

These “Community Questions” are specifically NOT about your library but are about the needs and desires of the people in your community (who may or may not be using the library currently).

### How to use these questions:

1. Select three to four questions. When selecting questions, try to have a balance of personal views/needs and community views/needs. Remember, the more questions you select, the more work there will be down the line to transcribe and categorize.
2. Find a **public area** (not just in the library necessarily) to post the first question and provide pens and sticky notes for visitors to write their answers and post them. It is okay to remove answers that are fully inappropriate (due to language, for example) but don't censor topics if at all possible – (just about) anything is fair game.
3. Leave each question up for at least a week or until the responses have noticeably slowed down.
4. Repeat for the remaining two or three questions. (If you find that one question doesn't solicit very many responses, feel free to pick another question to replace it).
5. Additional/alternative ideas:

You can distribute all (three or four) questions in a single survey; one director was able to distribute the survey through two or three teachers at their small school, for example, and received great feedback from the students.

You can post the questions on a large sheet from a “sticky pad” or on a poster sheet on an easel in areas throughout the community (or bring early to community meetings you attend and let people answer them before and after the meeting).

If you have a table or booth at a community event, you can place the question up above/behind and use butcher paper on the table where people can write their answers.

If a significant number within your community speak a language other than English, try to get the survey translated and out to those community members; perhaps through appropriate local community or service organizations.

Ask one question a week on social media.

Ask all questions on an online survey.

Send out stamped, self-addressed postcards (for example, four postcards, one question each; two postcards, two questions each; one postcard all four questions). If going this route, you may want to investigate [Every Door Direct Mail](#) service or if you can include

the postcard in the city's mailing (e.g. utility bills or similar).

**When using the above approaches, make sure to provide just enough context but don't stress the "library" aspect too much!**

6. Transcribe each question and all the answers (edit only for clarity if absolutely necessary). Please use Word and **not** Excel to record/transcribe answers for each of the questions.
7. The transcriptions will be used as a staff activity during the staff planning meeting – they will look over the answers for each question and group them into broad topics. Those broad topics are then used to help staff (and later, stakeholders) to prioritize the 18 public library service responses.

**Possible Questions:**

- One thing I wish I knew more about is...
- What do you value most about our community? - LIBRARY STAFF SELECTED
- Why do you live in [City]?
- What's on your bucket list?
- What one thing would make your life easier? - LIBRARY STAFF SELECTED
- What one thing would make our community better? - LIBRARY STAFF SELECTED
- What is preventing our community from being better?
- How do you spend your time? - LIBRARY STAFF SELECTED
- How do you spend your money?
- What do people worry about? (What do you worry about?)
- What do people dream about? (What are your hopes and dreams?)
- What is your favorite thing about the community? - LIBRARY STAFF ADDED

You are not limited to these specific questions. The primary characteristics of all these questions is they are about **people's lives / needs / desires and are very broad**. Do NOT ask questions about the library! ☒