Voter Perceptions of Libraries: Results and Methodology from the 2018 From Awareness to Funding Study

RIPL Webinar Series
May 23, 2019
2:00-3:00 Eastern/11:00-12:00 Pacific

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Voter Perceptions of Libraries: Results and Methodology from the 2018 From Awareness to Funding Study


Brief time travel to 2008

Image by Andrew Martin from Pixabay

2008 OCLC report

- Behavioral and psychological drivers
- Usage is a weak indicator
- Perceptions of library staff are key
- Power of transformative libraries
- Support claims are not commitments
- Awareness gaps persist

OCLC

From Awareness to Funding
A study of library support in America

A Report to the OCLC Membership
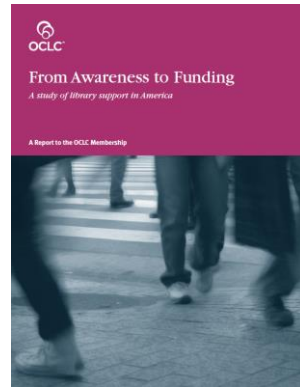
www.oclc.org/research/publications
/all/funding.html

Strategic responses to 2008 report

- OCLC's **Geek the Library** campaign
- PLA's **Turning the Page** training
- ALA's **Libraries Transform** campaign
- ALA **Advocacy Bootcamp** training
- **EveryLibrary** political action campaign
- Local recalibrations

We geek
saving
lives

Eric Jon Job photography

Slide 1:

- **Rise of social networks**
- **Video streaming**
- **Smart phones, tablets, Kindles**
- **The Great Recession**

- **Millennials in the workforce**
- **3 presidential elections**
- **Gig economy**

Image by Gerd Altmann on Pixabay

Slide 2:

2018 questions

- What do *today's* voters think of the library?
- How does that impact *support* for library funding?
- How does that inform library advocacy *strategy*?

From Awareness to Funding
Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018
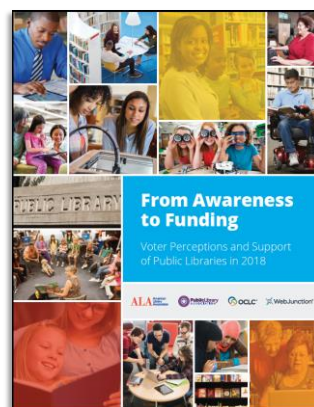
oc.lc/awareness2018

A research collaboration

- Leo Burnett USA
- ALA/PLA
  - Barb Macikas
  - Larra Clark
  - Marci Merola
- Public Library Advisors
  - Vailey Oehlke
  - Pam Sandlian Smith
  - Gina Millsap
  - Susan DiMattia

Used a Research Panel to

- Reach the "right" audience
- Ensure a diverse audience
- Use weighting for a representative sample
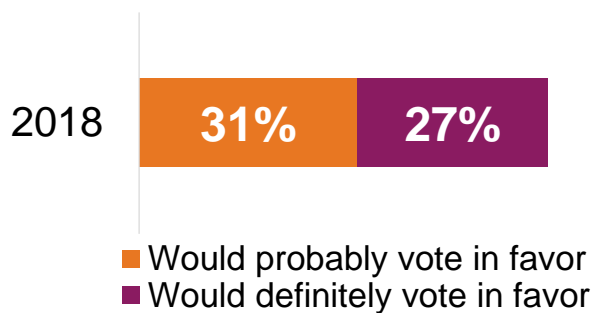- Generalize the findings confidently
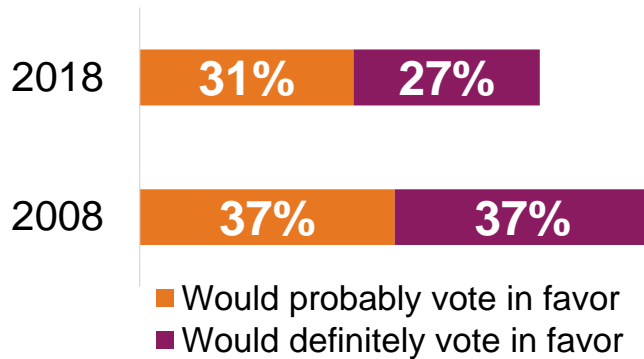
Highlights of comparative findings

Image from Pixabay

OCLC

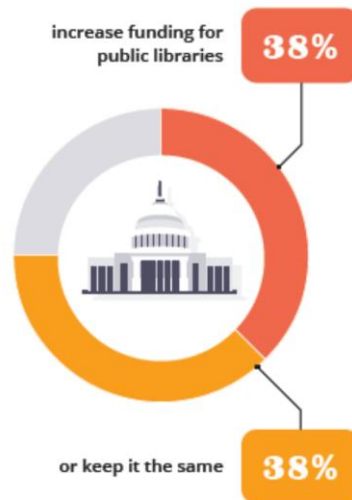
Most voters say they would vote in favor of local library funding.

2018	**31%**	**27%**

■ Would probably vote in favor
■ Would definitely vote in favor

But fewer voters are committed to library support than in 2008.

Year	Would probably vote in favor	Would definitely vote in favor
2018	31%	27%
2008	37%	37%

- Would probably vote in favor
- Would definitely vote in favor

Voters support federal funding for libraries.

76% say the federal government should either...

increase funding for public libraries — 38%

or keep it the same — 38%

But many are confused about the sources of library funding.

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

In reality,
86% of funding comes from local sources (IMLS, 2015)
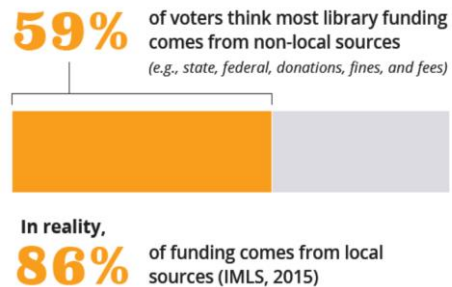
A majority of voters are willing to donate money to libraries.

61% have either...

contributed **28%**

or are willing to contribute to fundraising efforts in support of their local libraries **33%**
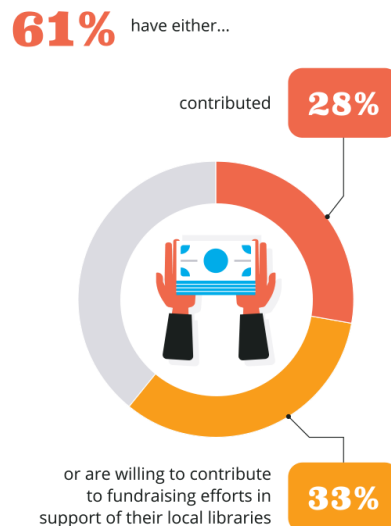
Most voters value public libraries as an essential local institution and a source of community pride.

	2018
▪ Essential local institution	55%
▪ Source of community pride	53%

But even more did a decade ago.

	2018	2008
▪ Essential local institution	55%	71%
▪ Source of community pride	53%	73%

For most voters, libraries remain relevant in the Internet age.

	2018	2008
▪ Internet is equivalent to libraries	27%	26%
▪ Book retailers are easier	19%	15%
▪ Libraries are unnecessary in Internet age	13%	13%
▪ Internet makes libraries obsolete	24%	14%

Traditional services are still very important to most voters.

- ▪ Quiet space
- ▪ Free, broad range of materials
- ▪ Convenient hours and location
- ▪ Free internet, computers, Wi-Fi

And a majority give their library high ratings on those services.

A majority of voters rate library staff qualities as very important.

	2018
▪ Friendly and approachable	69%
▪ Expert connector to information and resources	60%
▪ Teaches how to find trustworthy information	57%
▪ Makes library a place for fun and creativity	57%
▪ True advocate for lifelong learning	56%
▪ Knows what books children would love	56%

Ratings of local library staff qualities declined since 2008.

	2018	2008
▪ Friendly and approachable	53%	67%
▪ Is lifelong learning advocate	46%	56%
▪ Has community knowledge	42%	54%
▪ Knows how to address needs	42%	48%
▪ Has excellent computer skills	42%	50%
▪ Is well known in community	31%	40%

More voters today see their library as a resource for job skills, immigrants.

	2018	2008
▪ Helps to provide people with workplace skills	42%	35%
▪ Services for immigrants, non-English speakers	35%	25%

Fewer voters see the library's role in children's lives than did in 2008.

	2018	2008
▪ Excellent for homework help	51%	71%
▪ Excellent preparation for school	44%	53%
▪ Not as important in kids' lives	36%	24%

More voters today say it's important for the library to be a community hub.

	2018	2008
Activities, entertainment not found elsewhere	48%	38%
Be a place for people to gather and socialize	45%	36%
Support civic discourse and community building	47%	

And more voters see their local library as a hub today.

	2018	2008
Activities, entertainment not found elsewhere	43%	34%
Be a place for people to gather and socialize	44%	35%
Is a frequent social hub for the community	30%	18%
Support civic discourse and community building	40%	

Market Segment Analysis

Segmentation algorithm

- Demographics
- Voting behavior
- Library voting support
- Funding attitudes
- Awareness and use of libraries
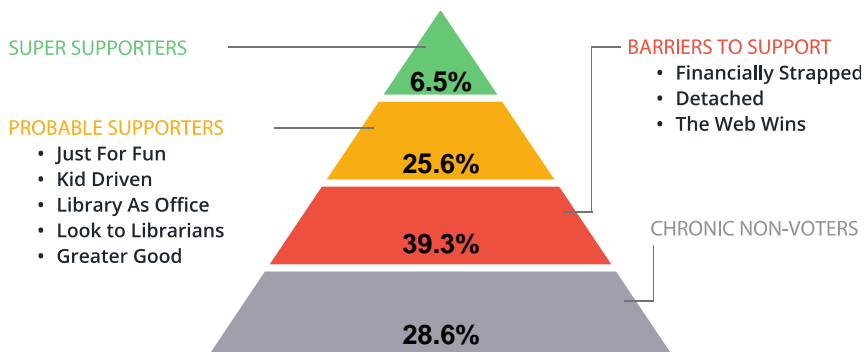- Perceptions of libraries
- Perceptions of librarians

Segmentation algorithm

Probseg5=-97.16812+(S5*6.76748)+(S6_D*1.84689)+(S6_P*0.69517)+(S6_S*1.30023)+(S6_R*0.39545)+(S6_S*4.2757)+(visit*0.16256)+(S8_A*1.24075)+(S8_B *-0.24813)+(S8_C*-0.29078)+(S8_D*0.17233)+(S8_E*2.07392)+(S8_F*-0.41428)+(S8_G*1.52127)+(S8_H*0.07681)+(S8_I*-0.36296)+(S8_J*-0.05702)+(S8_K*1.17063)+(S8_L*-0.58982)+(S9_A*2.23742)+(S9_B*0.56517)+(S9_C*1.68851)+(S9_D*1.24073)+(S9_E*-2.15916)+(S9_F*0.21663)+(S9_G*-0.06856)+(S9_H*0.25151)+(S9_I*1.15449)+(S9_J*-0.12081)+(S10_A*-1.0782)+(S10_B*0.16237)+(S7B*14.70333)+(SS7*3.82103)+(kid*0.02921)+(SS9*0.52861)+(profgrp*5.45865);

Probseg6=-91.10632+(S5*6.80751)+(S6_D*1.81361)+(S6_P*0.66345)+(S6_S*1.18231)+(S6_R*0.58818)+(S6_S*3.91223)+(visit*0.16149)+(S8_A *1.15678)+(S8_B *0.69857)+(S8_C* 0.30989)+(S8_D *0.04564)+(S8_E *0.80997)+(S8_F*-0.48247)+(S8_G*1.29087)+(S8_H*-0.26025)+(S8_I*-0.48805)+(S8_J*-0.02327)+(S8_K*1.37349)+(S8_L*-0.4987)+(S9_A*1.73365)+(S9_B*0.04969)+(S9_C*1.11979)+(S9_D*0.89482)+(S9_E*-1.42895)+(S9_F*0.0966)+(S9_G*0.68217)+(S9_H*0.42132)+(S9_I*1.57445)+(S9_J*0.27862)+(S10_A*-1.27965)+(S10_B*-0.04012)+(S7B*14.30248)+(SS7*3.81272)+(kid*0.04112)+(SS9*0.34198)+(profgrp*5.68212);

Library Support Pyramid

SUPER SUPPORTERS — **6.5%**

PROBABLE SUPPORTERS
- Just For Fun
- Kid Driven
- Library As Office
- Look to Librarians
- Greater Good

25.6%

39.3%

28.6%

BARRIERS TO SUPPORT
- **Financially Strapped**
- **Detached**
- **The Web Wins**

CHRONIC NON-VOTERS

"Barriers to Support" Tier

SUPER SUPPORTERS

1

PROBABLE SUPPORTERS
• Just For Fun
• Kid Driven
• Library As Office
• Look to Librarians
• Greater Good

2

3

4

BARRIERS TO SUPPORT
• Financially Strapped
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CHRONIC NON-VOTERS

The Web Wins segment

Getty Images

"Probable Supporters" Tier

SUPER SUPPORTERS

PROBABLE SUPPORTERS
- Just For Fun
- Kid Driven
- Library As Office
- Look to Librarians
- Greater Good

