Public Opinion Poll Results: Texas Public Libraries



This research was funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation

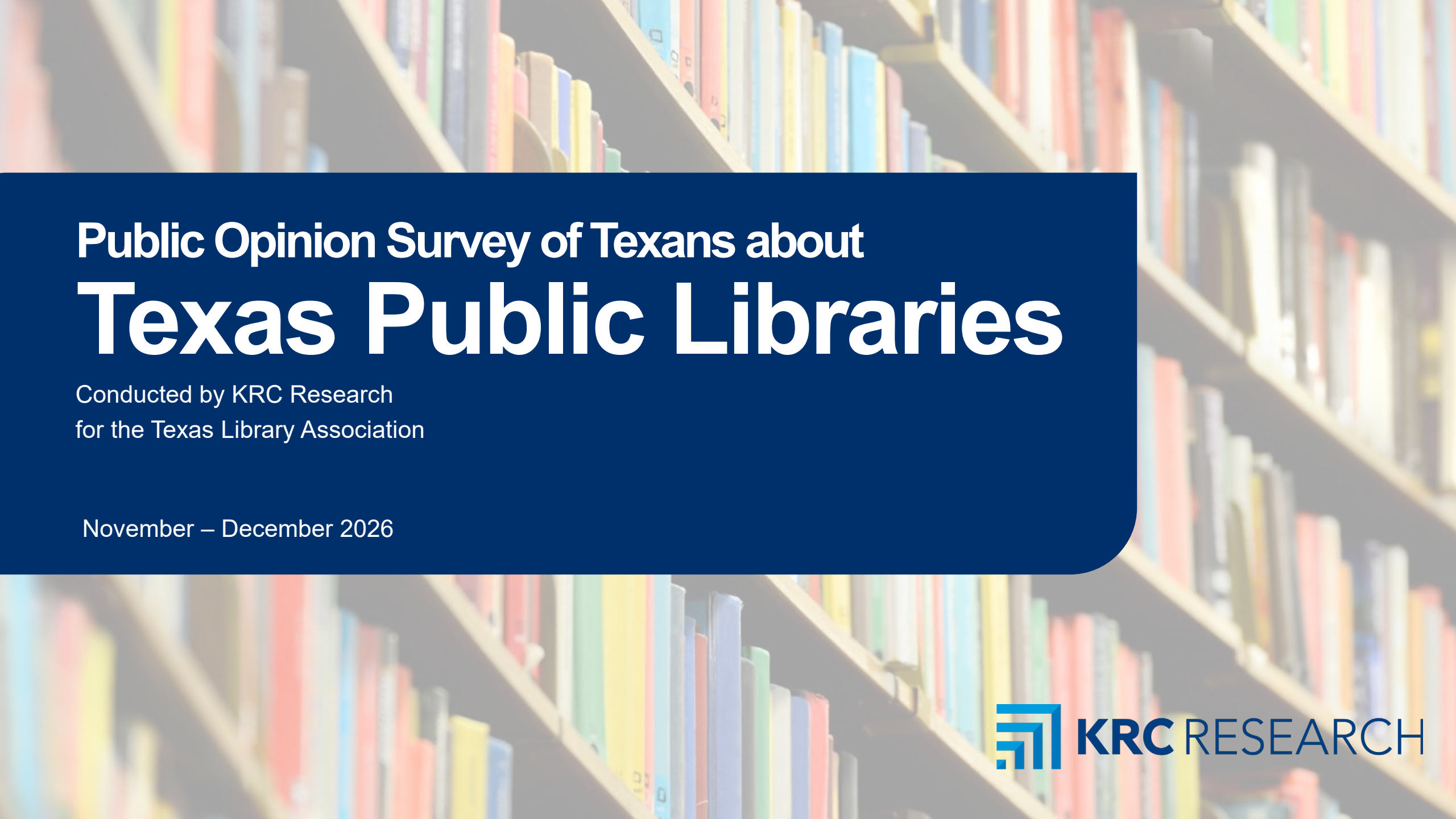
Presenters



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KRC Research



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Public Opinion Survey of Texans about
Texas Public Libraries

Conducted by KRC Research
for the Texas Library Association

November – December 2026

KRC RESEARCH

Objective and Method

To ensure Texas public libraries continue to effectively meet community needs, **Texas Library Association** conducted a statewide public opinion survey of Texas residents to understand perceptions of the need for and value of Texas public libraries, library utilization, trust in librarians, and attitudes toward information access and censorship. More specifically, the goal of this research was to:

- Assess **Texan's perceptions of libraries**, focusing on their importance, relevance, and value in communities, such as their role in education, access to information, and community building.
- **Measure trust in librarians** as credible experts, educators, and curators of information.
- Understand **attitudes toward censorship** in public libraries, specifically opinions on book and material availability.
- **Gauge support for libraries**, including the public's willingness to fund and endorse library initiatives, while identifying barriers to such support.
- Explore **future needs and expectations from libraries** to address evolving roles driven by societal and technological changes.

KRC Research deployed a comprehensive survey among 1,000 Texas adults, 18 years and older. The random sample survey was offered in both English and Spanish and was conducted both online and by phone (landline and cell phone), from Nov. 20 to Dec. 19, 2025. The sample was drawn from an online panel and from a phone sample, weighted to be demographically representative by Texas region, age, sex, race/ethnicity, household income, and educational attainment.

Respondent Sample Profile

Gender

50% Female

50% Male

Parental Status

42% Parents

58% Non-parents

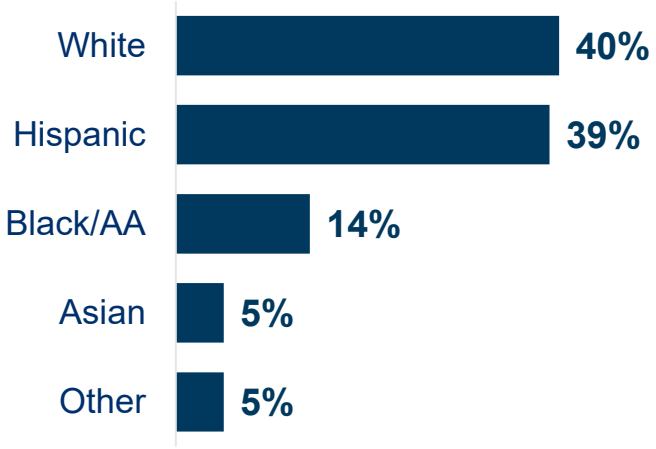
Community

35% Urban

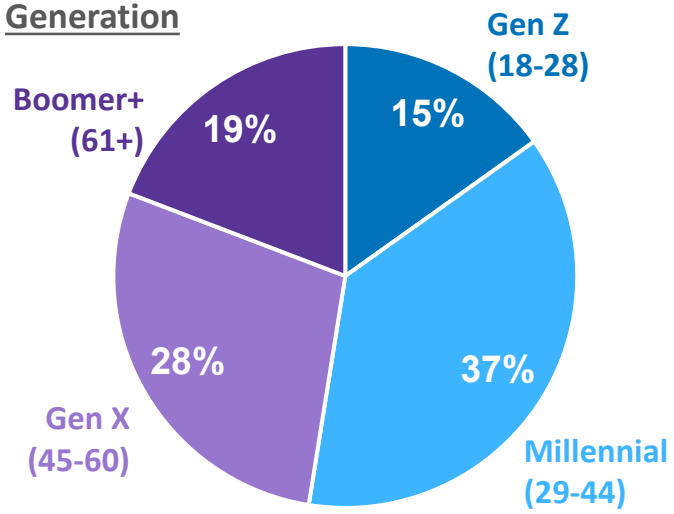
39% Suburban

19% Rural

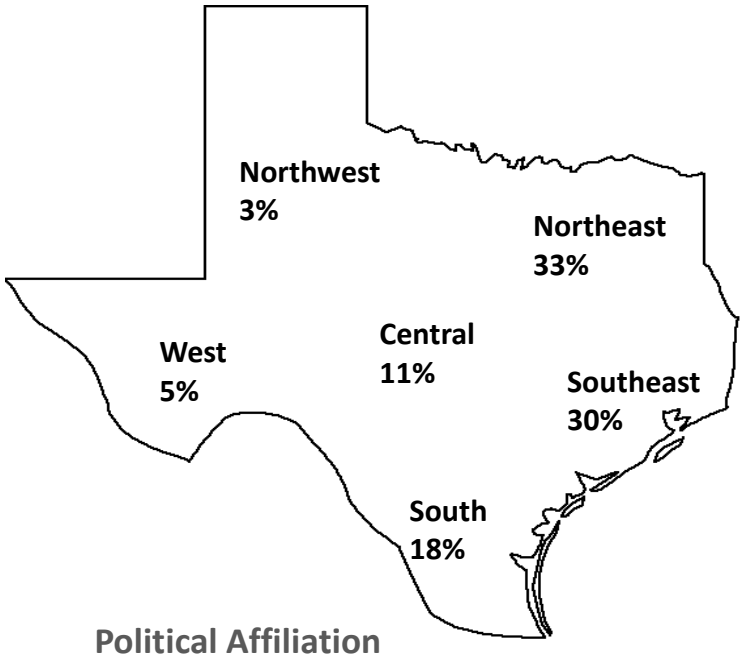
Race and Ethnicity



Generation



Texas Regions



Political Affiliation

31% Conservative

34% Moderate

21% Liberal

14% Unsure/No Response



Executive Summary

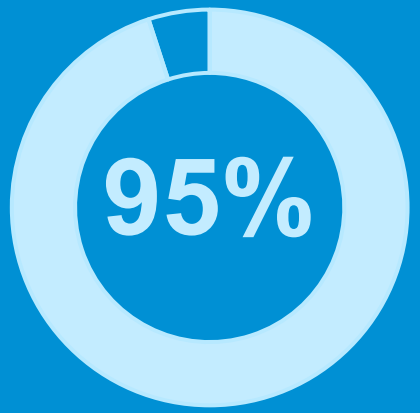
4 Key Takeaways

1. **Texans overwhelmingly regard public libraries as valuable community assets that serve critical roles in education, access to information, and community connection**. Awareness and engagement among Texans is strong. Beyond book borrowing, many Texans depend on libraries for internet connectivity and computer access. Libraries are also used as spaces for recreation and leisure and as venues for community events, demonstrating their adaptability for community needs.
2. **Public librarians are trusted as multifaceted professionals.** Texans demonstrate strong confidence in librarians and their ability to select resources that reflect the needs and interests of their communities. Texans perceive librarians as fulfilling multiple important roles within their communities.
3. **Texans expect libraries to balance access with user and community needs.** Most Texans agree that libraries should provide access to a broad range of information and ideas in books and materials, even if some community members disapprove.
4. **Most view public libraries as essential to the future—but underfunded.** Most Texans see Texas public libraries as an essential public service they expect to be as relevant or even more relevant in the future.



Public Library Perceptions and Attitudes

Summary: Public Libraries Highly Valued in Texas



of Texans say public libraries are *important* to both Texas and their own community—two-thirds (73%) say *very important*.

Importance of Public Libraries for your Community *(% very + somewhat important)*	98% library users vs. 82% of non-library users

95%

find that libraries are *very important* for providing free access to info, resources and services

95%

find that libraries are *very important* for promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and workforce readiness

93%

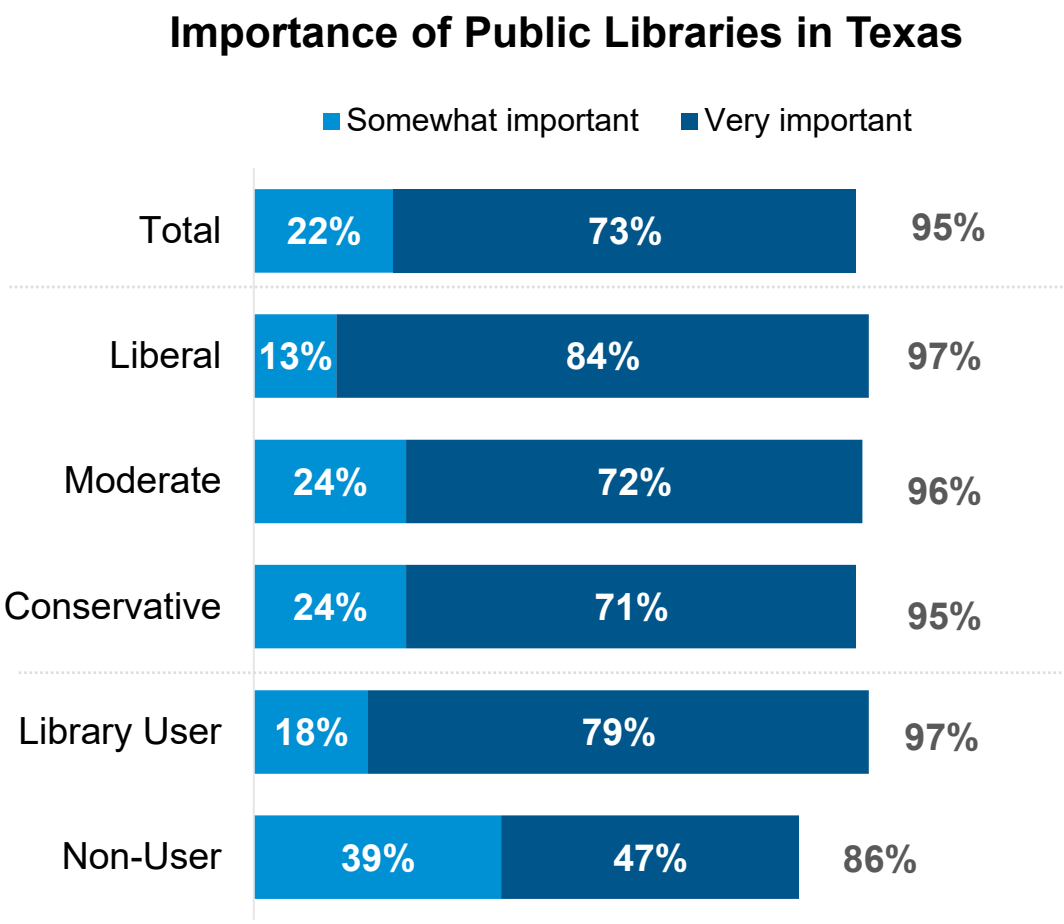
find that libraries are *very important* for bridging the digital divide

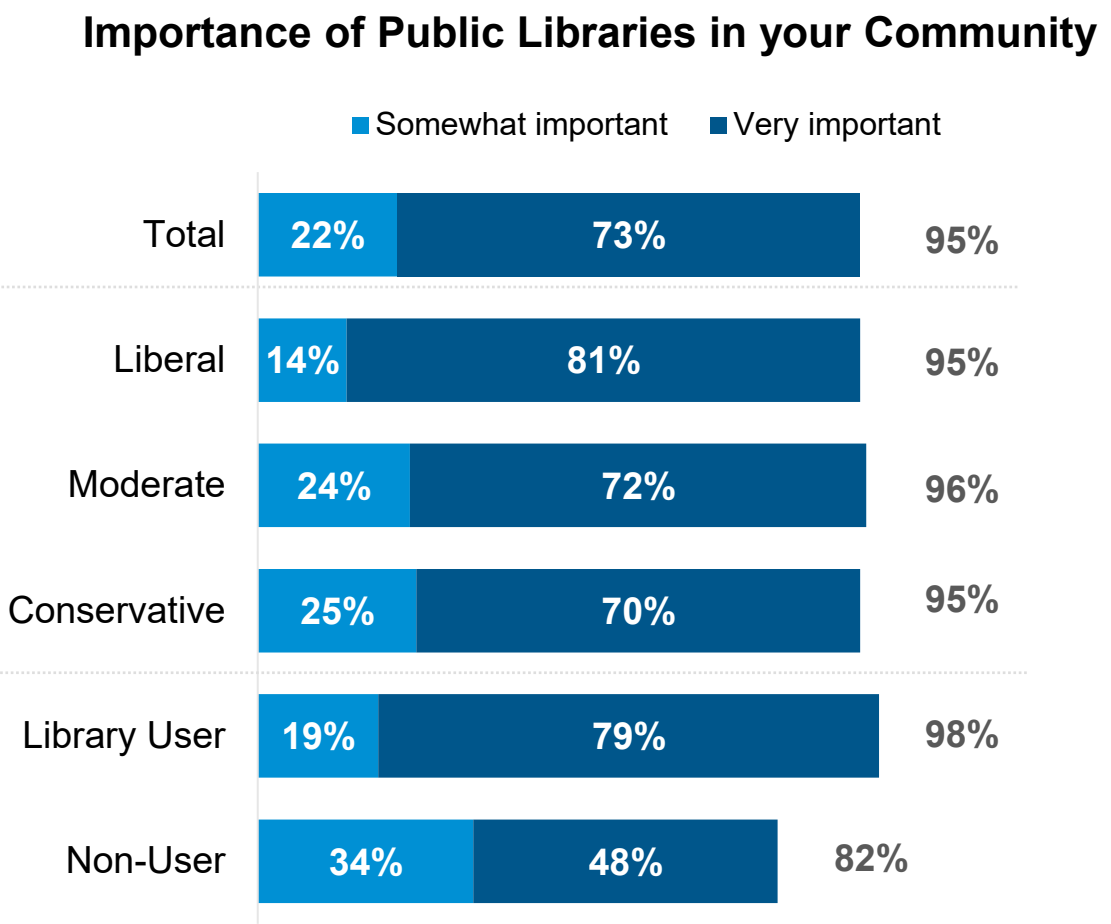
92% of Texans aware of a public library serving their community

80% of Texan households have used public library services in the past 3 years

92% of users are satisfied

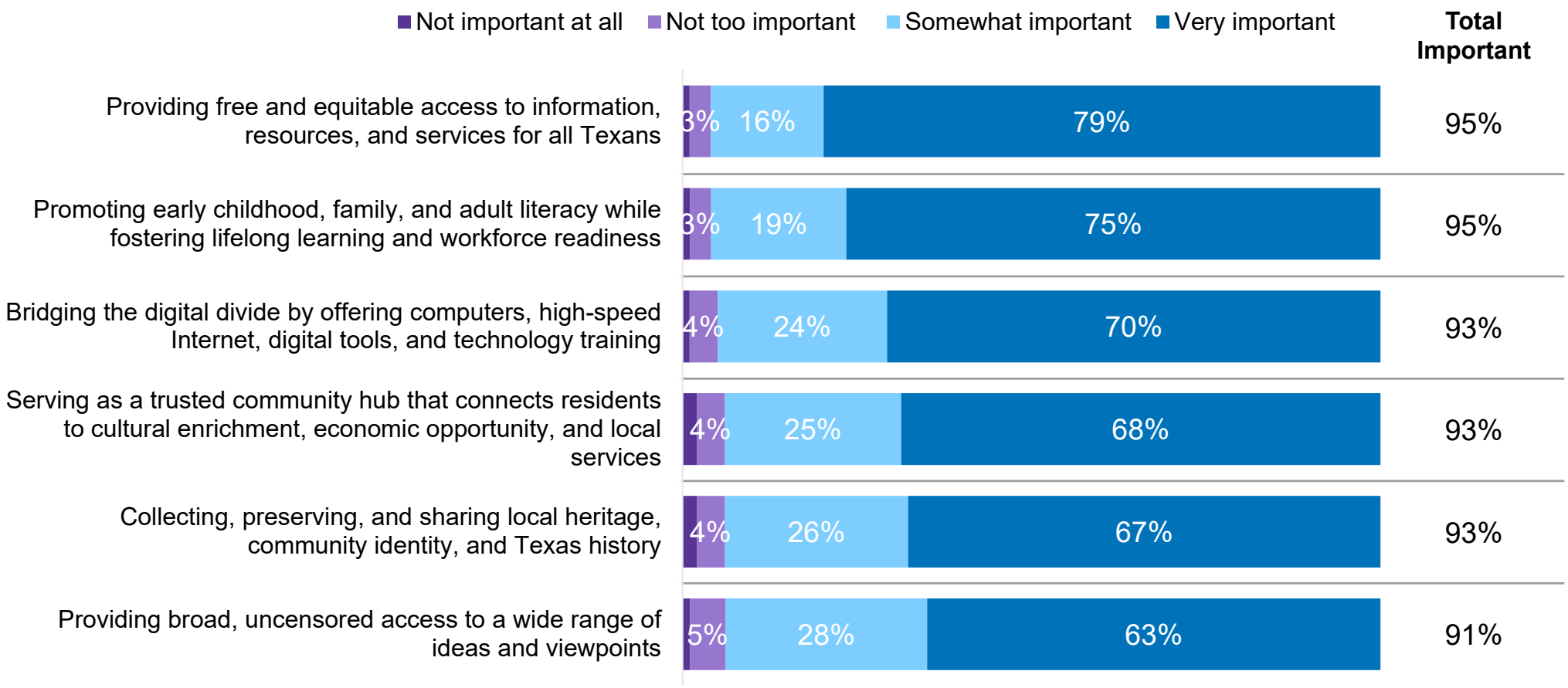
95% Texans find libraries *very important* both for Texas and their communities, regardless of their political affiliations or library usage.





Q. How important are public libraries in Texas—very, somewhat, not very, not at all? (n=1000) Q. How important is the public library to your community? (n=1000)

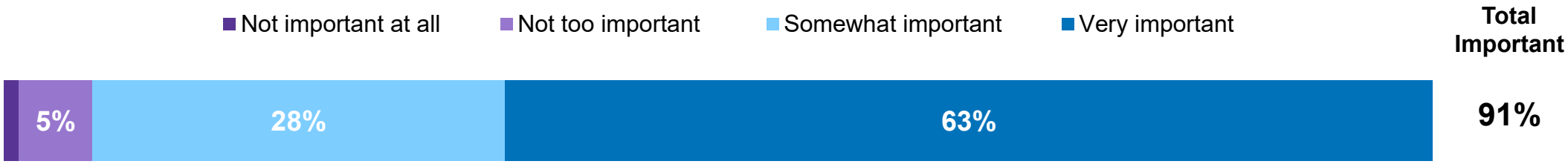
9-in-10 believe public libraries are important for access to information, technology, literacy, community, and intellectual freedom.



Q. How important are public libraries in fulfilling each of the following roles within Texas communities? (n=1000)

9-in-10 Texans say it is important that libraries provide broad, uncensored access.

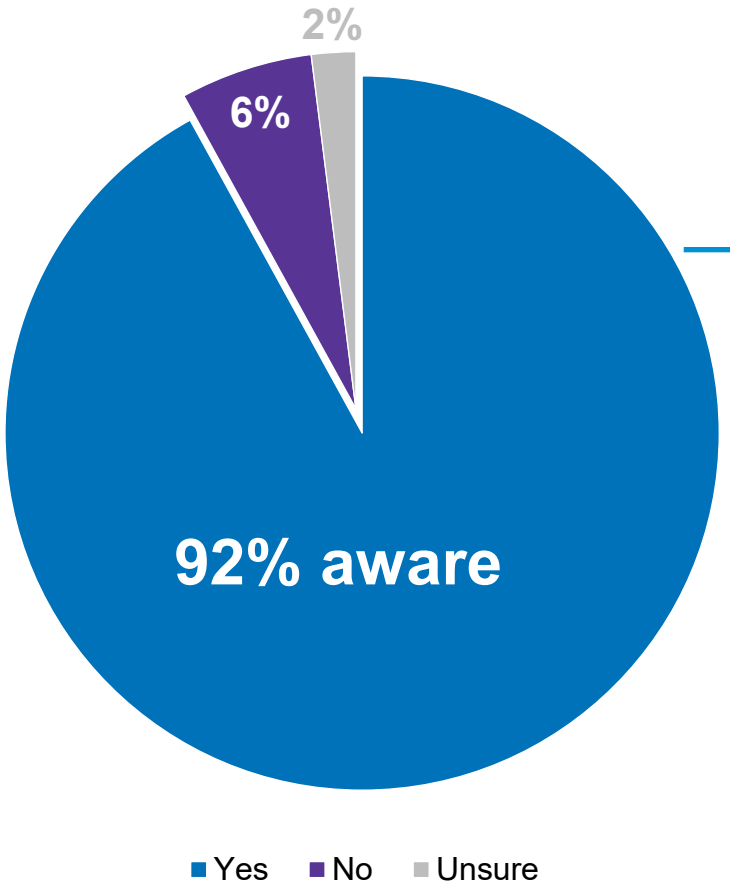
"Providing broad, uncensored access to a wide range of ideas and viewpoints"



This viewpoint held by Texans, regardless of political affiliation, age, gender, or minority status.

Q. How important are public libraries in fulfilling each of the following roles within Texas communities? (n=1000)

Most Texans are aware of a public library serving their community.



Parents: 94%
Non-parents: 91%

Gen Z: 89%
Millennial: 93%
Gen X: 94%
Boomer+: 91%

Male: 92%
Female: 92%

Urban:94%
Rural: 92%
Suburban: 92%

Northwest/West: 92%
Northeast: 90%
Central: 99%
Southeast: 90%
South: 95%

Q. Are you aware of a public library located in or serving your community (e.g., within your town, city, or neighborhood)? (n=1000)

In total, 80% of Texan households have used public library services over the past 3 years, including 67% that have done so personally.

Have used library in past 3 years

Only someone in household has

No one in household has



67% of Texans have personally used services provided by a public library in the last 3 years

Gen Z: 66%
Millennials: 73%
Gen X: 63%
Boomer+: 60%

Rural: 56%
Urban: 73%
Suburban: 67%

Men: 66%
Women: 68%

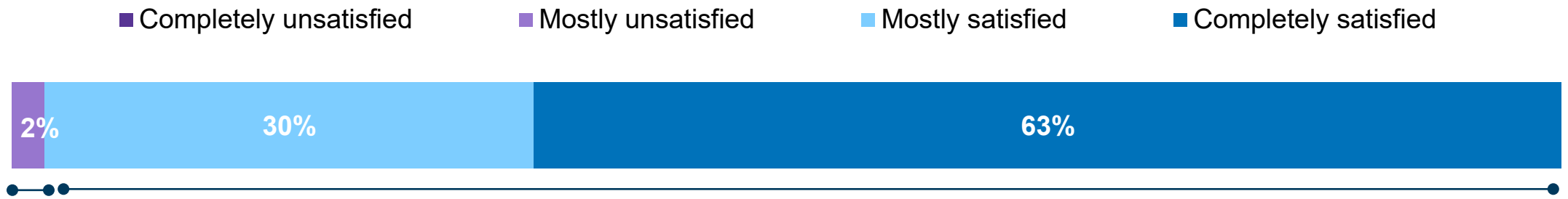
Parent: 75%
Non-Parent: 61%

13% have not used the public library, but someone in their household has in the last 3 years

20% of Texans have no one in their household who has used a public library in the past 3 years

Q. Have you and/or someone in your household used the services provided by a **public library**, either in person or online, over the past 3 years? Select all that apply. (n=1000)

The vast majority of Texas public library users are satisfied with their experiences. Satisfaction often hinges on the resources available or lack thereof.



