Accessibility in Public Libraries Research Project

National Network for Equitable Library Services (NNELS) and the Centre of Equitable Library Access (CELA) in partnership with eBOUND

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# Executive Summary

Accessible books are only accessible when supplied using accessible methods for patrons with disabilities to have an inclusive experience. To achieve equitable access, publishers, content creators, and libraries must work together to create and provide these accessible materials. In addition, library staff need awareness and training on accessibility to help users find content and provide accessible mainstream library services.

The National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), in partnership with eBOUND, undertook the Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre Project (PLARC) to create a consolidated nation-wide Library Accessibility Resource centre (website). The website focuses on awareness and training for library staff to increase the understanding and the importance of accessibility in digital books and the interfaces used to find and read them.

The first stage of this project (February-September 2021), discussed in greater detail throughout this report, consisted of:

* the creation of an Advisory Committee composed of 12 members from all sizes of libraries -- large and small, urban and rural;
* a nationwide survey for library staff on accessibility in the library;
* design of the first training module;
* creation of a website that consolidates training resources, including new and existing curated ones

The advisory committee provided input and feedback that informed the survey, learning outcomes, accessibility resources, website, and training resource creation.

The survey for library staff aimed to understand the accessibility needs of their services. The survey had five hundred seventy-seven responses from all provinces and territories and staff working in all library areas. The questions focused on what library professionals currently know about accessibility in their library and what areas they would like to increase their knowledge. The survey data revealed significant knowledge gaps:

* 77% of respondents indicated that their library website is not accessible, or they do not know if it is accessible;
* 72% of responses show a lack of awareness about metadata fields and to what extent their library catalogue/search is accessible;
* 50% of responses exhibit a lack of understanding or lack of accessible search capabilities

It was clear from survey responses that there is a need for foundational knowledge about accessibility. We believe it is essential to have training resources created by users with lived experience. The first training module developed by the project team (including people with lived experience of print disability) is “Accessibility and Disability Training” to help create this foundation.

The [Library Accessibility Resource Centre](https://accessiblelibraries.ca/) website will host all the resources created as part of this project and relevant external resources curated by the project team to support and promote accessibility in libraries.

# Introduction

The Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC) project, funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Book Fund, is a collaboration co-led by the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), in partnership with eBOUND. This project aims to create a consolidated nationwide online Accessibility Resource Centre focused on awareness and training for library staff to understand the importance of accessibility in digital books and the interfaces used to find them.

The goals of this project are to:

1. Build a consolidated nation-wide Library Accessibility Resource Centre focusing on accessibility awareness and training for public libraries;
2. Help ensure the availability, procurement, and delivery of accessible books and content across Canada;
3. Engage with library staff to develop awareness and training in accessibility.

# Context

In a 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, more than 6 million Canadians responded that they had a disability (22% of Canada’s population). However, the study noted that this number is likely higher (Government of Canada, 2021). Public libraries in Canada have always strived to offer services to disadvantaged and marginalized populations. However, it can be challenging to provide accessible mainstream services for people with disabilities due to a lack of knowledge or familiarity about accessibility and internal factors (like funding) in public libraries.

Accessible books are only accessible when supplied using accessible methods for people with disabilities to have an inclusive experience. In addition to electronic content available through reading platforms such as Overdrive and Hoopla, many libraries have accessible materials available for patrons such as DAISY CDs, large print books, audiobooks, and braille, often provided by specialized organizations (like NNELS, CELA, and BAnQ). When libraries rely on these organizations to supply accessible materials separate from their library services to the general population, it can often lead to a lack of consideration for accessibility in public libraries. Providing accessible books is excellent, but if patrons with disabilities cannot access them due to inaccessible services or are unaware of their existence, there is a failure in the process. Engaging with library staff and providing learning/training resources about accessibility will bridge the gap between the accessible materials they offer and patrons who want that content. When public library staff is engaged with accessibility in their library and have a basic understanding of accessible content and services, libraries will significantly improve the experience for everyone.

Part of supplying accessible books for patrons with disabilities includes working with publishers and libraries to publish and provide accessible materials. Publishers need to be supported and encouraged to create accessible materials (including accessibility metadata and alternative text in books), which will involve active support from libraries and other stakeholders working with publishers on behalf of patrons. To accomplish this, library staff need awareness and training on accessibility to provide mainstream library services for all readers, including helping users find accessible content.

# Terminology and Definitions

The terminology and definitions outlined in this section used throughout the project report can be referred to this section if/when necessary.

As outlined in the *Accessible Publishing Research Project* by the Association of Canadian Publishers et al. (2020), there are two language types often used:

1. person-first language,
2. and identity-first language.

Person-first language puts the person before the disability and emphasizes their humanity and individuality before specifying their disability (e.g., people with print disabilities). On the other hand, identity-first language defines people by their disability by placing the disability before them (e.g., print disabled persons). This language dehumanizes some, though it is important to note that many people consider their disabilities a positive part of who they are and prefer identity-first language to highlight their membership in a particular disability group. We respect the decisions of all groups about the type of language they prefer. However, for this report, we have chosen to use the person-first language (also used by the government of Canada, p.135).

“Disability” is a challenging term to define, as it needs to be broad enough to cover all disabilities. However, the Accessible Canada Act describes it as:

“Means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”

Different disabilities belong beneath the term “disability.” They are:

* The term “print disability” includes visual (blindness or partial sight loss), physical (cannot physically hold a book), and cognitive (comprehension and dyslexia) disabilities that make it difficult for people to read (NNELS, 2013; CELA, n.d.; Canadian Copyright Act, 2021, p. 15).
* “Hearing disability” includes those who have partial hearing loss and those who are deaf (a person not able to hear at all) (World Health Organization, 2021, *Deafness and hearing loss*).
* “Intellectual or Cognitive disability” includes people who have a greater difficulty completing mental tasks than others (those with autism, Down syndrome, and ADD are considered a part of this group) (WebAIM, 2020, *Introduction*).
* “Mobility and Physical disability” includes people who have limited or no movement in one or more of their limbs (as a result of injury, ageing, disease, and/or genetics) (Accessibility.com, n.d., *Mobility and physical disabilities*).

If this report has not described the disability that you identify with, the project team apologizes and wishes to reassure all readers that we strive to include all disabilities in the planning and creating accessibility and training resources.

The term “Accessibility” means that the services you provide are easily used and accessed by all patrons and that there are no barriers that would hinder or prevent people with disabilities (print, hearing, cognitive, and/or physical) from using your facilities, programs, and services. Accessibility includes providing direct and indirect access to libraries, such as making sure your library building has a ramp for wheelchair users or your website is usable with assistive technologies. This definition, created for the survey in this report, will define the term for this project.

Related to the term “Accessibility” are “Inclusive” and “Universal Design.” “Inclusive” means designing something for a broad range of people, and “… requires adequate knowledge of the conditions of all Canadians, including those with disabilities. Research is needed on the social, economic, and participation issues that affect the lives of people with disabilities and their families” (Government of Canada, 2013, *Research and Knowledge Development*). The term “Universal Design” refers to an environment (physical, digital, learning materials, etc.) that is accessible for all people regardless of disability, age, and/or size (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.). Considering the needs of all patrons when designing learning materials will only improve the readability and usability of those accessibility resources.

# Background

Previous projects explored the relationship between accessible books and how patrons with disabilities (specifically those with print disabilities) access that content. These projects informed and evolved into the current PLARC project report.

## Accessible Publishing Research Project

The “Accessible Publishing Research Project” analyzed the current landscape of Canada's production and distribution of accessible digital books. A recommendation that emerged from this project was the need to develop a national strategy for the awareness and training around accessible books in the publishing industry and related sectors. In addition, the project team determined that public libraries are an essential related sector and that helping them with training and awareness will improve the user experience for patrons with disabilities when they search for accessible books (Association of Canadian Publishers et al., 2020). There were two parts to this project that impacted this report, as described below.

### How do YOU Read? Study

The primary purpose of the “How do YOU read” study (HDYR) was to learn about the reading habits, needs, and preferences of people with print disabilities in Canada. This study found that “the vast majority of survey respondents get books from their public library or from a library organization that provides shared services for people with print disabilities (such as NNELS or CELA)" (Association of Canadian Publishers et al., 2020, 14). The HDYR study provided accessibility recommendations from respondent data for public libraries to best serve patrons with disabilities. They include:

* Increase the availability and selection of accessible materials, specifically increasing the number of accessible Canadian books.
* Provide training for library staff to ensure that they can provide accessible services for all patrons. Educate library staff about accessible reading platforms and formats so that they can help patrons access accessible books.
* Ensure that both physical and digital library spaces are accessible. This includes making sure that any digital technologies offered to patrons are accessible.
* Strive to make library programs, such as book clubs and social events accessible for all patrons.
* Ensure that assistive technologies are available for patrons (on reading devices and library computers).
* Consider adjusting library rules for patrons with disabilities when applicable. This may include longer lending periods, letting patrons with disabilities borrow more items, and/or providing priority access to accessible formats (Association of Canadian Publishers et al., 2020, 16; 88-89).

As identified by the HDYR survey, the PLARC survey[[1]](#footnote-1) and the PLARC advisory committee, both libraries and patrons with print disabilities are asking for the same thing: accessible library services. Therefore, the training materials will utilize the results of the PLARC study and previous research on accessing and providing accessible books to create and develop educational materials. In addition, the training resources will focus on areas that patrons identified libraries needed to improve upon to have an inclusive library experience.

Not all people with disabilities are aware of their disability or the services that are available for them. As commented on in the HDYR study when one respondent stated: “Today I found out that I have a new disability. It’s called a print disability, and I can get some help for it” (Association of Canadian Publishers et al., 2020, 38). Comments such as this one reinforce the need for inclusive design. It may be a surprise to learn that many of the convenient design features in our everyday environment were initially created for people with disabilities, even though they are enjoyed by everyone today. Some examples include but are not limited to buttons to open heavy doors, curb-cuts originally meant for people who get around on wheels, Siri, audiobooks, and OXO Good Grips. These innovations show that inclusive design is beneficial for everyone, despite living with a disability or not. Inclusive design includes reading materials, reading platforms, services, as well as digital and physical spaces. Supplying library staff with training resources to educate them on different disabilities and how to serve people with disabilities will help all readers, thus creating an inclusive library.

### Accessibility of eBooks and Audiobooks: An Awareness and Training Strategy for Public Libraries in Canada

The “Accessibility of eBooks and Audiobooks: An Awareness and Training Strategy for Public Libraries in Canada” was also part of the “Accessible Publishing Research Project.” This study aimed to identify public libraries' awareness and training needs across Canada, focusing on ebooks and audiobooks and how to integrate and incorporate accessibility into all services. The study drew on interviews with a cross-section of people working in accessibility services or collections, representing libraries and library organizations of different sizes, locations (rural/urban, and from various provinces and territories), and type of service (Association of Canadian Publishers et al., 2020). Key themes emerged from these interviews and were used to inform the awareness and training strategy recommendations.

Additionally, this study reviewed the accessibility training resources that currently exist for public libraries. This review discovered that while some organizations have substantial training resources and/or accessibility policies, none offer a complete list of comprehensive training resources well suited for Canadian public libraries. Therefore, further research into available accessibility resources was required, with the results provided in this study. The work plan created as part of this project guided the planning and development of PLARC. The environmental scan of accessibility resources and the survey questions for PLARC were constructed based on the research in the “Accessibility of eBooks and Audiobooks: An Awareness and Training Strategy for Public Libraries in Canada” report.

# Advisory Committee for PLARC

The PLARC Project Team assembled an advisory committee to ensure that the library community, and other related stakeholders, were consulted and had a significant voice in this project. The advisory committee members consist of volunteers from organizations across Canada who hold various job positions and represent different library types (regional, provincial, indigenous, etc.) and library sizes (small, medium, large, etc.). The advisory committee members are listed as follows along with their job title and library/organization:

* Colette Poitras, Manager of Indigenous Public Library Outreach, Alberta Library Services
* Cynthia Gatto, Manager of Collection Development; Accessibility Committee, Halifax Public Libraries
* Dean Kelly, Manager of Support Services, Fraser Valley Regional Library
* Feather Maracle, CEO/Director of Library Services, Six Nations Public Library
* Geoffrey Allen, Collections Manager, Regina Public Library
* Janine Hoff, Community Library Literacy Coordinator, Northwest Territories Public Library Services
* Joan Ransom, Stonewall Branch Librarian, South Interlake Regional Library
* Rachel Young, Library Supervisor, Mississauga Public Library
* Rina Hadziev, Executive Director, British Columbia Library Association
* Sharon Day, eBOUND Board Member/Manager, Branch Services and Collections, Edmonton Public Library
* Steve Till-Rogers, Director of Technology Services, Edmonton Public Library
* Wendy Wayling, Children’s Librarian, Bibliothèque publique de Westmount

When recruiting members for the Advisory Committee, the project team sent an email detailing the extent of the commitment. The Advisory Committee is responsible for:

* advise and share their expertise and unique experience relating to their job and accessibility,
* review the documents and data,
* share the survey with their network and associates to promote the research project,
* participate in monthly meetings from April to July (this timeline was extended to September).

All committee members agreed to this commitment.

