# Survey of New Castle County Library Staff

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# Results in Brief

This report presents the results of a survey of New Castle County Library staff conducted by the University of Delaware for the New Castle County Division of Community Services in August, 2009.

## Response Rate

Two hundred seventy surveys were distributed; 186 were returned for a response rate of 69%. Of the 186, 133 (72%) provided open-ended comments.

## Satisfaction with Policies and Practices

The survey had two sections that asked about satisfaction. One asked how satisfied or dissatisfied the respondents were with specific policies and procedures. The other asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with specific policies that had been changed in the past year. The following list identifies the policies and practices in both sections that were marked "somewhat" or "very" satisfied by more than 50% of all respondents. Please see Section 1 for details of how the patterns of satisfaction and dissatisfaction differed for part-time and full-time staff.

- Change in policy about fines and fees (71% satisfied)
- Working conditions of job (67% satisfied)
- Policies about patron behavior (63% satisfied)
- Quality of direct supervision received (62% satisfied)
- Policies regarding technology use (63% satisfied)
- Library safety procedures (59% satisfied)
- Your library's effort to keep pace with technology (56% satisfied)
- Availability of up-to-date technology for patrons (55% satisfied)
- Communication in library (51% satisfied)

Respondents were also asked for their perception of patron satisfaction of library services. Seventy-six percent (76%) reported that they thought that patrons were either somewhat satisfied (55%) or very satisfied (21%).

The items that had less than 50% of the respondents indicating satisfaction are:
- Changes in policies about shared collections (34% satisfied)
- Changes in policies about training and development authorizations (19% satisfied)
- Changes in policies about change fund procedures (16% satisfied)

## Appropriateness of Recent Changes

Library staff were asked to indicate how inappropriate or appropriate they thought certain changes that had been made in response to the "current economic crisis" were.[1]  The items that more than 50% of the respondents indicated as either "somewhat appropriate" or "very appropriate" are:

- Sharing staff across facilities (72% considered it appropriate)
- Cutting library hours (54% considered it appropriate)

Items that less than 50% marked as "somewhat appropriate" or "very appropriate" are:

- Absorbing non-library workers (24% considered it appropriate)
- Hiring contract workers (20% considered it appropriate)

Note that full- and part-time staffs were not always in agreement on appropriateness, with full-time staff tending to be more negative. (See Section 1 for more information.)

## Priorities for the Coming Year

Respondents were asked how important specific areas were as priorities for the coming year.[2]  Only one item was marked "very" or "extremely" important as a priority by more than 50% of the respondents for the coming year:

- Responsiveness to local community (64%)

The items considered "very" or "extremely" important by less than 50% of the respondents were:

- Floating collections (46% considered it "very" or "extremely" important)
- Reassessment of how Community Service Workers are used (45% considered it "very" or "extremely" important)
- Cross-library training (44% considered it "very" or "extremely" important)
- Outreach (39% considered it "very" or "extremely" important)
- A system for sharing staff (35% considered it "very" or "extremely" important)

## Most and Least Satisfying Aspects of Your Job

"Assisting the public" and "good people to work with" were the most common responses to the question, "what gives you the most satisfaction in your job?"  "Low salary" and "problems with

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[1] One respondent felt that the use of the word "crisis" was loaded in a way that could increase the likelihood of positive responses.  Results should be interpreted with that caveat in mind.

[2] Because the question included the phrase, "keeping in mind the limited amount of resources and funding available," a respondent commented that the question was biased, thinking perhaps that it would decrease the likelihood that respondents would mark everything as "very" or "extremely" important.

county administration" were the most common responses to the question, "what do you like least about your job?"

## Recommendations for Patron Services and Infrastructure

In the responses to the open-ended comments related to patron services and the library infrastructure that supports those services, two themes were dominant:

- Improving technology services to patrons
- Improving technical support to library staff

There were also several specific recommendations about requests for holds, DVD collections, and building cleanliness, among other topics. (See Section 2 for details.)

## Recommendations for Personnel Issues

Allowing workers to work on closed days was the most common recommendation in this category and the one most strongly expressed. Other recommendations addressed staffing issues, recognition, professional development, and other areas. (See Section 3.)

## Recommendations for Management & Administration

Valuing the knowledge and experience of library staff and demonstrating that value through transparency, consultation, and trust were the strongest themes in the recommendations for management and administration. Other topics included the process of managing change and communication. (See Section 4.)

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## Tables and Figures

# Introduction

This report presents the results of a survey of library staff conducted by the University of Delaware Education Research and Development Center for the New Castle County (NCC) Division of Community Services. The purpose of the survey was to help Division administrators prepare for the annual Library Staff Day scheduled for September 17, 2009 by providing information on staff reaction to policies and changes made in the past year, staff input on future priorities, and staff recommendations for improving library services and libraries as a place to work.

A questionnaire, cover letter, pen, and University of Delaware envelope was distributed to library staff through the library managers. Because the surveys were going to be collected in a central place in the library, staff were instructed to use the envelope to make sure their responses were seen only by the external researchers. If they did not want to complete the survey, they were asked to put the blank survey in an envelope and place it with the other envelopes in order to avoid any pressure to respond from managers. Ten days after the surveys were given to the library managers, the researchers went to each library to collect the surveys. The surveys did not include any information about which library they came from and the researchers mixed the envelopes together before opening them. (A copy of the instructions given to library managers and the cover letter attached to the survey for staff can be obtained upon request from the researchers. The questionnaire is provided in Attachment A.)

## Survey Content

The survey had six sections. The first asked about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with existing policies and practices. This section included a question asking respondents to rate how satisfied or dissatisfied they thought library patrons were. The second set of questions asked about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with policies and procedures that had been changed in the last year. In the third section, respondents were asked their opinions about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of actions taken by the County in response to the economic situation. The fourth asked respondents to rate the importance of potential areas for the County to address in the coming year. The fifth section included two questions, one asking about what respondents found most satisfying about their jobs and the other asking what they liked least. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked two open-ended questions: What recommendations do they have for improving library services? What suggestions do they have for improving the library as a place to work? In addition, they were given space for further comments. The open-ended responses were categorized through a process of inductive content analysis in which the major themes are identified by sorting the comments. The final step was summarizing the recommendations made within each theme and selecting comments to illustrate the reasons given for recommendations and to expand on specific recommendations.

# Response Rate

The researchers were given a list of 264 names of staff who work at one or more of the 9 libraries and Tech Services. The list also included 10 lines identified as "vacant" and 6 lines identified as "Contract Person". We distributed 270 surveys for all the staff positions that were not listed as "vacant". Of these, 186 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 69%. (We also received seven blank surveys.) A large proportion of the respondents – 136 of 186, or 73% -- responded to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey.[3]

The respondents were asked to identify themselves as full-time (non-contract), part-time (non-contract), or contract workers. No other descriptive data, such as library or title, was asked for. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses to the question and the response rate for each of the positions (plus the five who skipped the question). The table shows that full-time workers are somewhat over-represented in the sample and part-time workers are under-represented. For that reason, most of the survey results presented in Section 1 are broken out by full- and part-time worker. The graphs in Attachment B show the results for all three categories of workers.

Table 1: Distribution of Surveys and Response Rates by Type of Worker

| Type of Worker | Surveys Distributed | Surveys Returned | Response Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Part-time | 189 | 112 | 59.3% |
| Full-time | 75 | 65 | 86.7% |
| Contract | 6 | 4 | 66.7% |
| Skipped question | - | 5 | 1.9% |
| **Total** | **270** | **186** | **68.9%** |

The table also shows the low number of contract workers responding to the survey. In order to protect their confidentiality, their responses are not reported separately but are included in any findings reported about the sample as a whole in the Results in Brief and the results presented in Attachments A and B.

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[3]In addition to filling out the survey and writing responses to the closed-ended questions, some respondents made comments about the survey itself and/or about its intended use in library staff day. While two comments expressed appreciation for the survey, others had specific recommendations for improving the survey (for example, clarifying what "working conditions" means and specifying communication within the library versus communication between the library and the administration). In addition, one person was unhappy that money was being spent on the survey when other needs are pressing. The four comments about library staff day were negative.

## Structure of the Report

This report has four sections.  The first section summarizes the responses to the closed-ended questions about satisfaction with policies, appropriateness of recent actions, and priorities for the coming year.  Detailed data are provided in Attachments A and B.  Sections 2, 3, and 4 present the results of the analysis of the open-ended comments.  Section 2 focuses on library services and infrastructure.  Section 3 provides recommendations about personnel issues, including scheduling and support.  Section 4 identifies the recommendations for management related to the themes of communication and valuing staff input, among others.

# Section 1:  Satisfaction, Appropriateness, and Priorities

This section of the report summarizes the findings from the closed-ended questions.  Tables breaking out the responses from the part-time and full-time respondents are provided.  The tables combine "very" and "somewhat" responses to provide a clear picture of the positive, negative, and neutral reactions to each item.  Attachment A and Attachment B present the results with all response options broken out.  The questionnaire included in Attachment A provides the distribution for each item for the full sample. Charts in Attachment B show the proportion of responses from full-time, part-time, and contract workers.

## Satisfaction with Policies and Practices

The first section of the questionnaire asked about satisfaction with various policies and practices in the library.  The response options for each of the items were: very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, and very satisfied.  In the discussion below, the "very" and "somewhat" responses are combined.

### Technology

Library staff were asked about their satisfaction with (1) policies regarding technology use in the library, (2) their library's effort to keep pace with technology, and (3) the availability of up-to-date technology for patrons.  Overall, there was more satisfaction than dissatisfaction with each of these.

For the first item (policies regarding technology use), there is an unusually high degree of agreement between the full- and part-time respondents.  As shown in Table 1.1, more than 60% of both full-time and part-time staff indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied.  This item was also marked by a relatively large proportion of neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) responses.

Table 1.1:  Satisfaction with Policies Regarding Technology Use,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=105) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 15% | 10% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 22% | 25% |
| Satisfied | 63% | 65% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

In contrast to the consistent pattern of responses for full-time and part-time respondents seen in the first item, the full-time and part-time respondents are more split on the second and third items.  In both cases, a higher proportion of those who work full-time expressed dissatisfaction: 53% of the full-time staff said that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the

efforts to keep pace with technology, compared to 16% of part-time staff; and 47% of full-time respondents and 12% of part-time respondents reported being dissatisfied with the availability of up-to-date technology for patrons. (See Tables 1.2 and 1.3.)

Table 1.2:  Satisfaction with Efforts to Keep Pace with Technology,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=108) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 53% | 16% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 9% | 17% |
| Satisfied | 38% | 68% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.3:  Satisfaction with the Availability of Up-to-Date
Technology for Patrons, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=109) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 47% | 12% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 19% | 21% |
| Satisfied | 34% | 67% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

One respondent wrote, "Policies are not the issue with technology: the major problem with technology is the absence of IS support. Reliability is a constant problem, systems are always crashing or not working right."

## Supervision, working conditions, and communication

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with (1) the quality of direct supervision they receive, (2) the working conditions in the library, and (3) communication in the library.

In response to the question about quality of direct supervision, both part-time and full-time staff were more likely to be satisfied than dissatisfied.  However, there was more dissatisfaction among full-time than part-time staff.  (See Table 1.4.)

Table 1.4:  Satisfaction with the Quality of Supervision,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=111) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 30% | 16% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 14% | 16% |
| Satisfied | 56% | 68% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

A similar pattern was found for working conditions:  While a majority of full- and part-time respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with working conditions in the

library, a much larger proportion of full-time respondents (42%) than part-time respondents (17%) reported being dissatisfied.  (See Table 1.5.)

Table 1.5:  Satisfaction with Working Conditions,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=111) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 42% | 17% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 3% | 7% |
| Satisfied | 55% | 76% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

The responses to the question about communication are difficult to interpret because the question was not clear.  For example, one person who checked "dissatisfied" wrote in "too much!", while others who indicated that they were dissatisfied might have felt that there was too little.  (This interpretation is supported by the number of comments in the open-ended responses recommending increased and "better" communication.)  Given the lack of clarity, the results should be interpreted with caution.  They present a mixed picture, without large differences between the proportions of respondents that are satisfied and those that are dissatisfied.  (See Table 1.6.)

Table 1.6:  Satisfaction with Communication in Your Library,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=109) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 46% | 35% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 11% | 10% |
| Satisfied | 43% | 55% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

## Safety, patron behavior, and patron satisfaction

Staff were asked about their satisfaction with library safety procedures and policies about patron behavior.  They were also asked for their perceptions of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of patrons.

The question about library safety procedures had the highest proportion of neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) answers of any of the questions about satisfaction with policies and practices.  Twenty-five percent of the respondents overall, with 28% of the full-time and 20% of the part-time respondents, said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with library safety procedures.  In general, however, respondents were more positive than neutral or negative.  (See Table 1.7.)

<div align="center">Table 1.7:  Satisfaction with Library Safety Procedures,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff</div>

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 23% | 15% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 28% | 20% |
| Satisfied | 49% | 65% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

More than 60% of both full-time and part-time staff expressed satisfaction with policies about patron behavior (see table 1.8).  However, this item is one of the few where dissatisfaction was higher among part-time staff than among full-time staff.

<div align="center">Table 1.8:  Satisfaction with Policies about Patron Behavior,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff</div>

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=109) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 20% | 28% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 11% | 12% |
| Satisfied | 69% | 61% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Some respondents felt that it was inappropriate to ask them about patron satisfaction instead of asking patrons themselves.  Of those who responded, however, more than 75% of both full-time and part-time staff indicated that they thought patrons were either satisfied or very satisfied with library services.

<div align="center">Table 1.9:  Perceptions of Patron Satisfaction,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff</div>

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=106) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 22% | 15% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 2% | 8% |
| Satisfied | 76% | 77% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

## Satisfaction with New Policies

In this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with changes in four policy areas:  (1) shared collections, (2) fines and fees, (3) change fund procedures, and (4) training and development authorization.  They also had the option of reporting that they were "not aware of any change".

Of the four areas, fines and fees garnered the most positive responses with 69% overall (81% full-time and 65% part-time) reporting that they were somewhat or very satisfied.  This item also had

the lowest proportion of "not aware" responses, with only 3% marking that option. (See Table 1.10.)

Table 1.10:  Satisfaction with Changes in Fines and Fees Policies,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=110) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dissatisfied | 5% | 12% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 14% | 17% |
| Satisfied | 81% | 65% |
| Not aware of any change | 0% | 5% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

The other three areas – shared collections, change fund procedures, and training and development authorization – had similar patterns for the sample as a whole, with 28% reporting some level of dissatisfaction for each item and a range of 16%-34% indicating some level of satisfaction (see Attachment A).  This pattern masks the differences in awareness and neutrality between the part-time and full-time respondents.  More than half of the part-time respondents answered that they were either neutral to or unaware of any changes to policies about shared collections (39% neutral, 12% not aware), change fund procedures (26% neutral, 46% not aware), and training and development authorization (19% neutral, 38% not aware).

As shown in Table 1.11, the responses from the full-time respondents showed a split on the topic of shared collections, with 44% reporting some level of dissatisfaction and 41% marking either "somewhat" or "very" satisfied.  Several comments in the open-ended responses addressed issues with floating collections.  (See Section 2 for the discussion of comments about floating collections.)

