



ACORN PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
...grow with us!

Strategic Plan

2014-2016

Approved by the Acorn Public Library District Board of Trustees on October 9, 2013

Acknowledgments

Strategic Planning Committee

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Linda Janeczek, President of the Friends of the Library
Paula Korzonek, Trustee
Megan Mall, Head of Adult Services
Michael Monahan, Reference Librarian
Sandy Presseur, Community Participant
Jennifer Van Sickle, Head of Youth Services
Eric Werthmann, Director

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The Library would like to thank all staff members for their commitment and dedication, and the Friends of the Library for their ongoing support. We also wish to thank all members of our community, particularly those who participated in our community survey.

Introduction

The two goals of this strategic plan are to identify key areas that the Library must focus on in order to accomplish its mission and to share that information with all library stakeholders. The selection of specific priorities in this plan means that the Library will focus special energy and resources in these areas.

The environment that all libraries currently face is incredibly uncertain. Budgets are being threatened, technology is evolving rapidly and nobody really knows what the library of 2050 or 2075 will look like. In such times of flux, planning is both massively difficult and extremely important. Because of this, we decided upon a considered, involved planning process. We also limited the plan to cover only three years, because the rapid pace of change means that re-focusing our priorities more frequently is desirable.

Due to cost considerations, the Library decided not to contract with an outside facilitator. Instead, the planning process was facilitated by the Library's director. The method described in *Strategic Planning for Results* by Sandra Nelson was used as a loose framework with which to guide the planning process. After approval from the Library's Board of Trustees, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed in early 2013. This committee was composed of representatives from various stakeholder groups and it met four times from February to August.

In order to support the Committee's work, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with library staff was done, as was an analysis of census data for the Library's community. In addition, a community survey was conducted, using both online and paper versions of the survey. 235 community members answered this survey. A portion of the survey results and the SWOT analysis are presented in the appendices.

The Committee embarked on its strategic-planning process with two essential questions in mind: *who are we, and who do we want to become?* But, of course, the more we delved into these issues, the more we found that these two questions became many: *Where can we best focus our limited resources? What do members of our community want out of their library? How can we best incorporate new kinds of technology into the library so as to stay relevant? What are we already good at and what can we improve on?*

In the end, however, we narrowed all these questions down to only five areas on which we will direct our energies over the next three years. We have termed these five areas "service priorities":

1. *Community Awareness* – Focus on the demographic shifts in our district

2. *Technology Enrichment* – Ensure that the library keeps current with new technologies
3. *Evolving the Collection* – Ensure that the collection contains in-demand, useful and current fiction and nonfiction resources
4. *Improving Physical and Virtual Spaces* – Provide a warm, friendly and welcoming environment
5. *Maximizing Staff Solutions* – Ensure that staff are recognized and compensated adequately, and that staff is used as efficiently as possible

We feel that these priorities are those that best allow us to begin to build a modern, 21st century library that supports and energizes our community.

This plan will guide the Library's decision-making over the next three years. Progress towards these goals will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Mission Statement

Acorn Public Library District provides public access to books, digital resources, public programs and gathering spaces. The Library acts as a vital, inspiring and responsive center of lifelong learning that meets the educational, recreational, cultural, and informational needs of its diverse community.

Service Priorities

Priority #1: Community Awareness

Goal 1: Increase resources to meet the needs of new and growing populations.

Action Steps:

- Implement a number of new programs in this area
- Increase number of titles in foreign languages

Measurement: Increased program attendance and circulation of foreign language materials.

Goal 2: Establish increased awareness of resources and services

Action Steps:

- Partner with community organizations to increase knowledge of library and the services it offers

Measurement: Increased amount of positive anecdotal evidence

Priority #2: Technology Enrichment

Goal 1: Create an appealing and functional new website

Action Steps:

- Investigate possible methods of developing new website
- Build new website that is attractive and contains features that allow staff easier control and input

Measurement: increase of website traffic

Goal 2: Increase number and use of types of technology

Action Steps:

- Establish tools to measure use of technology
- Establish priorities and plan on how to expand technology in the library
- Continue to update public computers and add to the types of technology, including online services, available to patrons and staff

Measurement: Increased number of types and use of technology

Priority #3: Evolving the Collection

Goal 1: Develop a systematic, coordinated approach to collection development

Action Steps:

- Learn how to run and analyze statistics in Millennium. Create a Collection Development Plan
- Examine and revise current collection development policies, procedures and budgets

Measurement: increase of total circulation

Goal 2: Ensure collection is accessible and attractive to patrons

Action Steps:

- Continue to aggressively weed the collection of outdated and unpopular materials
- Continue to expand displays of library materials
- Highlight recent purchases in newsletter, Facebook, etc.

Measurement: Increase in total circulation

Priority #4: Improve Physical and Virtual Spaces

Goal 1: Build a vibrant and engaging web presence for the Library

Action Steps:

- Increase and refine staff use of various social media technologies

- Construct new website that is attractive and appealing to patrons

Measurement: increase of use of website and social media

Goal 2: Increase attractiveness and usefulness of library' spaces

Action Steps:

- Develop plan on how to modify the library's internal spaces to make them more attractive and useful.
- Develop plan on increasing the beauty of the library's landscaping

Measurement: Patron views on library's design, as measured by survey and anecdotal evidence.

Priority #5: Maximizing Staff Potential

Goal 1: Utilize staffing hours more efficiently

Action Steps:

- Establish cross-training procedures and training opportunities
- Modify hours and positions in order to optimize use of staff time

Goal 2: Create a peer-driven staff recognition program

Goal 3: Evaluate salary ranges and adjust to increase competitiveness as compared to market rates

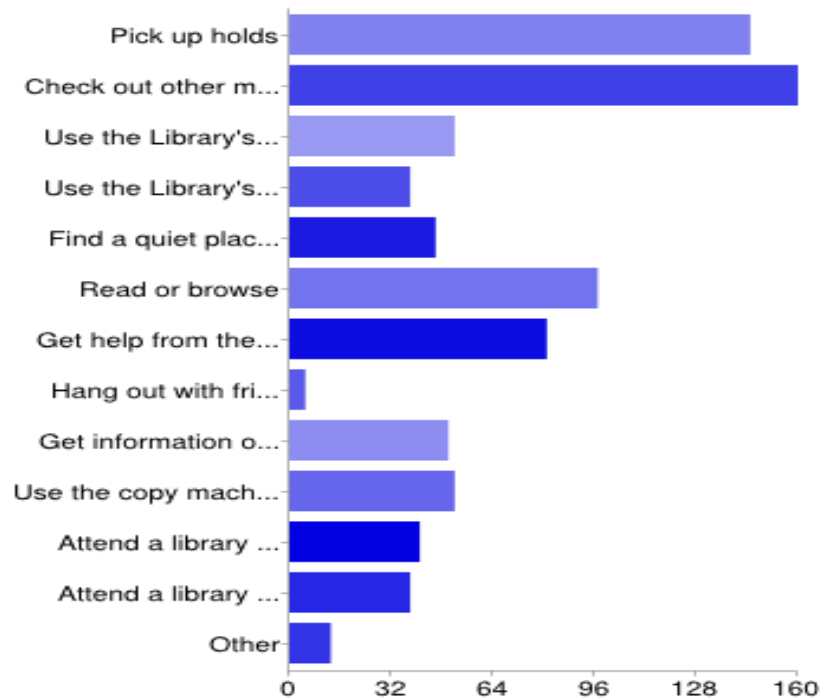
Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

<p>S</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Employees• Customer Service• Small size = intimacy• People like us!• Renovation has added vitality• Provide needed services to the community• We are affordable• Good programming• Schools like us	<p>W</p> <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small size• Lack of a print newsletter• Lack of funding• Not aware of how patrons view us• Too many options – unfocused• Changing demographics• Not enough info about demographics• No space for storage• Poor economy
<p>O</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing demographics• Space available - find uses• Marketing opportunities• Partnerships with community orgs• Facebook options• Ads in newsletter to fund it?• Library as Community Center• E-readers• Grants• Technology	<p>T</p> <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing demographics• Technology changes• Debt Burden• Need for capital expenditures• Building is old• Complacency – ignoring strengths• E-books• Internet• Funding

