

# Summary of Responses – Staff Survey (March)

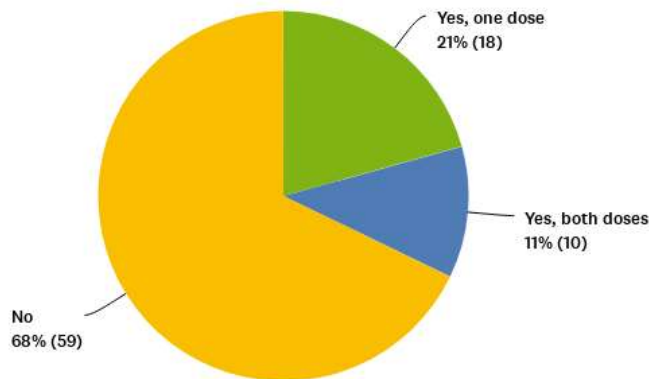
March 16–22, 2021

Library employees were given a link to the survey following the all-staff meeting on Tuesday, March 16, and responses requested by end of day Monday, March 22. 88 of 91 employees responded.

## Vaccination status and attitudes

### Q1 – Have you already had the COVID-19 vaccine?

87 of 88 respondents answered this question. Breakdown of answers is on par with vaccination rates in Lake County. Approximately 12% of Lake County residents have received both doses as of March 22.<sup>1</sup>



ALMOST A THIRD OF LIBRARY STAFF HAVE RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Knowing that a second dose follows the first by 3–4 weeks and that the CDC does not consider a person “fully vaccinated” until 2 weeks after their second dose, we can extrapolate the percentage of staff who will be “fully vaccinated”:

- by April 5, **between 11% and 32%**
- by May 3, **at least 32%**

Anecdotally, some department heads whose employees have shared their vaccination status with them report much higher percentages of fully vaccinated staff within their department.

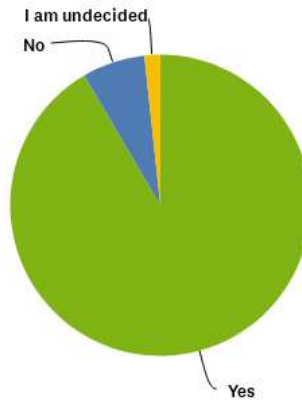
All government workers became eligible for the vaccine on Monday, March 22. However, Lake County Health Department has reported they expect a severely diminished supply until mid-April, when all ages 16+ become eligible, so it is difficult to project when our workforce might be “fully vaccinated.”

If vaccine supply flows more freely by late April, our workforce could be fully vaccinated by mid-June. This may happen more quickly if staff are able to secure earlier appointments or if more receive a one-dose regimen.

<sup>1</sup> [“About 14% of Illinois residents now fully vaccinated, state reports,”](#) March 21, 2021, *Daily Herald*

**Q2 – If you have not already received the vaccine, do you intend to when it becomes available for you? Q3 – What questions or concerns do you have about the vaccine?**

74 of 88 respondents answered this question; 50 shared additional feedback. Of the staff indicating that they have not yet received a vaccine, 92% indicate that they will pursue one when they are eligible. This is a much higher percentage than the general population (69%).<sup>2</sup>



A small number of employees indicate that they do not intend to be vaccinated or they are undecided. Concerns among this group include:

- Whether it's necessary to vaccinate against a disease that most people recover from
- Whether vaccination risks outweigh benefits for a person who has already had COVID
- Concerns about potential short- and long-term side effects, including one "no" response who cited existing medical issues that they worry will complicate their reaction to the vaccine and its ingredients

Concerns about potential short-term and long-term side effects are also prevalent among staff who have been vaccinated or intend to be.

Finally, many staff who have not yet been vaccinated but intend to be noted anxiety about being able to access the vaccine, especially before they are required to work with the public:

- *[I fear] that I won't get [a vaccination] before I am expected to work closely with the public.*
- *No health concerns relating to it; just anxious about when library workers will be eligible.*
- *Availability is scarce, and it's hard to find appointments*
- *No concerns about the vaccine, just concerns about getting an appointment.*
- *I am concerned that I will not be able to get vaccinated before I am expected to return to the building and work, both with staff and patrons.*

---

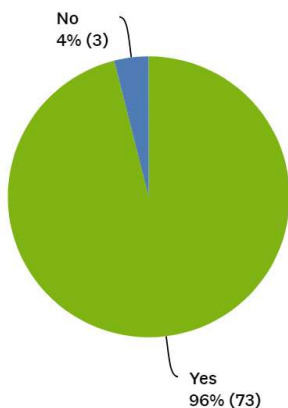
<sup>2</sup> ["Growing Share of Americans Say They Plan To Get a COVID-19 Vaccine – or Already Have,"](#) March 5, 2021, Pew Research Center

## Feeling safe while working at the library

### [Survey data summary](#)

#### Q4 – Do you currently feel safe working in the main library or annex?

87 of 88 respondents answered this question. Of the 76 who are currently reporting in-person for work at the library, 73 indicate that they currently feel safe doing so. 11 respondents are primarily working remotely and rarely if ever report to the building.



#### Q5 – What would make you feel more safe?

Asking all employees what would make them feel more safe provided an opportunity for staff to suggest ways to increase their assurance as we plan.

Of those who report that they currently feel safe, many offered praise for current library operations:

- *Everything in place is fine to make me feel safe.*
- *I think the library has done a good job of keeping staff safe and believe they will continue to put the staff wellness before opening to the public.*
- *Facilities is doing a great job at keeping the building clean and habitable. Keep up the good work!*
- *I feel pretty safe as is I'm ready for reopening.*
- *The library has been over the top with safety. I currently have no concerns.*
- *I feel safe whenever I go into the building.*
- *Generally I feel safe going into the library as I do it on a limited basis.*
- *Facilities has done a great job assessing needs and implementing safety protocols above and beyond.*
- *Just keeping us in the loop like you have been has been comforting*

Of the three employees who report that they currently feel unsafe in the building, just two offered additional elaboration: One admits they “fall in between yes and no” regarding feeling safe in the building — “*I feel that the library is taking as many precautions as possible, and I commend that*” — Their unease arises from working around other people, especially when they see evidence on coworkers’ social media accounts that those employees are taking more risks than they personally are comfortable with. The other hopes for continued work-from-home assignments where available.

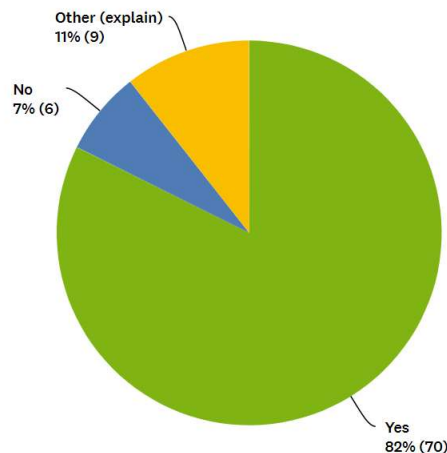
Of the 30 substantive suggestions:

- 6 indicated having a vaccine would make them feel safe
- 6 urged continued masking
- 6 want to see limits on the number of people in the office or patrons in the library
- 5 cited concerns around social distancing, safe distancing, and/or barriers

**Q6 – Assuming that local measures of COVID-19 community spread are equal to or better than where we are today, would you feel comfortable working in the library later this spring (with additional staff but before inviting the public into the building)?**

**Q7 – If you like, give additional details about your answer.**

85 of 88 respondents answered this question; 34 offered additional feedback.



MOST STAFF FEEL COMFORTABLE RETURNING TO WORK IN THE BUILDING

Of 6 staff who said they would not feel safe, 4 provided additional feedback.

One person enumerated concerns about taking on increased risk while most staff have not yet been vaccinated. They are alarmed at a widespread loosening of restrictions “because case numbers are lower” when there is still such high prevalence in our community — *“I am not at all comfortable with taking more risk especially when we are so close to defeating this virus. Just because the library has not had an outbreak doesn’t mean that we are immune to one down the road.”* — This person indicated in other responses that they currently work in the building and they feel safe doing so as long as the building remains closed to the public.

One person who is concerned they may be medically unable to get the vaccine indicated they would not be comfortable returning in person “until at least the summer.”

The other two indicated concerns about staff returning before being vaccinated:

- *Staff not being vaccinated, opening too soon, building occupancy and scheduling*
- *There’s increased risk of the COVID spread if there are more staff in the building. If everyone gets vaccinated it is safer.*

Nine staff answered “Other.” Their comments made clear that their answers were “Yes, if...”

- Yes, with appropriate social distancing / masks / PPE / safety guidelines
- Yes, if I have been vaccinated / a large portion of us were vaccinated

Of 32 substantive comments, repeated themes included:

- Social distancing of workstations / and/or barriers (9)
- Vaccination (8)
  - *[I am comfortable because] I have received the vaccine*
  - *Having been vaccinated I feel safer and I know the library will always put our safety first.*
  - *I will only feel comfortable returning to work in the building, whether with other staff only for longer days or with the public, when I am fully vaccinated.*
  - *I would be comfortable working in the back office with one (maybe two) other people as long as we were spread out and had the air purifier going once I am fully vaccinated.*
  - *I would feel comfortable if I was vaccinated, and a large portion of us were vaccinated.*
  - *It is ridiculous to think that just because case numbers are lower that we can reduce guidelines for people especially when most of the staff have not been vaccinated.*
  - *Some additional staff is fine; and a good portion of us having been vaccinated.*
- A need for a transition period (3)
  - *I will need as much notice as possible to arrange childcare.*
  - *I like the idea of a soft opening before going full opening to the public*
  - *I think it's imperative for staff to have a period of time to be back in the building before the public is back, both so that we can get re-acclimated but also so that we can adjust anything that needs adjusting.*

## Concerns related to reopening the building

### Q8 – Do you have concerns about opening the building to the public?

63 of 88 respondents shared a concern or suggestion. Common concerns included:

- Enforcement of safety protocols or interactions with unhappy patrons (e.g., mask use, social distancing, building capacity, length of stay) (31)
- Specific requests for a safety monitor and/or manager present during all operating hours (12)
- Concerns about being able to maintain social distancing, especially when assisting patrons (10)

### Q9 – Do you have other concerns about re-opening?

39 of 88 respondents shared some additional thoughts here. Recurring themes included

- concerns about shared staff spaces (bathrooms, break rooms)
- questions about details such as hours, building capacity, procedures for computer use
- how we will handle patrons needing assistance at a desk or with computers
- cleaning / sanitizing protocols: who will be responsible, how often it will occur

There were also several comments expressing unhappiness with a lack of raises last year and staff not being allowed to work full shifts or more days in the building.