The advisory committee provided input and feedback that informed the survey, learning outcomes, accessibility resources, website, and training resources. For example, during the environmental scan, the advisory committee suggested that the cost is considered for each accessibility resource as funding is a serious consideration for public libraries. They also reviewed the survey questions providing feedback and edits and adding new questions that helped create a more robust survey for participants. Upon survey completion, the advisory committee reviewed data summaries. The advisory committee emphasized the relevance of starting from a level playing field, resulting in the creation of the “Accessibility 101” training resources as a necessary first and primary learning outcome for this project. The advisory committee wanted library staff to be prepared to help any client, so awareness and education are essential. The advisory committee had a direct and vital impact on all stages of this project that improved the results and plans for research moving forward.

# Survey

The following section will do a deeper dive into the survey and explore the results.

## Scope

The project team conducted a survey focusing on what library professionals currently know about accessibility in their library and what they want to know more about to understand better their information needs in and around the accessibility of their current services. This data collected is used to plan and design training resources for library staff to improve their services and access accessible books for all patrons. The project team will share the accessibility and training resources on the Accessible Library Resource website.

To learn as much as possible about all areas of public libraries, the survey was open to all library staff, including library directors, librarians, library technicians, library pages, organization staff that support libraries, and many more. The goal of this study was to receive feedback from between 250 and 500 respondents. In total, 577 completed surveys with a 57% completion rate of the total surveys started were used for data extraction.

## Promotion and Communication

The PLARC survey was promoted in various ways to reach as many respondents who work in public libraries in as many varying roles as possible, including digitally through social media (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) and several newsletters and ListServs for library staff across the country. Relying on the connections of the project team and advisory committee, many libraries were also encouraged to take part in the survey through direct messages.

## Online Survey

The project team developed the survey questions from the key themes and data from the previous study: “Accessibility of eBooks and Audiobooks: An Awareness and Training Strategy for Public Libraries in Canada”. From this research and feedback from the advisory committee, the project team created questions to identify public library staff's current knowledge about accessibility in their libraries.

The project team divided the survey into multiple sections, covering different front and backend services in public libraries. The survey included but was not limited to questions about:

* the accessibility in library programs,
* how accessible public library websites are,
* and how accessible the public library workplace is.

The project team has listed all survey questions in Appendix A.

Survey respondents did not fill out all sections of the survey. What they did and did not fill out depended on the library role they selected in the demographic information. For example, library directors filled out most sections but left the “Library technicians and assistants” section empty. As a result, only staff identified as library technicians or assistants completed the “library technicians and assistants” section.

The project team used the software “Simple Survey” to conduct this study. The project team chose Simple Survey because it met the following criteria:

* a Canadian-owned company
* supports the creation of a single bilingual survey (in French and English),
* keeps survey data in the country (servers located in Canada, so will follow Canadian privacy legislation),
* data analysis
* WCAG 2.0 compliant

NNELS’ accessibility testers reviewed Simple Survey to ensure it was indeed fully accessible with assistive technologies.

## Data Analysis

The analysis methods available in Simple Survey were utilized to make reports from the results, which were reviewed and analyzed for patterns and themes. This work included comparing different fields together to understand further the data (e.g., the different responses between library sizes). In addition, any qualitative data found in open-ended questions, “Comments” and “Other” fields, were collected in a spreadsheet. A content analysis of the data was then performed, categorizing all qualitative data to identify study themes further.

Within the study results, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number for readability and clarity. In addition, some questions within the survey allowed respondents to select more than one option, so the total numbers will not always add up to 100%. The data analyzed in this report are from fully submitted survey responses.

## Study Results

This section will explore the results of this study.

### Demographics of Participants

The demographic information collected about participants directly correlates to the libraries they work in or for. Demographics include the province/territory/treaty territory they operate in, the type of library, the library size (based on the population size that their library serves), and their role (i.e., their job/position).

The survey did not collect personal information (name, gender, email, age, etc.) to ensure that all participants remain anonymous so that they may answer the survey honestly.

Participants in this survey represented all provinces and territories. The lowest number of participants is Nunavut with 0.17% and the largest percentage in Ontario with 27%. The map below outlines the number of participants from each province/territory. The participation percentages for the Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut are not rounded to the nearest whole number (they have been rounded to the nearest half a percentage) because they had such a low response rate.

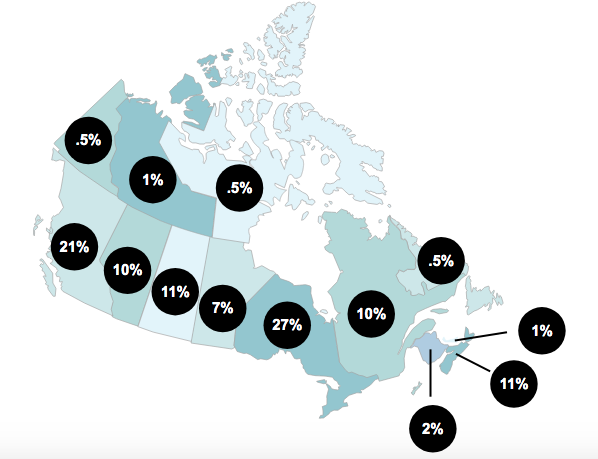


Image 1. A map of Canada with the percentage of survey respondents that work in that province/territory.

Participants in this survey were also given the option to declare what treaty territory/homeland they work in, with 8% of respondents answering this question. Below are the top responses (the percentage reflects the total number of options within the “Treaty Territory/Homeland” category).

* 28% stated that they work in Treaty 6 territory
* 9% stated that they work in Treaty 1 territory
* 9% stated that they work in Treaty 5 territory
* 9% stated that they work in Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories
* 7% stated that they work in Treaty 4 territory
* 7% stated that they work in Treaty 10 territory

The respondents for this survey were asked what type of public library they work in. The non-public library “types” were included in this question to account for respondents that support public libraries.

| Library Type | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Municipal | 66% |
| County | 3% |
| Regional | 16% |
| Indigenous | 1% |
| Rural | 11% |
| Urban | 14% |
| Provincial/Territorial Library | 5% |
| An organization that supports public libraries | 1% |
| Other Library (e.g. Academic, K-12, Post Secondary, Special Library, etc.) | 2% |

Note: the “Other” category for this question (3% of the total respondents) mainly was made up of the response “Public” (2%). The project team made the error by not explicitly asking what type of “public” library they worked in in the question.

The survey then prompted respondents to specify what size library they work in (defined by population size). This data allowed us to know if larger libraries (those that serve a bigger population) are more accessible and/or if they know more about accessibility than those that serve a smaller population.

| Library Size | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Very Small (serving a population of 20,000 or less) | 31% |
| Small (serving a population of 20,001 to 50,000) | 15% |
| Medium (serving a population of 50,001 to 100,000) | 18% |
| Large (serving a population of 100,001 to 250,000) | 18% |
| Very Large (serving a population of 250,001 or more) | 19% |

To learn how accessible the entire public library and workplace are, the project team wanted responses from various library employees. Therefore, each library role in the survey had at least two respondents, with the lowest being “Library Volunteer” (0.35%) and the highest being “Library Technician or Assistant” (28%). The library roles are listed below.

| Library Role | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Library Director | 13% |
| Library Branch or Department Manager | 12% |
| Reference/Adult Services Librarian | 7% |
| Collections Librarian | 2% |
| Metadata/Technical Services Librarian | 2% |
| Children's/Teen Services Librarian | 4% |
| Community Librarian | 6% |
| Rural Librarian | 3% |
| Library Technician or Assistant | 28% |
| Library Page | 3% |
| Circulation Staff | 14% |
| Library Volunteer | 0.35% |
| IT Manager/Systems | 1% |
| Accessibility Specialist | 1% |
| Communications | 1% |
| Human Resources | 1% |
| Staff from an organization that supports public libraries | 1% |

The survey was conducted in both English and French. French respondents (those who filled out the survey in French) made up 9% of the overall survey responses. More will be discussed about the differences between French and English respondents within data comparisons later in the report.

### Accessibility in Public Libraries

This survey section contained questions about the accessible content and accessible features present in the respondent’s library. Qualitative data (from the “other” category) will be added to provide further context to the respondent’s answers.

Respondents said that the libraries they work in have different accessible print and/or digital content available for patrons. The most popular items were “audiobooks” (96%) and “large print formats” (95%), and the least popular items available for patrons were “electronic braille (BRF)” (10%) and “books for dyslexic readers” (27%). Only 2% of respondents said they “didn’t know” if their libraries had accessible content.

When asked if respondents wanted to learn more about accessible content available in the public libraries, many stated that they did want to learn more (74%). While 17% stated they did not want to learn more and 9% said that they didn’t know it they wanted to learn more.

The specific options that respondents wanted to know more about accessible content were all selected by more than 50% of respondents. The option “I don't want to know more about accessible content options and formats” is much lower at 13%. The large number of respondents that wanted to know more about accessible content indicated the great need to support the creation of these books for patrons.

| Accessible Content Options and Formats | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Different formats | 52% |
| Accessibility guidelines | 56% |
| Accessible Reading Platforms | 61% |
| Assistive technologies | 66% |
| I don’t want to know more about accessible content options and formats | 13% |
| Other | 5% |

The “Other” option for this question includes comments about what they would like to know more about (not in the list) and qualitative data about their willingness to learn more about accessibility. 5% of respondents selected this response, including:

* “Promoting accessible resources.”
* “future of accessible materials – we aren’t going to depend on publishers are we?”
* “I would like to better understand how to utilize the content we currently have.”
* “I already know much, but always willing to learn more.”

The importance of accessible books and materials and the interest in future development and use are essential parts of the research. Libraries, publishers, and stakeholders need to work together to create accessible materials for all.

The library role that had the highest rate of response for “I don’t want to know more about accessible content” was Community Librarian (21%), followed by Accessibility Specialists (20%), Library Directors (15%), and then Reference/Adult Services (15%). Only one library role did not select this option (0%), which was Staff from an organization that supports public libraries.

To better understand the services that libraries provide patrons and if the services are accessible, the project team also needed to know the delivery language(s) of services. In this question, survey participants answered if their library provides services in “English” (95%), “French” (40%), and/or “Other” (13%). The “Other” category included languages like “Chinese” (3% with a combination of respondent answers including: “Cantonese”, “Mandarin”, and “Chinese”), “Hindi” (1%), and “Spanish” (1%).

The project team then surveyed respondents about what library services they believed needed to be made more accessible. Again, all options (except the “Other” option, which is 6%) were selected by 45% or more respondents showing the project team that many thought their library's services should be made more accessible.

| Library services that need to be made more accessible | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Reference services and reader's advisory | 53% |
| Borrowing physical materials | 50% |
| Borrowing digital materials | 53% |
| Computer with Internet access | 47% |
| Library programming | 64% |
| Library professional development | 45% |
| Other | 6% |

Beneath this question, in the “Other” category, respondents stated other library services that they thought needed to be made more accessible for their patrons, including:

* “Costed services like photocopying and faxing.”
* “Marketing of accessible materials.”
* “accès et animation pour les handicaps invisibles comme l'autisme chez les jeunes.” [“access and animation for invisible disabilities such as autism in youth.”]
* “communicating info in other ways that isn't online, delivery of info to seniors is a challenge, many do not use computers for various reasons; money, economic.”

For the question “Library services that need to be made more accessible”, the library role of Accessibility Specialists had the highest response rate percentage under all options. The options “reference services,” “borrowing digital content,” “borrowing physical content,” “library programming,” and “library professional development” were selected by 80% of Accessibility Specialist respondents. The option “Computer with Internet access” was chosen by 100% of Accessibility Specialists.

To support public libraries in making their services more accessible, the project team asked them to select the resources they would prefer for this subject matter. The most popular selections were “Webinars” (59%), “Guidelines” (54%), and “Toolkits” (54%). Therefore, the resources created and curated for public libraries should be in the preferred formats selected by respondents.

The project team asked if respondents preferred a specific training module to learn about accessibility in public libraries. The training module that was the most popular was “Self-paced” (73%), followed by “Individual learning” (51%).

| Training Modules | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Self paced | 73% |
| Live | 37% |
| Individual learning | 51% |
| Group learning | 36% |
| Reading | 26% |
| Interactive | 42% |
| Train the trainer | 24% |

To understand more about what the survey respondents wanted to learn about in the training modules and resources, the project team asked respondents to select different categories of accessibility features. Represented in the categories are general facets of public libraries.

| Accessibility Features in Libraries | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Digital content (EPUB, DAISY, Audiobooks, Electronic braille, etc.) | 67% |
| Physical content (large print, braille, talking books, etc.) | 37% |
| Communications and website (accessibility standards, information architecture, personalizing website view, etc.) | 60% |
| Catalogue (metadata, accessible search design, etc.) | 38% |
| Assistive technologies (screen readers, magnification software, braille display, etc.) | 67% |
| Built environment (requirements, hall spaces, toilets, signage, etc.) | 39% |
| Library programs (outreach programs, reading days, advertising for programs, etc.) | 70% |

In addition to learning what respondents want to know more about, the project team asked them what training they think library staff (including themselves and their coworkers) needed to serve patrons with disabilities best. Again, a large number of the survey respondents (87%) said that library staff, in general, need to learn more about how to help people with disabilities in any library service.

| Training for Library Staff | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| How to help people with disabilities access library services | 87% |
| Sensitivity training | 65% |
| How to use assistive technologies | 81% |
| Information about accessibility in your library's facilities | 57% |

Library accessibility experts believe that library staff need further training to provide accessible service. The library role, Accessibility specialists, had a high rate of response for each option when asked, “What training do you think public library staff should receive to best serve patrons with print disabilities?”. All options for this question were selected by 100% of Accessibility specialists, except for “Sensitivity Training”, which was selected by 80% of Accessibility specialists.

