Proprietary & Confidential

FINAL REPORT

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Pueblo County-City Library

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE STUDY

August 23, 2024

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Moss Adams LLP
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2800
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 302-6500

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. BACKGROUND

Located in Pueblo, Colorado, the Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD, the District) is comprised of 12 departments and eight branch locations (Barkman, Giodone, Greenhorn Valley, Lamb, Library @ the Y, Lucero, Pueblo West, and Rawlings). A seven-member Board of Trustees oversees the District, providing guidance and review of operations. PCCLD serves Pueblo County, which has a population of 169,422 (2023 U.S. Census), through a variety of services, programs, and resources.

PCCLD's mission is to "serve as a foundation for our community by offering welcoming, well equipped and maintained facilities, outstanding collections, and well-trained employees who provide expert service encouraging the joy of reading, supporting lifelong learning and presenting access to information from around the world." In 2016, PCCLD concluded a multi-year culture enhancement project to assess the District's organizational culture and identify opportunities for change and improvement. To continue this work, the District engaged Moss Adams LLP (Moss Adams) to conduct an organizational culture audit to revitalize efforts to improve the District's workplace culture, service delivery, and employee morale.

This assessment is the first of two initiatives intentionally designed to first gain an updated understanding of District culture and opportunities for improvement, and second to move forward with implementing the recommendations identified in the assessment.

B. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This work took place between January 2024 and June 2024 and was carried out as follows:

1. **Start-up and Management:** We conducted collaborative project planning, ongoing progress reporting, and regular feedback loops with PCCLD project leadership.
2. **Fact-finding:** In order to obtain an understanding of the District's culture, we performed the following activities:
   - *Interviews:* We conducted interviews and listening sessions with over 90 District employees and leaders, including all Board of Trustees, all members of District leadership, and 57 front-line employees. All branches and departments were reflected in these conversations.
   - *Document Review:* We reviewed multiple documents, including but not limited to:
     - Organizational charts
     - Policies and procedures
     - Marketing material such as programming flyers and calendars
     - Evaluation forms
   - *Survey:* We distributed a confidential online survey to all District employees between March 21 and April 1, 2024. Out of 145 employees invited to take the survey, 116 individuals submitted either full or partial responses (a participation rate of 80%). Survey results are included in the appendix.

- ○ ***Industry Best Practice Research:*** We conducted industry best practice research from entities such as the American Library Association (ALA) and Urban Libraries Council (ULC) to help inform our recommendations.

3. **Workshops:** We conducted two workshops to reflect on the results of the culture assessment, establish culture goals, and prioritize key initiatives to be included in an implementation plan.

   - ○ ***Preliminary Observations Workshop (Workshop 1):*** We hosted the Preliminary Observations Workshop on April 10, 2024. In this workshop, we reviewed preliminary observations on the District's culture, defined success for each thematic area, and brainstormed initiatives to support the District's ideal culture. Workshop participants included the Board of Trustee members, District leadership, and the Culture Committee.

   - ○ ***Implementation Plan Workshop (Workshop 2):*** We hosted an Implementation Plan Workshop on May 10, 2024. In this workshop, we reviewed the key initiatives from the prior workshop, refined recommendations, prioritized efforts, and reviewed key change management principles. Workshop participants included District leadership and the Culture Committee.

4. **Reporting:** Based on the results of fact-finding and feedback from the workshops, we prepared a draft report. The report was circulated to District senior leadership for review. Feedback on the draft report was incorporated into development of the final report and implementation plan.

C. WORKSHOP TAKEAWAYS

Organizational Culture

When asked for three words or phrases that describe the current organizational culture in the District, survey respondents had a mix of positive and negative sentiments. Among the positive sentiments, the most frequent words were inclusive, friendly, helpful, supportive, and teamwork. Conversely, the most frequent critical words were hierarchical, competitive, non-communicative (miscommunication), siloed, and untrusting. Of those who provided mixed responses, the majority acknowledged existing problems with a desire or hope for improvement. The following word cloud provides a visual representation of these responses:

When asked for three to five words to describe one's vision for the desired future state of the District's organizational culture, employees indicated the desire for trust, respect, collaboration, inclusivity, communication, support, and growth. The following word cloud depicts survey respondents' ideal future state of the District:

Trust and respect are important components of a healthy and productive work environment, serving as interpersonal dynamics that contribute to positive relationships and collaboration. Trust is the belief or confidence that one can rely on another person's actions, words, or decisions. Trust is built over time through consistent behaviors, transparency, and effective communication. In a workplace context, trust enables collaboration, delegation of responsibilities, and effective teamwork. Respect involves recognizing and valuing the worth, dignity, and contributions of others. It entails treating people with courtesy, fairness, and consideration, regardless of their role or position. In a work environment, respect fosters positive relationships, mutual understanding, and a sense of dignity and belonging among individuals working together.

Vision for Culture

In Workshop 1, we conducted an activity to brainstorm the District's vision for culture based on the survey results. The District's defined vision statement is "Books and Beyond" and its motto is "Ideas, Imagination, and Information;" these serve as foundational principles to inform the vision for culture. A vision for culture is the desired values, beliefs, behaviors, and atmosphere that an organization embodies. Organizations create vision statements that outline the ideal workplace environment and set the tone for how employees interact, collaborate, and work towards common goals. The vision serves as a guiding principle for shaping the organization's culture and informs decision-making processes to align actions with the desired cultural outcomes. The following summarizes the results of the visioning brainstorm, which were reviewed and affirmed by participants in Workshop 2:

- **Collaborative:** We encourage teamwork and shared expertise among staff to better serve one another and our community.
- **Accountable:** We uphold accountability, fostering a sense of responsibility and transparency in all our internal operations and decision-making processes.
- **IDEA:** At the heart of our organization's mission is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity, ensuring that every voice is heard, respected, and valued.
- **Trustworthy** We cultivate trust among our team members, valuing honesty, professionalism, and mutual respect in all our interactions.
- **Innovative:** We nurture an innovative internal environment, empowering staff to explore creative solutions and embrace new ideas to improve our services.
- **Adaptable:** We embrace adaptability, encouraging flexibility and resilience among our staff to effectively respond to changing needs and challenges.
- **Safe:** We prioritize a safe and supportive internal environment, ensuring mental and physical well-being and inclusivity of all staff members in our workspace.

As the District moves forward with the implementation phase of this work, it can take the above sentiments and develop a concise and compelling vision for culture statement. Similar to how the above statements were developed collaboratively with individuals from across geographies and hierarchies, the vision for culture statement can be developed by bringing together diverse individuals.

Preliminary Observation Themes

In Workshop 1, the Moss Adams team reviewed preliminary observations resulting from interviews, focus groups, and the employee survey. These observations were grouped into themes as reflected in the table below.

THEME	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
Service Delivery	• Branch service and program offerings are responsive to each community • The District is open to innovative programming ideas and options • Service delivery was described as engaging and motivating, reflecting a connection to the community	• Branches could be more consistent in their approach to customer service • In alignment with its IDEA efforts, the District should develop diverse programming and ensure marketing materials are strategically placed to reach all community members • Cultivate a sense of safety for both patrons and employees
Communication	• Internal branch communications appear strong and well-received by front-line staff • There are opportunities to provide upward feedback at branches • The District has a culture of listening to one another	• Develop upward feedback loops that extend beyond individual branches • Promote responsibility and accountability among all employees through difficult conversations • Ensure messages are distributed in a way that is accessible to all District employees, including part-time and substitute workers
Employee Engagement and Morale	• Employees report a strong affinity with the District's mission and overall job satisfaction • Employees feel connection at their branch locations • Employees appreciate and look forward to events	• Revise employee recognition mechanisms to enable recognition in ways that are meaningful to the individual • Create psychological safety and the ability to make mistakes at work • Enhance trust, respect, and accountability

Each of these thematic areas ultimately informs organizational culture.

In Workshop 2, we reviewed recommendations that were brainstormed during the previous workshop. This review focused on what success looks like, what existing resources to support the initiative are already in place, what additional resources would be required, and any potential risks to the initiative. Workshop participants provided input, which is reflected throughout this report. Workshop participants were also asked to prioritize initiatives, which is reflected in the implementation plan.

D. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations and recommendations were grouped into three categories summarized in the following table and detailed in Section III.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
Service Delivery		
1.	**Observation**	In its role as a public library, ensuring the physical safety and well-being of staff and patrons is an ongoing concern for the District.
	Recommendation	The District should gather qualitative and quantitative data to identify safety needs across branches and explore partnerships with local providers to build a robust safety program.
2.	**Observation**	Program evaluation has historically been heavily reliant on quantitative factors such as circulation and program attendance. This approach to evaluation is not holistic as it does not consider elements of program success such as impact or alignment with strategic goals.
	Recommendation	The District should develop a program evaluation process that reviews programs holistically, including advancement of its strategic plan, IDEA, and community impact.
3.	**Observation**	Driven by perceived competition and challenges in communication, the District is struggling with low levels of collaboration, leading to siloing and fragmentation in programming and service delivery.
	Recommendation	District leaders should leverage existing cross-functional committees to spearhead collaboration on library programs and initiatives. This, in conjunction with updates to program evaluation and improved communication, can strengthen collaboration across the District.
Communication		
4.	**Observation**	The District is experiencing issues with missed or mixed messaging using its current cascading communication framework, contributing to increased levels of frustration and distrust between staff and management.
	Recommendation	District leadership should work together to establish formal communication protocols that encourage productive multidirectional communication between management and staff.
5.	**Observation**	The District has adopted an increasing number of methods to communicate information to staff, contributing to fragmentation and confusion and making it difficult to ensure consistent and effective communication across the organization.
	Recommendation	The District should solicit feedback from staff to assess the effectiveness of its current communication pathways and work to consolidate its communication methods to promote clarity and consistency, focusing on integrating key features and tools.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
Employee Engagement and Morale		
6.	**Observation**	Expectations for employees are not clear and consistent across the District, which results in inconsistencies and creates challenges in holding employees to similar standards.
	Recommendation	A. Develop and reiterate clear, consistent employee expectations related to customer service, integration of IDEA in operating practices, and position responsibilities through job descriptions and other guiding documents. B. Revise performance review processes to include individualized performance goals that align with the District's mission, vision, values, vision for culture, and job descriptions.
7.	**Observation**	Employees consistently reported the perception that team members are not always held accountable, which impacts morale, communication, and service delivery.
	Recommendation	The District should embrace a culture of feedback and accountability to cultivate trust, respect, and collaboration through conflict management training and revised performance management processes.
8.	**Observation**	Employees indicate that they do not always feel recognized for their contributions to the District, which impacts employee engagement and morale.
	Recommendation	The District should prioritize providing employees with genuine and meaningful recognition that honors their contributions to the District.

II. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This report presents recommendations across a wide range of areas related to the District's culture improvement initiative. To provide the District with guidance for selecting which recommendations to execute and prioritize relative to other District efforts, we have prepared a high-level implementation plan. This implementation plan should be viewed as a living document that leadership will discuss, organize, and adjust to create an actionable path forward to strengthen and shape District culture. The implementation plan recommendations include the following:

- Priority level (high, medium, low), which reflects the sense of urgency and demand that was reflected in Workshop 2.
- Effort level (high, medium, low), which indicates the anticipated level of effort to complete the recommendation.
- Responsibility identifies who will be involved in designing and implementing the initiative:
  - The primary party is responsible for driving the work forward and coordinating work among stakeholders.
  - The secondary party encompasses those who will be actively involved in the work and collaborating with the primary party throughout the initiative
- Strategy and implementation period over the next three years to prioritize the timing of work and any necessary sequencing.
- Resources required reflect on the additional resources that Workshop 2 participants indicated would likely be necessary to fulfill the initiative.
- Potential performance measures provide optional performance measures that the District could use to monitor progress on this work. In order to evaluate year-over-year progress, the District should implement an annual employee engagement survey over key areas as noted in the table below. This will help to provide the baseline of the current culture and demonstrate where initiatives have had meaningful impacts to employees, teams, and the District overall.

REF.	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	EFFORT LEVEL	PRIMARY PARTY	SECONDARY PARTY	FY2024 Q3	FY2024 Q4	FY2025 Q1	FY2025 Q2	FY2025 Q3	FY2025 Q4	FY2026 Q1	FY2026 Q2	FY2026 Q3	FY2026 Q4	FY2027 Q1	FY2027 Q2	RESOURCES REQUIRED	POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Vision	Develop a concise and compelling vision for culture statement based on the results from the Workshops.	High	Low	Executive Director	Culture Committee, Executive Director of Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives	●	●											• Time and input to develop, review, and adopt the vision for culture statement	• Complete vision for culture statement.
Change Manag-ement	Develop a change management framework to support implementation, adoption, and buy-in of key change initiatives.	High	Medium	Executive Director, Associate Director, Executive Director of Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives, Technical Services Director	Culture Committee	●	●											• Time and input to develop, review, and adopt a change management framework	**By initiative:** • Individualized project goals • User adoption **Employee Engagement Survey:** • To what extent do employees feel prepared for organizational changes? • How effectively are organizational changes communicated?
6A	Develop and reiterate clear, consistent employee expectations related to customer service, integration of IDEA in operating practices, and position responsibilities through job descriptions and other guiding documents such as competency frameworks for each position.	High	High	Director of Human Resources	Executive Director, Library Managers				●	●	●							• Time and input to review job descriptions • Time and input to develop service expectations and other relevant guides (i.e., competency frameworks for positions)	**Employee Engagement Survey:** • To what extent do employees feel that expectations are clear, consistently understood, and consistent?

REF.	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	EFFORT LEVEL	PRIMARY PARTY	SECONDARY PARTY	FY2024 Q3	FY2024 Q4	FY2025 Q1	FY2025 Q2	FY2025 Q3	FY2025 Q4	FY2026 Q1	FY2026 Q2	FY2026 Q3	FY2026 Q4	FY2027 Q1	FY2027 Q2	RESOURCES REQUIRED	POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
4	District leadership should work together to establish formal communication protocols that encourage productive multidirectional communication between management and staff.	High	Moderate	Executive Director	Library Managers		●	●										• Defined framework outlining the messaging and recipients for various types of communication • Additional employee capacity to allow for attendance at in-person meetings • Audit communication help desk tickets to determine which are outstanding, require a response, or are complete	**Communication framework:** • Outlining the opportunities for downstream, upstream, and lateral communication **Employee Engagement:** • Staff perceive feedback as received and considered appropriately • Employees are provided opportunities for more in-person communication
6B	Revise performance review processes to include individualized performance goals that align with the District's mission, vision, values, vision for culture, and job descriptions.	High	Moderate	Director of Human Resources	District Leadership			●	●	●								• Potential revision of performance evaluation frameworks to develop career competencies	**Employee Engagement Survey:** • To what extent do employees feel that expectations are clear, consistently understood, and consistent?
7	The District should embrace a culture of feedback and accountability to cultivate trust, respect, and collaboration through conflict management training and revised performance management processes.	High	High	Executive Director and Director of Human Resources	Lead Trainer, Library Managers			●	●	●								• Conflict management training • IDEA training • Time and resources to update the annual review	**Employee Engagement Survey:** • To what extent do employees feel that trust, respect, and collaboration are present in interactions? How well does the District manage conflict and promote accountability?
1	The District should gather qualitative and quantitative data to identify safety needs across branches and explore partnerships with local providers to build a robust safety program.	Medium	High	Executive Director, and the Security Manager	Emergency Preparedness Workgroup, Health and Safety Committee					●	●							• Resource allocation for programs and personnel • Updated safety policies and protocols and supportive training for staff underway by the Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee • Community partnerships • Emergency Preparedness Project workgroup and plan	**Employee Engagement Survey:** • Overall feeling of safety • Staff confidence in navigating safety issues **Safety Metrics:** • Number of incidents per branch • Number of community partners engaged to provide supportive services
8	The District should prioritize providing employees with genuine and meaningful recognition that honors their contributions to the District.	Medium	Medium	Director of Human Resources	Recognition Steering Committee, Library Managers, Culture Committee			●	●									• Potential budgetary impact for recognition and total rewards program evaluation	**Employee Engagement Survey:** • To what extent do employees feel recognized for their contributions to the District?

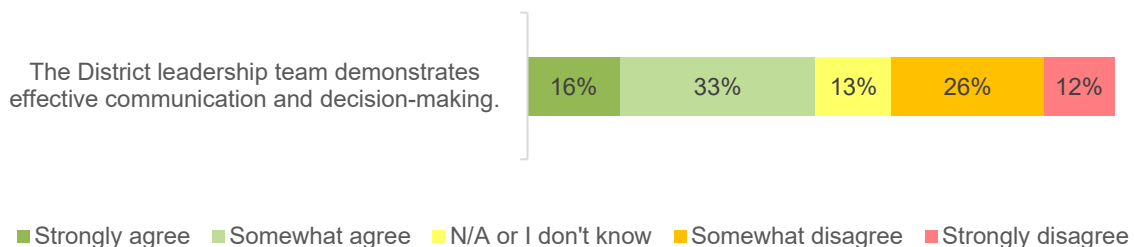| REF.	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	EFFORT LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITY		STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD												RESOURCES REQUIRED	POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
				PRIMARY PARTY	SECONDARY PARTY	FY2024		FY2025				FY2026				FY2027			
						Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
3	District leaders should leverage existing cross-functional committees to spearhead collaboration on library programs and initiatives. This, in conjunction with updates to program evaluation and improved communication, can strengthen collaboration across the District.	Medium	Medium	Director of Public Services	Public Service Managers							■	■	■	■			● Staff capacity to participate in collaborative initiatives	**Engagement** ● Program turnout numbers ● Training day for programs **Infrastructure** ● Dedicated collaborative opportunities for internal services departments ● Monthly check-ins
5	The District should solicit feedback from staff to assess the effectiveness of its current internal communication pathways and work to consolidate its communication methods to promote clarity and consistency focusing on integrating key features and tools.	Low	Medium	Executive Director	Director of Human Resources, Lead Trainer									■	■			● Anonymous feedback channel, along with guidelines for how these channels can be effectively used constructively ● Support and training for team on updated communication methods ● Training to support the use of inclusive language and ensure accessibility ● District-wide training on communication styles	**Employee Engagement Survey:** ● Improved satisfaction with communication methods ● Increased staff engagement **Infrastructure** ● There is a clear communication framework where the channel, purpose, recipients, messaging, frequency, and expectations of staff are clearly defined
2	The District should develop a program evaluation process that reviews programs holistically, including advancement of its strategic plan, IDEA, and community impact.	High	High	Executive Director, Associate Director, Executive Director of Library Foundation and Strategic Initiatives, Technical Services Director	Community Relations, Evaluation Steering Committee			░	░	░	░	░	░	░	░	■	■	● Patron feedback mechanisms ● Diversity and demographic data on community and patron needs ● ESRI ● Library IQ ● Community Needs Assessment	● How well does the community feel that materials, programs, and services respond to their needs and wants? ● What are patron satisfaction ratings for materials, programs, and services? ● Continue leveraging quantitative metrics to demonstrate community reach and service demand

A. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Implementation of the initiatives identified through this assessment will lead to a high degree of change. Employees are already experiencing a change as a result of the comprehensive renovation efforts underway. Navigating and leading through change is complex, involving not only the tactical side of change such as tools, processes, or technology, but also the people side of change that deals with behaviors, norms, and often people's identities.

PCCLD staff and leadership report challenges in effectively managing and encouraging change within the organization. Resistance to change is primarily attributed to historical distrust in leadership and a perception of a lack of transparency in decision-making. In addition, staff have not been consistently held accountable to adopt new change, creating a culture that tolerates combative and self-driven behavior. As organizations evolve, staff often struggle with operational changes. When attempts at change are not effectively implemented and maintained, it is increasingly difficult to secure leadership and staff buy-in to other changes over time. Change can be especially challenging when workloads are high and the proper time and training to implement the change creates additional work.

Interviewed and surveyed staff report that they often feel that changes and decisions presented to them are unclear and don't always include the rationale for the change. Some staff also note that prior leadership has left a sense of general distrust among staff. This has contributed to lower levels of trust and greater resistance to changes being implemented. When asked to rate agreement with whether the District leadership team demonstrates effective communication and decision-making, staff reported a wide range of responses. These responses indicate variances in perception and sentiments among staff.

The District leadership team demonstrates effective communication and decision-making.	16%	33%	13%	26%	12%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

To improve implementation, adoption, and buy-in, the District should establish a standardized change management process for significant organizational changes. Organizational changes that create high impact, impact a large number of employees, are complex, or pose business risks should undergo a formal change management process. Wherever possible, employees should be engaged prior to announcing new changes to define the problem, provide input on potential concerns, and provide suggestions to improve implementation. Often, employees facing change experience fear; therefore, a robust change management approach should emphasize the human side of change to promote employee adoption. By acknowledging their feelings and concerns, District leadership demonstrates its support of employees throughout the District, which improves overall change management. The change management process can also be modified to support effective organizational change management, process change management, and technical management.

The following are key elements for implementing successful change management:

- **Actively align District leadership:** The first element of change management is problem definition and the purpose of making the change. This should be well-defined and understood by the District leadership team. After the decision to make a change—whether it occurs primarily at an enterprise or departmental level—has been made, the District leadership team's primary responsibility is to ensure there is alignment across all departments. Although a change may not result in significant improvements for every department, this presents an opportunity to exercise enterprise-wide thinking and consider the impact of the change on other facets of the District. Without alignment and commitment, any change management initiative is likely to fail.

- **Communicate the need for change:** Excellent communication is critical to change management. Affected employees should be aware of the business need for change and buy into potential solutions. District leadership should build awareness around the District's needs and the risk of remaining with the status quo. Where appropriate, impacted stakeholders should be involved in defining initiative requirements and the design process. Project sponsors should ensure clear and open lines of communication throughout the change management process and advocate for two-way dialogue to provide answers and reassure stakeholders.

- **Plan for and understand the ramifications of the change:** Clearly identify what is changing, how it is changing, who will be affected, how users will be affected, and when the change will occur. Change should occur in a multi-step, well-communicated process that includes ample training and no surprises to staff. Key communication messages should be developed and disseminated to ensure staff are aware of progress towards implementation and are reminded of personal benefits they can expect to derive from the new system or process. Depending on the nature of the change, District leadership may also need to plan for negative ramifications of the change that impact employee morale and provide consistent messaging and support in change adoption.

- **Consider and design a method for staff education:** Throughout implementation, build staff knowledge and abilities through training opportunities. Following implementation, provide reinforcement and allow employees to provide feedback on the change and change process, making minor adjustments where necessary. Ensure consistent adoption by providing policies, procedures, and performance measures that reflect the change and can serve as staff resources.

To increase the District's capacity for effective change management, the District should consider providing change management and communication training to the entire leadership team. This can increase individual knowledge and capacity to manage change, as well as provide the leadership team with a commonly understood language to identify, discuss, and strategize around change management challenges. A people-focused change management process can help transform the District's culture into one invested in making strategic changes.

III. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the input gathered from interviews, document reviews, survey results, as well as workshop discussions, we prepared a comprehensive set of observations and recommendations.

A. SERVICE DELIVERY

Observations and recommendations in this section address the District's service delivery. These are areas where programming, interdepartmental collaboration, and physical safety could be realigned to support improved service delivery.

Physical Safety

1.	Observation	In its role as a public library, ensuring the physical safety and well-being of staff and patrons is an ongoing concern for the District.
	Recommendation	The District should gather qualitative and quantitative data to identify safety needs across branches and explore partnerships with local providers to build a robust safety program.

Safety in libraries is a nationwide concern, as the type and complexity of incidents continue to increase. Often, staff must address the full spectrum of reportable incidents, from patrons who create discomfort or chaos, to substance abuse, theft, vandalism, and extreme threats of physical violence or sexual misconduct. Prioritizing safety within the library setting is increasingly challenging, as organizations struggle with dwindling resources including both access to funding and qualified personnel. Since January 2024, there have been 92 recorded incidents across all District branches. These have ranged from minor incidents where patrons were found loitering in restricted areas, to more severe threats of harassment and physical assault. The most commonly reported issue across all branches relates to alcohol and drug abuse; however, there are several incidents categorized as "other" that relate to issues across categories including harassment, disruptive behavior, and sexual misconduct.

The District has taken several measures to promote safety across branches. It regularly updates its security manual, has a Safety Committee, and conducts ongoing safety training for all staff. Additionally, the District is in the process of creating an emergency preparedness plan. PCCLD employs one security manager and six security officers to provide security services across its eight branches. The District does not have sufficient funding to provide full-time security officers at all branches. Officers can also be reassigned to provide coverage in the event another officer is absent. Sometimes this can happen with short notice to library staff. Overall, library staff are primary in all patron interactions; however, when incidents escalate or there is a safety concern, this interaction activates the persons in charge and security officers. Interviewed and surveyed staff report concerns over confronting safety issues within the library. While staff report sufficient education in dealing with security incidents, concerns remain over the practice of confronting issues within the library setting.

Staff also note challenges receiving information on patrons who have been suspended. The current practice is for security reports to go to managers because they may contain confidential information.

In some situations, there can be a delay in getting relevant information from managers to front-line staff, which limits the enforceability of security precautions. For example, a patron suspended from one branch was able to visit a different branch before their status was reported and they were asked to leave. There are also perceptions that safety incidents are managed differently across branches. Interviewed staff note that the consequences for certain incidents can vary and escalation procedures are unclear.

Recommendation

Creating a secure environment where everyone feels welcomed is critical to ensuring the well-being of patrons, staff, and visitors. A safe environment provides a conducive atmosphere for learning, studying, and accessing information, which contributes to fulfillment of the District's overarching mission and role as a public library. To prioritize safety, the District should:

1. **Work with branches to identify top safety needs.** Safety and security needs across branches will vary based on several factors including but not limited to location, community demographics, services, and operating hours. To improve safety across the District, leadership and the security manager gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data can be in the form of listening sessions or interviews to evaluate staff comfort in dealing with various issues and the effectiveness of current tools and training. These sessions can also be good opportunities to gain insight into opportunities to improve reporting consistency, communication of incidents across branches, and the effectiveness of escalation procedures in the case of repeat offenders.

   Evaluating historical incident reports can provide quantitative data to understand incident trends in both type and volume. This can help position the District to proactively identify opportunities to improve safety.

   The Health and Safety Committee meeting should be another way in which safety issues surface, lessons learned are shared, and cross-collaboration can be used to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of security initiatives across the District. Currently, this committee generally focuses on injury prevention and workers' compensation but should be expanded to help support an ongoing focus on branch safety.

2. **Identify community groups providing safety and relevant support services.** In a resource-constrained environment, a robust network of community partnerships is crucial for enhancing safety and support services. With needs per branch established, the Safety Committee can conduct a mapping exercise that identifies and charts local community groups and organizations that provide safety and support services, such as needle exchange programs, mental health services, and de-escalation training. Once a preliminary list is developed, it may be helpful for all staff to review and provide input to ensure all possible community partnerships are represented. At this stage, it may also be helpful to identify which, if any, staff have existing relationships with these community groups or have experiences interacting with various groups. This is often a useful exercise to identify which groups may be preferred partners.

3. **Connect with interested community partners to explore options to cultivate safety at each branch.** Once these organizations are identified, District leadership can leverage existing relationships with target organizations or initiate outreach to connect with fellow leaders. This approach will foster strong relationships with community groups, ensuring sustained engagement and collaborative efforts. Additionally, it will guarantee that all branches have access to the same community resources and support services through a shared network. Regularly reviewing and updating the list of community partners will help reflect changes in community demographics and emerging needs.

To enhance safety at each branch, it's imperative to collaborate closely with branch staff to pinpoint the most pressing safety requirements. This involves identifying community groups that offer safety-related support services. Engaging with these organizations allows for the exploration of potential partnerships aimed at fostering safety measures tailored to the specific needs of each branch. By working collaboratively with community partners, the District can effectively cultivate safe environments that prioritize the well-being of patrons, staff, and visitors.

Program Evaluation

2.	Observation	Program evaluation has historically been heavily reliant on quantitative factors such as circulation and program attendance. This approach to evaluation is not holistic as it does not consider elements of program success such as impact or alignment with strategic goals.
	Recommendation	The District should develop a program evaluation process that reviews programs holistically, including advancement of its strategic plan, IDEA, and community impact.

Library programming refers to the various events, activities, workshops, and services offered by libraries to engage and serve their communities. PCCLD offers over 200 programs a month throughout its eight library branches and four satellite locations. Although certain program offerings are specialized, such as Local History and Genealogy, User Services, and Experiential Learning, and are coordinated by District content specialists, the majority of programs within the District are conducted at the branch level.

Following program completion, the District relies primarily on numerical metrics to gauge success over time. Examples of quantitative metrics that are regularly tracked include circulation, library visits, digital circulation, program attendance, computer use, wi-fi use, and website page views. These figures are reported at the branch level and the District level and provide valuable feedback to taxpayers in Pueblo County on how the District is serving the community. However, staff interviews and survey responses indicate quantitative metrics alone do not provide a comprehensive evaluation of programs and can be limiting. Programs often have multifaceted goals and outcomes that cannot be accurately captured through numbers alone. This narrow approach can lead to an incomplete understanding of the program's impact on the community or its overall effectiveness in achieving District goals and objectives.

Recommendation

The District should develop a program evaluation process that reviews programs holistically, including quantitative and qualitative metrics. To properly inform program evaluation criteria, District leadership should:

1. **Convene a workgroup to support program evaluation process revisions.** This workgroup should include representatives from across branches to provide local perspectives on evaluative techniques. The workgroup should have a charter, goals, and a timeline to complete work to help guide their joint activities on revising the program evaluation process.
2. **Review program evaluation framework in relation to library values, goals, IDEA strategies, and priorities.** There are several resources available that the District can use to help inform its

program evaluation model. The Urban Libraries Council endorses a model that includes developing a logic model to identify target program outcomes and then developing performance metrics according to those goals.[1] Some libraries use evaluation matrices that review four to five components such as cost, effectiveness, and benefits.[2] The American Library Association also published materials to help libraries integrate outcome-based planning and evaluation into public libraries.[3] The workgroup should review the current evaluation framework in relation to other possible models to revise how program evaluation is completed. Regardless of the model that is used, programs should clearly connect to the District's values, goals, IDEA strategies, and priority areas.

3. **Propose revisions to the program evaluation process, pilot the revised process, and continuously improve.** The workgroup should propose program evaluation revisions to the District leadership team for feedback. Once a revised process has been mutually agreed upon, the District should develop an implementation plan that may include a pilot of the revised process at a particular branch. Piloting a new initiative can be helpful to identify what is successful and lessons learned prior to rolling out the new program evaluation process District-wide. After a pilot period takes place and appropriate tweaks are implemented, the District should roll out the revised program evaluation process to all branches and continuously improve upon it.

The District may consider reviewing how program information is shared between branches and advertised. Enhanced sharing of information regarding the programs offered by each branch will facilitate cross-learning throughout the District.

Collaboration

3.	Observation	Driven by perceived competition and challenges in communication, the District is struggling with low levels of collaboration, leading to siloing and fragmentation in programming and service delivery.
	Recommendation	District leaders should leverage existing cross-functional committees to spearhead collaboration on library programs and initiatives. This, in conjunction with updates to program evaluation and improved communication, can strengthen collaboration across the District.

Effective collaboration fosters a sense of community and shared purpose among staff. When there are high levels of collaboration, branches bring together diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering innovation and creative problem-solving. A collaborative approach allows the District to present a unified front in community outreach and engagement, strengthening its impact and visibility. This is essential when delivering District-wide programs and services that are aligned with PCCLD's mission and strategic plan. It is also an important part of ensuring that patrons receive a consistent level of service, making the library experience predictable and reliable.

Interviewees note varying degrees of success collaborating with branches and departments across the District. For larger, more established initiatives such as the summer reading program, interviewees note success where programmers are able to successfully share materials and request

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[1] Evaluation Guide for Public Libraries
[2] Defining Quality Library Services and Evaluation Resources for Public Libraries
[3] Five Steps of Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation for Public Libraries

support from one another. While the District is renovating several of its branch buildings, there is a marked increase in collaboration to support displaced staff and programming to continue serving the community to the best extent possible. Interviewed staff also reflect positively on opportunities to collaborate cross-functionally, such as during the twice-annual all-staff days.

Collaboration efforts fall short when it comes to programs started at the branch level. These programs are often developed by staff with specialized expertise or interests or may be based on a unique community need or request. In this scenario, low levels of collaboration are often driven by obstacles in communicating effectively across the District, and the competitive nature of the program evaluation framework (see Program Evaluation). Varying branch hours, work schedules, and high workloads contribute to issues finding the time and capacity to effectively collaborate. Additionally, staff are fearful of perceived failure if participation is low, and they can be territorial over attendance numbers in reporting.

Recommendation

Collaboration is as much a skill to teach, as it is a practice to cultivate across the District. Therefore, the District should take a multipronged approach to improve collaboration practices. The approach should 1) create opportunities to collaborate and 2) address attitudes towards collaboration. To create opportunities for collaboration, District leadership should leverage existing cross-functional committees to:

1. **Identify initiatives that necessitate representation across branches and functions.** Existing cross-functional committees can be an effective way for staff from various branches and functions to identify programs where collaboration is lacking or could be improved. PCCLD leadership, including branch managers, should meet to develop a set of criteria that can be used to prioritize initiatives that would benefit from cross-functional collaboration. This criterion should address:
   ○ Impact on branches or departments across the District.
   ○ Need for diverse expertise or skills
   ○ Potential for resource sharing
   ○ Alignment with strategic goals of the District

2. **Create cross-departmental committees focused on specific initiatives.** Initiatives can be scored against the criteria to determine the benefit of a focused collaborative effort. Internal and external initiatives should be considered. For example, technology upgrades could impact all branches, need diverse perspectives to define user requirements, have high potential to be shared, and are aligned with the District's modernization efforts. Using these criteria, it would be relevant to bring this initiative into an existing cross-functional committee or establish a temporary one. To ensure that committees remain an effective collaboration space, the purpose, outcomes, and reporting for various groups should be well defined. This is discussed further in Meetings.

3. **Host cross-departmental events such as workshops, seminars, and activities that support District goals.** Successes collaborating during all-staff days can be leveraged to identify additional opportunities to host cross-departmental events such as workshops, seminars, and team-building activities. These events should be designed to encourage interaction, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem-solving among staff from different branches and functions. Specific sessions on collaboration skills, conflict resolution, and team dynamics can be incorporated into these events. Bringing in external experts or utilizing internal talent can provide valuable insights and techniques to enhance collaborative efforts.

Recommendations in this report that address communication, recognition and morale, and program evaluation can help positively impact attitudes towards collaboration across the District.

B. COMMUNICATION

Observations and recommendations in this section address the communication practices within the District, including how practices could be improved to support better communication.

Mechanisms

4.	Observation	The District is experiencing issues with missed or mixed messaging using its current cascading communication framework, contributing to increased levels of frustration and distrust between staff and management.
	Recommendation	District leadership should work together to establish formal communication protocols that encourage productive multidirectional communication between management and staff.

Communication is the glue that helps to align employees with the District's goals, foster collaboration, and enhance overall efficiency. Effective communication prevents misunderstandings, boosts morale, and supports a positive work environment, ultimately contributing to the District's success. Robust communication is most often characterized by openness, clarity, timeliness, and two-way interaction. Communication practices should be adaptive to diverse needs, integrate technology, and include both downstream and upstream opportunities where communication can flow not just from leadership to front-line staff, but also from front-line staff to leadership.

District-wide communication primarily relies on a cascading communication framework. In this framework, information flows down from District senior leadership to branch/department managers, and then to front-line staff. While a cascading communication model offers a structured approach to organization-wide communication, in practice, there are prevalent concerns regarding communication and trust between staff and management. Staff report several issues receiving timely, complete, and relevant communication from leadership. The Employee Communication survey results further illustrate that while communication between and within branches is effective, there is a breakdown when receiving communication from leadership. Additional concerns about providing communication from front-line staff to leadership were also shared. Without transparent, productive communication between staff and management, the District cannot effectively operate or focus on community services and programming.

Recently the District has made efforts to change its communication framework. Rather than relying on messaging to flow down through the organizational hierarchy from senior leadership to front-line staff, PCCLD leadership has attempted to work through established committees, conduct on-site visits, and communicate directly to all staff (see Methods). This has had varying levels of success. In some instances, staff report that they appreciate the effort of leaders to attend on-site meetings. In other instances, staff note that they perceive additional in-person communication as a lack of trust.

Recommendation

District leaders should work to develop a formalized communication framework to ensure that employees across the District receive consistent, frequent, and transparent communication to remain informed. When communication patterns are clear and documented, it can remove any question of whether or not information has been shared with relevant parties, freeing up staff and management to deal with more mission-critical community-oriented work and ensuring that all employees receive the same information. Communication practices should be designed to send information up and down through the organization to promote two-way communication that includes front-line staff. Management should relay messages in a timely manner and provide employees an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and provide critical feedback. Front-line supervisors and managers play a critical role in both sharing information from management and serving as the conduit for feedback from staff. Without their leadership, the two-directional flow of information is blocked, creating frustration for both staff and management. As such, staff, supervisors, and managers should all be trained in communication practices so they can effectively participate.

An19ffecttive communication framework addresses the full directionality of communication across the district, defined in the following table.[4]

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[4] Erick, Anna. 2021. "Lateral Communication: What it is, why it's useful and how to improve it." https://pumble.com/blog/lateral-communication/

FEATURES	LATERAL COMMUNICATION	DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION	UPWARD COMMUNICATION
Direction	Between employees on the same hierarchical level	From superiors to subordinates	From subordinates to superiors
Nature	Collaborative	Directive	Participative
Purpose	To obtain information, exchange ideas, achieve common goals, and solve problems	To give directions, provide instructions, prescribe guidelines, assign responsibilities, inform, etc.	To provide feedback, share ideas, make complaints, offer suggestions, etc.
Frequency	Frequent	Frequent	Usually Frequent
Speed	Fast	Fast	Slow
Examples	- Team meetings where peers discuss updates, share ideas, or develop solutions or new initiatives. - Instant messaging or emails between colleagues for day-to-day communication. - Collaboration on a project through a shared document or platform. - Committees where individuals can gather to collaborate cross-functionally.	- A senior leader sending a District-wide email about a new strategic direction, initiative, or notification. - A manager giving instructions to their team about a new program, task, or update. - Townhall meetings where senior leadership shares updates or news with the entire District.	- An employee survey where staff can provide feedback to management. - A report from a team to their manager highlighting their achievements and challenges. - A suggestion box where employees can submit ideas for improvement to the leadership team. - Focus groups or committees where employees can voice their opinions or concerns to the management.

For each direction, the plan should outline the information to disclose including key elements like:

- Key messages
- Communication channels (see Methods)
- Staff responsibilities and processes
- Timing and deadlines

The internal communication plan should be written and kept up to date in line with the overall goals of the District. A well-crafted internal communication framework keeps employees informed of current initiatives, events, and future plans. It also shows each member of the District how they fit in with the plans and the importance of their contribution. While the development of an updated communication framework may include multiple representatives from across PCCLD, there should be one individual responsible for the overall management of the framework.

Methods

5.	Observation	The District has adopted an increasing number of methods to communicate information to staff, contributing to fragmentation and confusion and making it difficult to ensure consistent and effective communication across the organization.
	Recommendation	The District should solicit feedback from staff to assess the effectiveness of its current communication pathways and work to consolidate its communication methods to promote clarity and consistency focusing on integrating key features and tools.

While communication mechanisms describe the overall structure of how information flows up, down, and laterally across an organization, methods refer to the tools and platforms the District uses to communicate information. Communication methods should be easily accessible to all employees, regardless of their location or role within the organization. They should provide employees with opportunities to receive and share information quickly, easily, and in a manner integrated within their work. This ensures that everyone can participate in communication processes and stay informed.

At the District, communication methods include email, phone calls, meetings (including 1:1, committee meetings, manager meetings, functional team meetings, town halls, and all-staff days), intranet, slack, newsletters, and Paylocity. As reflected in survey responses, the application of methods across the District is mostly effective.

Communication modalities across the District (meetings, the portal, email etc.) are effective

| 20% | 42% | 12% | 18% | 8% |

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree
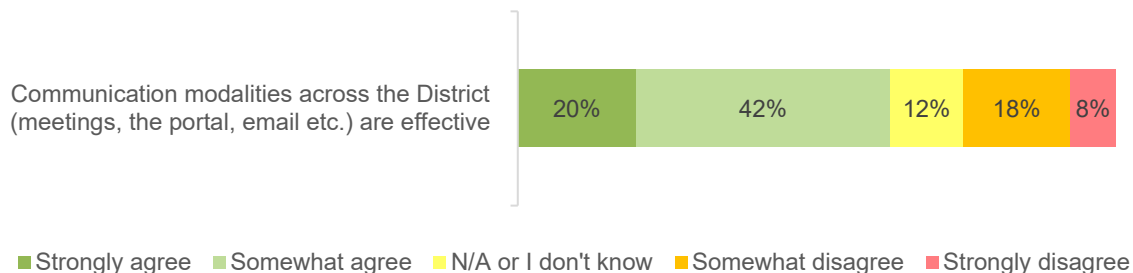
Opportunities for improvement were identified through interviews and workshops. The top concern heard from staff related to methods is keeping track of the variety of ways information can be shared and uncertainty as to the best place to get the most updated information. This is a common issue in organizations that have several methods to communicate with staff. There is often a perception that communication should be disseminated through as many methods as possible to ensure that regardless of where staff, look they'll be sure to receive important information. While it's important to communicate in various ways, an overabundance of messaging can overwhelm staff, make it difficult to identify the most critical messages, and create challenges for leaders to ensure that information is consistently updated across all channels.

Meetings

When used effectively, meetings can be a platform for individuals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate. It's important for organizations to carefully consider the purpose, structure, and necessity of meetings to maximize their benefits.

Throughout fieldwork and in workshops, staff consistently remarked that there were both too many meetings and also not enough meetings. It's important to note that both sentiments are valid. When this type of duality is observed, it often indicates that the purpose, outcomes, and goals of current meetings are not well defined.

Public Service Managers Meeting

The Public Service Managers (PSM) meeting is a monthly meeting between District leadership and branch management. Its aim is to relay pertinent information, updates, and District-related changes to branch management. Both interviewees and survey respondents reported varied opinions and feedback on the PSM meeting. Some perceive it as a valuable opportunity for information sharing and collaboration, while others find it to be unproductive, frustrating, and combative.

There are several opportunities to improve the PSM meeting. The following are the primary recommendations gathered from established best practices, workshops, interviews, and survey input:

- Improve meeting structure, agendas, and meeting minutes to help support a consistent takeaway message among attendees
- Create an environment of teamwork, trust, collaboration, and a presumption of goodwill to improve the culture of the meetings by fostering support and open discussion among colleagues.
- Transform meetings into opportunities for collaboration, idea-sharing, and team-building
- Prioritize updates from branches and foster collaboration and problem-solving
- Encourage openness to new ideas and constructive feedback during meetings, regardless of the presenter's role, branch/department, or leadership level
- Create a safe and supportive environment for sharing ideas and discussing improvements during meetings

START Meetings

START meetings are another opportunity for management and leadership across the District to work together on District-wide goals and initiatives. Consistent with the PSM meeting feedback, when asked how satisfied individuals were with the START Team meetings, the majority of survey respondents responded as neither satisfied nor unsatisfied (64%).

18%	14%	64%	4%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied ■ Unsatisfied ■ Very unsatisfied

Opportunities for improvement that surfaced via interviews, the survey, and in workshops are similar to recommendations to improve the PSM meeting. In addition, the following specific recommendations were noted:

- Shift the focus of the meeting from solely sharing updates to utilizing the meetings as problem-solving forums
- Share meeting notes with all PCCLD staff to ensure everyone stays informed about senior leadership projects
- Incorporate more problem-solving, strategic planning, and discussion of concerns, issues, and opportunities into the meetings
- Focus on larger projects and goals that the District is trying to achieve to center the purpose of this meeting
- Consider changing the name of the START Team meetings to better reflect their purpose and avoid sending unintended messages to staff

Recommendation

Building from the communication framework recommended in Mechanisms, the District should conduct a comprehensive audit of its current communication methods. The audit should include the following:

- **Inventory.** The inventory should list all current communication methods and channels including email, intranet, messaging apps, newsletters, meetings, and social media. For each method, the purpose and frequency of communication via each method should be cataloged.
- **Evaluation.** Once a comprehensive list is compiled, the evaluation of each method can occur. To understand the effectiveness of each method, the reach, accessibility, consistency, security, reach, cost-effectiveness, and required involvement from staff across each method should be considered.
  - The District should involve staff members from various levels, departments, and branches in the review process to gather feedback and insights on their communication needs and preferences.
  - Evaluative information can be gathered through quantitative methods such as surveys and/or qualitative methods such as through listening sessions. This assessment captures several inputs on the effectiveness of communication and can be leveraged to complete a comprehensive communication audit.
- **Improvement Plan.** Once all methods have been identified and evaluated, the District can work cross-functionally to streamline communication methods and incorporate formalized structures into its framework. This will help ensure that the right information is reaching the right individuals, appropriate channels are used to communicate relevant information, and expectations for employees are clear. Together, this can help improve communication throughout the District.

Communication mechanisms and methods are the critical infrastructure that can help communication flow across all levels of the District. It's important to recognize that, alongside a strong infrastructure, investments in Employee Engagement and Morale can help build trust and improve the interpersonal dynamics that are an important part of making communication effective overall.

C. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND MORALE

Observations and recommendations in this section address employee engagement and morale within the District, including the desire to create clear and consistent employee expectations, promote a culture of accountability, and recognize employees for their contributions to the District.

Expectations

6.	Observation	Expectations for employees are not clear and consistent across the District, which results in inconsistencies and creates challenges in holding employees to similar standards.
	Recommendations	A. Develop and reiterate clear, consistent employee expectations related to customer service, integration of IDEA in operating practices, and position responsibilities through job descriptions and other guiding documents such as competency frameworks. B. Revise performance review processes to include individualized performance goals that align with the District's mission, vision, values, vision for culture, and job descriptions.

Clear expectations are a critical aspect of success within organizations. They provide employees with a shared understanding of what is required of them, minimizing confusion and uncertainty. This understanding allows employees to prioritize tasks effectively and allocate resources efficiently, contributing to the achievement of shared goals. Additionally, clear expectations promote better communication and collaboration among team members, as everyone comprehends their role and its significance to the overarching objectives. Moreover, clear expectations enable leaders to offer constructive feedback and evaluate performance more effectively, fostering accountability and enhancing productivity.

In interviews and focus groups, employees often indicated that roles, responsibilities, and service level expectations were unclear. Some examples where employees expressed concern or confusion include:

- **Different classifications are able to conduct library programming at different branch locations.** Typically, programming is generally led by librarians, but some branches also allow support staff to lead programs. This creates a sense of inequity between branches and concerns around some employees working out of class.

- **Customer experiences are inconsistent across branches.** The experience of being served at library branches reportedly differs in the absence of overarching guidelines. Some branches greet each patron that enters the library, whereas others may not find this to be a priority. Additionally, staff reported concerns about how each branch determines whether fees and fines can be waived across branches. Customer experiences shape how IDEA is integrated into service and operational practices, ensuring that the District provides equitable service to all patrons.

- **Lack of a shared understanding of job functions and purpose.** Some employees reported the sense that others were not fulfilling their job duties but continued to advance in the District. This creates a perception that some employees are favored over others, although this may be attributable to a misunderstanding of what certain positions are intended to accomplish.

- **Unclear or shifting policies and procedures.** As the District has evolved and implemented new systems and processes, employees report that there are not always documented policies and procedures to help clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Documented and shared guidance is helpful to support employees through a change and also provides a baseline of expectations. Interviewed staff and survey respondents report that instruction from District leadership is unclear and can differ between leaders. Without clear and consistent guidance, employees may struggle to understand their responsibilities and meet leadership's expectations.

Overall, ambiguity in employee expectations can hinder productivity, morale, and overall effectiveness in the District. In the absence of clear expectations for employees, there is also a perception that accountability is lacking and unprofessional behavior is tolerated, which negatively impacts employee morale.

Recommendation

District leadership should develop and reiterate clear, consistent employee expectations to provide a basis for performance and accountability. Employee expectations should be clarified in the following priority areas:

1. **Ethics and customer service expectations:** Libraries often have customer service standards that outline their expectations for the delivery of excellent service.[5] The ALA's Code of Ethics and related materials also include principles that can help guide decision-making, equitable service, and customer service both internally and externally.[6] Having documented guidance is helpful because it clearly articulates behavioral expectations for all District employees in their interactions with patrons and colleagues. The District should develop its own ethics and/or customer service policies to create clear, consistent expectations that employees can be held accountable for upholding.

2. **Position roles and responsibilities:** The District should embark on a review of its positional roles and responsibilities to ensure they are consistent across branches. For example, there should be clarity on who is able to perform programming at branches. Following this analysis, job descriptions should be comprehensively reviewed and updated. Accurate position descriptions offer several benefits, including enhanced resource management, clear expectations, compensation management, and strengthened performance management.

3. **Individualized performance goals:** Employees, in collaboration with their managers, should establish three to five performance goals each year. Ideally, goals should be aligned with departmental and overall District goals and consistent with the established SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) framework. Employees' goals establish the criteria that they will be evaluated against and may align with their job description, projects, behaviors, or career development opportunities.

These tools will help create clear expectations for employees across the District, supporting teamwork, employee morale, accountability, and recognition.

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[5] Customer Service in Libraries: Meeting Evolving Needs
[6] American Library Association: Code of Ethics

Accountability

7.	Observation	Employees consistently reported the perception that team members are not always held accountable, which impacts morale, communication, and service delivery.
	Recommendation	The District should embrace a culture of feedback and accountability to cultivate trust, respect, and collaboration through conflict management training and revised performance management processes.

Within the context of a work environment, accountability entails taking responsibility for actions, decisions, and their consequences. Accountability may involve adhering to standards, meeting objectives, and being answerable for performance and results. Additionally, accountability includes transparency, integrity, and the willingness to accept feedback and make improvements when necessary.

Numerous interviewees perceive strong levels of trust and respect from their branch and departmental leadership. However, this perception fades as it extends to the District as a whole. Many respondents attributed this to experiences with prior leadership, which have eroded trust in the District leadership team. When asked to rate agreement with the statement "leaders within the District inspire trust, confidence, and respect," 21% strongly agreed and 33% somewhat agreed. When asked to do the same but in regard to branch or department leadership, 40% strongly agreed and 38% somewhat agreed. This considerable difference reinforces interview themes and sentiments.

Leaders within the District inspire trust, confidence, and respect.
21% | 33% | 14% | 13% | 19%

Leaders within the Branch/department inspire trust, confidence, and respect.
40% | 38% | 8% | 10% | 4%

■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Strongly disagree
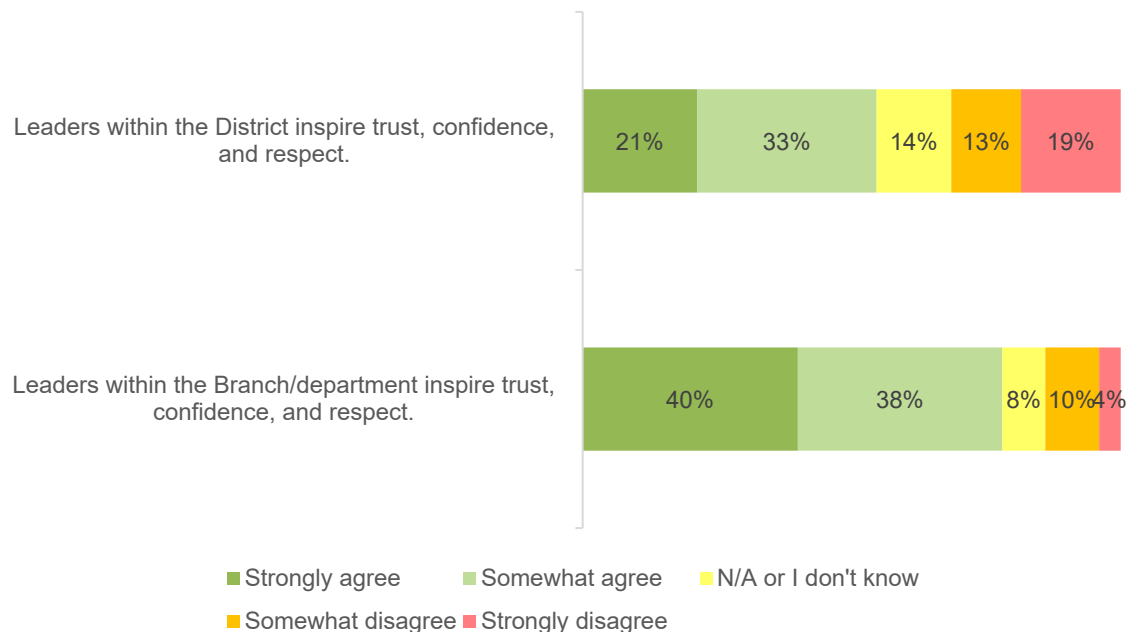
When there is a lack of trust and respect between employees and leadership, it can have detrimental effects on the work environment. Collaboration and teamwork may suffer as individuals hesitate to rely on each other or delegate tasks. This can lead to inefficiencies, missed opportunities, and a lack of unity within the team. Additionally, strained relationships, communication breakdowns, and

decreased morale may occur, further exacerbating the negative impact on productivity and overall workplace atmosphere. Both clear expectations and employee accountability can help instill trust and respect into the District's culture.

Throughout interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, employees indicated that accountability was lacking throughout the District. Employees reported the perception that the District lacks a consistent, fair approach to addressing issues, often handling them on a case-by-case basis. Only 33% of survey respondents agreed with the statement that there are clear mechanisms in place for resolving interpersonal conflicts or misunderstandings. This results in a deterioration of relationships, collaboration, and the sense of team. Individuals often feel affinity with their branch location or department, rather than the District as a whole.

There are clear mechanisms in place for resolving interpersonal conflicts or misunderstandings	11%	22%	27%	18%	22%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree
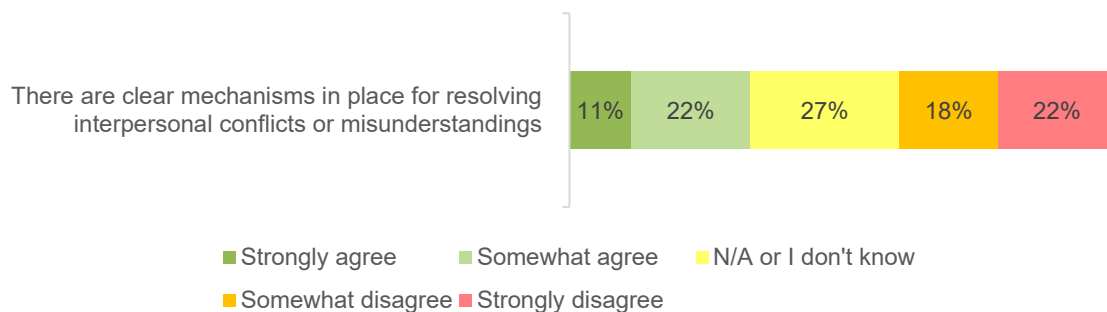
Staff also expressed a perception that the management of conflicts and issues may vary depending on the individuals involved. Some employees shared examples of instances where issues were mishandled, leading to the spread of rumors. When staff perceive that incidents are handled differently based on the individuals involved, it undermines confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the resolution process. When asked to rate agreement with the statement "I feel the District provides fair treatment to all," 20% of respondents said strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed, which indicates that approximately half of employees perceive unfair treatment. When asked the same but in regard to branch/department leadership, 41% strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed.

I feel that the District provides fair treatment to all.	20%	27%	12%	24%	17%
I feel that the Branch/department leaders provide fair treatment to all.	41%	27%	11%	14%	7%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree
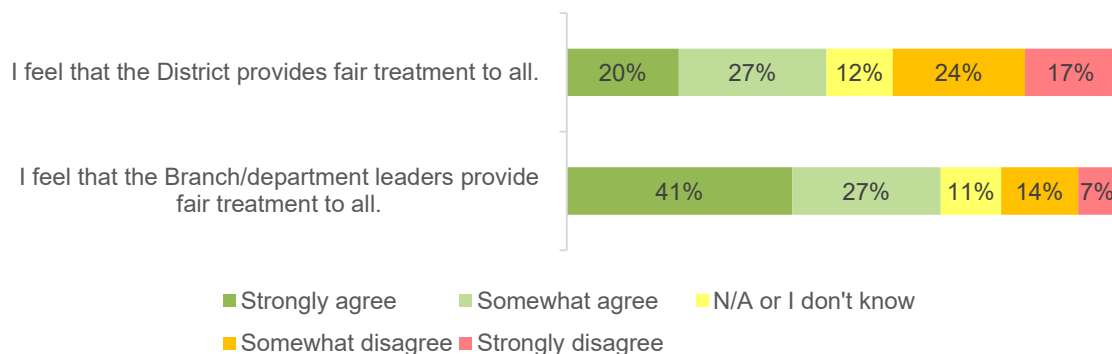
Recommendation

Leadership should review the District's existing processes regarding accountability and revise them to have strong, clear accountability measures. To prepare leaders and managers for additional focus on accountability, the District should begin by providing employees with conflict resolution training and tools. This training should provide skills and resources to help leaders understand, address, and resolve conflicts effectively. Typically, conflict management training incorporates the following elements:

- **Understanding conflict:** Explore different types of conflicts, including their dynamics, nature, causes, and impact on individuals and teams. This may also include an activity to help participants identify their preferred conflict resolution style and what would be appropriate in unique situations.

- **Communication:** Review active listening techniques and strategies for clear, assertive communication such as using "I" statements.

- **Emotional intelligence:** Enhance emotional awareness and self-regulation to support objectivity in navigating conflict. By including training on how to manage difficult conversations, the District can equip leaders to navigate challenging situations, including strategies to address power dynamics and resistance.

- **Problem-Solving:** Introduce negotiation methods to help find mutually beneficial solutions and make informed decisions. Review conflict resolution models and when each model might apply. When disciplinary action needs to be taken, ensure that the goal of the consequence is accountability but also helping everyone on the team be successful.

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Ensure leaders are aware of cultural differences in communication and conflict resolution approaches to ensure IDEA values are present throughout difficult conversations.

The District should also review its current performance management practices to embed feedback and accountability in its culture for all levels of employees. Currently, these reviews are conducted at the end of the calendar year and employees are evaluated on the following categories: customer service, comprehension and competencies, teamwork and relationships, time management, and alignment with SMART goals. Elements of a performance management process that the District should consider include:

- **Rating scale development and consistent application:** A common concern across decentralized organizations such as the District is the consistency of performance rating scale application depending on the manager (i.e., the perception that someone is an "easy" or "hard" grader). This can be reduced by conducting department-level calibration sessions to ensure every supervisor is using a consistent basis in their application of the rating scale.

- **Additional contributor feedback:** As the District embarks on initiatives to enhance interdepartmental collaboration, it should consider whether an additional contributor feedback process would be helpful. This process entails an employee and their supervisor identifying other team members from across the District who have insight into their performance. For example, employees may work cross-functionally on specific projects or serve other teams outside of their branch or department. Those individuals can then provide input on the employee's performance either at the collaborative project's conclusion and/or at the time of performance evaluations. Additional contributors can be asked how the employee meaningfully contributed to the project and what they could improve in the future to enhance interdepartmental work. This information can then be incorporated into the employee's complete performance evaluation.

- **Upstream feedback:** Similarly, the District should consider implementing a process for direct reports to provide feedback on their manager in a confidential manner when there are three or more employees reporting to the same person. Managers and supervisors play a vital role in perpetuating organizational culture and facilitating tasks. Upstream feedback is a useful tool to help leaders view their own skills accurately and improve their behavior as managers,[7, 8] as well as providing the benefit of helping to identify managers in need of support. By bringing together the perspectives of direct reports, managers are able to understand their development areas and better support their teams, which in turn improves organizational effectiveness.

  Manager appraisals should include specific requirements related to their efficacy in managing teams and supporting employees, while identifying actionable feedback to continuously improve management skills.[9] This information should largely derive from the manager's direct reports but may also extend to other colleagues throughout the District. Incorporating specific management goals into performance appraisals reiterates the guide's ongoing training and supports accountability in serving as an effective manager.

Overall, District leadership should foster a culture where employees take personal responsibility for their work and actions. The District should empower employees to make decisions and be accountable for the outcomes. To promote a sense of fairness, accountability measures should be applied equitably across the organization. Individual and team accountability should be tied to the overall mission and objectives of the District.

Recognition

8.	Observation	Employees indicate that they do not always feel recognized for their contributions to the District, which impacts employee engagement and morale.
	Recommendation	The District should prioritize providing employees with genuine and meaningful recognition that honors their contributions to the District.

Recognition is an essential component in fostering a culture of appreciation, motivation, and engagement within an organization. Recognition demonstrates appreciation for employee contributions and achievements, reinforcing their value to the organization and fostering a positive work environment. Recognized employees feel motivated to continue performing at a high level and contributing to the organization's success, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction.

Numerous employees, in both interviews and survey responses, expressed a lack of recognition for their efforts or work. Of those who reported receiving adequate or satisfactory recognition, almost all cited their peers or branch management as the source. In regard to District-level feedback, staff perceive that when they perform well, District leadership regards it as the expectation, while others are reprimanded for not meeting the same standard. In the survey, 51% of employees agreed that

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[7] An Examination of the Effects of an Upstream Feedback Program Over Time
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01744.x

[8] The Influence of Upstream Feedback on Self- and Follower Ratings of Leadership
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01745.x

[9] 5 Steps to a Performance Evaluation System https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2003/0300/p43.html

they are "satisfied with the level of recognition and acknowledgment I receive for my contributions to the District," which indicates that approximately half of employees feel that recognition opportunities could be strengthened.

| I am satisfied with the recognition and acknowledgment I receive for my contributions to the District. | 32% | 19% | 17% | 19% | 12% |

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree
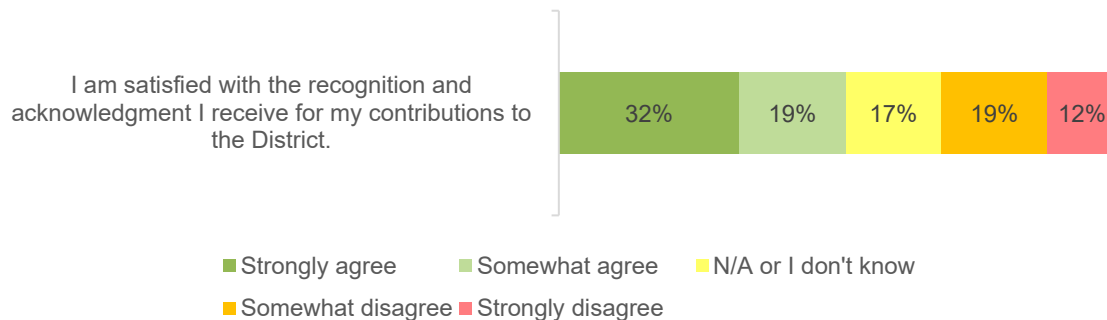
The District hosts a few annual events, one of which includes annual District awards. This event is meant to be a ceremony or gathering to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievements, contributions, and service within the District. During this event, individuals or teams may be honored with awards or accolades in various categories. However, according to some interviewees and survey respondents, these awards predominantly focus on public services teams, resulting in internal-facing employees and departments feeling excluded from consideration. This has resulted in lower levels of recognition and inclusion amongst internal services.

Recommendation

The District should reevaluate its employee recognition programs to promote meaningful recognition opportunities that honor contributions to the District, including in service delivery and exemplifying the vision for culture established as part of this culture study. To start this work, the District should craft and distribute an employee survey that asks specifically how each individual would like to be recognized. During workshop discussions, it was noted that some employees enjoy public awards whereas others may feel more comfortable receiving a handwritten thank you card and a piece of chocolate. Evaluating employee recognition options should take these preferences into consideration so that each employee can be recognized in a way that is meaningful and comfortable to them.

Using aggregated results from this survey, the District should review and revise its current employee recognition program components. During this process, leadership should consider opportunities to recognize employees for embodying the District's culture, vision, and mission, as well as providing excellent service. By having formal recognition opportunities for teamwork, collaboration, and relationship building, these values are more likely to be instilled within the organizational culture. Leadership may also consider reviving its Star Program, where patrons and co-workers could provide an employee with a "star," which could later be redeemed for small gift cards. The District may wish to consider the Achiever's recognition program[10] or a similar program that provides a public feed of recognition and allows others to celebrate their teammates' successes.

Finally, the District should continue to evaluate its total rewards program, which encompasses employee compensation and benefits to reward employees for performance. Tying total rewards to employee recognition and performance helps to refine desired behaviors and organizational values.

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[10] Achiever's Program

Employees who feel recognized and appreciated are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to the District's success.

APPENDIX: SURVEY RESULTS

We distributed a confidential online survey to all District employees between March 21 and April 1, 2024. Out of 145 employees invited to take the survey, 116 individuals submitted either full or partial responses (a participation rate of 80%).

Background

Q. Approximately how long have you been working with the Library?

16%	20%	20%	22%	9%	14%

■ Less than 1 year　　■ 1 to 2 years　　■ 3 to 5 years
■ 6 to 10 years　　■ 11 to 15 years　　■ More than 15 years
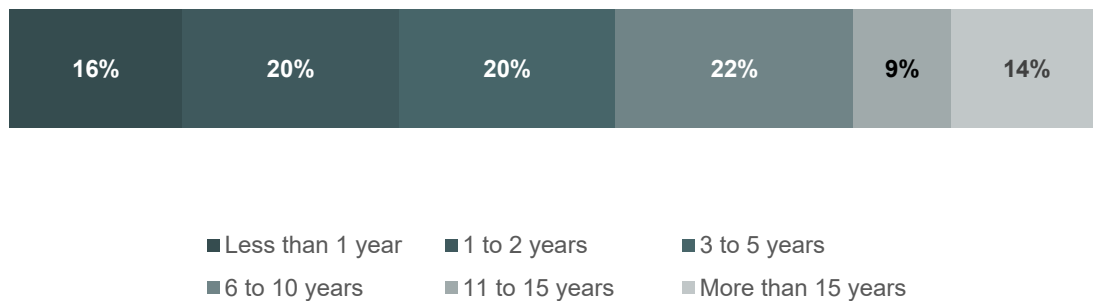
Q. Do you supervise or manage other employees?

25%	75%

■ Yes　■ No
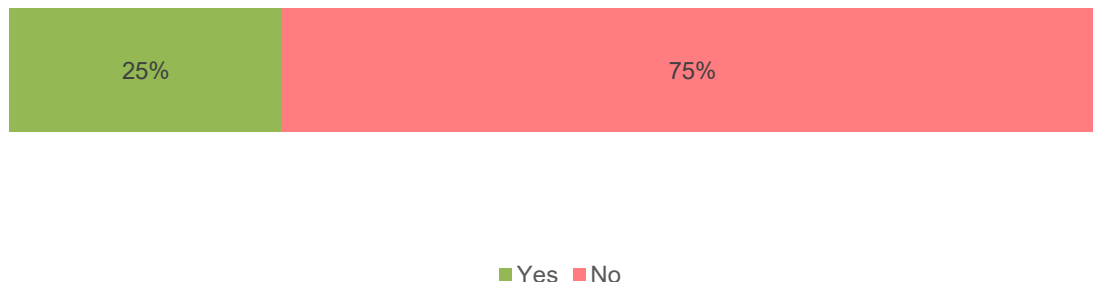
Organizational Culture

Q. What are three words or phrases that describe the current organizational culture at the District?

Q. What are 3-5 words to describe your vision for the desired future state of the District's organizational culture?

Q. Please rate your agreement with the following:

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	N/A or I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand and resonate with the mission and values of the District.	53%	35%	6%	6%	0%
The District's mission and values guide my decision-making and behaviors.	39%	43%	14%	4%	1%
The District values diversity and fosters an inclusive environment.	31%	33%	9%	19%	7%
Within the District, teams work effectively together to achieve common goals and objectives.	16%	44%	13%	22%	6%
The District leadership team demonstrates effective communication and decision-making.	16%	33%	13%	26%	12%
Leaders within the District inspire trust, confidence, and respect.	21%	33%	14%	13%	19%
I feel that the District provides fair treatment to all.	20%	27%	12%	24%	17%
There is a high level of trust and mutual respect among colleagues within the District.	14%	29%	15%	28%	15%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Q. Please rate your agreement with the following statements related to organizational culture. This section specifically asks about your experiences within the Branch or department you most closely associate with.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	N/A or I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The Branch/department leadership team demonstrates effective communication and decision-making.	34%	44%	8%	9%	4%
Branch/department leadership values diversity and fosters an inclusive environment	44%	31%	12%	11%	2%
Within the Branch or department teams work effectively together to achieve common goals and objectives.	47%	31%	6%	14%	2%
Colleagues within my work environment treat each other with kindness, empathy, and professionalism.	54%	27%	7%	9%	3%
Leaders within the Branch/department inspire trust, confidence, and respect.	40%	38%	8%	10%	4%
I feel that the Branch/department leaders provide fair treatment to all.	41%	27%	11%	14%	7%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Library Service Delivery

Q. How effective do you find the current library programs and services offered in meeting the needs of patrons?

| 34% | 44% | 19% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
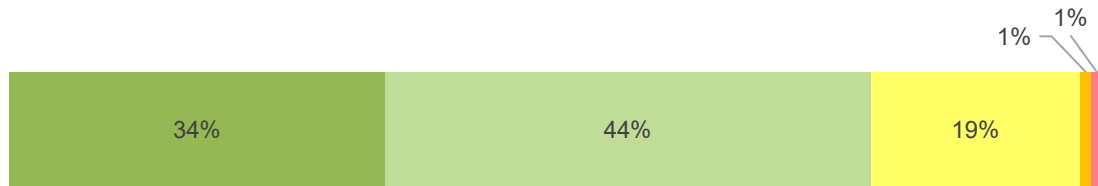
■ Very effective ■ Somewhat effective ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat ineffective ■ Very ineffective

Q. How would you rate the level of support and collaboration among library staff members in delivering services?

| 23% | 44% | 22% | 10% | 1% |
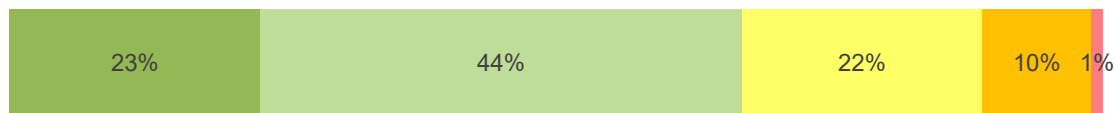
■ Very strong ■ Somewhat strong ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat poor ■ Very poor

Employee Communication

Q. From your perspective as an employee, how would you rate internal communication practices at the District, overall?

| 8% | 37% | 22% | 22% | 11% |
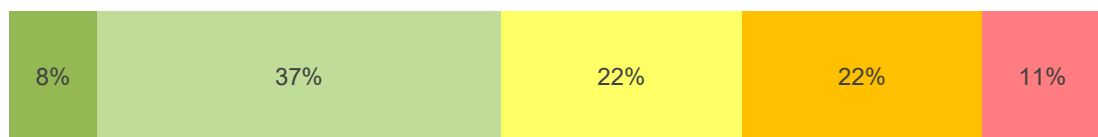
■ Very strong ■ Somewhat strong ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat poor ■ Very poor

Q. From your perspective as an employee, how would you rate external communication practices at the District, overall?

Very strong	Somewhat strong	Neutral	Somewhat poor	Very poor
12%	34%	37%	9%	8%

■ Very strong ■ Somewhat strong ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat poor ■ Very poor

Q. Please rate your agreement with the following statements related to communication. This section will ask you about communication across the District, including from District leadership as the senior executive team.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	N/A or I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The communication I receive from District leadership is transparent	22%	38%	12%	16%	12%
Communication between different departments or teams within the District is effective	12%	30%	13%	37%	8%
Communication modalities across the District (meetings, the portal, email etc.) are effective	20%	42%	12%	18%	8%
District leadership takes my concerns and feedback seriously	26%	21%	17%	19%	17%
Conflicts and disagreements are addressed openly and constructively within the District	9%	23%	26%	20%	22%
There are clear mechanisms in place for resolving interpersonal conflicts or misunderstandings	11%	22%	27%	18%	22%
I feel safe expressing my opinions and ideas in this District.	22%	23%	13%	19%	24%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Q. Please rate your agreement with the following statements related to communication. This section will ask you about communication within the Branch/department you most closely associate with.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	N/A or I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The communication I receive from Branch/department leadership is transparent	42%	31%	11%	9%	7%
I am satisfied with the frequency and clarity of communication from managers regarding work-related tasks and expectations	45%	30%	11%	7%	7%
I feel listened to and heard during team meetings and discussions.	45%	28%	14%	8%	5%
My manager takes my concerns and feedback seriously	54%	27%	9%	5%	5%
I feel safe expressing my opinions and ideas within my Branch/department team.	44%	30%	8%	13%	4%
My manager provides constructive feedback in a timely and respectful manner.	55%	26%	9%	4%	6%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ N/A or I don't know
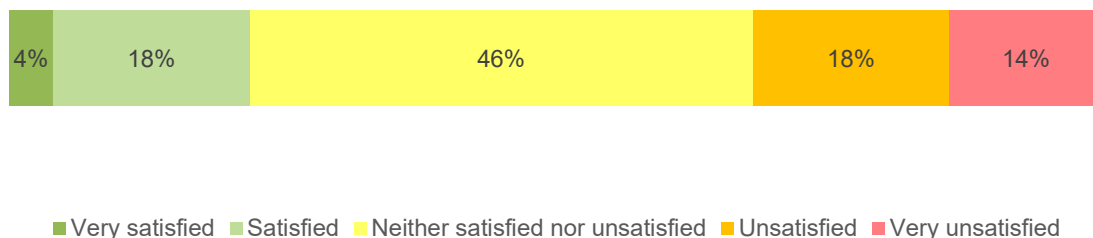■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Q. How satisfied are you with the Public Service Manager's Meeting?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
4%	18%	46%	18%	14%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied ■ Unsatisfied ■ Very unsatisfied

Q. How satisfied are you with the START Team Meeting?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Unsatisfied
18%	14%	64%	4%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied ■ Unsatisfied ■ Very unsatisfied
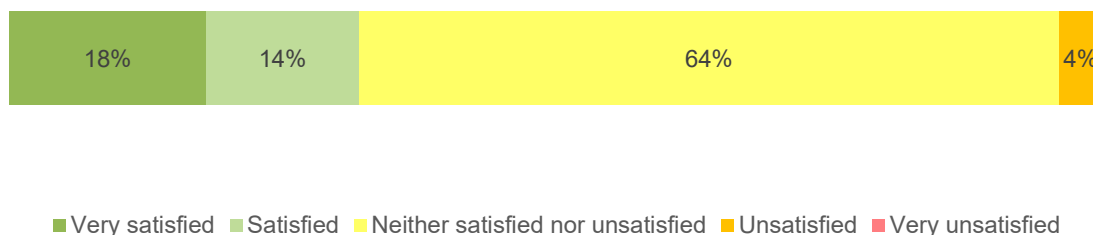
Employee Morale

Q. How would you rate your overall job satisfaction?

| 29% | 48% | 16% | 7% | 1% |
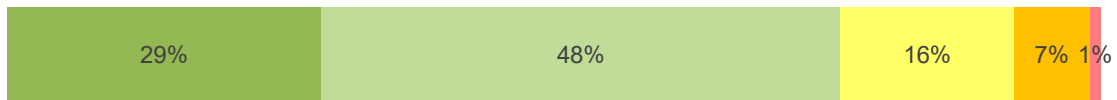
■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied ■ Unsatisfied ■ Very unsatisfied

Q. How motivated do you feel to come to work each day?

| 37% | 35% | 13% | 10% | 5% |
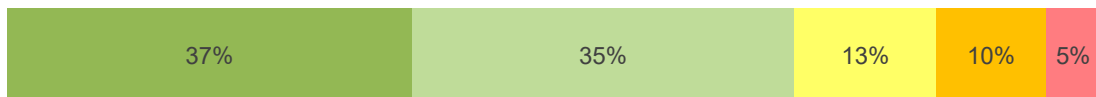
■ Very motivated ■ Somewhat motivated ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat unmotivated ■ Very unmotivated

Q. How would you rate the work-life balance provided by the District?

| 33% | 28% | 20% | 16% | 3% |
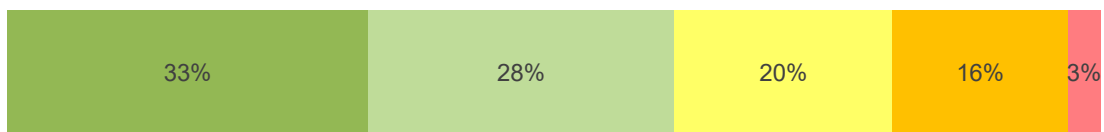
■ Very good ■ Somewhat good ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat poor ■ Very poor

Q. Have you experienced any instances of job-related stress or burnout in the past few months?

67%	27%	7%

■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know / N/A

Q. How satisfied are you with the opportunities for career growth and advancement within the District?

21%	24%	23%	16%	16%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Unsatisfied ■ Very unsatisfied

Q. Please rate your agreement with the following statements related to employee morale.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	N/A or I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes without fear of negative consequences.	25%	32%	9%	25%	10%
Leaders within the District genuinely value and respect diverse perspectives.	23%	29%	18%	18%	12%
Leaders within my Branch/department genuinely value and respect diverse perspectives.	50%	30%	9%	7%	5%
I feel respected, valued, and included at work.	42%	31%	8%	12%	7%
I am satisfied with the recognition and acknowledgment I receive for my contributions to the District.	32%	19%	17%	19%	12%
There are opportunities for innovation and creativity within my team or department.	44%	36%	10%	7%	3%
I do not experience bullying or harassment from other District employees.	50%	20%	10%	13%	8%
I feel like I am on the same team as the other people in my Branch.	50%	28%	7%	11%	4%
I feel like I am on the same team as the District as a whole.	14%	34%	12%	27%	12%

Legend:
- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Somewhat agree
- ■ N/A or I don't know
- ■ Somewhat disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree