

Green Apple County Library

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2023

# CONTENTS **М** TABLE

Introduction and Methodology	1
Review of Existing Data Community Survey Focus Group of Community Leaders Stakeholder Interviews	<u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u>
<u>Circulation Statistics</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Demographics</u>	<u>13</u>
Overall Results and Data Comparison	<u>17</u>
<u>Community Survey</u> <u>Focus Group of Community Leaders</u> <u>Stakeholder Interviews</u>	<u>17</u> 26 28
<u>Proposed Actions</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Library Collection</u> <u>Library Services</u>	<u>31</u> 32
<u>Reference</u>	<u>33</u>
Appendix A: Community Survey	<u>34</u>
Appendix B: Focus group of Community Leaders	<u>42</u>
<u>Appendix C: Stakeholder Interviews</u>	<u>43</u>

# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Green Apple County Public Library aspires to empower patrons to be life-long learners through the resources, programs, and support offered by the library. We are committed to providing Green Apple County with reliable, easy access to diverse resources, ideas, and information both in person and online. We believe that as our community grows and changes, our resources and services must evolve to meet the needs of our patrons and of our community.

The Green Apple County Public Library has undertaken this Community Needs Assessment to develop a greater understanding of the materials and services the Green Apple County community needs from its public library today and into the future. Various methods were used throughout the duration of this project to compile data about the community and gather input from Green Apple County residents and library patrons.



# Review of Existing Data

The Needs Assessment Committee collected and reviewed existing data regarding the Green Apple County Public Library and the greater Green Apple County community, including:

- Green Apple County demographics gathered from the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2021 and 2022
- Statistic of library use for Green Apple County Public Library from:
  - Circulation statistics

# Community Survey

A community survey consisting of 15 questions was distributed to library patrons and community members over a 6-month period. The survey was available beginning October 1st, 2021 in physical and digital formats in English, as well as Spanish. Survey participants were given until April 30th, 2022 to complete and return their surveys and were entered into a raffle to win one of three gift cards to local Green Apple County businesses upon the completion and return of their survey. A total of 2,000 surveys were completed and returned: 1,017 digital and 983 physical. Survey questions included topics such as frequency of library use, user experience, and library services.

# Focus Group of Community Leaders

A focus group consisting of various community leaders was held as part of this needs assessment. 45 community leaders were identified to participate in the focus group, including members from organization such as:

- The Green Apple County Historical Society
- Green Apple County ISD
- Boys & Girls Club of America
- Chamber of Commerce
- Equality Alliance of Green Apple County
- Green Apple County Community College
- The GAC Senior Resource Center

Focus group meetings took place at the Green Apple County Public Library and the Green Apple County Community Center.



# Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to the focus group of community leaders, the Green Apple County Public Library Needs Assessment also conducted interviews with various stakeholders in the community, including parents, library staff, library patrons, local government employees, and educators in Green Apple County. These interviews consisted of questions regarding the role of the library in the community, the importance of a library in the community, personal experiences with library resources, services, and staff, areas of improvement, and areas where the library is succeeding.

This Community Needs Assessment will be presented to Green Apple County council members at the upcoming Green Apple County chamber of commerce meeting and will be published for viewing by the public on the Green Apple County Public Library website.



# CIRCULATION STATISTICS

During the last fiscal year, collection use has remained fairly consistent in Green Apple County (see Figure 1), with a range between 20,000 and 32,000 items circulated each month. The last fiscal year ended with a total of 309,694 items circulated. As expected, June and July are the highest months due to summer reading programs for different age groups, summer programming, and an influx of teen volunteers.

Figure 1

Total Monthly Collection Use; 21-22 FY

40,000



Contrasted with consistent use across the months of the last fiscal year, the total annual collection use statistics (see **Figure 2**) and total library visits (see **Figure 3**) vary greatly. This is due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. A large dip occurred in the years 2020 and 2021. With that said, since the administration of COVID vaccines, there has been a large surge in collection use. Registered users has stayed largely the same (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 2

400,000

307,858 317,769 303,156 292,505

TOTAL ANNUAL COLLECTION USE

5 YEAR COMPARISON

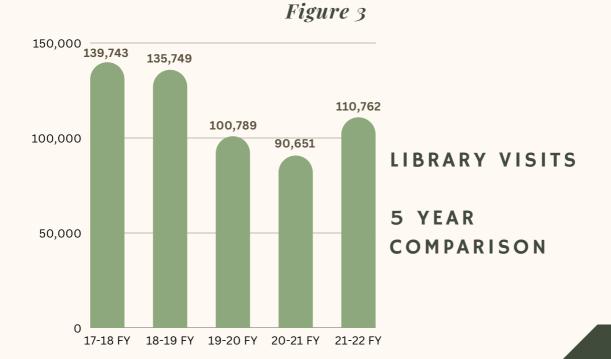


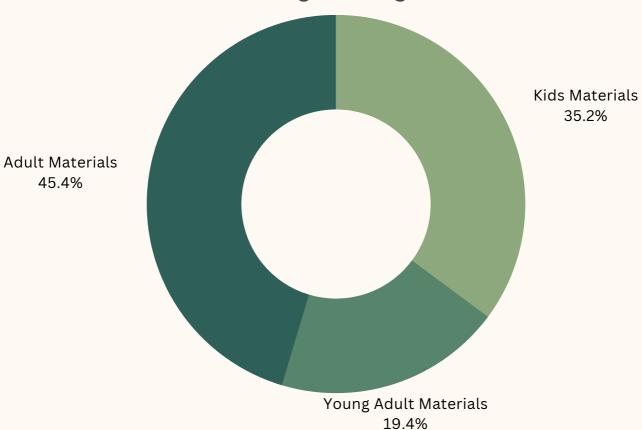
Figure 4
Registered Users; 5 Year Comparison





The majority of items circulated during the 21-22 FY were adult items (see Figure 5).

