

### INTRODUCTION:

As part of its strategic planning process, the Somerville Public Library conducted a **community survey** in **September and October 2025**, yielding **1,385 responses**. While the survey **underrepresents men, residents under 25, low-income households, renters, non-white residents, and Wards 1 and 2**, responses from **nearly all demographic groups were sufficient** to feel **confident that their perspectives are represented**. The community survey's results provide valuable insight into **community satisfaction, priorities, and opportunities for improvement** across Library services, spaces, and programs.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Overall satisfaction is very high** across nearly all measures.
- **Ease of borrowing materials, proximity to a branch, and knowledgeable, helpful staff** received the highest satisfaction ratings.
- **Staff service stands out**, with **72% of respondents reporting very high satisfaction** with staff knowledge and helpfulness.
- Even among the **lowest-rated areas** (operating hours, building appearance, and space availability), only **10–15% of respondents rated their satisfaction below neutral**.
- A **high number of “not sure” responses** related to **take-home objects** suggests **limited awareness** of this offering.
- **Interest in expanded weekday evening and weekend daytime hours** is substantial across most groups, except for seniors.
- **Parents report high satisfaction** with the **variety of children’s programs**.
- **Nonbinary and LGBTQIA+ respondents report even higher overall satisfaction** than other groups.
- **Seniors report comparable satisfaction** to other age groups with **collection navigation, the Library website, and Library apps**.
- Respondents who **speak a language other than English at home** are satisfied with **program information availability**, but slightly less satisfied with **staff helpfulness**.
- **Ward 2 (Union Square) respondents** report the **lowest satisfaction with proximity** to a Library branch.
- **West Branch users** are more satisfied than other users with **space availability** and especially with the **appearance and functionality of buildings**.
- **Newsletters** (Library and City) generated the **highest number of survey responses**, followed by **social media**.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Key planning considerations include:

- **Expand and better promote Library programs**, as this is the **top priority overall**, especially for **non-Library users**.
- **Consider expanding or reconfiguring operating hours**, particularly **weekday evenings and weekend days**, with special attention to branch-specific needs.
- **Increase awareness of underused services**, including the **Library of Things and take-home objects**.
- **Evaluate building and space needs**, especially at the **Central Library**, where **parents and Central users prioritize new or updated facilities**.
- **Address equity in access**, including proximity concerns in **Ward 2** and service experience for households that **speak a language other than English at home**.
- **Expand digital materials**, a consistently high priority across respondent groups.
- **Tailor collection strategies** to account for **seniors, youth, and non-English-speaking respondents** who place a slightly higher priority on **physical materials**.
- **Leverage high-performing outreach channels**, particularly **newsletters and social media**, to improve awareness and engagement.

## CONCLUSION:

The 2025 Community Survey results highlight a Library system that is **highly valued and well-regarded**, particularly for its **staff expertise, customer service, and ease of use**. The findings also point to **clear, actionable opportunities** related to **program expansion, operating hours, space, outreach, and the community's awareness of Library services**. Together, these insights provide a strong foundation to guide strategic priorities and ensure the Somerville Public Library continues to meet evolving community needs.