

Rural Library Survey

Summary Report

Prepared by:

Evan Leach Ph.D.

TAP, Inc.

June 28, 2004

Rural Library Survey

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Summary of Survey Results.....	4
Summary of “Other” Responses.....	12
Clustered Verbatim “Other” Responses.....	14

Rural Library Survey

Executive Summary

A survey was designed and administered in December, 2003 to explore the resource needs, perceived challenges and developmental needs of rural librarians. This survey was distributed to the following three groups:

- Rural School Librarians
- Rural Tribal Librarians
- Rural Public Librarians

The data obtained from this survey leads to the following conclusions:

- Survey respondents were most likely to be representatives of rural school or public libraries from the Great Lakes/Plains or West/Southwest regions of the U.S. Most respondents serve communities with a population smaller than 10,000.
- Poverty was the issue that was of greatest concern for survey respondents, particularly those representing rural tribal libraries. Although depopulation was an issue identified by rural school and public libraries, this was not a concern for rural tribal libraries. Unemployment/underemployment was a concern that was identified as well in the qualitative responses.
- Survey respondents identified a lack of money as their greatest challenge and computer training as their most pressing training need. Inadequate space was a challenge identified in the qualitative responses. “Basic library skills” was identified as a pressing training need for both rural tribal and school libraries. Computer hardware, technical support and technical training were all identified as significant technological needs.
- Survey respondents identified “current nonfiction” as a significant collection development need. However, rural tribal libraries identified “local history, reminiscences, folklore, and traditions” as their most pressing collections development need. Rural school libraries identified “school curriculum materials” as a significant collection development need.
- The majority of respondents reported collaborating with civic organizations/nonprofits and governmental agencies. A strong minority also reported collaborating with colleges and universities. Schools and other libraries were identified as sources of collaboration in the qualitative data. Nearly half reported being members of the American Library Association while a significant minority belongs to the Public Library Association.
- A strong majority reported they would benefit most from ALA resources directed towards advocacy for library funding and support, while nearly half stated they would benefit from staff development events and online communication. There

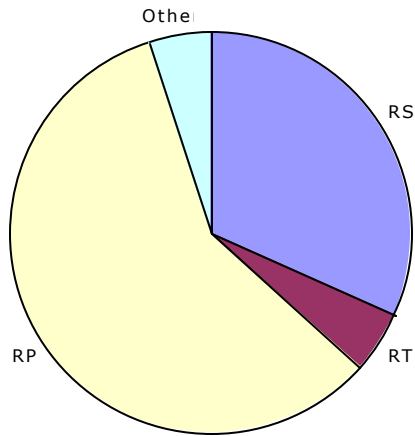
were no significant differences in preferences between the rural public, school and tribal library groups.

Survey of Rural Librarians

Summary of Results

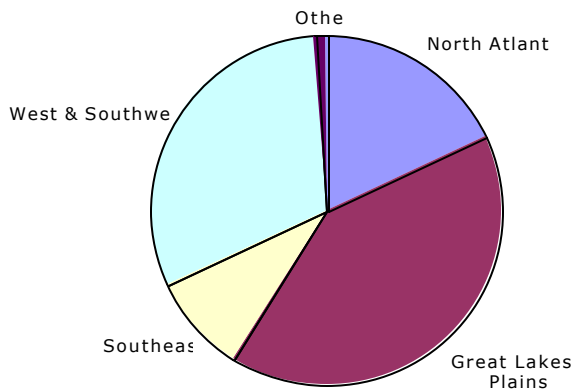
1. Type of library?

Response	N	%
Rural School (RS)	377	32
Rural Tribal (RT)	50	5
Rural Public (RP)	695	59
Other	62	5



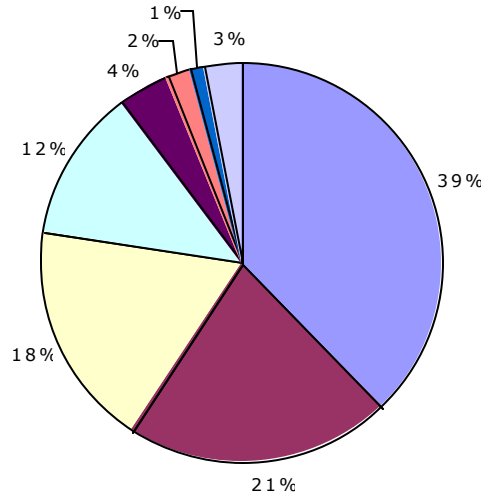
2. Location?

Response	N	%
North Atlantic	209	17
Great Lakes & Plains	488	41
Southeast	104	9
West & Southwest	363	31
Other	20	2



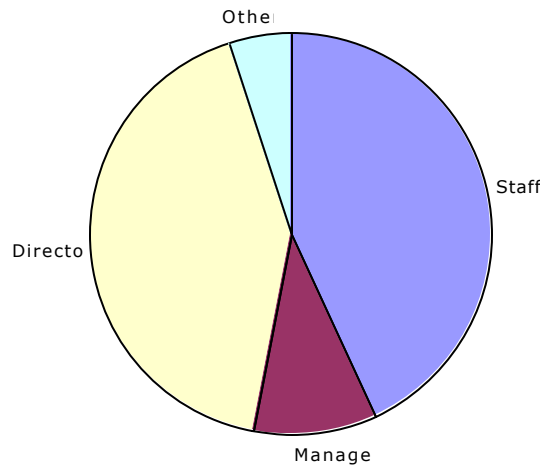
3. Population of your community?

Response	N	%
Under 2,500	439	39
2,500 - 4,999	249	21
5,000 - 9,999	216	18
10,000 - 19,999	137	12
20,000 - 29,999	53	4
30,000 - 39,999	22	2
40,000 - 49,999	16	1
50,000 and up	35	3



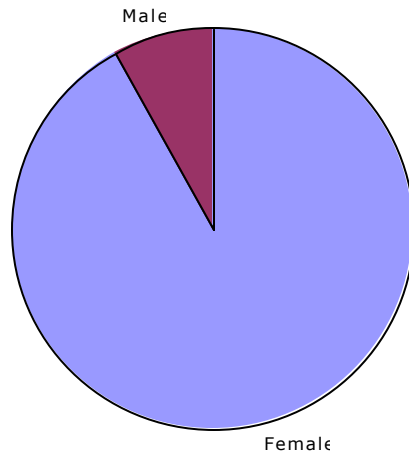
4. Your job level?

Response	N	%
Staff/Media Specialist/Librarian	508	43
Manager/Supervisor/Coordinator	101	10
Director/Principal	515	42
Other	60	5



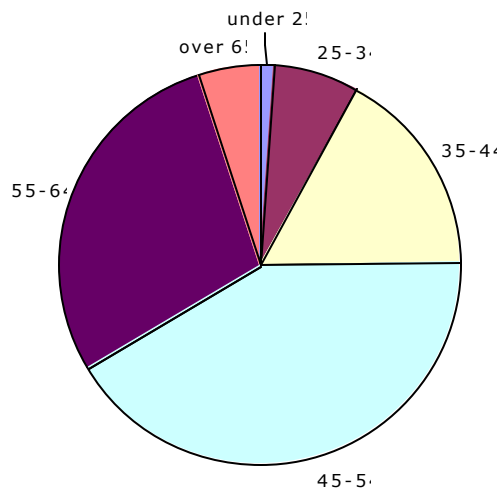
5. Your sex?

Response	N	%
Female	1084	92
Male	100	8



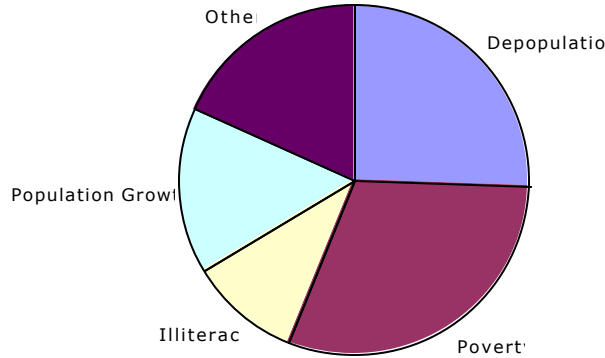
6. Your age (in years)?