1

2

3

4

BARRIERS TO SUPPORT
- Financially Strapped
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CHRONIC NON-VOTERS
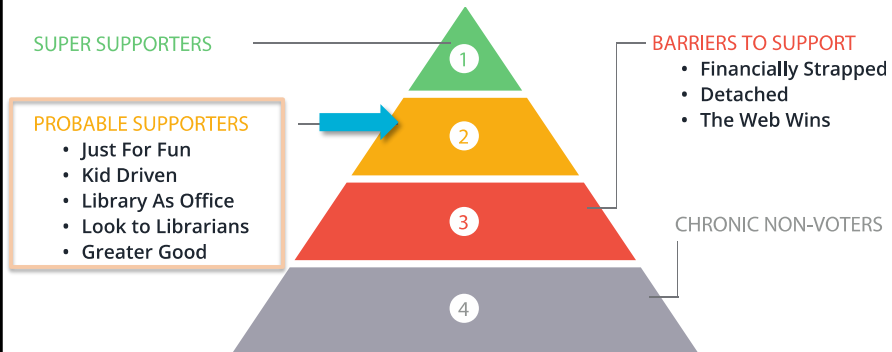
Library as Office segment

Getty Images

Kid Driven segment

Getty Images

"Super Supporters" Tier

SUPER SUPPORTERS

1

PROBABLE SUPPORTERS
- Just For Fun
- Kid Driven
- Library As Office
- Look to Librarians
- Greater Good

2

3

4

BARRIERS TO SUPPORT
- Financially Strapped
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CHRONIC NON-VOTERS
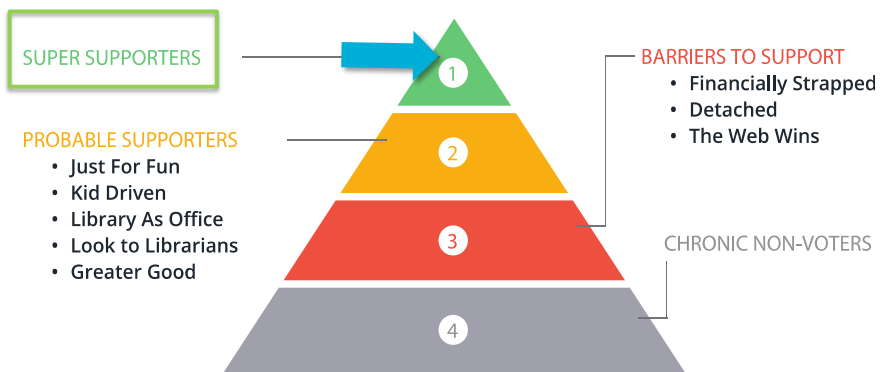
Super Supporters

So now what?

Photo by Emily Morter on Unsplash

OCLC

People-centered approaches

- Cultivate and steward strategic relationships
- Help your Super Supporters support
- Break through the distractions, overcome the "meh"
- Practice human-centered design ("design thinking")
- Apply an equity lens to outreach, services, programs
- Target with segment-based marketing
- Your creativity, fun, and hope are infectious
- (Re)assess and (re)evaluate iteratively
- Partner with local market researchers to probe further

Resources

- Dig into the data, explore the research: oc.lc/awareness2018
- Hold **community and stakeholder discussions**
- Join the **From Awareness to Funding Facebook Group:** www.facebook.com/groups/FATF2018
- Revisit **OCLC, PLA, ALA (and other) advocacy** resources www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/advocacy.html
- Send WebJunction your ideas and requests for **programming, training, resources:** streamss@oclc.org
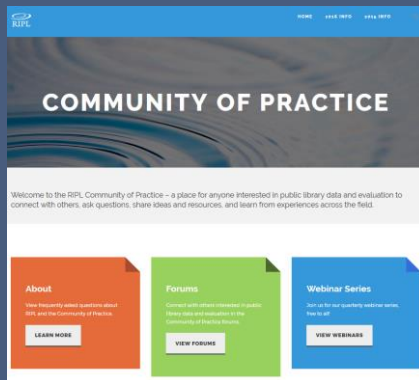
RIPL Webinar Series

Power Up Reports with Google

September 24, 2019 1:00-2:00 Eastern/10:00-11:00 Pacific
Lynn Hoffman, Director of Operations
Somerset County Library System of New Jersey

Thank You!

Webinar evaluation:
https://s.lrs.org/voter