

# Public Opinion Survey of Texans about **Texas Public Libraries**

Conducted by KRC Research  
for the Texas Library Association

FINAL REPORT January 2026

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## Objective and Method

To ensure Texas public libraries continue to effectively meet community needs, **Texas Library Association** conducted a statewide public opinion survey of Texas residents to understand perceptions of the need for and value of Texas public libraries, library utilization, trust in librarians, and attitudes toward information access and censorship. More specifically, the goal of this research was to:

- Assess **Texan's perceptions of libraries**, focusing on their importance, relevance, and value in communities, such as their role in education, access to information, and community building.
- **Measure trust in librarians** as credible experts, educators, and curators of information.
- Understand **attitudes toward censorship** in public libraries, specifically opinions on book and material availability.
- **Gauge support for libraries**, including the public's willingness to fund and endorse library initiatives, while identifying barriers to such support.
- Explore **future needs and expectations from libraries** to address evolving roles driven by societal and technological changes.

**KRC Research** deployed a comprehensive survey among 1,000 Texas adults, 18 years and older. The random sample survey was offered in both English and Spanish and was conducted both online and by phone (landline and cell phone), from Nov. 20 to Dec. 19, 2025. The sample was drawn from an online panel and from a phone sample, weighted to be demographically representative by Texas region, age, sex, race/ethnicity, household income, and educational attainment.





# Respondent Sample Profile

## Gender



50% Female



50% Male

## Parental Status



42% Parents



58% Non-parents

## Community



35% Urban

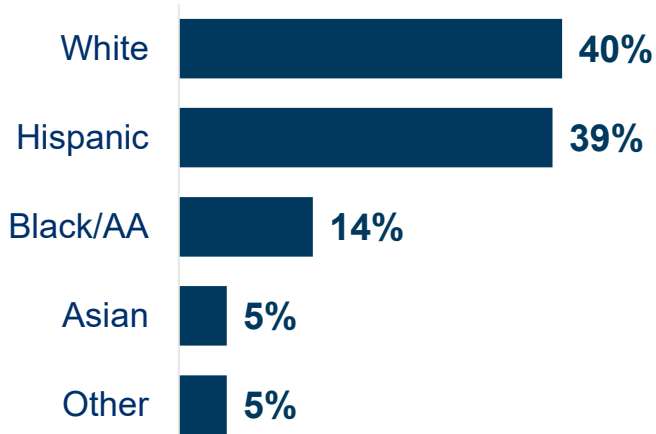


39% Suburban

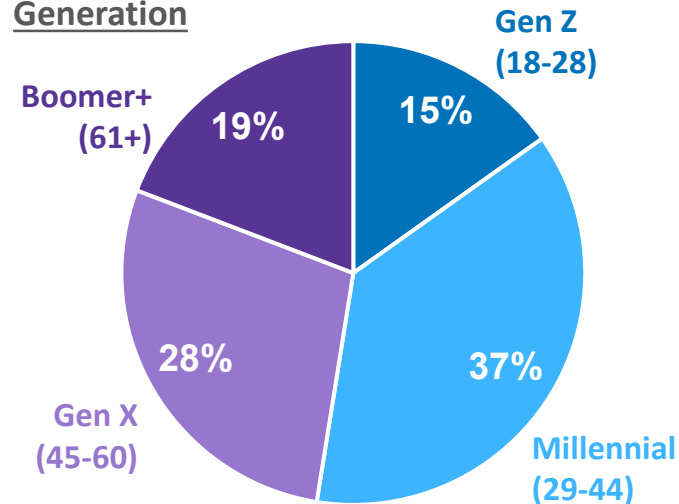


19% Rural

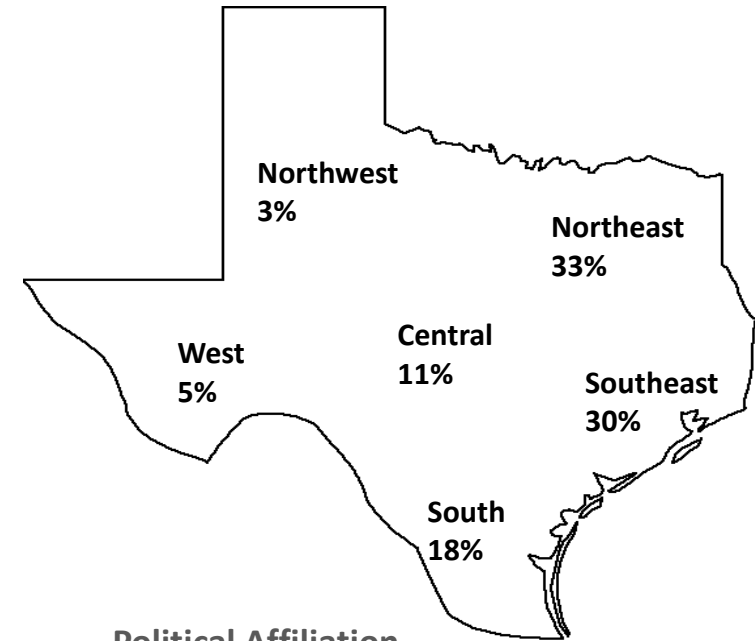
## Race and Ethnicity



## Generation



## Texas Regions



## Political Affiliation

- 31% Conservative
- 34% Moderate
- 21% Liberal
- 14% Unsure/No Response





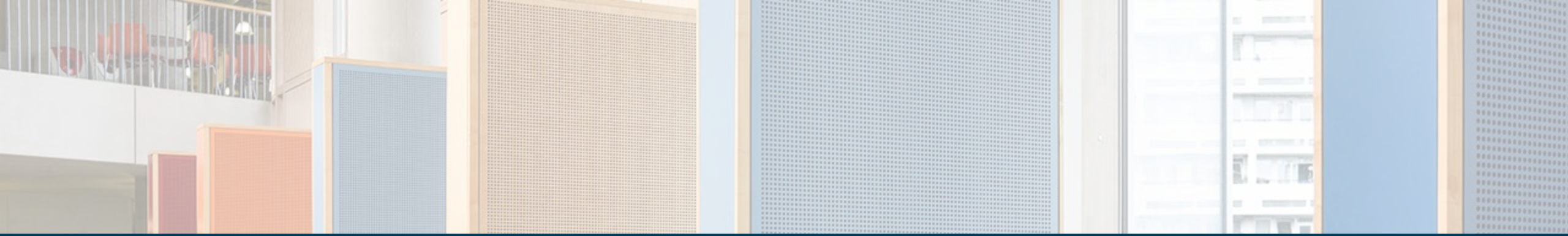
# Executive Summary



## 4 Key Takeaways

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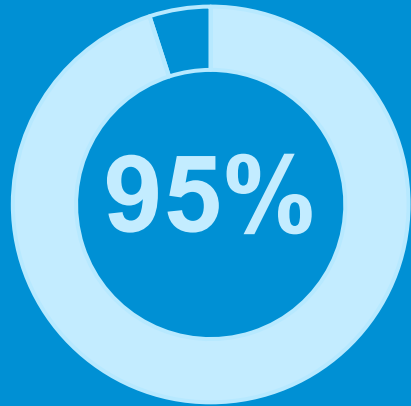
- 1. Texans overwhelmingly regard public libraries as valuable community assets that serve critical roles in education, access to information, and community connection.** Awareness and engagement among Texans is strong. Beyond book borrowing, many Texans depend on libraries for internet connectivity and computer access. Libraries are also used as spaces for recreation and leisure and as venues for community events, demonstrating their adaptability for community needs.
- 2. Public librarians are trusted as multifaceted professionals.** Texans demonstrate strong confidence in librarians and their ability to select resources that reflect the needs and interests of their communities. Texans perceive librarians as fulfilling multiple important roles within their communities.
- 3. Texans expect libraries to balance access with user and community needs.** Most Texans agree that libraries should provide access to a broad range of information and ideas in books and materials, even if some community members disapprove.
- 4. Most view public libraries as essential to the future—but underfunded.** Most Texans see Texas public libraries as an essential public service they expect to be as relevant or even more relevant in the future.



# Public Library Perceptions and Attitudes



# Summary: Public Libraries Highly Valued in Texas



95% of Texans say public libraries are *important* to both Texas and their own community—two-thirds (73%) say *very important*.

Importance of Public Libraries for your Community (% very + somewhat important)

98% library users vs. 82% of non-library users

95%

find that libraries are *very important* for providing free access to info, resources and services

95%

find that libraries are *very important* for promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and workforce readiness

93%

find that libraries are *very important* for bridging the digital divide

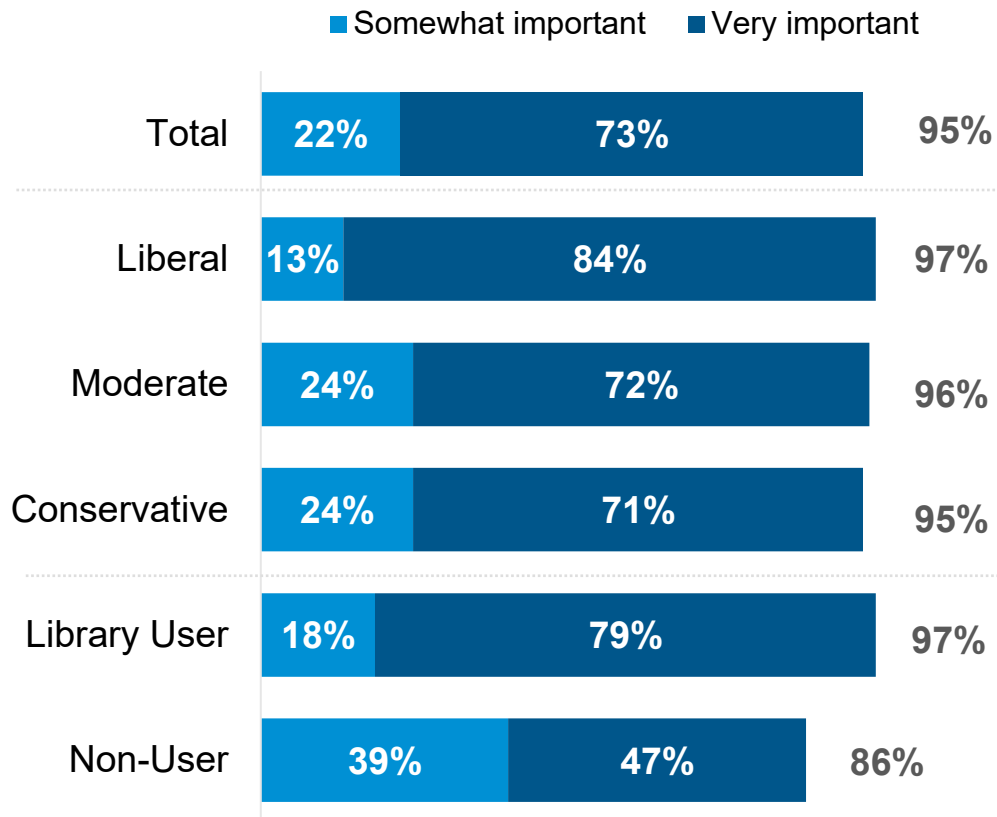
92% of Texans aware of a public library serving their community

80% of Texan households have used public library services in the past 3 years

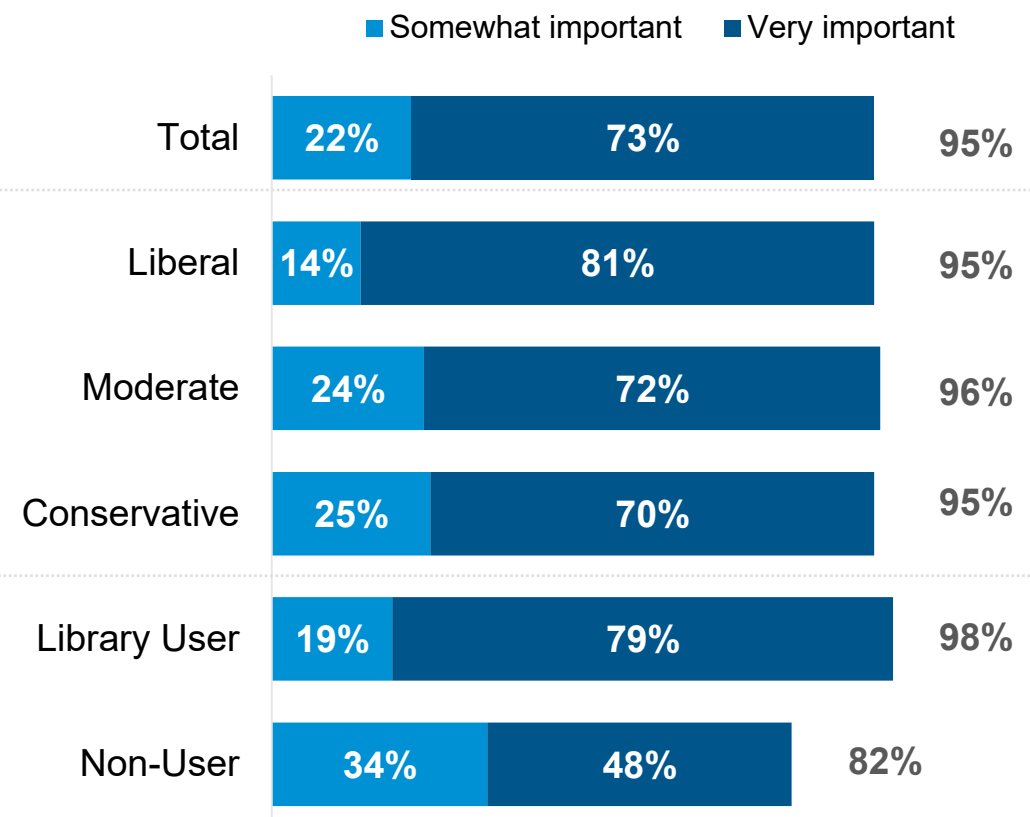
92% of users are satisfied

# 95% Texans find libraries *very important* both for Texas and their communities, regardless of their political affiliations or library usage.

