

2016 NEW MEXICO LIBRARIES ASSESSMENT



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INTRODUCTION

In early 2016, the New Mexico Library Foundation commissioned this study to achieve two goals:

- To gather information and data that will identify the current state of the New Mexico public, tribal, school, academic, community and government library sectors.
- To gather information and data on the various New Mexico library sectors in terms of services, funding, collections, staffing, technology, education, collaboration opportunities, other needs and achievements.

Penny Hummel Consulting of Portland, Oregon was hired to address these goals and to prepare the current assessment report. To explore the research questions, several different methods were utilized:

Focus groups were conducted at three locations across the state from May 9th through 12th, 2016 to address the need for geographically diverse input and to provide multiple opportunities for face-to-face participation. Sites included a public library (Las Cruces), a school library (Albuquerque) and an academic library (Farmington). These focus groups were limited to directors of all types of libraries, including solo librarians in a school setting. In total, there were 37 participants, including 12 public librarians, two tribal librarians, two special librarians, one elementary school

librarian, four middle school librarians, six high school librarians, one private high school librarian, three community college librarians and six university librarians. (Focus group questions are included in Appendix B.)

Community conversations were held at public libraries in Las Cruces, Albuquerque and Farmington from May 9th through 12th, 2016 to provide the general public with the opportunity to share their thoughts about New Mexico libraries. These attracted a total of 26 participants. (Community conversation questions are included in Appendix B.)

INTRODUCTION

An **online survey** solicited input from New Mexico library directors of all types, including solo librarians in a school or special library setting. Available from May 3rd through 24th, 2016, the survey was designed and analyzed by Penny Hummel with support from the Survey Research Lab at Portland State University, utilizing Qualtrics software. Content for the 20-30-minute survey expanded upon the questions identified for this needs assessment. Library directors who attended focus groups were also encouraged to fill out the survey. The survey received 269 responses, including the participation of 67% of New Mexico's 39 academic libraries, 83% of its 18 tribal libraries and 84% of its 75 public libraries. 147 responses were from school staff or librarians representing 19 school districts, one pueblo school and four charter or private schools. Representatives of 12 special libraries also provided input. All New Mexico counties were represented by at least one library in the survey with the exception of Catron, Harding and Mora counties. (Of these three, only Catron County has a public library.) (Survey questions are included in Appendix C and an overall breakdown of responses (with respect to types of libraries and counties represented) can be found in Appendix D.)

The survey, focus groups and community conversations were publicized via library listservs, e-mail lists and social media channels managed by the New Mexico Library Foundation, the

New Mexico State Library, the New Mexico Library Association, NMCAL (New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries), NALSIG (the Native American Libraries Special Interest Group), ASL-SIG, (Advocacy for School Libraries Special Interest Group), Albuquerque Public Schools, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Special Libraries Association, and the New Mexico Humanities Council. We thank these partners for their invaluable support.

Finally, Penny Hummel Consulting explored existing information about New Mexico libraries, particularly in the context of national trends and statistics. Works consulted are listed in Appendix A.

Although all share a common purpose as libraries, the different types of New Mexico libraries vary substantially in myriad ways. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, data has been analyzed from several perspectives: as a whole, differentiated by type of library, and differentiated within each type of library as appropriate. Tribal libraries merit special attention in this area. Similar in mission and scope to public libraries, tribal libraries are in fact a sub-type of public libraries and are included in public library statistics gathered and maintained by the New Mexico State Library and the federal government. However, since the data revealed numerous differences between tribal libraries and public libraries, it is frequently shared separately in the results below.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Mexico's library landscape is unique, rich and diverse.

Reflecting the state's remarkable geography, history and demographics, New Mexico's libraries are a priceless asset, and include 93 public and tribal libraries, 39 academic libraries, school libraries serving 89 school districts and private schools, and special libraries.

Adequate funding is a critical issue for virtually all New Mexico libraries, because the existing funding mechanisms do not generate enough support.

Although New Mexico libraries benefit from an array of funding streams, including GO (general obligation bonds), the gross receipts tax, and the state's general fund, all have challenges and collectively they do not provide what is needed for libraries of all types to thrive. Increased support is needed from New Mexico's counties to assist existing public and tribal libraries in serving those in rural and unincorporated areas.

88% of New Mexico libraries reported shrinking or flat budgets in the last three years, yet 92% say their expenses have increased or stayed the same.

Each year, inflation eats away at library budgets, making it difficult for libraries to avoid cutting services. In the assessment, academic libraries most frequently reported decreases in funding, as well as increases in expenses.

Libraries work hard (often with limited resources) to provide relevant, high-quality collections that positively impact the lives of their patrons.

Only 11% of New Mexico libraries reported experiencing no challenges with their collections. About half reported having out-of-date and worn-out materials, as well as an inadequate supply of new items. Both print and digital materials remain popular, although all types of libraries report a significant increase in demand for digital materials. As the keepers of collections focusing on Southwest culture, history and people, New Mexico libraries play an essential role in preserving and sharing state heritage.

Limited or inadequate staffing frequently limits the ability of all types of New Mexico libraries to provide quality service.

Only 13% of New Mexico libraries reporting having no staffing issues. Top challenges include inadequate staffing to staff desks or provide timely service, conduct outreach or engage in marketing. Recruiting, retaining and training staff are also significant challenges.

Many New Mexico library directors lack the standard credential or credentials for managing their type of library. Only 68% of all school library directors surveyed reported being certified as teacher librarians, which is a critical issue given the demonstrated positive impact that certified teacher librarians have on student success. Within Bernalillo County, the percentage is 79%; outside of Bernalillo County, the percentage drops to 51%.

Libraries strive to bridge the digital divide and to keep up with advancing technology, but are held back by lack of broadband access, outdated hardware and limited e-resources.

Library technology provides essential access to the Internet, enhances the work of educators and supports jobseekers. However, due to the unavailability of high-speed connectivity in many areas of the state, 40% of New Mexico libraries reported that they do not offer broadband internet service. Similarly, 28% of New Mexico libraries report that they do not offer e-resources, and 25% report they provide services with computers more than five years old. Only 7% reported having no technology issues at their library.

For almost all New Mexico libraries, the quality of their facility or facilities hinders their ability to serve their communities.

95% of all New Mexico libraries report having one or more facilities issues, including lack of space for patron use, not enough space for collections and infrastructure issues. While 25% of New Mexico libraries reported having been built or renovated since 2010, another 27% were last improved prior to 1990.

To the extent that capacity allows, New Mexico libraries are active collaborators.

67% of New Mexico libraries indicated that collaboration with external entities increases the visibility of their libraries and increases their knowledge of the community, while over half said that such collaboration supports the work of other service providers, expands their reach to new or underserved audiences, or leverages additional resources.

At the statewide level, New Mexico library directors identified several issues and challenges, including formal cooperation, resource allocation, advocacy and testing in school libraries.

Compared to other U.S. states, New Mexico has a limited infrastructure for library resource sharing, such as shared catalogs or courier services, and some assessment participants questioned the current allocation of public library resources at the state level. Both library supporters and staff emphasize the need for sustained advocacy on behalf of New Mexico libraries. And, the frequent closure of school libraries for mandatory testing is having a negative effect across New Mexico.

Despite the many challenges they face, New Mexico libraries can take pride in their many achievements.

Although New Mexico's libraries are quite diverse, they share a common commitment to offering service that supports several key common values. 96% reported that their services support student success, 86% reported supporting lifelong learning and 64% indicated that their library preserves resources and cultural assets.

79% of New Mexico libraries reported that they had increased the quality of their collections in the last three years, 61% reported that their circulation had increased, and 56% said they had increased their annual number of library visits or expanded their collection. In the last five years, a significant number of New Mexico libraries have added new services, such as maker-spaces, support for job seekers, computer literacy training and library programming.

In addition, New Mexico voters consistently support local and statewide library measures, a strong indication of the perceived value of the state's libraries. In 2014, library GO bonds, which benefit academic, school, public and tribal libraries, passed by 62.9%.



FINDINGS

New Mexico's library landscape is unique, rich and diverse.

Picture a library in your imagination. Does it hold shelf after shelf of rare books that delineate a region's history and culture? Or do you see rows of computers, where people from your community are learning about technology, conducting a job search, or staying connected with friends and colleagues? Is it a school library where the small chairs and the helpful librarian instantly take you back to your childhood? Or, perhaps, a teen center, where adolescents are learning how to code in a collaborative setting? Do you see the extensive collections and the study carrels that speak of higher education? Or, are there toddlers sitting on the floor, clapping and singing during a story time?

All of these images—and many more—help define the broad range of institutions in New Mexico that call themselves libraries. Reflecting the state's unique geography, history and demographics, New Mexico's libraries are a priceless asset. They include:

- 93 public and tribal libraries, ranging in size from the Rio Abajo Community Library in La Joya, which serves 84 people, to the 18-branch Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Library, which serves a population of over 662,000. These libraries are operated by a

variety of institutions, including municipalities, counties, nonprofits and Native American tribes.

- 39 academic libraries, including research and regional universities, branch colleges, community colleges and private institutions.
- School libraries serving New Mexico's 89 school districts as well as charter and private schools.
- Special libraries with a deep focus on areas as diverse as history, the arts, the law and science.
- The New Mexico State Library, which in addition to its other responsibilities as a state agency, provides direct services to the blind and physically-handicapped, and to rural residents, who do not otherwise have public library access, via a books-by-mail service and three bookmobiles.

As service providers, New Mexico's libraries operate each day in a unique milieu. It all begins with geography: although New Mexico is the fifth largest state in the U.S., it ranks 45th in population density, which is concentrated in particular areas: half lies along the Rio Grande and its tributaries and one-third is in Bernalillo County alone.¹ Ethnic and linguistic diversity add more complexity to the

“It's a hard row to hoe in New Mexico.”

—public library patron attending community conversations

mix. According to data from the U.S. Census, New Mexico enjoys the highest percentage of Hispanics or Latinos of any U.S. State (48%),² compared to 17.6% in the U.S. as a whole.³ New Mexico also enjoys the third largest percentage of Native Americans or Alaska Natives of any U.S. state., who comprise 10.4% of its population⁴ and speak over half a dozen Native American languages.⁵

Finally, socioeconomic indicators point to notable aspects of New Mexico. Over 21% of New Mexico residents are identified in U.S. Census data as living in poverty, compared to the national average of just under 15%. With a 2014 median income of \$44,968, New Mexico is significantly below the national median income of \$53,482.⁶ Given factors such as these, it is not surprising that the 2016 KIDS COUNT Data Book compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation recently ranked New Mexico 49th out of 50 states in terms of supporting overall child well-being.⁷ Literacy statistics, which

are particularly relevant to libraries, tell a similar story. According to a study by the Milken Institute cited by the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy, 20% of New Mexicans age 16 and over have literacy skills at the lowest level measured, which indicates difficulty locating information in a newspaper article or checking a sales receipt. Statewide, 25% of adults 21 and over lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.⁸

In short, as a public library patron attending one of the assessment's community conversations said, "It's a hard row to hoe in New Mexico." Focus group participants shared their perceptions that in New Mexico, there is a general lack of understanding of how vibrant libraries are essential in making individuals and communities stronger. Within this context, New Mexico libraries of all types are striving to meet the needs of the people they serve and to communicate their value as broadly as possible.



Adequate funding is a critical issue for virtually all New Mexico libraries, because the existing funding mechanisms do not generate enough support.

Achieving adequate financial support has long been an important issue for New Mexico's libraries. As a 1985 statewide library needs assessment that gathered extensive input from opinion leaders, librarians and community members stated bluntly, "The major obstacle to statewide library cooperation is insufficient funding. Citizens and librarians alike felt too little was being spent on libraries today."⁹ More recently, a participant in the current study simply said, "New Mexico libraries are rich in everything except money." While this challenge is, to some extent, shared by libraries across the country, national data indicate that the issue is particularly acute in New Mexico. For example, according to 2013 data from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, New Mexico is 35th in the nation with

respect to average spending per capita on public libraries.¹⁰

Before exploring the issues surrounding library funding, it may be helpful to briefly visit the major types of funding that support New Mexico libraries:

- Presented every two years to the voters of New Mexico as a statewide ballot measure since 2002, GO (general obligation) bonds support academic, public, school and tribal libraries. The amount of GO bond funding is determined by the New Mexico Legislature. GO Bond grants are intended to supplement local support for libraries, and can only be used for collections, equipment and databases.
- Although property taxes are the primary means of support for public libraries in most other states, this is

"The major obstacle to statewide library cooperation is insufficient funding. Citizens and librarians alike felt too little was being spent on libraries today."

—1985 statewide library needs assessment

"New Mexico libraries are rich in everything except money."

—current assessment participant

not the case in New Mexico. Instead, a Gross Receipts Tax (a tax on sellers of goods and services) provides significant municipal (and more rarely, county) support for public libraries.

- The state's general fund provides primary support to public K-12 schools through the Public Education Department and to public colleges and universities via the Department of Higher Education. The extent to which school and academic libraries benefit from this funding is dependent upon budgeting choices made by their host institutions, and varies considerably from library to library.
- Also supported by the state's general fund and allocated by the legislature, the New Mexico State Library's Grants-In-Aid program provides support to New Mexico public and tribal libraries. Most receive a baseline grant, with some adjustment for size of population served.
- Tribal libraries also receive Tribal Libraries Program Grants from the New Mexico State Library to support operational expenses associated with delivery of library services.

In the survey, libraries were asked to provide a breakdown of their various sources of funding, which were then averaged within each type of library. Figure 1 shows this data. While libraries of the same type reported significant differences in their dependence upon different revenue streams, the overall picture provides a window into how different types of New Mexico libraries build their financial support. For most, the primary source of funding is their affiliated institution. Public libraries rely most heavily on municipal gross receipts tax revenues, which in a sense is also institutional funding as it is the largest source of general fund revenue for the cities of New Mexico.

FIGURE 1

Sources of funding	Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Host institution	81.5%	46.6%	2.5%	1.5%	51.0%
State GO bonds	7.0%	30.0%	15.0%	18.0%	
Gross receipts tax (GRT)		2.0%	40.0%		
City non GRT		2.5%	9.0%		
Tribe(s)		0.5%	1.0%	38.0%	
County		0.5%	7.0%	13.0%	
Local designated tax support		9.0%	2.0%		
State library aid for public libraries	1.5%	2.5%	5.5%	13.0%	
IMLS			1.0%	7.0%	
Competitive grants	.5%	1.0%	4.5%	10.0%	2.0%
Other	10.0%	8.0%	15.0%	1.0%	48.0%

GO Bonds are an unstable means of supporting a broad range of libraries.

As mentioned above, academic, public, tribal and school libraries all receive support from the statewide GO Bonds. However, as Figure 2 indicates, the dependence upon GO Bonds varies. Academic libraries reported (on average) that 7% of their budget was from GO Bonds, while public and tribal libraries reported averages of 15% and 18% respectively. According to survey results, school libraries are most dependent upon GO Bond funding, which comprises an average of 30% of their total budgets. As a funding mechanism that benefits a wide range of New Mexico libraries, GO Bonds provide essential support. However, in the focus groups and survey comments, library representatives detailed numerous challenges associated with GO Bond funding.

