EVALUATION OF THE CECIL COUNTY

PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

By

Marielle Evans Gose

Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research
College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

April 1992

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 1991 the Cecil County Public Library System asked the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research of the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware, to conduct a needs assessment of library services. The Cecil County Public Library System commissioned this study to support its development of a new five-year plan.

Four critical areas were selected for review by the library system's Long-Range Planning Committee to aid in the development of a targeted plan of service:

- o   Facilities; Adequate, accessible space to house library collections and conduct programs.
- o   Collections Development; Timely and accurate information reflecting community needs and advances in technology.
- o   Programming; Entertaining and informative activities for all age groups.
- o   Public Relations; Public awareness of both library locations and services offered.

In addition, the Cecil County Public Library System sought information about demographic change taking place in and around the library's service area. The speed and type of population change will affect the demand for services. Further, Census data are used to assist in development of forecasts that aid planning.

Data collection began in October 1991 and continued through January 1992. Information was gathered by both in-library and telephone surveys. The latter employed random-digit dialing techniques throughout Cecil County. The goals were to measure the extent to which current library users (defined for the purpose of this study as those who have gone to their local library either to obtain information, to

borrow materials, or for any other purpose) value library service in Cecil County, and to identify the reasons for non-use by non-users in Cecil County.

Demographic Background.

Elkton, North East and Perryville experienced substantial population growth over the past ten years. They, along with Rising Sun, currently account for 21 percent of the population of Cecil County and 89 percent of the population of the towns where a branch library is located. Census tracts also exhibited substantial growth rates. In the 1980's the population of Cecil County grew by 18.1 percent and the number of households increased by 28 percent. The median age increased from 29.6 years to 32.6 years of age. Those born during the years 1946-1964, commonly referred to as the "baby boom" generation, were the primary cause of the increase in population growth as they formed households and began families. As this generation (or the children of parents born at the beginning of the boom) grew up, the growth in households increased as they began to move out of their parent's house. Since they were relatively slow to begin new families, population increased less rapidly. As a result, we have observed smaller family sizes, more singles, and larger numbers of housing units.

These population and housing trends suggest several points. As the median age continues to increase, a larger percentage of the population will fall into the adult (20-55) or senior citizen (56+) category, indicating the need for new and perhaps expanded adult and senior services. Further, we have already observed both younger baby boomers (those born towards the end of the boom) and older children of early baby boomers starting families of their own. With an increase in births, there will be a need for new or expanded children's services, initially for preschool children and later for those who are of school age. Areas exhibiting the most growth, i.e., North

East, Perryville, and Rising Sun, should be expanded first. The Elkton branch was expanded in 1987.

Not surprisingly, the profile of current library users resembles that of Cecil County residents. The majority are over 30 years of age, have lived in Cecil County 20 years or more, and have two to three persons currently living in their household. Although 1990 Census statistics for education levels and income figures are not yet available, the survey data show education levels for approximately 40 percent of the respondents include some college or a college degree; the same 40 percent also enjoy incomes of $35,000-$60,000 annually. Education and salary levels suggest a population that will make frequent use of library services. As society continues to become more technology literate and video oriented, the library system must insure that users have access to the latest technological materials. This suggests the potential need for computers, audio and video materials, and compact discs. More in-depth reference, business, and legal information may also be important as libraries play a larger role supporting people looking for employment and starting small businesses. Both areas are increasing.

Library Use.

Over the five-year period from 1986-1991, the growth in circulation of the Cecil County Public Library System (9.8% annually) has exceeded the growth of its holdings (6.8% annually). Since population growth has been only 1.8 percent annually, per capita use of the library has increased. Future funds should be channeled into the expansion of holdings and, if possible, into the expansion of the system as a whole.

Facilities.

Deciding whether expansion of the system should take place requires a review of many factors, including the utilization of facilities now operating. Elkton, Rising Sun

and North East are the most utilized and most preferred branches. They are located in the most populated areas and are therefore the most convenient to reach, at least in terms of travel time. Almost three-fourths of the users surveyed indicate that they generally make a special trip to go to the library. Approximately the same proportion responded that the maximum distance they would travel from their house is ten miles. They also feel that the maximum amount of time they would be willing to spend traveling to get to a library is fifteen minutes. Most of the respondents (85%) live within 5 to 10 miles of the library branch that they use. Evenings and Saturdays were cited by respondents as the most popular times to visit, but this varied by age group.

Although the quality of services currently delivered was rated fair to good by 98 percent of respondents, 62 percent would welcome expansion. More importantly, 66 percent of users stated they would be willing to pay for the expansion.

Collection Development.

Another factor that must be addressed is the size of the library's current collection and the methods used to maintain it. Because the growth in holdings is less than the growth in circulation, there is a need to expand the entire collection of materials, and, probably, to review purchasing decisions. What materials and books are needed and how many to purchase are not questions that can be easily answered.

To address this issue, library users were asked about expenditures on reading material outside of the library. Sixty percent of respondents spend at least $50 a year on these items. Daily newspapers, monthly magazines and "best-seller" books were mentioned most often. Users state that priority should be given to adding reference, technical and health information to the library holdings. As users grow older, obtain higher education and earn higher salaries, they are more likely to use reference and technical materials for academic and business-related research. Other services related to this growing technical audience should also be provided. Audio and video material,

microcomputers and software, and legal and investment materials are among the many items library patrons said they would use. It is important to remember, however, adding these items is only the first step; publicizing their availability will help ensure that the money was well spent.

Programming.

While the collection of materials available within the library is of extreme importance, so too is the availability of programs. Such programs must be geared towards all segments of the population. Library programming is an excellent way to attract people to the library. Programming not only encourages reading as a way of learning but also as a form of recreation and leisure. When users were asked if they or their family members would be interested in currently offered or potential services listed on the questionnaire, those most mentioned included Children's Summer Reading (50%), Children's Storytime and Films (53%), Saturday or Evening Children's Program (46%), and Adult Programs (62%). One mission of the library is to encourage young people to develop an interest in reading and learning. Success in pursuing this goal helps create lifelong users. Programming is essential to accomplishing this mission.

Public Relations.

Success is only possible, however, if the library's programs, services and locations are widely known. Although many forms of advertisement are available, word-of-mouth is by far the most prevalent. Forty-four percent of users state that this was the way they learned about library activities. A recommendation by a satisfied client or customer is the quickest way and, perhaps, the cheapest way to publicize library services. Newspapers and fliers are another way to publicize library events and activities; at least half of the respondents stated they obtained library information

through these publications. Approximately 17 percent of library users do not know the locations of all branches of the library or the services that each one offers. When residents are not aware of the library offerings, they may look elsewhere. Further, library users who may not wish to travel a great distance will be much happier if they know all of their options.

The mission of the Cecil County Public Library System is to provide library material to satisfy the information, recreation, and educational needs of the community and to stimulate the community's awareness of those resources. Ninety-three percent of respondents agree that the library should support individuals in reading and learning on their own; it is important that the library express the strength of this mission and its dedication to maintaining it. Publicizing this mission is important because people tend to gravitate towards places that meet their needs and people with whom they feel they have a common interest.

Library Non-Users.

Current users can witness first-hand the dedication library personnel display in providing the best possible services to the community they serve. But what about non-users, those who have never gone to the library for any reason? Of the general public surveyed, 26 percent were non-users. They have many reasons for not using library services, including the availability of other reading resources (42%), a lack of interest (17%), and the lack of a library card (21%). Overall, 40 percent of non-users were unaware of any library services in Cecil County. The Cecil County Public Library System might consider sending a periodic library bulletin outlining services and activities to a countywide list of residents. Interestingly, 59 percent of non-users have lived in Cecil County for at least 20 years, 73 percent have at least a high school education, and 34 percent are in the over 60 age group. Non-use by this last group

may be a result from a lack of physical mobility or inadequate transportation in addition to the other reasons cited above.

Findings.

Overall, the surveys' find a satisfied group of users who support the expansion of the system. Because growth in the system is already warranted, plans to expand the facilities, collection, equipment, and programs should begin soon. As new services and materials are made available, new users will find their way to the library. A larger collection coupled with an increase in users will strain current facilities. Users may be less charitable in their views of the system if expansion does not follow the increase in need.

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope.

The purpose of the Cecil County Public Library System is to provide people of all ages with free and convenient access to a wide variety of information. In 1976, the library system commissioned a study to determine the extent to which the goals of the system were being met and whether these goals should be modified. As a result of this study, the Cecil County Library System was expanded. A new 24,000 square-foot headquarters facility was constructed in Elkton. In addition, an automated circulation system and county-wide public access catalog were adopted.

In 1986, the growth of the system and the county since 1976 required a review of the Cecil County Public Library System's strategic plan. To aid in this effort, a study was conducted to measure the library's image among county residents. After this study was completed, a five-year plan for service (1987-1992) was produced. This plan identified four areas of concern relating to the overall mission of the library system. They were facilities, collections development, programming, and public relations. Within these priority areas, goals and objectives were defined and over the next five years, action was taken to achieve those goals. That five-year plan of service is now expiring. The Cecil County Public Library System is once again going to update service goals, prioritize client needs, and define branch responsibilities to make the most effective use of county resources while delivering a high quality service to county residents.

In September 1991, the Cecil County Public Library System asked the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research of the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware, to conduct a needs assessment of library services. The Cecil County Public Library System commissioned this study and will

use it in its development of a new five-year plan. This needs assessment concentrated on the four critical areas previously selected by the library system's Long-Range Planning Committee, namely, facilities, collections development, programming, and public relations. The purpose of this study is to determine the following:

- o What services do current patrons of the Cecil County Public Library System consider as essential? desirable?
- o What is the perceived quality of service now offered by the system?
- o Is expansion in the library system's collection and facilities needed?

The Cecil County Public Library System will utilize the findings to develop a long-range plan (1993-1998) that reflects and anticipates the library needs of the residents of Cecil County.

Methodology.

During the summer of 1991, the library staff and the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) staff developed two questionnaires to determine the library and information needs of Cecil County residents and current library users. In September, CADSR staff organized and trained interviewers and used a pretest of 25 interviews to refine the questionnaires.

To learn about the views and attitudes of those currently using library services, part of the interviews were conducted "in-house." Users in this case were defined as those who have used their local library either to obtain information, to borrow materials, or for any other purpose during the survey period. Responses were collected from users 16 years of age and older at the circulation desks in all library branches from October 1991 through January 1992. Six hundred sixty in-house surveys were completed. Each survey was classified by the branch name, the date, time of day, and day of the week. The in-house survey instrument is found in Appendix A.

To obtain a sample of the general public, volunteer "friends" of the Cecil County Public Library System conducted telephone surveys in assigned areas. Using random-digit dialing throughout Cecil County volunteers surveyed 400 residents between November 1991, and January 1992. The goals were to measure the extent to which users in the general public value library service in Cecil County, and to determine the characteristics of non-users and the reasons for non-use. Non-users are defined for the purpose of this study as those who have never gone to the library for any reason. The general public survey instrument is in Appendix B.

The surveys obtained were segregated into four sample groups: users of the Elkton branch, users of the other six branches combined (Cecilton, Chesapeake City, North East, Perryville, Port Deposit, and Rising Sun), users in the general public of Cecil County, and non-users in the general public of Cecil County. In this report the results were divided into two sections. Results for all users are explained in the first section. Results for sub-groups of users are also provided. Results for the sample of non-users are explained in the second section.

County Demographic Background.

The amount and type of growth taking place in Cecil County affects the need for library services. It also expands the number and scope of requests for information from the Cecil County Public Library System. Using information about this growth, the strategic planning process can determine the future direction of the Cecil County Public Library System and how the system can best serve the increasing expectations of residents in a time of limited resources.

The population of Cecil County, Maryland, grew 18.1 percent from 1980 to 1990 (Table 1). Between 1980 and 1990, the number of households (the person or persons who occupy a housing unit) increased by 22 percent. As average household

TABLE 1

Household and Population Figures
Cecil County, Maryland[1]

Characteristic	1980	1990	% Change	Annual Growth Rate %
Total Population	60,430	71,347	18.10	1.8
Total # HH[2]	19,318	24,725	28	2.7
Persons per HH[3]	3.01	2.81	-6.64	NA
Median Age	29.6	32.6	10.14	NA

---

[1]Cecil County 1980-1990 Census of Population and Housing. Maryland Office of Planning.

[2]A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit (Bureau of the Census).

[3]The measure of persons per household is obtained by dividing the number of persons in households by the number of households (or householders), (Bureau of the Census).

size dropped, the population of Cecil County was aging; the median age increased by 9.2 percent between 1980 and 1990, to 33 years of age.

The growth rates in the towns were quite different. Elkton, North East and Perryville witnessed notable growth in comparison with Cecilton, Chesapeake City, Port Deposit, and Rising Sun (Table 2). Census tracts (shown in Figure 1) adjacent to the towns of Elkton and North East also exhibit the significant positive growth. For example, tracts 314, 313, and 307 which are adjacent to the town of Rising Sun have experienced substantial growth (35% or more), (Table 3). Several question must be asked. Are the libraries which service these areas keeping up with this growth? Are the libraries throughout the system, including those which service the slower growing areas, initiating programs and services which attract non-users? These questions and others will be addressed in future sections of this report.

The need for adult (20-55) and senior citizen (56+) services should be a major consideration in future development options. If the newly formed households start having children, the population will grow (as will the need for children's services), but the number of households will grow very little (deceptive if services offered are based on number of households in service area).

The construction of the new library headquarters in Elkton has allowed services and sources of information to be expanded to keep up with this town's growth. In the other six towns, however, library service has been severely limited by the size and quality of the branch facilities. Population figures indicate the urgent need to identify the best pattern for service without creating inequities, a task which will be addressed throughout this report.

Library System Growth, 1986-1991.

The Cecil County Public Library System consists of a headquarters building in Elkton and six community branches in Cecilton, Chesapeake City, North East, Perry-

TABLE 2

Household and Population Figures by Town
Cecil County, Maryland[4]

Town	1980	1990	% Change
Cecilton			
Population	508	489	8.34
Total # HH	180	195	10.93
Persons per HH	2.82	2.51	8.65
Median Age	34.7	37.7	
Chesapeake City			
Population	899	735	-18.24
Total # HH	327	290	-11.31
Persons per HH	2.75	2.53	-8.0
Median Age	32.3	34.8	7.74
Elkton			
Population	6,468	9,073	40.28
Total # HH	2,097	3,333	58.94
Persons per HH	2.7	2.59	-4.07
Median Age	31.3	30.8	-1.60
North East			
Population	1,469	1,913	30.25
Total # HH	525	812	54.67
Persons per HH	2.8	2.36	-15.71
Median Age	30	30.5	1.67
Perryville			
Population	2,018	2,456	21.71
Total # HH	742	980	32.08
Persons per HH	2.7	2.5	-7.41
Median Age	32	33.7	5.31
Port Deposit			
Population	961	685	-28.72
Total # HH	110	241	119.09
Persons per HH	2.8	2.84	1.43
Median Age	18.5	30	62.16
Rising Sun			
Population	1,160	1.263	8.88
Total # HH	432	504	16.67
Persons per HH	2.69	2.51	-6.69
Median Age	29.5	32.5	10.17

---

[4]Cecil County 1980-1990 Census of Population and Housing. Maryland Office of Planning.

Cecil County Maryland

1990 Census Tracts and Towns

0314

Rising Sun

030601

0313

0307

030602

030501

Elkton

031201

030503

Port Deposit

030901

North East

031202

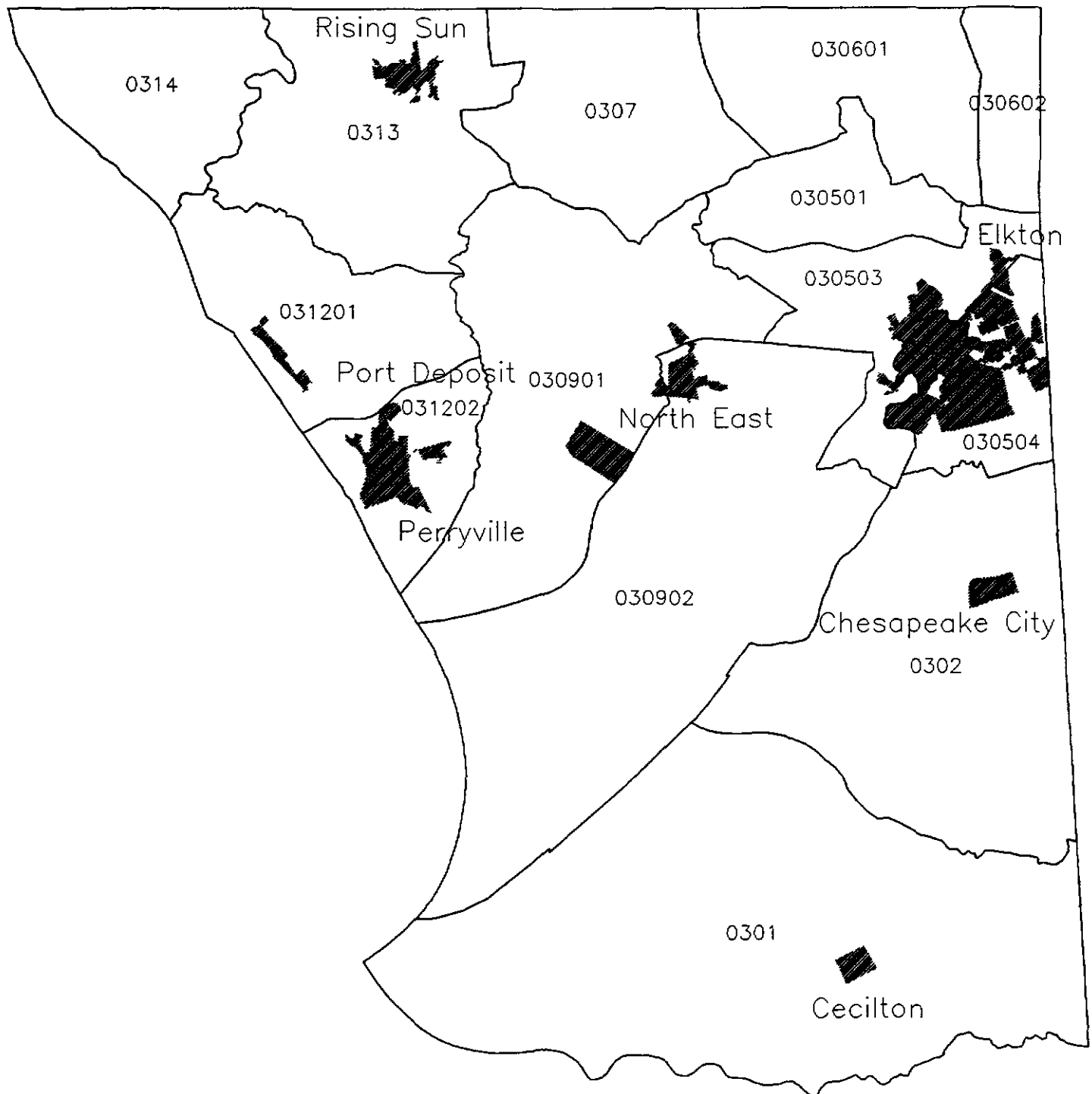Perryville

030504

030902

Chesapeake City

0302

0301

Cecilton

TABLE 3

Population Figures by Census Tract, Cecil County, MD

Census Tract	1980	1990	% Change	Location of Town
301	2,880	3,386	17.6	Cecilton
302	3,714	4,444	19.7	Chesapeake City
304	5,140	5,019	-2.4	Elkton
305.01	2,710	3,601	32.9	
305.03	3,846	3,423	-11.0	Part of Elkton
305.04	4,168	5,650	35.6	Part of Elkton
306.01	2,276	3,084	35.5	
306.02	3,729	3,406	-8.7	
307	2,522	3,572	41.6	
309[5]	12,507	16,204	29.6	North East
312[6]	8,628	9,533	10.5	Port Deposit and Perryville
313	6,201	7,172	15.6	Rising Sun
314	2,109	2,853	35.3	
Total	60,430	71,347	18.10	Cecil County

---

[5] In 1990, Census Tract #309 is split into Tract #309.01 and #309.02.

[6] In 1990, Census Tract #312 is split into Tract #312.01 and #312.02.

ville, Port Deposit, and Rising Sun. During the fiscal year 1986 (July 1985-June 1986) circulation was 270,703. The total holdings consisted of 132,399 items, including books, records, video cassettes and other related items. There were 41,024 registered borrowers in a county population of 63,000.[5] In comparison, circulation was 442,708 in fiscal year 1991 (July 1990-June 1991), and total holdings consisted of 185,729 items. There are now 29,015 registered borrowers in a county population of 71,347. It should be noted that the growth of borrowers is misleading. The 1986 count represents borrowers prior to the installation of the automated computer system; that is, any borrower who was ever registered with any Cecil County Library. The 1991 figure, however, represents "active" borrowers only; that is, only those borrowers who have had activity recorded since 1987. Consequently, no correlation can be made between the growth rate of annual borrowers and the other data provided.

---

[5]Cecil County Public Library Plan for Service, 1987.

II. USERS OF THE LIBRARY

Demographics.

As expected, current users (both those who responded to the in-house survey and those who responded to the telephone survey) resemble Cecil County residents generally (Table 4). The largest group of users surveyed were age 30-45 (43%). This is consistent with the median age of Cecil County residents (32.6). Respondents ages 46 and over made up the second largest group of users (35%). One-fourth of the respondents are native to Cecil County. Approximately 22.4 percent of in-house respondents had lived in Elkton for their entire lives, and 24 percent had lived within the limits of the other six towns 20 years or more. Overall, 25.8 percent of the general public had lived within Cecil County 20 years or more.

More than 50 percent of all in-house respondents had attended college. Similarly, 39 percent of users from the general public had attended college. More than 90% of the respondents from each sample had at least a high school education. The income distribution is similar (statistically) across all three groups. Roughly half of the respondents have a family income of less than $35,000 and half are above that income. Both the high education level and the relatively high income level may, in part, reflect the use of Cecil County as a "bedroom" for many University of Delaware faculty and staff.

TABLE 4

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents Who Use Library Services
("Users")

Who are the users?	In-House (Elkton) (N=330)	In-House (Other Six Branches) (N=330)	General Public (Telephone) (N=294)
How long have you lived in Cecil County?			
0-5	18.8%	23.3%	15%
6-10	15.8%	10.6%	9.2%
11-20	16.4%	17.6%	23.8%
20+	20.9%	24.2%	25.9%
Always	22.4%	21.5%	23.5%
How many people are living in your household?			
1	8.2%	10.3%	9.2%
2-3	47%	47%	48.3%
4-5	37.6%	37.9%	33%
5+	5.5%	3%	7.1
Last grade completed in school?			
Grade school or less	.9%	1.8%	1.7%
Some high school	5.8%	7.6%	7.8%
High school graduate	22.7%	26.4%	40.8%
Technical school	3.6%	5.8%	4.1%
Some college	32.1%	27%	21.8%
College graduate	20.3%	17.3%	16%
Post graduate	13%	13.3%	5.1%
Age			
16-19	7.2%	3.6%	5.8%
20-29	16.1%	10.6%	15.3%
30-45	46.1%	42.4%	40.8%
46-59	15.2%	18.9%	17.7%
60+	13.9%	23%	17.3%
What is your family income?			
Less than $10,000	3.3%	6.1%	4.1%
$10,000-$20,000	13%	16.7%	12.6%
$20,000-$35,000	23%	27.3%	22.4%
$35,000-$60,000	33.9%	30.9%	24.1%
$60,000+	14.2%	9.1%	11.9%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100 minus refusals.

Facilities.

The importance of facilities is probably best expressed in the Cecil County Public Library Plan for Service 1986-1992:

> "All Citizens of Cecil County will have access to library services through improved library facilities and equipment."

The library must be responsive to changing and on-going needs in each community. Does each branch fulfill this goal?

There are some differences between the branch users in the three samples utilized and the one they prefer. For Elkton patrons, the Elkton branch ranks first, North East second, and Rising Sun third in both categories (Figure 2). Probably the most striking feature of this graph is that a significant number of those using the Elkton branch would like to be at another branch. Is this because of hours at the other branches or perhaps the extent of the collection?
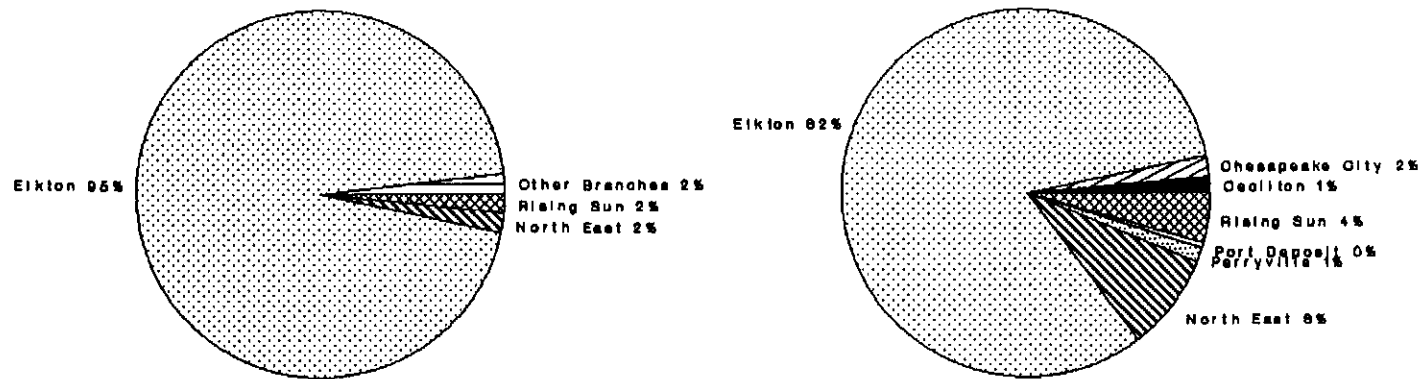
Among the other six branches, Rising Sun ranked highest in both categories (Figure 3). Cecilton and Perryville were rated second and third in terms of use, while Elkton and Cecilton were the preferred branches. In Figure 3, it is clear that there is some degree of mismatch between use and preference. In Rising Sun a significant number use the branch more, but would prefer to use another. This is most likely due to a problem with the hours, facilities, or collections. Perryville has a similar pattern. It appears those dissatisfied are using Elkton and North East as alternatives.

Users in the general public sample resemble Elkton Branch patrons, naming Elkton, Rising Sun, and Cecilton as the top three most used branch locations (Figure 4). When asked which ones they preferred to use, they listed Elkton, Rising Sun, and North East as the top three branch locations. The mismatches are not quite as evident.

FIGURE 2

CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

PATRONS OF THE ELKTON BRANCH

Elkton 95%   Other Branches 2%
                          Rising Sun 2%
                          North East 2%

Elkton 82%

Chesapeake City 2%
Cecilton 1%
Rising Sun 4%
Port Deposit 0%
Perryville 1%
North East 9%
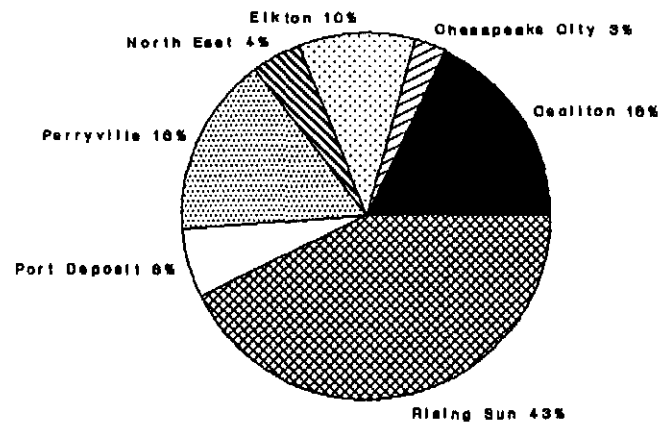
Branch Used
Most Often

Branch Prefer
To Use

Does not reflect refusals, N/A, or D/K

14

FIGURE 3

CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

PATRONS OF THE OTHER SIX BRANCHES

Elkton 10%
North East 4%
Chesapeake City 3%
Perryville 16%
Cecilton 16%
Port Deposit 8%
Rising Sun 43%

Branch Used
Most Often

Elkton 10%
North East 6%
Chesapeake City 4%
Perryville 12%
Cecilton 17%
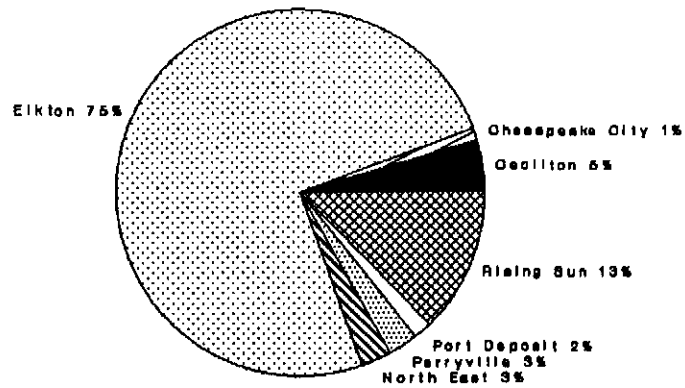Port Deposit 6%
Rising Sun 37%

Branch Prefer
To Use

Does not Include refusals, N/A, or D/K

FIGURE 4

CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

USERS IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

Elkton 75%
Chesapeake City 1%
Cecilton 5%
Rising Sun 13%
Port Deposit 2%
Perryville 3%
North East 3%

Branch Used
Most Often

Elkton 75%
Chesapeake City 0%
Cecilton 3%
Rising Sun 11%
Port Deposit 2%
Perryville 2%
North East 7%

Branch Prefer
To Use

16
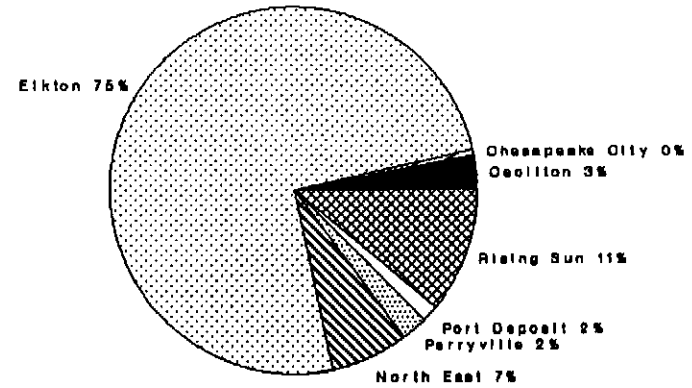
Does not reflect refusals, N/A, or D/K

The results suggest several things. First, Elkton will continue to be the primary library so it will have to grow. Second, some of the pressure on Elkton could be relieved by improvements in hours, collections, facilities, or programs at Rising Sun and Perryville.

Interestingly, without specifying a particular branch, and understanding that expanded services mean increased costs, more than 67 percent of in-house respondents and 57 percent of users in the general public felt library services should be expanded.

The most popular time to visit the library is in the evening (Table 5). There is no clear second-place choice among in-house respondents, but the afternoon is the next most convenient time for users in the general public. These results are somewhat different across age groups. The first three age groups all prefer the evening or combination (more than one time frame mentioned) options. These groups are most likely to be at school or at work during the day. The last two age groups prefer the morning or afternoon. No particular day or a combination of days is most convenient for someone to visit the library, although Saturday was the choice selected by the largest number of respondents (9.7%), (Table 6).

According to responses from all three samples, the largest group of users visit the library several times monthly (33%). Other large groups are those that visit it once a week (24% of in-house users) and once a month (24% of general public). Those persons who visit the library several times monthly have some college education and are in the 30-45 age group. Those who visit the library once a week have at least a high school education and are in the 20-29 and 30-45 age groups.

Approximately 44 percent of the in-house users and 39 percent of users in the general public live within five miles of the library branch they use; 31 percent of in-house users and 37 percent of users in the general public live within 10 miles. The majority of users (85%) in all three samples agree, however, that the maximum

17

TABLE 5

Most Convenient Time for Library Visit
by Age

(Each table reflects percentages out of 100)

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	14.8%	1.2%	15.5%	41.3%	25.5%	3.0%
Other Six Branches	18.8%	2.5%	20.6%	30.9%	27.2%	3.0%
General Public (Telephone Survey)	15.2%	1.5%	24.2%	45.5%	8.0%	5.7%

16-19 Years of Age:

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	4.2%	4.2%	20.8%	62.5%	8.3%	0
Other Six Branches	0	0	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%	0
General Public (Telephone Survey)	0	0	23.5%	70.6%	5.9%	0

20-29 Years of Age:

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	9.4%	0	15.1%	45.3%	26.4%	3.8%
Other Six Branches	8.6%	2.9%	5.7%	54.3%	25.7%	2.8%
General Public (Telephone Survey)	4.4%	8.9%	26.7%	57.8%	0	2.2%

30-45 Years of Age:

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	12.5%	.7%	15.1%	46.7%	23%	2%
Other Six Branches	15%	3.6%	17.9%	35.7%	27.1%	.7%
General Public (Telephone Survey)	11.7%	.8%	10%	66.7%	7.5%	3.3%

46-59 Years of Age:

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	20%	4%	10%	30%	34%	2%
Other Six Branches	27.4%	1.6%	21%	30.6%	16.1%	3.3%
General Public (Telephone Survey)	28.8%	0	26.9%	26.9%	11.5%	5.9%

60 Years of Age and Older:

	Morning	Noontime	Afternoon	Evening	Combo	No Answer
Elkton	28.3%	0	21.7%	15.2%	32.6%	2.2%
Other Six Branches	25%	1.3%	27.6%	5.3%	34.2%	6.6%
General Public (Telephone Survey)	27.5%	2%	51%	3.9%	11.8%	3.8%

TABLE 6

Most Convenient Day for Library Visit

Day of Week	In-House Elkton (N=330)	In-House Other Six Branches (N=330)	General Public (Telephone Survey) (N=294)
Monday	3%	2.1%	5.8%
Tuesday	1.5%	2.4%	2%
Wednesday	6.7%	3%	8.8%
Thursday	.3%	1.8%	2.4%
Friday	1.5%	1.2%	1.7%
Saturday	9.7%	9.7%	8.8%
Sunday	3%	1.2%	1.4%
Anyday	57.3%	63.3%	60.5%
Combination	17.9%	12.1%	6.5%
Don't Know	.3%	.3%	0

Note: Refusals are not reflected in the above figures.

amount of time they would be willing to spend traveling to a library is 15 minutes. These statistics become important when deciding to build a new branch or relocate an existing one.

The quality of services delivered will have a large effect on the number of people who use the library and the frequency of their visits. Library personnel and ease of check out, were the highest rated in terms of quality (Table 7, 7a, 7b). An average of 93 percent of in-house users in Elkton and the six branches rated these two services #1. Eighty-nine percent of users from the general public agreed. Staff members who check out the materials come in contact with clients most often. Thus, a high rating in this area is a strong indication of people's satisfaction with the library. Users in the three sample groups were in agreement for the next three top-rated factors as well. Approximately 70 percent of respondents from Elkton and the other six branches and 80 percent from the general public felt the condition of, ease in locating, and variety of materials offered were worthy of a good rating. The fact that availability and variety of material ranked below condition and ease of finding material could have implications for the collections at all branches. It was interesting to see that Elkton was not rated significantly high on these dimensions. It is interesting to find that ease in locating materials received a high rating, but the perception of the computerized card catalog was relatively low. Only about half of the in-house users from Elkton and the other six branches felt this service aided their efforts; even fewer users in the general public (40%) felt the computerized catalog was helpful. These data suggest that further investigation may be useful. Are they unsure of how to use it? Is the equipment often busy when they are attempting to use it? Do they simply have techno-phobia?

Range of services for youth, adults, and seniors was rated only by those who actually utilized each specific service rather than by the overall population. As a

21

TABLE 7
Perceived Quality of Service by Type

Elkton:

Ranking	Service	Percentage
1	Library Personnel	91.2%
2	Ease of Check-out	88.5%
3	Condition of Material	83%
4	Ease in Finding Material	81.2%
5	Variety of Material	73%
6	Services for Adults	68.5%
7	Availability of Material	67.6%
8	Services for Youths	62.7%
9	Up-to-date Material	62.4%
10	Computer Catalog	54.5%
11	Services for Seniors	50.6%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

TABLE 7a
Perceived Quality of Service by Type

Other Six Branches:

Ranking	Service	Percentage
1	Library Personnel	98.2%
2	Ease of Check-out	95.8%
3	Condition of Material	87%
4	Ease in Finding Material	77.3%
5	Up-to-date Material	70.9%
6	Availability of Material	65.8%
	Variety of Material	65.8%
TIE	Services for Adults	65.8%
7	Services for Youths	52.7%
8	Services for Seniors	51.8%
9	Computer Catalog	44.2%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

22

TABLE 7b

Perceived Quality of Service by Type

<u>General Public (Telephone Survey)</u>:

Ranking	Services	Percentage
1	Ease of Check-Out	89.5%
2	Library Personnel	88.8%
3	Condition of Material	85.4%
4	Ease in Finding Material	79.6%
5	Variety of Material	76.2%
6	Availability of Material	72.8%
7	Services for Adults	71.8%
8	Up-to-date Material	67.3%
9	Services for Youths	62.6%
10	Services for Seniors	43.5%
11	Computer Catalog	40.1%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

result, we will not compare their ratings to the other statistics in this section. These services will be discussed at length in the "Programming" section.

Collection Development.

The importance of having a well-rounded collection is expressed in the existing strategic plan:

> "All citizens of Cecil County will have access to a current
> and expanding collection of library materials in a format
> and at a level appropriate to meet their needs and
> interest."

Every library has two factors to consider when purchasing books. The first factor is the completeness of the collection. A library should develop collections in each category in which users have indicated an interest or need. The second consideration is that the library should serve the needs of the largest percentage of the population, that is, the collection should reflect the reading habits of the overall population. These two factors (breadth and depth) must be carefully balanced.

Other considerations which should not be overlooked include the lifespan of a book (or any other item in the "holdings") and whether the item will have heavy initial use but reduced long-run appeal. Books wear out if they are circulated enough, and the typical "best seller" stays popular only for a short period of time. These two factors will affect the library's purchasing decisions. The choices that are made will also have an effect on the user's search for alternate sources of material.

The distribution of money spent on personal reading material (Table 8) is essentially the same across all three groups. To put the expenditures in perspective, it costs about $150/year for a typical daily newspaper. That coupled with two magazine subscriptions pushes the total over $200. An avid reader of paperbacks will easily spend $4 per week. It is difficult to draw in conclusions from this table because

TABLE 8

Money Spent on Personal Reading Materials by Users

Amount	In-House Elkton (N=330)	In-House Other Six Branches (N=330)	General Public (Telephone Survey) (N=294)
None	.9%	3%	1%
Less than $25	12.7%	13.9%	7.1%
$25-$50	17.3%	20.3%	20.4%
$50-$100	22.7%	24.2%	24.5%
$100-$200	20%	22.1%	19%
Over $200	25.2%	15.2%	24.1%

Note: Columns may not add to 100% because of refusals, etc.

people who do not read do not spend much money on books and those that do use the library and spend money on books. It is somewhat surprising to find the expenditures between the in-house survey and the telephone survey so similar since many in the general population do not read at all.

In all three samples surveyed, adult books were the most frequently borrowed or utilized reading material (Table 9). In the second place, users of the Elkton branch borrow or utilize video tapes and reference materials (47.9% for both). Although users in the general public also named reference materials as their second choice, video tapes were not one of the top selected items. In contrast, users of the other six branches rate paperbacks as their second choice (49.7%). These differences could reflect the selection of materials available within the specific branches. For example, more reference materials are available at the Elkton branch. Both Elkton users and users in the general public (64% of whom frequent the Elkton branch) indicate their high usage of this resource. Children's books were rated as the third most utilized reading resource by both the Elkton patrons and the other six branches respondents, while users in the general public ranked it fifth. This placement is ironic when figures reflecting actual circulation are reviewed. In fiscal year 91, circulation of children's books was 150,874. During the same time period circulation of adult books was 215,701. These circulation figures may be misleading since children's books are probably not exact equivalents.

Users were asked if they were interested in a variety of actual and potential library services (Table 10). The availability of audio and video tapes/cassettes was the service that generated the greatest positive response among users in both the Elkton and other six branches samples: 88 percent and 80 percent, respectively. At least 70 percent of users within each age group from 16 to 59 want this service, and more than 50 percent of users in the over-60 age group. Users in the general public placed this service second with their first place choice being health information (78%). The in-

TABLE 9

Library Service Most Utilized During a Typical Visit

Service	In-House Elkton (N=330)	In-House Other Six Branches (N=330)	General Public (Telephone Survey) (N=294)
Adult Books	80.9%	90%	76.9%
Children's Books	43.6%	45.8%	43.5%
Paperbacks	33.6%	49.7%	46.9%
Teen Reading	13.6%	16.1%	16.7%
Audio Recording	20.9%	13.3%	23.8%
Video Tapes	47.9%	40.6%	43.9%
Reference Materials	57%	42.4%	69%
Magazines/Newspapers	37.3%	30.3%	35.7%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100.

TABLE 10

Perceived Interest in Actual or Potential Services

Service	In-House Elkton (N=330)	In-House Other Six Branches (N=330)	General Public (Telephone Survey) (N=294)
AV Tapes/Cassettes	87.9%	79.9%	69%
Health Information	78.8%	72.4%	77.9%
Books in Foreign Languages	37.9%	27%	29.9%
Microcomputers and Software	61.8%	47.9%	54.1%
Telephone Information and Referral Service	66.1%	51.5%	51.7%
Adult Literary Material	38.5%	39.1%	42.9%
Compact Discs	51.8%	32.1%	38.8%
Job/Employment Info.	61.5%	51.5%	60.5%
Magazine Swaps	48.5%	56.1%	50.3%
Business, Finance, and Investment Info.	66.7%	54.2%	62.6%
Legal Info.	71.5%	65.2%	68.4%
On-line Data Searching	63.9%	47.9%	45.6%
Access to Library by Home Computer	54.2%	33.9%	42.9%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

28

house users made this service their second choice. Looking at all three samples, every age group had a large percentage of users wanting health information. It is worth noting, however, that the second-largest age group interested in this service in both the other six branches and the general public was the 16-19 year-olds, with 78.6 percent and 82.4 percent, respectively. Of Elkton branch teenage users, 91.7 percent were interested in this service. The very high rating given to health information by teenagers could reflect not so much the need for the service, but the feeling by users that such a service should exist.

The next two most popular services in all three samples were legal, business, financial, and investment information. Although users in the 30-45 year age group were the primary requestors, there is enough demand from the other age groups to place the need for these services high on the list. In Elkton, users in particular indicated a special need for this service. These statistics also suggest a need for more technical information exists. Accordingly, collections in these categories should be reviewed for further development.

The least-desired services, although this is not to say each service does not have some users interest, are books in foreign languages, adult literacy materials, and compact discs. These last two services will probably be more popular as more households acquire the equipment.

The library is utilized for more than just its reading material. The demand for these non-book services will continue to rise. Increased educational levels result in an increased demand for technical and business-related information, as well as requests for the opportunity to learn about new technologies. For example, home computers may eventually become as commonplace as television. As that occurs the popularity of services related to home computers will increase. When purchasing materials, it is important to balance the potential interest in service against all the competing requirements of the citizens of Cecil County.

Programming.

The Cecil County Public Library System has a mission beyond that of a repository. This is expressed below:

> "All citizens of Cecil County will have access to library-sponsored programs to meet their current needs and interests."

Library programs are an excellent way to attract people to the library and allow them to pursue their interests while they enjoy learning. Most often, the target population for these programs is young children. The 1986-1992 Plan for Service states that pre-school children are an important focus of programming. Although children are an important consideration in programming, programs for adults and senior citizens should not be overlooked. The adult group may wish to become more knowledgeable in their occupations, to pursue other personal interests, or they may be parents who are concerned with educating their children. The senior citizens group is likely to include persons seeking recreation and/or lifelong learning.

Respondents in all three samples rated the Children's Storytime and Films as the program in which they or another member of their family would be most interested. This was followed by Children's Summer Reading, the Saturday or Evening Children's Program, and Adult Programs (Table 11). Fifty-three percent of all users indicated that the Children's Storytime and Films program is an important program for the library. Approximately half of the users felt that the Summer Reading program is needed. Fifty-two percent of the Elkton users, 49.4 percent of the users from the other six branches, and 48 percent of the general public users expressed an interest in this program. The Saturday Evening Program was also chosen by close to 50 percent of the users in the three samples; 44.2 percent of the Elkton users, 44.5 percent of users from the other six branches, and 49.3 percent of users from the general public.

TABLE 11

Perceived Interest in Actual Programs

Programs	Elkton	Other Six Branches	General Public (Telephone Survey)
Children's Summer Reading	52.1%	49.4%	48%
Children's Storytime and Films	52.4%	52.7%	56.1%
Pre-School Story Hour	34.5%	37.3%	41.5%
Two-Year-Old Story Hour	26.7%	31.2%	31%
Saturday or Evening Children's Program	44.2%	44.5%	49.3%
Book Discussion Group	33.9%	42.4%	28.9%
Adult Programs	63.9%	65.5%	55.4%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

-

Programs for the younger children drew much less interest. Only 34.5 percent of the Elkton users and 37.3 percent of the users from the other six branches indicated the Pre-School Story Hour was important. Users of the general public were somewhat more supportive: 41.5 percent responded positively. The Two-Year-Old Story Hour also had a relatively low rating among the current users. Only 26.7 percent of the users from Elkton and 31.2 percent from the six branches responded positively. The general public followed the same trend with only 31 percent expressing an interest. This is not surprising since relatively few people have a direct need for such a program.

The majority of users who responded to these questions were the 30-45 age group and had at least a high school education. The responses from this group are interesting since many of these respondents may be parents. While parents would most likely encourage programs for all children, users seem to feel that the programs for the older children are more important than those for the younger children. It could be that users feel it is more important for school-aged children to be stimulated outside of school in order to enhance their academic performance and to strengthen their desire to learn on their own. Users may consider pre-school children too young to stay interested in a lengthy program or may feel that they, themselves, can teach these children at home until it is time to attend school. The library can play a vital role in this area by providing evidence that learning begins at an early age and encouraging parents to take advantage of the educational advantages the library offers. These services should assist children in becoming better students and help them develop a strong desire to learn even more than what is taught in school or at home.

Adults also need to be stimulated to learn new things beyond their daily employment and/or their parental roles. Apparently, adult users are in agreement. The adult programs proved to be very popular among all three samples of users; 63.9

percent of Elkton users, 65.5 percent of users from the other six branches and 55.4 percent of users from the general public responded positively to these programs.

One adult program which was not selected among the sample groups was the Book Discussion Group. Only one-third of the Elkton users (33.9%) felt the program was needed and about two-fifths of the users of the other six branches felt the same (42.4%); nearly half of the Elkton users (49%) indicated less interest in the program, as did just over two-fifths of the users from the six branches (43.9%).

All three areas of service (children, adults, and senior citizens) rate positively among the three sample groups (Table 12). At least 50 percent of the users from both the Elkton and other six branches sampled rated all three services as "good," as did at least 40 percent of users from the general public. The youth and adult services were rated "good" by at least 62 percent; the senior services received "good" ratings from approximately 43 percent of the respondents. These positive figures obviously indicate that the majority of the library users are satisfied with the quality of current services available for youth, adults and seniors.

As the majority of users answering these questions were aged 30-45, with significant input from the over 60 age group, it could be assumed that programs geared to their respective ages would be of more interest. It should be noted that these ratings reflect only on current services and not potential future services. While users may be satisfied with the current services available, they may be unaware of other services that might serve them better. However, it is encouraging to see that the people who are using these services or know of them feel that they are serving their purpose.

TABLE 12

Perceived Quality of Service for Target Age Range
(Each cell reflects percentages out of 100)

Elkton:

Ranking	Services as rated "Good"	Percentage
1	Adult	68.5%
2	Youth	62.7%
3	Seniors	50.6%

Other Six Branches:

Ranking	Services as rated "Good"	Percentage
1	Adult	65.8%
2	Youth	52.7%
3	Seniors	51.8%

General Public (Telephone Survey):

Ranking	Services as rated "Good"	Percentage
1	Adult	71.8%
2	Youth	62.6%
3	Seniors	43.5%

34

Public Relations.

A library system can only be effective if potential users are aware of the collection and services offered. The Cecil County Public Library System expresses this goal in the following way:

"All citizens of Cecil County will be made aware of the

range of services available through the public library."

While it is important that the materials and services in the library are accessible to the user, it is also important that the public each branch serves knows about those services. Even more important, they must be aware of the location of the library itself. When users were asked whether they knew the location of all library branches, 90 percent of users from the other six branches and general public sample responded positively, but only 72% of Elkton branch users did so. This could indicate that most of Elkton's users are loyal and feel no need to go elsewhere, or that users of the other six branches or the general public may frequent more than one library. But what if particular materials or services that users need are not available at the library they frequent and they are not aware that these items are available elsewhere. How does the system promote an informed set of citizens?

Users rate word-of-mouth as the most effective way to market library materials and services (Table 13). Word-of-mouth may be the most efficient means since it can reach the audience the library system has been unable to reach through other means. In addition, it is a recommendation by someone with no personal stake in the outcome. It is therefore important that library personnel are diligent in conveying to the library's users the availability of materials and services in all personal contact. It is evident that users rate library personnel very favorably and that there is a high degree of positive contact between personnel and the users.

The second most widely utilized form of public information is newspapers. This is not surprising since the majority of users responded that receive the daily

TABLE 13

Perceived Effectiveness of Tools Used to Publicize Library Service
(by Users)

Technique	Elkton (N=330)	Other Six Branches (N=330)	General Public (Telephone Survey) (N=294)
Newspapers	42.1%	40%	51%
Radio	4.2%	2.4%	5.1%
Flyer or Poster	22.4%	29.4%	19.7%
Word-of-Mouth	45.2%	52.4%	36.7%
Library Newsletter	13.3%	23%	14.6%
Unaware	21.5%	14.2%	13.9%

Note: Each cell above reflects favorable responses out of total respondents (100%) in each sample group.

newspaper at their place of residence. User rates can probably be affected by using newspapers to market the library's materials and services, but word-of-mouth still remains the most powerful tool. This is particularly true if many non-users, or infrequent users, do not read a newspaper regularly.

Other than materials and services, the reputation of an organization can do a great deal for its image. The library, like most organizations, attempts to convey a clear and positive image of its mission to the public. The results of this survey indicate that the Cecil County Public Library System has succeeded. The vast majority of respondents from all three sample groups feel the library's three top missions should be to encourage young children to develop an interest in reading and learning, assist students of all ages in meeting their educational goals, and support individuals of all ages in learning on their own (Table 14).

TABLE 14

Perceived Library Mission(s)

Mission	Elkton	Other Six Branches	General Public
Meetings and Activity Center	59.1%	61.5%	67%
Current info. on community organizations, issues, services	86.4%	87.3%	90.5%
Students in meeting education goals	94.5%	97.3%	96.9%
Support individuals of all ages to learn on own	94.8%	97%	95.9%
Current, high demand material in variety forms	89.1%	92.1%	94.2%
Young child to develop interest in reading and learning	94.2%	98.2%	97.3%
Timely, accurate, and useful information	88.5%	92.4%	94.2%
Assist scholars and researchers	75.5%	79.1%	83%

Note: Each cell reflects those users who responded favorably out of total respondents (100%) in each sample group.

III. NON-USE AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

While the purpose of the Cecil County Public Library System is to provide free and convenient access and information in a variety of forms for people of all ages, that does not necessarily mean that all people of Cecil County are being served. In order to get a clear picture of who the library is reaching, it is important to examine the demographic characteristics of the non-users and their reasons for not using the library (Table 15). This examination can assist the library system in assessing the non-user's needs so that these people can be more accurately targeted in the future.

The random sample for the general public consisted of 400 respondents, of whom 106 claimed to be non-users of the library, i.e., those who have never gone to the library for any reason. Looking at the most prevalent characteristics of the non-users, we see that 34 percent have lived in Cecil County for at least 20 years, 49 percent have 2-3 persons in their household, 39 percent have a high school education, 36 percent earn between $20,000 and $60,000 per year, and 34 percent are in the over 60 age group. How does this compare to the most recent Cecil County census information? For the county, the number of persons per household for 1990 was 2.81, which corresponds with the majority of non-users who have 2-3 persons per household. However, there is a large difference in the ages of the two groups. The median age for the county is 32.6, while the median age for the non-users is 51.5, indicating that some older groups make little use of the library. Non-use by this group could be attributed to a lack of physical mobility, and inadequate transportation in addition to a lack of interest.

The most prevalent reasons for not using the library (Table 16) were that non-users use other reading sources, do not read much, do not have a library card, are too

TABLE 15

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents Who Do Not Utilize Library Services
("Non-Users")

How long have you lived in Cecil County?	
0-5	23.6%
6-10	8.5%
11-20	7.5%
20+	34%
Always	24.5%
How many people are in your household?	
1	19.8%
2-3	49.1%
4-5	27.4%
5+	.9%
Last grade completed in school?	
Grade school or less	5.7%
Some high school	17%
High school graduate	38.7%
Technical school	5.7%
Some college	16%
College graduate	8.5%
Post graduate	3.8%
Age	
16-19	3.8%
20-29	13.2%
30-45	24.5%
46-59	21.7%
60+	34%
What is your family income?	
Less than $10,000	11.3%
$10,000-$20,000	15.1%
$20,000-$35,000	17.9%
$35,000-$60,000	17.9%
Over $60,000	7.5%

Note: Refusals are not reflected in the above figures.
Each cell equals 100%

TABLE 16

Reason for Non-Use of Library System

The Top Seven Responses Ranked in Order of Frequency

Inconvenient Hours	85.8%
Poor Transportation	84%
Physically Unable	81.1%
Do Not Know Where Library Is	76.4%
No Library Card	70.8%
Too Busy	69.8%
Other Reading Sources	50%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

busy, or lack the interest. The non-users who do not have a library card comprised 70.8 percent of this group while those who use other reading sources comprised 50 percent of the sample. Speculating on reasons for this non-use is difficult. It could be that these non-users are simply not aware of materials and services that are available in the library. For example, often people who enjoy reading novels will check the best-seller list at the local bookstore rather than going to the library. Another point for consideration is the popularity and convenience of magazine subscriptions. Many people would probably prefer to pay to have their favorite magazine delivered to their home rather than find out if the local library carries it and has copies available. It could also be something as simple as the weather or the inability to drive at night.

Fifty percent of non-users responded that they had alternative sources of materials. In Table 17 are found the different types of materials used. It appears that there are around 25 percent of the non-user population that does not read. They are probably a lost cause. Another 28 percent are regular readers who probably buy their own materials. There may be little that can be done to reduce a change in habits. The remaining 50 percent are light readers.

There will always be non-users who are harder to induce to use the library. How can these non-users be made aware of the library and its services and, more importantly, how can they be convinced that various library materials and services will prove interesting and stimulating? Many people in the over 60 age group are retired or have slower-paced jobs, which allows them more free time to enjoy the library's services. People of all ages can use the library as a source of information for their jobs (i.e., technical information), their homes (i.e., consumer reports, do-it-yourself books) and their children (i.e., the early learning years). Parents could also visit the library while their children attend any number of programs. The key to turning non-

TABLE 17

Personal Reading Materials by Non-Users

Daily Newspapers	
0	15.1%
1-4	69.7%
Weekly Newspapers	
0	43.4%
1-3	40.6%
Magazine Subscriptions	
0	20.8%
1-3	34.8%
4 or more	28.3%
Books Purchased Yearly	
0	24.5%
1-10	31.1%
10 or more	28.1%

Note: Each cell reflects percentages out of 100

users into users is to let people know how becoming a member of the library will help them and their families in their everyday life.

The majority of non-users find out about library services by newspapers (Table 18). Users, too, found newspapers one of the most useful tools when obtaining information on the library's services and weekly activities. Non-users ranked word-of-mouth second as a way to find out about library services. Perhaps this is because non-readers/non-users do not socialize with the same groups as users. Although the lowest-ranked method for finding out about library services is through fliers/posters, this is probably a cost-efficient and effective way to advertise. Out of 106 non-users, 40 percent said they were unaware of library services.

TABLE 18

Perceived Effectiveness of Tools Used to Publicize
Library Services by Non-Users

Newspapers	33%
Radio	6.6%
Flyer/Poster	2.8%
Word-of-Mouth	17.9%
Library Newsletter	3.8%

Note: Each cell reflects those non-users who responded
favorably out of total respondents (100%).

45

IV. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the library offers a wide range of materials and services and is ready and willing to provide more services if the resources are available. What are the needs that users feel are not currently being met?

Patrons of the Elkton branch stated:

1) More Professional Research Material

2) Enlarge Subject Areas

3) Faster Inter-Library Loan System

Patrons of the other six branches:

1) More Medical, Legal, and Financial Material

2) Enlarge Subject Areas

3) More Professional Research Material & Faster Inter-Library Loan System

Users responding to the telephone survey (General Public):

1) Enlarge General Collection

2) More School Material

3) More Business and Technical Material

Responses in all three samples are quite similar. Based on previous figures and the top unmet needs, we can surmise that:

1) As younger users tend to delay marriage and children while they concentrate on their career, more in-depth information is needed relating to business and finance, and career development;

2) As baby boomers and their children begin to start families, those users will use the library and, thus, the library will need to expand not only subject areas, but the library facility itself;

3) As technology continues to advance, researchers, and school children alike will be making requests for computer use, audio and video materials, modems, and compact discs.

4) As competition for users continues to grow, communication between libraries is essential. Problems, such as speed with the inter-library loan system, will have to be corrected.

These conclusions are further supported by responses to the question, "What one thing would you change about the Cecil County Library System?"

Patrons of the Elkton branch:

1) New/Larger Collection
2) Increase Hours
3) Increase Audio/Video Collections

Patrons of the other six branches:

1) New Facility
2) Enlarge space within the current facility
3) New/Larger Collection

Users responding to the telephone survey (General Public):

1) Expand Facilities
2) Longer Hours
3) Expand Business and Technical Collection

Not surprisingly, the words bigger, longer, expand, etc., continue to find their way into every aspect of this report. Any such expansion will be expensive. Although most users stated they support expansion regardless of extra costs, there are still more than 30 percent of users who are unsure. When the "unsure" users are added to library

non-users, the potential for opposition is significant. Since there will always be a small group of non-users who will not utilize the library under any circumstance, it should not be the goal of the library to gain 100 percent utilization rates. In fact, the reduction of the non-user population by 10-20 percent is probably a realizable goal.

To increase the number of users and their reliance on services of the Cecil County Public Library System, the Cecil County Public Library System's Long-Range Planning Committee should consider the following:

Facilities

1)   Consolidate libraries. Have one library serving a larger territory in the less populated areas; or, utilize the space to build a "specific service" facility perhaps offering only technical or research material.

       o   This strategy would reduce operating costs, open up available funds for other areas where the need is greater, and provide a resource for a growing "technical" audience.

2)   Work with schools, retirement homes, inter-city community agencies, and others to reduce barriers that could affect non-use.

3)   Concentrate adult services within the evening/weekend time frames; senior and children's programs can be delivered weekday afternoons.

4)   If forced to choose, the library system should remain open later hours on week days and Saturdays and forego early morning hours on week days or Sundays.

5)   Expand the facility in Rising Sun.

Collection Development

1) Create "displays" which would allow visitors to see at a glance where the section they need is located. Displays could also focus on new items or items that users might not be aware the library carries.

    o   This strategy is also good for browsers. It provides them with the widest possible contact with various segments of the collection.

2) Provide a "collection box" for used books (preferably current "best-sellers" or classics).

    o   This strategy would increase the supply of books available for patrons without adding additional cost to the library. It is also a tax deduction for the donor.

Programming

1) Keep up with technological advances. Incorporate new technology into programs offered. (For example, provide training on the automated catalog system, or instruction on computers in general).

Public Relations

1) Develop a mailing list which includes those persons who own a library card. Use this list to mail fliers/brochures which contain branch locations and services. Ask users to suggest the names of current non-users and mail out a temporary library card.

    o   This strategy helps to insure that both patrons and branch personnel are aware of current library operations.

2) Initiate a publicity campaign stressing the amount of money individuals could save if they used the library to borrow, rather than purchase outside reading sources.

3) Hold an "open-house" for users describing and highlighting the services and programs available at the library. Request that each user bring a guest who is currently not using library services.

This study seems to indicate that increased visibility should be a high priority for the Cecil County Public Library System. The location of each branch and the services each provides should be the primary message. Second, listen to the needs of the community and watch closely for changes in society. Technological advances are being introduced every day. As more and more people become interested in computers, for example, having computers available and providing instruction on them is vital. Further, as the recession continues to reduce residents' spendable income, the library can provide services that might not be widely affordable, such as video and compact disc rentals, the availability of a color laser printer, and business, legal, and technical information. Users, and possibly non-users, will begin to realize that borrowing materials, or attending free library programs are valuable and economical leisure-time activities.

APPENDIX A

Cecil County Public Library
Library Users Survey
College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
October, 1991

The following survey is sponsored by the Cecil County Public Library
system. This survey is intended to provide the Library with
information needed for continuing to meet the library-related needs of this county.

All survey information will be analyzed and processed by the
College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy - University of
Delaware. You must be 16 years of age to complete this survey.

Thank you for participating in this survey.

01.   How often do you go to the library?

01___ Several times a week   05___ Several times a year
02___ Once a week   06___ Once a year
03___ Several times a month   07___ Other_____
04___ Once a month   (specify)

02.   Do you have a library card?

1___   Yes
2___   No

03.   Do you know where the branches of the Cecil County library are located?

1___   Yes (go to question 4)
2___   No (go to question 7)

04.   Which branches have you used in the past year?

_____

_____

05.   Which library branch in Cecil County do you use most often?

_____
                    _

06.   Which library branch would you prefer to use (if convenient)?

_____ (branch name)

07.   During the past year about how much money has your household
       spent buying reading materials?

1___   None   5___ $100 - $200
2___   Less than $25   6___   Over $200
3___ $25 - $50
4___ $50 - $100

08.   Do you generally make a special trip just to go to the library?

1___   Yes
2___   No

09. What is the maximum amount of time you would be willing to spend traveling to get to a library?

1___ 5 minutes   5___ 45 minutes
2___ 10 minutes   6___ 1 hour or more
3___ 15 minutes
4___ 30 minutes

10. About how far is the distance from your residence to the closest public library, in miles?

1___ Less than 1 mile   7___ Refused
2___ 1 mile but less than 5 miles   9___ DK
3___ more than 5 miles but less than 10 miles
4___ More than 10 miles

** PROCEED TO QUESTION # 11 ON THE NEXT PAGE **

11. The following is a list of actual and potential library services. If you think you or your family members would be interested in a service, circle **yes**; if it is not of interest, circle **no**.

		Yes	No	DK
a.	Audio and Video Tape/Cassettes	1	2	9
b.	Children's Summer Reading Programs	1	2	9
c.	Meeting Rooms For Community Use	1	2	9
d.	Health Information	1	2	9
e.	Books in foreign languages	1	2	9
f.	Microcomputers and Software	1	2	9
g.	Telephone Information and Referral Service	1	2	9
h.	Adult Literacy Materials	1	2	9
i.	Children's Storytime and Films	1	2	9
j.	Compact disks	1	2	9
k.	Job/Employment Information	1	2	9
L	Magazine Swaps	1	2	9
m.	Adult Programs	1	2	9
n.	Book Discussion Groups	1	2	9
o.	Pre-school story hour	1	2	9
p.	Two-year-olds Storyhour	1	2	9
q.	Saturday or evening children's programs	1	2	9
r.	Business, financial & investment information	1	2	9
s.	Legal information	1	2	9
t.	On-line data searching	1	2	9
u.	Access to library by home computer	1	2	9

12. What types of library materials do you normally borrow or use during a typical visit to the library? (Indicate all that apply).

___	Adult Books	___	Audio Recording
___	Children's Books	___	Video Tapes
___	Paperbacks	___	Reference materials
___	Teen reading	___	Magazines and newspapers

The following 12 questions relate to *your opinion* of the quality of service that the Cecil County Library System delivers.

13. Have you used the computerized catalog?

1___ Yes   2___ No (go to q. 15)

14. How would you rate the computerized catalog in helping you get the materials you want?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

15. How would you rate the library personnel that serve you?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

16. How would you rate the library on variety of materials?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

17. How would you rate the library on availability of materials when needed?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

18. How would you rate the library on condition of materials?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

19. How would you rate the library on up-to-date selections?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

20. How would you rate the library on ease of check-out?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

21. How would you rate the library on ease of locating materials?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

22. How would you rate the library on range of services for youth?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

23. How would you rate the library on range of services for adults?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

24. How would you rate the library on range of services for seniors?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

The following 8 questions pertain to the different missions that the library can have in your community. Following each missions statement, indicate whether you feel the stated mission is IMPORTANT or NOT INPORTANT. When answering these questions, ask yourself: How important is this mission to me in terms of how and why I use the public library?

25. The library should be a place for meetings and other community activities.

___ Important   ___ Not Important ___ DK

26. The library should be a source for current information on community organizations, issues, and services.

___ Important   ___ Not Important ___ DK

27. The library should assist students of all ages in meeting their educational goals.

___ Important   ___ Not Important ___ DK

28. The library should support individuals of all ages learning on their own.

___ Important   ___ Not Important ___ DK

29. The library should feature current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for all ages.

___ Important   ___ Not Important ___ DK

30. The library should encourage young children to develop an interest in reading and learning.

___ Important   ___ Not Important   ___ DK

31. The library should provide timely, accurate and useful information for community residents.

___ Important   ___ Not Important   ___ DK

32. The library should assist scholars and researchers undertaking in-depth studies.

___ Important   ___ Not Important   ___ DK

33. Presently, library services account for less than one percent of the Cecil County budget and presently cost the average county household nine dollars per year. Knowing that expanded services mean increased costs, do you think library service should be:

1___   Expanded
2___   Stay the same
3___   Reduced
4___   Eliminated

34. Do you feel you have information needs which cannot be met at the Cecil County library?

1___   Yes (go to question 35)   3___   To some degree (go to question 35)
2___   No (go to question 36)

35. If you answered "yes" or "to some degree" to the previous question please indicate one of the most important of these unmet information needs:

_____

36. If you could change one thing about Cecil County Library, what would it be?

_____
_____
_____

37. What time of day would it be most convenient for you to use the library?

    1___ Morning
    2___ Noontime
    3___ Afternoon
    4___ Evening

38. Which day of the week would it be most convenient for you to use the library?

    01___ Monday   04___ Thursday   07___ Sunday
    02___ Tuesday   05___ Friday   08___ Any day
    03___ Wednesday   06___ Saturday

39. What other reading materials do you use, receive, or own?

    ___ Number of daily newspapers
    ___ Number of weekly newspapers
    ___ Number of magazine subscriptions
    ___ Number of books purchased yearly

40. How do you find out about library programs and services? (Check all that apply.)

    ___ Newspapers   ___ Word-of-mouth
    ___ Radio   ___ Library Newsletter
    ___ Flyer or poster   ___ Unaware of Library programs & services
                    ___ Other _____
                                (specify)

The final questions pertaining to your household will assist us in analyzing the information already given us. Your responses will be kept in strictest confidence.

41. How long have you lived in Cecil County?

    1___ 0-5 years   6___ Don't live in Cecil County
    2___ 6-10 years
    3___ 11-20 years
    4___ 20 + years
    5___ Always

42. Including yourself, how many people are currently living in your household?

    1___ 1
    2___ 2-3
    3___ 4-5
    4___ More than 5

43.   What is the last grade of school that you completed?

1___   Grade school or less (K - 8th grade)
2___   Some High School (9th - 11th grade)
3___   High School graduate
4___   Technical School
5___   Some college
6___   College graduate
7___   Post graduate

44.   What is your age?

01___ 16   05___ 20-24   09___ 40-45   13___60+
02___ 17   06___ 25-29   10___ 46-49
03___ 18   07___ 30-34   11___ 50-55
04___ 19   08___ 35-39   12___ 56-59

45.   What is your occupation? _____
              (specify)

46.   What is your approximate family income for the past year?

1___   Less than $10,000   4___ $35,000 - $60,000
2___ $10,000 - $20,000   5___   Over $60,000
3___ $20,000 - $35,000

63

APPENDIX B

Cecil County (MD) Library Survey
General Population Sample
College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
October, 1991

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from the University of Delaware. We're conducting a survey for the Cecil County Library system to obtain information needed to meet the library-related needs of this county.

Are you 16 years of age or older?

YES ___   NO ___   (If no, ask to speak to someone in the household
                        who is 18 years or older. If no one is available,
                        ask when you may call again.)

_____ Number of calls to reach respondent

_____ Date interviewed

_____ Time interview began

_____ Time interview ended

01. Have you or any member of your family ever gone to your local library, either to obtain information, to borrow materials, or for any other purpose?

1___ Yes (go to question 3)
2___ No (go to question 2)

02. Why don't you use the library? (Check all that apply.)

___ Poor transportation

___ Have other sources of reading materials

___ Physically unable

___ Don't read much

___ Inconvenient operation hours

___ No library card (yet?)

___ Too busy

___ Don't know where library is located

___ Other _____
(specify)

GO TO QUESTION 41

03. How often do you go to the library?

01___ Several times a week
02___ Once a week
03___ Several times a month
04___ Once a month

05___ Several times a year
06___ Once a year
07___ Other_____
(specify)

04. Do you have a library card?

1___ Yes
2___ No

05. Do you know where the branches of the Cecil County library are located?

1___ Yes (go to question 6)
2___ No (go to question 9)

06. Which branches have you used in the past year?

_____

_____

07. Which library branch in Cecil County do you use most often?

_____

68

08. Which library branch would you prefer to use (if convenient)?

_____ (branch name)

09. During the past year about how much money has your household spent buying reading materials?

1___	None	5___	$100 - $200
2___	Less than $25	6___	Over $200
3___	$25 - $50	7___	REF
4___	$50 - $100	9___	DK

10. Do you generally make a special trip just to go to the library?

1___ Yes
2___ No

11. What is the maximum amount of time you would be willing to spend traveling to get to a library?

1___	5 minutes	5___	45 minutes
2___	10 minutes	6___	1 hour or more
3___	15 minutes_	7___	Refused
4___	30 minutes	9___	DK

12. About how far is the distance from your residence to the closest public library, in miles?

1___	Less than 1 mile	7___	Refused
2___	1 mile but less than 5 miles	9___	DK
3___	more than 5 miles but less than 10 miles		
4___	More than 10 miles		

13. The following is a list of actual and potential library services.
If you think you or your family members would be interested in
a service, answer yes; if it is not of interest, answer no.

		Yes	No	DK
a.	Audio and Video Tape/Cassettes	1	2	9
b.	Children's Summer Reading Programs	1	2	9
c.	Meeting Rooms For Community Use	1	2	9
d.	Health Information	1	2	9
e.	Books in foreign languages	1	2	9
f.	Microcomputers and Software	1	2	9
g.	Telephone Information and Referral Service	1	2	9
h.	Adult Literacy Materials	1	2	9
i.	Children's Storytime and Films	1	2	9
j.	Compact disks	1	2	9
k.	Job/Employment Information	1	2	9
l.	Magazine Swaps	1	2	9
m.	Adult Programs	1	2	9
n.	Book Discussion Groups	1	2	9
o.	Pre-school story hour	1	2	9
p.	Two-year-olds Storyhour	1	2	9
q.	Saturday or evening children's programs	1	2	9
r.	Business, financial & investment information	1	2	9
s.	Legal information	1	2	9
t.	On-line data searching	1	2	9
u.	Access to library by home computer	1	2	9

14. What types of library materials do you normally borrow or use during a typical visit to the library? (Indicate all that apply).

___ Adult Books   ___ Audio Recording
___ Children's Books   ___ Video Tapes
___ Paperbacks   ___ Reference materials
___ Teen reading   ___ Magazines and newspapers

The following 12 questions relate to your opinion of the quality of service that the Cecil County Library System delivers.

15. Have you used the computerized catalog?

1___ Yes   2___ No (go to q. 17)

16. How would you rate the computerized catalog in helping you get the materials you want?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

17. How would you rate the library personnel that serve you?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

18. How would you rate the library on variety of materials?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

19. How would you rate the library on availability of materials when needed?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

20. How would you rate the library on condition of materials?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

21. How would you rate the library on up-to-date selections?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

22. How would you rate the library on ease of check-out?

___ Good   ___ Fair   ___ Poor

23. How would you rate the library on ease of locating materials?

____ Good   ____ Fair   ____ Poor

24. How would you rate the library on range of services for youth?

____ Good   ____ Fair   ____ Poor

25. How would you rate the library on range of services for adults?

____ Good   ____ Fair   ____ Poor

26. How would you rate the library on range of services for seniors?

____ Good   ____ Fair   ____ Poor

The following 8 questions pertain to the different missions that the library can have in your community. Following each missions statement, indicate whether you feel the stated mission is IMPORTANT or NOT INPORTANT. When answering these questions, ask yourself: How important is this mission to me in terms of how and why I use the public library.

27. The library should be a place for meetings and other community activities.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ____ DK

28. The library should be a source for current information on community organizations, issues, and services.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ____ DK

29. The library should assist students of all ages in meeting their educational goals.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ____ DK

30. The library should support individuals of all ages learning on their own.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ____ DK

31. The library should feature current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for all ages.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ____ DK

32. The library should encourage young children to develop an interest in reading and learning.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ___ DK

33. The library should provide timely, accurate and useful information for community residents.

____ Important   · ___ Not Important   ___ DK

34. The library should assist scholars and researchers undertaking in-depth studies.

____ Important   ____ Not Important   ___ DK

35. Presently, library services account for less than one percent of the Cecil County budget and presently cost the average county household nine dollars per year. Knowing that expanded services mean increased costs, do you think library service should be:

1____   Expanded
2____   Stay the same
3____   Reduced
4____   Eliminated
7____   REF
9____   DK

36. Do you feel you have information needs which cannot be met at the Cecil County library?

1____   Yes (go to question 37)   3____   To some degree (go to qustion 37)
2____   No (go to question 38)   9____   DK

37. If you answered "yes" or "to some degree" to the previous question please indicate one of the most important of these unmet information needs:

_____

38. If you could change one thing about Cecil County Library, what would it be?

_____
_____
_____

39. What time of day would it be most convenient for you to use the library?

1___ Morning   7___ REF
2___ Noontime   9___ DK
3___ Afternoon
4___ Evening

40. Which day of the week would it be most convenient for you to use the library?

01___ Monday   04___ Thursday   07___ Sunday   99___ DK
02___ Tuesday   05___ Friday   08___ Any day
03___ Wednesday   06___ Saturday   97___ REF

41. What other reading materials do you use, receive, or own?

___ Number of daily newspapers
___ Number of weekly newspapers
___ Number of magazine subscriptions
___ Number of books purchased yearly

42. How do you find out about library programs and services? (Check all that apply.)

___ Newspapers   ___ Word-of-mouth
___ Radio   ___ Library Newsletter
___ Flyer or poster   ___ Unaware of Library programs & services
                          ___ Other _____
                                (specify)

The final questions pertaining to your household will assist us in analyzing the information already given us. Your responses will be kept in strictest confidence.

43. How long have you lived in Cecil County?

1___ 0-5 years   6___ Don't live in Cecil County
2___ 6-10 years   7___ Refused
3___ 11-20 years
4___ 20 + years
5___ Always

44. Including yourself, how many people are currently living in your household?

1___ 1
2___ 2-3
3___ 4-5
4___ More than 5

74

45. What is the last grade of school that you yourself completed?

1___ Grade school or less (K - 8th grade)
2___ Some High School (9th - 11th grade)
3___ High School graduate
4___ Technical School
5___ Some college
6___ College graduate
7___ Post graduate
8___ Refused

46. What is your age?

01___ 16	05___ 20-24	09___ 40-45	13___60+
02___ 17	06___ 25-29	10___ 46-49	97___REF
03___ 18	07___ 30-34	11___ 50-55	
04___ 19	08___ 35-39	12___ 56-59	

47. What is your occupation? _____
            (specify)

48. What is your approximate family income for the past year?

1___ Less than $10,000	4___ $35,000 - $60,000
2___ $10,000 - $20,000	5___ Over $60,000
3___ $20,000 - $35,000	7___ REF
	9___ DK

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION, TIME AND ASSISTANCE