Table 1.11:  Satisfaction with Changes in Policies about
Shared Collections, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=110) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dissatisfied | 44% | 19% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 14% | 39% |
| Satisfied | 41% | 30% |
| Not aware of any change | 0% | 12% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Over 70% of the part-time staff were either neutral about or not aware of any change in change fund procedures.  Among full-time staff, there was more dissatisfaction than satisfaction.  As shown in Table 1.12, 54% were dissatisfied compared to 14% satisfied.

Table 1.12:  Satisfaction with Changes to Change Fund Procedures,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=105) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 54% | 10% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 24% | 26% |
| Satisfied | 14% | 18% |
| Not aware of any change | 8% | 46% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.13 shows that the changes to the training and development authorizations were also viewed more negatively than positively by full-time respondents:  48% were dissatisfied and 8% were satisfied.  The remaining 44% were split evenly between neutral (22%) and not aware (22%).

Table 1.13:  Satisfaction with Changes to the Training and Development
Authorizations, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=108) |
|---|---|---|
| Dissatisfied | 48% | 17% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 22% | 19% |
| Satisfied | 8% | 27% |
| Not aware of any change | 22% | 38% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

The following statements summarize the responses to the questions about satisfaction with new policies:

- Satisfaction with shared collections is split among full-time staff, while more than 50% of part-time staff are either neutral or not aware of a change in policy.

- A high proportion of respondents, both part-time and full-time, are satisfied with the new fines and fees procedures.

- A high proportion of respondents are either neutral about or unaware of changes in change fund procedures and training and development authorizations.  Of the full-time staff that are aware of the changes, most are dissatisfied.

## Appropriateness of Responses to Economic Situation

The next section of the survey asked, "As you know, the current economic crisis meant the County changed some of its practices.  Given the County's financial situation, how appropriate or inappropriate do you think the following actions are?"  Two respondents wrote on the surveys that they found the prompt for this question biased because it uses the word "crisis".  The following results should be interpreted with that in mind.

The specific practices that were asked about are: (1) hiring contract workers, (2) absorbing non-library workers, (3) sharing staff across facilities, and (4) cutting library hours. The response options were: very inappropriate, somewhat inappropriate, somewhat appropriate, very appropriate, and don't know or no opinion. As in the previous section, the tables in this section collapse the "very" and "somewhat" responses.

As shown in Tables 1.14 and 1.15, full-time and part-time respondents shared disapproval of the practices of hiring contract workers and absorbing non-library workers. Over 75% of full-time respondents expressed that the two practices were inappropriate, and over 40% of part-time respondents were also negative. (For both items, more than 25% of the part-time respondents gave an answer of "don't know/no opinion".)

Table 1.14: Appropriateness of Hiring Contract Workers,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=108) |
|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 86% | 42% |
| Appropriate | 11% | 25% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 3% | 34% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.15: Appropriateness of Absorbing Non-Library Workers,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=62) | Part-time (n=108) |
|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 77% | 44% |
| Appropriate | 16% | 29% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 6% | 27% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Responses were more positive to the item about sharing staff across facilities – over 60% of both full- and part-time respondents indicated that it was appropriate. (See Table 1.16.)

Table 1.16: Appropriateness of Sharing Staff,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=62) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 37% | 12% |
| Appropriate | 61% | 79% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 2% | 9% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

As shown in Table 1.17, part-time respondents were more likely to be negative about cutting library hours than the full-time staff.

Table 1.17: Appropriateness of Cutting Library Hours,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=63) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 29% | 48% |
| Appropriate | 68% | 46% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 3% | 5% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

## Priorities for the Coming Year

The next section of the survey asked library staff to rate areas for their importance as potential priorities for the coming year.  The specific question asked, "Keeping in mind the limited amount of resources and funding available, how important is each of the following for the county to address in the coming year?" Response options were not important, somewhat important, very important, extremely important, or don't know/no opinion.

As shown in Table 1.18, responsiveness to local community needs and interests is clearly the strong favorite with 65% of the respondents reporting that it is "very" or "extremely" important. Floating collections, reassessment of how Community Service Workers are used, and cross-library training are roughly equal with 45-46% of the respondents giving them a "very" or "extremely" important rating.  Although receiving fewer ratings of high importance than the others, outreach and a system for sharing staff across facilities were also both rated as at least "very important" by more than a third of the respondents.  As noted earlier, there were several comments about floating collections.  Addressing it as a priority for the coming year, one person wrote, "I believe the Floating Collection changes will [be] good for the library and patrons and will improve back office workflow."

Table 1.18: Potential Priorities for the Coming Year
in Order of  "Importance" Ratings

| Priorities for the Coming Year | % "Very" or "Extremely" Important Responses |
|---|---|
| Responsiveness to local community needs and interests | 65% |
| Floating collections | 46% |
| Reassessment of how Community Service Workers are used | 45% |
| Cross-library training | 45% |
| Outreach | 39% |
| System for sharing staff across facilities | 35% |

Tables 1.19 – 1.24 show the results broken out by full-time and part-time respondents.  Part-time respondents were more likely to give "don't know/no opinion" responses than full-time.  Full-

time respondents were more likely to select the "not important" option than part-time respondents. Both groups were agreed on the importance of responsiveness to local community needs (table 1.19).

Table 1.19:  Importance of Responsiveness to Local Community Needs and Interests as a Priority, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 5% | 3% |
| Somewhat important | 34% | 20% |
| Very important | 45% | 41% |
| Extremely important | 17% | 25% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 0% | 12% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.20:  Importance of Floating Collections as a Priority, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 22% | 9% |
| Somewhat important | 22% | 30% |
| Very important | 29% | 30% |
| Extremely important | 23% | 12% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 5% | 19% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.21:  Importance of a Reassessment of how Community Service Workers Are Used as a Priority, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=107) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 16% | 6% |
| Somewhat important | 31% | 16% |
| Very important | 23% | 32% |
| Extremely important | 16% | 17% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 14% | 30% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.22:  Importance of Cross-Library Training as a Priority, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=62) | Part-time (n=110) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 27% | 4% |
| Somewhat important | 42% | 31% |
| Very important | 26% | 40% |
| Extremely important | 5% | 12% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 0% | 14% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.23:  Importance of Outreach as a Priority,
by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=65) | Part-time (n=108) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 23% | 8% |
| Somewhat important | 38% | 26% |
| Very important | 31% | 27% |
| Extremely important | 6% | 13% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 2% | 26% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.24:  Importance of a System for Sharing Staff across
Facilities as a Priority, by Full-Time and Part-Time Staff

|  | Full-time (n=64) | Part-time (n=111) |
|---|---|---|
| Not important | 27% | 8% |
| Somewhat important | 50% | 37% |
| Very important | 17% | 36% |
| Extremely important | 5% | 5% |
| Don't know/no opinion | 2% | 14% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

## Most and least satisfying aspects of job

The final two closed-ended questions asked respondents to identify what gives them the most satisfaction in their job and what they like least about their job.  Response options were provided, and there was a place for specifying other options if needed.

## What gives you the most satisfaction in your job?

"Assisting the public" and "good people to work with" were the most common responses for all three categories of workers. Related write-in comments included "connecting with my community", "developing services", "working together to provide great customer service no matter what your position", and "being able to help people who help me".  Not surprisingly, full-time workers were more likely to indicate "developing collections" and "programming" as sources of greatest satisfaction than part-time workers were.  (See Figure 1.1.)

Figure 1.1: What gives you the most satisfaction in your job?*
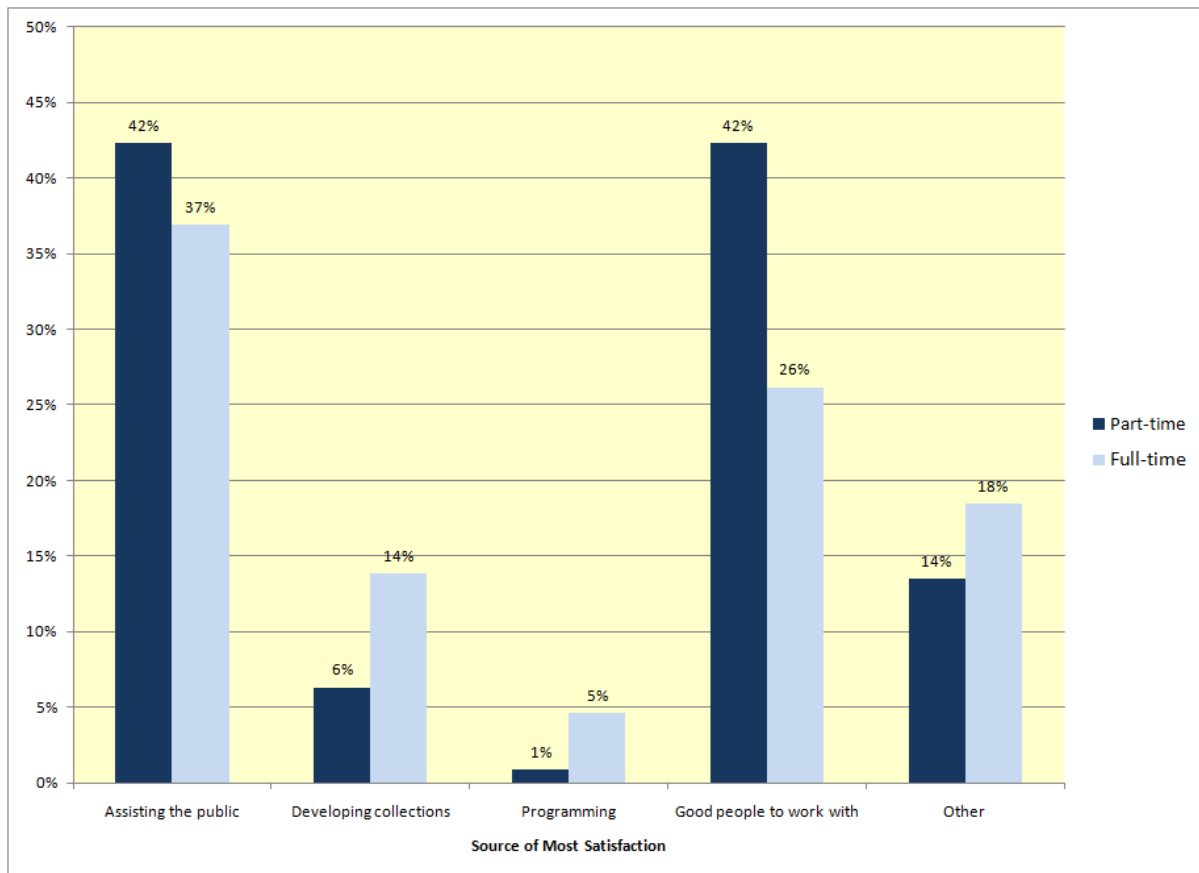


*The percentages add up to more than 100% because some respondents selected more than one of the choices.

Many of the write-in comments from both full-time and part-time workers focused on administrative issues, such as: competent management/accountability; contributing to common goals; effective workflow (systems, policies, and people); and working on system wide issues.

Some focused on the nature of the work, such as the consistency of the tasks, the satisfaction of completing tasks, the variety of tasks, and opportunities to learn new skills. For example, one person wrote, "completing all duties (public desk and collateral) in a timely and accurate manner and seeing the value added benefit to the library for having done so."

Others were concerned with the fit of the job with individual and family needs, with statements such as: "right now—having a job" and "good work schedule fits the needs of my family."

One was about the work environment: "being in a library setting".

## What do you like least about your job?

As Figure 1.2 shows, the pattern of responses to the question, "What do you like least about your job?", was very different for part-time workers than for full-time workers. While 44% of part-time workers reported that "low salary" was what they liked least, only 11% of full-time workers gave that answer. In contrast, compared to 6% of part-time workers, 36% of the full-time workers checked "problems with county administration" in response to the question. None of the other

options received more than 20% of either group's responses. However, there was also a big difference in the proportion of respondents writing in the "other" option: 2% of the full-time staff and 14% of the part-time staff gave "other" responses.

Figure 1.2: What do you like least about your job?*
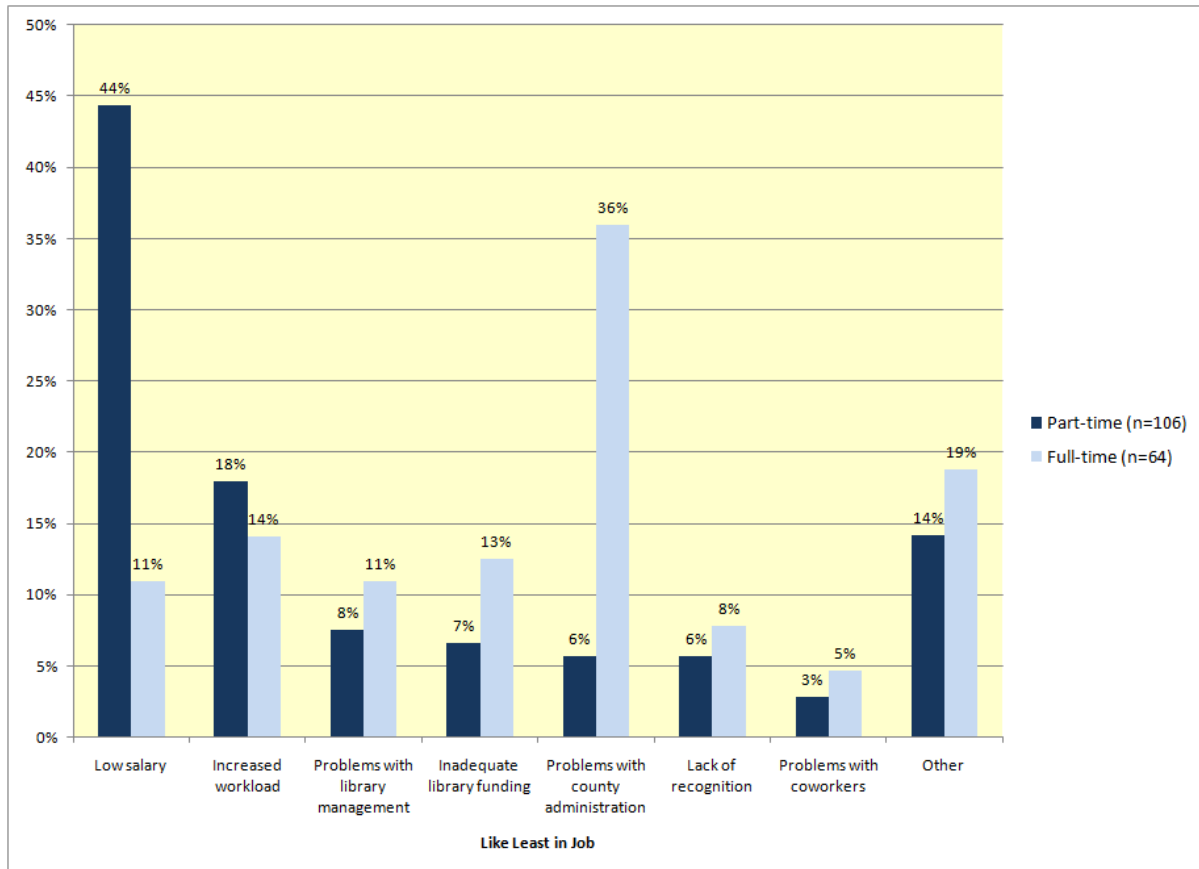


*The percentages add up to more than 100% because some respondents selected more than one of the choices. Response options receiving less than 2% from both full- and part-time respondents are not included.

Full-time workers wrote in "other comments" about (1) communication (such as, "poor communication, miscommunication, conflicting communication"); (2) support, or lack of it ("unable to give great customer services because of huge work volume and inadequate staffing"); and (3) administration, with comments like "lack of administration's understanding of how libraries work".

Part-time workers were most likely to write in comments about (1) benefits (e.g., "I feel that I am a strong contributor and am being frustrated by lack of salary and vacation, sick days, etc."), (2) pay/hours (e.g., "I would like to work more hours so I wouldn't have to work 2 and 3 jobs"); (3) administration (e.g., "people making decisions about library policies and procedures who aren't knowledgeable about the library system"); and (4) library environment (e.g., "in circulation, the work is never completed so there is no sense of accomplishment").

One person also wrote, in response to the question about what they like least, "none - i love my job :)".

# Section 2: Library Services & Infrastructure

*Everyone on staff needs to realize that service to patrons is our most important job.*

*I recommend that we focus on making sure primary library functions are being performed well with the resources we have available. By this I mean we should: (1) make sure transit service desks are staffed; (2) make sure transits are processed; (3) make sure holds are pulled; (4) maintain collection (purchase, weed, shelf read); and (5) offer appropriate programming.*

As noted in Section 1, the top response to the question, "what gives you the most satisfaction in your job?", was "assisting the public." While the theme of maintaining and improving the quality of patron services underlies many recommendations found in the other sections of this report, this section focuses on recommendations that specifically addressed patron services and the infrastructure that supports those services. Most of the recommendations are paraphrased from one or more than one respondent comment. When specific respondent statements are added to expand on the recommendation, they are indicated by quotation marks.

## Recommendations for Patron Services

Technology services were the focus of most of the recommendations for patron services. However other topics, such as serving diverse groups in the community, are also addressed. In addition, as seen immediately below, some respondents recommended against adding services.

### Limiting services

There were not many comments recommending limiting services. However, given salary cuts and reduced staff, one respondent felt that attention should be focused "more on core services and less on new initiatives for awhile so all library staff will have time to handle their main responsibilities." Another respondent expressed a sense that patrons do not appreciate the services they already receive, recommending "if anything, the library should start charging patrons for abuse of services."

### Improving technology services to patrons

This section focuses on recommendations associated with technology as part of patron services; a later section addresses recommendations for improving technical support to library staff. There were two closed-ended questions that relate to technology services for patrons. In response to the question about satisfaction with policies about technology use in the library, more than 60% of both full-time and part-time staff indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. When asked about satisfaction with the availability of up-to-date technology for patrons, part-time respondents were more likely to be satisfied than full-time respondents.

Reflecting the dissatisfaction among full-time staff, one respondent said, "I think we need to take into consideration that there are still people needing our help with technology and we need to offer it." Specific recommendations were:

- "Redistribute the librarians and specialists according to the circulation and computer use statistics…"
- Have a computer lab in all libraries.
- Loosen policies on helping patrons with computers; give computer aides more leeway in what they can assist with: "We often need to do more than log patrons on and get them to a website- sometimes due to the County's firewall, which makes their public computer experience different then at home."
- Provide free computer classes at all libraries:
  - For job searchers who do not know how to use a computer so that they can fill out an online application and write a resume on the computer.
  - For beginners, teaching basics such as email, browser manipulation, cleaning temporary internet files, etc.
- Keep hardware up-to-date: "Increased use of computers in last 2 years- equipment is wearing out!"
- Keep software up-to-date. Specific software programs mentioned were Flash, Adobe, and Office 2007: "This has often been a problem when we do not have the latest versions to allow certain websites to be used or we lack software that allows patrons to use documents created with "newer" programs such as Office 2007."
- Hire more people for the IS department to service the hardware and software.
- Add more public Internet computers to the busy libraries that often have waiting lists (taking computers from less busy libraries if necessary).

## Improving other services

Recommendations for improving other services were also made. Most of these addressed the DVD collections. Some respondents felt that there should be less emphasis on DVDs altogether because they take resources away from books and because they are hard to process and store. Others had specific recommendations for improving the DVD services.

### *Improvements for media collections*

- Limit DVD purchases:
  - Cut DVD purchases to make up for the loss of funding for books.
  - Stop buying "excessive copies of 'hot' items" and "every DVD for every season of TV shows that weren't any good to begin with" (especially given space/storage issues for DVDs).
- Improve selection of DVDs:
  - Put the movie rating stickers back on DVD cases.
  - Have copies of popular TV and movie DVDs that the public would like to see.

- Improve collection by buying quality movies and more education DVDs.

- Improve customer access to DVDs, CDs and electronic books

  - Change catalog to make it easier to order DVD TV series.

  - Divide things into categories, for example "movies divided by genre, as is common in video stores".

  - Include a section for rap in music.

  - Have a late night service using a machine where patrons could put in a dollar and pick the DVD they want to watch overnight.

  - Make downloadable electronic books available through the catalog, compatible both with iPod and with other MP3 players.

*Other improvements*

- Make bus schedules readily available for patrons.

- Have friendlier circulation staff.

- Make use of greeters (volunteers) at peak times (e.g. children's programming).

- Put a US mailbox in front of the Brandywine Hundred Library for customer convenience.

- Have a direct phone line for reference desk calls.

- Expand facility to include a children's room and story time room.

- Make old café area in the Newark Library into more study rooms.

- Increase funding to maintain accuracy in shelving books.

## Recommendations for Public Access and Engagement

When asked for their perceptions about patron satisfaction, more than 76% of the staff who responded indicated that they thought patrons were either satisfied (54%) or very satisfied (22%) with library services. Responsiveness to local community needs and interests was also given higher marks for importance as a priority for the coming year than any of the other options, with 43% of the respondents saying that it was "very important" and 22% marking it as "extremely important." In addition to the comment that simply said, "Be more responsive to community needs" (adding the example of offering patrons new technologies such as gaming), some specific suggestions for maintaining satisfaction and increasing public engagement were made in response to the open-ended questions.

### Serving diverse communities

Recommendations associated with specific groups within the community included:

- Provide flyers, brochures, webpages, and other documents in Spanish.

- Hire more bilingual (Spanish/English) staff.

- Offer English as a Second Language classes.

- Offer an international event every year representing different cultures in the community.

- Reach out to teens through gaming.

- Continue to encourage and fund additional programs for children.

- Work more closely with schools and homeschoolers to teach students to use the resources and electronic databases available through the public libraries.

- Establish relationships with English, history, and science teachers to cooperate each year on recurring assignments.

- Staff libraries according to "the neediness of the community being served.…Both reference and circ staff have to spend more time explaining policies and procedures to patrons who have never used libraries before or who speak little or no English…."

## Staying open for the public

The responses to the closed-ended question about the appropriateness of cutting hours were mixed, but more positive than negative, with 42% of the respondents saying it was either "somewhat" or "very" inappropriate and 53% saying it was either "somewhat" or "very" appropriate.  Of the many comments about the library hours, most were about the impact on the staff.  These are addressed in Section 3, which covers personnel issues.

However, some comments were about the effect of library hours and recent changes on the public.  Recommendations for this issue were:

- Maintain/expand hours for better public service and to keep popular programs:
  - "Our new hours…close us down another day and we lost [morning programs] which were very popular."
  - "Recognize that in a down economy, demand for services increases and that those demands often come from desperate citizens."

- Keep busy libraries open sufficient evenings to allow maximum use of meeting rooms and study rooms and to serve students and people who work during the day:
  - Libraries "could open 12-8 or 1-9 on one or more night a week (Thursday or Friday) to allow community groups, students, and working patrons to have maximum access to the facilities, resources, and programming in the evenings."
  - Keep at least one or two libraries open on Sundays and Thursday evenings.

- Keep hours consistent:
  - Across summer and winter:  "I have noticed a large outrage from patrons concerning the change of hours in Sept. and I feel this will be hard on students who depend on the library so much."

- "Please stop changing library hours – 4 changes to hours in as many years. There is no way we are going to make every patron satisfied."
- Choose hours based on need:
  - Stay open on Sundays only during school year.
  - Determine what hours the library is open based on what hours are busiest. Hire more staff for those hours. "Be prepared to reduce hours if usage is poor."
- "Continue with the reduced library hours – we are not through the financial problems yet, and the public had adjusted to Sunday closings. Even though some may still complain, in general, they understand the situation."

## Increasing public awareness of services

One person noted that it is important to remind the public of the importance of the library so as not to "go the way of Philadelphia's libraries!" Specific recommendations included:

- Develop more visible public outreach efforts: "We are here to serve the public but we're only tapping a small portion of our communities."
- Make it easier to volunteer at the library.
- Create a library advertising committee. "Professionals would use all media to advertise library programs, events, and keep library web pages up-dated."

## Increasing public input

Input from the public was identified as a way to improve library services by some respondents. Their suggestions were:

- "Designate a week for getting ideas from patrons as to what they want/expect from the library."
- "Conduct a patron survey."
- "Involve the public in changes in policy and procedure and then inform the public in a timely fashion about changes in policy and procedure."
- Provide "a direct method of communication whereby the customer could reach [the administration] directly…This might add a different perspective and fresh ideas from the residents, tax payers, our ultimate employers."

## Recommendations for Policies Related to Holds, Number of Items, & Patron Behavior

In addition to recommendations for how to serve the public better, respondents made suggestions about policies related to patron behavior. This section summarizes comments and recommendations related to library rules and guidelines for patrons.

## Limiting holds and charging a fee for expired holds

There were several comments about the time spent on requests for holds.  This statement describes the recommendation and concerns expressed by many:  "I think we should charge a fee for those holds that are not picked up. First we must run the report, gather the items, scan them, box them up to be sent to pickup location where they are unboxed, checked, patron is called and then the item is shelved. With the budget crisis, staff shortage and staff time involved to get the requested material to the patron, it is a shame NOT to charge a fee for holds not picked up.  If the item is NOT picked up, we must run the report, pull the item, check it in, box it up, and send it back to the owning library and then it must be shelved. I think that charging a fee would <u>greatly</u> reduce time wasted."  Recommendations associated with requests for holds were:

- Limit the number of holds that a patron can request.

- Use a system similar to NetFlix for holds where you can place as much on hold as you want but only have "x" amount available at one time.

- Charge a fee for expired holds:  "I feel that there should be stricter policies on patrons with requests and fines.  Some people request and never pick up their items, wasting workers' time."

## Limiting the number of items that can be checked out

Some respondents recommended limits on the number of items that can be checked out at one time.  Some of these focused on DVDs.  For example, one person recommended limiting patrons to 5 DVDs instead of 10.  Others did not give a specific number, but also recommended reducing the numbers of books and DVDs that can be checked out.

## Using fines and fees

A high proportion of respondents, both part-time (65%) and full-time (81%), are satisfied with the new fines and fees procedures.  This finding was reinforced by comments approving of recent changes, such as the following two examples:

- "Thank you for the changes that have been made in the past year.  Even though it requires more effort e.g. a few extra minute setting up new library cards and patrons having to be more responsible about their cards, it has resulted in a more effective and efficient system overall."

- "Blocking internet usage for people with fines was a great idea."

The recommendation to charge for reserved items that are not picked up has already been mentioned above.  Additional recommendations for fines and fees policies were:

- "Decrease non-resident fee. $35 way too much."

- Charge a $5.00 fee for all new library cards:  "This will bring in income and limit the number of cards in the family.  Patrons tend to get cards for every child in the family including infants and then have difficulty managing the accounts.  If they renew on one

card, they assume everything is renewed on all cards and then they are angry when they have fines."

- Charge for DVDs.
- Charge for first replacement card.
- Fine patrons $15 for losing DVDs from jackets or putting wrong DVDs in jackets.

## Creating and enforcing policies for patron behavior

In response to the question about satisfaction with policies about patron behavior, 69% of the full-time and 61% of the part-time staff reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. Dissatisfaction was higher among part-time staff (28%) than among full-time staff (20%). Some respondents also had recommendations for policies about patron behavior:

- "Post a dress code for the public – No underwear hanging out of your pants, and shirts and shoes required."
- Make sure patrons are aware of their responsibilities with library use: "Short classes of maybe ½ hour are needed for a lot of new patrons who don't have a clue as to how to use the library. If they learn, they do not have to be assisted every time they place a hold or look for a book."
- Enforce behavior policies better:
  - Especially for children and teens (noise and misplacing books and DVDs).
  - "When patrons become disruptive…they should IMMEDIATELY be ushered out and banned from the premises."
- Keep the library quieter:
  - Create more adult quiet zones and make sure they are not situated near loud children.
  - Establish quiet time in children's area.
  - Provide a separate room or space for children's programs so it does not disturb patrons.
- Block "my space" from internet use as it brings teens who loiter, and become disruptive.

In addition, Claymont library was identified as a library needing particular help in several areas: noise, loitering, management, space, and consistency in "following the rules and guidelines that have been put in place."

## Recommendations for Collections Management & Storage

Many respondents commented about the work behind the scenes that support patron services. In this section, recommendations for managing DVDs, floating collections, and storage are summarized.

## Managing DVDs

Several comments were made about the circulation and shelving of DVDs. One problem seems to be storage, as illustrated by this comment: "The amount of DVDs in the system can become a nightmare when trying to find holds for the request list or for patrons who are in the library. There is no room on the shelves for all of them and not enough staff to put them in any kind of order."

Specific recommendations included:

- Find a vendor that puts DVDs and CDs in more durable cases.

- Do not allow patrons to return DVDs and CDs in the bookdrop.

- Have a separate area for checking audio visual materials (DVDs and CDs) in and out.

- Redesign circulation area to accommodate DVD cases.

- Have DVDs with security tags so the DVDs don't have to be removed before they're shelved: "It takes SO much time that could be used better. Also we need to get those DVDs back in circulation quicker. Isn't circulation the priority?"

- "Do not waste time putting the DVD's in complete order- All A'; All B's; etc. would save a lot of shelving hours. The children's nonfiction could be done the same way, leaving more time to keep the non-fiction and Ref. sections correct."

## Floating collections

There were mixed reactions to the closed-ended question about satisfaction with changed policies about shared collections. More than half of the part-time respondents answered that they were either neutral to or unaware of any changes (39% neutral, 12% not aware). The full-time respondents were split on the topic, with 44% reporting some level of dissatisfaction and 41% being either "somewhat" or "very" satisfied. Reflecting this split, both positive and negative comments were made about floating collections. On the positive side, there were recommendations for floating collections: One person suggested using "floating to reduce transit" and another recommended "centralized ordering and floating collections being put on the fast-track." However, there were more comments raising concerns about than supporting floating collections. Specific concerns included:

- Physical space:
  - "Does everyone (anyone) have enough fluctuating physical space on their shelves?"
  - "I also feel it will increase transit and some libraries will end up with collections they have no room for."
- Responsibility:
  - "I feel that it is as if they belong to no particular library so no one will feel responsible for their care or keeping track of them anymore.

- "I don't think the DVD collections should float. Who takes responsibility for ownership when something is broken or missing?"

- Increased theft of DVDs and CDs.

- Appropriateness of starting with DVDs: "If the powers that be were paying attention to the presentation given last year on the floating collection, they might have noticed that the system does not float their AV collection, so why do we start with the DVD collection?...Why not just float books?"

- Appropriateness when other tasks are more pressing: "Floating collections should not be a priority when we cannot process requests and transits in a timely manner. Setting up collections for floating is a labor intensive process and some libraries do not have the staff or time to do it…what is the rush to have everything float? Slow down the pace so it can be done properly without so much stress on staff."

## Storing materials

In addition to the comments made about storing DVDs, general recommendations for more space were made, including "more space for library materials," "more shelving space," "storage space." One suggestion specifically addressed the need for more room at the circulation desk: "Circ desk needs room to work more efficiently; accessible place for returned items; space needed to display library materials."

# Recommendations for Equipment and Technical Support

This section outlines recommendations for the equipment and technical support provided to library staff (as opposed to technology services provided to patrons). In the closed-ended questions, the survey asked staff to indicate their satisfaction with their library's efforts to keep pace with technology. In response, 53% percent of the full-time staff said that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the efforts to keep pace with technology, compared to 16% of part-time staff. As described below, the recommendations for the technology used by library staff focused less on "efforts to keep pace" and more on maintenance.

## Providing appropriate technology and equipment

Some recommendations were for the basic tools of telephones, printers, and fax machines:

- Have a phone system installed that has a menu which lists hours of operation, circulation desk, reference desk and voice mail for staff.

- Update phone service to include voicemail, etc.

- Provide receipt printers that are reliable and fast: "We cannot check items in or out quickly with old receipt printers that keep breaking down…the new printers are actually slower than the old ones which slows us down even more."

- Get a fax machine and a scanner; remove non-functioning scanners.

- Update all staff computers and SAM computers more frequently.

## Providing technical support

Several comments about technical support recommended adding staff to the technical services unit so that computer problems can be solved more quickly.  For example, one person wrote: "Improve the turnaround time on fixing computer problems at individual branches. There is only one staff person who handles trouble tickets, so it can take a long time for a problem to be resolved, meaning that a computer may be out of service for awhile. This affects customer service."  Other comments recommended increasing the number of technical support staff.

Other recommendations for improving the use of information technologies were:

- "Allow IS Department to teach us do simple things like how to remove/replace receipt printers so we won't have to waste time (and decrease productivity and service) waiting for IS to install/move the printers."

- Do not require passwords to be changed every 3 months.

# Recommendations for Building Maintenance

Some respondents made suggestions for building cleanliness, safety, and physical comfort.  Of these, cleanliness was the major concern.

## Keeping buildings clean

Respondents raised concerns about the cleanliness of the libraries, particularly the effects of poor maintenance on staff health, patron health, and building appearance.  For example:

- "The libraries are noticeably dirtier and unattractive since the cleaning contracts have been cut; this affects both patrons and staff."

- "Re-negotiate the custodial contract to provide more thorough cleaning and a cleaner building for patrons and staff.  Because of the budget reductions, only very basic cleaning is being done now. This will have a negative effect on the appearance of the building over time."

- "…Especially in the wake of a possible epidemic such as swine flu, I would think cleaning a public building would be a priority."

## Keeping buildings safe and comfortable

Other recommendations related to keeping the buildings comfortable and safe, such as:

- Keep the building at an appropriate temperature:  "Little to no A/C in summer. Too much heat in winter."

- Maintain the buildings better – specific concerns mentioned were leaky roofs, falling ceiling tiles, exit/entry doors that do not work properly, and broken book shelves.

- Reduce the backlog of items that create hazards:  "We walk around boxes all day.  Walk around carts. Carry heavy cases for DVD security."

- Increase the size of circulation workstations [relates to comment about where DVDs are checked in and out].

## Maintaining security and safety

In response to the question about satisfaction with library safety procedures, respondents were more positive than neutral or negative, with 49% of the full-time and 65% of the part-time respondents reporting that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. At the same time, concerns about safety were expressed in response to the open-ended questions. One respondent wrote, "security is a strong issue for staff and library patrons. The library is a very dangerous place to work." Specific suggestions for improving security included:

- Have a security system so that library items are not taken.

- Activate the door alarm to prevent book theft.

- Add cameras and security guards.

- Station police officers at each library at all hours.

Other comments recommended developing a safety awareness program, training all personnel on safety procedures, and enforcing the safety policies. To add emphasis to the recommendation, one person wrote, "Library injuries are common!"

A specific practice was also addressed in a comment related to safety and security: "The end-of-day process of removing cash from the register and walking through the library with it is not a safe practice. Even though it is not much money, the patrons know this."

# Section 3: Library Personnel Issues – Staffing, Scheduling, & Others

*The library will be a better place to work when we can hire when we need to.*

*Please allow us the time to do our job. All the cuts in personnel hours place a tremendous strain on everyone. Shorter days and days closed will not result in fewer customers. It just means that same amount of customers but less time open to the public. The daily operation of the library is so much more than checking books in and out.*

This section presents recommendations that were made for personnel issues, including staffing, scheduling, work assignments, and others. As the two opening comments indicate, workload is an underlying theme for many of the topics covered.

## Recommendations and Comments about Staffing

Comments about staffing covered the adequacy of staff, staff needs, who should and should not be hired, and others. In many cases, the recommendations and comments linked staffing policies and decisions to both staff morale and public service. For example, one person wrote, "Allow adequate staff to be hired to provide the service the public expects and deserves."

## Addressing staff size issues

Not surprisingly, one of the most common recommendations about staffing was simply to increase the number.

### Effects of understaffing

Some comments reported effects of understaffing:

- *Delays in processing holds:* "Request lists are no longer pulled daily at some locations…We are further hindered in our job by all the patrons who call and want to know why they haven't received their request that has been in transit forever."

- *Delays in shelving:* "Have enough personnel to work on weekends. Because the shelving carts get backed up on Saturday and Mondays the personnel cannot get all carts shelved."

- *Difficulty getting to collateral duties:* "Not only are we perpetually behind on circulation desk duties, I am always behind on collateral duties as well."

- *Poor service:* "…We have reached a tipping point where we can no longer afford quality service to our patrons because of inadequate staffing."

### Managing with reduced staff

Some respondents made recommendations for how to manage with the reduced staff:

- *Put off labor-intensive changes:* "Until staffing can be improved, put off some of the more labor intensive changes planned like floating collections."

- *Focus on improving work station and flow processes:* "We also need to stop putting all of our resources and efforts into new library locations and to focus on improving what we already have. Work station changes and work flow changes could allow for significant improvements."

- *Increase part-time hours:*
  - "Offer more than 25 hours. Allow p/t people to take other people's hours if management approves to help people with scheduling issues."
  - "I think we are moving in the right direction by allowing PT staff to work their 25 hours again. This will greatly improve customer service, help reduce the workload, and improve morale of the staff."
  - "Increase already existing CSW's hours."

### *Hiring priorities*

To address personnel shortages, there were varied opinions about who should and who should not be hired. This section summarizes these comments and recommendations.

- *Hire part-time staff:* Hiring part-time staff was recommended as a fallback to full-time staff, as this quote suggests: "If you're not going to hire more full time staff, than give us some part time staff to get the job done."

- *Hire full-time staff:* "full-time county employees—not contract workers or part-timers."

- *Hire more qualified staff:*
  - "More quality staff – it is easier to go to battle when you have good soldiers and the tools you need to do your job properly."
  - "Having a choice on whom to hire, not be forced to take on an employee who should have been let go years ago."

- *Hire effective managers:* In addition to "effective", specific qualities wanted in managers included: "strong," "full-time," "challeng[ing] the reference librarians to be better employees," and "in charge of collection development."

- *Hire staff to fill specific needs:*
  - "A finance officer who oversees the money is spent in an efficient and effective manner;" "a finance director for library finances."
  - "A full-time children's librarian" to improve programming, advertising, displays, and volunteer recruitment.
  - "Volunteers for summer reading."
  - "More specialists."

## Considering contract workers and non-library workers

*I would like to see more in-house hiring- advancement opportunities for those already employed. Bringing someone in from outside the library to fill positions is unfair.*

As this quote indicates, strong feelings were expressed about the hiring of contract workers and the transfer of non-library workers into library positions. These feelings were also indicated by the largely negative responses to the closed-ended questions about the appropriateness of hiring contract workers and absorbing non-library workers: 58% said that hiring contract workers was either "somewhat" or "very" inappropriate; and 57% said that hiring non-library workers was either "somewhat" or "very" inappropriate. Both these items had high proportions of "don't know or no opinion" responses (23% for hiring contract workers, 20% for absorbing non-library workers), leaving less than 25% of the respondents giving the practices marks of either "somewhat appropriate" or "very appropriate."

### *Hiring contract workers*

The concerns expressed about hiring contract workers focused on fairness, recognition of the skills of trained librarians, the time spent training workers who may not have the commitment as a regular county employee, and the effect on the union bargaining unit. These are illustrated in the following comments.

- "I don't think it's fair to county employees to be superseded by contract or "temp" workers. Many of us have undertaken the cost and effort to study in our fields, only to be denied promotions, or not even be offered promotions, so that temps may take those positions. This practice devalues what we do, our levels of education, and our years of experience."

- "Hiring contract workers is an erosion of the union bargaining unit. My feelings might be different if they were temporary, but they seem to be here for the long term."

### *Absorbing non-library workers*

Like the comments about hiring contract workers, statements about absorbing non-library workers focus on unfairness – in terms of how the non-library workers are brought in without a competitive selection process and the differences in salary and expectations (not having to work nights and weekends) once they are there. Two comments illustrating these concerns follow:

- "I love what I do, as do many of my coworkers. But we are feeling both fried and hung out to dry. What really is most egregious is moving people out of government center and into libraries, but keeping them at their old salaries. So library staff has to train someone from scratch who makes more than they do. At the least – if they're a library employee, they should be paid as such."

- "If there is truly an open position available at the library- meaning that position is available to current library employees and to other non-library workers- and if the non-library workers want to apply for that position, are qualified, and selected…then it's okay. But when they are just transferred into a library, keep their old salary and old title, and

don't work the same schedule as other library workers, including nights and weekends…then it's not okay."

## Working with Summer Youth Workers

Concerns about the summer youth program were raised by three respondents. The primary issue was the added work for library staff. One person commented, "The summer youth program has been a continual effort, often with more work required to find something for the youth to do than to do it ourselves." One recommended "training and/or a different criteria for the summer youth workers." The use of funds for the purpose, "even if it is a grant," was questioned, especially if it took funds away from supporting circulation staff.

## Dealing with unproductive or disruptive staff

As illustrated by the following, some respondents felt that not everyone pulls their weight equally:

- "Less 'that's not my job' and more of everyone just doing. We need to stop passing the buck and work together."

- "When I come to the library I give 100%. I work another full time job and I do not want to carry someone's weight if this is their primary job."

- "There are co-workers who do not follow procedures or rules. Supervisors know and see this but nothing is done. It gets very discouraging after a while when you are doing your job and others are not time after time."

Recommendations included:

- Change in attitude: "Leave your problems and bad attitudes out of work;" "Co-workers need to realize their actions affect one another adversely or for the good."

- Hold employees equally accountable for the work they do.

- "Mak[e] sure everyone (staff) has a thorough understanding of what they are asked to do as well as how they are asked." For example, "Circulation needs to make sure that everyone does everything the same (such as consistently using filing items in correct alphabetical order…)."

- Enforce library policies with staff as well as patrons.

- "Get rid of underperforming employees…There needs to be coaching and counseling then progressive discipline for these employees…Right now, nothing happens. By tacit agreement, their bad behavior is condoned."

## Recommendations for Scheduling

> *Our circulation staff have a lot of great ideas on how to make our library better, but we are so busy with increased circulation and our hours being cut that we don't get a chance to implement our ideas.*

Many comments were made about scheduling issues, especially about the policy against working on closed days.  Other topics included off-desk time and flex-time scheduling issues.

## Working on closed days

The policy prohibiting working on closed days was the major issue in the comments on scheduling, with the associated recommendation being to allow staff to work on closed days.  A consistent thread through the comments is the negative effect not being able to work on closed days has on patron services. One comment summarized the arguments for working during closed hours:

> *Allow us into the building on the day we are closed- even if just for half a day.  There are essential tasks to keep up with such as book drop and transit.  There are tasks that are more efficiently performed in the library stacks when there are no patrons present…The ability to work uninterrupted on tasks that require concentration…is invaluable; workers are much more productive at those tasks on closed days. It also allows time for staff meetings that last long enough to cover all issues …and for transfer of knowledge between staff members who have attended training or professional meetings.  Finally, it is a much-needed respite from public service, which in turn improves the quality of public service on days we are open.*

Other comments reinforced the points made in that quote.  Specifically, respondents feel that working on closed days has the following benefits to library operations:

- *Solves the scheduling problem:* "Staff wouldn't be trying to 'flex', or never getting a weekend off, or never getting two days off in a row and on and on and on…). Staff could work a normal 5 day work week."

- *Enables staff "to tackle big projects…* [and] better serve the public."

- *Gives staff time "to perform off desk duties…*so we can concentrate on the public when they are here;" "to catch up [which] helps us provide better service."

  – Without that time, "DVDs can't be put on the shelves in a timely manner, holds are not pulled often enough, and transit boxes are over a week behind being opened."

  – "Already some of the libraries are 10 days or more behind in doing transits…."

- *Provides meeting time for staff:* "It would also give staff more time to bond by having time to work on special building-wide projects as a team, and time to have meaningful staff meetings which could last more than 35 minutes and could allow for brainstorming."

- *Reduces staff stress and improves staff morale:* "This will also improve morale and will keep people from having to sacrifice their family life to create a workable schedule."

- *Does not require many additional resources:* "Only the lights in the workroom need to be on and the heating and cooling of the building would not amount to much more than if we were totally closed as the doors would not be opening and closing all day to the public."

One comment made a specific recommendation:

- "…instead of closing for a whole day, they could change the starting time Monday thru Sunday to 11:00am. This would save 6 hours a week and allow the full time staff to come in at 9:00am and have 2 hours to get the library ready to open and complete their peripheral duties, and not have to flex their time."

## Working off-desk time and flex-time

While fewer comments were made about off-desk time and flex-time than about working on closed days, they had similar themes. About off-desk time, for example, one person wrote, "More off desk time--With over 20 hours a week on service desk, it makes it difficult to keep up with collateral duties. (Desk time = stress)." Another said, "We need off-desk time to select books, plan programs, and fill out the mountains of paper work required of us." These recommendations were associated with a sense that the administration did not respect the importance of these tasks. As one person wrote, "Administration needs to stop dismissing collateral duties as unimportant tasks that part timers or volunteers should do. The majority of collateral duties are critical tasks that need to be done if the library is to operate, and they contribute a large measure to both employee job happiness and satisfaction and customer service and patron satisfaction with library service."

The comments about flex-time did not focus as much on the ability to get other work done, but echoed the recommendations for working on closed days and off-desk time in the concerns about negative effects on public service and morale. However, some also mentioned its potential benefits. The follow comments provide recommendations about how flex-time is implemented.

- "Staff should not have to flex time or work every weekend. Requiring staff to fit all the hours in when the library is open means less family life; inequity of sick time and vacation time, less time to do your work and LOTS of STRESS. Happier staff means better service to the public."

- "No employee should have to work more than one Sunday a month."

- "The benefit of having a three-day weekend if one flexes should be available to everyone or to no one."

- "Staff would like more flexibility with their schedules…in order to work more efficiently and complete work on time. This would improve staff morale and customer service. This has been a big strain on staff, restricting the use of flex time."

- "Flex scheduling should accommodate many different scenarios- allow employees to work anytime between 8 AM and 9 PM. To fit in 35 hours in 4 days."

## Communicating and managing work schedules

Some part-time staff made recommendations about how work schedules are developed and communicated. One person recommended having standard work schedules because it could "cut down on special scheduling requests as employees will know their work hours in advance and can schedule accordingly." Another said, "I wish we knew our working schedule for the fall already. Some of us have other jobs etc that are also affected by this lack of knowledge."

Other scheduling comments and recommendations included:

- Make "sure that libraries have sufficient coverage on busy days (Sat, Sun, Mon)."

- "…many staff members will have to quit their part-time jobs due to library and staffing hours. Many people need their part-time jobs due to our 5% decrease in pay and many of us have spouses that have been laid off from their jobs."

- "Enforce library closing time so hourly employees are not expected to work past their scheduled time…OR schedule workers to a time past closing hour so workers are compensated for their time. OR stop circulation services before closing time."

- "Look for ways to decrease and eliminate unnecessary chores." For example, "do not insist that money from the cash register be counted at the end of the day when the bag is only into the safe to be counted again the next morning…We need staff checking people out, answering phones, checking items in, filing holds, and boxing transits. It wastes 15 minutes of time everyday for something that is redundant."

## Distributing work across types of workers

Recommendations were also offered about how work is distributed. Some of these had to do with equity issues and others with being able to cover specific duties.

- "Assign each page an area to work in- example A has adult fiction, B has children's and once they're section is done, they can help out where needed."

- "Share the work equally among part time and full time workers."

- "Staff part-timers over long weekends or days library is closed."

- Cross-train the "'big bucks' people" so that all services are covered even when one is out.

- "Rethink scheduling- do we need 4 reference librarians working at a time?"

- "Delegate duties and responsibilities more evenly across reference and circulation staff."

- "Give recognition to how hard circ works and how many duties get past on to us for the fraction of the pay of FT workers."

Teamwork was also a topic related the distribution of work. One person warned against teamwork for teamwork's sake: "Do not interpret teamwork as 6 people doing an activity that only requires 1, thereby keeping some from doing their assigned work." Other comments were stated more positively as in these examples:

- "Smile and help each other."
- "True teams value differences. Our differences make us stronger workplaces."

## Sharing staff across facilities

There were relatively few comments about sharing staff across facilities. The responses to the closed-ended question about the appropriateness of this as a response to economic problems in the county were largely positive, with 72% reporting that it was either somewhat or very appropriate. The comments that were made had more to do with how the information was communicated and the consideration given to the effect on the individual staff than with the action itself. For example, one person wrote, "Sharing staff is only appropriate if set up ahead of time and agreed to by the staff involved. It should also be for long-term. Libraries differ in many small ways and it takes time to adjust to each library. Constantly changing personnel is disruptive and leads to inconsistency. It also unfair to expect a person to suddenly have a much longer commute to work then they had been hired for."

# Recommendations for Recognition, Pay, and Professional Development

## Recognizing workload and performance

The theme of recognition is not limited to formal ways of recognizing performance; many of the comments address the fundamental issue of recognizing the context within which library staff are performing their duties. For example, one person wrote, "We need county personnel to <u>actually look</u> at our workload. When patrons complain about lines and no spaces left in parking- we are not processing as efficiently as we could (and did in the past)- if we had an adequate number of hands on duty."

There were several short comments asking for more recognition and support

- "Give new contract workers more recognition."
- "More support for employees. The customer is sometimes 'not right'."
- "Develop meaningful ways to recognize and reward people who are performing at higher output levels."
- "Recognition on a daily basis, not just once a year."
- "It would be nice to be appreciated for the work we do instead of criticized for not taking on more responsibility."
- "…When I first came here [several years ago] I knew what my role in this organization was and I felt valued. The work I did had meaning. Today I do not know what my role is, and I do not feel valued."
- "During time of financial difficulties and cutbacks imparting to staff that they are valued and respected."

- "Library staff members are overworked and often overwhelmed…we are still providing the highest quality of public service to our patrons in spite of materials and staff budget cuts.  It would be a gesture of appreciation to allow us to work in our home library on closed days."

## Increasing salaries

Compared to issues of scheduling and recognition, relatively few comments were made about salaries and professional development.  The comments about salaries included recommendations to "increase wages."  Another person wrote, "There are times when I feel as though I'm doing the job of 2 people for the salary of one.  I am willing to work more hours if offered."  One person made a specific recommendation:  "Part timers (the backbone of the library) should have the $9 and $10 caps removed from their salary, and receive at least ONE paid holiday per year and a paid vacation equal to the number of hours that are worked in a pay period after 3 years of service."

## Providing training and professional development

While there was a general call for more resources for professional development and the use of credits to track progress, most recommendations for professional development were more specific.  The most common recommendation was for more training for managers.

- Provide training for managers.  Specific topics mentioned were:  communication skills, sensitivity training, and supervisory skills.  Other comments related to training for managers were:
  - "Every manager should work circulation for a month."
  - "Improve management by providing training or courses in management…There has to be someone who can take charge and exert control over a diverse staff with courage and strength yet allow for the different personalities."
- Improve training for pages.
- Provide training that stresses that "a library position is a multi-tasking position. This would decrease workload on any one employee and increase job satisfaction."
- Train staff on customer service:  "Many are content to do library work, yet not help patrons."
- "Develop employee advancement programs…How does someone move from a part time to a full time position? From full time to PLA? From Librarian I to Librarian II?"

## Encouraging initiative

With comments suggesting that initiative is not encouraged, some respondents recommended creating an environment in which initiative is encouraged, and others called for people to show more initiative.
- "Encourage employees to be creative and bring their fresh ideas to work."

- "People are afraid to show initiative…. We need people to be encouraged to share their ideas."

- "Eliminate arbitrary rules that limit an individual's contributions."

- "All departments of government workers will have to do more with less.  We need to see the change as helping the county (stay) and keep out of debt.  A change of attitude needs to be fostered.  We must appreciate what we have, not dwell on what we had to give up."

## Recommendations for Other Personnel Practices

Additional recommendations for personnel practices related to dress code, hiring procedures, and employee orientation:

- "Would like to see some logo-wear for employees to purchase-i.e., polo or golf shirt w/ county logo or specific library logo…not mandatory but optional as kind of a uniform."

- "I would like to see the dress code adapted to fit changing needs of employees and to accommodate changing styles."

- "Have new employees be introduced to the existing workers so it's not so awkward."

- "Better hiring procedures, even with volunteers (background check)."

- "Allow flexibility as long as the job is getting done."

- "Outlaw gossip, say only good things about people, be accountable, and COMMUNICATE."

# Section 4:  Management & Administration

*[We] do not feel that the administration cares about our working conditions. Good people are being driven away. We understand the reality of the economic situation. What we don't understand is the lack of basic consideration of our needs.*

The response option of "Problems with county administration" was the most commonly selected choice for full-time staff in response to the question about what they like least about their job. Specific concerns and recommendations were found in the comments about management and administration.  Themes within the comments included communication, consultation, trust, and the process of managing change.

## Recommendations for Communication

The responses to the closed-ended question about satisfaction with "communication in your library" were split:  43% of full-time and 55% of part-time respondents were satisfied, and 46% of full-time and 35% of part-time respondents were dissatisfied.  While the closed-ended responses give a mixed picture, the open-ended comments indicated a desire for more communication, especially between management and staff.

### Communicating overall

There were many short comments about communication, most asking for "better communication," "more communication," communication that is "in detail and accurate."  Some of these comments referred specifically to communication with management.  Examples of the recommendations include:

- "Better communication across all management."
- "Communicating with entire staff."
- "Allow managers to keep the staff informed so that we aren't blindsided when the public comes in with the library changes we aren't aware of yet."

Other comments were more specific about who needs to be communicating and how communication should be facilitated, as illustrated by the following:

- "References and circulation need to have a better relationship instead of two areas not communicating with each other."
- "Mak[e] sure that workers are treated equally, especially with communication from administration."
- Allow time "for PT staff to access their email at least 1X per week.  This will help in assuring that everyone has access to current and important info and keep the lines of communication open."

Some comments were about communicating expectations:

- "Better communication between staff and defining boundaries, duties and authority to make decisions."
- "I support the trend towards developing SOPs to standardize practices throughout the system. It would be helpful to have expectations more clearly explained. It seems that often we are berated for not doing what was expected, when that wasn't conveyed to us in the first place."

Respondents also stated that communication should be timely. For example, one person wrote, "there should be timely announcements of changes before rumors take over." Timely communication about changes at an individual level was also called for. For example, one person wrote, "Managers and administrators should realize that workers are people, not just positions. If a staff member's assignment or posting is shifted to another library, talk it over with the worker, don't just tell them one day that he will be working at another library permanently, beginning the next day."

## Communicating via meetings and meeting minutes

Meetings are a traditional means of communication and information shared at meetings can be distributed broadly through the meeting minutes. Some comments addressed these two topics specifically.

### Number and timing of meetings

Some people felt there should be fewer staff and committee meetings, and others had specific recommendations about scheduling meetings. For example, respondents suggested having "regular opportunities to meet as a group" and scheduling "meetings from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM so that the work day ends at the end of a meeting." Meeting on closed days was mentioned in Section 3 and also relates to the issue of communication. According to one respondent, working on closed days "would also allow library staff to have constructive staff meetings. Currently there is hardly any time to have good staff meetings. As a result, staff members are unable to communicate effectively, voice concerns, and make sure policies are understood and implemented effectively."

### Sharing meeting minutes

Two perspectives on meeting minutes were given. One respondent had a positive view, writing, "Some communication within the library system has improved in the past year or so. Most groups that meet regularly are sending out minutes to all library employees, so that we are better informed about what is being discussed and decided." In contrast, another respondent said that minutes from meetings of Managers or System Meetings or from the Library Advisory Review Board meetings are not shared with library staff. This respondent also noted that results from a staffing study conducted by an outside company and performance measures workshops have not been shared. Both of these comments support a recommendation to share meeting minutes.

# Recommendations for Consultation

Many comments were made about the need for consultation with staff before decisions are made, including comments that indicated that there had been some progress made on that front recently, especially with regard to the fines and fees policies and floating collections:

- "The administration has listened to some suggestions which has been gratifying to all of us. For instance, the changes in policies about library fines and fees and new rules of obtaining library cards were welcome changes for all staff members."

- "Thank you for listening and taking steps to change things when needed. We are so happy with the fines and fees policies that put responsibility back on the patrons. Staff love it and the majority of our patrons who are good love it too! Also, floating collections will greatly reduce wear and tear on staff currently dealing with a lot of transit. Thank you for moving that forward. It is good to know our voices are heard!"

While these and other comments suggest that the administration has consulted with library staff on policy changes, many other comments expressed a sense that the administration needed to do more on this front. Some examples of these comments are:

- "Ask questions- don't make decisions without consultations."

- "I know that there are hard decisions to be made when money is a problem, but it seems as if the ones who make the decisions don't do a good enough job of gathering all the facts before they forge ahead with changes."

- "…much more serious consideration needs to be given to the input solicited from library staff."

There were also concerns about whether feedback provided by the staff is used in decision-making. For example, in the context of decisions about sharing staff across facilities, one respondent wrote, "The reality is there seems to be a lot of lip service paid to employee workplace satisfaction, but our concerns are dropped as soon as we are out of the room." Another person recommended, "Prompt and open communication from the NCC administration. This includes being responsive to input when it is solicited."

# Recommendations for Valuing the Experience of the Library Workers

Some respondents went beyond the themes of communication and consultation to address concerns about respect for the knowledge and experience of library managers and other staff. These concerns were expressed in two ways: (1) recommendations that decision-makers spend some time working in libraries so that they understand the impact of their policies, and (2) recommendations that the decision-makers respect the knowledge of experienced staff.

Two examples of the comments recommending that administrators and policy-makers spend time in the library follow:

- "The person or persons in charge of decision making need to spend at least a week working in the libraries so that they have a true perception of daily operations before they make drastic changes in procedures or expectations."
- "I feel that the administration does not understand the work that is needed to run the library effectively. I would like to see members of administration…work on public service desks in busy library branches so that they can better appreciate our dilemma and better understand the important services we provide."

Examples of the comments made about trusting the expertise of the library managers and staff include:

- "…our current Library Managers are educated, experienced, and dedicated. There is no need for involvement and micromanagement from Administration in the day-to-day operations of the libraries. Hire people you trust and respect, and then step back and let them do it."
- "Cutting library hours on its own may be necessary. Having the decision made by staff not associated with the library, who then force the library to agree with the change is poor leadership. The hours libraries are open keep changing because librarians who know what their patrons want are not truly involved in the decision.."
- "Quit micromanaging from far away. Give managers guidelines and let employees work with supervisors to improve service to public, and morale among staff and professionals."
- "…hire good people to do the job and allow them to do it without dictating how it is to be done – just maybe something new and fresh will take off."

## Recommendations for Specific Policies and the Policy-Making Process

This section includes suggestions about changes at the system level having to do with coordination and funding. In addition, recommendations about the policy-making process that go beyond communication are given below.

### Coordinating policies and resources

Two recommendations were made for policies about coordination and unity.

- "Create a unity between county libraries and the Delaware Division of Libraries. Work together on sharing resources, community partners, work on staff training and development, and work together on programming and events."
- "More unified reference policies."

### Saving money

Some staff made recommendations for saving money, generating new funds, or managing funds well:

- Improve funds allocation processes.
- "Create a library funding committee.  Professionals would specialize in obtaining funds and grants for all libraries."
- "Gain an overall handle on fiscal management of collection development."  (This relates to recommendations reported in Section 2 to hire financial mangers.)
- Close the Garfield Park lending library.  (One comment went on to recommend that a planning process for the library should be completed first and that the process should be carried out by library staff.)
- Find a sponsor to supply tote bags that the libraries could sell as book bags.
- Charge community groups for the use of community rooms.
- Manage money-generating activities effectively.  (The "Love Your Library" campaign was given as an example of one that was poorly managed).

## Managing change

Comments about the rate at which policies are being made and changed and the reasons for them are summarized here.  A theme in these comments is the recommendation to move more slowly in the policy process.  These suggestions are also related to the comments about consultation with staff.

- "Take a step back from any decision and look at the big picture not the immediate results."
- "Hold off on introducing new programs and initiatives and focus on core library operations. Staff are stressed, overwhelmed and it seems that new initiatives are constantly being introduced while our resources are shrinking…."
- "Make decisions based on service to the public not just budget concerns."
- Make decisions and the decision-making process transparent.
- "…EVERYTHING is changing policy, procedure, and practices wise, the current economic climate is unsettled, our work schedules are being twisted and turned, and employees are stressed. If you want to maintain the level of service we have now then we need to focus on employees because morale is already sinking and customer service is going to start slipping if we don't."

This last, longer comment is included because it combines the themes of serving the public, maintaining staff morale, and managing change, threads found throughout the responses of the library staff whether they were making recommendations for services, personnel, or management issues.

