

# STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT 2025-2030

**NIPPERSINK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
DISTRICT**

## History

The Nippersink Public Library District (NPLD) was established in 1972 by a group of dedicated citizens who believed their rural community deserved access to local library services. Following guidance from the Northern Illinois Library System, a committee formed in 1971 and successfully applied for a Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grant to support the creation of a district encompassing Richmond, Burton, and Hebron Townships. The Library opened in Richmond's Memorial Hall on July 7, 1972, operating as a demonstration project. After Hebron withdrew from the effort, a referendum passed in 1973 by a four-to-one margin, ensuring long-term funding. The Library began receiving tax revenues in 1974 and was named after Nippersink Creek, which flows through the district.

## Introduction & Background

In January 2024, the hiring of a new Library Director, Dana Fanslow, prompted conversations about initiating a strategic planning process. With new leadership in place, the Library saw an opportunity for fresh direction and renewed focus. These early discussions laid the groundwork for launching a comprehensive planning process later in the year.

This plan outlines NPLD's strategic vision for the next five years. It was presented to the Board of Trustees in March 2025 for questions, discussion, and revisions, and was approved in April 2025. Following approval, Library administration and staff finalized an Activity Plan to support implementation beginning July 1, 2025, which marks the start of the Library's fiscal year. Progress toward plan goals will be reviewed regularly and reported to the Board.

The planning process provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the Library's progress, both within the building and across the broader community, and to explore future directions based on input from community members, staff, and trustees. Data collection and analysis were central to our approach, helping us understand our community's evolving needs and determine how best to serve them within our available resources. We entered this process with open minds and a shared commitment to the foundational values of public libraries: access, inclusion, and freedom of information.

Strategic planning efforts were led by Library Director Dana Fanslow, with a dedicated planning team that included three other staff members—Ash Lee Simons, Youth Services Manager; Kristine Ozyuk, Adult Services and Circulation Manager; and Yoni Nielson—as well as five Board Members: Drew Knobloch, President; Brett Bieder, Vice President; Adrienne Adams, Treasurer; Sue Rekenhaller, Secretary; and Michelle Jordan, Trustee.

## **Planning Process & Data**

The strategic planning process began in September 2024 with a full committee kickoff meeting to establish goals, form subgroups, and set a working timeline. Over the following weeks, subgroups developed draft community survey questions and outlined methods for effective outreach. By October, the full committee finalized the survey and began coordinating plans for a community open house. Concurrently, subgroups prepared multiple drafts of vision and mission statements to gather feedback and began outlining logistics for the December open house. The finalized community survey was submitted for inclusion in the Winter newsletter at the end of October.

From November 2024 through February 2025, the focus shifted to gathering and analyzing community feedback. The committee met to finalize open house plans and prepare to assess survey data. The open house, held in December, invited community members to complete surveys and vote on vision and mission drafts. In January, the committee reviewed this input to identify emerging trends. Subgroups analyzed responses, comparing findings with data from peer libraries to develop key strategic themes. By February, the committee consolidated these insights into a set of strategic priorities reflecting both short- and long-term goals.

In the final phase, running from March to April 2025, the committee drafted strategic goals and aligned them with identified community needs. Subgroups then developed detailed action plans, assigning responsibilities, setting timelines, and estimating resource needs. The result was a well-informed and community-driven foundation for the library's next strategic plan. A summary of the survey results that informed these decisions can be found at the end of this document.

## Vision

**Nippersink Public Library District's vision is to be the heart of our community: a center where knowledge, innovation, and experience come together to enrich lives and strengthen connections.**

## Mission

**Nippersink Public Library District's mission is connection: connecting people with knowledge, technology, and one another. Through welcoming spaces, a variety of programs, and accessible resources, we cultivate a lifelong love of learning and build a stronger, more engaged community.**

# Strategic Priorities



## Community



## Customer Service



## Programs



## Technology

One of the most valuable outcomes of our strategic planning process was the ability to step back and identify where our efforts will have the greatest impact. With limited resources and ever-evolving community needs, having a clear and intentional focus ensures that we move forward with purpose, rather than reacting to short-term demands. By analyzing data gathered through surveys, open house feedback, peer comparisons, and staff insights, we identified four strategic priorities that will guide our decisions and initiatives over the next five years. These focus areas—Community, Customer Service, Programs, and Technology—represent the most meaningful ways we can support and enrich the lives of those we serve.



## Community Priorities

We aim to strengthen our role as a vital part of the community by building relationships, fostering inclusion, and serving as a welcoming gathering space for people of all ages and backgrounds. This includes increased outreach, visibility, and partnerships with local organizations.

### Strengthen Partnerships with Local Organizations

**Goal:** Expand collaboration with schools, nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies to increase community engagement.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Establish formal partnerships with at least five local organizations for joint programming and outreach & hold semi-annual meetings with key partners to discuss collaboration opportunities.
- **By July 2027:** Develop a shared resources initiative, such as cross-promoted events or joint service projects.
- **By July 2028:** Implement a shared resources initiative, such as cross-promoted events or joint service projects.

### Enhance Communications & Outreach via Newsletter

**Goal:** Improve Library visibility by increasing the frequency and reach of newsletters.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Increase e-newsletter distribution from once a month to bi-monthly or weekly.
- **By July 2027:** Expand print newsletter distribution to at least five new locations (e.g., village office, doctor's offices, post office).
- **By July 2028:** Investigate push notifications for key updates, such as event reminders or service changes.

## Implement Sustainability Initiatives

**Goal:** Integrate eco-friendly practices into Library operations.

### **Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Implement eco-friendly in-house processes and initiatives such as paperless forms, recycling programs, and energy-efficient upgrades.
- **By July 2027:** Launch a community-wide recycling program, including book and electronics recycling.
- **By July 2028:** Assess and expand sustainability initiatives based on community needs.

## Improve Library Spaces for Accessibility & Comfort

**Goal:** Upgrade the Library's physical environment to enhance accessibility and patron experience.

### **Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Refresh the interior with new paint.
- **By July 2027:** Update ADA-compliant seating, lighting, and shelving; and evaluate front entryway improvements.
- **By July 2028:** Complete major upgrades, including parking lot lighting improvements.



## Customer Service Priorities

We are committed to providing an exceptional, consistent, and personalized experience for all patrons. This priority focuses on staff training, streamlined services, and thoughtful improvements that make using the Library easier and more enjoyable.

### Implement a Staff Training Program

**Goal:** Develop a consistent training program to ensure excellent patron service.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Launch a customer service training series on best practices for assisting patrons, handling complaints, and creating a welcoming environment.
- **By July 2027:** Implement biannual training refreshers to reinforce skills and create a Customer Service SharePoint page with guidelines for common patron interactions.
- **By July 2028:** Evaluate training effectiveness and adjust based on feedback and implement a staff recognition program for outstanding customer service.

### Improve Signage & Wayfinding

**Goal:** Enhance directional signage inside and outside the Library to help patrons navigate more easily.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Assess current signage and identify high-traffic areas needing improvement and redesign interior signage for clarity and accessibility.
- **By July 2027:** Improve outdoor signage for parking, entrances, and book drop locations.
- **By July 2028:** Regularly update signs based on patron feedback.

## Enhance Hold & Pickup Services

**Goal:** Enhance book pickup options to make the process more convenient for patrons.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Implement an extended hold shelf for easier self-service access & check out services in the Youth Services Department.
- **By July 2027:** Expand curbside pickup with designated parking spots and staff assistance.
- **By July 2028:** Optimize workflows for seamless hold processing.

## Strengthen In-House Patron Relationships

**Goal:** Foster stronger connections with patrons through personalized engagement.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Implement a “Library Concierge” approach, where staff proactively engage with patrons about programs and services.
- **By July 2027:** Offer monthly “Meet the Librarian” sessions to build relationships and address community needs.
- **By July 2028:** Develop a patron appreciation initiative, such as a milestone rewards program or annual recognition event.



## Program Priorities

We will develop and deliver programs that are engaging, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our diverse patrons. Our goal is to provide a wide variety of learning and enrichment opportunities that reflect the interests of the community.

### Expand Multigenerational Programming

**Goal:** Develop programs that connect multiple age groups and foster mentorship opportunities.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Introduce mentorship programs pairing older and younger patrons.
- **By July 2027:** Expand intergenerational programming based on participation trends.
- **By July 2028:** Evaluate effectiveness and adjust accordingly.

