About Us

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• The objectives for the project
  • Increasing ways to bring people “back” after an unsuccessful referendum movement.
  • Appropriate program offerings that meet the true needs of the community.
  • Communications and partnerships that helps the community be more aware of the resources and assistance available at the library, and that builds their engagement and support.
  • A new mission, vision, and strategic plan to support the Library’s community engagement and lead staff’s efforts toward measurable outcomes tied to the plan.
  • A needs assessment to support the development of the plan
Monroeville, PA

Statistics and Demographics

- 12 miles east of Pittsburgh, PA
- Structure
  - Municipal Department
  - Federated System
  - Council Appointed Board
- Staffing
  - 29 Employees, 3 Contractors, 2 AmeriCorps
  - 11 FT, 15 MLS/MLIS (19.35 FTE)
- Demographics
  - 31,000 Service Area
  - Not a walking community
  - Increase in immigrants and refugees
- Circulation and Programming (2017)
  - Circulated 345,415 items
  - 18,174 people attended 927 programs

Prepping the Needs Assessment

Narrowing the focus:

- Need for Library (Libraries make a community vital)
- Goals of the community (Library is pertinent to them)
- People think of us 1st (when making plans or partnerships, as answers to problems)
- Priority niches - can’t be all things to all people - are we meeting the real needs of our biggest populations?
- Gaps - What population should we focus more on that we are not serving

Create a steering committee

- Library staff and board
- Library friends and volunteers.
- Community stakeholders – chamber of commerce, municipal liaison, community college, etc.
Create a timeline

Taskforce calendar schedule for creating and reviewing questions for the survey. Then on to survey collection!

2nd task force meeting | August 14
---|---
3rd task force meeting (if needed) | August 21
Review survey instrument, beta test | by August 28
Create FAQ sheet for public | By August 28
Train volunteers and staff | September 7
Kickoff survey collecting | September 14
Conclude date collecting | October 15
Provide report on data | November 7

Create accountability and share tasks

- Request to community partners to forward survey link & cover email to colleagues, employees
- Press Release– Sara Jane will write main copy
- Love your Library month Tie-ins - television
- Monroeville Magazine?
- Signage in areas of Library – where to place, who will create?
- Who will create bookmarks and strips for handing out
- Municipal engagement
- Lion’s Farmers Market (provide water bottles to those who take survey)
- Parks and Rec connection (Sept 17 or 24)
- Need list of Outreach Activities (schools, senior center, Ministerium, Islamic Center, Congregations, Girl-Boy Scouts) How to inform staff?
- Talk to CCAC
- Make pins for staff and volunteers: “Take a survey – Win a Prize”
- Distribution to schools
- Chamber engagement
- Get Nicole Featured in the Chamber Newsletter
- UPMC East
- Welcome Wagon – R/E agents

- Monroeville Apartments
- Jennifer’s Chamber networking groups
- Who will reach out to IUP – Penn Center
- Who will reach out to Forbes Vocational
- YMCAs – who to contact by when
- Signage/banner for outreach events (who will order and place)
- Email blast(s) Need communication timeline
- Library
- Cardholders (request einetwork – email list of cardholders)
- Link/button on website
- Make sure slip is placed in Annual Appeal – 9/1
- Library station where people can be assisted in-house (who will “staff” the station, and when – daily? Times of day?)
- Who will reach out to Daycares – to go home to parents
- Respondent recruitment (who will be point person)
- Social media postings from library – schedule + messaging
- Staff and volunteers for internal and external survey efforts – must ask in enough time to get training on their schedule

Incentives

- Who will get donations of Cookies and candy bars from Sam’s, Giant Eagle
- Cash card ($200) rather than merchandise
- Gift cards
Developing the Survey

Survey Development

- Decide what you want to know
- Determine general content areas
- Generate a list of question topics and organize them under the content areas
- Determine type of information sought
- Decide on question structure
  - Choose words that express the question(s)
  - Reflect the information sought
- Prepare introduction letter, instructions, etc.

Test the Survey

- **Piloting** – trying out the entire survey process
- **Pre-testing** – trying out questionnaire only
- Want to identify problems:
  - Are questions/instructions clear?
  - Do people understand how to respond?
  - Are choices mutually exclusive, exhaustive?

Data Collection and Reporting

Data Collection

- Identify sites, team leader(s), volunteers
- Schedule collection dates and volunteers
- Determine equipment and set-up logistics
- Train volunteer data collectors
- Best practices
- Review survey
- Consider an “Interviewer's Kit”

Reporting Findings

- Report total number of respondents for the survey or for each question if it varies
- Report percentages not numbers for ease of comparisons
- Use graphs from web-based survey or create graphs in Excel
- Code open-ended response by looking for common themes, report percentages
- Examine differences in sub-groups by demographics (i.e., age, level of education)
Some survey humor

THE WAY I FEEL IS HARD TO QUANTIFY!

HOW HARD ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN?

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Community Needs Assessment Survey Results

Executive Summary

The Monroeville Public Library (MPL) contracted with Sara Jane Lowry Consulting to begin the process of exploring a potential shift in the focus of MPL’s services and strategies in support of a new vision of library engagement with the community. For this purpose, MPL and the consulting team designed and conducted a survey to assess the interests, perceptions, and needs of the community. The survey process and results will inform the identification and planning of library resources, services, and activities that best support Monroeville and Pitcairn.

Overview of the Methodology

Information was collected between September 7, 2017, and October 31, 2017 via an online survey. A convenience sample was utilized. To promote the survey and recruit participants

- a participation request and link to the survey was sent to the MPL email list,
- a press release was created,
- posts were made on social media,
- a volunteer committee went to Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) Boyce Campus and other local businesses and events,
- bookmarks were given at the desk, and
- signage recruiting participants was posted in the library.

In addition, the survey link with a request to forward it to members was sent to local organizations and nonprofits. We collected 627 surveys.

Highlights of the Findings

MPL plays a relevant role in the lives of the respondents and their families. MPL is perceived as an important partner in addressing challenges that face the community.
MPL is well appreciated by their patrons and the value and quality of the services they provide is recognized. Of the respondents who indicated an interest in learning more about a particular topic or beginning a new endeavor, the majority would utilize the library to do so.

Many of MPL’s services and programs are likely to be used or continue to be used by the respondents, particularly borrowing DVDs (66%), free Wi-Fi in the library (66%), E-books and audiobooks (58%), adult lectures (57%), special events (55%), adult craft, art, and gardening classes (53%); musical performances (52%), and author visits (52%). Participants’ responses varied somewhat by age and whether or not they had children under the age of 18 in the home.

MPL is known for its expertise in presenting high-quality special events such as Star Wars Day, Fun Fest and New Year’s Eve. More than half (55%) of those surveyed indicated they were “likely” to “extremely likely” to attend one in the future, but among those with minor children the percentage increased to 73%.

Respondents would like to see more full time jobs (63%) and local/small business growth (57%) in Monroeville over the next two years. A post-secondary degree, STEM skills training, and the development of work-related “soft skills” such as communication and teamwork are important for finding employment according to the survey participants. Information on financial aid was considered important to completing a college degree.

The top community challenges reported by respondents were job creation/business growth/job training, crime and safety issues, and the local school district. Other issues noted by respondents included addiction and drug use, taxes, infrastructure concerns, youth development - specifically a lack of engagement and affordable activities for children, tweens, and teens; racism and cultural and religious discrimination or distrust, and the environment.

The library is well positioned to work with other Municipality of Monroeville departments, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to address issues of importance to the community, particularly around employment skills and opportunities, information on topics related to post-secondary education, engagement with teenage youth, and other relevant and timely topics.
Four Types of Question Structures

1. Open-ended questions
   - No answer choices are provided
   - Respondents must create their own responses

   Use when:
   - Want respondents to answer freely
   - Want to elicit precise information without difficulty or confusion

   Challenges:
   - Demanding on respondents
   - Requires probing/follow-up
   - Difficult to construct variables
   - Produces many different responses
   - Time consuming analysis

2. Close-ended with ordered responses

   Use common rating scales ordered from:
   - Negative to positive
   - Low to high
   - Infrequent to frequent
   - Less than to more than

   Example:
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree  or
   Not at all likely  Somewhat likely  Neither likely nor unlikely  Very likely  Extremely Likely

   Requires:
   - Consistency at each end
   - A balance of all responses on continuum
   - Use of a 3-to-5-point rating scale
   - Negative end first to reduce bias
   - Use of same language in the question and in the scale

3. Closed-ended without ordered responses

   Known as nominal or categorical questions
   - Can choose more than one answer

   Use when:
   - “Check all that apply” to determine interest in or experience with a list of items
   - “Forced choice” asking to choose best answer or between Yes and No

   Challenges:
   - May oversimplify a complex issue
   - Specific answer not available/not listed may distress respondent

4. Partially close-ended

   Includes both a list of items and an open-ended response that asks the respondent to specify
   - Other (please specify _________)

   Challenges: Similar to open-ended questions
## Survey Data Collection Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>On-Site</th>
<th>Mailed</th>
<th>Web-Based</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents use paper and pencil.</td>
<td>Respondents use paper and pencil.</td>
<td>Respondents use a computer, tablet or smartphone.</td>
<td>Interviewer uses written script, collects verbal responses of interviewee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>Low if 1 mailing; medium if multiple mailings.</td>
<td>Low – but very much dependent on the target population’s use of technology.</td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed of data collection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fast</strong></td>
<td>Slow (min. 2 months)</td>
<td><strong>Fast</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarification of questions</strong></td>
<td>Medium (if staff present)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploration of questions</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Varies - Low to Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing, paper, incentives, survey supervisor, space for respondent to complete.</td>
<td>Printing, paper, envelopes stamps, incentives, staff to track responses and follow up.</td>
<td>Costs related to the site used to design &amp; host survey.</td>
<td>Staff training, incentives, telephones, telephone charges, and staff to conduct interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special needs</strong></td>
<td>Space and privacy to complete survey.</td>
<td>Requires up-to-date address list.</td>
<td>Both parties need Internet connection, web browser and email address. Need software and/or vendor. Sampling of e-mail addresses is difficult.</td>
<td>Requires up-to-date phone numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resources for follow-up mailings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule appointments to conduct interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Fink & Kosecoff How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide and United Way of America, Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach)