Kiowa County Public Library District Survey Results Summary

Summary of Results

The Kiowa County Public Library District conducted a county-wide community survey September 2019 – December 2019 through SurveyMonkey. Survey topics included the best things about living in the county, challenges facing the county, the best things libraries can do for their community, and interest in new or expanded library services. A sixth question about location (town of respondent's mailing address) was added after 88 responses were already received. A total of 270 people responded to the survey; three-fourths (76%) of the 182 respondents who answered the question about location had a mailing address in Eads. Because additional demographic information was not collected, it is critical not to assume that the survey results represent the greater population that the library serves. However, they are usefulas a jumping-off point for further investigation.

In general, the results indicate that the respondents:

- Are relatively satisfied with the services the library is providing;
- Care about their town being safe;
- Value family and community;
- Are concerned about economic issues such as funding for public services and infrastructure, jobs, and housing;
- And are seeking more activities in their communities, particularly educational activities for kids.

The greatest issue currently facing the library is the lack of access for patrons. Their most significant challenges are:

- Accessing the library after hours (4:30pm) and on the weekends;
- Being able to physically get to the library because of how far they live from it;
- And being able to access the building because of physical mobility.

Respondents proposed various ideas to address this problem. These included moving the library, increasing or changing hours, and creating avenues for virtual access to resources.

The survey data also highlighted a prioritization of children within the community:

- Schools were rated the best thing about living in Kiowa County;
- More than half of respondents said there were not enough things to do for children and teens;
- Nearly 80 percent of respondents said libraries should support education and literacy (although this can occur at any age, it is traditionally thought of as K-12);
- And 40% of respondents would like to see a space for children and teens in the library.

However, when asked about things modern libraries do, "offer family events/programs" received the fewest number of votes. This could indicate a lack of awareness about the role libraries can play within their community. Given the positive feedback on the Summer Reading program in the qualitative answers, additional programs for children and teens may be a priority area for expansion. Additional research through focus groups or interviews, and thatincluded non-users, would provide additional information on if this need exists.

Methodology

The Kiowa County Public Library District conducted a county-wide community survey September 2019 – December 2019 through SurveyMonkey. The survey asked five multiple choice questions and one open-ended question. A sixth multiple choice question about location was added after 88 responses were already received.
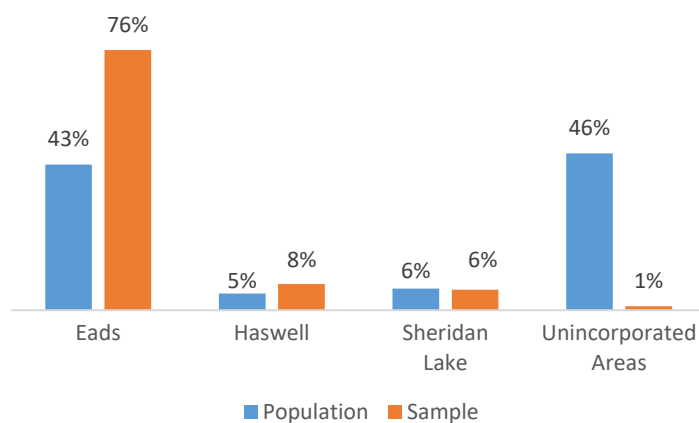
Demographics

Kiowa County's 2019 Legal Service Area (LSA) is calculated as 1,373 people. Therefore, the survey sample size of 270 represents nearly 20 percent of the population. However, as the survey did not collect demographic information other than location, we cannot infer that the respondents are representative of the county population. Below is demographic information about the county from datausa.io, which pulls from multiple datasets publicly available.

- Median age: 41.1
- Median household income: $39,250
- 88 percent are White, 7.02 percent are two or more races, and 4.39 percent are Hispanic or Latinx
- 10.6 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with the vast majority being females ages 55+. The next largest demographic is males 16-17 years old.
- From 2016 to 2017, employment in Kiowa County declined at a rate of -6.09 percent. The most common employment sectors for individuals who live in Kiowa County are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (120 people); Health Care and Social Assistance (117 people); and Educational Services (85 people).
- 93.1 percent of the population have health coverage (although this could have changed since the Affordable Care Act was rescinded). 19.2 percent are on Medicaid and 14.6 percent are on Medicare.

Of the 182 that answered the question, 139 live in Eads (76.37%). However, Eads represents only 42.75 percent of Kiowa County's LSA. 14 respondents were from Haswell (7.69%), which covers 4.88 percent of Kiowa County's LSA, and 11 respondents were from Sheridan Lake (6.04%), which covers 6.34 percent of the service area. Finally, 16 respondents were from unincorporated areas including Towner, Arlington,

Sample distribution by address

Source: County Municipality estimates 2010-2018

and Chivington (a combined 1.17% of respondents). The unincorporated areas represent 46.03 percent of Kiowa County's LSA. The graph shows the disparity in location distribution between the survey sample
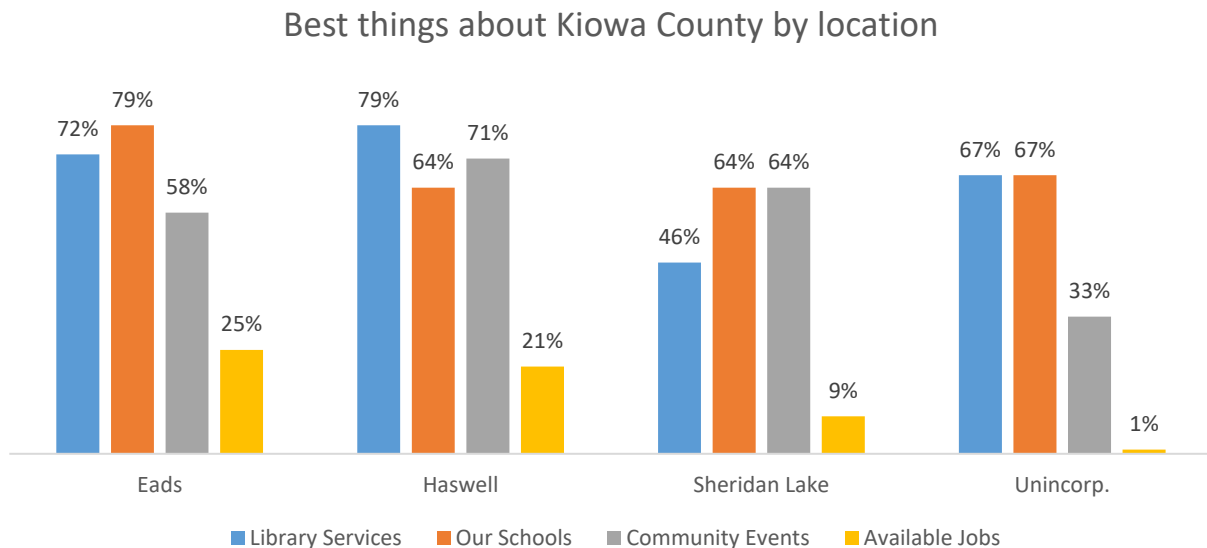
and population. However, it is important to note that the library is located in Eads, meaning more patrons are likely to be located there.

Results

Key thematic groupings emerged within the data across survey questions. These can help evaluators look deeper into answers to gather information that respondents may not directly indicate. Some major themes were: people/community, access, and economic hardship. Each theme will be discussed further within the context of specific survey questions.

Question 1: What are the BEST things about living in Kiowa County

For this question, nearly half of respondents (45.6%) chose 7 or more of the choices (out of 11). Without a ranked voting, it's difficult to interpret the priorities of respondents. However, we can perceive that government services are important to Kiowa County residents. Among the highest ranked categories were schools, having a hospital and clinic, and library services. Another key theme was community. "Knowing our neighbors" and "our community pulls together" also ranked highly for this question. In addition, under the "other category" seven respondents wrote in answers dealing with safety, including "small, quiet town" and "local fire, EMS, Sheriff." These responses could also indicate aspects of "community" that respondent's value. Some write-in responses regarding people or family included "all the wonderful people who live here" and "friendly people."

Best things about Kiowa County by location

"Library services" ranked fourth in the overall survey, but was #1 in Haswell with 78.6% of respondents choosing that option. It ranked lowest in Sheridan Lake at 45.5%. Other than "library services,"the variables in the chart at left were chosen based on their overlap with existing or potential library services (hosting events, helping patrons search for jobs, educational programs, etc).
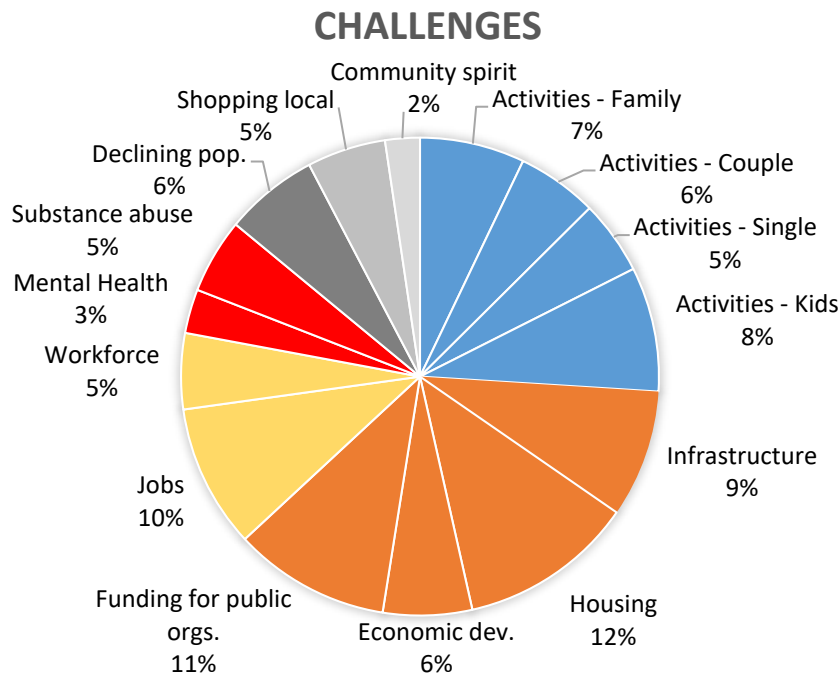
Question 2: What are the greatest challenges facing the County?

Overwhelmingly respondents across locations believe housing was the greatest challenge facing Kiowa County (70.8%). In addition to housing, respondents also chose funding for public organizations (63.3%), lack of jobs (58%), and maintaining infrastructure (51.5%). This data highlights a focus on government services and could point to a general dissatisfaction with the municipality or a perception of economic hardship.

However, challenges varied by location. In Haswell, "substance abuse" ranked third overall despite being among the lowest in every other area. Inversely, "declining population" was a major concern for every location except for Eads (ninth out of 15 challenges).

Within the write-in responses, similar issues emerged. Housing was again mentioned multiple times, as well as issues surrounding government services such as "pot holes," "funding for all things, "more events at the fairgrounds," and the "sheriff's department."

The chart below compares each challenge to the overall total votes, not the number of people who responded (since respondents could choose more than one option). The chart is also organized into color groups by various themes: blue – activities, orange – public sector, yellow- employment, and red – health.The desire for more activities emerged as an overall challenge, encompassing one-quarter of votes. Public sector issues also took up nearly one-third of votes despite representing 4/15 of the options.

CHALLENGES

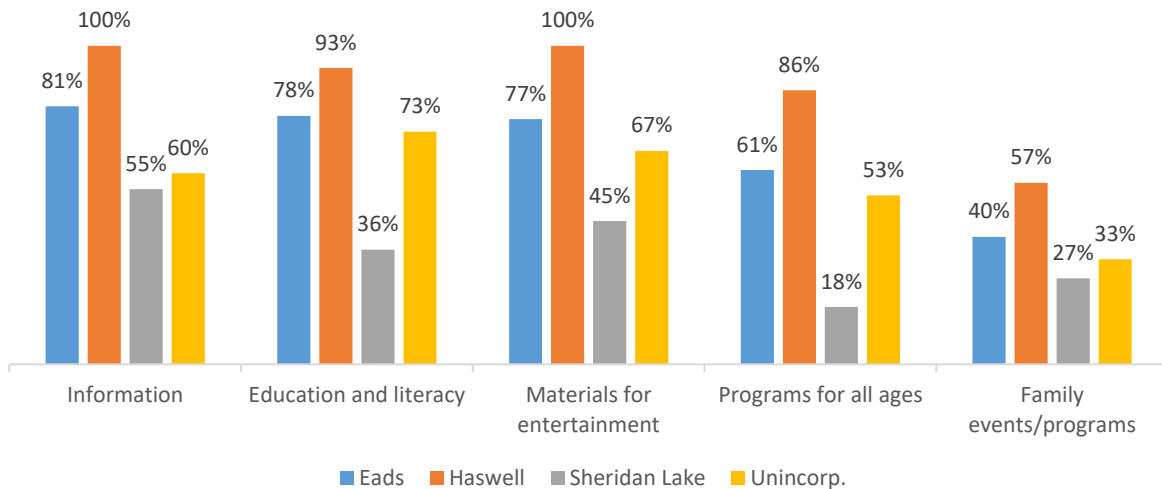*Question 3: What are the best things modern libraries do for their communities in the 21st century?*

Based on the qualitative answers given under the "other" option, there was some confusion regarding the wording of this question. One person answered, "not sure what all the library does," while another responded, "This is a tough question since we do NOT have a modern library in KC…guessing what things

COULD be done."Therefore, people could either be answering as what they think the library does best or what is valuable for them personally that the library provides. In addition, they may be thinking of Kiowa County Library or a hypothetical "modern library."

This question elicited the largest percentage of responses chosen, with respondents choosing an average of 7.6 options out of 12 total choices. However, the result for "Offer family events/programs" (42%) is lower than expected based on responses to other survey questions. This may indicate a lack of awareness about what libraries can provide.

Best things modern libraries do by location

Eads ■ Haswell ■ Sheridan Lake ■ Unincorp.

Overall, people think the best things libraries should, could, or currently do are (1) provide information, (2) support education and literacy, and (3) provide materials for entertainment. However, it is possible to infer from the results that respondents believe nearly all of these options are important objectives for a library.
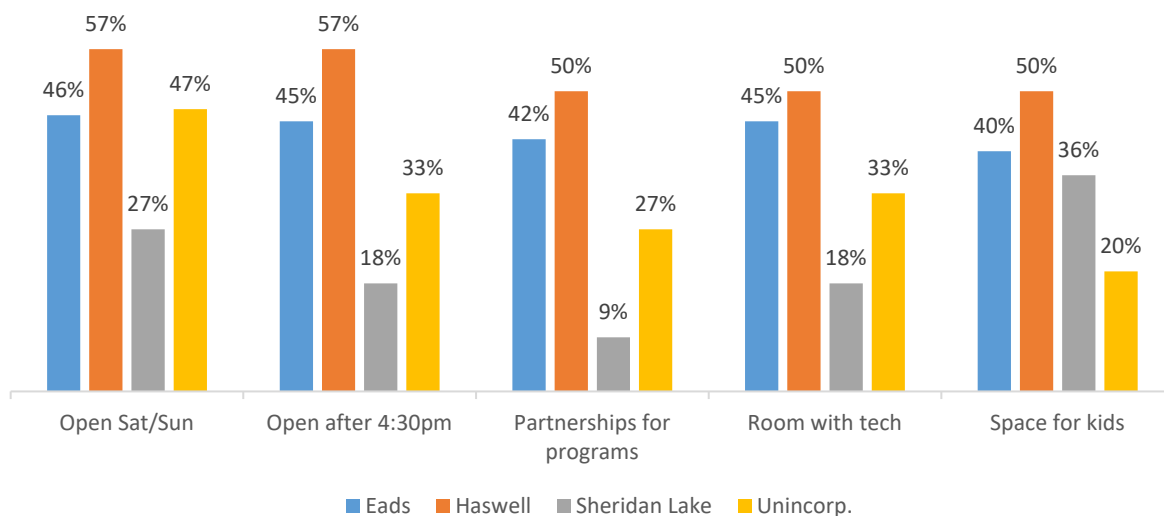
Question 4: What new or expanded services would you like at the library?

Results for question 4 centered on a couple of key themes, namely "space," "access," and "programming." Of all the questions, this one elicited the lowest response rate, with an average of 3.6 chosen options out of 10 choices. There was also smaller variation, with an answer choice being chosen by an average of 35.81% of respondents and a standard deviation of 0.10.This could indicate that respondents already believe the library is providing sufficient services.

The unincorporated areas were most interested in "outreach services for all ages in all parts of the county," while Eads, where the library is located, had a nearly 3-way tie between "open after 4:30 on weekdays," "open on Saturday and/or Sunday," and "a free room for community use with projection and conference technology."

Corresponding to the challenge of not enough activities, 44% of respondents indicated they would like "new partnerships to bring educational and entertainment programs to the county." This option was chosen most by residents of Eads (42%) and least by residents of Sheridan Lake (9%). Overall, 67 respondents chose both that a challenge was "not enough things to do for kids or teens" and "new partnerships to bring educational and entertainment programs to the community."

Top 5 new services by location

Interestingly, although "lack of jobs" was the third highest ranked challenge, only 20.7% of respondents chose "business support" as a service they would like at the library and only 30 respondents chose both of these options. This could reflect a perception by respondents that there are no jobs in the area, even though they themselves may be employed. Therefore, they might not have a personal need for this service. Further research could investigate whether this is an actual need, although it may benefit people who are not currently accessing the library and/or did not respond to the survey.

Overall, being able to access the library, both physically and at different times, appears important to respondents. Among "other" responses, ones regarding access included, "A ramp! For me accessibility is a REAL problem!" as well as "a virtual library so you can access books via your mobile device."

Qualitative data (question 5 results are folded into this section)

The qualitative data for this question was combined with qualitative data from the previous questions and coded according to whether the excerpt was: (1) best things about Kiowa County, (2) best things about libraries, (3) challenges, or (4) ideas. Excerpts were additionally coded according to reoccurring themes. Results are organized below first by response type and then by thematic groupings.

RESPONSE TYPE	THEMATIC CODE	EXCERPT	RESPONDENT	ADDRESS	
Best Kiowa	People/Community				
		Having people that are loving.	Participant: 5	Eads	
		friendly people	Participant: 87	Eads	
		My Family <3	Participant: 6	Eads	
		No traffic congestion	Participant: 91	Eads	
		Friends	Participant: 117	Eads	
	Safety				
		live in a relatively "safe" environment	Participant: 60	Towner	
		Small quite town	Participant: 115	Eads	
		Local fire, EMS, Sheriff	Participant: 7	Eads	
		Safety. The area is relatively safe	Participant: 165	Eads	
	Other				
		Sunrise; sunsets; National Park-Sand Creek; freedoms; 2 newspapers.	Participant: 46	Eads	
Best Libraries	Materials				
		Books!!!	Participant: 181	Arlington	
	(additional code = family)	Helping provide bereavement books for families.	Participant: 121	Eads	
	Services/Programs				
		Someone that cant be deleted or censored off the internet	Participant: 164	Eads	
		Online access	Participant: 145	Towner	
		I am pleased with our library! The Summer Reading Program is excellent!	Participant: 46	Eads	
		The Summer Reading Program is something my granddaughters look forward to every summer.	Participant: 110	Eads	
		Summer Reading Program is awesome!!	Participant: 191	NA	
	Staff				
		The librarians are awesome - Very helpful!	Participant: 110	Eads	
		They have the greatest most friendly staff with smiling face and are very helpful	Participant: 41	Haswell	
	General				
		Thank you for all you do and try to do!	Participant: 181	Arlington	
		I think it is great the way it is	Participant: 166	Eads	
		Doing a great job!	Participant: 125	Eads	
		I think the library is just fine for our community. :)	Participant: 13	Eads	
Challenges	Access				
	Subcode = temporal				
		Right now only a fraction of Kiowa county citizens have the ability to access the library.	Participant: 191	NA	
		Nice idea to be open after 430 PM.	Participant: 46	Eads	
	Subcode = physical				
		Driving *(likely a child based on other answers)	Participant: 6	Eads	
		35 miles is a long ways to access the library	Participant: 144	Towner	
		For me accessibility is a REAL problem.	Participant: 46	Eads	
	General Kiowa				
	Subcode = infrastructure				
		houses need to be sold that are sitting for years	Participant: 157	Eads	
		Swimming Pool	Participant: 5	Eads	
		Lack of homes	Participant: 46	Eads	
		Pot holes; abandoned property; weeds; dead trees	Participant: 171	Haswell	
		Restaurants	Participant: 103	Eads	
	Subcode = activities				
		There needs to be more events at the fair grounds to utilize it.	Participant: 41	Haswell	
		Needs to be more recreation	Participant: 41	Haswell	
	other				
	(additional code = community)	Lazy people	Participant: 66	Chivington	
	(additional code = health)	Meth heads	Participant: 164	Eads	
	(additional code = community)	The abusive and power hungry sheriffs department. Crooked as all hell.	Participant: 148	Sheridan Lake	
Ideas	Programs				
	(additional code = collaboration)	Facilitate exchange student & foster care programs	Participant: 88	Sheridan Lake	
		Possible future book clubs?	Participant: 146	Sheridan Lake	
Ideas, Programs, Community		What about a social book club? Read & Share!	Participant: 46	Eads	
Ideas Family, Programs	(additional code = family)	Offer family events/programs - I don't know?	Participant: 116	Eads	
Ideas, Programs, kids, Collaboration	(additional codes = collaboration, kids)	maybe work with the school to set up tutoring sessions for kids that need it or even study sessions for adults going thru college courses	Participant: 43	Outside the county	
		Maybe classes? Computer classes for Senior Citizens	Participant: 46	Eads	
	(additional codes = outreach, community)	The library could serve the community better if they (the Library) had more community support!	Participant: 177	Haswell	
	Access				
	Subcode = temporal				

		Longer hours…	Participant: 35	Eads	
		Nice idea to be open after 430 PM…	Participant: 46	Eads	
		The biggest change that would better serve the community would be staying open after regular business hours and/or weekends to allow working adults and students library access. Right now only a fraction of Kiowa county citizens have the ability to access the library.	Participant: 191	NA	
		after hours access	Participant: 2	Eads	
		mostly open on weekdays for being open after 4:30 pm	Participant: 83	Eads	
		Move the library to main street, out of the court house so hours could be changed…	Participant: 157	Eads	
		better serve the community would be staying open after regular business hours and/or weekends to allow working adults and students library access.	Participant: 191	NA	
		Move to location with more hours open	Participant: 3	Eads	
		open on weekends	Participant: 87	Eads	
		…and after hours access	Participant: 2	Eads	
	Subcode = physical				
		…Easier way into the library? YES! A ramp - a ramp! For me accessibility is a REAL problem. Maybe-to a seperate room for computer use.	Participant: 46	Eads	
		Possibly things over this way - East.	Participant: 147	Towner	
		I have read all of these questions and don't care about any other stuff. I only care about a ground level way of getting into the library! I know a lot of others care about this too.	Participant: 1	Eads	
		35 miles is a long ways to access the library. Online virtual library? Satellite location on East end of county.	Participant: 144	Towner	
		A virtual library so you can access books via your mobile device.	Participant: 145	Towner	
	Space				
		Space for TEENS	Participant: 15	Eads	
		Signage to handicap doors.	Participant: 122	Eads	
		A different location where the library could be visibly seen. Move the library to main street…hopefully the building could be 3x bigger also	Participant: 157	Eads	
		Larger library	Participant: 188	NA	
		…like decorating rooms and such.	Participant: 35	Eads	
		Internet café…	Participant: 2	Eads	
	Materials				
		…more selection of books…	Participant: 35	Eads	
		Get newer books maybe	Participant: 5	Eads	
		More old old history textbooks and instruction manuals from pre-world war 2	Participant: 164	Eads	
		Update book collection with up-to-date personal finance, investing and stock trading materials.	Participant: 107	Eads	