### Strengthen Community Collaboration

**Goal:** Partner with local organizations to offer collaborative events and to enhance programming reach and impact.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Establish three new partnerships with local businesses or nonprofits and develop an outreach plan.
- **By July 2027:** Co-host at least three collaborative programs (e.g., financial literacy workshops with a local bank, STEM events with schools).
- **By July 2028:** Formalize long-term partnerships for recurring programs, such as business-led career nights or school reading initiatives.

## Increase Cultural Programming

**Goal:** Offer a wide range of cultural perspectives through Library events.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Establish a cultural programming calendar with author talks, festivals, food tastings, and history presentations.
- **By July 2027:** Introduce "World Café" where community members can learn new cultures and languages in a casual setting.
- **By July 2028:** Partner with local cultural organizations to ensure authentic representation in programming.

## Develop a Sustainability Program

**Goal:** Educate the community on sustainable living practices through hands-on workshops and events.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Host an introductory sustainability fair, featuring local experts on gardening, composting, and eco-friendly products.
- **By July 2027:** Launch a sustainable living workshop series.
- **By July 2028:** Develop a seed library and gardening club for patrons interested in growing their own food.

## Expand Life-Long Learning Skills

**Goal:** Provide workshops on personal finance, home skills, and career development.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Develop a workshop series on personal finance, budgeting, credit management, and investing.
- **By July 2027:** Introduce DIY home skills classes, including basic plumbing, electrical fixes, and home organization.
- **By July 2028:** Evaluate and refine based on patron interest.



## Technology Priorities

We will ensure access to current and emerging technologies that support digital literacy, access to information, and lifelong learning. This includes maintaining reliable infrastructure, offering tech-focused services, and helping patrons confidently navigate an increasingly digital world.

### Invest in Emerging Technologies & Library of Things

**Goal:** Expand access to non-traditional library resources.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Begin phased implementation of a Library of Things, including toolkits, STEM kits, and outdoor equipment.
- **By July 2027:** Develop a small-scale Maker Space with introductory 3D printing workshops and DIY tech programs.
- **By July 2028:** Create a technology advisory group for ongoing innovation input.

### Expand Charging & Circulating Tech Access

**Goal:** Improve in-library and take-home charging options for patrons.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Install in-house charging stations in high-traffic areas.
- **By July 2027:** Introduce circulating device chargers (portable battery packs).
- **By July 2028:** Create a tech bar where patrons can borrow adapters, chargers, or accessories while in the Library.

## Offer Regular Tech Training & Classes

**Goal:** Provide ongoing technology education for patrons of all skill levels.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Develop a core curriculum covering topics like basic computer skills, online safety, digital literacy, and social media.
- **By July 2027:** Offer monthly tech training sessions with guest speakers, one-on-one help, and interactive workshops.
- **By July 2028:** Create on-demand tutorial videos for common tech issues.

## Improve Tech Accessibility & E-Resource Entry Points

**Goal:** Enhance digital resource access for all patrons, including those needing assistive technology.

**Actions & Timeline:**

- **By July 2026:** Simplify e-resource access and improve website usability.
- **By July 2027:** Expand assistive technology options like screen readers and adaptive devices.
- **By July 2028:** Offer staff-led digital literacy workshops.

