

December 2024

Grand Concourse Library and Affordable Housing

Community Visioning Report



New York
Public
Library

NYC

**Housing Preservation
& Development**
Office of Neighborhood
Strategies

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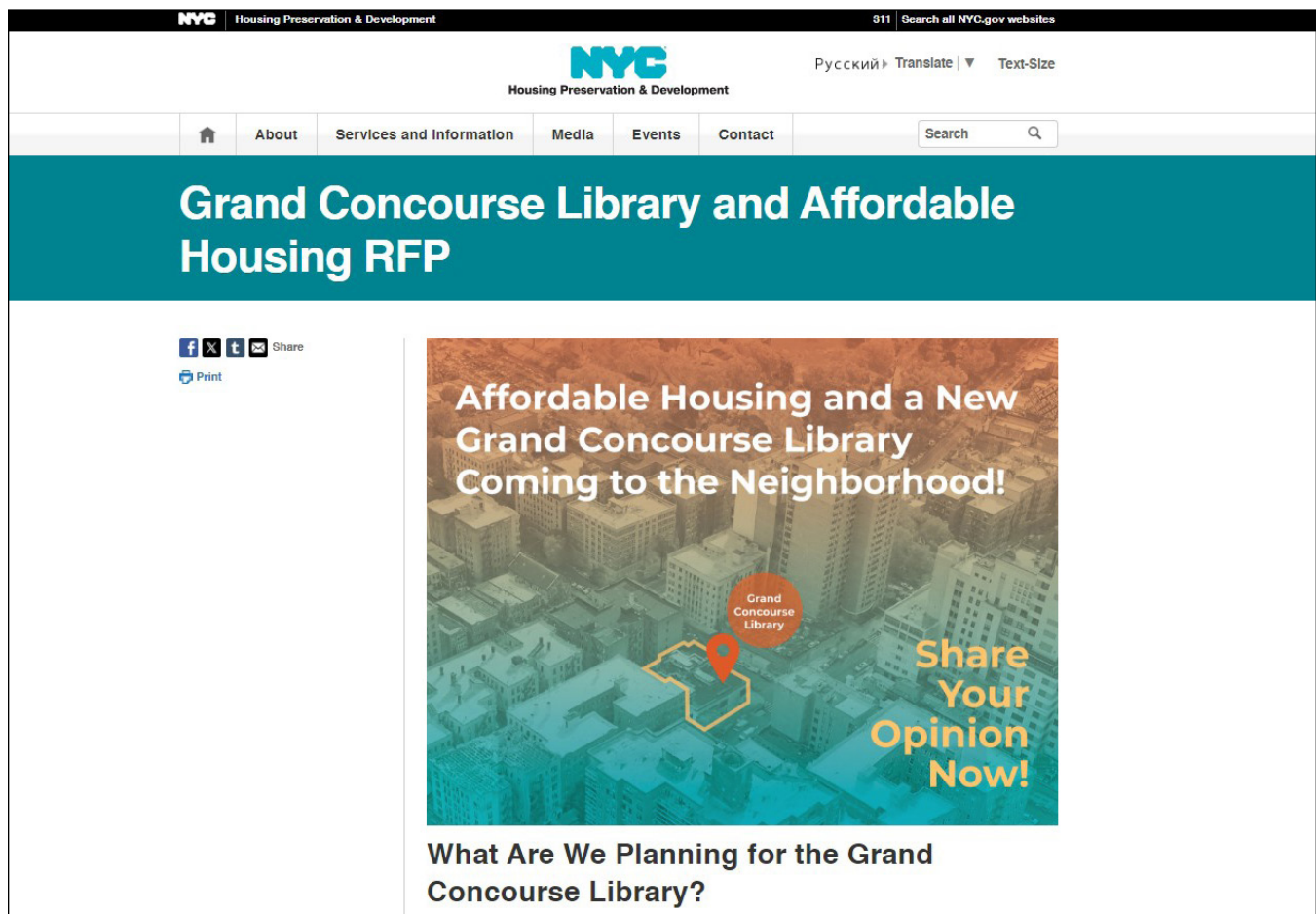
Development Informed by Community

What?

The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and The New York Public Library (NYPL) conducted community outreach from April through September of 2024 to gather input on the redevelopment of the Grand Concourse Library with a new state-of-the-art library and affordable housing above.

The goal of the outreach was to identify priorities for the library and housing portions of the new development from community members who have an intimate understanding of neighborhood conditions and needs as well as New Yorkers at large. This report summarizes the results of HPD and NYPL's engagement process and is available on the project website at www.nyc.gov/grandconcourselibrary.

The report will also be attached to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for the Grand Concourse Library site. Development teams responding to the RFP are strongly encouraged to consult this report and thoughtfully respond in their proposals. HPD and NYPL will evaluate how well development teams incorporate the community vision from this report in their submissions.



Project Website

Where?

The Site

The existing Grand Concourse Library, which is owned by the City, was built in 1959 and has served the surrounding community for 65 years. The library sits on an 8,900 square foot lot, located at East 173rd Street and Selwyn Avenue in the Bronx.

The future development will include a new two-story library on the first and second floors of the building with approximately 100 new affordable homes above.



Site Aerial View

The Context

The existing Grand Concourse Library is located in Community District 4 of the Bronx.

The library is one block east of the Grand Concourse with access to several MTA bus lines and the B and D trains at 174-175 Street, and it is one block south of the Cross Bronx Expressway. The library is also across the street from the Claremont BronxCare campus, and P.S. 70, P.S. 402, and Claremont Park are nearby.

The blocks surrounding the library are a mix of residential and institutional uses. The homes and apartment buildings in the neighborhood range from two stories to 20 stories, and many of them have retail storefronts. East Mt. Eden Avenue, across the Grand Concourse, is home to many local businesses, services, and community amenities.



Neighborhood Map

Community Engagement Strategies

How?

HPD and NYPL organized over a dozen community engagement events over the course of six months to provide various ways for community members to provide their input. These events are listed in the **Engagement Events Timeline** below.

The engagement included:

- Public meetings and presentations to Bronx Community Board 4
- Flyering and tabling events at the library and throughout the neighborhood in partnership with local schools and community-based organizations.
- A community visioning workshop held at the library.
- An interview on Levántate New York, a local Spanish language news broadcaster.

Engagement Events Timeline



Outreach Strategies

In addition to the individual events listed in the **Engagement Events Timeline** on page 6, HPD and NYPL promoted the project in the following ways:

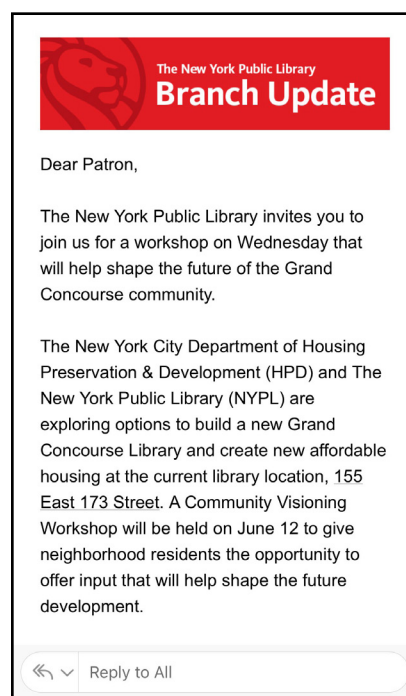
- Maintained and promoted a project website and questionnaire.
- Conducted targeted outreach to Community Board 4, nearby schools, local institutions and community-based organizations.
- Sent several email blasts to the HPD project email list of over 200 subscribers and the NYPL Grand Concourse Library patron list of over 5,900 subscribers.
- Posted on social media (X/Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).
- Posted project flyers in the library and across the neighborhood.
- Ensured all project advertisements and engagement materials were available in Spanish to accommodate the diverse community in the neighborhood.

270 members of the public completed the project questionnaire online and in-person. The questionnaire was the primary method of collecting community input, and included questions about:

- Who needs affordable housing in the neighborhood and what kind of housing should be included above the new Grand Concourse Library.
- What types of spaces, services and programming are important to include in the new Grand Concourse Library.



Instagram Advertising



Library Patron Email Blast



Banner at the Grand Concourse branch

Community Visioning Workshop

The workshop was held on June 12, 2024 at the Grand Concourse Library. 33 community members participated in activities and discussions about three topics:

1. The affordable housing in the new building.
2. The design of the building and the potential for a rezoning of the site.
3. Library spaces and programming in the new building.



