

April Listening Sessions - Older Adults

(Main 4/17, Maze 4/18, Dole 4/22 — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from [10 survey submissions](#))

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR NEWS?

- Newspaper (online or print):
 - International - BBC, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror (3)
 - National:
 - NYT (18 total, 9 specifically online, 2 specifically print/hard copy)
 - Washington Post (3 total, 1 specifically online)
 - BuzzFeed (1)
 - The Guardian (2, 1 online specific)
 - Scholastic News (1)
 - The Daily Skimm (1)
 - The Atlantic (1, online)
 - The New Yorker (1, online)
 - The Economist (1, online)
 - NPR (3)
 - Local:
 - Chicago Tribune (10 total, 3 specifically online, 3 specifically print/hard copy)
 - Wednesday Journal (8 total, 3 combo of online & print, 3 specifically online, 3 specifically print/hard copy)
 - Block Club Chicago (1)
 - Oak Leaves (2)
 - General - no specific sources named (8)
- TV - local news channels, WGN, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, etc. (24 total)
- Internet/online - general, no specific sources mentioned (14)
- Radio - WBEZ, etc. (12)
- Apps - Apple News, Public Square, etc. (7)
- Social media - TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, etc. (8)
- Email (3)
- Word of mouth (4)

HOW DO YOU USE OPPL NOW? WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU VISIT?

- Physical materials:
 - Books/audiobooks (31)
 - DVDs (11)
 - Music (2)
 - Magazines (1)
 - General, “picking up holds”, ILL (7)
- Digital materials (Libby, Hoopla, etc.) and online resources (7)

- Mostly use library virtually/digitally since COVID (1) – “Since covid i seem to be going to the library less frequently. Mostly now I access the library on line and get my library info from news the library emails me”
- Physical spaces:
 - Meetings (4)
 - Study rooms (4)
 - As a destination/space use generally/sitting & reading (17)
 - Resources for and space to do work or schoolwork (6)
 - Exhibits/displays in Art Gallery and Idea Box (8)
- Programs/events (18)
- Technology:
 - Computers/laptops (10)
 - Printing/copying/scanning (8)
 - Wifi (4)
 - Hotspots (1)
 - Learning Labs (1)
- Staff support/conversations/recommendations (3)
- Kids resources (10)
- Job search (2)
- Voting (1)

WHY DO YOU ATTEND EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY?

- Don't attend (20)
 - No time or timing conflicts (8)
 - Don't know about them (5)
 - Difficult to get out of home to attend, might attend virtual (2)
 - Not interested (3)
 - Might attend in future, dependent on timing, topic, format (4)
- Used to attend but don't now - e.g., now that no longer have kids, since COVID, etc. (5)
- Attend (35)
 - Enjoy content - entertaining, informative, etc. (12)
 - Movies (2)
 - Authors (2)
 - Lectures (6)
 - Book groups (3)
 - Instructional classes (1)
 - Kids programming (5)
 - Community/local info (2)
 - Political info, candidate forums (4)
 - History (2)
 - Architecture (1)
 - Local interest (1)
 - Cooking (1)
 - Like socializing, seeing people you know, feeling of community at programs (6)

- Paper calendar helps, have to remember to pick up (2)
- Staff do a good job (2)
- Like virtual offerings (3)
- Attend in-person (2)
- Like to keep mind active (1)
- Attendance depends on topic (4)
- Come just to see what's new at the library (1)
- Motivated to attend by food (1)

FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

- Programming & Learning:
 - Book groups (and programs in general) geared toward older adults - focused on aging/end of life/meaning/loneliness (7)
 - More virtual/hybrid events (3)
 - Digital learning - e.g., getting ebooks, learning what's available at the library online (3)
 - “for seniors like me who are not very internet savvy --I'd like an easy to access on-line session or two on what the library does offer and how to access it on-line and also who at the library to speak with about various question we may have”
 - Movies (2)
 - American history events (2)
 - Music events (1)
 - Teen/youth development programming (2) Teen/youth development programming (2)
 - Offer more programs at Maze, not just Main (1)
 - Library “sleepover” (1)
 - Work with Park District to offer programs for seniors (1)
 - More information provided about ancestry research (1)
- Materials:
 - Return of hard copy newspapers/magazines (6)
 - “I'm very upset that you did away with print newspapers. Especially older adults, and people with difficulty using and/or looking into a backlit computer need print copies. Some of us just prefer it.”
 - One also said harder to hold electronic device with their hands for online viewing vs. paper copies
 - More books & book recommendations (4)
 - More materials on display (2)
 - More materials for browsing at Dole (1)
 - More books on medical topics/wellness, non-fiction, history, mystery at Dole (1)
 - More added to Library of Things (1)
 - Return of large print books to the 2nd floor, so they are near the regular fiction (1)
 - Move multicultural collection to Main - takes up too much space at Dole (1)
- Staffing:

- Tech & digital learning support - e.g., staff always stationed at computer lab (1)
- Staff/volunteers with disabilities to help with simple questions (1)
- More staff on 3rd floor, to avoid long lines (1)
- Creative leadership at the library to think about how to address ageism (1)
- Physical spaces:
 - Ceiling repair in 1st floor men's bathroom (1)
 - More info on reserving meeting rooms (1)
 - More comfortable seating (1)
 - More power outlets (1)
 - More parking (2)
 - Activate Dole in a different way (1)
- Communication:
 - Need more communication (1)
 - Calendar could be easier to navigate (1)

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Staff:
 - Great people working at library - welcoming, caring, helpful (12)
- Space:
 - Safe space (3)
 - Library architecture is great (1)
 - Easy access, long hours (3)
 - Like kids space (2)
 - Miss pre-COVID toys (1)
 - Like quiet spaces (2)
 - Like reading spaces outside (1)
- Physical Materials:
 - SWAN/ILL is great (3)
 - Love hold system for getting materials (3)
 - Appreciates Home Delivery (1)
- Technology:
 - Printing/copying - useful, keep it free (5)
 - Excited about 3D printer (1)
- Communication:
 - Not great communication with public but getting better (1)
 - Email newsletters are helpful (1)
- Mission:
 - Focus should be more on books and less on social services and multicultural work (2)
 - Not focusing on older/aging people enough, not a priority in the DEI work (2)
 - Want more comprehensive listing of OP services for seniors (1)
 - "I love the OPPL but feel it is not serving seniors as well as it could/should."
 - Library is focusing more on seniors now (1)

- Appreciate respectful treatment of people experiencing homelessness & teens (2)
- Teens are loud (1)
 - “I appreciate being able to find and place holds on books via Swann system. I was driven away from using the library as a place to read, research, study sometime around fall 2019 when acting-out teens and homeless made it tough to feel comfortable and concentrate. My purse was stolen. I’ve not returned except to borrow and return books or attend scheduled events.”
- Inclusive library, reaching out to all community members (2)
- Appreciate anti-racism commitment (1)
- Like that it is more of a community center and not just a quiet space (1)
- Provides resources for all ages/whole family (1)
- Innovative (1)
- Embraces environmentalism (1)
- Love smaller branches, keep them open (4)
- General positive comments:
 - “The library is my second home”
 - “Every library should be like this”
 - “What you do is so wonderful and important”
 - “I think Oak Park Library is doing a great job with all your offerings!! I think you have great offerings for all ages and many programs for all ages together too.”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- Total: 10
- Library cardholder?
 - No: 0
 - Yes: 10
- ZIP:
 - 60302: 8
 - 60304: 2

May Listening Sessions - Library Spaces

(Main 5/1, Dole 5/10, What’s Blooming on Harrison 5/20) — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from [17 survey submissions](#))

WHICH LIBRARY SPACES DO YOU USE?

- Main (48)
 - Children’s (13)
 - Quiet study space, study rooms (5)

- Meeting spaces (4)
- 2nd or 3rd floor generally (5)
- Programming (2)
- Printing (2)
- Computers (1)
- Middle school resources (1)
- Get books more quickly (1)
- Art gallery (1)
- New releases (1)
- Browsing (1)
- Maze (28)
 - Pick-up/holds (11)
 - Maze has better fiction collection than Main, new books (3)
 - Browsing (3)
 - Newspapers (3)
 - Printing (2)
 - Studying (2)
 - Sitting & reading (1)
 - Large tables (1)
 - Kids (1)
- Dole (21)
 - Use because of dance class, PDOP programs in building (6)
 - Children's resources mainly (5)
 - Pick up holds here because parking difficult at Main (2)
- General, comments about space usage that are not location-specific:
 - Love digital library, Libby, Hoopla (5)
 - "Since the pandemic started I mostly use Hoopla Digital/ebooks."
 - Kids section, storytimes (4)
 - Holds pickup (3)
 - Books (1)
 - ILL (1)
 - Study rooms cold in winter (1)
 - New releases (1)
 - Study rooms / study space (2)
 - Meeting rooms (1)
 - Use printers a lot (1)

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO BORROW NEXT?

- Browsing at library, displays (25)
- Recommendations from people:
 - Librarian/library staff recommendations (5)
 - Friend/family/coworker recommendation, word of mouth (16)
 - Book group/club recommendation (6)
- Online reviews/articles/blogs - NYT, etc. (16)

- Aspen online catalog (15)
- Good Reads (3)
- Book review magazines (1)
- Book stores (5)
- Amazon (1)
- Library digital collection apps - Libby, Overdrive (2)
- Email recommendations from libraries, bookstores, etc. (3)
- Book lists (3)
- Social media - e.g., TikTok (2)

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

- Spaces:
 - Free and expanded parking at Main - hard to find spot (4)
 - “Better drop off space and free parking in your parking garage! Libraries are a free public space, parking should not be the exception.”
 - Furniture:
 - More seating (1)
 - Better tables and better/more comfortable chairs (3)
 - “used to use third floor but stopped because comfortable chairs are gone”
 - “any chance of bringing back comfortable chairs for older folks? I am 86.”
 - More tables with power outlets built in (1)
 - Spaces/Zones for Specific Uses:
 - More room to relax, “stretch out”/ cozy reading spots (2)
 - More spaces for adults to work (1)
 - Need zones for conversation and for silence (2)
 - Hours:
 - Open Maze on Fridays (3)
 - Later closing time on Sundays (1)
 - Study/Meeting Rooms:
 - Upgrades or better maintained study rooms (1)
 - Improved reservation system for study rooms and meeting rooms (2)
 - Sound proofing (1)
 - Different service desk area (1)
 - Coffee pot, beverages for patrons (2)
 - Improve bathrooms (1)
 - Better airflow in quiet room at Main - gets stuffy & hot (1)
- Communications:
 - More yard signs promoting library (1)
 - Better notification about programs (1)
- Materials:
 - Library of Things (3)
 - Tools (1)

- Want model train checkout (1)
 - More 3D puzzles (1)
 - More books onsite in general - greater variety and increased volume to decrease wait time (3)
 - More fantasy fiction (1)
 - More sci-fi, esp. new (2)
 - More bestsellers (1)
 - More current books (1)
 - More fiction (1)
 - Increased diversity of characters in children's books (1)
 - More DVDs (1)
 - More academic articles via ILL (1)
 - Print newspapers (1)
 - More book displays - more than just new titles, recommendations from librarians like in bookstores (1)
 - "The fiction floor has been so boring since the pandemic. Before the pandemic, there was a table with monthly themed suggestions. The shelves on the walls had themed suggestions, too. Now? NOTHING. [...] It's overwhelming to just browse the stacks and I'm often at a loss. I think the floor could host a lot of different ideas for people who are looking for a new or different genre to get them out of their reading ruts."
 - Arrange stacks by genre instead of author (1)
 - Make collection face-out like at a bookstore (1)
 - More access to book reading lists/recs (1)
- Technology:
 - Faster computer speed (1)
 - Longer reservation times for computers - longer than 2 hours, all day? (3)
 - Improve printing at Maze (1)
 - Provide access to digital tools like Adobe suite, Tableau, etc. (1)
- Programs:
 - Psychology workshops (1)
 - Technology workshops (1)
 - More tutoring (1)
 - More activities (1)
 - More art shows (1)
 - More movies (1)
 - More photography classes (1)
 - Night school for HS equivalency (1)
 - More daytime programs, esp. author visits (1)
 - More programs at times when people with 9-5 jobs could attend (1)
 - "As a 27 year old, I do not see much on the calendar for my age range. I'm excited for the summer reading challenge, but many of your events take place during the work day. I work 9-5, so I'm not able to attend most of the programs that interest me (sound bath/ yoga). I'd love to see like an

“after work” relaxing/ unwind series for adults that could include crafts, talks, or physical fitness. I love the library, so I’d be excited to participate in your programs. :)”

- Mission:
 - More focus on Latinx community (1)

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Positive feedback:
 - Love the offerings, children’s and multicultural (1)
 - Likes library return process (1)
 - Love activities, programs (2)
 - Fun collections (1)
 - So glad you have an area for teens, so great for them to have a space (1)
 - Friendly/welcoming staff (1)
 - Loves the library (7)
 - Loves Libby/digital library (1)
 - Loves displays (1)
 - Likes social service focus (1)
 - “OPPL is a five-star library in so many ways!! You all are doing so much! It's really exciting. I'm very proud that OPPL continues to offer such amazing services.”
 - “We love the library and all the events.”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- Total: 17
- Library cardholder?
 - No: 0
 - Yes: 17
- ZIP:
 - 60301: 3
 - 60302: 9
 - 60304: 4
 - 60126: 1

June Listening Sessions - Library Programs

(A Day in Our Village 6/4, Dole 6/8, Maze 6/17) — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from [54 survey submissions](#))

HOW DO PATRONS FIND OUT ABOUT PROGRAMS?

- Library emails (7)

- Library website (3)
- Library staff (1)
- Library calendar (2 total, 1 specifically hard copy)
- Online - source unknown (2)
- Newsletter - source unknown (2)
- Mom mail (2)
- Library flyer (1)
- From D97 (1)
- Word of mouth (1)
- Wednesday Journal (1)

WHEN DO PATRONS PREFER TO ATTEND PROGRAMS?

- Day of Week:
 - Any day - no preference (5)
 - Weekends only (14)
 - Weekdays only (14)
 - Sun: 28
 - Mon: 15
 - Tue: 17
 - Wed: 18
 - Thu: 20
 - Fri: 20
 - Sat: 30
- Time of Day:
 - Any time - no preference (2)
 - Late morning (24)
 - Early afternoon (25)
 - Late afternoon (21)
 - Evening (26)
 - Other (4)

WHAT FORMAT DO YOU PREFER FOR PROGRAMS?

- In-person (28)
- Virtual (3)
- Hybrid (23)

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN?

- SRP - broadly (3)
 - Adult SRP (1)
 - Teen Summer Challenge (1)
- Tech programs - 3D printing, etc. (3)
- Gaming - Pokémon, board games, chess, etc. (2)
- Storytimes (1)
- STEAM Fest (1)

- Latinx Book Group (1)
- Noche de Loteria (1)
- Open mic (1)
- Language classes (1)
- Sewing (1)
- DIY (1)

WHAT LIBRARY PROGRAMS HAVE YOU ATTENDED IN THE LAST YEAR?

- None (32) – 59% of survey respondents said they hadn't attended any library programs in the last year (32/54). Reasons why below (responses from people who said "none" only):
 - I do not know what kinds of programs the library offers (19)
 - I have no time to attend library-led programs (2)
 - I have no interest in attending library-led programs (1)
 - Other (10)
- Storytime (4)
- Book club (3)
- Wellness:
 - Yoga (1)
 - Breathing techniques (1)
 - Meditation, sound healing (2)
- STEAM Fest (2)
- Movies (2)
- Musical performance (2)
- Arts:
 - Craft classes (1)
 - Watercolor (1)
- Author talk (1)
- Lecture (1)
- ILP programs (1)
- Anti-racism (1)
- Day of the Dead event (1)
- Decluttering event (1)
- Cooking class (1)
- Recycling presentation (1)
- Book sale (1)
- Spanish conversation group (1)
- Attended genealogy prior to COVID (1)

OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES THAT PATRONS LIKE:

- Art Gallery (1)
- Library of Things (1)
- Seed Bank (1)
- Teen volunteer program (1)

- Book Swaps (1)
- Use of meeting rooms (1)
- Online zoom workshop (1)
- Voter registration (1)

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS:

- “please make kid events that working parents can utilize”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- Total: 54
- Library cardholder?
 - No: 1
 - Yes: 52
 - Unknown: 1
- ZIP:
 - 60301: 3
 - 60302: 34
 - 60304: 15
 - Unknown: 2

***NOTE:** Data in this document compiled from the following raw data sources: [Listening Session Flip Chart Notes](#), [Listening Session Google Form Responses](#)