

Description

Participating libraries of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Opportunity Online hardware program completed an evaluation survey as part of the annual ALA Funding & Technology Access Study. Over 785 library branches participated in the final round of the Opportunity Online hardware program.

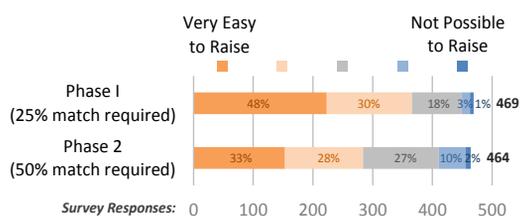


Key Findings

- Over 80% of participating libraries indicated that the grant program had a positive community impact.
- 74% of participating libraries have or will have some form of replacement/maintenance plan for public computers.
- 52% of participating libraries expressed confidence in their ability to secure public funding for future technology expenses.
- Over 70% of feedback to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation expressed gratitude for the grant program.

Ease of Raising the Matching Funds

Exhibit 1. Reported ease of raising the matching funds for each phase of the program:



- 78% of grant participants expressed ease in raising the first year match funds. Grant participants as a whole found the second year more difficult, yet 61% still classified the challenge as "Easy". (Exhibit 1)
- Participants cited a number of elements of success in raising the matching funds, most noticeably demonstrating the value of free computing, community support, and advocacy. (Exhibit 2)
- Almost half of library participants felt that lack of community resources was a significant barrier to raising matching funds. (Exhibit 3)
- Other barriers cited include lack of library staff time to fundraise, lack of commitment/interest from government, and government unawareness of library technology needs. (Exhibit 3)

Exhibit 2. Critical elements of success in raising the matching funds:¹

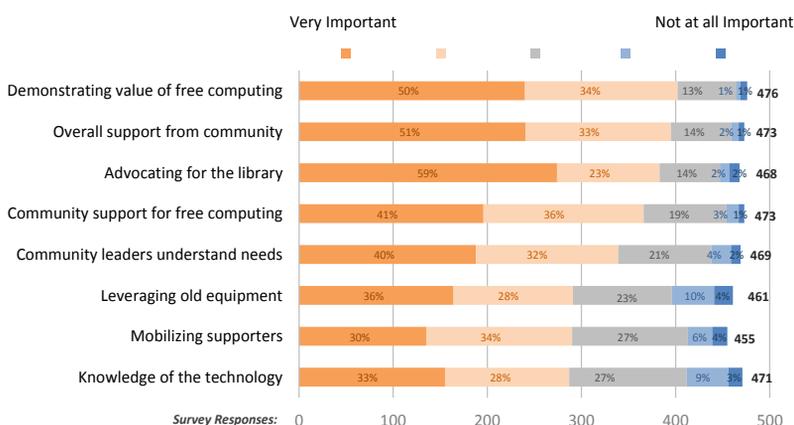
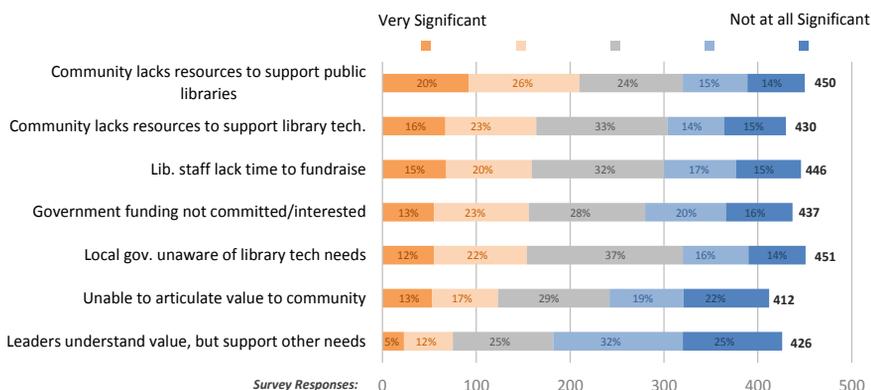


Exhibit 3. Major barriers to raising the matching funds:²



Source: American Library Association and University of Maryland, June 2010. *Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study, Opportunity Online Evaluation Questions, 2009-2010.*

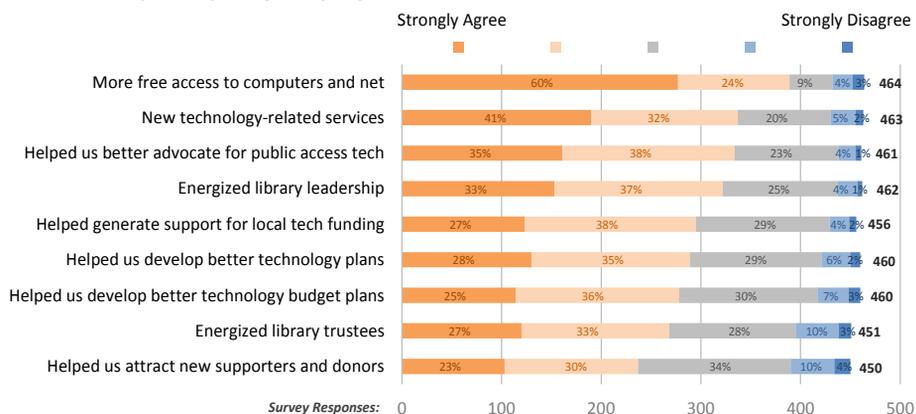
1. 63 libraries answered "Other." These responses were grouped into the categories displayed where applicable.

2. 46 libraries answered "Other." These responses were grouped into the categories displayed where applicable.

Program Impact

- Over 80% of participating libraries indicated that the grant program had a positive community impact in one or more ways. (Exhibit 4)
- The majority of participating libraries noticed all of the positive impacts cited in the survey. (Exhibit 4)
- The top ranking impacts include more free access to computers and the internet, new technology-related services, and help to better advocate for public access technology. (Exhibit 4)

Exhibit 4. Impacts of the grant program: ³



Public Access Technology Sustainability

- 74% of participating libraries have or will have some form of replacement/maintenance plan for public computers. (Exhibit 5)
- 52% of participating libraries expressed confidence in their ability to secure public funding for future technology expenses. (Exhibit 6)

Exhibit 5. Does your budget include funds for ongoing replacement and maintenance of public computers? ⁴

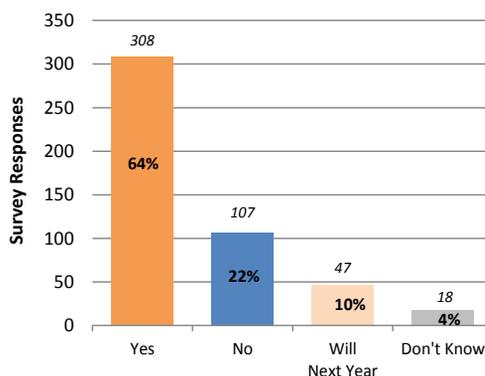
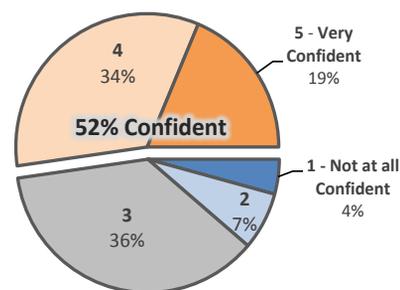


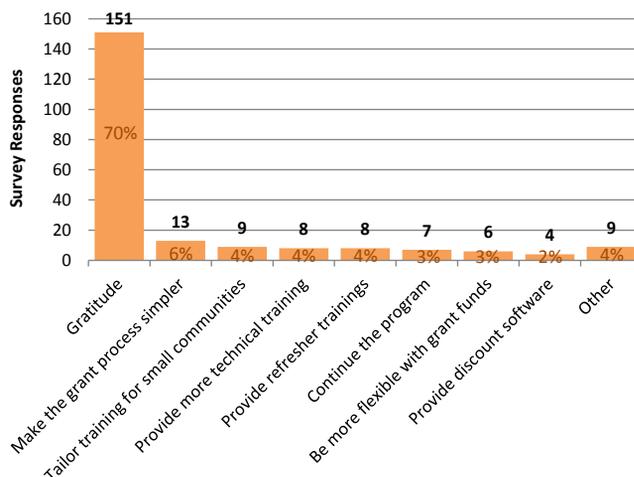
Exhibit 6. Library confidence in ability secure public funding for future technology expenses:



Library Feedback on Grant Program

- Over 70% of feedback to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation expressed gratitude for the grant program. (Exhibit 7)
- Grant participants offered a number of other valuable feedback based on their experience in the grant program.

Exhibit 7. Feedback from Grant Participants



Source: American Library Association and University of Maryland, June 2010. *Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study, Opportunity Online Evaluation Questions, 2009-2010.*

3. 23 libraries answered "Other." These responses were grouped into the categories displayed where applicable.

4. 45 libraries answered "Other." These responses were grouped into the categories displayed where applicable.