

VERONA
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



HOW WE SERVE

Our Mission

The Verona Public Library enriches lives and builds community by providing opportunities to discover, connect, learn, and enjoy.

Core Values

SERVICE: We are dedicated to making a positive difference in people's lives. We are free and open to all and treat everyone with respect and compassion.

INNOVATION: We are a learning organization that embraces change. We are enthusiastic and creative in responding to our community's needs.

TEAMWORK: We celebrate the diversity of our experiences. We build trust and connections with the library staff, volunteers, and community members.

DISCOVERY: We encourage people to experience the pleasure of reading and the joy of learning. We empower them in their search for knowledge.

TRUST: We take responsibility for the stewardship of the materials, spaces, and resources with which we are entrusted. We respect privacy and intellectual freedom.

500 SILENT STREET
VERONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

From The Board of Trustees

Libraries are a cornerstone of our society and are a vital lifeline in providing intellectual freedom and equitable access to information. Our Verona Public Library continues to be a leader in supporting that vision in providing our community the space to engage in lifelong learning, producing robust engagement through cultural programming, and delivering access to a diverse collection of materials to build skills, experience new ideas and even get lost in wonderful stories.

We are truly fortunate to have one of Dane County's premier libraries and we thank our VPL librarian team for how well they have weathered significant events over the past four years. They have navigated new ways to engage with the public during the pandemic as one of the first libraries reopened in the area. They provided responsive leadership on the fast-changing technology landscape and looked for innovative ways to improve patron access to eBooks and other technology-based services. Most importantly, they continue to deliver in providing innovative educational and cultural experiences to our patrons as Dane County's number one library in circulation in 2024, with 588,188 items borrowed and 34,157 program attendees.

Verona continues to be a vibrant, fast-growing community, and our VPL leadership team and Board have realized that after 18 years in our current library there was a need to fully evaluate our services and plan for the community's future needs. We began our current planning process in 2024 with an intention of identifying who is using the library, what services are being utilized well and where can we find opportunities to meet the community's growing needs. Our goal in the end was to provide a framework for our excellent library team in supporting the educational and enrichment opportunities to Verona. This report outlines our findings and the methods that we will use to advance the library over the coming years.

We appreciate all of Verona's patrons and friends of the library that support the great work of our library team and we look forward to the continued opportunity to collectively enhance the Verona Public Library's contribution to the community.

– Chris Hopp, Library Board President

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

“

Verona Library is a community treasure. Beautiful, a community meeting place, and always doing everything possible to meet the needs of patrons. If I were grading Verona Library, I would give it an A+ for going above and beyond in professionalism, creativity, dedication, and helpfulness.

”

-comment from member of the public, Library Services Survey, Oct 2023



Who We Are

The library's history begins in the 1940s, when Verona was home to only 535 residents and the library was housed in one half of a vacated bank. The American Legion Auxiliary maintained the library and offset the \$15 a month rent by renting out the space during the day to a lawyer and to a gentleman who gave accordion lessons. While the community has changed and grown dramatically over the years, the library continues to honor its innovative beginnings by seeking creative solutions to provide services to residents of Verona.

In 2006, the library moved to a new 33,000 square foot facility designed to meet the needs of our rapidly growing community for 20-25 years. Now nearly 20 years later, the population of Verona has grown by 60% and is the fastest growing community in Dane County (US census data,).

During the early days of the 2020 pandemic, the library began offering online virtual programs including story times and adult programs within a week of the shut down and offered curbside pick-up as soon as we were allowed to under emergency orders. This highlights the commitment of the library staff to providing access to materials and library services to the community. Our strong collection, robust programs, knowledgeable staff, and growing community have made the library consistently one of the busiest libraries in the seven-county South Central Library System for the past five years. Out of 381 libraries in the state, Verona Public Library ranks fifth in check-outs per capita (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2023).

In addition to the robust and diverse library collection, the Verona Public Library hosts hundreds of programs and events every year for all ages on a variety of topics, from traditional story times and lectures, to hands-on programs and events that celebrate the arts and sciences, literature, local history, and much more.

The Verona Public Library is a member of the Dane County Library Service and South Central Library System and is governed by a seven-member library board.

– Stacey Burkart, Library Director

VERONA PUBLIC LIBRARY'S SERVICE PRIORITIES

As the data shows, continued population growth is expected and the library is focused on serving our growing and changing community. Data also shows that younger professionals with families are moving into the community; many of these new community members are professionals working for tech companies and arrive with high technology skills and needs. Anticipated library services for our growing community include building updates; flexible library spaces for remote workers, students, small business owners, and all community members; maintaining a diverse collection; innovative public programs; library publicity; and so much more.

The service priorities are detailed in the goals and objectives in the strategic plan framework.



About the Strategic Plan

Community members provided feedback about library services via a survey in late 2023 and library board members and staff provided input via additional surveys in the summer of 2024. This strategic plan was completed in March 2025. Survey results and current demographic data provided the foundation for the plan, which was drafted by the library director and consultant staff from the South Central Library System.

Our findings and data have identified four service priorities to help guide the work of the library staff and Board of Trustees. The four areas of focus are:

Space and building needs: The rapid population growth data over the past 20 years and projected future growth make space and building needs a high priority so that we can continue to meet the library service needs of our growing community.

Library programming: The patron survey results and high program attendance data make a diverse offering of library programs for all ages one of our continuing priorities.

Collections: The patron survey results and high circulation data indicate that library collections are very important to the community. In the survey, patrons overwhelmingly requested better access and shorter wait times for eBooks and eAudiobooks. The library staff continues to be committed to offering a diverse collection that is representative of all our residents.

Communication and outreach: The library board survey and staff survey identified communication and outreach as essential to reach new community members as our city continues to grow and expand.

Sharing Results

The library director of the Verona Public Library will share progress reports with the library Board of Trustees at board meetings. Staff members will receive updates about the actions of the plan, with special attention paid to identifying ways their work supports the strategic plan. Community members will learn about new collections, materials, services, and programs resulting from the new strategic plan via local media outlets, newspaper articles, social media updates, in-library publicity, and community forums and discussions. The library director will refer to goals of the strategic plan when hiring new staff; newly-elected board members will be introduced to the strategic plan and goals as a component of trustee training.