# Attachment A – Survey with Aggregate Data

## New Castle County Library Staff Survey – 2009

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your answers are important. Please provide your honest feedback – positive or negative. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following library policies and practices.? *(Please check the box that best describes your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for each policy or practice.)*

| Policies and Practices: | Very dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Policies regarding technology use in the library (n=179) | 2% | 11% | 24% | 36% | 27% |
| Your library's effort to keep pace with technology (n=180) | 11% | 19% | 14% | 32% | 24% |
| The availability of up-to-date technology for patrons in the library (n=181) | 7% | 18% | 20% | 33% | 22% |
| The quality of direct supervision that you receive (n=183) | 11% | 10% | 15% | 25% | 39% |
| The working conditions of your job (n=185) | 11% | 15% | 7% | 32% | 34% |
| Communication in the library (n=181) | 16% | 23% | 12% | 33% | 17% |
| Policies about patron behavior (n=183) | 8% | 16% | 13% | 46% | 16% |
| Library safety procedures (n=184) | 7% | 11% | 25% | 32% | 26% |

2) Compared to what you think it should be, how satisfied do you think library patrons are with the services the library provides? (n=178)

- ☐ Very dissatisfied – 5%
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied – 14%
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 6%
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied – 54%
- ☐ Very satisfied – 22%

1

3) This question is about policies that have been changed in the last year or so.  Please check the box that best describes how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the changes.   If you are not aware of any change in the area, please check the last column.

| Changes in policies about: | Very dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Very satisfied | Not aware of any change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared collections (n=182) | 13% | 15% | 30% | 20% | 14% | 8% |
| Fines and fees (n=183) | 2% | 8% | 18% | 30% | 39% | 3% |
| Change fund procedures (n=177) | 16% | 12% | 25% | 10% | 6% | 31% |
| Training and development authorization (n=180) | 13% | 15% | 21% | 12% | 8% | 31% |

4) As you know, the current economic crisis meant the County changed some of its practices.  Given the County's financial situation, how appropriate or inappropriate do you think the following actions are?

| | Very inappropriate | Somewhat inappropriate | Somewhat appropriate | Very appropriate | Don't know or No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hiring contract workers (n=183) | 38% | 20% | 16% | 3% | 23% |
| Absorbing non-library workers (n=179) | 32% | 25% | 16% | 7% | 20% |
| Sharing staff across facilities (n=181) | 8% | 13% | 48% | 24% | 7% |
| Cutting library hours (n=182) | 19% | 23% | 35% | 18% | 5% |

5) Keeping in mind the limited amount of resources and funding available, how important is each of the following for the county to address in the coming year?

| | Not important | Somewhat important | Very important | Extremely important | Don't know/ No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Floating collections (n=181) | 14% | 26% | 30% | 16% | 14% |
| Outreach (n=179) | 15% | 30% | 29% | 10% | 17% |
| Responsiveness to local community needs and interests  (n=181) | 4% | 25% | 43% | 22% | 7% |
| Cross-library training (n=178) | 12% | 34% | 34% | 11% | 9% |
| System for sharing staff across facilities (n=181) | 14% | 41% | 29% | 6% | 9% |
| Reassessment of how Community Service Workers are used (n=177) | 9% | 22% | 29% | 16% | 24% |

6) Please identify which category describes your position.  (Please check only one.) (n=181)

☐ Full-time (non-contract) – 34%

☐ Part-time (non-contract) – 62%

☐ Contract – 2%

7) What gives you the most satisfaction in your job?  Please check just one of the following or add your own item.

☐ Assisting the public (41%)

☐ Developing collections (9%)

☐ Programming (2%)

☐ Good people to work with (34%)

☐ Other: _____(14%)_____

3

8) What do you like least about your job?  Please <u>check just one</u> of the following <u>or add your own</u> item.

- ☐ Inadequate library funding (9%)
- ☐ Increased workload (16%)
- ☐ Low salary (30%)
- ☐ Too little support with technology (1%)
- ☐ Lack of recognition (4%)
- ☐ Problems with coworkers (3%)
- ☐ Problems with scheduling (1%)
- ☐ Poor quality or inadequate equipment (including computer hardware and software) (1%)
- ☐ Problems with library management (6%)
- ☐ Problems with county administration (13%)
- ☐ Other (15%)

9)  What recommendations (if any) do you have for improving library services in the coming year?

10) What suggestions do you have for improving the library as a place to work?

11) Please provide any other comments you have here:

*Thank you again!*

4

# Attachment B – Presentation of Data Broken out by Type of Worker

Figure B-1.  Satisfaction with policies regarding technology use
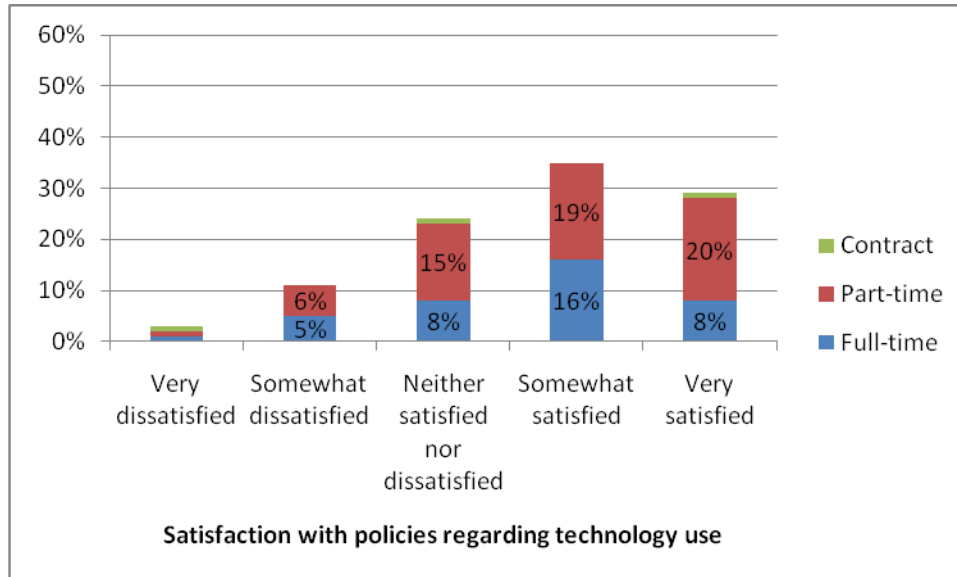


Figure B-2.  Satisfaction with library's effort to keep pace with technology
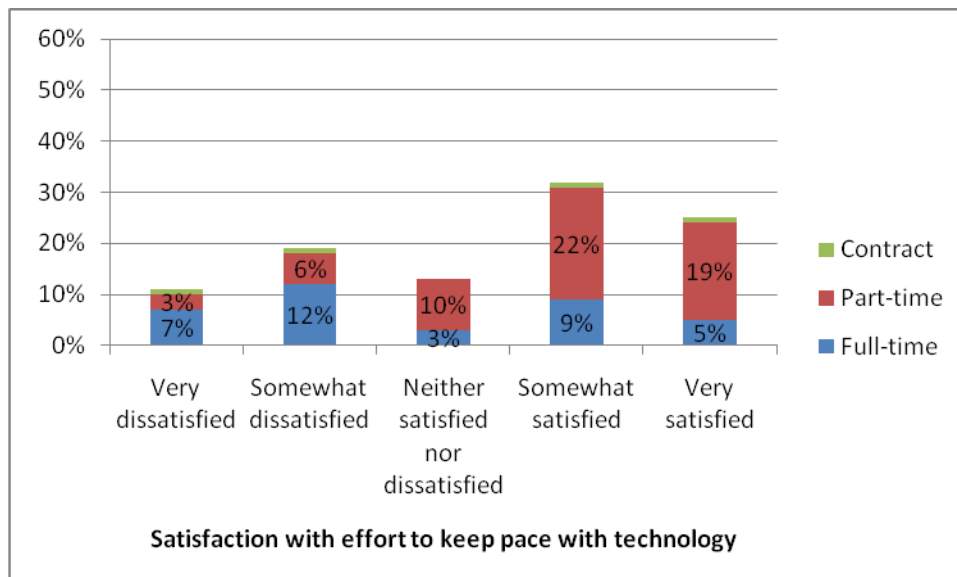
Figure B-3. Satisfaction with availability of up-to-date technology for patrons in library
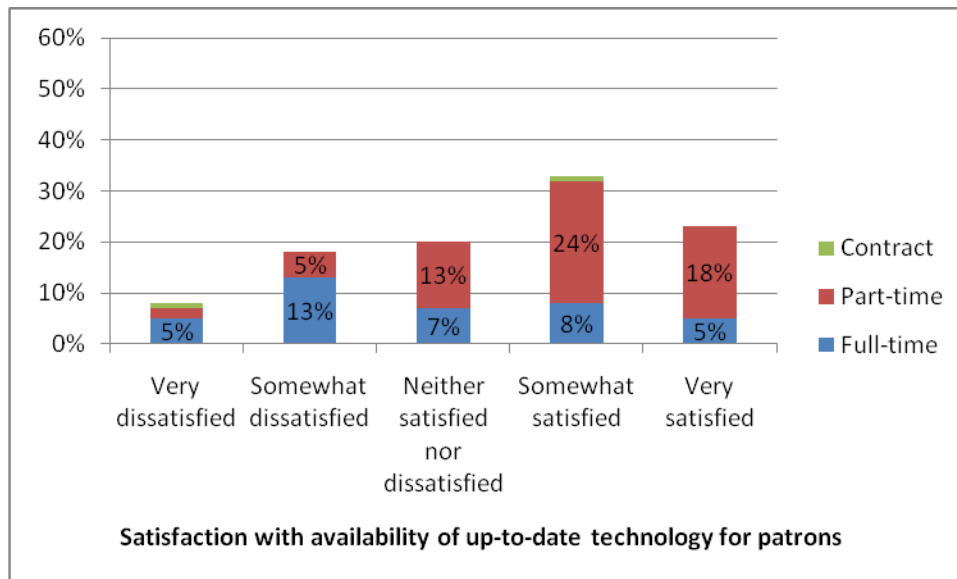


Figure B-4. Satisfaction with quality of direct supervision that you receive
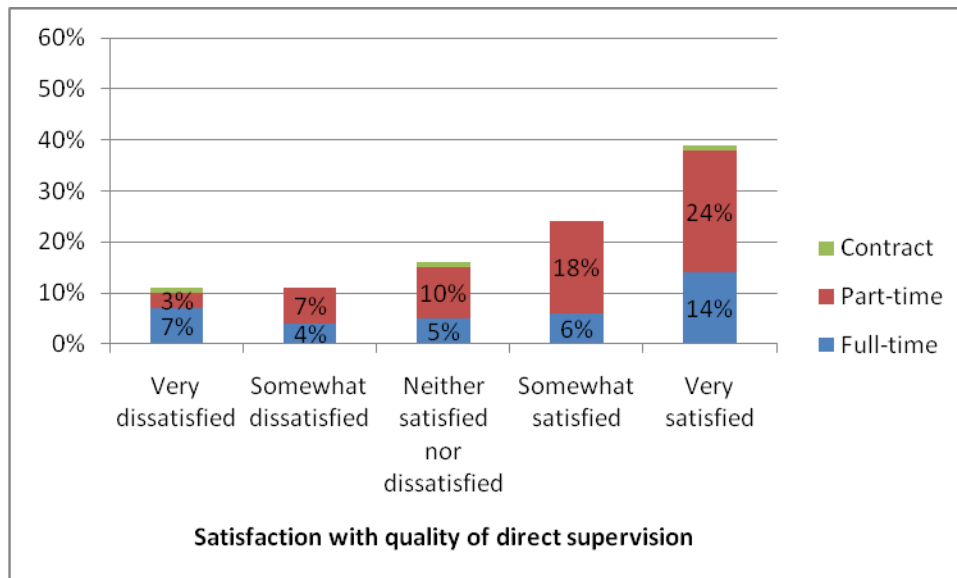
Figure B-5.  Satisfaction with working conditions of your job
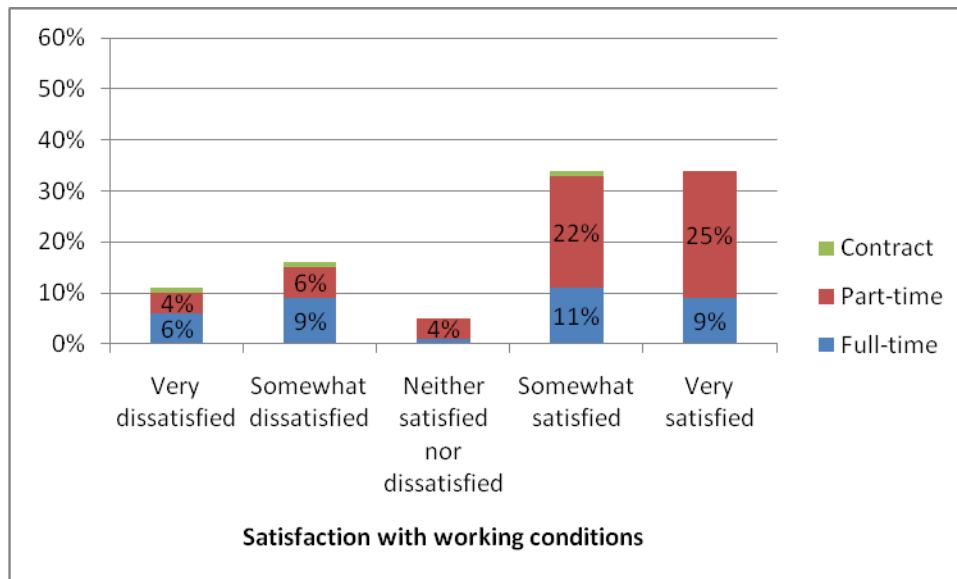


Figure B-6.  Satisfaction with communication in your library
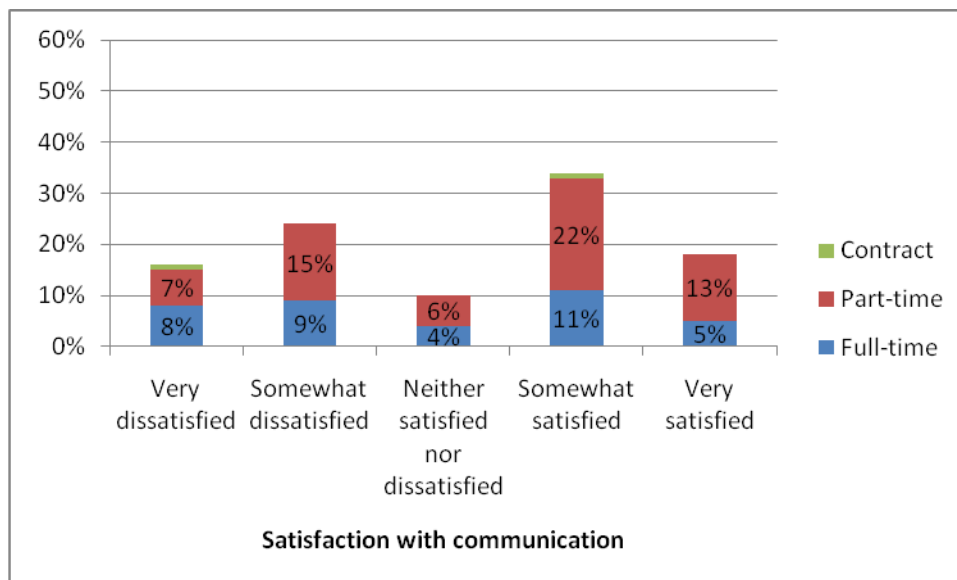
Figure B-7.  Satisfaction with policies about patron behavior
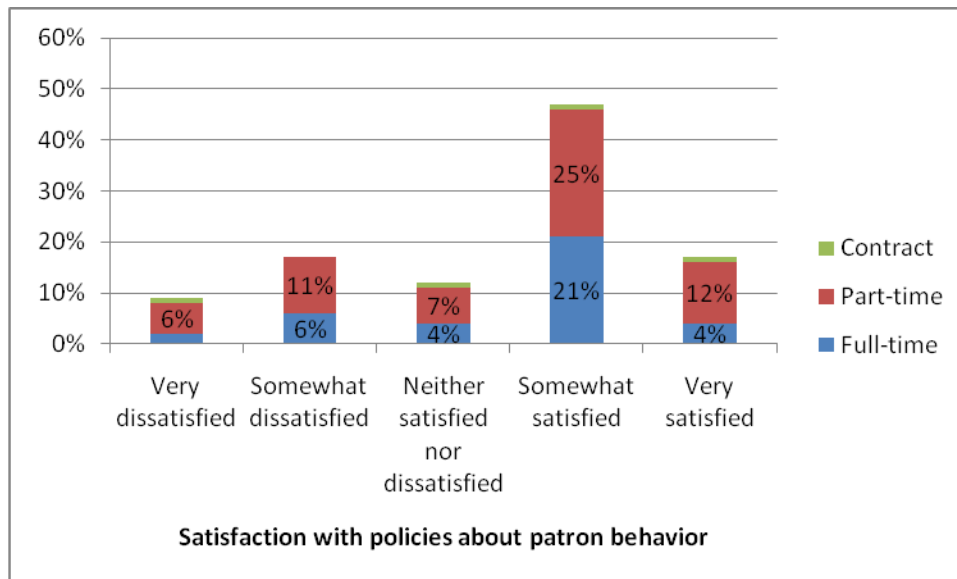


