



Brookfield Public Library Community Survey July 2016

Executive Summary

In July 2016, UNICOM•ARC conducted an online survey of residents in the Brookfield Public Library service area. The purpose of the survey was to better understand area residents' perceptions of and priorities for the Library.

Six hundred forty two (642) responses were received. Complete results of every question asked are included elsewhere in this report.

Using the Library

A very high percentage of respondents (91%) reported having a Brookfield Library card, and most respondents (66%) indicated that they visit the Library once a month or more. More than a third (37%) said that they visit the library several times a week or more.

Respondents were asked how frequently they or anyone in their household use several of the Library's technology offerings. Of the items in the list, respondents were most likely to say that someone in their households took advantage of Library computers or Internet:

- WiFi hotspots (46%, respondent or someone in household)
- Computer workstations for Internet access and/or productivity software (44%)
- Laptops / tablets for Internet access and/or productivity software (30%)
- Simple scan station (30%)
- 3D printer (21%)
- Digital conversion workstation (18%)
- EReaders (16%)
- Playaways (12%)
- Nintendo DSI (9%)

Almost half of respondents (48%) believed that the Library offers the only free access to computers and the Internet in the community, while 15% indicated that there were other locations.

Rating the Library

Most respondents gave high marks to the Library, with three quarters grading the Library an “A” (29%) or “B” (47%). By contrast, very few respondents rated the Library a “D” (2%) or “Fail” (2%).

Respondents were also asked to rate the Library’s performance in a number of areas. In almost every case, majorities rated the Library’s performance to be “excellent” or “good.”

- Keeping up-to-date with technology (81%, excellent/good)
- Encouraging residents to participate in the Library’s planning process (73%)
- Hiring and retaining a quality staff (73%)
- Keeping up with the repair and maintenance of the Library building (73%)
- Providing quiet places to sit and use library materials (63%)
- Providing adequate space for library classes and events (56%)
- Maintaining a strong board and administration (51%)
- Building partnerships with local schools, businesses and other organizations (50%)
- Providing adequate meeting space for community groups (47%)
- Using tax dollars efficiently (47%)

Statements about the Library

Respondents were read several statements that “some people might make about the Brookfield Public Library” and asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each. Strong majorities agreed with a number of positive statements about the Library and its role in the community.

- The Library promotes lifelong learning through its services, classes and events. (88%, strongly/somewhat agree)
- The Library staff is knowledgeable and resourceful. (86%)
- Our Library acts much like a community center where all are welcome to participate. (84%)
- The Library greatly contributes to the high quality of life found in Brookfield. (79%)
- The Library offers a full range of classes and events for all age groups, young and old alike.(79%)
- A Library with 21st century services, classes and events is a source of pride in Brookfield. (78%)
- Supporting the Library is a great investment for keeping our community strong. (78%)
- There is not enough space in the building for the number of children and adults that use the Library. (52%)
- With so much technology in homes, public libraries are simply not needed. (23%)

Possible Library improvements

Respondents were presented with several “possible improvements to the Brookfield Library” and asked how high a priority they placed on each. Every item tested in this section was rated a high or very high priority by between one half and about two thirds of respondents:

- Provide more services, classes and events for young children (67%, high/very high priority)
- Create a quiet reading room (67%)
- Offer facilities that are more accessible for those with disabilities (64%)
- Provide additional services for older adults (64%)
- Add computer workstations (58%)
- Provide a dedicated space for teens (57%)
- Expand and enlarge space for community group meetings (54%)
- Offer individual and group study rooms (54%)

Possible construction project

Respondents were asked how strongly they favored or opposed a possible project to construct a new library building:

Brookfield Public Library is considering a construction project for a new library building. While the exact project amount has not been determined, let's assume the Library will need to borrow \$10.3 million for the project.

When asked near the start of the survey, about half (48%) of respondents said they favored the project, while two in five (40%) were opposed.

Respondents were asked again about this proposal near the end of the survey, and support rose slightly, with a narrow majority (51%) saying that they favored the project. Again, two in five (40%) were opposed.

Facts about the Library

Respondents were presented with four "facts about the Brookfield Public Library" and asked whether each made them more or less likely to support a proposal for a new library. Majorities said that two of these facts made them more likely to support the proposal, while almost half said the same about two other facts:

- More than 700 Brookfield residents were denied access to classes and events because of limited space. (54%, more likely)
- Compared to other libraries in the area, Brookfield has more demand for services but far less space to provide those services. (52%)
- In total, Brookfield residents saved more than \$6 million in 2015 by borrowing print and digital books, movies, music and magazines rather than buying. (49%)
- Architects and engineers have determined that expanding / adding another floor to the existing Library is not structurally feasible. (45%)