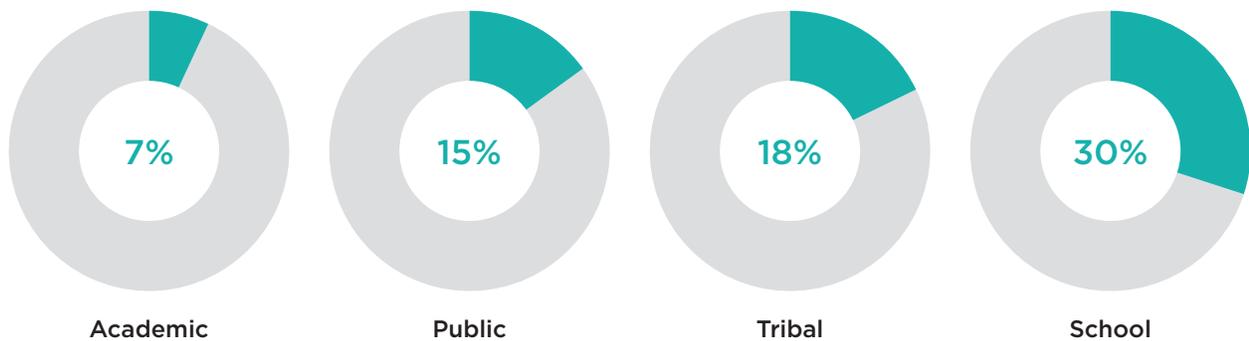
- In some cases, GO Bond funds provide no benefit to the New Mexico

libraries they are intended to support. Both school and academic librarians reported that receiving GO Bond funding can be complemented by a parallel reduction in institutional dollars, resulting in no net increase in the library’s overall budget. School librarians also noted that school districts can choose to spend all of their GO Bond funds on one school library, rather than spreading these resources more equitably.

- Despite the fact that library expenses increase each year, GO Bond funding is not adjusted for inflation each year, which results in diminished buying power.
- The legislature’s capacity to authorize GO Bonds is limited by the state’s overall GO Bond capacity, and is not a permanent source of funding. This is particularly precarious for New Mexico libraries since so many of them depend on GO Bond funding for basic operational support.

FIGURE 2

GO Bond Funding



“Because NM’s public and community libraries rely on their local government funds for funding, funding is one of the most important factors limiting the expansion of public library service.”

—1985 assessment of New Mexico’s public libraries commissioned by the New Mexico State Library

- Voters have no real say in the funding levels for GO Bonds, which often creates false expectations that the amount offered through the bonds is adequate to the library’s needs.
- Although thus far the statewide GO Bonds have always passed, it takes a great deal of effort by supporters, users and library staff (on personal time) to coordinate the advocacy campaign needed for success.

Reliance on the gross receipts tax creates numerous hardships for New Mexico’s public libraries.

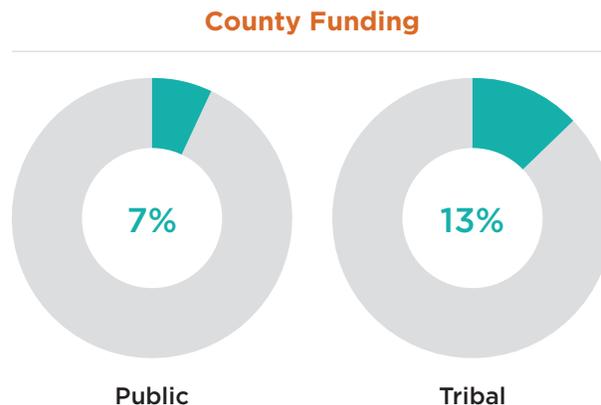
According to a 1985 assessment of New Mexico’s public libraries commissioned by the New Mexico State Library, “Because NM’s public and community libraries rely on their local government funds for funding, funding is one of the most important factors limiting the expansion of public library service.”¹¹ More than 30 years later, this is still true. Moreover, dependence on revenues from the highly volatile gross

receipts tax makes it almost impossible for public libraries to plan their expenditures strategically. In the focus groups, public library directors shared how they scan gross receipts tax spreadsheets from month to month, continually adjusting their spending in order to accommodate the inevitable ups and downs of their major source of funding. Others raised concerns about how larger trends in the state’s economy might affect their libraries. One survey respondent wrote: “due to the state’s 2013 repeal of the Hold Harmless payments¹², GRT revenue is expected to drop significantly over the next several years and we are very concerned about the impact this will have on library operations in the future.”

Increased support is needed from New Mexico’s counties to assist existing public and tribal libraries in serving those in rural and unincorporated areas.

In comparison to what is the norm in many other states, New Mexico’s

FIGURE 3



public libraries do not serve a specific geographical area that is defined by city or county limits, the boundaries of a library district, or cooperative inter-library agreements. Instead, the state's public libraries, most of which are operated by municipalities, serve anyone who wishes to use them, whether or not they are residents of their legal service area. As a service requirement associated with receiving state funding, this policy is also motivated by the laudable desire to serve those who would otherwise have no free access to a public library. However, the impact of this policy is that in many New Mexico communities, you will often find a municipal library that is largely funded by city dollars (via the gross receipts tax) also serving a much larger county population, which provides minimal or no financial support for the services provided to those outside of city limits. Tribal and nonprofit public libraries face the same issue. Figure 3 indicates the amount of county funding reported in the survey for both public and tribal libraries.

Without significant county support, the already-stretched operating budgets of New Mexico's public and tribal libraries are stretched even further. Within the library community, there is a strongly held perception that New Mexico counties need to do more to support the state's public libraries. One survey respondent wrote, "The current method of funding public libraries through municipal gross receipts while asking public libraries to pro-

vide service beyond the boundaries of the municipality does not provide sufficient revenue." Adds the 2010 University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) public library funding study, "Since municipal, tribal and non-profit libraries provide library services to many who live in unincorporated areas or in small incorporated towns without their own libraries, it is reasonable to ask whether counties might be persuaded to contribute more for this municipal-type service so important to people in more rural areas."¹³

Reliance on funding from the state's general fund creates economic instability for K-12 and academic libraries.

As the nation's sixth largest net supplier of energy,¹⁴ the state of New Mexico relies heavily on oil and gas tax revenues to fund state-supported services. When these revenues drop due to lower oil prices, the impact on New Mexico libraries, directly or indirectly, is significant. School and academic libraries are primarily funded by their host institutions, which in turn rely heavily on support provided by the state of New Mexico. Public and tribal libraries are also affected as the state library's Grants in Aid program is also funded by the legislature.

Philanthropy is not a significant source of funding for New Mexico libraries.

As Figure 4 demonstrates, compet-

"The current method of funding public libraries through municipal gross receipts while asking public libraries to provide service beyond the boundaries of the municipality does not provide sufficient revenue."
—survey respondent

“We have had modest success in receiving grants for particular programs, but desperately need general operating funds to keep the doors open.”

—survey participant

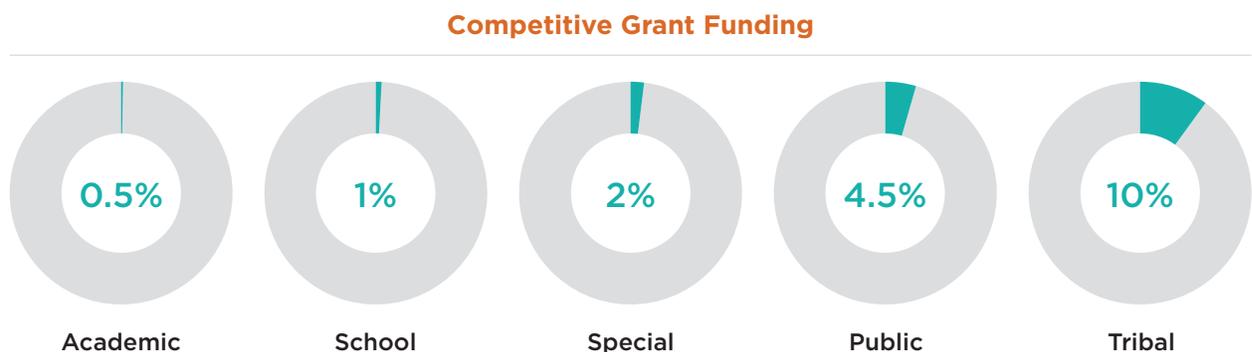
itive grant seeking by New Mexico libraries is limited, resulting in small reported percentages of funding that result from this revenue stream. Tribal libraries were the highest at 10%; the lowest were academic libraries, which reported an average of less than 1%. It stands to reason that the state’s 13 nonprofit public libraries, which tend to be small in size, rely more heavily on donations and grants than do those run by government entities, and this is reflected in the survey data. While public library survey respondents reported receiving an average of 4.5% of their operating budget from competitive grant making, for public libraries serving under 10,000 people, the proportion is 7%. Similarly, tribal libraries serving under 10,000 people reported receiving almost 6% of their support from competitive grant funds. According to the 2010 BBER public library funding study:

Generally speaking, both tribal and nonprofit libraries face similar funding challenges. For both library types, most are barely getting by year-to-year with so little assurance of future funding that

*planning beyond the current funding cycle is impossible. The directors of both types of libraries are often poorly paid (if at all) and spend exorbitant amounts of their time applying for or managing grants.*¹⁵

As one survey participant noted, even when grant seeking is successful, it is a mixed blessing: “We have had modest success in receiving grants for particular programs, but desperately need general operating funds to keep the doors open.” The state’s low per capita income and lack of potential corporate supporters (New Mexico is one of only seven states that lack the company headquarters of a Fortune 1000 company¹⁶) also have a dampening effect on the ability of libraries to cultivate private support beyond grant writing. As the 2014 study by BBER on the Creative Economy in New Mexico notes, “Corporate philanthropy in New Mexico is poorly developed...without a strong philanthropic community, arts organizations must depend on the patronage of private individuals; these donors tend to concentrate their giving on large organizations leaving smaller

FIGURE 4



organizations with few options.”¹⁷

In short, all the currently utilized funding mechanisms for New Mexico libraries have their limitations. The 2010 BBER study “Options for Funding Local Library Operations (Including Collections) in New Mexico” extensively explored a variety of means to improve support for public and tribal libraries, noting that in addition to increasing funding in existing channels (State library assistance, GO bonds, counties and municipalities), other options might include the establishment of library or quality of life districts.¹⁸ While it is beyond the scope of this report to analyze the political viability and efficacy of these options, it can generally be said that with respect to public libraries in other states, independent districts have been an effective way to allow voters the opportunity to create dedicated and permanent funding for libraries.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

New Mexico’s 39 academic libraries include a diverse range of educational institutions focused on postsecondary learning. In addition to private colleges, these libraries serve seven four-year public colleges and universities; ten two-year branch community colleges; seven two-year independent community colleges; and four tribal postsecondary institutions.

A key function of academic libraries is to nurture information literacy in the students they serve, which has been defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) as a set of abilities requiring individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”¹ Citing a 2016 ACRL study, the American Library Association’s 2016 report *The State of America’s Libraries* notes “a growing body of evidence demonstrating the positive contributions of academic libraries to student learning and success in five key areas:

- Improved information literacy competencies for first year students
- Increased student success in connection with library usage
- Documented student retention with library instruction
- Demonstrated library contributions to collaborative academic student support
- Enhanced student learning with library research consultation services.”²

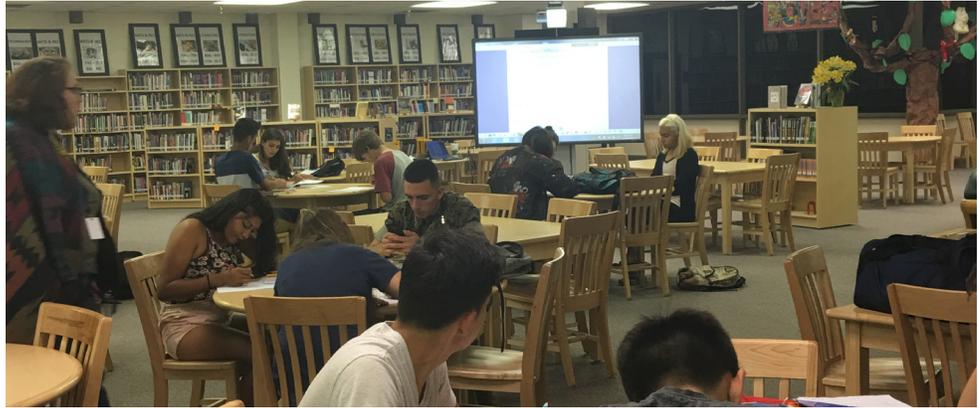
Similarly, a 2015 research project exploring the value of academic libraries concluded that colleges and universities that invest in instruction and support services such as libraries experience higher graduation rates.³

To maximize their impact, New Mexico’s academic libraries collaborate through the New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries (NMCAL), which encourages networking, facilitates resource sharing and encourages partnerships.

¹Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency>.

²Kathy Rosa ed., *The State of America’s Libraries: A Report from the American Library Association*, American Library Association, 2016, 7.

³Gregory A. Crawford, “The Academic Library and Student Retention and Graduation: An Exploratory Study,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 15, 2015, 41.



88% of New Mexico libraries reported shrinking or flat budgets in the last three years, yet 92% say their expenses have increased or stayed the same.

“It’s fair to say that our library is just treading water. For the past three years, our budget has either been flat or reduced; because our costs rise each year, we have been in a constant state of contraction and have been able to do and offer less.”

—comment on survey from academic librarian

Consumer Price Index data provided by the U.S. Department of Labor confirms that annual inflation has been the norm for at least a generation. Since 2013, inflation has risen 3.5%.¹⁹ For libraries with flat budgets, this translates into reduced buying power. So, although only 40% of New Mexico libraries reported funding decreases, an additional 48% experienced diminished buying power due to increased costs.

Figure 5 shows funding changes in the last three budget years, broken down by type of library. Over half of academic libraries (54%) reported a decrease in funding, followed by school libraries at 45%. With the exception of special libraries (only 17% reported budget decreases), at least one of each of the other types of libraries reported

experiencing a 41-50% cut. 11 school libraries (including six outside of Bernalillo County) reported budget cuts of 51-100%. Conversely, only 13% of all libraries surveyed reported experiencing a funding increase in the last three fiscal years. Over half of those indicated that the increase was 10% or less.

