

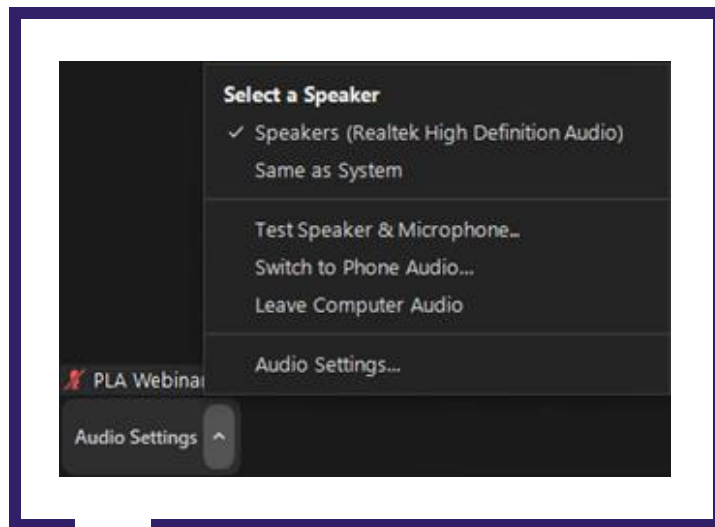
Benchmark 101: Become a Data-Informed Library

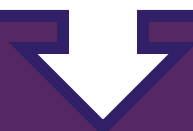
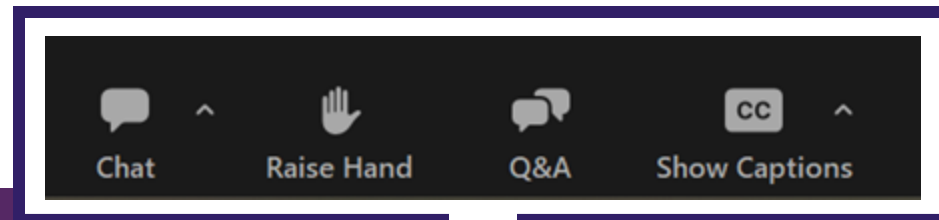
November 13, 2023



Not hearing any audio?

Check your audio settings below—to test your speaker or select a different one.







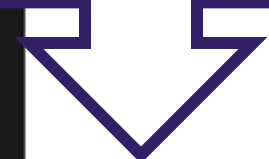
Chat

Who can see your messages?

To: **Everyone** ▼

Your text can be seen by panelists and other attendees

- Hosts and panelists
- ✓ Everyone



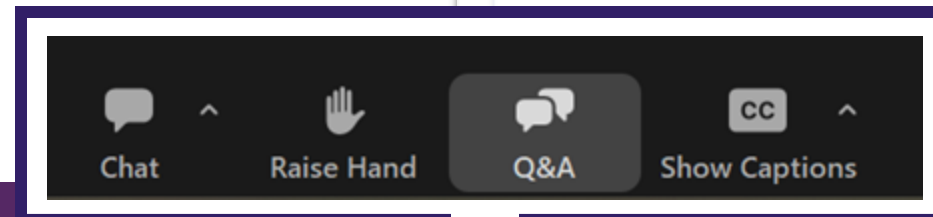
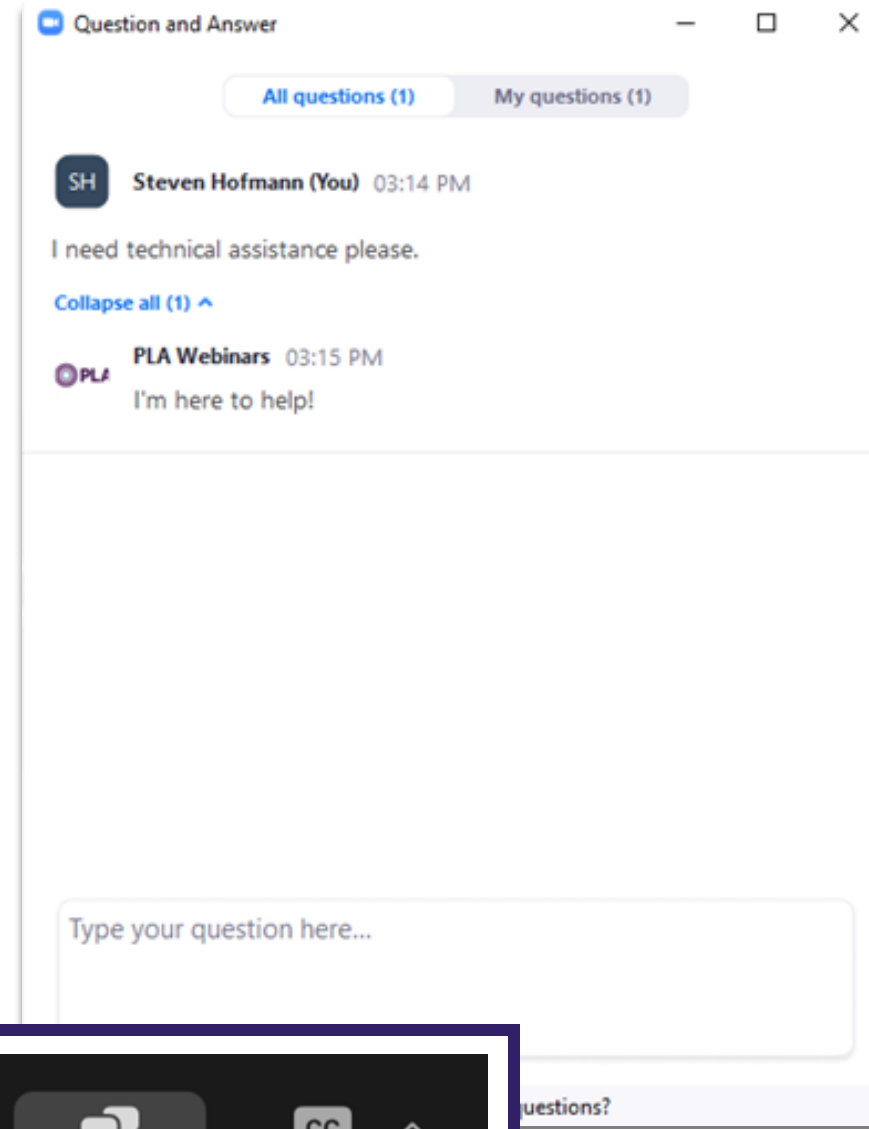
Who can see your messages?

