# Hello and Welcome!

**Bklyn Public Library**

**Avenue M Group**

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# Cardholder Signup Policies Access in Practice

May 22, 2024

# Cardholder Access Research:
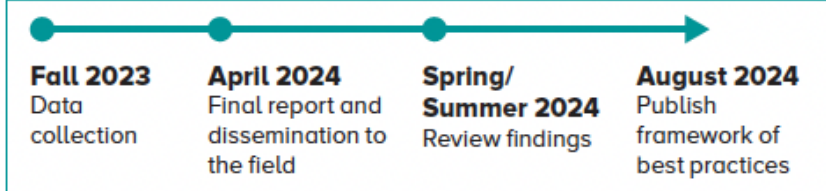# What is it?



Brooklyn Public Library is leading a research project to study cardholder sign-up policies in public libraries across the United States. We are seeking to understand:

- The range of policies and procedures that govern cardholder access
- The rationale used when establishing policies
- Notable trends and patterns nationwide
- Where the field could benefit from clarity, guidance and standardization

Starting fall 2023, public library administrators and staff will be invited to respond via surveys and focus groups. Make sure YOUR library is represented! Your participation and responses will remain confidential.

**Help us advance the right to read.**

**Project timeline**

| Fall 2023 | April 2024 | Spring/Summer 2024 | August 2024 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Data collection | Final report and dissemination to the field | Review findings | Publish framework of best practices |

Sign up and learn more at **bklynlib.org/library-study**

Brooklyn Public Library is spearheading an effort to research how public libraries in the U.S. structure their cardholder signup policies.

The project will result in the first known national dataset of this area of practice.

- What is the established practice across the field?
- How often is this practice revisited, updated, and/or interrogated? (Why do we do things a certain way?)
- Where could we benefit from better clarity, standardization, and guidance?

# Cardholder Access Research: What is it?

The results of the research are freely available at www.bklynlib.org/library-study

- Published analysis
- Interactive dashboard
- Raw dataset (available by request)



LIBRARY CARD ACCESS RESEARCH REPORT

Brooklyn Public Library & Avenue M Group

April 2024

Bklyn Public Library    AVENUE M GROUP



**Project timeline**

**Fall 2023** Data collection

**April 2024** Final report and dissemination to the field

**Spring/ Summer 2024** Review findings

**August 2024** Publish framework of best practices

# Cardholder Access Research:
# Today's Agenda

Inspiration

Research Methodology

Takeaways

Next Steps

# BPL Cardholder Policies
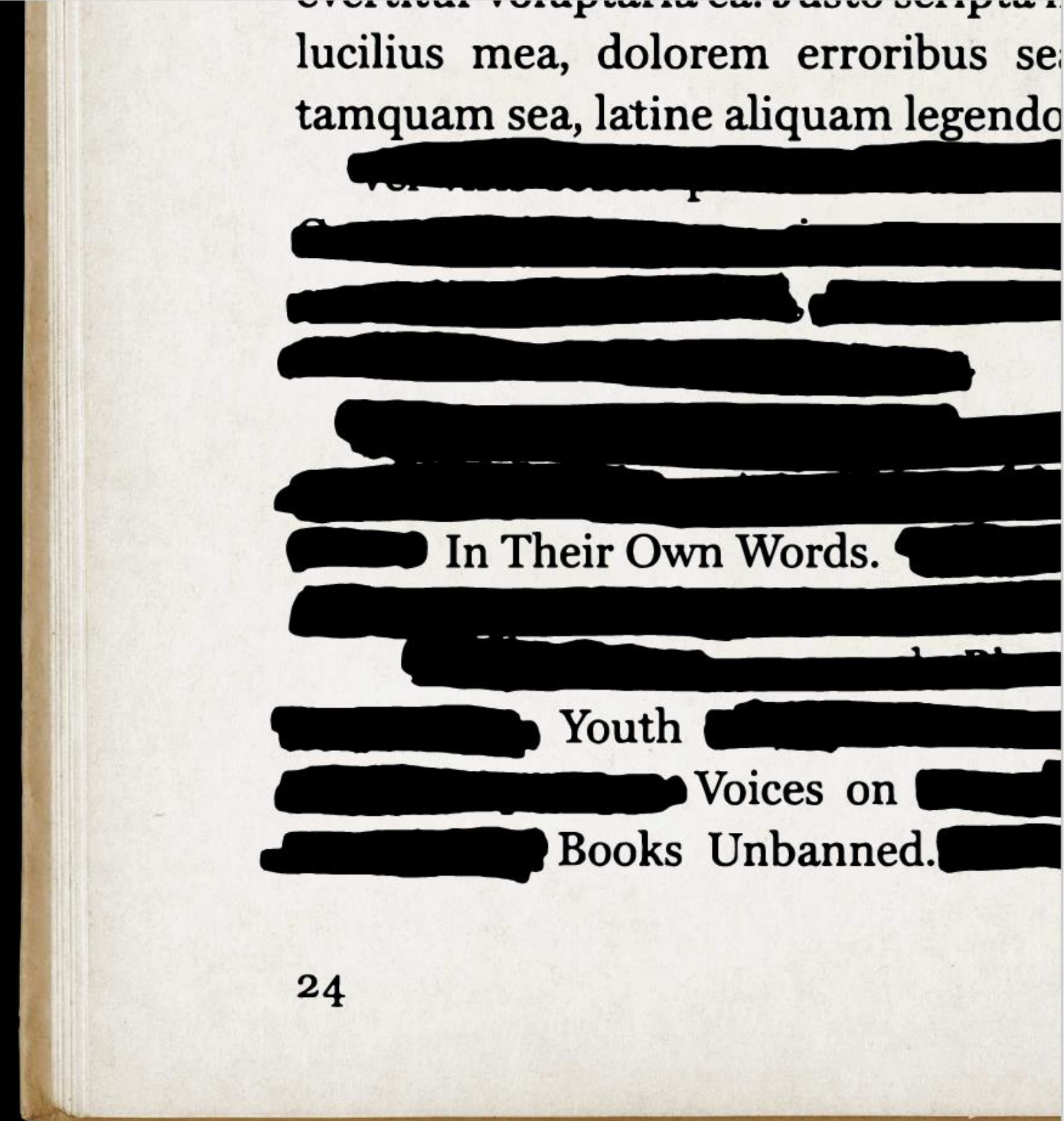
**Balancing access and stewardship**

# Books Unbanned

**Youth Voices: limited library access**

https://www.bklynlibrary.org/books-unbanned

# Library Stakeholders

**Best practices and guidance**



In Their Own Words.

Youth Voices on Books Unbanned.

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# Research Components

The survey included 1,895 libraries, and the qualitative research included approximately 115 libraries.

A few libraries participated in multiple research methods.

| **Interviews** | **Survey** | **In-Person Focus Groups** | **Online Focus Group** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 75 in-person interviews at ALA Conference, June 24-26, 2023 | Online survey fielded Sept 18 - Dec 7, 2023 | 1. ARSL Conference, September 2023 2. ULC Forum, October 2023 | Online, asynchronous focus group, November 2023 |

# Example Survey Questions

*[Show to all respondents]*

14. Does the library require adults to show government-issued photo identification (ID) in order to receive a full-access library card? (Select one)
    - ( ) No
    - ( ) Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
    - ( ) Yes, but there are exceptions – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
    - ( ) Yes, always
    - ( ) Unsure
    - ( ) Prefer not to answer

*[Show if respondent selected either "Yes" response, "Unsure," or "Prefer not to answer" in Q14]*

15. Does the library give any considerations to patrons whose name does not match their legal ID? (Select one)
    - ( ) No
    - ( ) Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
    - ( ) Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
    - ( ) Unsure
    - ( ) Prefer not to answer

Informed by interviews at the ALA Conference

Close-ended answer options

Opportunity for write-in responses

Collaborative process for refining questions
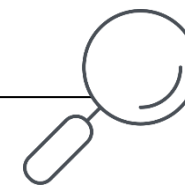
# Research Process
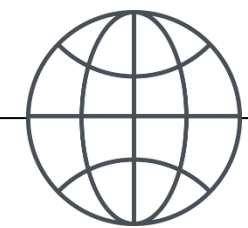
Collaborated on Developing Research Instruments
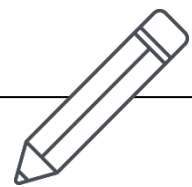
Collected Data Through Multiple Methods
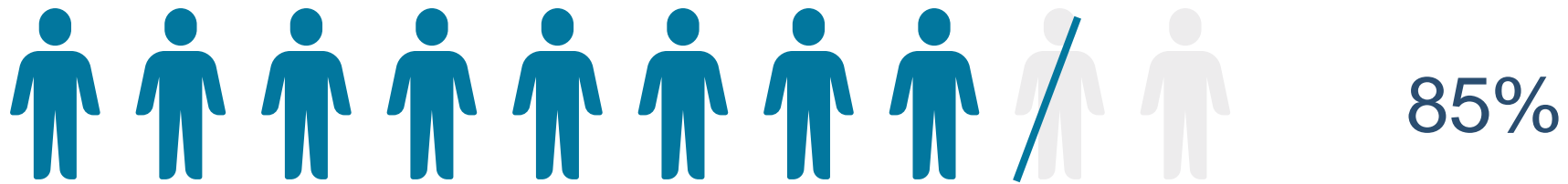
Cleaned, Organized, & Analyzed Data

Now Sharing with the Library Community
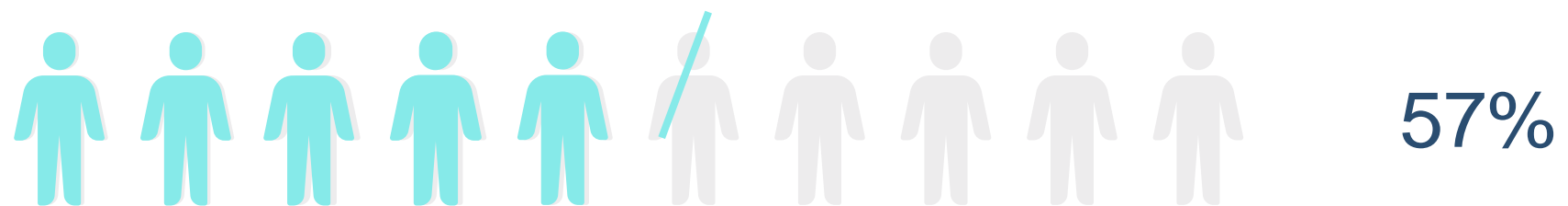
# Survey Sample

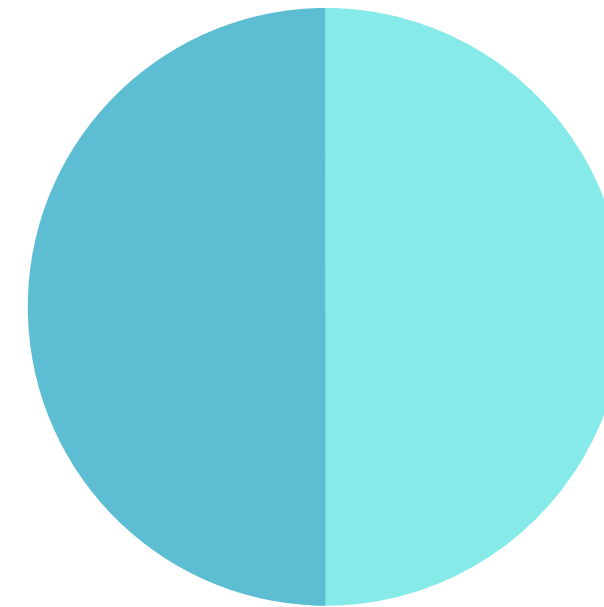Answered on behalf of their library system (director, administrator)

85%

Based on professional observations (clerical, librarians, other service staff)
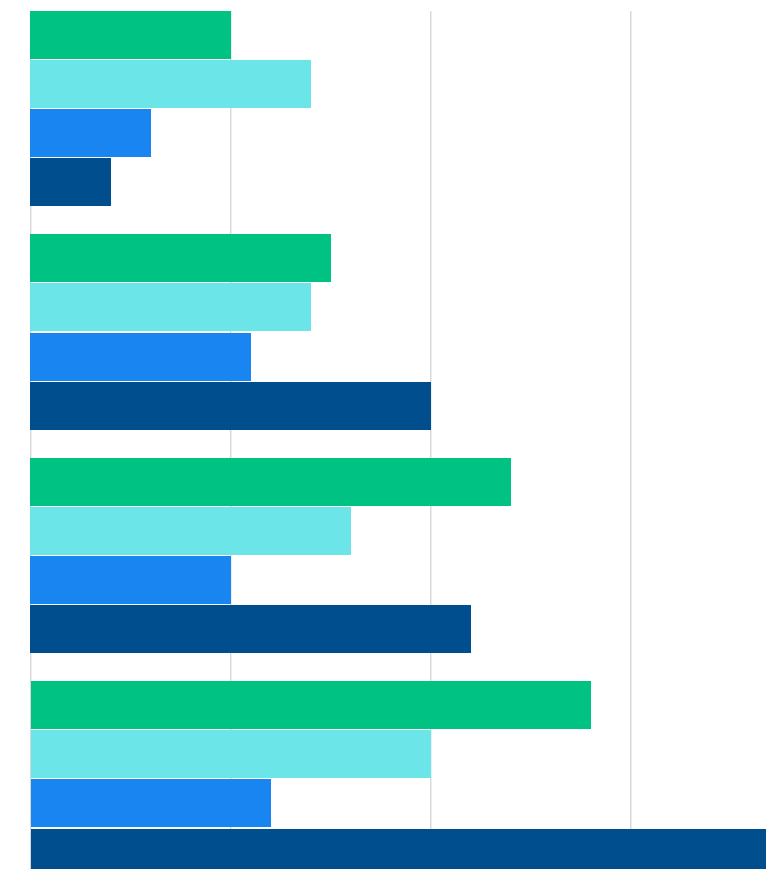
15%

Regularly assist patrons with card signup

57%

## Population of Legal Service Area

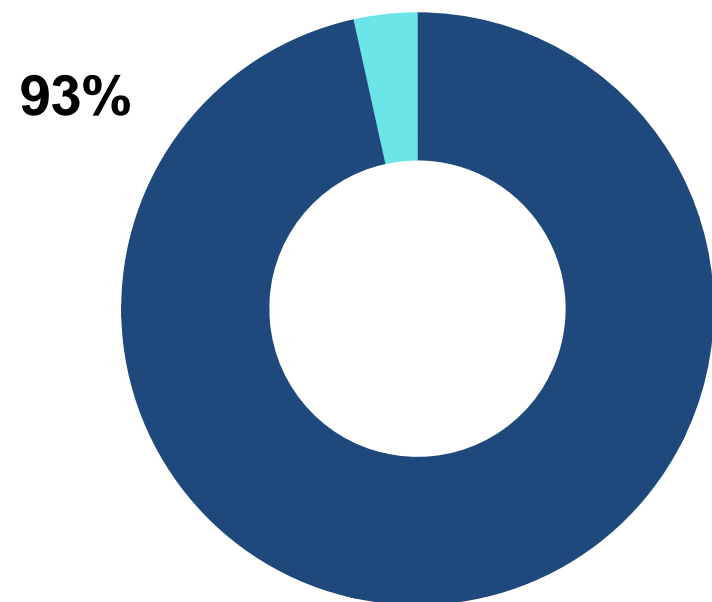Almost half (46%) of surveyed libraries serve a legal service area with a population of less than 10,000.

## Regions and Divisions

Using library location, survey responses were broken down into four regions and nine divisions, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
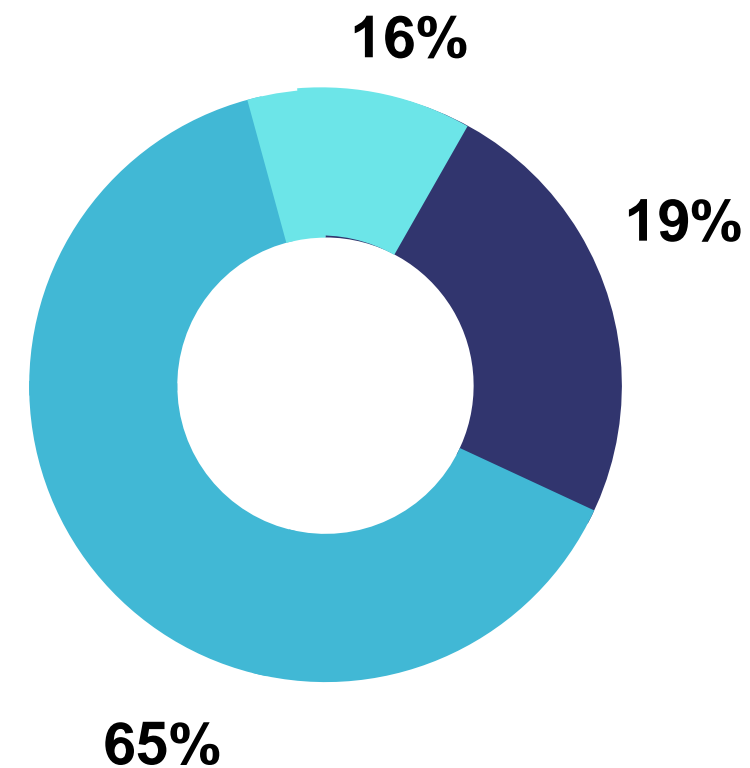
# Majority Collect (Adult Cards)

More than nine in ten (93%) require a **primary mailing address** in all cases.

66% of libraries require **phone number** in all cases. Nearly one in ten (9%) require phone number in some cases. 24% optionally collect phone number.
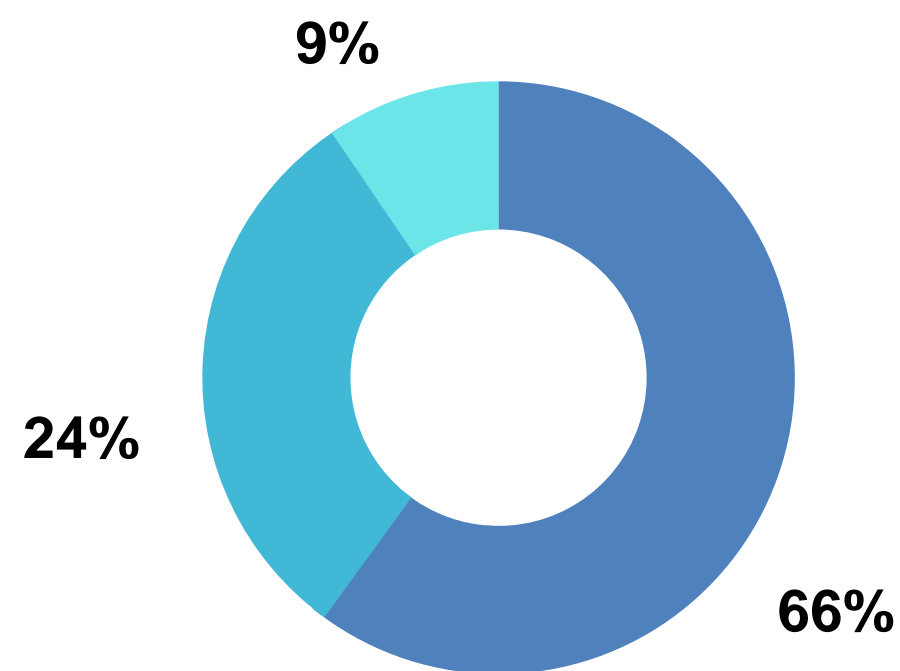
65% of libraries optionally collect **preferred name**, with nearly one in five (19%) not collecting preferred name. 16% require this information in all or some cases.
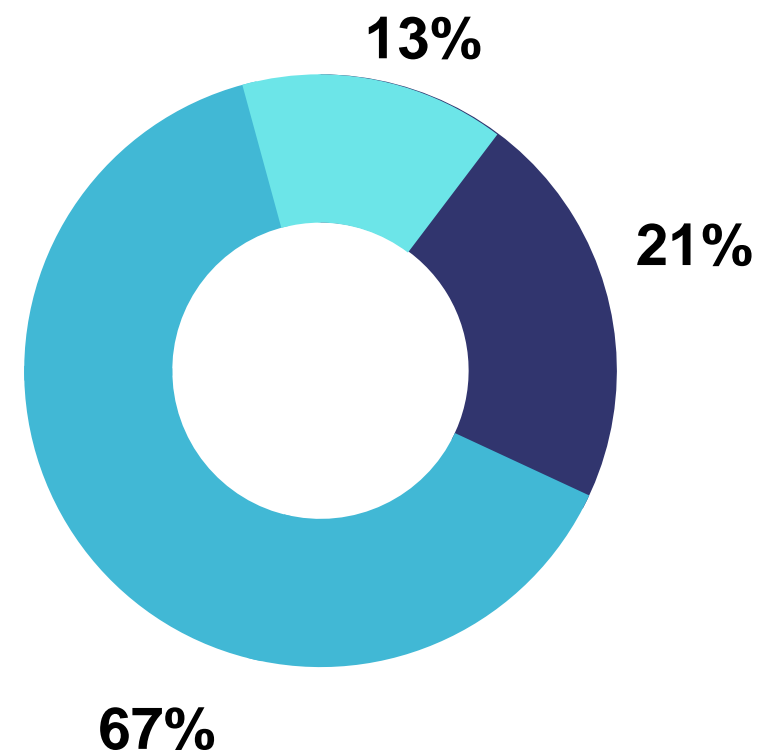
61% of libraries optionally collect **email address**. 27% require email address in all cases, and 10% require email address in some cases.

93%

9%

24%

66%

16%

19%

65%

10%

27%

61%
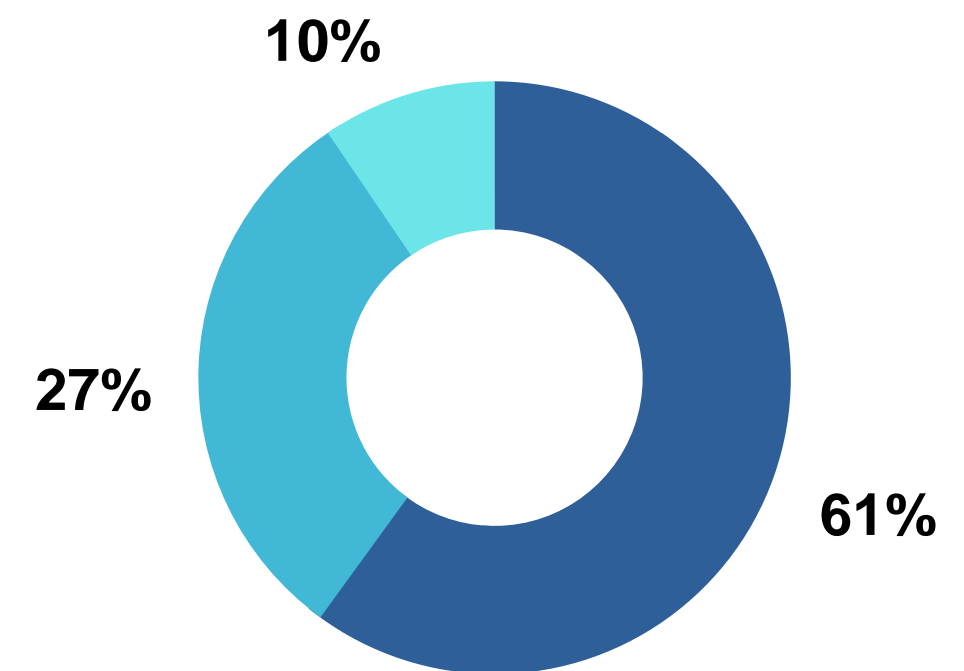
# Majority Not Collect (Adult Cards)

67% of libraries do not collect **gender information**. 21% optionally collect gender. More than one in ten libraries require collecting gender in all (11%) or some (2%) cases

59% of libraries do not collect an **identification number** (e.g., Driver's license number). More than one-third require an identification number in all (27%) or some (9%) cases,
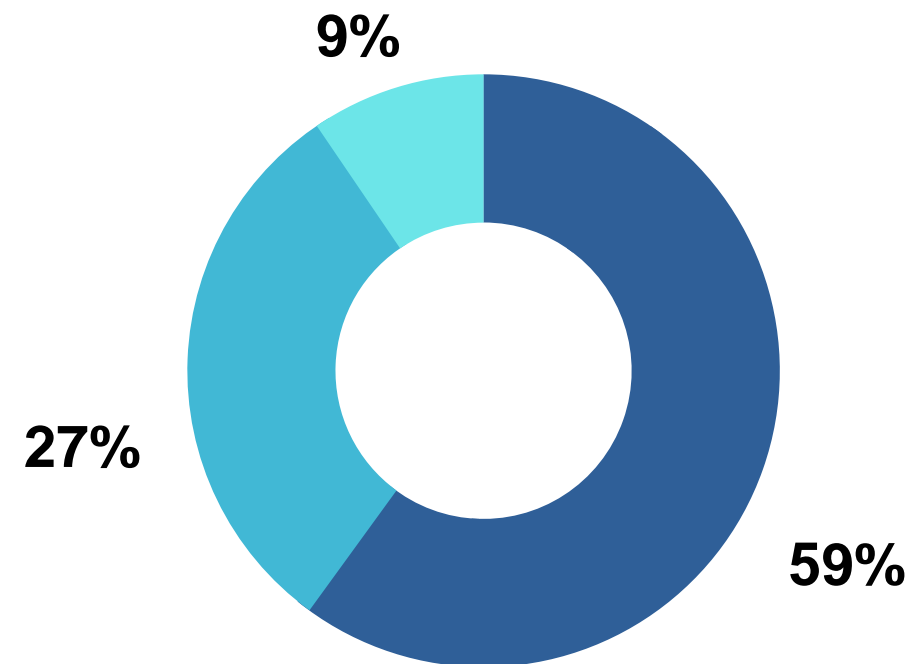
85% of libraries do not collect information on **employer or place of employment**. One in ten require this information in all (2%) or some (8%) cases.
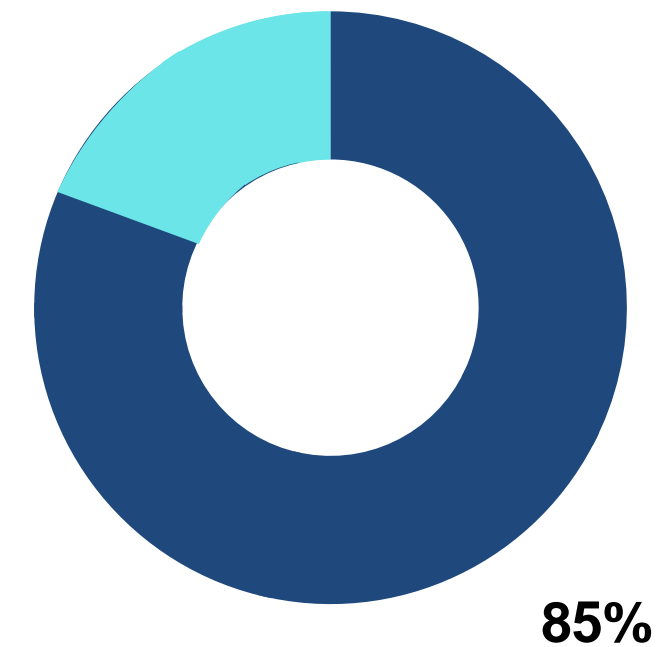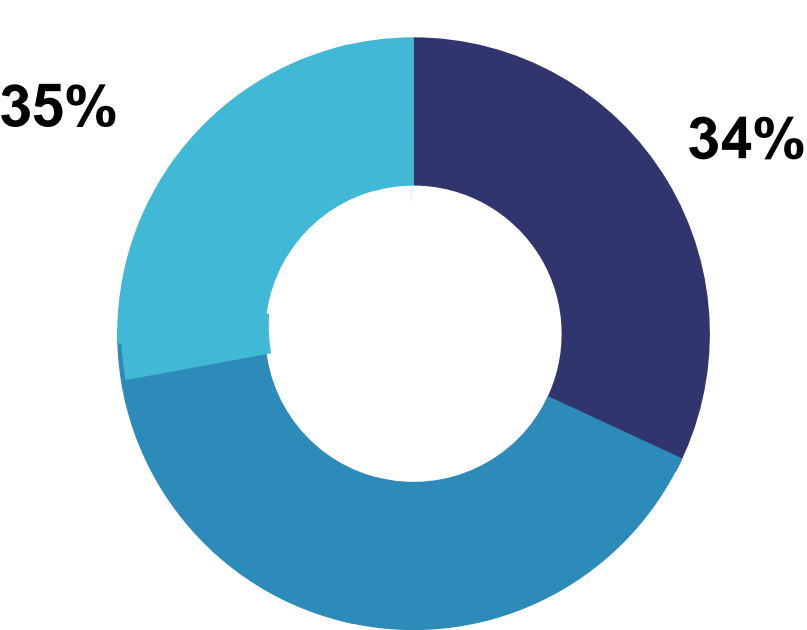
91% of libraries do not collect **community references**. Five percent require community references in all (3%) or some (2%) cases.



13%

21%

67%

9%

27%

59%

85%

91%
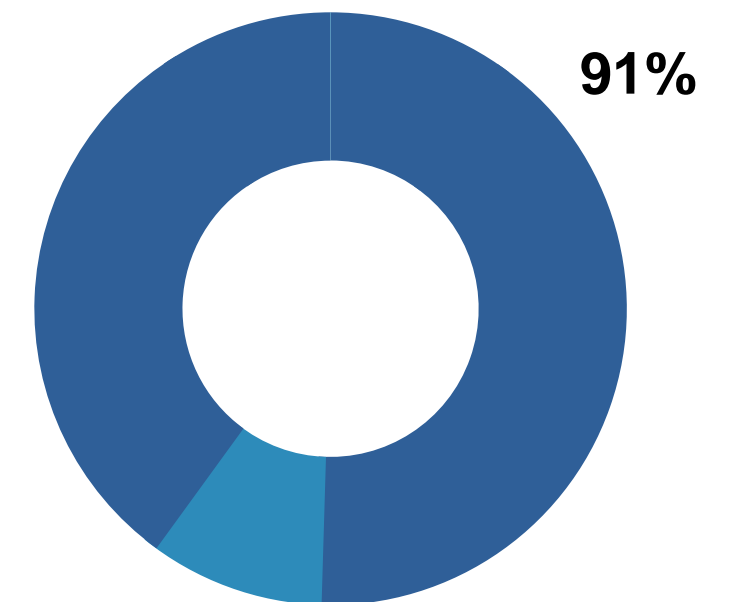
# Types of Adult Cards

Nearly seven in ten libraries offer **library cards to non-residents**: about one-third (35%) offer non-resident cards for a fee, and about one-third (34%) offer non-resident cards for no charge.

53% of libraries offer **temporary cards or guest passes** to anyone who cannot obtain a library card. 45% do not offer this option, while 2% are developing this.
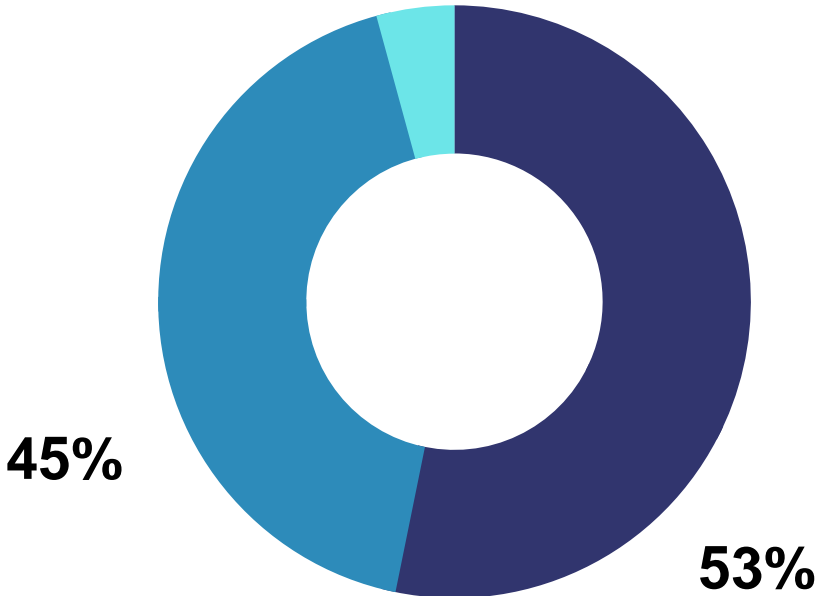
82% of libraries do not require patrons to have a **library card to access computer and/or printing services**.
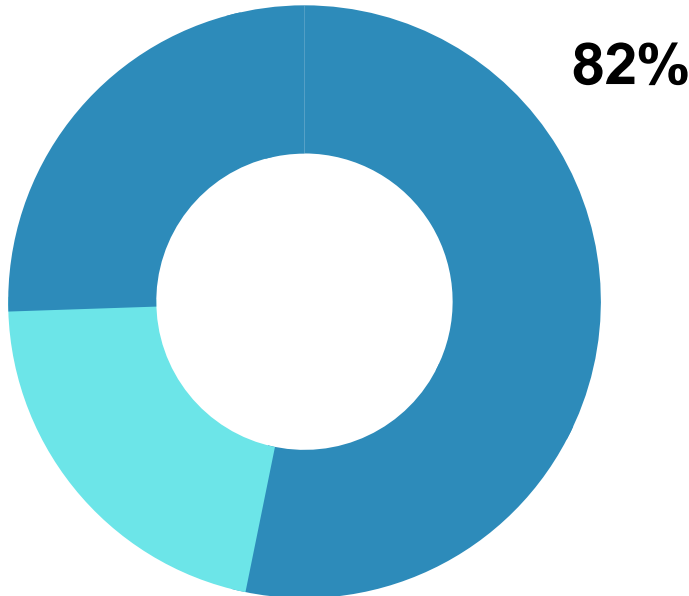
52% of libraries do not offer **electronic library cards, or eCards**. Among libraries with eCards, more than half (56%) introduced eCards between 1 and 3 years ago.

**35%**  **34%**

**45%**  **53%**

**82%**

**52%**
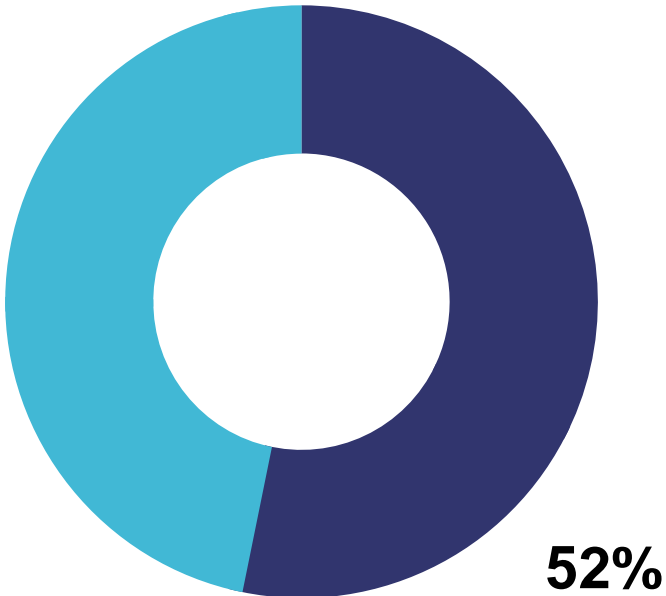
# Types of Youth Cards

53% of libraries have no **minimum age requirement** for a library card. 14% have a minimum age requirement of 5 years old. 9% have a minimum age requirement between 10 and 18 years old to get a library card.
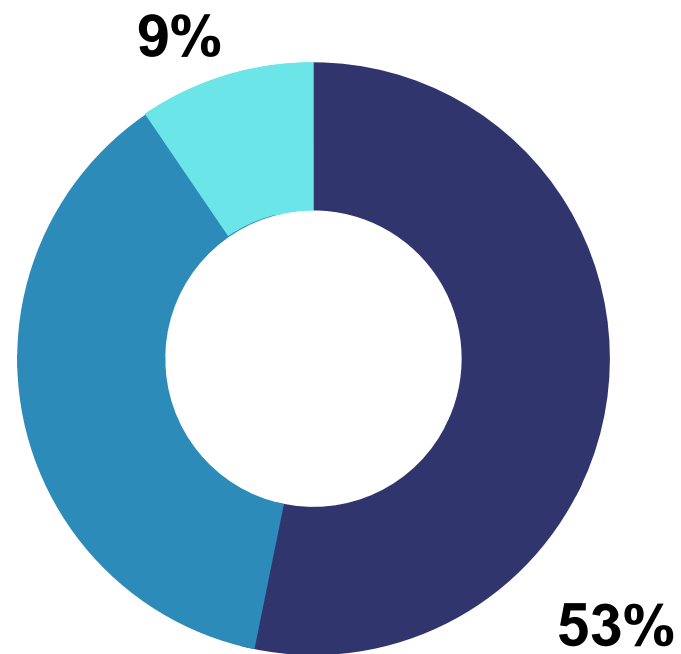
68% of libraries **issue youth a library card with no limitations on access**. 16% issue library cards to youth with limitations on access based on age.
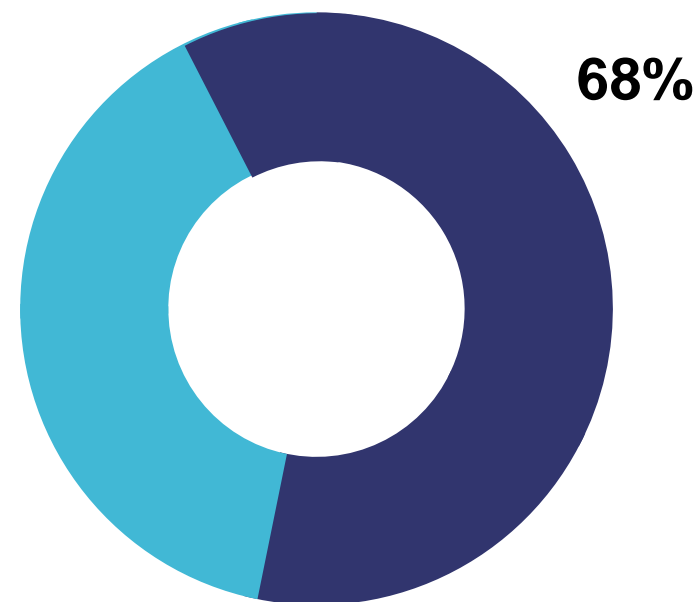
Among the libraries with limitations on **access based on age**, the most common limitation is on the **types of items** (60%). 32% of these libraries put limitations on the **number of items** that can be checked out.
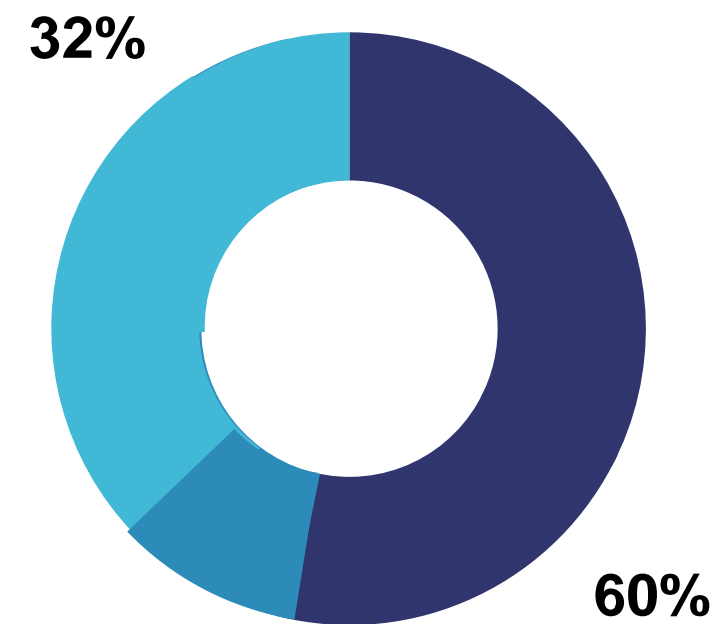
85% of libraries require youth up to a certain age to have **stated permission from an adult** to receive a library card. Of these libraries, 54% require permission until a patron is 18 years old

**9%**

**53%**
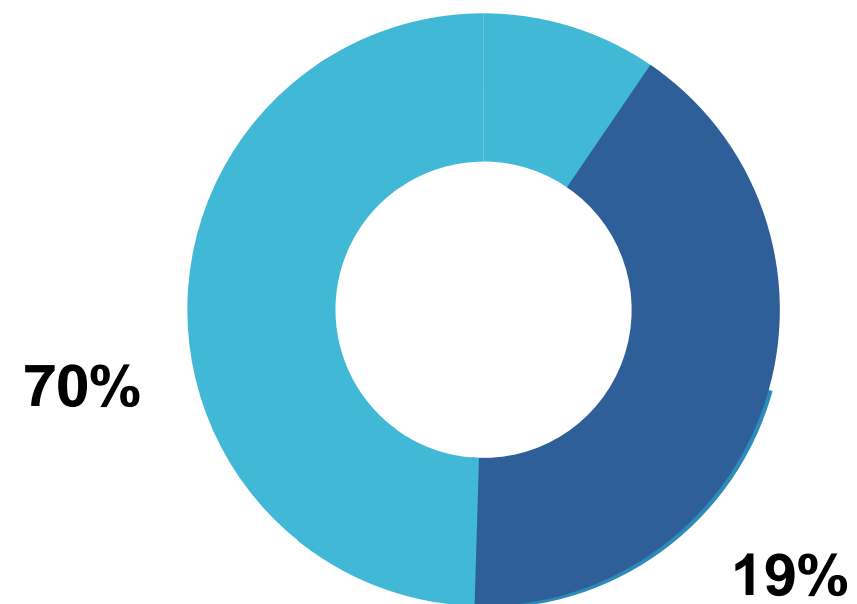
**68%**

**32%**

**60%**

**54%**
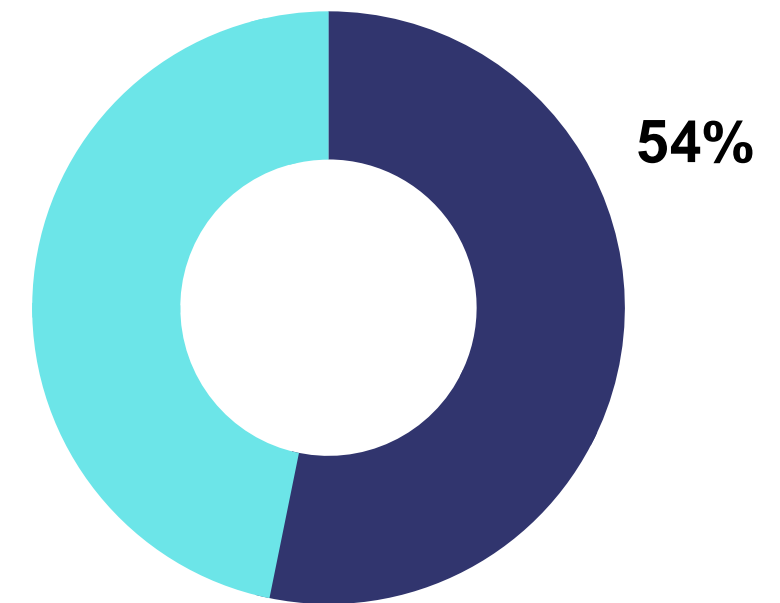
# Cardholder Signup Process

98% of libraries reported that general library card signup usually **takes 15 minutes or less**. Among the remaining 2%, about three in four indicated it takes 1 business day or more.
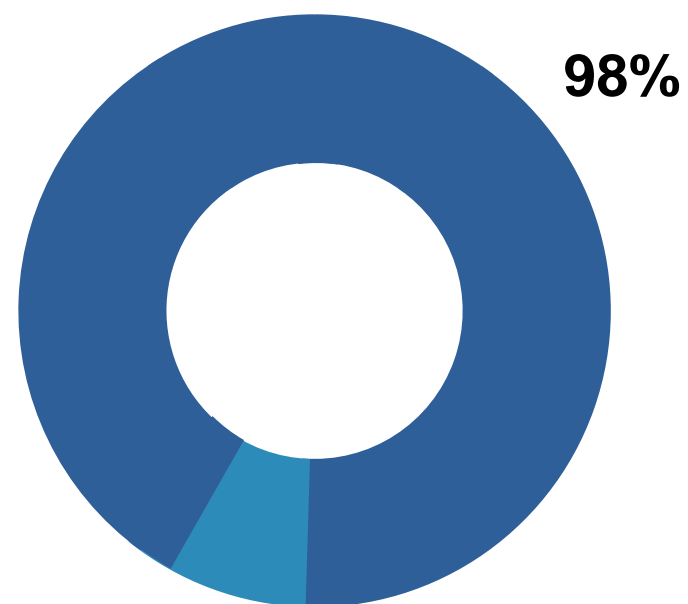
70% of libraries do not have a **probationary period for new library cards** for adult patrons. 19% have a probationary period in all cases.

76% of libraries offer **cardholder signup to patrons who are homebound or otherwise unable** to visit the library in person. 17% reported not offering signup to those unable to visit in person.
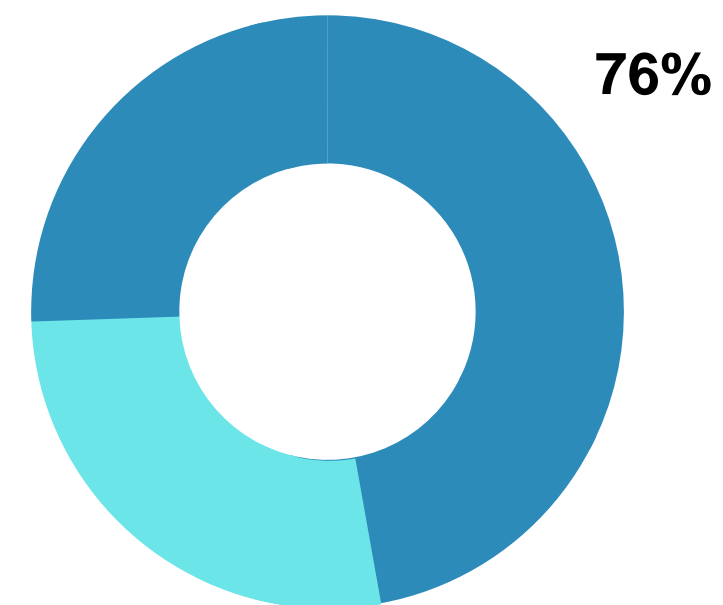
The majority of libraries offer the library's cardholder **application** (62%) **and introductory information or materials** (72%) **only in English**.

**98%**

**70%** **19%**

**76%**

**62%**
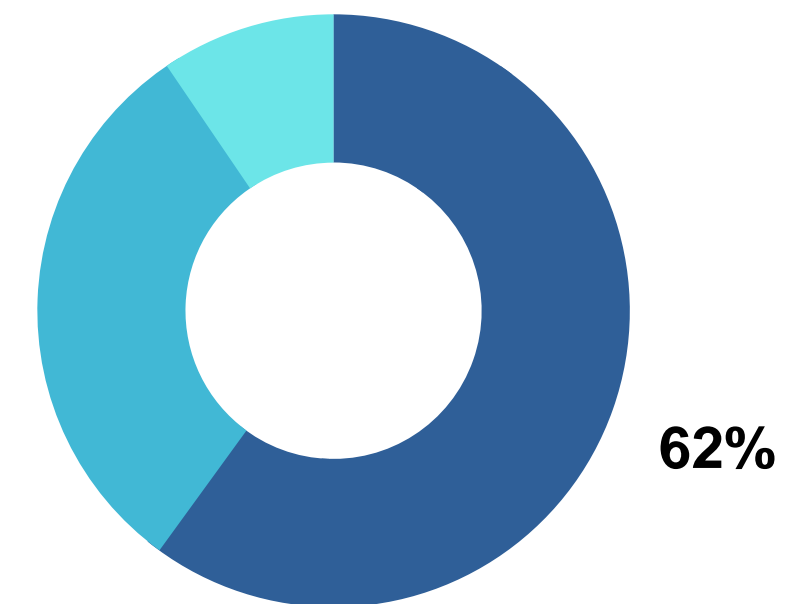
# Key Takeaways

**POLICY CHANGES**

Most libraries have made some type of change to their cardholder signup policies and/or procedures in the past five years; however, 30% of libraries have not.

**BARRIERS TO ACCESS**

Barriers can present themselves in the cardholder signup method (i.e. requiring in-person), proof of eligibility, the types of data collected, youth signup, and language access.

**SOURCE PROMPTING CHANGE**

For the majority of libraries, changes to cardholder signup policies and procedures are prompted by staff. Training and communication are essential.

**DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING**

Libraries expressed the value of having data available to support change (patrons not able to provide ID or address not shown to have a higher materials loss rate).

# Next Steps
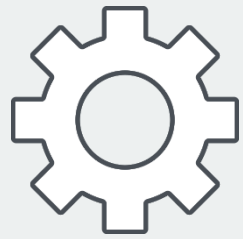
**WORKING GROUP**

Best practices

Policy framework

**PRESENT AND PUBLISH**

Share the work

Create meaning

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Integrate learnings and consensus into professional practice

The Cardholder Access Working Group will meet through the spring and summer, with a goal to publish a framework of best practices in Fall 2024.

# Working Group

Alameda County Library

Austin Public Library

Boone County Public Library

Brigham Memorial Library

C/W MARS (Central-Western Mass
   Automated Resource Sharing)

Carlsbad City Library

Casey County Public Library

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Chicago Public Library

City of Wolfforth Library

Davidson County Public Library

DC Public Library

Deschutes Public Library

Englewood Public Library

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District

Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL)

Lake Park Public Library

Lambertville Free Public Library

Libraries of Eastern Oregon

Mandel Public Library

Metropolitan Library System

North Liberty Library (IA)

New York Public Library

Public Library of Youngstown and
   Mahoning County

Round Rock Public Library

Rusk County Community Library

Sacramento Public Library

Salt Lake County Library

Springfield City Library

St. Louis Public Library

Suffolk Public Library

The Seattle Public Library

Toronto Public Library

| Assess Current Practice | List Opportunities for Change | Flag Existing Barriers | Prioritize Solutions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Consider your library's practices and policies in the following areas. **What do you currently do and why do you do it this way?**<br><br>● Residency requirements<br>● Youth access<br>● Language access<br>● Digital access<br>● Data collection & retention<br>● Patron information & education<br>● Other miscellaneous (expirations & renewals, guest passes/ computer use, outreach/ homebound, incarcerated patrons) | Identify where there might be opportunities to make **"easy" changes**.<br><br>Are there areas where you can get creative within the stated policy? Easily change or update internal procedures?<br><br>Or, are there areas in which the policy itself is "easy" to change? | Identify where you might run into **barriers, pushback, or roadblocks** to make changes.<br><br>Where might you need more data, information, or other support in order to make your case?<br><br>How can data collected from this project support you? Where are the areas in which you might you need additional information? | List your **top three most urgently needed changes**, and brainstorm possible **solutions to move forward**. |

Questions?
Comments?

# Resources

Library Card Access Study

www.bklynlib.org/library-study

*"In Their Own Words: Youth Voices on Books Unbanned"*
www.booksunbanned.com/youthvoices

# Project Contact

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