Response	N	%
Under 25	3	1
25 - 34	80	7
35 - 44	206	17
45 -54	495	42
55 - 64	343	29
65 and over	54	5



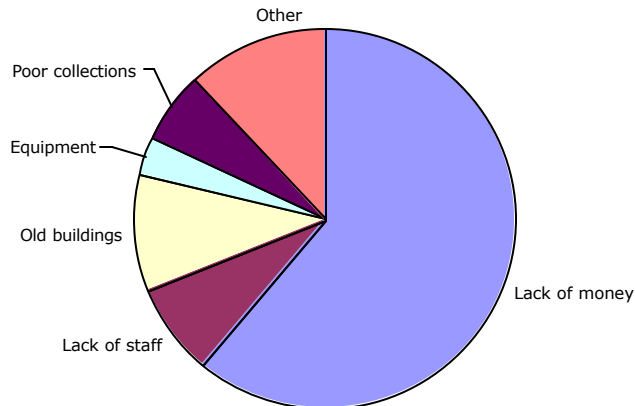
7. What is the greatest/main/most concern of the rural area that your library serves?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Depopulation	298	25	27	2	26
Poverty	356	30	34	48	27
Illiteracy	114	10	9	22	9
Rapid population growth	175	15	12	4	17
Others:	212	18	16	18	18



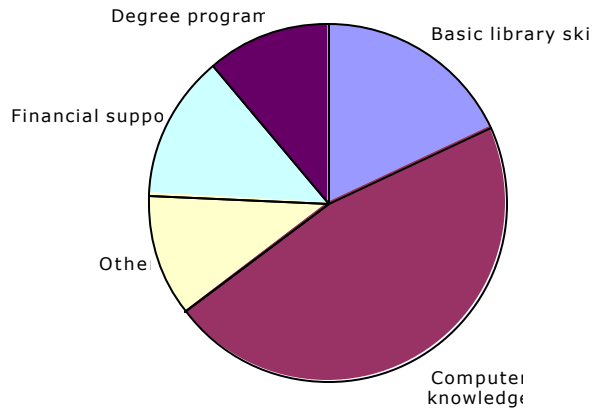
8. What is the greatest/main/most challenge facing your library?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Lack of money	718	61	62	48	62
Lack of qualified staff	93	8	8	14	7
Old buildings	120	10	4	6	14
Equipment	33	3	3	4	3
Poor collections of books and materials	68	6	11	14	2
Others	139	12	10	14	11



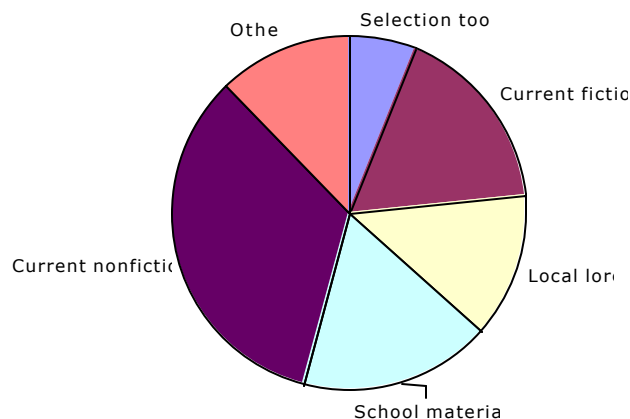
9. What is your library's greatest/main/most urgent training need?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Basic library skills for staff and customers	217	18	26	28	13
Computer knowledge for staff and customers	543	46	33	26	55
Library degree programs for staff	135	11	11	28	10
Financial support through scholarships and loans	155	13	17	16	11
Other	95	8	9	2	7



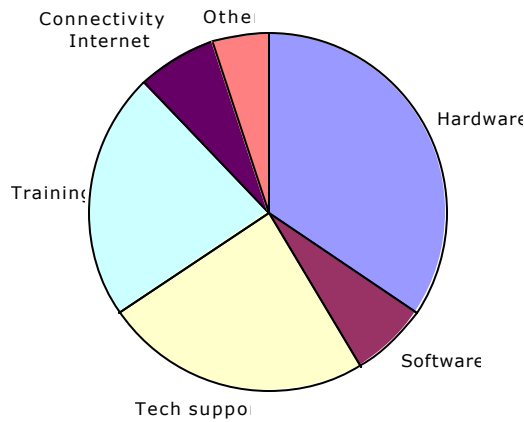
10. What is your library's greatest/main/most collection development need?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Selection tools	69	6	3	18	6
School curriculum materials	202	17	37	10	7
Local history, reminiscences, folklore, and traditions	154	13	6	46	14
Current fiction	201	17	13	6	20
Current nonfiction	395	33	31	16	37
Other	138	12	8	4	13



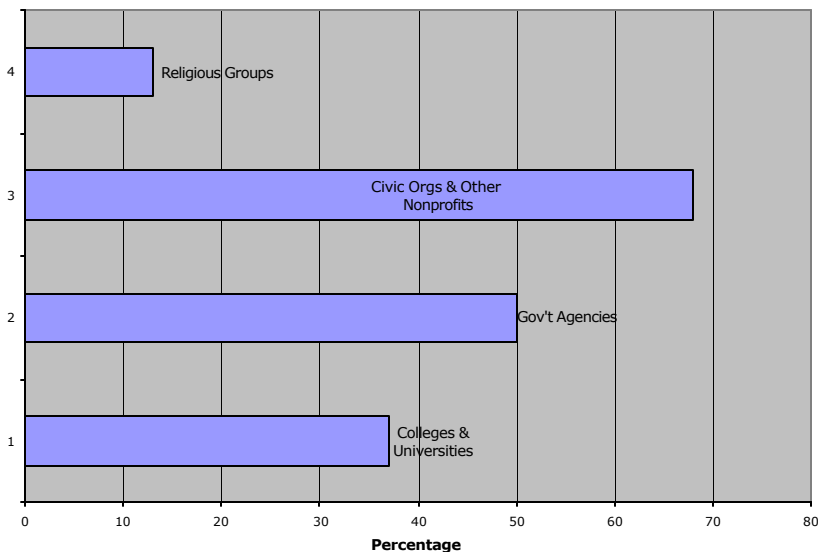
11. What is your library's greatest/main/most technology need?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Hardware (computers, printers, etc.)	401	34	44	26	30
Software	77	7	7	14	6
Technical support	283	24	18	20	27
Training for staff and customers	259	22	20	22	21
Quality of connectivity to the Internet	84	7	4	10	8
Other	65	5	6	6	5



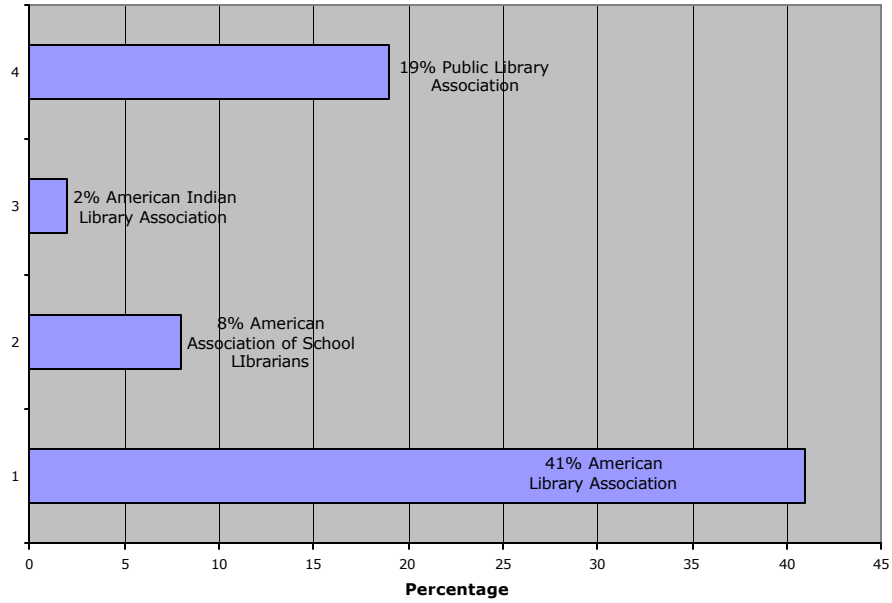
12. With what groups has your library collaborated?

Response	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Colleges and universities	438	37	746	63
Government agencies	593	50	591	50
Civic organizations and other non-profits	802	68	382	32
Religious groups	150	13	1034	87



13. To which professional organizations do you belong?

Response	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
American Library Association	488	41	696	59
American Association of School Librarians	99	8	1085	92
American Indian Library Association	26	2	1158	98
Public Library Association	227	19	957	81



14. What American Library Association resources would benefit you?

Response	Total		RS%	RT%	RP%
	N	%			
Staff development events (conferences, institutes, etc.)	584	49	53	62	47
Advocacy for library funding and support (public policies, lobbying, etc.)	839	71	71	68	72
Publications	408	34	36	32	34
Graphics & other marketing resources	447	38	32	38	41
Online communication (electronic discussion lists, online resources, online continuing education)	571	48	53	52	46