92% are **satisfied** with their public library

Many report satisfaction with their library's wide selection of resources, positive experiences with staff, and the overall appeal of the space.

"I am able to go there to get things printed out if I need to and they have special events for the kids for different age groups and for adults as well"

"They are welcoming and helpful and provide what we need."

"Because it's convenient, well-run, has great resources, and staff is always helpful."

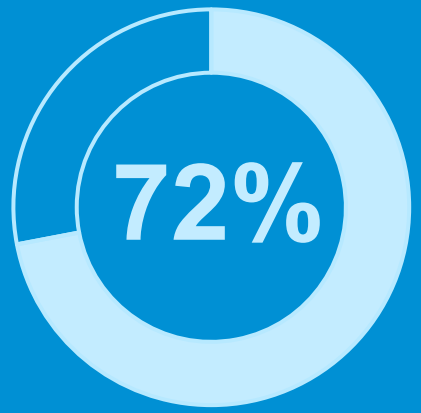
"I am satisfied with my library because it has a wide selection of books and a quiet, comfortable place to study"

Q. Overall, thinking of your **public library**, based on your personal experiences, how satisfied are you with your public library? (n=667) Q8. For what reasons are you [satisfied/unsatisfied] with your public library? (n=630) *Open-ended question*

Library Use



Summary: Texans show high engagement with the library



of Texan households currently have a library card

Frequently visits their…

- Library in-person 69%
- Library's website for digital media 57%
- Library's app 43%
- Other apps 49%

Most common and well-known

	Offered	Not offered	Unsure
Internet and Wi-Fi access	89%	5%	5%
Computer access	89%	5%	6%
Book borrowing	85%	7%	8%

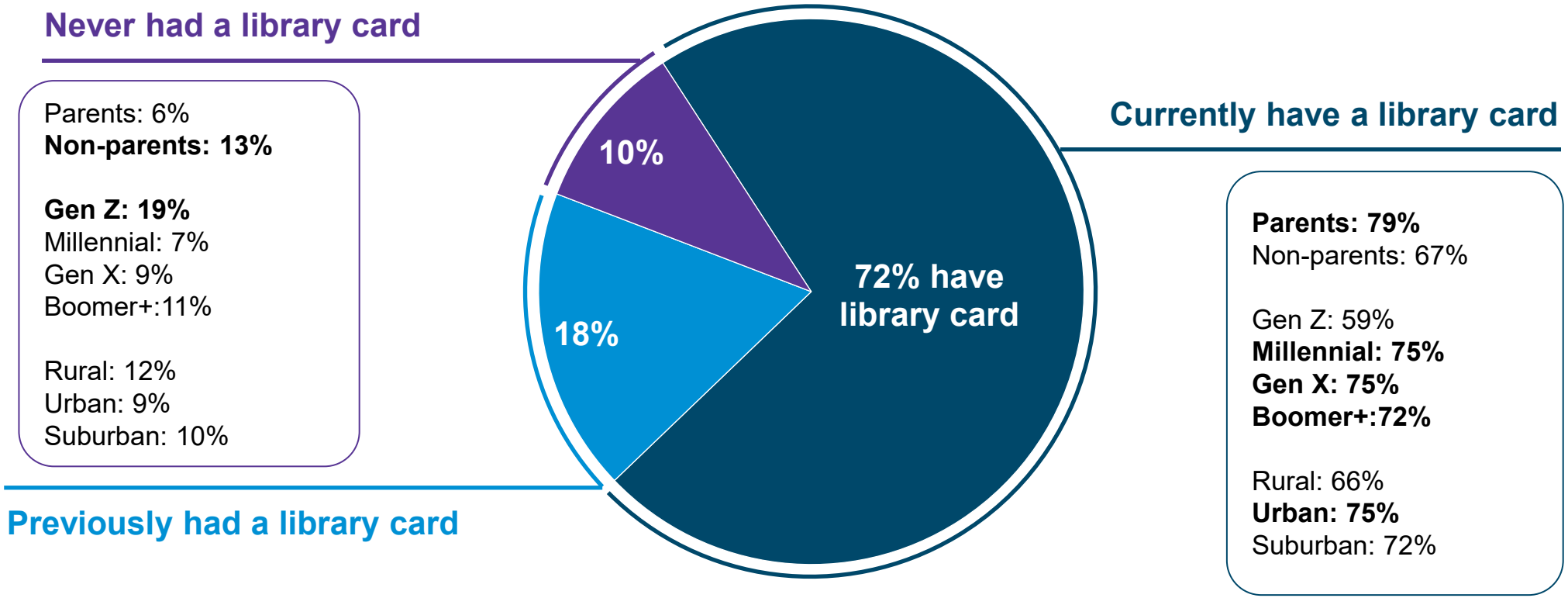
Widely offered, but some uncertainty

	Offered	Not offered	Unsure
Research support	79%	7%	14%
Recreation or leisure space	74%	11%	15%
Digital Resources	76%	7%	17%
Community events	72%	9%	19%
Youth programs	72%	9%	19%

Less awareness

	Offered	Not offered	Unsure
Access to special equipment	59%	13%	27%
Adult education programs	56%	13%	30%
Emergency shelter	52%	13%	35%
Lending non-traditional items	33%	25%	42%

Nearly 3-in-4 Texans (72%) report currently having a library card. An additional 18% did previously, leaving just 10% of Texans who have never had a library card.



Q. Do you or someone in your household have a library card for your local public library? (n=1000)

69% of Texans are regularly (sometimes or often) visiting their library in person. A majority (57%) are also regularly using the library's digital materials.









	Often / Sometimes	Total Frequency (often + sometimes)						
		Total	Parent	Non-Parent	Ethnic or Cultural Minority	Non-Minority	Disabled	Not disabled
Visit the library in person		**69%**	**79%**	62%	71%	69%	72%	68%
Visit the library's website for digital materials		**57%**	**68%**	48%	**69%**	54%	61%	55%
Visit the library's app on a mobile device		**43%**	**54%**	35%	50%	42%	50%	41%
Use other apps to access digital content (e.g., Libby, Hoopla)		**49%**	**62%**	40%	**61%**	47%	**58%**	47%

Q. Thinking about your local public library, how often do you…—often, sometimes, rarely, never? (n=921)

Regular in-person library users are most likely to also be the ones using libraries online and digital resources.



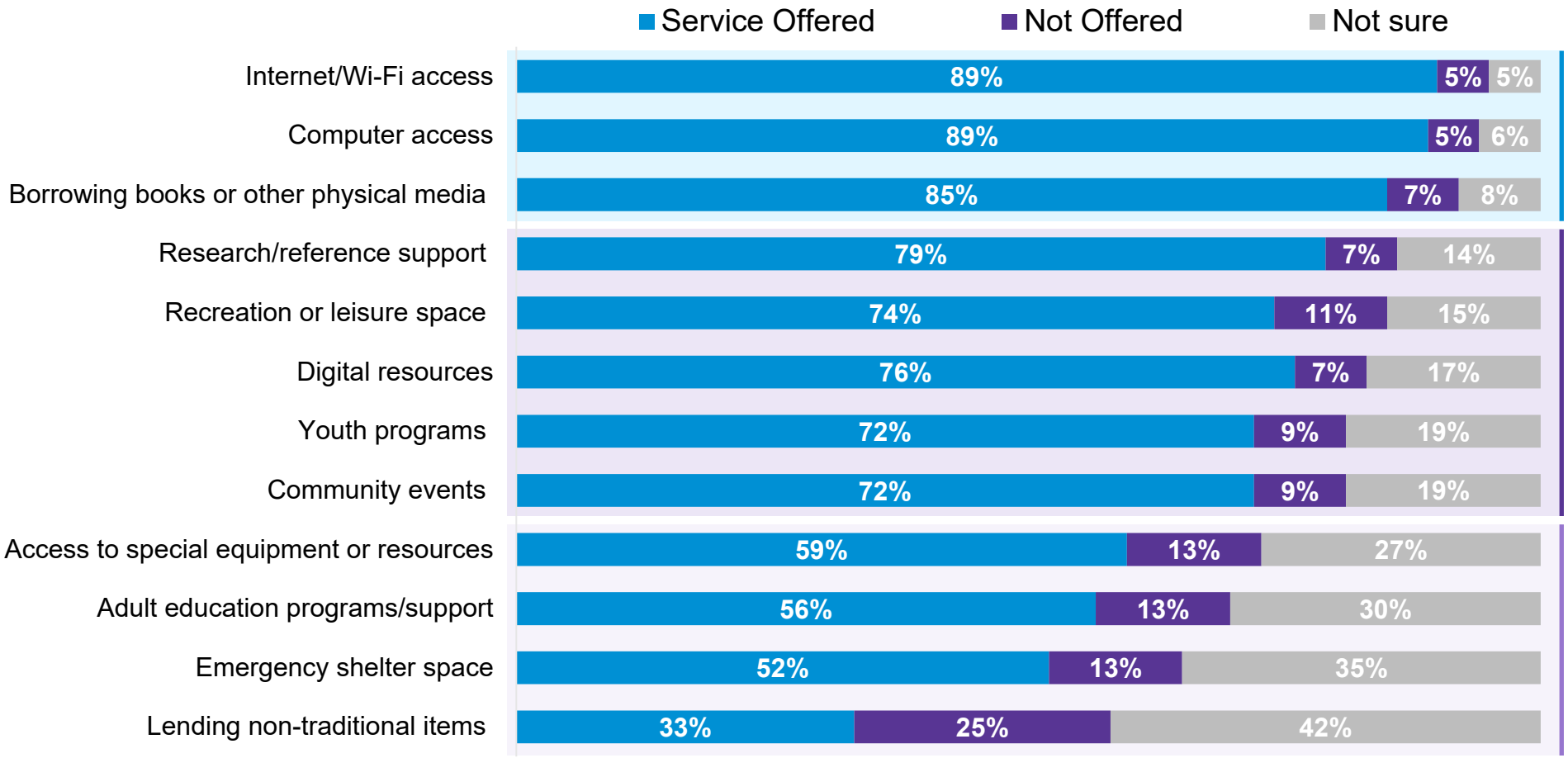




	Total	Total Frequency (often + sometimes)	
		Regular In-Person Visitor	Non-regular In-Person Visitor
Visit the library's website for digital materials	57%	**72%**	21%
Visit the library's app on a mobile device	43%	**57%**	12%
Use other apps to access digital content (e.g., Libby, Hoopla)	49%	**59%**	27%

Q. Thinking about your local public library, how often do you…—often, sometimes, rarely, never? (n=921)

In addition to book borrowing, internet and computer access are top common library uses. Many are also aware of uses like leisure space, community, youth, and adult programing.