### Accessible Library Programs

In this section, the project team asked about library programs and how accessible they are for patrons. The questions are about the different types of library programs they offer if accessible and what libraries need to create accessible library programs.

The respondents replied that their library offers patrons many different library programs. All options when asked what library programs they offer were above 60%. The least popular choice was “Digital literacy” (65%), and the highest or most popular was “Children’s programs” (96%). The other two options, “Adult programs” (92%) and “Youth programs” (85%), were both very popular as well. The “Other” option for this question was selected by 8%, which was used to discuss library programming that did not fall in the previously mentioned categories. Of this 8%, 35% used this option to state that their library did not provide programming or was unsure if their library provided programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other items beneath the “Other” category include:

* “arts and crafts”
* “maker programs”
* “senior programs”

After establishing that most respondents working in libraries provide library programming, they were asked if those programs were accessible. The majority of respondents (36%) answered, “I don’t know” to this question, followed by “Some” (28%), “No” (21%), and “Yes” (14%).

Rural Librarians had the highest percentage beneath the options for both “Yes” (19%) and “I don’t know” (63%). Accessibility Specialists had the highest percentage beneath “Some” (80%), and Staff from an organization that supports public libraries was the highest library role percentage under the option “No” (50%).

If the libraries had accessible library programs, respondents were asked to list the programs at their library that are accessible. If respondents answered “No” or “I don’t know” to the previous question, they were asked respondents to respond N/A (not applicable). Examples of accessible library programming include but are not limited to:

* “Home Library service”
* “Virtual programming with captions enabled”
* “Story-time”
* “Book Clubs”

The number of respondents who answered “N/A” (“S/O” for French) or “I don’t know” when asked what library programs are accessible was 55%. This result was 2% lower than those who responded similarly to the previous question. The most popular accessible programs offered by libraries included but are not limited to:

* “Storytimes”
* “Book clubs”
* “Virtual programming”
* “Home Services”

In this question about library programs, the number of respondents who answered “N/A” or “I don’t know” was 30%.

The survey then asked if respondents and their libraries would be willing to share their accessible programs to be added to a collaborative resource website, most responded, “I don’t know” (60%) to this question, followed by “Yes” (28%) and “No” (13%). Collecting and sharing crowd-sourced accessible programs would help others create accessible library programs from their examples.

To create accessible library programs, respondents were asked what resources could be provided to help make sure their library programs were accessible. The most popular resources were “Guidelines” (63%) and “Accessible Programming” (57%).

### Hardware, Software, and Assistive Technologies

In the *Hardware, Software, and Assistive Technologies* questions, the project team focused on discovering how accessible the technologies provided by libraries are. These technologies include things like computers, printers, word processing software, and assistive technologies.

When asked if the public use hardware was accessible, most replied “Yes” (40%) and “Some are accessible” (43%). Only 8% of respondents said “No,” and 9% replied, “I don’t know”. The same question was asked about the public use software in public libraries, with most also replying “Yes” (41%) and “Some are accessible” (36%). For this question, only 8% responded “No,” and 15% said, “I don’t know.”

The library roles that replied “Yes” the public library hardware in their library was accessible most frequently were Rural Librarians (56%), followed by IT Managers/Systems (50%), Reference/Adult Services Librarian (49%), and then Community Librarian (45%). The library roles that replied “Some” of the public library hardware is accessible were Accessibility Specialists (60%) followed by Metadata/Technical Services (56%), IT Managers/Systems (50%), and Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (50%). The library roles that replied “No” that the public library hardware where they work are not accessible most frequently was Accessibility Specialists (40%), followed by Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (25%) and Rural Librarian (19%). All other library roles percentages were below 10%. Metadata/Technical Services knew the least (selecting “I don’t know”) about the accessibility of their public library hardware at 33%, followed by Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (25%) and Collections Librarian (21%).

The library roles that had the highest rate of response that the software was accessible in their library (selecting the “Yes” option) were IT Managers/Systems (63%), followed by Rural Librarians (56%) and Library Directors (51%). Those who selected “Some” most frequently were Accessibility Specialists (60%), followed by Reference/Adult Services Librarian (54%) and Library Branch or Department Manager (42%). For the “No” option, the library roles that had the highest percentage of selection was Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (25%), followed by Accessibility Specialists (20%), Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (11%), and Library Branch or Department Manager (11%). Finally, for the option “I don’t know” if the software their public library provides is accessible, the library roles that had the highest rate of response was Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (33%), followed by Collections Librarian (29%), and Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (25%). The percentages for this and the previous paragraph list the highest percentages beneath each option by library role, not necessarily the highest percentage for the individual library role.

After determining if the hardware/software was accessible in their libraries, the project team asked respondents what support they offer to patrons to make the hardware/software accessible. Most replied that they depend on “Librarian assistance” (88%) for accessibility support, which means that library staff training is crucial.

| Accessibility Support for Library Hardware/Software | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Librarian assistance | 88% |
| Guides | 16% |
| Accessible signs | 31% |
| Provide assistive technologies | 43% |
| We do not offer accessibility support | 7% |
| Other | 6% |

In the “Other” category, many said that they were unsure of what accessibility supports they provided (12% of those who selected the “Other” category). Other comments include:

* That what accessibility support they do have “…is minimal and needs improvement.”
* “ensure all technologies (self check, computers, etc.) have height and or width adjustable options, space for assistive devises, chairs both with and without arm rests and wheels.”

The library role that responded most frequently to the option that their library does not provide accessible support was Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (22%), followed by Accessibility Specialists (20%), Children’s/Teen Services Librarian (12%), and Library Director (10%). All other library roles were less than 10% for this option.

To ensure that the hardware and software are accessible in public libraries, the project team asked what resources the respondents would prefer to see for this subject matter. The most popular options were “Guidelines” (75%), “Checklists” (61%), and “Toolkits” (55%). Further suggestions by respondents in the “Other” category (7% of respondents selected this option) include:

* “consultation/advisory from people with disabilities.”
* “Best practices.”
* “Funding.”

The project team also asked what resources respondents would need to support their hardware/software accessibility updates. The most popular options for that were “Guidelines” (77%), “Checklists” (73%), and “Links to relevant updates” (66%).

Moving on from the hardware/software found in public libraries, the project team asked respondents if their libraries provided assistive technologies for patrons to use. Most respondents selected “Yes” (56%) that they offered assistive technologies, followed by “No” (26%) and “I don’t know” (17%). The next question asked was what assistive technologies they do provide.

| Assistive Technologies | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Screen readers like JAWS installed on one or more computers | 26% |
| Magnification software installed on one or more computers | 42% |
| A refreshable braille display | 1% |
| An adaptive keyboard or voice recognition for patrons with mobility disabilities | 24% |
| My library doesn’t have assistive technologies | 25% |
| I don’t know if my library has assistive technologies | 18% |
| Other | 23% |

Magnification is the most frequently selected assistive technology libraries provide for patrons. In the “Other” category, many respondents (32% of the 23% of those who chose this option) said that they provided patrons with “DAISY players.”

The library roles with the highest rate of response that “Yes” their library provides assistive technologies for patrons were Accessibility Specialist (100%), followed by IT Managers/Systems (88%), and Reference/Adult Services Librarian (79%). For the option “No”, the library roles that selected this were Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (63%), followed by Rural Librarian (50%) and Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (44%). The library roles who responded “I don’t know” if their library provides assistive technologies were Collections Librarian (29%), followed by Rural Librarian (25%) and Children’s/Teen Services Librarian (24%).

The final question in this section is about what resources would help respondents learn more about assistive technologies. The most popular resources for assistive technologies are “Guidelines” (69%), “Webinars” (58%), “Tutorials” (55%), and “Checklists” (50%).

### Accessibility of Public Library Websites and/or App

In the *Accessibility of Public Library Websites and/or App* section, the project team wanted to know more about how accessible a library’s website and/or app is. This includes asking questions about the Integrated Library Systems (ILS), and the online catalogue/search system provided for users to access the content. The project team inquired if the website/app was accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A guidelines (Cadwell et al., 2008, *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*).

The first few questions in this section focus on measuring the accessibility of the respondent's library website, with the majority of respondents replying, “I don’t know” (68%) when asked if their library website was accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards, followed by “Yes” (12%), “Somewhat” (12%), and “No” (9%).

The majority of all library roles selected the option “I don’t know” when asked if their library was accessible according to WCAG 2.0 A standards. The only library role that chose less than 50% of this option was Reference/Adult Services Librarian (29%). The upper range spanned from 50% (IT Mangers/Systems) to 88% (Rural Librarian).

The next question was what accessibility features are available on the respondent's library website. Again, the most frequent answer for this question is “I don’t know” (53%). The two most selected accessibility features were that the “website is logical and easy to use” (42%) and “adjust the web page text size” (31%). The list of accessibility features came from the WCAG 2.0 guidelines (Cadwell et al., 2008, *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*).

| Accessibility Features in Library Website | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Website design is logical and easy to use | 42% |
| You can change the web page contrast settings | 14% |
| You can adjust the web page text size | 31% |
| You can change the font face of the web page | 10% |
| You can change the line spacing of the web page | 5% |
| Your website is compatible with assistive technologies | 15% |
| I don't know | 53% |
| Other | 8% |

In the “Other” category, respondents took the time to comment on how inaccessible their library website is or if it is currently under redesign. Comments included:

* “Currently redesigning site to be compliable.”
* “I know the web team is working on this but I am unsure of their progress and the full range of options.”
* “website is a mess.”
* “Our library website is outdated beyond belief, no support for assistive devices or basic typography for dyslexia, etc.”
* “None – ours is horrible and old.”

Most library roles selected “I don’t know” for this question. The library role that chose this option most frequently was Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (75%). The library role that selected this option the least was Reference/Adult Services Librarian (46%).

To make their library website accessible, the project team asked survey participants what resources they would prefer to accomplish this task. The most popular options were “Accessible design guidelines” (75%), “Resources to test the website” (64%), and “Tech support” (48%).

The following questions were about how accessible the library app (if applicable) is according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards. For questions about library apps, “I don’t know” (43%) and “We don’t have a library app” (46%) are the most popular answers. Many selected the latter option because app development requires time and funding that many libraries cannot afford. The remaining choices were chosen by 5% or less of respondents, including: “Yes” (3%), “Somewhat” (3%), and “No” (5%).

The next question asked if their library app had accessibility features (the same options in the website question above). Again, the most popular responses were “My library doesn’t have an app” (49%) and “I don’t know” (38%). The most popular accessibility feature was “The app is logical and easy to navigate” (13%). The rest of the options in this question were selected by less than 5% of respondents.

The “Other” option for the question about what accessibility features are in their library app included the comments:

* “App is a mess.”
* “The app is ‘in progress’ since early 2020.”
* “Probably none of the above, unless it works with assistive technologies by chance.”

When asked what resources would help libraries ensure that their library app is accessible, the most popular resources are “Accessible design guidelines” (34%), “Resources to test the app” (29%), and “Tech support” (28%). However, the most selected option for this question is “My library doesn’t have an app” (50%).

To find out how libraries ensure that a website and/or app is and remains accessible, respondents were asked how they evaluate their technology for accessibility. The two most selected options were “My library doesn’t have an app” (37%) and “Testing (by library IT staff)” (28%). In the “Other” category, “No”, “N/A”, and “I don’t know” were written in by 68% of respondents (of the 19% who selected this category).

The next section focuses on which ILS libraries use, if they can make changes to it, and how accessible their library catalogue/search system is. The most common ILS was Horizon/Symphony (36%), Polaris (18%), Evergreen (Sitka and Spruce) (11%), Bibliocommons (11%), and Millennium/Sierra (9%).

A significant factor for the accessibility of a library catalogue is if they can make changes to their ILS (which is why respondents were asked what ILS they use). When asked, most respondents selected “I don’t know” (46%), followed by “Somewhat” (29%), “No” (16%), and “Yes” (9%). The next question asks respondents if they can make changes to their ILS and if they encountered “blockers” or issues when trying to do so. 87% of respondents replied “N/A” and “I don’t know” to this question.

The “Other” option for this question included the comments:

* “Yes, usually the ILS needs to be involved in changes and not everything is possible yet.”
* “time, expertise.”
* “Our I.T. department has put limits on the changes we can make.”
* “System won't allow it.”
* “Self-inflicted.”
* “cannot make changes to ILS, can change website.”

The following questions were about how accessible their library catalogue/search is. Most replied that their catalogue/search is “Okay” (35%), followed by “I don’t know” (32%). The least selected options were “Perfect” (1%) and “Terrible” (3%).

To make their library catalogue/search accessible, the survey asked participants what support they would need to ensure this. The most popular options were “Accessible design guidelines” (71%), “Resources to test the website” (62%), and “Technical support” (58%). Respondents were also asked how they ensure their current catalogue system remains accessible; with most respondents selecting “I don’t know” (70%), the most frequently chosen method was “Testing” (22%).

