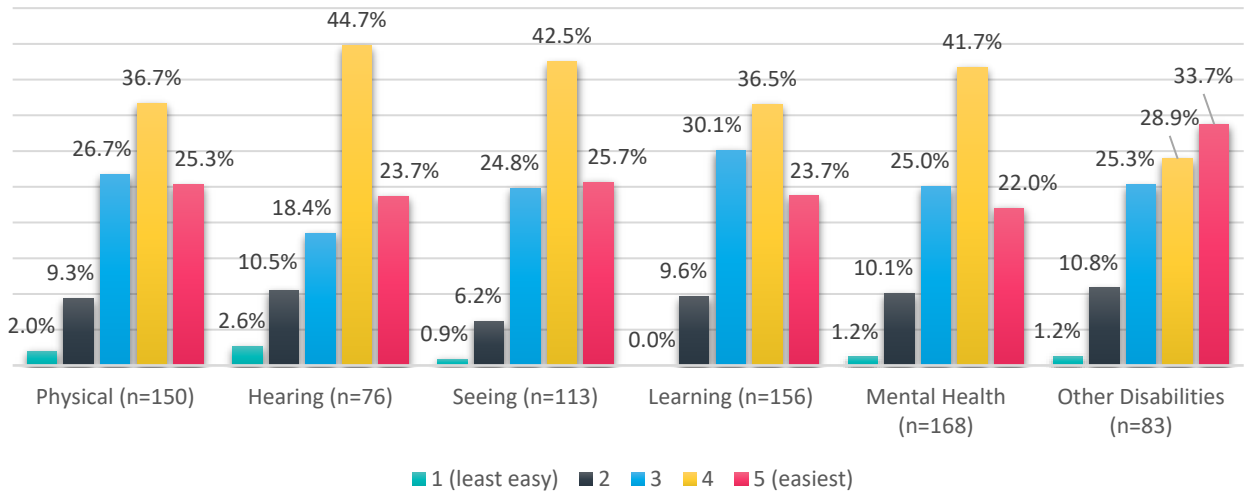
Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

Clarity and Flexibility of Program Information: The clarity of program information was rated highly, with 72.1% rating it 4 or 5 (see Figure 23). However, flexibility in program formats to accommodate diverse needs received slightly lower ratings, with 68.4% rating it a 4 or 5, suggesting there may be opportunities to increase adaptability in programming formats for varying accessibility requirements (see Figure 24).

Figure 23: On a scale of 1-5, how clear do you find program information and instructions provided by the library? (patrons with one or more disability)
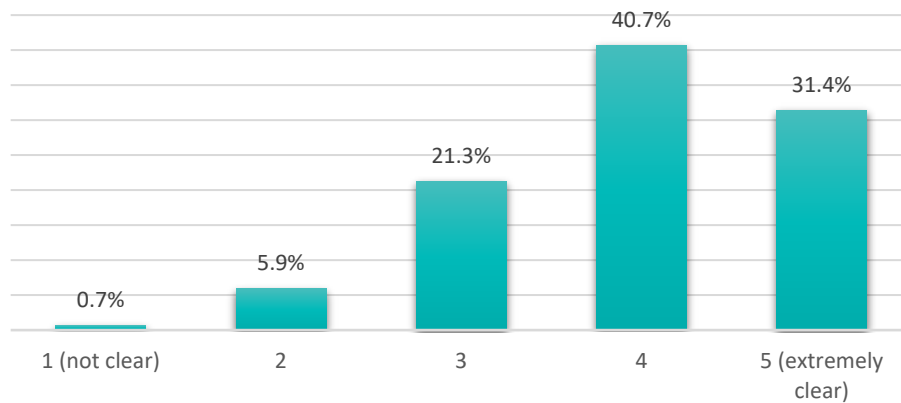
Note: missing=18 (non-respondents); n=437

32

Figure 24: On a scale of 1-5, how flexible do you find the library's program formats in accommodating various needs? (patrons with one or more disability)
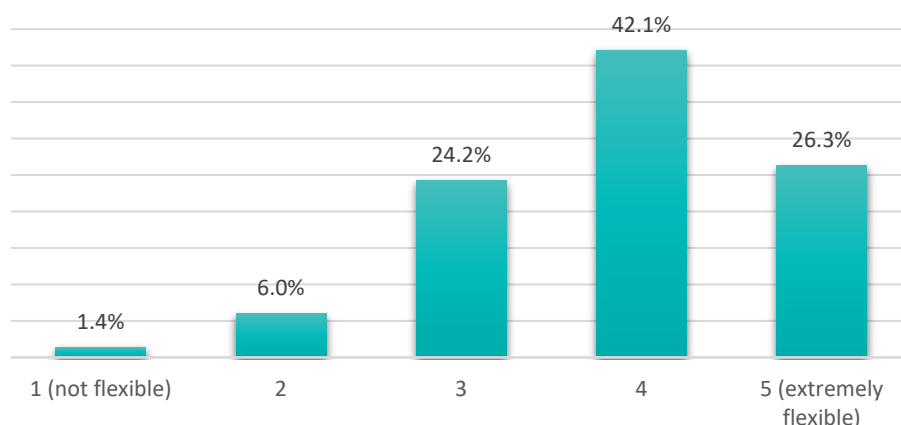
Note: missing=25 (non-respondents); n=430

Taking a closer look at individual library patron disability groups, a lower proportion of those with vision impairments (64.3%) rated the clarity of program information most highly (4 or 5) (see Figure 25). Conversely, a greater proportion of patrons with vision impairments (68.1%) rated the flexibility of program formats in accommodating different needs highly (4 or 5), compared to other disability groups (see Figure 26). Over a third of library patrons with physical disabilities (39.9%) shared neutral or negative sentiments regarding program flexibility, which was higher than other individual disability groups.

Figure 25: On a scale of 1-5, how clear do you find program information and instructions provided by the library? (library patron disability groups)
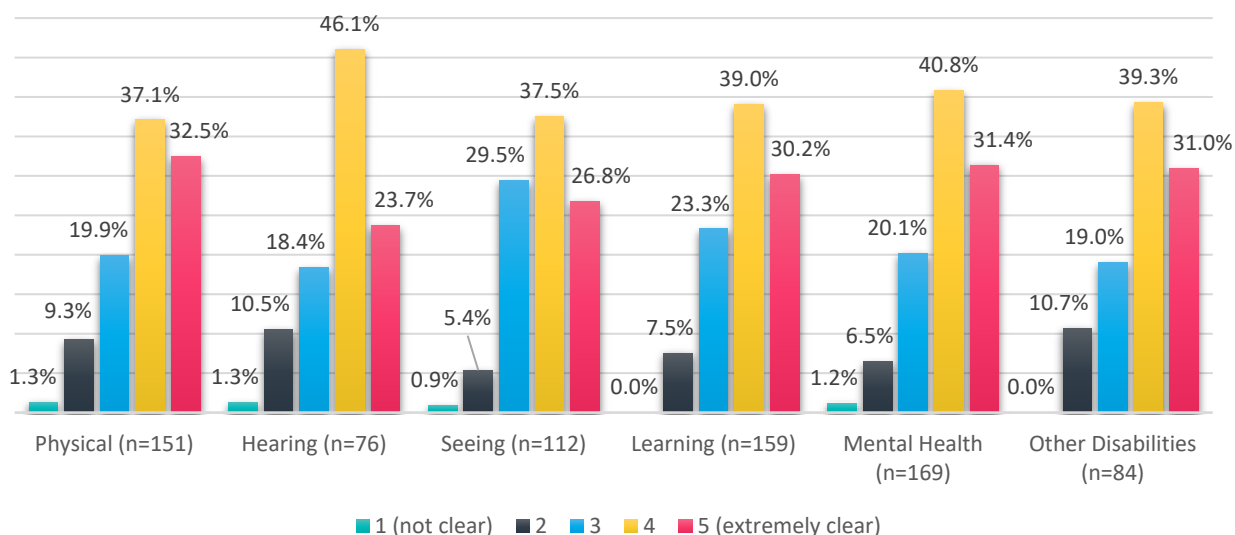

Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

Figure 26: On a scale of 1-5, how flexible do you find the library's program formats in accommodating various needs? (library patron disability groups)
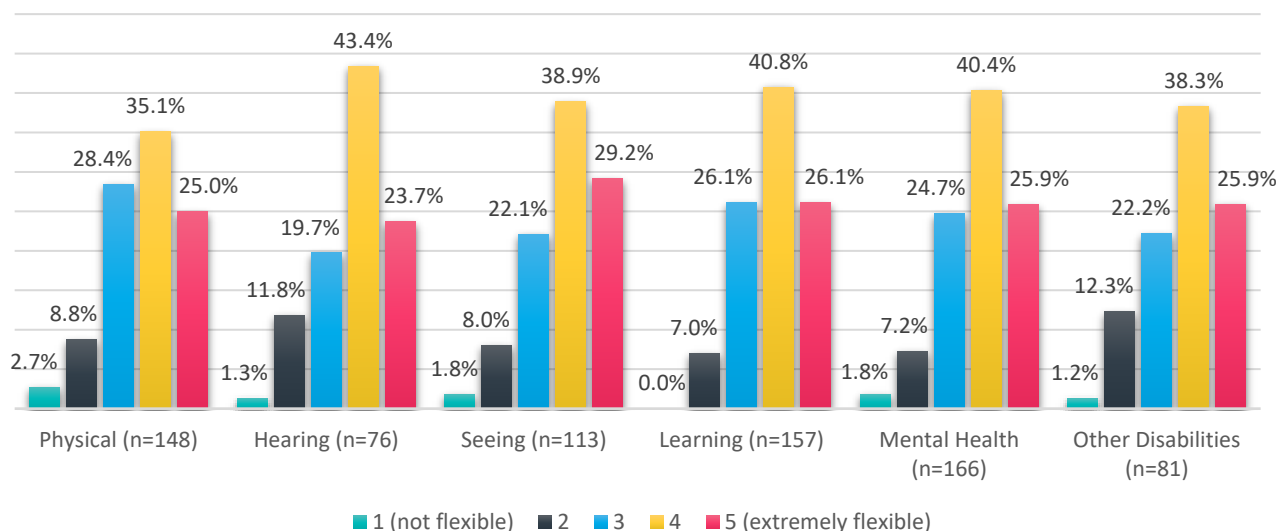
Physical (n=148): 2.7%, 8.8%, 28.4%, 35.1%, 25.0%
Hearing (n=76): 1.3%, 11.8%, 19.7%, 43.4%, 23.7%
Seeing (n=113): 1.8%, 8.0%, 22.1%, 38.9%, 29.2%
Learning (n=157): 0.0%, 7.0%, 26.1%, 40.8%, 26.1%
Mental Health (n=166): 1.8%, 7.2%, 24.7%, 40.4%, 25.9%
Other Disabilities (n=81): 1.2%, 12.3%, 22.2%, 38.3%, 25.9%

■ 1 (not flexible) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (extremely flexible)

Note: Discrepancies in disability group sub-samples are due to non-response; groups are not mutually exclusive and those with multiple disabilities can represent responses in multiple disability categories.

Accessibility Barriers in Service Utilization

As shown in Figure 27 below, patrons with disabilities (n=455) encountered a variety of barriers to program participation. For instance, over 18.2% expressed difficulty obtaining accessible program information and lack of available communication supports (communication barriers), while others reported limited access to assistive technologies and accessible computer equipment (technological barriers) and issues accessing spaces such as entrances and restrooms impacted ease of access (physical barriers). Nearly 13.2% of patrons with disabilities experienced challenges with staff not fully understanding accessibility needs, suggesting an area for growth in disability-specific training (attitudinal barriers).

Figure 27: Barriers when trying to participate in library programs among those with 1 or more self-reported disability

15.2%
18.2%
18.2%
13.8%

■ Physical barriers ■ Communication barriers ■ Attitudinal barriers ■ Technological barriers
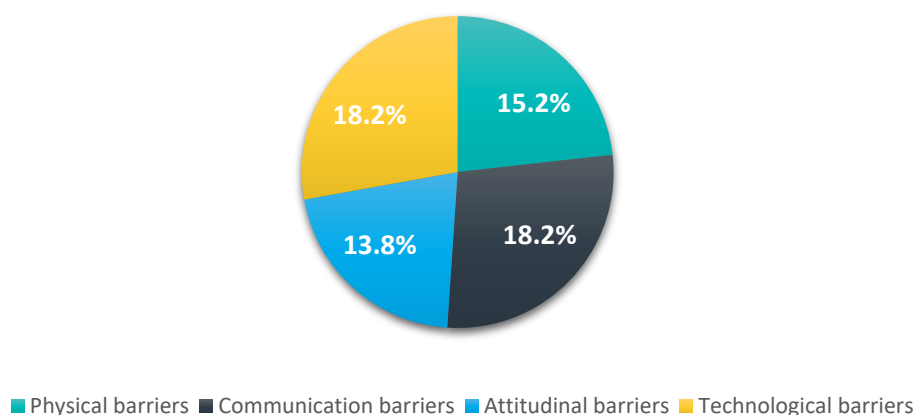
Note: n=455

Communication and Technological Barriers: High proportions of patrons with vision impairments (31.9%) and hearing difficulties (26.3%) reported encountering communication barriers when using library services (see Figure 28). This could include unclear signage, inaccessible program descriptions, or lack of staff support suited to patrons with these types of challenges. Technological barriers, such as limited access to assistive technologies like screen readers or overstimulating digital interfaces, were also notably high for patrons with vision difficulties (34.5%) and mental health difficulties (27.3%), demonstrating the challenges these patrons face in accessing services requiring advanced assistive technologies.