## Importance of Public Libraries in Texas



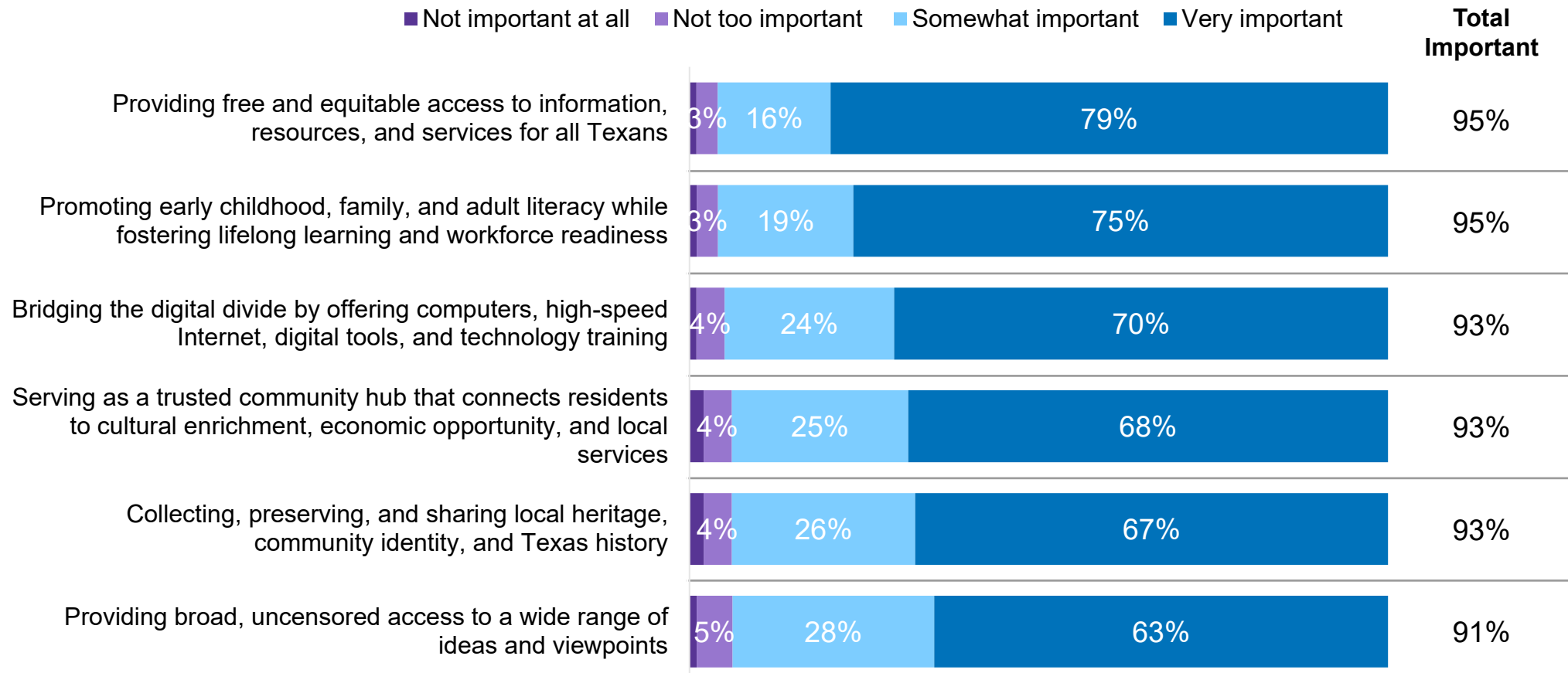
## Importance of Public Libraries in your Community



Q. How important are public libraries in Texas—very, somewhat, not very, not at all? (n=1000) Q. How important is the public library to your community? (n=1000)



# 9-in-10 believe public libraries are important for access to information, technology, literacy, community, and intellectual freedom.



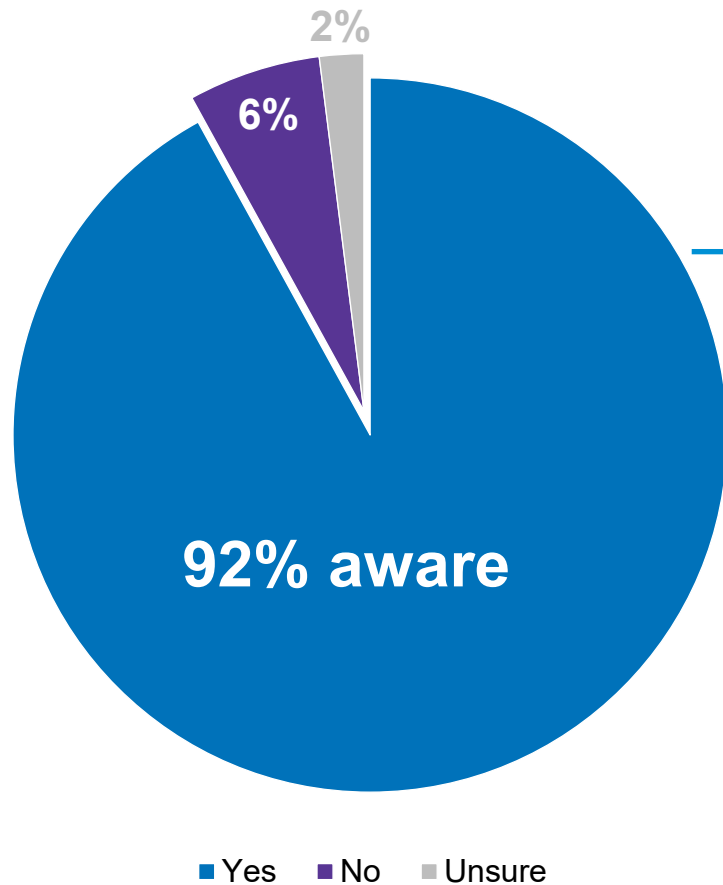
# 9-in-10 Texans say it is important that libraries provide broad, uncensored access.

## “Providing broad, uncensored access to a wide range of ideas and viewpoints”



*This viewpoint held by Texans, regardless of political affiliation, age, gender, or minority status.*

# Most Texans are aware of a public library serving their community.



Parents: 94%  
Non-parents: 91%




Gen Z: 89%  
Millennial: 93%  
Gen X: 94%  
Boomer+: 91%

Male: 92%  
Female: 92%

Urban: 94%  
Rural: 92%  
Suburban: 92%

Northwest/West: 92%  
Northeast: 90%  
**Central: 99%**  
Southeast: 90%  
South: 95%

# In total, 80% of Texan households have used public library services over the past 3 years, including 67% that have done so personally.

 Have used library in past 3 years
  Only someone in household has
  No one in household has



**67%** of Texans have personally used services provided by a public library in the last 3 years

Gen Z: 66%	Rural: 56%	<b>Parent: 75%</b>
<b>Millennials: 73%</b>	<b>Urban: 73%</b>	Non-Parent: 61%
Gen X: 63%	<b>Suburban: 67%</b>	
Boomer+: 60%		
	Men: 66%	
	Women: 68%	

**13%** have not used the public library, but someone in their household has in the last 3 years

**20%** of Texans have no one in their household who has used a public library in the past 3 years

# The vast majority of Texas public library users are satisfied with their experiences. Satisfaction often hinges on the resources available or lack thereof.



92% are **satisfied** with their public library

Many report satisfaction with their library's wide selection of resources, positive experiences with staff, and the overall appeal of the space.

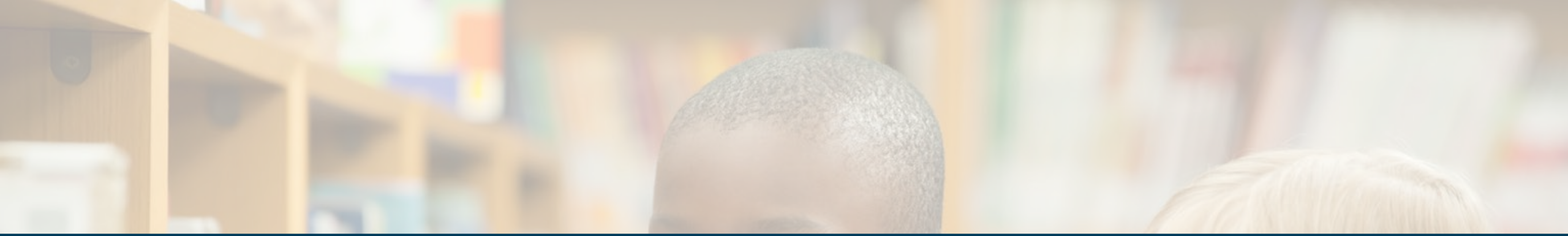
*"I am able to go there to get things printed out if I need to and they have special events for the kids for different age groups and for adults as well"*

*"They are welcoming and helpful and provide what we need."*

*"Because it's convenient, well-run, has great resources, and staff is always helpful."*

*"I am satisfied with my library because it has a wide selection of books and a quiet, comfortable place to study"*

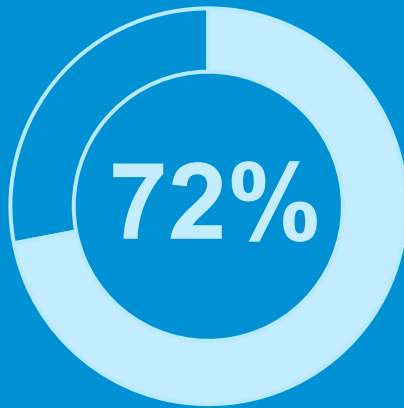




# Library Use

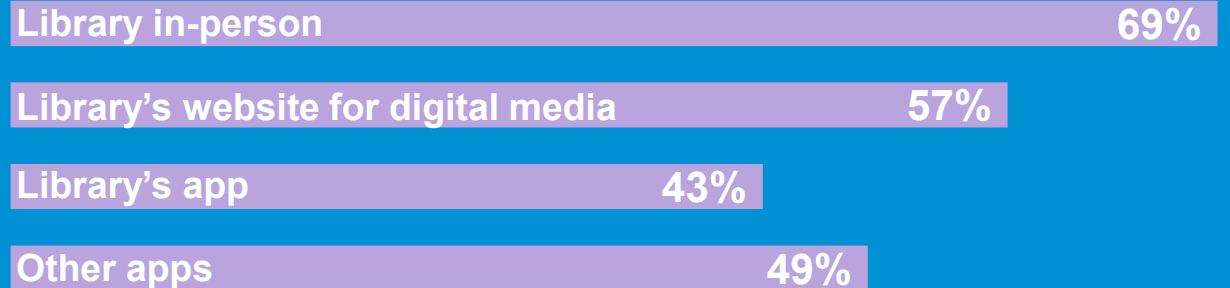


# Summary: Texans show high engagement with the library



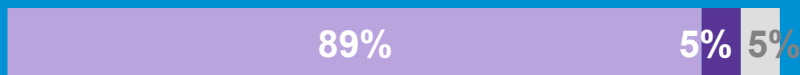
of Texan households currently have a library card