The final question in this section asked respondents what resource formats would help them learn more about accessibility for their library websites and (if applicable) app. The most popular options were “Accessible design guidelines” (75%), “Resources to test the website” (64%), and “Technical support” (60%).

### Accessibility in Metadata and Cataloguing

In the section, *Accessibility in Metadata and Cataloguing*, most respondents are unaware of the different accessibility metadata fields available to catalogue content. This unfamiliarity extended to the different types of accessibility metadata (schema.org, ONIX, and MARC), demonstrating the need to educate library staff on accessibility metadata. The data for accessibility metadata and cataloguing also contains the information for the same questions in the *Library Technicians and Assistants* section for clarity.

The first question asked respondents if they were aware of the metadata fields related to accessibility. Most replied “No” (55%) to this question, followed by “Somewhat” (23%), “I don’t know” (17%), and then “Yes” (5%).

The majority of all library roles responded “No” or “I don’t know” when asked whether they knew about accessibility metadata fields. The library role that knew the least about metadata (adding up the percentages in the “No” and “I don’t know” columns) were Rural Librarian (100%), followed by Children’s/Teen Services Librarian (84%), IT Manager/Systems (75%), and then Library Branch or Department Manager (74%).

The library role that had the highest number of respondents who selected “Yes” or “Somewhat” that they were aware of the accessibility metadata fields available (when adding up the two percentages) were Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (44%), followed by Accessibility Specialists (40%), Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (38%), and then Collections Librarian (36%).

The next question listed the most common accessibility metadata fields. When asked about whether respondents are familiar with different types of accessibility metadata fields, for the most part, respondents selected, “I don’t know” (73%). However, across the library roles, the respondents know the most about the MARC accessibility metadata fields.

| Accessibility Metadata Fields | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| schema.org accessibility metadata | 4% |
| ONIX accessibility metadata (codelist 196) | 3% |
| MARC accessibility metadata (fields 341 and 532) | 25% |
| I don’t know | 73% |
| Other (all responses were some version of “No”) | 2% |

The library role that knew the most about schema.org was the Accessibility Specialists (20%), followed by IT manager/Systems (13%), Metadata/Technical Services (11%), and then Community Librarian (9%).

The library role that knew the most about ONIX was the IT Manager/Systems (13%), followed by Collections Librarian (7%), Library Director (4%), and then Community Librarian (3%)

The library role that knew the most about MARC was the Accessibility Specialists (40%), followed by Collections Librarian (36%), Metadata/Technical Services (33%), Library Director (29%).

The library roles that knew the least about the accessibility fields were the Rural Librarians (100%), followed by Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (88%), Reference/Adult Services Librarian (77%) and then Children’s/Teen Services Librarian (76%).

The responses do not necessarily reflect the library roles answers from the previous question. For example, Staff from an organization that supports public libraries selected “Yes” or “Somewhat” in the last question (38%) but was the second least knowledgeable group for the metadata fields (87.50% said “I don’t know”). Alternatively, IT Managers/Systems claimed not to know much about accessibility metadata (75% responded “No” or “I don’t know”), but this group was the most knowledgeable about ONIX metadata at 13%.

The survey then asked if their library displayed the accessibility metadata for patrons, the most popular answer for this question was “I don’t know” (66%), followed by “No” (22%). For the affirmative options, 2% selected “Yes,” and 10% selected “Some”.

The project team wanted to know if respondents knew if the publishers their library purchases from are providing accessibility metadata. The most common answer was “I don’t know” (85%), with the rest of the options selected less than 8% (“Some” was 7%). The project team then asked if respondents’ libraries utilize the accessibility metadata provided by publishers of the content (if applicable). The answers are similar, with 84% of respondents selecting “I don’t know” (the rest of the options for this question are all less than 6%). Staying on the topic of publisher produced accessibility metadata, respondents were asked if they would be willing to advocate for more accessibility metadata from publishers and vendors their library purchases from, with the two most popular options being “I don’t know” (50%) and “Yes” (48%). Only 2% said “No”.

To conclude this section, respondents were asked what resources would help them learn more about accessibility metadata. The most popular options were “Guidelines” (69%), “Checklists” (51%), and “Webinars” (43%).

### Guidelines for Selections and Acquisition, and Licensing

The section *Guidelines for Selections, Acquisition, and Licensing,* asked questions about how public libraries curate accessible content for their patrons.

To begin this section, the survey asked participants how their library selects accessible materials for their patrons. The most popular option chosen by respondents was “Use CELA or NNELS” (67%). The additional options for this question are in the table below:

| How Libraries select Accessible Materials | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Work with library vendors who supply accessible material | 48% |
| Work with publishers who produce accessible materials | 21% |
| Patron suggestions | 50% |
| Use CELA or NNELS | 67% |
| Other | 15% |

In “Other”, 8% responded “N/A” and/or “I don’t know” to this question. Other comments include:

* “We are looking at discovering more vendors and publishers to source accessible material.”
* “order through a library collective.”
* “we outsource our collection.”

Respondents were asked if their library reviews the materials they purchase to make sure that they are accessible. The highest percentage of respondents selected “I don’t know” (39%) for this question, followed by “Sometimes” (28%), “No” (24%), and “Yes” (9%). If the respondents selected “Yes” or “Sometimes” they were asked in the next question if their library would share the methods and/or resources they use to review materials for accessibility. The majority of respondents selected “I don’t know” (59%) for this question, followed by “We don’t review materials to make sure they are accessible” (24%). The percentages for those who answered “Yes” (12%) or “No” (5%) are much lower.

The project team asked if respondents are aware of publishers and vendors who create accessible materials. The majority said that they did not know (53%). The percentages for the other options under this question are “Yes” (11%), “Some” (32%), and “No” (3%). Building on this theme, respondents were asked if they would be willing to advocate for accessible materials from vendors and publishers. Most respondents answered “Yes” (62%) to this question, showing that there is support in the public library community for the creation of accessible materials. Only 4% of respondents said, “No”, that they are unwilling to advocate for more accessible materials, with the rest of respondents answering, “I don’t know” (34%).

Most of the library roles responded, “I don’t know,” when asked if the publishers/vendors they purchase from created accessible books. The highest percentage was by Accessibility Specialists (80%), and the lowest percentage by library role for this option was Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (22%). The library role that responded “Yes” most frequently was Rural Librarian (19%). The library role that selected “Some” most frequently was Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (56%). Finally, the library role that chose “No” most frequently was Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (13%).

When asked if respondents would consider advocating for accessibility with their vendors and publishers, most selected “Yes” with the library role Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (89%) having the highest percentage and Children’s/Teen Services Librarian and Library directors having the lowest percentage (both 56%). Staff from an organization that supports public libraries is the library role with most respondents selecting “No” (13%) that they would not consider advocating for accessible materials. The library role that said “I don’t know was Children’s/Teen Services Librarian (40%).

The final question in this section was what resources would provide respondents with support for selecting and purchasing accessible materials. The most popular resource formats for this section were “Guidelines” (78%) and “Checklists” (61%). All other options in this section were lower than 40%.

### Accessible Facilities and Spaces

In *Accessible Facilities and Spaces,* the project team asked survey participants how accessible their library buildings are for patrons. For most of the questions in this section, respondents selected “multiple facilities” if they work in a library with many different branches and/or separate workspaces.

When asked if the public library facilities are accessible, the answer with the highest percentage was “Yes” (47%), followed by “Multiple facilities – some accessible, some are not” (26%), “Somewhat” (20%), “No” (5%), and “I don’t know” (2%). Respondents are much more aware of the accessibility requirements for physical spaces than the areas covered in previous sections, such as library programming and websites. This is apparent by the low response rate for “I don’t know”.

Most library roles replied “Yes” their library facilities are accessible for all patrons, with Rural Librarian (63%) selecting this response most frequently and the library role of Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (13%) having the lowest percentage. The library role with the largest percentage under the option “Multiple facilities - some are accessible, and some are not” was Accessibility Specialists (80%). The library role that responded “Somewhat” most frequently was Metadata/Technical Services Librarian (44%). The library role that said “No” was Staff from an organization that supports public libraries (13%). This is also the library role that responded most frequently to “I don’t know” with the same percentage of 13%.

The project team asked what accessibility requirements their library facilities and/or spaces have. Most of the options provided for this question had a response rate above 50%. The only options below 50% were “Audio or braille signage” (19%), an “Evacuation plan that considers all patrons” (44%), and the “Other" (5%) category.

| Accessibility Requirements in Library Facilities/Spaces | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Ramps and/or lifts | 65% |
| Elevators | 61% |
| Power-assisted doors | 82% |
| Accessible bathroom stalls | 82% |
| Accessible parking spaces | 79% |
| Audio or braille signage | 19% |
| Evacuation plan that considers all patrons | 44% |
| Other | 5% |

The comments for “Other” ranged in subject matter from respondents pointing out that their library is closed due to the pandemic, noting that their library does not have any accessibility requirements. Comments included:

* “no patron access (none at all).”
* “We don't have any requirements.”
* “ensuring things like doorways and walk ways are clear for wheelchair access, we allow service animals, sitting or standing desks.
* “Our libraries are in different municipalities, thereby adhere to different standards.”

Building on the different accessibility requirements in public libraries, the project team asked how their library has made their signs accessible. Signage was the least selected option listed in the previous question, excluding the “Other” category. The two most selected options for this question were “No” (39%) and “Some are accessible” (36%), followed by “I don’t know” (19%) and “Yes” (6%). The project team then asked what accessible components had been added to their signs. Unfortunately, the most selected option for this question is “The library signs are not accessible for all patrons” (49%).

| Accessible Sign Features | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| An audio component | 0.34% |
| Clear raised text | 21% |
| Braille | 23% |
| Pictograms | 32% |
| The library signs are not accessible for all patrons | 49% |
| Other | 10% |

Many of the comments in the “Other” option was “I don’t know” and “N/A” (7%). However, some of the comments discuss alternate accessibility methods and respondents’ opinions about signs in libraries. Comments included:

* “Colour contrast; font.”
* “Helpful staff!”
* “We try to keep all signs to a minimum in any format because people don't read signs. It's better to just talk to people.”

The library role that most frequently said “Yes” that their library signs are accessible was Community Librarian (12%). Multiple library roles did not select “Yes” at all (0%) and are Collections Librarian, Metadata/Technical Services Librarian, Children’s/Teen Services Librarian, Accessibility Specialist, and Staff from an organization that supports public libraries. The library role that said “Some are accessible” most frequently was Library Branch or Department Manager (43%). The library role that said “No” most frequently was Rural Librarians (63%), and the library role that said “I don’t know” most frequently was Accessibility Specialist (40%).

The project team asked what accessibility requirements respondents would like to see added to their library facilities to help reveal the accessibility requirements that their library may not already have. The most popular options were “Audio or braille signage” (59%) and “Assistive technologies” (68%), followed by an “Evacuation plan that considers all patrons” (41%), “Accessible bathroom stalls” (19%), and “Power-assisted doors” (18%).

In the “Other” category, respondents discussed other accessibility requirements that they would like to see added to their library. For example, “Gender-neutral/family bathrooms, ongoing curbside, improved lighting, awareness and improvement of the sensory environment.”

The survey asked what resources could help public libraries ensure that their facilities and/or spaces are accessible. They responded with “Guidelines” (75%), “Checklists” (60%), and “Toolkits” (40%). All other resource options were below 40%.

### Legislative Accessibility Requirements

In the *Legislative Accessibility Requirements* section of the survey, the project team asked respondents to answer what they know about provincial accessibility legislation and how it impacts public libraries. The current provinces/territories that have accessibility legislation (Doyle, 2021, *A complete overview of Canada's accessibility laws*) are:

* Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in 2005.
* The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law in 2013.
* Nova Scotia Accessibility Act became law in 2017.
* Quebec’s Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of their Rights with a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration became a law in 1978 (amended in 2004).
* Accessible British Columbia Act (Bill 6) was proposed in 2021.

When asked if respondents were aware of current or upcoming provincial/territorial accessibility requirements, most selected the option “Somewhat” (36%) and “No” (34%). The rest of the options were “Yes” (17%), “I don’t know” (8%), and “My province/territory does not have accessibility legislation planned or in force” (5%).

The library role that said “Yes” they were aware of the current or upcoming provincial/territorial accessibility requirements were Accessibility Specialists (40%). The next closest library role was Library Directors (19%). However, the library role of Library Director (41%) was the highest percent for the option “Somewhat”. The library role that selected “No” most frequently was Accessibility Specialists (40%), and the library roles that chose “I don’t know” most frequently were Library Directors and Library Branch or Department Managers (both 8%). These numbers represent the highest percentages beneath each option, not the highest percentage for each library role.

