Social Wellbeing, Literacy and Libraries: Discussion of IMLS' Research

Emily Plagman and Madison Sampson

Social Wellbeing, Literacy & Libraries
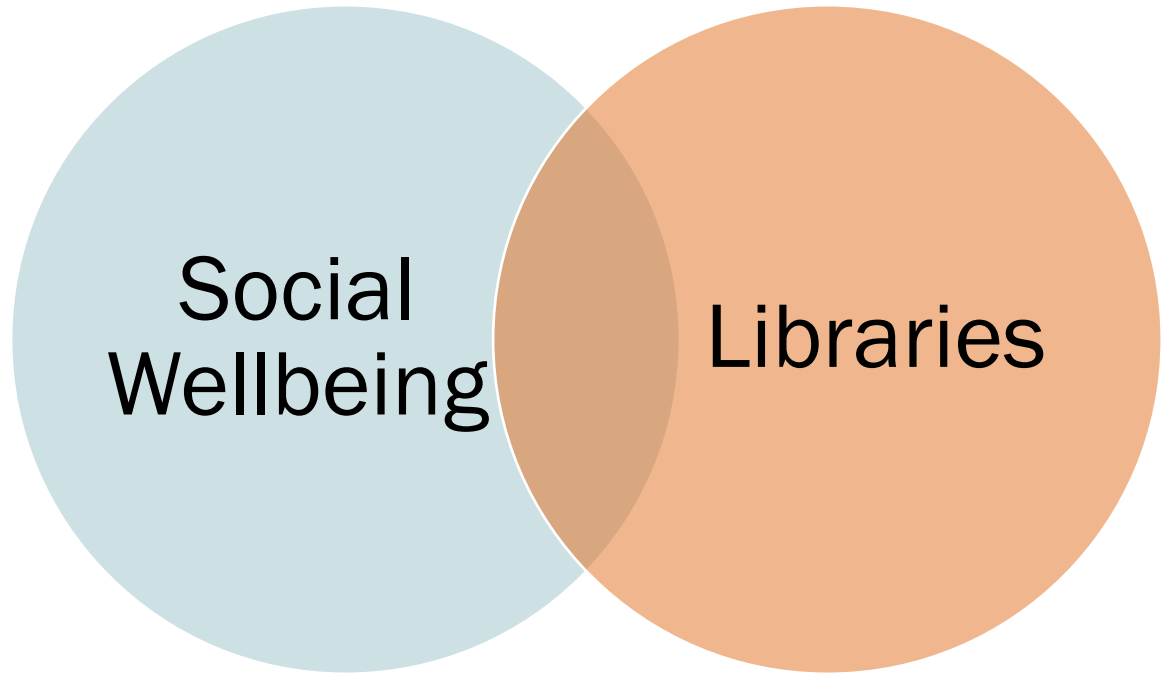
Literacy

Libraries

Social Wellbeing

What can we learn at the intersection of all three?

IMLS investments

- Social Wellbeing Research

- Empowering Readers, Empowering Citizens

- IMLS' Grants & Data Collection

Social Wellbeing & Libraries

Social Wellbeing Research

"Social wellbeing...focuses on the direct and indirect ways that libraries and museums create social value—the dimensions of wellbeing their efforts support, the institutional structures they employ, the partnerships they develop, and the positions they occupy within broader networks of support for social wellbeing." - pg. 12

https://www.imls.gov/publications/understanding-social-wellbeing-impacts-nations-libraries-and-museums

Social Wellbeing Research (1)

Purpose:

- Examine social wellbeing and the relation to presence and utilization of museums and public libraries

- Research led by Reinvestment Fund

- Published October 2021

https://www.imls.gov/publications/understanding-social-wellbeing-impacts-nations-libraries-and-museums
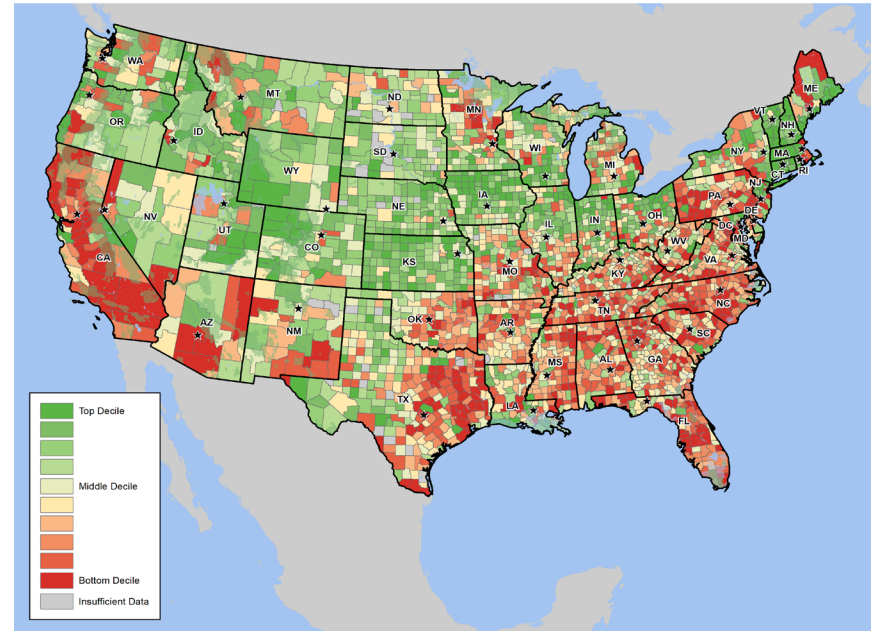
Social Wellbeing Research (2)