Appendix B: Survey Results

235 total responses

1. What do you typically do when you visit the library?

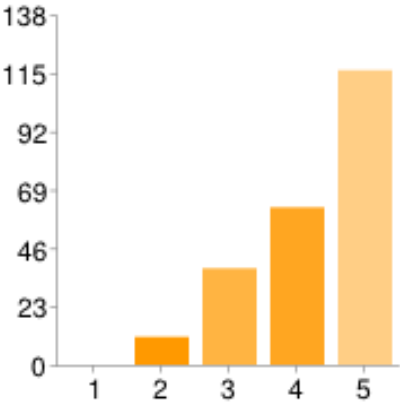


Pick up holds	145	18%
Check out other materials	160	20%
Use the Library's public computers	52	6%
Use the Library's wireless network	38	5%
Find a quiet place to work or study	46	6%
Read or browse	97	12%
Get help from the Library's staff	81	10%
Hang out with friends	5	1%
Get information or do research	50	6%
Use the copy machine, fax machine, or scanner	52	6%
Attend a library program for adults	41	5%
Attend a library program for children	38	5%

Other	13	2%
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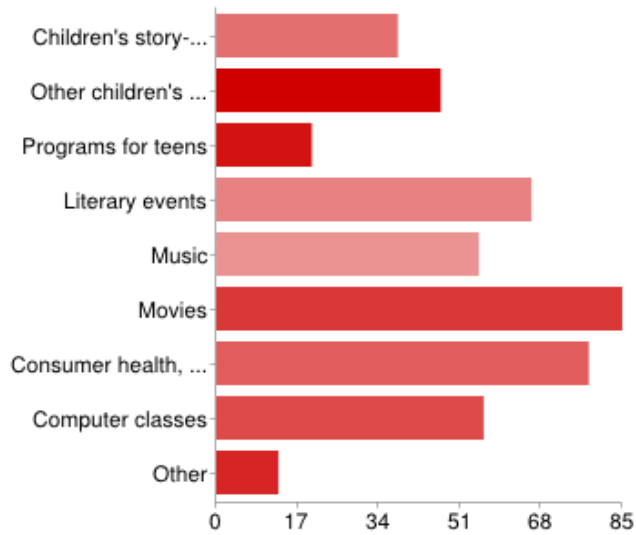
2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the programs and events provided by the Library?

1 = not satisfied, 5 = very satisfied



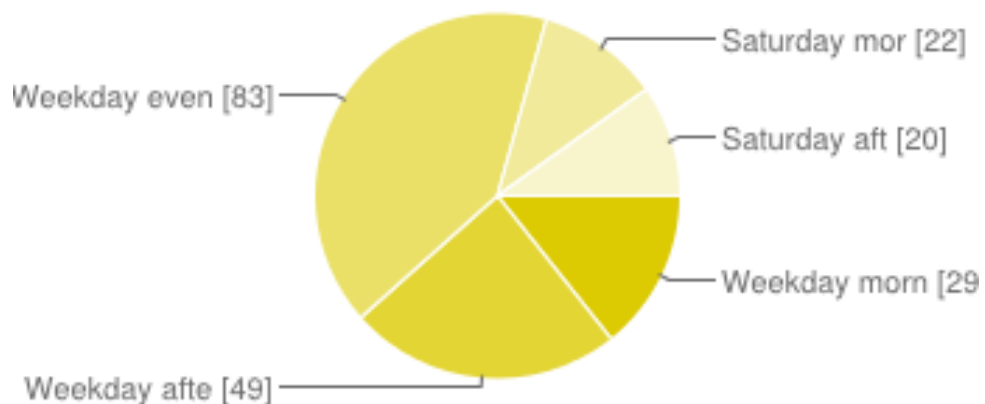
1	0	0%
2	11	5%
3	38	17%
4	62	27%
5	116	51%