Figure 28: Accessibility barriers to library service utilization by disability type
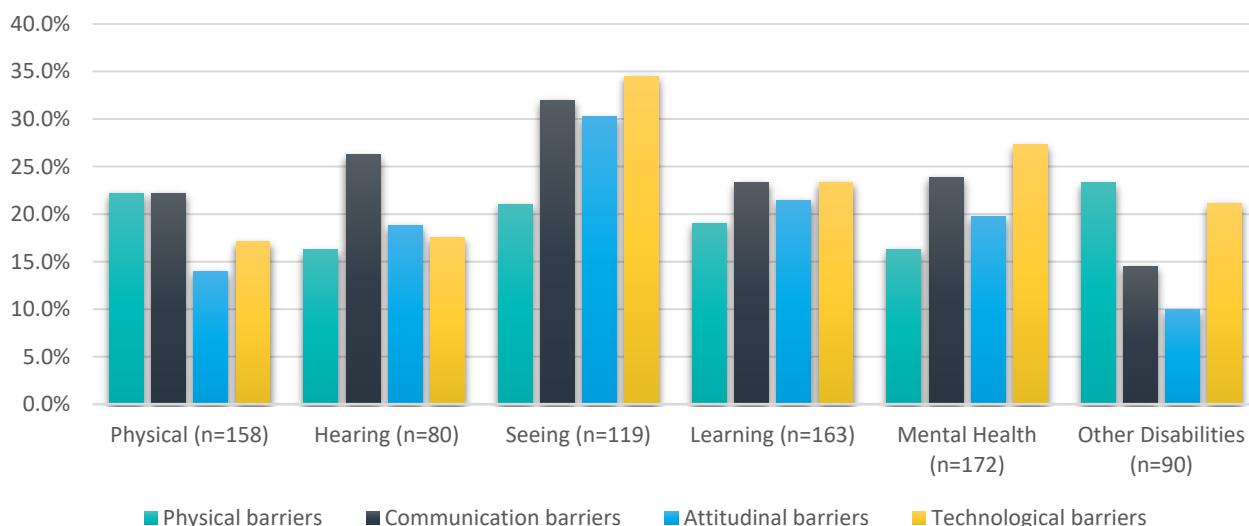
Note: n=455

Attitudinal Barriers: This was a recurring issue, particularly for patrons with vision (30.3%) and mental health difficulties (21.5%). This suggests that additional staff training could benefit these groups and enhance service experience.

Physical Barriers: Nearly a quarter of patrons with physical difficulties (22.2%) and other disabilities and chronic health conditions (23.3%) reported facing physical barriers to accessing library services and programs. Many of the insights patrons offered on the physical barriers associated with library environments may carry over into increasing program and service inclusion by addressing this barrier category.

Qualitative Data Analysis
The open-ended responses to the Patron Survey on programs and services accessibility reveal several themes related to physical accessibility, awareness of services, inclusivity in program design, and staff support for patrons with disabilities. Patrons highlighted areas for improvement as well as positive aspects of their library experiences. The following is a summary of key findings.

Physical and Digital Accessibility Barriers
Physical Barriers: Patrons reported difficulties with physical access to library resources, including challenges retrieving books from low or high shelves, lack of accessible seating, and limited quiet or sensory-friendly spaces. Many patrons with mobility impairments noted that the design of self-checkout stations and book

drops did not fully accommodate wheelchair users, and patrons with sensory sensitivities highlighted the need for low-stimulation environments.

Digital Barriers: Patrons with visual impairments often found the availability of accessible digital materials limited, with some noting long wait times for audiobooks and e-books in compatible formats. Many were also unaware of existing assistive technology, and there was a clear call for more training or guidance on using digital tools like screen readers.

> *As someone with low vision, I sometimes struggle with e-book formats and would love more options that are screen-reader friendly. – Library Patron*

Program Accessibility and Inclusivity

Timing and Format of Programs: Program scheduling was a noted barrier, especially for seniors, patrons with mobility limitations, and those who cannot drive at night. Respondents expressed a desire for flexible options, such as virtual programs and hybrid formats, to accommodate patrons who find physical attendance challenging.

Inclusive Programming Needs: Patrons expressed strong interest in programs specifically tailored to people with disabilities, including sensory-friendly Storytimes, sign language classes, and designated "quiet hours." These suggestions underscore the need for a variety of program options to meet diverse accessibility needs and improve library inclusivity.

Resource Availability for People with Disabilities

Accessible Collections and Assistive Devices: Many respondents highlighted the limited supply of accessible resources, such as large print and Braille books. Audiobooks, which often had long wait times, were especially sought after. Patrons with hearing impairments emphasized the need for assistive listening devices and captioning for events to fully engage in library programs.

Support for Technology and Accessibility Tools: Access to assistive technology like magnifiers, large print keyboards, and screen readers was limited, with patrons mentioning a lack of guidance on their use. Several patrons suggested that more visible promotion of these tools would increase awareness and usage.

Awareness and Communication of Accessibility Services

Many patrons with disabilities reported that they were previously unaware of the library's accessibility services, indicating a gap in communication and outreach. Suggestions for improvement included clearer signage, workshops on accessibility tools, and dedicated library resources that outline available services for patrons with disabilities.

> *I've been coming here for years and didn't know about the digital accessibility options. Clearer communication on what's offered would be appreciated. – Library Patron*

Patrons expressed appreciation for staff who were proactive and supportive in addressing accessibility needs, although gaps in staff training were also noted. Several patrons suggested that staff could benefit from additional training in assisting patrons with specific disabilities, especially in understanding and operating assistive technologies. Consistency across branches was mentioned as an area for improvement, with some branches being better equipped and more knowledgeable in accessibility services than others.

4.2 Library Staff Survey Findings

Quantitative Data Analysis

The responses from 110 library staff members provided key insights into current accessibility practices and staff perspectives on *program and services accessibility* in the library system. Below is a summary of the findings.

Staff Tenure and Department Distribution

Respondents had varied levels of library work experience, with the largest group working at the library for 1-3 years (35%), followed by those with over 10 years (25%). Departments with high representation included reference and information services (41%), adult services (34%), children's services (23%), and outreach/community engagement (21%), indicating a strong patron-facing focus.

Involvement in Program Development and Planning

As shown in Figure 29 below, over half of the staff (52%) reported no involvement in program development, with only 23% describing themselves as "very involved." There was considerable variation in the level of involvement across roles related to program development and planning. For instance, program and event coordinators (75%), outreach and community staff (70%), and youth and teen services staff (83%) reported the highest levels of involvement, suggesting a strong alignment between patron-centered roles and program planning. Conversely, roles such as communications and marketing (20%) and IT (33%) were notably less involved, which may represent an opportunity to expand participation among other staffing groups and ground accessibility planning as a cross-organizational activity.

Figure 29: How involved are you in the development or planning of library programs?
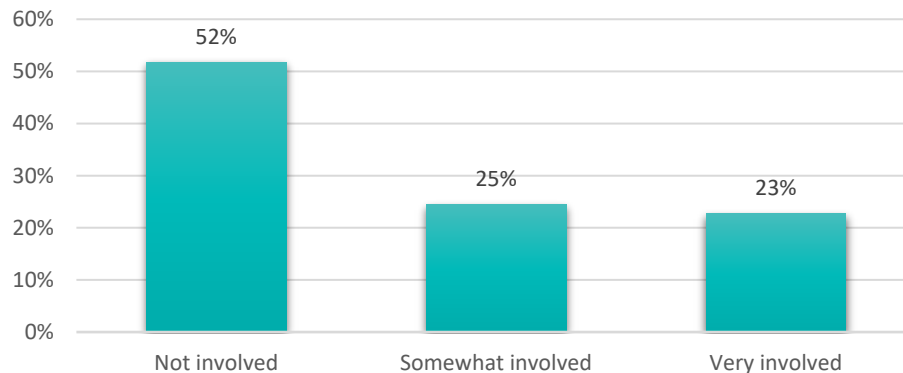
Note: n=110

Integration of Accessibility in Program Planning

Accessibility considerations, such as access to program locations, availability of materials in alternative formats, and the presence of assistive listening devices, were not consistently integrated into program

planning. As Figure 30 below shows, only 10% of respondents reported that accessibility is "always" integrated, and 13% reported it is "often" considered. Staff in program-oriented roles were notably more aware of these considerations. For instance, youth and teen services staff, who showed strong planning involvement, reported integrating accessibility more frequently than roles with less planning responsibility.

Figure 30: In your experience, are accessibility considerations integrated into the program planning process?
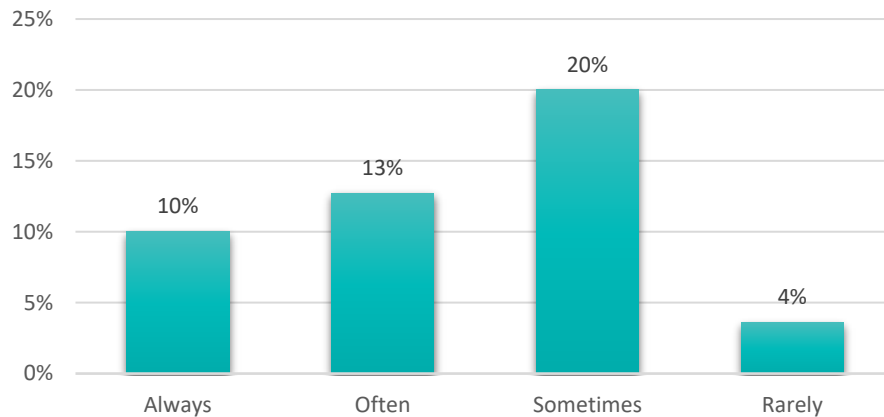
Note: n=110

Quality of Accessibility in Library Programs

As shown below in Figure 31, ratings for the *physical accessibility* in library programs (e.g., access to program locations, availability of ramps/elevators, accessible seating arrangements) were relatively high from staff, with 53% describing it as "good" and 26% as "excellent."

Figure 31: How accessible are library programs for patrons with physical disabilities?
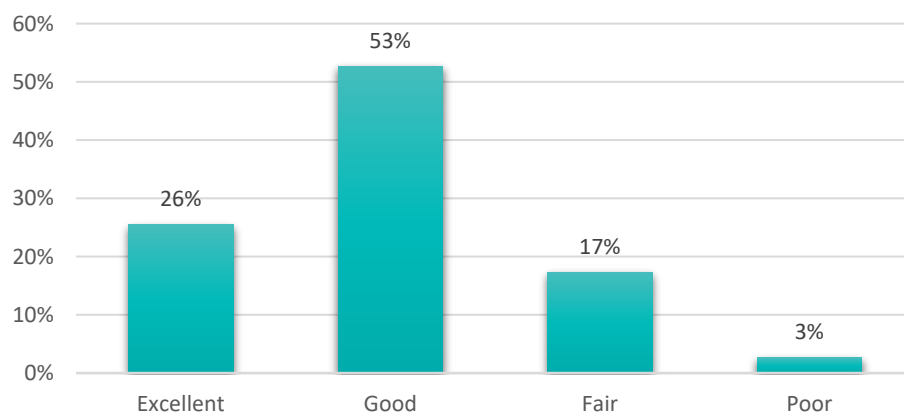
Note: n=110

However, as Figures 32 and 33 demonstrate, *sensory and neurodivergent accessibility* in programs received lower ratings. Only 37% rated sensory accessibility (e.g., availability of materials in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, or audio, and the presence of assistive listening devices) as "good," and neurodivergent accessibility (e.g., sensory-friendly programming, flexible participation options, accommodations for varying sensory needs) was rated "good" or "excellent" by just 36%.

Figure 32: How accessible are library programs for patrons with sensory disabilities?
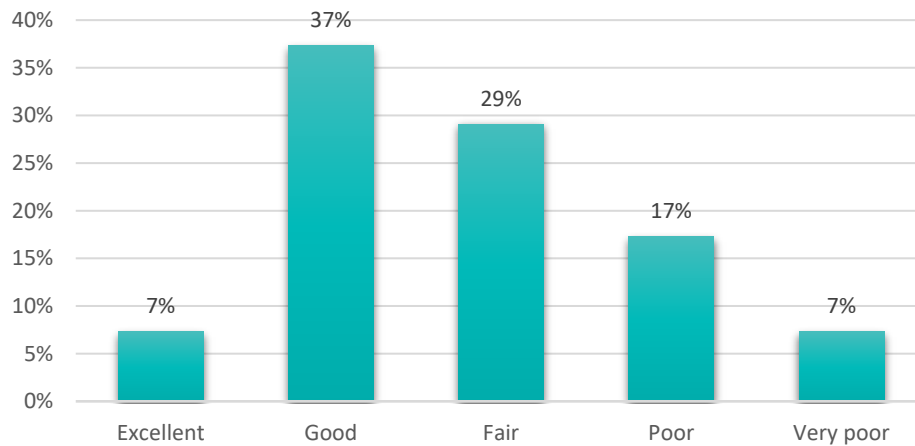
Note: n=110

Figure 33: How accessible are library programs for neurodivergent patrons?
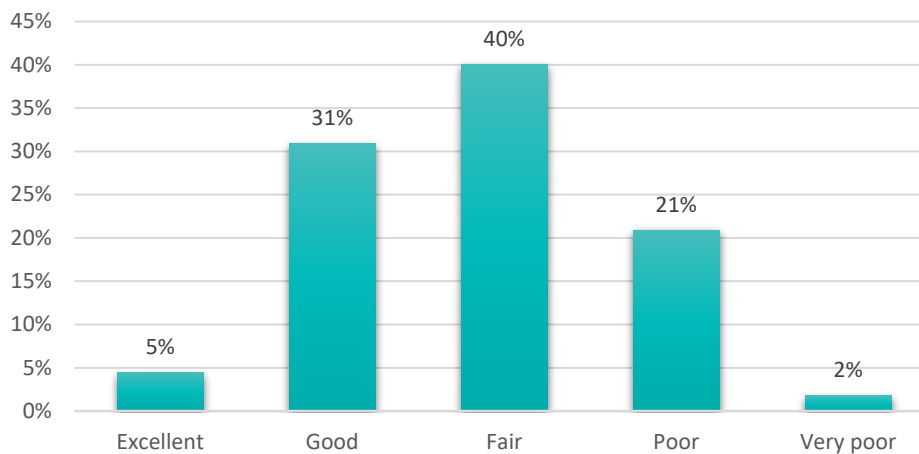
Note: n=110

Cognitive accessibility in library programs, which includes clarity of program information, ease of understanding instructions, and availability of support for patrons with memory, attention, and comprehension challenges, received mixed ratings. As shown in Figure 34, only 4% rated it as "excellent" and 41% as "good," while nearly 45% felt it was "fair," and 9% rated it "poor" or "very poor." This highlights an area with room for improvement in accommodating patrons with cognitive needs.