Study activities:

- Literature review

- County-level analyses estimating

  1. Presence and utilization of museums and libraries

  2. Social wellbeing indices for every US county

  3. Relationships between item 1 and select indices in item 2
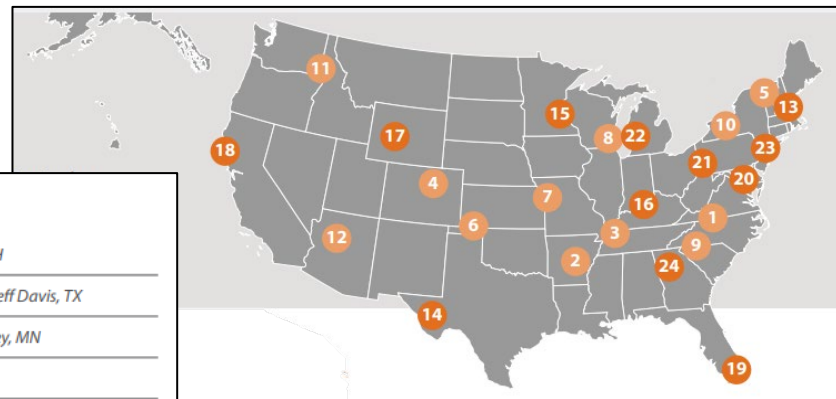
Distribution of Libraries Index

https://www.imls.gov/publications/understanding-social-wellbeing-impacts-nations-libraries-and-museums

Social Wellbeing Research (3)

Study activities (cont'd):

- 24 Case Studies

LIBRARIES

1	**Blue Ridge Regional Library System**	*Martinsville, VA*
2	**Central Arkansas Library System**	*Pulaski, AR*
3	**C.E. Weldon and McWherter Public Libraries**	*Weakley, TN*
4	**Denver Public Library**	*Denver, CO*
5	**Fletcher Free Library**	*Chittenden, V,T*
6	**Liberal Memorial Library**	*Seward, KS*
7	**Mid-Continent Public Library**	*Platte, MO*
8	**Milwaukee Public Library**	*Milwaukee, WI*
9	**Spartanburg County Public Libraries**	*Spartanburg, SC*
10	**Victor Farmington Library, Wood Library** *and* **Geneva Public Library**	*Ontario, NY*
11	**Whitman County Rural Library District**	*Whitman, WA*
12	**Yavapai County Free Library District**	*Yavapai, AZ*