3. Which of the following types of programming are you interested in?



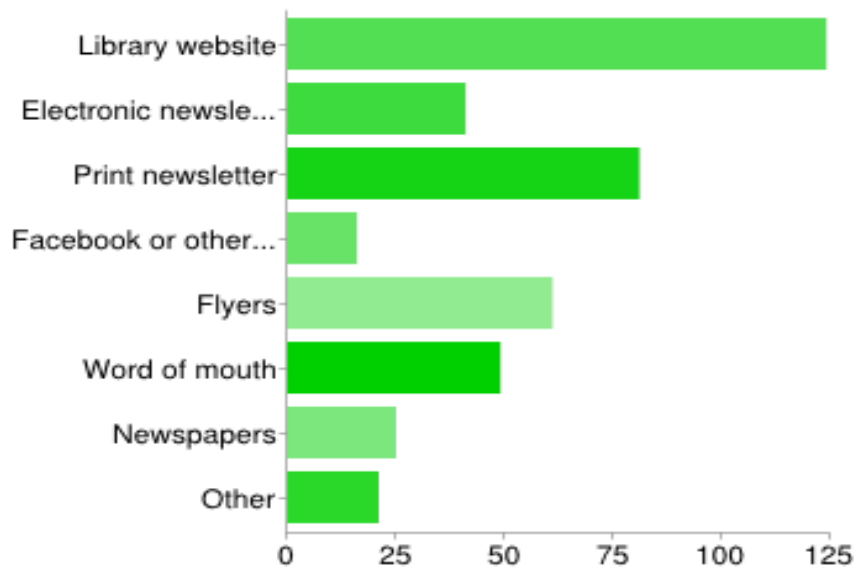
Children's story-times	38	8%
Other children's programs	47	10%
Programs for teens	20	4%
Literary events	66	14%
Music	55	12%
Movies	85	19%
Consumer health, finance, other informational topics	78	17%
Computer classes	56	12%
Other	13	3%

4. At what time would you be most likely to attend Library programs?



Weekday mornings	29	14%
Weekday afternoons	49	24%
Weekday evenings	83	41%
Saturday mornings	22	11%
Saturday afternoons	20	10%

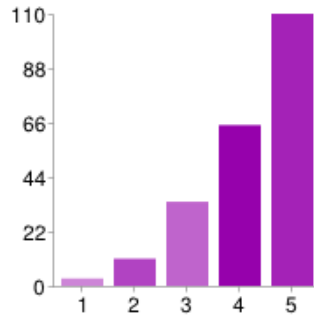
5. Where do you receive your information about the Library from?



Library website	124	30%
Electronic newsletter	41	10%
Print newsletter	81	19%
Facebook or other social media site	16	4%
Flyers	61	15%
Word of mouth	49	12%
Newspapers	25	6%
Other	21	5%

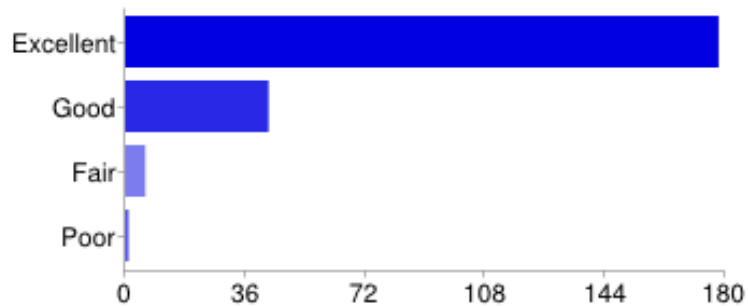
6. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Library's communication about its programs and services?

1 = not satisfied, 5 = very satisfied



1	3	1%
2	11	5%
3	34	15%
4	65	29%
5	110	49%

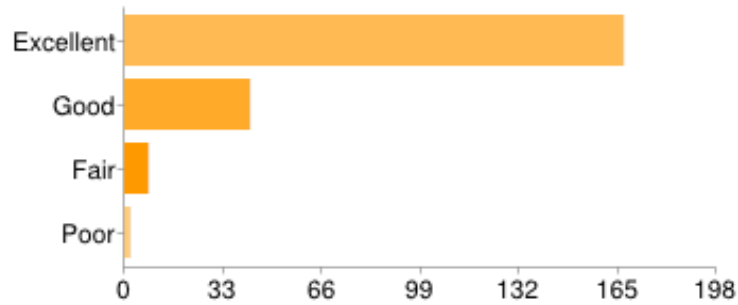
7. How would you rate the customer service from the following areas of the Library: Circulation Desk



