

Community Needs Assessment

Data points:

- 2016 CERC Town Profile
- 2010-2014 American Community Survey (Census)
- 686 surveys
- 5 focus groups, 35 participants
- 7 key informant interviews

Community Needs Assessment

Who are the people in your community?

- 19,744 people (2014), 18,960 projected for 2020
- Median age: 43
- Age distribution:
 - Under 24 - 32%
 - 25-44 - 21%
 - 45-64 - 32%
 - 65+ - 14%

Community Needs Assessment

Who are the people in your community?

- Bachelors degree or higher: 50%
- Race/ethnicity:
 - White – 87.9%
 - Hispanic/Latino - 4.8%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander – 3.2%
 - Black/African American - .68%
 - Two or more races – 2.1%
- Median HH income: \$108,688 (Fairfield County: \$83,163)

Community Needs Assessment

Other town characteristics:

- 85% of housing units are Single Unit (compared to 58% in Fairfield County)
- 93.5% owner occupied dwellings
- Distance to NYC: 60 miles
- Population receiving SNAP: 213

Community Needs Assessment

Who participated in the library's process?

- 686 took survey, 35 participated in focus groups, 7 key informant interviews
- Survey respondent age range:
 - 18 and under – 1.29%
 - 19-25 – 1.13%
 - 26-45 – 29.7%
 - 46-65 – 44.9%
 - 66+ - 22.9%

Community Needs Assessment

- Children as part of household:
 - 42.7% not raising any children
 - 17% with children under 6
 - 42% with children 6-18
 - 12% with children over 18 at home

Community Needs Assessment

- Employment:
 - 43% employed fulltime
 - 13% employed part time
 - 9% self-employed/entrepreneur
 - 10% stay-at-home parent
 - 13.9% between jobs
 - 5.8% planning to retire in next 5-10 years
 - 23.3% retired
 - 4.5% caring for aging parents
 - other (3.4% included):
 - student, volunteer

Community Needs Assessment

- Planning to live in Monroe in 5 years:
 - 68% yes
 - 12% no
 - 20% I don't know

Community Needs Assessment

Why do you live/stay in Monroe?

Schools

Town amenities

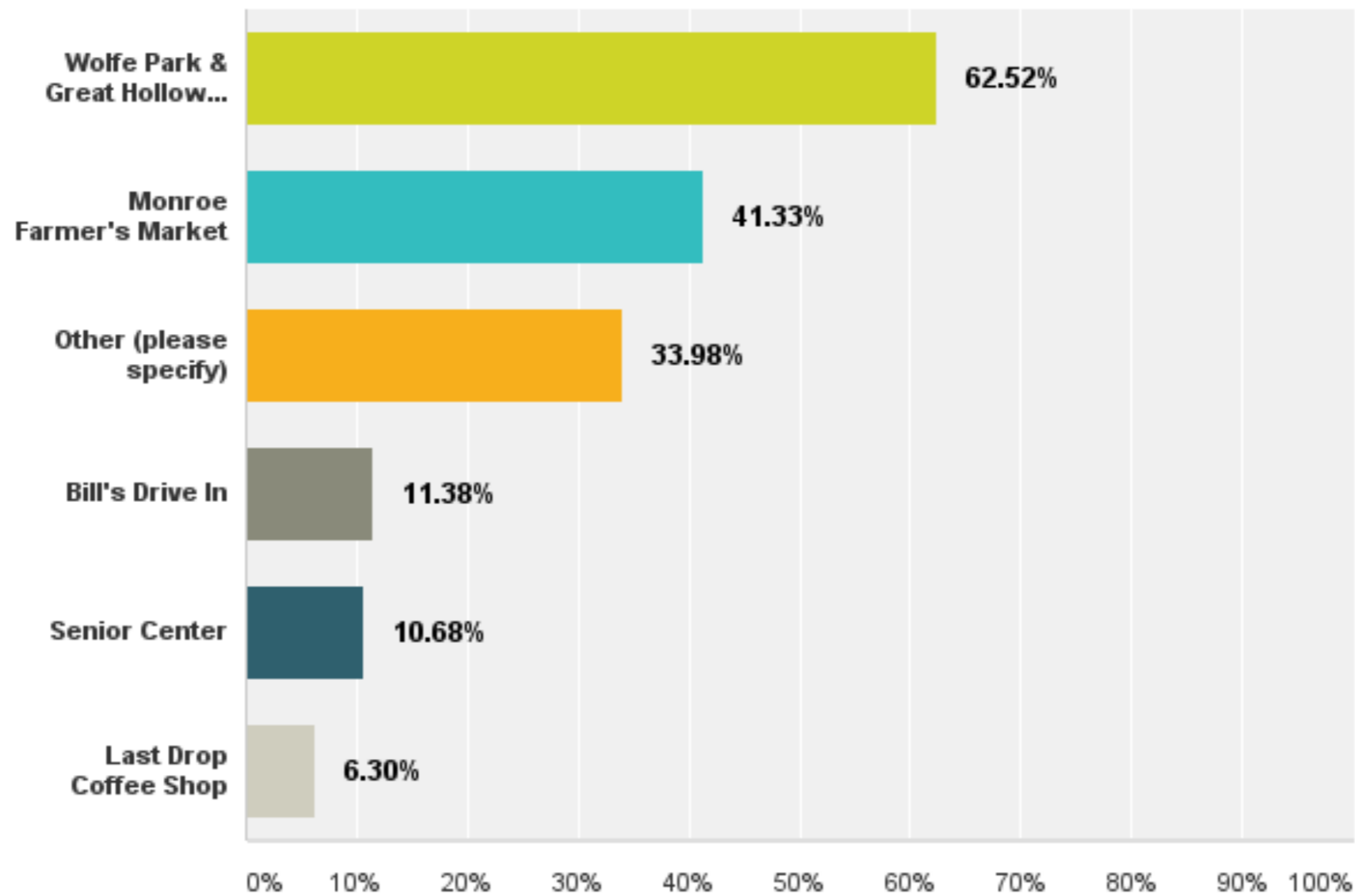
Location

Taxes

Community Needs Assessment

Q16 Where in Monroe do you experience the greatest level of community interaction?

Answered: 571 Skipped: 115



Community Needs Assessment

What are the major issues facing Monroe?

Economic & demographic transitions

Aged/lack of infrastructure

Residents with school-aged children vs. those without

Budget structure – referendum system

Lack of overall planning system

Community Needs Assessment

How would we get to that vision?

Working together – collaboration – communication

Proactive planning processes

Increased awareness of & support for diversity that does exist in town (economic, racial/ethnic, ability)

Some direct quotes
from

Q: Why is that
important to you?

“Because I have children and want them to grow up in a community feeling that they belong, and where everyone is treated equally and fairly.”
(age 36-45)

“Inclusivity because I believe everyone should be treated equally, support because I know how important it can be to have people to turn to when you're in need, creativity because it's something that I highly value and believe can lead to improvement”
(age 19-25)

“In this age of growing isolation and intolerance of others who are different, it is important for everyone to have a place they can go to and live in where they feel safe and welcomed.” (age 66-75)

“I think a town should have a sense of community where everyone feels like they belong. In order to build a good sense of community, the citizens must be accepting of one another so everyone can feel comfortable in the town. I think in order to make strides and progress as a town, we must be collaborative and be able to work with each other to use our individual talents and skills towards a common goal of improving our town. Lastly, it is important to me that our community is positive about the future. I want to live in a happy place where people believe that the future will be a better place than the past or even the present.” (age 13-17)

“I think it's important to have a community that is invested in its children, economic growth and provides a welcoming atmosphere.” (age 36-45)

Q: How is that
different from how
you see things now?

“Gathering places enable us to have physical contact with people and their ideas to work together. Government is losing its perspective and purpose and becoming more self motivating rather than doing what is good for all. Social media does promote innovation because the information is at our fingertips but at the same time it's moving us away from the basics for very noble professions that we will lose. We have to know what is going on all the time and have to have the latest and greatest which evolved us into a throw away society. This needs some innovation to fix.” (46-55)

“People seem to think the budget is a game and don't place any trust in the employees who create the budget (not the elected officials as they seriously have little to do with the creation of the budget, just the "vetting" of it.” (age 46-55)

“As a long time resident-almost 50 years-I have seen this town double in size, and up until about 5 to 10 years ago keep its small town warmth. Now everything seems to be evaluated on a quantitative basis with no subjectivity considered. Not every value has a number.” (age 81+)

Q: What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

“Give people more opportunities to engage with the community, offer compelling programs, opportunities to volunteer, demonstrate their expertise as teachers.” (age 46-55)