Figure 5
Circulation Based on Age Demographics; 21-22 FY





Regarding Audio/Visual content over the past three years, there was only a small dip on circulation of materials in the 20-21 FYE (see Figure 6). During the last year, most video items circulated were physical while most audio items were digital (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

Figure 6
Collection Use By Type; 3 Year Comparison

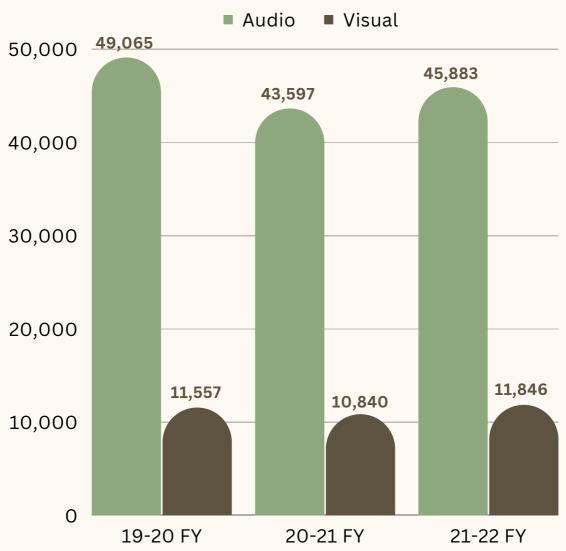
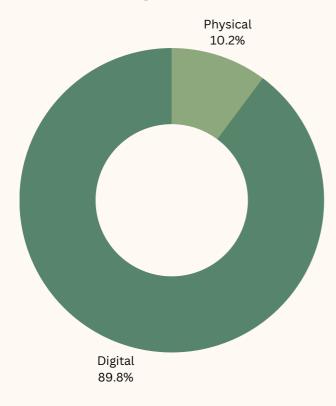


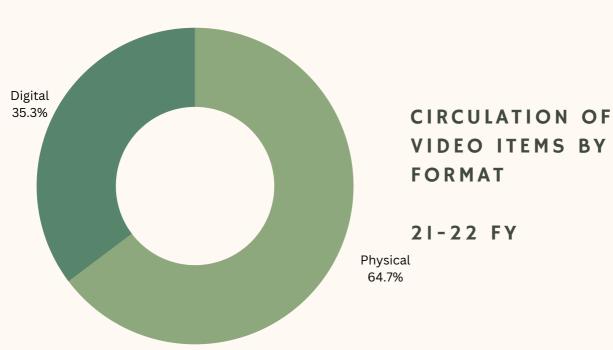
Figure 7



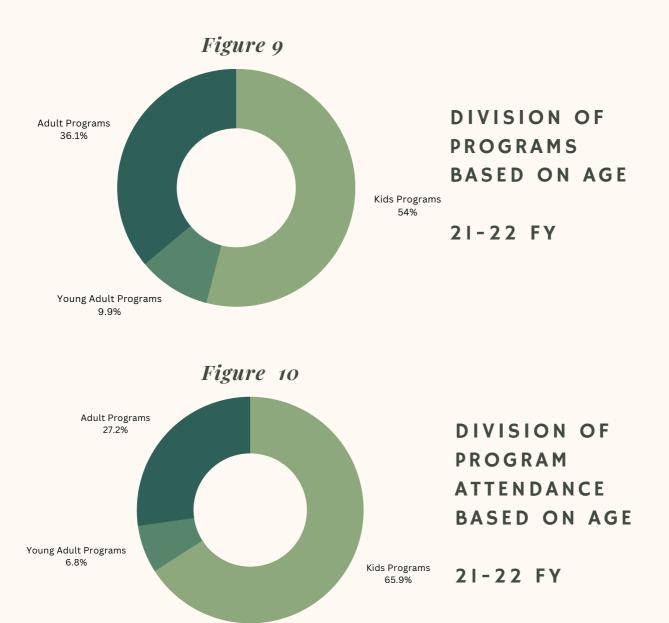
CIRCULATION OF AUDIO ITEMS BY FORMAT

21-22 FY

Figure 8

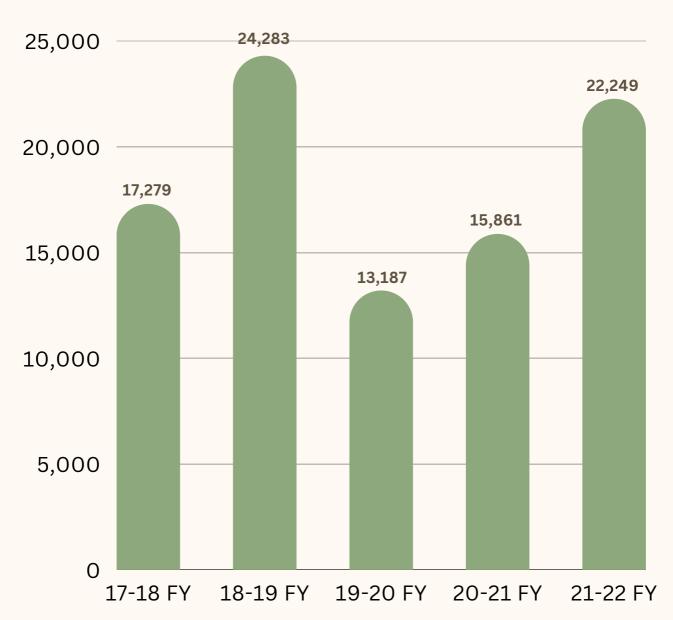


Programs include classes, story times, makerspaces, etc. In proportion to the programs provided (see Figure 9), adults attended events proportionally more than young adults (see Figure 10). Children attended events at the rate predicted.



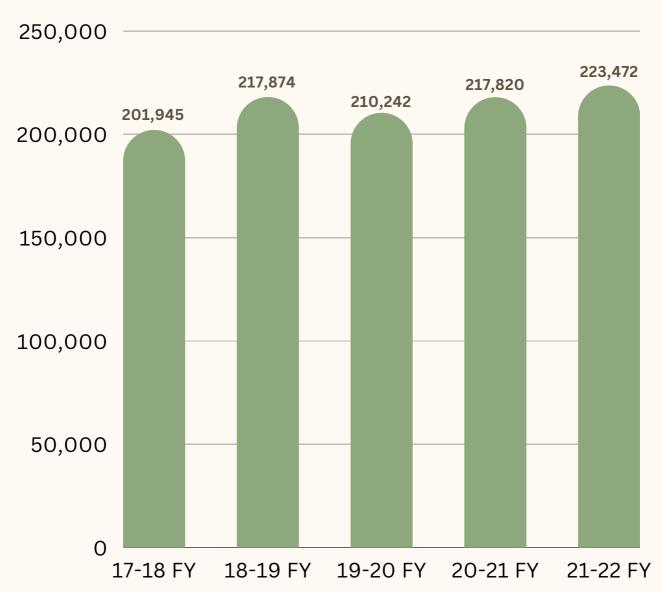
Like the circulation rates, uses of library computers have fluctuated based on the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 11). There was a large dip in the 19-20 FYE. Since then, computer use rates have grown.

Figure 11
Public Computer Use; 5 Year Comparison



During the last five years, library website visits have steadily grown (see **Figure 12**) in part because of library services being heavily digitized during the pandemic.

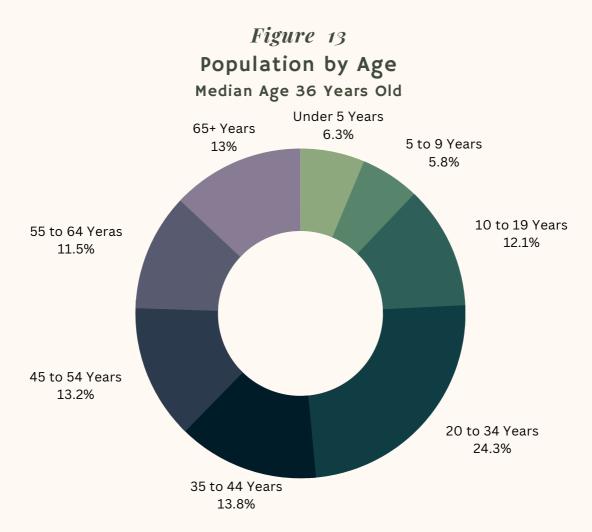
Figure 12
Library Website Visits; 5 Year Comparison



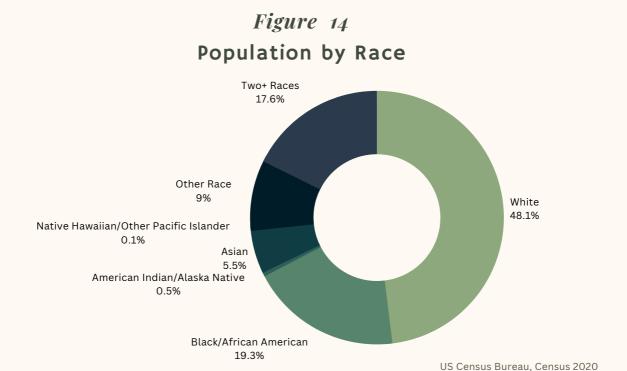
# DEMOGRAPHICS

Green Apple County is a community with a population of 727,105. There are 279,435 total households in Green Apple County at an average household size of 2.55. Our county has experienced 17% population growth since 2010, adding many new single-family homes and multi-family residences which has resulted in the building of several new schools and public green spaces, as well as attracting new retail and restaurants along with three new hospitals.

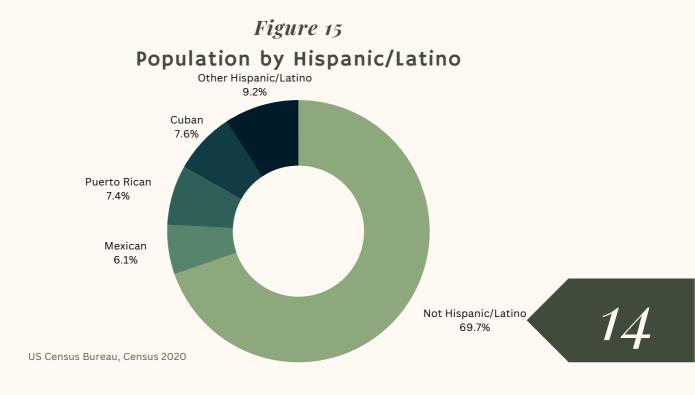
The median age of Green Apple County's residents is slightly younger than that of the total US at 36 years (vs. 38.2 years US; see **Figure 13**).



Green Apple County has a lower proportion of White residents than the US average (48% vs. 62% total US) and a higher proportion of Black/African American (19% vs. 12% US) or multiracial (18% vs. 10% US) residents (see **Figure 14**).

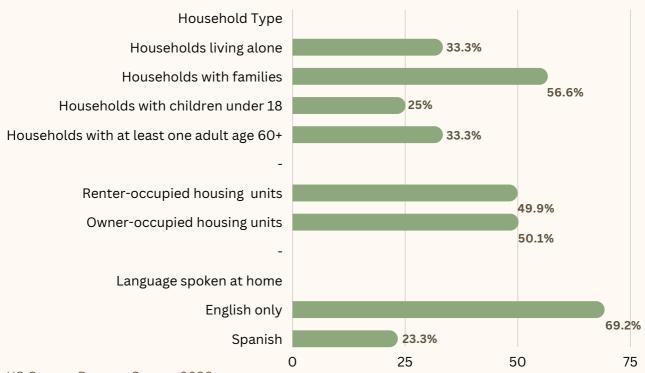


Residents from Green Apple County are more likely to be Hispanic or Latino than the national average (30% vs. 19% US) and the county has a higher proportion of residents of Puerto Rican (7% vs. 2% US) and Cuban descent (8% vs. 1% US; see **Figure 15**).



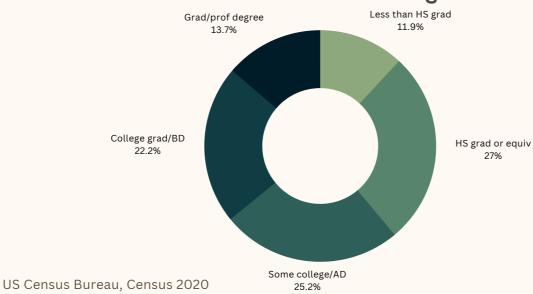
Green Apple County has a higher proportion of renters than the Total US (50% vs. 36% US) and, while the County is less likely to have households with at least one adult over 60 years of age (33% vs 40% US), we are more likely to have householders living alone (33% vs. 28% US) and have a higher incidence of Spanish as the language spoken at home (23% vs. 13% US; see **Figure 16**).

Figure 16
Population by Household Type



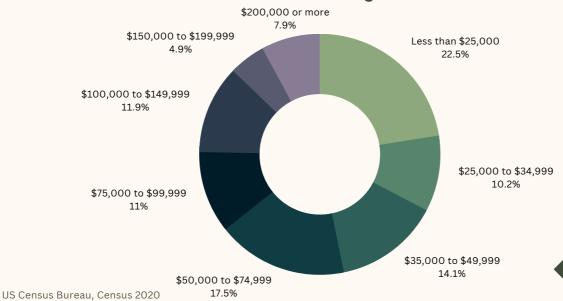
As far as educational attainment, Green Apple County mirrors the US closely, as 27% have a high school diploma or equivalent (vs. 27% US) and 33% have a college degree or more (vs. 33% US; see **Figure 17**).

Figure 17
Educational Attainment: Age 25+



Household incomes in Green Apple County are lower than the national average with a median household income of \$53,896 (vs. \$69,717 US). Twenty-two percent of residents have incomes of under \$25,000 (vs. 17% US) and only 25% have higher household incomes over \$100,000 per year (vs. 34% US; see **Figure 18**).

Figure 18
Household Income
Median \$53,896 | Avg \$83,876



# OVERALL RESULTS AND DATA COMPARISON

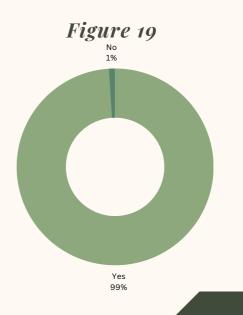
# Community Survey

Green Apple County library sent surveys to key informants in both traditional and electronic formats. The survey was open for six months from October 2021 until April 2022. We received 2,000 survey responses and used data collection software to compile the results (see <u>Appendix A</u> for full survey).

This survey was designed to understand the community needs to help Green Apple Public Library better serve its community. The survey has fourteen questions with a mix of quantitative and qualitative characteristics. The key informants chosen for survey participation are current library card holders, local educators, public officials, community leaders, and local business leaders. The survey was disseminated voluntarily onsite at various branches and through electronic medium. A six-month span, from October 2021 to April 2022, was allowed for survey participations before results were compiled. We received 2000 surveys in response, representing approximately 9% of our current registered membership.

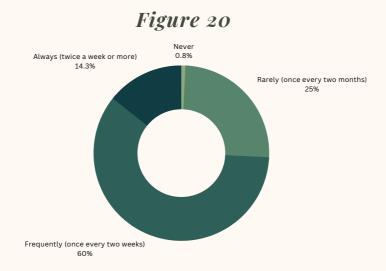
# Question 1. Are you currently a Green Apple County Public library member?

Of the 2,000 respondents over 99% are current members of the Green Apple County Public library (see **Figure 19**).



# Question 2. How often do you visit the library?

About 16% (300) of survey respondents use the library infrequently. The remaining 84% of respondents use the library on a regular basis. (see **Figure 20**).

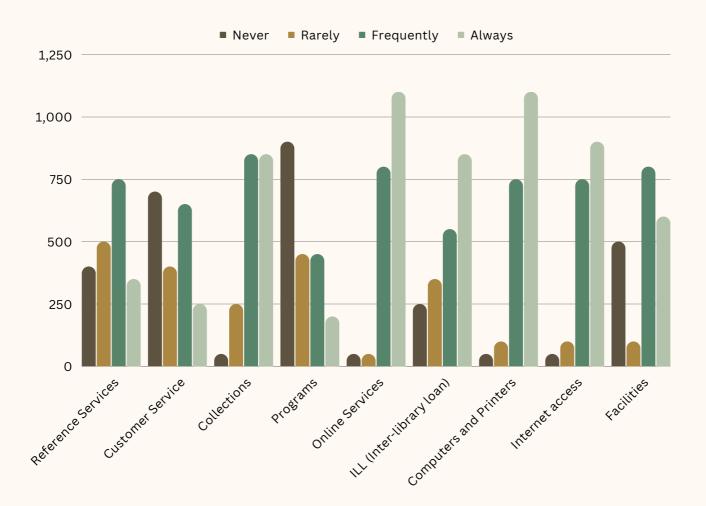




# Question 3: How often do you use each of the following library services?

Online services are used by a significant percentage (<50%) of the respondent population, while programs are the least attended service with a significant percentage (<50%) never or rarely attending. The most used services are online services, computers, and internet access. The least used services are programs, customer service, and facilities (see **Figure 21**).

Figure 21

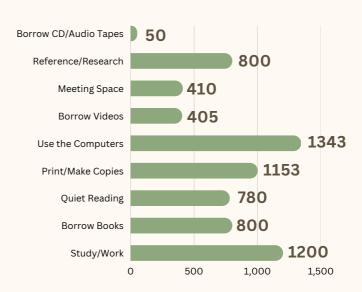




# Question 4. What are your main reasons for using the library?

Of the listed reasons, using computers and work/study are the main uses with over 60% of survey participants responding positively to both categories. Borrowing CD/Audio tapes, borrowing videos, and using the library as a meeting place were categories with the lowest positive responses (see Figure 22)

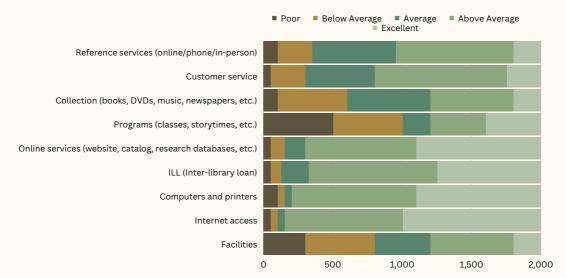
Figure 22



Question 5. How would you rate each of the following library services?

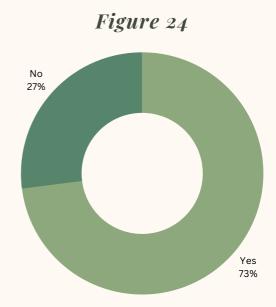
As mirrored in the previous question, Internet access received the highest rating with over 50% of survey participants responding with excellent ratings. Computers and online services also received a high satisfaction rating. As mirrored in the previous question, programs and facilities receive the lowest satisfaction rating with 10-20% of the survey participants responding with poor evaluations. (see **Figure 23**).

Figure 23



# Question 6. On your last visit, did you find what you were looking for?

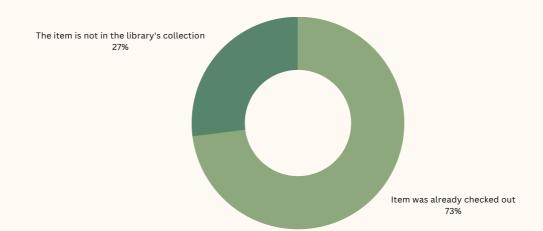
Approximately 73% of survey participants responded positively to this question. 27% of survey participants did not find what they were searching for during their last visit (see Figure 24).



Question 7. If unable to find what you were looking for on your last visit, what was the reason?

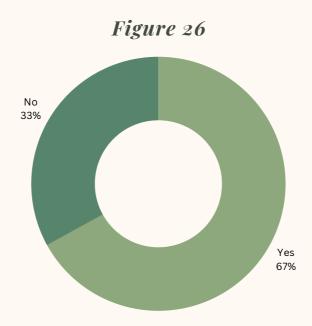
Of the 533 survey respondents who responded negatively to the previous question, 73% (390) chose the option that the item was checked out. The other 27% (133) chose the option stating their desired object was not in the collection (see **Figure 25**).

Figure 25



### Question 8. Are the current materials useful and up to date?

When asked if the collection was up to date, 67% of the surveyed respondents responded yes. A negative response was received from 33% of the respondents surveyed (see **Figure 26**).



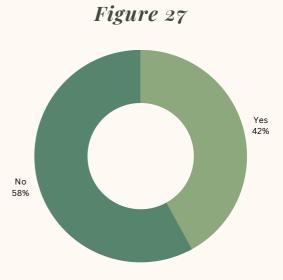
### Question 9. Which areas of our collection would you like to see improved/expanded?