## Frequently visits their...

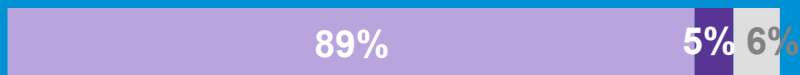


## Most common and well-known

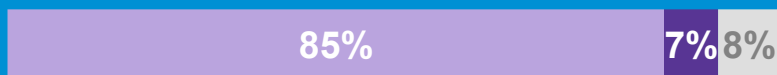
### Internet and Wi-Fi access



### Computer access



### Book borrowing



## Widely offered, but some uncertainty

### Research support



### Recreation or leisure space



### Digital Resources



### Community events



### Youth programs



## Less awareness

### Access to special equipment



### Adult education programs



### Emergency shelter

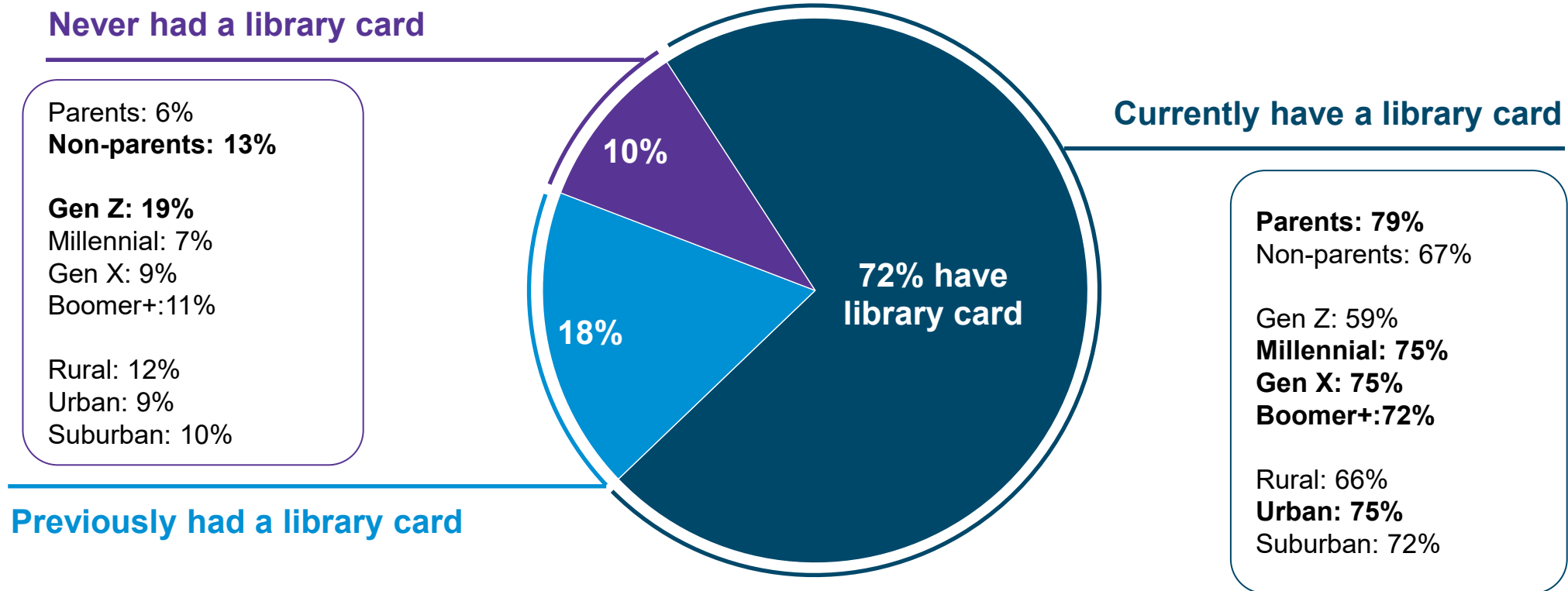


### Lending non-traditional items

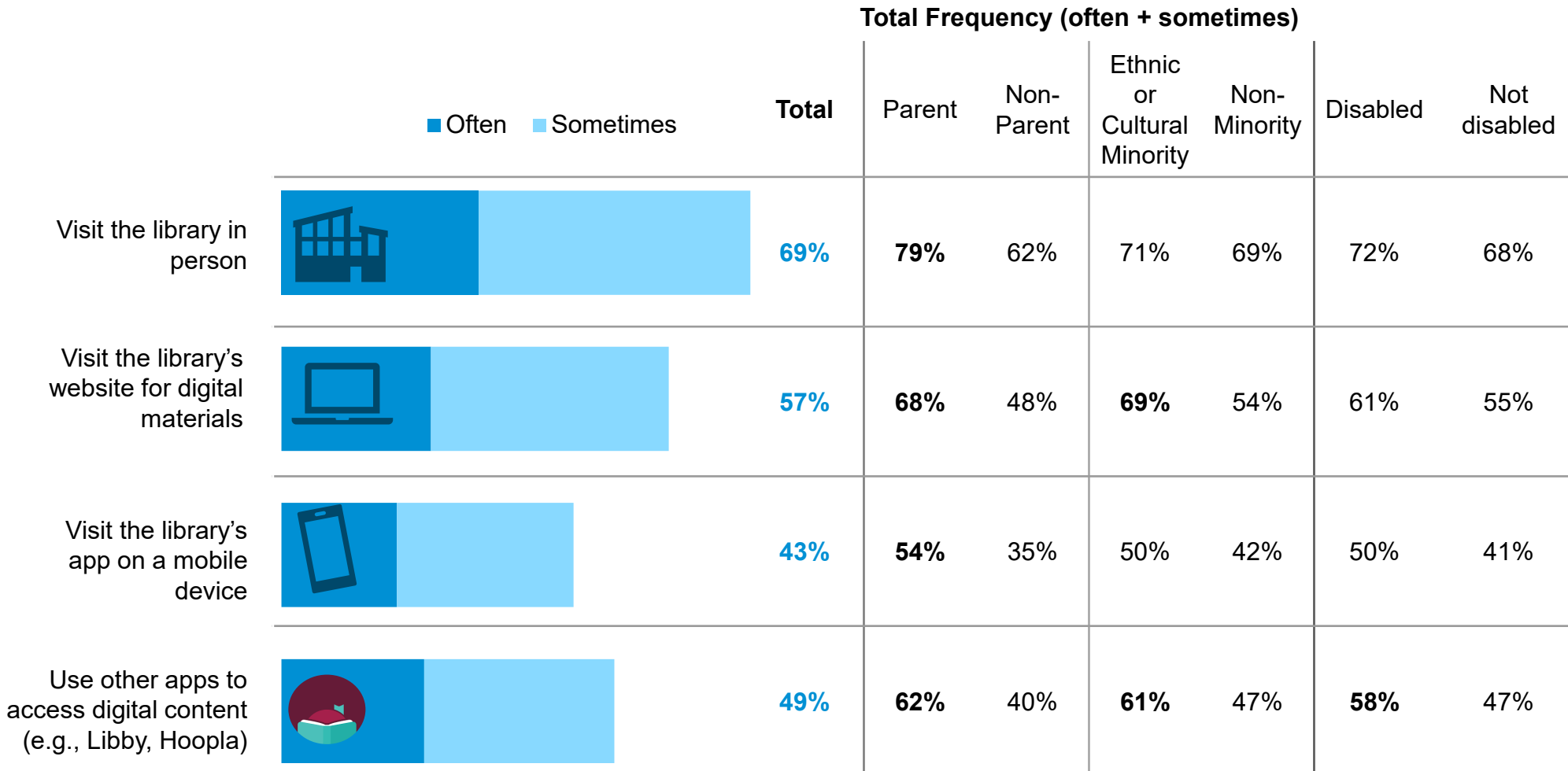


■ Offered ■ Not offered ■ Unsure

# Nearly 3-in-4 Texans (72%) report currently having a library card. An additional 18% did previously, leaving just 10% of Texans who have never had a library card.



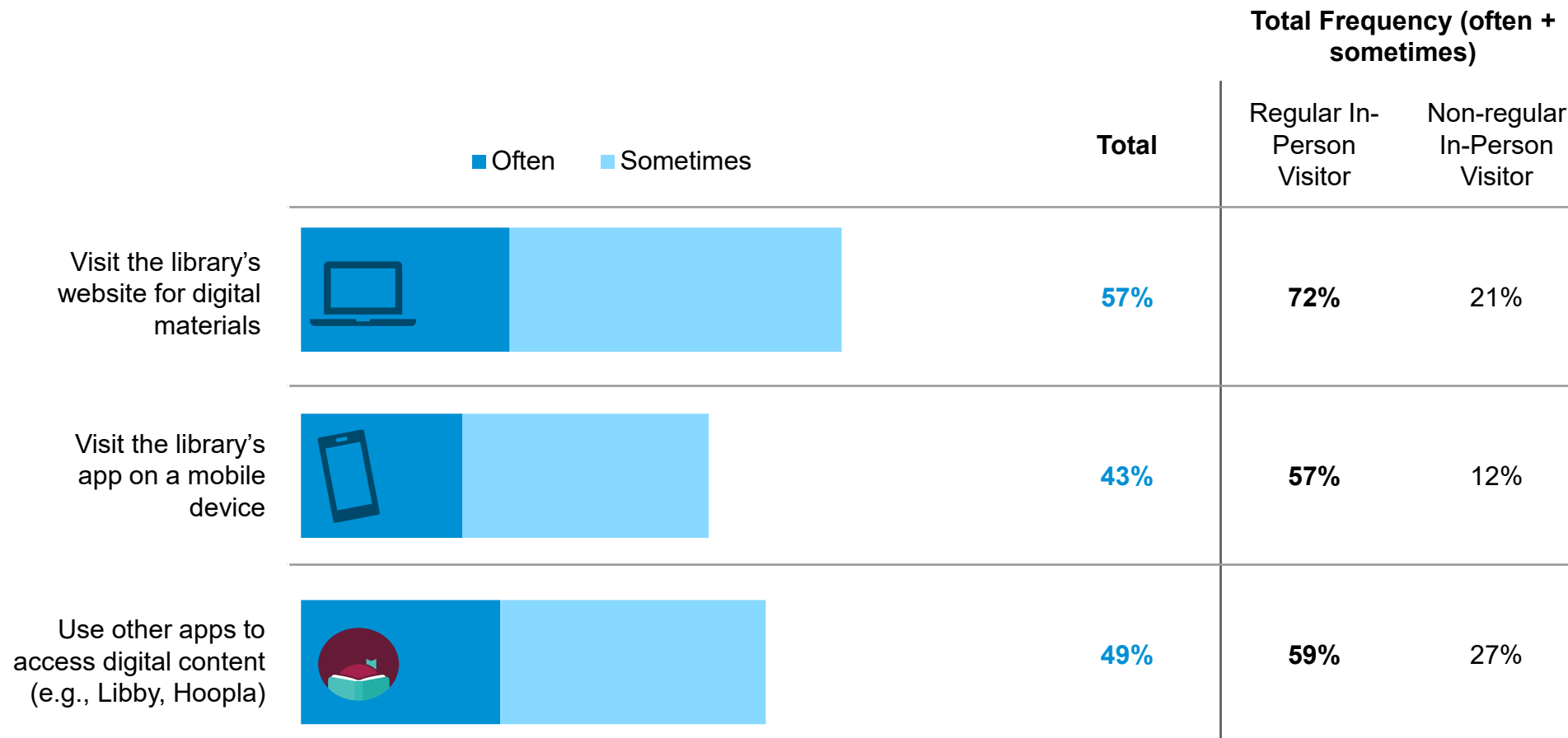
# 69% of Texans are regularly (sometimes or often) visiting their library in person. A majority (57%) are also regularly using the library's digital materials.



Q. Thinking about your local public library, how often do you...—often, sometimes, rarely, never? (n=921)



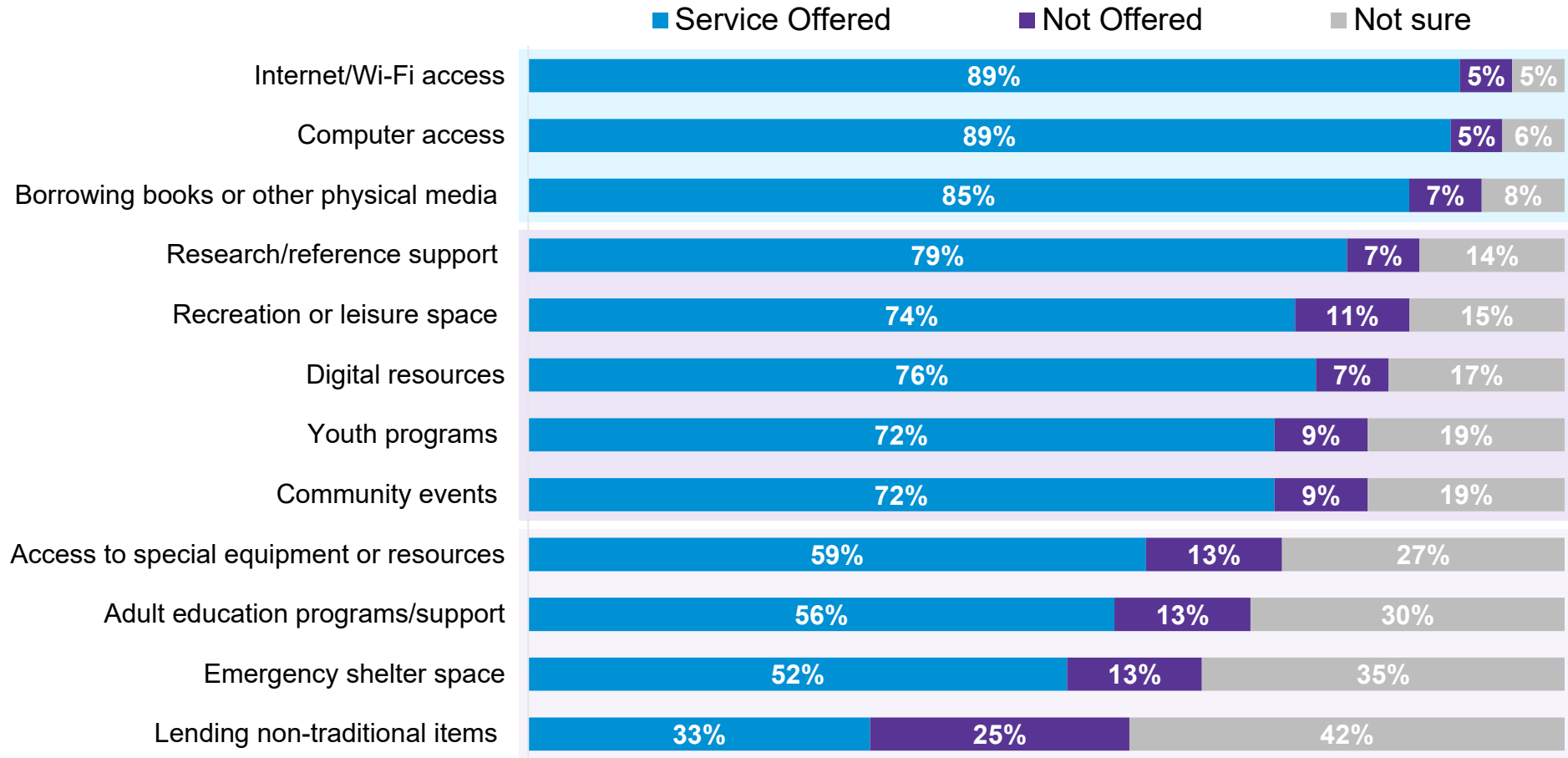
# Regular in-person library users are most likely to also be the ones using libraries online and digital resources.



Q. Thinking about your local public library, how often do you...—often, sometimes, rarely, never? (n=921)



# In addition to book borrowing, internet and computer access are top common library uses. Many are also aware of uses like leisure space, community, youth, and adult programming.



## Common

Most Texans are aware of these services and that they are available at their library

## Some Uncertainty

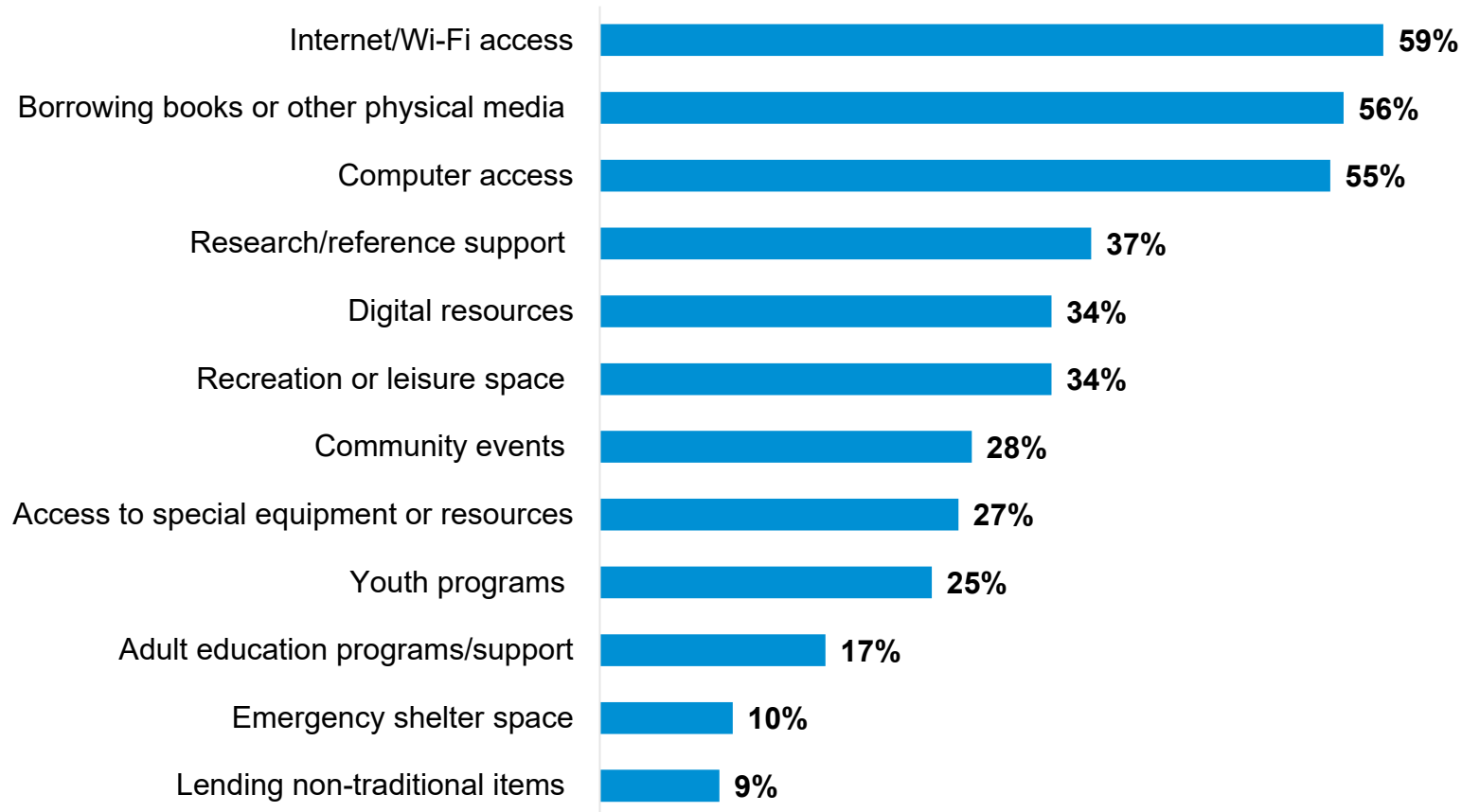
Most Texans are aware that these services are offered, but there are slightly more that are unsure

## Less Awareness

Uncertainty of these services is high – a quarter or more Texans are unsure if these are offered at their library.



# While less common than top uses, uses including leisure space, community events, special equipment and youth and adult programs are also utilized.



Though Gen Z is least likely to have recently used a library, they are more likely to use it for internet access.

**Gen Z: 69%**      Gen X: 53%  
**Millennials: 64%**      Boomers+: 50%

Lower income households are much more likely to rely on their public libraries for computer access.

**<\$35K: 64%**  
**\$35K-\$75K: 59%**  
 \$75K-\$150K: 49%  
 \$150K+: 39%

A third (34%) of Texans said they have used their public library as an open space for recreation or leisure.

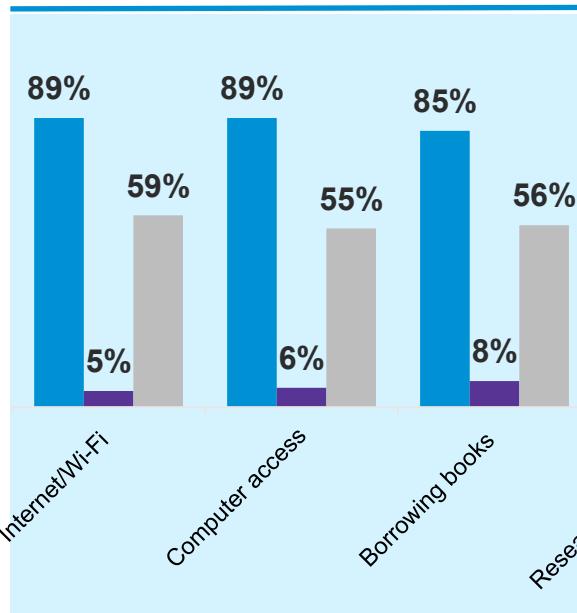


# There is an opportunity to increase awareness of non-traditional services provided by public libraries.

■ Service Offered ■ Unsure if Service Offered ■ Service Utilized

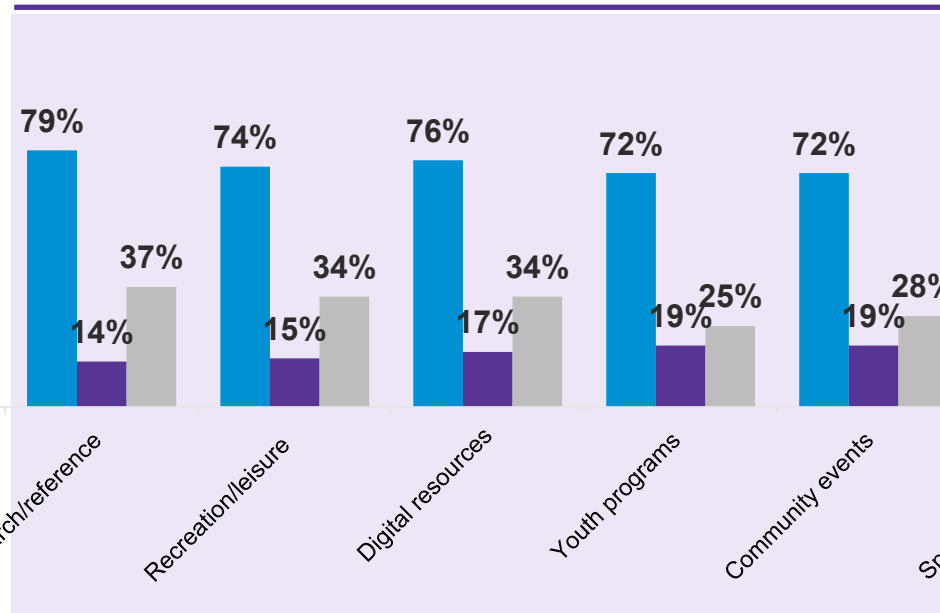
## Most Aware and Utilized

Most Texans are aware of these services, and they are most commonly utilized.



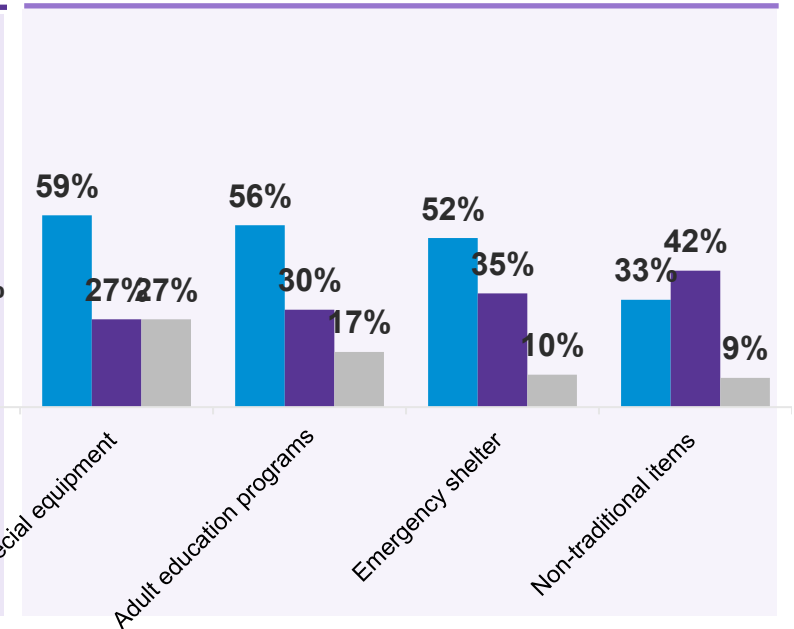
## Commonly Aware and Utilized

Many Texans are aware of these services, and around one-third to one-fourth of them have utilized these services.



## Less Aware and Underutilized

Some Texans are unaware of whether these services are offered at their library, especially among these more non-traditional library services.