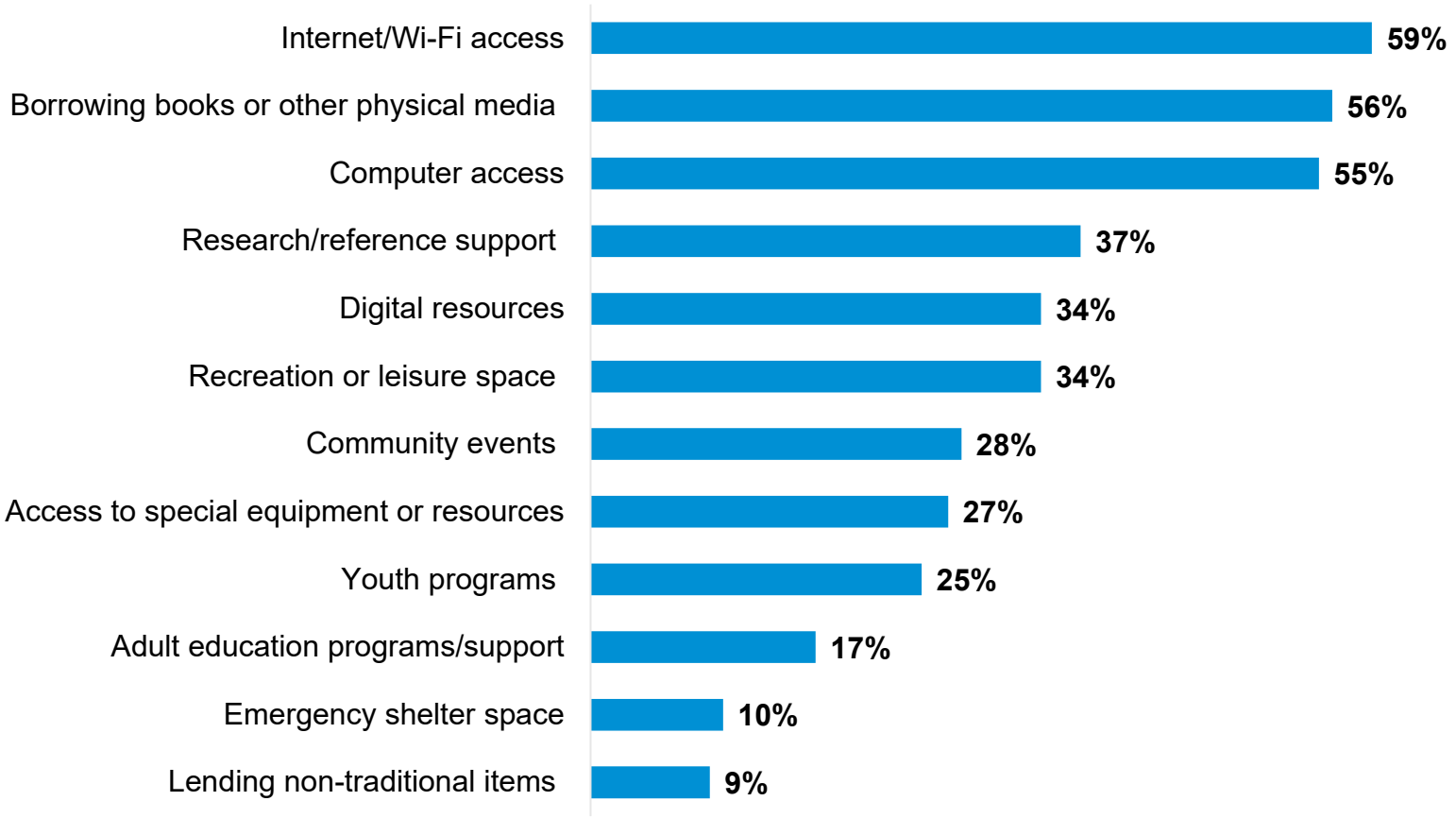
Common
Most Texans are aware of these services and that they are available at their library

Some Uncertainty
Most Texans are aware that these services are offered, but there are slightly more that are unsure

Less Awareness
Uncertainty of these services is high – a quarter or more Texans are unsure if these are offered at their library.

Q. Which of the following services does your local public library offer? Select one option for each. If you are not sure about a specific service being offered, please indicate so. (n=921)

While less common than top uses, uses including leisure space, community events, special equipment and youth and adult programs are also utilized.



Though Gen Z is least likely to have recently used a library, they are more likely to use it for internet access.

Gen Z: 69% Gen X: 53%
Millennials: 64% Boomers+: 50%

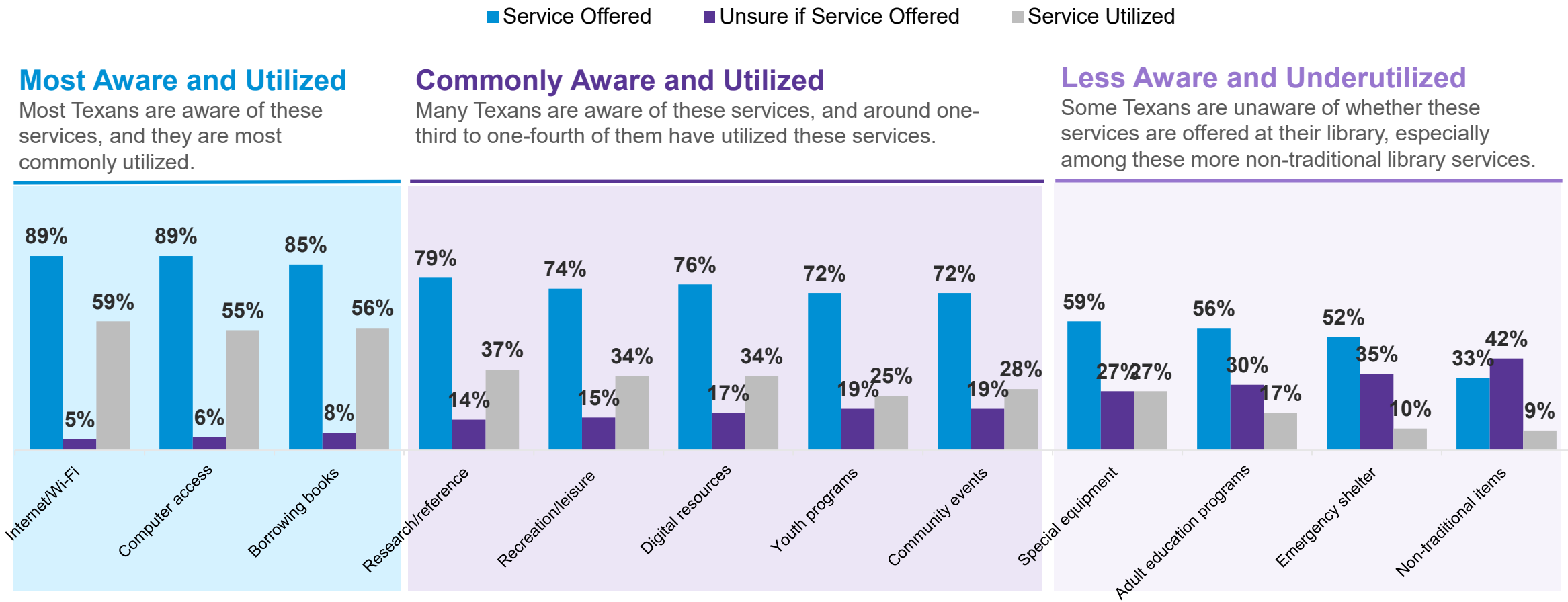
Lower income households are much more likely to rely on their public libraries for computer access.

<$35K: 64%
$35K-$75K: 59%
$75K-$150K: 49%
$150K+: 39%

A third (34%) of Texans said they have used their public library as an open space for recreation or leisure.

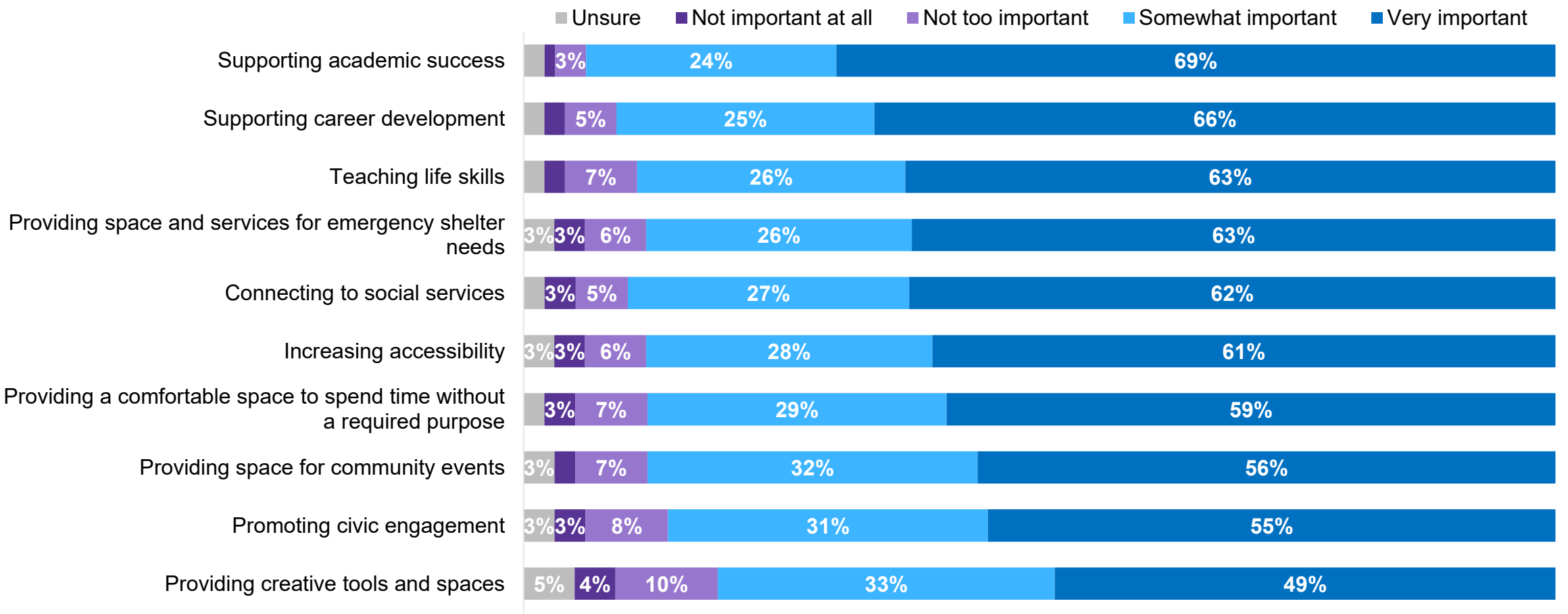
Q. Which of the following services have you ever personally used at your local public library? Select all that apply. (Sample sizes vary)

There is an opportunity to increase awareness of non-traditional services provided by public libraries.



Q. Which of the following services does your local public library offer? Select one option for each. If you are not sure about a specific service being offered, please indicate so. (n=921)
Q. Which of the following services have you ever personally used at your local public library? Select all that apply. (Sample sizes vary)

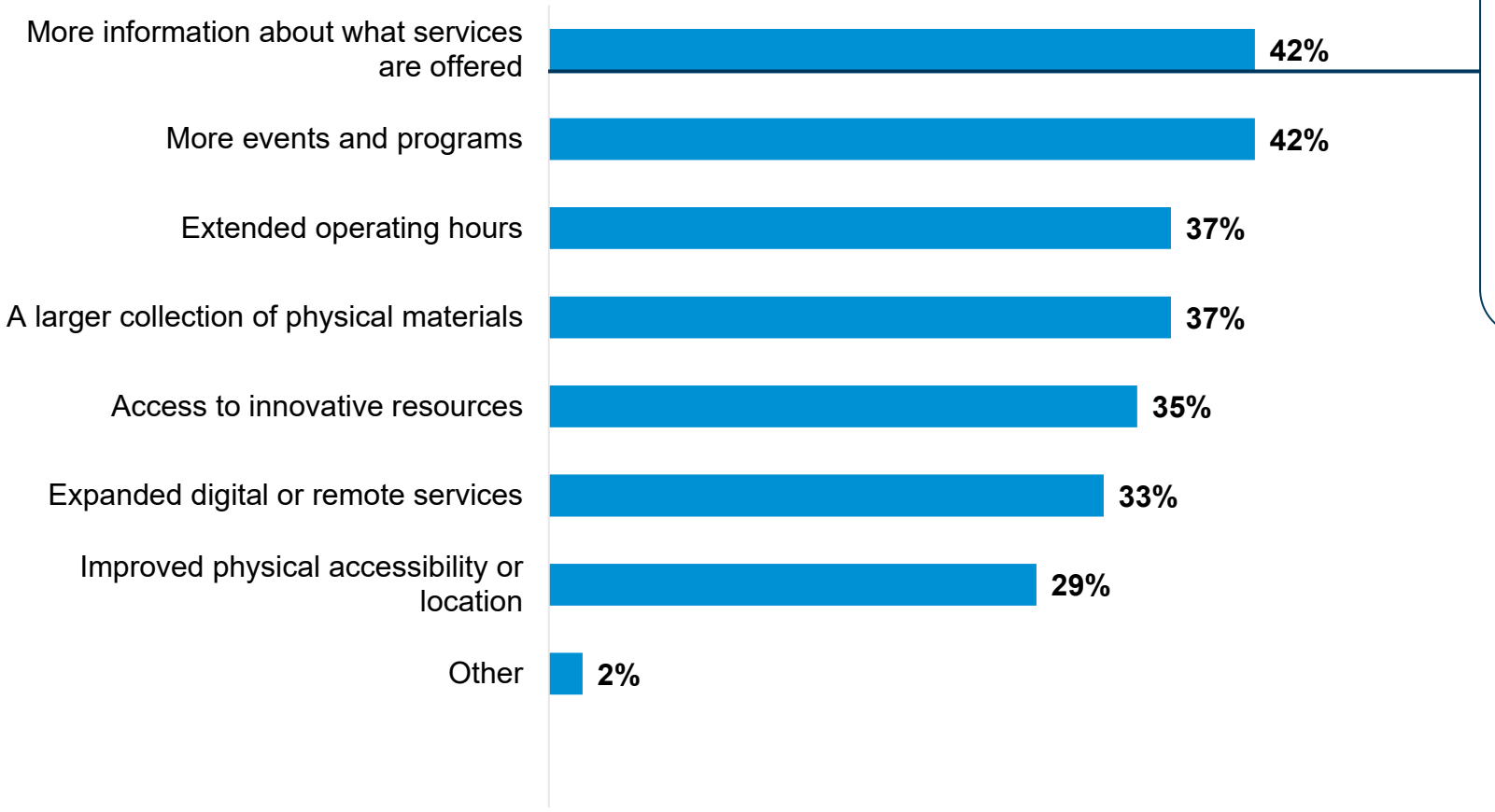
Half of Texans or more said the additional public library services are *very important*. Supporting academic success and career development top the list as most important.



Note: Only showing data labels for items that are 3% or higher.