Figure B-8.  Satisfaction with library safety procedures
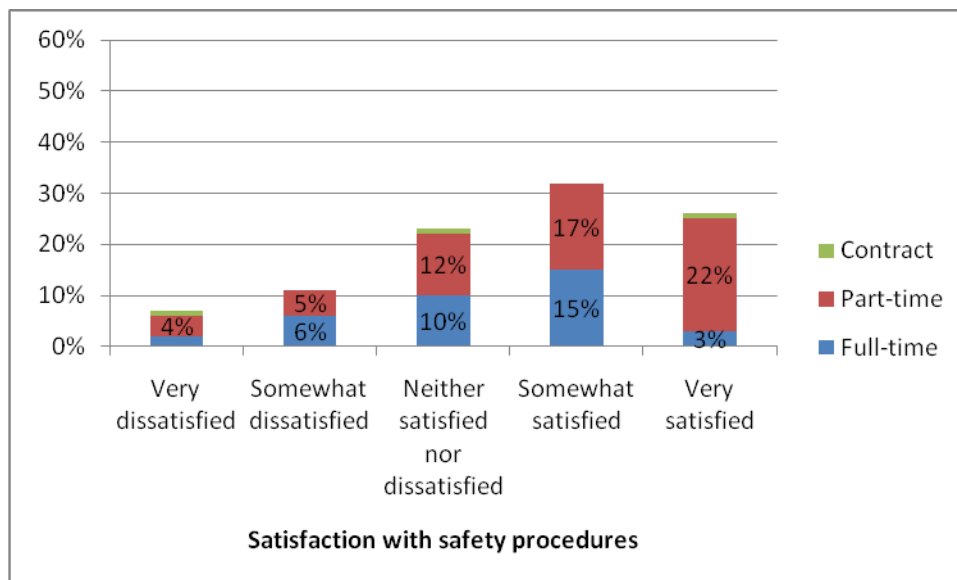
Figure B-9.  Perceptions of patron satisfaction with services the library provides
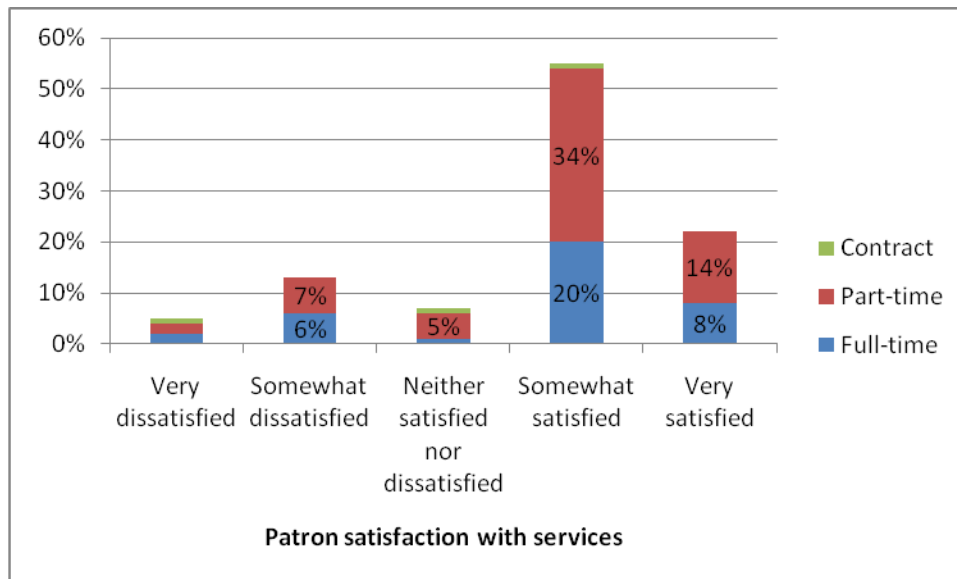


Figure B-10.  Satisfaction with changes in policies about shared collections
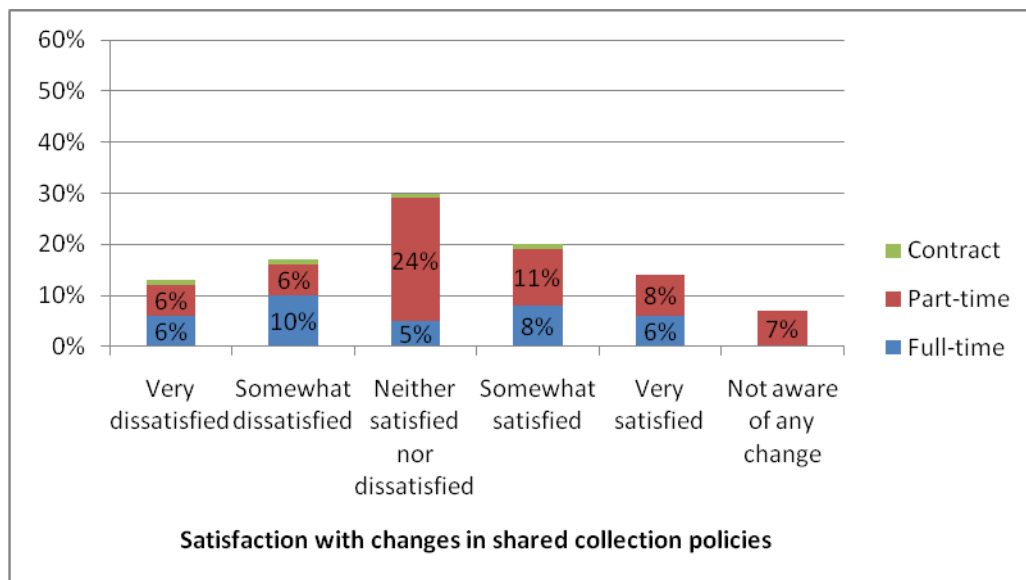
Figure B-11.  Satisfaction with changes in policy about fines and fees
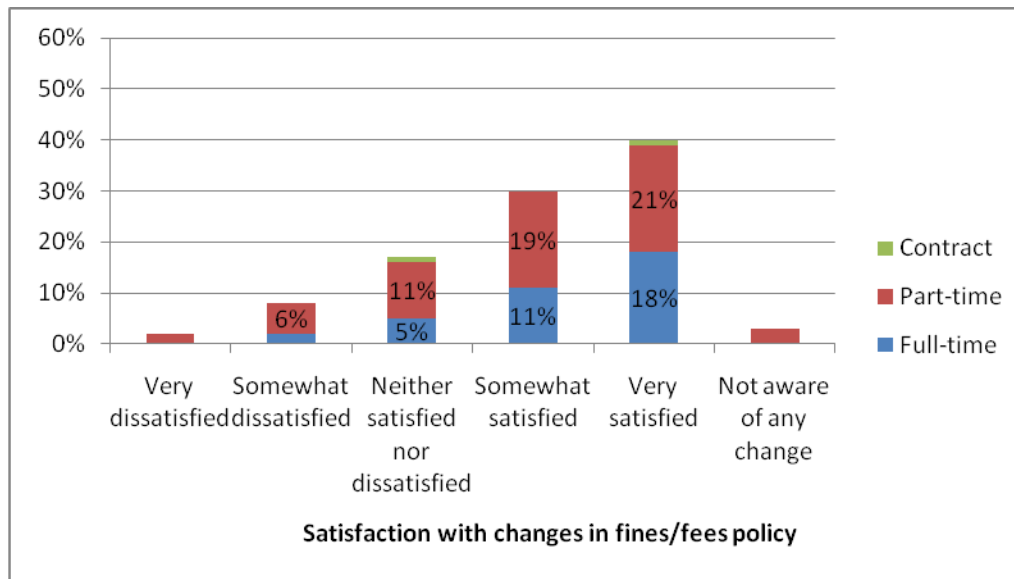


Figure B-12.  Satisfaction with changes in policy about change fund procedures
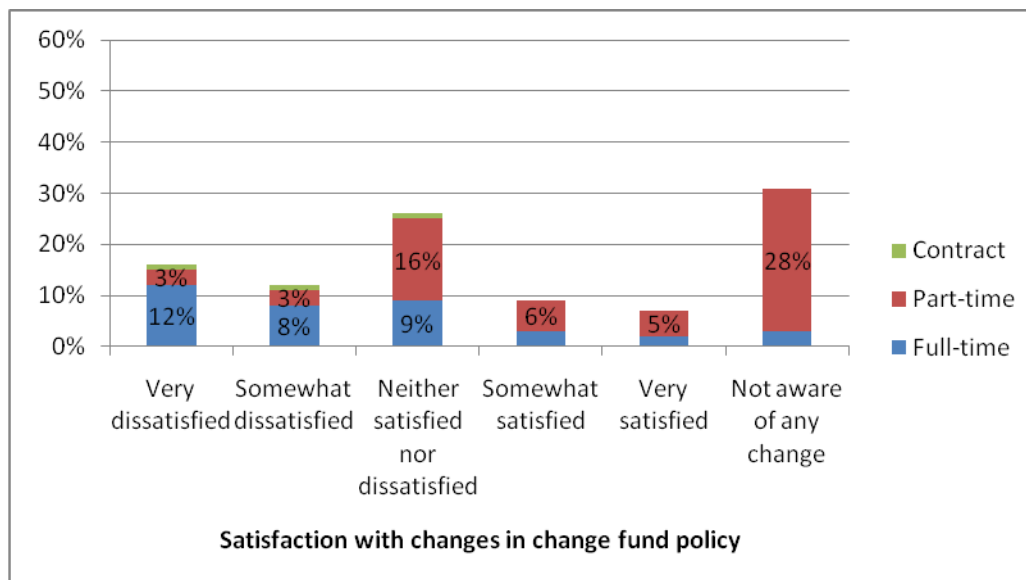
Figure B-13.  Satisfaction with changes in policy about training and development authorizations
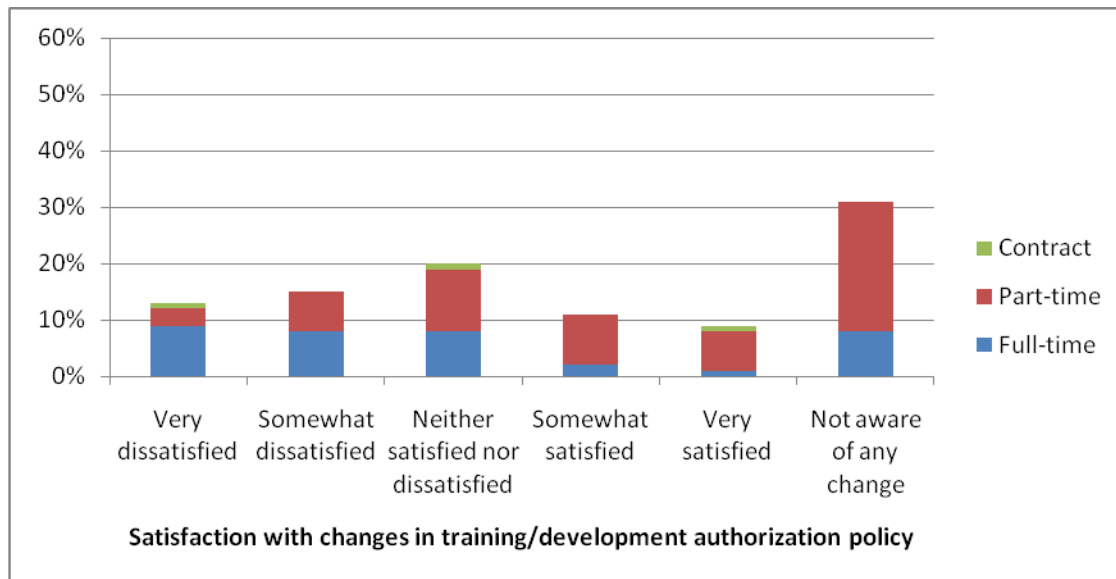


Figure B-14.  Appropriateness of hiring contract workers
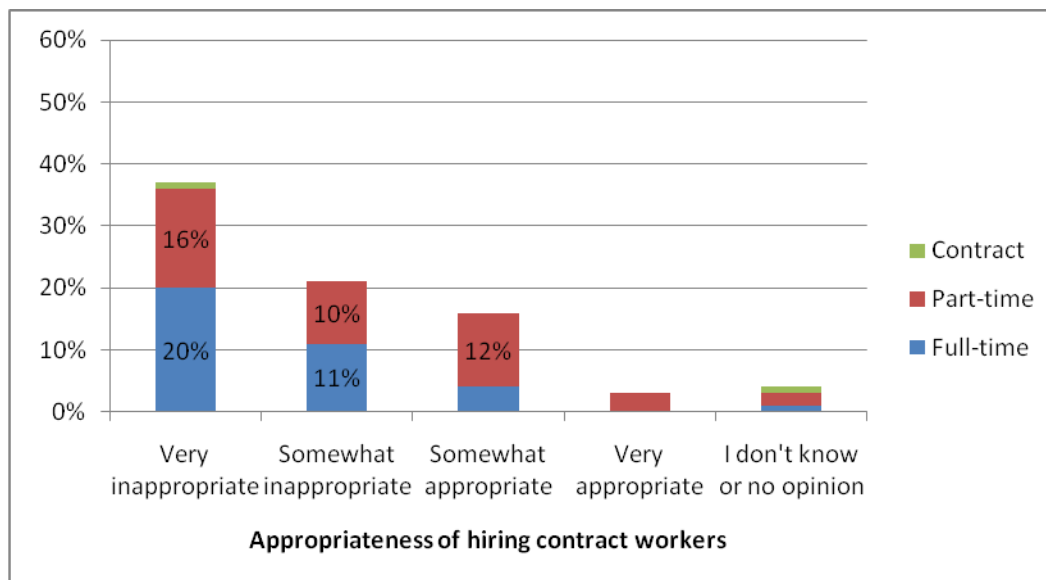
Figure B-15. Appropriateness of absorbing non library workers



Appropriateness of absorbing non-library workers
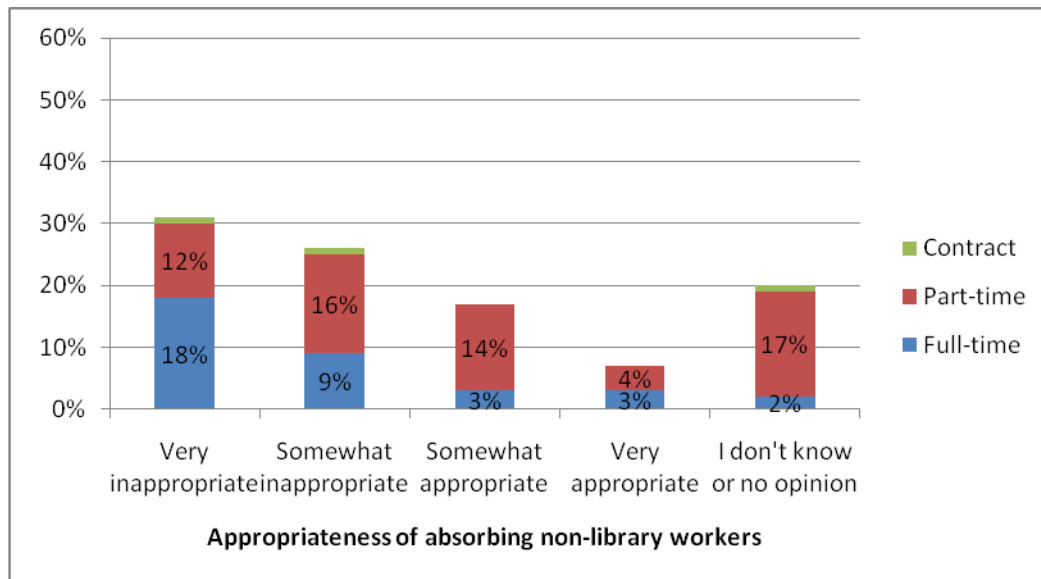
Figure B-16. Appropriateness of sharing staff across facilities



Appropriateness of sharing staff across facilities
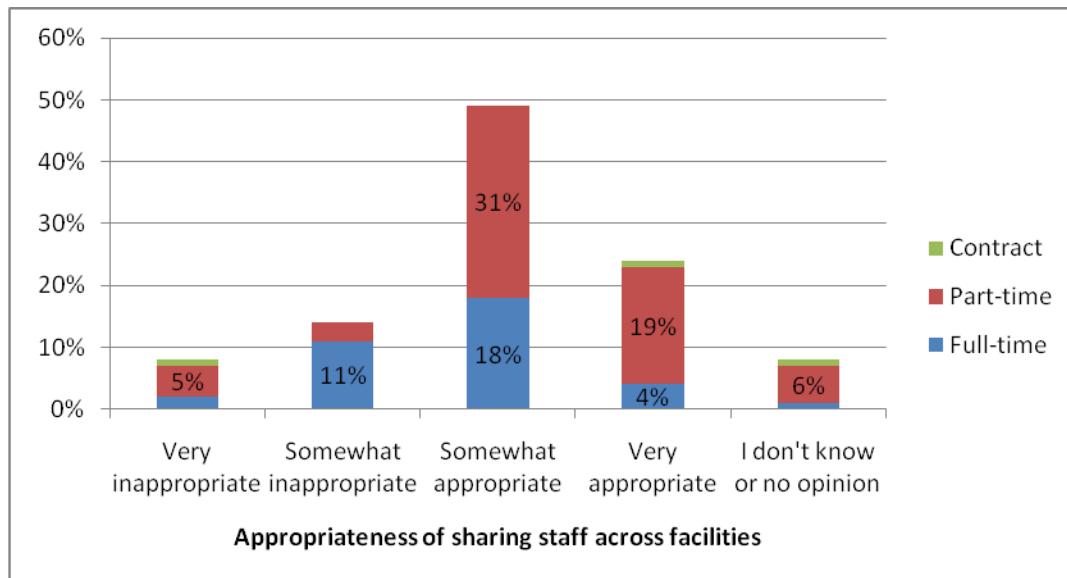
Figure B-17.  Appropriateness of cutting library hours
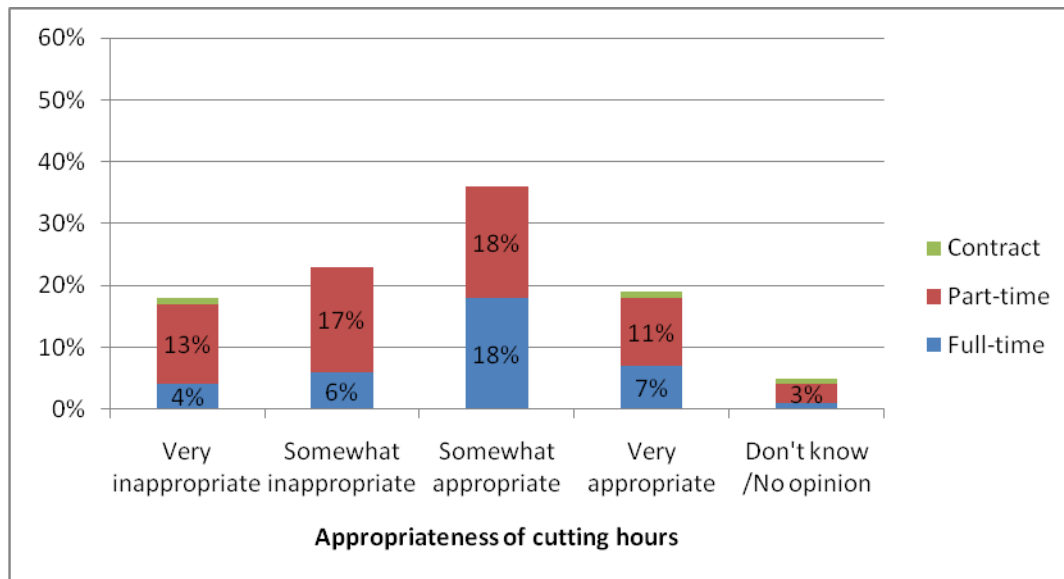


Figure B-18.  Importance of addressing floating collections in the coming year
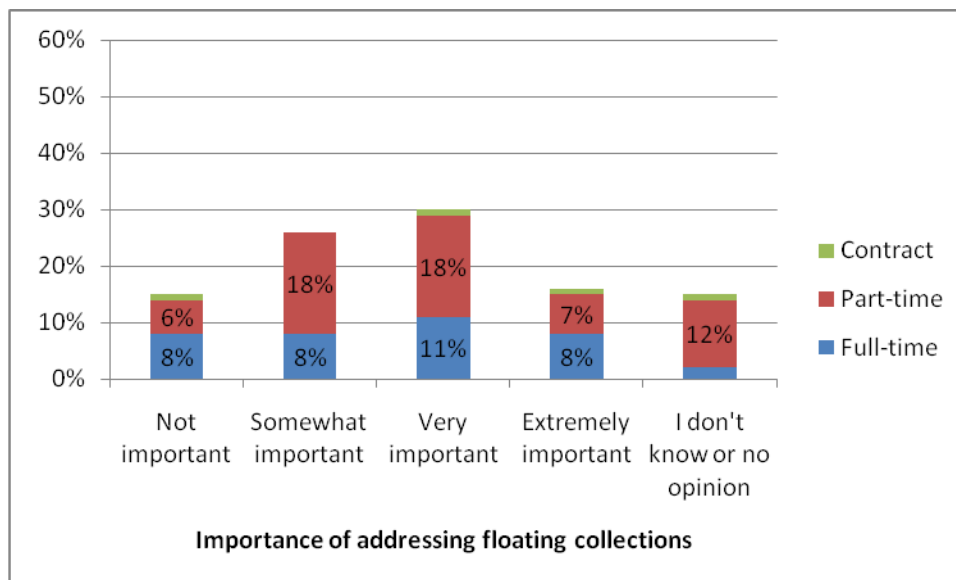
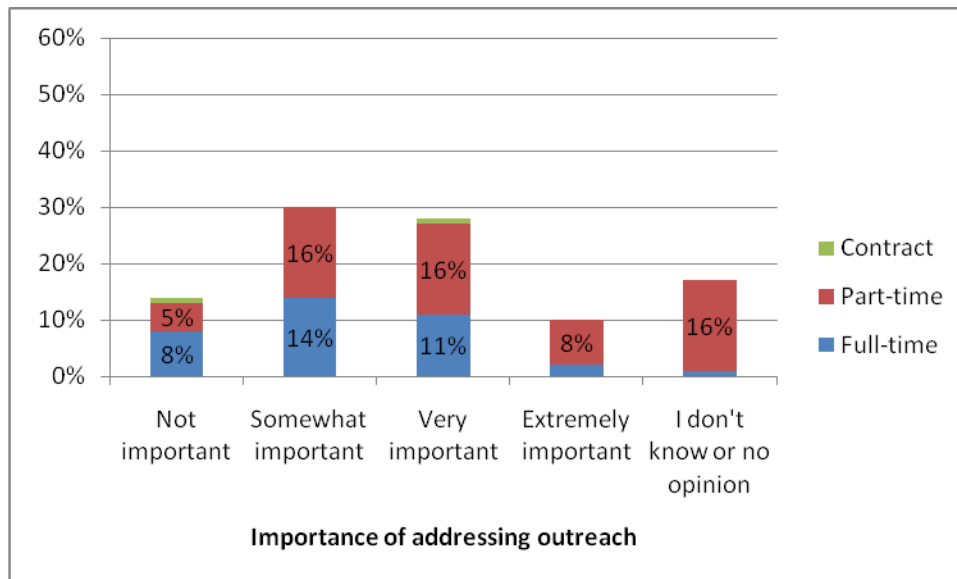Figure B-19. Importance of addressing outreach in the coming year



Figure B-20. Importance of responsiveness to local community needs and interest in the coming year.
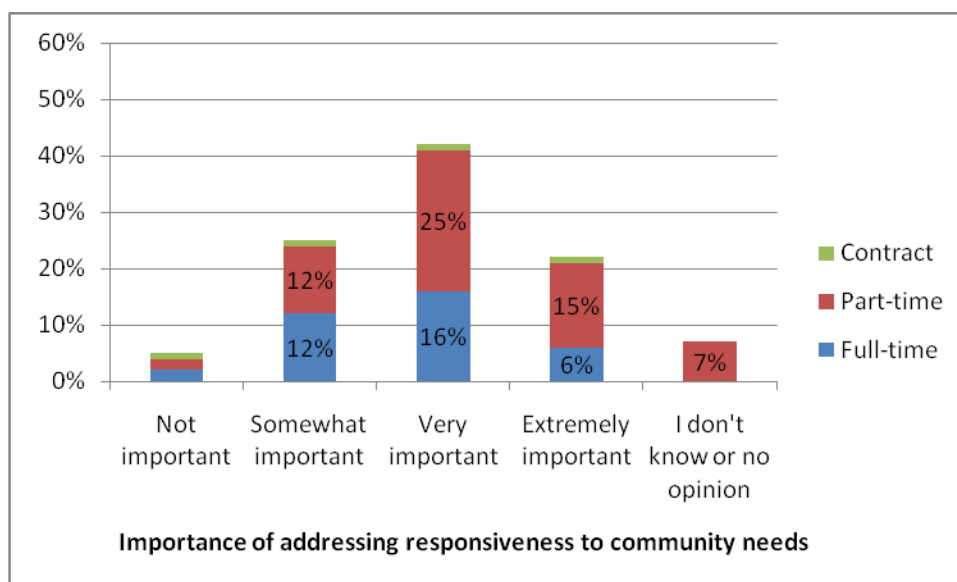
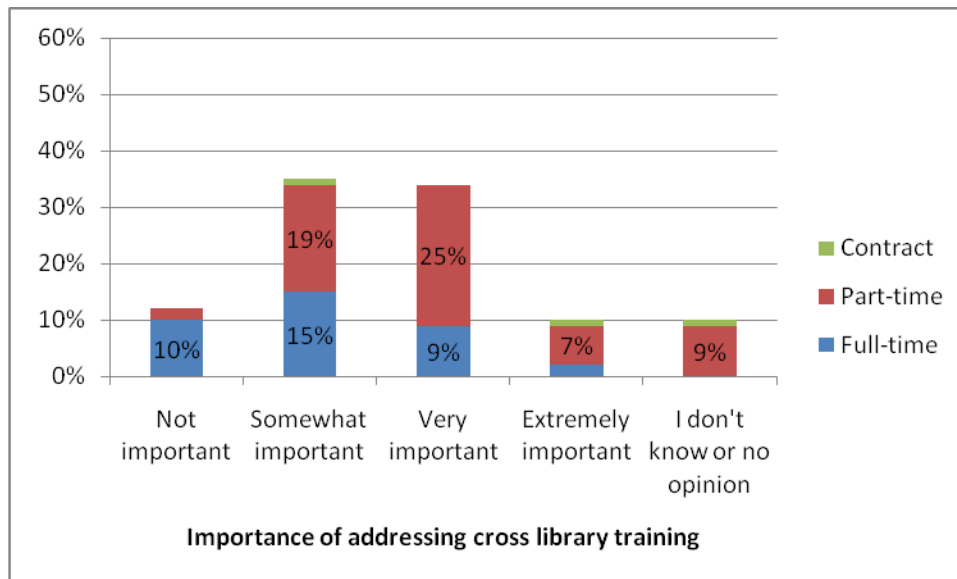Figure B-21.  Importance of cross library training in the coming year.



**Importance of addressing cross library training**

Figure B-22.  Importance of a system for sharing staff across facilities in the coming year



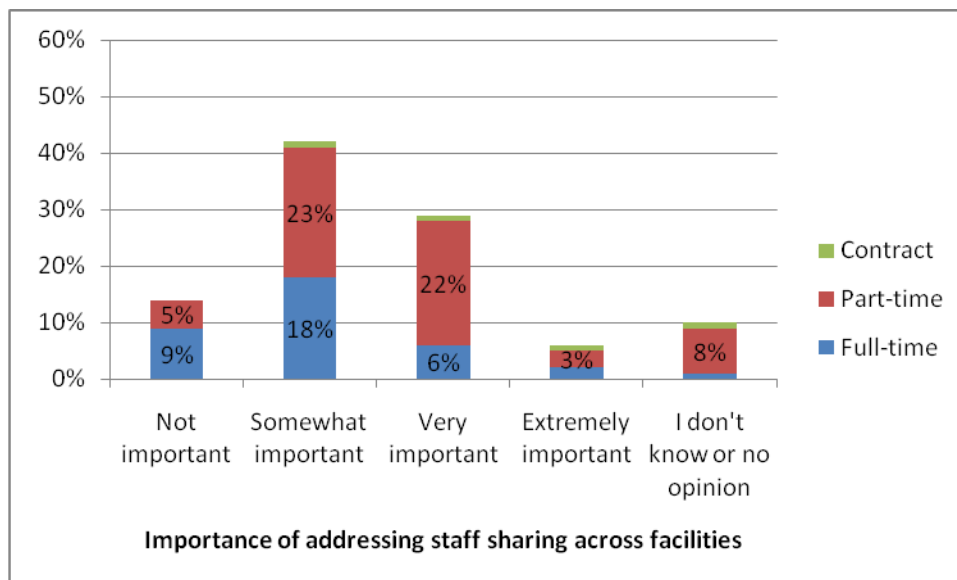**Importance of addressing staff sharing across facilities**

Figure B-23. Importance of a reassessment of how Community Service Workers are used in the coming year