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Library Technology and Digital Services Survey

Key Findings for the Eight Member Library Systems of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency

In spring 2022, the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a survey of adults in the 7-county Twin Cities metropolitan area to learn more about their technology and digital service needs and the use of these services at local public libraries. MELSA and eight Twin Cities metropolitan area library systems will use the survey findings to inform their technology and digital services. The survey was sent to a representative sample of 20,800 residents from the metropolitan area. A total of 3,230 residents completed the survey for a response rate of 16%. Survey results are weighted by population demographics, making them statistically representative of the adult population. Below are the key findings from the survey. We highlighted items where there was a difference of 10 percentage points between demographic groups.

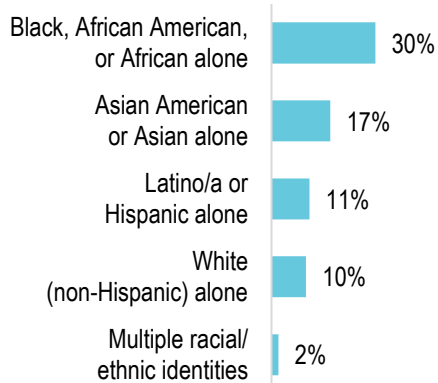
Internet access

12% of respondents report slow, unreliable, or no internet access at home.

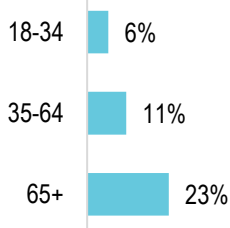
1. Percentage of respondents with slow, unreliable, or no internet access at home

Respondents overall 12%

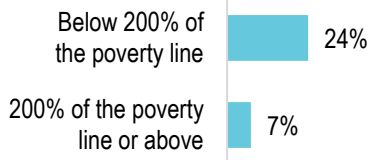
Race/Ethnicity



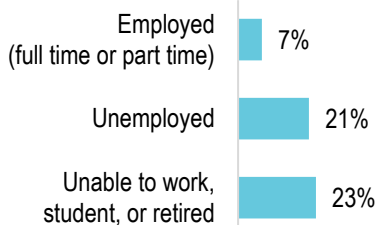
Age



Poverty status



Employment status



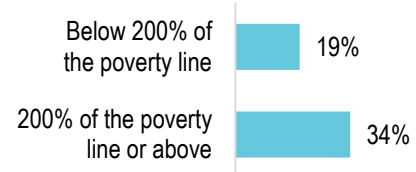
For respondents with slow, unreliable, or no internet access at home, 30% said they use the library to access the internet.

Among individuals who reported inadequate internet at home, respondents of color and respondents with children in the household were more likely to access internet at the library compared to White (non-Hispanic) respondents and respondents without children in the household. Respondents living at or above 200% of the Federal Poverty Line were more likely to use the library compared with lower income respondents, perhaps because they have access to transportation for easier access.

2. Respondents with slow, unreliable, or no internet access at home most likely to access internet at the library

Respondents overall 30%

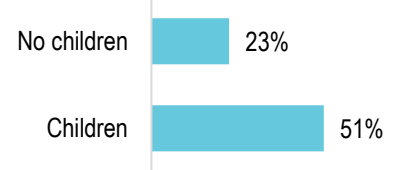
Poverty status



Race



Household type



Existing services

Survey respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with existing digital and technology services at the library.

Over 95% of respondents reported satisfaction with library digital and technology services, including computers, internet access (Wi-Fi), printers, eCollection, online research tools, and technology support from library staff.

From a list of possible services at the library, the highest percentage of respondents said they would be interested in accessing charging ports (41%), scanners (36%), Wi-Fi hotspots (33%), and fax machines (32%).

Online activities

Respondents reported using the library for a variety of online activities.

From a list of seven possible online activities, the most common activities at the library in the past 12 months were education-related tasks (e.g., doing homework, taking a class; 9%) or "other things" (e.g., shopping, banking, finding health information, looking things up, entertainment, connecting with friends and family; 9%).

For many of the online activities, Black or African American and multi-racial respondents had the highest percentages of use.



3. Common online activities at the library in the past 12 months by race/ethnicity

	Education-related	Other things (e.g., shop, bank, look things up)	Access government information and services	Work-related	Search or apply for a job
Respondents overall	9%	9%	5%	5%	4%
Black, African American, or African alone	30%	19%	8%	21%	20%
Asian American or Asian alone	29%	21%	7%	9%	6%
Latino/a or Hispanic alone	10%	3%	2%	0	0
White (non-Hispanic) alone	6%	7%	5%	4%	3%
Multiple racial/ethnic identities	26%	22%	14%	21%	22%

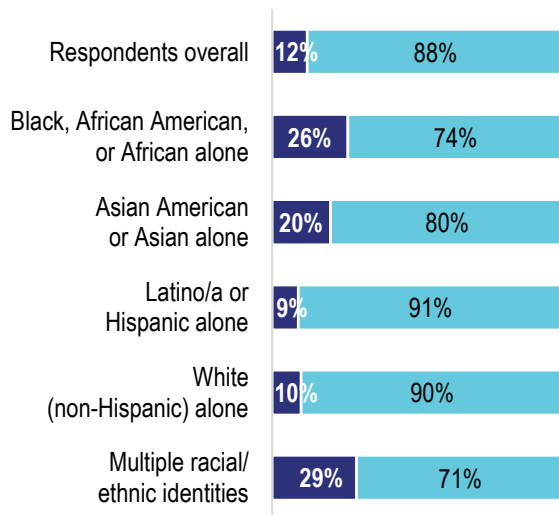
Remote work and distance learning

12% of respondents reported using the library for remote work or distance learning in the past six months.

Of those who used the library for remote work or distance learning in the past six months, 3% said they used the library for that purpose at least once a week.

Over one-quarter of Black or African American respondents and multi-racial respondents indicated using the library for this purpose.

4. Use of library for remote work or distance learning in the past 6 months by race/ethnicity



■ Used at least once ■ No use

When asked what would help them work remotely or participate in distance learning, the largest proportion of respondents reported:

21% Free or low-cost printing, faxing, and scanning

18% Private work space

17% High-speed internet connection

Support

The largest proportion of respondents overall want help with:

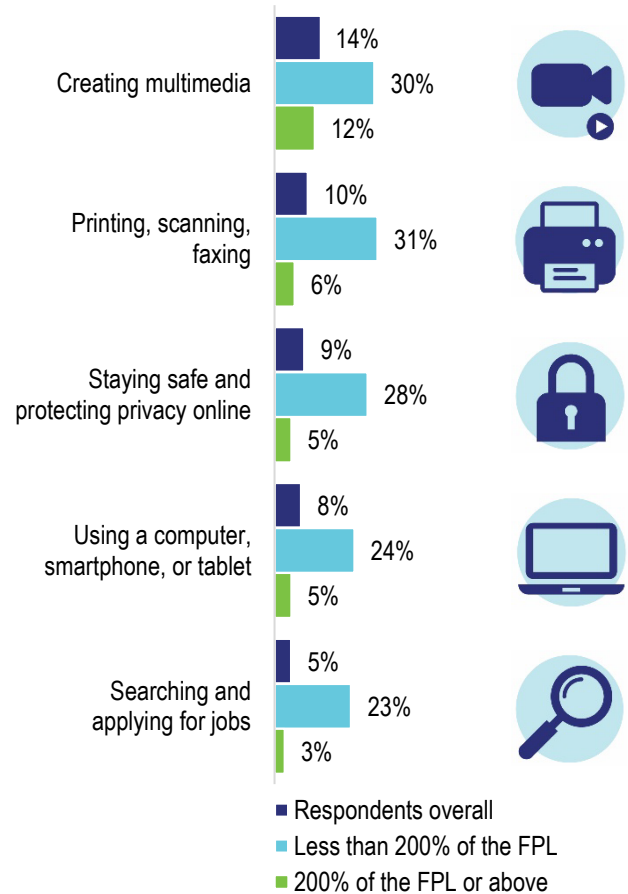
14% Creating multimedia

10% Printing, scanning, or faxing

10% Downloading eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, or music

Respondents living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line were more likely to report a need for help with a variety of computer skills or activities compared to respondents with higher incomes.

5. Desired support for computer skills or activities by poverty status



■ Respondents overall
■ Less than 200% of the FPL
■ 200% of the FPL or above

For more information about the survey, contact Mona Scott at mona@melsa.org.

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