There were various responses received for this open-ended question, with the top five responses listed below.

- Young Adult e-books
- Adult e-books
- Foreign Language titles
- Music
- DVD/Video

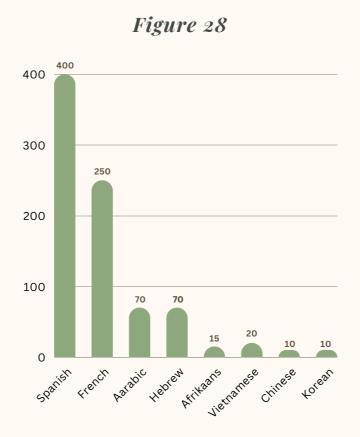
# Question 10. Would you use materials in languages other than English?

When asked if survey participants would use foreign language resources, 42% (845) responded positively. More than 50% of surveyed participants responded negatively to this question (see **Figure** 27).



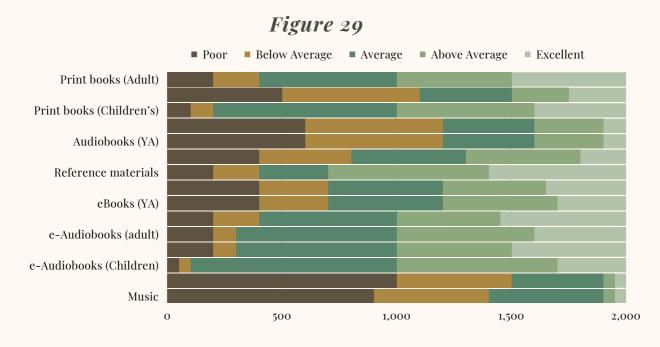
# Question 11. If you answered "Yes" to question number 11, please select language(s).

There is a strong preference for Spanish and French foreign materials and some interest in Arabic or Hebrew literature. There is low interest for materials in Afrikaans, Vietnamese, Chinese, or Korean (see Figure 28).



### Question 12. How would you rate each of the following library collections?

Data collected from this question highlights printbooks, e-books, and e-audiobooks as average to above average. Poor or below average ratings were received for dvd, music, and movies. (See **Figure 29**)



Question 13. Which social media platforms have you seen Green Apple Library using to promote programs, events, and other services?

Green Apple Library uses several social media platforms to engage patrons. According to a survey of 2000 survey participants, approximately 77% have seen our content on one or more platforms. About 23% of surveyed participants have not engaged with our content across the various platforms (see **Figure 30**).

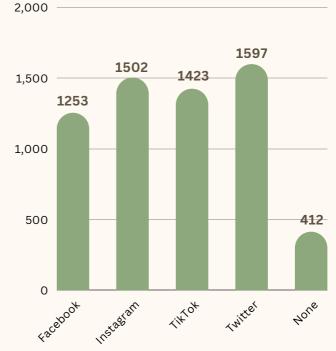
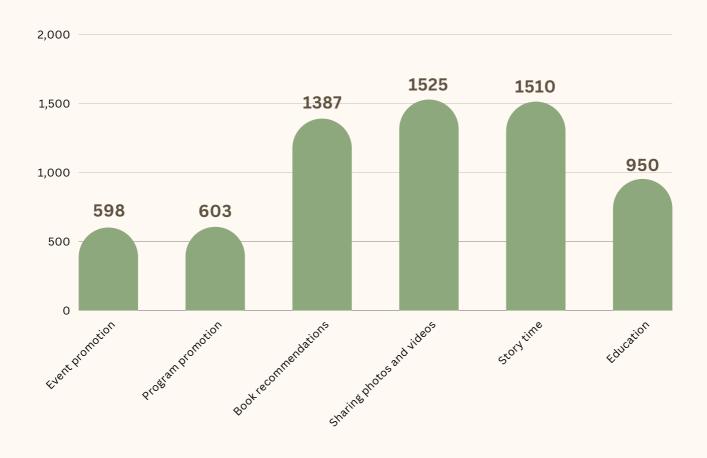


Figure 30

# Question 14. How does Green Apple Library use its social media platform(s)?

Those who have engaged with content on our various platforms identified book recommendations, photos and videos, and story time as the most frequent content viewed. They also identified event promotion and program promotion to be the least frequent content viewed. This may help explain the unsatisfactory scores programs/events received in question 3 and question 5 (see Figure 31).

Figure 31



**♦------**

# Focus Group of Community Leaders

Focus groups lasted approximately one hour each and focused on several questions. The most common responses and topics of discussion are provided below (see <u>Appendix B</u> for full survey).

### Question 1: What are the biggest challenges facing your community?

The focus group identified three main issues the community is currently experiencing. Poverty has increased due to hardships encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic. This poverty increase has also lead to higher rates of homelessness and less access to technology.

# Question 2: What do you think the library can do to address current challenges experienced in the community?

The Green Apple Library can help provide technological access and wifi to those members of the community who are disadvantaged. This will help mitigate poverty and homelessness by provide access to technology resources, as many employers and social programs require submissions through electronic means.

# Question 3: What value does the Green Apple County Public Library bring to the community?

Green Apple Public Library provides community meeting spaces, digital resources, reference materials, and experienced reference clerks to help the community access required information. The library also provides educational programs, storytimes, and other events designed to increase youth engagement.