Excellent	178	78%
Good	43	19%
Fair	6	3%

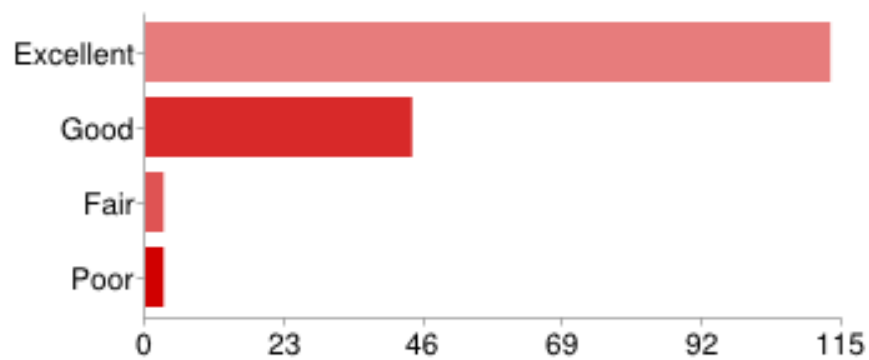
Poor	1	0%
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8. How would you rate the customer service from the following areas of the Library: Reference Desk



Excellent	167	76%
Good	42	19%
Fair	8	4%
Poor	2	1%

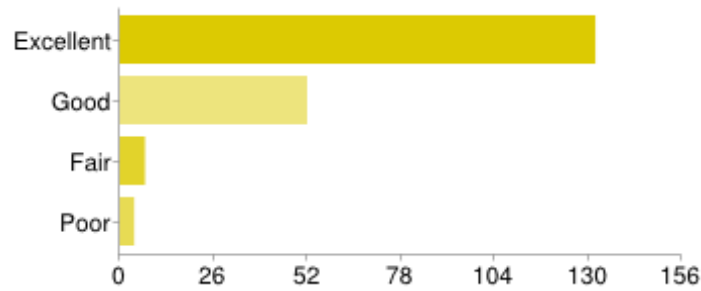
9. How would you rate the customer service from the following areas of the Library: Youth Services Desk



Excellent	113	69%
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Good	44	27%
Fair	3	2%
Poor	3	2%

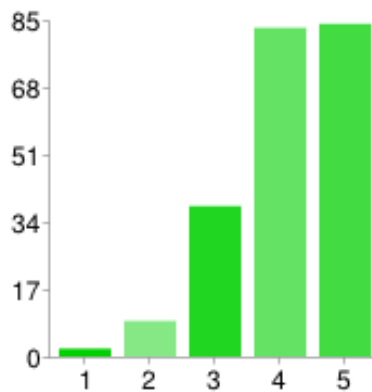
10. How would you rate the customer service from the following areas of the Library: Other Library Staff



Excellent	132	68%
Good	52	27%
Fair	7	4%
Poor	4	2%

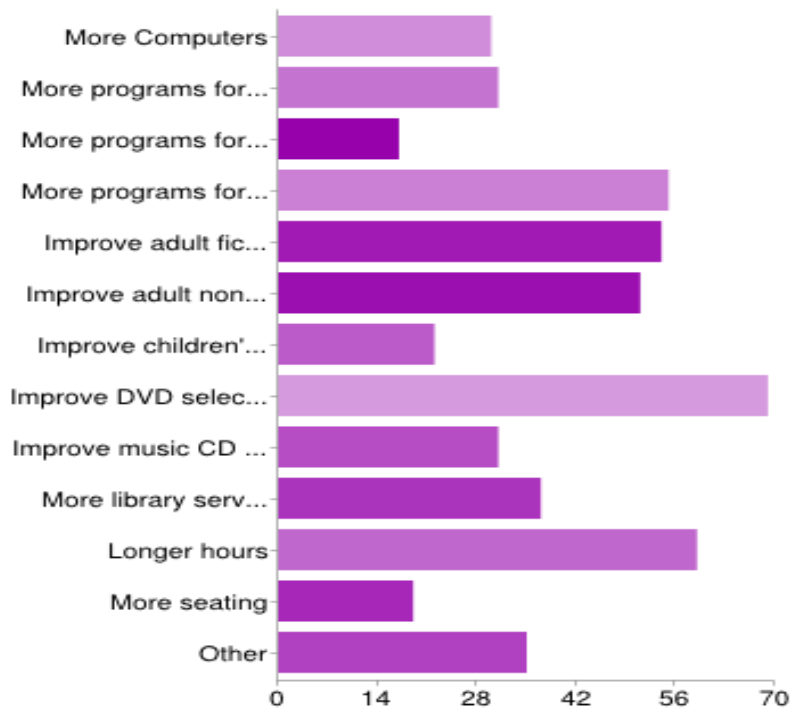
11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Library's selection of books and other materials?

1 = not satisfied, 5 = very satisfied



1	2	1%
2	9	4%
3	38	18%
4	83	38%
5	84	39%

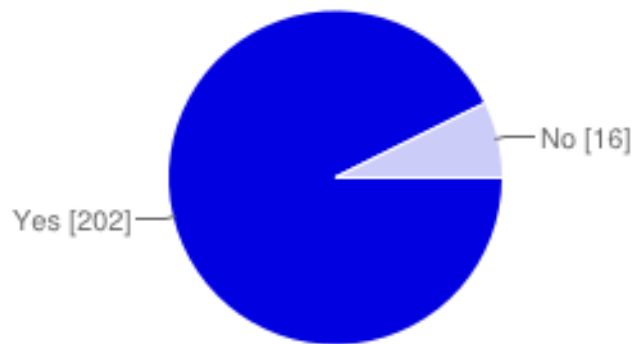
12. What areas of improvement would you like the Library to focus on?



More Computers	30	6%
More programs for children	31	6%
More programs for teens	17	3%
More programs for adults	55	11%
Improve adult fiction book selection	54	11%

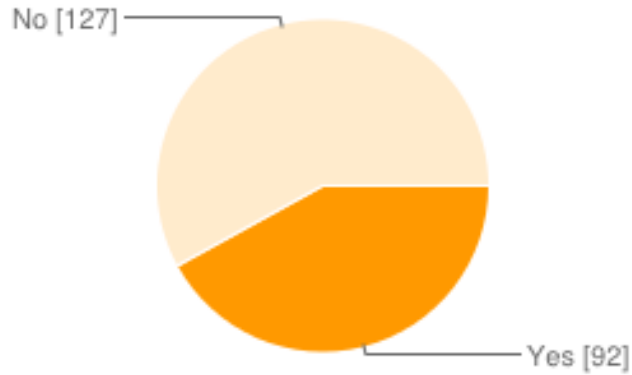
Improve adult non-fiction book selection	51	10%
Improve children's book selection	22	4%
Improve DVD selection	69	14%
Improve music CD selection	31	6%
More library services available online	37	7%
Longer hours	59	12%
More seating	19	4%
Other	35	7%

13. Do you have internet access at home?



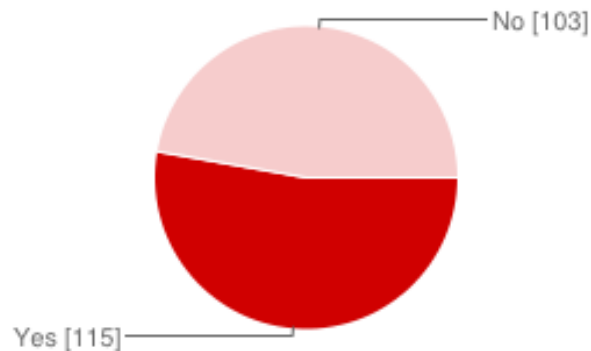
Yes	202	93%
No	16	7%

14. Do you own a tablet or an eReader?



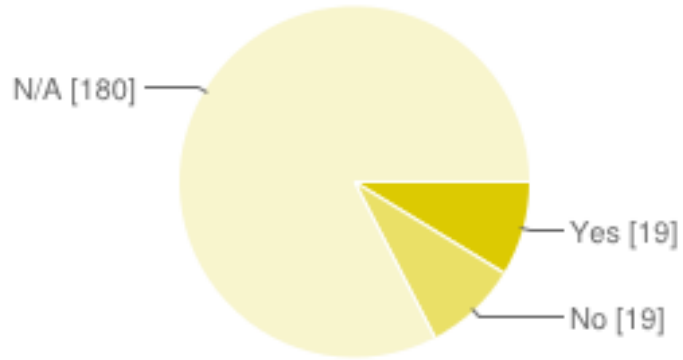
Yes	92	42%
No	127	58%

15. Were you aware that the Library has resources in foreign languages, including books in Spanish and Polish?



Yes	115	53%
No	103	47%

16. If you speak a language other than English at home, do you view the library as a place to get materials for information and entertainment?



Yes	19	9%
No	19	9%
N/A	180	83%