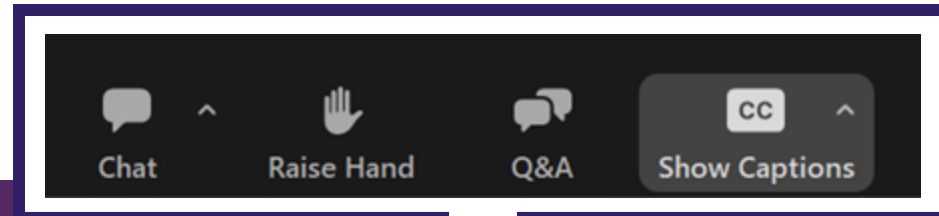
To: **Everyone** ▼

Your text can be seen by panelists and other attendees

Need technical assistance?

Click the “Q&A” icon in the toolbar below, then type your request in the Q&A window.





Benchmark 101: Become a Data-Informed Library

November 13, 2023



Speakers



Sara Goek
Project Manager,
Data and Research
PLA



Katina Jones
Program Manager,
Evaluation and Assessment
PLA



Renee DiPilato
Director of Libraries and
Historical Resources
Sarasota County, FL



LIBRARY METRICS AND TRENDS

The newest tool for data-driven planning
and advocacy in libraries

librarybenchmark.org



Email: plabenchmark@ala.org

Agenda

- I. Why Benchmark
- II. Making Effective Peer Comparisons
- III. Using Benchmark for Strategic Planning
- IV. Next Steps
- V. Q&A

WHY BENCHMARK

Sara Goek



Background

1988-
2018

- Annual Public Library Data Service surveys
- PLA Metrics

2019

- Focus groups and conversations with the field
- PLDS retired

2020

- New annual topical survey model launched

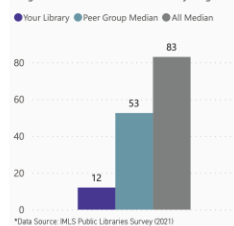
2021

- Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends launched

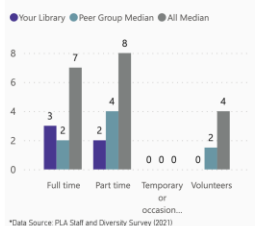
Summary Data

is a **Town/Rural** library in the **New England** administered by a **Nonprofit**. The library serves a population of **9,711**. It is part of peer group **60**.

Programs & Services: Number of Library Programs



Numbers of Staff



Filters

Survey Year: Most Recent

Below filter changes Peer Group: Peer Group Name

Primary Peer Group: [Dropdown]

Below filters change 'All' Data Point: Locale

Locale: All

Region: All

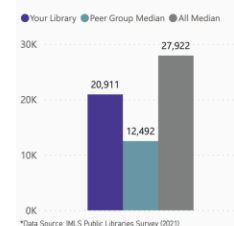
Population: All

Percent POC: All

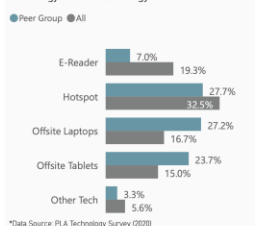
Percent College: All

Legal Basis: All

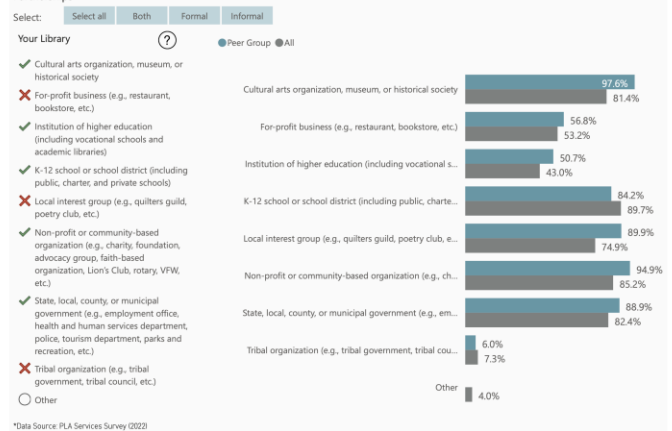
Collections: Total Collection Use



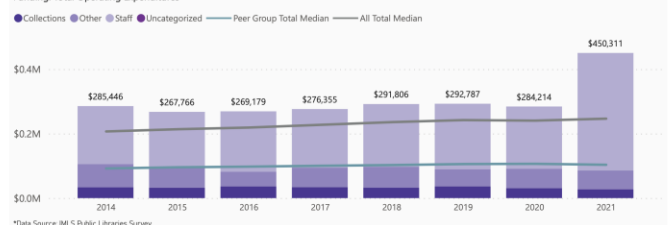
Technology: Off-Site Technology



Partnerships



Funding: Total Operating Expenditures



Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends

Data available includes:

- PLA annual topical surveys
- IMLS Public Libraries Survey
- Census Bureau's American Community Survey
- Public Library Data Service (historic data)

Why Benchmark

Performance



Value



Impact



BENCHMARK: LIBRARY METRICS AND TRENDS

PUBLIC LIBRARIES have access to:	Free Access	Subscription
PLA annual surveys	✓	✓
PLA annual survey reports with national results	✓	✓
Your library's responses to past PLA and PLDS surveys	✓	✓
Selected data visualizations with peer comparisons	✓	✓
Account and contact management	✓	✓
Data-related resources	✓	✓
Interactive data dashboards with 100+ unique visualizations of PLA, PLDS, IMLS, and census data	✗	✓
Custom report builder with historical metrics	✗	✓
Create custom peer groups for tailored benchmarking	✗	✓
	Free	\$400/year*

* get up to 20% off with eligible discounts

Subscriptions

- Subscription types
 - **Public library**
 - Consortium / state library agency / group
 - Corporate
 - Individual consultant / researcher
- More info: <https://www.ala.org/pla/data/benchmark>
- Free webinar for groups on December 11:
<https://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/datatools>



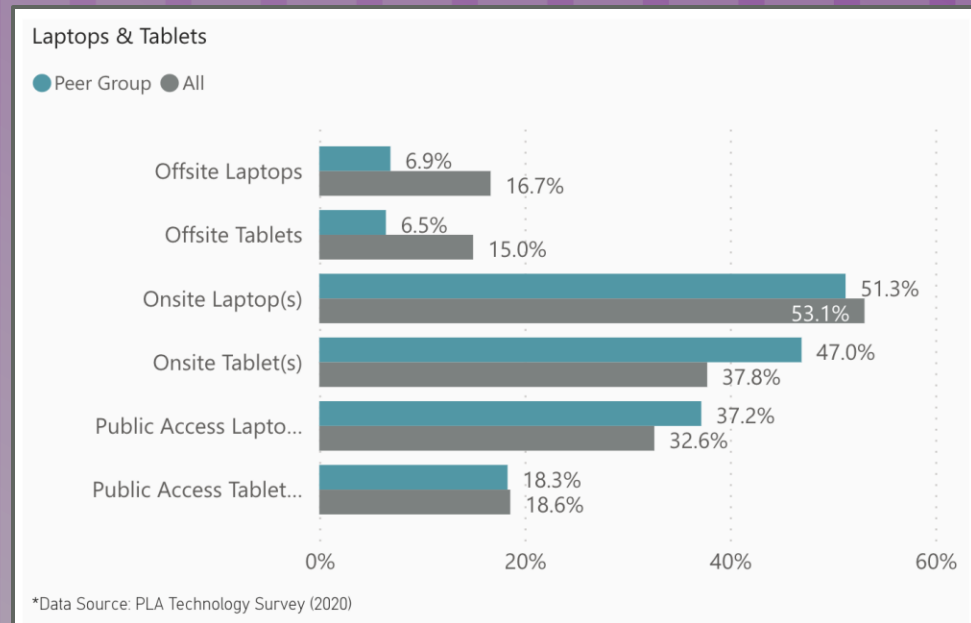
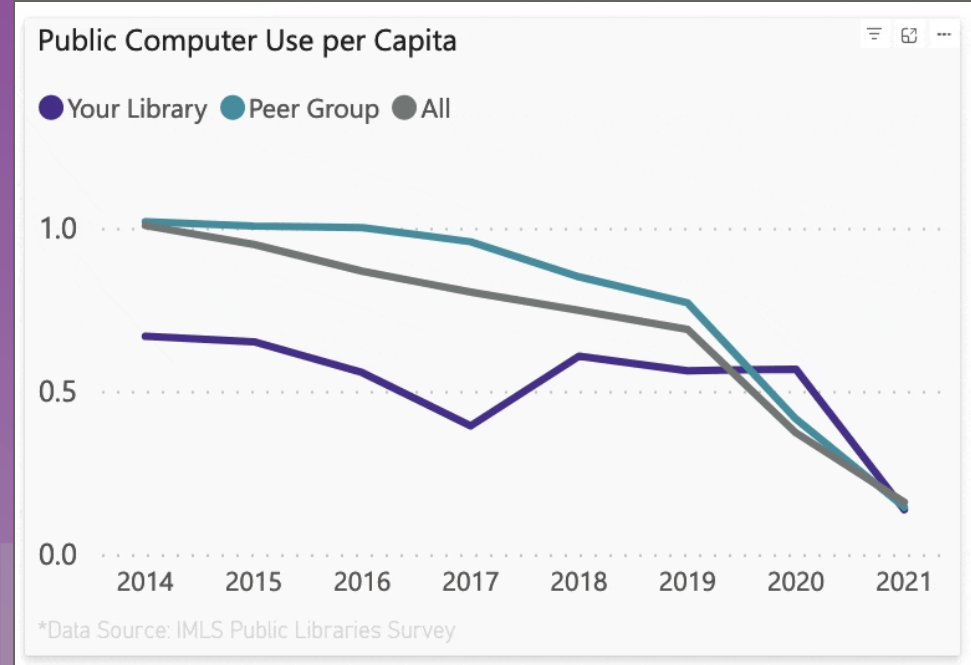
MAKING EFFECTIVE PEER COMPARISONS

Katina Jones



Benchmarking

The process of comparing your organization's performance with peers' performance for purposes of improvement, decision-making, strategic planning, and advocacy.



Benchmark Subscriber Features



Data Dashboards



Peer Groups



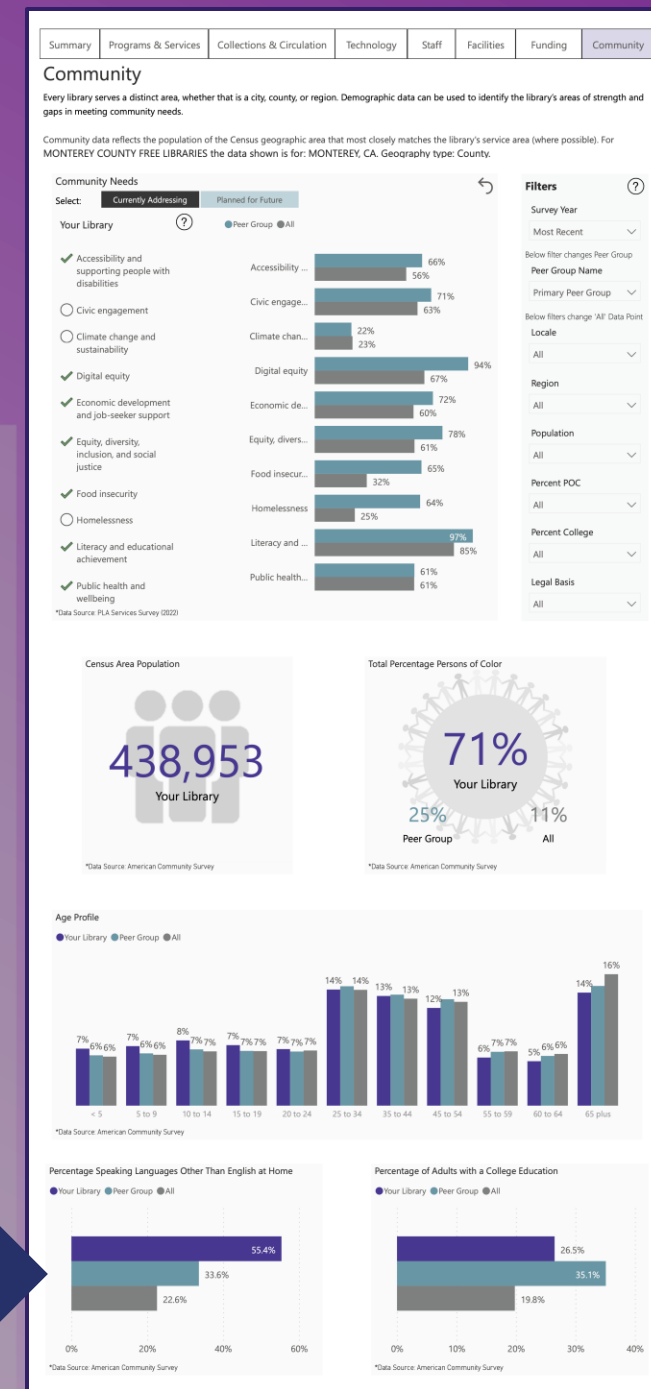
Custom Reports

Visualize

Dashboards

- Summary Data (includes selected charts from the other topic areas)
- Programs and Services
- Collections and Circulation
- Technology
- Staff
- Facilities
- Funding
- Community (pictured)

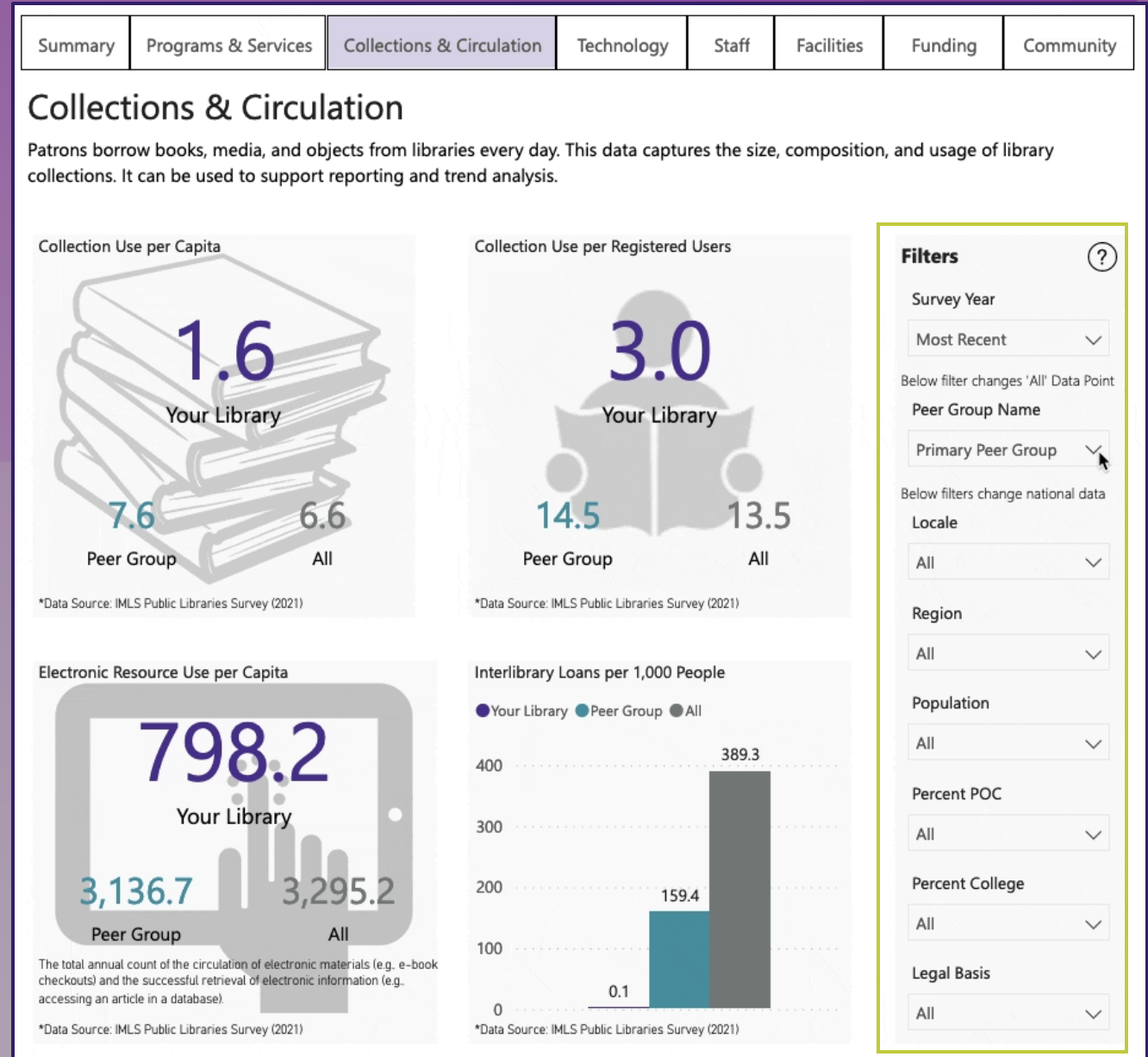
View any chart as a table or export the data



Filter

Explore and filter by:

- Survey Year
- Peer Group
- Library characteristics
 - Locale
 - Region
 - Population of service area
 - Legal basis
- Community characteristics
 - Percent persons of color
 - Percent college-educated



Primary Peer Groups



IMLS Public Libraries Survey



Peer Groups = groups of libraries that share similar characteristics

Peer Group Characteristics



Region



Legal basis



Locale



Percent non-Hispanic white



Percent with a college degree

Custom Peer Groups

Filters to select:

- Locale
- Region
- Population
- Legal basis
- % people of color
- State

Custom peer groups you create show up in the Peer Group filter in the dashboard

The screenshot shows the 'Peer Groups' management page in the Public Library Association dashboard. The page includes a navigation bar with links for Home, Surveys, Resources, Peer Groups, Manage Library, Survey Metrics Dashboard, and Custom Report. The main content area features a 'Peer Groups' section with a dropdown menu for 'Choose Peer Group List...', a 'New' button, and an 'Example' input field with a 'Create' button. Below this are six filter dropdowns: 'Filter by Locale', 'Filter by Region', 'Filter by Population', 'Filter by Legal Basis', 'Filter by %POC', and 'Filter by State', along with a 'Reset' button. A 'Select Libraries...' dropdown and an 'Add to List' button are also present. A search bar is located on the right side. At the bottom, a table with columns for Library, Branch, City, State/Province, and Country is shown, displaying 'No matching records found'. The footer contains the copyright notice '© 2023 - Privacy Policy'.

Who are your peers?

General purpose

- Key library characteristics: locale, legal basis, service area population, state/region

Budget justification

- Service area population
- Number of branches/outlets
- Budget

Strategic planning

- Community demographics
- Annual programs/services
- Number of paid staff

Custom Reports

Custom Report

Filters ?

Survey Year

Most Recent
▼

Population

All
▼

Survey Name

PLA Technology Survey
▼

Peer Group Name

Primary Peer Group
▼

Region

All
▼

Survey Sections

All
▼

Legal Basis

All
▼

Locale

All
▼

Question Name

All
▼

Question Name	Your Library	Peer Group Median	Peer Group Average	All Median	All Average
11 (a) Total annual wireless sessions:	220,889	7,848	74,608	5,418	235,196
16. Does your library system or the entity that c...	No		72.5%		57.4%
3D Printing	No		19.3%		20.6%
8. Does your library system have a website?	Yes, conti...		100.0%		100.0%
9 (a) Number of website visits:	1,456,570	66,270	283,743	17,454	186,060
A faster speed is not available in our service area.	No		6.1%		34.6%
A mobile app created for the library (e.g., with ...	Yes (at lea...		74.1%		52.0%
Assistive technology use (e.g., screen readers, te...	Yes, infor...		37.2%		26.0%
Bandwidth (e.g., improved speeds)	No		58.7%		43.7%

Exploring Results

What does the digital divide look like in my community and how does the library address **technology** needs?

Census data →

Percentage of households with broadband

Percentage of households with computers

IMLS PLS data →

Library computers and WiFi

Library devices for checkout

PLA data →

Technology training

Does the library's **staffing** align with community needs?

Population

Ages: children, teens, adults, senior citizens

Library visits

Program attendance

FTE per capita

Numbers of staff

Staff roles

QUESTIONS?



- + . **USING BENCHMARK**
- o **FOR STRATEGIC**
- PLANNING**

Renee Di Pilato

Sarasota County Libraries



An overview of Sarasota County



Our library system



Benchmark for strategic planning



SARASOTA COUNTY

+

o

•

Sarasota County Demographics



We have five municipalities

Population ~
462,000

Culture of
philanthropy
and non-profit
organizations



10 library
branches

1 History Center

Approximately
166 staff

\$18 million
budget

1 Foundation,
11 Friends
groups, 3
advisory boards

Dependent on
partners and
private funding



New Director Drama: 2019-2020

- Tasked with gathering statistics
- Comparing collection expenditures for a budget ask
- Disorganized mess



Moving to a Data Informed Culture: 2021-2023

Goals

- Using data for decision making
- Regularly reviewing data for improvements
- Working with data to tell our story
- Improved communications with stakeholders

Moving to Benchmark

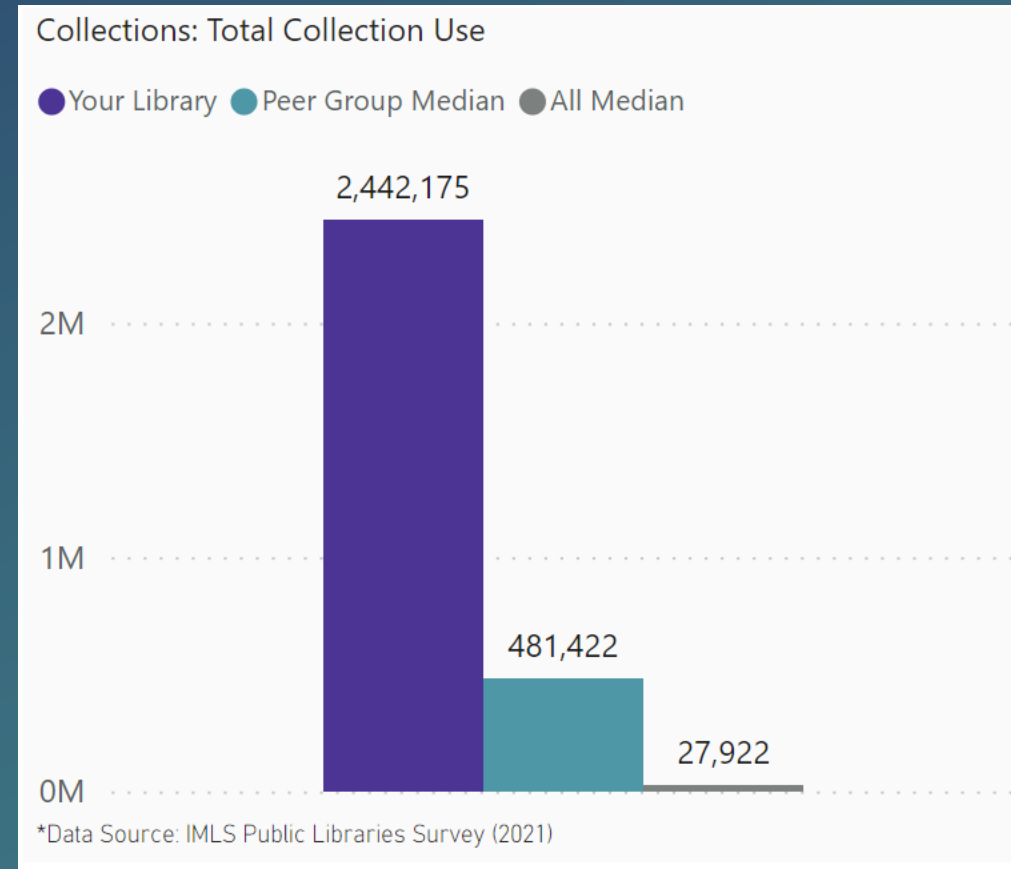
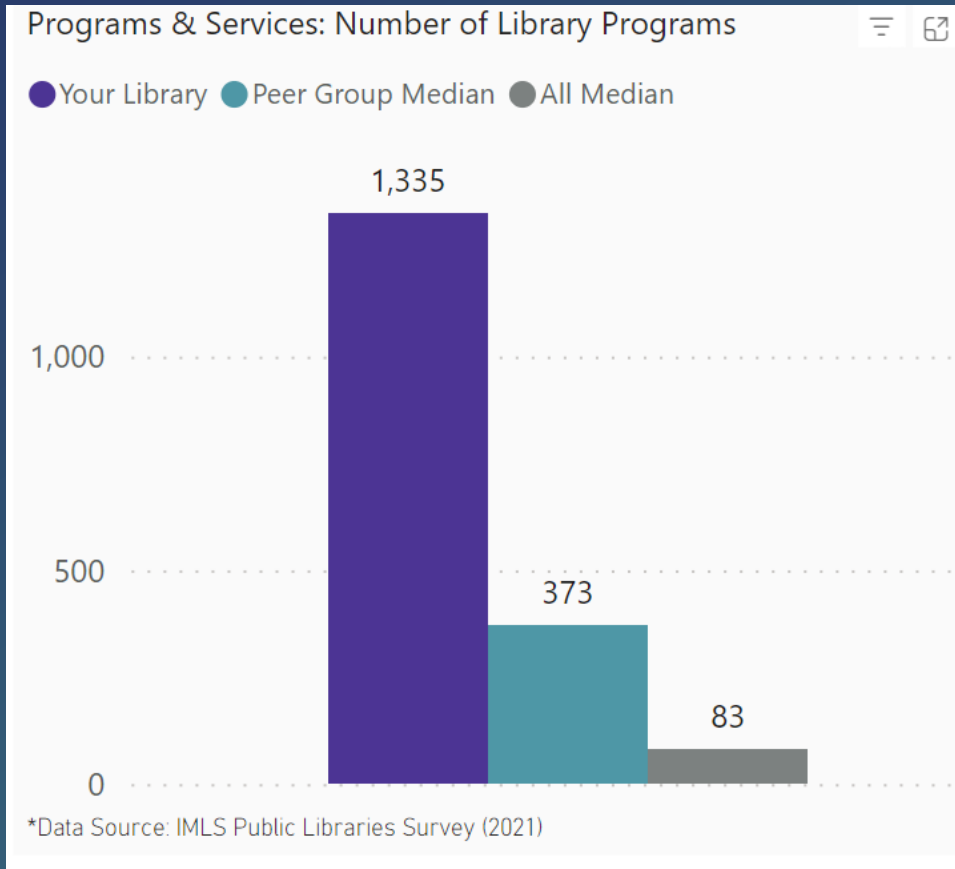




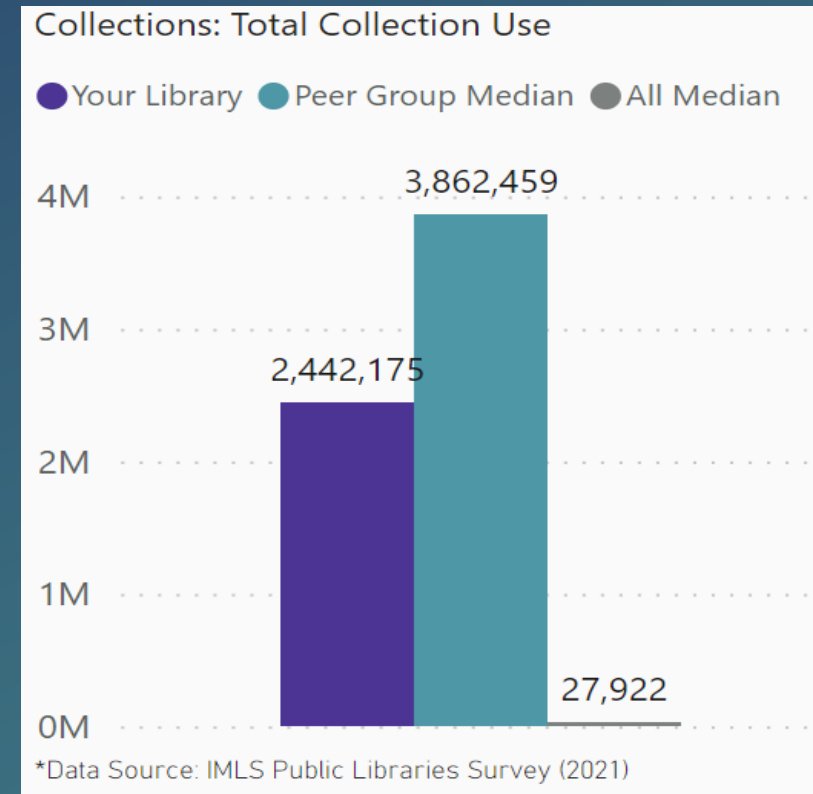
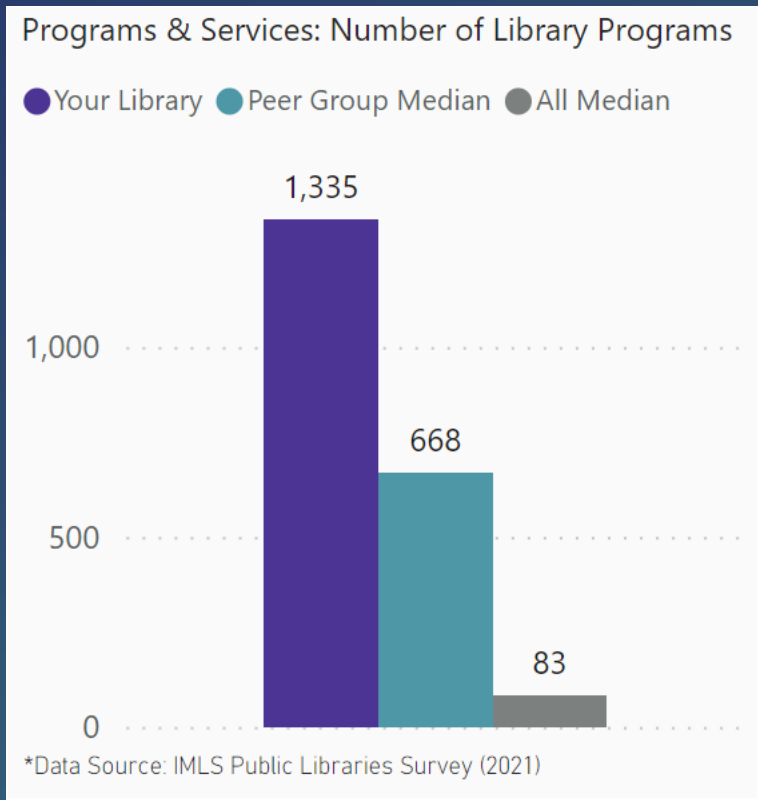
Benchmark and Strategic Planning

- Benchmark provided insights to performance
 - Peer comparisons demonstrated strengths and weaknesses
 - Allowed consultant to focus on qualitative processes
 - Improved our messaging
-

Needs Assessment



Needs Assessment: Local Peers

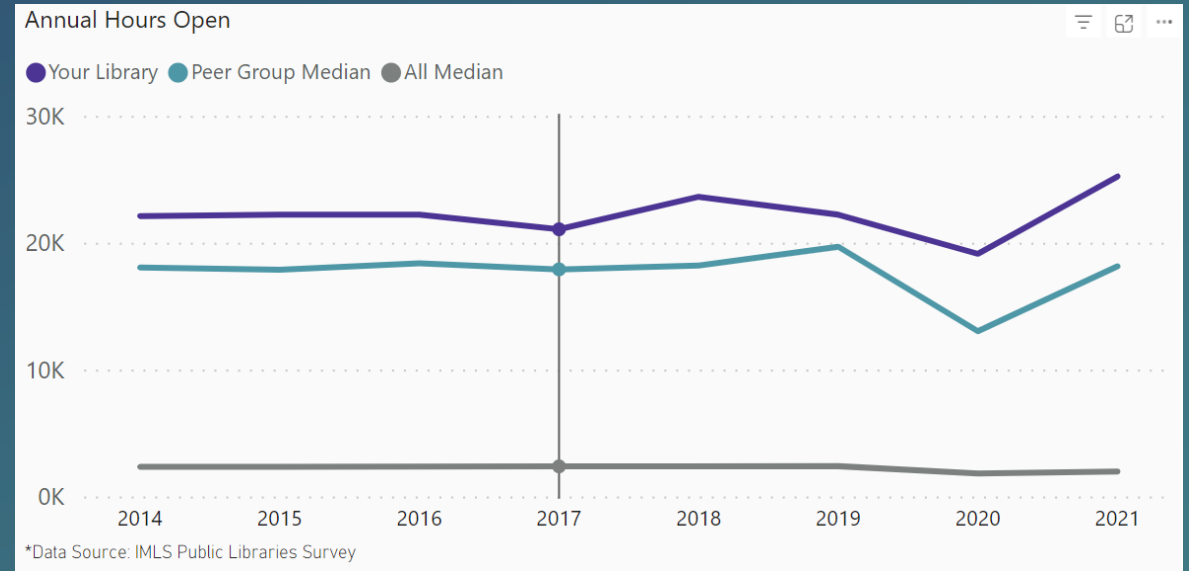




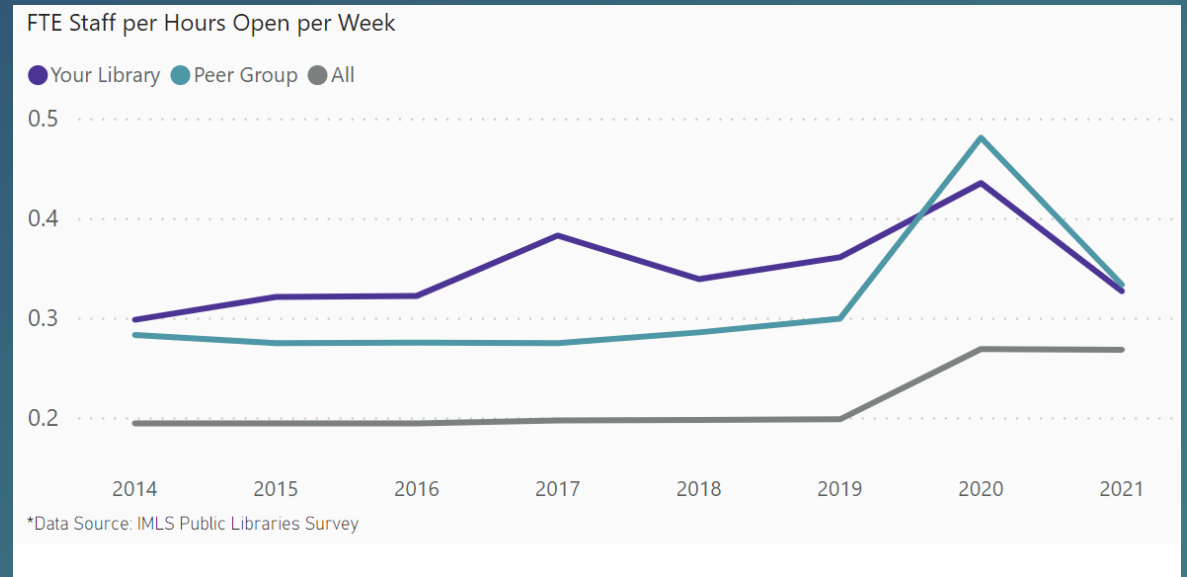
NEEDS ASSESSMENT: LOCAL PEERS



NEEDS ASSESSMENT: LOCAL PEERS



NEEDS ASSESSMENT: LOCAL PEERS



+

•

○

Valuable Features

- Quick snapshots
- Tables and visualizations
- Peer comparisons
- Demonstrates trends
- For strategic planning
 - Budget Trends
 - Collections
 - Library Use
 - Programs/Services
 - Technology

A Work in Progress



Regularly reviewing data



Working with data to tell our story



Using data for advocacy



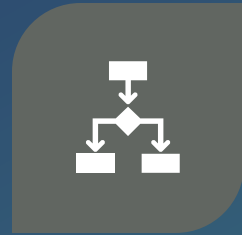
Staff training on Benchmark



Why Benchmark?



EFFICIENCY



DECISION-
MAKING



PLANNING



CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT



ADVOCACY

NEXT STEPS

Sara Goek



Learn More: Resources

Tutorials

[NEW Benchmark video tutorials](#)

Learn how to make the most of Benchmark's features and peer comparison data for your library. The first ten videos in a new series are now available (Sept 2023).

[Getting Started](#)

Navigating your Benchmark account and subscription information.

[Creating a Custom Peer Group](#)

How to create a custom peer group for benchmarking.

[The Survey Metrics Dashboard](#)

How to navigate the dashboards, interpret the visualizations, apply filters, and see tooltips.

[Creating a Custom Report](#)

How to use the Custom Report builder to view and export data.

[Viewing Tables and Exporting Data](#)

How to view tables and export data for any charts in the dashboard.

[Group/Consortia/State Accounts](#)

How to manage and review member libraries' information (for group account administrators)

Interpreting the Data

[About Benchmark](#)

Background on the tool and its development.

[Benchmarking](#)

Making effective peer comparisons for planning and advocacy.

[Peer Groups](#)

An outline of the primary peer groups in Benchmark and the methodology used to create them.

[PLA Survey Data](#)

The Benchmark dashboards include data from PLA's new annual topical surveys and historic Public Library Data Service (PLDS) surveys.

[IMLS Public Libraries Survey Data](#)

The Benchmark dashboards include IMLS PLS data from 2006 to the most recent available.

[Census Data](#)

The Benchmark dashboards include data drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

[NEW: Use Cases](#)

Four use cases demonstrating how public libraries could use Benchmark in practice (published June 2023).

Surveys

[2023 PLA Technology Survey Worksheet](#)

Survey worksheet (fillable PDF)

[2023 PLA Technology Survey Instructions](#)

Survey instructions and glossary

[2022 Services for Strong Communities Survey](#)

Survey worksheet (fillable PDF), instructions, and glossary

[2021 Public Library Staff & Diversity Survey](#)

Survey worksheet (fillable PDF), instructions, and glossary

[PLA Technology Survey \(2020\)](#)

Reference copy (PDF) of the 2020 Technology Survey.

[PLDS Surveys 2011-2019](#)

Reference copies of all Public Library Data Service annual surveys, 2011-2019 (PDF).

Other Resources

[FREE webinar: Benchmark 101](#)

Get a behind-the-scenes look at Benchmark's interactive and user-friendly data dashboards and reporting tools for public library subscribers in this free PLA webinar on Monday, November 13, 2023.

[Updates](#)

A record of updates and new features in Benchmark. Most recent: PLA 2022 survey data, IMLS PLS FY21 data, and new use cases published (6/20/23).

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Updated 09/27/2023

[Webinar recording: 2023 Technology Survey](#)

This free on-demand webinar provides an overview of PLA's 2023 Technology Survey and covers why your library's response matters (recorded Oct. 12, 2023).

[Webinar recording: Public Library Staff and Diversity](#)

An overview of the results of the 2021 Staff and Diversity survey, highlighting how the data suggests both opportunities and challenges for the future of public libraries (recorded Oct. 4, 2022).

[Webinar recording: Introducing Benchmark](#)

PLA member leaders and staff introduce

Use Cases

Children's programming

Facilities improvements

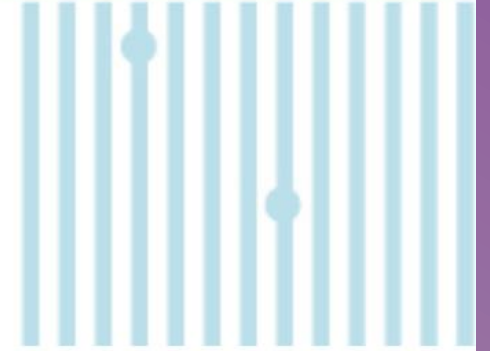
Ebook readers for accessibility

Hiring a language specialist



Open through December 16th!

2023 Public Library Technology Survey



Help PLA measure and share emerging trends around tech resources, infrastructure, digital literacy, staff, and budget.

Participate now at librarybenchmark.org.

Participants will be entered into a drawing to win free group registration for a PLA webinar!



Subscribe

librarybenchmark.org

PublicLibrary ASSOCIATION

Home Surveys Resources Manage Library

Click on the [Survey](#) tab to complete any available open surveys.
Subscribers: go to your [Survey Metrics Dashboard](#) to see more data and graphs.
Not a subscriber? [Click here to subscribe!](#)

Login to your library's Benchmark account

Link to the subscription form is at the top of the Home page

Participate in the survey and use your **discount code!**

PublicLibrary ASSOCIATION Benchmark

New Subscription Renew Subscription Account Status Customer Service FAQ

New Subscription to PLA Benchmark

Already a subscriber? [Click here](#) to renew your account.

Shipping Address

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

First Name *

Last Name *

Title *

Library/Organization Name *

Address1 *

Address2

City *

State/Province *

Zip/Postal Code *

Country *

Telephone *

Fax

Email Address *

Subscriber Type *

PLA organizational members and/or libraries who have completed this year's survey are eligible for discounts. If your library is eligible and you have not received a discount code, please contact plabenchmark@ala.org.

Promotion code:

Sales tax is charged in the following states: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia. If your library/organization is tax exempt, please contact customer service (PLAsubscriptions@omeda.com or call 800-293-6178 toll free) for assistance completing your subscription.

Please Answer The Following Questions:

Library FSCS Key *

US public libraries must enter their library's FSCS Key. If you do not have an FSCS key but were given a login ID by PLA Benchmark staff, please enter that here.

Submit

Next Steps for Benchmark

- Data updated annually
 - American Community Survey 2022 estimates available in early 2024
 - IMLS PLS FY22 data available summer 2024
 - PLA 2023 Technology Survey data available summer 2024
- Continued improvements to the resources, dashboards, and interface



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

Visit: librarybenchmark.org

Email: plabenchmark@ala.org