Question 4: Are there any new or emerging needs that you see in the community that the library may be able to address by offering specific resources, programming, or services?

Green Apple County has become more diverse in recent years as the Hispanic population increase. The library needs to pivoto accomodate those whose native language is not English. The library can address this need by providing translation software, appropriating more foreign language titles, hire bilingual employees, and learn more about Hispanic cultures.

Question 5: Do you have suggestions for how library programming could better serve the community? Consider content, format, location, and day/time.

Increasing foreign language resource selection was identified due to the increase in Spanish speacking households. The focus group also highlighted a need to increase both e-book and digital resource access. Finally, a suggestion was given to expand the operating hours of the library to increase public access.



# Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews with library stakeholders, including parents, local educators, library staff, library patrons, and local government officials, were conducted over a 6-month period. Stakeholders were interviewed from October 2021 to April 202 (see <u>Appendix C</u> for full survey). The top responses to each question are included below:

δ.......

### Question 1: What role does the library play in your community?

- Community meeting place
- Resource for print materials
- Resource for technology
- Learning space

# Question 2: What areas do you believe the Green Apple County Public Library is succeeding in?

- Reference Services
- Library programs
- Community engagement

# Question 3: Are there any areas in which the Green Apple County Public Library could improve?

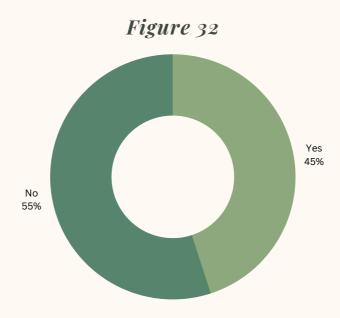
- Selection of foreign language resources
- E-book materials selection
- User experience on library website

### Question 4: What can be done by the library to support your needs and interests?

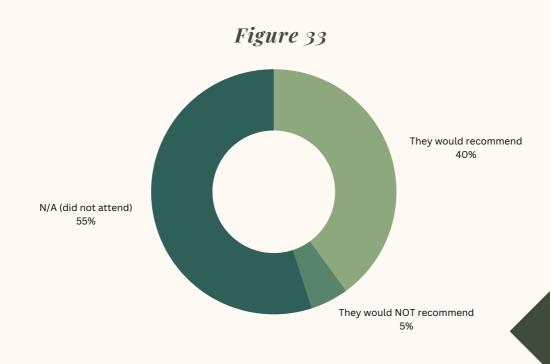
- Improve selection of foreign language materials
- Online opportunities to leave suggestions and comments
- Connect with local schools

Question 5: Have you attended any Green Apple County Public Library programs in the past year?

(see Figure 32)



Question 6: Would you recommend Green Apple County Public Library programs? (see Figure 33)



# Question 7: How do you typically interact with library resources?

- Online using the library website
- Online using Libby/Overdrive
- In-person



# PROPOSED ACTIONS

The Green Apple Public Library is dedicated to fulfilling and exceeding the needs of its community. Based on the survey, GAPL's online services are among the most popular provided to patrons. Over the past two fiscal years, there has been a greater need for online resources, which GAPL has been able to accommodate. Two major areas that can be improved are within the library collections and library services. The proposed actions presented below will be shared with the Green Apply County council members and be available on the library website for public viewing.

# Library Collection

The current library collection houses a nearly equal amount of print-to-electronic resources at 46% print and 54% electronic. Annual collection use has also fallen short of prepandemic totals at 309,694 for the 21-22 fiscal year. This change in collection use has contributed to decreased library traffic as a result of the pandemic. Despite this, GAPL is hopeful of passing past traffic numbers in the near future.

# Foreign language resources

About 30% of library users are of Hispanic or Latino origin. In an ongoing effort to best meet the needs of the community, GAPL recognizes that the current collection lacks Spanish-speaking titles. According to survey feedback, foreign language resources are among high-priority areas for improvement. By 24-25 FY, GAPL aims to increase Spanish-speaking print and electronic resources by 25% to better meet the ongoing community needs.

### E-books

As technology continues to become a relevant aspect of daily life, GAPL has assessed that its current electronic book offerings could be improved. While the number of electronic resources outnumbers print resources, the difference is not significant. As made evident through the recent pandemic, the library is capable of providing a balanced e-collection to the community. The current e-collection houses adult, young adult, and children titles. Of these areas, adult e-book use is significantly higher than young adult and children. Due to this, GAPL plans to increase adult e-book titles by 15% in the next fiscal year.

31

# Library Services

In an effort to better meet the expectations of the Green Apple community, the following service areas will be reviewed for improvement: User services, young adult programs, and technology. Although the community surveys and data collected cover a greater range of topics, these were areas that Green Apple Public Library viewed as needing the most change. The results of the surveys and data collected will also be shared with the Library's Materials Committee for further input and recommendations.

### User services

Based on the registered user data, the average number of registered library users in the past four fiscal years is 18,812, with the most recent fiscal year (21-22) total being 18,816. Library visits have also fallen short of pre-pandemic levels. The 18-19 fiscal year recorded 135,749 library visits, while the 21-22 fiscal year recorded 110,762 library visits. To increase the total number of registered library users and library visits, Green Apple Library will implement a revised weekly social media marketing strategy to reach a greater percentage of the Green Apple population and encourage library use.

### **Programs**

Young adult program attendance is only at 6.8%, which is less than half of the adult and kids program attendance. Two new young adult programs will be introduced in an effort to increase program attendance.

### *Technology*

Current library technology includes public computers, rentable electronics (laptops, tablets, media players, sound systems, and general technology equipment), and makerspace equipment. Green Apple Library is committed to providing relevant technology to its users. Over 800 survey respondents claimed to always use the available library technology. Total public computer use has increased by 18% this year compared to the last fiscal year. Within the next two fiscal years, Green Apple Library will replace the current public computers with up-to-date ones that include relevant applications and programs to encourage and continue public computer use growth.

# REFERENCE

US Census Bureau. (n.d.). Home page. *Census.Gov.* https://www.census.gov/en.html



# APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this survey. The Green Apple County Public Library is requesting community input on the current library collection, programs, and services. Responses to this survey will help the library to best respond to the wants and needs of library patrons. All participants in this survey will remain anonymous. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

**♦.....** 

- 1. Are you currently a Green Apple County Public library member?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2. How often do you visit the library?
  - a. Never
  - b. Rarely (once every two months)
  - c. Frequently (once every two weeks)
  - d. Always (twice a week or more)



3. How often do you use each of the following library services? Please check one answer for each service.

	Usage Frequency					
Service Type	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Always		
Reference services (online/phone/in-person)						
Customer service						
Collections (books, DVDs, music, newspapers, etc.)						
Programs (classes, story times, etc.)						
Online services (website, catalog, research databases, etc.)						
ILL (Inter-library loan)						
Computers and printers						
Internet access						
Facilities						

- 4. What are your main reasons for using the library? Select all that apply
  - a. Study/Work
  - b. Borrow Books
  - c.Quiet Reading
  - d. Print/Make Copies
  - e.Use the Computers
  - f. Borrow Videos
  - g. Meeting Space
  - h. Reference/Research
  - i. Borrow CD/Audio Tapes



5. How would you rate each of the following library services? Please check one answer for each service.

	Service Rating					
Service Type	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Always		
Reference services (online/phone/in-person)						
Customer service						
Collections (books, DVDs, music, newspapers, etc.)						
Programs (classes, story times, etc.)						
Online services (website, catalog, research databases, etc.)						
ILL (Inter-library loan)						
Computers and printers						
Internet access						
Facilities						

6. On your last visit, did you find what you were looking for?
a.Yes
b. No
7. If unable to find what you were looking for on your last visit, what was the reason?
a.Item was already checked out
b. The item is not in the library's collection
c.Not applicable- I found my resource
8. Are the current materials useful and up to date?
a.Yes
b.No
9. Which areas of our collection would you like to see improved/expanded?
10. Would you use materials in languages other than English?
a.Yes
b.No
11. If you answered "Yes" to question number 11, please select language(s). Choose all that
apply.
a.Spanish
b.French
c.Arabic
d.Hebrew
e.Afrikaans
f.Vietnamese
g.Chinese
h.Korean

12. How would you rate each of the following library collections? Please check one answer for each service.

	Collection Rating				
Collection Type	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Print books (Adult)					
Print books (YA)					
Print books (Children's)					
Audiobooks (Adult)					
Audiobooks (YA)					
Audiobooks (Children's)					
Reference Materials (dictionaries, Atlases, etc.)					
eBooks (Adult)					
eBooks (YA)					

# Question 12 Continued

	Collection Rating				
Collection Type	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
eBooks (Children)					
e-Audiobooks (Adult)					
e-Audiobooks (YA)					
e-Audiobooks (Children)					
DVDs/Movies					
Music					



- 13. Which social media platforms have you seen Green Apple Library using to promote programs, events, and other services? Choose all that apply.
  - a. Facebook
  - b.Instagram
  - c.TikTok
  - d. Twitter
  - e. None
- 14. How does Green Apple Library use its social media platform(s)? Choose all that apply.
  - a. Event promotion
  - b. Program promotion
  - c. Book recommendations
  - d. Sharing photos and videos from library events
  - e. Story time
  - f. Education



# APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this focus group. This discussion will take approximately 1 hour. The Green Apple County Public Library is dedicated to serving our community in the best ways possible through our collection, programs, and services. In an effort to evolve and improve how we serve our community, we have gathered leaders from across Green Apple County to discuss how we can better meet the needs of the community as we review and expand our collection.

- 1. What are the biggest challenges facing your community?
- 2. What do you think the library can do to address current challenges experienced in the community?
- 3. What value does the Green Apple County Public Library bring to the community?
- 4. Are there any new or emerging needs that you see in the community that the library may be able to address by offering specific resources, programming, or services?
- 5. Do you have suggestions for how library programming could better serve the community?



# APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Thank you for agreeing to speak with us today. We are members of the Green Apple County Public Library Collection Development Team and we are interviewing library stakeholders to find out their opinions about our library and determine if our collection is meeting the needs of our community. All participants in these interviews will remain anonymous. Interview responses will be used to help us evaluate our existing collection and determine which areas of our collection need improvement. This interview will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

- 1. What role does the library play in your community?
- 2. What areas do you believe the Green Apple County Public Library is succeeding in?
- 3. Are there any areas in which the Green Apple County Public Library could improve?
- 4. What can be done by the library to support your needs and interests?
- 5. Have you attended any Green Apple County Public Library programs in the past year?
- 6. Would you recommend Green Apple County Public Library programs? (see Figure 33)
- 7. Question 7: How do you typically interact with library resources?