The project team asked if respondents knew how their libraries have incorporated or begun incorporating provincial/territorial accessibility requirements. Only 5% of respondents selected “My province/territory does not have accessibility legislation planned or in force,” and 10% of respondents said, “I don’t know” or “N/A” (in the “Other” category) for a total of 15% of respondents. This is despite the fact that 36% of survey participants worked in provinces and territories without accessibility legislation. The rest of the options broke down, as seen in the table below.

| Public Library Accessibility Legislation Incorporation | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Making library services accessible | 44% |
| Website improvements | 37% |
| Making your physical building accessible | 50% |
| Making sure your library offers accessible materials | 45% |
| We haven’t begun incorporating provincial/territorial accessibility requirements | 21% |
| My province/territory does not have accessibility legislation planned or in force. | 5% |
| Other | 14% |

The “Other” category includes multiple respondents replying “I don’t know” to the question (10%) and comments about how they are trying to make their library accessible when they are not fully aware of the accessibility legislation requirements. For example, “Sans être au courant des normes, nous essayons de permettre l'accès à nos service pour le plus grand nombres d'usagers” [translation: Without being aware of the standards, we try to allow access to our services for the greatest number of users].

The library role that selected the response that their library has not begun “incorporating the provincial/territorial accessibility requirements” was Accessibility Specialist (40%) followed by Rural Librarian (38%).

To best help public libraries incorporate accessibility legislation requirements, the project team asked them what resources they would prefer. The two most popular options were “Guidelines” (77%) and “Checklists” (68%).

### Human Resources

In the *Human Resources* section, the project team asked respondents how accessible their library workplace is. This includes the library facilities and/or spaces, digital tools used by staff, and how employees are educated about accessibility in their workplace.

The first question in this section asked survey participants if their library workplace is accessible. The majority of respondents selected “Some areas are accessible” (54%), followed by “Yes” (38%), “No” (7%), and “I don’t know” (1%).

The Rural Librarian role had the highest percentage under the option “No” (13%) the library workplace is not accessible. Human Resources had the highest percentage “Yes” (60%) the library workplace is accessible. For the option “Some areas are accessible,” the library role selecting this option most frequently was the Library Branch or Department Manager (65%). Only one library group chose the option “I don’t know”, which was Library Directors (3%) with the rest of the library roles at 0%, though Library Directors had the second-highest percentage for the option “Yes” (47%).

If respondents answered, “Yes” or “Some areas are accessible,” the project team asked how they had ensured that the workplace was accessible (those who chose “No” or “I don’t know” could select “The library workplace is not accessible” (9%)). For those who selected “Yes” or “Some areas are accessible,” there were multiple accessibility options, most of which were selected by more than 50% of respondents.

| How is the Public Library Workplace Accessible | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Offices are accessible | 58% |
| Ramps and/or lifts | 52% |
| Elevators | 45% |
| Power-assisted doors | 62% |
| Accessible bathroom stalls | 71% |
| Accessible parking spaces | 68% |
| Audio or braille signage | 13% |
| An evacuation plan that considers all staff | 39% |
| The library workplace is not accessible | 9% |
| Other | 5% |

The “Other” option for this question includes comments about accessibility features/requirements and qualifying information about the accessibility of the library workplace. Comments included:

* “height adjustable desks, touch screen work phone, adaptive keyboards.”
* “Only some braille signage.”
* “Public bathrooms are accessible but private staff bathrooms at times are not.”
* “some offices are accessible.”

To ensure that the public library staff workplaces are accessible, the project team asked respondents what resources would help. The most popular resources were “Guidelines” (85%), “Checklists” (76%), “Toolkits” (47%), and “Webinars” (42%). The rest of the options were selected by less than 35% of respondents.

The next few questions in this section are about the digital tools public library employees use for their day-to-day work and how accessible they are for all staff. The first question asks respondents if the digital tools staff/contactors/volunteers use are accessible. The highest percentages were “I don’t know” (42%) and “Some digital tools are accessible” (32%). The answers “Yes” and “No” for this question were both 13%.

If the respondents answered, “Yes” or “Some” in the previous question, respondents were asked what digital tools they considered accessible (email, file sharing, conferencing software, etc.). Those who answered “No” or “I don’t know” in the previous question could select either “The digital tools staff/contractors/volunteers use are not accessible” (7%) or “I don’t know” (50%). All the listed digital tools can be found in the table below.

| Digital Tools | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Email (e.g. Gmail, Outlook, etc.) | 40% |
| Payroll (e.g. Humi, Payworks, etc.) | 6% |
| Scheduling software (e.g. ScheduleBase, Doodle, etc.) | 5% |
| Project management software (e.g. Asana, Slack, etc.) | 2% |
| Conferencing software (e.g. Zoom, Teams, etc.) | 33% |
| File sharing software (e.g. DropBox, OneDrive, etc.) | 23% |
| Word processors (e.g. Word, GoogleDocs, etc.) | 38% |
| Spreadsheet software (e.g. Excel, Google Docs, etc.) | 36% |
| The digital tools staff/contractors/volunteers use are not accessible | 7% |
| I don’t know | 50% |
| Other | 2% |

The “Other” option included comments about accessibility in the workplace. For example, “Much more needs to be made available to staff with disabilities without gatekeeping.”

When asked if the digital tools libraries use are accessible, Human Resources said “Yes” most frequently (80%), and Accessibility Specialists (0%) was the lowest percentage. This is the opposite for the option “No.” 20% of Accessibility Specialists said “No” the digital tools are not accessible, whereas 0% of Human Resources selected this option.

The project team inquired how they know that the digital tools are accessible or how they have ensured those digital tools are accessible. The most popular option was “I don’t know” (54%), followed by “Not applicable” (20%), “Asked for staff feedback” (16%), and “Testing the tools” (15%).

To support making the public library workplace accessible, the survey asked respondents what resources they would prefer for their digital tools. The most popular options were “Guidelines” (80%), “Checklists” (67%), and “Toolkits” (43%). All other options are 40% or less.

The survey asked respondents if their hiring and recruitment policies were accessible. This question is essential to have an inclusive workplace. The following options were provided for respondents to select:

| Accessible Hiring and Recruitment Policies | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Accessible language in job postings | 26% |
| Posted to job boards for people with disabilities | 10% |
| The job posting is provided in accessible format | 18% |
| Job interviews are conducted in an accessible location | 50% |
| I don’t know | 43% |
| Other | 4% |

In the “Other” option, the respondents commented that they did not follow any of the other answers for this question. For example, “we don't do this.”

The following few questions are about how public libraries educate employees about accessibility. The initial was, “Do they educate employees about accessibility?” The most common answer was “Somewhat” (48%), followed by “Yes” (28%), “No” (16%), and “I don’t know” (8%).

When all library roles were asked if they educate library staff about accessibility, Accessibility Specialists had the highest response rate for the option “Yes” (40%). Library Branch or Department Manager had the highest percentage under the option “Somewhat” (54%). Rural Librarian was the library role with the highest percentage beneath “No” (25%). The library role with the highest percentage for the option “I don’t know” was Human Resources (40%).

If respondents selected “Yes” or “Somewhat” in the previous questions, they asked how they educate public library employees about accessibility. For those who answered “No” or “I don’t know”, respondents were provided with the options “We don’t educate employees about accessibility” (13%) and “I don’t know” (14%). The most popular answer was “Training” (60%), followed by “Presentations” (27%), and “Handouts” (22%).

The comments in the “Other” category (9%) included education method:

* “Verbalment” [verbally].
* “Webinars.”
* “Policy review.”
* “email.”

Connected with the accessibility education methods public libraries used, the project team asked respondents if their library would feel comfortable sharing these materials with other libraries. 20% of respondents selected “Yes”, 11% responded “No”, 41% responded “I don’t know,” and 29% selected “We don’t have educational accessibility resources”.

The final question in this section asked what resources would help respondents make the public library workspace accessible. The four most popular answers are “Guidelines” (80%), “Checklists” (65%), “Webinars” (47%), and “Toolkits” (41%). The rest of the options for this question are below 40%.

### Communications

The section, *Communications*, is about the outreach communications that public libraries use to promote their services and content. This includes social media posts, advertising, press releases and much more.

The first question in this section is if the content they release is accessible. 16% of respondents said “Yes,” 27% of respondents said “Sometimes,” 24% said “No,” and 33% said, “I don’t know”. The library role that said “Yes” their library makes sure that communications content is accessible most frequently was Library Director (18%). The library role Communications said “Somewhat” most often at 71%. Rural Librarian was the library role that said “No” most frequently at 38%. For the option “I don’t know,” Accessibility Specialists selected this most often at 60%.

In the previous question, if the response was “Yes” or “Sometimes”, the project team followed up by asking what accessibility features are included in their communications. The options were:

| Accessible Features for Communications | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Alt text for images | 26% |
| Long descriptions for graphs, charts, diagrams, and maps | 5% |
| Open and closed captioning in videos | 12% |
| Informative links (e.g. not using “click here”) | 23% |
| Hashtags are in camel case | 3% |
| Limited use of emojis | 21% |
| Inclusive language | 32% |
| Large font size | 15% |
| Use only one font type | 19% |
| Do not only use colour to convey meaning | 16% |
| We don’t include accessibility information in our communications | 32% |
| Other | 23% |

The majority of the “Other” comments were respondents saying they do not know the answer to this question (17%).

Using the same response options as in the question above, the survey asked respondents what accessibility features are used in communications they would like to know more about. They are:

| Learn more about Accessible Features in Communications | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Alt text for images | 53% |
| Long descriptions for graphs, charts, diagrams, and maps | 39% |
| Open and closed captioning in videos | 55% |
| Informative links (e.g. not using “click here”) | 45% |
| Hashtags are in camel case | 44% |
| Limited use of emojis | 20% |
| Inclusive language | 49% |
| Large font size | 34% |
| Use only one font type | 29% |
| Do not only use colour to convey meaning | 26% |

The final question is about resources that will help make their library communications more accessible. The most popular options are “Guidelines” (79%), “Checklists” (69%), and “Tutorials” (50%).

### Accessibility Questions

This section contains general *Accessibility Questions* that were created for public library support staff like volunteers, pages, and circulation staff. The opinions and views of those employees are important as they interact with library patrons regularly and are very familiar with the content and services public libraries offer and should not be overlooked.

The first question in this section asked respondents how knowledgeable they consider themselves about accessibility (on a sliding scale from 1 to 10). The average of those who answered this question is 6.24, with the lowest number submitted being 2 and the highest being 10.

Reviewing the information by library role, Library volunteers had the lowest average at 5.50 and Library pages had the highest at 6.47. Circulation staff sat squarely between the two groups with an average of 6.20.

Considering the results of the previous question, when asked if they were aware of the accessibility requirements and features their library has, and they responded either “Yes” (45%) or “Somewhat” (55%). None of the respondents for the accessibility question section said either “No” or “I don’t know.” All library volunteer survey respondents selected “Yes” for the question, “ (100%). Both Library pages and Circulation staff selected “Some” (63% for library pages and 54% for circulation staff) more frequently than “Yes” (37% for library pages and 46% for circulation staff).

When asked what accessibility features their library has and provides for patrons, respondents in this section replied that their libraries have most of the options listed.

| Accessibility Features in Public Libraries | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Digital content (EPUB, DAISY, Audiobooks, Electronic braille, etc.) | 99% |
| Physical content (large print, braille, talking books, etc.) | 100% |
| Communications and website (accessibility standards, information architecture, personalizing website view, etc.) | 57% |
| Catalogue (metadata, accessible search design, etc.) | 56% |
| Assistive technologies (screen readers, magnification software, braille display, etc.) | 69% |
| Built environment (requirements, hall spaces, toilets, signage, etc.) | 78% |
| Library programs (outreach programs, reading days, advertising for programs, etc.) | 75% |
| I am not aware or I don’t know the accessibility requirements my library has | 2% |

The next question asked what accessibility features respondents would like to learn more about. The two most popular options were “Communications and website” (51%) and “Assistive technologies” (49%). The options beneath this and the previous question were the same (though the percentages differed).

| Accessibility Features in Public Libraries Respondents want to Learn About | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Digital content (EPUB, DAISY, Audiobooks, Electronic braille, etc.) | 32% |
| Physical content (large print, braille, talking books, etc.) | 22% |
| Communications and website (accessibility standards, information architecture, personalizing website view, etc.) | 51% |
| Catalogue (metadata, accessible search design, etc.) | 43% |
| Assistive technologies (screen readers, magnification software, braille display, etc.) | 49% |
| Built environment (requirements, hall spaces, toilets, signage, etc.) | 33% |
| Library programs (outreach programs, reading days, advertising for programs, etc.) | 47% |
| Other | 2% |

The final question in this section asked the respondents if accessibility was something they had to consider in their library role and how (or why not). The comments submitted by respondents ranged from a simple “No” to descriptive comments about how they have served patrons with disabilities. Below are comments by respondents reflecting those that said yes, somewhat, and no.

“Yes, if various scenarios such as communicating with masks, tracking down LP [large-print] copies of books, teaching accessibility options in tech literacy workshops, learning about accessible website design, and more.”

“Somewhat. We all try to be aware of our patrons’ needs. We have lots of large print, and a small collection of audio books. We tell everyone about Libby (print size choices, audio options, and dyslexia font).”

“No it has not been, and I feel horrible about it. My sister is young, only 25, and she used to be an avid reader. Now with all her health complications, she has cataracts and hardly reads at all anymore, which I know is a huge loss for her. I was not trained at all sufficiently about the Daisy readings, or CELA, but I want to help her, and I want to help other patrons like her feel more comfortable coming to the library and asking questions about getting help for better accessibility.”