Total visits to the library

230,876

Meeting room use

6,843

Computer lab use

9,265

2024 data

SERVICE PRIORITY:

Building & Space Needs

The Verona Public Library is a welcoming place that provides spaces for community members to learn and connect.

Objectives

- Library officials will evaluate the current library space to accommodate the projected growth of the Verona community over the next 20 years.
-

Actions

- Identify a space needs consultant.
 - Conduct space needs evaluation.
 - Conduct space observational study.
 - Explore options to alleviate overcrowded workspaces for staff, particularly youth services staff.
-

Assessment

- By December 2025, we will evaluate the effectiveness of space needs consultation.
- By December 2025, we will use results of space needs consultation to determine whether space needs are adequate or inform future space planning.



34,157
participants

1,024
programs

2024 data

“ *The library is one of the best things about living in Verona!
Thank you for making it so valuable.* **”**

-comment from member of the public, Library Services Survey, Oct 2023

SERVICE PRIORITY:

Library Programming for All Ages

The Verona Public Library supports the continued growth of the community we serve by sustaining and/or increasing library programming in line with the growth of the community.

Objectives

- Library staff will continue to provide a diverse offering of programs for all ages, focusing on educational and enriching events that foster connection and build community, with special attention on providing services to the growing population of young families in Verona.
-

Actions

- Library staff will continue to provide the same or an increased number of programs for patrons of all ages.
-

Assessment

- At the end of each calendar year, we will compare data in the following categories with percentage estimated population growth of the community:
 - New library cards
 - Circulation
 - Library visits
 - Library programs & attendance
 - Outreach programs & attendance



Collection
size

121,157

Total
checkouts

588,188

58% of items checked out are children's materials.

2024 data

SERVICE PRIORITY:

Library Collections That Reflect Our Community

The Verona Public Library supports learning and educational opportunities for all community members through robust library collections that reflect our community and its interests.

Objectives

- The library will continue to add to and build our collection of digital resources.
 - Library collections will continue to build within the limits of our physical space.
-

Actions

- Continue to evaluate the diversity of library collections.
 - Increase our popular digital resource collections, specifically eBook and eAudiobook collections.
-

Assessment

- By December 2025, we will use diversity audit software to evaluate the diversity of library collections. Software will be used in 2 to 3 year cycles for future evaluations.
- By the end of each calendar year, we will use collection data to evaluate digital collections.
- By the end of each calendar year, we will use circulation data to evaluate physical collections.



We reached
8,984
community members

during
306
outreach visits

Outreach visits included child care centers, senior living communities, parks, playgrounds, farmers' markets, the food pantry, and community events.

2024 data

SERVICE PRIORITY:

Communication & Outreach

The Verona Public Library supports the continued growth of the community we serve by increasing marketing and outreach efforts in line with the growth of the community.

Objectives

- Library staff will use marketing strategies to promote library services to new community members.
 - Library staff will promote library services to new and existing community members through library outreach.
-

Actions

- Market library services through print and digital media to reach new community members.
 - Promote library services at community events, through collaboration with city departments, schools, child care centers, senior living facilities, local businesses, and more.
-

Assessment

- By December 2025, we will develop a communications plan.
 - By December 2026, we will evaluate the communications plan and revise with any improvements.
 - At the end of each calendar year, we will evaluate outreach programs and use data such as the number of books checked out at library events and new library card sign-ups to measure success.
-

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY DATA



Registered Borrowers & Library Use

Wisconsin public libraries submit an annual report to the Department of Public Instruction. Annual report data provides information about the number of materials borrowed, the number of library visits, information about computer usage, and program attendance.

Residents with a library card & home library of Verona Public Library (Jan. 2025)

	City of Verona	City of Madison - West Side	City of Fitchburg	Town of Verona	Town of Middleton
Count	7,425	6,031	846	704	284
Percentage	45%	12%	2%	33%	4%

LINKcat patrons registered, WI Dept. of Administration (DOA)

Residents who used their library card at any SCLS library (2024)

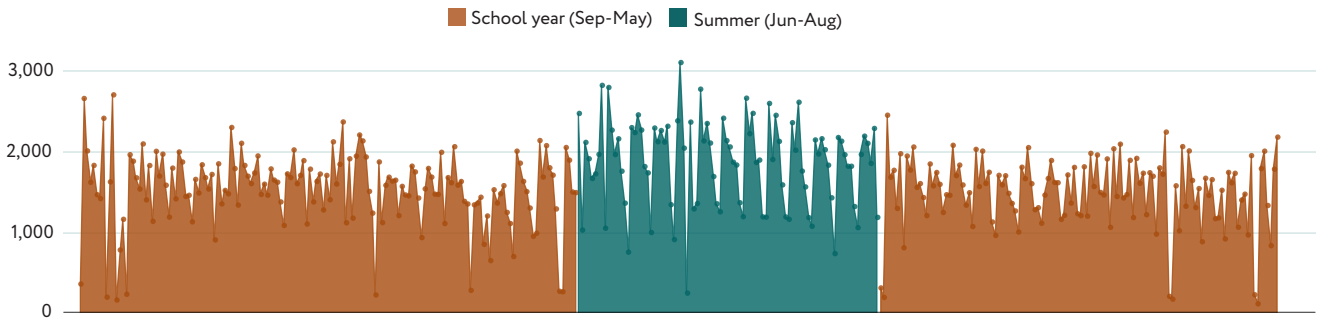
	City of Verona	City of Madison - West Side	City of Fitchburg	Town of Verona	Town of Middleton
Count	3,875	10,316	5,779	408	1,481
Percentage	24%	20%	16%	19%	21%

Bibliovation, WI Dept. of Administration (DOA)

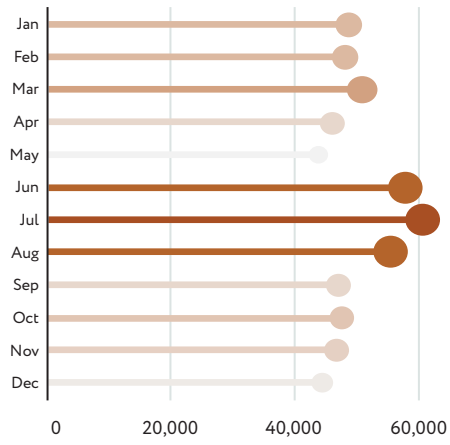
Cardholder use data by date, month, date, and hour (2024):

The library's busiest months are in the summer. The library offers many programs and a robust summer reading program to help promote reading and keep children's reading and literacy skills sharp over the summer. Library use patterns change throughout the day. Our peak times are typically in the morning when story times are held and then again in the late afternoon. By evening the library is less crowded and provides a quiet place for people to work and study.

