From Awareness to Funding

Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018

A new survey of US voters commissioned by OCLC, the American Library Association, and its Public Library Association division offers valuable insights on current voter perceptions as public libraries continue to strategize for the future. Read on for a selection of key survey findings.

Public libraries are essential to communities

55%
view the public library as an essential local institution

58%
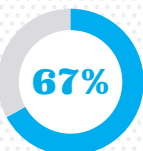believe public libraries advance education for any community
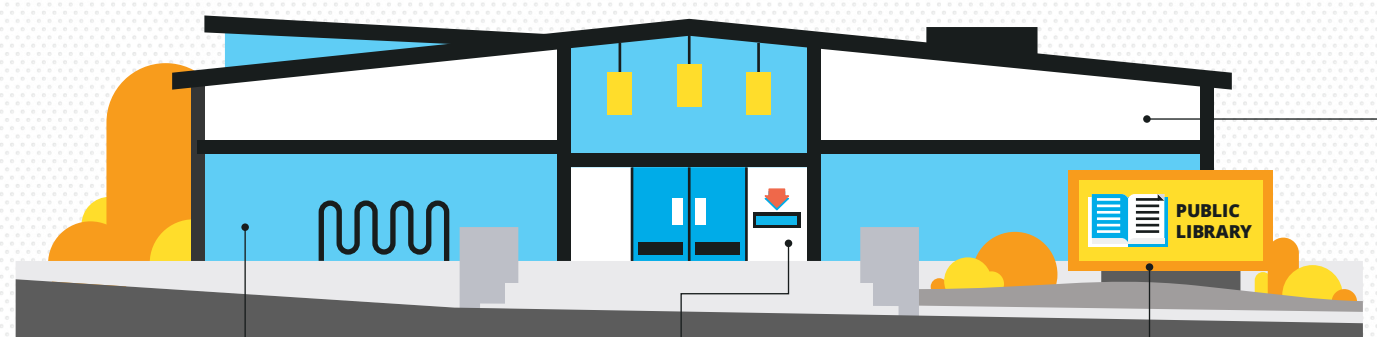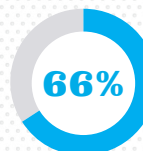
44%
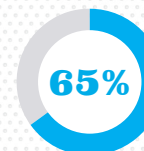view the library as a gathering place for community members

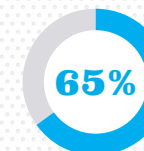**2 in 3 voters** place high importance on foundational library services, including:

67%
quiet areas

66%
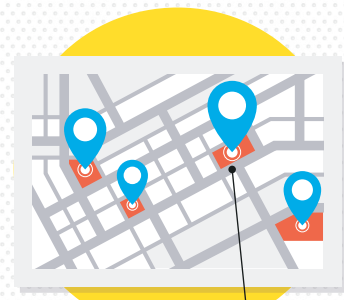books and technology

65%
a broad range of materials to explore

65%
computers and internet

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Voters frequently visit libraries in person and online

70%
of voters have visited a public library in the last year, an average of

8.6 visits

52%
have visited the library's website in the last year, an average of

7.6 visits

Majority of voters support local funding for libraries
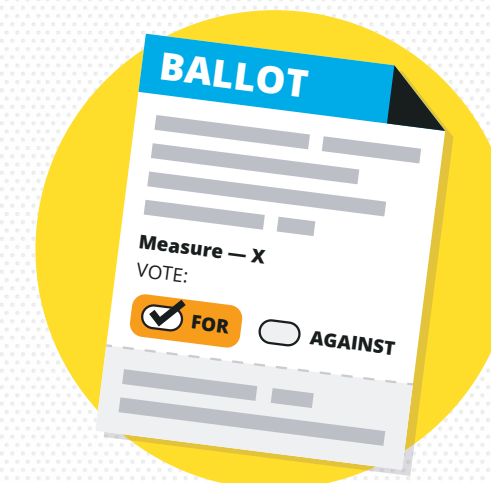
58% would vote favorably for libraries at the ballot box

27%
would definitely vote in favor

31%
would probably vote in favor

BALLOT

Measure — X
VOTE:
☑ FOR   ○ AGAINST

Most voters are confused about library funding sources

59%
of voters think most library funding comes from nonlocal sources
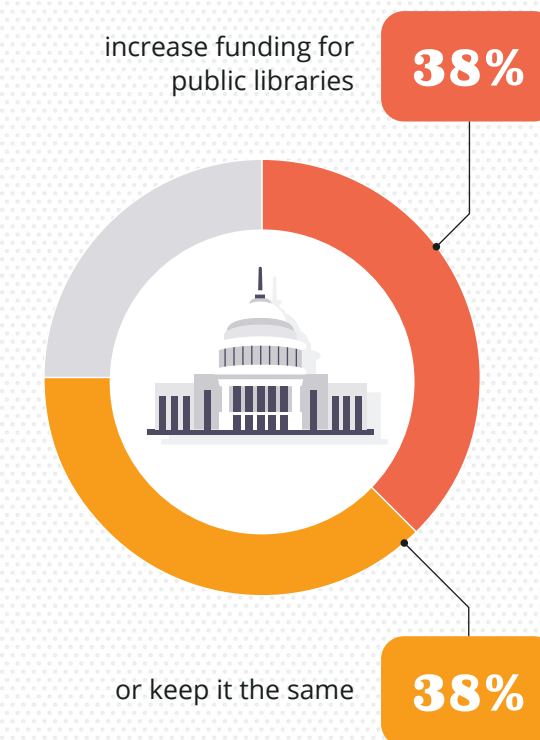*(e.g., state, federal, donations, fines, and fees)*

In reality,
86%
of funding comes from local sources (IMLS, 2015)

Voters support other funding options

Most voters support federal funding

76% say the federal government should either...
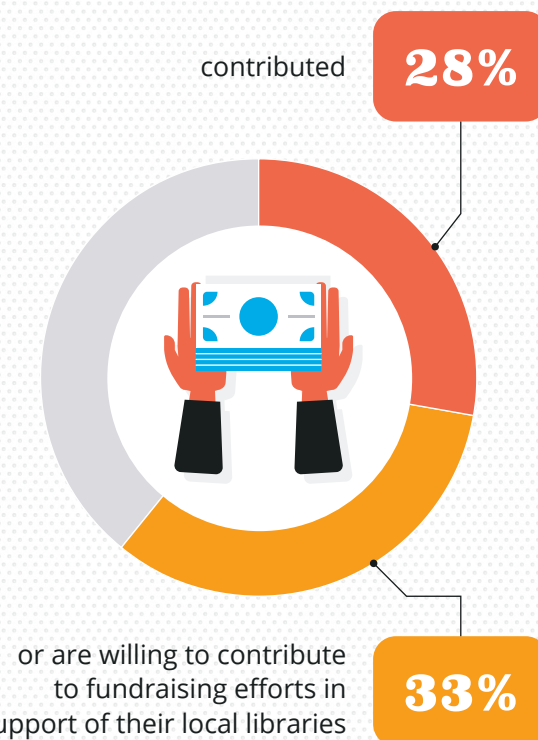
increase funding for public libraries **38%**

or keep it the same **38%**

The majority of voters are willing to donate money to libraries

61% have either...

contributed **28%**

or are willing to contribute to fundraising efforts in support of their local libraries **33%**

Read the full report to learn more!
Visit oc.lc/awareness2018

to discover the variations in attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors among different segments of the voting public over the past ten years and how that drives their support for libraries today.

ALA American Library Association   PublicLibrary ASSOCIATION   OCLC   WebJunction