Community Visioning Workshop, June 12, 2024



Tabling at P.S. 053 end-of-year celebration, June 26, 2024



Tabling at the New Settlement Community Center's Juneteenth Event, June 26, 2024

Summary

Participants communicated many different visions for the site, and certain themes emerged as priorities. In total, HPD and NYPL received **270 questionnaire responses**, reflecting a wide variety of backgrounds and ideas.

The findings in this section are organized by topic from the questionnaire. However, the written takeaways are reflective of the various ways HPD and NYPL engaged the community, including conversations at tabling events and at the workshop, community-based organization outreach, email correspondence from the public, and more.

The main takeaways about the **new affordable housing** and the **new library spaces and programming** are described below.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Ensure the housing is truly affordable and reflects incomes in the community.
- Prioritize housing for low-income families with children, seniors, and individuals with mental disabilities or those receiving public assistance.
- While some community members expressed interest in homeownership opportunities, HPD's homeownership program does not reflect income levels in this community.
- Support to maximize number and size of affordable homes built.

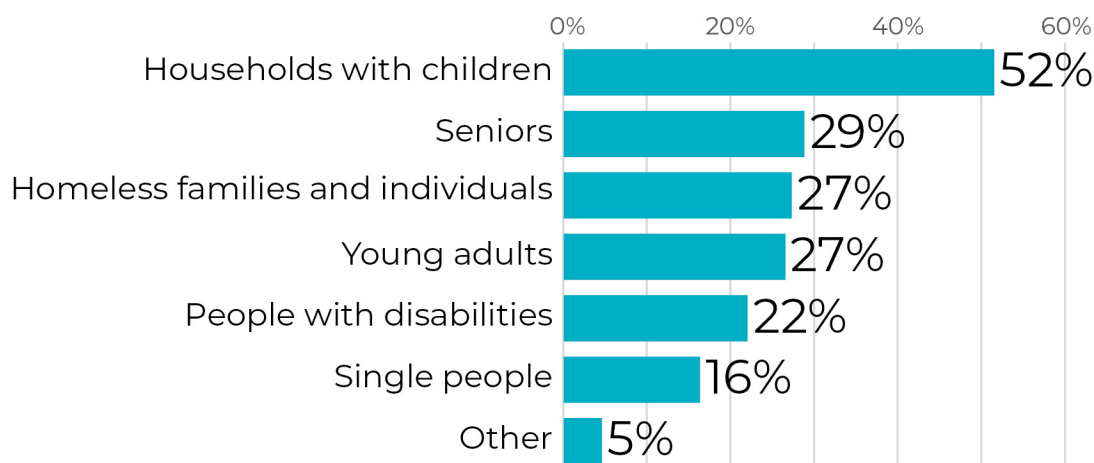
LIBRARY SPACES AND PROGRAMMING

- Support for extended hours and improved accessibility.
- Importance of youth and teen programming.
- Expand programming related to health, technology, financial literacy, and the arts.
- Desire for more quiet zones, study rooms, and computer stations.
- Importance of multilingual resources and services.
- Need for temporary space and services during library closure.

Affordable Housing

HPD asked respondents about who faces barriers to accessing and keeping housing in the neighborhood to better understand which populations need affordable housing the most.

1. WHO NEEDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING THE MOST AT THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY SITE? SELECT UP TO 2



97% of respondents answered this question.

A majority of questionnaire respondents stated that **households with children** are most in need of affordable housing at the Grand Concourse Library site. “Single people” was the least selected population.

In conversations at in-person engagement events, community members expressed that a mix of populations are in need of affordable housing, with an emphasis on family-sized units.

“Mixture of units for Families, Seniors and Single occupancy.”

“I would love for it to be for the people who help the community like teachers, nurses, non-profit employees who have children.”

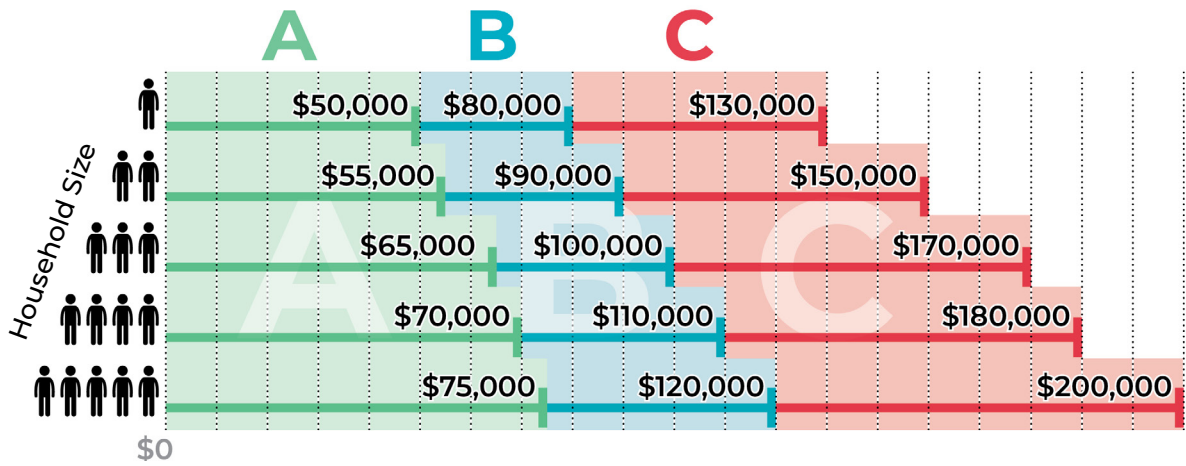
“People with low income and disability.”

“Please cater to people that are trying to make a way for themselves and their families. This would be able help more black and brown people within the community.”

“It should target people who are in need in the community. For example, homeless, families in overcrowded living environments, working families.”

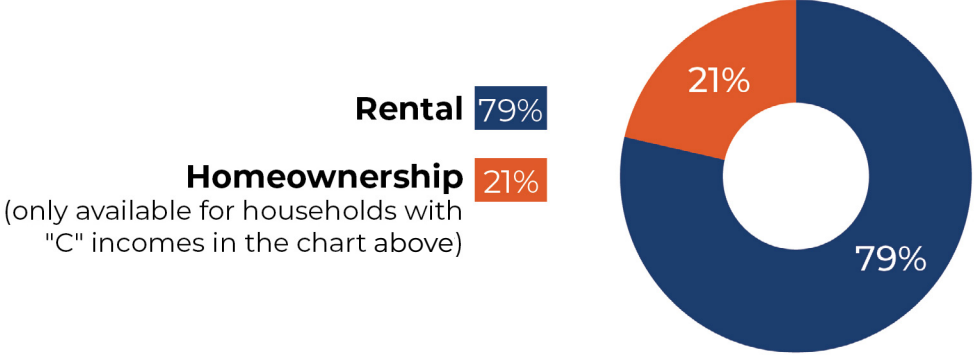
QUESTIONS 2 AND 3:

HPD builds affordable housing where units are reserved for households in specified income ranges or with specific needs. The table below show the range of incomes that qualify for HPD’s affordable housing. The table is divided into income ranges (A, B, and C) by household size that approximate 0-50%, 50-80%, and 80-120% of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Income Limits, or Area Median Income (AMI), for 2023.



2. WHAT KIND OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DO YOU THINK IS MOST NEEDED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY BRANCH?

HOMEOWNERSHIP IS ONLY AVAILABLE FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH “C” INCOMES IN THE TABLE ABOVE.



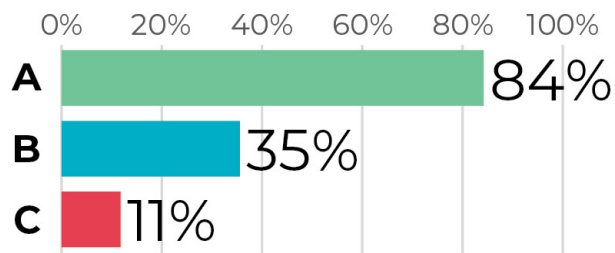
98% of respondents answered this question.

A majority of questionnaire respondents felt **rental housing** is most needed in the neighborhood around the library.

In the questionnaire open-ended responses and conversations at in-person engagement events, many community members expressed their interest in homeownership opportunities. However, they felt that a homeownership building only eligible to households with “C” incomes would not reflect people’s incomes in this community, and it is important to ensure the new housing on this site is truly affordable for people who live in the community.

3. WHAT INCOMES SHOULD THE NEW HOUSING BE AFFORDABLE FOR?

USE THE INCOME TABLE ON PAGE 11 AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY:



98% of respondents answered this question.

The vast majority of respondents (84%) felt the new housing should be affordable for households with “**A**” incomes. 35% of respondents felt the new housing should be affordable for households with “**B**” incomes, and just 11% for households with “**C**” incomes.

In general, respondents commented that while they are supportive of this development serving a mix of incomes and populations, it should prioritize the lower incomes shown to reflect what members of this community can afford.



4. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER IDEAS FOR THE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT THIS SITE?

47% of respondents filled out this open-ended question.

Respondents emphasized the need for truly affordable housing that supports a variety of incomes and household types, while integrating amenities and maintaining accessibility and safety.

Affordability and the **type of housing** were the most common themes mentioned in responses. Responses about these themes matched the takeaways of Question 2 and Question 3. Respondents feel it is important to prioritize housing for long-term New Yorkers, low-income families, seniors, and individuals with mental disabilities or those receiving public assistance. They also feel the new development should address needs of college students, single adults, and families with young children.

Several respondents reiterated their desire for **affordable homeownership opportunities** for community members with incomes lower than bracket “C” from Question 3. Currently, only households with incomes in bracket “C” are eligible for HPD’s homeownership program.

Other themes that respondents discussed included:

- The importance of **accessibility** of the new homes for elderly and disabled residents.
- The new building should be **storm-resistant, energy efficient, and eco-friendly**.
- The building should include **residential amenities** like a community room, fitness center, garden, and laundry.
- **Supportive services** like agency referrals, self-care classes, and social services should be offered on-site.

“I think homeownership opportunities are really important and it was my initial answer. But homeownership can’t be limited to people with such high incomes who already have access to housing across the city.”

“There should be additional supplemental “third spaces” along with the library for both residents and the surrounding community for other non-medical services and supports for intentional social living.”

“It should be accessible for the disabled.”

“Housing [for] people with mental disabilities, people on SSI / P.A. and lower the income ranges please.”

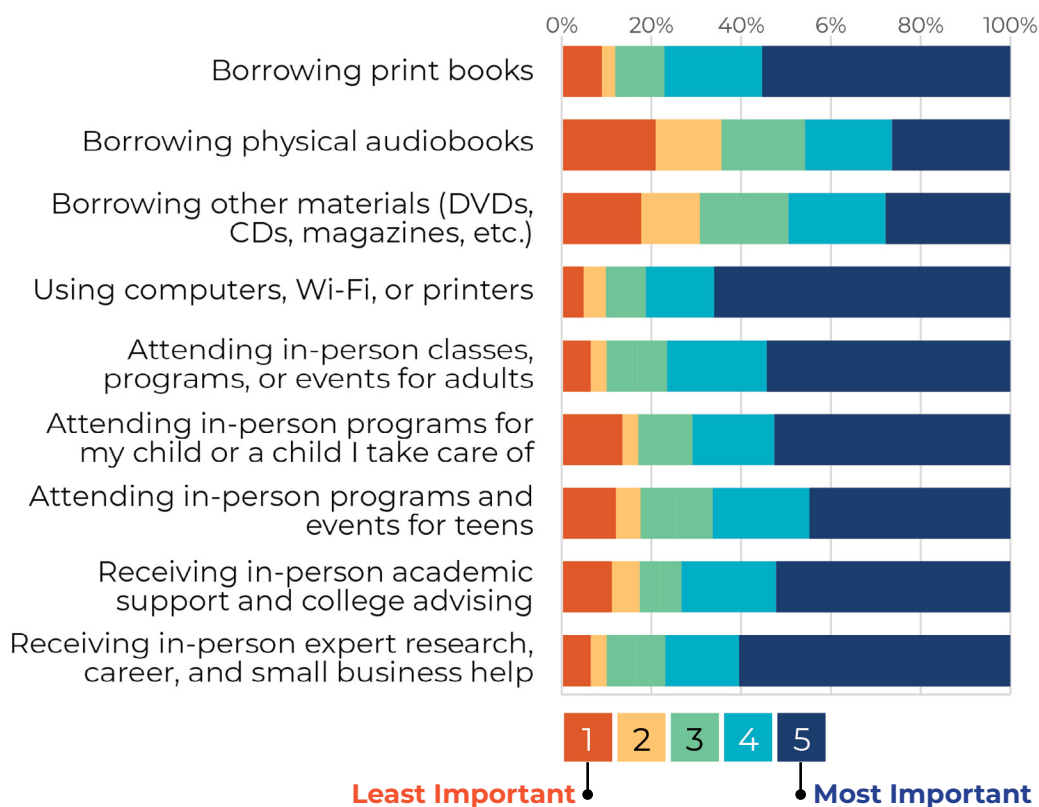
“They should have a gym in the building and a laundry room. Social services on hand and a community room.”

Library Spaces and Programming

NYPL asked respondents about spaces and programming for the new library.

5. WHAT IN-PERSON LIBRARY SERVICES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU AT THIS TIME?

Respondents rated services on a scale of 1 (least important) to 5 (most important).



100% of respondents answered this question.

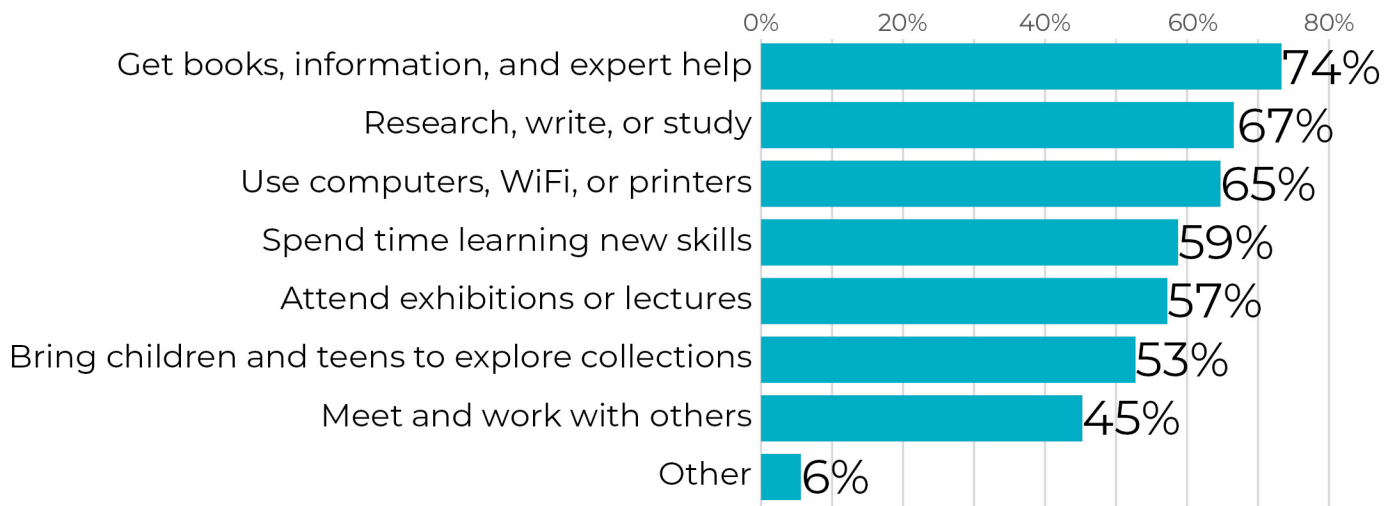
Respondents ranked “using computers, WiFi, or printers” and receiving in-person expert help related to research, career, small businesses, academic support, and college advising as the most important in-person library services at this time.

Borrowing materials other than print books, such as physical audiobooks, DVDs, CDs, and magazines, were rated as less important than the other services listed.

27% of respondents wrote in “other” services that are important to them. These responses emphasized the importance of the library as a hub of learning, community support, and safe social interaction, with impactful children and youth services and educational programming.

6. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO DO AT THE RENOVATED GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY?

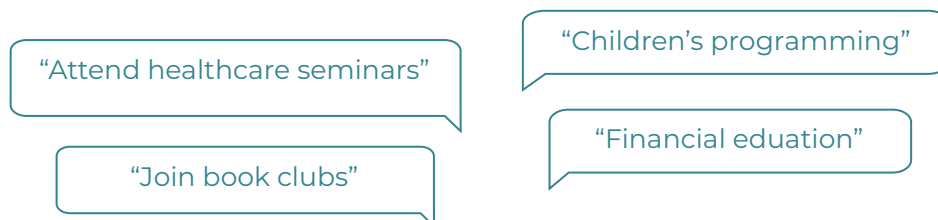
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY:



99% of respondents answered this question.

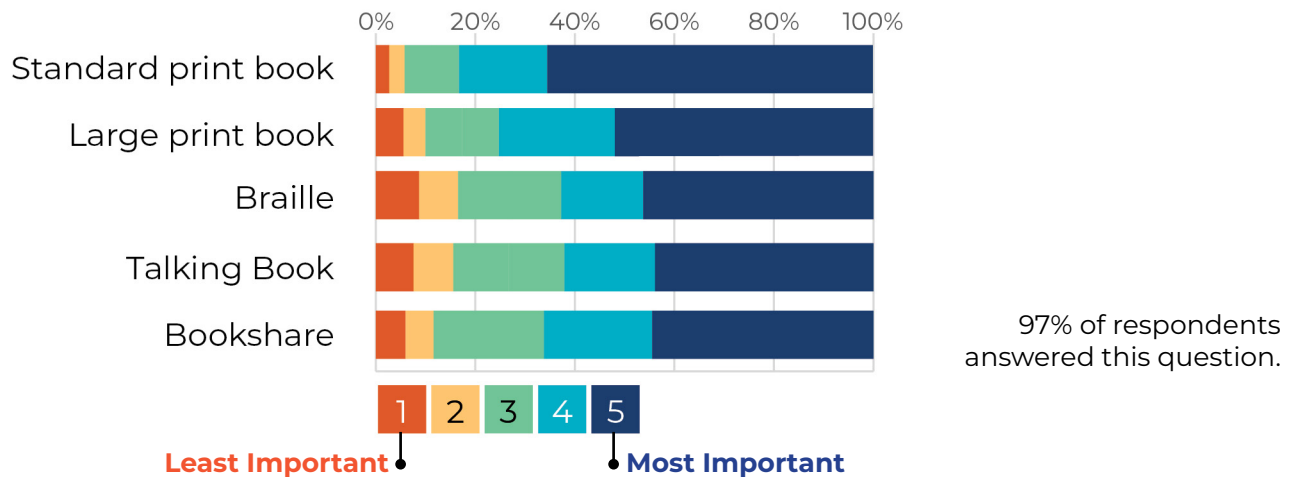
Respondents are most likely to “get books, information, and expert help,” “research, write, or study,” and “use computers, WiFi, or printers” at the renovated Grand Concourse Library.

6% of respondents wrote in “other” activities they would be likely to do at the renovated library. These responses included a range of services and programs.



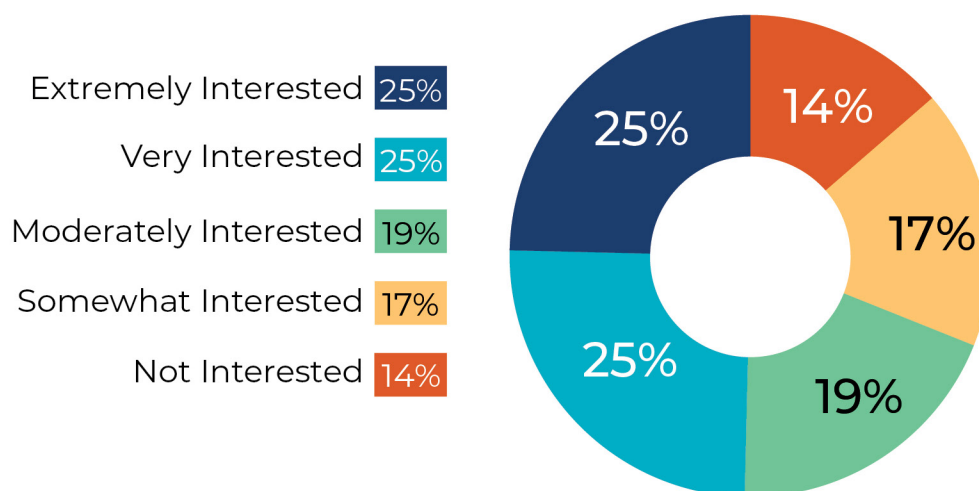
7. THE LIBRARY IS COMMITTED TO EXPANDING THE RANGE OF MATERIAL FORMATS AVAILABLE TO PATRONS. PLEASE EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE FOLLOWING FORMATS TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOURSELF.

Respondents rated material formats on a scale of 1 (least important) to 5 (most important).



On average, respondents rated all the material formats as very important. Standard print and large print books were rated as the most important material formats.

8. HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN ACCESSING WORLD LANGUAGE COLLECTIONS IN YOUR PREFERRED LANGUAGE AT THIS LIBRARY?

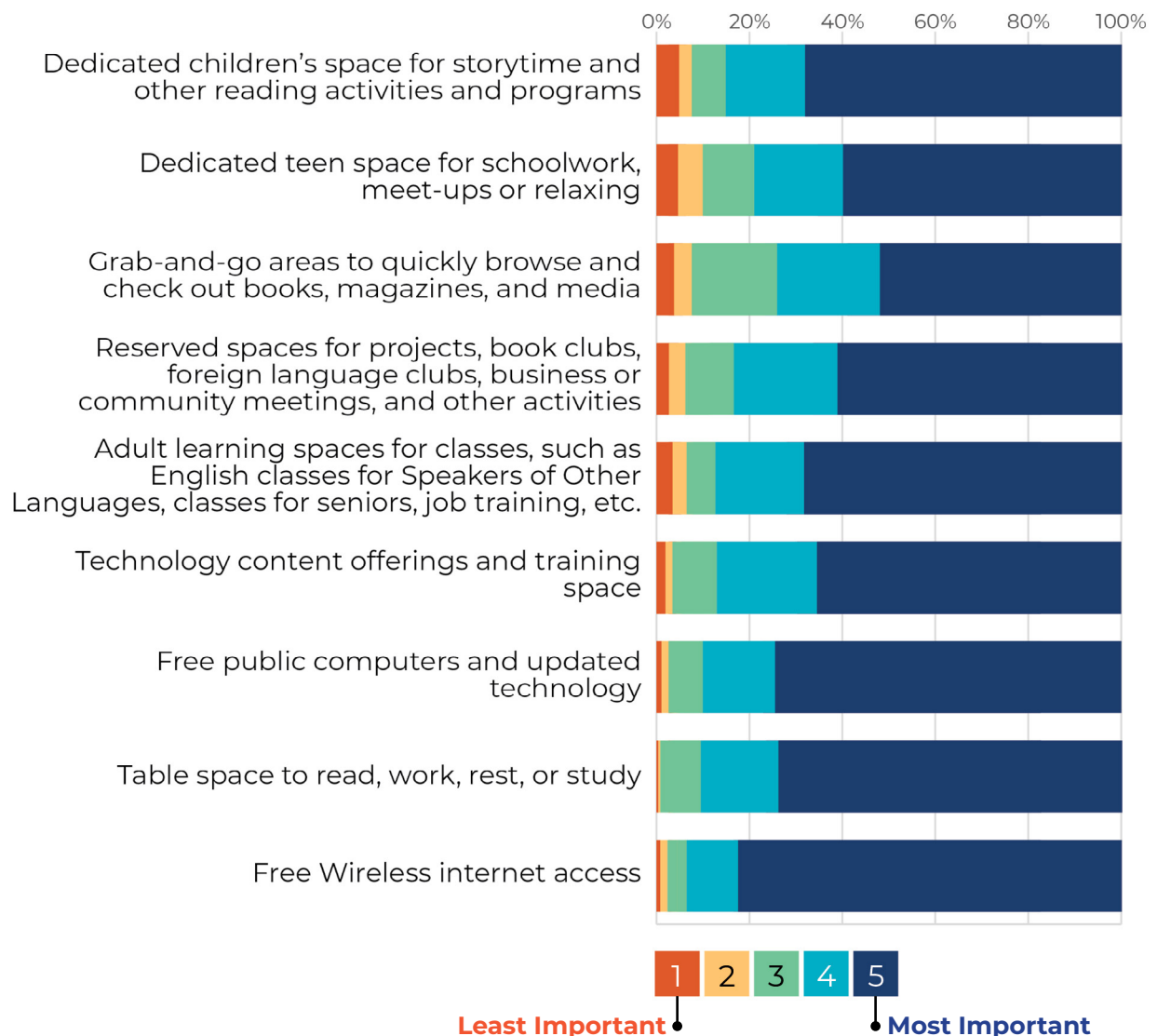


98% of respondents answered this question.

Half of respondents are “**very**” or “**extremely**” interested in accessing world language collections in their preferred language at this library. More information on the preferred languages of respondents can be found in the Appendix.

9. PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING LIBRARY SPACES AND ADDITIONS IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE FOR YOU.

Respondents rated services on a scale of 1 (least important) to 5 (most important).



99% of respondents answered this question.

Respondents recognized the importance of all the spaces and additions listed. The spaces and additions that were rated “4” and “5” the most were “free wireless internet access,” “table space to read, work, rest, or study,” and “free public computers and updated technology.” Over 52% of respondents rated all spaces and additions as most important.

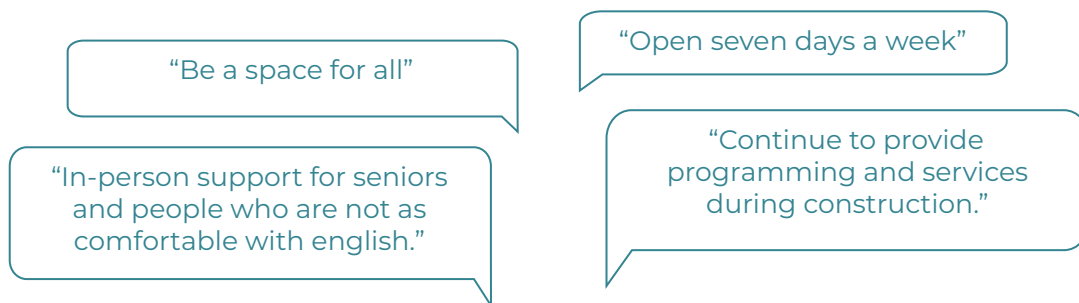
13% of respondents wrote in “other” spaces and additions that were important to them, which included references to dedicated spaces for various programs, seminars and community meetings, with accessibility for all ages and disabilities.

10. HOW CAN THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY BEST SERVE YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS?

46% of respondents filled out this open-ended question.

According to community members, the Grand Concourse Library can best serve this community's needs by providing spaces for all ages, larger collections, and a diversity of programs. Common themes from the questionnaire and in-person community engagement events included:

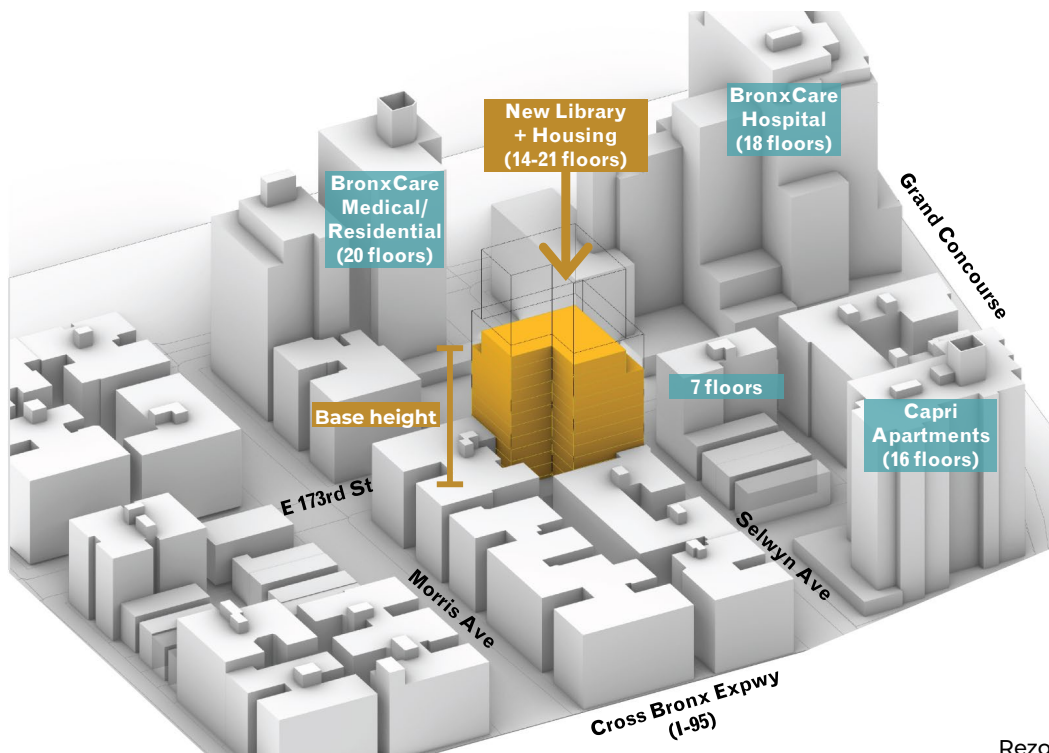
- Expanding print materials and programming.
- Ensuring increased accessibility and extended open hours, including during construction.
- Offering diverse and inclusive spaces for all ages.
- Providing quiet zones.
- Hosting a variety of educational and community events.



Building Form and Design

HPD and NYPL did not directly ask about zoning or the shape of the building in the questionnaire. However, this topic was mentioned in the Community Board 4 briefing on April 1, 2024. The rezoning diagram below was shared and discussed with community members during the Community Visioning Workshop on June 12, 2024.

The diagram shows the potential size (in **yellow**) and maximum height (in the **black outline**) of the new building with a rezoning. The rezoning would help maximize the number of affordable homes above the new two-story library.



Rezoning Diagram

Takeaways from conversations at the workshop, tabling events, and open-ended responses to the questionnaire about this topic include:

- There is general support for rezoning to maximize the number and size of affordable homes built.
- There are other taller buildings in the area, but we should still be aware of the building height compared to adjacent buildings.
- Building setbacks (explained using the “wedding cake analogy”) would improve perception of the building from the street.

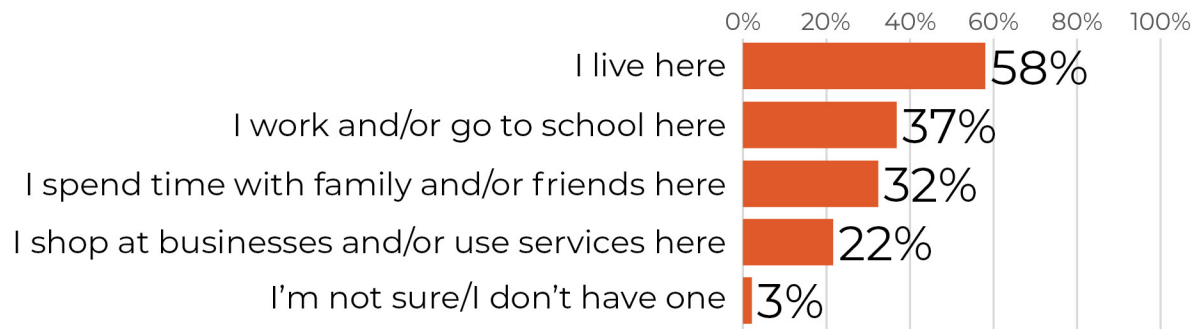
“Please build as big and tall as possible, to maximize the number of units. NYC desperately needs denser new housing. This is already a high density, transit-oriented neighborhood.”

Profile of Respondents

A. WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

A majority of respondents live in the neighborhood around the library. 97% of respondents have a connection to the neighborhood.

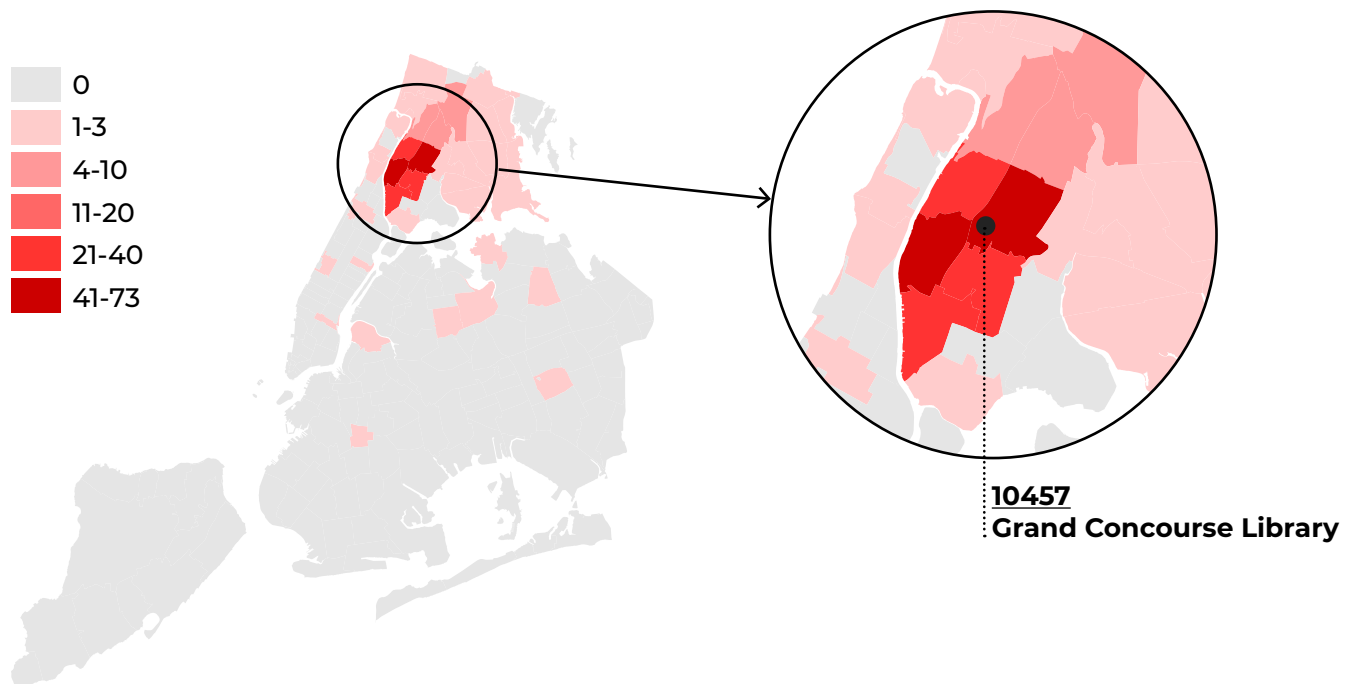


99% of respondents answered this question.

B. NEIGHBORHOOD OF RESIDENCE:

The Grand Concourse Library is located in the 10457 ZIP code.

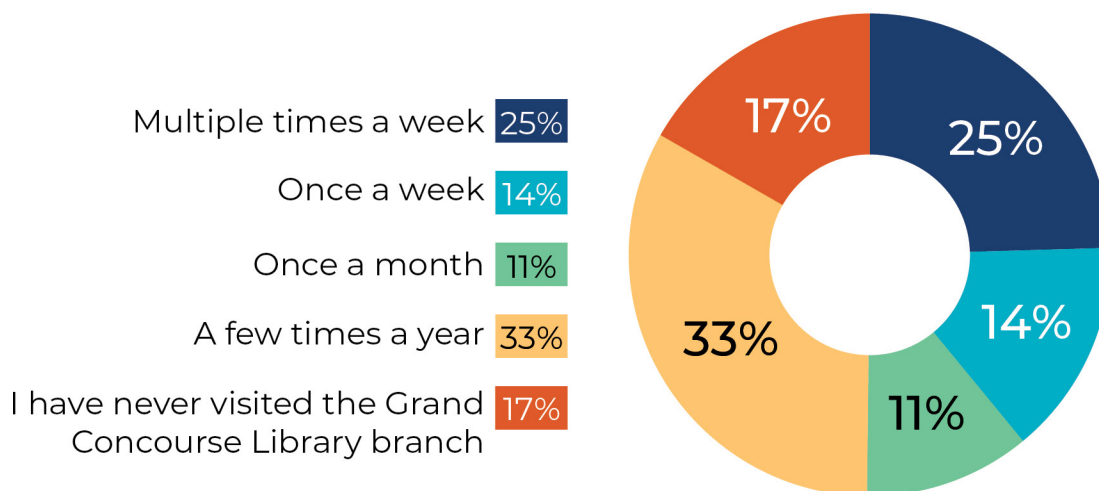
67% of respondents live in 10457 or a ZIP code directly adjacent to the library, including 10452, 10453, and 10456. Additionally, 91% of respondents live in the Bronx, and 97% of respondents live in New York City.



99% of respondents answered this question.

C. ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY?

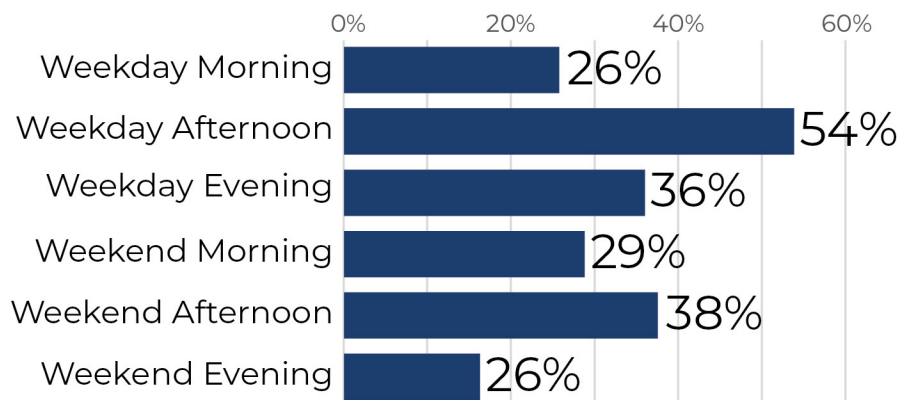
39% of respondents visit the library at least once a week. Half of respondents visit the library at least once a month.



100% of respondents answered this question.

D. WHEN ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO VISIT THE GRAND CONCOURSE LIBRARY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

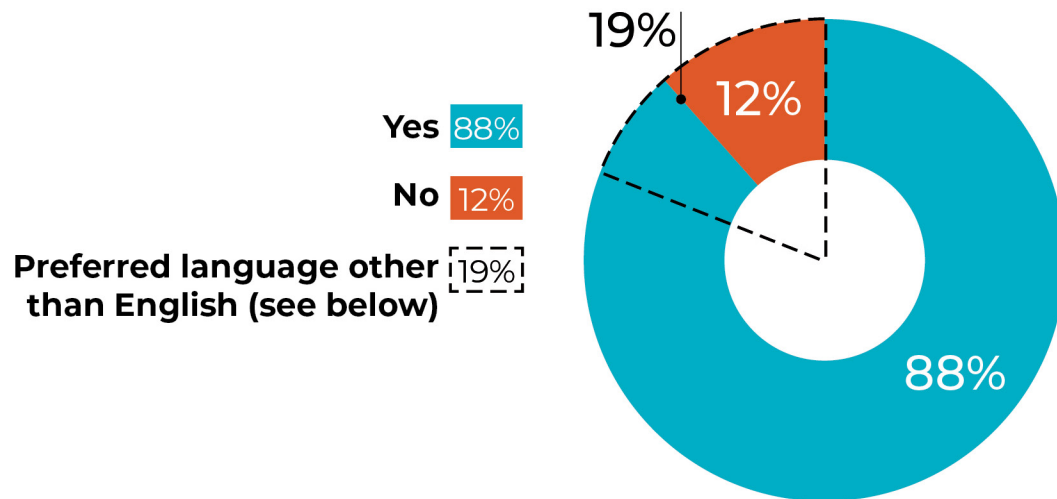
Respondents are most likely to visit the library on a weekday afternoon (54%), weekend afternoon (38%), or weekday evening (36%).



97% of respondents answered this question.

E. IS ENGLISH YOUR PREFERRED LANGUAGE?

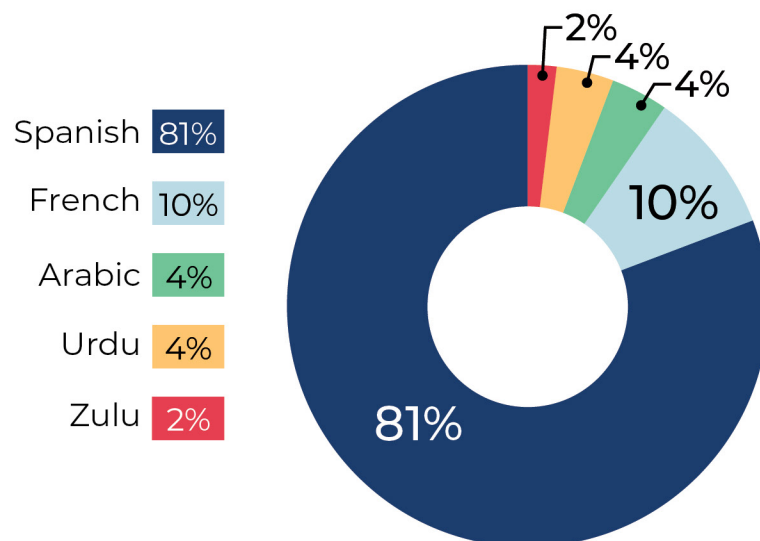
English is the preferred language of 88% of respondents. However, in the question below, 19% of respondents indicated they prefer a language other than English.



99% of respondents answered this question.

F. IF NOT ENGLISH, WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED LANGUAGE?

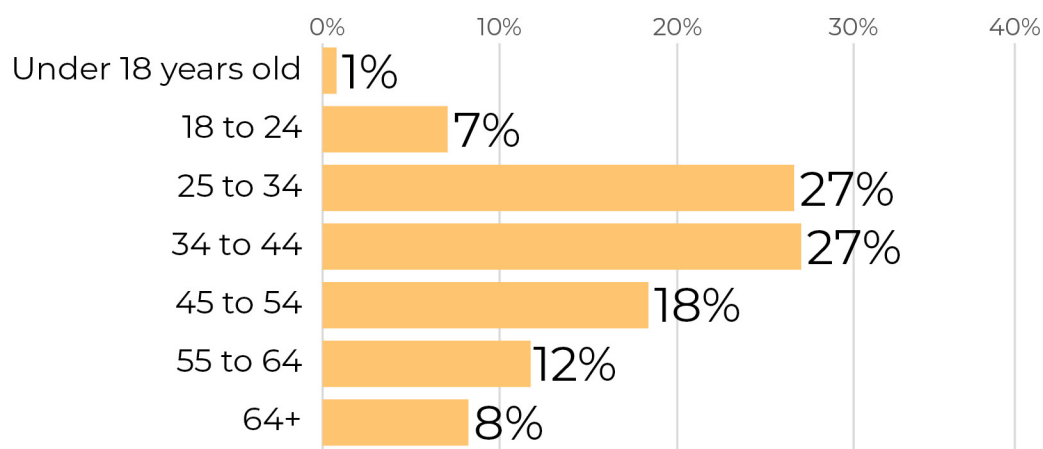
81% of respondents who answered this question selected Spanish as their preferred language, and 10% selected French. Other languages selected included Arabic, Urdu, and Zulu.



19% of respondents answered this question.

G. AGE

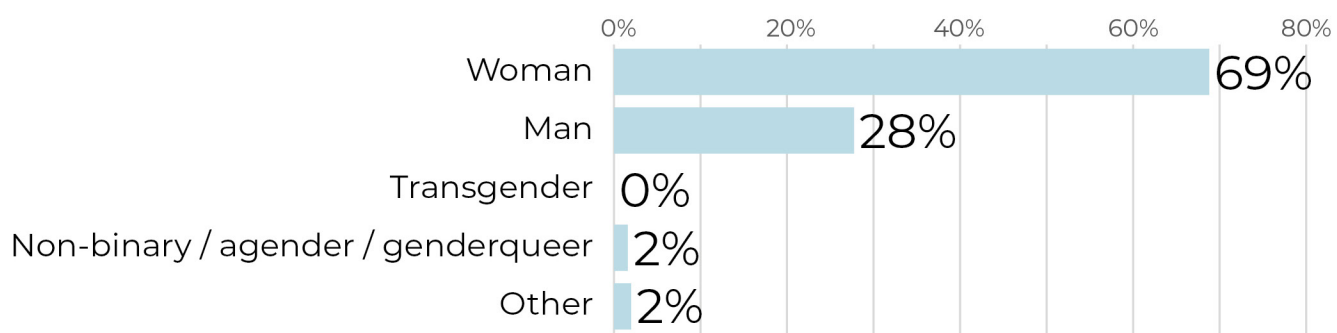
The median age range of respondents is 35-44 years old.



94% of respondents answered this question.

H. GENDER IDENTITY

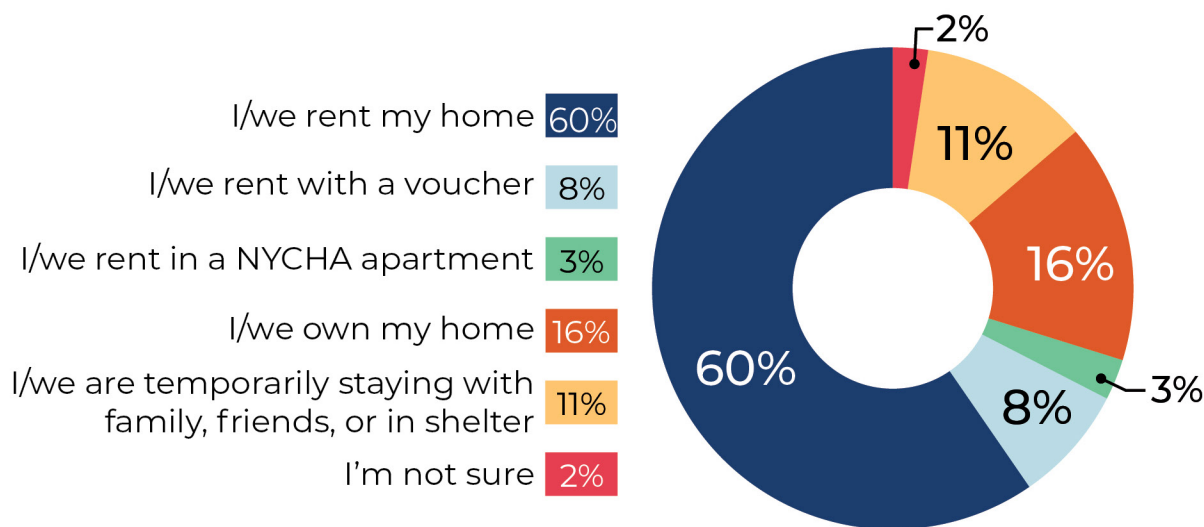
More than two thirds of respondents (69%) identify as women.



94% of respondents answered this question.

I. HOUSING DESCRIPTION

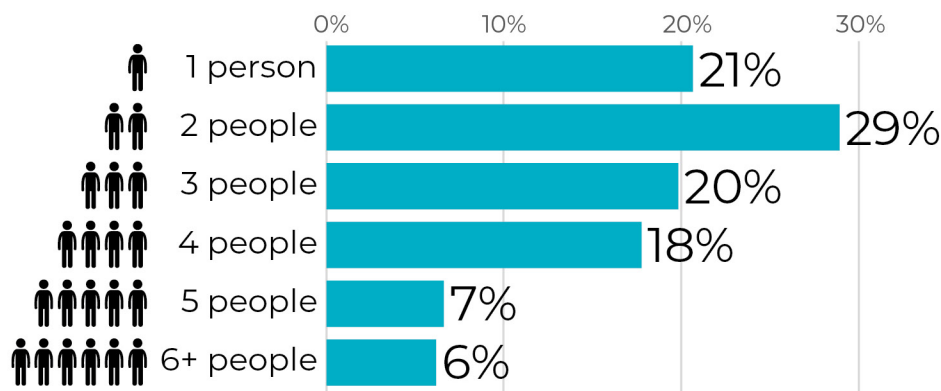
More than two thirds of respondents (71%) rent their homes, including those who rent with a voucher or live in a NYCHA apartment. 16% of respondents own their homes, and 11% are temporarily staying with family, friends, or in shelter.



94% of respondents answered this question.

J. HOUSEHOLD SIZE

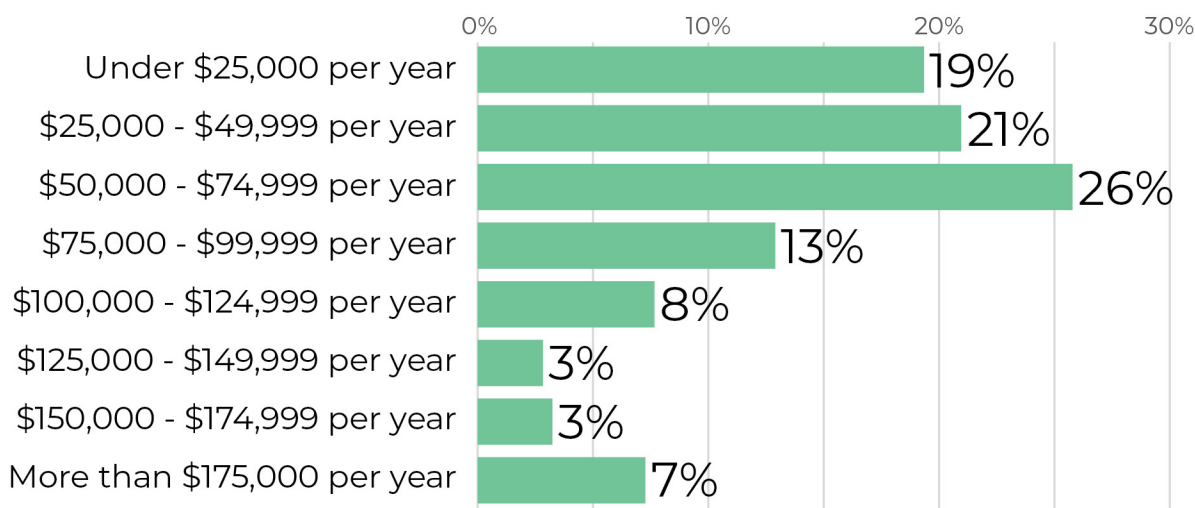
Half of respondents have one- or two-person households, and half of respondents have households of three people or more.



90% of respondents answered this question.

K. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

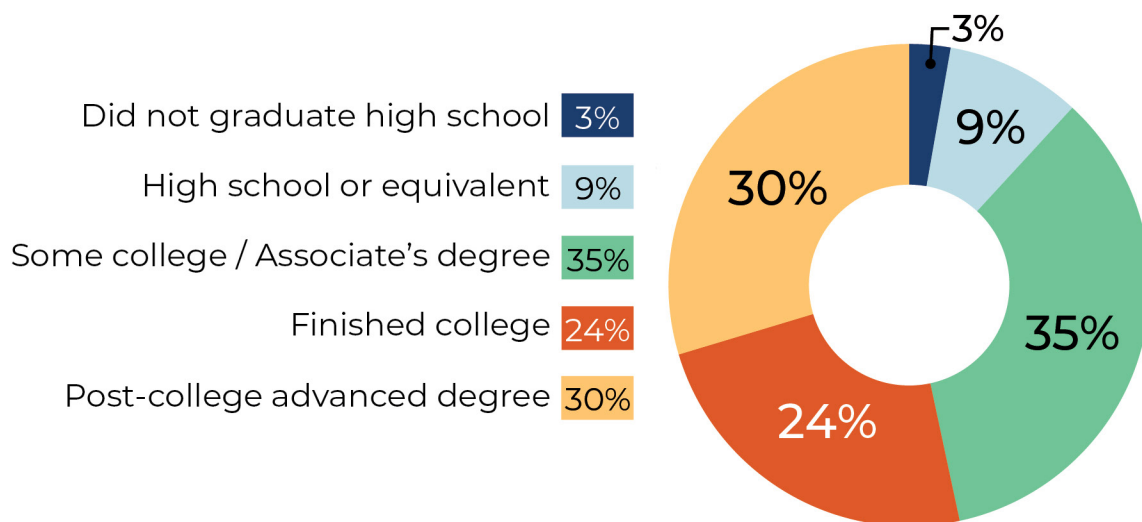
40% of respondents' households make less than \$50,000 per year. The most chosen income range of respondents was \$50,000-\$75,000.



92% of respondents answered this question.

L. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

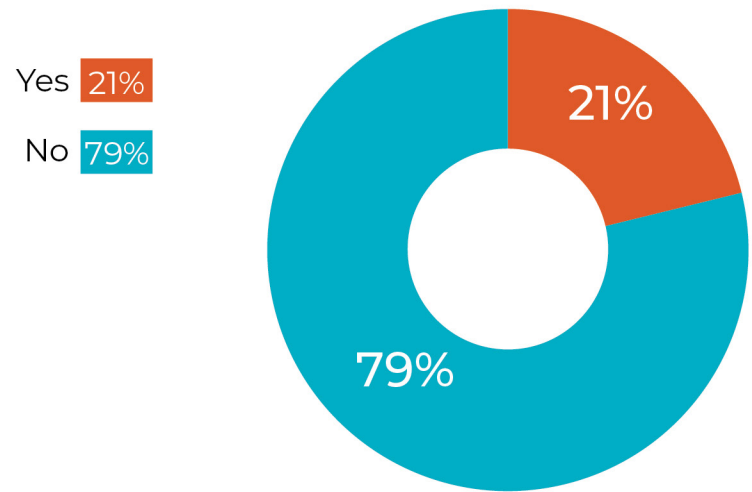
The majority of respondents (54%) have a college or post-college advanced degree. An additional 35% have some college or an associate's degree.



94% of respondents answered this question.

M. DISABILITY

21% of respondents have a disability.

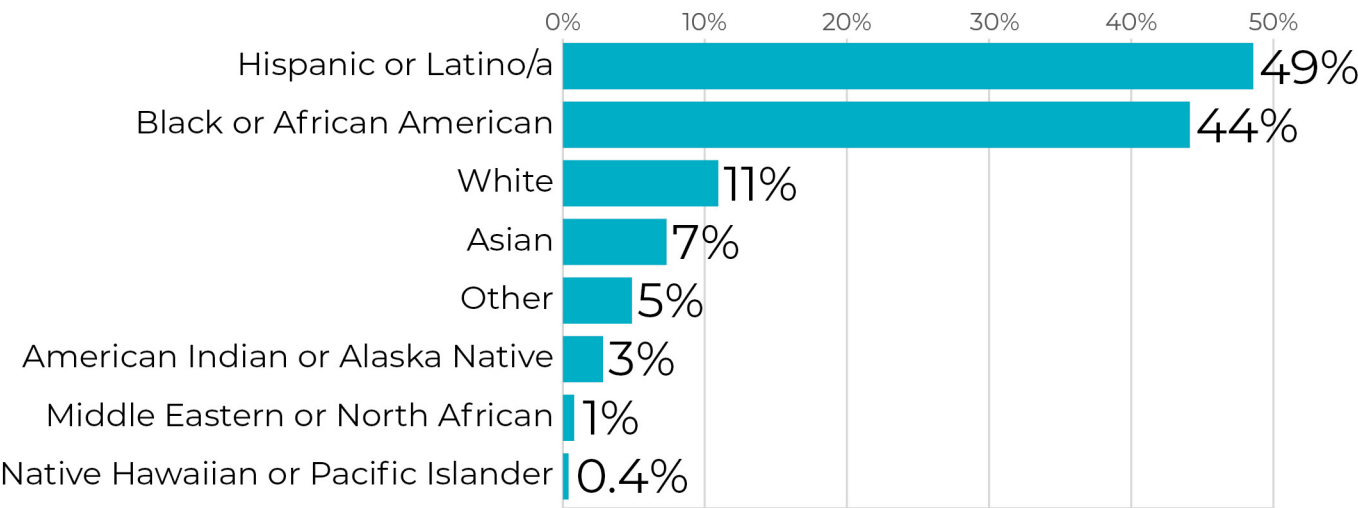


94% of respondents answered this question.

N. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Respondents selected as many races and ethnicities as were applicable to them.

“Hispanic or Latino/a” (49%) and “Black or African American” (44%) were the two most common identities selected. 17% of respondents selected two or more racial/ethnic groups and/or selected “other.”



92% of respondents answered this question.

Email:
GrandConcourseLibrary@hpd.nyc.gov

Project website:
www.nyc.gov/grandconcourselibrary

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