Figure 34: How accessible are library programs for patrons with cognitive disabilities?
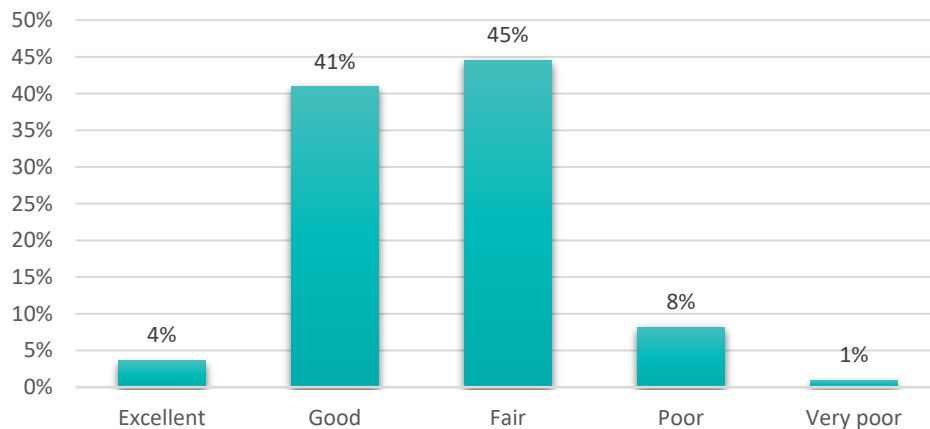
Note: n=110

Digital accessibility, such as online program materials that comply with accessibility standards such as WCAG, and accessible virtual programming, was rated as "good" by 45% and "excellent" by 11% of respondents (see Figure 35). However, a notable 24% rated it as "fair" and 18% as "poor" or "very poor," indicating a need to enhance digital accessibility in library programs.

Figure 35: How is the digital accessibility in library programs?
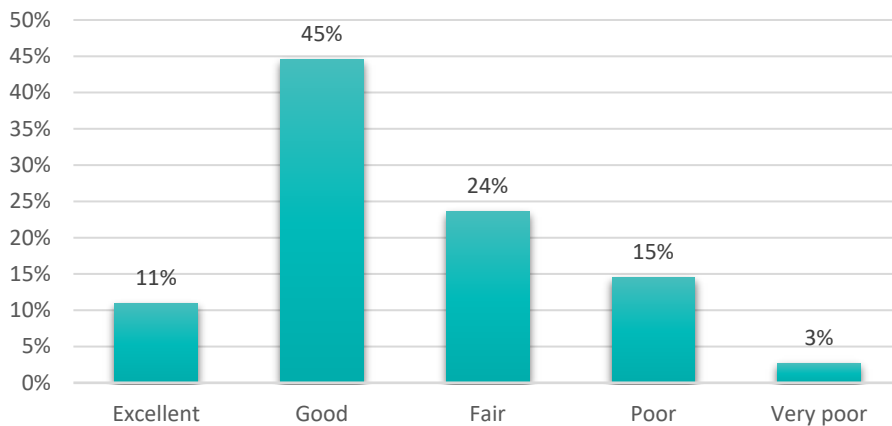
Note: n=110

As shown in Figure 36, *overall inclusivity in library programs* received a positive response, with 50% of staff rating it as "good" and 21% as "excellent." However, 23% of respondents rated inclusivity as "fair" and 5% as "poor," suggesting that while inclusivity is generally perceived positively, there are opportunities to broaden support for diverse accessibility needs.

Figure 36: How is the overall accessibility in library programs?
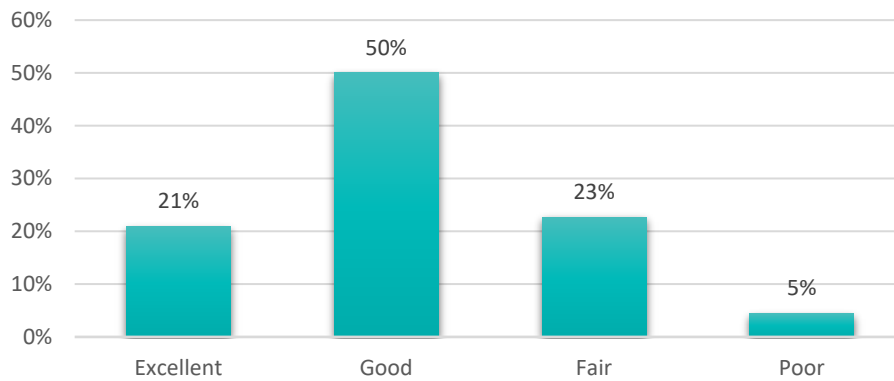
Note: n=110

Availability and Familiarity with Accessibility Accommodations

As Figure 37 shows on the next page, *materials in alternate formats* (70%) and *flexible participation options* (57%) were the accessibility accommodations most widely available in the participating libraries' programs. Notably, library assistants reported significantly higher awareness of materials in alternate formats (83%) compared to other roles, indicating a strong alignment in this role for resource-related awareness.

Figure 37: What specific accessibility accommodations are currently offered in the library's programs?
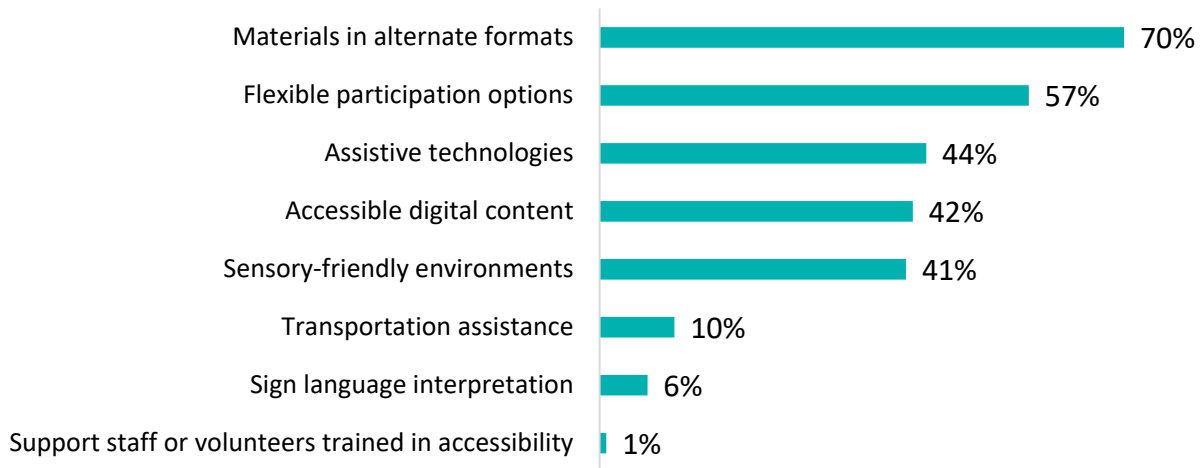
Note: n=110

Familiarity with assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, hearing loops, magnification devices) among library staff is varied, with 42% reporting a clear understanding of available tools, while 39% are only "somewhat" familiar, and 17% indicate no familiarity at all (see Figure 38). This range suggests a potential need for targeted training to ensure all staff can effectively support patrons requiring assistive technology.

Figure 38: Are you familiar with the assistive technologies available at the library?
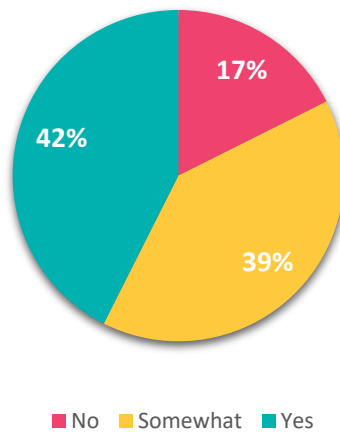
Note: n=110

Accessibility and Inclusivity Training

As Figure 39 on the next page demonstrates, training on accessibility remains limited across specific areas. While disability awareness training was the most common at 29%, only 21% of staff had received customer service training specific to patrons with disabilities, and only 17% had training on assistive technologies.

Figure 39: Training received related to accessibility and inclusivity
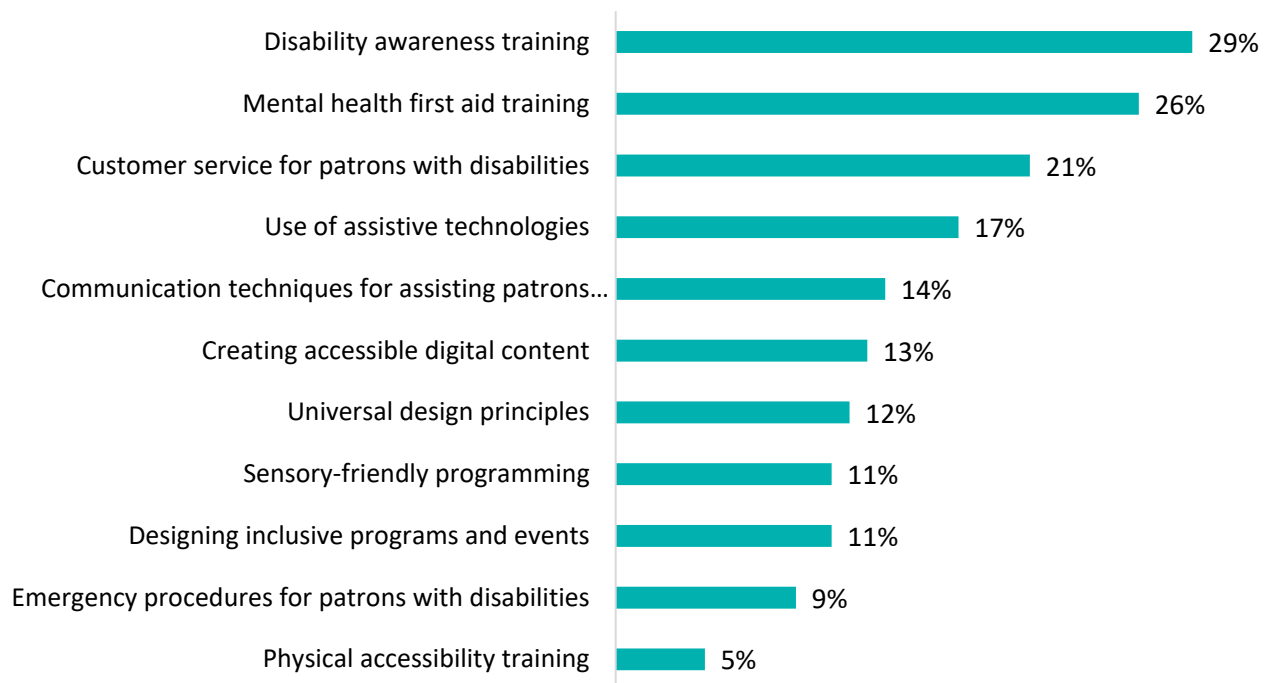
Note: n=110

Confidence in Providing Accessible Programs

As shown in Figure 40, staff's confidence levels in providing accessible programs and services were moderate, with 45% rating their confidence at "3" on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating room for improvement in staff preparation. Only 4% rated their confidence at the highest level. This could reflect the variability in training exposure, as roles like circulation staff reported gaps in awareness and training on accommodations.

Figure 40: How confident do you feel in your ability to provide accessible programs and services?
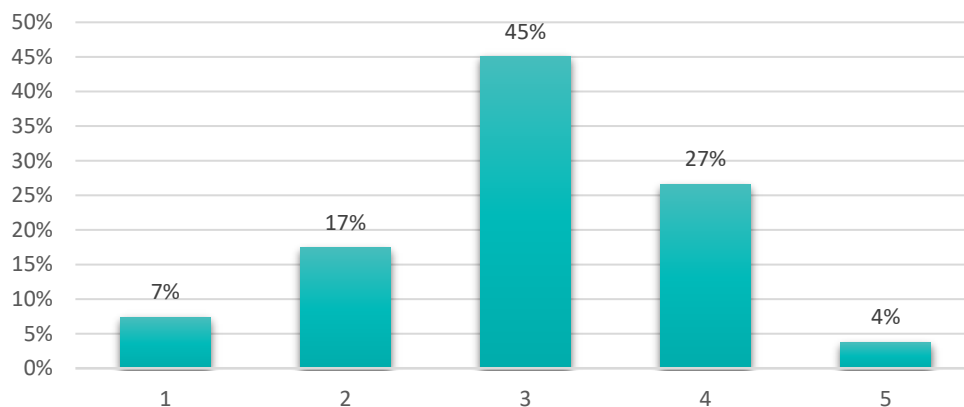
Note: n=110

Communication of Accessible Services to Patrons

Staff rated the library's communication on accessible services as moderate, with 46% rating it a "3" on a scale of 1 to 5 (see Figure 41 below). Interestingly, 67% of IT staff and 50% of technical services staff rated communication on accessibility a "4 or 5," suggesting that these departments have higher confidence in communicating accessibility. This could be an opportunity to leverage their communication practices across other departments.

