Environment Scan:
Current and Future Needs for Library Services in Rhode Island
By ESC New England for
Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) is the state library administrative agency for Rhode Island (RI). Its mission is to make all RI libraries more effective and to ensure all people of RI have the best possible services available. OLIS is in the process of preparing their strategic plan and have chosen ESC New England to help with this project. The role of ESC is to provide OLIS with an environmental scan to better understand the library landscape in RI. ESC consultants, in collaboration with OLIS staff, identified several tools to use in collecting data for this project.

- Research, including review of the OLIS website, the RI Governor's website, US Census Data, Department of Labor website and various current articles
- Online survey to the RI library community
- Focus and community group meetings
- Telephonic interviews with key stakeholders

Academic, public and school libraries are experiencing a shift in how they are perceived by their communities and society. They are no longer just places for books. Libraries of all types are community anchors, centers for academic life, research and cherished spaces. Major future trends for US public library services and demonstration of the library's value include:

- Change to the composition of library collections
- Support of economic and community development
- Being an educational hub for all ages
- Technology advances for the public and staff
- Community based activities
- Library staffing and advocacy of services offered

The state of Rhode Island consists of 39 cities and towns, located in 5 counties with a statewide population of just under 1.1 million. Population counts for those under the age of 19 are projected to decline over the next several years, while the number of people over the age of 65 is projected to increase. Rhode Island is continuing to recover from the economic recession that has affected the country during 2007 to 2010. The state has recovered about 93% of the jobs lost during the recession and anticipates a growth back up to the pre-recession level in the 500,000 job range by 2020. The changes in demographics, economy and technological changes will drive the demand and delivery of library service.

The online survey identified five most important services that are likely to be in demand for the next five years, as:

- Lending print books and magazines
- Providing services for children/teens
- Providing study or work group spaces

- Lending e-books and e-magazines
- Providing technology training

Current OLIS services that are of greater importance to the libraries are:

- Delivery Services
- Interlibrary Loan Clearinghouse
- Ask RI (statewide databases)
- Children and Young Adult Services
- Summer Reading

Online surveys and focus groups also identified a need for re-organization or renovation of space for small group meeting rooms/study spaces, computer and other technology labs, innovation labs, maker spaces, collaborative spaces and additional spaces for patrons to use their own technology.

Personal interviews identified President Trump's budget proposal for the 2018, which seeks to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as a significant concern, as this will affect funding and programs of RI libraries. Transformation of libraries into community learning centers offering technology and STEM education, reorganization of library space for community gathering and learning places for all Rhode Islanders are identified by interviewees as the future trend.

OLIS has very high approval ratings within the library community. The leadership and dedicated staff were identified as strengths during the focus group and personal interviews. Current Governor Gina Raimondo's top priority is to rebuild the middle class and create opportunity for everyone. The governor's key initiatives for 2017 include growing 21st Century businesses that attract high wage and skilled jobs, strengthening the educational system to support a skilled labor force, and creating a collaborative environment to attract more technology and research development based business. Academic, public, school and special libraries in RI are critical to implementing the governor's initiatives. OLIS needs to align its goals and strategies in leading the transformation of all RI libraries to support the Governor's initiatives and goals.

2. OLIS OVERVIEW

The Office of Library and Information Services supports and strengthens library and information services in Rhode Island to ensure that all residents will benefit from free and convenient access to library and information resources and services. OLIS serves public, school, academic, health, research and various other types of libraries. OLIS is responsible for administering state and federal funding and programs related to libraries. State funded programs include state library aid to municipalities, public library construction reimbursement, statewide reference resources and interlibrary delivery. Programs funded by a blend of state and federal funding include resource sharing, Talking Books Plus, summer reading, public library development, and partnerships with various other state agencies and library organizations. OLIS administers

library services to provide various adult and children programs, early literacy, continuing education for library staffs, delivery and interlibrary loan services, data collection and statistics, construction and physical space consultation, preservation, network services (Library of Rhode Island), and statewide reference resources (AskRI). Additionally, OLIS houses a professional collection of materials through the Frank Iacono Library and operates the library for the blind and physically handicapped through Talking Books Plus.

OLIS is empowered to cooperate with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to carry out all acts of Congress for the benefit of library and information services throughout the state of RI. IMLS requires OLIS to set strategic direction for the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds and state funds to meet statutory requirements and have the best possible outcomes. Specifically, this includes coordination and approval by the Library Board of RI (LBRI), for the development of a strategic plan for library development, interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing. The plan promotes continuous improvement for library services, facilitated access to resource sharing, promotion of education, enhancement of library staff skills, preservation of library collections, and sharing of information through state and national networks.

Currently OLIS provides $8.6 million in state aid for library services to all 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island under a formulaic approach in conjunction with local municipal tax revenues. The purpose of this funding is to support local library services and statewide resource sharing. In 2016 the Library Board of RI (LBRI) undertook a study to determine if there should be a change to how funds are distributed. This is in response to the belief that the current formula favors affluent communities and inadequately supports poorer communities. The study concluded that the best solution would be to reallocate a portion of funds based on population size. The goal is to provide additional funds to municipalities with high population while maintaining other municipalities at a level not less than that received in the previous year.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to provide OLIS with an environment scan to better understand the library landscape in RI. This report aims to help OLIS to address three critical areas and the information necessary to develop a strategic plan responsive to the changing needs of the state.

1. OLIS strength in supporting RI libraries.
2. OLIS weakness in supporting RI libraries.
3. Key opportunities for OLIS to lead RI libraries during next five years.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ESC consultants in collaboration with OLIS staff, Karen Mellor (Chief of Library Services) and Donna Longo DiMichele (Library Program Manager), identified the following techniques for data collection.

4.1 Literature Surveys

Technological changes during the last decade have greatly impacted the library landscape at the macro level. ESC consultants conducted an online survey to identify current trends and understand the changes to the library landscape.

4.2 Online Surveys

ESC consultants in collaboration with OLIS staff developed an online survey to gather primary data. The objectives of the survey were to evaluate the importance and effectiveness of current OLIS services and to obtain a better understanding of the future service needs of RI libraries so that OLIS may strategically plan how to best direct its resources and funding. The survey was sent out by OLIS to the entire library community.

4.3 Focus Groups

ESC consultants in collaboration with OLIS staff developed a series of questions used to gather primary data from library patrons. OLIS organized 4 focus groups and 2 community groups at various public libraries across RI to obtain feedback. Three focus groups consisted of representatives of different segments of the library community and one consisted of patrons of Talking Books Plus; the community group meetings were open to the entire library community. ESC consultants facilitated the discussions to gain a high-level understanding of the current and future service needs of libraries and Talking Books patrons, along with strengths, weakness and key opportunities for OLIS to lead RI libraries.

4.4 Telephonic Interviews

OLIS identified seven individuals who are known leaders in the RI library community. ESC consultants, in collaboration with OLIS staff, developed a series of questions, coordinated the interview schedule and conducted hour long telephone interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the current status of the library environment and to obtain input for what they see as the future vision for OLIS.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Macro Trends in the Library Landscape

The American Library Association's (ALA) State of America's Libraries Report 2015 identified academic, public and school libraries are experiencing a shift in how they are perceived by their communities and society. They are no longer just places for books; libraries of all types are community anchors, centers for academic life and research and cherished spaces.

David Lee King, Digital Services Director, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, identified three emerging technology trends that will start impacting libraries:

1. Library websites join the 21st century: This means libraries take ownership and constantly update their website contents and actively engage with their patrons through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat.
2. Maker spaces help re-"make" the library: Many libraries are starting to plan small maker spaces or are allowing patrons to check out digital creation tools such as microphones or video cameras. They are discovering a new customer base--people who don't necessarily like or need traditional library services but love to make things in an active and more social way.
3. The Internet of Things (IoT) will start impacting the library: IoT-related changes will begin to affect library services, both internally and externally. The IoT will bring changes to internal library infrastructure and functions. Aging back-end systems will be replaced by newer, "connected-to-the-web" systems. Externally, library patrons are becoming more accustomed to connecting to businesses and people via their smart phones.

Meredith Farkas, author and faculty librarian at Portland Community College identified five basic competencies for library personnel to be successful in the information age:

1. Ability to embrace change: Library patron populations are rapidly changing as are the technologies for serving them.
2. Comfort in the online medium: Librarians need to do so much online these days, way beyond basic catalog and database searching (which sure isn't easy either). Librarians have to be able to use search engines and use them well.
3. Ability to troubleshoot new technologies: Librarians should be able to play with the technologies in the library, to learn what problems commonly come up, and to fix them if necessary, because it is often our responsibility to fix them.
4. Ability to easily learn new technologies: People need to learn how to learn about new technologies without having to ask other people for help all the time.
5. Ability to keep up with new ideas in technology and librarianship: Keeping up with new technology is often not an explicitly listed part of library staff's basic weekly job duties, but it is important to function as a productive librarian.

A report by Nancy Bolt at the 2014 ALA Summit on the Future of Libraries identified seven major future trends in US public library service:

1. Change in the composition of library collections
2. Support of economic and community development
3. Educational hub for all ages
4. Technology advances for the public and staff
5. Community hub
6. Library staffing
7. Advocacy and the demonstration of the library's value

5.2 Political Changes

5.2.1 Federal Government

Republicans took control of the Presidency, the Senate and the House during 2017. The major news outlets CNN, USA Today, and the Washington Post all reported that President Trump's Budget Blueprint for the year 2018 proposed to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Launched 20 years ago under President Bill Clinton, this agency is the main federal funder of libraries and museums across the United States. It had a budget of $230 million for the year 2017. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) targeted it for elimination before, arguing museums and libraries should be funded by the private sector. If the 2018 budget passes as proposed by the current administration it will have a significant impact on the operations of public libraries across America.

5.2.3 State Government – Rhode Island

On January 6, 2015, Gina M. Raimondo, a Democrat, became the 75th Governor of Rhode Island and the state's first female governor. Governor Raimondo's top priority is to rebuild the middle class and create opportunity for everyone.[1] Rhode Island's economy continued to make progress and the economy created 5,800 jobs last year. The unemployment rate fell to its lowest point since the beginning of the Great Recession. Economic progress continues in large part due to the programs and initiatives set in motion in previous budgets. However, more work needs to be done in order to create and support economic growth that can benefit our cities and towns, businesses and families. The State must continue to make smart investments, not just in its economic programs, but in Rhode Islanders. That means continued focus on increasing accessibility to education, attracting high-paying jobs and building a better quality of life for residents.[2] Governor Raimondo's FY 2018 Budget focuses on building on the current momentum and creating a better Rhode Island for working families and businesses.[3]

Governor Gina Raimondo has several key initiatives for 2017. These include:

1. Growing 21st Century businesses that attract high wage and skilled jobs
2. Strengthening the educational system to support a skilled labor force
3. Creating a collaborative environment to attract more technology and research development based business
4. Creating tax incentives to attract business to RI
5. Implementing construction efforts to fix and repair the infrastructure, including projects for schools, roads, bridges and creating energy efficiency
6. Initiatives to keep people healthy

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[1] Rhode Island, Office of the Governor, http://www.governor.ri.gov/about/governor.php
[2] Rhode Island, Office of Management and Budget, http://www.omb.ri.gov/budget/prioryear/operating/2018.php
[3] Rhode Island, Office of Management and Budget, http://www.omb.ri.gov/budget/prioryear/operating/2018.php

5.3 Rhode Island Demographics

Populations in Rhode Island range from rural towns consisting of 1,000 people to large cities consisting of over 100,000 people; and 25% of public libraries serve communities of less than 10,000 people while 12% serve communities of over 50,000; 40% of libraries serve communities between 10,000 and 25,000 people. Median household income is just under $60,000 and the median age is 40. Approximately 14% of the total population lives below the poverty line, compared to the national average of 13%. Most recently available population statistics from 2015 and 2016 show there are 1.1 million people living in RI. They are represented as 81% White, 12% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Some Other Race, 5% Black/African American, 3% two or more races, 2% Asian, less than 1% each for American Indian, three or more races and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The largest ethnicities are White, followed by Hispanic and Black. Gender is fairly even at approximately 52% female and 48% male. Data comparisons obtained by the US Census Bureau for RI, measuring population trends over a 5 year period, from April 2010 to July 2015, show following changes:

- Numbers of children under the age of five have decreased from 5.5% to 5.2%
- People under the age of 18 have decreased from 21.3% to 20%.
- People over the age of 65 have increased from 14.4% to 16.1% of the population.