## Improve Tech Accessibility & Training for Staff

**Goal:** Ensure staff are equipped with the skills to assist patrons and maintain technology effectively.

**Actions & Timeline:**

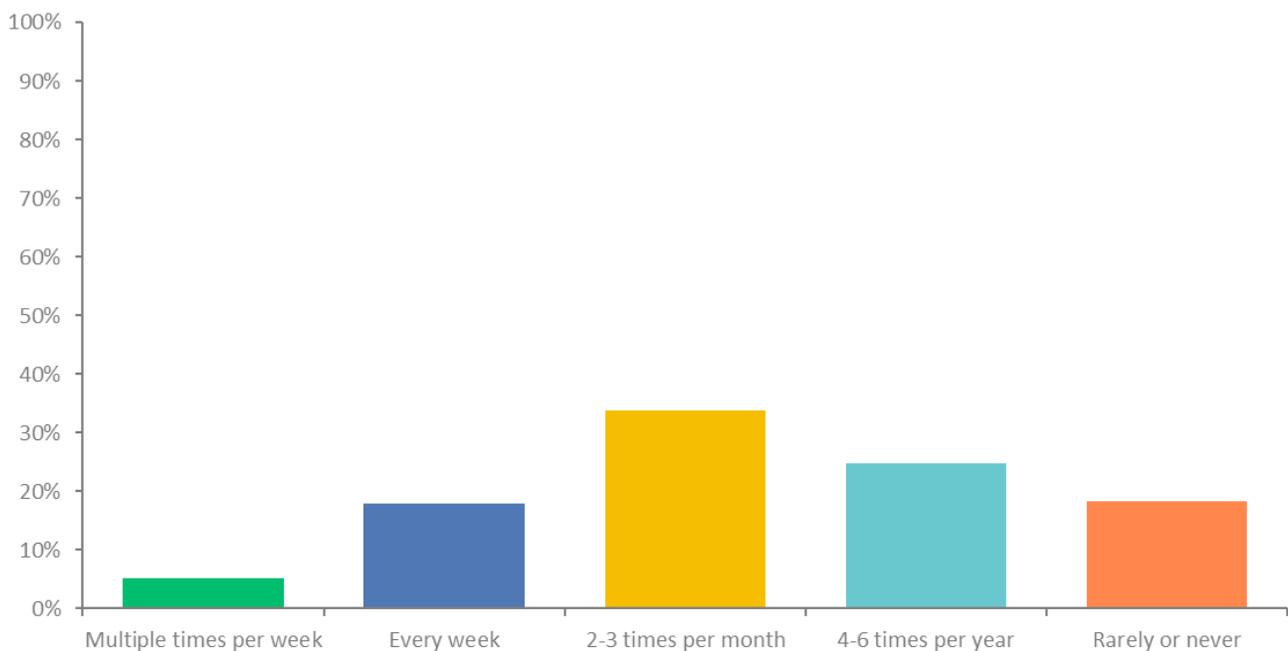
- **By July 2026:** Introduce to staff "I Fix It" training videos for troubleshooting common tech issues.
- **By July 2027:** Offer quarterly staff tech training workshops to keep up with emerging tools.
- **By July 2028:** Regularly update training based on staff feedback.

# Nippersink Public Library District Strategic Plan Survey Results

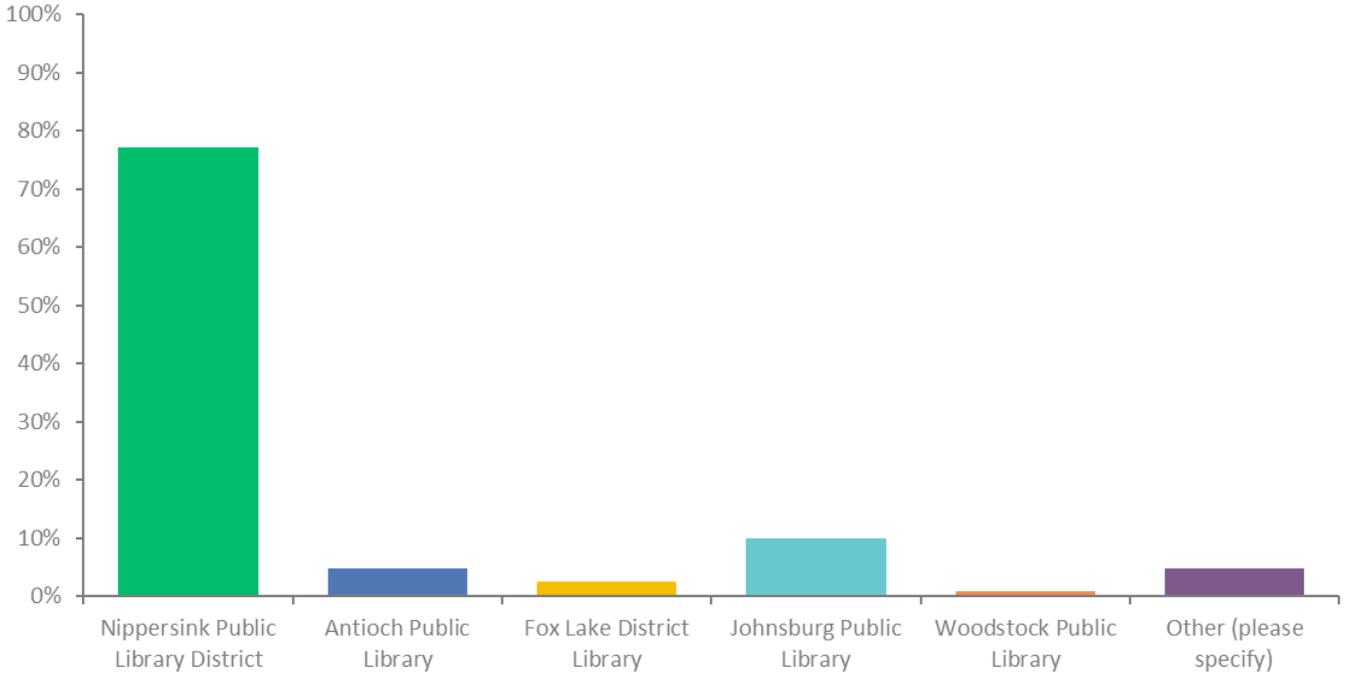
December 2024

252 Total Responses

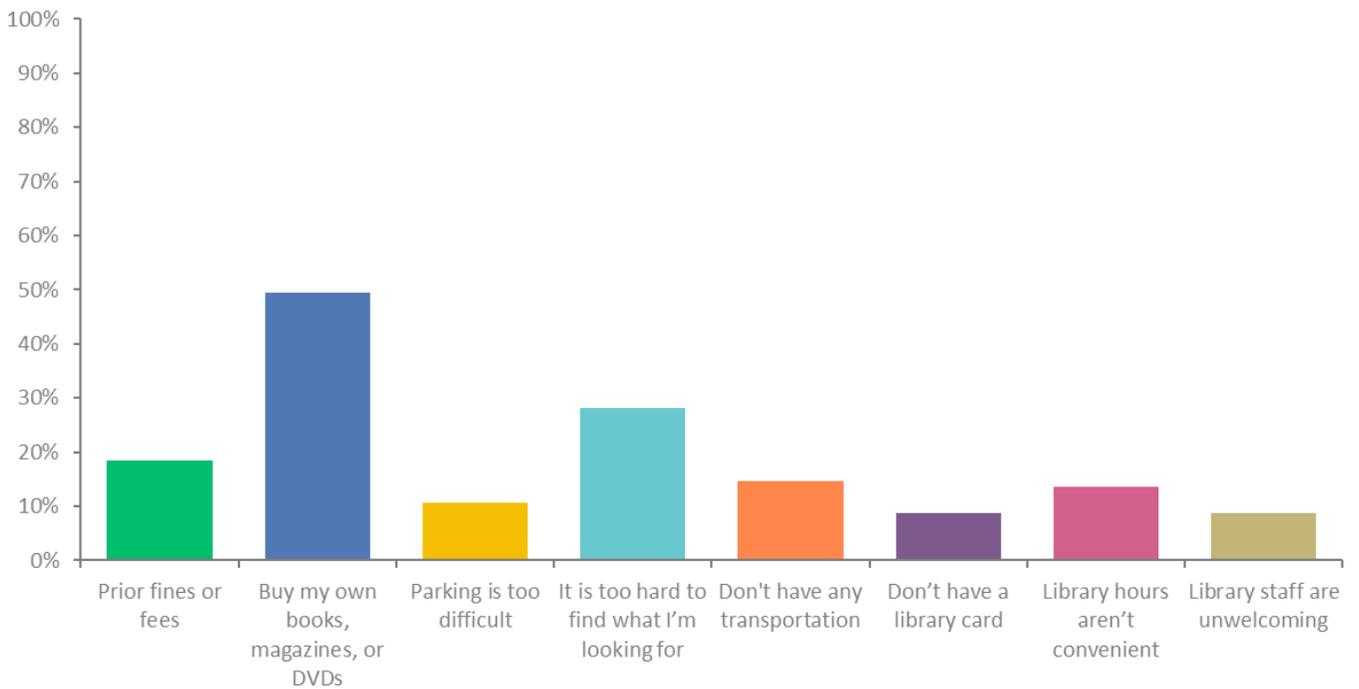
How often do you visit Nippersink Public Library District?