### Library Technicians and Assistants

Respondents who selected the library role, *Library Technicians and Assistants*, completed this section*.* It combines the accessibility question in the previous section and questions that the project team thought were relevant for this library role. The metadata responses have been folded into the metadata section above for clarity.

The first question in this section asked respondents how knowledgeable they consider themselves about accessibility (on a sliding scale from 1 to 10). The average of those who answered this question is 6.32, with the lowest number submitted being 2 and the highest being 10.

Next, they were asked if they are aware of the accessibility requirements their library has, with most respondents answering “Yes” (40%) and “Somewhat” (55%). The other two options had a low selection rate, “No” was 4% and “I don’t know” only 1%. If respondents answered “Yes” or “Somewhat to this question, they were then asked what accessibility requirements/features were offered by their library. If they answered no in the previous question, they could select the option “I am not aware, or I don’t know the accessibility requirements my library has” (2%).

| Accessibility Features in Public Libraries | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Digital content (EPUB, DAISY, Audiobooks, Electronic braille, etc.) | 95% |
| Physical content (large print, braille, talking books, etc.) | 93% |
| Communications and website (accessibility standards, information architecture, personalizing website view, etc.) | 41% |
| Catalogue (metadata, accessible search design, etc.) | 43% |
| Assistive technologies (screen readers, magnification software, braille display, etc.) | 65% |
| Built environment (requirements, hall spaces, toilets, signage, etc.) | 76% |
| Library programs (outreach programs, reading days, advertising for programs, etc.) | 59% |
| I am not aware or I don’t know the accessibility requirements my library has | 2% |

To learn more details about the accessible content offered by their library, the project team asked respondents to select the options their library has. The options they could choose were both accessible formats and content providers. The most popular options chosen by Library technicians and assistants were “Audiobooks” (95%), “Large print formats” (94%), “Talking books” (73%), and “EPUBS” (70%). The least popular options were “I don’t know if my library provides accessible content” (1%), “Electronic braille (BRF)” (3%), and “Other” (5%). The rest of the options were between 15% and 65%. In the “Other” category, many respondents noted that they also have books for those with dementia.

After establishing what accessible content their library offers, the project team asked them if they would like to learn more about the accessible content and formats. Most said “Yes” (76%) with only 12% selecting “No” and 12% answering “I don’t know.” The accessible content and options that respondents said that they wanted to know more about were:

| Accessible Content and Options | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Different formats | 62% |
| Accessibility guidelines | 63% |
| Accessible reading platforms | 63% |
| Assistive technologies | 69% |
| I don’t want to know more about accessible content options and formats | 10% |
| Other | 7% |

When considering the services provided by their library, the project team asked respondents which services should be made more accessible for their patrons. Overall, Library technicians and assistants indicated that many of the services needed to be made more accessible (with four of the six options selected by more than 50% of respondents).

| Library Services | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Reference services and reader’s advisory | 50% |
| Borrowing physical materials | 39% |
| Borrowing digital materials | 42% |
| Computer with Internet access | 50% |
| Library programming | 57% |
| Library professional development | 50% |
| Other | 4% |

The “Other” comments allowed respondents to elaborate on accessible services, including items they would like to be made more accessible. For example:

* “we have enough as far as I know.”
* “THE LIBRARY WEBSITE.”
* “More lendable DAISY players.”

The project team asked what resources would help Library technicians and assistants make their library training accessible. The most popular options were “Webinars” (58%), “Guidelines” (53%), and “Tutorials” (52%). Additionally, Library technicians and assistants were asked what training modules they would prefer; the top selections were “Self paced” (70%), “Individual learning” (52%), and “Interactive” (44%). The rest of the options are lower than 40% for both questions.

The next question asks the respondents what they would like to learn more about in the training resources. Most options were selected by more than 50% of respondents. The most popular topic for the training modules was “Digital content” (67%), and the least popular option was “Physical content” (31%).

| Training Resources Topics | Response Rate |
| --- | --- |
| Digital content (EPUB, DAISY, Audiobooks, Electronic braille, etc.) | 67% |
| Physical content (large print, braille, talking books, etc.) | 31% |
| Communications and website (accessibility standards, information architecture, personalizing website view, etc.) | 60% |
| Catalogue (metadata, accessible search design, etc.) | 57% |
| Assistive technologies (screen readers, magnification software, braille display, etc.) | 66% |
| Built environment (requirements, hall spaces, toilets, signage, etc.) | 40% |
| Library programs (outreach programs, reading days, advertising for programs, etc.) | 60% |

When asked what training library staff need to best serve patrons with disabilities, respondents selected all options more than 60% of the time. The most popular choice for respondents was “How to help people with disabilities access library services” (88%), followed by “How to use assistive technologies” (84%), “Sensitivity training” (70%), and “Information about accessibility in your library’s facilities” (61%).

Finally, the survey asked if accessibility has been something Library technicians and assistants have had to consider and to please explain how (or why not). The comments include:

“Accessibility has been something I have had to consider in my library role many times. A few examples of this are: choosing Large Print books specifically during Curbside Pick-up for those who have poor eye sight, choosing DVDs that specifically have subtitles for those who are hearing impaired, considering space between shelving units while rearranging the library for wheel chair access, creating a specialized vehicle pick-up option and more. The list goes on and on.”

“Yes. I have worked in our accessibilities services department. As a library employee I understand that my ability/ willingness to adjust myself to fit the needs of patrons with differing abilities could be the difference between someone accessing information or not.”

“Will be starting to work on outreach when Covid restrictions allow.”

### Data Comparisons

#### Library Size

The survey responses were compared by library size to identify patterns of accessibility knowledge. Using filters created in the survey tool, the responses for each group were looked at separately and then compared together. The options were:

* Very Small (serving a population of 20,000 or less)
* Small (serving a population of 20,001 to 50,000)
* Medium (serving a population of 50,001 to 100,000)
* Large (serving a population of 100,001 to 250,000)
* Very Large (serving a population of 250,001 or more)

When comparing the response statistics, it is apparent that, for the most part, there are a more significant number of problems when serving a greater number of patrons. Though larger library sizes can provide more services (assistive technologies, library programs, etc.) than smaller libraries, most likely because of an increase in funding, that does not mean that those services are all accessible. Larger libraries also have bigger (and sometimes multiple) facilities and more library staff, making it challenging to ensure that accessibility is a forefront consideration in their library. However, there are instances when respondents in larger libraries are more aware/knowledgeable about specific accessibility requirements (like accessibility metadata).

In the question about whether or not their library offers accessible library programs, the number of respondents who selected the option “Yes” goes down by library size (meaning that larger libraries responded less frequently that all their library programs were in fact, accessible). The “Somewhat” option goes up as the library size increases, so some programs are accessible in larger library sizes. However, if you add the total number of “Yes” and “Some”, the statistics work out to be about the same for each library size (around 40%), with higher percentages found in larger-sized libraries.

| Library Size | “Yes” Response Rate | “Some” Response Rate | Total of “Yes” and “Some” |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very Small | 20% | 20% | 40% |
| Small | 20% | 18% | 38% |
| Medium | 10% | 36% | 46% |
| Large | 11% | 31% | 42% |
| Very Large | 4% | 44% | 48% |

In the section about *Hardware, Software, and Assistive Technologies*, smaller libraries replied that their hardware and software are more accessible (responding “Yes”) than those who work in larger libraries. This may be because larger libraries have more technology (hardware and software) available for patrons, so staff are less sure about how accessible their hardware/software is.

| Library Size | Hardware “Yes” Response Rate | Software “Yes” Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very Small | 49% | 51% |
| Small | 44% | 46% |
| Medium | 49% | 42% |
| Large | 34% | 38% |
| Very Large | 23% | 23% |

When asked if they provide assistive technologies for patron use, for the most part, the number of respondents who replied “Yes” goes up by library size (and “No” goes down).

| Library Size | “Yes” Response Rate | “No” Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very Small | 42% | 40% |
| Small | 54% | 33% |
| Medium | 67% | 19% |
| Large | 64% | 14% |
| Very Large | 75% | 8% |

Respondents answered if they were aware of metadata fields and options related to accessibility, those who work in larger libraries selected “No” less frequently than those who work in smaller libraries. The inverse is true for the option “Somewhat” (larger libraries selected this option at a higher rate than those in smaller libraries). There is a slight dip in knowledge between medium and large libraries in the “Somewhat” percentages. The option “Yes” for this question is sub 10% for all library sizes, and “I don’t know” ranges from 14% (Very small) to 22% (Large).

| Library Size | “Somewhat” Response Rate | “No” Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very Small | 13% | 70% |
| Small | 25% | 52% |
| Medium | 35% | 47% |
| Large | 24% | 48% |
| Very Large | 35% | 37% |

When purchasing materials, the survey asked respondents if they knew ff the vendors and/or the publishers they purchase from create accessible books/items. The response rate for the “Yes” option goes down as the library size goes up. The number of respondents who selected “Yes” they purchase from vendors/publishers who create accessible books/items was 15% for very small libraries, 12% for small libraries, 9% for medium libraries, 7% for large libraries, and 8% for very large libraries. Smaller libraries are more aware of if the publishers/vendors they purchase from create accessible books; this may be because larger-sized libraries purchase more content and have more purchasing control.

In the question about whether or not their public library facilities are accessible for all patrons, the two lowest “Yes” percentages were in very large libraries (42%) and large libraries (44%). Though the percentages for this option by all library sizes are within 10%, most respondents in medium and small libraries said that their library facilities and spaces were accessible (52% of respondents for medium libraries and 50% for small libraries). 48% of very small library respondents selected “Yes” their libraries were accessible. However, respondents in very large libraries have the highest response rate for “multiple facilities – some are accessible, and some are not” at 40%.

The larger the library size, the more likely (according to respondents) some of their signs are accessible. When asked if their library signs are accessible for all patrons, respondents in very small and small libraries most frequently selected “No” (48% for very small and 52% for small libraries). For medium (43%), large (42%), and very large (57%) libraries, most respondents selected “Some.”

In the question, “when releasing content (social media, press releases, advertisements, etc.), do you make sure that the content is accessible?”, very small libraries had the highest response for the option “Yes” (19%), and very large libraries had the lowest response rate for that option (7%). Larger libraries also had a higher response rate for the option “I don’t know” (56% for very large and 39% for large libraries).

| Library Size | Yes | Sometimes | No | I don’t know |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very small | 19% | 24% | 29% | 27% |
| Small | 18% | 21% | 39% | 21% |
| Medium | 18% | 41% | 6% | 35% |
| Large | 9% | 35% | 17% | 39% |
| Very Large | 7% | 26% | 11% | 56% |

In the qualitative data, respondents mentioned issues found in larger-sized libraries due to more library responsibilities, segmented roles, and a lack of communication. Additionally, larger libraries may have multiple facilities, some of which could be more accessible than others.

“There were several things I could not answer very well because it is unfortunately not my department and we are somewhat siloed. I tried to indicate this wherever possible.”

“I work in a large urban library that centralizes duties - like IT/web/ILS development and collections. I wasn't able to answer all of these questions because of this. Working across teams can be complicated and difficult particularly with respect to accessibility issues.”

“Some branches have the requirements selected in the question above. Some do not. I would like to see all branches have all the requirements listed above.”

Funding and resources may be more readily available in larger libraries than in smaller libraries. This may explain why those serving a smaller population cannot provide all accessible options (e.g. providing DAISY players) for patrons.

“… As an administrator, I am looking for what needs to be done to comply and to serve our community, recognizing that we are a small library with limited resources…”

“We are a small library with a smaller budget. We cannot afford to do much upgrading or purchasing of new equipment. We would need some funding.”

#### Provinces/territories with legislation vs. those without

This section compares respondents who work in provinces that have passed or proposed accessibility legislation against the responses of those who work in provinces/territories that do not (there are currently no territories with current or upcoming accessibility legislation). The purpose of this data gathering is to see if people who live in those provinces are more knowledgeable about accessibility and if their libraries are more accessible than their counterparts. Filters were created in Simple Survey for the two groups, by separating the respondent’s location using the question that asked what treaty territory/homeland/province/territory they worked in, so all respondents that identified working in provinces that have legislation were grouped in one filter (and vice versa for those in provinces/territories without legislation). There are four provinces with current legislation and one with proposed accessibility legislation (Doyle, 2021). They are:

* Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in 2005.
* The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law in 2013.
* Nova Scotia Accessibility Act became law in 2017.
* Quebec’s Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of their Rights with a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration became a law in 1978 (amended in 2004).
* The accessible British Columbia Act (Bill 6) was proposed in 2021.

75% of respondents are located in a province with accessibility legislation, 25% of respondents are located in a province/territory that does not currently have provincial accessibility legislation. The statistics between the two groups are generally similar (within 10%). However, respondents in provinces/territories with legislation statistically selected “I don’t know” less frequently than those in provinces without legislation (they still selected this option, just at a lesser percentage rate).