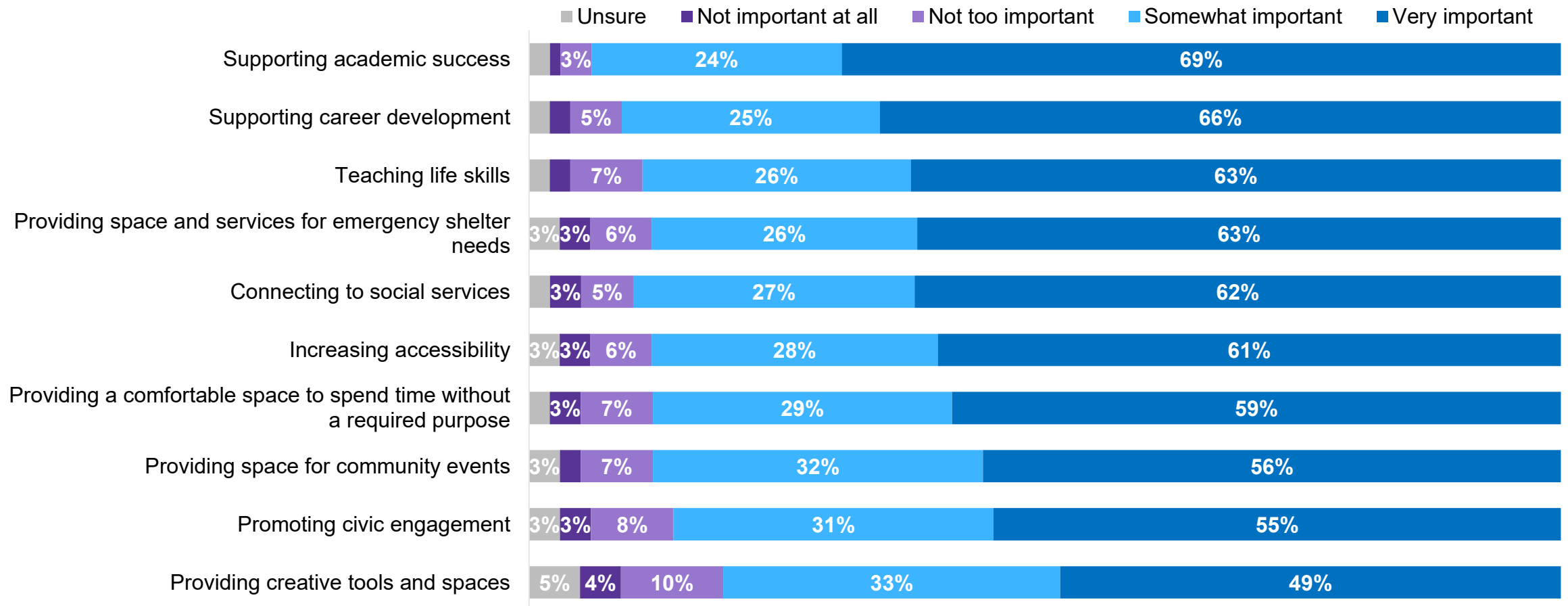


Q. Which of the following services does your local public library offer? Select one option for each. If you are not sure about a specific service being offered, please indicate so. (n=921)

Q. Which of the following services have you ever personally used at your local public library? Select all that apply. (Sample sizes vary)



# Half of Texans or more said the additional public library services are *very important*. Supporting academic success and career development top the list as most important.

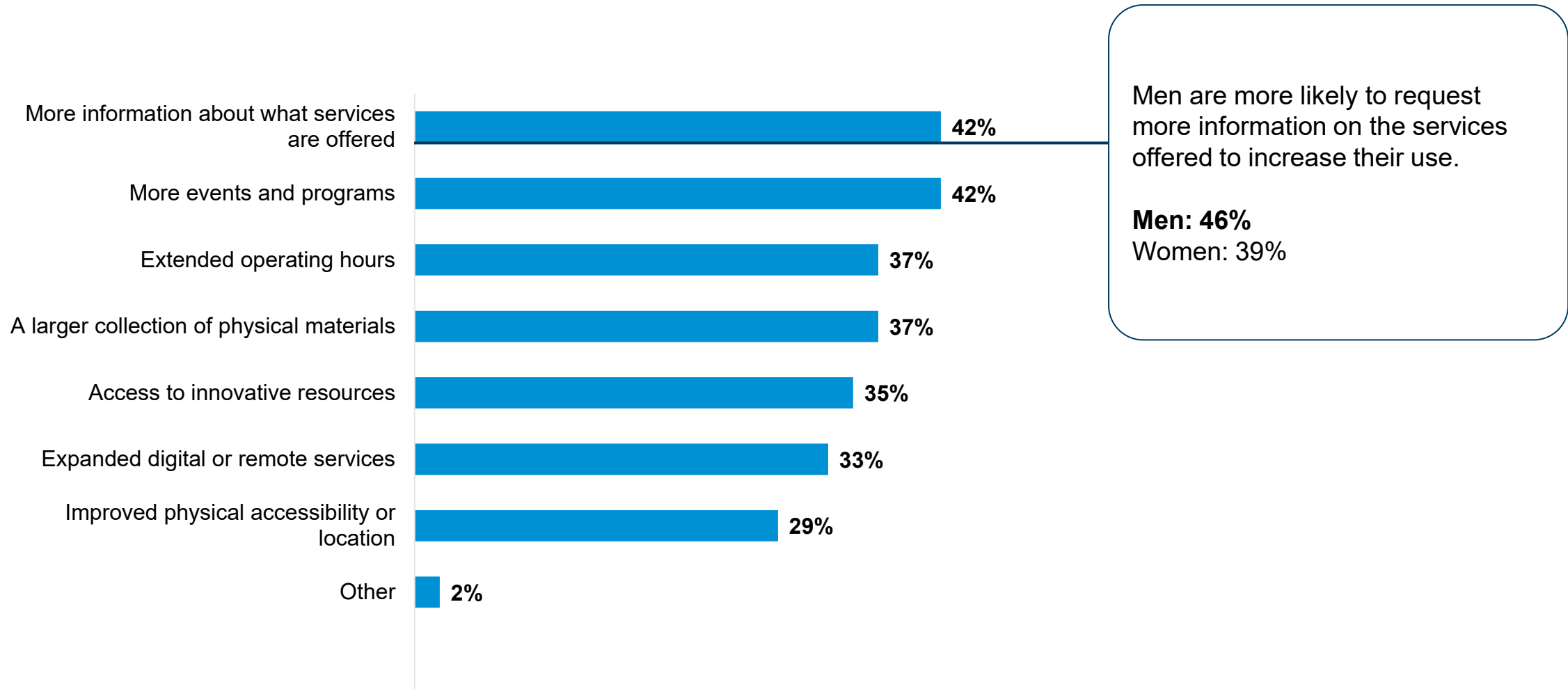


Note: Only showing data labels for items that are 3% or higher.

Q. Most public libraries offer programs and services beyond loaning books. Below is a list of additional services that libraries can provide to their communities. How important do you feel each is for your community? (n=1000)



# Top factors that would encourage increased library use include information about services, more events and programs, and extended operating hours.



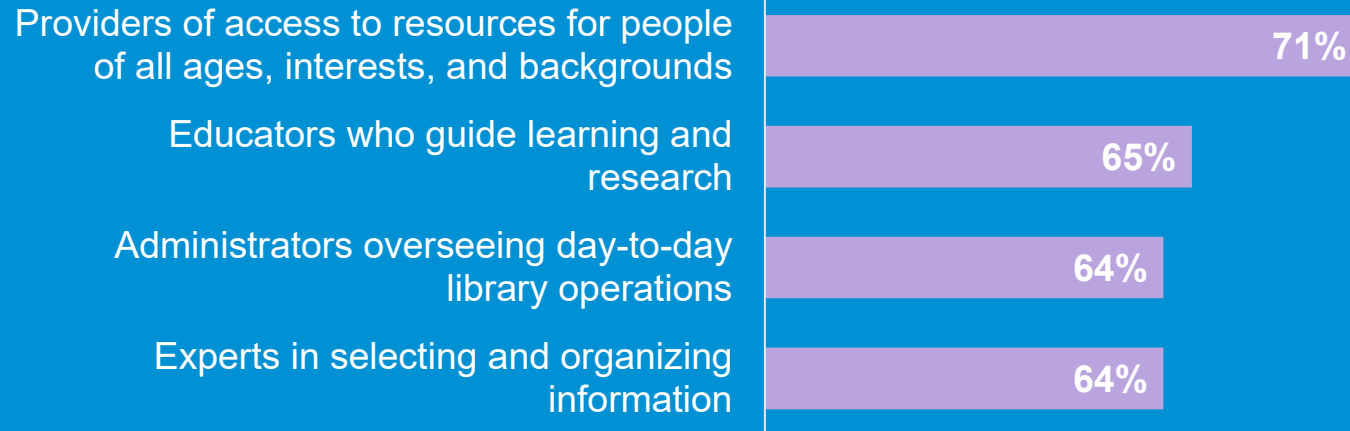


# Role of Public Librarians



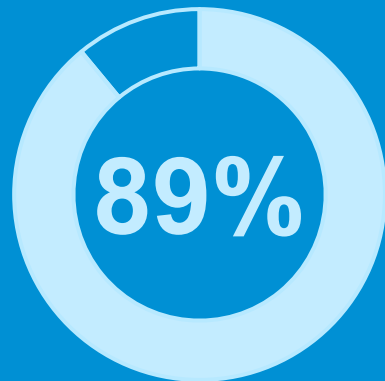
# Summary: Librarians are trusted as multifaceted professionals

It is *very important* that librarians are...

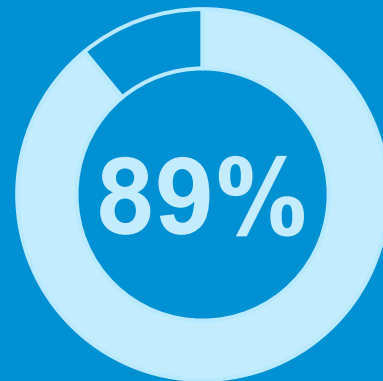


# 92%

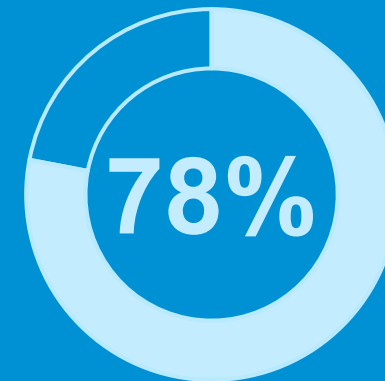
agree public librarians should ensure that library collections reflect the needs and interests of the communities they serve



of Texans are confident in their librarians' ability to select resources



agree public librarians and other professional library staff have the expertise to select books using relevant criteria

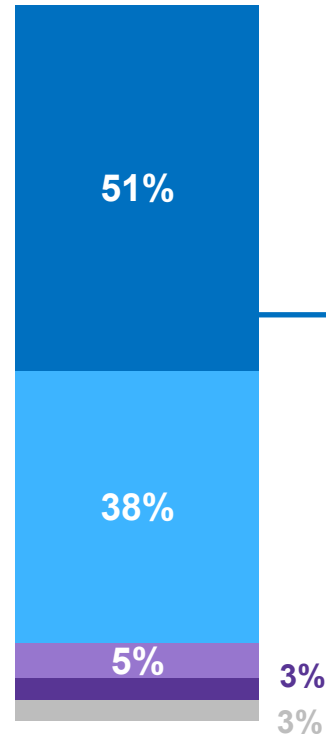


agree public librarians should have the primary responsibility for choosing materials for public library collections

# 9-in-10 (89%) of Texans are confident that public librarians select materials that reflect the needs and interests of their community.