“In order to create change, we need to provide welcoming environments for town members to feel comfortable, but also that their opinions are not only welcomed, but encouraged and valued as well.” (age 13-19)

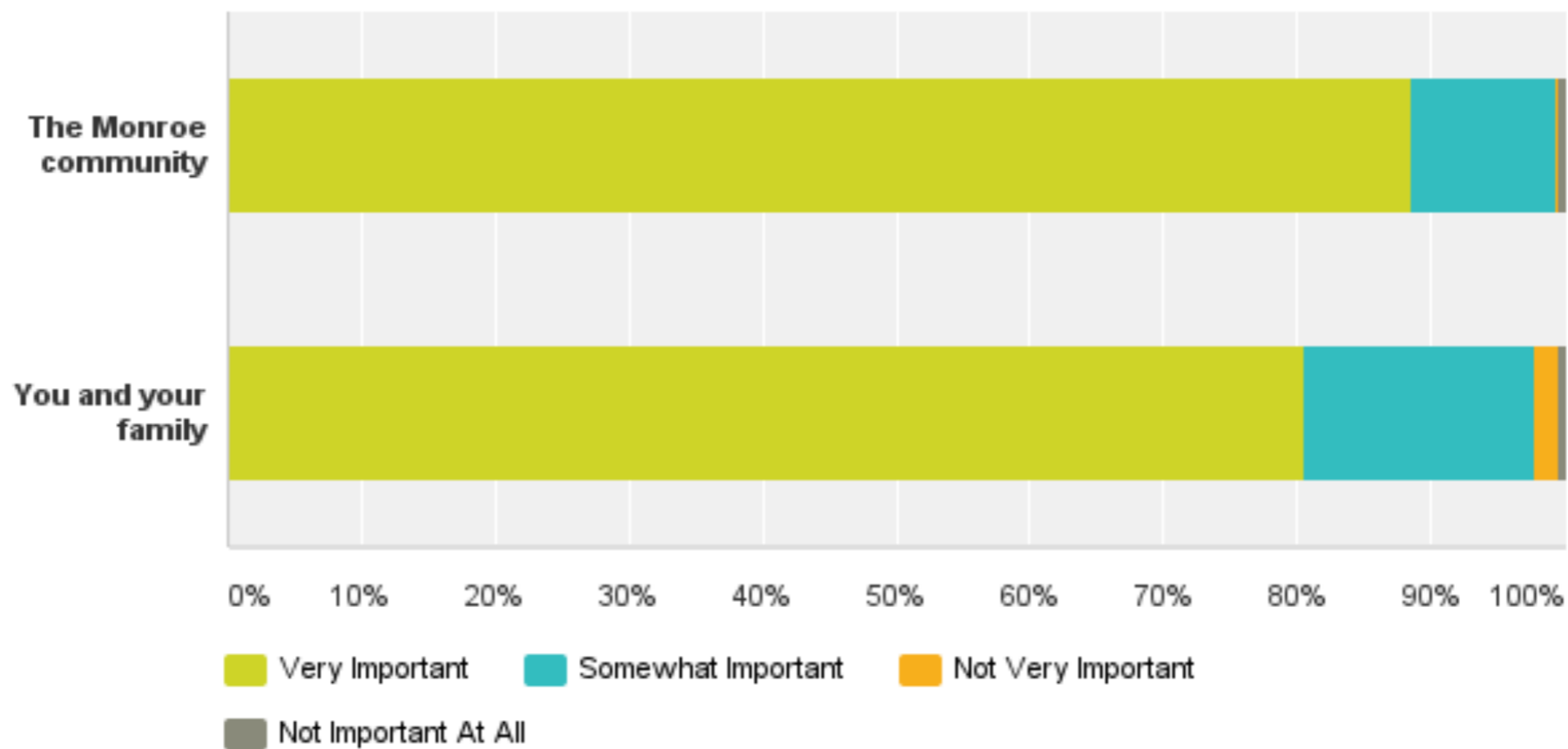
Community Vision

We want a community where people trust and value each other, celebrate diversity, foster creativity, and value new ideas; but we have a lack of 1.) participation from many citizens and 2.) a commonly recognized town center. If we want to reach our aspirations, we need to create an engaged community focused on thoughtful, proactive planning where everyone feels that they belong.

Edith Wheeler Memorial Library and the community

Q4 In your opinion, how important is Edith Wheeler Memorial Library to...?

Answered: 662 Skipped: 24



How much do you think EWML contributes to the following things in your community?

Providing a comfortable place for people to spend time

80% - A lot; 17% - Some

Creating educational opportunity for people of all ages

61% - A lot; 34% - Some

Providing a trusted, reliable place for people to learn about new technologies

55% - A lot; 38% - Some

How much do you think EWML contributes to the following things in your community?

Helping spark creativity among young people

50% - A lot; 43% - Some

Helping people when a natural disaster or major problem strikes the community

48% - A lot; 33% - Some

Promoting a sense of community among different groups in your local area

43% - A lot; 46% - Some

How much do you think EWML contributes to the following things in your community?

Serving as a gathering place for addressing issues in your local community

39% - A lot; 46% - Some

Helping people decide what information they can trust

37% - A lot; 45% - Some

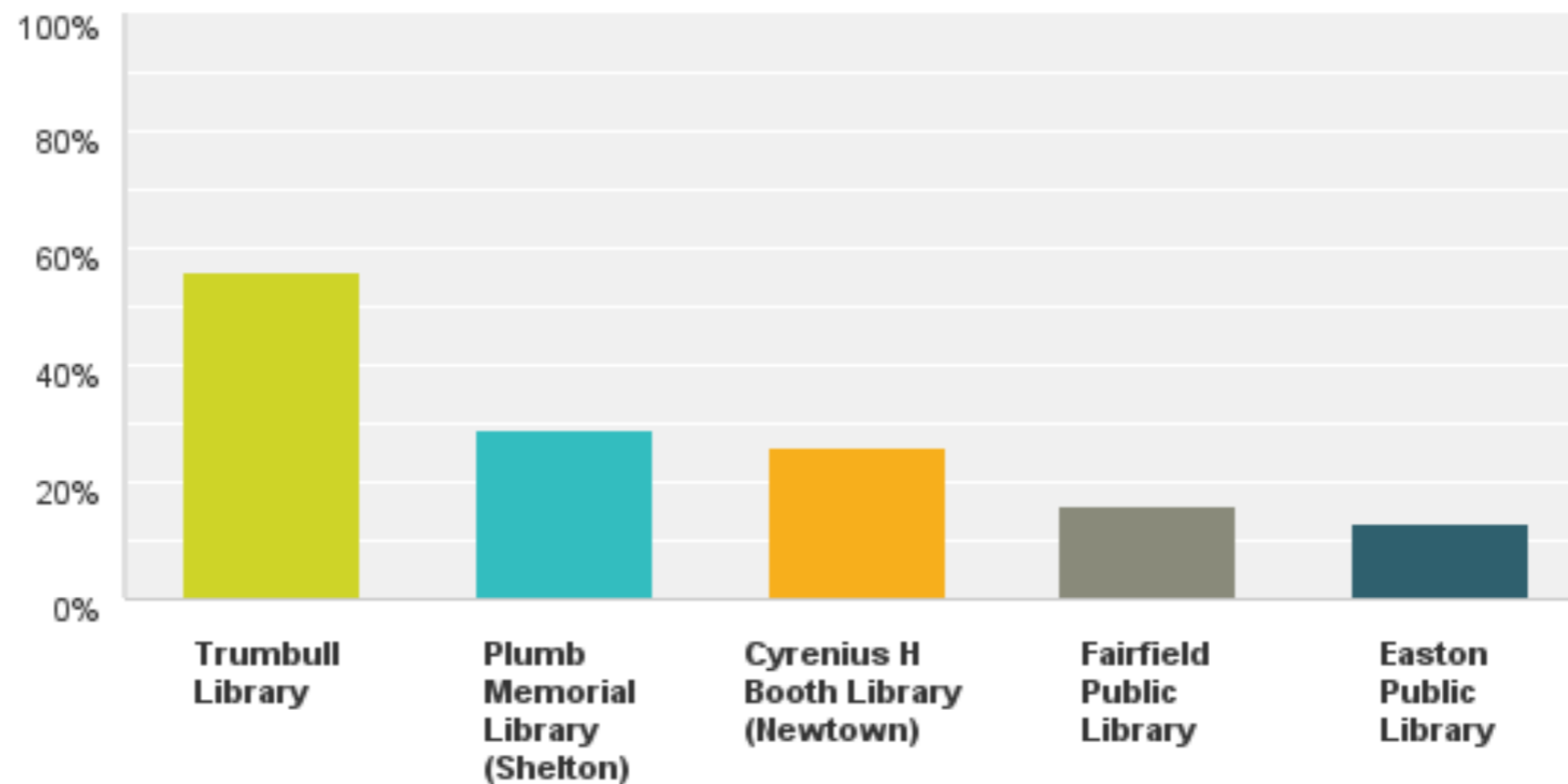
Helping people find jobs or pursue job training

31% - A lot; 52% - Some

Comparing EWML

Q3 What other libraries in the state do you visit? (check all that apply)

Answered: 267 Skipped: 419



SWOT Exercise

Strengths: What does EWML do well?