For the question, “what training do you think public library staff should receive to best serve patrons with disabilities?” the responses were very similar between the two groups (all options were within 10% points). The top three choices were the same for both groups.

| Library Staff Training Options | With Legislation | Without legislation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| How to help people with disabilities access library service | 88% | 83% |
| How to use assistive technologies | 82% | 79% |
| Sensitivity training | 67% | 60% |
| Information about accessibility in library facilities | 55% | 61% |

Provinces with legislation seem more aware of if their library website is accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards. 15% of respondents selected the option “Yes” in provinces with legislation, but only 5% of respondents chose this option when located in a province without legislation. This extends to the “I don’t know” option for this same question. 80% of respondents who selected “I don’t know” were located in provinces/territories without legislation, versus 63% of respondents working in provinces with legislation. Over half of the respondents who work in a province with legislation do not know if their library website is accessible.

When asked if public library facilities and/or spaces were accessible for all patrons, respondents in provinces with legislation selected “Yes,” and “Somewhat” more frequently than provinces without legislation. Respondents in provinces/territories without legislation selected the option “I don’t know,” “Multiple facilities,” and “No” more frequently than those who work in provinces with legislation.

| Are Facilities/Spaces Accessible | With Legislation | Without Legislation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 48% | 42% |
| Multiple Facilities – some are accessible, some are not | 25% | 30% |
| Somewhat | 21% | 18% |
| No | 5% | 6% |
| I don’t know | 1% | 4% |

When respondents were asked if they ensure the content they release (social media, press releases, advertisements, etc.) is accessible. Those respondents in provinces with legislation answered “Yes” and “Sometimes” more frequently than those in provinces without legislation (they more commonly answered “No” and “I don’t know”). This indicates that respondents working in provinces with legislation are more knowledgeable about accessible communications than those located in provinces/territories without legislation.

| Accessible Communications | With Legislation | Without Legislation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 17% | 10% |
| Sometimes | 29% | 21% |
| No | 22% | 31% |
| I don’t know | 31% | 38% |

#### By Language

This section compares the survey responses of French-speaking participants with English speaking participants. Though participants were not asked to identify their principal language in the survey, it was achieved by comparing those who filled out the survey in French to those who filled it out in English. Filters were created in Simple Survey for each group (French and English respondents) to compare the responses more accurately.

French respondents made up 9% of the overall survey responses. They did respond to some questions differently than their English counterparts, and throughout the study, a pattern emerged.  French respondents generally have a higher percentage for “Yes” and “No” and lower percentages for “Some” and “I don’t know” (when compared to English respondents). French respondents still consistently selected the ‘Some” and “I don’t know” options (just at a lower rate than English respondents).

In the question, “do you offer accessible library programs?”, French respondents have higher percentages in the “Yes” category (30% for French respondents and 13% for English respondents) and a lower percentage in the “I don’t know” category (20% for French respondents and 38% by English respondents). They also have a lower percentage in “Some” (23% for French and 28% for English) and a higher percentage in “No” (27% for French and 21% for English).

When asked if the respondent's public use hardware is accessible, the same pattern emerges. French respondents have a higher percentage for “Yes” (French 50% and English 39%) and “No” (French 10% and English 8%) and lower percentages for “Some are accessible” (37% for French respondents and 44% for English respondents) and “I don’t know” (3% for French respondents and 10% for English respondents).

For almost all assistive technology options under the question “what assistive technologies do you offer patrons,” French respondents have a lower percentage than English. “Braille” and “I don't know if my library has assistive technologies” were the only options that French respondents had a higher percentage than English respondents. “An adaptive keyboard or voice recognition for patrons with mobility disabilities” and “Magnification software is installed on one or more computers” were close between the two groups. However, English respondents selected “My library doesn’t have assistive technologies available” more frequently than French respondents.

| Assistive Technologies | French Response Rate | English Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Screen readers like JAWS installed on one or more computers | 13% | 28% |
| Magnification software is installed on one or more computers | 40% | 42% |
| A refreshable braille display | 7% | 1% |
| An adaptive keyboard or voice recognition for patrons with mobility disabilities | 23% | 24% |
| My library doesn't have assistive technologies available | 10% | 27% |
| I don't know if my library has assistive technologies | 20% | 17% |

When asked if their library website was accessible according to WCAG 2.0 A standards, French respondents selected “No” more frequently than English respondents (20% for French and 7% for English respondents). “Yes” (7% French and 13% English), “Somewhat” (10% French and 12% English), and “I don’t know” (63% French and 68% English) were selected more frequently by English respondents.

In the question about whether or not the respondent’s library signs are accessible, French respondents selected the options “Yes” and “No” more frequently than English respondents (and vice versa for the options “Some are accessible” and “I don’t know”).

| Are Library Signs Accessible | French Response Rate | English Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 10% | 6% |
| Some are accessible | 20% | 38% |
| No | 60% | 36% |
| I don’t know | 10% | 20% |

When asked if the library workplace is accessible, more French respondents answered “Yes” and “No” than English respondents. English respondents selected the options “Some areas are accessible” and “I don’t know” more frequently than French respondents.

| Library Workplace Accessible | French Response Rate | English Response Rate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 59% | 35% |
| Some areas are accessible | 32% | 57% |
| No | 9% | 7% |
| I don’t know | 0% | 1% |

For the question, “are the digital tools staff/contractors/volunteers use accessible?”, again French respondents had a higher response for “Yes” (French 27% and English 11%) and “No” (French 27% and English 11%) than English respondents (yes, the same number of respondents selected “Yes” and “No” options for both these groups). This pattern is reversed for the other two options “Some digital tools are accessible” (18% French and 34% English) and “I don’t know” (27% French and 44% English).

#### The Unknown

This section looks at the response rate for the option “I don’t know” in the survey questions. The highest rates of “I don’t know” responses are metadata, library programs, communications, and digital technology (website/apps and digital tools). The areas where respondents showed the most awareness about accessibility (selected “I don’t know” less frequently) were accessibility in public libraries, accessible facilities and spaces, legislation accessibility requirements, accessibility questions (for library pages, library volunteers, and circulation staff), and the library technicians and assistant’s sections.

Respondents, when an “I don’t know” option was unavailable to select, used the “other” categories available to write it in. These have been counted to ensure all occurrences of “I don’t know” were accurately calculated. In this section, the additional options in the questions (yes, some/somewhat, no, etc.) are not counted because they imply knowledge of the question. For example, if a respondent said “no” that the library staff's digital tools are not accessible, it confirms they know it is inaccessible.

Overall, according to the respondents, they are aware of the general accessibility requirements for public libraries. The questions in this section had a low rate of “I don’t know” responses. For the most part, they have a response rate of 2% or lower for the questions (including those who wrote the option in “Other” categories). The only question with a higher response rate in this section was “Would you like to know more about accessible content options and formats,” where “I don’t know” was selected by 9% of survey participants.

In the section on *Accessible Library Programs*, there is a significant increase in the number of times respondents selected the option “I don’t know.” When asked if their library offers accessible library programs, 36% of respondents chose “I don’t know”. This goes up when asked what accessible library programs their library offers. For this question (text-based), the number of times respondents wrote in “N/A”, “S/O,” or “I don’t know” as answers was 55%. This percentage increases even more in one of the final questions, when asked, “Would you feel comfortable adding your accessible library programs to a collaborative resource website for others to use?” 60% of respondents selected ‘I don’t know.” While that last question does not relate directly to the accessibility of their library, it does speak to respondents’ uncertainty of their accessible library programs.

In the section about the *Hardware, Software, and Assistive Technologies* in public libraries, the options/questions have a reasonably low rate of “I don’t know” response. For the question about how accessible the library hardware (printers, copiers, etc.) is, respondents said, “I don’t know” 9% of the time, 15% of respondents selected “I don’t know” for the software question, and 17% selected this option when asked about if their library has assistive technologies. Additionally, when asked what assistive technologies their library provides, 18% replied that they didn’t know if their library has assistive technologies and, in the same questions, a further 4% responded in the “Other” category “N/A” or “I don’t know.”

For questions about the *Accessibility of Public Library Websites and/or Apps,* there was a high selection rate for the “I don’t know” options. The majority of respondents selected “I don’t know” more often than the other available options. When asked if their library website was accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards, 68% of respondents selected “I don’t know.” When asked about the accessibility of their library app, 43% selected “I don’t know” (this number is lower because 46% responded “We don't have a library app”). Additional questions with a high rate of response for the “I don’t know” options in this section include:

* 46% responded “I don’t know” when asked if they can make changes to their ILS;
* 87% wrote “N/A” or “I don’t know” in the “Other” category when asked what blockers they have encountered when making changes to their ILS;
* 32% replied that they didn’t know to what extent their library catalogue/search is accessible;
* 70% did not know how their library ensures the catalogue remains accessible.

In the section, *Accessibility in Metadata and Cataloguing*, respondents are unaware of accessibility metadata. In the first question, only 17% of respondents said they didn’t know or were unaware of the metadata fields and options related to accessibility. The response rate takes a significant jump in the next few questions. 73% of respondents were unaware of the accessibility metadata fields. 66% didn’t know if their library displays metadata for patrons. 85% were unaware of if the publishers and vendors they purchase from provide accessibility metadata.

The section, *Guidelines for Selection, Acquisition, and Licensing*, also has a high response rate for the “I don’t know” options. When asked if their library reviews materials they purchase to ensure accessibility, 39% responded, “I don’t know.” 53% said they do not know if the vendors/publishers that their libraries purchase materials from create accessible books/items. 34% were unsure if they would consider advocating for accessibility with their vendors and publishers.

There is a low response rate for the “I don’t know” categories in the section *Accessible Facilities and Spaces*. Only 2% said they were unaware of if their public library facilities and spaces were accessible for all patrons. The response rate goes up when asked if the signs in their library are accessible (19% responded “I don’t know”), but not to the numbers found in the previous sections.

Another area where respondents selected the option “I don’t know” less frequently was in the *Legislative Accessibility Requirements* section (10% or less). When asked if they were aware of the current or upcoming provincial/territorial legislative accessibility requirements, 8% selected “I don’t know.” This is a similar statistic found in the following question (from the “Other” category), where 10% of respondents said that they don’t know if they have incorporated or begun incorporating provincial/territorial legislative accessibility requirements.

In the section, *Human Resources*, respondents are aware of how accessible the physical library workplace is and if their library educates library employees about accessibility. Still, most respondents were not aware of if the digital tools staff use were accessible or if their library uses accessible hiring techniques. Only 1% of respondents said “I don’t know” when asked if their library workplace was accessible, but 42% selected “I don’t know” when asked if the digital tools staff use are accessible. For the question “Does your library use any of the following accessible hiring policies and/or recruitment techniques?” 43% replied that they did not know what techniques were used. This section closes with asking respondents how their library educates employees about accessibility, with only 8% selecting the option “I don’t know”.

When asking about releasing content in the *Communications* section, 33% of respondents said they were unaware if their social media posts, press releases, advertisements, etc., are accessible. In the following question, 17% of respondents wrote that they were unaware of what (if any) accessibility features were included when they release content.

In the *Accessibility Questions* section filled out by library pages, library volunteers, and circulation staff, the respondents selected “I don’t know” infrequently. 0% of respondents for this section selected “I don’t know” when asked if they were aware of the accessibility requirements their library has. In the next question about what accessibility features are offered by their libraries, only 2% of respondents said that they were unaware or didn’t know the accessibility features their library has.

The final section of the survey, *Library Technicians and Assistants*, has a low selection rate for the “I don’t know” options in the first few question, but the percentages increase in the metadata questions. Only 1% said that they don’t know about the accessibility requirements their library offers patrons. In the next question about what accessibility features are offered by their libraries, 2% of respondents selected the option “I am not aware or I don't know the accessibility requirements my library has.” For the question, what accessible print and/or digital content does their library have, only 1% selected “I don’t know if my library provides accessible content.” The percentage increases for the next question, with 12% saying they don’t know if they want to know more about accessible content and options.

For the metadata questions in the *Library Technicians and Assistants* section, 11% selected “I don’t know” when asked if they were aware of metadata fields and options related to accessibility. The percentages jump up for the following few questions (significantly). When asked if they were familiar with accessibility metadata fields, 73% selected “I don’t know.” For the next question, 66% replied that they were unaware if they display/make available the accessibility metadata for their patrons. 90% said they do not know if the publishers and vendors their library purchases from provide accessibility metadata. And finally, 85% selected “I don’t know” when asked if their library utilizes accessibility metadata for their patrons.

The rate of selection for the “I don’t know” options reveals significant gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed around accessibility in public libraries, specifically around digital accessibility. However, respondents showed that they do and are aware of accessibility requirements, specifically around accessibility in physical spaces.

# Key Themes and Supporting Themes

Results from the survey combined with feedback from the advisory committee were compiled, and key themes were identified to help inform the awareness and training needs. In addition to the key themes, supporting themes were also identified, as they are integral to understanding the entire ecosystem of accessibility needs in public libraries.

## Key Themes

### Accessibility and Disability Training

Training public librarians about different disabilities and how to serve patrons with disabilities is very important. 87% of respondents believed that this should be part of public library training, educating library staff on all types of disabilities and how to create an inclusive library best. This includes providing sensitivity training for public library staff, with 65% of respondents saying this was necessary. Public library services include reference, borrowing digital/physical materials, computer with Internet access, library programming, and library professional development. Within the survey, respondents were asked if those services needed to be made more accessible, and all of those options were selected by 45% or more respondents, the highest being library programming at 64%. Providing resources to help train public libraries and educate them on different disabilities would improve the accessibility of public library services and the patron experience.