Figure 41: How well do you think the library communicates the availability of accessible programs and services to patrons?
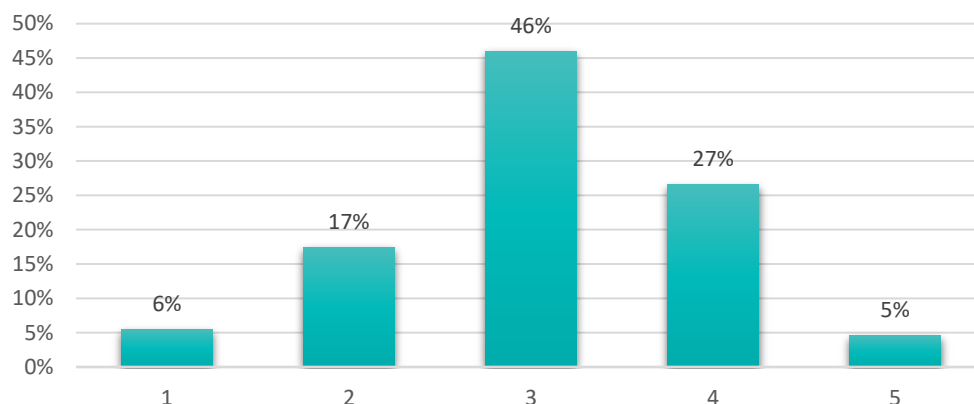
Note: n=110

Qualitative Data Analysis

The staff survey responses on programs and services accessibility reveal significant insights into current practices and areas for improvement in serving patrons with disabilities. Key themes emerging from the data include involvement in program planning, community outreach, program accessibility, staff training, and barriers.

Inclusive Programs for Patrons with Disabilities

Adaptive and Sensory-Friendly Programming: Staff reported involvement in programs designed specifically for patrons with disabilities, including adaptive Storytimes and sensory-friendly events. These programs cater to patrons with cognitive, sensory, and developmental disabilities by creating experiences that accommodate diverse needs, such as reducing sensory stimuli and offering a sensory-safe environment. Such programming reflects a commitment to inclusivity and is a foundation for further accessibility initiatives.

> *Our accessibility department has provided neurodiverse-friendly Storytimes on occasion, but it would be nice to offer more time slots at other branches to cater better to patrons. – Library Staff*

Community Outreach and Partnerships: Staff frequently engage in outreach with local schools, community centers, and disability-focused organizations, extending access to library services for those who may not visit the library regularly. Programs such as home delivery and partnerships with external organizations help bring accessible services to patrons with mobility limitations or those who are geographically isolated. Regular visits to schools and community events allow staff to gather feedback directly, which helps tailor programs to the accessibility needs of patrons with disabilities.

Program Development and Accessibility Initiatives

Assistive Technology Support: Staff highlighted involvement in technology-based programs, including one-on-one tech support and assistance with digital resources. These initiatives are particularly relevant to accessibility, as assistive technology is essential for patrons with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments to access digital resources. However, the need for further training in assistive technology was noted, as not all staff feel equipped to support patrons in using these resources effectively.

Evaluation and Adaptive Planning: Many staff are involved in the planning and evaluation of programs, ensuring that programs evolve based on the needs of patrons with disabilities. This continuous improvement process, which includes capacity assessments and feedback integration, allows programs to remain accessible and relevant. Although staff involvement in planning is strong, some frontline staff expressed a desire for more input in program design, which could enhance responsiveness to patrons with specific accessibility needs.

Barriers and Areas for Improvement

Limited Communication about Accessibility Features: A recurring barrier identified by staff is the lack of clear communication about accessibility features in program descriptions, which can deter patrons with disabilities from participating if they are unsure whether their needs will be met. Currently, accessible features are often added only upon request, making accessibility a reactive process. Proactively including

information on available accommodations in all program materials could improve transparency and participation.

> *We don't ask participants when they register [for library programs] if they require an accommodation—I suspect some may stay away who don't want to have to ask. – Library Staff*

Physical Accessibility Challenges: Staff frequently highlighted physical barriers within library spaces, such as limited accessible parking, program locations on higher floors, and crowded or constrained program spaces. For patrons with mobility impairments, these challenges can hinder participation. Additionally, overcrowded children's programs create difficulties for neurodivergent patrons or those with sensory sensitivities, who may find overstimulating environments unwelcoming.

Staff Training and Knowledge Gaps

Training in Accessibility Practices: Many respondents noted the need for more comprehensive accessibility training across all staff roles, particularly regarding assistive technologies, American Sign Language, and universal design principles. While some staff already feel confident in delivering accessible programming, others lack familiarity with specific accessibility practices, which can lead to inconsistent service for patrons with disabilities. Equipping all staff with training in these areas would ensure a more inclusive experience across library programs.

Funding and Resource Constraints: Budget limitations were identified as a significant barrier to expanding accessible programming and implementing necessary accommodations. Financial constraints limit the ability to hire specialized staff, expand sensory-friendly resources, or invest in additional assistive technologies, which impacts the consistency and reach of accessible services across library branches.

4.3 Library Staff Interviews Findings

This analysis synthesizes insights from 12 interviews with representatives from seven libraries. Key themes emerging from the interviews include proactive vs. reactive approaches to accessibility, availability and use of assistive technologies, training and awareness of staff, communication of accessibility services, and innovation in resource allocation. These findings highlight both the challenges and opportunities libraries face in supporting accessible programming and services, especially for patrons with disabilities.

Proactive vs. Reactive Approaches to Accessibility

General Observations: Most libraries adopted a reactive approach to accessibility, providing accommodations only upon request. This approach often places the responsibility on patrons to self-advocate, which can be a barrier for those uncomfortable with disclosing their needs. Few libraries routinely inquire about accessibility requirements during program sign-up, indicating a gap in proactive accommodation.

Impact of Library Size: Smaller libraries, such as Pemberton Library, tended to handle accessibility needs informally and on a case-by-case basis, relying heavily on personal relationships with patrons but lacking formal systems to track requests. In contrast, larger libraries like Surrey Public Library were better equipped

with structured programs, such as home delivery services, but even these institutions primarily took a reactive stance.

We wait until someone asks us for that service versus offering it to every person...the onus is on [library patrons] to let us know if they need any accommodations. – Library Staff

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Assistive Technologies

General Observations: Access to assistive technology varied significantly, with more basic accessible resources like large print materials and audiobooks widely available. However, advanced assistive tools such as screen readers, hearing loops, and Braille materials were less common, and awareness of these resources among patrons was limited.

Notable Examples: Surrey Public Library introduced Envoy Connect, a portable audiobook player for visually impaired patrons, demonstrating an innovative approach to accessibility. Meanwhile, West Vancouver Memorial Library trained patrons on DAISY players through home visits, offering personal support in technology use.

Impact of Library Size: Smaller libraries struggled to provide a range of assistive technologies due to limited demand and budget constraints, while larger libraries reported low uptake of available tools, highlighting a need for more promotion and user education to increase accessibility awareness.

Staff Training and Awareness

General Observations: Most libraries acknowledged a need for more comprehensive training in accessibility. Current staff training often covered only basic assistive technology, with limited attention to sensory and neurodivergent needs. Staff expressed interest in additional training to better serve patrons with disabilities, especially those with autism, ADHD, or sensory sensitivities.

Notable Examples: Whistler Public Library was developing sensory kits and training staff to support neurodivergent patrons, while West Vancouver Memorial Library provided some training for handling neurodivergent behaviors, like creating flexible, noise-tolerant spaces during children's programs.

Impact of Library Size: Smaller libraries, where staff often perform multiple roles, struggled to prioritize specialized training. For instance, a director from a small library noted the challenge of balancing program planning with staff development. Larger libraries, despite having more resources, still reported gaps in staff confidence and consistency in accessibility practices.

Library staff receives basic training to assist patrons with using the available assistive technologies, such as screen readers and accessibility kits. However, the training is not comprehensive, and more consistent staff training would be beneficial. – Library Staff

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General Observations: Libraries commonly used various communication channels—websites, social media, newsletters, and in-branch posters—to promote programs. However, accessibility information in these materials was often insufficient or inconsistent, contributing to underuse of assistive technologies and accessible programs. Few libraries routinely designed promotional materials with accessibility features such as screen reader compatibility or large print options.

Notable Examples: Surrey Public Library promoted accessibility services through brochures and targeted outreach, though they acknowledged a lack of promotion specifically for demographics like people with developmental disabilities.

Impact of Library Size: Smaller libraries often lacked the resources to produce accessible promotional materials, while larger libraries admitted they could do more to utilize their resources in promoting accessible services.

Innovation and Resource Allocation

General Observations: Budget constraints limited innovation across libraries, particularly in developing new accessible programs and acquiring advanced assistive technologies. Many libraries relied on partnerships with community organizations to provide accessible programming, which allowed them to extend resources effectively.

Notable Innovations: Surrey Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Library introduced sensory kits for neurodivergent patrons and Envoy Connect devices for audiobooks, demonstrating creative approaches to accessibility despite budget constraints. Surrey Public Library's Adapted Stories program was specifically designed for patrons with developmental disabilities, incorporating participant feedback to enhance sensory accessibility.

Impact of Library Size: Smaller libraries typically lacked the budget to implement new technologies independently and thus focused on basic resources and ad hoc accommodations. Larger libraries had more funds for specialized programs but faced challenges in consistently embedding accessibility in general services.

> *Our library implemented sensory kits and Envoy Connect players for audiobooks… it's been impactful for patrons with neurodivergent needs and visual impairments." – Library Staff*

4.4 Document Analysis

Across participating libraries, accessible programs and services are emphasized through specific offerings, ongoing assessments, and feedback mechanisms. Libraries demonstrated varying levels of depth in their approaches, with some excelling in technology integration, while others highlighted policy frameworks or patron-centric modifications. Below is a synthesis of these findings, followed by specific examples to illustrate the range and impact of accessibility efforts.

Libraries offer a wide array of accessible services, with a strong focus on providing both physical and digital resources. Many libraries provide materials tailored to patrons with print disabilities, such as audiobooks, large print collections, DAISY readers, and specialized eBooks. Programs like CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access) and NNELS (National Network for Equitable Library Service) are standard, enabling patrons with perceptual disabilities to access a diverse and regularly updated collection of audiobooks and other media.

Surrey Libraries exemplifies a robust approach by not only participating in CELA but also by introducing Envoy Connect devices, designed to further support visually impaired patrons. Their commitment to accessible digital materials through an extensive online event calendar and brochures ensures patrons are well-informed of offerings that meet diverse needs.

Coquitlam Public Library also provides a wide selection of accessible materials, including decodable books for readers with dyslexia, which directly support struggling readers. Their high usage statistics for eAudiobooks and eBooks underscore the demand and impact of digital resources for patrons seeking accessible options.

Inclusivity in Program Design

Libraries aim to design programs that are universally accessible, allowing patrons of all abilities to participate fully. Inclusive program development focuses on creating sensory-friendly, multilingual, and technologically accessible environments. Although not every library formalizes these practices in written policies, informal modifications and staff willingness to accommodate specific patron needs demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity.

Whistler Public Library offers a range of sensory-friendly features within its children's tech programs, such as dimmed lighting and "Brain Break" stations with noise-canceling headphones and fidget toys, catering to children with sensory sensitivities. Additionally, their bilingual Storytimes in Farsi and French ensure language inclusivity, making library programs accessible to diverse communities.

West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) integrates inclusivity directly into technology programs, offering closed captioning on all tutorial content and adaptive tech support for programs that require hands-on instruction. Their "Paws 4 Stories" and bilingual Storytimes encourage patrons of varied linguistic backgrounds and abilities to participate in engaging, accessible programming.

Physical and Digital Accessibility

Participating libraries have dedicated efforts to remove physical and digital barriers within library spaces and online environments. Physical accessibility improvements are frequently informed by accessibility audits, while digital accessibility is promoted through well-designed online resources, instructional content, and assistive technologies. Libraries generally acknowledge ongoing needs in areas like wayfinding, signage, and accessible computer stations.

North Vancouver City Library initiated an in-depth Accessibility Audit and Strategy in 2019, which assessed pathways, entrances, lighting, and other physical elements. Recommendations from this audit led to systematic adjustments in building accessibility and continue to guide facility modifications.

West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) collaborates with the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues and follows their Accessibility Plan. Physical modifications are tracked quarterly, with steps

including hearing loops in presentation spaces, contrasting stair nosing, and proposals for a rooftop lift, ensuring alignment with universal design concepts.

Staff Training and Engagement

Most libraries could benefit from more systematic and regular accessibility training to ensure all staff are adequately prepared to address patrons' diverse needs. Currently, accessibility and disability inclusion training are offered inconsistently, often on a one-time basis rather than as an ongoing initiative.

