LEARNING FROM THE PANDEMIC:

Mechanics of Post-Pandemic Programming

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ABOUT

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In 2020, libraries pivoted.

We delivered resources to meet new community demands.

We promoted services which could be seamlessly modified to virtual events.

We overcame barriers to provide programming to every patron, of every background and nearly every need.

Learning from the Pandemic: Mechanics of Post-Pandemic Programming is a toolkit for every library and every staff member who delivers programming. We define programming as: "Planning and presenting cultural and community programs on behalf of the library" (American Library Association). This resource takes a trauma-informed approach to enhance services to patrons and communities most affected by the pandemic.

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VIRTUAL
Virtual programming is conducted entirely on Zoom or another virtual platform. These programs can be live or prerecorded. Virtual programs can include items distributed to use at home during the live or prerecorded presentation.

HYBRID
Hybrid programming has an interactive component. This interactive component can include an activity that is connected to a live or prerecorded video on Zoom or another platform, or can be completed independent of a video at home.

IN-PERSON
In-person programming takes place at the library or in a physical location with other patrons. CDC precautions are followed.

PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships are a critical component of library programming. This section includes where to look and how to approach partnerships during a pandemic.

SURVEY
To develop this toolkit we first conducted a survey. See the results here.

RESOURCES
We scoured articles, videos and interviews for toolkit recommendations. This is the full list.

For ease of use this toolkit is divided into the following sections:

Within the Virtual, Hybrid and In-person programming sections you will information on:

PLANNING
The benefits and procedures of programming.

POLICY
Policies provide structure and guidelines for library staff and patrons that allow for safe experiences and programming in a library. Depending on the organization, a policy may provide a document that needs approval from the Library Board of Trustees, City Council or other governing bodies. A note that organizations should evaluate if these policy recommendations would be better suited as guidelines, practices, or procedures.

BARRIERS
Inequities that can prevent library users or staff from accessing programs.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS
Programming examples suitable for virtual, hybrid or in-person activities.

TOOLKIT STRUCTURE

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BACKGROUND & RESEARCH

One of the 2021 challenges for the Developing California Library Leaders Leadership Challenge is "Post-COVID-19 Library Services." Our group, made up of four public librarians and one academic librarian, accepted this challenge. We understand and acknowledge that many libraries are making do with existing funding, supplies, books and more. But we desired to provide additional recommendations for resources, funding, partnerships and wellness from a trauma-informed perspective.

According to the Buffalo Center for Social Research, "Trauma-Informed Care understands and considers the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize" (University at Buffalo).

Survival doesn't always equate to thriving. What happens when all of the funding is exhausted? How can staff continue to care for themselves while continuing to serve library users? In the aftermath of COVID-19, how will libraries protect their library users and staff? What could we have done better if we had more funding or resources?

There are so many questions and even more variables. It is impossible to tackle every aspect of post-COVID-19 library services for every type of library. We decided to use what we have learned from research, libraries and a survey we conducted to focus on creating a trauma-informed programming toolkit. In it, we consider inclusive and equitable programming options for all communities.

Our research included websites, blogs, journal articles, and videos. We also conducted a survey, which examined current programming models and the needs of California libraries. This informed and shaped our toolkit, so that we could fill in the gaps of program planning and implementation.

The recommendations in this toolkit can be adopted and adapted by any type of library. The toolkit is not meant to be prescriptive nor an exhaustive list of resources. All programs can be scaled up or down and adapted to any library type. We encourage you to comment and share additional resources that have supported your work and patrons' needs in this time. Your input will contribute to more successful, vibrant libraries in a post-COVID world.

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REFERENCES

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach states that a program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

1. Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.
2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

A trauma-informed approach can be implemented in any type of service setting or organization and is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or treatments that are designed specifically to address the consequences of trauma and to facilitate healing.
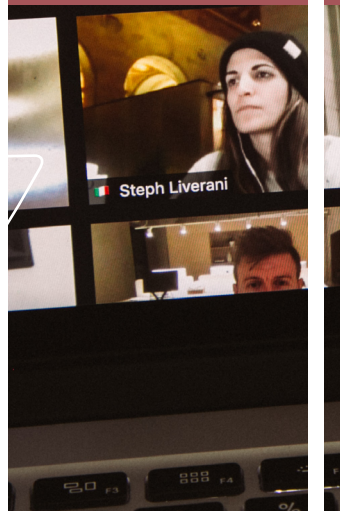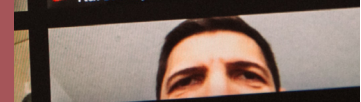
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DEFINING TRAUMA-INFORMED

VIRTUAL

07
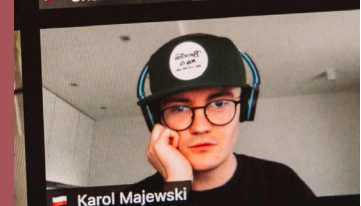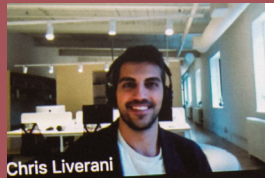
Laptop screen
displaying
multiple people
on virtual call

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PLANNING

Virtual programming is here to stay. Asynchronous (on-demand) and synchronous (live) programs break regional barriers and allow library users to participate from anywhere around the world.

The benefits of virtual programming are:

1. Live programs provide human interaction without human contact;
2. Live programs in webinar format can be recorded and made available for on-demand viewing;
3. Live programs that utilize Zoom can also live stream via Facebook or Youtube;
4. On-demand programs can be made accessible via library websites for library users to view anytime;
5. On-demand programs can be prerecorded individually or in batches without the pressure of a live audience; and
6. Supply kits for either type of program can be picked up from the library at the library users leisure.

Suggestions to include in virtual programming policy:

1. Security settings for digital platforms
2. Live captioning via an autocaption tool or text-to-speech or live interpreters

POLICY

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BARRIERS

There are many inequities that can prevent library users from accessing virtual programs. From lack of or inadequate technology or wifi to the skill level or comfort using technology. One of the most exhaustive barriers for most libraries is funding. In order to put IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access) into practice, there has to be a reasonable budget to allow for actionable accommodations for the needs of library users.

It isn't easy to overcome all of the inequities that prevent library users from accessing virtual library programs, but the goal is to make every effort to Include everyone, Diversify programs for diverse folks with varying skill levels and abilities, and provide Equitable Access to technology needed to bridge the digital divide. Listed below are just a few recommendations that can assist libraries overcome barriers.

INTERPRETERS OR LIVE CAPTIONING
The high cost of hiring a trained interpreter to interpret at every event is unreasonable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Tap into existing resources
   a) Curate a list of library staff who speak additional languages, including American Sign Language (ASL) within your library organization and/or other nearby libraries. Library staff from the curated list can be used to interpret at live virtual events or prerecording sessions. The recorded programs can be hosted on the websites of all participating libraries.

2. Use community volunteers
   a) Community volunteers are a great resource. Note that participating volunteers should be vetted and approved to ensure their interpretation is accurate, and to prevent any miscommunication or misrepresentation of the library.

TECHNOLOGY, WHICH INCLUDES VIRTUAL EVENT PLATFORMS, LAPTOPS/TABLETS, TECH SUPPORT FOR LIBRARY STAFF AND LIBRARY USERS
Having tech support for some libraries isn't an option due to budget constraints. For library systems with tech support, oftentimes tech support is stretched thin and is unable to provide adequate support.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Educate library users. Create short videos and instruction guides on subjects such as: using a library laptop/tablet, connecting to wifi hotspots, how to join programs via Zoom/Youtube/Facebook, how to access on-demand programs, and the top technology issues and how to fix them.
2. Share resources with nearby or other system libraries. Co-host events so a tech person or responsible staff member can monitor one live event.
3. Instead of hiring a tech person, pay for the training of one or a few library staff members to get tech training.
4. Use existing staff who are familiar with virtual platforms. For example, create an Emerging Technology committee. This will use existing staff to explore technology that will be vital in post-pandemic programming, especially hybrid programming. Committees can engage staff members of all classifications.

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Woman pointing at a screen
wearing a mask

DIVERSE PROGRAMMING FOR DIVERSE PATRONS

Duplicating programs for specific library users, such as neurodiverse patrons and/or disabled patrons can prove time consuming.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Pre-record programs using sensory friendly colors, techniques, voice tone, supplies and more.
2. Host a virtual movie viewing with closed captioning.
3. Host a Book Read. A book of choice is read aloud for those who are unable to read and includes captioning to help others follow along.
4. Easy arts and crafts programs with large size supply items that are easier to manipulate are a great solution for all patrons.

RESOURCE SCARCITY

Libraries may not have the resources or supplies for multiple events or the number of patrons who attend virtual programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Host programs that utilize household everyday materials, easy to find supplies or dollar store supplies.
2. Host a supply donation drive. Solicit the community in efforts to provide quality programming to all.

Weston Public Library Virtual
Events
Lewisville Public Library Virtual
Library Programs

NOTABLE PROGRAMS

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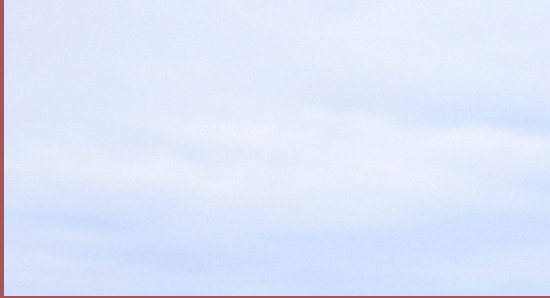
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HYBRID

Groups of people
physically distancing
sitting on the grass
outside by buildings

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The idea of hybrid programming is nothing new. An early definition described this approach as "an environment with physical and virtual services supporting professional activities of the users at their workplace from the discovery of information to the manipulation and analysis of the delivered resources" (Allen). We now meet the expectations of many in our community who have come to expect that some, if not most, services we provide are offered in person and online.

According to a Public Library Association survey, more than half of public library respondents reported they have transitioned summer learning programs from in-person to online (American Library Association). Hybrid programming is one way to engage community members who are ready to return to the library while ensuring safety precautions, such as social distancing, are met.

The benefits of hybrid programming are:
1. Curbing Zoom fatigue
2. Hosting an in-person program while making it available to those at home
3. Making available supply kits that can be completed at home, in the library or elsewhere
4. Developing innovative on-your-own time activities, which connect patrons to the library off site

Suggestions to include in hybrid programming policy:

1. Security settings for digital platforms
2. Live captioning via an autocaption tool or text-to-speech or live interpreters
3. If providing an in-person program, ensure Center for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) social distancing requirements are met
4. Provide outside program if space permits and is accessible to all patrons

POLICY

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BARRIERS

Barriers to hybrid programming include all those mentioned in Virtual programming in addition to:

1. RESOURCE SCARCITY
   Libraries may not have the resources or supplies for multiple events or the number of patrons who attend hybrid programming.

   RECOMMENDATIONS:
   1. Host programs that utilize everyday household materials, easy-to-find supplies or dollar store supplies.
   2. Host a supply donation drive. Solicit the community in efforts to provide quality programming to all.

2. SPACE SCARCITY
   Libraries may not have the physical space required to host attendees for hybrid programming. Georgia Lomax, executive director of the Pierce County Library System, noted, "I think the hardest thing is just that our buildings and parking lots weren't designed for the new things we are offering—like curbside service or tech access outside. We evaluate each location and do our best with their sidewalks, parking lot flows, front entry design, and spaces. People love the speed and convenience of curbside, and I'm sure if we have the opportunity to design or remodel buildings, we'll incorporate it" (Freudenberger).

   RECOMMENDATIONS:
   1. Host programs outside of the library if space permits (such as a garden, a large patio, or block off a portion of the parking lot)
      a) When hosting outside programs be mindful of accessibility.
      - Accommodate patrons with ramps when needed and socially distanced walkways.
      - Ensure that tables are at patron's height and material is accessible for use.
      - Consider using a speaker or megaphone so all patrons can hear instructions.
   2. Partner with a community organization or community facility to host programs in a larger indoor or outdoor space
      a) When hosting at a community center ensure that it is in a central, accessible location for patrons.
      - Public transportation is a necessity for some patrons.
      - Bike paths open up more options for patron mobility.
   3. Connect with the parks and rec department and host programs at a local park
   4. Host programs exclusively online but have patrons pick up material to bring home and attend virtually
   5. Host programs, such as a Storywalk, in neighborhoods
      a) When hosting walking programs be mindful of accessibility
      - Provide options for walking and wheelchair mobility.

Small finger placing pieces of colorful paper on white paper

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NOTABLE PROGRAMS

5 Popular Children's Take-and-
Make Kits for Libraries

Host a Storywalk

Illustration and written story on
paper on a fence post

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IN-PERSON

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Child sitting with an open book

PLANNING

The importance of in-person programming is clear in its absence. The absence or break of routine and continued education of children and young adults has been noted by the CDC to contribute to the social, emotional, and mental well-being that has been impacted by the pandemic (COVID-19 Parental Resources Kit - Early Childhood). Trauma faced at these developmental stages may have long-term consequences across their lifespan.

The benefits of in-person programming are numerous but include:
1. Developing socialization and social skills in young children
2. Patron access to technology
3. Patron use of the library

The negative effects of a lack of in-person programming are:
1. Possible delay in socialization skills or education gaps in young children
2. A lack of access to free, accessible programming and technology
3. A deterioration of mental health (Anxiety and Depression)

Two people with face masks on sitting in a library

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POLICY

Amending policies can slow down the re-implementation of in-person programming and reopening efforts. A note that organizations should evaluate if these policy recommendations would be better suited as guidelines, practices, or procedures.

Policies or guidelines that libraries may wish to put in place, explore, or refresh are:
1. MASKS
   a) While vaccinated individuals do not need to wear masks indoors (CITATION NEEDED), library mask policies may continue into the near future. Therefore, organizations should have a policy on mask wearing as well as a timeline of triggers/milestones/benchmarks that may cause a shift in policy. Find California's most recent mask requirements on [CA.GOV](CA.GOV) (Ca.gov).
2. TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH
   a) Please review Defining Trauma-Informed for an understanding of a trauma-informed approach in your organization.
   b) If an organization is committed to providing services and programming with a trauma-informed approach, we can recommend the following short-term areas to be examined and considered in regard to transitioning to in-person programming for staff and/or community members:
   - Anxiety of crowds or multiple people in an enclosed space
   - Anxiety of illnesses or symptoms of illnesses, such as sneezing, coughing, sniffling
   - Depression from losing loved ones, being ill, side effects of illness, and missing milestones
   - Anxiety over unemployment, distance learning, and transitioning to in-person schooling.
   - Separation anxiety from home and household members
   - Anxiety and stress around places or persons such as hospitals and doctors, police stations and police, etc. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
3. CODE OF CONDUCT
   Most organizations have a Code of Conduct in place detailing acceptable behavior as well as the consequences if behavior practices are not followed. Due to the "new normal" of a post COVID-19 world, we recommend organizations reexamine their Code of Conduct to determine if it needs adjustments. Adjustments may include those that involve food and drink consumption in the library.
4. PROGRAMMING
   Depending on the organization, a programming policy or guidelines may already be in place. Now is a good time for this policy to be reviewed and updated for outdated or non-inclusive language.
   If an organization does not have a programming policy, guidelines or standard, the transition to post-COVID-19 might provide the opportunity to draft one. The purpose of a programming policy is to provide continuity of the type of programs offered as well as reflect the organization's mission, vision and value statement. Inclusive language is recommended.

BARRIERS

While the goal of this document is not to create a set of principles for redesigning spaces, staffing practices or utilization of resources, the manner in which organizations tackle these areas post-COVID-19 will be different.

This section will lay forth clear milestones/points to consider while planning for in-person programming. In examining the spaces provided for library services, organizations and library staff should consider the following potential barriers:

1. SAFETY REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES:
   Libraries should anticipate the continued use of similar safety procedures and regulations in their in-person programming until community immunity is achieved. In correlation of the consideration for safety regulations and procedures, libraries should analyze their ability to continue their existing core services (or pending expansions) with in-person programming. One concern from our survey was an organization's ability to offer virtual and in-person programming as well as continued services such as curbside pickup, reference, in-person browsing, and so on.

RECOMMENDATION:
It is imperative when planning that organizations consider their bandwidth and ability to maintain quality services over quantity. If staffing resources can perform current services but are not capable of expanding to the degree for proper implementation of monitoring in-person programming (i.e. mask wearing and six feet social distancing) in-person programming may need to be tabled until more staff are available, or the organization will need to seek additional resources. For those libraries who are considering expanding services on limited resources, see the Partnerships section.

Caution sign stating "maintain social distancing"

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For organizations required to provide in-person programming on limited resources, here are some ideas for programming within approved spaces:

TYPE OF PROGRAM	STAFFING	SUPPLIES	NOTES
Storytime, Craft Time, Discovery Club	One staff to lead program, one staff to check people in	Books, music, markers for family sitting locations, etc. Crafts supplies (one for each individual)	With children or family programming, consider attention span and ability to maintain safe distancing habits
Teen Hour	Potentially one staff to lead and monitor program; preferred staff with experienced teen programming	Separate supplies, use wipes if reusing items, use wipes for electronics if using technology	Make safety expectations known to each teen and allow for questions; re-enforce Library practices vs. school or home practices
Book Clubs, Death Cafes, Debate Clubs, Poetry Meetings, Crochet and Knitting, Genealogy Groups	One staff to lead program and maintain safety	Books, prompts, crafting supplies, eventually snacks (refer to policy on eating and drinking and safety concerns)	While these types of programs are the easiest to bring back, they are also programs that may remain virtual due to the "success" of that format. Consult existing groups and former members about accessibility to technology for continued virtual programming or review for transition to in-person
Special Needs Programming	Refer to previous staffing levels and add at least one additional staff	Accessible supplies such as hand grips, appropriate tables and chairs, considerations of sensory items, space/room for caregivers, separate supplies for each individual	As special needs patrons are not required to wear masks (but their caregivers are), staff will want to have clear expectations internally and externally as to what programming entails.