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident
- Not confident at all
- Unsure

**89%**  
of Texans are  
confident in their  
librarians' ability  
to select  
resources



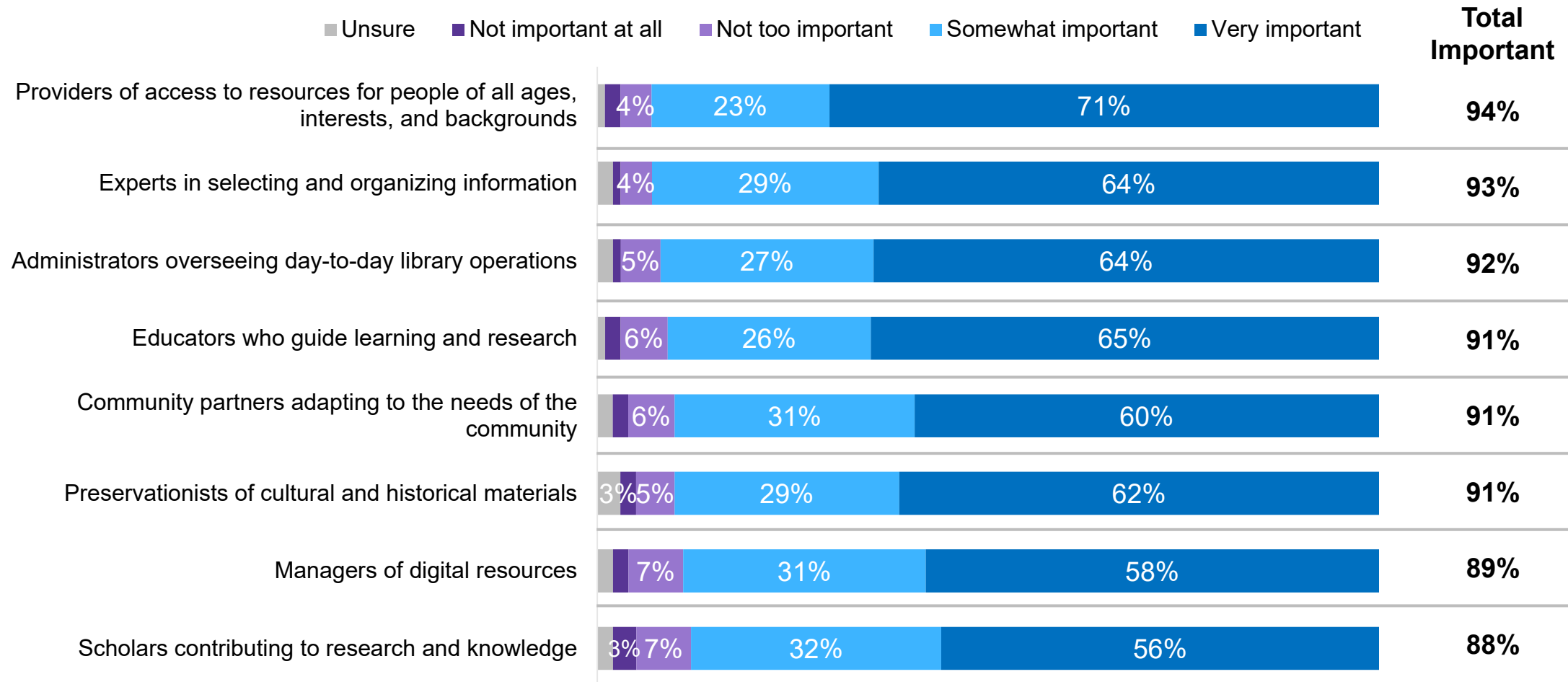
Use and engagement with libraries has a strong effect on confidence in librarians to select appropriate materials.

**Library User: 56%**  
Non-User: 33%

**Library Card Holder: 58%**  
Non-Library Card Holder: 34%



# Texans view public librarians as having important, wide-ranging expertise and dynamic roles. 71% say their role in providing access to resources for all people is *very important*.

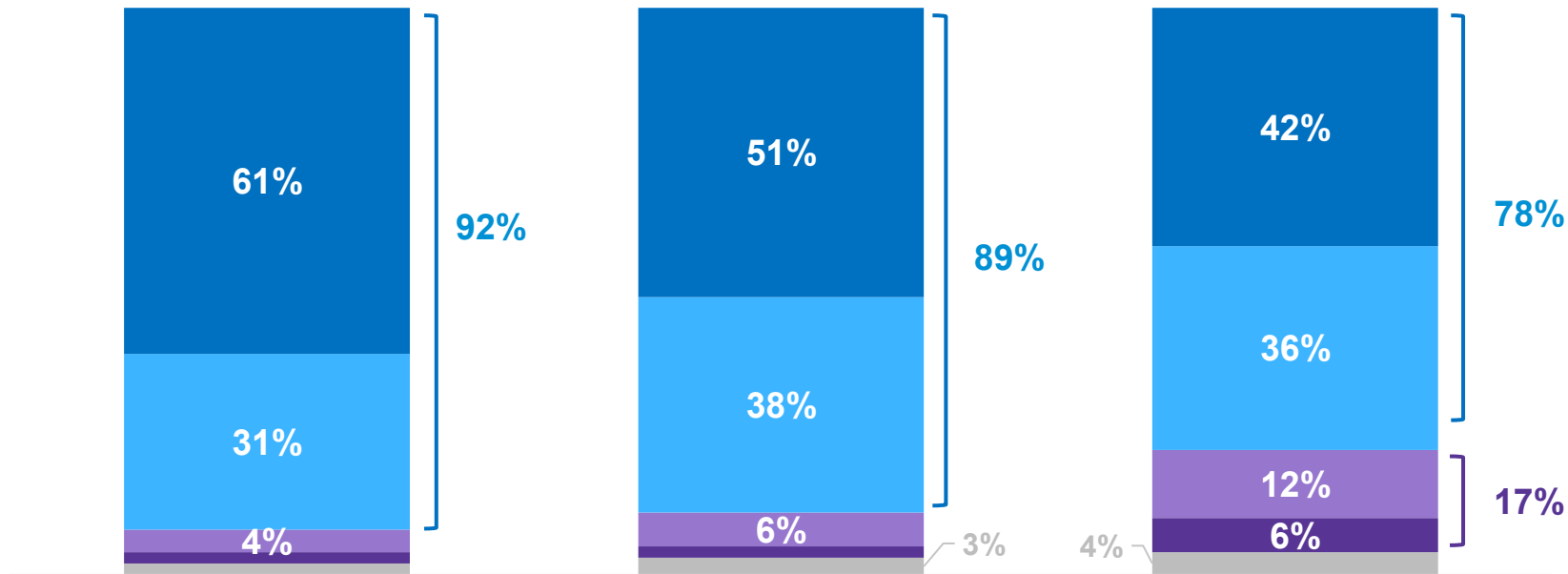


Q. Next, we will ask some questions specific to the librarians who work in public libraries. How important are each of the following roles that librarians can play at public libraries? Please rate each option. (n=1000)



# Most agree that librarians should ensure collections reflect the needs of their communities. Most also believe librarians have the expertise and should have the *primary* responsibility for selecting materials.

■ Unsure ■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



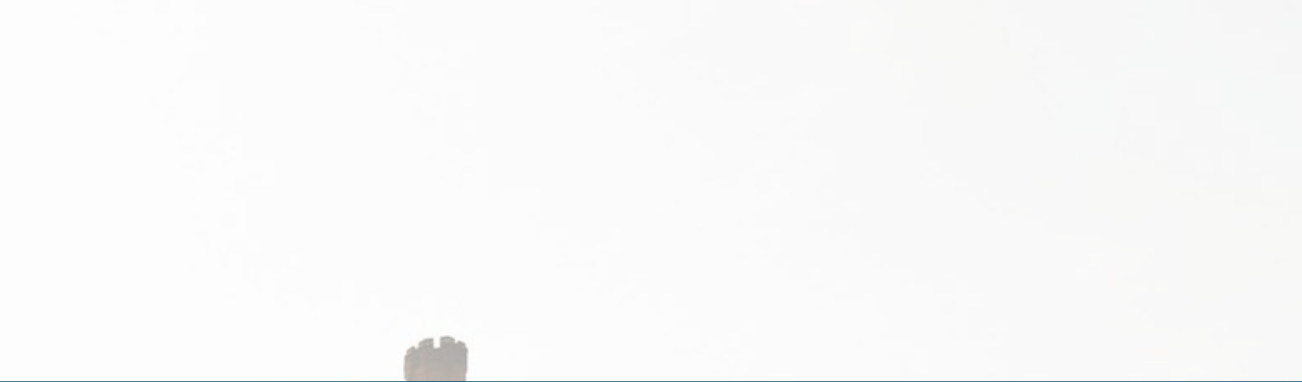
Public librarians...

...should ensure that library collections reflect the informational, educational, and cultural needs and interests of the communities they serve.

...and other professional library staff have the expertise to select books using relevant criteria such as literary quality, accuracy, originality, and community needs and interests.

...should have the primary responsibility for choosing materials for public library collections.





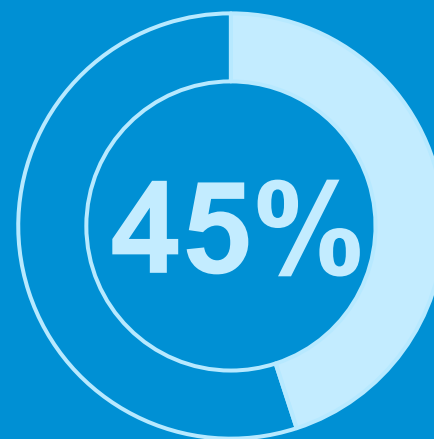
# Support for Public Libraries



# Summary: Most view libraries as essential—but underfunded



90% of Texans agree public libraries should be treated as an essential public and community service



45% of Texans said their public library is underfunded

Millennials, Gen X, and urban Texans are even more likely to support this sentiment

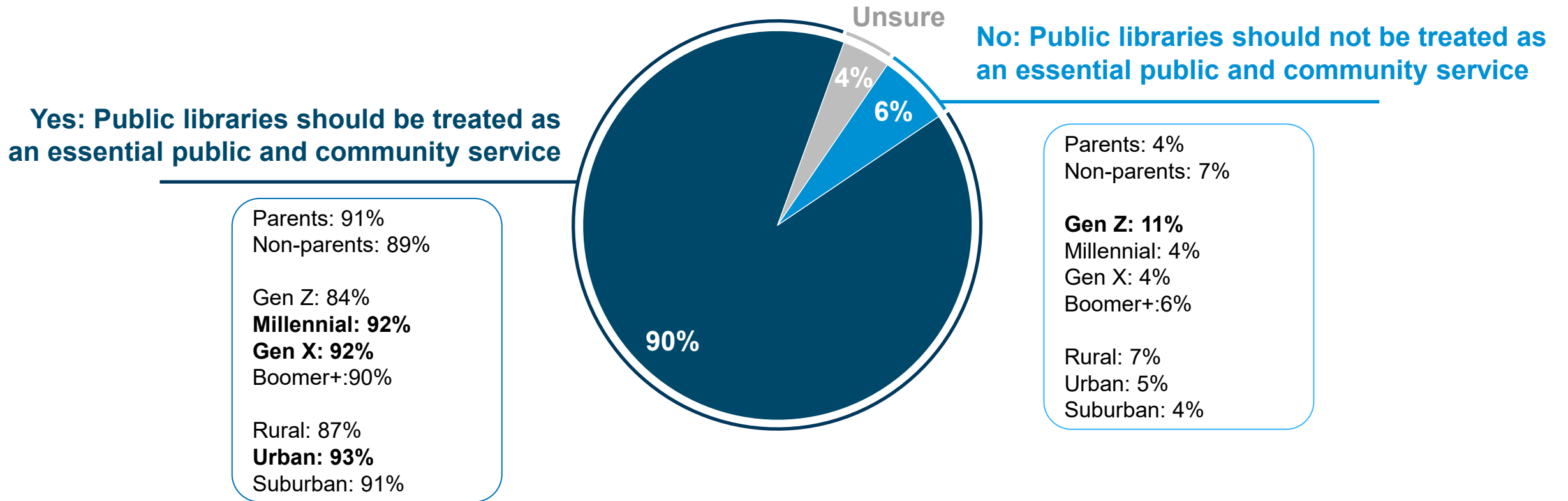
Gen Z: 84%  
Millennial: 92%  
Gen X: 92%  
Boomer+: 90%

Rural: 87%  
Urban: 93%  
Suburban: 91%

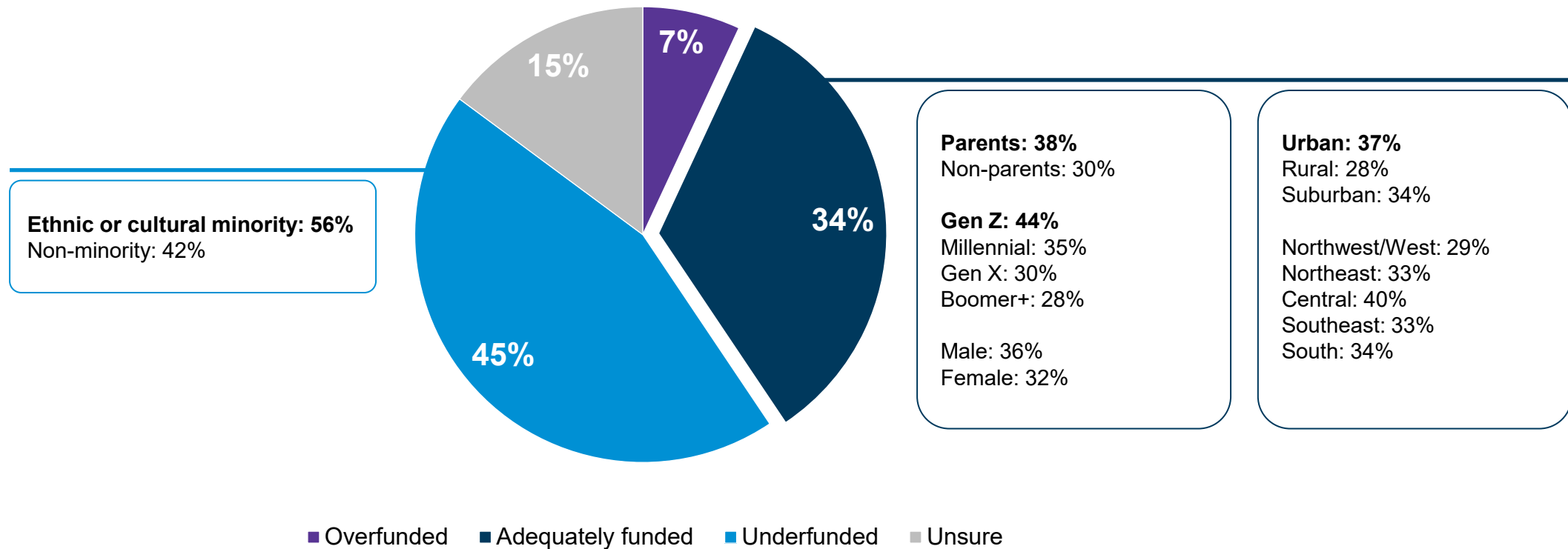
Ethnic or cultural minorities are more likely to say their public library is underfunded

56% of those that identify as an ethnic or cultural minority  
42% of non-minorities

# 9-in-10 Texans said public libraries should be treated as an essential public and community service, especially Millennials, Gen X, and Urbanites.