“Education about all barriers in a work environment would be helpful. Although we have taken Mental Health Training this does not teach the impact on the challenges faced by the affected. I feel like paid time for employee's to explore the differing types of visible and non-visible disabilities in a guided learning environment would help both the people with the disability and the people who work with them everyday.”

#### Training Outcomes

1. Library staff knows about different disabilities and can have respectful interactions with patrons with disabilities.
2. Provide training resources and teaching guides for public library staff to learn and improve upon patron services.

### Educating Public Library Staff and Creating Educational Resources

It is essential to provide educational materials for libraries to use so that they can provide accessible services in an accessible environment (physical and digital). The resources will focus on educating about and addressing knowledge gaps identified in the survey. The gaps of knowledge can be seen in the questions where the majority of the respondents selected “No” or “I don’t know”. The “No” responses addressed the inaccessible services/options in libraries that staff can be educated on. The “I don’t know” option refers to a lack of knowledge or unfamiliarity of the accessibility feature being asked about.

The survey sections where the most significant number of respondents said either “No” or “I don’t know” were metadata, library programs, communications, and digital technology (website, catalogue, and digital tools). The education materials will be resources in the preferred formats as identified in the survey (generally, “Checklists”, “Guidelines”, “Tutorials”, and/or “Toolkits”).

* 77% of respondents selected “I don’t know” or “No” to the question, “Is your library website accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards?”
* 72% of respondents selected “No” or “I don’t know” when asked, “Are you aware of metadata fields and options related to accessibility?”
* 57% of respondents selected “No" or “I don’t know” when asked, “Do you offer any accessible library programs?”
* 57% of respondents answered, “No” or “I don’t know” to the question, “When releasing content (social media, press releases, advertisements, etc.), do you make sure that the content is accessible?”
* 55% of respondents selected “No” or “I don’t know” when asked, “Are the digital tools staff/contractors/volunteers use accessible?”
* 50% of respondents selected “Not great,” “Terrible,” or “I don’t know” to the question “To what extent is your library catalogue/search accessible?”

#### Training Outcomes

1. Bridge the gap of knowledge that exists between public libraries and accessibility.
2. Provide accessibility resources for public library staff to consult and implement in their library to best serve all patrons.
3. The creation of accessible educational resources for public libraries on accessibility.

### Creating an Accessible Workplace

Ensure the public library workplace is fully accessible for all staff. This includes considering how the staff interacts and uses the library's physical space (both public-facing and areas specifically for staff) and the digital tools staff needs to use to perform their roles. Making sure that all staff is working in an accessible environment, without requesting special consideration, will create an inclusive working environment. This also extends to the hiring policies in public libraries to create an inclusive workplace for all.

* 8% of respondents replied “No” or “I don’t know” that their library workplace was accessible.
* 55% of respondents replied “No” or “I don’t know” that the digital tools staff uses are accessible.
* 47% of respondents replied “No” (using the “Other” category) or “I don’t know” if their library uses accessible hiring or recruitment techniques.
* 24% of respondents replied “No” or “I don’t know” if their library educates employees about accessibility.

#### Training Outcomes

1. Library staff works in a fully accessible workplace.
2. Libraries are aware of and understand how different workplace requirements can be made accessible.
3. Libraries use accessible hiring methods to ensure that the library workplace is inclusive.

### Funding Support

Funding was noted as being a significant barrier for public libraries to become fully accessible. Throughout the survey, qualitative data revealed that while the library and staff are motivated to learn more about and implement accessibility, but lack the funding. Providing training and educational resources for public libraries may help alleviate some of the funding issues they face. In addition, providing links to resources and grants can help libraries incorporate those accessibility needs.

Qualitative data by respondents that support this theme:

“We would be able to make our library a lot more accessible if we had the money and funding for it. Our library serves several surrounding communities that works out to around 7900 people. This does not allow enough funding to be as accessible as we would like.”

“Doing things requires funding. We can't act on advice without funding.”

“Funding. We know what we need, we can't afford it.”

#### Training Outcomes

1. Provide resources and links to funding/grant opportunities.
2. Provide links with alternative or “free” resources to help mitigate the need for funding.

### Marketing Resources

Accessible outreach and marketing need to be a priority for libraries. Many respondents said that their library is accessible or has accessible features but that patrons may not know about them. In the “How do YOU Read” report, one of the key findings is that people with disabilities do not know about or cannot take advantage of resources, services, and technologies available to them in libraries (Association of Canadian Publishers, eBOUND, et al., 2020, p. 13). Marketing and outreach by libraries about their current accessibility services would help solve this issue. Creating accessible marketing materials for the accessible features would help bridge that gap, which will involve including accessibility features in their communications (alt text, long descriptions, open and closed captioning, etc.).

Qualitative data by respondents that support this theme:

“Marketing - how do you have inclusive Marketing.”

When asked what library services need to be made more accessible, one respondent commented “marketing of accessible materials.”

#### Training Outcome

1. Provide accessible marketing resources so that public libraries can promote and provide outreach about previously existing and newly accessible services that patrons with disabilities may not be aware of.
2. Promote better communication between libraries and all patrons.
3. Ensure that public library communications include accessibility features for patrons with disabilities.

## Supporting Themes

### Supporting and Advocating for Accessibility

Accessibility in public libraries also depends on external factors. Publishers and vendors must produce accessible materials with accessibility metadata. Technology creators need to make sure that their software/hardware and websites are accessible with assistive technologies. Integrated Library Systems (ILS) should be editable by libraries to ensure an accessible experience for all patrons. Currently, the default for these external factors is not (necessarily) to be as accessible as possible. Supporting and advocating for these (and more) external factors to be made more accessible by public libraries and their staff will help libraries become more accessible for patrons.

* 48% of respondents said that “Yes” they would be willing to advocate for more accessibility metadata.
* 62% of respondents said “Yes” they would advocate for accessible materials

Part of this will include library staff/volunteers/contractors joining a supportive learning cohort dedicated to accessibility in public libraries, of which 21% of respondents (averaged from 11 questions in the survey) said that they would be interested in being a part of.

Qualitative data by respondents that support this theme:

“from what I've heard it's difficult to get Horizon and bibliocommons to make changes unless several library systems demand it, so guidelines backed up by several systems saying "this is what we need" would probably be a good place to start.”

“I love the idea of a supportive learning cohort! I'm by no means a decision-maker at my library but I would love to get more involved in accessibility efforts.”

#### Training Outcomes

1. Joining together to advocate for accessibility in public libraries.
2. Create a community dedicated to making all things in public libraries accessible.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Survey Questions

**General** - All respondents

Which treaty territory/homeland/province/territory do you work in?

What type of library do you work at?

What is the size of your library?

Which of the following best describes your library role?

**Accessibility in Public Libraries** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

Does your library have accessible print and/or digital content?

Would you like to know more about accessible content options and formats?

If you answered yes or I don’t know, what would you like to know more about?

Which language(s) does your library provide services(s) in?

Thinking about how accessible your library services are, please check all the services that you believe need to be made more accessible for your patrons?

What library training or professional development resources would help make your library services more accessible?

What training modules would you prefer?

What aspects of accessibility would you like to know more about in the library training resources?

What training do you think public library staff should receive to best serve patrons with print disabilities?

**Accessible library programs** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

What library programs does your library offer patrons (both live and virtual)?

Do you offer any accessible library programs?

If yes or some, what accessible library programs do you offer?

What are your most popular accessible library programs?

Would you feel comfortable adding your accessible library programs to a collaborative resource website for others to use?

What resources can we offer to help you make sure all library programs are accessible?

**Hardware/Software/Assistive Technology** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, IT staff, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

Is the public use hardware in your library normally accessible for all users?

Is the public use software in your library normally accessible?

What resources can we provide to help ensure that your hardware and software is accessible?

What accessibility support do you offer patrons for the hardware/software normally offered in your library?

What resources do you need to support hardware/software accessibility updates?

Do you provide assistive technologies for your library patrons?

If yes, what assistive technology do you provide?

What information or resources would best help you learn more about assistive technologies?

**Accessibility of Public Library Websites and/or apps** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, IT staff, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

Is your library website accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards?

What accessibility features are available in your library website?

What support do you need in order to make your library website accessible?

If you have a library app, is it accessible according to the WCAG 2.0 A standards?

What accessibility features are in your library app?

What support do you need to make your library app accessible?

How do you evaluate that your website remains accessible for patrons as you grow your website/app content?

If you selected Web Automation tools, which ones do you use?

What Integrated Library System (ILS) does your library use?

Does your library have the ability to make changes to your ILS/Website to improve accessibility?

If you can make changes to your ILS/Website to improve accessibility, have you encountered blockers preventing you from making your LMS/Website more accessible?

To what extent is your library catalogue/search accessible?

What support do you need to make your library catalogue/search accessible?

How do you ensure that your catalogue remains accessible?

What resources do you need to help create and maintain an accessible website/app?

**Accessibility in metadata and cataloguing** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, IT staff, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

Are you aware of metadata fields and options related to accessibility?

Are you familiar with any of the following accessibility metadata fields?

Do you display/make available the accessibility metadata for your patrons?

Do any of the publishers and vendors you purchase from provide accessibility metadata?

If yes or some, do you utilize that accessibility metadata for your patrons?

Would you advocate for more accessibility metadata from the publishers and vendors you purchase from?

What resources would you like to have to support the creation and use of accessibility metadata for your patrons?

**Guidelines for selection, acquisition and licensing** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

How do you select accessible material for your public library?

Do you review materials that you select/purchase to make sure that they are accessible?

If yes or sometimes, would your library be willing to share any resources or practices you use when reviewing your materials to make sure they are accessible?

Do the vendors/publishers that you purchase materials from create accessible books/items?

Would you consider advocating for accessibility with your vendors and publishers?

What resources would be helpful to you to make sure that your library materials you select and purchase are accessible?

**Accessible Facilities and Spaces** - For library directors, librarians, library managers, accessibility experts, and staff in an organization that support libraries

Are your public library facilities accessible for all patrons?

What accessibility requirements do your facilities and/or spaces have?

Are your signs accessible for people with print disabilities?

If yes or some, how have you made your signs accessible?

What accessibility requirements would you like to see added to your library facilities and/or spaces?

What resources do you need in order to create fully accessible facilities and spaces for both patrons and staff?

**Legislative Accessibility requirements** - For library directors, Rural Librarians, library managers, and accessibility experts

Are you aware of the current or upcoming provincial/territory accessibility requirements?

How have you incorporated or begun incorporating the provincial/territory accessibility requirements?

What resources would you like to see offered for libraries in order to follow legislative accessibility requirements?

**Human Resources** - For library directors, Rural Librarians, library managers, human resources, and accessibility experts

Is your library workplace accessible?

If yes or if there are some accessible areas, how have you ensured that the library workplace is accessible?

What resources can we provide to help you make your physical library workplace accessible?

Are the digital tools staff/contractors/volunteers use accessible?

If yes or some, what digital tools are accessible?

How have you ensured that these digital tools are accessible?

What resources would be useful to help ensure that the digital tools library employees use are accessible?

Does your library use any of the following accessible hiring policies and/or recruitment techniques?

Do you educate employees about accessibility in the library?

If yes or somewhat, how do you educate library employees about accessibility?

Would you feel comfortable adding your library accessible education materials to a collaborative resource website for others to use?

In your library role, what resources would help you make your library more accessible?

**Communications** - For library directors, Rural Librarians, library managers, communications, and accessibility experts

When releasing content (social media, press releases, advertisements, etc.), do you make sure that the content is accessible?

If yes or sometimes, what accessibility information do you include in your posts?

What accessibility features would you like to know more about?

In your library role, what resources would help you make your content more accessible?

**Accessibility Questions** - For library pages, library volunteers, and circulation staff

On a scale of 1 to 10, how knowledgeable are you about accessibility?

Are you aware of the accessibility requirements your library has?

If yes or somewhat, what accessibility features does your library offer patrons?

What accessibility information would you like to know more about?

Has accessibility been something you’ve had to consider in your library role, and if so, how?

**Library Technicians and Assistants** - For Library Technicians and Assistants

On a scale of 1 to 10, how knowledgeable are you about accessibility?

Are you aware of the accessibility requirements your library has?

If yes or somewhat, what accessibility features does your library offer patrons?

Has accessibility been something you’ve had to consider in your library role, and if so, how?

What accessible print and/or digital content does your library have?

Would you like to know more about accessible content options and formats?

If you answered yes or I don’t know, what would you like to know more about?

Thinking about how accessible your library services are, please check all services that you believe need to be made more accessible for your patrons.

What library training or professional development resources would help make your library services more accessible?

What training modules would you prefer?

What aspects of accessibility would you like to know more about in the library training resources?

What training do you think public library staff should receive to best serve patrons with disabilities?

Are you aware of metadata fields and options related to accessibility?

Are you familiar with any of the following accessibility metadata fields?

Do you display/make available the accessibility metadata to your patrons?

Do the publishers and vendors you purchase from provide accessibility metadata?

If yes or some, do you utilize that accessibility metadata for your patrons?

What resources would you like to have in order to support the creation and use of accessibility metadata for your patrons?

**Final Comments** - All respondents

Comments

1. The PLARC survey is a significant part of this report and will be described in further detail below. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)