Note: consider cleanliness of spaces before and after use as part of programming time and burden.

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2. CAPACITY LIMITATIONS

In assessing when your organization is in the position to offer in-person programming, the organization should be aware of all varying levels of restrictions and enforcements from the state and county. While each organization has hurdles in respect to its space, it is important that libraries determine their indoor capacity in transitional stages post-COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION:

An assessment of capacity limitations may require agencies to visit the program location, approve activities, or offer alternatives. It is recommended that California libraries check the state's Industry guidance page and reach out to one's county for information on mandatory directives, capacity limitations or the like. Other organizations may be able to reach out to their local public health agencies, fire departments or Cal/OSHA representatives for insight to capacity and activity limitations (such as singing, shouting, etc.). Beyond the scope of COVID-19 safety regulations and procedures, organizations should still assess their rooms for "normal" capacity limitations and safety precautions such as food and material allergies (nuts, latex, etc.), technology cords, and choking hazards when planning for in-person programming.

3. COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND NEEDS

So, you have decided that you will offer in-person programming! Next comes what type of program you will offer. Perhaps, in the past, your organization's most popular programs were storytime, craft hour, death cafes, or technology classes. However, with COVID-19 still in effect, who knows what your community needs now or what would be popular.

You do not want to prep, research, and prepare for a program that no one attends because:
1. No one is interested in this topic anymore.
2. You think it is a need, but it actually is not a need.
3. No one is able to attend the program at the scheduled time.
4. Some do not feel comfortable attending programs inside the library yet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Communicate with and poll patrons
   a) Beyond conversations staff have had with the public about their needs and wants, libraries can survey their community for their interest and needs. This should be done online (via email, newsletter, social media, etc.) as well as in-person (bookmark, quarter sheet, volunteer taking a poll at curbside, etc.) to gather the most insight possible without limiting to a single format. These conversations will prove to be the most insightful to your community's interest and needs.
2. Use circulation & database trends
   a) If a community survey is not possible due to limited resources, an examination of circulation and databases trends and topics may prove insightful. For example, a surge in home improvement books may indicate a community interest in home improvement projects. Or, a flux in employment test prep database logins could illustrate the need for technology classes on resume building. Keep in mind this data is not a whole picture of community needs.
3. Use U.S Census Data 2020-2021
   a) The U.S. Census 2020 census information will provide insight to your community's local demographics that have shifted from previously known data. In addition, the U.S. Census obtained information during COVID-19 for the U.S. Pulse Household Survey which provides insight into the needs of households during the pandemic, including unemployment, food scarcity, housing insecurity, and inability to pay household expenses. Beyond these areas the survey additionally captured those individuals who have been impacted by COVID-19 by being forced to telework or working remotely or pausing their education. While the survey results revealed the current experiences of households, the ramifications of food scarcity, paused educational pursuits, and unemployment may have long-term effects.

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4. TECHNOLOGY

One side effect of COVID-19 was the demand from society to be more technological savvy for work, school, and socialization. The Virtual portion of this toolkit discusses the barrier of technology and addressing bridging that gap.

With an in-person services model, one of the most popular programs may be a technology center, technology classes, a technology drop-in session, or "book a librarian" feature. While not all of these programs may be possible for your organization (or perhaps you subscribe to an online database to assist with these areas), it should be taken into consideration and should be training for staff. Staff, especially frontline staff, will encounter most technology issues from people such as:

1. Troubleshooting library and personal technology, software, etc.
2. Instructing how to use library products (Wi-fi, laptops, computers, printing, copying, etc.)
3. Researching internet or technology loan
4. Answering the "usual" technology questions such as printing, emailing, Office products, etc.
    a) It should be noted that due to the accelerated rate of technology adoption due to COVID-19, previous non-technology users may be coming into the library for assistance. Therefore, this shift may increase demand for help.

Outdoor musical or theater performances

Job fairs (Outdoor, drive-thru, or large indoor room)

Book tastings

Video Game Day

Tech drop-in

Book or Fan Festivals

PROGRAMS IDEAS

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PARTNERSHIPS

Five people talking at a table

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PARTNERSHIPS

Finding a partnership is a great way to supplement meager and/or non-existent budgets. Libraries struggle to provide their users with year-round quality programming. There are Facebook groups where librarians share ideas of what to do with specific materials or left over items. The ingenuity of trying to continuously engage the library community is phenomenal.

Where do we begin? The first steps would be to identify potential partners and clearly identify how each party benefits from the partnership. Your partnership has to make sense for your library community. How do you apply for grants? How do you plead to your library's governing body for more funding? You are not alone. Applying for grants and additional funding is cumbersome and can be frustrating. The key is to never give up and to ask for help when needed.

"If you wait until a pandemic to build community partnerships, it's going to be a challenge"
-Eli Guinee, New Mexico librarian (Freudeberger)

Two men shaking hands

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Where to find money; The cost to apply for grants/funds/programs is free; however there is a cost for labor hours needed for staff to research, write and apply for grants and funding.
   a) Watch for state grants, such as technology grants and the one in this State Library Press Release
   b) Use refurbished material such as those supplied by Human-I-T
   c) Use community volunteers to assist with interpreting for the community they identify with.
2. Regional connections: Regional connections build community. Seek out people or groups in your area that would be willing to teach a new skill or craft to library users for free or a nominal fee. Many community people and businesses would be willing to donate time in exchange for free advertising. The cost to host instruction style events is low to medium. The library can host an event via their virtual platform. The low cost is attributed to the labor hours needed for staff to research and communicate with potential community instructors. The cost rises when supply kits for library users are included.

Learning from the Pandemic:
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a)Home chefs/professional chefs:
- Struggle meals
- Meals you can make with 99 cent store ingredients
- Semi-homemade meals
- Cookie decorating

b) Local authors/poets:
- Allow up-and-coming authors and poets to read or recite their works.

c) Knitting, crocheting & sewing circle groups

d) College alumni and faculty emeritus groups

e) Local gardening clubs or groups

f) Other local libraries

3. Social Media Takeovers: The cost for social media takeovers are free; however, there is a cost for the labor hours needed for staff to create content and post events on social media. Social media takeovers can increase followers and engagement. For an agreed upon amount of time, a business will allow the library to post content directly to their social media account. One idea is to partner with local bookstores. See:
- Why Plan a Social Media Takeover?
- How to Run a Smart Social Media Takeover

4. Sponsorships: Seek out the sponsorship of regional school/office supply companies to provide supplies.
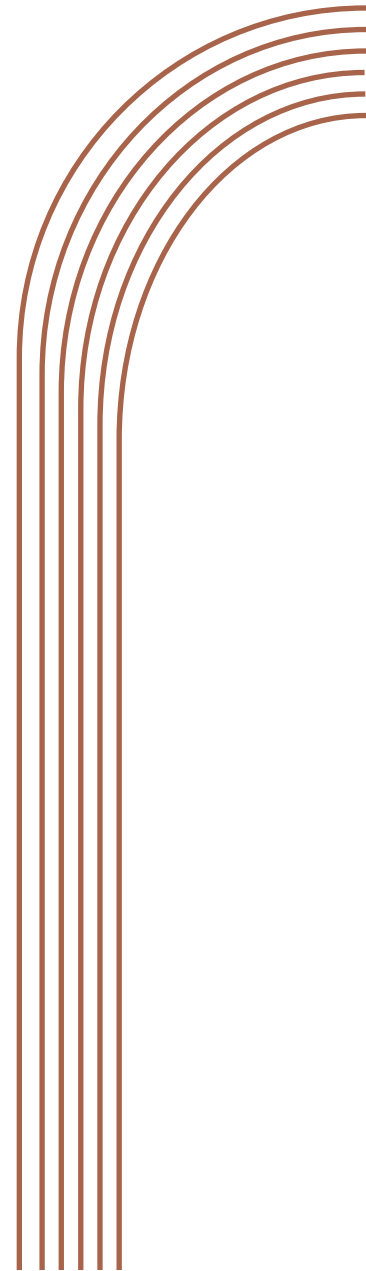
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REFERENCES

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PATRON & STAFF WELL BEING

The ability to offer in-person programming will vary for every organization, but the most common scenario is that the "new normal" will not reflect the "pre-COVID-19 normal." Every member of the community, including staff, have been marked by this traumatic historic event. Everyone's needs, interests, and even preferences have changed or been altered due to the effects of a pandemic, such as physical distancing, telework or distance learning, quarantining from family and friends, a lack of socialization, shifts in relationships, illness, and even deaths.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Trauma-Informed Approach
   a) It is imperative when planning and assessing an organization's ability to create in-person programming that the planners take a trauma-informed approach for both their staff and patrons' wellbeing.
   According to the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), individual trauma results from an event, a series of events, or a set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. From SAMHSA's description, the events surrounding the pandemic apply to many individuals.
   Any type of organization can provide services following a trauma-informed framework by incorporating six principles of trauma-informed care. According to SAMHSA those principles include:
   - safety;
   - trustworthiness;
   - peer support;
   - collaboration and mutuality;
   - empowerment, voice and choice; and
   - cultural, historical, and gender issues

> "Every member of the community, including staff, have been marked by this traumatic historic event."

Learning from the Pandemic:
Using a Trauma-Informed Approach in Post-
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2. Safety
a) The matter of safety is addressed in aforementioned areas of space, capacity, and the use of safety regulations and procedures. Beyond these areas of physical safety, the matter of emotional safety should be considered. The public and staff may have differing opinions about what is "safe" based on the news, press releases, internal knowledge, and personal comfort.

When an organization decides to resume in-person programming, there will be individuals throughout the spectrum of readiness. Some patrons will think it is long overdue while others will firmly believe it is too soon. And lastly, some may be unsure what to think but trust their library to "know what's best" and take their cue from the library's actions. Organizations should keep in mind that even though someone attends an in-person program their ability to cope with traumatic triggers may be less than others'. Therefore, it is recommended that organizations have a space or practice to address those individuals who attend in-person programming who may suffer from anxiety, panic attacks, inability to stay in a "crowded" space, emotional reactions to lack of soap or sanitizer, and more.
See the Policy section for additional recommendations and ideas on this issue.

3. Trustworthiness
a) One of the chief concerns about resuming in-person programming is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is only achievable through transparency and vulnerability. Organizations should be up front with the fact that "post-COVID-19 programming will not be the same as pre-COVID-19 programming" as well as the reasons, which include staffing limitations, limited resources, restructuring to the new normal, and so on.
b) Organizations should evaluate and project their budget for the next few years to ascertain if in-person programming can be maintained. The long-term effects that COVID-19 will have on library budgets are unknown, but organizations should plan conservatively. Organizations do not want to offer a program that is needed by the community and popular but that they are unable to maintain. The result would be a disappointment and loss of trustworthiness with their community.

Person wearing face mask with eyes welling

4. Peer support
a) Before implementing in-person programming, which may be the first in-person, non-household experience for staff and patrons, staff should be given the tools to deal with the public as well as their own trauma. Trauma-Informed training is available in virtual, hybrid and, in some cases, in-person models. In addition, Mental Health First Aid training for adults and teens would be beneficial for staffing dealing with the public to recognize breakdowns, panic attacks, and other behavior as well as next step practices.

5. Collaboration and mutuality
a) Develop partnerships
b) Ensure mutual decision making within your system
c) Use the Environmental Scan Trauma Planning Doc

6. Empowerment, voice and choice:
a) Involve community in survey for in-person programming, consider inclusivity and accessibility.
b) Staff voice and concern during reopening phases and in-person programming
c) [Use the Trauma-Informed Communication Checklist](#)

7. Cultural, historical, and gender issues:
Because of historical distrust between some communities and public/government agencies:
a) Use local partnerships to reach demographics
b) Conduct misinformation training for staff, exploring topics of anti-misinformation and providing them with resources, definitions, approaches, and strategies they can employ in their institutions to address the topic of misinformation with patrons

8. Transportation assistance
Using transportation methods like Uber or Lyft at a discounted rate to allow patrons with big crowd anxiety and wish to avoid public transportation get to and from the library. Some cities offer free or low-cost transportation to seniors, such [ACC Services](#) in Sacramento.

SURVEY

Two hands on a stack of paper with data

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Learning from the Pandemic:
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Pandemic Programming

SURVEY

In February and March of
2021, our team conducted a
survey to understand the state
of programming in California
libraries. We received 66 responses.
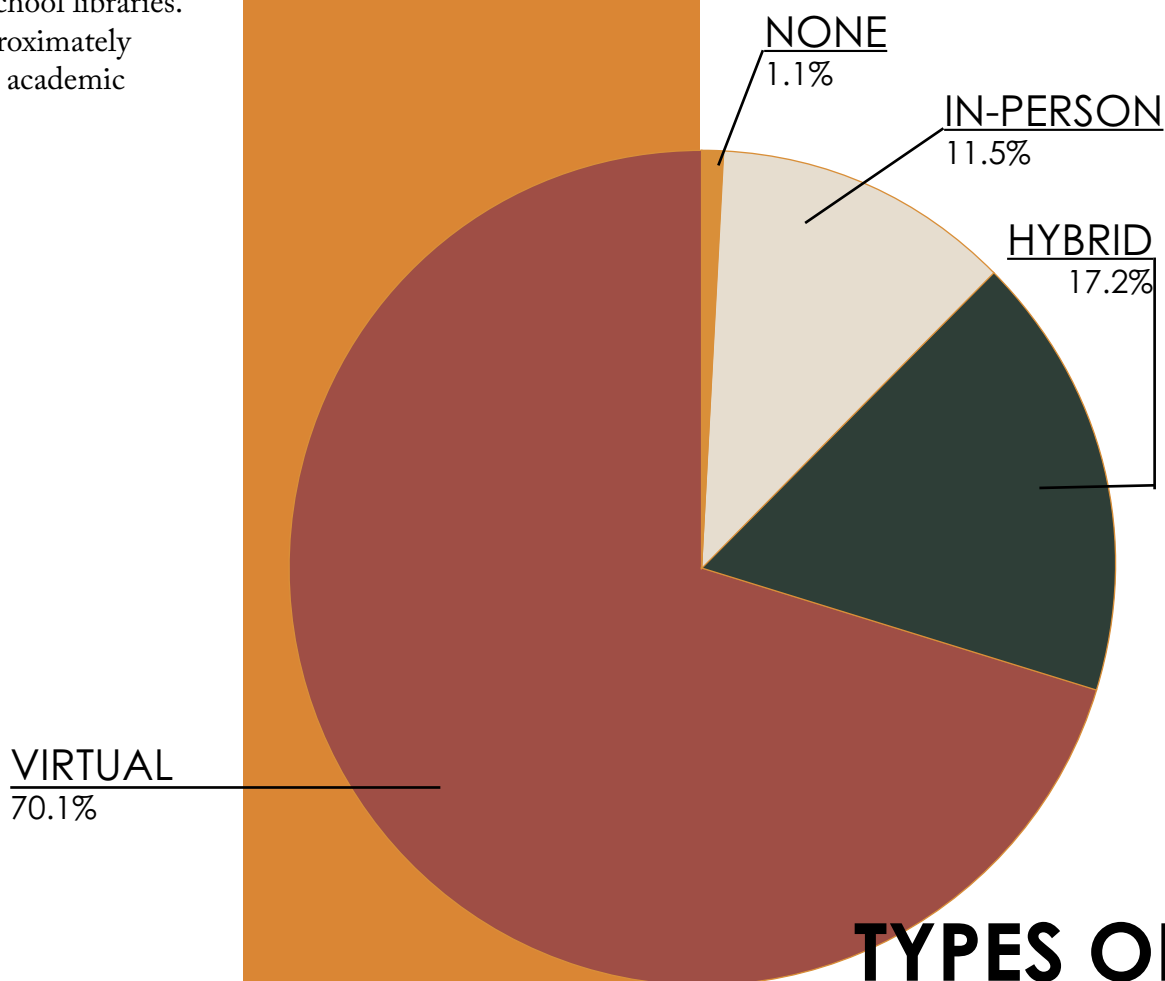Relevant findings are shared here.

57 respondents (over 86 percent)
are from public libraries.
6 respondents (approximately 9
percent) are from school libraries.
3 respondents (approximately
5 percent) are from academic
libraries.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS OFFERED

Most libraries were able to offer
some sort of programming
throughout the pandemic. The
majority - 70 percent - offered
virtual programs. Approximately
17 percent of libraries offered
hybrid programs, and almost 12
percent offered in-person programs.
Only one library stated they
were not able to offer any type of
programming in the last year.

NONE
1.1%

IN-PERSON
11.5%

HYBRID
17.2%

VIRTUAL
70.1%

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Learning from the Pandemic:
Using a Trauma-Informed Approach in Post-
Pandemic Programming

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

Nearly 40 percent of respondents said virtual programs were a success. Respondents noted that there are many benefits to offering a program virtually: those who have time and transportation barriers can attend and there is flexibility for those with mobility and time constraints. One library had program attendance go up by 175 percent because of the virtual programs they offered.

Notable programs offered have been:

1. Virtual storytimes
2. Author visits
3. Talks by city experts (such as the city historian)
4. Teen programs, such as mindful journaling, advisory board meetings and game nights
5. Online tutoring and job help
6. Battle of the Books
7. Virtual class visits
8. Book to Action program
9. Antiracism and LGBTQ pride programs
10. Unboxing new books and "get to know the staff" videos
11. At-home programs such as cooking and tidying up

Respondents also noted that adult and teen virtual programs are more successful than virtual children's programs. Additionally, by archiving live and asynchronous videos, patrons can access the program and are able to attend on their own time.

Hybrid programs have also been popular. Nearly 18 percent of our respondents said grab-and-go programs were one of their most successful programs. Examples of grab-and-go programs included:
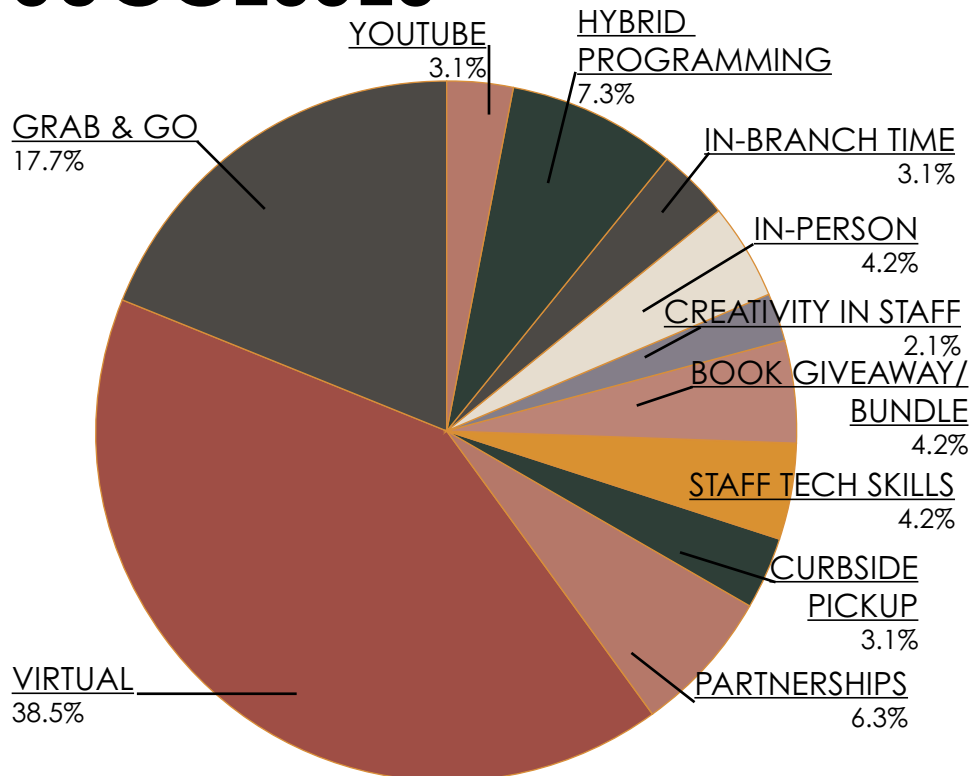
1. Paint-alongs
2. Snow globe making
3. Craft kits
4. STEM/STEAM kits
5. Storytime kits (one library provided a book with craft material appropriate for babies and toddlers; others provided more traditional storytime material such as a bell, an egg shaker or a scarf)

One respondent noted that take-home arts and crafting is popular for young patrons and adults.

Academic libraries continued to provide online reference and research support.

If in-person programs were offered, they were passive and socially distanced. Examples include Storywalks, a poetry walk for National Poetry Month and drive-thru events.

LIBRARY PROGRAMMING SUCCESSES

YOUTUBE
3.1%

HYBRID PROGRAMMING
7.3%

GRAB & GO
17.7%

IN-BRANCH TIME
3.1%

IN-PERSON
4.2%

CREATIVITY IN STAFF
2.1%

BOOK GIVEAWAY/ BUNDLE
4.2%

STAFF TECH SKILLS
4.2%

CURBSIDE PICKUP
3.1%

PARTNERSHIPS
6.3%

VIRTUAL
38.5%

POST-COVID-19 PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Our toolkit is designed to help fill the gaps in program planning, development and implementation during COVID-19 and as we emerge from the pandemic. To fill these gaps, we asked libraries about the challenges they anticipate.

The majority of respondents said that staffing (39 respondents) and funding (36 respondents) would prove challenging when it came time to reopen their library. Challenges with staffing include the number of support staff in the library. They also include training new staff and communication across departments and within branches. The majority of the requests for training include technology training for virtual programs. To address these issues please review our Partnerships section and Technology and Funding under Resources.
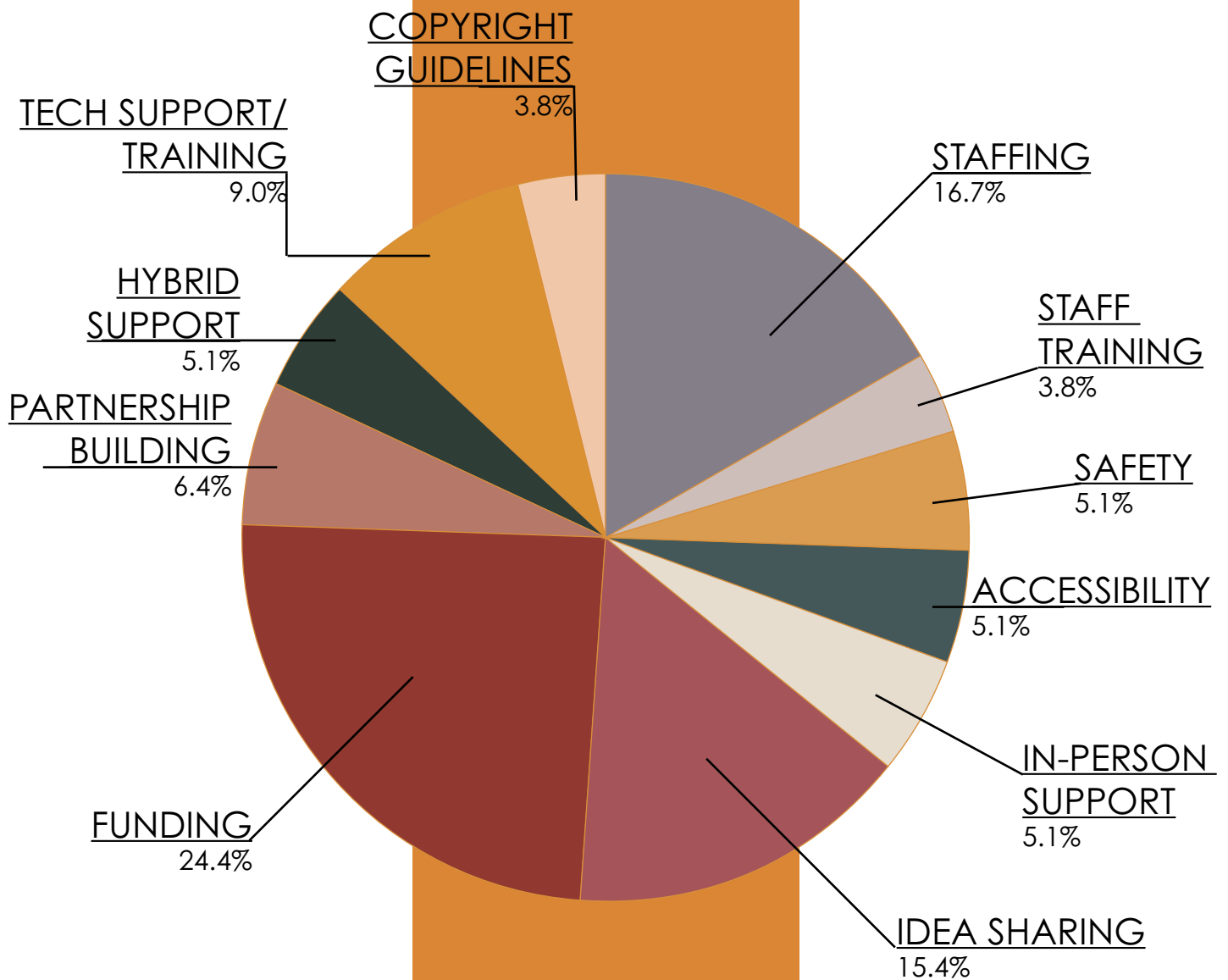
Community partnerships made the list of greatest anticipated challenges. Over 15 percent of respondents replied they are concerned about partnerships in their community. The stability of nonprofits and businesses, and the willingness of the library and/or the agency to work together has libraries wondering about their future partnerships. To understand ways to resume or develop partnerships, see the Partnership section of this toolkit.