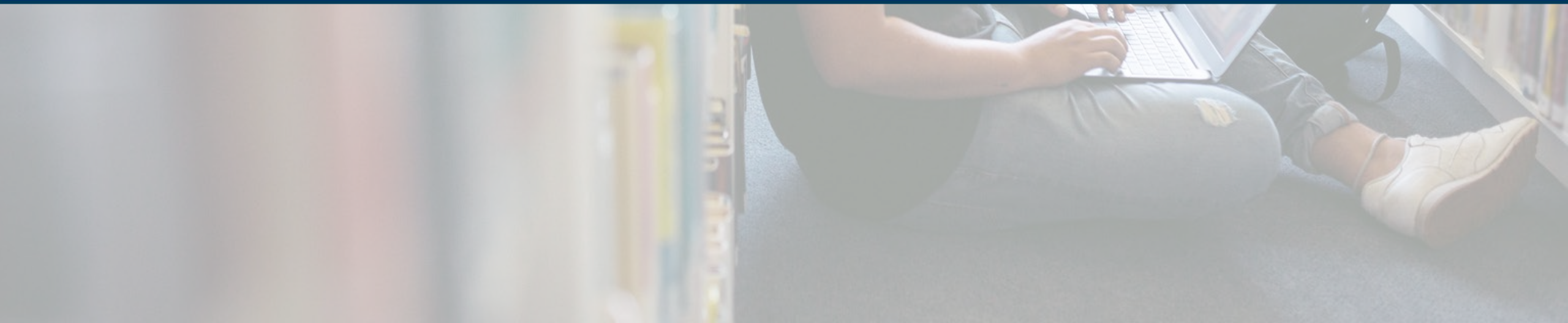


# A plurality of Texans (45%) feel their local public library is underfunded; only 7% believe their public library is overfunded.

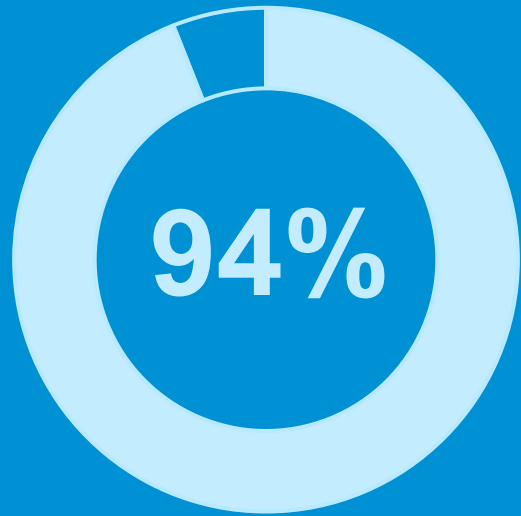




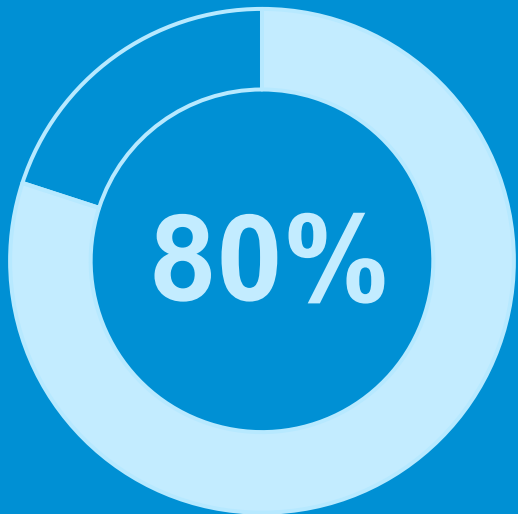
# Attitudes Towards Censorship



# Summary: Texans expect libraries to provide access to a broad range of materials

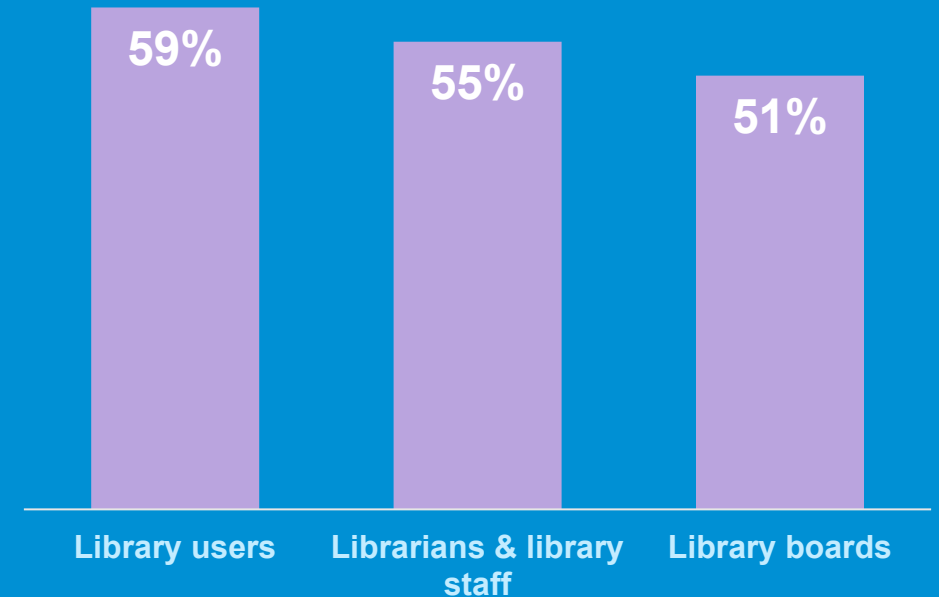


94% of Texans believe it is important for libraries to provide access to a broad range of information and ideas.

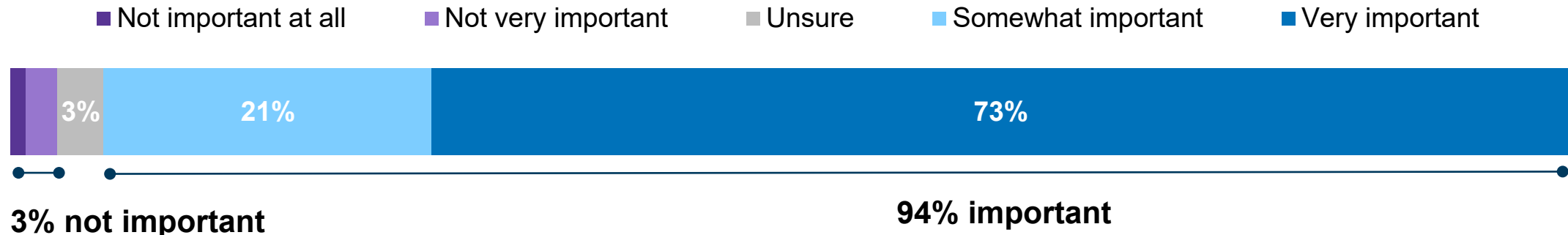


80% of Texans agree libraries should offer materials even if some community members strongly disapprove.

Most selected as who should have input regarding what materials are included in libraries:



# 9-in-10 Texans (94%) consider it important for libraries to provide access to a broad range of information and ideas in books and materials.

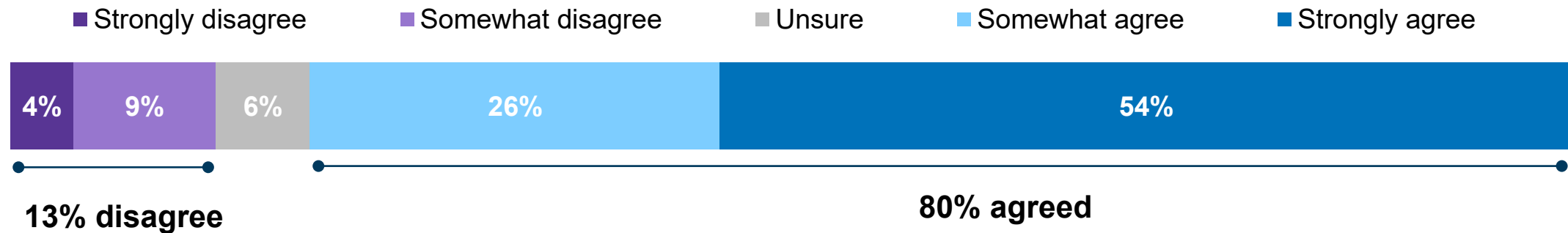


Parents: 94%	<b>Registered voter:</b>
Non-parents: 94%	<b>96%</b>
	Not registered: 86%
Gen Z: 88%	
Millennial: 93%	Lib.: 94%
<b>Gen X: 96%</b>	Mod.: 96%
<b>Boomer+: 96%</b>	Cons.: 94%
Rural: 94%	<b>Ethnic or cultural</b>
Urban: 95%	<b>minority: 98%</b>
Suburban: 94%	Non-minority: 93%



**8-in-10 Texans, regardless of their age, parental status, or where they live, agree that a public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove.**

**“A public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove of them”**



# Texans are largely aware of some degree of efforts to censor or restrict access to materials in Texas libraries.

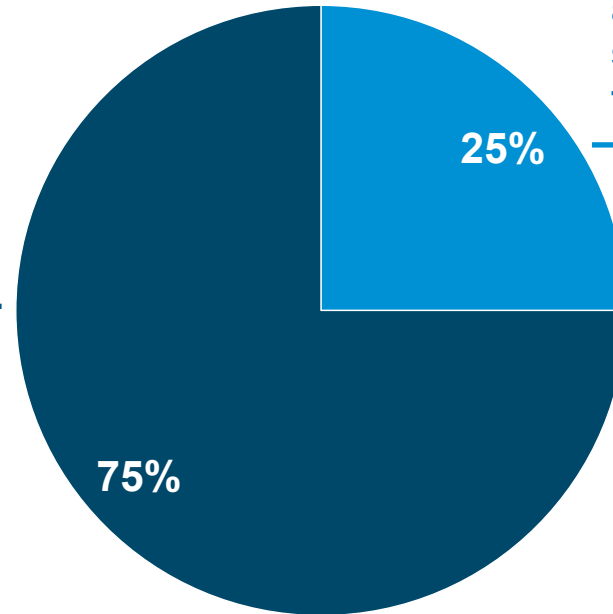
	Total	Urban	Rural	Suburban	Parent	Non-parent	Library user	Non-user
<b>NET: Awareness of efforts at any level</b>	61%	<b>64%</b>	45%	<b>63%</b>	66%	57%	<b>66%</b>	41%
<b>NET: Awareness of local level-OR state-level efforts</b>	56%	<b>62%</b>	42%	<b>58%</b>	<b>60%</b>	53%	<b>61%</b>	34%
Aware of local level efforts in my community	37%	<b>44%</b>	29%	34%	<b>44%</b>	32%	<b>42%</b>	16%
Aware of state-level legislation, policies, or initiatives	36%	<b>37%</b>	26%	<b>41%</b>	37%	35%	<b>38%</b>	26%
Aware of federal-level legislation, policies, or initiatives	21%	18%	19%	21%	20%	21%	21%	20%
Unaware	39%	36%	<b>55%</b>	37%	34%	<b>43%</b>	34%	<b>59%</b>



# 3-in-4 Texans (75%) agree that public libraries should remain neutral spaces and ensure access to information from all viewpoints.

