



# COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS SUMMARY REPORT 2024

**BACKGROUND:** In July 2024, several Library staff members conducted brief, informal interviews at local retail establishments (Elia’s Country Store and Market Basket) and the Buzzell Senior Center. Library staff polled approximately 150 community members about their Library usage and interests.

## RETAIL LOCATIONS AND # OF RESPONDENTS:

1. Elia’s Country Store Respondents = 51
2. Elia’s Country Store Respondents = 45+
3. Market Basket Respondents = 45

## 1. DO YOU GO TO OR USE THE LIBRARY?

Yes		No		Non-Local		Total Respondents
67	47%	62	43%	14	10%	143

## RELATED FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

### a. Asked Approximately 45 “YES” Respondents: Is There Anything You Would Like the Library to Change?

- Offer More Activities for Children
- Increase the Drop-in Opportunities for Kids
- Expand Attendance Capacities for Kids’ Outside Activities
- Offer More Programs for Adults
- Expand the Promotion of Hot Spots Available for Borrowing
- **Misc. Comments/Feedback:**
  - Continue offering Dungeons & Dragons
  - A patron expressed how grateful she was that we always helped her find books for her mom before she passed
  - One respondent expressed frustration that outdoor programs had registration limits

### b. Asked Approximately 49 “NO” Respondents: Why Don’t You Use the Library?

- Numerous non-users said they don’t live in Wilmington.
- Several respondents stated they no longer use the Library because their children have grown up.
- Some people said they don’t have enough time to visit the Library.
- One respondent very recently moved to Wilmington.
- “Life got in the way.”

- Responses Regarding Not Needing the Library:
  - Used to use DVDs but have largely switched to streaming.
  - Switched mostly to digital vs. physical books. The interviewer shared information regarding Libby/Hoopla resources because the respondent didn't know he could borrow digital books.
  - "I get everything I need on the internet."
  - "I don't read."
    - Respondents who said they don't read were informed that "The Library is more than just books! We have a Library of Things, language learning resources, DVDs, etc."
- c. Asked Approximately 24 "NO" Respondents: What Could the Library Offer That Would Interest You?**
  - A respondent said they would love to see a youth writing group. They have been looking into a group like that for their son.
  - "I want more stuff to do at the Library with my grandkids."
- d. Asked Approximately 14 "NON-LOCAL" Respondents: What Do You Love About Your Town's Library?**
  - Comfortable play area
  - Conference rooms
  - Libby

**INTERVIEWERS' NOTES:**

- Interviewers asked a group of non-local non-users if they use their local library. It was a good way to engage people and encourage them to think about their local libraries, not just Wilmington Memorial Library.
- People often expressed interest in "more programs" because they're familiar with that particular Library offering. However, at the same time, they chatted with us about how they couldn't make it to the Library (too busy, scheduling conflicts).

**2. DO YOU USE THE LIBRARY'S DIGITAL RESOURCES?**

Yes		No		Total Respondents
19	47%	26	43%	45

**3. WHEN THINKING ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE – WHAT WOULD BETTER SERVE RESIDENTS: FOCUSING ON PROGRAMMING AND RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY \*OR\* INSIDE THE LIBRARY?**

Inside the Library		Outside the Library		Total Respondents*
33	61.1%	21	38.9%	54

\* Some respondents chose both options.

### **INTERVIEWERS' NOTES:**

- Initially, we asked people about their potential interest in “pop-up libraries,” but most weren’t aware of the term. We simplified the question’s wording by stressing programs and resources in the Library building (*Inside the Library*) versus activities and services offsite (*Outside the Library*). If we repeat this feedback-gathering activity in the future, providing examples of types of outreach and possible pop-up library locations may yield more accurate data.
- A small number of respondents lived in neighboring towns (Billerica, Andover, etc.). We encouraged them to answer our questions with the Wilmington community in mind.
- People assumed we were soliciting donations. Beckoning people over with a brief question like, “Would you like to take a quick survey about the Library and get a tote bag?” may capture people’s attention and clarify we’re seeking input.

### **4. ASKED APPROXIMATELY 20 LIBRARY USERS – WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT THE LIBRARY?**

- Several people said they love the new first floor and always enjoy being greeted by friendly staff.
- Several parents said they enjoy all the children’s programming and love that the Library is a free space to entertain their kids.
- There were also several comments about how people love the ease of printing at the Library and enjoy reading the newspapers in the morning. One person even commented about how they love our social media posts.
- Love being able to get books from libraries all around.
- A teacher mentioned she loves getting books for her students and enjoys the children’s room.
- A gentleman who is a lawyer in town expressed interest in offering his services to do a program or two at the Library for patrons.

### **INTERVIEWERS' GENERAL COMMENTS:**

- At Elia’s Country Store, the interviews went really well. Most people were receptive to chatting with the interviewers for a minute or two.
- We may have convinced some people to visit the Library to check it out and/or use our digital services.
- People enjoyed the swag we gave away (totes, ‘zines, pens, stickers), and several people asked to donate money to us.

## BUZZELL SENIOR CENTER RESPONDENTS = 6 (4 Tech Help Participants + 2 Buzzell Staff Members)

### 1. DO YOU VISIT THE LIBRARY?

Occasionally*		No		Total Respondents
3	50%	3	50%	6

\* The “Occasionally” responses may have been given because respondents didn’t want to hurt the interviewer’s feelings by saying no.

- A couple of respondents live in other towns (e.g., Reading).

### 2. DO YOU USE THE LIBRARY’S DIGITAL SERVICES?

- None of the respondents use the Library’s digital services, which isn’t surprising. Two respondents surveyed have received Tech Help at the Library in the past.

**INTERVIEWERS’ NOTES:** The Library should keep this population in mind and remember that most seniors use traditional Library resources and services. Some libraries have gotten rid of all their print books. We should most certainly *not* do that.

### 3. WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER THE LIBRARY OFFER MORE OF: PROGRAMMING (IN THE LIBRARY) OR POP-UP LIBRARY SERVICES (OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY)?

- All respondents chose programming (in the Library) because the Buzzell Center has a sizable library. The interviewer visited the shelves and noted that their books, movies, and CDs could be borrowed and returned whenever they wanted. It’s a direct competition with the Library.

#### INTERVIEWERS’ GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Non-local people visit the Buzzell Center. They don’t use their local senior centers, so it’s likely they don’t use their hometown libraries. They might be interested in Wilmington Memorial Library if we approached them in the right manner.
- Consider placing marketing materials on the Buzzell Center’s bookshelves. It appears to be a high-traffic area, so bookmarks, brochures, and flyers would likely be seen by a population that doesn’t think of the Wilmington Memorial Library because they’ve got a library right there.