

# Community Survey Report

Survey opened 9/18/2022

1001 responses through 10/31/2022

## Question 1: What kind of community do you want to live in?

n = 870

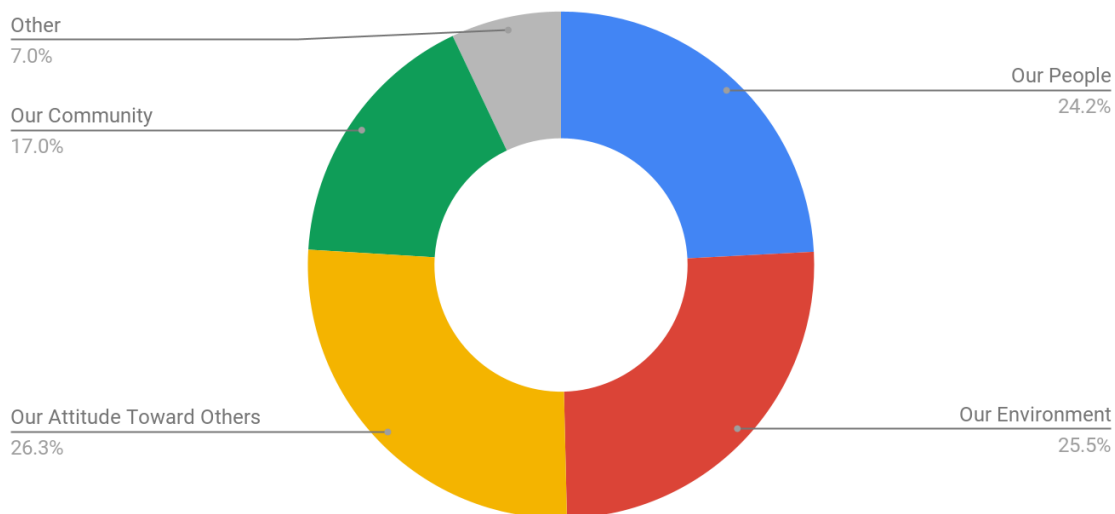
Word frequency:

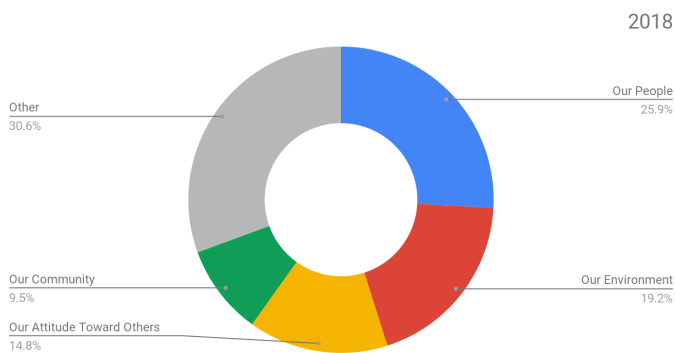
286	community	50	support	31	town	24	everyone
216	safe	47	other	30	good	24	place
145	one	46	open	29	culture	23	opportunities
125	diverse	42	active	29	kids	22	age
111	friendly	42	suburban	28	accepting	22	free
91	people	42	want	27	differences	22	peaceful
88	inclusive	38	cleanliness	27	value	21	knowledge
84	education	35	wellbeing	26	access	21	minded
56	all	34	family	25	housing	21	tolerate
52	caring	33	help	25	neighbors	20	more
51	kind	33	learning	25	quiet	20	rural
51	live	33	welcome	25	small	19	affordable
50	respect	32	library	25	walk	19	service

We grouped the responses around four themes that reflect the kind of community in which people want to live:

- Our People: Friendly, helpful, kind, caring, nice, happy
- Our Environment: Safe, clean, environment, healthy
- Our Attitude Toward Others: Diverse, inclusive, respect, welcoming, open, accepting, differences
- Our Community: Supportive, neighbors, together, close, social, connected, involved

2022





This breakdown demonstrates the biggest difference between responses to this survey and to our last community survey in August 2018. The number of responses that did not fall into one of the four themes (Other) decreased dramatically. We also saw a marked increase in the percentage of responses that included the theme of Our Community (9.5% in 2018 to 17.0% in 2022), as well as that of Our Attitude Toward Others (14.5% in 2018 to 26.3% in 2022), which is now the most prevalent theme. This is consistent with the results of our Community Conversations, where participants expressed a desire for connectedness, feeling welcomed, and being engaged and

involved with community activities (see [2022 Community Conversations Summary](#)).

Questions 2, 3 and 4 are difficult to analyze in isolation, because they each refer back to the respondent's answer to question 1. We looked at answers to the following questions where the person's answer to question 1 fell into the two segments referenced above.

### Where Question 1 was in the *Our Attitude Toward Others* segment...

n = 389

#### Question 2: Why is that important to you?

Word frequency (Our Attitude Toward Others):

109	community	14	values	8	open	6	long	5	interaction
70	people	14	belonging	8	active	6	self	4	key
53	lives	14	acceptance	8	thrive	6	work	4	own
49	all	13	town	8	another	6	along	4	hear
47	need	13	access	8	connected	6	group	4	keep
43	other	12	see	7	best	6	level	4	type
42	feel	12	kind	7	hate	6	raise	4	above
32	safe	12	humanity	7	look	6	share	4	basic
32	everyone	12	together	7	bring	6	social	4	broad
31	children	12	knowledge	7	equal	6	friends	4	order
28	life	11	future	7	peace	6	support	4	small
28	important	11	freedom	7	change	6	happiness	4	always
24	learn	11	society	7	rights	6	generations	4	become
24	believe	11	education	7	school	6	opportunity	4	choice
24	respect	10	caring	7	diverse	5	now	4	define
20	world	10	ability	7	library	5	full	4	equity
20	growth	10	cultures	7	reading	5	part	4	making
18	better	10	creativity	7	families	5	time	4	public
18	things	10	environment	7	neighbors	5	great	4	stress
17	help	10	understanding	7	welcoming	5	ideas	4	taking
17	quality	9	good	7	continually	5	quiet	4	fosters

17	different	9	love	7	experiences	5	state	4	members
16	health	9	enjoy	6	ages	5	treated	4	outside
15	well	9	thinking	6	home	5	programs	4	isolated
14	sense	9	inclusive	6	just	5	resources	4	positive

### Question 3: How is that different from how you see things now?

Word frequency (Our Attitude Toward Others):

97	people	18	things	11	times	9	racism	7	even
81	community	18	children	11	want	9	safe	7	few
69	more	17	groups	10	hard	8	become	7	important
57	our	17	know	10	hillsborough	8	build	7	learn
55	have	16	seem	10	neighbors	8	care	7	libraries
42	different	15	events	10	out	8	find	7	low
42	other	15	good	10	own	8	focused	7	often
40	see	14	being	10	way	8	here	7	opinions
31	town	14	rights	10	years	8	life	7	opportunity
27	library	13	all	9	ability	8	little	7	services
27	need	13	one	9	activities	8	political	7	taxes
25	diversity	12	everyone	9	education	8	politics	7	values
24	like	12	school	9	family	8	pretty	7	well
24	think	11	access	9	hate	8	same	6	area
23	live	11	changing	9	look	8	society	6	classes
22	feel	11	each	9	media	8	sure	6	close
20	less	11	new	9	move	7	better	6	common
19	divided	11	resources	9	only	7	current	6	covid
18	just	11	social	9	public	7	enough	6	every

### Question 4: What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

Word frequency (Our Attitude Toward Others):

106	need	17	know	11	adults	8	political	6	officials
97	people	17	see	11	continued	8	show	6	race
80	community	17	support	11	groups	8	work	6	religion
43	library	17	think	11	leadership	7	another	6	safe
42	education	16	activities	11	living	7	arts	6	school
39	other	16	learn	11	respect	7	citizens	6	seniors
37	all	16	open	11	sharing	7	effort	6	spaces
35	have	16	schools	10	build	7	feel	6	system
34	programs	15	public	10	communication	7	freedom	6	thinking

32	events	15	social	10	government	7	funding	6	wide
32	our	15	stop	10	include	7	income	5	accountability
26	everyone	14	kindness	10	representing	7	love	5	backgrounds
25	different	14	together	9	awareness	7	only	5	common
24	change	13	accept	9	good	7	own	5	conversations
22	help	13	less	9	information	7	residents	5	empathy
21	town	13	listen	9	mind	7	state	5	finding
20	cultures	13	services	9	participate	6	access	5	food
20	children	13	time	9	resources	6	affordable	5	gathering
19	diversity	12	being	9	understand	6	focus	5	health
19	just	12	believe	8	available	6	future	5	home
18	books	12	care	8	create	6	great	5	law
18	local	12	housing	8	elected	6	keep	5	life
18	make	12	new	8	important	6	media	5	lower
18	opportunities	12	place	8	many	6	meet	5	members
17	better	12	trying	8	parents	6	news	5	neighborhood

Where Question 1 was in the *Our Community* segment...

n = 251

### Question 2: Why is that important to you?

Word frequency (Our Community):

76	community	14	know	8	believe	5	activities	4	creates
48	people	14	sense	8	happiness	5	best	4	differences
39	live	12	being	8	most	5	build	4	future
31	with	12	good	8	things	5	connected	4	give
28	feel	12	learn	7	care	5	diversity	4	human
27	others	12	those	7	environment	5	enjoy	4	looking
26	life	12	town	7	needs	5	from	4	neighborhood
26	our	11	each	7	support	5	home	4	now
24	need	11	they	6	belonging	5	isolated	4	opportunities
23	safe	11	values	6	books	5	many	4	outside
22	want	10	grow	6	bring	5	meet	4	own
21	all	10	think	6	encourage	5	much	4	quiet
21	like	9	able	6	friendly	5	myself	4	raised
19	help	9	another	6	get	5	part	4	services
19	important	9	education	6	individuals	5	provides	4	small
18	neighbors	9	health	6	just	5	resources	4	society

17	family	9	library	6	less	5	shared	4	work
16	children	9	love	6	respect	5	time	3	above
16	everyone	9	place	6	social	5	walking	3	accept
16	their	9	quality	6	understand	4	ages	3	active
15	makes	9	together	6	world	4	among	3	adults
15	one	8	accessible	5	about	4	better	3	benefit

### Question 3: How is that different from how you see things now?

Word frequency (Our Community):

42	community	6	others	4	support	3	sit	2	future
36	people	5	area	3	apart	3	small	2	good
20	more	5	great	3	close	3	volunteer	2	hard
19	see	5	involved	3	come	3	well	2	initiatives
15	town	5	offer	3	complain	2	alone	2	interests
14	different	5	outside	3	connect	2	arts	2	isolated
13	library	5	residents	3	day	2	aware	2	learning
13	like	5	safe	3	education	2	bad	2	leave
11	live	5	together	3	events	2	bit	2	love
10	kids	5	want	3	face	2	black	2	members
9	neighbors	4	being	3	few	2	blend	2	nice
9	think	4	change	3	first	2	building	2	night
8	going	4	county	3	getting	2	busy	2	opportunities
8	know	4	divide	3	large	2	car	2	part
8	school	4	each	3	meeting	2	children	2	public
8	work	4	enough	3	museums	2	citizens	2	reasons
7	all	4	everyone	3	old	2	council	2	respect
7	feel	4	family	3	political	2	created	2	system
7	groups	4	grows	3	right	2	currently	2	technology
7	needs	4	help	3	same	2	decades	2	uncertainty
7	place	4	programs	3	seem	2	diversity	2	welcoming
6	activities	4	social	3	self	2	fit	2	white

### Question 4: What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

Word frequency (Our Community):

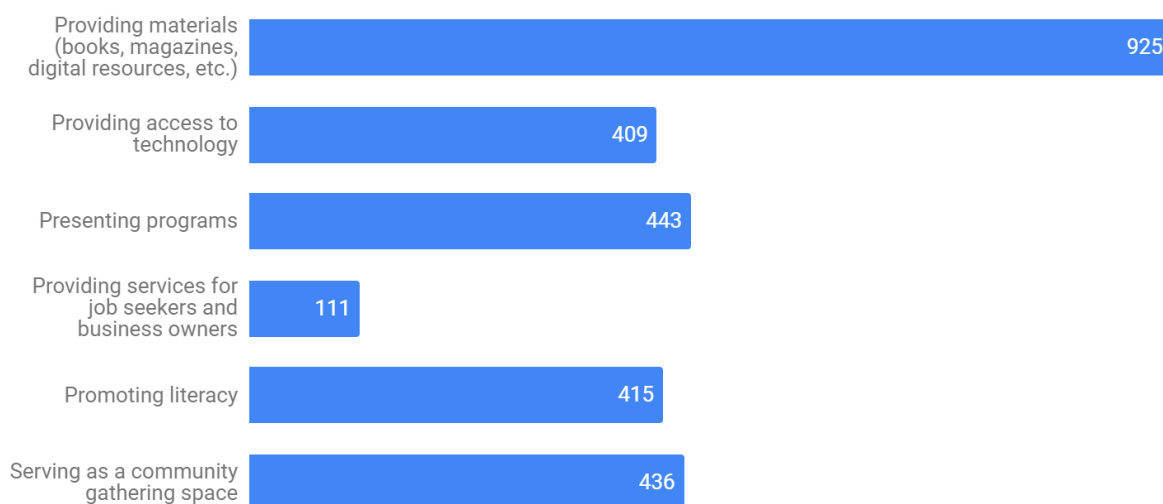
72	community	14	division	8	currently	6	hard	5	job
50	people	14	know	8	resources	6	hillsborough	5	lost
41	have	13	events	8	safe	6	house	5	moved
41	more	12	just	8	use	6	isolated	5	often

36	library	12	less	7	better	6	kind	5	own
34	our	12	neighbors	7	could	6	look	5	police
30	town	12	one	7	education	6	saying	5	seem
28	other	11	children	7	find	6	social	5	sense
23	like	10	about	7	groups	6	time	5	sure
23	see	10	neighborhood	7	life	6	without	5	those
21	feel	10	things	7	new	5	become	5	walking
21	them	9	activities	7	programs	5	being	5	way
20	different	9	connected	7	will	5	centered	5	well
19	live	9	each	7	years	5	close	4	ago
18	need	9	make	6	area	5	diversity	4	books
17	good	9	rights	6	down	5	due	4	covid
17	think	9	school	6	driving	5	families	4	going
15	many	9	want	6	even	5	far	4	important
15	you	8	all	6	everyone	5	help	4	inclusive
14	access	8	building	6	focus	5	high	4	plan

### Question 5: Which of the following services offered by SCLSNJ do you think are the most important?

Please select your top 3 choices

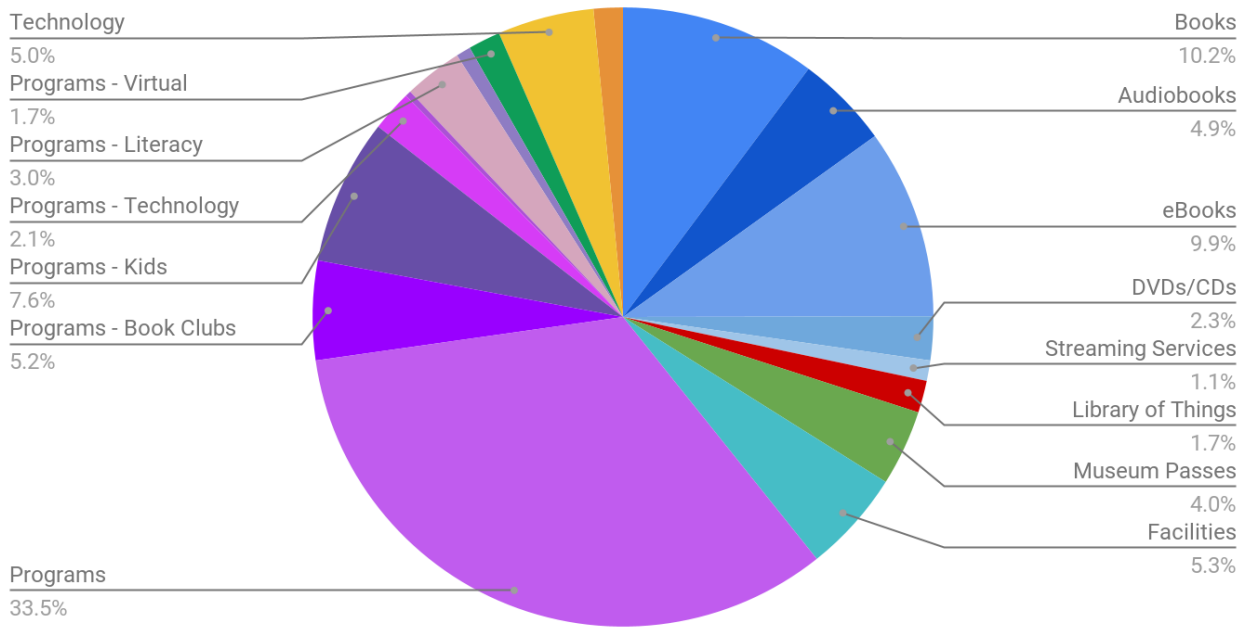
n = 986



Respondents clearly felt that materials are the most important service offered by SCLSNJ, also true in the 2018 survey.

## Question 6: Which service, program, or resource do you wish the library offered, or offered more of?

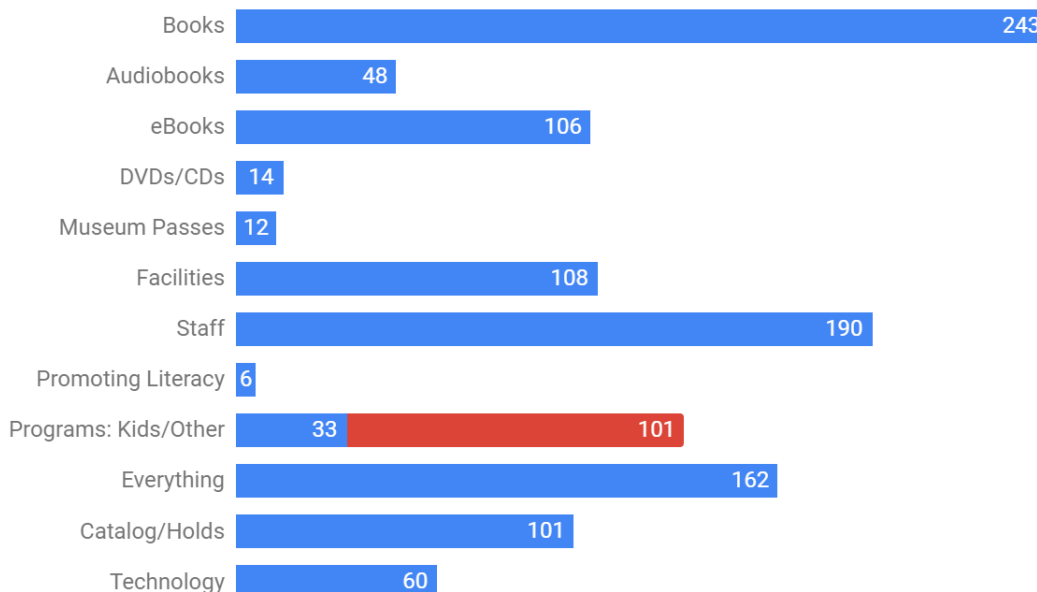
n = 678



As is common in surveys regarding library services, respondents often indicate that they want more of what the Library is already providing much more frequently than they suggest services not currently offered. Unlike in 2018, when almost two-thirds of responses were for more programs, whether generally, or of a specific type, that proportion is closer to half in 2022. Materials, especially Audiobooks (1.6% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2022) and eBooks (4.1% in 2018 to 9.9% in 2022), account for much of the shift.

## Question 7: What is SCLSNJ doing well?

n = 834



NOTE: All responses for Programs are grouped together, with the blue segment representing responses referring to programs for kids, and the red segment representing all other program-related responses.

As this was an open-ended question, each response was coded to parse out the categories that people mentioned.

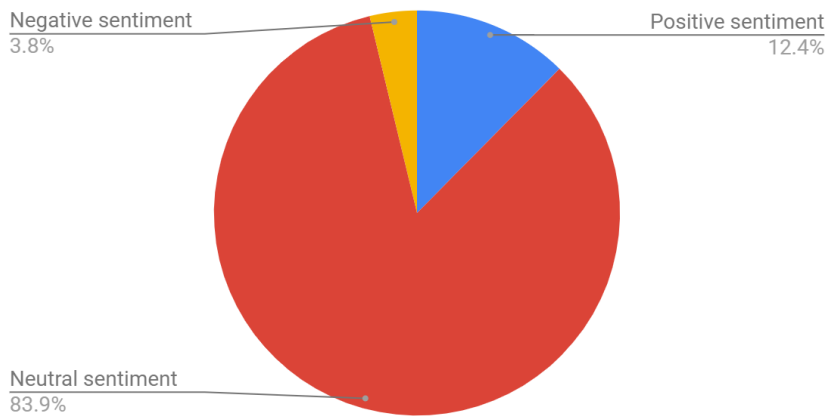
- Many of the responses for books were along the lines of “Checkout books” or “Borrowing books.”
- Responses for Facilities included mentions of facilities being clean, welcoming, having places to read, meet, study, etc.
- Responses coded as Everything also included “Yes” responses (presumably a misreading of the question as “Is SCLSNJ doing well?”).

Compared to the 2018 survey, responses to this question suggest an increase in satisfaction with many of our services:

	Everything	eBooks	Staff	Catalog/Holds
2018	56 (7.7% of responses)	34 (4.7%)	102 (14.0%)	49 (6.7%)
2022	162 (19.4%)	106 (12.7%)	190 (22.8%)	101 (12.1%)

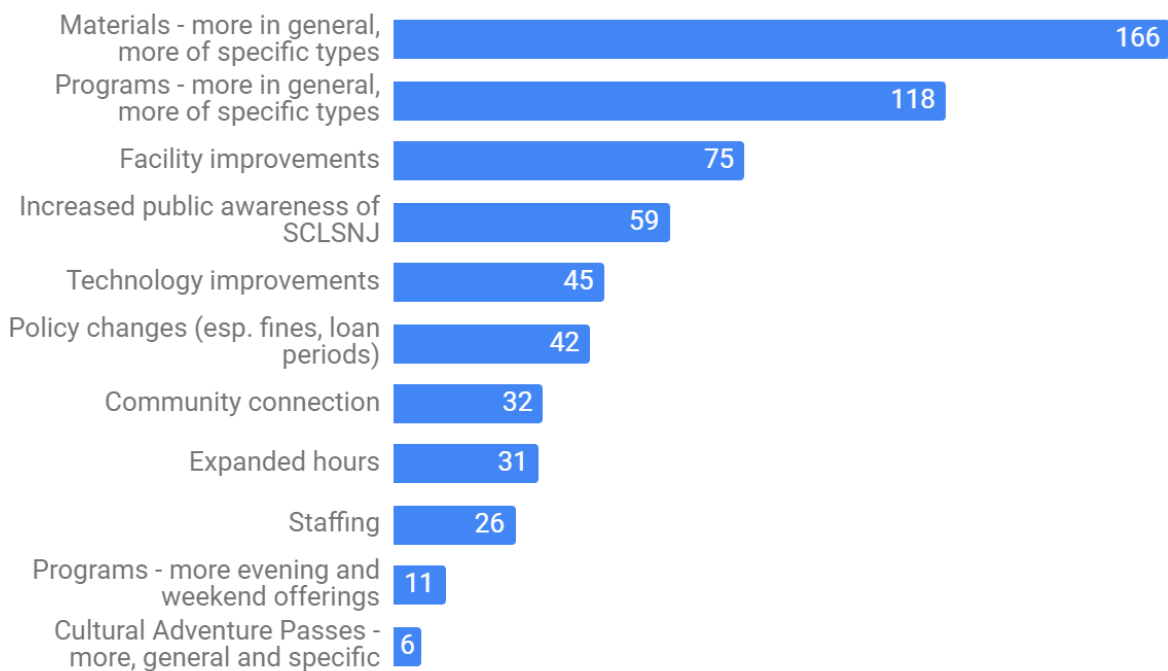
### Question 8: How could SCLSNJ improve?

n = 622



#### Broad categories for improvement





Patron comments about improvement are often in direct contradiction with each other:

Less community gatherings and more books	Offer more in-person gatherings - other ways to build community
get rid of celebration of pride month, especially in children's section. little children don't need to know of such things.	Children's books grouped by topics like gun-safety and control, transgender and sexuality topics, etc...even at a picture book level. Books I can use to introduce topics like this to my young son.
Have more in person programs not wait for covid to completely go away. Create more reasons to visit the library.	Make trips to the physical library even less necessary than was the case during COVID
Return to basics and eliminate extraneous nonsense. Providing internet and entertainments should not be the function of a tax funded organization....most especially when taxpayers have choice as to whether or not to contribute	Change with the times and recognize that in the digital age, a library should become a de facto community center if the area does not already have one... It's the only community-supported building that is funded by taxpayers for those towns that do not have a community center.
I think they are doing great and deserve more funding for more events.	Spend most budget on books instead of unnecessary programs
Programs in the evening to start a bit later for people who work.	Try to have programs during the day, not at night.
Less concern about quiet and decorum.	Keep the library quieter and food free

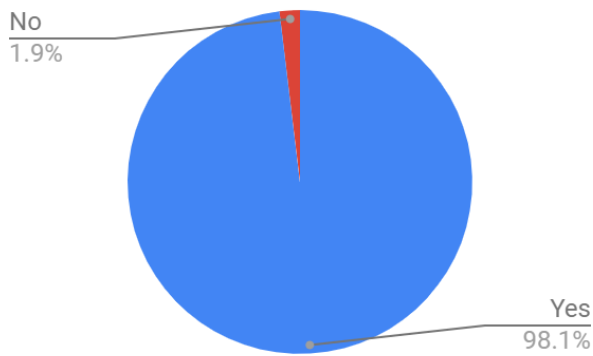
Some of the more unusual suggestions for what we can do to improve include:

- Provide community cable
- Bus trips
- Would like a drive up window to get and return books!

As one respondent put it, "Let me just say, Ben Franklin would be very proud of all of you."

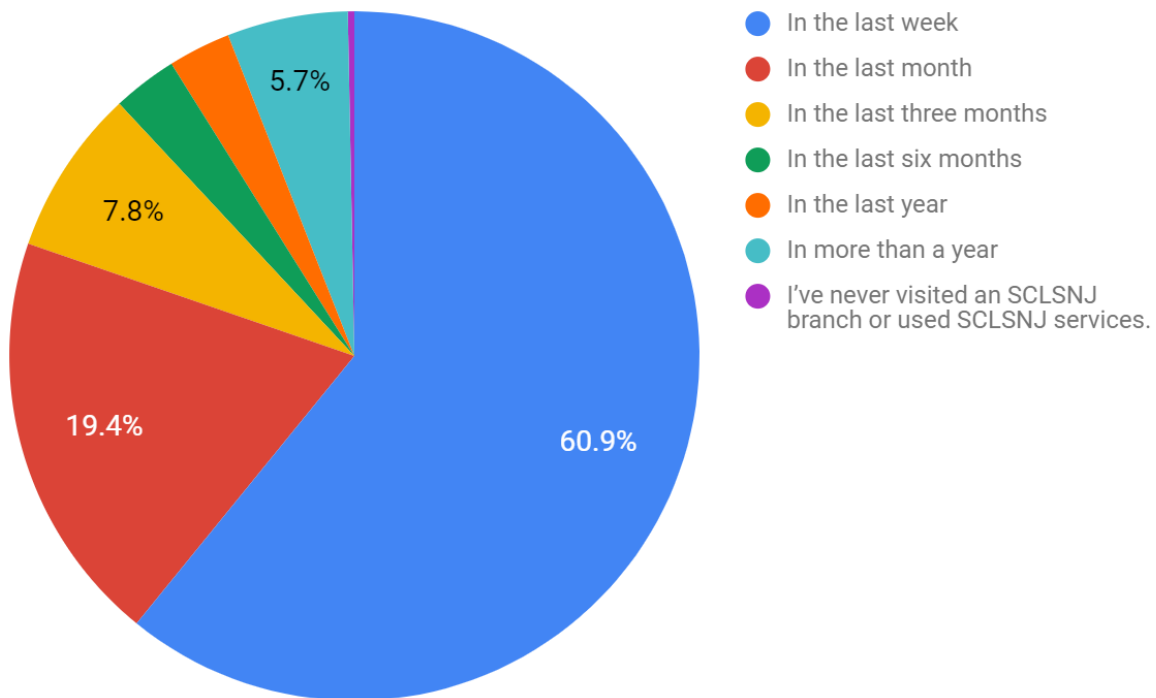
### Question 9: Do you have an SCLSNJ library card?

n = 983



### Question 10: When did you last visit an SCLSNJ branch or use SCLSNJ services?

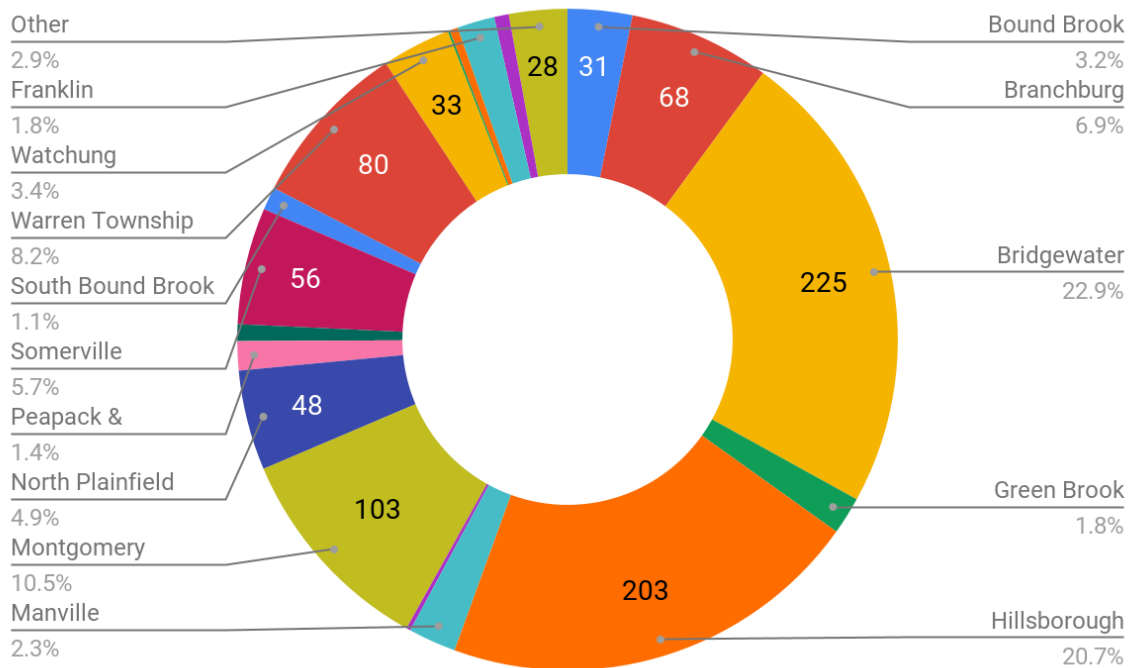
n = 977



Based on the responses, we can infer that patrons are visiting the library less frequently now than they did in 2018, when almost three-quarters of respondents had visited in the last year, and over 90% having visited in the last month. Post-COVID, the data from the 2022 survey supports other data and anecdotal evidence that people are not visiting as often – 80% of respondents reported having visited in the last month, which is still quite high, but significantly less than previously.

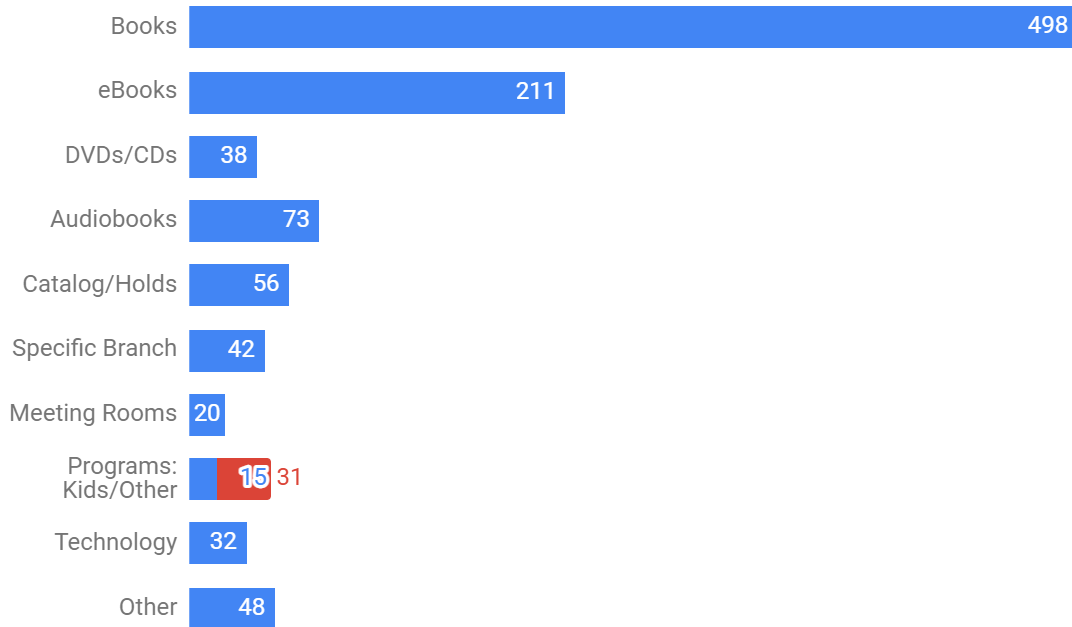
## Question 11: What borough or township do you live in?

n = 961



## Question 12: What SCLSNJ service do you use most?

n = 951



NOTE: All responses for Programs are grouped together, with the blue segment representing responses referring to programs for kids, and the red segment representing all other program-related responses.

As this was an open-ended question, each response was coded to parse out the categories that people mentioned. Many of the responses for books were along the lines of “Checkout books” or “Borrowing books.” The other formats mentioned were most commonly in addition to a response that included books. Responses for a specific branch also included items like “Spending time in the library” or “Visiting the children’s department.”

These responses, compared to those from 2018, suggest patron behavior changes that we can see elsewhere in this survey and in other usage data. eBook use increased tremendously during the pandemic, and while it has declined somewhat, the new usage level is significantly higher than in 2018. The number of eBook responses in the survey reflects a similar increase in use. Similarly, we know that people visit the library less often and for a shorter period of time than they did pre-pandemic; the number of people who responded that they attend programs as the most used frequent service has fallen compared to materials.

	Books to eBooks	Books to Programs
2018	7:1	5:1
2022	5:2	10:1