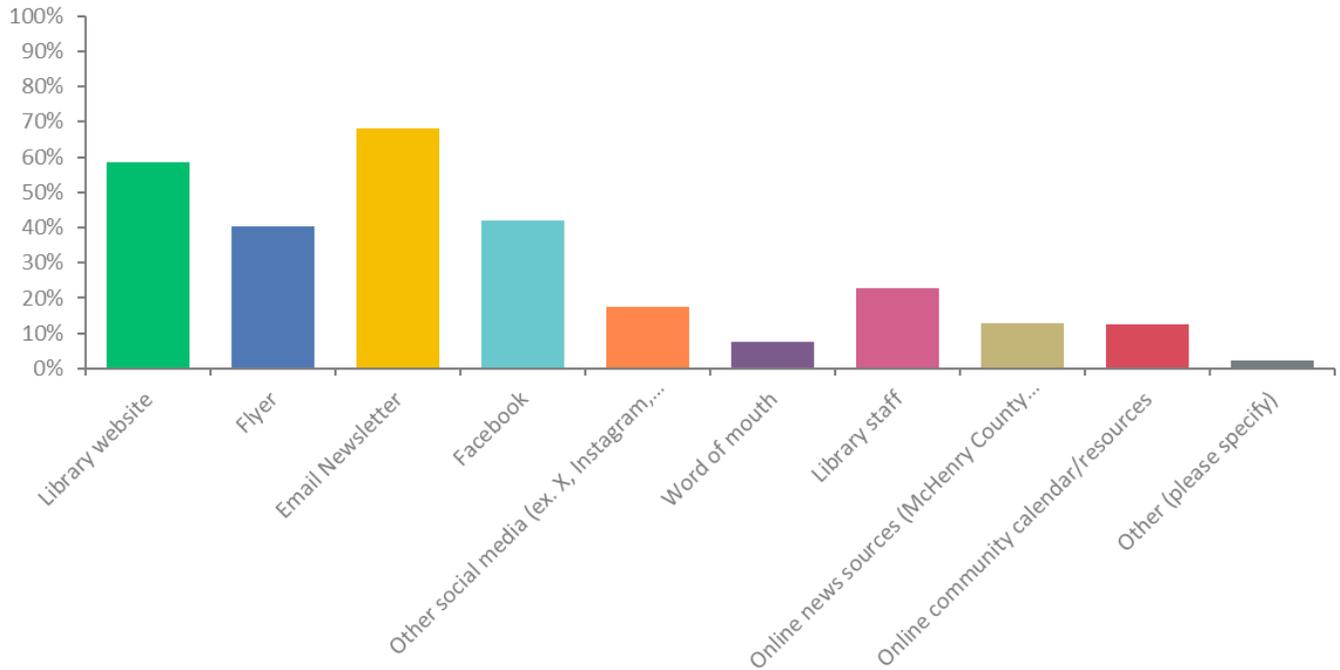
### Which library do you use most often?



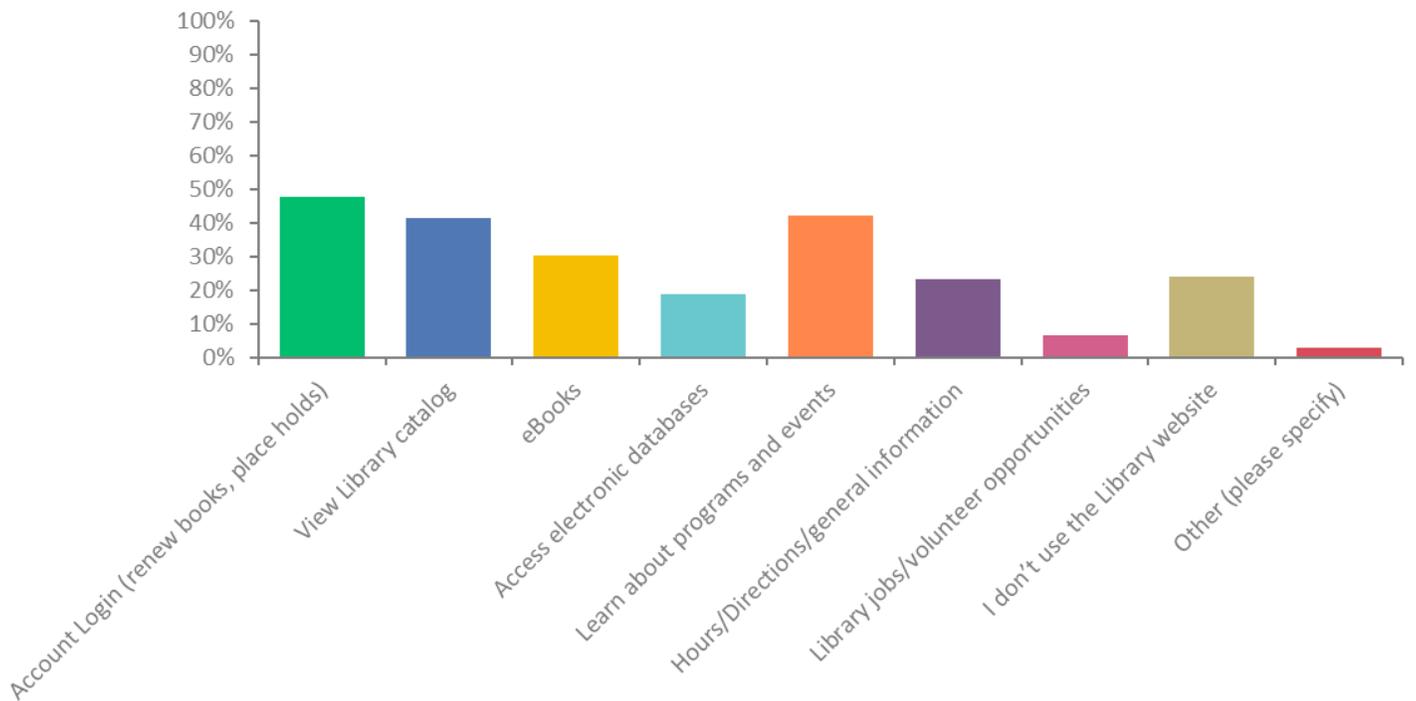
### If you do not use the Nippersink Public Library District regularly, why not? (Check all that apply.)



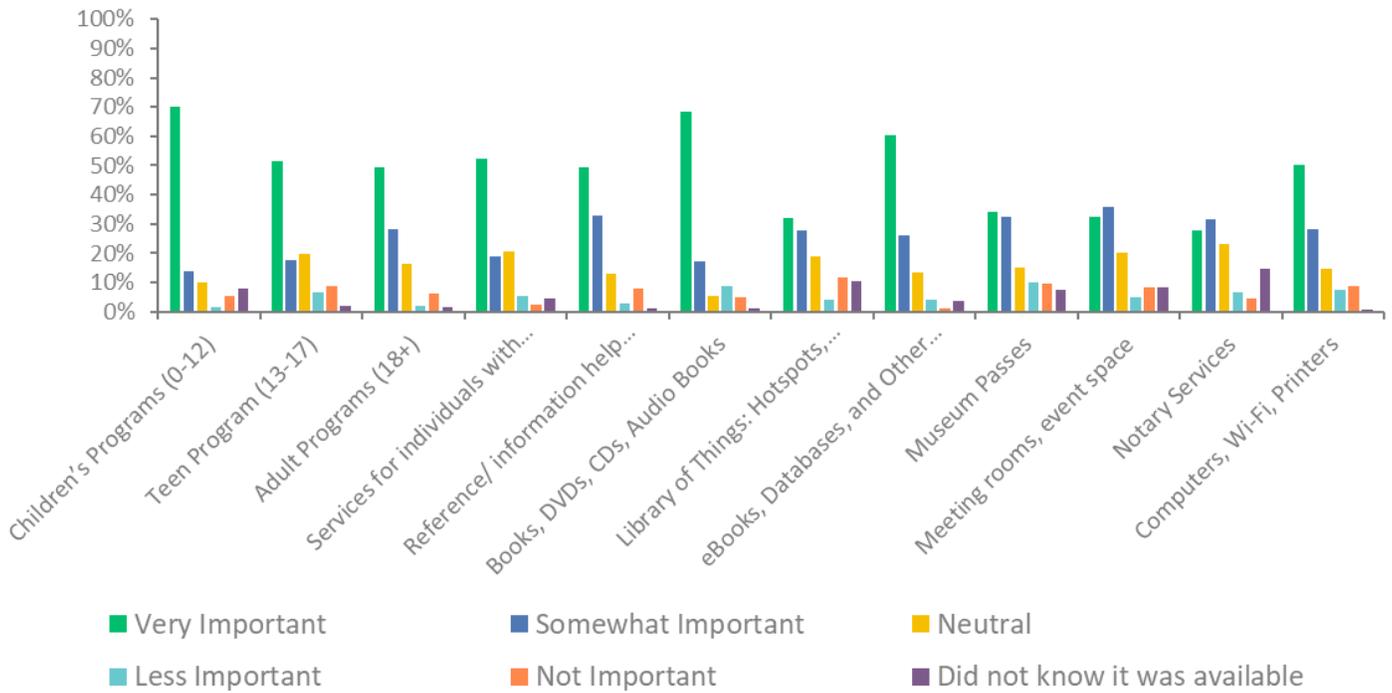
**How would you like to learn about the programs and services at the Nippersink Public Library District? (Check all that apply.)**