Whistler Public Library hosted an accessibility awareness workshop with advocate Marco Pasqua, focusing on identifying and removing barriers in library interactions. This training introduced staff to foundational accessibility concepts, though ongoing sessions would enhance staff preparedness and promote a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to accessibility.

West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) engages staff with regular updates on accessibility-related themes through email communications, addressing everyday issues like noise sensitivity and accommodating sensory needs. For example, the library provides staff with strategies to manage noise complaints by offering patrons earplugs or noise-canceling headphones. This approach fosters an awareness of accessibility, but more formal, structured training sessions would improve consistency and deepen staff understanding of inclusive service practices.

Continuous Feedback Integration

Feedback mechanisms are essential for libraries to remain responsive to accessibility needs. Libraries incorporate public feedback through surveys, online forms, and informal conversations, allowing patrons to voice suggestions and report barriers. Libraries then use this feedback to shape policy changes, program adjustments, and physical improvements.

West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) actively tracks accessibility-related feedback using an internal tracker, which is reviewed quarterly by the EDI Steering Committee. The data informs decision-making and operational adjustments, ensuring patron feedback directly impacts service evolution.

Surrey Libraries utilizes both an EDIA Action Plan and participation in citywide accessibility initiatives, collecting insights from community members through the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) and internal Accessibility Committee. This structured feedback loop helps the library meet legislative requirements while aligning with community accessibility standards.

4.5 Implications

Accessibility in library programs and services revealed a blend of innovation and challenges as libraries strive to meet the diverse needs of patrons with disabilities. Through library staff interviews, document analysis, and survey responses, the following key insights emerge:

1. Reactive Accessibility Practices

Across many libraries, accessibility practices have been adopted and patrons accommodated as needs presented themselves. In some instances, this leaves the responsibility on patrons to self-identify and disclose needs, which can deter or delay some from seeking assistance. While smaller libraries often handle accessibility requests informally, larger libraries implement more structured systems. In both instances, proactive outreach strategies designed to engage patrons regarding accessibility programs and services may be helpful in anticipating service needs and interests as well as inform related planning decisions.

2. Availability and Utilization of Assistive Technologies

Libraries differ considerably in their access to and promotion of assistive technologies. Basic resources like large print materials and audiobooks are commonly available, yet more advanced tools, such as screen readers, hearing loops, and Braille materials remain limited and are underutilized even when available. The discrepancy in access reflects the financial constraints of smaller libraries and highlights a broader need for user education to enhance patron awareness and uptake of these resources.

3. Comprehensive Accessibility Training for Staff

Staff training in accessibility, particularly in areas of sensory and neurodivergent needs, can be inconsistent and limited. While libraries have shown an openness to expanding their training, most current programs cover only basic assistive technology, leaving gaps in understanding and confidence among staff to address patrons' diverse accessibility needs. Libraries with more resources attempt to fill these gaps with periodic training. However, a structured, ongoing training model would better support staff preparedness across all libraries, regardless of size.

4. Communication of Accessibility Services

Libraries use various channels to communicate services, including websites, newsletters, and social media. However, accessibility information in these materials can be insufficient or inconsistent. Few libraries produce promotional content designed to be accessible (e.g., screen-reader compatible, large print), which may contribute to underuse of available accessible services. Improved, standardized communication practices could help patrons make better use of existing resources and services, enhancing overall accessibility awareness within the library community.

5. Budget Constraints as a Barrier to Innovation

Budget limitations commonly hinder the abilities of libraries' to innovate and expand accessibility services. Smaller libraries, in particular, rely on partnerships with community organizations to extend their accessible offerings, while larger libraries with more resources face challenges in fully embedding accessibility across all services and programs. This reliance on external partnerships and prioritization of select offerings highlights a need for more comprehensive and collaborative driven accessibility strategies that leverage common interests in library accessibility and inclusion and collective resource development and innovation.

6. Emphasis on Accessible Services and Materials Over Full Inclusion

Libraries generally excel in providing accessible materials, such as audiobooks, eBooks, and resources through programs like CELA and NNELS. Opportunities for more inclusive practices—such as proactive accommodations and sensory-friendly spaces—could include standardized policies, in contrast to more typically informal or individual staff efforts to drive accessibility in non-content material areas.

7. Gradual Improvements in Physical and Digital Accessibility

Physical and digital accessibility improvements are underway in many libraries, informed by accessibility audits and community feedback. Libraries are focusing on areas such as wayfinding, signage, and accessible computer stations, though some gaps persist in these foundational aspects of accessibility. Digital resources, in particular, show promise as libraries expand their accessible eBook and eAudiobook offerings, yet ongoing adjustments are necessary to ensure these improvements fully meet patrons' needs.

8. Feedback Mechanisms Drive Incremental Accessibility Enhancements

Libraries actively gather and incorporate feedback through surveys, online forms, and informal interactions, though the effectiveness and frequency of these mechanisms vary. Larger libraries more commonly

implement structured feedback processes, helping them to identify accessibility needs systematically and adjust programming, services, and policies accordingly. Formalizing and expanding feedback mechanisms across libraries would enhance responsiveness to patrons and support continuous accessibility improvement.

5. Recommendations

This section outlines actionable recommendations based on the findings from both *programs and service accessibility* and *social and attitudinal accessibility assessments*. The recommendations focus on helping libraries move from reactive to proactive accessibility approaches, expanding accessibility training and communication, and establishing robust feedback mechanisms. Recommendations should be viewed as considerations for addressing immediate needs and developing sustainable, inclusive practices, and not prescriptive guidelines. Generally, efforts to adopt and act on any of these recommendations, where opportunities for improvement are apparent at individual libraries, will help foster a more accessible and welcoming environment for all patrons.

The following priorities are divided into *short-term* and *long-term* initiatives. The short-term priorities highlight actions that can be implemented with minimal disruption to current operations but have the potential for immediate impact. The long-term priorities involve deeper systemic and cultural shifts that require consistent effort and resource allocation over time to achieve sustained accessibility improvements across library programs, services, and social environments.

5.1 Short-Term Priorities

Enhance Accessibility Training and Awareness Programs
- Conduct **introductory workshops on accessibility topics for all staff**, focusing on foundational awareness of neurodivergent, sensory, and mobility-related needs. This could include topics like effective communication strategies, managing sensory sensitivities, and understanding assistive technologies.
- Libraries can reduce costs and build internal expertise by leveraging existing staff resources. **Peer-led learning sessions**, where staff members with disabilities or lived experience share insights, can foster empathy and provide practical understanding of accessibility challenges. Additionally, IT staff can offer periodic demonstrations of assistive technologies, such as screen readers and DAISY players, equipping library staff to better support patrons with diverse needs confidently and effectively.
- Develop a **feedback survey** following the training to gauge staff comfort levels and areas for improvement, providing data for ongoing training customization.

Introduce Comprehensive Accessibility Guidelines and Resources for Staff
- To build staff confidence in accommodating patrons with disabilities, libraries could develop **accessibility-focused Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and provide practical resources for consistent application across all programs and services. SOPs for developing new programs should integrate accessibility considerations from the planning stage, ensuring every program is designed with inclusivity in mind. For example, guidelines can include conducting an accessibility review of the program space, ensuring assistive devices are available, and incorporating multiple engagement formats (e.g., visual aids, written materials, and audio descriptions) for diverse learning needs.
- Additionally, creating **quick-reference checklists** for facilitating workshops and events can help staff ensure accessible delivery. Sample checklist items might include:
    - Confirming accessible seating and clear, unobstructed paths for mobility devices.
    - Providing accessible materials, such as large print handouts or screen-reader-compatible digital files.
    - Testing any presentation equipment in advance to ensure compatibility with assistive devices (e.g., hearing loops or screen readers).
    - Preparing sensory-friendly items, such as noise-canceling headphones or fidget tools, for patrons with sensory sensitivities.

Proactively Communicate Accessibility Services
- Create or enhance **accessibility information on library websites, social media, and in-branch materials**, ensuring it is screen-reader compatible and available in large print and Braille. Clear descriptions of available accommodations, such as assistive devices and sensory-friendly spaces, should be easily accessible to patrons.
- Establish **signage and guides that clearly indicate accessible resources and features** within library buildings, such as hearing loops, accessible computer stations, or designated quiet areas.
- Regularly **promote available accessibility services** to patrons through newsletters and social media to increase awareness and utilization of these resources.

Integrate Accessibility into Emergency Procedures:
- Consider **reviewing and updating emergency plans and procedures** to specifically account for the safety and accessibility needs of patrons with disabilities. This may include providing clear, accessible

signage for emergency exits, designing evacuation plans that accommodate mobility, sensory, and cognitive needs, and training staff on assisting individuals with disabilities during emergencies. Such procedures could also be tested during emergency drills to create staff comfort and familiarity, as well as identify opportunities for improvement.

- **Training staff on basic American Sign Language (ASL)** can enable them to communicate essential instructions to patrons with hearing impairments during emergency situations, fostering clearer communication and ensuring that all patrons feel secure.
- Consider implementing both **audible and visual alarms** for those who may have vision or hearing impairments, respectively.
- Designating **safe waiting areas** for those who may need extra assistance.

Implement Consistent Feedback Mechanisms

- Introduce or formalize existing **feedback channels, including online forms, comment boxes, and survey tools**, to allow patrons to voice accessibility needs and provide feedback on programs and services.
- **Track feedback related to accessibility through a dedicated system or process**, ensuring it is reviewed monthly or quarterly and directly informs programming and facility adjustments.
- Encourage staff to **collect informal feedback** during interactions with patrons and communicate common themes to the accessibility or EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) teams for consideration.

Pilot Inclusive Programming Initiatives

- Launch a few **pilot programs focusing on inclusivity**, such as sensory-friendly events, American Sign Language Storytimes, or quiet hours. These programs can serve as learning experiences for staff and provide immediate benefits to patrons with specific accessibility needs.
- Collect participant feedback to **assess the success of these pilot programs**, make adjustments as needed, and build best practices for future inclusive programming.

5.2 Long-Term Priorities

Establish Comprehensive Accessibility Policies and Standards

- Develop formalized accessibility policies that **address both programs and services and social and attitudinal accessibility**, embedding accessibility into library operations, communications, and training protocols. Policies should be guided by universal design principles to ensure all services and spaces are accessible to patrons with diverse needs.
- Implement systematic processes for **assessing and updating accessibility policies**, informed by ongoing patron feedback, evolving accessibility standards, and technological advancements.

Invest in Advanced Assistive Technologies and Staff Education

- **Allocate resources** to expand the range of assistive technologies available, including screen readers, hearing loops, DAISY players, and other adaptive tools. These should be accompanied by user guides or brief tutorials to support patrons in utilizing the technologies effectively.
- To foster a culture of inclusivity, libraries should **implement ongoing training sessions** that extend beyond foundational knowledge to cover advanced topics in accessibility, disability awareness, and social inclusivity. These sessions should involve all staff members, regardless of department, ensuring that accessibility is embedded into every aspect of library services and interactions. By addressing emerging issues, best practices, and innovations in assistive technology, libraries can create a well-rounded, responsive approach to patron needs. Cross-departmental training promotes consistency,

enabling all staff—from front-line teams to IT and program coordinators—to confidently provide inclusive, accessible services and actively contribute to an equitable library environment.

Build a Culture of Proactive Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Encourage a shift from reactive to proactive approaches by **implementing standard practices that anticipate accessibility needs**, such as inquiring about accessibility requirements during program sign-up and designing programs with universal access in mind.
- Ensuring that accessibility is integrated into all aspects of library programming requires coordinated efforts across departments. **Accessibility considerations should be incorporated into every phase of program planning and development**, with input and support from marketing, IT, and patron-facing teams. This collaborative approach helps ensure accessibility is embedded in all scopes, including inclusive communication strategies, accessibility audits of new programs, and outreach initiatives targeting underrepresented communities. By involving multiple departments, libraries can foster a holistic, consistent approach to accessibility, aligning promotional materials, technological support, and service delivery to better meet the diverse needs of patrons.
- **Strengthen partnerships** with local disability organizations, advocates, and community groups to incorporate broader perspectives and collaborate on accessible programming.

Develop and Maintain Accessible Physical and Digital Spaces
- **Conduct regular accessibility audits** of physical and digital spaces, identifying and addressing barriers to ensure all patrons have seamless access to library resources. Prioritize wayfinding, signage, and accessible computer stations as key areas for improvement.
- **Invest in accessible web design for digital content**, such as library catalogs and event pages, to meet WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards. Digital spaces should be routinely evaluated to keep pace with evolving accessibility requirements.

Formalize and Standardize Continuous Feedback Integration
- Establish a robust and formalized **process for integrating patron feedback** on accessibility into library operations. Feedback should be systematically reviewed by an accessibility committee or designated role and used to guide decisions on programming, service adjustments, and facility upgrades.
- **Document changes made in response to feedback and share outcomes** with patrons to build transparency and trust. An annual or biannual accessibility report can be shared publicly to inform patrons of ongoing accessibility initiatives and accomplishments.

Establish Consistent Accessibility Standards Across All Libraries
- To ensure equitable access, libraries should work towards providing a **uniform standard of accessibility across all locations**. This includes making sure that all patrons, regardless of disability, can access necessary resources, programs, and services at any library they visit. By standardizing accessibility measures, libraries create a seamless experience for patrons, eliminating discrepancies in service quality and reinforcing a consistent commitment to inclusivity throughout the library network.