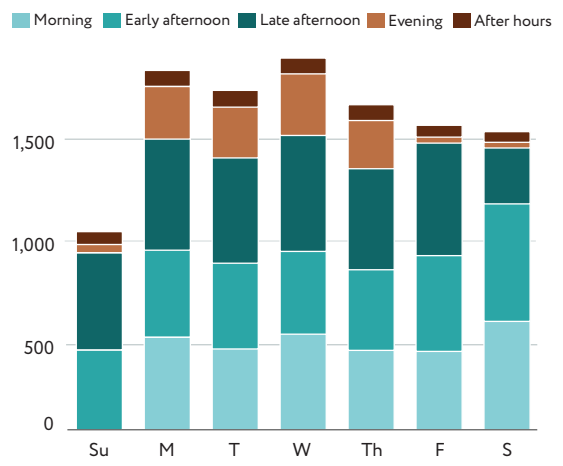
Check-outs by date



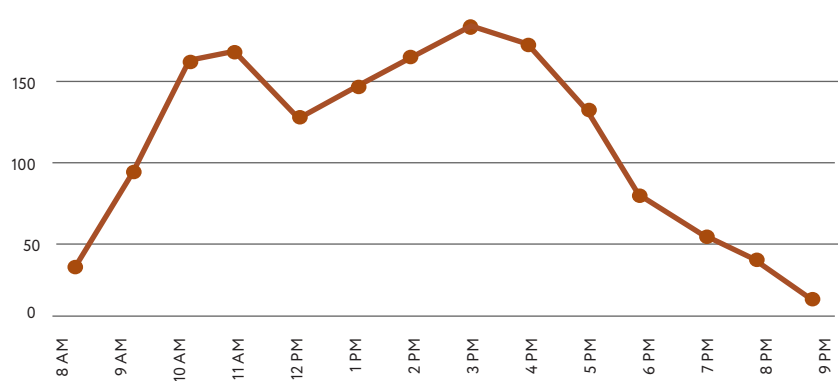
By month



Average by weekday & time



Average by hour



Library Service Data 2024

Part of the continued success of the Verona Public Library is our commitment to offering innovative programs, performances, lectures, and traveling exhibits.

We are a community center and a place of learning for all ages. Library visitors use the library for computer, technology, and WiFi access. They connect with other community members while attending library programs like writer’s groups, book clubs, story times, and many more. They find trustworthy resources for facts and information with the help of professional librarians. They expand their knowledge, skills, and pursuits through our collections and resources.

Square Footage	33,000
Staff (FTE)	24.23
Hours Open per Week	68
Registered Users	17,600
Checkouts	588,188
Use of E-Books and E-Audio	109,685
Number of Library Programs	1,024
Library Program Attendance	34,157
Wireless Internet Uses	772,951
Uses of Public Internet Computers	9,265

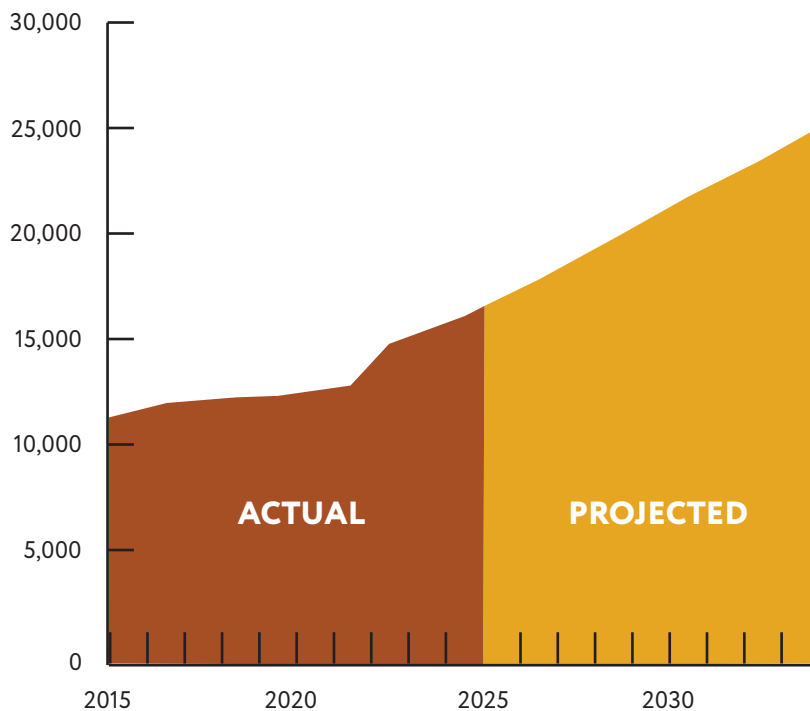
Who We Serve

Population, demographics, and future estimates

The Verona Public Library serves residents in the Cities of Verona, Fitchburg, Madison, and the Towns of Verona, Middleton, Springdale, and Montrose. The Wisconsin Department of Administration estimates the region's population will continue to grow by 2040, with the the Town of Verona being the only municipality served by the library to experience a slight projected decrease.

The Verona Public Library card may be used at any public library in Columbia, Dane, Green, Sauk, Wood, Adams, and Portage counties belonging to the South Central Library System. It may also be used at public libraries in other library systems with South Central reciprocal borrowing agreements.

Actual and projected growth, City of Verona



Since the building was constructed in 2006 Verona's population has increased by

66%

& is projected to increase

82%

in the next 15 years

Detailed demographic information

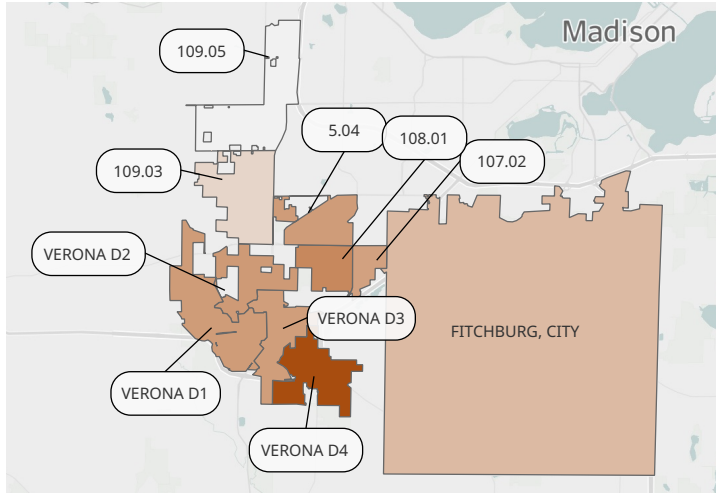
Verona is a growing and vibrant community. As compared with the rest of the state, the City of Verona and the surrounding communities the library serves has a higher percentage of families with children, higher cost of housing, higher median income, and lower poverty rate. As one of the fastest-growing communities in the state, the community is expanding and changing rapidly.

2023 American Community Survey

	City of Verona	City of Madison - West Side	City of Fitchburg	Town of Verona	Town of Middleton	Wisconsin
Median age (years)	38.3	34.4	34.7	45.2	42.7	40.1
Population under 18	27.2%	20.8%	17.3%	25.1%	30.1%	21.6%
Population 65+	13.2%	13.0%	14.4%	22.0%	17.9%	18.0%
Non Hispanic – White alone	88.1%	69.8%	59.9%	86.9%	89.4%	79.2%
Hispanic or Latino	4.2%	9.8%	16.3%	1.6%	3.2%	7.8%
Veterans	5.2%	3.9%	3.6%	6.0%	3.9%	6.4%
Median property value	\$382,800	\$384,500	\$389,400	\$561,800	\$653,500	\$247,400
Median household income	\$119,148	\$104,152	\$85,420	\$138,750	\$187,446	\$75,670
Poverty rate – children (under 18)	0.4%	5.9%	7.0%	2.9%	4.6%	13.0%
Poverty rate	1.9%	5.1%	7.6%	2.8%	4.6%	10.6%
Households without an internet connection	4.2%	3.2%	3.9%	2.5%	1.5%	10.5%
Renters pay >30% income	41.7%	31.9%	45.8%	46.0%	0.0%	40.4%
Children living in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or food stamps/SNAP	65	1,317	1,458	85	38	282,214

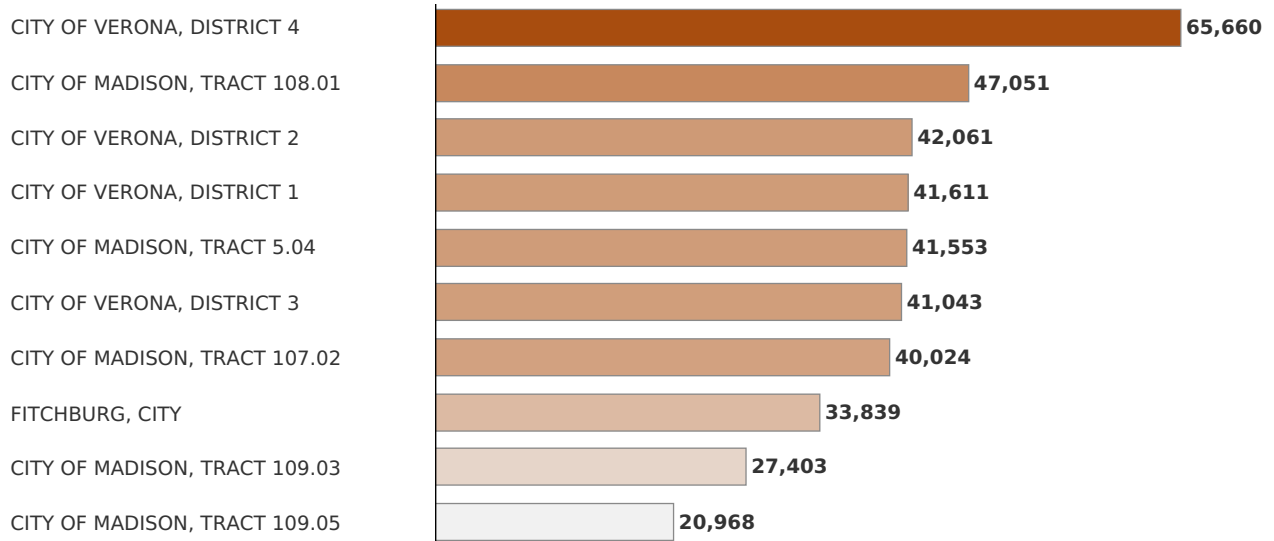
Who uses the Verona Public Library?

In 2024, City of Verona residents checked out 190,375 items from the Verona Public Library, which was 32% of the total checkouts. Because of our close geographic proximity to Madison, Fitchburg, and other area communities, we attract visitors who reside outside of the city.



Library card holders checked out

588,188 items from the
Verona Public Library in 2024



16,597

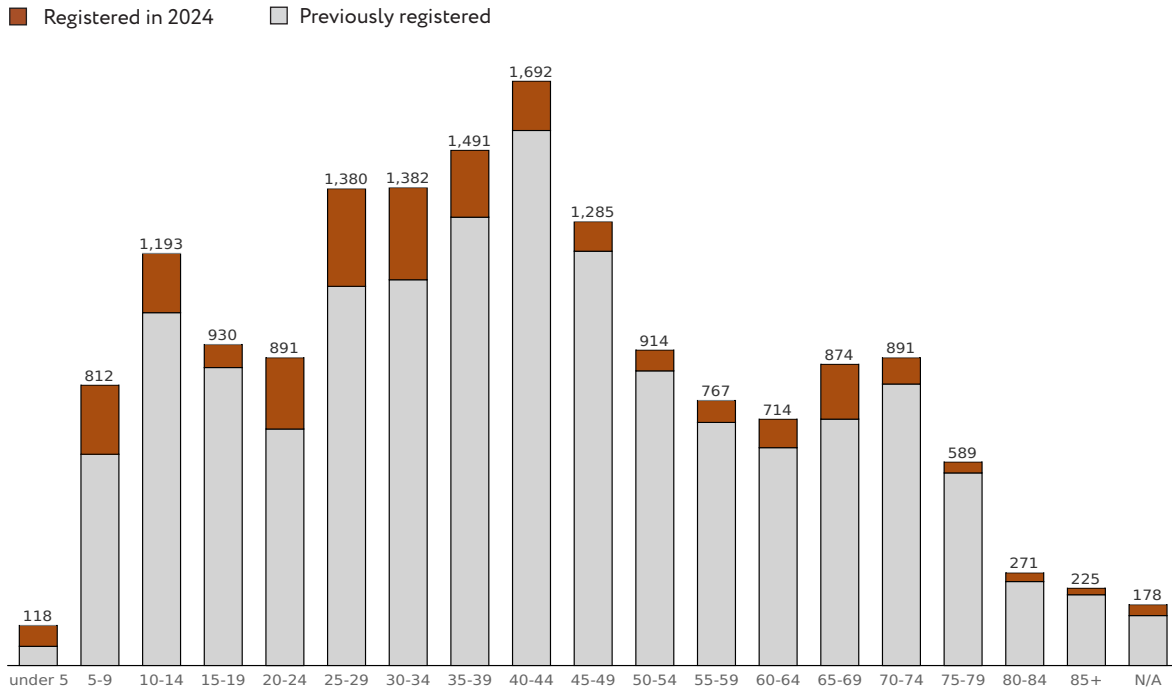
Total Cardholders

13,729

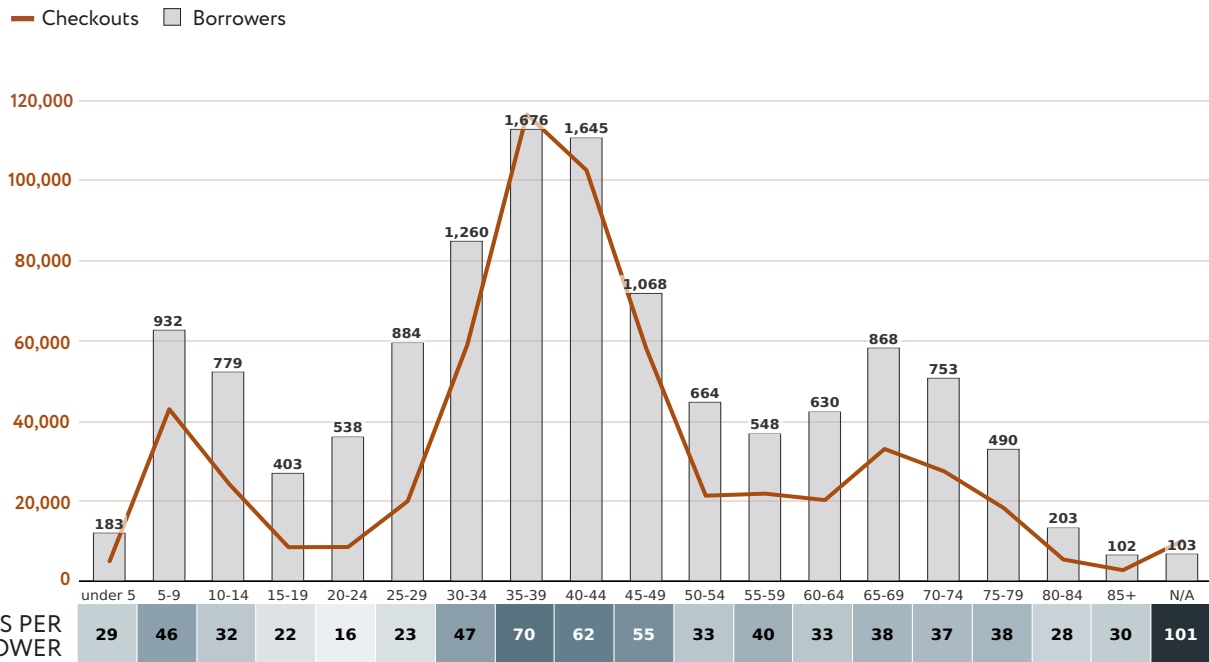
Unique Borrowers

Library cardholders by age group (Jan. 2025)

Anyone of any age can get a library card at the Verona Public Library, but the age range with the highest number of library cards and checkouts is 30-49 years old.



Circulation by age group (2024):



COMMUNITY SURVEY



Library Services Summary

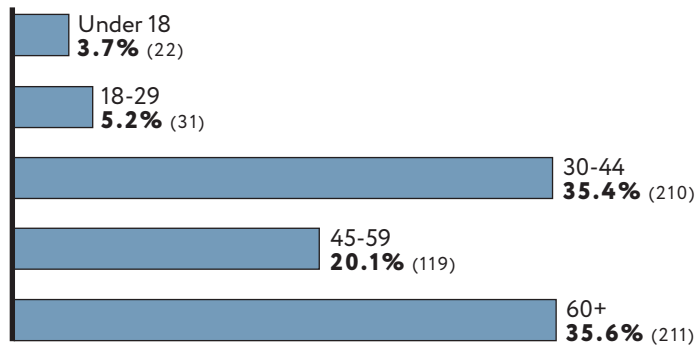
The Verona Public Library conducted a library services survey in Fall 2023. This 12-question survey had 594 respondents and provided useful information for the library’s strategic plan:

About the survey respondents:

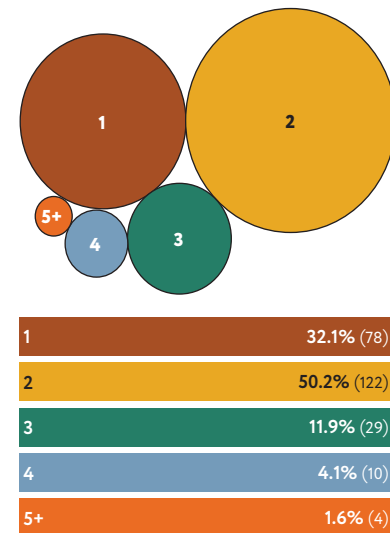
Residency



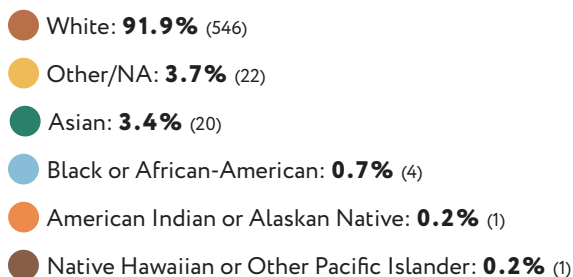
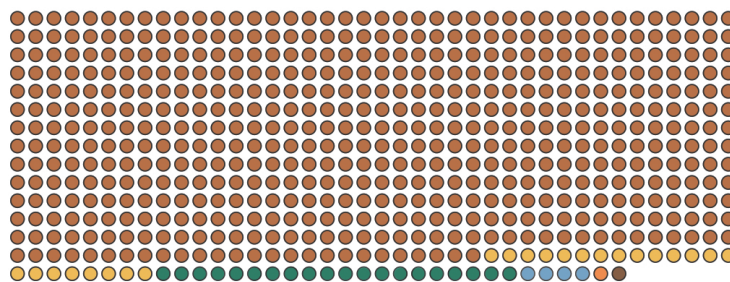
Age



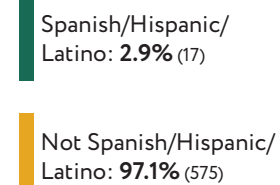
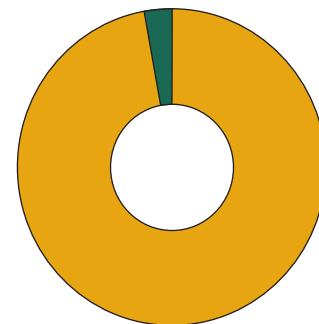
Number of children under 17 in household



Race



Ethnicity

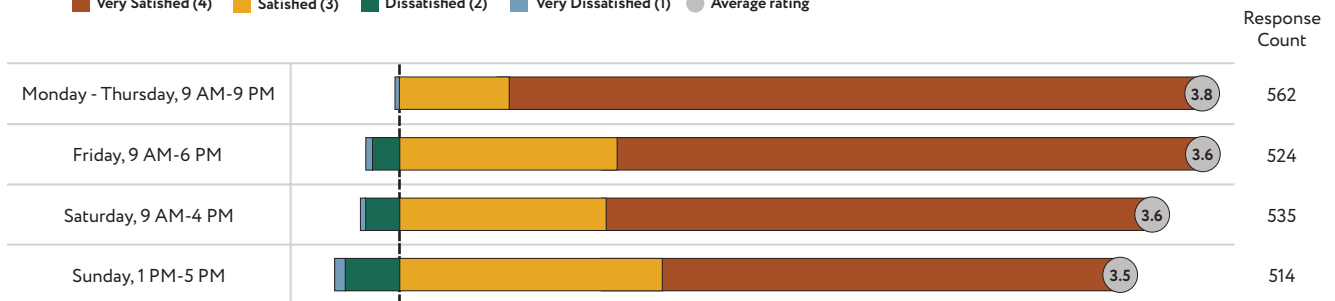


Survey Satisfaction Summaries

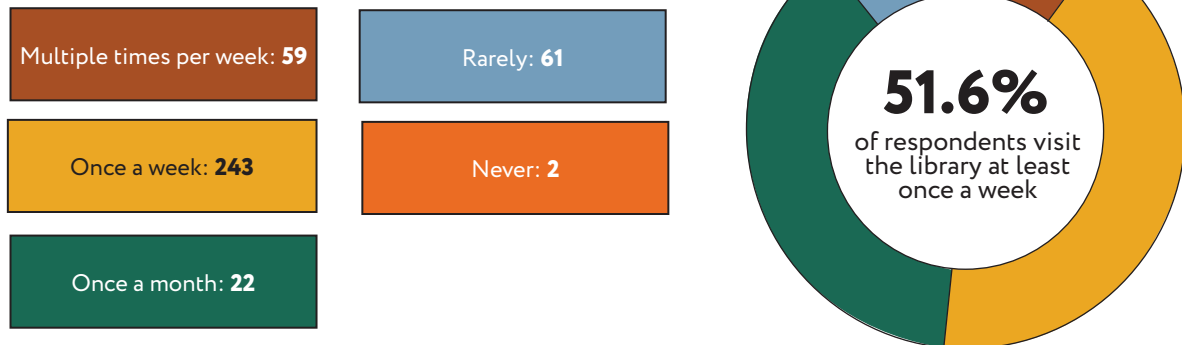
Library visits and hours:

How satisfied are you with library hours?

■ Very Satisfied (4)
 ■ Satisfied (3)
 ■ Dissatisfied (2)
 ■ Very Dissatisfied (1)
 ● Average rating

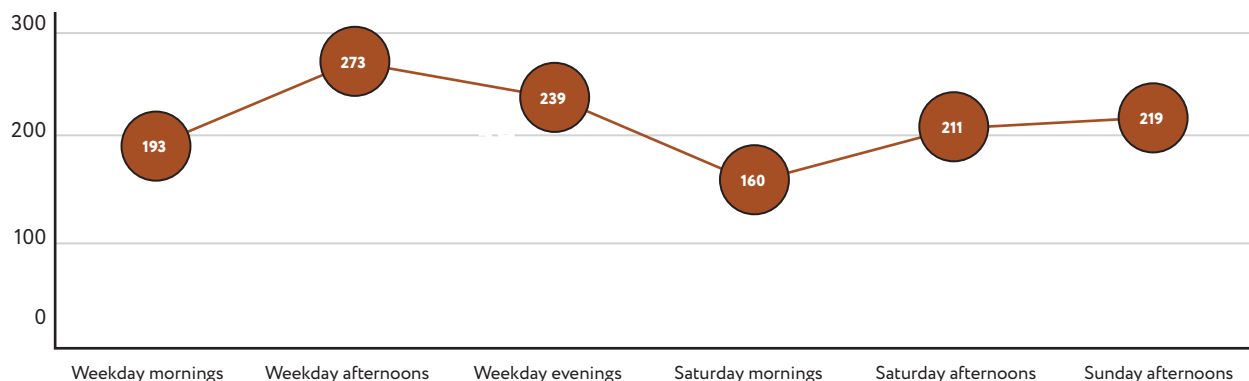


How often do you or members of your household typically come to the library?



When do you typically come to the library?

Response count (multiple selections possible per submission)

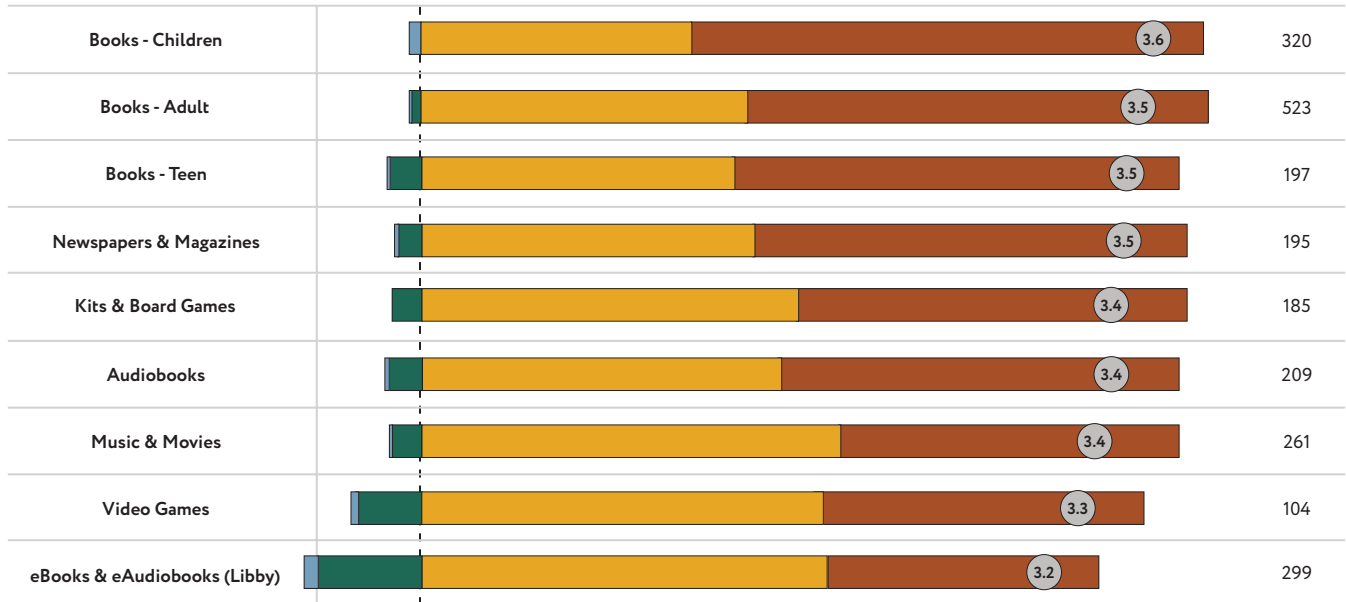


Library collections:

How satisfied are you with the library's collection?

Very Satisfied (4) Satisfied (3) Dissatisfied (2) Very Dissatisfied (1) Average rating

Response Count

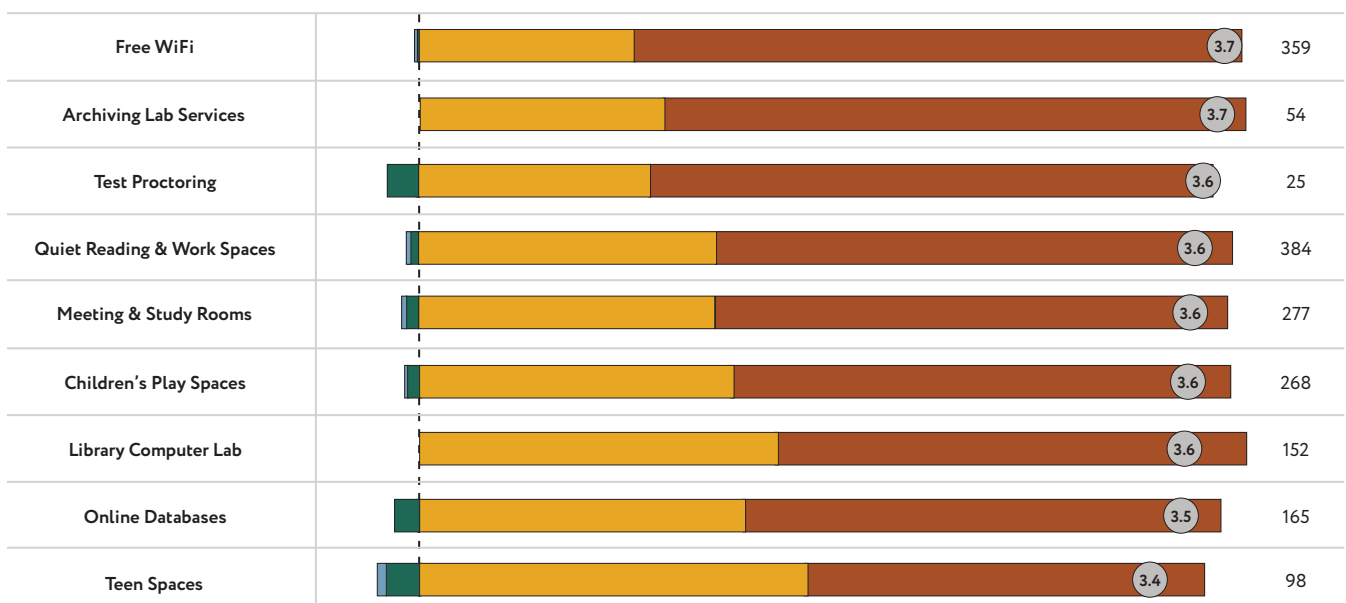


Library services and spaces:

How satisfied are you with our services and spaces?

Very Satisfied (4) Satisfied (3) Dissatisfied (2) Very Dissatisfied (1) Average rating

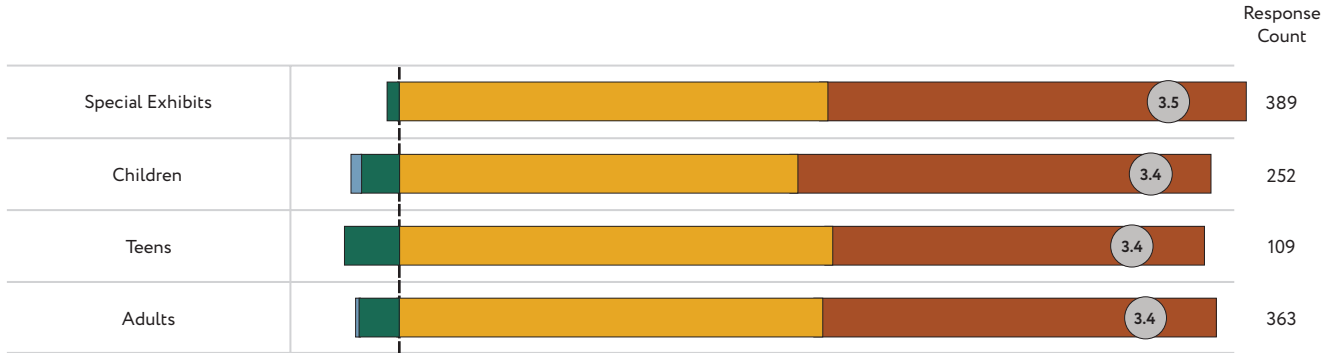
Response Count



Programs and exhibits:

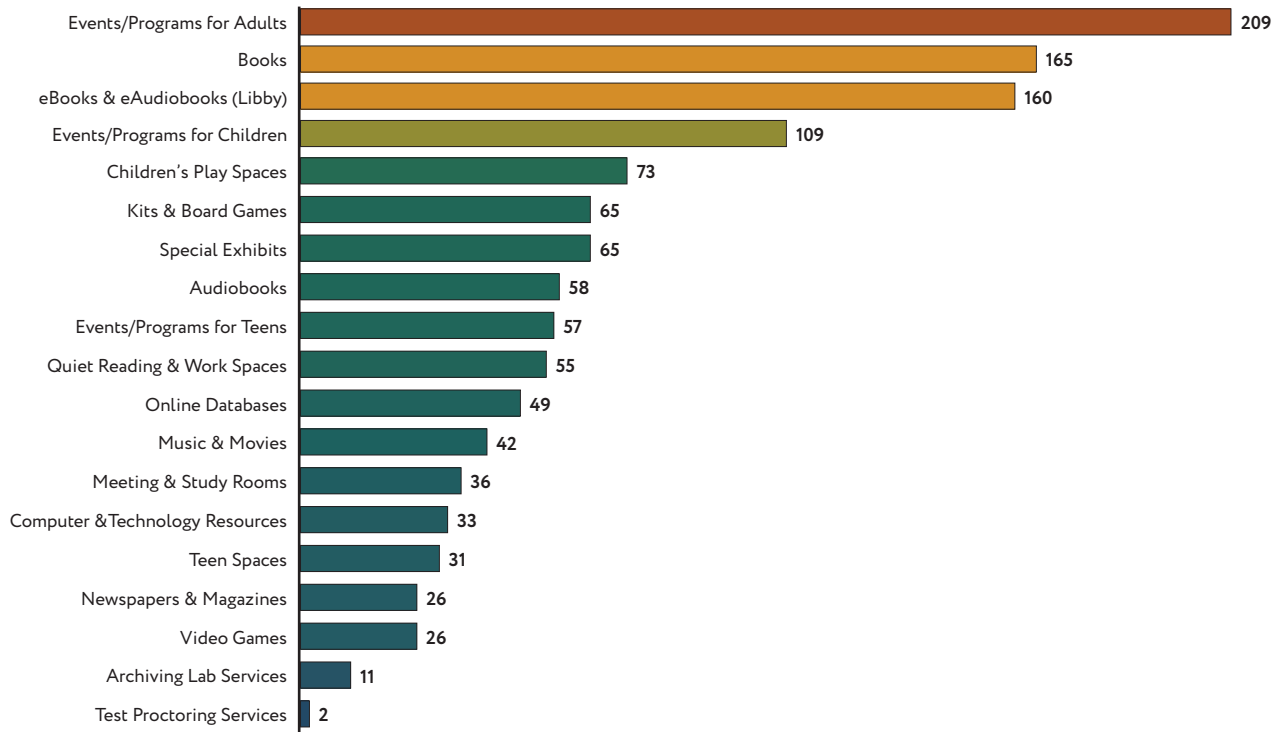
How satisfied are you with the library's programs and exhibits?

■ Very Satisfied (4)
 ■ Satisfied (3)
 ■ Dissatisfied (2)
 ■ Very Dissatisfied (1)
 ● Average rating



Suggested improvements:

What should the library provide more of/improve in the next few years?
 Response count (up to 3 selections per submission)



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts and insights during the strategic planning process. We are grateful to all the residents who took time to participate in our community survey, to all the Verona Public Library staff members whose ideas and feedback were an invaluable part of this process, and to the consultants at the South Central Library System for their work on this plan.



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Chris Hopp, President

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Library Management Team

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Julie Harrison, Assistant Director/
Head of Youth Services

Ronda Evenson, Head of Circulation Services

Tonja Lepien, Head of Adult Services

Theresa Skov, Head of Technical Services

Special thanks to Abby Kolosovskiy, Verona Public Library Communications Coordinator and Brad Nellis, Distillery Marketing and Design Studio, for their design contributions.

For questions or comments, please contact Stacey Burkart at
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