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Public libraries should remain neutral spaces, ensuring access to information from all viewpoints, regardless of controversy



Public libraries should be selective, avoiding materials that could be the source of division or controversy in the community

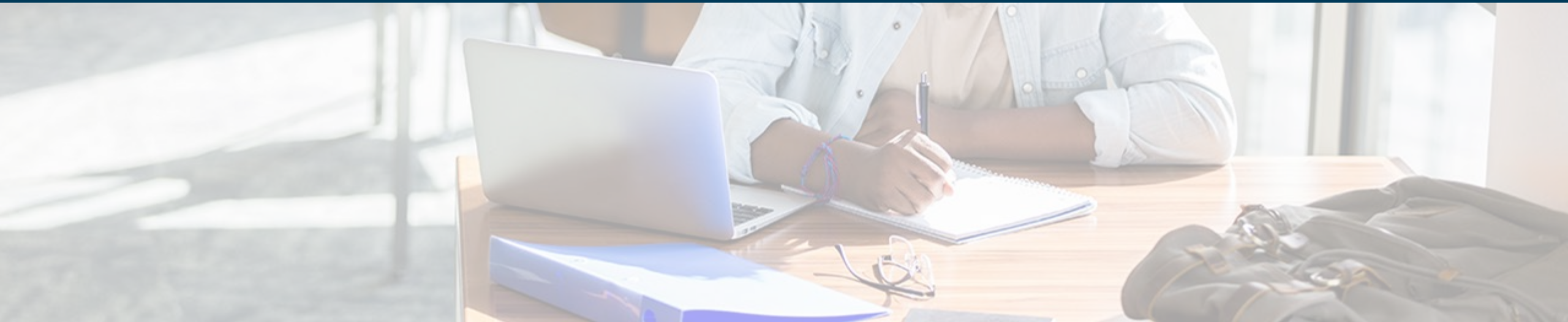
# Holistically, Texans feel that experts (librarians and staff, Library Boards) and library users should have input into library acquisitions, more so than elected officials.

		Lib.	Mod.	Cons.	Urban	Rural	Suburban
People who use libraries	<b>59%</b>	59%	58%	58%	57%	62%	60%
Professional librarians and library staff	<b>55%</b>	57%	58%	55%	53%	53%	<b>62%</b>
Library boards	<b>51%</b>	52%	50%	55%	52%	48%	56%
City council or local elected officials	<b>31%</b>	25%	29%	<b>38%</b>	34%	29%	29%
State legislators	<b>21%</b>	11%	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>	22%	23%	20%
The Governor	<b>17%</b>	11%	<b>18%</b>	<b>21%</b>	18%	15%	18%
Other	<b>3%</b>	4%	2%	<b>3%</b>	4%	1%	3%

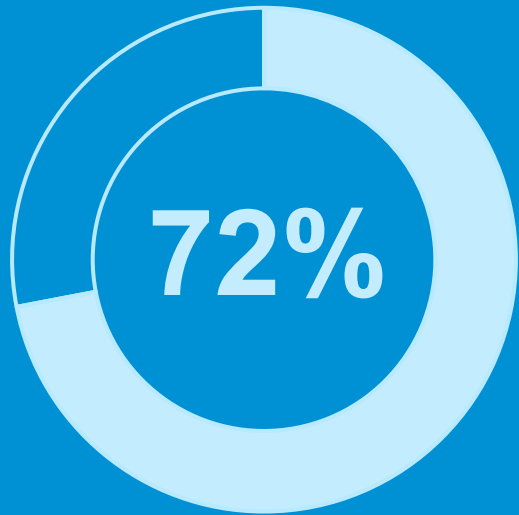
Q. In Texas, who do you think should provide input into the decision-making around what materials are included in public libraries? Select all that apply. (n=1000)



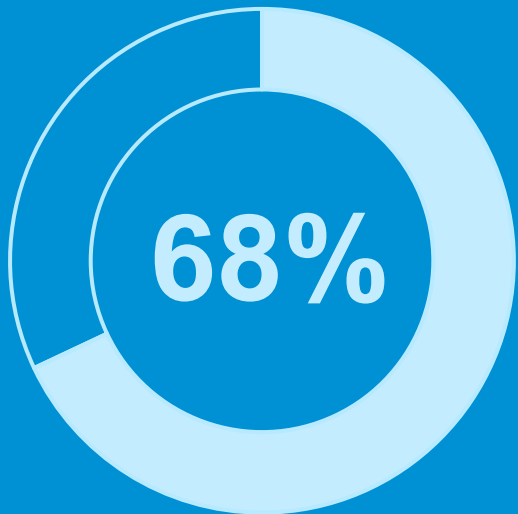
# Future Needs and Expectations



# Summary: Texans have a forward-looking perspective on libraries



72% of Texans believe libraries are as relevant or more relevant now compared to the past.

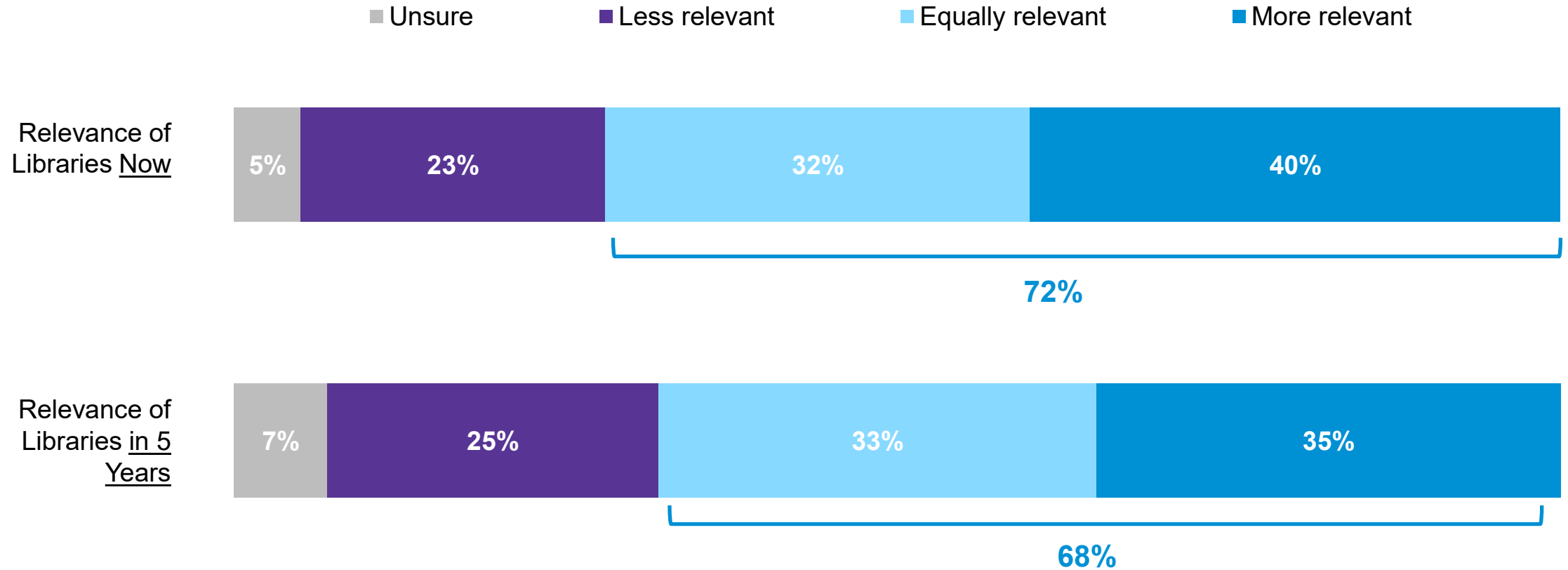


68% of Texans expect public libraries to be as relevant or more relevant in the future compared to today.

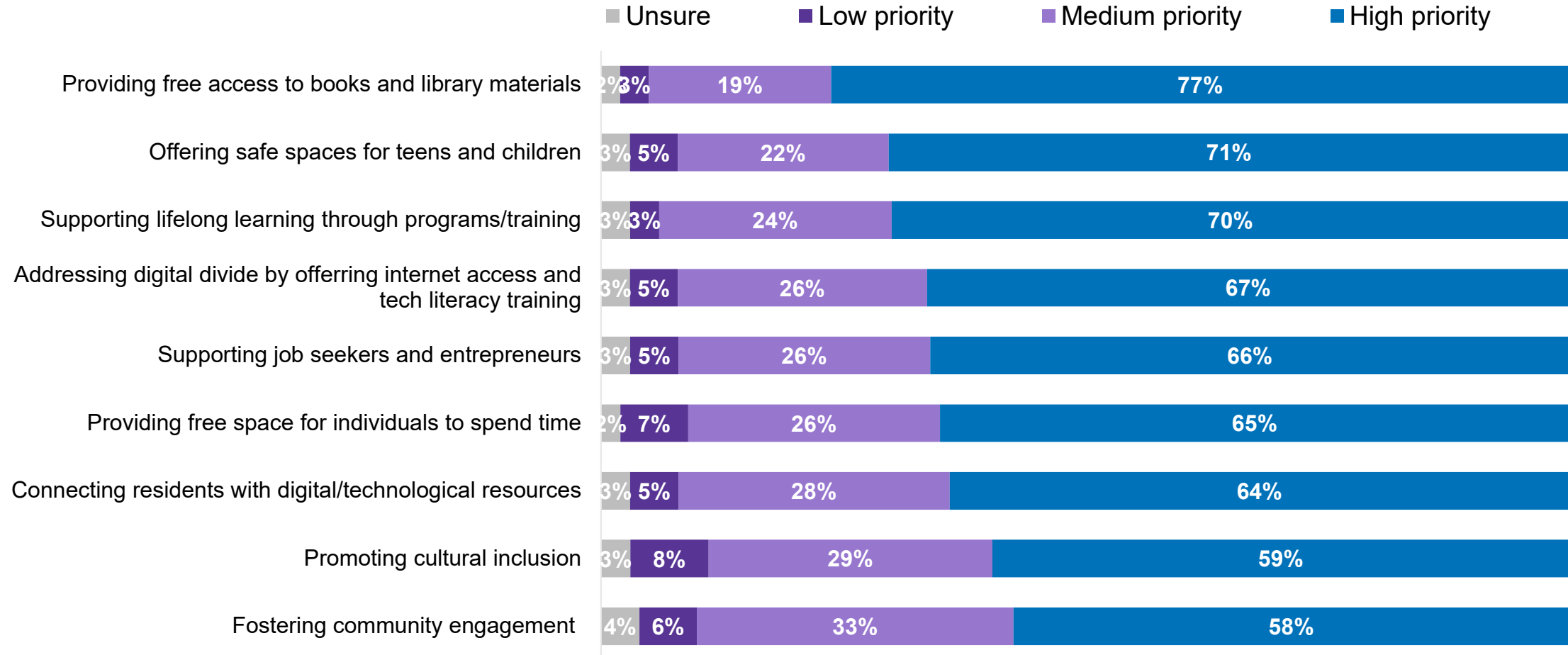
Most selected “high priority” services and programs to meet changing community needs:



# Texans see public libraries having timeless value, with three-quarters saying they are as or more relevant now, and a third predicting they will be even more relevant in the future.



# Free access is the highest priority for libraries to focus on, along with providing space for younger generations, supporting lifelong learning, and bridging the digital divide.





# Sample Profile



# Sample Profile

<b>Gender</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Metro Area Status</b>	<b>%</b>
Man	50	Employed full-time	52	Metro area	78
Woman	50	Employed part-time	8	Non-metro area	22
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>%</b>	Self-employed	9	<b>Texas Region</b>	<b>%</b>
White	40	Unemployed/Student	15	Central	11
Hispanic	39	Retired	14	Northeast	33
Black/AA	14	<b>HH Income</b>	<b>%</b>	Northwest	3
Asian	5	Under \$35,000	26	South	18
Other	5	\$35,000 to less than \$75,000	35	Southeast	30
<b>Age</b>	<b>%</b>	\$75,000 to less than \$150,000	23	West	5
18-24	8	\$150,000 or more	15	<b>Survey Language</b>	<b>%</b>
25-34	20	<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>%</b>	English	100
35-44	25	Less than Bachelor's degree	63	Spanish	-
45-54	21	Bachelor's or higher	37	<b>Survey Mode</b>	<b>%</b>
55-64	13	<b>Urbanicity</b>	<b>%</b>	Online	90
65+	13	Urban	35	Phone	10
<b>Parental Status</b>	<b>%</b>	Suburban	39		
Parent	42	Rural or small town	19		
Non-parent	58	Rural or small town	19		
		Prefer not to say	6		

# Sample Profile

## Political Ideology %

Conservative	31
Moderate	34
Liberal	21
Unsure	8

## Political Party Affiliation %

Republican	42
Democrat	35
Independent	16

## Voter Status %

Registered	83
Not registered	14
Prefer not to say	2

## Voted in 2024 Presidential Election %

Yes	73
No	23
Prefer not to say	3

## Community Affiliation %

Religious or faith-based community	19
Ethnic or cultural minority	16
Military veteran	10
LGBTQ+ community	9
Labor union member	6
None of these	53

## Disability Status %

Yes	23
No	75