6. Conclusion

This report highlights the current state of accessibility within participating library programs, services, and social and attitudinal environments. Through a thorough analysis of survey data, staff interviews, and document reviews, it is clear that while libraries demonstrate a foundational commitment to inclusivity, opportunities remain to improve proactive accessibility practices.

In the area of *programs and services accessibility*, libraries have made meaningful strides, particularly in providing accessible materials, basic assistive technologies, and fostering partnerships with community organizations. However, challenges such as limited advanced assistive technology, inconsistent accessibility training, and challenges in communication of services persist. Many libraries are hindered by budget constraints and rely on ad hoc accommodations rather than formalized policies. Additionally, accessibility remains largely reactive, with accommodations often provided only upon request. This approach may deter or delay patrons who face barriers to self-advocating, underscoring the need for more proactive and systemic accessibility planning.

In terms of *social and attitudinal accessibility*, findings reveal that staff are engaged and open to enhancing their capacity to support patrons with diverse needs, but require additional training and confidence in their ability to provide assistance. While some libraries offer targeted training and informal accommodations for patrons with sensory and neurodivergent needs, formalized and consistent staff education on disability inclusion remains limited. Furthermore, communication of accessibility services could be improved across departments. Addressing these social and attitudinal issues could greatly enhance inclusive library cultures and practices.

The recommendations in this report provide both *short-term* and *long-term* priorities for libraries to consider. In the short-term, libraries can enhance accessibility by offering more informal/formal and regular training sessions, enhanced promotion of available accessibility services, and piloting of inclusive programming to meet patron accessibility needs and interests. These recommendations lay the groundwork for libraries to build an accessible culture that values and anticipates diverse needs. For sustained, long-term impact, libraries should consider establishing comprehensive accessibility policies, investing in advanced assistive technologies, and integrating accessibility priorities into cross-departmental program planning. By embedding accessibility into every stage of service delivery—from planning and marketing to staff training and feedback integration—libraries can foster a proactive and impactful approach to inclusivity.

Ultimately, this report underscores the importance of viewing accessibility not as a single initiative, but as an evolving commitment to equitable service delivery. By implementing relevant and practical recommendations, libraries will position themselves as community leaders in accessibility, creating welcoming and supportive environments for patrons with diverse abilities. The transition to a proactive accessibility model requires time, resources, and dedication, but it is practical step in advancing libraries' mission to serve all members of their communities, inclusively.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Library Patron Accessibility Survey

Public Library Accessibility Survey ⅋

This survey is designed to help us understand the accessibility of our library's programs and services for all patrons, including those with disabilities (physical, sensory, neurodivergent, etc.). We are also interested in learning about the overall environment in the library—whether it feels welcoming and accommodating to all visitors.

Your feedback is important and will help us improve our services and create a more inclusive environment for all patrons. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Enter your contact details at the end of the survey for a chance to win a $75 eGift Card.

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC is conducting this survey on behalf of the Public Library InterLINK. All feedback collected will be used solely to support the work of the member libraries. None of your identifying information will be shared and your individual responses will be kept confidential—only anonymized information from all responses will be shared publicly

Thank you for your time and participation!

1. Do you have difficulty with any of the below? Only difficulties or long-term conditions that have lasted or are expected to last for six months or more should be considered. (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Physical activities (walking, using stairs, using your hands or fingers)
- [ ] Hearing (even when using a hearing aid)
- [ ] Seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses)
- [ ] Learning, remembering, or concentrating
- [ ] Emotionally, psychologically, or with any mental health conditions
- [ ] With any other health problem or long term condition
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other

2. Over the past year, how often have you visited the library?

- ◯ Never

- ◯ Once or twice
- ◯ A few times
- ◯ More than a few times
- ◯ About monthly
- ◯ About weekly

- ◯ Daily or almost daily

3. Over the past year, which libraries have you visited? (Check all that apply)

☐ Bowen Island Public Library

☐ Burnaby - Bob Prittie Metrotown Library
☐ Burnaby - Temporary Cameron Library
☐ Burnaby - McGill Library
☐ Burnaby - Tommy Douglas Library
☐ Coquitlam - City Centre Library
☐ Coquitlam - Poirier Library
☐ Gibsons and District Public Library
☐ North Vancouver City Library
☐ Pemberton and District Public Library
☐ Richmond - Brighouse Library
☐ Richmond - Cambie Library
☐ Richmond - Ironwood Library
☐ Richmond - Steveston Library
☐ Squamish Public Library
☐ Surrey - City Centre Library
☐ Surrey - Clayton Library
☐ Surrey - Cloverdale Library
☐ Surrey - Fleetwood Library
☐ Surrey - Guildford Library
☐ Surrey - Newton Library
☐ Surrey - Ocean Park Library
☐ Surrey - Port Kells Library
☐ Surrey - Semiahmoo Library
☐ Surrey - Strawberry Hill Library
☐ Vancouver - Britannia Library
☐ Vancouver - Carnegie Library
☐ Vancouver - Central Library
☐ Vancouver - Champlain Heights Library
☐ Vancouver - Collingwood Library
☐ Vancouver - Dunbar Library
☐ Vancouver - Firehall Library
☐ Vancouver - Fraserview Library
☐ Vancouver - Hastings Library
☐ Vancouver - Joe Fortes Library
☐ Vancouver - Kensington Library
☐ Vancouver - Kerrisdale Library
☐ Vancouver - Kitsilano Library
☐ Vancouver - Marpole Library
☐ Vancouver - Mount Pleasant Library
☐ Vancouver - nə́ c̓ aʔmat ct Strathcona Library
☐ Vancouver - Oakridge Library
☐ Vancouver - Renfrew Library
☐ Vancouver - South Hill Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Terry Salman Library
- [ ] Vancouver - West Point Grey Library
- [ ] West Vancouver Memorial Library
- [ ] Whistler Public Library
- [ ] Other

4. Which of the following library programs and services have you used in the past year? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Book loans

- [ ] Interlibrary loans (borrowing books from other libraries within the network)

- [ ] Children's and family programs (e.g., storytimes, crafts, and reading clubs designed for young children and families)

- [ ] Teen and youth programs (e.g., coding clubs, book clubs, and creative writing workshops tailored to teenagers)

- [ ] Homework help

- [ ] Adult learning and reading programs (e.g., book clubs, creative writing workshops, and adult literacy classes)

- [ ] Computer and technology classes

- [ ] Language learning and newcomer programs (e.g., conversation circles, citizenship preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes)

- [ ] Job and career assistance (e.g., resume workshop, job search assistance, career planning sessions)

- [ ] Public access computers and Wi-Fi
- [ ] Printers
- [ ] Study and meeting rooms
- [ ] Community events
- [ ] Makerspaces (creative DIY space providing access to equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, woodworking tools, etc.)

- [ ] None
    Other

5. Which of the following library program or service is **most important** to you?
- [ ]
- ( ) Book loans

- ( ) Interlibrary loans (borrowing books from other libraries within the network)

- ( ) Children's and family programs (e.g., storytimes, crafts, and reading clubs designed for young children and families)

○ Teen and youth programs (e.g., coding clubs, book clubs, and creative writing workshops tailored to teenagers)

○ Homework help

○ Adult learning and reading programs (e.g., book clubs, creative writing workshops, and adult literacy classes)

○ Computer and technology classes

○ Language learning and newcomer programs (e.g., conversation circles, citizenship preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes)

○ Job and career assistance (e.g., resume workshop, job search assistance, career planning sessions)

○ Public access computers and Wi-Fi
○ Printers
○ Study and meeting rooms
○ Community events
○ Makerspaces (creative DIY space providing access to equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, woodworking tools, etc.)

○ None
  Other

6. Do you use library services or resources designed to support people with disabilities?
(e.g., audiobooks, large print collections, home delivery, assistive listening or reading devices, accessibility software, accessible computer equipment)

○ Yes, for myself

○ Yes, for someone in my care
○ I am unaware of any
○ No
  Unsure

○

7. Over the past year, which of the following library services or resources have you, or someone in you care, used? (Check all that apply)

☐ Home delivery

☐ Accessible collections (e.g., audiobooks, braille, e-text, DVDs and described DVDs, large print)

☐ Assistive listening device (e.g., DAISY players)

☐ Assistive reading device (e.g., screen magnifiers, zoom text, electronic video magnifiers, magnifying glass domes, magnifying lamps)

☐ Accessibility software (e.g., non-visual desktop access, zoomText, OpenDyslexic font)

☐ Accessible computer equipment (e.g., adjustable computer desk, keyboard with keyguard, large print keyboards, touchpad mouses)

☐ None

Other

8. Which of the following accessible service or resource is **most important** to you, or someone in you care?

○ Home delivery

○ Accessible collections (e.g., audiobooks, braille, e-text, DVDs and described DVDs, large print)

○ Assistive listening device (e.g., DAISY players)

○ Assistive reading device (e.g., screen magnifiers, zoom text, electronic video magnifiers, magnifying glass domes, magnifying lamps)

○ Accessibility software (e.g., non-visual desktop access, zoomText, OpenDyslexic font)

○ Accessible computer equipment (e.g., adjustable computer desk, keyboard with keyguard, large print keyboards, touchpad mouses)

○ None

○ Other

9. Over the past year, are there any services, programs, or resources at the library that you have not been able to access?
(e.g., unable to sign out a large print book because someone else had it)

○ Yes
○ No

Unsure

10. Briefly tell us which services, programs, or resources you were unable to access?

11. Have you encountered any barriers when trying to participate in the **library's programs**? (Check all that apply)

☐   Physical barriers (e.g., inaccessible locations)

☐   Communication barriers (e.g., lack of information in accessible formats)
☐   Attitudinal barriers (e.g., staff not understanding accessibility needs)
☐   Technological barriers (e.g., lack of assistive technologies)
☐   No barriers encountered
     Other

☐

12. Over the past year, are there any services, programs, or resources that have not been available at the library or that you would like to see in the future?

◯ Yes
◯ No
    Unsure

◯

13. Briefly tell us which services, programs, or resources you would like to see at the library?

```
[                                                                ]
```

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the **variety** of services and resources offered for persons with disabilities at the library (e.g., home delivery, accessible collections, assistive listening devices, accessibility software, accessible computer equipment)?

1	2	3	4	5

Very poor   **Excellent**

15. On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy do you think it is for people living with disabilities to **access** the library's programs and services (e.g., ease of access, clarity of information, staff support)?

1	2	3	4	5

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, how clear do you find **program information and instructions** provided by the library (e.g., program descriptions, registration details, location directions)?

1	2	3	4	5

Very poor   **Excellent**

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how flexible do you find the library's **program formats** in accommodating various needs (e.g., physical accessibility, sensory accommodations, language preferences)? (1 = Very Poor, 5 = Excellent).

1	2	3	4	5

Very poor   **Excellent**

18. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions for improving the accessibility of programs and services at the library:

19. Have you encountered any barriers during your visits to the library? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] No barriers

- [ ] Difficulty accessing entrances/exits
- [ ] Difficulty moving around the library
- [ ] Inaccessible restrooms
- [ ] Lack of accessible parking
- [ ] Poor signage or wayfinding
- [ ] Inadequate lighting
- [ ] Noise levels too high

- [ ] Lack of quiet or sensory-friendly spaces

☐ Inaccessible technology (e.g., computers, printers)

☐ Lack of accessible seating or workspaces

☐ Difficulty obtaining information in accessible formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio)

☐ Inadequate support for communication needs (e.g., sign language interpreters, communication devices)

☐ Other

20. Please provide more information about the barriers you encountered, if any, and any suggestions for improvement:

21. On a scale of 1 to 5, how welcomed do you feel when you visit the library?

1	2	3	4	5

Not welcomed at all   **Very welcomed**

22. Please expand on how you feel when you visit the library:

[ ]

23. On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy is it to find library staff to help you?

1	2	3	4	5

Very hard   **Very easy**

24. On a scale of 1 to 5, how helpful have library staff been during your visits?

1	2	3	4	5

Not helpful at all   **Very helpful**

25. Please expand on your experiences with library staff:

[ ]

26. Do you have any suggestions for how the library could be more welcoming and inclusive towards people with disabilities?

[ ]

27. Do you have anything else you would like to share or say about the library(ies) you visit?

[   ]

28. Age

   ⭕ Under 18

   ⭕ 18-24

   ⭕ 25-34

   ⭕ 35-44

   ⭕ 45-54

   ⭕ 55-64

   ⭕ 65+

   ⭕ Prefer not to say

29. Gender

   ⭕ Male
   ⭕ Female
   ⭕ Non-binary
   ⭕ Two-Spirit
   ⭕ Prefer not to say
     Other

30. ⭕ Thank you for participating in our survey. To show our appreciation, we are offering a chance to win a $75 eGift Card. If you would like to be entered into the draw, please provide your contact information below.
Privacy Statement: Your contact information will be used exclusively for the prize draw and will not be linked to your survey responses. All data will be handled in accordance with our privacy policy and applicable data protection laws.

Please provide your Name, Email Address and/or Phone Number below to be entered into the draw; otherwise, leave it blank.

The winner will be contacted in October 2024

31. Are you a person living with a disability who is interested in participating in a focus group about your experiences using the library?

If yes, please let us know below if you would like to be considered for a focus group discussion. We will use your contact information provided above to follow up with further details.

The focus group discussion will be one hour long to be scheduled in the Fall 2024. The discussion will delve deeper into the questions asked in this survey regarding your use of the library's programs and services and the overall atmosphere of the library, including how welcoming and inclusive it feels, and the attitudes and behaviors of staff and other patrons towards individuals with disabilities.