**What do you use the Nippersink Public Library District website for? (Check all that apply.)**



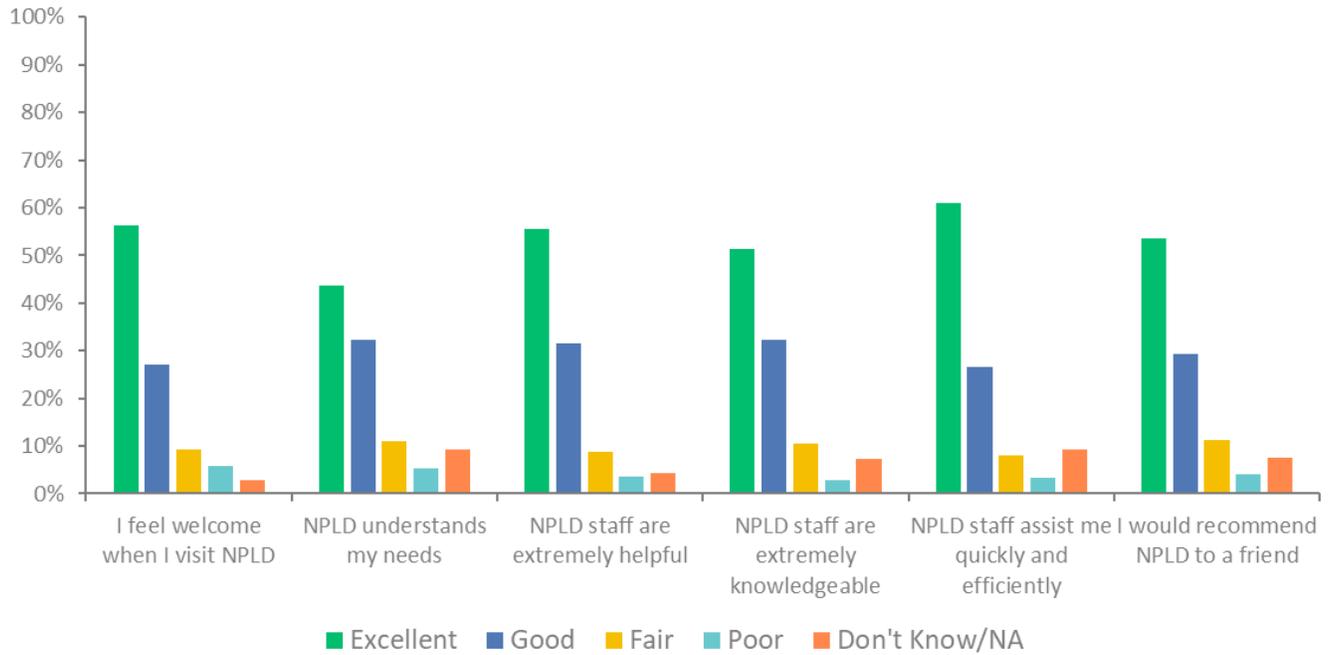
## Please rate the importance of the current Nippersink Public Library District services that are provided



## How would you rate the Nippersink Public Library District's Library Service?



### How would you rate the Nippersink Public Library District's Customer Service?



### Please select up to 5 program topics that interest you the most.