While library funding largely stays the same or decreases, expenses continue to rise. As shown in Figure 6, 92% of New Mexico libraries reported that their expenses have increased (50%) or stayed the same (42%). Again, academic libraries most frequently by far reported a budget squeeze, with 81% of them experiencing expense increases. Next were public libraries: 59% reported expense increases, as did 45% of school libraries. Only 8% of

FIGURE 5

Funding changes in the last three years (by percentage)

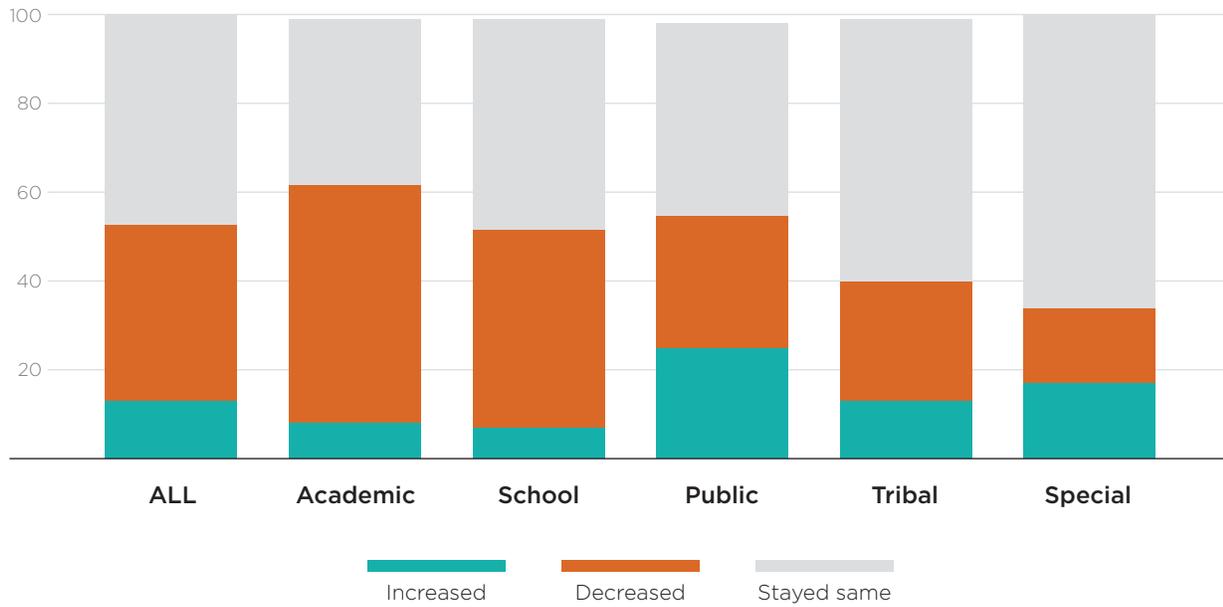
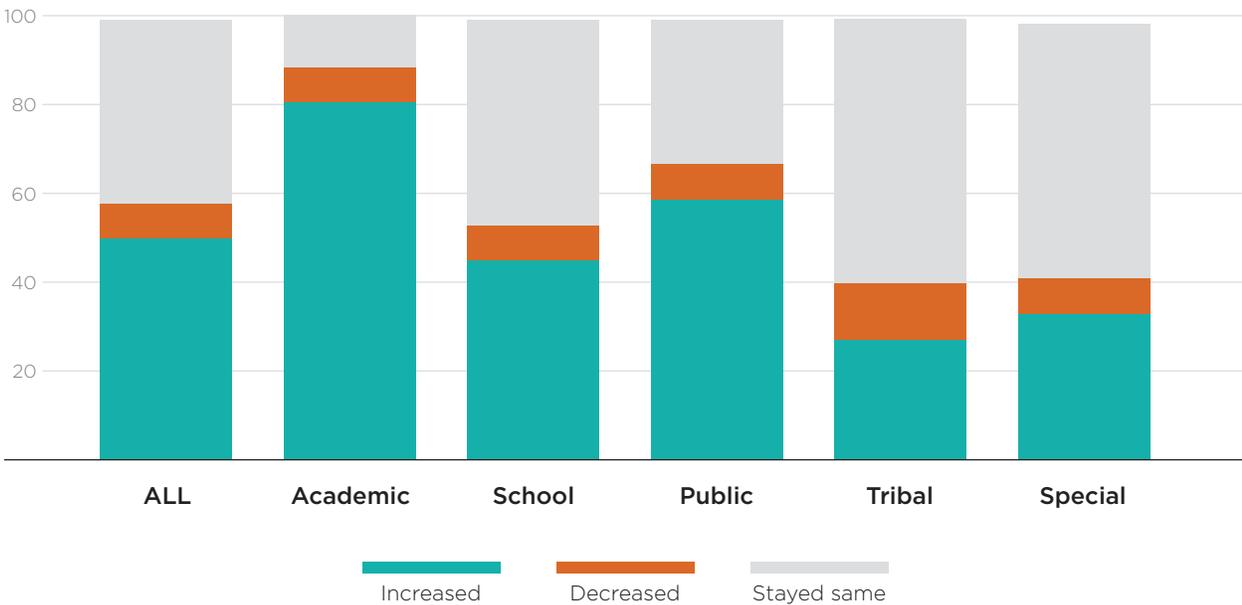


FIGURE 6

Percentage who reported changes in expenses in the last three years



“I do not receive nearly enough money by any means to keep the library collections current. I have many books that are close to 20 years old but I hang on to them because of a lack of a good budget to purchase new ones.”

—public librarian

survey respondents, representing 22 libraries, reported that their expenses had actually decreased.

The survey and focus groups elicited vigorous responses about shrinking budgets and their negative impact on library service. As an academic librarian commented in the survey: “It’s fair to say that our library is just treading water. For the past three years, our budget has either been flat or reduced; because our costs rise each year, we have been in a constant state of contraction and have been able to do and offer less.” Another added, “We will continue to respond to our students’ and faculty needs but we will have to provide possibly less (possibly no) public access to research resources and assistance.”

Similarly, one of New Mexico’s nationally regarded public libraries reported losing 25% of its budget in 2008, which significantly reduced investment in collections, programming and staffing. The result has been declining usage in areas where these significant cuts were taken. For tribal and public libraries with the most limited means, even the smallest reductions can be significant. In a focus group, the director of a tribal library shared how the library’s inability to pay its utility bill sometimes results in the lights literally being turned out.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

New Mexico’s special libraries are as unique as the collections they carefully cultivate. According to the New Mexico State Library’s online library directory¹, there are 122 special libraries in the state, which service a wide range of organizations, including but not limited to:

- Museums
- Churches and other religious institutions
- Cultural organizations
- Correctional facilities
- Hospitals, legal firms, laboratories and other businesses

Although they vary significantly in both size and scope, the focused collections of special libraries collectively enhance the knowledge and information available to New Mexico workers, residents and researchers.

¹“Directory of New Mexico Libraries,” New Mexico State Library, <http://www.nmstatelibrary.org/directory/>



Libraries work hard (often with limited resources) to provide relevant, high-quality collections that positively impact the lives of their patrons.

Although 21st century libraries are about so much more than the books and other materials, collections remain at the heart of what libraries are all about. Maintained not only in physical books, periodicals, DVDs, CDs, etc., but also made accessible online or in various downloadable formats, library collections must be relevant to the needs of the audiences and communities they serve. In a rapidly changing world, the currency of these materials is critical.

Only 11% of New Mexico libraries reported having no issues with their collections. Biggest challenges: out-of-date and worn-out materials, and an inadequate supply of new materials.

Figure 7 shows the top challenges libraries of all types face with their collections. The top challenge for both school and academic libraries was out-of-date or worn-out materials (selected by 69% of school libraries

and 54% of academic libraries). For special and tribal libraries, the most frequently reported challenge was having an inadequate supply of new items (chosen by 67% of special libraries and 53% of tribal libraries). 44% of public libraries selected having insufficient materials in digital formats, making that their biggest challenge.

Given that the collections budget is generally second only to library staffing with respect to the portion of overall funding it requires, issues with collections are inextricably tied with general funding issues. One public librarian wrote, “I do not receive nearly enough money by any means to keep the library collections current. I have many books that are close to 20 years old but I hang on to them because of a lack of a good budget to purchase new ones.” 20-year-old books might not seem old, until one considers that the mission of a public library includes providing up-to-date information on health, technology, political science and many

“We are a school with a dual-language program, but our bilingual budget is not adequate to meet the needs of dual language and English language learners. We need more materials in Spanish, particularly for those academic subjects taught in Spanish.”

—school librarian

“Print materials are still the highest demand of reading materials for students. Reading and learning from printed materials are essential for student learning.”

—survey respondent

other topics that are subject to frequent change. Adds a school librarian: “It would be nice to have the money to purchase all the items in a timely manner that the students are looking for.” For both academic and school libraries, limited ability to purchase current and relevant materials diminishes capacity to support the academic programs of their institution.

In the focus groups and survey, several public and school librarians also commented on the challenge of meeting the needs of New Mexico’s substantial Spanish-speaking community, both in terms of finding linguistically- and culturally-appropriate materials as well as being able to afford them. As one noted, “We are a school with a dual-language program, but our bilingual budget is not adequate to meet the needs of dual language and English language learners. We need more materials in Spanish, particularly for those academic subjects taught in

Spanish.” In addition, about a quarter of survey respondents indicated that not having enough staff who speak languages other than English was a challenge at their library.

85% of libraries report that their collection budgets have decreased or stayed the same in the last three years.

As with library budgets as a whole, funding that stays the same from year to year is essentially diminishing funding when inflation is taken into account. While 54% of respondents reported flat budgets, another 31% reported actual decreases, including 38% of academic libraries, 36% of school libraries, 22% of public libraries, 25% of special libraries and 0% of tribal libraries. Only 16% of respondents reported that their budgets had increased. Figure 8 shows the breakdown by type of library.

FIGURE 7

What challenges do your patrons experience with your library’s collection?	Percentage reporting this challenge
Out of date and worn out materials	55%
Inadequate supply of new items	45%
Long waits for in-demand items	33%
Not enough materials in digital formats	31%
Not enough materials in languages other than English	23%
Other	16%
None	11%

For academic libraries, whose collections place the largest emphasis on digital materials, managing flat budgets is particularly challenging because such materials are leased (not purchased) from outside vendors, so there is little cost flexibility. An academic librarian noted, “Our subscription-based resources (print journals and resource databases) increase in cost every year. If we are lucky our budgets remain flat from the previous year, but even then, because of the annual increase in subscription costs, we lose ground. Every year.” According to the 2016 periodicals price survey conducted by Library Journal, average periodical price increases in 2016 and 2017 are expected to be in the 5.5% to 6.5% range.²⁰

Both print and digital formats remain popular: over half of all

New Mexico libraries reported an increased demand for digital materials, and over a third reported increased demand for print and physical materials.

Figures 9 and 10 show percentage changes in demand for print/physical and digital materials. While demand for both online/digital and physical materials (including books as well as DVDs, CDs, etc.) varies among the different types of libraries, overall, both remain popular and are expected to remain so. This finding is consistent with national data. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, the vast majority of e-book readers also enjoy printed books and prefer reading in both formats.²¹

With respect to New Mexico libraries, the highest percentage of respondents who reported an increase in demand

“We are unable to meet e-book demand in our community at this point. Usage of these materials has soared by over 60% over the last year.”
—survey respondent

FIGURE 8

Percentage who reported changes in collection budget

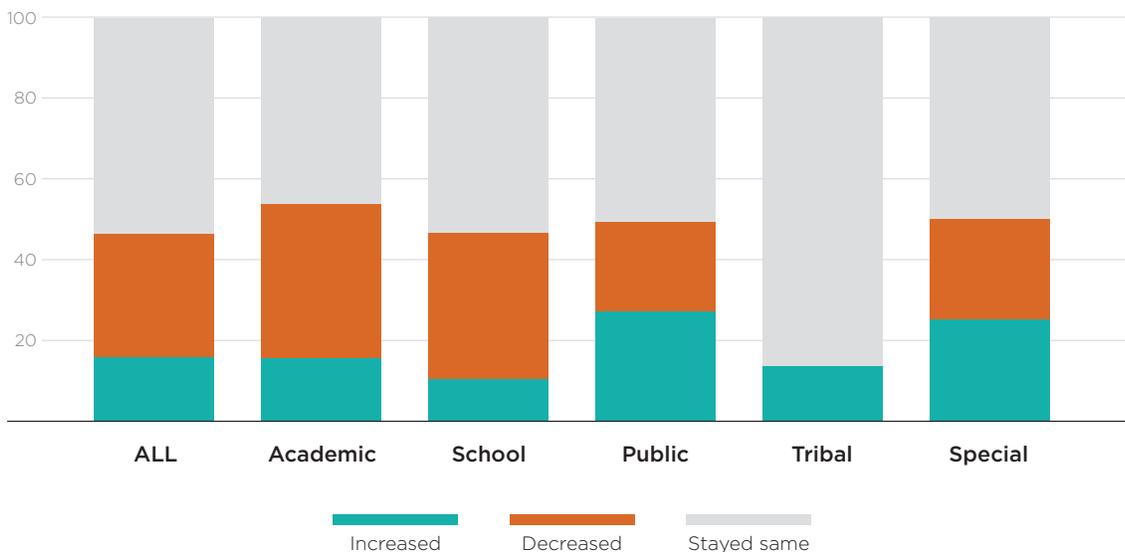


FIGURE 9 Percentage changes in demand for digital materials

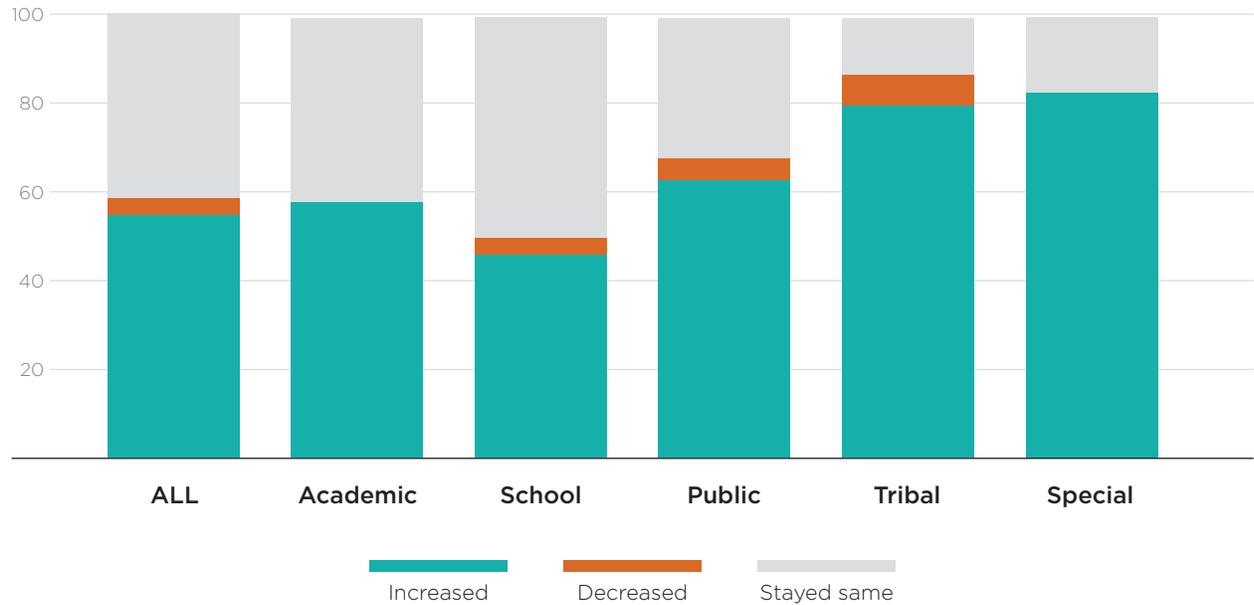
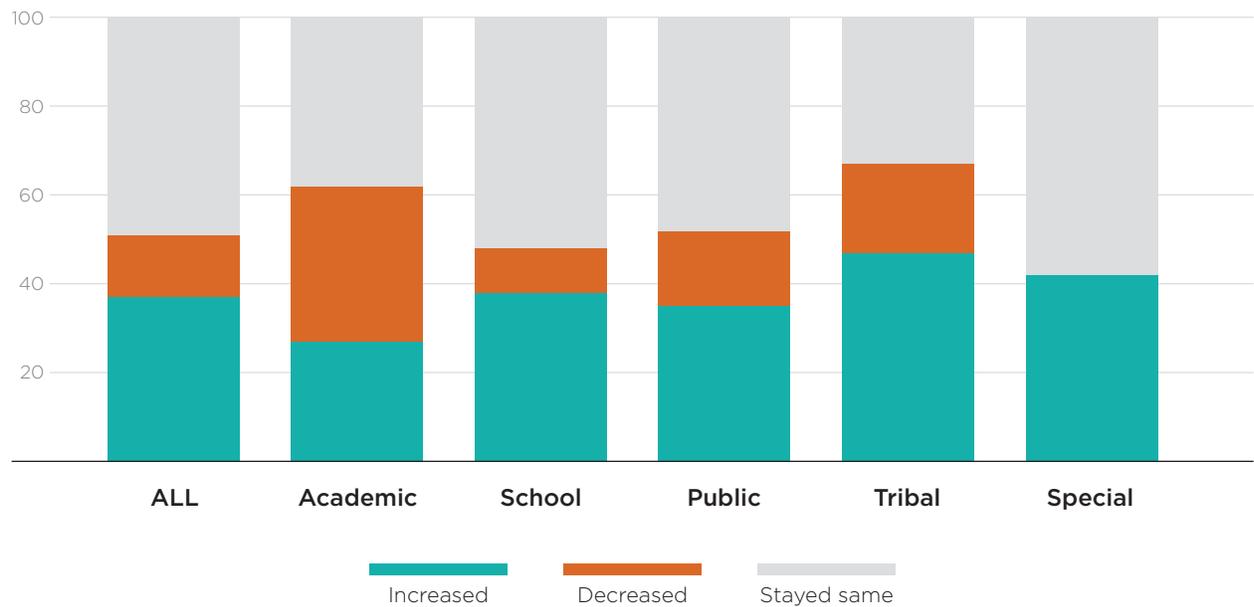


FIGURE 10 Percentage changes in demand for print and physical materials



for digital materials were special libraries (83%) and tribal libraries (80%). At the lowest (but still substantial) end, 46% of schools reported an increase in demand for digital materials. Conversely, academic libraries most frequently reported a decrease in demand for print materials.

Whether print or digital is preferred depends upon the learning or informational context. According to school librarians participating in the focus groups, their primary focus is still on print. As one wrote as a survey comment: “Print materials are still the highest demand of reading materials for students. Reading and learning from printed materials are essential for student learning.” Similarly, a special librarian shared, “I serve a mostly elderly population who not only don’t demand digital materials but are relieved that I have kept paper for them to access.”

At the other end of the spectrum are academic libraries, as well as some public libraries. One public library director reported “We are unable to meet e-book demand in our community at this point. Usage of these materials has soared by over 60% over the last year.” To some extent, emphasis on digital materials varies in New Mexico’s public libraries based on size of the library and the community being served. 85% of those serving populations of over 10,000 reported an increase in demand for digital materials, while only 53% of

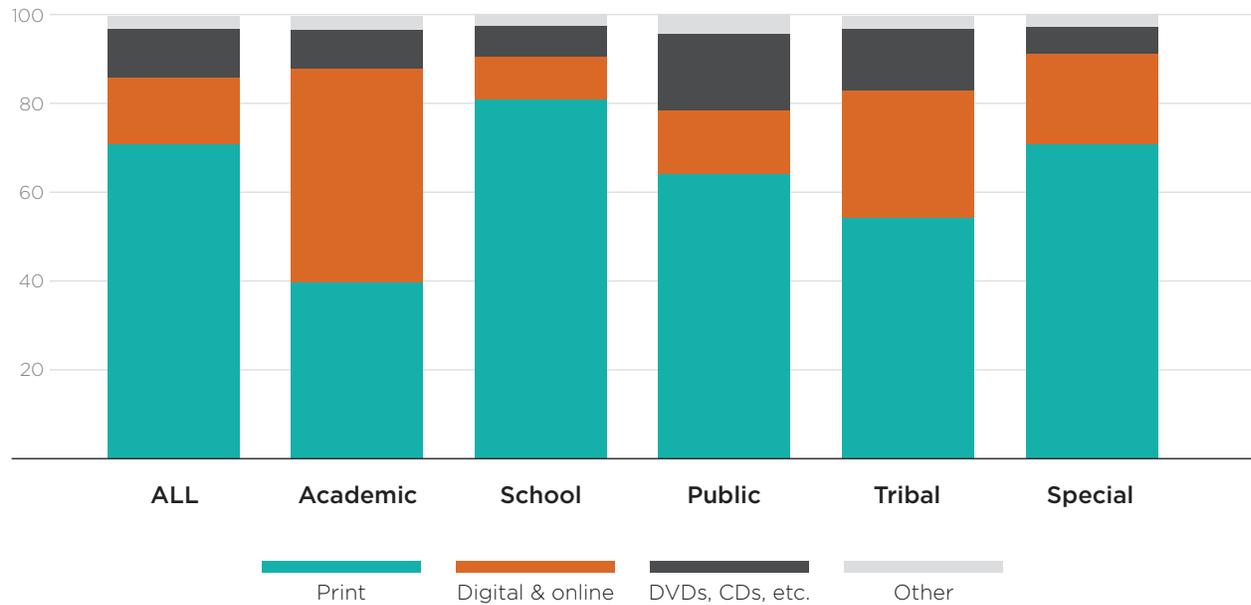
those serving under 10,000 people said the same. Conversely, only 20% of the larger public libraries reported an increase in demand for print materials, compared to 42% of smaller public libraries. It is interesting to note, however, that although almost all of New Mexico’s tribal libraries serve under 10,000 people, 80% reported an increase in demand for digital materials. According to one tribal librarian, this can be attributed to the slower start tribal libraries had in integrating digital materials into their collections; now that they are being offered, patron demand is catching up to that experienced by other libraries.

While New Mexico libraries still spend a large proportion of their budgets on print materials, digital materials are also a high priority.

Figure 11 indicates how different types of libraries allocate their collection budgets. Consistent with the differing demands they experience as described above, school libraries focus to the highest extent on print materials (81% of their budgets), while academic libraries are the only type of library that reported spending a higher percentage of budget (48%) on downloadable digital materials (e-books, databases, etc.) than on print (40%).

FIGURE 11

Percentage changes in demand for print and physical materials



As the keepers of collections focusing on Southwest culture, history and people, New Mexico libraries play an essential role in preserving and sharing state heritage.

As noted earlier, New Mexico is one of the U.S.’s most unusual states, enjoying a history and culture that shares some elements with other southwestern states but is, in other respects, unique. Given the state’s entirely appropriate emphasis on celebrating the many

remarkable aspects of the “Land of Enchantment,” it is worth noting that New Mexico libraries of all types play an important role in preserving and sharing this heritage. As a public librarian who had recently moved from another western state noted, the regionally-focused collections that can be found in the public, academic, tribal and special libraries of New Mexico are more extensive and prominent than what she observed in her previous home.



Limited or inadequate staffing frequently limits the ability of all types of New Mexico libraries to provide quality service.

Put simply, staff are the lifeblood of New Mexico libraries. As the seen and unseen hands that staff desks, organize and implement programming, select, order and shelve materials, teach and so much more, library staff are the ingredient that makes “all things library” possible. With limited resources in this arena, New Mexico library staff strive to be resourceful and ingenious. As one focus group participant said, “All of us wear many hats, and we try to work harder to go smarter.”

Only 13% of New Mexico libraries report having no issues with staffing.

Figure 12 shows the staffing-related challenges reported by New Mexico library directors. Top challenges include lack of capacity to provide ongoing services, engage in marketing and conduct outreach, as well as

addressing 21st century technology needs. Figure 13 shows the breakdown by type of library. For many libraries, making things work with a smaller-than-needed staff is a constant juggling act. Wrote one public library director: “We follow an incredibly complex schedule in order to keep the service desks staffed and the books shelved in a timely manner. Any deviation requires careful planning to keep the library functioning.” An academic library director said simply: “We have more student employees than we have staff. We need more staff.”

84% of libraries report that their staffing budget has decreased or stayed the same in the last three years; academic libraries report the highest percentage of decreased budgets.

As with collections, a budget that stays the same is a budget that is decreasing

“We follow an incredibly complex schedule in order to keep the service desks staffed and the books shelved in a timely manner. Any deviation requires careful planning to keep the library functioning.”

—public library director

“All of us wear many hats, and we try to work harder to go smarter.”

—focus group participant

when inflation is taken into account. 62% of libraries reported that their staffing budget had stayed the same in the last three fiscal years, while an additional 22% said it had decreased. In the focus groups, some directors noted that the major cuts they had recently experienced had occurred earlier, during the peak of the economic downturn. 38% of academic libraries reported experiencing a staffing budget decrease, the highest percentage of all types of libraries; second were special libraries at 33%. On the other end of the spectrum, 38% of public library directors reported an increase in their staffing budget, much higher than the average among all libraries of 16%. Much of this staffing budget increase was experienced by larger public libraries (serving over 10,000), where 55% reported staffing budget increases; 30% of public librar-

ies under 10,000 also reported such an increase.

Many New Mexico library directors lack the standard credential or credentials for managing their type of library.

One area that shows the wide variation among different types of libraries is the credentials of the library director. Figure 14 shows the different credentials held by librarians who responded to the survey, and their frequency across the different types of libraries.

- The Masters in Library or Library Information Science (MLS/MLIS) has historically been the credential that defines a professional librarian outside of a K-12 school setting. 100% of academic library directors reported having an MLS/MLIS, as did 83% of special library directors.

FIGURE 12

What challenges do your patrons experience with respect to staffing?	Percentage reporting this challenge
Not enough staff to conduct outreach	41%
Not enough staff to market the library's services	39%
Not enough people to staff desks or provide timely service	39%
Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century tech. needs	38%
Limited continuing education opportunities for staff	34%
Fewer open hours than desired by community	32%
Not enough credentialed staff	25%
Not enough staff who speak languages other than English	24%
Other	14%
None	13%

FIGURE 13

Top staffing challenges, by type of library

Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Not enough staff to market the library's services	Not enough people to staff service desks or provide timely service	Not enough staff to conduct outreach	Not enough staff to conduct outreach	Fewer open hours than desired by the community
Limited continuing education opportunities for staff	Limited continuing education opportunities for staff	Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century technology needs	Not enough staff to market the library's services	Limited continuing education opportunities for staff
Not enough staff to conduct outreach	Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century technology needs	Not enough staff to market the library's services	Not enough people to staff service desks or provide timely service	Not enough people to staff service desks or provide timely service
Fewer open hours than desired by the community	Not enough staff to conduct outreach	Fewer open hours than desired by the community	Not enough credentialed staff	Not enough staff to market the library's services
Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century technology needs	Not enough staff to market the library's services	Not enough people to staff service desks or provide timely service	Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century technology needs	Not enough staff with skills to address 21st century technology needs

FIGURE 14

Credentials of New Mexican library directors

	MLS/MLIS	Teacher library certification	State library certification
ALL	35%	41%	24%
Academic	100%	8%	0%
School	20%	68%	12%
Public	37%	10%	49%
Tribal	13%	7%	80%
Special	83%	0%	8%

“In our relatively isolated community, it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff without being able to offer competitive salaries.”

—survey respondent

“We don’t have paid staff because we don’t have sufficient funds to pay for much more than utilities and internet.”

—survey respondent

However, only 37% of New Mexico’s public library directors and 13% of tribal library directors possess it, due in part to the fact that the degree is currently not offered in New Mexico. For directors of public or tribal libraries serving under 10,000 people, the percentage of MLIS/MLS holders drops to 18%.

- Mandated by statute, State Library Certification for Public Library directors is offered at three different levels, depending upon the size of the public library’s service population. Overall, 49% of public (not including tribal) library directors and 80% of all tribal library directors reported having this credential. With respect to the directors of libraries serving under 10,000 people, 53% of public library directors and 83% of tribal library directors are certified.
- Considered the standard for K-12 librarians, Teacher Librarian Certification requires licensed Library Media Specialists to have teacher licensure as well as an added library endorsement and training. Slightly over two-thirds (68%) of the school library staff who responded to the study have this credential. Only 51% of those responding to the survey for school libraries outside of Bernalillo County indicated that they were licensed media specialists, compared to 79% within Bernalillo County.

Given this data, it is not surprising that 25% of New Mexico library directors

indicated that having too few credentialed staff was a challenge for their library.

Recruiting, retaining and training staff are all challenges for New Mexico libraries.

In the focus groups and survey comments, New Mexico librarians were explicit about the numerous challenges of attracting, retaining and developing the staff their libraries need. One said, “In our relatively isolated community, it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff without being able to offer competitive salaries.” This is particularly an issue with respect to competing with other states for MLS/MLIS credentialed librarians. According to May 2015 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mean annual wage of librarians in New Mexico is \$49,940, 18% lower than the national mean annual librarian wage (\$58,930).²²

Tight budgets often mean there is limited money for training, placing the burden on the personal finances of individual staff members. And, as an academic librarian shared, “There’s no incentive for staff to increase skills or pursue a degree in library-related fields.” Over 34% of survey respondents chose “limited continuing education opportunities for staff” as a challenge.

Public and school libraries are highly reliant on volunteers, which creates both opportunities and challenges.

Eight of the library directors who responded to the survey are actually volunteers, a testament to their strong commitment to their local (mostly public) libraries. As one said, “We don’t have paid staff because we don’t have sufficient funds to pay for much more than utilities and internet.” Beyond being in charge of the library, volunteers perform many functions. A school librarian reported “The volunteers raise money for the library programs and collections, man the circulation desk, host and organize evening reading events and pay for author/illustrator visits.” While an enormous blessing that can help a library keep its doors open, volunteers also have to be managed and can lack necessary skills. A public library director shared that “Our (mostly retired) volunteers are great; however, they lack any formal library science education, and are unfamiliar with technology.”

The lack of certified school librarians (also known as teacher librarians and library media specialists) remains a critical issue.

Trained and certified as both teachers and librarians, certified school librarians are uniquely qualified to enhance classroom learning in a K-12 setting. They play a critical role in teaching students essential 21st century information literacy skills and are instrumental in instilling a lifelong love of reading. Nationally, study after study confirms that the presence of a certified school librarian at a school library

has a direct effect on improving academic achievement regardless of socioeconomic status; a recent study by the Washington Library Media Association confirmed that there is a particularly high relationship between their presence and a school’s graduation rate.²³

The value of credentialed school librarians is not in question; however, in New Mexico as in many other areas of the country, when K-12 budgets get tight, library staffing frequently lands on the cutting board. Although the 2002 New Mexico study “How School Librarians Improve Outcomes for Children” reports that a strong school library has a minimum of one full-time librarian and one full-time aide²⁴, this is far from the reality across the state. One focus group participant (an academic librarian) expressed extreme dismay that, in her community, the school libraries were entirely shuttered because there was no one to staff them. In other communities, certified school librarians have been replaced by staff or volunteers without the relevant training or experience. Where such librarians still exist, they are often too thinly spread. As one survey respondent shared, “I am the only certified librarian in our district, which is not adequate at all.” Another noted, “...it is impossible to teach library classes, back to back, circulate materials, and manage a big collection with one staff member. Volunteers are helpful, but unreliable.”

“The volunteers raise money for the library programs and collections, man the circulation desk, host and organize evening reading events and pay for author/illustrator visits.”

—school librarian

“I am the only certified librarian in our district, which is not adequate at all.”

—survey respondent

In the focus groups, school librarians noted the lack of appropriate staffing at all levels: not enough administrative coordinators across the state, not enough librarians at the libraries, and not enough library aides. Given that the Public Education Department no longer has any staff focused on school libraries, others also noted a critical gap at the statewide level. While the dearth of school librarians is an issue currently receiving national attention, it is particularly important in New

Mexico, where school libraries can have a positive impact on challenging socioeconomic factors that limit student success. Hopefully, the 2015 passage of the national Every Student Succeeds Act, which recognizes school librarians as crucial to successful student outcomes, will help reverse the effects of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which precipitated the elimination of hundreds, if not thousands, of school libraries nationwide.

PUBLIC AND TRIBAL LIBRARIES

New Mexico is served by 93 public and tribal libraries, ranging in size from the Rio Abajo Community Library in La Joya, which serves 84 people, to the 18-branch Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Library, which serves a population of over 662,000. These libraries are operated by a variety of institutions, including municipalities, counties, nonprofits and Native American tribes. A few key FY2015 statistics from the New Mexico State Library about the state's public and tribal libraries:

- Number of annual visitors: 7.3 million
- Number of annual Internet sessions: 1.9 million
- Annual attendance at library programs: over 485,000¹

Because they serve everyone from all walks of life, public and tribal libraries offer an enormous range of programs and services. A few examples: jobseekers and small business owners find support and resources to become successful; infants develop the early literacy skills that will guide them to future school success; seniors learn how to use 21st century technology at their local library, while teens access homework help. The collections of public and tribal libraries reflect the informational, recreational and educational interests and needs of the diverse communities they serve. New Mexico's 18 tribal libraries also play a significant role in the enrichment of the state's diverse Native American communities by providing cultural programs, language programs and functioning as keepers of traditional knowledge and culture.

¹"FY15 Annual Report," New Mexico Public Library Statistics, New Mexico State Library, <http://www.nmstatelibrary.org/services-for-nm-libraries/public-library-statistics>.



Libraries strive to bridge the digital divide and to keep up with advancing technology, but are held back by lack of broadband access, outdated hardware and limited e-resources.

Although books are usually the first thing that comes to mind when the general public thinks about libraries, technology is equally essential in the 21st century. Utilized in a wide variety of applications, technology makes it possible for libraries to offer their communities a wide variety of core services, including:

Access to the Internet. According to Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding and Technology Access, a study by the American Library Association, in 62.1% of communities across the U.S., public libraries are the only provider of free public access to computers and the Internet.²⁵ Such access is critical in helping to bridge the digital divide between those with access to the Internet and those without.

Education. In the 21st century, technology is essential for student success,

providing access to information as well as the ability to complete assignments and interact with fellow classmates and teachers. Libraries also provide the technological tools to assist students in applying for college and financial aid.

Technology training. Libraries offer training on employment, access to health-related resources and training on how to use technology itself.

Access to E-government. Computer access to the government information and online is essential for those seeking support in areas such as voting, immigration, citizenship, and emergency benefits.

Employment support. Technology at the library enables residents of all ages to create resumes, search for jobs, complete online applications, and prepare for and undertake testing that leads to employment (such as procuring a food handler's license).

Figure 15 indicates the percentage of survey respondents representing New Mexico libraries who report offering their patrons a variety of different technology-related services, while Figure 16 breaks down by type of library those who do not offer core services such as broadband Internet access, Wi-Fi, patron computers and e-resources.

40% of New Mexico libraries report that they do not provide broadband internet access:

- Almost half (47%) of New Mexico’s school libraries
- One-third (32%) of New Mexico’s public libraries
- One-quarter (24%) of New Mexico’s academic libraries
- One-fifth (20%) of New Mexico’s tribal libraries

As use of the Internet has grown, so has the need for capacity and speed. According to the Federal Communication Commission’s 2010 National Broadband Plan,

Broadband is the great infrastructure challenge of the early 21st century. Like electricity a century ago, broadband is a foundation for economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness and a better way of life. It is enabling new industries and unlocking vast new possibilities for existing ones. It is changing how we educate children, deliver health, manage energy, ensure public safety, engage government, and access, organize and disseminate knowledge.²⁶

In New Mexico, where access to high-speed connectivity is not available in many parts of the state, it’s a critically important issue. According to the organization BroadbandNow, New Mexico

FIGURE 15

What technology-related services does your library offer? (select all that apply)	Percentage of respondents who selected this service
Computers for patron use	87%
Wi-Fi	84%
Electronic resources	72%
Broadband Internet access	60%
Other Internet access	17%
Laptops to check out	17%
Tablets to check out	17%
E-readers to check out	14%
Other	13%

ranks 37th in U.S. states in terms of broadband connectivity, with 24% of the state currently underserved.²⁷ As a recent article in *Enchantment*, the magazine of New Mexico’s rural electric cooperatives recently noted, “Much of New Mexico remains unplugged.”²⁸

The 2014 Information Policy and Access Center Digital Inclusion study reveals that the median download speed of New Mexico’s public libraries is half the national average. In the survey, some respondents reported that insufficient bandwidth limited the online searching that their patrons could do, while others noted that “due to the inadequacies of the internet providers located in this area, many patrons give up in frustration.” However, according to a recent article in the *Las Cruces Sun-News*, only one in three rural New Mexico residents can connect to the internet at home, leading many to utilize Wi-Fi

at schools and libraries not only when they are open, but also from adjacent parking lots when they are not.²⁹ In addition, Internet pricing across the state is inconsistent, causing users in remote areas to pay more for less bandwidth.

28% of New Mexico libraries do not offer e-resources, including:

- 40% of tribal libraries
- 27% of public libraries
- 25% of school libraries

While print materials remain popular, and there is a mistaken perception that “everything is available free on the Internet,” there is much essential and important research and information that is only accessible through the online databases, electronic periodicals and e-books that libraries offer. Reassuringly, survey results indicate that 100% of New Mexico’s academic libraries offer e-resources; the picture is less bright for tribal, public and

“Due to the inadequacies of the internet providers located in this area, many patrons give up in frustration.”

—survey respondent

FIGURE 16

Percentage of libraries not offering core technology services

	Broadband Internet access	Wi-Fi	Computers for patron use	E-resources
ALL	40%	16%	13%	28%
Academic	24%	0%	0%	0%
School	47%	21%	14%	25%
Public	32%	13%	10%	27%
Tribal	20%	7%	7%	40%
Special	50%	25%	42%	50%

“Our school is located in a high poverty area (100% of students receive free lunch). The library is oftentimes the only place where students can have reliable access to technology. The technology available is in high demand and does not ‘translate’ into home use (i.e. difficult to promote e-books when students do not own required devices or have internet at home).”
 —school librarian

school libraries. According to the IPAC 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey, New Mexico’s public libraries offer e-books at a lower rate (73%) than the national average (90%).³⁰

In some cases, use of e-resources is limited by larger factors. A school librarian shared the following: “Our school is located in a high poverty area (100% of students receive free lunch). The library is oftentimes the only place where students can have reliable access to technology. The technology available is in high demand and does not ‘translate’ into home use (i.e. difficult to promote e-books when students do not own required devices or have internet at home).”

While 79% of New Mexico libraries report that their technology budgets have decreased or remained the same in the last three years, 73% also report that demand has increased.

61% of survey respondents indicated that their technology budget had stayed the same in the last three fiscal years, while 21% indicated their budgets had increased. 99% indicated that demand for technology-related services at their library had stayed the same or increased.

25% of New Mexico libraries provide services with outdated computers that are five or more years old.

Figure 17 shows the age of the oldest patron computers that are available at each type of library, and Figure 18 shows the top technology challenges, which begin with aging hardware. In the survey, one school librarian wrote “Our library computers are more than 10 years old! They will not support PARCC (mandatory) testing.” An academic librarian shared “We have six computers in a library that needs to serve 500 students in all, and 28

FIGURE 17
Oldest patron computers

	3 - 4 years old	4 - 5 years old	More than 5 years old
ALL	17%	19%	25%
Academic	16%	20%	24%
School	17%	19%	29%
Public	21%	17%	24%
Tribal	13%	20%	7%
Special	8%	17%	25%

students per class period. And two of these computers are at least six years old.”

As more and more patrons bring their own devices (phones, tablets, e-readers and laptops), they need to be able to plug them in where they are sitting, a challenge that is universally shared by all types of libraries, which were largely not designed around this need.

Libraries of all types strive to keep up with rapidly advancing technology.

Recognizing their critical role as a locus for technology access in their communities, New Mexico libraries utilize the resources available to them to offer the best services that

they can. With respect to the need to embrace emerging technologies, directors from diverse types of libraries were eloquent in their articulation of the need to keep moving forward. From an academic librarian: “We have become technology intensive and the complexity of technology increases quickly.” A school librarian noted that “Library collections that support 21st century students must move beyond print resources to include Makerspace materials and resources, databases, digital audiobooks, eBooks and technology such as iPad apps as well as computers and digital devices.” Finally, a special librarian pointed out that utilizing technology is not a luxury but also essential in maintaining precious collections: “The greatest, most urgent

“We have six computers in a library that needs to serve 500 students in all, and 28 students per class period. And two of these computers are at least six years old.”

—academic librarian

FIGURE 18

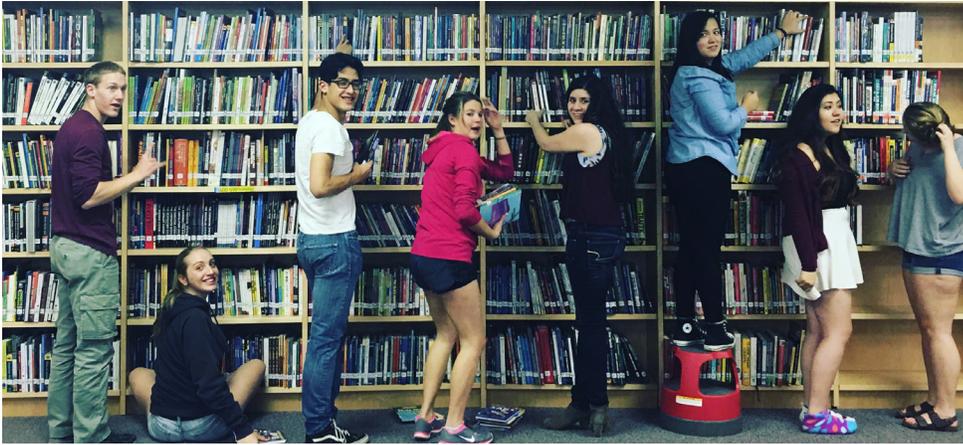
What challenges do your patrons experience with respect to technology?	Percentage of respondents who reported this challenge
Aging hardware	44%
Speed of Internet access	41%
Not enough places to plug in devices	41%
Not enough Internet computers	40%
Lack of tech training opportunities	38%
Not enough in-house IT support	35%
Limited continuing education opportunities for staff	29%
Inadequate Wi-Fi	28%
Other	13%
None	7%
Lack of Wi-Fi	6%

“The greatest, most urgent need is for digitization of unique resources in fragile media. Many are at or near end-of-life, and we have no staff, budget, equipment or IT support to preserve them.”

—special librarian

need is for digitization of unique resources in fragile media. Many are at or near end-of-life, and we have no staff, budget, equipment or IT support to preserve them.”

However, managing the technology they already have is an issue for many New Mexico libraries, as is staying on the forefront of developing technology. In the staff portion of the survey, 38% indicated that they considering having “not enough staff with the skills to address 21st century needs” to be a challenge; in the technology portion of the survey, the same percentage noted the lack of tech training opportunities accessible to them. Several survey respondents commented on the lack of IT support they currently receive, which hinders their ability to provide quality service. Noted one school librarian, “We have no quality IT support of the school site. Consequently, my lessons are often derailed because of lack of digital access.”



For almost all New Mexico libraries, the quality of their facility or facilities hinders their ability to serve their communities.

While libraries of all types have long been appreciated for their aesthetic beauty, in the 21st century having a well-functioning and well-designed facility is more important than ever, given the multiple activities that occur in the same space simultaneously. Yet, as a survey respondent noted, “Space is one our biggest challenges.”

95% of New Mexico libraries report having one or more facilities-related issues.

Figure 19 indicates the facilities-related challenges that New Mexico library directors report that their patrons experience. Not surprisingly, the top challenges all relate to how people actually use the library on a daily basis: not enough space for quiet study (52%), not enough plug-in outlets (52%) and not enough space for noise-producing activities (49%). Following those were challenges more related to management of the building

itself: not having enough space for collections (47%) infrastructure issues (46%). Figure 20 shows the top challenges by type of library.

While 25% of New Mexico libraries have been built or significantly renovated since 2010, 27% were last improved prior to 1990.

Figure 21 shows the percentages of timeframes during which New Mexico libraries have been built or renovated. Given that the early 1990s heralded the arrival of the World Wide Web, which revolutionized library services, it is notable that over one-fourth of New Mexico libraries were last improved prior to that era. The percentage varies by type of library: 42% (special), 33% (school), 26% (academic), 20% (public) and 14% (tribal).

At the other end of the spectrum, 57% of tribal libraries reported being built

FIGURE 19

What challenges do your patrons experience with the library facility or facilities?	Percentage of respondents who reported this challenge
Not enough space for quiet study	52%
Not enough outlets to plug in devices	52%
Not enough space for noise-producing activities	49%
Not enough space for collections	47%
Infrastructure issues (HVAC, plumbing, etc.)	45%
Not enough instructional space	38%
Outdated interior design or layout	37%
Not enough space for programming	33%
Not enough seating	31%
ADA compliance or other accessibility issues	18%
Other	18%
None	5%

FIGURE 20

Top 5 facilities challenges, by type of library

Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Not enough space for quiet study	Not enough outlets to plug in devices	Not enough space for quiet study	Not enough instructional space	Not enough space for collections
Not enough outlets to plug in devices	Infrastructure issues (integrity of building, HVAC, plumbing, etc.)	Not enough space for noise-producing activities	Not enough space for collections	Not enough space for quiet study
Not enough space for noise-producing activities	Not enough space for collections	Not enough space for collections	Not enough space for quiet study	Not enough seating
Infrastructure issues (integrity of building, HVAC, plumbing, etc.)	Not enough space for noise-producing activities	Infrastructure issues/Not enough instructional space	Not enough space for noise-producing activities	Not enough outlets to plug in devices
Not enough instructional space	Not enough space for quiet study	Not enough outlets to plug in devices	Not enough space for programming	Not enough space for programming

or renovated since 2010, compared to 25% (school and special), 19% (public) and 16% (academic), evidence that the 2012 GO Bonds that supported capital improvements to tribal libraries have had a positive impact. For many New Mexico libraries, facilities improvements are dependent upon capital outlay funds from the legislature.

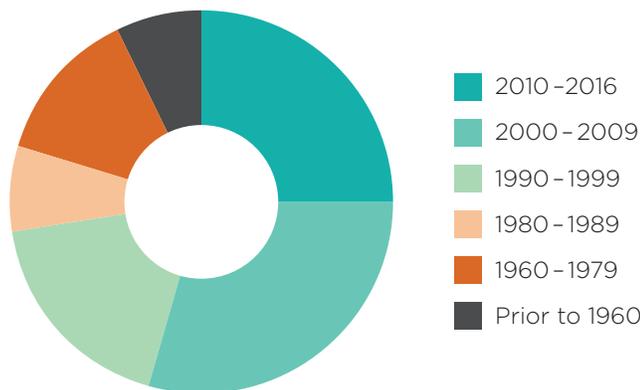
In terms of assessing how the quality of their library facilities had changed in the last three years, respondents were fairly evenly divided between indicating it had improved (35%), stayed the same (33%), or declined (31%). 53% of tribal and half of special libraries indicated that their library facility had improved, compared to 40% of public libraries, 34% of academic libraries and 30% of school libraries.

Survey respondents shared many comments, both positive and nega-

tive, about their facilities, and almost half reported experiencing ongoing infrastructure issues. Those that are fortunate enough to be in a newer or renovated facility confirm the positive impact that it has on their ability to provide quality service. An example: “Our facility is well used because it is new and has many things teachers and students want and need.” Others expressed frustration about inadequate space for both collections and people, and listed the far-ranging deficiencies of their buildings, including failing HVAC systems (“We have two temperatures: hot and cold”), leaking roofs, bad wiring, lack of bathrooms, worn-out furniture and carpeting, and insufficient parking. In one of the focus groups, the director of a small rural library described having no heat for six weeks last winter; she noted that community members still came to the library anyway.

FIGURE 21

When was your library constructed or last significantly renovated?



To the extent that capacity allows, New Mexico libraries are active collaborators.

In the survey and focus groups, library directors were asked about how they collaborate with other organizations, including other libraries. Figure 22 shows the breakdown by type of library, while Figure 23 shows the top collaborative partners for each type of library. 67% of survey respondents indicated that collaboration with external entities both increases the visibility of their library, and increases their knowledge of the community, while over half of all respondents said that such collaboration supports

the work of other service providers, expands their reach to new or underserved audiences, or leverages additional resources.

Figure 24 shows the challenges to collaboration reported by all types of libraries. With the exception of academic libraries, who most frequently selected geographic distance as a barrier, all other types of libraries most frequently selected staff capacity as their top challenge. As one wrote as a survey comment, “We love to collaborate, and our efforts at this have been successful, but are limited by time constraints.”

FIGURE 22

	Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
K-12 schools	24%	71%	73%	80%	25%
Other libraries	60%	50%	57%	53%	83%
Arts, historical and cultural organizations	40%	13%	59%	73%	67%
Preschools, child care providers	16%	18%	62%	87%	0%
Local government	12%	6%	70%	47%	42%
Higher education	52%	14%	30%	67%	33%
Local businesses	32%	15%	43%	40%	25%
News media	20%	6%	48%	27%	25%
Social service providers	12%	6%	32%	60%	8%
Tribe(s)	20%	3%	14%	93%	17%
Other	8%	8%	5%	0%	17%
None					

FIGURE 23

Top 5 collaborative partners, by type of library

Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Other libraries	K-12 schools	K-12 schools	Tribe(s)	Other libraries
Higher education	Other libraries	Local government	Preschools and childcare providers	Arts, historical and cultural orgs.
Arts, historical and cultural orgs.	Preschools and child care providers	Preschools and child care providers	K-12 schools	Local government
Local businesses	Local businesses	Arts, historical and cultural orgs.	Arts, historical and cultural orgs.	Higher education
K-12 schools	Higher education	Other libraries	Higher education	K-12 schools/ Local businesses

FIGURE 24

Challenges to collaboration

	ALL	Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Lack of staff capacity to collaborate	64%	60%	58%	71%	77%	83%
Difficulty in engaging potential collaborative partnerships	38%	44%	37%	46%	15%	25%
Geographic distance	35%	72%	23%	46%	31%	33%
Other	22%	12%	29%	12%	23%	17%



At the statewide level, New Mexico library directors identified several issues and challenges, including advocacy, formal cooperation and resource allocation.

“Although our budget for collections has increased, the purchasing power has diminished by about 20% each year. Consortia purchases have helped our library tremendously.”

—survey respondent

“Everyone is independent here; we don’t share materials.”

—public library focus group participant

Compared to other U.S. states, New Mexico has a limited infrastructure for library resource sharing.

With respect to formal interlibrary collaborations, New Mexico has numerous examples, including New Mexico Library To Go, a group of 32 public libraries that collectively purchase and share downloadable e-books and audiobooks, and the New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries (NMCAL) Passport program, which allows faculty, students and staff of 36 academic libraries to access library collections at other member academic libraries. These collective efforts are enormously beneficial to both libraries and their patrons. Referring to another NMCAL program which pools member resources to purchase electronic resources, a survey respondent noted, “Although our budget for collections has increased, the purchasing power

has diminished by about 20% each year. Consortia purchases have helped our library tremendously.”

However, beyond individual interlibrary loans, the New Mexico library landscape is relatively lacking in the formal interlibrary collaborations that can be found in other states, such as shared (union) catalogs and courier services between different library systems. It is perhaps telling that in a national 2007 survey of library networks, cooperatives and consortia undertaken by the American Library Association, New Mexico is one of only ten states not represented in the study because no data about existing consortia in the state was submitted.³¹

A school librarian also shared that there are no cooperative agreements between school districts. As a public library focus group participant who has worked in other states said,

“Everyone is independent here; we don’t share materials.”

Library cooperatives or consortia are important because they allow library users increased access to an expanded selection of books and other materials, and help libraries decrease costs by avoiding duplication. Appropriately, Goal 3 of the New Mexico State Library’s 2013 – 2017 Library Services and Technology Act plan is to “strengthen relationships between the New Mexico State Library and the New Mexico library community as well as foster collaboration and cooperating within the library community,” and includes a statewide resource-sharing initiative as a planned activity.³²

The cost of creating and maintaining cooperative systems and surmounting geographical distances are undoubtedly the key deterrents in New Mexico, yet some survey respondents nonetheless expressed the wish for greater ongoing collaboration. “Collaboration makes everyone stronger. It’s crucial for grants these days. It opens opportunities we would not otherwise have. But it requires communication, which is often lacking among New Mexico libraries. Improved communication about needs, shared goals and opportunities is crucial to success in this area.” Another said, more succinctly, “If we came together more often to address issues, we’d be more successful.”

Although not focused specifically on

New Mexico libraries, the 2006 work *Governing New Mexico* includes a statement that is relevant in this context. Describing statewide needs, the authors note: “New Mexico needs an educational *system*. The state’s development depends upon employing its financial and human resources with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. New Mexico cannot afford to continue to perpetuate a hodgepodge of educational institutions and programs.”³³

The frequent closure of school libraries for mandatory testing is having a negative effect across New Mexico.

In the survey, almost half the school librarians of New Mexico’s school libraries reported adding testing as a new service in the last five years. This is a particularly thorny issue for them because testing takes over the library’s computers and space for extended periods of time, limiting library access for both students and teachers. According to a 2015 survey of 100 New Mexico school librarians by the state’s Advocacy for New Mexico School Libraries Special Interest Group (ASLSIG), 24% reported being closed for testing for one to five days.. However, 23% reported being closed for 21 to 36 or more days, a significant portion of the school year.³⁴

In the survey and focus groups, school librarians were vocal in describing how such closures negatively impact

“If we came together more often to address issues, we’d be more successful.”

—survey respondent

“Teachers fight for access to computers, especially during windows of standardized testing.”

—school librarian

their work. One wrote, “Testing at the library has tremendously cut down on services to the school community. We have had to close for long periods of time on several occasions this year. The month of April and half of May have been focused solely on testing.” Others said, “Teachers fight for access to computers, especially during windows of standardized testing” and “We have been closed for testing more than we have been open.”

New Mexico library directors strongly support an empowered and adequately funded New Mexico State Library.

Positioned in state government within the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, the New Mexico State Library provides services that, according to its website, “support public libraries as well as deliver direct library services to rural populations, state agencies, the visually-impaired and physically-disabled, and students and citizens conducting research.”³⁵ Services to public libraries are similar to those provided by state libraries elsewhere in the U.S. and include offering continuing education, administering state and federal grants, administering the state’s library certification program and tribal library program and coordinating special projects such as statewide summer reading.

In any state, having a strong and stable state library is essential to the overall well-being of that state’s library ecosystem. While indisputably providing

quality service to the state year after year, the dedicated staff of the New Mexico State Library have nonetheless had to do so under a variety of less-than-ideal circumstances in recent years, including frequent turnover of the state library director position and a flat (therefore annually decreasing) budget. According to a 2014 IPAC study on State Library Agencies, the New Mexico State Library ranks sixth of all U.S. states with respect to recent reductions in state contributions to library revenue.³⁶ For FY17, the state library’s budget is \$4.876 million, an amount very similar to the \$4.847 million allocated five years ago in FY12.³⁷ This unfortunate budgetary reality translates into many of the same challenges that are detailed by other New Mexico libraries elsewhere in this report.

In the focus groups, New Mexico library directors expressed appreciation for the state library, while also expressing the desire for it to be in a stronger position to take a leadership role in the state, not only with public libraries but with New Mexico libraries as a whole. In addition, there were two specific issues that came up in relationship to statewide library services that are detailed below.

Some of New Mexico’s public library directors raise the issue of whether library services to rural areas should be reorganized to provide the most efficient and cost-effective service.

Supported primarily by federal (Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)) funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the state library's three bookmobiles travel to 24 rural counties in New Mexico where residents do not have access to public libraries. Circulating over 47,000 items annually, the bookmobiles serve over 6,000 registered card holders, including 1,214 children.³⁸ While this service is undoubtedly valued by the New Mexico residents that utilize it, some perceptions within the library community are different. In all three of the focus groups conducted for this project, public library directors (as well as other directors) questioned the efficacy of the bookmobile program from a cost-benefit standpoint. Many argued that the needs of bookmobile patrons could be met by public libraries in the communities they already drive to in order to shop, work and play, and that the funds that are currently supporting bookmobiles could provide better service to the state if distributed another way. It is important to note that research for this assessment did not include an analysis of the bookmobile service, nor (to the researcher's knowledge) did any users of that service attend one of the community conversations. However, given the scarcity of library resources in New Mexico and (one assumes) differing perceptions about the bookmobile service, this is an area that merits additional discussion, information sharing and gathering of stakeholder input.

Appropriately, the exploration of new service models for rural New Mexico residents is part of the state library's 2013-2017 LSTA Five Year Plan.³⁹

Within the New Mexico library community, there is a lack of consensus about the distribution of GO Bonds and State Grants-in-aid funding for public and tribal libraries.

Just as the population of New Mexico is quite unevenly distributed, so too are the service areas of its public libraries. According to statistics compiled by the Farmington Public Library utilizing data from the state library's public annual public library statistics, as of FY13, six public libraries (in Farmington, Bernalillo County, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe and Alamogordo) serve over 66% of the state's population. While the funding formulas for both GO Bond distribution and state Grants-In-Aid funds are distributed by providing each library (regardless of size) with a baseline grant, GO Bond distribution also includes additional funding based on population served. This methodology results in significantly different state funding per capita between large and small libraries. As of FY13, the top six libraries (in terms of size of population served) received an average eight cents per capita, compared with an average of \$2.91 per capita for New Mexico libraries serving fewer than 5,000 people.⁴⁰

The issue of how to balance the needs

“We have been closed for testing more than we have been open.”

—school librarian

of small and often financially struggling libraries in isolated communities with those of larger libraries with exponentially larger service demands is not simple, and is outside the scope of this assessment. As with the book-mobile service, however, it is worth noting that there are strong opinions on both sides, as evidenced in both focus group and task force discussions. Again, given the general scarcity of resources, reexamination of the formulas used to distribute funding, as well as additional discussion and information sharing within the library community on this topic, is recommended.

Across New Mexico, library supporters and directors recognize the need for sustained advocacy on behalf of New Mexico libraries.

Across the U.S., libraries of all types are grappling with the best way to articulate their value to their funders, users and other stakeholders. In New Mexico, a major silver lining of the biennial push to pass the library GO bonds is that the library community has a regular opportunity to speak in one voice and to emphatically tell the New Mexico library story. This is an advantage that libraries in many other states do not have.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

New Mexico's school libraries serve the state's 89 school districts as well as private schools. While it is unknown exactly how many school libraries there are in New Mexico, it is clear that funding, quality and staffing of school libraries varies considerably across the state. Due to years of school budget cuts, some districts have reduced or certified teacher librarians (who are credentialed both as teachers and as librarians), and some lack school libraries entirely.

Nationally, study after study confirms that the presence of a certified school librarian at a school library has a direct effect on improving academic success. Notes a 2002 study of New Mexico's school libraries: "New Mexico achievement scores rise with the development of school library programs." In addition, the American Library Association's 2016 State of America's Libraries notes:

The value of certified school librarians continues to grow as administrators and teachers seek education resources to better serve tech-savvy students. Among other things, administrators are looking to school librarians to help them incorporate digital educational resources and lead blended-learning activities in schools, resulting in more equity, connectivity, and personalization to instruction.

School librarians are instrumental in instilling a lifelong love of reading in young students, and play a critical role in teaching them essential skills for the 21st century.

