

Libraries Together FAQ

Q. I didn't receive a survey in the mail, but I'd like to complete one and send it in. Can I do that?

A. We can only include surveys from people who were randomly selected, but you can still participate in Libraries Together. We'll be holding public forums in mid-October. Each forum will be two hours long and will ask you to make some of the same choices as you see in the survey. If you're interested in attending a forum, let us know at Feedback. Space is limited and we may need to limit participation to assure that all parts of the county are included.

Q. The survey asks us to choose among different ways to structure public libraries, like having one library for the whole county. Wouldn't that require a change in state law?

A. Depending on how the libraries choose to move forward, it could require a change in state law.

Q. I like more than one of the options for changing how libraries operate. Why can't I pick two?

A. The survey was designed to require people to make choices, and sometimes those choices are pretty difficult. We've asked you to select the one that you prefer and tell us why you made that choice. This will give us a realistic picture of what matters most to people.

Q: Why did you decide to do this study?

A: Government funding is tight. State and local elected officials are demanding greater efficiency from all tax-supported services, including libraries. Rather than wait to be forced to change how they operate, the libraries decided to be proactive. They wanted the chance to consider the options and to involve their customers in deciding what should be done.

Q: If government funds are so tight, why are tax dollars being spent on this project?

A: The majority of the funding (about 75%) comes from grant money provided by the Scott County Regional Authority, Riverboat Development Authority, and State Library. The remainder is from the participating libraries and Friends of the Library organizations.

Q: Why are you using out-of-town consultants? Couldn't this be done by local people?

A: The libraries decided to send its request for proposals to firms nationwide. They did this in part because it was so important that the study be neutral. A firm from outside the community was unlikely to have ties to one library or another. No local firms submitted proposals for consideration.

Q: Why are we letting out-of-town consultants tell us what to do?

A: The consulting firm, a Kansas City-based nonprofit organization, will not recommend one course of action and it certainly won't decide what the libraries will do. Instead, the firm will provide a report that includes a range of actions and the likely public, board and staff response to each. Then the libraries and the local community will decide which course of action is best.

Q: How will the public be involved in Libraries Together?

A: The public will be involved in three main ways. First, a random sample of library card holders will be asked to complete a survey on how satisfied they are with their library. Second, a random sample of all residents of Scott County will be asked to complete a survey about which actions they think libraries should take to operate more efficiently. Third, local citizens will be invited to participate in public meetings during one week in October. Citizens will work in small groups to consider the tradeoffs and consequences of different changes to libraries.

Q: Sometimes when the public is involved, what they say doesn't have any impact on what happens. How do we know that this will be different?

A: You're right that public involvement doesn't always have an impact. In this case, though, no decisions have been or will be made until after the public has had a chance to review and discuss the facts. The libraries are committed to involving their patrons and to learning what's most important to them. Citizens won't be "sold" one course of action, but will discuss what would be gained or lost from several different ways to approach library services.

Q: I would like to attend one of the public meetings. Can anyone attend?

A: One week in October, we'll hold about a dozen two-hour discussions with small groups of Scott County residents. We can accommodate about 20 persons in each small group, a number low enough to allow for a meaningful discussion. Anyone can reserve a spot to attend until all spots are filled. If you'd like to be notified via email when Libraries Together begins taking reservations, please send your name, email address, home address and daytime phone number to the public relations coordinator.