Q. Most public libraries offer programs and services beyond loaning books. Below is a list of additional services that libraries can provide to their communities. How important do you feel each is for your community? (n=1000)

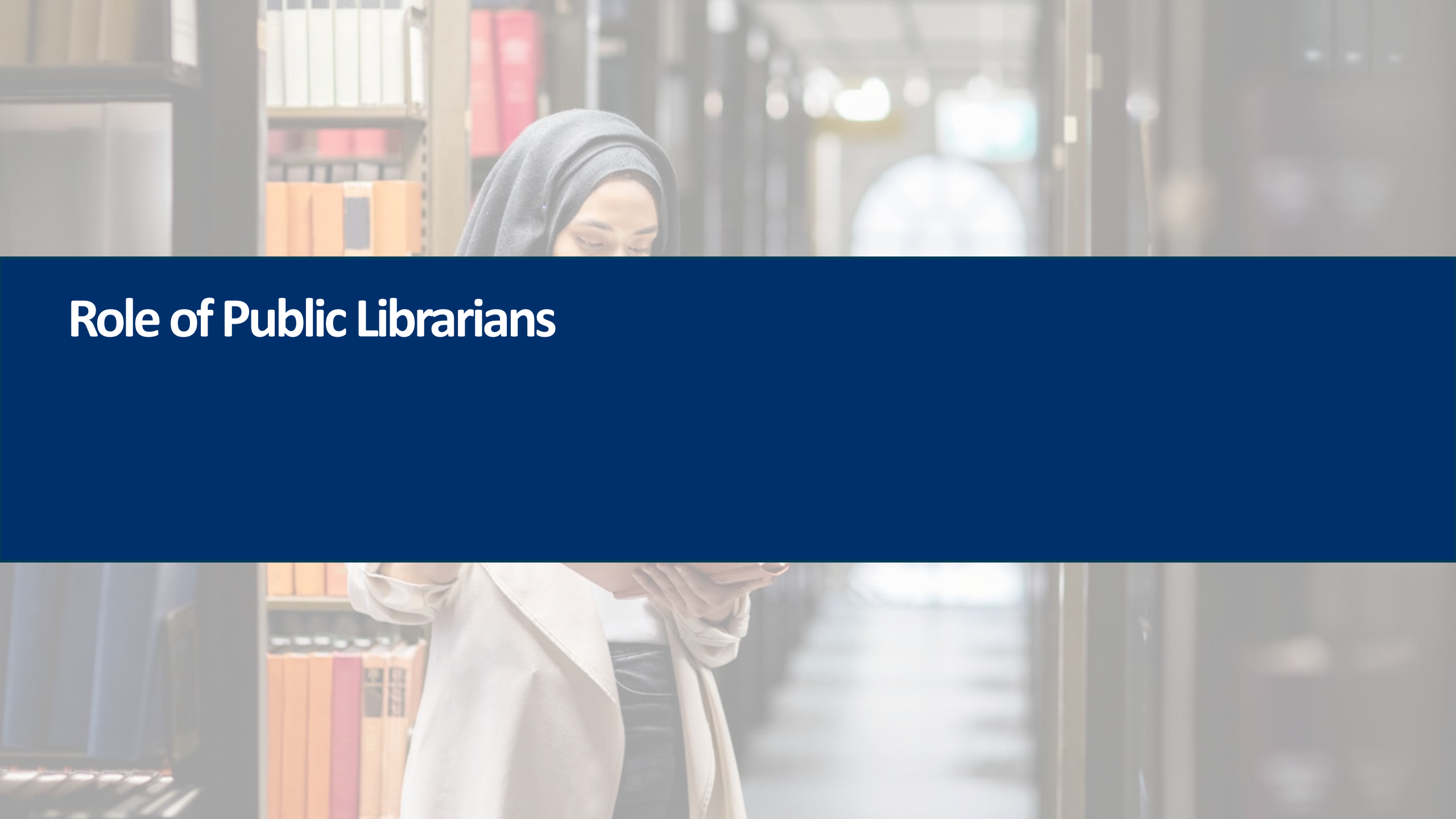
Top factors that would encourage increased library use include information about services, more events and programs, and extended operating hours.



Men are more likely to request more information on the services offered to increase their use.

Men: 46%
Women: 39%

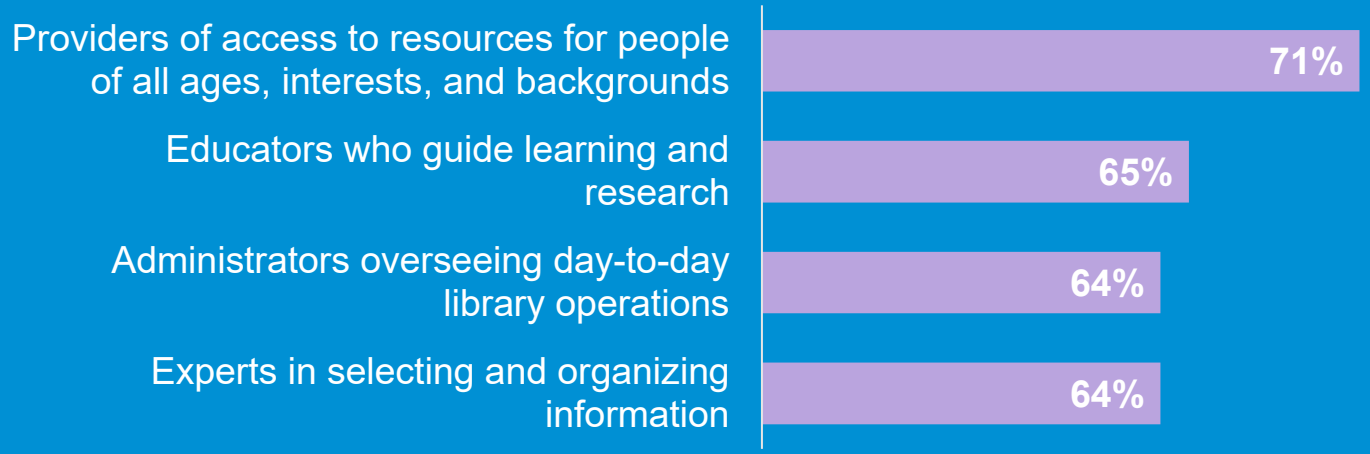
Q. What would encourage you to use a public library more often? Select all that apply. (n=1000)



Role of Public Librarians

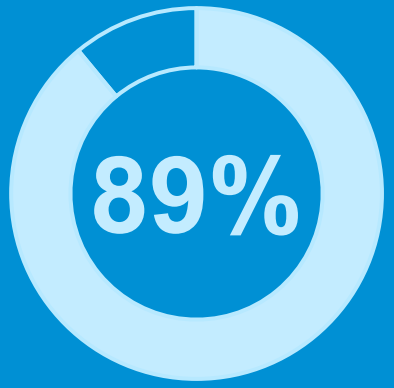
Summary: Librarians are trusted as multifaceted professionals

It is *very important* that librarians are…

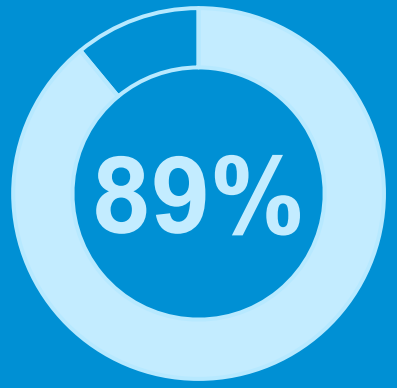


92%

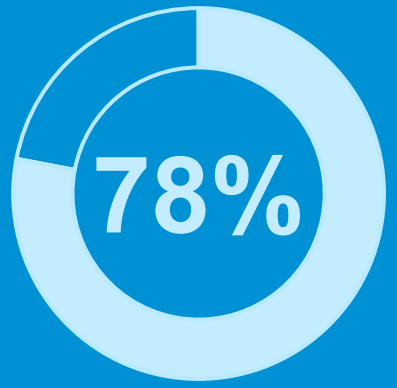
agree public librarians should ensure that library collections reflect the needs and interests of the communities they serve



of Texans are confident in their librarians' ability to select resources

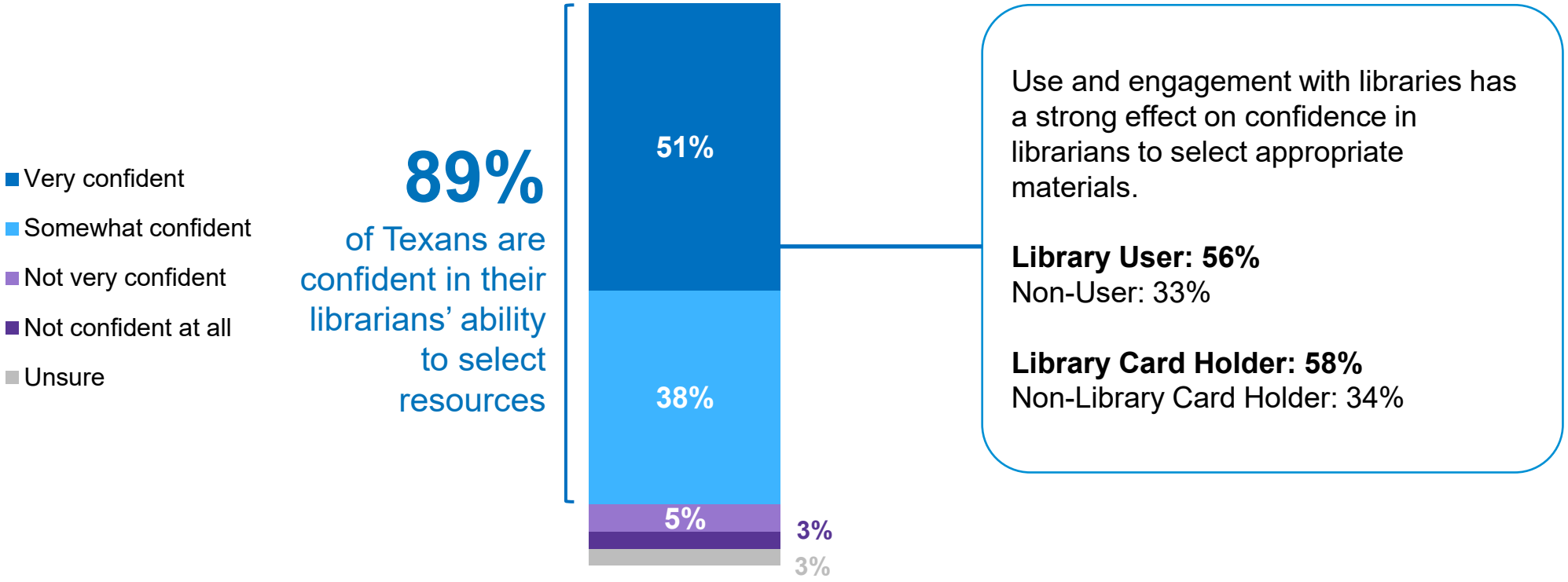


agree public librarians and other professional library staff have the expertise to select books using relevant criteria



agree public librarians should have the primary responsibility for choosing materials for public library collections

9-in-10 (89%) of Texans are confident that public librarians select materials that reflect the needs and interests of their community.



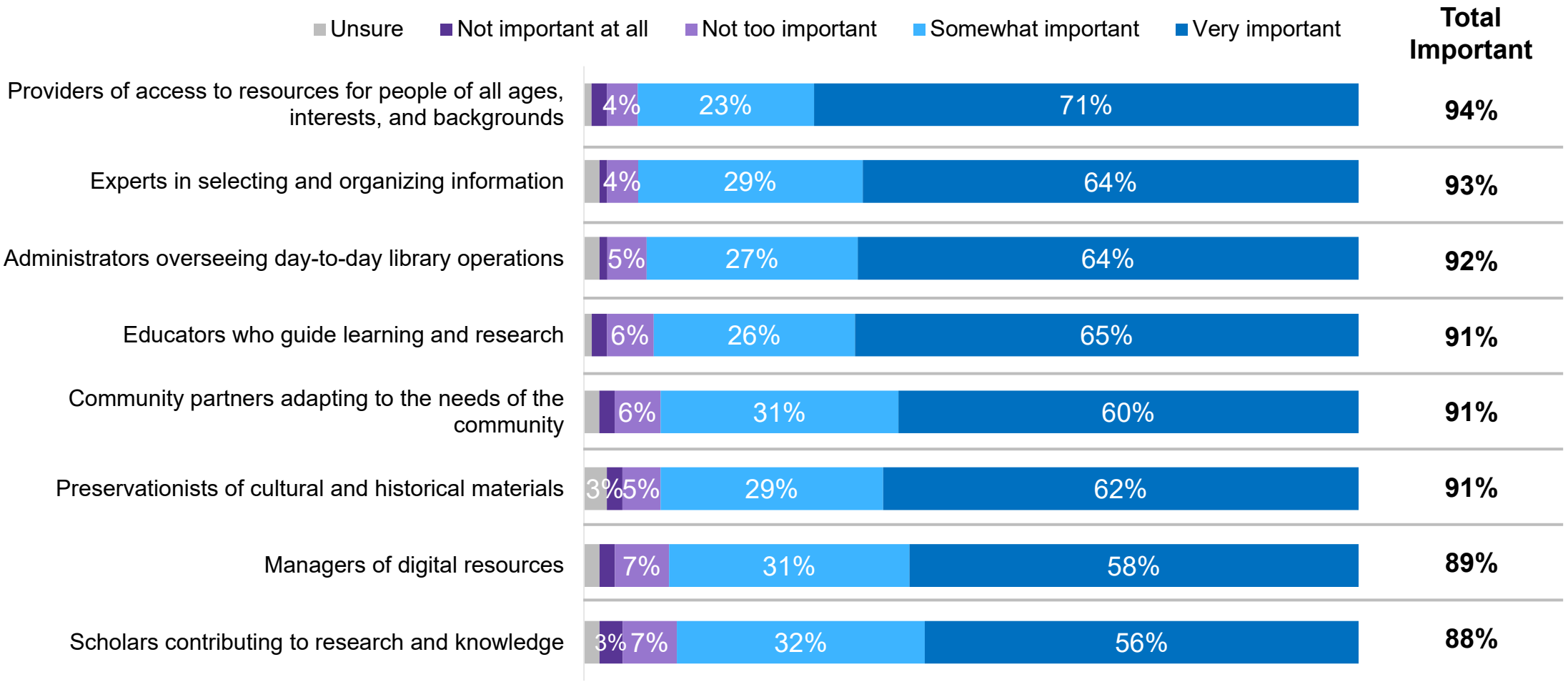
Use and engagement with libraries has a strong effect on confidence in librarians to select appropriate materials.

Library User: 56%
Non-User: 33%

Library Card Holder: 58%
Non-Library Card Holder: 34%

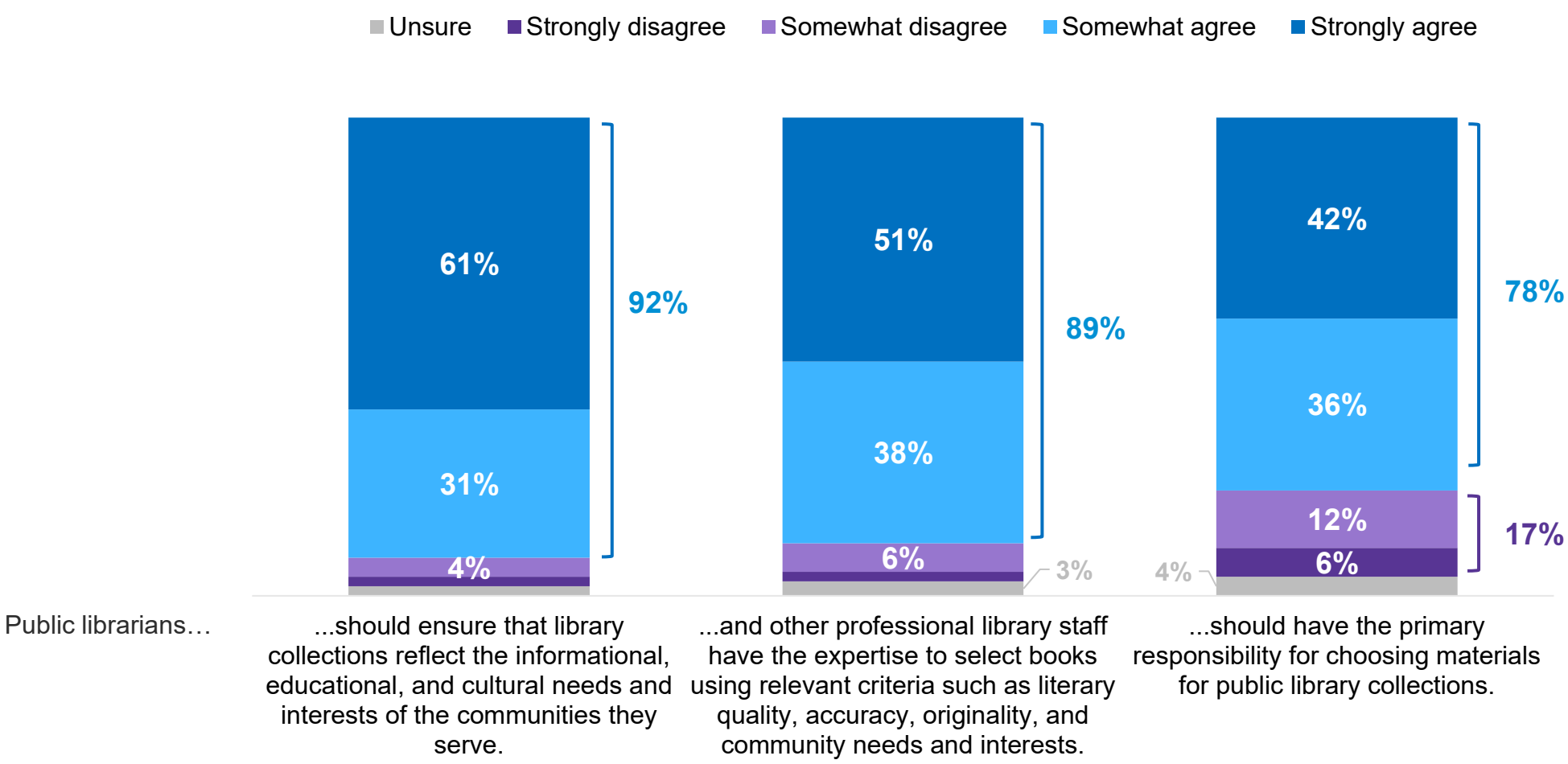
Q. How confident are you that public librarians select materials and resources that reflect the varied needs and interests of the community? (n=1000)

Texans view public librarians as having important, wide-ranging expertise and dynamic roles. 71% say their role in providing access to resources for all people is *very important*.



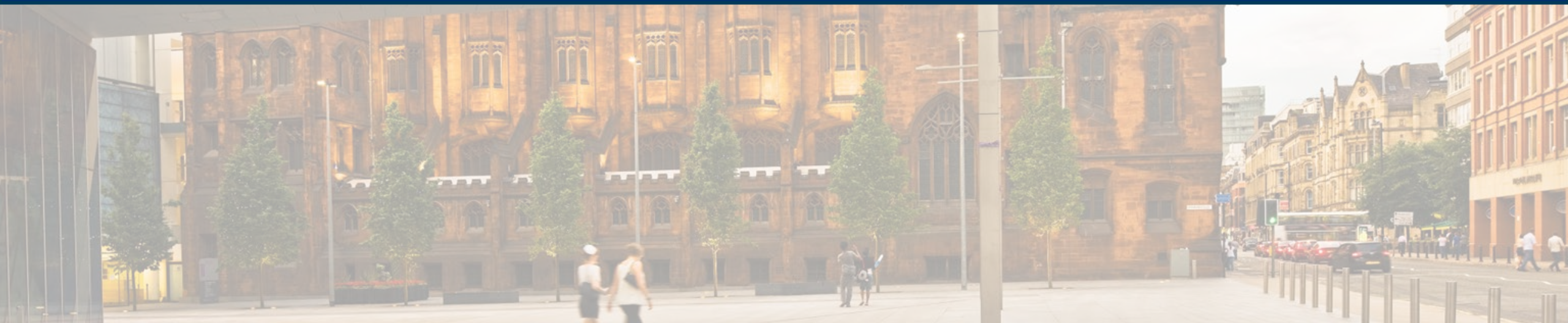
Q. Next, we will ask some questions specific to the librarians who work in public libraries. How important are each of the following roles that librarians can play at public libraries? Please rate each option. (n=1000)

Most agree that librarians should ensure collections reflect the needs of their communities. Most also believe librarians have the expertise and should have the *primary* responsibility for selecting materials.



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of public librarians? (n=1000)

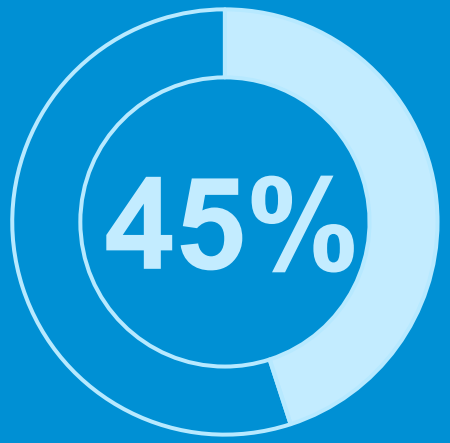
Support for Public Libraries



Summary: Most view libraries as essential—but underfunded



of Texans agree public libraries should be treated as an essential public and community service



of Texans said their public library is underfunded

Millennials, Gen X, and urban Texans are even more likely to support this sentiment

Gen Z: 84%
Millennial: 92%
Gen X: 92%
Boomer+:90%

Rural: 87%
Urban: 93%
Suburban: 91%

Ethnic or cultural minorities are more likely to say their public library is underfunded

56% of those that identify as an ethnic or cultural minority
42% of non-minorities

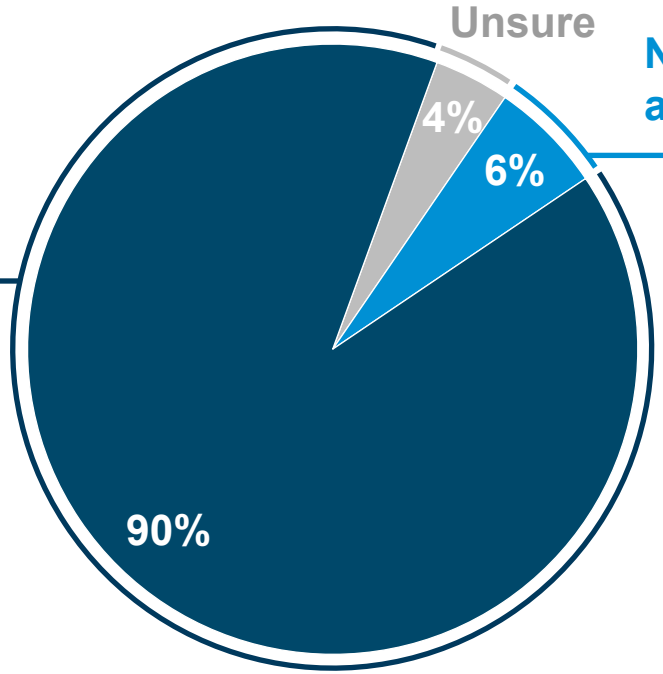
9-in-10 Texans said public libraries should be treated as an essential public and community service, especially Millennials, Gen X, and Urbanites.

Yes: Public libraries should be treated as an essential public and community service

Parents: 91%
Non-parents: 89%

Gen Z: 84%
Millennial: 92%
Gen X: 92%
Boomer+:90%

Rural: 87%
Urban: 93%
Suburban: 91%



No: Public libraries should not be treated as an essential public and community service

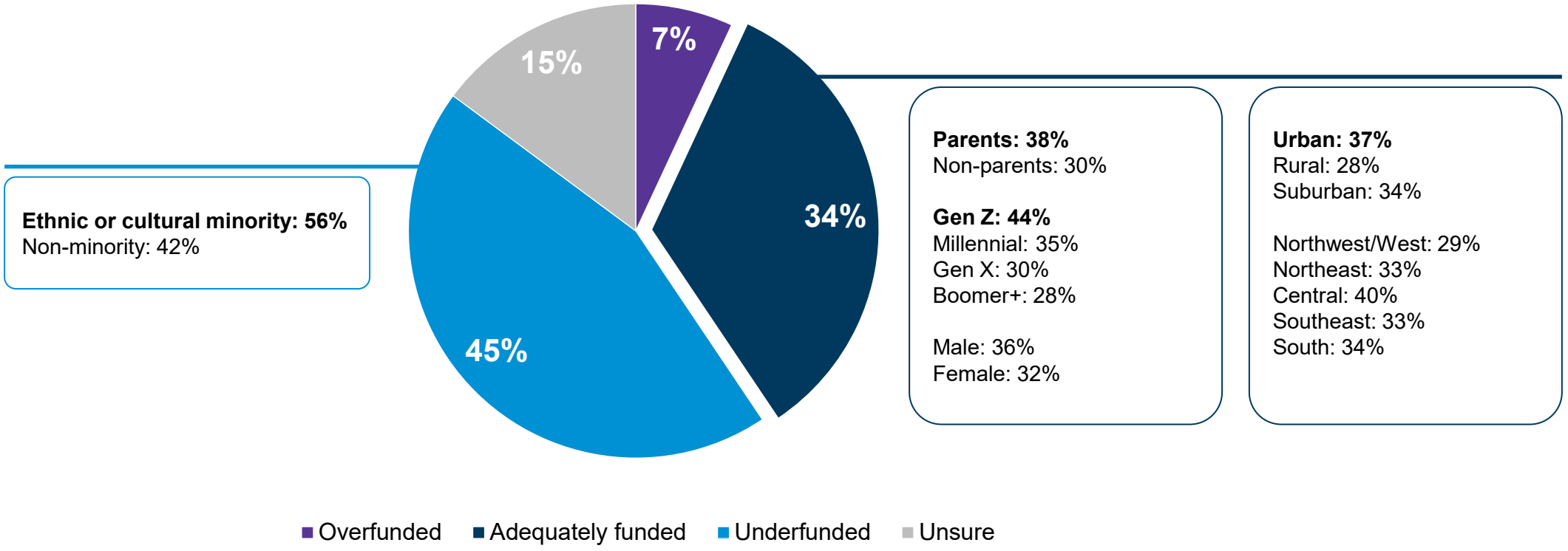
Parents: 4%
Non-parents: 7%

Gen Z: 11%
Millennial: 4%
Gen X: 4%
Boomer+:6%

Rural: 7%
Urban: 5%
Suburban: 4%

Q. In your opinion, should public libraries be treated as an essential public and community service? (n=1000)

A plurality of Texans (45%) feel their local public library is underfunded; only 7% believe their public library is overfunded.



Ethnic or cultural minority: 56%
Non-minority: 42%

Parents: 38%
Non-parents: 30%

Gen Z: 44%
Millennial: 35%
Gen X: 30%
Boomer+: 28%

Male: 36%
Female: 32%

Urban: 37%
Rural: 28%
Suburban: 34%

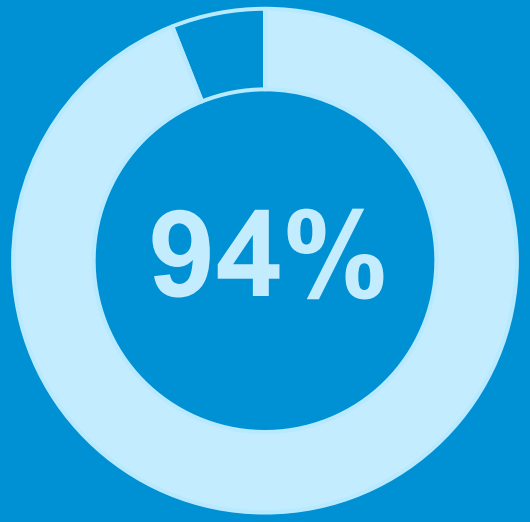
Northwest/West: 29%
Northeast: 33%
Central: 40%
Southeast: 33%
South: 34%

Q. Do you believe your public library is [ROTATE] overfunded, adequately funded, or underfunded? (n=1000)

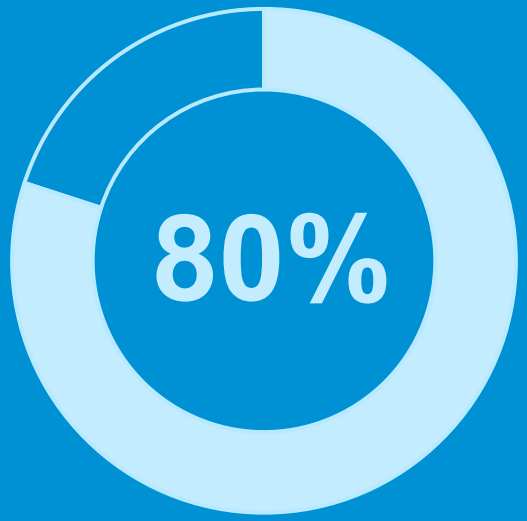
Attitudes Towards Censorship



Summary: Texans expect libraries to provide access to a broad range of materials

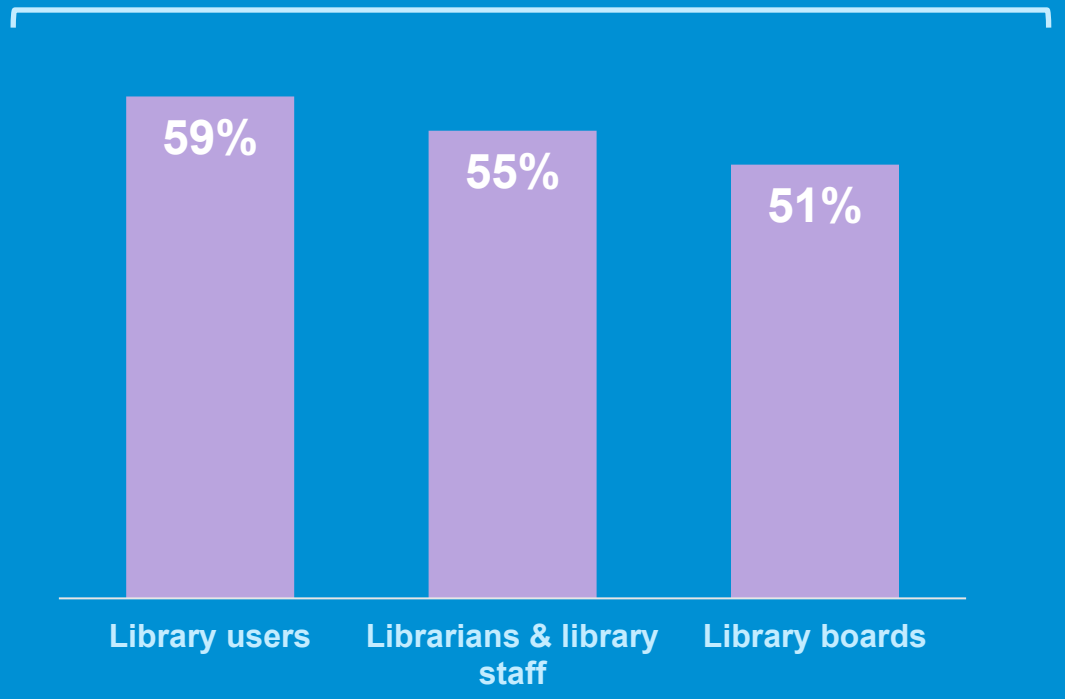


of Texans believe it is important for libraries to provide access to a broad range of information and ideas.

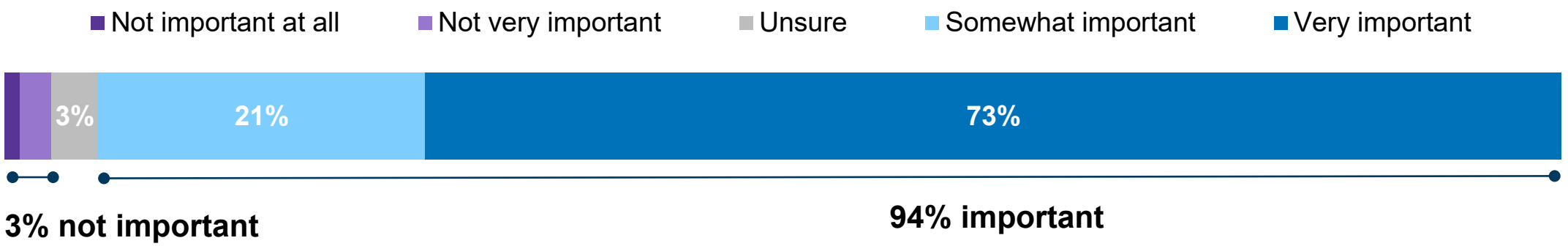


of Texans agree libraries should offer materials even if some community members strongly disapprove.

Most selected as who should have input regarding what materials are included in libraries:



9-in-10 Texans (94%) consider it important for libraries to provide access to a broad range of information and ideas in books and materials.



Parents: 94%
Non-parents: 94%

Gen Z: 88%
Millennial: 93%
Gen X: 96%
Boomer+: 96%

Rural: 94%
Urban: 95%
Suburban: 94%

Registered voter: 96%
Not registered: 86%

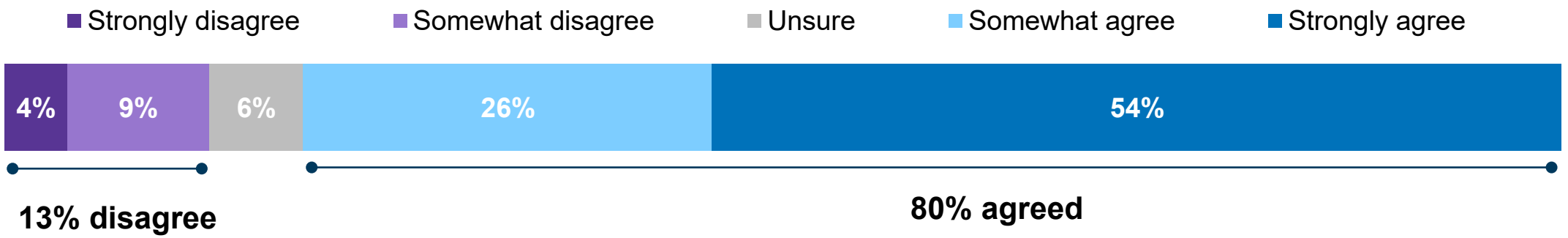
Lib.: 94%
Mod.: 96%
Cons.: 94%

Ethnic or cultural minority: 98%
Non-minority: 93%

Q. How important is it for public libraries to provide access to a broad range of information and ideas in books and materials? (n=1000)

8-in-10 Texans, regardless of their age, parental status, or where they live, agree that a public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove.

"A public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove of them"



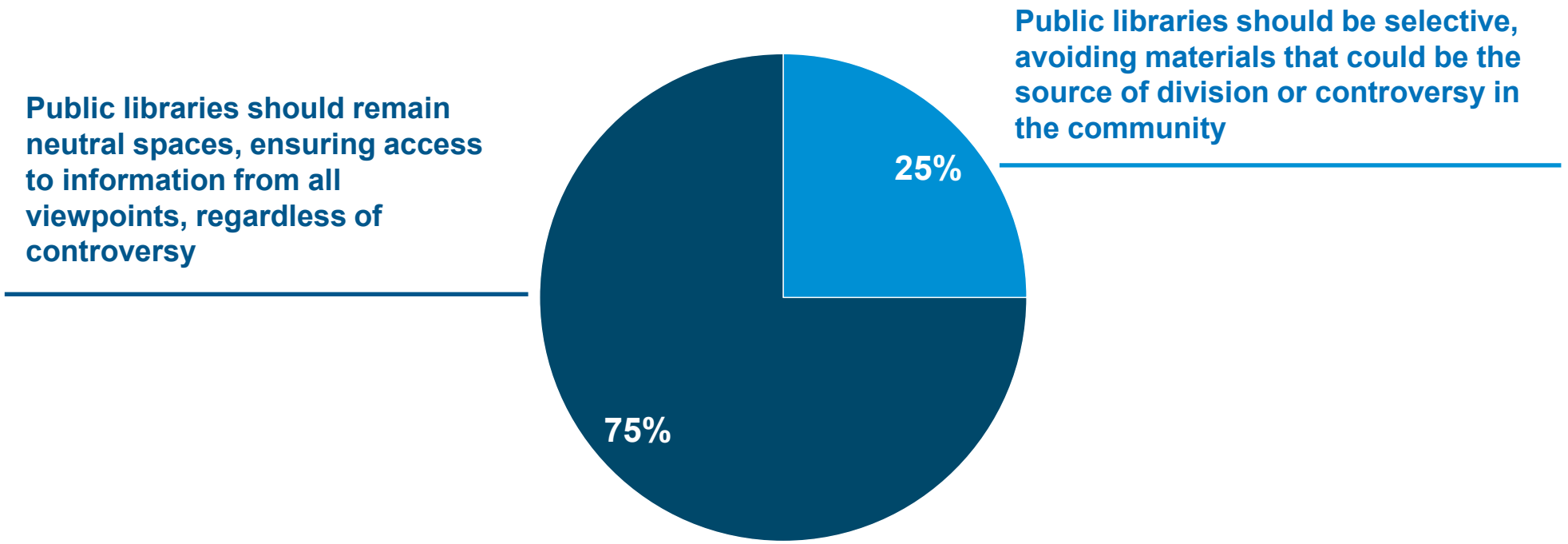
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree: "A public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove of them." (n=1000)

Texans are largely aware of some degree of efforts to censor or restrict access to materials in Texas libraries.

	Total	Urban	Rural	Suburban	Parent	Non-parent	Library user	Non-user
NET: Awareness of efforts at any level	61%	**64%**	45%	**63%**	66%	57%	**66%**	41%
NET: Awareness of local level- OR state-level efforts	56%	**62%**	42%	**58%**	**60%**	53%	**61%**	34%
Aware of local level efforts in my community	37%	**44%**	29%	34%	**44%**	32%	**42%**	16%
Aware of state-level legislation, policies, or initiatives	36%	**37%**	26%	**41%**	37%	35%	**38%**	26%
Aware of federal-level legislation, policies, or initiatives	21%	18%	19%	21%	20%	21%	21%	20%
Unaware	39%	36%	**55%**	37%	34%	**43%**	34%	**59%**

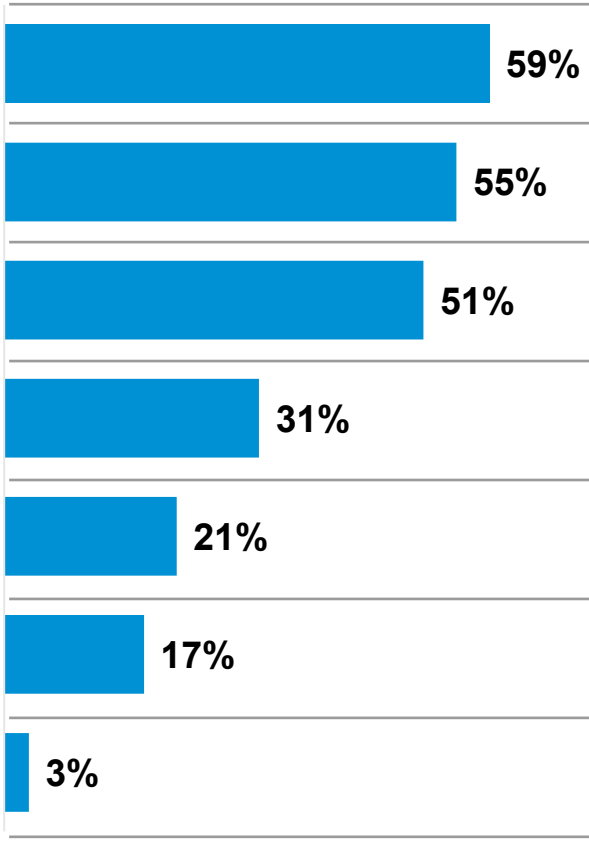
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree: “A public library should offer reading materials and information even if some community members strongly disapprove of them.” (n=1000)

3-in-4 Texans (75%) agree that public libraries should remain neutral spaces and ensure access to information from all viewpoints.



Q. Which one of the following two statements about public libraries do you agree with most? (n=1000)

Holistically, Texans feel that experts (librarians and staff, Library Boards) and library users should have input into library acquisitions, more so than elected officials.



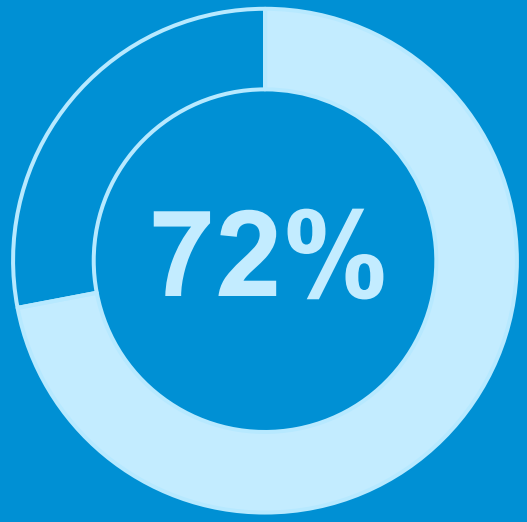
		Lib.	Mod.	Cons.	Urban	Rural	Suburban
People who use libraries	**59%**	59%	58%	58%	57%	62%	60%
Professional librarians and library staff	**55%**	57%	58%	55%	53%	53%	**62%**
Library boards	**51%**	52%	50%	55%	52%	48%	56%
City council or local elected officials	**31%**	25%	29%	**38%**	34%	29%	29%
State legislators	**21%**	11%	**21%**	**30%**	22%	23%	20%
The Governor	**17%**	11%	**18%**	**21%**	18%	15%	18%
Other	**3%**	4%	2%	**3%**	4%	1%	3%

Q. In Texas, who do you think should provide input into the decision-making around what materials are included in public libraries? Select all that apply. (n=1000)

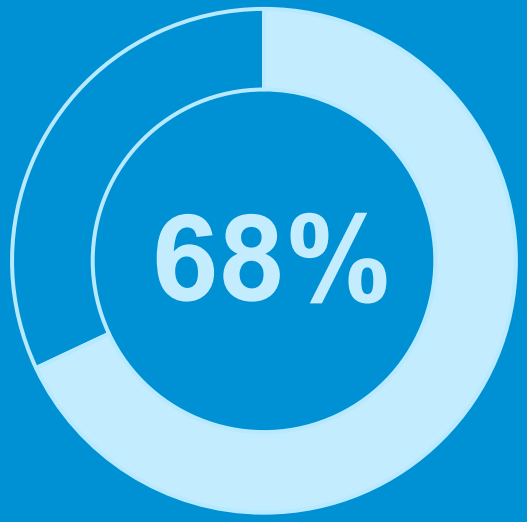
Future Needs and Expectations



Summary: Texans have a forward-looking perspective on libraries

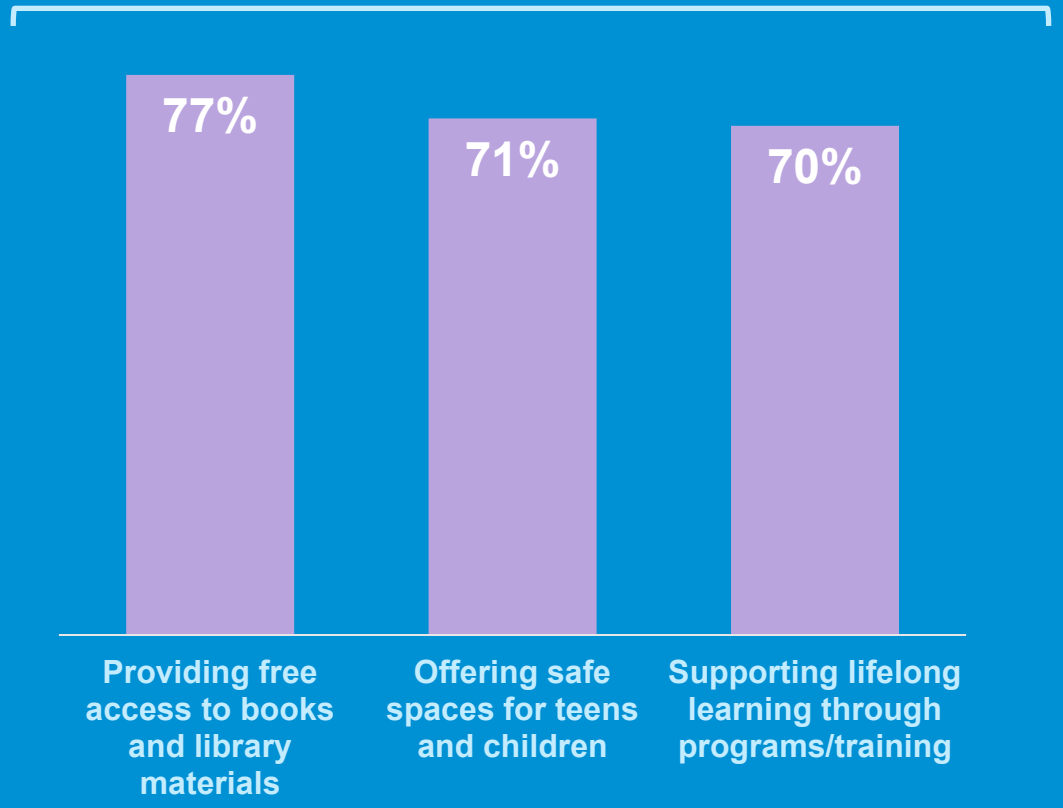


of Texans believe libraries are as relevant or more relevant now compared to the past.

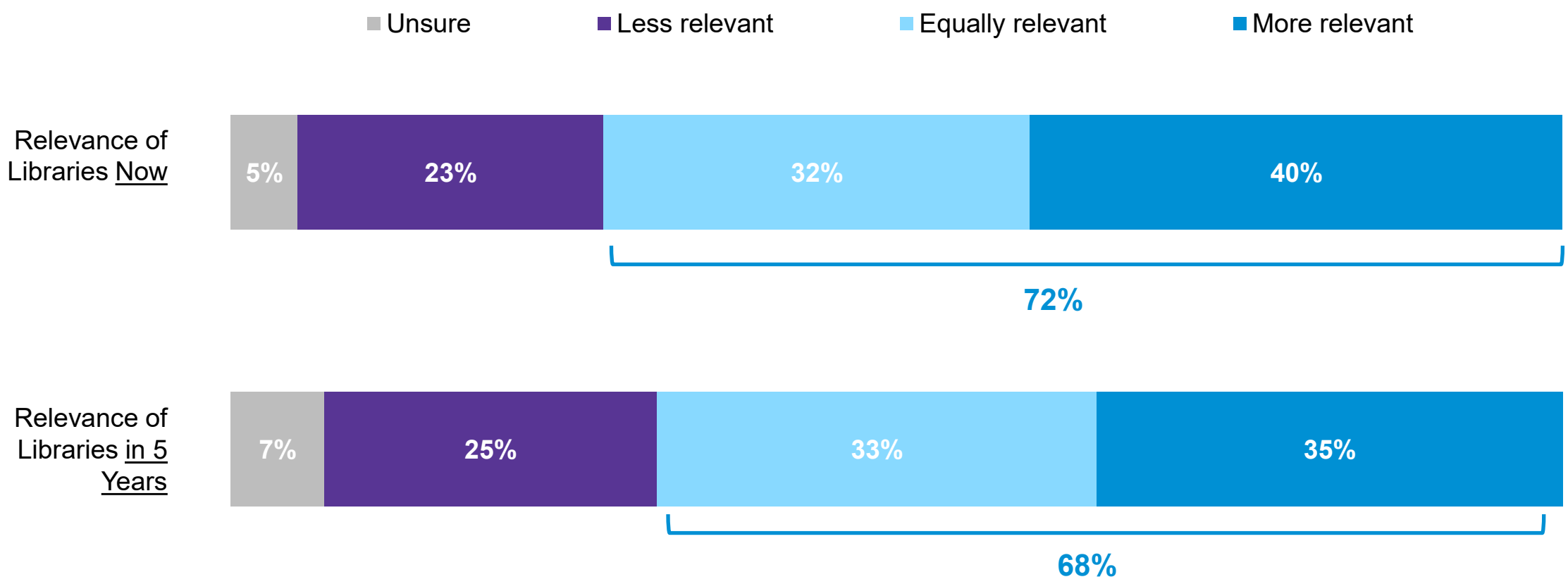


of Texans expect public libraries to be as relevant or more relevant in the future compared to today.

Most selected “high priority” services and programs to meet changing community needs:

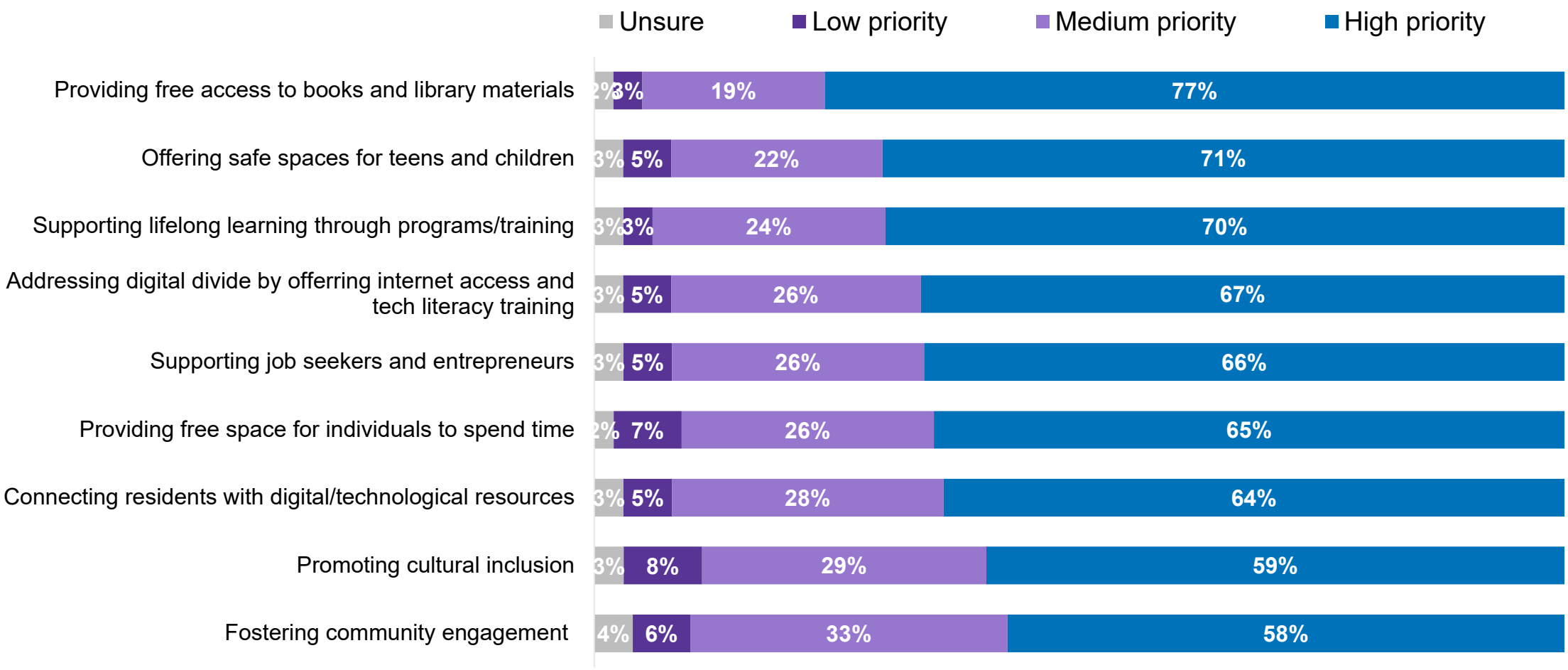


Texans see public libraries having timeless value, with three-quarters saying they are as or more relevant now, and a third predicting they will be even more relevant in the future.



Q. Thinking about today, do you believe public libraries are more relevant, less relevant, or equally relevant in your community compared to the past? (n=1000)

Free access is the highest priority for libraries to focus on, along with providing space for younger generations, supporting lifelong learning, and bridging the digital divide.



Q. How high of a priority are each of the following services or programs public libraries can provide to meet changing community needs? (n=1000)

Q & A

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