MUSEUMS

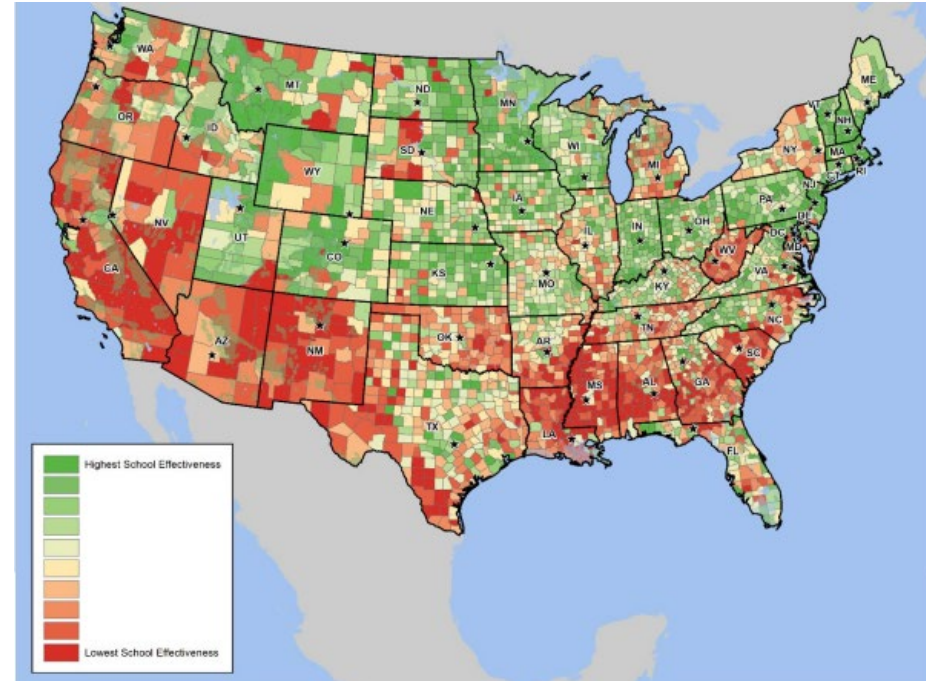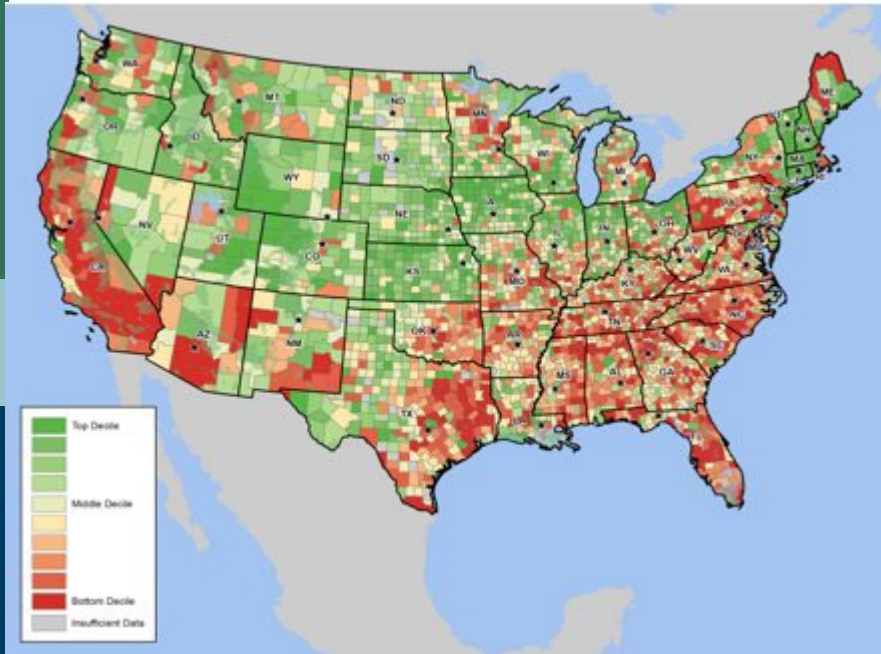|		
13	**Canterbury Shaker Village**	*Merrimack, NH*
14	**Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute**	*Jeff Davis, TX*
15	**Como Park Zoo and Conservatory**	*Ramsey, MN*
16	**Kentucky Science Center**	*Jefferson, KY*
17	**Lander Children's Museum**	*Fremont, WY*
18	**Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**	*Mendocino, CA*
19	**Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami**	*Miami-Dade, FL*
20	**Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center**	*Prince George's, MD*
21	**The Mattress Factory**	*Allegheny, PA*
22	**Tri-Cities Historical Museum**	*Ottawa, MI*
23	**Visual Arts Center of New Jersey**	*Union, NJ*
24	**Woodlands Garden**	*DeKalb, GA*

- Document museum and library activities

- Document museum and library positions in broader networks of support

- Estimate economic contributions

1. Presence & Utilization Example

Distribution of Libraries & School Effectiveness Indices

2. Indices Analyses

- Economic Wellbeing*
- Housing Opportunity
- School Effectiveness*
- Institutional Connection
- Cultural Assets

- Ethnic Diversity
- Economic Diversity
- Health Access
- Personal Security
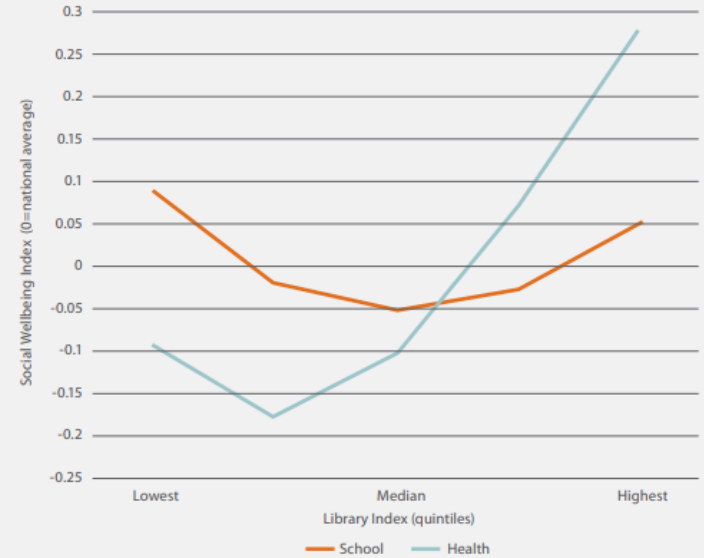- Community Health*

*indicator selected for deeper analysis

Relationship Between Libraries & Indices

💡 <u>Insight</u>: Correlations are mixed and do not prove causation.
However..... Case studies provided richer information about local influence.

ALL COUNTIES

FIGURE 6.
Predicted Values of School Effectiveness and Community Health and Library Index Quintiles

Social Wellbeing Index (0=national average)

0.3
0.25
0.2
0.15
0.1
0.05
0
-0.05
-0.1
-0.15
-0.2
-0.25

Lowest — Median — Highest
Library Index (quintiles)

— School — Health

indicator selected for deeper analysis

Case Study Examples

Yavapai County, Arizona

<u>Yavapai County Free Library District (YCFL), AZ</u>
County system, 15 branches
Annual budget: $1.2 million (2018-2019)

<u>Case study finding:</u>
"Throughout the county, there is limited public infrastructure and few public dollars for small towns or unincorporated parts of the county...The Network [which consists of 42 public entities and is spearheaded by YCFLD] <u>pools its collective resources in a single-platform catalog so that books, entertainment, and educational and digital materials are available to any member of the Network, anywhere in the county, no matter how remote.</u>"[2]
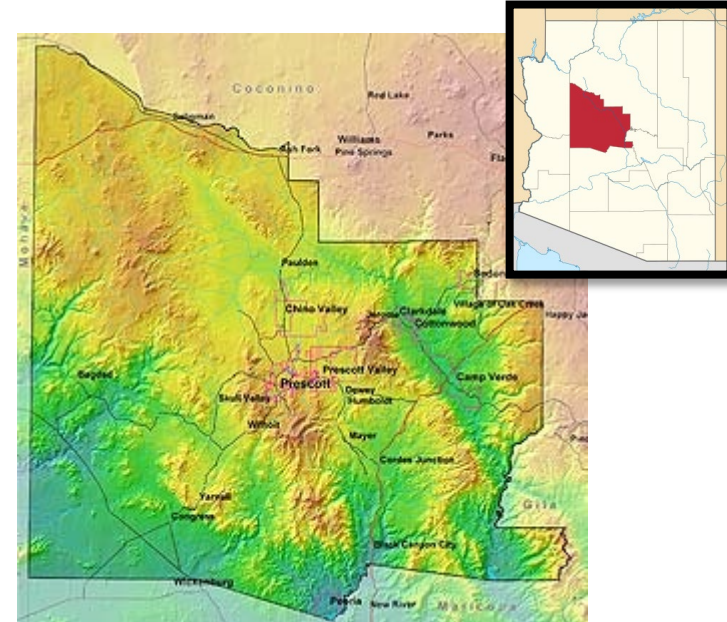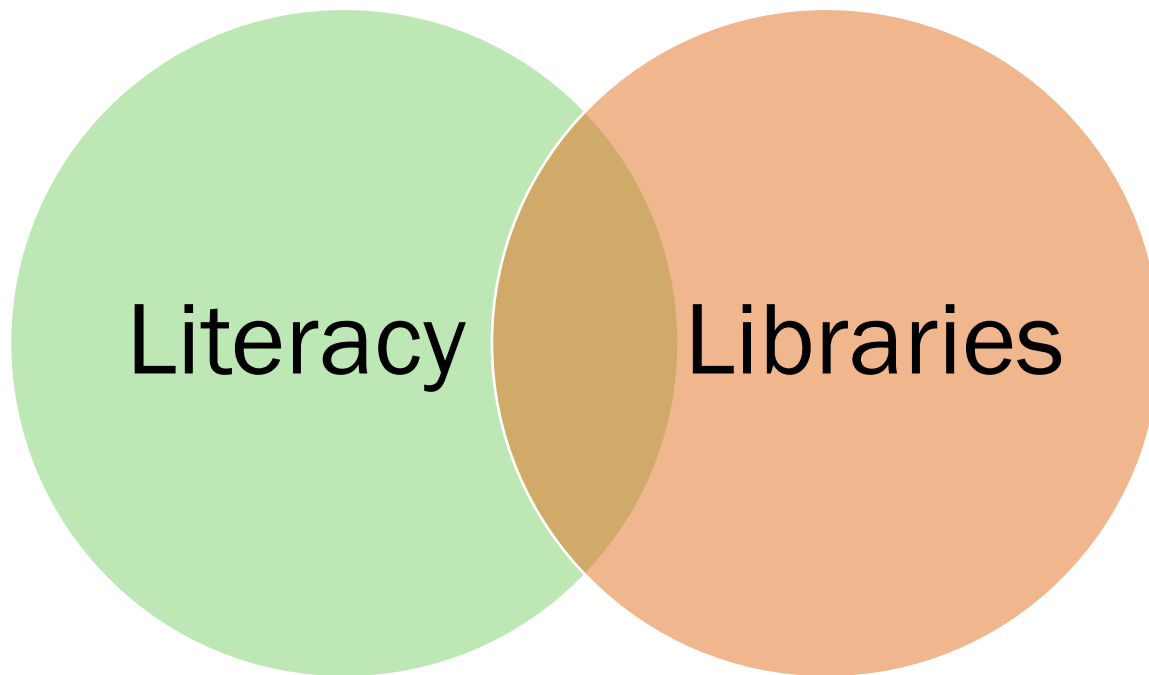

Image sources: Wikipedia & Yavapai County Government "About" webpage

– [2] Library Profile: Yavapai Free Library District, https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/yavapaicounty.pdf, page 4

Literacy & Libraries

Literacy   Libraries

Empowering Readers, Empowering Citizens

Planet Word Museum, Washington DC
March 1-2, 2022

"The mission of this convening is to facilitate knowledge sharing across stakeholders from libraries and local community organizations to generate new ideas and innovations for empowering readers."

Guiding Questions

1. Buidling upon learnings from the social wellbeing study, how does literacy contribute to improving outcomes for community members/library patrons?

2. If library usage is declining, as evident in circulations rates, what is at stake and how can libraries increase community engagement?

Convening Goal

"The mission of this convening is to facilitate knowledge sharing across stakeholders from libraries and local community organizations to generate new ideas and innovations for empowering readers."

Overview (1)

- **Location:** Planet Word Museum, Washington DC

- **Dates:** March 1-2, 2022 (1.5 days)

Overview (2)

- **Invitees:** ~100 selected librarians, library directors, educators, researchers, grantmaking organizations, and community-based program officers, IMLS staff

- **Structure:** 3 sessions comprised of expert keynotes, panel discussions w/ Q&A, and facilitated table discussions

Session 1: Libraries & Social Wellbeing

Keynote Speakers

Expert Panelists

Robert Putnam
Political Scientist,
Researcher, Author

Shaylyn Romney Garrett
Author, Researcher

Dianne Connery
Pottsboro Library

Carmen Patlan
Highwood Public Library

Felton Thomas, Jr.
Cleveland Public Library

Session 2: Strategic Alignment of Library Resources

Keynote Speakers

Expert Panelists

Tim Coates

Researcher,
The Freckle Report

Tony Ageh

New York Public Library

Jennie Garner

North Liberty Library

Patrick A. Losinski

Columbus Metropolitan
Library

Kelvin Watson

Las Vegas-Clark County
Library District

Session 3: Prioritizing Literacy Development

Keynote Speaker

Maryanne Wolf
Author, Researcher
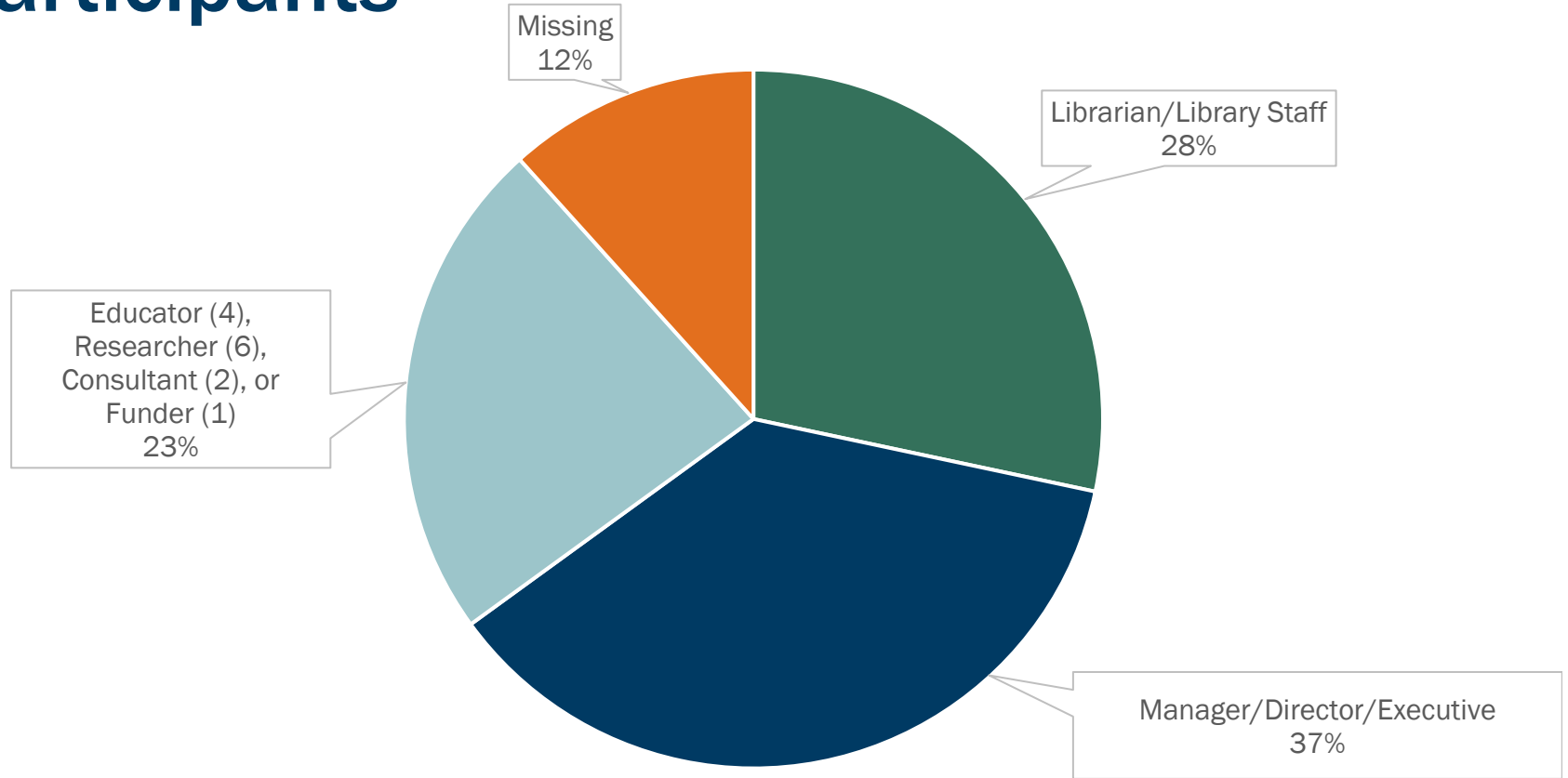
Expert Panelists

Dipesh Navsaria
Reach Out & Read

Munro Richardson
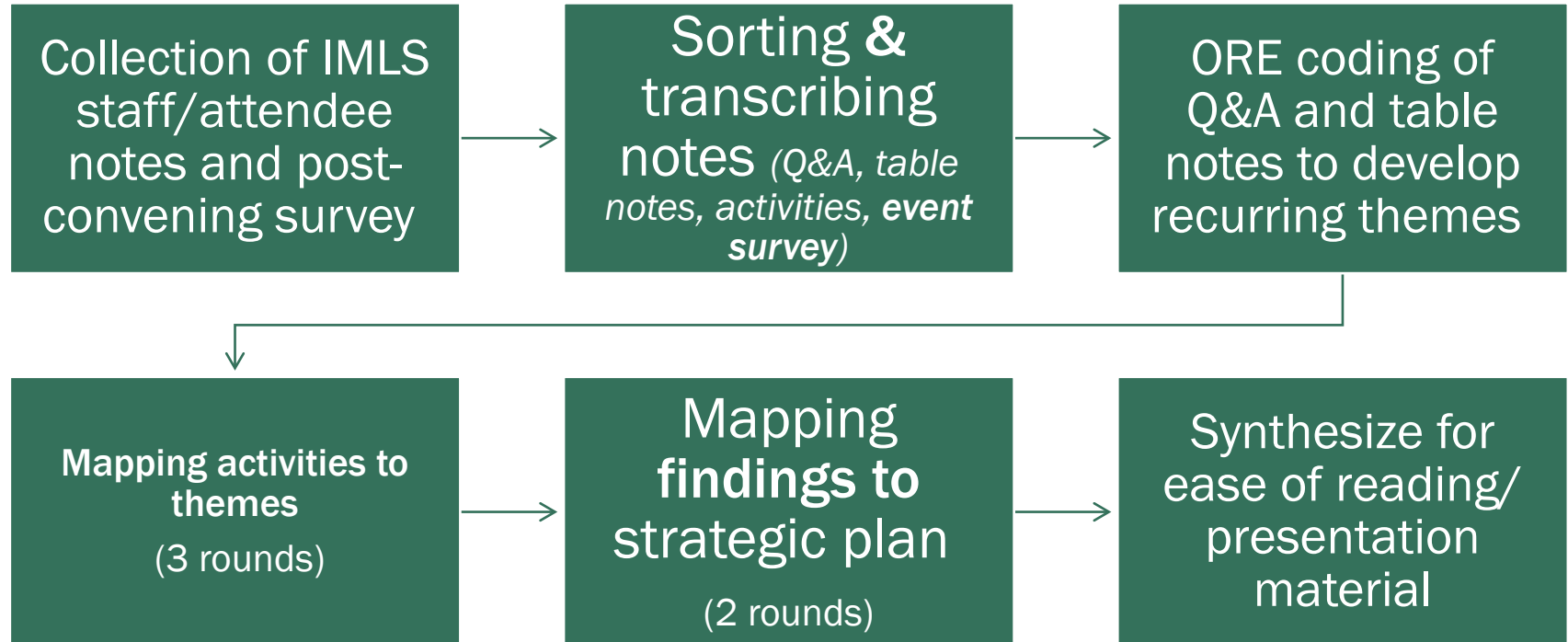READ Charlotte

British A. Robinson
Barbara Bush Foundation

Participants

Missing
12%

Librarian/Library Staff
28%

Educator (4),
Researcher (6),
Consultant (2), or
Funder (1)
23%

Manager/Director/Executive
37%

49 participants interested in follow up work groups

Organization & Synthesis

Post-convening assessment (3/2 - 4/11)

Collection of IMLS staff/attendee notes and post-convening survey

→

Sorting **&** transcribing notes *(Q&A, table notes, activities, **event survey**)*

→

ORE coding of Q&A and table notes to develop recurring themes

Mapping activities to themes

(3 rounds)

→

Mapping **findings to** strategic plan

(2 rounds)

→

Synthesize for ease of reading/ presentation material

Emergent Themes

1. Library Identity, Purpose, and Branding

2. Literacy Development and Engagement

    2b. Navigating Digital Transformation

3. Funding and IMLS Grantmaking

4. Research, Data, and Evaluation

5. Supporting the LIS Field/Library Workforce

6. Identifying Best Practices & Programs

The theme of **Improving Equity via Outreach & Collections** is interwoven throughout each theme. Examples are noted as "*Equity Question(s)*" under each theme.

Current IMLS Definitions of Literacy

- Visual Literacy
    - Demonstrate the ability to interpret, recognize, appreciate, and understand information presented through visible actions, objects and symbols, natural or man-made[2]

- Scientific and Numerical Literacy
    - Demonstrate the ability to evaluate the quality of scientific and numerical information on the basis of its sources and the methods used to generate it
    - Demonstrate the capacity to pose and evaluate scientific arguments based on evidence and to apply conclusions from such arguments appropriately
    - Demonstrate ability to reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts

- Cross-Disciplinary Thinking
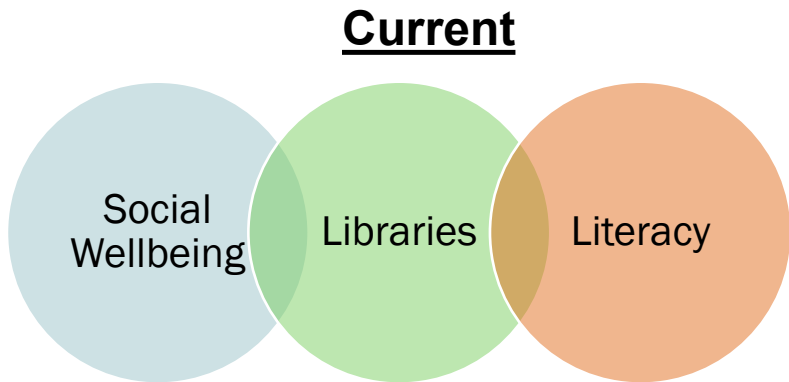   - Apply knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills across disciplines in appropriate and effective ways

- Basic Literacy
    - Demonstrate the ability to use language to read, write, listen, and speak

What's Next?

Current

Social Wellbeing — Libraries — Literacy

Future

Social Wellbeing — Literacy — Libraries
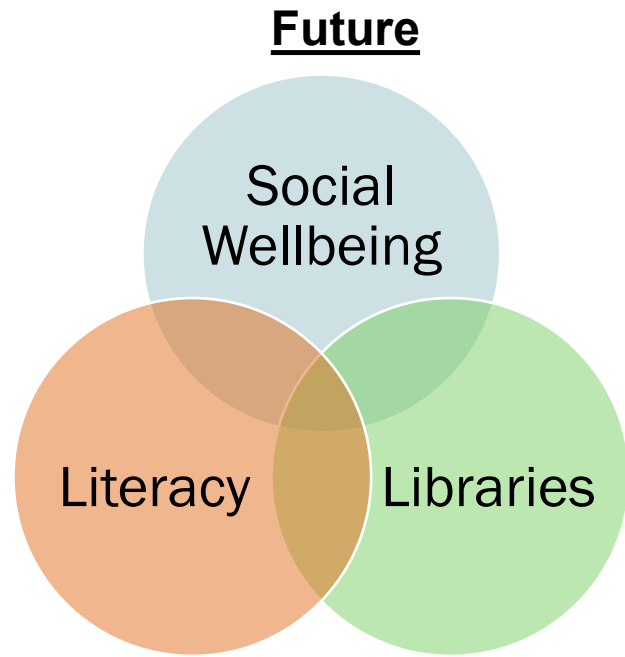
LSTA Funds, Literacy & You

The role of a LSTA Coordinator:

- Where do you encounter concepts of "literacy" in your work?

- How do you see social wellbeing improving because of your work?
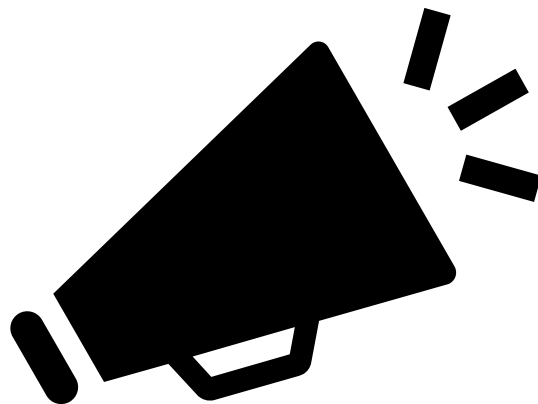
Session Activity

How does literacy influence social wellbeing and what does the library's role in literacy look like in your state?

- What did you learn during COVID & CARES/ARPA work?

- What did you learn from your evaluations?

- What have you heard directly from the field?

Social Wellbeing

Literacy

Libraries

Report Out

Activity: What do you see? (1)

The following data elements were included in the School Effectiveness Index:

- Performance on standardized math state assessments;
- Performance on standardized English/Language Arts state assessments;
- High school graduation rate; and
- Percent of 16- to 19-year-olds who are not high school graduates or enrolled in school.

Distribution of Libraries & School Effectiveness Indices
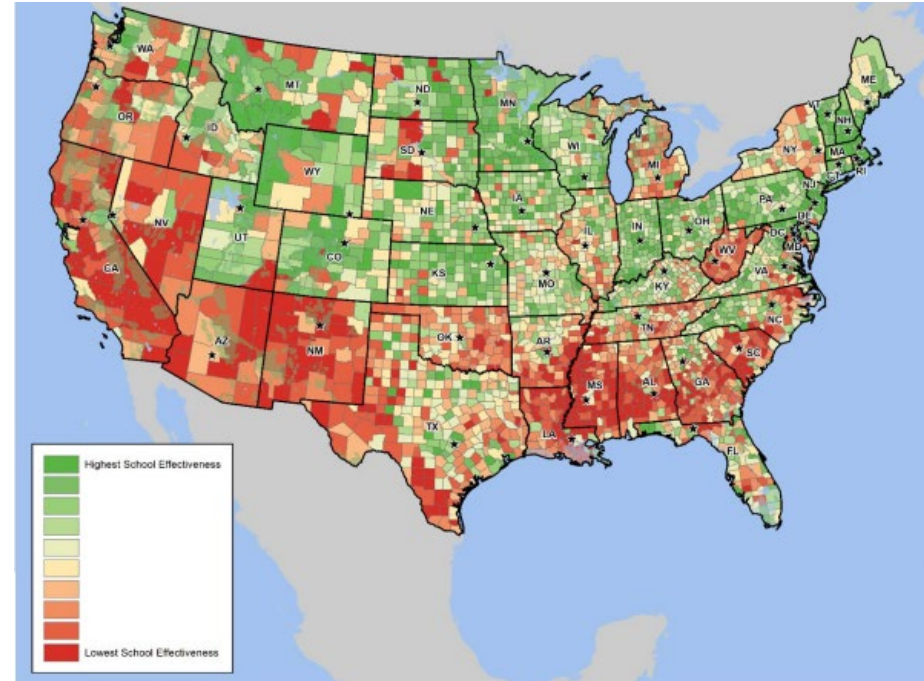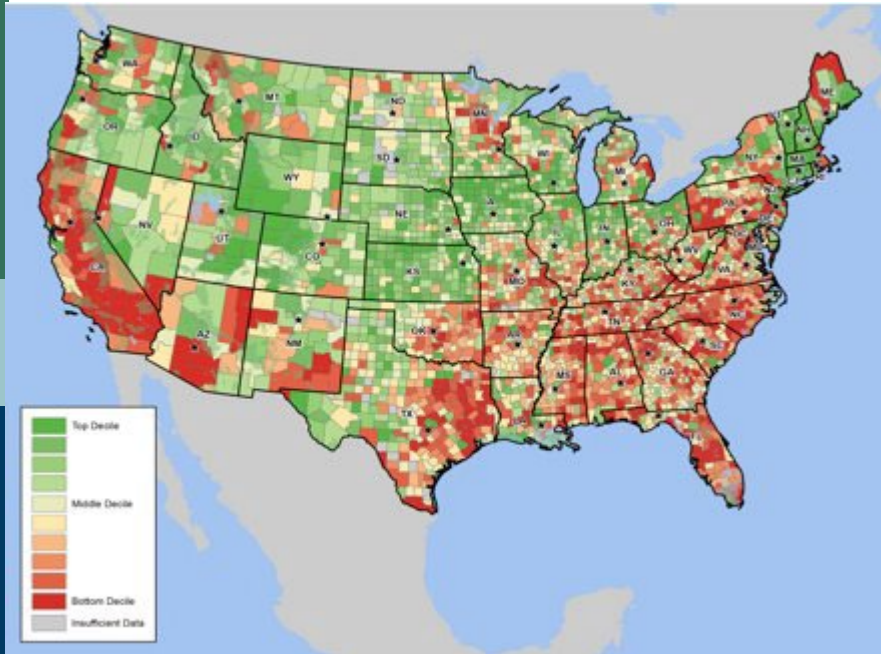
Activity: What do you see? (2)

Distribution of Libraries & Community Health Indices