Lastly, safely gathering is a concern of staff and patrons. Several respondents said they are examining avenues for the safe return of patrons. For resources on how libraries are safely returning please view Response to COVID-19 articles under Resources.

POST-COVID CHALLENGES

OTHER CHALLENGES
12.7%

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
15.3%

SAFELY GATHERING
8.5%

FUNDING
30.5%

STAFFING
33.1%
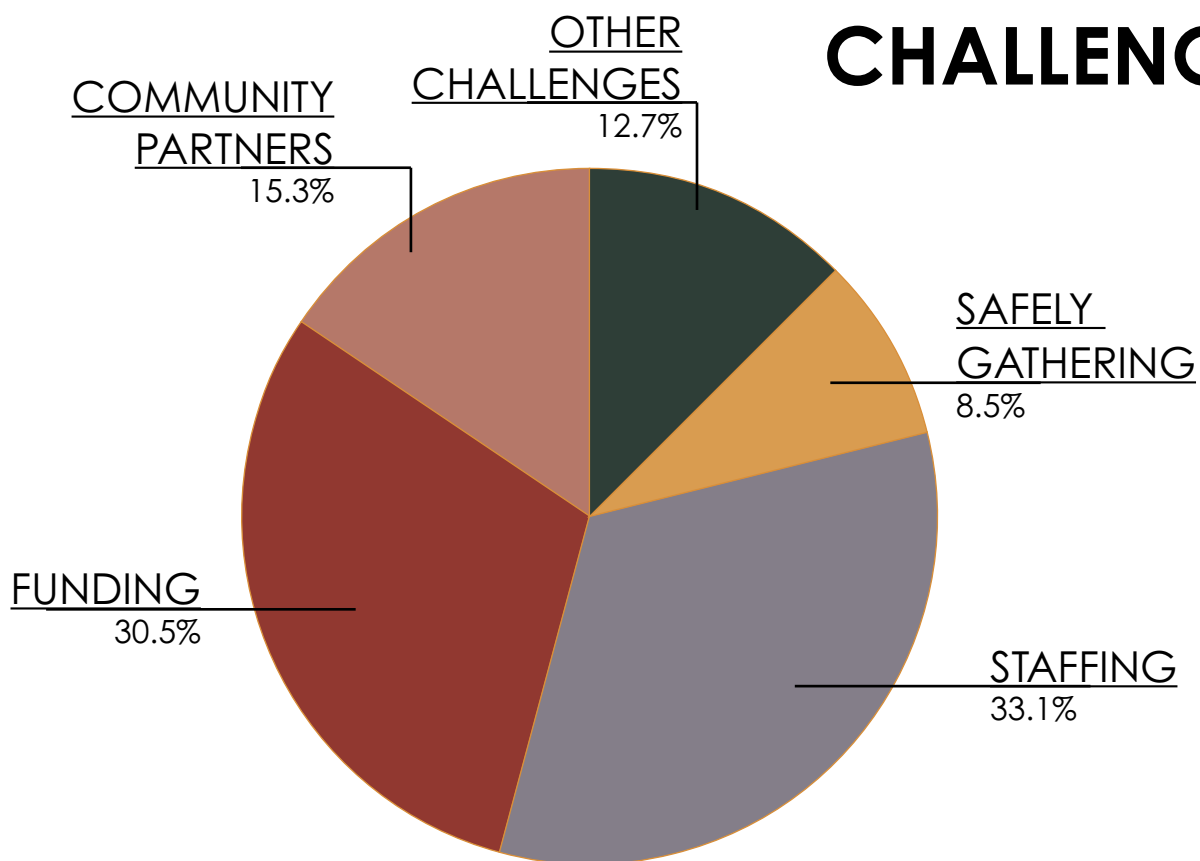
RESOURCES

We polled respondents on resources libraries needed the most. Top requests included funding resources, additional staff, an idea-sharing platform, technology support and training for staff. For idea-sharing, we have created a Slack account. This is a wonderful opportunity for libraries to connect, recharge and learn something new.

COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES
3.8%

TECH SUPPORT/ TRAINING
9.0%

HYBRID SUPPORT
5.1%

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
6.4%

FUNDING
24.4%

STAFFING
16.7%

STAFF TRAINING
3.8%

SAFETY
5.1%

ACCESSIBILITY
5.1%

IN-PERSON SUPPORT
5.1%

IDEA SHARING
15.4%

RESOURCES NEEDED

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to take a moment to acknowledge all parties and individuals that made this toolkit possible. From the California Library Association's Developing Leaders in California Libraries Leadership Challenge to individuals who have provided feedback, insight, and guidance.