You will receive a $50 eGift Card for your participation in a focus group discussion.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Library Staff Survey: Inclusive and Welcoming Environment ⧉

This survey is designed to gather feedback from library staff on the library's environment. Specifically, we are interested in understanding how libraries and staff are contributing to welcoming and inclusive environments for all patrons, but particularly those with disabilities, including physical, sensory, neurodivergent, and other diverse needs.

Your participation is important and will help us identify areas for improvement and enable libraries to implement strategies that foster an inclusive environment. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

As a token of appreciation, you can enter your contact details at the end of the survey for a chance to win a $50 eGift Card.

This survey is being conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) on behalf of the Public Library InterLINK, which is a cooperative federation of 18 public library systems in British Columbia, Canada, that facilitates resource sharing, collaborative initiatives, and accessible services across member libraries to enhance library services for communities throughout the region.

All feedback collected will be used solely to support the work of the member libraries in improving accessibility. Your responses will remain confidential, and only anonymized data will be shared publicly.

Thank you for your time and valuable input!

1. Which of the following library(ies) do you currently work at?

- [ ] Bowen Island Public Library

- [ ] Burnaby - Bob Prittie Metrotown Library

- [ ] Burnaby - Temporary Cameron Library

- [ ] Burnaby - McGill Library

- [ ] Burnaby - Tommy Douglas Library

- [ ] North Vancouver City Public Library

- [ ] Richmond - Brighouse Library

- [ ] Richmond - Cambie Library

- [ ] Richmond - Ironwood Library
- [ ] Richmond - Steveston Library
- [ ] Squamish Public Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Britannia Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Carnegie Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Central Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Champlain Heights Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Collingwood Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Dunbar Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Firehall Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Fraserview Library

   Vancouver - Hastings Library
- [ ] Vancouver - Joe Fortes Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Kensington Library
- [ ] Vancouver - Kerrisdale Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Kitsilano Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Marpole Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Mount Pleasant Library

- [ ] Vancouver - nə́ćaʔmat ct Strathcona Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Oakridge Library

- [ ] Vancouver - Renfrew Library

☐ Vancouver - South Hill Library

☐ Vancouver - Terry Salman Library

☐ Vancouver - West Point Grey Library

☐ West Vancouver Memorial Public Library
  Other

☐

2. How many years have you worked at this library?

○ Less than 1 year

○ 1-3 years

○ 4-6 years

○ 7-10 years

○ More than 10 years

3. Which department(s) or area(s) do you primarily work in? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Adult Services** (e.g., Book Clubs, Lectures, Digital Literacy Programs)

☐ **Youth Services** (e.g., Teen/Young Adult Programs, Study Support)

☐ **Children's Services** (e.g., Storytime Sessions, Educational Activities for Children)

☐ **Reference/Information Services** (e.g., Research Assistance, Reference Help, Information Literacy Instruction)

☐ **IT/Technical Services** (e.g., Technology Infrastructure, Digital Services, Cataloging, Materials Processing)

☐ **Administration/Management** (e.g., Operational Management, HR, Strategic Planning)

☐ **Human Resources/Training** (e.g., Staff Recruitment, Training, Professional Development)

☐ **Collections Development** (e.g., Selecting, Acquiring, Maintaining Library Materials)

☐ **Outreach and Community Engagement** (e.g., Community Relations, Partnerships, Extending Services Beyond Branches)

☐ **Communications and Marketing** (e.g., Internal and External Communications, Promotional Activities, Public Relations)

☐ Other

4. What is/are your current role(s) at the library? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Librarian** (e.g., Reference Librarian, Children's Librarian, Adult Services Librarian, Teen/Youth Librarian)

☐ **Library Assistant** (e.g., Library Technician, Circulation Desk Staff, General Support Staff)

☐ **Circulation Staff** (e.g., Frontline Staff at Lending/Returning Desks)

☐ **Administrative Staff** (e.g., Executive Assistant, Finance, Facilities Management)

☐ **IT Staff** (e.g., IT Support, Systems Administrator, Digital Services Coordinator, Web Developer)

☐ **Training Coordinator** (e.g., Staff Development Coordinator, Educational Program Coordinator)

☐ **Program/Event Coordinator** (e.g., Community Engagement Coordinator, Event Planner, Outreach Coordinator)

☐ **Supervisor/Manager** (e.g., Branch Manager, Department Head, Team Leader)

☐ **Technical Services Staff** (e.g., Cataloger, Acquisitions Staff, Processing Staff)

☐ **Collections Development Staff** (e.g., Collections Librarian, Collections Specialist)

☐ **Outreach and Community Services Staff** (e.g., Outreach Librarian, Community Services Coordinator)

☐ **Youth/Teen Services Staff** (e.g., Youth Services Librarian, Teen Services Coordinator)

☐ **Communications and Marketing Staff** (e.g., Communications Specialist, Marketing Coordinator)

☐ Other

5. How confident are you in your team's ability to provide inclusive and accessible services to patrons with disabilities? (e.g., providing assistive technologies or materials in alternative formats, understanding and meeting diverse needs, knowledgeable about accessible services such as home delivery)

1	2	3	4	5

Not Confident   **Very Confident**

6. How frequently are staff trained on accessibility and inclusivity?

- ( ) Annually
- ( ) Bi-Annually
- ( ) Quarterly
- ( ) As Needed
- ( ) Never

- ( ) Other

7. What steps could be taken to improve your team's preparedness for assisting patrons with disabilities?

8. Do you feel the library's policies and procedures adequately support inclusivity for patrons with disabilities, based on your experience in your role?

1	2	3	4	5

Not at All   **Completely**

9. Have you received any training on how to assist or cater to patrons with the following types of disabilities? (Check all that apply)

☐   **Physical Disabilities** (e.g., mobility impairments, chronic pain)

☐   **Sensory Disabilities** (e.g., visual impairments, hearing impairments)

☐   **Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities** (e.g., learning disabilities, memory difficulties)

☐   **Neurodivergent Conditions** (e.g., autism, ADHD)

☐   **Mental Health Conditions** (e.g., anxiety, depression)

☐   **No, I have not received any specific training**

☐   Other

10. How confident do you feel in your ability to assist or cater to patrons with the following types of disabilities in your specific role?

	Not Confident	Somewhat Confident	Confident
Physical Disabilities (e.g., mobility impairments, chronic pain)	○	○	○
Sensory Disabilities (e.g., visual impairments, hearing impairments)	○	○	○
Cognitive/ Intellectual Disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, memory difficulties)	○	○	○
Neurodivergent Conditions (e.g., Autism, ADHD)	○	○	○
Mental Health Conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression)	○	○	○

11. How effective do you think the current staff training programs are in preparing you to interact with patrons with various disabilities?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Effective				**Very Effective**

12. What types of training have you received related to accessibility and inclusivity **in the past year**? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Disability Awareness Training**

☐ **Communication Techniques for Assisting Patrons with Disabilities**

☐ **Use of Assistive Technologies** (e.g., screen readers, magnification software, speech-to-text programs)

☐ **Accessibility Software Training**

☐ **Physical Accessibility Training** (e.g., helping patrons navigate the library with mobility aids)

☐ **Emergency Procedures for Patrons with Disabilities** (e.g., evacuation plans for patrons with physical or sensory disabilities)

☐ **Addressing Attitudinal Barriers** (e.g., challenging stereotypes and biases about disabilities)

☐ **Mental Health First Aid Training** (e.g., supporting patrons with mental health conditions)

☐ **Designing Inclusive Programs and Events** (e.g., ensuring programs are accessible to all patrons)

☐ **Creating Accessible Digital Content** (e.g., making online resources and materials accessible to users with disabilities)

☐ **Sensory-Friendly Programming** (e.g., designing programs for neurodivergent individuals)

☐ **Customer Service for Patrons with Disabilities** (e.g., providing tailored assistance and support)

☐ **Universal Design Principles** (e.g., applying UD principles to library services and facilities)

☐ **None**

☐ Other

13. What types of training have you received related to accessibility and inclusivity **since you started working at the library**? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Disability Awareness Training**

☐ **Communication Techniques for Assisting Patrons with Disabilities**

☐ **Use of Assistive Technologies** (e.g., screen readers, magnification software, speech-to-text programs)

☐ **Accessibility Software Training**

☐ **Physical Accessibility Training** (e.g., helping patrons navigate the library with mobility aids)

☐ **Emergency Procedures for Patrons with Disabilities** (e.g., evacuation plans for patrons with physical or sensory disabilities)

☐ **Addressing Attitudinal Barriers** (e.g., challenging stereotypes and biases about disabilities)

☐ **Mental Health First Aid Training** (e.g., supporting patrons with mental health conditions)

☐ **Designing Inclusive Programs and Events** (e.g., ensuring programs are accessible to all patrons)

☐ **Creating Accessible Digital Content** (e.g., making online resources and materials accessible to users with disabilities)

☐ **Sensory-Friendly Programming** (e.g., designing programs for neurodivergent individuals)

☐ **Customer Service for Patrons with Disabilities** (e.g., providing tailored assistance and support)

☐ **Universal Design Principles** (e.g., applying UD principles to library services and facilities)

☐ **None**

☐ Other

14. What improvements would you suggest for the current training programs?

[text box]

15. What additional training do you think would help you better serve or cater to patrons with disabilities?

[text box]

16. To what extent do you believe that the library fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment for patrons with disabilities?

1	2	3	4	5

Not Inclusive   **Very Inclusive**

17. How often do you encounter negative attitudes or stereotypes about people with disabilities in your work environment?

○ Never
○ Rarely
○ Sometimes
○ Often

   Always

○

18. Have you observed any barriers to accessibility or inclusivity in the library?

○ Yes

    No

○

19. If yes, please describe what barrier(s) you have observed.

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20. How often do you interact with patrons with disabilities?

○ Daily
○ Weekly
○ Monthly
○ Rarely

    Never

21. How comfortable are you in addressing accessibility concerns raised by patrons?

1	2	3	4	5

Not Comfortable   **Very Comfortable**

22. What challenges have you faced in interacting with patrons with disabilities?

23. What steps could the library take to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for patrons with disabilities?

24. Age

○ Under 18

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

○ 45-54

○ 55-64

○ 65+

○ Prefer not to say

25. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

○ Non-binary

○ Two-Spirit

○ Prefer not to say

26. Thank you for participating in our survey. To show our appreciation, we are offering a chance to win a $50 eGift Card. If you would like to be entered into the draw, please provide your contact information below.

Privacy Statement: Your contact information will be used exclusively for the prize draw and will not be linked to your survey responses. All data will be handled in accordance with our privacy policy and applicable data protection laws.

Please provide your Name, Email Address and/or Phone Number below to be entered into the draw; otherwise, leave it blank.

The winner will be contacted in October 2024

Appendix C: Library Staff Survey – Programs and Services Accessibility

Library Staff Survey - Accessibility of Programs and Services ⅋

This survey is designed to gather feedback from library staff on the accessibility of our library's programs and services. Specifically, we are interested in understanding how libraries and staff are contributing to accessible programs and services for all patrons, particularly those with disabilities, including physical, sensory, neurodivergent, and other diverse needs.

Your participation is important and will help us identify areas for improvement and enable libraries to implement strategies that foster an inclusive environment. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

As a token of appreciation, you can enter your contact details at the end of the survey for a chance to win a $50 eGift Card.

This survey is being conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) on behalf of the Public Library InterLINK, which is a cooperative federation of 18 public library systems in British Columbia, Canada, that facilitates resource sharing, collaborative initiatives, and accessible services across member libraries to enhance library services for communities throughout the region.

All feedback collected will be used solely to support the work of the member libraries in improving accessibility. Your responses will remain confidential, and only anonymized data will be shared publicly.

Thank you for your time and valuable input!

1. Which of the following library(ies) do you currently work at?

☐ Coquitlam - City Centre Library

☐ Coquitlam - Poirier Library

☐ Gibsons and District Public Library

☐ North Vancouver City Public Library

☐ Pemberton and District Public Library

☐ Surrey - City Centre Library

☐ Surrey - Clayton Library

☐ Surrey - Cloverdale Library

☐ Surrey - Fleetwood Library

☐ Surrey - Guildford Library

☐ Surrey - Newton Library

☐ Surrey - Ocean Park Library

☐ Surrey - Port Kells Library

☐ Surrey - Semiahmoo Library

☐ Surrey - Strawberry Hill Library

☐ West Vancouver Memorial Public Library

☐

2. How many years have you worked at this library?

○ Less than 1 year

○ 1-3 years

○ 4-6 years

○ 7-10 years

○ More than 10 years

3. Which department(s) or area(s) do you primarily work in? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Adult Services** (e.g., Book Clubs, Lectures, Digital Literacy Programs)

☐ **Youth Services** (e.g., Teen/Young Adult Programs, Study Support)

☐ **Children's Services** (e.g., Storytime Sessions, Educational Activities for Children)

☐ **Reference/Information Services** (e.g., Research Assistance, Reference Help, Information Literacy Instruction)

☐ **IT/Technical Services** (e.g., Technology Infrastructure, Digital Services, Cataloging, Materials Processing)

☐ **Administration/Management** (e.g., Operational Management, HR, Strategic Planning)

☐ **Human Resources/Training** (e.g., Staff Recruitment, Training, Professional Development)

☐ **Collections Development** (e.g., Selecting, Acquiring, Maintaining Library Materials)

☐ **Outreach and Community Engagement** (e.g., Community Relations, Partnerships, Extending Services Beyond Branches)

☐ **Communications and Marketing** (e.g., Internal and External Communications, Promotional Activities, Public Relations)

4. What is/are your current role(s) at the library? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Librarian** (e.g., Reference Librarian, Children's Librarian, Adult Services Librarian, Teen/Youth Librarian)

☐ **Library Assistant** (e.g., Library Technician, Circulation Desk Staff, General Support Staff)

☐ **Circulation Staff** (e.g., Frontline Staff at Lending/Returning Desks)

☐ **Administrative Staff** (e.g., Executive Assistant, Finance, Facilities Management)

☐ **IT Staff** (e.g., IT Support, Systems Administrator, Digital Services Coordinator, Web Developer)

☐ **Training Coordinator** (e.g., Staff Development Coordinator, Educational Program Coordinator)

☐ **Program/Event Coordinator** (e.g., Community Engagement Coordinator, Event Planner, Outreach Coordinator)

☐ **Supervisor/Manager** (e.g., Branch Manager, Department Head, Team Leader)

☐ **Technical Services Staff** (e.g., Cataloger, Acquisitions Staff, Processing Staff)

☐ **Collections Development Staff** (e.g., Collections Librarian, Collections Specialist)

☐ **Outreach and Community Services Staff** (e.g., Outreach Librarian, Community Services Coordinator)

☐ **Youth/Teen Services Staff** (e.g., Youth Services Librarian, Teen Services Coordinator)

☐ **Communications and Marketing Staff** (e.g., Communications Specialist, Marketing Coordinator)

5. How involved are you in the development or planning of library programs?

   ○ Very Involved

   ○ Somewhat Involved Not

   ○ Involved

6. In a few words, can you describe your involvement.

   [ ]

7. In your experience, are accessibility considerations integrated into the program planning process? (e.g., access to program locations, availability of materials in alternative formats, presence of assistive listening devices)

   ○ Always

   ○ Often

   ○ Sometimes

   ○ Rarely

   ○ Never

8. How accessible do you believe the library's **programs** are for patrons with disabilities? **Programs refer to organized events, classes, workshops, etc.**

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good
Physical accessibility (e.g., access to program locations, availability of ramps/elevators , accessible seating arrangement)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sensory accessibility (e.g., availability of materials in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, or audio, and the presence of assistive listening devices)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cognitive accessibility (e.g., clarity of program information, ease of understanding instructions, availability of support for patrons with cognitive disabilities)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Neurodivergent accessibility (e.g., sensory- friendly programming, flexible participation options, accommodatio ns for varying sensory needs)	◯	◯	◯	◯

Digital accessibility (e.g., online program materials that comply with accessibility standards such as WCAG,

accessible virtual programming)

◯   ◯   ◯   ◯

Overall inclusivity of programs (e.g., efforts to make programs welcoming and inclusive to all patrons, including those with disabilities)

◯   ◯   ◯   ◯

9. What specific accessibility accommodations are currently offered in the library's **programs**? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Sign Language Interpretation**

☐ **Materials in alternative formats** (e.g., Braille, large print, audio)

☐ **Assistive Technologies** (e.g., screen readers, hearing loops, magnification devices)

☐ **Sensory-Friendly Environments** (e.g., quiet spaces, low lighting)

☐ **Accessible Digital Content** (e.g., WCAG-compliant online resources, captioned videos)

☐ **Flexible Participation Options** (e.g., remote access, varying program formats)

☐ **Support Staff or Volunteers Trained in Accessibility**

☐ **Transportation Assistance** (e.g., accessible transportation options for program attendees)

☐ **I am unaware of any**

☐ **None**

☐ Other

10. Are there any barriers that you have observed or experienced that impact the accessibility of the library's **programs**?

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11. How accessible do you believe the library's **services** are for patrons with disabilities? **Services refer to ongoing support provided by the library, such as access to materials, assistance at service desks, and digital services.**

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good
Physical accessibility (e.g., access to service desks, accessible restrooms, clear signage)	○	○	○	○
Sensory accessibility (e.g., availability of materials in alternative formats, availability of assistive listening devices at service points)	○	○	○	○
Cognitive accessibility (e.g., clarity of service procedures, ease of understanding for patrons with cognitive disabilities)	○	○	○	○
Neurodivergent accessibility (e.g., sensory- friendly service environments, accommodations	○	○	○	○

for sensory
sensitivities)

**Digital
accessibility**
(e.g., accessible
website design,
accessible online
catalogs and
databases)

⬭   ⬭   ⬭   ⬭

**Overall
inclusivity of
services** (e.g.,
efforts to make
services
welcoming and
inclusive to all
patrons, including
those with
disabilities)

⬭   ⬭   ⬭   ⬭

12. Are there any barriers that you have observed or experienced that
impact the accessibility of the library's **services**?

[ ]

13. Are you familiar with the assistive technologies available at the library?
(e.g., screen readers, hearing loops, magnification devices)

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Somewhat

14. What types of training have you received related to accessibility and inclusivity? (Check all that apply)

☐ **Disability Awareness Training**

☐ **Communication Techniques for Assisting Patrons with Disabilities**

☐ **Use of Assistive Technologies** (e.g., screen readers, hearing loops)

☐ **Physical Accessibility Training** (e.g., helping patrons navigate the library with mobility aids)

☐ **Emergency Procedures for Patrons with Disabilities**

☐ **Mental Health First Aid Training**

☐ **Designing Inclusive Programs and Events**

☐ **Creating Accessible Digital Content**

☐ **Sensory-Friendly Programming**

☐ **Customer Service for Patrons with Disabilities**

☐ **Universal Design Principles**

☐ **None**

☐ Other

15. How confident do you feel in your ability to provide accessible programs and services to patrons with disabilities?

1	2	3	4	5

Not Confident   **Very Confident**

16. How well do you think the library communicates the availability of accessible programs and services to patrons?

1	2	3	4	5

Very Poorly   **Extremely Well**

17. Do you think the library's promotional materials (e.g., flyers, website announcements) are accessible and easy to understand for patrons with disabilities?

○ Yes

○ No

18. If no, can you further explain?

19. Are accessibility accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, accessible seating) consistently provided during library events?

○ Always

○ Often

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

○ I am unsure

20. What do you think are the library's strengths in terms of providing accessible programs and services?

21. What do you think are the areas where the library could improve in terms of providing accessible programs and services?

22. Age

○ Under 18

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

○ 45-54

○ 55-64

◯ 65+

◯ Prefer not to say

23. Gender

◯ Male

◯ Female

◯ Non-binary

◯ Two-Spirit

◯ Prefer not to say

24. Thank you for participating in our survey. To show our appreciation, we are offering a chance to win a $50 eGift Card. If you would like to be entered into the draw, please provide your contact information below.
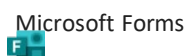
Privacy Statement: Your contact information will be used exclusively for the prize draw and will not be linked to your survey responses. All data will be handled in accordance with our privacy policy and applicable data protection laws.

Please provide your Name, Email Address and/or Phone Number below to be entered into the draw; otherwise, leave it blank.

The winner will be contacted in October 2024

Appendix D: Library Staff Interview Guide – Social and Attitudinal Accessibility

Introduction (5 minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. As part of the accessibility audit with InterLINK, we're conducting interviews with staff members to better understand how inclusive and welcoming the library environment is, particularly for patrons with disabilities, including those with mobility, sensory, and neurodivergent needs.

The interview will cover several areas, including training on accessibility, how you gather feedback from patrons, resources available to assist patrons with disabilities, and other key areas. Your insights will help us identify areas for improvement to make the library more inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

This interview will take approximately one hour, and your responses will remain confidential. The information you provide will help inform recommendations to improve accessibility across the library system.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section 1: General Accessibility (10 minutes)

1. **Can you describe how your library approaches accessibility for patrons with disabilities?**

   - Is there a specific individual or team/department responsible for ensuring accessibility within the library?

   - How is accessibility integrated across different departments?

2. **Does your library have a dedicated Accessibility Services department or team?**

   - If so, how is it structured, and what are its key responsibilities?

   - If not, how are accessibility services managed within the library?

Section 2: Training and Staff Support (10 minutes)

3. **How effective do you think the training is in preparing staff to assist patrons with disabilities?**
4. **What types of accessibility training are provided to staff at the library?**

   - Does the training cover all types of disabilities (e.g., mobility, sensory, neurodivergence)? Can you provide examples?

5. **Do you feel you have enough resources and support to assist patrons with different types of disabilities?**

   - Are there specific tools, technologies, or guidelines in place to help staff accommodate various needs?

   - How confident are you in using assistive technologies available in the library?

Section 3: Gathering Feedback and Understanding Needs (10 minutes)

6. **Does your library actively seek feedback from patrons with disabilities about their experience?**

   - How is this feedback gathered and what is done with it?

7. **When patrons register at the library or for programs, are they asked if they require specific accommodations?**

   - What is the process for managing these requests, and are they usually met successfully?

Section 4: Creating Inclusive Environment (10 minutes)

8. **How inclusive and welcoming do you believe the library environment is for people with disabilities?**

   - What steps are taken to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere?

9. **What specific actions are taken by staff to ensure that the library is a welcoming space for people with disabilities, a place where they feel they belong?**

   - Are there practices or guidelines that encourage positive interactions?

10. **How would you handle situations where negative attitudes or stereotypes about people with disabilities are displayed by staff or patrons?**

    - Are there guidelines in place to address these situations?

Section 5: Evacuation Plans and Emergency Procedures (5 minutes)

11. **What is the library's approach to ensuring the safety of patrons with disabilities in emergency situations?**

    - Are evacuation plans and emergency procedures adapted for patrons with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities?

Section 6: Closing Questions (10 minutes)

12. **Can you share any innovative approaches or strategies you've seen used to improve accessibility and inclusion for patrons with mobility, sensory, or neurodivergent disabilities?**
13. **What improvements could be made to make the library more inclusive and accessible for patrons with disabilities?**

- What additional training or resources would help you feel better equipped to serve patrons with diverse needs?

Conclusion

- Ask if the interviewee has any final thoughts or suggestions.

- Thank them for their participation and remind them of the confidentiality of their responses.

Appendix E: Library Staff Interview Guide – Programs and Services Accessibility

Introduction (5 minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. As part of the accessibility audit with InterLINK, we're conducting interviews with staff members to better understand how accessible and inclusive the library's programs and services are, particularly for patrons with disabilities, including those with mobility, sensory, and neurodivergent needs.

The purpose of this interview is to delve deeper into how the library approaches accessibility, such as accommodations, use of assistive technologies, and how programs and services are made accessible and communicated to patrons. Your insights will help us identify areas for improvement to make the library more accessible for everyone.

This interview will take approximately one hour, and your responses will remain confidential. The information you provide will help inform recommendations to improve accessibility across the library system. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section 1: Accommodations (10 minutes)

2. **Do you ask patrons if they require specific accommodations or if they have specific needs when they register at the library or for programs?**

    - How is this process communicated to patrons?

    - How do you handle situations where accommodations are requested after registration?

3. **What types of accommodations have been most frequently requested by patrons?**

    - Are there systems in place to track and manage accommodation requests?

Section 2: Assistive Technologies (10 minutes)

3. **What is the process for patrons to use assistive technologies at the library?**

    - Are they easily accessible, and are staff knowledgeable in assisting patrons with these tools?

    - How is information about available assistive technologies communicated to patrons?

4. **How frequently do patrons request the use of assistive technologies, and are there any barriers in accessing them?**

Section 3: Accessibility of Programs (10 minutes)

5. **Can you walk me through how programs are currently planned and executed at your library? How do accessibility considerations, particularly for patrons with mobility, sensory (hearing and vision), or neurodivergent disabilities, factor into that process?**

6. **How do you ensure that programs are accessible to patrons with hearing impairments?**

   - For example, do you provide assistive listening devices, captions for virtual programs, or sign language interpreters? Do your physical program locations have hearing loops?

7. **What accommodations are in place to make programs accessible to patrons with vision impairments?**

   - Do you provide large print materials, braille, or audio descriptions?

8. **What adjustments or accommodations are in place to ensure that programs are accessible for patrons who are neurodivergent (e.g., those with autism, ADHD, or learning disabilities)?**

   - Probe: Are there quiet spaces, sensory kits, or clear visual instructions to help patrons feel comfortable in the space?

Section 4: Communication of Library Services (10 minutes)

9. **How are library programs and services communicated to patrons?**

   - Are there different methods used to reach various demographics, including patrons with disabilities?

10. **Are promotional materials or information about programs and services developed to be accessible?**

    - Do you use alternative formats (e.g., large print, braille, or digital formats accessible for screen readers)?

Section 5: Alternative Formats (10 minutes)

11. **Where are alternative formats like audiobooks located, and how are they accessed?**

    - Are there specific accommodations or processes in place to ensure ease of access for individuals with sensory disabilities?

12. **How frequently are alternative formats used, and what feedback do you receive from patrons about their accessibility?**

Section 6: Inclusivity and Accessibility in Programs and Services (10 minutes)

13. **How confident do you feel the library's programs and services are in accommodating patrons with various disabilities (e.g., mobility, sensory, neurodivergent)?**

    - What areas do you feel could be improved in terms of accessibility?

14. **Can you share any innovative approaches or strategies you've seen used to improve accessibility for patrons with mobility, sensory, or neurodivergent disabilities?**

15. **Do you feel supported by library leadership in implementing accessible programs and services for patrons with disabilities?**

    - What additional resources or support would help improve the library's ability to provide accessible programs and services?

Conclusion

- Ask if the interviewee has any final thoughts or suggestions.

- Thank them for their participation and remind them of the confidentiality of their responses.