¹Keith Curry Lance, Marcia J. Rodney and Christine Hamilton-Pennell, *How School Libraries Improve Outcomes for Children*, 2002, vii.

²Kathy Rosa ed., *The State of America's Libraries: A Report from the American Library Association*, American Library Association, 2016, 9.



Despite the many challenges they face, New Mexico libraries can take pride in their many achievements.

“We do a lot with a little.” With this statement, a survey respondent summed up how New Mexico libraries manage, against some odds, to continue to grow and to be effective.

Top achievements reported by New Mexico libraries: improving and increasing the size of collections and increasing circulation and number of annual visits.

In the survey, library directors were asked to identify achievements within the last three years. Figure 25 shows these achievements listed in order of popularity. 79% of New Mexico libraries indicated that they had increased the quality of their collections, followed by 61% who indicated that they had increased circulation. 56% said they had increased visitation to their library or increased the size of their collection. This is consistent with data from the collections portion of the

survey, where two-thirds of all libraries reported that their collections had improved in the last three years.

New Mexico libraries are significantly committed to supporting student success and lifelong learning as well as preserving resources and cultural assets.

Although New Mexico’s libraries are quite diverse, they share a common commitment to offering service that supports several core values. As Figure 26 indicates, 96% of survey respondents indicated that the services of their library support student success, 86% indicated the same for lifelong learning and 64% indicated that they preserve resources and cultural assets. Figures 27-29 indicate the types of services that New Mexico library directors reported that their libraries offer in each of these three categories. According to the survey, almost 80%

FIGURE 25

What are your library's achievements in the last three years?	Percentage of survey respondents
Increased quality of collection	79%
Increased circulation	61%
Increased visitation	56%
Increased size of collection	56%
Increased number of programs or events offered	47%
Increased participation in programs	42%
Increased number of internet sessions	39%
Increased number of classes taught	34%
Increased volunteer involvement	32%
Increased open hours	23%
Successfully raised money for a special project	23%
Initiated a new service	19%
Opened a new or improved facility	15%

FIGURE 26

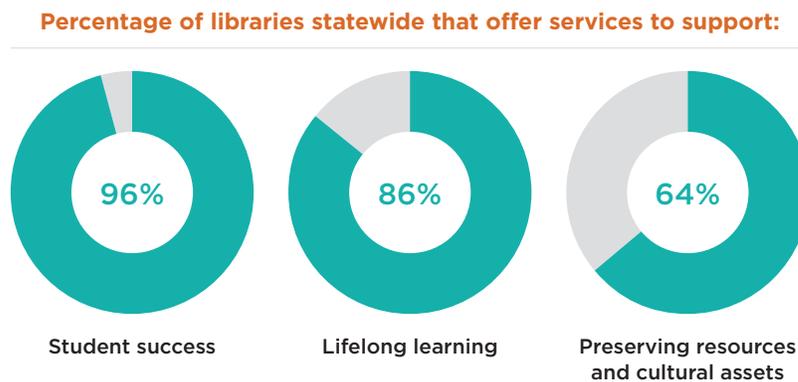


FIGURE 27

Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to support student success?	Percentage who chose this activity
Support for research by students, faculty and staff	79%
Research instruction	68%
Collaboration with teachers on non-library lessons	61%
Early childhood learning and other early literacy services	49%
Test proctoring	40%
STEM programs and services	31%
Resources and programs for job seekers	27%
Homework Center	27%
Tutoring	25%
Homeschooling resources	19%

FIGURE 28

Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to support lifelong learning?	Percentage who chose this activity
Reading promotion programs (such as Summer Reading)	64%
Early childhood learning, storytimes and other early literacy services	48%
Arts, history and cultural programming	34%
Resources and programs for jobseekers	24%
Outreach services for those who can't reach a library	17%
Adult literacy programs and services (including ESL)	12%

FIGURE 29

Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to preserve resources and cultural assets?	Percentage who chose this activity
Special collections	53%
Archives	27%
Preservation of traditional languages	18%

of New Mexico's libraries support research for students, faculty and staff, 64% support reading promotion programs and 53% maintain special collections.

In the last five years, New Mexico libraries have maintained current services and added services tailored to the needs of their users.

Libraries transform the communities they serve by providing a wide variety of opportunities for enrichment and self-improvement. As reported in the survey, Figure 30 shows the most frequently selected new and additional services added in the last five years by type of library. Apart from testing, which is addressed above, the results indicate that large numbers of New Mexico libraries are engaged in developing and providing cutting-edge library services that meaningfully enhance the lives, specifically in the areas of economic and community development.

Economic Development

Support for job seekers. In the survey, 46 of New Mexico libraries reported adding services in this area; 15 libraries have added actual job training in

the last five years. The 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey notes that 78% of New Mexico's public and tribal libraries help individuals apply for jobs, while 70% help them utilize and access employment resources.⁴¹

Support for Social and Health

Services. In the survey 26 New Mexico libraries reported adding services that assist library patrons in navigating the marketplace options of the Affordable Care Act and other health and social services. 2014 data from the Digital Inclusion Survey indicate that 65% of New Mexico's public and tribal libraries provide access to online health resources, and 54% help them identify health insurance resources.⁴²

Computer literacy training. 85 libraries reported adding trainings that make it possible for all residents to utilize technology to benefit their lives. According to the 2014 Digital Inclusion survey, such training is provided by 95% of New Mexico's public and tribal libraries.⁴³

“We do the best we can with what we are given to maintain the bulk of our services at the highest level we can.”

—library director

Community Development

Makerspaces. Supported by the New Mexico Makerspace Initiative, a New Mexico State Library program that has attracted national attention⁴⁴, 55 New Mexico libraries reported having added these dynamic and collaborative learning environments in the last five years. By inspiring creativity and cultivating problem solving, makerspaces appeal to intergenerational audiences and help build strong communities.

Events, classes and programming.

Forty-one New Mexico libraries reported adding programming focused on a new audience or topic, ranging from GED classes to poetry readings to “how to” classes for entrepreneurs.

According to the 2015 Pew Research study Libraries at the Crossroads, the American public is interested in new services, and would like public

libraries to support local education, help local businesses and jobseekers, embrace new technologies, and serve immigrants, veterans and active-duty military personnel.⁴⁵ Thus, it would seem that New Mexico libraries are in alignment with national trends. With respect to achievements, it is also important to note that for many libraries with limited resources, simply maintaining services is a great accomplishment. One library director contributed this comment to the survey: “We do the best we can with what we are given to maintain the bulk of our services at the highest level we can.” Another wrote, “We provide the opportunity for people from all walks of life to gain research and library skills that will assist them in their academic, professional and personal life.”

“We provide the opportunity for people from all walks of life to gain research and library skills that will assist them in their academic, professional and personal life.”

—library director

FIGURE 30

New and additional services, by type of library

Academic	School	Public	Tribal	Special
Programming	Testing	Support for social and health services	Job training	Job training
Job seeker support	Makerspace	Job seeker support	Support for social and health services	Programming
Computer literacy training	Computer literacy training	Programming	Job seeker support	Jobseeker support
Testing	Job training	Job training	Computer literacy training	Support for social and health services
Support for social and health services	Programming	Makerspace	Programming	Computer literacy training

New Mexico voters consistently support local and statewide library measures, a strong indication of the perceived value of the state’s libraries.

At a statewide level, perhaps the greatest achievement of New Mexico libraries is providing the high level of service that has consistently motivated New Mexico voters to pass the GO bonds every other year since 2002. In November, 2014, the most recent visit to the ballot box, library GO bonds passed by 62.9%. At that same election, bonds to support libraries in Sandoval and Bernalillo counties also passed by healthy margins.⁴⁶

Figure 31 shows the percentage of “yes” votes for library GO Bond elections since 2002.⁴⁷ As it reveals, statewide support dropped at the height of the recent recession in 2008 and 2010, an indication that although passage of library GO bonds does not raise taxes, voters do not vote in a vacuum—another reason why GO Bond funding is an unpredictable source of support for New Mexico libraries.

FIGURE 31

Library GO Bond Results, 2002–2014

Year	Percentage of voters who approved GO Bonds
2002	59.7%
2004	58.5%
2006	56.9%
2008	52.33%
2010	52.46%
2012	62.12%
2014	62.9%

CONCLUSION

According to the Pew Research Center’s 2016 national study *Libraries and Learning*, 76% of Americans say that their local libraries serve the learning and educational needs of their families “very” or “pretty well.” At the same time, their results show that there is a significant lack of awareness with respect to the learning-related programs and materials that libraries offer. For example, while 62% of adults surveyed knew that their local library offered e-books, 22% did not know and 16% say they are not available in their community. Only 41% of those surveyed indicated they knew about career and job-related resources at their local library, while 59% either were uncertain or indicated that such services were not available.⁴⁸ So, at a national level, data suggests that yes, libraries are valued—but that the value of what they actually offer is only partially understood by the public.

In New Mexico, the challenge of successfully conveying the value of libraries is made more difficult by systemic resource issues, which underlie virtually all of the challenges outlined in this report. While there are obviously

no easy solutions, the primary recommendation of this assessment is to identify funding solutions to ease the pressure currently experienced by all types of New Mexico libraries. (Given the diversity of New Mexico libraries, this will likely involve different solutions for different types of libraries.) Until then, many New Mexico libraries will continue to struggle, which reduces their capacity to do the important work for their communities that it is their mission to fulfill.

As a state that is often described as financially poor, New Mexico has an even greater need than wealthier states for the wide array of services that libraries of all types provide. School libraries are instrumental in helping the most vulnerable children and youth graduate from high school and pursue further education, while academic libraries sustain that continuum of support to position students for further achievement. Tribal and public libraries educate, inform and inspire people of all ages and from all walks of life. Collectively, New Mexico libraries help residents cultivate the skills that facilitate lifelong learning and success.

According to the American Library Association's 2016 report *The State of America's Libraries*:

Libraries today are less about what they have for people and more about what they do for and with people. Library professionals promote opportunities for individuals and progress for communities. Libraries of all kinds add value in five key areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, empowerment, and engagement. They are advancing the legacy of reading and developing a digitally inclusive society.⁴⁹

Despite addressing what are sometimes overwhelming challenges on a daily basis, New Mexico libraries open their doors and welcome the community in, striving for excellence as much as is possible with the resources available to them. This commitment to service is laudable and worthy of additional financial support.



- ¹F. Chris Garcia et al, ed., *Governing New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2006), 3.
- ²Anna Brown and Mark Hugo Lopez, *Mapping the Latino Population, By State*, Pew Research Center, 2013.
- ³“Quick Facts United States,” United States Census, <https://www.census.gov/quick-facts/table/PST045215/00>.
- ⁴“American Indians by the Numbers,” U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihmcensus1.html>.
- ⁵New Mexico State Library, *LSTA Five Year Plan, 2013 – 2017*, 2012, 2.
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- ⁷Anna E. Casey Foundation, *Kids County Data Book, 2016*, 19.
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- ⁹New Mexico State Library: Cresap, McCormick, and Paget, *New Mexico State Library: Assessment of Statewide Library Needs*, 1985, 3.
- ¹⁰“Public Libraries in the United States Survey: Fiscal Year 2013,” Institute of Museum and Library Services, <https://www.imls.gov/public-libraries-united-states-survey-fiscal-year-2013>
- ¹¹New Mexico State Library: Cresap, McCormick, and Paget, *New Mexico State Library: Assessment of Statewide Library Needs*, 1985, iii-4.
- ¹²Since 2004, the state of New Mexico has provided hold-harmless subsidies to cities and counties to replace lost revenue from food and selected services that were exempted from gross receipts taxes. In 2013, the legislature voted to phase these payments out over a multiple year period beginning in 2015.
- ¹³Jeffrey Mitchell and Gillian Joyce, University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research, *Building on the Past, Facing the Future: Renewing the Creative Economy of New Mexico*, 2014, 63.
- ¹⁴“New Mexico State Profile and Energy Estimates,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.cfm?sid=NM>.
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FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. I'm a librarian from Oregon, who has never worked in New Mexico. How would you describe the New Mexico library landscape to me? What's unique about it?
2. What are the specific challenges that your library faces in the following areas?
 - Funding
 - Collections
 - Facilities
 - Staffing
 - Technology
 - Other services
3. What are the opportunities that your library is experiencing in the following areas?
 - Funding
 - Collections
 - Facilities
 - Staffing
 - Technology
 - Other services
4. If you had "enough" funding, what would your priorities be?
5. Thinking of your own type of library, but also New Mexico libraries in general, in what ways do you think that New Mexico libraries are successful?
6. Does your library have a success story that you would like to share?
7. Do you have anything to add about New Mexico libraries?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

1. What do you like about your library (or libraries)? In what ways does your library meet the needs of your community? (If you've lived somewhere other than New Mexico, how would you compare libraries in both places?)
2. What library services do you use the most?
3. Thinking about the library you use, how would you describe your experience of the...
 - Collections
 - Facilities
 - Staffing
 - Technology
 - Other services
4. Thinking about the library you use, what could be improved in the following areas?
 - Collections
 - Facilities (including hours open)
 - Staffing
 - Technology
 - Other services
5. What is your understanding of how your library is funded? Do you think that existing funding is adequate?
6. What do you think your library's spending priorities should be?
7. Do you have any stories to share about how a New Mexico library made a positive impact on your life?
8. Do you have anything else to add about New Mexico libraries?

This survey is part of a library assessment funded by the New Mexico Library Foundation. The goal of the project is to identify the current state of the New Mexico public, tribal, school, academic and special library sectors.

This survey should be filled out by library directors or others responsible for the overall management of New Mexico libraries (such as solo librarians at school libraries). Completing the survey should take approximately 20 minutes. All responses will be kept confidential and data will only be used in the aggregate. Thank you for your willingness to provide input! Let's begin.

This first set of questions asks you to describe your library.

1. What type of library do you work for? (select only one)

- School (K-12)
- Academic
- Public
- Tribal (public)
- Special
- Other (please specify):

2. Which category most closely resembles your role/responsibility in the library community (select only one)

- Library director (paid)
- Library director (volunteer)
- Solo librarian
- Other library staff member (paid)
- Other (please specify):

3. What library do you represent? (Note: this question will be utilized only to assess overall response to the survey, not to identify individual respondents)

4. How many people does your library serve?

- Fewer than 500
- 501 – 999
- 1,000 – 2,999
- 3,000 – 4,999
- 5,000 – 9,999
- 10,000 – 19,999
- 20,000 – 49,999
- 50,000 – 99,999
- 100,000 – 499,999

- 500,000 or more
- Don't know

5. In what county or counties is your library located?

6. Which state senator(s) serves your library's community?

7. Which state representative(s) serves your library's community?

This next set of questions asks about funding and expenditures for your library.

8. What is the approximate size of your library's total annual budget (including staffing, collections and all other operational expenses) for the current fiscal year?

- \$0 – \$999
- \$1,000 – \$4,999
- \$5,000 – \$9,999
- \$10,000 – \$29,999
- \$30,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$199,999
- \$200,000 – \$399,999
- \$400,000 – \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 – \$4,999,999
- \$5,000,000 – \$9,999,999
- \$10,000,000 or more
- Don't know

9. What are the sources of funding for your library? Please enter the approximate percentage of each of the sources listed below.