Projections from the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program, as of April 2013, project slow growth through 2020, slightly higher rates through 2030, before slowing down again due to aging population trends.   In 2015 the RI population was 1.047 million and of that approximately 24% were under the age of 19, with 16% over the age of 65. Projections for 2020 included a population of 1.049 million with 23% under age 19 and 18% over age 65. Projections for 2025 include population of 1.061 million with 22% under age 19 and 21% over age 65. There are approximately 66,000 veterans and 13% foreign born people. Owner occupied housing unit rates are 60% with a median value of 238,000. There are 411,000 households with approximately 3 people in each.

Language other than English for people age 5 and up from 2011-2015 is measured at 21.4%. Approximately 79% of the population of RI speaks English, with 11% that speak Spanish, 7.2% speak Indo-European, 2.1% speak Asian/Pacific Island languages and less than 1% speak other languages.

Education levels consist of 86% of people age 25 years and older who have a high school degree or higher for the period measured, 2011-2015, and 32% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Information obtained from Info Works, Rhode Island Education Data Reporting, put the percentage of students graduating high school for 2015-2016 at 85.3% within 4 years and slightly higher at 86.6% for those able to graduate after 5 years of attending high school. The high school dropout rate is 8.3% and 1.6% .receive a high school equivalency degree. Approximately 66% of the total RI population, aged 16+, are employed in the civilian labor force, with average weekly wage of $949, compared to US average weekly wage of $989. For Providence County, the average weekly wage is slightly higher at $993. For the remaining counties, the average weekly wage differs at $793 for Bristol, $858 for Kent, $910 Newport and $831 for Washington counties.

Rhode Island is continuing to recover from the economic recession that affected the country during 2007-2010. Prior to that period, RI had approximately 500,000 jobs on record. Unemployment is steadily being reduced and the economy is expected to grow slowly over the next several years and into 2020. In February 2017 the RI unemployment rate was recorded at 4.5%, and ranked as one of 10 states that were slightly lower than average. This compared to most other states that were in the 5-7% unemployment range. The state has recovered about 93% of the nearly 40,000 jobs lost during the recession and anticipates a growth back up to the 500,000 job range as it gets closer to 2020. Although population numbers have remained consistent over the years, the number of aging people has increased. There is some argument as to the accuracy of the jobs statistics, as noted by the RI Freedom & Prosperity Center's January Jobs & Opportunity Index (JOI) which suggests that if the number of people in the labor force increased at the national average, then the unemployment rate might be as high as 12.4%.

The RI Gross Domestic Product is expected to grow by 1.7% over the next few years which is lower than the 2.3% national average. RI has experienced problems since the late 1990s in creating an economic environment that encourages and retains new business. Sources of future job growth are anticipated to come from the leisure and hospitality industries, business and other professional services, education and health services. Over the last several years, RI has experienced a lag in manufacturing, government and construction jobs.

5.4 Rhode Island Library Landscape

There are over 600 libraries in RI. OLIS services are available to all libraries, but are used primarily by the 48 public, 12 academic, 6 hospital, 106 school and 6 special libraries that are members of the Library of Rhode Island (LORI) network. The special libraries include the Providence Athenaeum Library, Redwood Library and Athenaeum, RI Historical Library, RI Law Library, RI State Library and the RI Department of Attorney General Library. There are three library consortia in RI: all public libraries are members of the Ocean State Libraries consortium; slightly over half of the academic libraries belong to the HELIN consortium; and 177 school libraries belong to RILINK. Additionally, there are more than a dozen other library organizations serving a variety educational, health, research, literacy, professional, and diversity and advocacy interests. The University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies is the only public university masters program in New England; it plays a critical role in training librarians in Rhode Island and throughout New England.

OLIS has the statutory authority and responsibility to administer state and federal funding and to develop and coordinate statewide programs to meet the needs for library and information services in the state. LORI is the OLIS-administered library network that brings together the resources and services of libraries across the state, connecting different types of libraries and providing access to their collections for all Rhode Islanders. OLIS is advised by the 15 member Library Board of Rhode Island; its members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and represent different groups of library users and various types of libraries.

5.5 Online Survey Results

ESC received 133 responses to the online survey and about 56% of the respondents were from public libraries, followed by 20% from academic libraries , 17% from school libraries, 2% from membership, 2% from government, less than 1% health science and 3% from others. The other category consisted of board members, consortium and other higher academic departments. Those responding included 16% reference specialists, 15% school librarians, 13% executive directors, 12% youth services, 7% technical specialists, 6% assistant directors, 5% digital services, 4% each for access and adult services, 3% trustees, less than 1% each for archives and outreach respondents and 13% other. The other categories of respondents are from a variety of resource personnel. Population service size of survey respondents varied, with 43% in the under 10,000 category. This included a response to that category of 56 survey takers out of 130. Population size was 17.7% or 23 out of 130 respondents for 10,000-19,999 sized community. For the 20,000-49,999 sized communities, 19.2% of the respondents, or 25 out of 130. For those responding they represented the over 50,000 population group was represented by 26 out of 130 respondents, or 20%.

About 84% of responses received rated library services offered that will continue to be important over the next five years. The respondents rated services as very important or somewhat important during the next five years. Of the very important services, rating value is as follows:

1. Lend print books and magazines   91%
2. Provide services for children/teens   86%
3. Provide study or work group spaces   83%
4. Lend e-books and e-magazines   75%
5. Provide technology training   73%
6. Provide services for adults   69%
7. Provide technology space   67%
8. Provide services for seniors   64%
9. Provide access to historical documents/artifacts   59%
10. Lend CDs, DVDs (music, videos)   54%
11. Provide services for veterans   52%
12. Provide assistance with job applications/resumes 51%
13. Lend technology (tablets, streaming)   48%
14. Provide services for immigrants, refugees   47%
15. Provide access to streaming services   44%
16. Provide adult literacy/education   43%
17. Provide meeting space for local/small business 35%
18. Space for art, community exhibits   37%
19. Assistance with filing government documents   37%
20. Lending materials (instruments, games, videos) 35%

The above survey results will help OLIS to plan for future services and allocate resources.

Only 60 respondents (45%) responded to the question: what trends in library and information services do you think will have the most impact on libraries over the next five years. The key words to represent the trends are technology, education, community, digital and space.

To the question is the library space adequate to meet the community's needs over the next 5 years, the response is divided equally to yes and no. To the follow up question, what changes in your library's physical space might be needed or are being planned in the next 5 years about 54% of the respondents answered that reorganization of current space (involves little or no construction beyond cosmetic updates) and about 35% answered renovation of or addition to a current library facility will meet the need. To the follow-up question of primary reasons for the re-organization or renovations of the space the respondents identified the purposes:

1. Small group meeting rooms/study spaces
2. Computer and other technology labs, innovation lab, maker space
3. Collaborative space
4. Additional space for patrons to use their own technology

Most of the respondents are very aware of the services the library provides and believe that their library will have adequate funding to execute its program of service over the next five years. Budget cuts and digital divide are the primary concern over the next 5 years. OLIS should monitor the Federal 2018 budget closely and work with elected officials to preserve federal funding for libraries.

Only 26% of the respondents answered the question related to the gaps in training and technology was identified as key word. About 46% responded to the questions related to the challenges facing their community and the key words representing the challenges were budget, funding and technology.

Among current OLIS services, the following services are of greater importance to the libraries. The top five highest rated and corresponding values are as follows:

1. Delivery Services   73%
2. Interlibrary Loan Clearinghouse   52%
3. AskRI (statewide databases)   49%
4. Children and Young Adult Services   46%
5. Summer Reading   44%

Most of the respondents believe that OLIS staff are helpful and responsive when their library needs assistance. They are knowledgeable and provide valuable assistance to the needs of the statewide library community.

5.6 OLIS Strengths

The key strengths mentioned during the telephonic interviews and the focus groups are:

1. Current leadership at OLIS
2. Experienced and dedicated staff – if they can help they always do
3. Resource sharing and providing educational resources
4. Building connections within the library communities

OLIS has very high approval ratings within the users and OLIS may be able to use this goodwill to lead the changes in the library system to meet the needs of the community in future with ease.

5.7 OLIS Weaknesses

The responses to these questions were varied and ESC believes that most were related to the OLIS services as detailed below:

1. OLIS can do a better job in creating public presence - create awareness of library services, market the library services
2. Need to update the website and use social media to communicate both to the library community and the residents of RI
3. OLIS is weak in building connections between school, public and academic libraries

Communication is a common theme and OLIS updating their web content and make it easy to use for the general public is one of the quickest ways to solve the weakness.

5.8 Major Trends, Challenges, Opportunities Impacting Libraries in the RI Community

The focus groups and interviews with experts within the RI community identified the following trends and challenges impacting RI community:

Federal budget eliminating IMLS is the most mentioned concern during the focus groups and telephonic interviews. The macro trends identified during the literature survey was libraries adapting to the 21st century technology because all the studies were conducted prior to the Presidential elections.

1. Transformation of libraries into community learning centers for technology and STEM education – this is in line with the macro trend at the national level and RI Governor's priority to prepare RI skill sets to meet the 21st century business needs.

2. Libraries to transform as a welcoming place to everyone regardless of their age, immigration status – this is unique because of the increase in immigrants and aging populations in RI during the last few years and this trend is likely to continue based on RI demographics studies for the next decade.

3. Need for print resources especially newspapers and magazines are likely to reduce and libraries will have fewer inventories of printed books. Libraries need to adapt to

technology platform changes – DVD, MP3 players will be replaced by live streaming and smart devices.

4. Libraries are likely to transform into community gathering and learning places and it will impact future training needs of library staff.

5. Other key findings include the use of technology, redesign of library space; proactive grass roots advocacy for libraries, professional training to library staff and fostering diversity in libraries.

5.9 Key Opportunities for OLIS to lead the Transformation

OLIS has a visionary leader and have dedicated staff in place to lead the transformation. They will need additional resources in terms of staff and funding to lead the transformation. The key opportunities are:

1. Advocate for all libraries and foster collaboration across academic, school, public and special libraries.

2. Make the OLIS website more user friendly to all, embrace social media for communication and be the voice for all libraries at the state.

3. Guide libraries to implement best practices, provide leadership in the transformation, share successful ideas, programs within all libraries and explore public/private partnerships.

5.10 OLIS Role in Diversity in Libraries

The demographic studies have identified that the number of minorities in RI will increase during the next decade. OLIS needs to act proactively to meet the diversity needs of the RI community and some of the following recommendations identified through interviews are outside the purview of OLIS. The recommendations received during individual interviews and raised during several focus/community meetings are:

1. Create paid summer library internships for high school students of color and minority. Working in libraries may create interest in a library career as one of their career choices.

2. Actively recruit minorities to all open positions and provide diversity training to current staff.

3. Work with URI's library school to recruit minorities to open positions.

4. Create graduate scholarships at URI's library school for minority students through state funding and public/private partnerships.

5.11 Talking Books Plus Program

The Talking Books Plus program provides access to library materials for people with visual and physical disabilities who are unable to read traditional print materials. The program serves veterans, students with reading disabilities and especially older Rhode Islanders who have lost their vision later in life. Talking Books Plus is part of the Library of Congress National Library Service, which provides digital audio books (books, magazines), playback equipment and Braille materials. OLIS contracts with the Perkins Institute Library in Watertown MA, to provide storage, management and shipping of physical materials and equipment, while OLIS staff enrolls and provides direct services to TBP patrons. Being able to provide access to information which is up to date and can be quickly downloaded is critical to the success of TBP. Traditional libraries tend to not be as user friendly to many people with disabilities, especially those with no or low vision, as they are not set up to accommodate them. Overall physical design of most libraries does not adequately serve physically challenged people. Time and money is needed for training of special equipment such as user friendly computers. Many disabled need to pay for driving services which may prohibit them from being able to get to the library. Better coordination of social services would alleviate this to some degree. Streaming services such as Amazon Echo and Google Home compete with libraries as they are available for a fee but accessible from home. There are also time lags with deliveries of material, which are shipped from the Perkins Library in MA. If RI offered a similar program, lag times might be shortened. Offering programs which could get disabled people to social events would help integrate them into the community.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Changes in the political landscape at the federal level are likely to be the most important factor that will affect how OLIS will function in the coming years. OLIS needs to monitor the current political developments in developing their five year strategic plan. OLIS needs to plan for contingencies as federal funding contribution is significant in the services and programs that OLIS provides to libraries across RI.

Governor Gina Raimondo's top priority is to rebuild the middle class and create opportunity for everyone. That means continued focus on increasing access to education, attracting high-paying jobs and building a better quality of life for all Rhode Islanders. The Governor has several key initiatives for 2017. These include:

1. Growing 21st Century businesses that attract high wage and skilled jobs.
2. Strengthening the educational system to support a skilled labor force.
3. Creating a collaborative environment to attract more technology and research development based business.
4. Implementing construction efforts to fix and repair the infrastructure, including projects for schools, roads, and bridges and creating energy efficiency.

The online survey, focus groups and interviews with experts within the RI community identified leadership at OLIS, experienced and dedicated staff, expertise in resource sharing, providing educational resources, and building connections within the library community as key strengths.

OLIS has very high approval ratings within the user community and OLIS needs to align their strategic goals with the Governor's priorities and key initiatives to meet the needs of Rhode Islanders and to lead the changes in the library system.

Our research identified the following areas for OLIS to focus on with their strategic plan and to meet the Governor's key initiatives, address IMLS priorities, and fulfill OLIS' statutory mandates:

1. Broaden and expand technology support to assist with digital era technology changes and privacy of information issues. Important offerings should include providing a communication platform to support collaboration; and providing a central database, so that libraries can communicate with other organizations. Library trends and services having the most impact over the next 5 years include evolving technology and digital literacy, digital publications and competition of various streaming services, instruction, public access and space for these services. School libraries are being asked to help students with multimedia productions and need equipment and space to provide this. Staff needs training with technology so they can be effective educators. There seems to be some differences between digital services that are available within urban libraries as opposed to rural communities. Opportunities to streamline this, sharing of resources and common databases would alleviate this.

2. Provide more training in business strategy planning and statistics to support librarians expanding roles. Skills such as writing a strategic plan, calculation return on investment and statistical analysis, are now incorporated into the librarians' job and training is needed. Time is an issue for most people so increased usage of online and webinar programs would be helpful. Continue to support an education system so that librarians can keep up with job skills and professional enhancement. Solicit feedback on needed training. Librarians need to be able to keep up with best practices, human resource issues like employment law and OSHA along with overall business knowledge including customer services, statistical analysis and grant writing. Refresher courses in procedures for circulation, cataloging and delivery, technology, programming challenges and keeping up with new issues is important.

3. The interlibrary loan program is a challenge due to delivery turnaround times, but expansion of ILL programs between various types of libraries and on an interstate basis would allow a wider availability of resource, information and services.

4. Space and the usage of that space are evolving. Space for community events, programming, performances, exhibits, small businesses, technology and study space are needed and budget should allow for these construction transitions.

5. Help is needed with public relations and advertising so that libraries can continue to reach the community. Training is needed for community outreach, advocacy and public relations so librarians can more effectively reach out to their local communities and be in position to work with a wider variety of state and local agencies.

6. Materials and training for Spanish and other non-English language speakers is important. Asian languages are becoming more widespread as this population continues to rise in RI.

7. Services offered outside of the traditional library, including outreach to the community, mobile collections, wi-fi services at community events, resource sharing and interlibrary delivery, scanning services and providing local history collections are needed.

8. Services requested by Talking Books Plus include lending of e-reader, e-books and read aloud materials; and being able to provide the public with project materials and materials to aid the disabled.

9. Provide more project based activities that offer opportunities for the community to convene, stay current and have access to materials they might not have available, are requested library offerings.

10. Provide community based programs so people can have human interaction, providing safe spaces, access to wider social services within the community, educational services and the overall role of libraries serving the public has increased, with more widespread needs than libraries have traditionally offered. Mobil services are needed for home schooled people, senior housing, disabled and those who cannot get out, and the incarcerated. There is an increased need for education to help people learn new skills, tutoring for students and classes to help people keep current with technology changes. There is a need for some tutoring databases similar to tutor.com and STEAM based programs.

11. Cultural and demographic trends, including an aging population and increases to numbers of immigrants, present literacy/second language challenges, and issues with people being able to get to libraries. There is increased need for economic and educational programs to address job search and assistance with becoming job ready. There is an increased need for services to accommodate diverse cultures. Diversity issues need to be addressed by libraries in terms of hiring and attracting staff who can relate to a wider degree of people. Attracting, hiring and retaining library staff that are diverse and can serve a greater array of cultures and disabilities is seen as important. Training is needed for community outreach, advocacy and public relations so librarians can more effectively reach out to their local communities and be in position to work with a wider variety of state and local agencies.

12. Key organizations for OLIS to work and build connectors with are the Departments of Labor & Training, Education, and Health, along with Coalition of Library Advocates (COLA), Rhode Island Library Association (RILA), and national library organizations such as American Library Association (ALA), Special Libraries Association (SLA), and state organizations such as Massachusetts Library Association (MLA). Also of importance are the relationships with other government and non-government agencies for funding, grants, and services that can support all library types.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Survey Questions

To prepare a new strategic plan, the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) is gathering information from the state's library community. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the importance and effectiveness of current OLIS services and to obtain a better understanding of the future service needs of RI libraries so that OLIS may strategically plan how to best direct its resources and funding. Your answers will help OLIS assess what areas of library service we can provide that will be most impactful over the next five years.

Your responses to the survey will be anonymous. However, if you wish to share your name and/or the name of your library, you will have the option to do so at the end of the survey.

Thank you for your thoughtful and honest responses to the following questions.

Demographic Information

1. What type of library do you represent? (select one)
   Academic
   Hospital/Health Science
   Membership
   Public
   School
   State or federal government
   Other Special _____

2. What is your role in the library? (select the one response that best represents your primary role)

   Access Services
   Adult Services
   Archives/Special Collections
   Assistant Director/Manager/Branch Head
   Digital Services/Technical Services
   Director/Dean/Executive Director
   Outreach/Community Engagement
   Reference/Information Services/Subject Specialist
   School Librarian/School Media Specialist/Library Teacher
   Technical Services/Cataloging/Metadata
   Youth Services
   Trustee
   Other _____

3. What is the population size of your community/school district/college campus? Note to ESC: allow only one answer

   Under 10,000
   10,000-19,999

20,000-49,999
50,000 and over

Information Access, Services and Trends

4. How important will it be to provide the following services at your library over the next five years?

    Lend print books and magazines
    Lend e-books and e-magazines
    Lend CDs, DVDs (music, videos)
    Lend technology (tablets, mobile hot spots, streaming tools such as Roku, etc.)
    Lend other materials (video games, musical instruments, baking implements, tools, etc.)
    Lend/provide access through streaming services (music, video, etc.)
    Provide access to historical documents and artifacts
    Provide assistance with job applications, resume preparation, job searches
    Provide assistance with filing government documents/applications (e.g., Social Security, unemployment)
    Provide services for children and teens
    Provide services for adults
    Provide services for seniors
    Provide services for immigrants/refugees
    Provide services for veterans
    Provide support for adult literacy and adult education (ESL, GED, etc.)
    Provide technology training (classes or one-to-one)
    Provide technology space and/or technology labs
    Provide study or group work spaces
    Provide space for art and other community exhibits
    Provide meeting and training space for local and small businesses and non-profits

5. List any additional services you would like to provide to your community in the next 5 years.

6. What trends in library and information services do you think will have the most impact on libraries over the next five years?

Library Physical Space

7. Do you feel your library space is adequate to meet the community's needs over the next 5 years?
    Yes / No / Unsure

8. What changes in your library's physical space might be needed or are being planned in the next 5 years: (Select all that apply.)

    Reorganization of current space (involves little or no construction beyond cosmetic updates)
    Renovation of or addition to a current library facility
    New building construction
    Securing a satellite location in a non-library facility (e.g., using a community center)
    No changes anticipated
    Not sure
    Already in the process of altering our space/building a new facility!

9. If you indicated above that you anticipate change in space needs, what would be the primary purpose for those changes? (Select all that apply.)

   Community program space
   Small group meeting rooms/study spaces
   Computer and other technology labs, innovation lab, maker space
   Training space
   Collaborative space
   Additional space for library collections
   Additional space for patrons to use their own technology
   Overall upgrade/update of facility
   Other _____

Your Library and Community

10. Please respond to the following statements by indicating your level of agreement:

    a. Overall, my community is very aware of the services the library provides.
    b. My library's staff is qualified and trained to meet the current needs of the community we serve.
    c. My library will have adequate funding to execute its program of service over the next five years.
    d. My library is currently or will be looking for new sources of revenue to fund library services in the next five years.

11. Can you identify gaps in training at your library that could be bridged by OLIS or other library organizations?

12. What are the biggest challenges or the most pressing issues you see facing your community over the next 5 years?

13. Please describe any substantial demographic changes occurring within your community regarding age, employment, income level, and ethnicity.

OLIS Services

14. Please rate the importance of the following OLIS services to your library currently.

    a. Adult Services
    b. AskRI (statewide databases)
    c. Children's and Young Adult Services
    d. Continuing Education
    e. Data Collection and Statistics
    f. Delivery Services
    g. Disaster and Preservation Planning
    h. Erate
    i. FirstSearch
    j. General Consultant/Advisory Services
    k. Interlibrary Loan Clearinghouse
    l. Library Construction Consultation Services
    m. OLIS Website, Blogs and Social Media

   n. Reference Services/OLIS Library
   o. Summer Reading Program
   p. Talking Books Plus (Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped)

15. Please describe areas where OLIS can improve on the current services it provides.

16. What other services could OLIS provide in the future to further strengthen your library and statewide library services?

17. Please assess how OLIS is serving your library and the library community by indicating your level of agreement with the following statements:

   a. OLIS staff are helpful and responsive when my library needs assistance.
   b. OLIS staff are knowledgeable and provide valuable assistance to my library.
   c. OLIS has adequate staff to execute its mission and support its services.
   d. OLIS is responsive to the needs of the statewide library community.
   e. OLIS priorities reflect the current needs of the statewide library community.
   f. OLIS demonstrates leadership in areas critical to the library community.

18. Please provide comments on any of the above statements that may help OLIS better serve libraries.

19. Are there other agencies or services in the state or nationally that OLIS could build connectors to for the benefit of the library community? Please list examples or service areas/tools that would be useful to libraries.

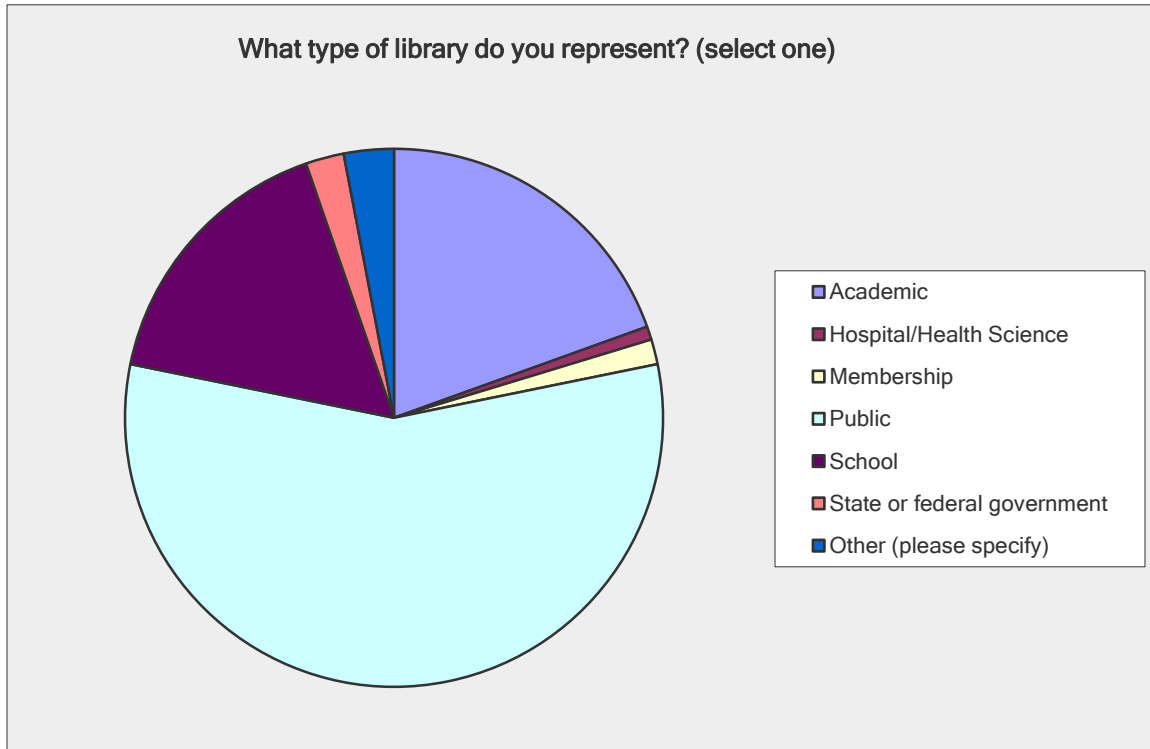20. Please share any final thoughts you may have.

Optional: your name_____
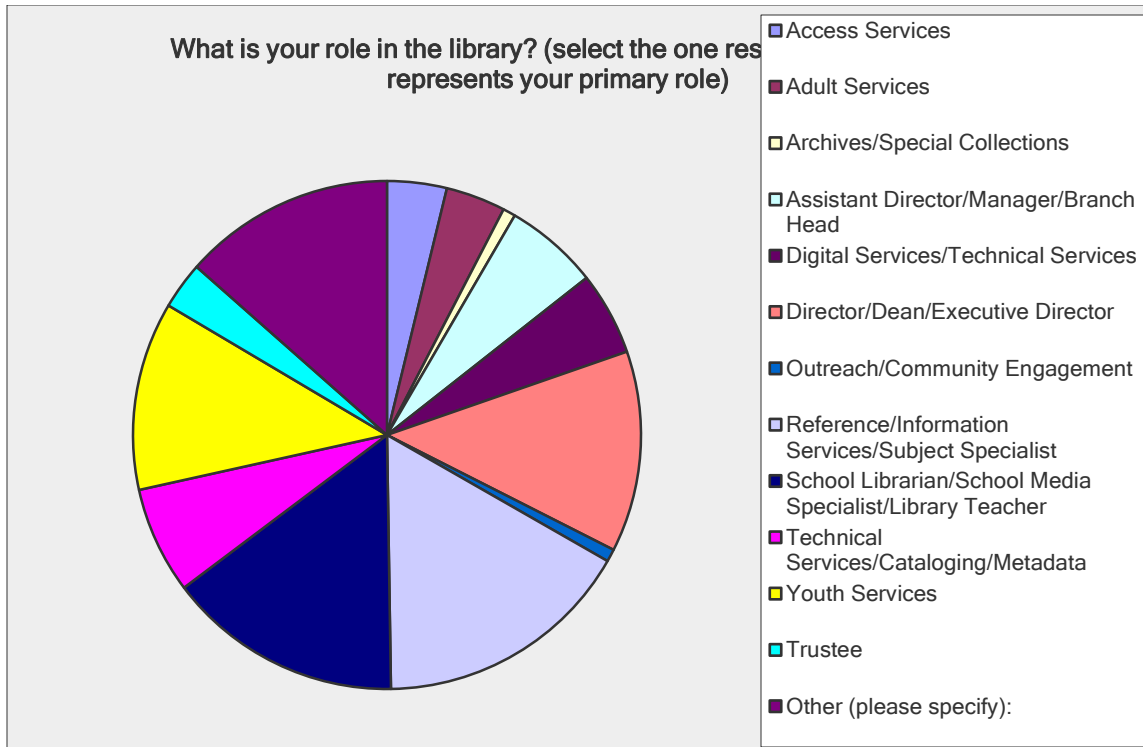
Optional: name of your library_____

Appendix 2

Survey Results

Full survey results are available on the OLIS website at
http://www.olis.ri.gov/aboutus/plan2018/

What type of library do you represent? (select one)

Legend:
- Academic
- Hospital/Health Science
- Membership
- Public
- School
- State or federal government
- Other (please specify)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Academic	19.5%	26
Hospital/Health Science	0.8%	1
Membership	1.5%	2
Public	56.4%	75
School	16.5%	22
State or federal government	2.3%	3
Other (please specify)	3.0%	4
answered question		133

What is your role in the library? (select the one response that best represents your primary role)

Legend:
- Access Services
- Adult Services
- Archives/Special Collections
- Assistant Director/Manager/Branch Head
- Digital Services/Technical Services
- Director/Dean/Executive Director
- Outreach/Community Engagement
- Reference/Information Services/Subject Specialist
- School Librarian/School Media Specialist/Library Teacher
- Technical Services/Cataloging/Metadata
- Youth Services
- Trustee
- Other (please specify):

| What is your role in the library? (select the one response that best represents your primary role)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Access Services	3.8%	5
Adult Services	3.8%	5
Archives/Special Collections	0.8%	1
Assistant Director/Manager/Branch Head	6.0%	8
Digital Services/Technical Services	5.3%	7
Director/Dean/Executive Director	12.8%	17
Outreach/Community Engagement	0.8%	1
Reference/Information Services/Subject Specialist	16.5%	22
School Librarian/School Media Specialist/Library Teacher	15.0%	20
Technical Services/Cataloging/Metadata	6.8%	9
Youth Services	12.0%	16
Trustee	3.0%	4
Other (please specify):	13.5%	18
answered question		133

What is the population size of your community/school district/college campus
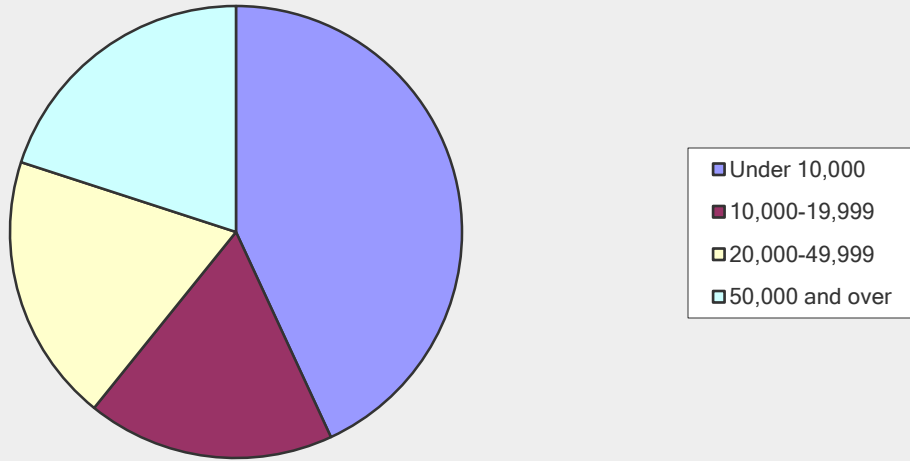
| What is the population size of your community/school district/college campus		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 10,000	43.1%	56
10,000-19,999	17.7%	23
20,000-49,999	19.2%	25
50,000 and over	20.0%	26
answered question		130
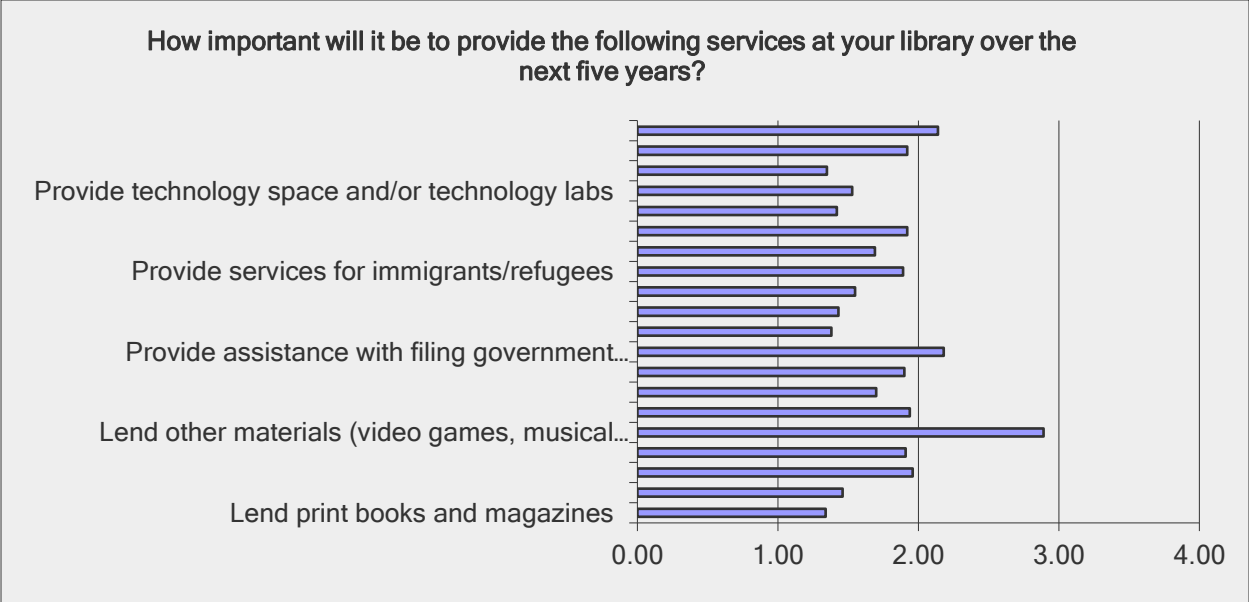
How important will it be to provide the following services at your library over the next five years?

How important will it be to provide the following services at your library over the next five years?								
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Lend print books and magazines	91	17	3	3	2	0	1.34	116
Lend e-books and e-magazines	75	31	5	4	0	0	1.46	115
Lend CDs, DVDs (music, videos)	54	33	10	8	8	3	1.96	116
Lend technology (tablets, mobile hot spots, streaming tools such as Roku, etc.)	48	38	16	5	4	3	1.91	114
Lend other materials (video games, musical instruments, baking implements, tools, etc.)	12	31	29	12	16	15	2.89	115
Lend/provide access through streaming services (music, video, etc.)	44	41	15	5	4	4	1.94	113
Provide access to historical documents and artifacts	59	28	15	3	2	7	1.70	114
Provide assistance with	51	23	6	6	8	20	1.90	114

|								
job applications, resume preparation, job searches								
Provide assistance with filing government documents/applications (e.g., Social Security, unemployment)	37	22	13	5	10	27	2.18	114
Provide services for children and teens	86	3	5	3	4	13	1.38	114
Provide services for adults	69	18	6	1	2	16	1.43	112
Provide services for seniors	64	11	9	0	5	25	1.55	114
Provide services for immigrants/refugees	47	23	12	5	5	22	1.89	114
Provide services for veterans	52	23	10	1	4	23	1.69	113
Provide support for adult literacy and adult education (ESL, GED, etc.)	43	23	7	7	5	29	1.92	114
Provide technology training (classes or one-to-one)	73	25	6	1	1	8	1.42	114
Provide technology space and/or technology labs	67	33	9	0	2	3	1.53	114
Provide study or group work spaces	83	19	8	0	1	1	1.35	112
Provide space for art and other community exhibits	37	50	14	4	2	6	1.92	113
Provide meeting and training space for local and small businesses and non-profits	35	27	12	7	7	26	2.14	114
							answered question	**116**

Do you feel your library space is adequate to meet the community's needs over the next 5 years?
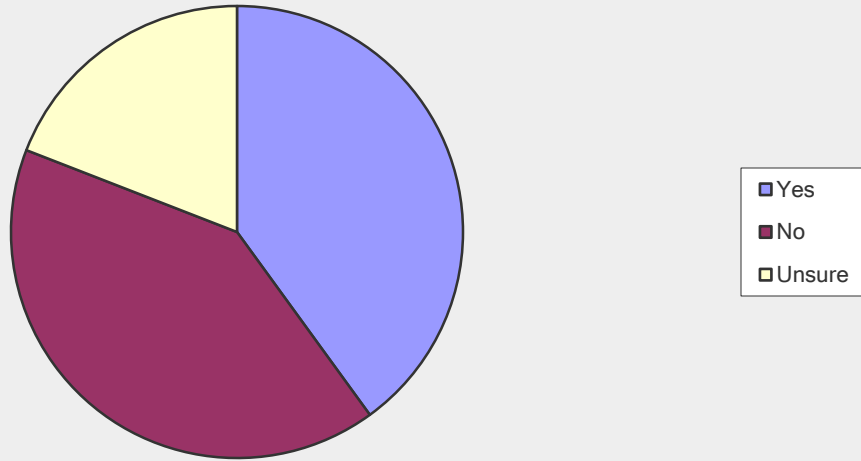
Do you feel your library space is adequate to meet the community's needs over the next 5 years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	44
No	40.9%	45
Unsure	19.1%	21
answered question		110
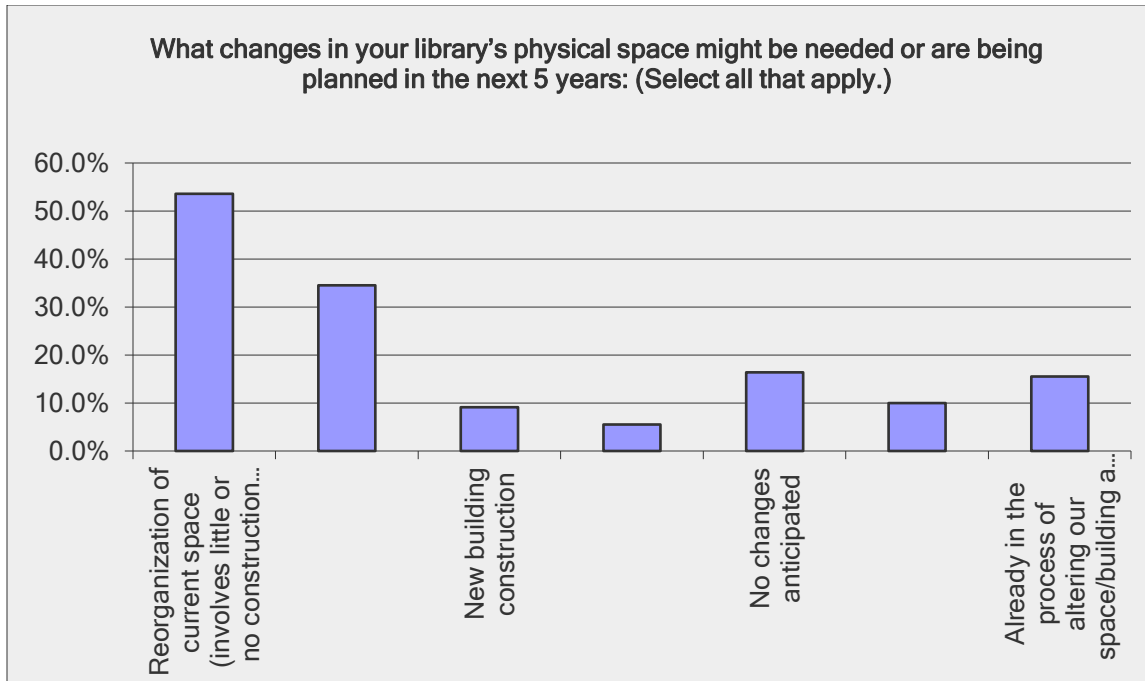
What changes in your library's physical space might be needed or are being planned in the next 5 years: (Select all that apply.)

What changes in your library's physical space might be needed or are being planned in the next 5 years: (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Reorganization of current space (involves little or no construction beyond cosmetic updates)	53.6%	59
Renovation of or addition to a current library facility	34.5%	38
New building construction	9.1%	10
Securing a satellite location in a non-library facility (e.g., using a community center)	5.5%	6
No changes anticipated	16.4%	18
Not sure	10.0%	11
Already in the process of altering our space/building a new facility!	15.5%	17
answered question		110
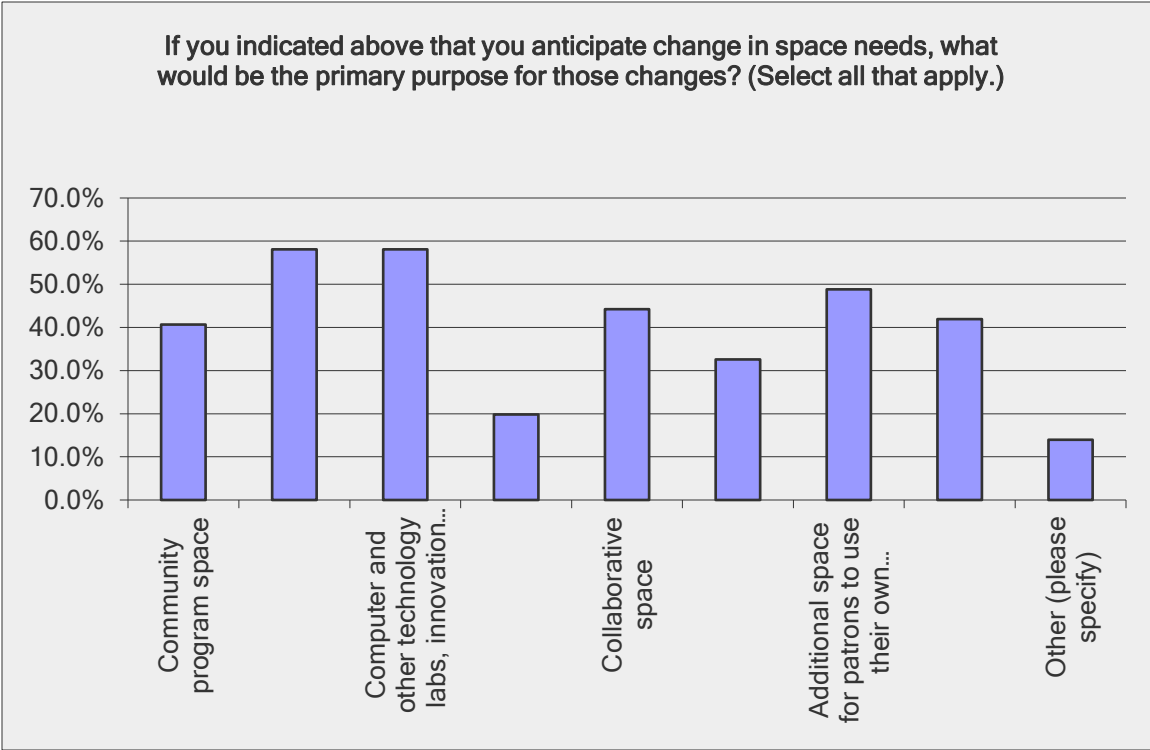
If you indicated above that you anticipate change in space needs, what would be the primary purpose for those changes? (Select all that apply.)

| If you indicated above that you anticipate change in space needs, what would be the primary purpose for those changes? (Select all that apply.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Community program space	40.7%	35
Small group meeting rooms/study spaces	58.1%	50
Computer and other technology labs, innovation lab, maker space	58.1%	50
Training space	19.8%	17
Collaborative space	44.2%	38
Additional space for library collections	32.6%	28
Additional space for patrons to use their own technology	48.8%	42
Overall upgrade/update of facility	41.9%	36
Other (please specify)	14.0%	12
answered question		86

Please respond to the following statements by indicating your level of agreement:
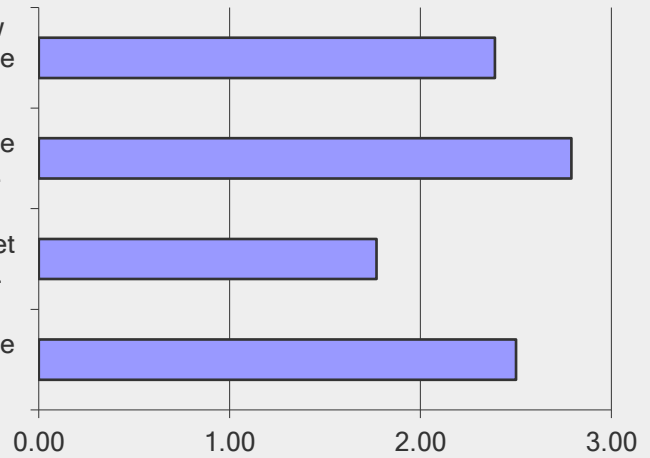
Please respond to the following statements by indicating your level of agreement:								
Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Overall, my community is very aware of the services the library provides.	10	51	24	14	3	0	2.50	102
My library's staff is qualified and trained to meet the current needs of the community we serve.	38	51	9	3	0	1	1.77	102
My library will have adequate funding to execute its program of service over the next five years.	9	37	28	22	6	0	2.79	102
My library is currently or will be looking for new sources of revenue to fund library services in the next five years.	23	25	36	9	2	6	2.39	101
						answered question		102
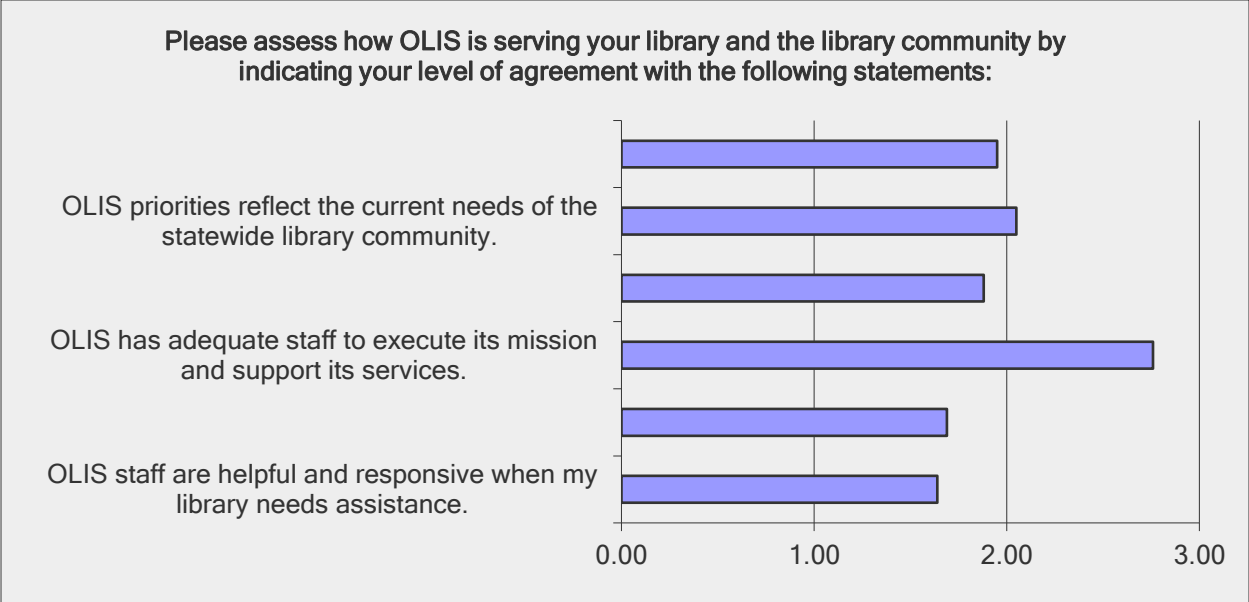
Please assess how OLIS is serving your library and the library community by indicating your level of agreement with the following statements:

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
OLIS staff are helpful and responsive when my library needs assistance.	41	31	7	1	1	5	1.64	86
OLIS staff are knowledgeable and provide valuable assistance to my library.	40	28	10	1	1	5	1.69	85
OLIS has adequate staff to execute its mission and support its services.	9	20	36	11	4	6	2.76	86
OLIS is responsive to the needs of the statewide library community.	32	31	15	2	1	4	1.88	85
OLIS priorities reflect the current needs of the statewide library community.	24	35	17	4	1	4	2.05	85
OLIS demonstrates leadership in areas critical to the library community.	28	33	16	1	2	3	1.95	83
						answered question		86

Appendix 3.
Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services Focus Groups

1. What trends do you see happening now in your community, the state and the nation that may impact libraries?
- Politics – Fed, State and Local Budget cut for Libraries
- Move towards Digitization & Streaming, decrease in print & DVD circulations
- Digital divide between communities (Urban vs. Rural)
- Need for public fund raising to meet the budget short fall
- Creating Public awareness for library
- Increased traffic - interest groups, immigrates for IT resources
- Education - providing learning opportunities to learn new skills - digital learning, accessing health programs; historically they wanted information, now they are seeking skills; asking for reading, math, tutors for children (state eliminated tutor.com); hand-holding with technology; digital literacy in all ages - how to use their phone, taxes, applying unemployment, on line job searches);
- community gathering place; meeting space, space for home-schoolers;
- mobile services - to senior housing, incarcerated people, shut-ins
- for some circulation, computer use, and attendance going down but doesn't feel like there are fewer people (maybe due to self service?); some people stay all day (homeless, wifi; seeking human connection);
- demographics - trying to attract millennials 25-45 - get children and elderly, grandparents as caregivers
- people participate in programs (e.g. Book babies) but don't check out books;
- federal funding/perceptions that libraries are not needed
- Delivery system is important to patrons (don't see this changing) Increase in e-book usage, but still have demand for actual books
- Some issues relate to how long it takes to get material (e.g. law library needs 48 hour maximum; never use OLIS for faculty needs because of timing)
- Budget is under pressure, so delivery costs are constrained
- Distribution system is a vital service
- School systems also have concerns about delivery times. Sometimes only get delivery once per week. Trying to work with OLIS on coordinating by school system, but running into difficulty.
- Shift in roles of staff (hiring more educators vs. librarians)
- More facility renovations to accommodate community meeting space needs
- Workforce development demands; funds come from Feds & State to other agencies, but they turn to the libraries to provide services (resume writing, etc.)
- Need help calculating ROI of library services; if they didn't do these things, who would pick up the slack? Need to quantify value. Help with this calculation.
- Collaboration is needed. Help identify partners that aren't initially obvious
- What is the central social, economic problems that society is trying to solve? What is the library's role. Who else is working on these things. "Collective Impact"

- Good movement in collaborating with other libraries, i.e. between cities. Could use more support both within state and inter-state. The latter provide some grant opportunities.
- "Ask RI" is a good resource
- Specialized libraries typically use other national resources
- A "one-catalog" state-wide system didn't work; OLIS leadership is needed; is there a vendor who can help with this? Are funds available? Academic, public, school-based catalog systems need to be connected in a consortium. They need to be connected with a bridge of sorts. "HELIN" seemed to be a problem
- Political environment creates uncertainty in funding, especially from the Feds. State funding is also a concern, although Gov's emphasis on job development may be an opportunity.
- Assessment is huge. How does the library measure success. How does it do in delivering the services the constituency needs?
- Being asked to apply business measures, but do not have the training to do it. For example, how to do a strategic plan, or how to conduct a survey.
- Provide more relevant professional development. It is starting to improve…continue to evolve.
- Provide minimum standards for staff education, especially around technology.
- circulation down in public libraries, except ebooks which is increasing but people coming to the library for programming (community initiated educational programs, as well as library initiated), events (e.g. Christmas tree lighting), community hub (e.g. to collect donations for other agencies like animal control, food pantry), 1:1 education (digital literacy), meeting spaces;
- reductions in funding; and concerns that political environment likely leading to cuts to federal funding
- data archiving of information the government will no longer maintain
- school/municipal budget cuts (to zero in some cases) severely limiting ability to provide hard copy books (for young children) with mandate to support curriculum; do have access to electronic materials; reduced staffing curtailing services
- not always alignment between what community it's wants (e.g. programming) vs., what local boards deem as appropriate/part of mission
  -school libraries being asked to assist students with multi-media production ("maker space" - hands on e.g. posters, sewing, legos) - don't have equipment to support this but likely will get funding because it's "sexy"
- IMLS budget being cut, this is the agency that funds public libraries, 230M, this also funds staff for reading programs, provides research, publications, children's services, provides national leadership
- Jack Reed has pull with congress and is a lead advocate. Whitehouse follows his lead.
- State gov needs to compensate for cuts
- Affordable Care Act will affect health issues so may be need for community centers like libraries to pick up slack
- Space needed for small business, job training and special programs

- With increased Latino and other immigrant cultures, need for family literacy programs. - Political issues with creating safe spaces where there is no threat to deportation. What are laws to protect privacy in public spaces?

2. How might libraries adapt in response to these trends?
- Market the services – Last free help - Passport, Housing, food stamps applications
- Create spaces for interests groups – IT education, Immigration help and English classes
- Create safe space – Open and inviting for everyone
- will need to offer streaming
- new ways of getting content out to people
- to be communicating about/driving the trends; provide a beyond-RI perspective
- bring back databases - including a way to track utilization statistics
- go for bigger grants to ca*pitalize on new trends and allow all libraries to participate (vs. small grants to individual libraries)*
- reinforcing the notion of one state one library - children's program - more efficient/effective to not have competition among the libraries to get the money
- more orderly/communicative re granting opportunities
- spend more of LSTA money for grants (as other states do) vs. hiring staff
- resources -like an Angie's list - e.g. Building consultants, architects, etc
- grant-writing?
- state funding is based on local funding so wealthier localities get more and poorer localities get less
- state-wide contracts e.g. for databases
- advocacy/promotion of the importance of libraries; educating town managers councils about how libraries are funded,
- Resources/templates for advertisements, websites, etc.
- get statistics that are provided mostly to OSL to pre-populate the annual report
- give more notice for director meetings and allow for more feedback, dialogue, opportunities for directors to raise agendas items
- sense of artificial deadlines
- OLIS should continue to make sure all State agencies know how libraries can be partners in fulfilling their goals. Advocate for libraries. "Libraries are seen as a resource, but not necessarily a partner."
- Libraries need to advocate for themselves too.
- Promote the wide variety of services provided by libraries; could OLIS help with a state-wide marketing campaign?
- The importance of information literacy, i.e.. teaching how to know the difference between fact and fake news
- Learning materials to support the do-it-yourself culture.
- Moving away from managing collections to providing services.
- serving as clearing house/central list of programs seeking to provide programs at the libraries

- advocacy within state government/with public, promotion of best practices/successes, PR, statistics
- creating and upholding definitions for each type of library and requirements to meet those definitions
- strengthen/expand collaboration with other state agencies/offices: health, labor and training, innovation,
- workshops for school administration similar to programs offered to public library trustees/board
- fostering connection among library peers (e.g. Like the round tables) and among the library constituents (public, schools, higher ed, etc)
- education
- helping to identify and disseminate key nationally trends/information
- expand centralized programming (e.g. Like the summer/children's programming)
- maintaining a centralized calendar of continuing ed among the individual consortia
- promote the concept of career in libraries
- Hard to protect people in public spaces, freedom of speech issues, but state overrides federal laws
- Better align with Depts. of Health and Education
- Threats to budget may affect staffing

3. What traditional library services may be less relevant five years from now?
- Printed reference materials
- Traditional catalogues searches
- Certain media (audio books, cds)
- Collecting for collecting sake. Collection size doesn't matter; "Just in case vs. just in time" collections (no to former and yes to latter.)
- Computing format is changing; platforms are shifting to fewer desktops, but public needs access to wifi and power for their own devices.
- while some services are increasing/decreasing it's unlikely that things will change significantly in the next five years such that any aspect will go away
- Library beautification especially if there are fewer funds available
- Downsize reference collections as Google is more available

4. What are the biggest challenges that you see libraries facing in the next 5 years?
- Competition from Amazon & eBooks
- Physical space – Less for books and more for people
- Demographic shift – more immigrants, need for foreign language skills at the staff level
- Library search catalogues not efficient - Amazon search is easy with partial details
- Moving too quickly to change things and not getting it right
- Funding uncertainty
- Professional development; perhaps OLIS could help with access to on-line training (staff is not prepared to respond to some of the current requests, e.g. coding)

- Time constraints. Staff is asked to do more and more services, but not give up enough of the traditional services.
- Staff needs much better technology skills (some used Northstar Digital Literacy resource)
- What role will libraries play in Governor's free tuition plan? Perhaps connect students to free textbook access? (Check OER initiatives. RIC and Bryant are doing a pilot)
- caught between pressures to adapt/evolve to the trends and pressure to stay traditional
- managing culture of board - some boards are oriented toward fiscal oversight/vigilance vs. support/advocacy towards evolving to meet public needs
- Library beautification especially if there are fewer funds available
- Downsize reference collections as Google is more available

5. What is the library's role in creating change and fostering social connections in the community?
- Develop local volunteers
- Free help- IT resources, Space for special interest groups, welcome everyone including immigrants
- Example: Community Connectors, e.g. social workers and former homeless people; Providence Public Library invites them to use the library space for regular hours for outreach. Also, the library goes outside its building into housing projects, etc.
- Support schools of continuing education, adult learning, and at-risk populations
- library directors being visible/making personal connections with other leaders in town government/activities/schools
- providing programming
- reaching out/utilizing social media
- supporting overall town/school priorities/programming
- leveraging talents of other agencies/organization
- Become a welcome wagon to support community and make them feel unified
- More flyers, facebook, radio and delivery systems

6. What do you believe are the key opportunities for OLIS to lead libraries forward?
- One library system / Catalogue - single portal for all libraries
- Expand delivery services and make it more efficient
- OLIS – highlights programs, share programs with all libraries.
- Continue to act as a conduit for partnerships
- Advocating for the libraries with the legislature and state agencies to promote collaborations
- Keep various people aware of what is going on across the state
- Be a resource for sharing experience, so individual libraries aren't forced to reinvent the wheel; information sharing
- Funding resource (e.g. LSTA grants for launching innovation programs; even a small grant made the difference)

- Help connect resources to individual libraries, e.g. get Brown University to donate its used computers to a community in need.
- help connect libraries to resources to help them update systems, use URI, etc.
- More advertising and public relations
- Dept of Administration website needs to be better visually, less text and less sub categories
- Data collection statistical analysis and support
- Getting info out on resources that are available and funding for these
- Comingling of state agencies like DOE, offering more collaborative resources with other libraries
- Summer reading and getting info packets out to students that tells about services

7. What are OLIS strengths (list 1-2) in supporting the libraries?
- Resource sharing - book delivery
- Providing educational resources
- Experienced and dedicated staff – doing more with fewer resources
- Advocacy – network for stronger voices 2 Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services Focus Groups
- grant in aid;
- transportation of books among the libraries
- paying for databases
- upholding standards
- concern, customer service orientation, empathy - don't behave like bureaucrats
- like the annual report
- Responsive within its limits; if they can help, they do
- Good comparative data for all the libraries in the state; helps in benchmarking.
- interlibrary transportation
- askri/database sharing
- staff - Lauren mentioned specifically
- Very supportive and responsive, very quick to ask where they can help
- Provide information where others can learn from each other.
- Network opportunities in meetings are appreciated and valued.
- Summer reading and Talking Book services

8 . What are OLIS weaknesses (list 1-2) in supporting the libraries?
- Public presence – creating awareness
- Staff pretty stretched
- Lack of presence in the state government level
- promotion/advocacy
- too staff heavy
- get and give additional funding/grants
- Limited resources. They need to stop doing things that are no longer necessary
- Have they identified the unmet needs?
- Dissemination of information is not clear enough

- Do a better job of communicating the array of services available; make a simple list of services on the website
- Website is too cluttered. Can't find things. Left-hand list relies too much on specific terms, so if you don't know the exact term, you don't find what you need.
- Annual report asks a lot of questions, not sure they are all necessary. How are you using the data?
- No analysis of the data compiled. How can the libraries use the data? (They see some progress here) Would be helpful to cull some of the data to present to public officials to help libraries relate data to outputs,
- Cost for STOPS (delivery system) went up too much.
- Loss of tutor.com
- defining/ creating visibility for OLIS outside of library community
- Not quick to replace people who leave OLIS and funding for replacing them
- State is at issue, but dissemination of funds and state procurement and grant in aid are cumbersome, need to lobby more with state on this
- Interlibrary loan program needs more monitoring as there are issues with material being returned

9. How can OLIS best facilitate the continued development of a strong and connected library network?
- Partner with RI department of education
- Digitization of historic books
- Free e-book catalogues
- Lobby at the local government level
- Statewide sharing of e-books – follow MA/CT model
- using library visits as a way to receive feedback from libraries
- OSL serves this function to a significant degree -
- what they really want is money or help in getting money
- sharing information from non-public libraries (e.g. Higher education, school)
- take over Rhode Island Center for the Book
- Observation: constituent (e.g. public, school, etc) needs are different and at times in conflict - e.g. Some would like to see more specific standards/definitions to obligate schools/municipalities to provide minimum standards while others fear that more stringent definitions/standards would put some libraries at risk
- Enforce library standards
- Help with continuing education programs, certification
- Help with professional development so people are interested in working in libraries
- Continue with OLS and technical services, computers, databases and public information

10. Is there a role OLIS could play in supporting and fostering diversity in libraries?
- OLIS lead in diversity programs for libraries – Recruit staff to represent local populations (more immigrants),
- Create URI scholarships for diversity population

- Provide local ID for refugees.
- Anything they can do to support service to diverse populations
- Work with URI library school to recruit more diverse students
- Gather successful stories to share publicly
- Assist with recruiting diverse employees to fill vacancies
- Work with other state agencies to promote library diversity, facilitate partnerships
- Help build career pathways for less skilled workers to gain more skills to make them a candidate for higher level positions
- Help refugees communities gain access to local libraries, perhaps connect libraries to relevant state agencies
- raising awareness of the need to have a library staff that is reflective of the community - create awareness of this need among the library community including the educational programs that train librarians
- making sure that promotion, centralized programming are oriented toward/offer diverse perspectives and involve diverse participants
- Training and getting info out on language classes, ASKRI, public relations, advertising
- Create a calendar, newsletter, clearinghouse on information available and notifying of services
- Coordinate with other agencies that address diverse needs, get seats on their boards.

Appendix 4.

Focus Group Questions for the Talking Books Plus Focus Group

1. What are most important services that Talking Books Plus offers?
   – Accessibility to information which enables patrons to know what is happening, access to topics and access to community events
   – Portability of program which can be used on digital player, pocket player
   – Online accessibility
   – Andy Egan from Perkins is very good
   – Material that is up to date, BARD program which provides more in depth information and can be accessed digitally and downloaded.
   – Braille and audio recorded distribution, human voice recordings are better than digital voice.

2. Are there additional services or programs that Talking Book Plus could offer?
   – Newsline, recorded newspapers, and local community information such as supermarket flyers, discounts, etc
   – Time lags present problems although BARD is getting better
   – Commercial books and getting access to information which is current

3. What could the Office of Library and Information Services do to attract more members of Talking Books Plus?
   – Services that are able to reach more diverse disabled population to better integrate people into the community.
   – In MA library programs include services which take people to plays and other community events which get people out of isolation and into the community, especially in winters. It would be great if OLIS could do similar in RI
   – Increased elderly population presents vision changes and more disabilities so need is increasing, issues with getting to the library and being able to access material

4. Do you use public libraries and in which ways do you use them?
   – General lack of connection and libraries not set up to be user friendly
   – Feel like they do not belong since set up is more geared towards people who can see and are not disabled
   – Current libraries are not designed for use by disabled or getting to them. Drivers are needed to be able to access them and that costs money.

5. Are there things public libraries could offer that would make it easier for people with visual impairments or disabilities to use them?
   – Computers and kindles available for access to the blind
   – Better layout of library so that people can get around
   – More specialized training is needed and diversity of library staff that could help disabled (NY library has these)

- Many hours of training is needed to use special equipment that blind and disabled can access
- More audible books and materials are needed
- Better communication of library offerings and services
- Train the trainer programs, maybe rotate those who specialize in disability communication aids and they can float between libraries
- Better coordination of social services to the disabled to consider veterans, blind, disabled, elderly should all be able to be included

6. More accessible reading material is now available online, from libraries and other sources, the technology for listening to books and reading print materials aloud has improved greatly, and audio books are commonly available in libraries. Do you think there will be a need for a Talking Books service five years from now?
   - Yes, need expansion of BARD services and all technology (victor player, e books, recorders, MP3, IPOD), sound rooms with headsets, story hours for adults, more community events to include health and exercise programs
   - OLIS can bring this uniformity of services offered, representatives of the disabled population should be used when designing libraries
   - Recognize this involves money and budgets don't always allow for

7. List 1 or 2 weaknesses in the Talking Books Plus services.
   - Need to integrate more services like the Amazon echo and Google home that are seen as competition to libraries
   - BARD, talking books need to be able to provide activated services
   - Since delivery comes from Perkins in MA, if RI had a similar service then delivery could be improved

8. List 1 or 2 strengths in the Talking Books Plus services.
   - Staff especially Andy and Ann who are great to deal with
   - Help with applications for new users is great, good catalog online
   - OLIS does very well even though the staff has been reduced over the years, access to information and timeliness of responses from staff is good

9. What should the Office of Library and Information Services do to ensure that those who are blind, visually impaired or have other disabilities that make it unable for them to read traditional print material will continue to have free access to reading materials?
   - BARD to provide voice activated services
   - Better access to info through websites like Newsline that provides news similar to Providence Journal, Wall Street Journal information
   - Special book requests and delivery
   - More training for talking books, currently state agencies need to assist with this. Funding needs to be redirected from Human Service organizations.
   - Coordinate interaction of agencies in RI including Dept of Human Services and Office of Rehabilitation Services, Committee for the Blind - available in MA, not RI

Appendix 5.
Interviews with Key Individuals at Various Organizations

1. What trends do you see happening now in your community, the state and the nation that may impact libraries?
- IMLS/NEH/NEA funding at risk.
- Will libraries be able to retain increased consumer base prompting local, state, foundation and private donors?
- Changing demographics and new needs
- Fed budget proposal eliminating IMLS and Concern especially funding to State OLIS for projects such as LSTA Funding eliminated.
- RI State budget formula for 25% of operating budget close but not meeting
- Trumps war on immigrants may deter people from using the public library
- Trend is to create more community centered libraries
- Decreased funding and support for libraries at the federal and state levels (including possible defunding of IMLS)
- Public desire for safe, welcoming public spaces for civil discourse, democratic exchange of ideas, and freedom of expression
- "Stay Strong" Ferguson Library in wake of Michael Brown shooting
- LBTQ spaces & gender neutral bathrooms
- Diverse programming for all community audiences
- Community bridge building
- All ages in need of learning & enrichment opportunities - from technology training to workforce development to ESL to financial literacy, etc.
- Emphasis on STEAM education for children and teens
- Need for community space for library-driven and community-driven gatherings and programs
- Interest in family programs (infants-HS) that serve educational and entertainment needs
- Serving the underserved - free, open access to resources and programs
- Increased access to advanced and emerging tech
- Library as tech hub - provide both access and training
- Maker spaces, learning labs, digital art labs, hacker spaces, etc.
- Loss of mandated school librarians in state education plans
- Era of alternate facts - need to engage in information literacy
- Opportunities for start-ups and small business incubation to use library spaces and services
- Existing misperceptions or outdated notions of libraries & library services
- Importance of Media literacy
- Interest in STEM education
- Balance in life – digital & social
- Online learning – everyone wants online class
- Transition from Print to Digital media

- Underutilization of libraries in school because they are not changing to the user needs
- Patrons going to the library to access internet (current) to access digital media (future) – transformation to digital community house
- Current Federal government attitude towards public libraries, reduction in budget
- Libraries moving towards community centers serving variety of patrons

2. How might libraries adapt in response to these trends?
- I think they will need to devout more time to advocacy
- Crowd funded videos for advocacy at the Federal, State & local governments
- Need more proactive grassroots advocacy from library supporters, friends, trustees, etc.
- Need to publicly call out Washington Administration for its devastating budget proposal and PROMOTE what libraries do for communities
- Need more inclusive programming to welcome outsiders into our library communities so they do not feel intimidated or unwanted in our libraries.
- Need more outreach to various community groups and not just those who come in the door and have card
- Create safe spaces and offer diverse programs
- Become the "unquiet library" and market active community center atmosphere
- Actively train for and engage in advocacy and PR for constituents and stakeholders
- Pursue grants to underwrite new initiatives and unique programming
- Perform outreach & focus groups - give the public what they want
- Allow staff to attend trainings and professional development opportunities
- Trend spot and be innovative
- Practice creative budgeting - new ways of building collections, sharing more resources
- Saving money through patron driven acquisitions, on demand services, shared e-book
- collections, shared databases, etc.
- Pursuing more grant funded opportunities to supplement budget
- Continue to cultivate community partnerships and collaborate to fill gaps and strengthen offerings, cross-promote and cross-pollinate
- Train staff to handle change and adapt to different library uses
- Constantly communicate with stakeholders - tell the library's story
- Need to look at their strategic plan and adapt to the technological changes
- Space redesign – change of space, furniture
- Professional development for library staff on media literacy, fake news
- Redesign Physical space to provide user experience – not just add more computers to the old space with high circulation desk but create design based on people flow (Apple store)
- Become a digital learning center in the community – offer coding & multi-media courses

– Revisiting what traditional libraries do and use technology to evolve to meet the needs of the patrons
– Partner with private sector for funding – libraries are more of information disseminators and learning centers.

3. What traditional library services may be less relevant five years from now?
– The world is constantly changing because of new technology. We are in and may always be in a digital technology revolution. Libraries will need to change and adapt to new technology.
– Local town newspapers will stay. National newspapers and magazines -I wonder about circulation – will it decrease.
– Print resources and circulation may decrease but online resources increase but who will know what they are and how to use them?
– Need to transform traditional reference "wait and see" reactionary approach to more pro-active roaming and programming especially educating all library users with more digital information literacy instruction in libraries.
– Print reference (More online offerings - databases, electronic access to collections and materials)
– Less is more collections: Smaller, more specialized collections - examples: tailored magazine & newspapers
– Traditional computer training classes (MS Word, etc) - more focus on emerging tech, programming, design offerings
– Staff: Some traditional staff roles may change to adapt to new services and programs
– Magazines, Newspapers – People will read them online
– Carry less printed books and co-ordinate with other libraries to maintain enough inventories
– Newspaper and magazine will likely go away
– Traditional checks out with high desk & the staff will cease to exist
– Reduction in print books circulation and hence the inventory
– DVD/ TAPE outdated and will go away. Less of print books as demand for printed book decreases
– Physical space will be less important and functional space demand will rise

4. What are the biggest challenges that you see libraries facing in the next 5 years?
– Public funding, increased demand for programs that meet needs of community (Homeless, elderly, immigrants) without capacity to do so
– Funding levels from all three: Fed, State, and local
– Building grass roots community support for local community libraries, school, public, and academic libraries.
– Shared Programming: Step in one door and you have stepped in ALL. Need more multi-type library programming and collaborations.
– Staffing with right skill sets
– Balancing traditional and emerging services

- Educating stakeholders and constituents on library value
- Advocate what libraries do – places of value
- Staff education and training in technology/ digital media
- Staff buy in for lifelong learning. Create incentives through credentialing
- Use the library space more effectively to meet the digital needs of the patron
- Library staff training/ skill improvement – currently they are not equipped to meet the future digital needs of the patrons.
- Library staff willingness to change to the digital world
- Funding challenge
- Accommodating and balancing needs of patrons/ entire community (kids, elders, immigrants, homeless)
- Increased diversity of patrons & need for foreign language skills

5. What is the library's role in creating change and fostering social connections in the community?
- Libraries are bricks and mortar gathering places for actual non virtual people. They are the hubs of the community. When you want to find out about what matters to a community, visit their library. Libraries are way stations for jobless workers, providing free internet, adult education classes for high school diplomas, workforce development services, childhood literacy, ESL, resume help, free legal advice, health insurance help, etc.
- Create intergenerational programs – Adults/ Teen readings, activities
- Need to increase F2F programming for all levels and all community members.
- Do more outreach to immigrants, ESL learners, Literacy volunteers, online tutorials, etc.
- Create welcoming spaces and nonthreatening environments in all public, school, and state supported academic libraries, i.e. URI, CCRI, and RIC.
- Need strong OLIS leadership for all types of libraries.
- Offering numerous and diverse events and programs
- Clubs
- Fostering partnerships with community groups
- Create integrated learning – iPads & Books
- Develop Public/ private partnership - training, skill development, digital media
- Librarian's need to be community digital learning leaders – teach tech tools, multimedia
- Public libraries to work closely with school libraries and share the resources. One card to borrow books/ resources (tech) from school and community libraries
- Libraries to transform into digital learning centers
- Community gathering place – safe place to exchange ideas and interact with people of different cultures

6. What do you believe are the key opportunities for OLIS to lead libraries forward?
- Advocating for libraries and funding, listening to the needs of community libraries. OLIS is a hub- step up social media advocacy

- Continue ASK RI
- OLIS Coordinating and collaborating with partners in RI and with organizations in creating statewide initiatives and programming and PSA/PR for HOW LIBRARIES TRANSFORM Communities.
- Work as THE number one leader in the state for multi-type library collaborations in resources, services, and communication. One catalog is NOT necessary and NOT possible goal as the time has passed but OLIS needs to lead with collaborations and support for multi-type library programming, etc.
- Acting as trend spotters and promoting innovation
- Continued professional development for all library types - formalized or incentivized in some way? Credentialing?
- Statewide PR campaign
- Ensuring a strong statewide resource sharing program
- Tracking legislation and assisting with calls to action
- Increasing programs and services for and collaboration between all library types
- Increased focus on higher ed, schools, and special libraries
- Shared collections, patron driven acquisition models
- They have a system in place for training librarians – need fine tuning
- Website old fashioned – redesign and make it popular with everyone not just the librarians to serve as an Online Master resource – Calendar, events (e.g.: An Autistic parent can go to OLIS website and find a story time for her autistic kid in any library across RI)
- Guide community libraries to implement/ follow best practice
- Sharing of great ideas/successful programs from one library to others community libraries so they can replicate the successful ideas and programs in their community
- Broker relationship between librarians (skill improvement classes, training sessions)
- Advocate for all libraries and foster collaborations across academic, school, public and community libraries

7. What are OLIS strengths (list 1-2) in supporting the libraries?
- Partnering with other organizations to strengthen overall network of libraries, communicating with libraries. Staff are forward thinkers
- OLIS reaches out to public libraries with support and services.
- OLIS keep ASK RI
- OLIS website keeps updated webpage which communicates what is happening and job opportunities. Very important links for library communities- All librarians use OLIS website
- Facilitating shared collections and eliminating barriers to patron use (delivery system & ASKRI databases)
- Tracking legislation
- Very good at inter library delivery services
- Represent all public libraries at the state level
- Strong and dedicated staff

- Karen is well respected and high in the hierarchy to influence change; very good leader and very collaborative (State & University library). Deeply impressed by her commitment to the library community.
- Leadership is good at building connections with the community libraries
- Very good at communicating – central communication hub for all libraries

8. What are OLIS weaknesses (list 1-2) in supporting the libraries?
- OLIS has limited staff and cannot be everywhere to lead the future of libraries in RI.
- Primary focus of OLIS seems to be public library services. Need to provide more communication and collaborative support across multi-type libraries and library organizations.
- Public education/PR - emphasizing the value of libraries to RI constituents & legislators - using stats and other annual data/info collected to highlight library services and tell the story of 21st century libraries
- Poor Website/Ease of finding info (I think that's a state issue!)
- Better examples: https://library.ohio.gov/ or http://libraries.delaware.gov/
- Web presence outdated
- Use of digital and social media for communications
- Weak in marketing the library services
- Lack of understanding of university libraries (HELIN database was a very useful tool and one day they took it away)
- OLIS not good at sharing / communicating success between community libraries
- I think OLIS could facilitate connections between local libraries and school libraries. That's a natural connection that's not happening in a lot of communities. Another connection is higher ed libraries w/ local and school libraries. Their key weakness is in ability to build connections between school, community and higher education libraries
- Leadership not good at setting vision for the future – need to be a strategic thinker

9. How can OLIS best facilitate the continued development of a strong and connected library network?
- I think OLIS staff should be allowed out in the community more and spend more time at libraries across the state. They need to spend more time at the local libraries to understand their needs and evangelize the success stories between libraries
- Strong leadership and More ALL types of library programming and not just public libraries.
- Communication, communication, communication
- Storytelling/PR
- Strengthen resource sharing
- Fight to maintain or increase funding for delivery system and shared resources (databases/ASKRI)
- Offer relevant CE & networking programs - maybe formalized programs (certifications, etc.)

- Assist school libraries with resource sharing
- Better online way to share the resources (e.g. Story core project got grants to procure state of art equipment's for podcast productions at one location. OLIS can connect other libraries to share this resource)
- Continuing education for the library staff – Digital, multi-media
- Set a vision, articulate, communicate effectively and implement the agenda
- Be an advocate for all libraries at the state house and with the elected officials.
- More virtual meetings between library communities (community, university & school)
- Currently librarians do not see the value in networking between themselves – OLIS can help to change the attitude

10. Is there a role OLIS could play in supporting and fostering diversity in libraries?
- Listening, supporting and advocating for all
- Actively look and recruit minorities for the jobs
- Create summer library scholarships for High school people of color to work in library – most think the library as a traditional service.
- OLIS needs to be more connected with all types of libraries and especially the urban ring to promote the profession and opportunities for employment in libraries.
- Develop career days and speakers to go into urban schools and colleges to promote working in libraries and promote the profession and collaborate with library orgs such as CORI and other diverse groups in the communities.
- Need to connect with immigrant communities and those not being served.
- Promote library profession through career development programs in High schools
- Partner with diversity interests groups like LGBTQ, Latino Student association to promote library science as one of the career choices
- Be present and attend career college fairs at the local colleges
- Help local libraries tell a story and promote 21st century library skills to minority groups
- Identify funding for minority students to go to library school
- Recruit minority staff to the library positions – most of the librarians are middle aged Caucasians
- Recruit minority staff to match the needs of the local community
- Create summer internship for minority high school student so they know of library career options
- Create summer internship for minority college student and get them interested in library sciences
- Actively recruit minorities and people of color for the library position.
- Recruit more youth through summer jobs.
- Mobilize scholarship for minorities to go to grad school for library sciences.