Weaknesses: In what areas could EWML improve?

Opportunities: What are our aspirations for EWML?

Threats: What things need to change so that EWML can reach its aspirations?

Opportunity: Marketing Strategy

Strengths to build on:

- Programming
- Staff
- Building

Current weaknesses:

- Existing marketing
- Siting on the road

Opportunity: Space Needs Assessment

Strengths to build on:

- Building

Current Weaknesses:

- Lack of teen space
- Lack of walled-in space
- Limited meeting room space
- No sense of welcoming upon arrival
- No place to eat
- No self-checkout

Opportunity: Staff development

Strengths to build on:

- Staff are welcoming, knowledgeable, friendly, professional, and responsive

Current Weaknesses:

- Existing staff configuration

Opportunity: Community Engagement/Partnerships

Strengths to build on:

- Current interest groups created
- Institutional creativity

Weaknesses:

- Existing marketing
- Hours
- Staff configuration

Threats

- Budget (municipal and internal)
- Lack of effective communications, centralized info sources
- Perception/naysayers

Selecting Service Priorities

Service priorities:

what a library does, or what it offers to the public in an effort to meet community needs

Service priorities

1. Connect to Community: Residents will experience the library as the hub for belonging and connecting to the community. The library will be a place where everyone can feel welcomed and supported. The library will be a central source for community information.

Programming examples could include: 1. Undertake a review of the physical space with new service priorities in mind, 2. Position staff at key junctions in existing space to welcome the public and demonstrate downloading services or other new offerings, 3. Review meeting room policies, 4. Extend invitations to target groups. 5. Participate in community task forces and committees, 6. Assign staff members to each of the active or emerging groups in town as liaison to resources.

Service priorities

2. Create Young Readers: Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Programming examples could include: 1. Present regularly scheduled story programs divided by age of intended audience, 2. Develop theme packets that include books, tapes, toys, software, and games for parents and caregivers to use with their children, 3. Include a Read-to-Me component in the summer reading program, and other reading programs, with incentives for parents and caregivers and the children, 4. Review census data and school projections to annually adjust offerings for age groups. 5. Create opportunities for children's staff to work from informal spaces alongside children and caregivers.

Service priorities

3. Build Successful Enterprises Entrepreneurs, business owners, and nonprofit organizations will have a welcoming place to work on new ideas to bring to the marketplace.

Programming examples could include: 1. Sponsor or co-sponsor workshops and seminars on topics of interest to businesses and entrepreneurs, 2. Establish and maintain a business/entrepreneur center in the library, 3. Make presentations to local business organizations about the library's business-related services and programs, 4. Call on businesses and shadow their activities to determine service delivery

Service priorities

4. Create and Share Content Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

Programming examples could include: 1. Provide a multimedia production studio with the tools needed to create animated and live-action videos, record music and audio, 2. Sponsor writers' workshops and publish the results, 3. Provide hands-on classes to teach people to use a variety of media production tools.

Service priorities

5. Be an Informed Citizen Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision-making.

Programming examples could include: 1. Convene meetings to provide an opportunity for people to discuss community issues, 2. Host regularly scheduled open discussions with elected officials and make discussions available as podcasts or downloadable digital videos, 3. Present programs in partnership with local and national organizations that promote democracy and civic involvement, 4. Offer to be a hub for connecting residents with contrasting opinions.

Service priorities

6. Satisfy Curiosity and Stimulate Imagination Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Programming examples could include: 1. Provide events and opportunities on a variety of topics of interest to various and mixed age groups, 2. Work with local organizations to co-sponsor demonstrations on topics of interest to various age groups, 3. Provide access to adult education courses and streaming national events through distance learning or video-on-demand. 4. Present programs on new books and particular genres and sponsor author visits in virtual formats if in person is not possible.