- Host institution or school (if an academic, school or special library)

- Municipal/City: Gross Receipts Tax

- Municipal/City: (non-Gross Receipts Tax)

- County

- Tribe(s)

- Local library-designated tax support (such as a library levy or library district)

- State GO (general obligation) bonds

- New Mexico State Library's state aid for public libraries

- Institute of Museum and Library Service) grants (federal)

- Competitive grants

- Other:

10. How has your library's overall funding changed in the last three fiscal years?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

12a. (if DECREASED): How much your library's funding decreased?

- 0 – 5%
- 6 – 10%
- 11 – 15%
- 16 – 20%
- 21 – 30%
- 31 – 40%
- 41 – 50%
- 51 – 60%
- 61 – 70%
- 71 – 80%
- 81 – 90%
- 91 – 100%

12b. (if INCREASED): How much has your library's funding increased?

- 0 – 5%
- 6 – 10%
- 11 – 15%
- 16 – 20%
- 21 – 30%
- 31 – 40%
- 41 – 50%
- 51 – 60%
- 61 – 70%
- 71 – 80%
- 81 – 90%
- 91 – 100%

13. How have your library's expenses changed in the last three fiscal years?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

14a. (if DECREASED): How much have your library's expenses decreased in the last three fiscal years?

- 0 – 5%
- 6 – 10%
- 11 – 15%
- 16 – 20%
- 21 – 30%
- 31 – 40%
- 41 – 50%
- 51 – 60%
- 61 – 70%
- 71 – 80%
- 81 – 90%
- 91 – 100%

14b. (if INCREASED): How much have your library's expenses increased in the last three fiscal years?

- 0 – 5%
- 6 – 10%
- 11 – 15%

- 16 – 20%
- 21 – 30%
- 31 – 40%
- 41 – 50%
- 51 – 60%
- 61 – 70%
- 71 – 80%
- 81 – 90%
- 91 – 100%

15. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Thinking ahead 5 – 10 years, funding for my library is sustainable with respect to maintaining the current level of services.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

16. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Thinking ahead 5 – 10 years, funding for my library is sustainable with respect to responding to community need.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

17. How is your library's annual budget allocated? Please enter the approximate percentage of each expenditure area listed below.

- Staffing
- Collections
- Technology
- Other

This next set of questions asks about your library's achievements.

18. What achievements has your library accomplished in the last three fiscal years? (select all that apply)

- Increased circulation
- Increased visitation
- Increased number of classes taught
- Increased open hours
- Increased number of Internet sessions
- Increased size of collection
- Increased quality of collection
- Increased number of programs or events offered
- Increased participation in programs
- Increased volunteer involvement
- Opened a new or improved facility
- Successfully raised money for a special project
- Initiated a new service (specify):
- Other (specify):

19. Additional comments about your library's achievements:

This next set of questions asks about your library's collection.

20. How would you describe the quality of your library's collection?

Scale: Poor/Excellent

21. In the last three fiscal years, would you estimate that your library's budget for its collections has:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

22. In the last three fiscal years, would you estimate that the quality of your library's collection has:

- Improved
- Declined

- Stayed the same

23. In the last three fiscal years, has the demand for digital materials at your library:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

24. In the last three fiscal years, has the demand for print and other physical materials at your library:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

25. Thinking of the total budget for your collection, enter the approximate percentage spent in the categories below. (Total must add up to 100%).

- Print materials
- DVDs, CDs and other physical media
- Digital and online materials (databases, e-books and downloadable media)
- Other

26. In the last three fiscal years, has the percentage of your collections budget spent on print materials:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

27. In the last three years, has the percentage of your collections budget spent on DVDs, CDs and other physical media:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

28. In the last three fiscal years, has the percentage of your collection budget spend on digital materials (e-books, downloadable movies, databases, etc.):

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

29. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

If my library's budget was increased, improving the collection should be a high priority.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

30. What challenges do your patrons experience with your library's collection? (select all that apply)

- Inadequate supply of new items
- Out of date or worn-out materials
- Long waits for in-demand items
- Not enough materials in languages other than English
- Not enough materials in digital formats
- Other (please specify):
- None

31. Additional comments about your library's collections:

This next set of questions asks about your library's facilities.

32. Does your library have more than one facility? Yes/No (IF YES: go to question 31a. If NO, go to question 31b)

31a. How would you describe the overall quality of your library facilities? Scale: Poor/Excellent (Go to 33)

31b. How would you describe the quality of your library facility? Scale: Poor/Excellent

32. When was your library facility constructed, or last significantly renovated?

- 2010 – 2016
- 2000 – 2009
- 1990 – 1999
- 1980 - 1989
- 1960 – 1979
- Prior to 1960

33. In the last three years, would you estimate that the quality of your library's facility or facilities has:

- Improved
- Declined
- Stayed the same

34. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

If my library's budget was increased, improving our facility should be a high priority.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

35. What challenges do your library's patrons experience with respect to your library facility? (select all that apply)

- Not enough space for collections
- Not enough instructional space
- Not enough seating
- Not enough space for programming
- Not enough space for noise-producing activities
- Not enough space for quiet study
- ADA compliance or other accessibility issues
- Outdated interior design or layout
- Not enough outlets to plug in devices

- Infrastructure issues (integrity of building, HVAC, plumbing, etc.)
- Other (please specify):
- None

36. Additional comments about your library's facility or facilities:

This next set of questions asks about your library's staffing.

37. How would you describe the quality of your library's level of staffing?

Scale: Adequate/ Inadequate

Poor/Excellent

38. In the last three years, would you estimate that your library's staffing budget has:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

39. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

If my library's budget was increased, increasing our staffing should be a high priority.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

40. What challenges does your library experience with respect to staffing? (select all that apply)

- Fewer open hours than desired by the community
- Not enough people to staff service desks or provide timely service
- Not enough staff who speak languages other than English
- Not enough credentialed staff (MLS, MLIS, teacher librarians

- or library media specialists)
- Not enough staff with the skills to address 21st century technology needs
- Not enough staff to conduct outreach
- Not enough staff to market the library's services
- Limited continuing education opportunities for staff
- Other (please specify):
- None

41. As the director of your library, what is your professional background? (select all that apply)

- MLS/MLIS
- BA or BS
- Certification as a teacher librarian
- State library certification
- Other:

42. Additional comments about your library's staffing:

This next set of questions asks about technology at your library.

43. What technology-related services does your library offer? (select all that apply)

- Broadband internet access
- Other internet access
- Wi-Fi
- Computers for patron use
- Tablets to check out
- Laptops to check out
- E-readers to check out
- Electronic resources (e-books, online databases, etc.)
- Other (please specify):

45. How would you describe the quality of your library's technology-related services? Scale: Poor/Excellent

46. In the last three years, would you estimate that the quality of your library's technology has:

- Improved
- Declined
- Stayed the same

47. In the last three years, would you estimate that the quality your library's technology budget has:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

48. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

If my library's budget was increased, improving technology should be a high priority.

Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

49. In the last three years, has the demand for technology-related services at your library:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same

50. How old are the oldest patron-available computers in your library?

- Less than a year old
- 1 – 2 years old
- 2 – 3 years old
- 3 – 4 years old
- 4 – 5 years old
- More than 5 years old

51. What challenges do your patrons experience with the library's technology? (select all that apply)

- Speed of Internet access
- Not enough Internet computers
- Not enough places to plug in devices

- Not enough in-house IT support
- Lack of tech training opportunities
- Limited continuing education opportunities for staff
- Lack of Wi-Fi
- Inadequate Wi-Fi
- Aging hardware
- Aging software
- Other (please specify):
- None

52. Additional comments about technology at your library:

This next set of questions asks about services at your library.

53. Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to support lifelong learning? (select all that apply)

- Early childhood learning (including story times and other early literacy services)
- Adult literacy programs and services (including ESL)
- Arts, history and cultural programming
- Reading promotion programs (such as Summer Reading)
- Resources and programs for jobseekers
- Outreach services for those who can't visit a library
- My library does not offer services to support lifelong learning.

54. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Supporting lifelong learning is a high priority for my library.

Scale: Strongly agree/Strongly disagree).

55. Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to support student success (including K-12 and post-secondary education)? (select all that apply)

- Early childhood learning (including storytimes) and other early literacy activities
- Collaboration with teachers on non-library lessons
- Research instruction
- Support for research by students, faculty and staff
- Resources and programs for job seekers
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs and services
- Tutoring
- Test proctoring
- Homework Center
- Homeschooling resources/resources for homeschoolers
- Other (specify)
- My library does not offer services to support student success.

56. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Supporting school success is a high priority for my library.

Scale: Strongly agree/Strongly disagree).

57. Which of the following programs or services does your library offer to preserve resources and cultural assets? (select all that apply)

- Special collections (specify focus)
- Archives (specify focus)
- Preservation of traditional languages
- My library does not offer ser-

vices to preserve resources and cultural assets.

58. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Preserving resources and cultural assets is a high priority for my library.

Scale: Strongly agree/Strongly disagree).

59. What new or additional services has your library provided in the last three years (select all that apply)?

- Jobseeker support
- Job training
- Makerspace
- Computer literacy training
- Support for social and health services, such as ACA health marketplace services
- Testing
- Programming focused on a new audience or topic (please describe):
- Other:
- None

60. What services has your library been unable to provide in the last three years that have been requested by library patrons (select all that apply)?

- Jobseeker support
- Job training
- Makerspace
- Computer literacy training
- Support for social and health services, such as Affordable Care Act health marketplace services
- Testing
- Other:
- None

61. Additional comments about other services at your library:

This next set of questions asks about collaboration and your library.

62. Which of the following external entities does your library actively collaborate with? (select all that apply)

- Local government
- Tribe(s)
- Arts, historical and cultural organizations
- Other libraries (indicate which type)
- Social service providers
- Higher education
- K-12 schools
- Preschools and child care providers
- Local businesses
- News media
- Other:
- None:

63. In which of the following ways does collaboration with external entities support the mission of your library? (select all that apply)

- Expands our reach to new or underserved patrons
- Increases the visibility of our library
- Increases our knowledge of our community
- Supports the work of other service providers
- Leverages additional resources
- Other (please specify):

64. What are the challenges to collaboration that you experience at your library? (select all that apply)

- Lack of staff capacity to collaborate
- Difficulty in engaging potential collaborative partners
- Geographic distance
- Other:

65. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Collaboration with external partners is a priority for my library.

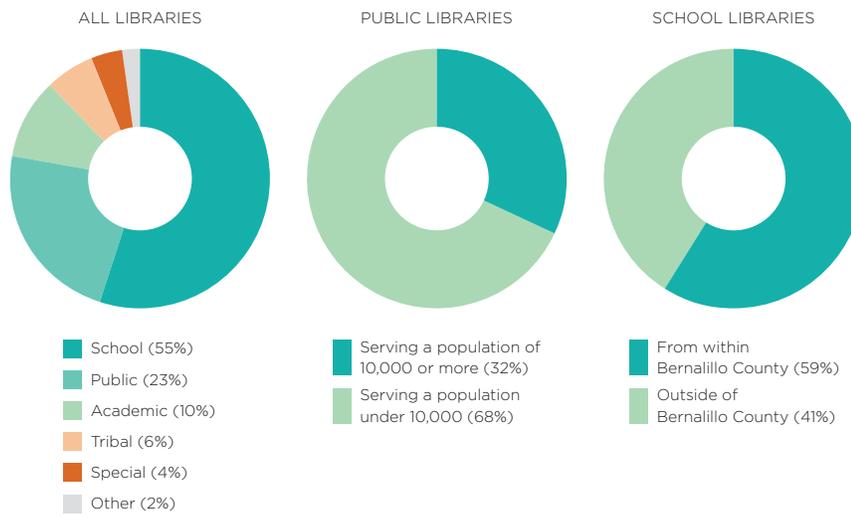
Scale: Strongly agree/strongly disagree

66. Additional comments about collaboration and your library:

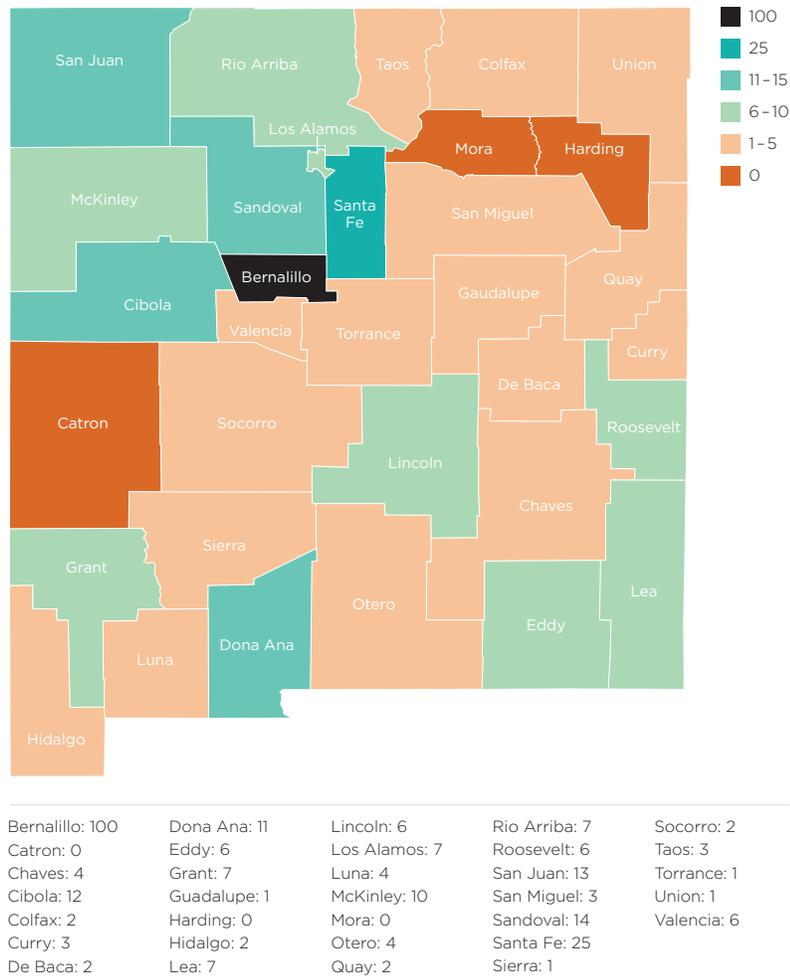
Thank you! Your input is critical to making the assessment a success. If you have any questions about this project, contact researcher Penny Hummel at penny@pennyhummel.com or New Mexico Library Foundation board of trustees chair Carol Hoover at foundation@nm-lf.org.

APPENDIX D: DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONSES

What type of library do you work for?



Distribution of survey responses by county





New Mexico Library Foundation

P.O. Box 30572
Albuquerque, NM 87190-0572

<http://www.nm-lf.org>