

July Staff Survey results

July 21, 2021

The July survey had 75 respondents: 62 from the main library, 12 from the annex, and one who skipped the location question. This is a smaller number of survey participants than April (84) or March (88).

Feeling safe while working at the library

Among people working in person at the library, July survey results had 73 people reporting “I feel safe,” compared to 69 in April.

Two employees indicated they do not feel safe. Those employees cited concerns about the Delta variant and the library keeping a consistent mask policy. The Delta variant is outside of our control. All we can do is assure you we are watching it and will continue to make every effort to operate as safely as possible. The mask policy is addressed below.

Concerns from July survey results, addressed

When asked “Is there something that would make you feel more safe?,” specific concerns included:

Fellow employees being vaccinated. 91% of library staff are fully vaccinated. This number is higher than local, state, or national averages. It is higher than the percentage of athletes at the Olympic games who are vaccinated. We are doing great.

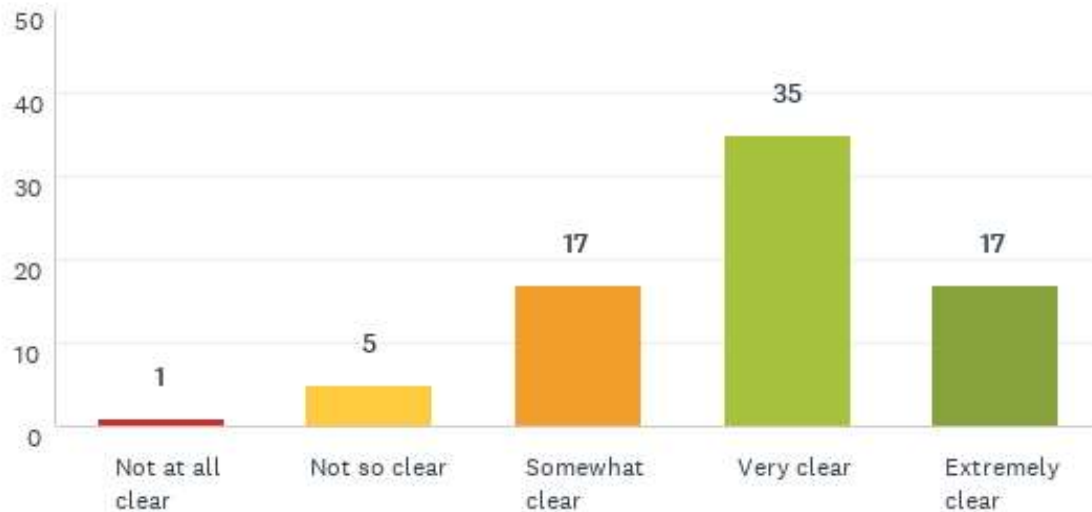
Some additional safety precautions. One person requested “more of those blue self-cleaning rubber things on door handles.” — will do! Another person requested “More signage and barriers around the checkout desk” — some additional details would be helpful. Please remember that you are invited to submit concerns and feedback anytime by talking to your supervisor or Cindy, or through the [anonymous feedback form](#).

Many people responded with praise for current operations:

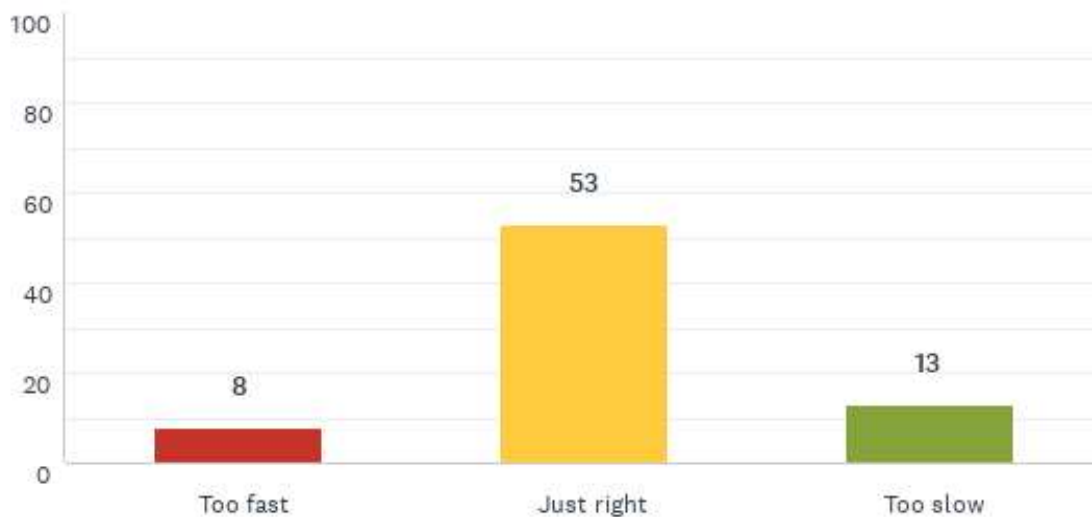
- *Feeling quite safe already with the measures you have put in place.*
- *Our library is doing a great job in protecting the employees.*
- *No, the library has been outstanding in keeping us safe.*
- *Yes - the obvious - eradicating the Covid virus entirely. But, until that's a possibility, I think Operations and all others involved are doing a great job implementing reasonably safe precautions.*
- *No, I think we're doing a great job.*
- *Nothing I can think of. I appreciate people wearing masks and workplaces being distanced.*
- *I FEEL SAFE*
- *No, there is nothing to make me feel more safe*
- *If every employee that was able would get vaccinated.*

Staff sentiment about changes and specific policies

How informed do you feel about service changes? Responses lean in a satisfactory direction.



How do you feel about the pace of changes? This distribution of answers indicates that, on balance, we are doing just fine.



In this survey, we asked some questions about how staff feel on some issues: the greeter, the patron mask policy, the health screening, and break spaces.

These surveys and other feedback channels are intended to provide additional information that the management team can consider as we continue to evolve and refine operations during COVID. Staff sentiment is just one factor in decision making. CDC and other public health recommendations are another. Budget impact is another. Staff feedback helps us identify areas we might want to investigate further and other areas that we can set aside. We give extra weight to the opinions of those who would be most affected by a given change. We are not

inclined to implement policies that affected staff feel negatively about, and we continue to prioritize staff and community safety in all decisions.

Greeter. Just 23% of main building staff felt okay about eliminating the greeter position. No changes are planned for the greeter at this time.

Break rooms. Since the main building staff are the ones most affected by a change in break room space, only those responses were considered. 77% felt it would be acceptable to revert the meeting room to patron space.

However, there is no compelling reason for us to do so immediately, so no change for now. We will keep you updated as plans evolve for fall.

Health screening. The health screening affects everyone who enters the building, so all staff answers were examined. Overall, 70% of respondents are in favor of eliminating the health screening. (Not surprisingly, the staff who work the most hours in person are the most in favor.)

We will be ending the health screening after Saturday, July 24. However, please note: we are **not** ending the policies outlined by the screening. **The following requirements still apply,** we just aren't going to ask you every day.

If you are not fully vaccinated, you are expected to stay home and contact HR if:

- you are experiencing symptoms of illness
- you had close contact with someone who has COVID or is suspected to have COVID
- you tested positive for COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19
- you or anyone in your immediate household (including guests) traveled to or from an [Illinois resurgence region](#), an orange state on the [Chicago Travel Order](#), or internationally

Even if you are fully vaccinated, you are expected to stay home and contact HR if:

- you are experiencing symptoms of illness
- you tested positive for COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19
- you or anyone in your immediate household (including guests) travelled internationally

Mask policy. 31% of staff are in favor of relaxing the patron mask policy. 22% expressed no opinion. 49% are opposed. The topic of masks received more comments than any other.

- *Keeping a consistent mask policy (every patron over the age of 2 who enters our library needs to wear a mask). The recent decision to not enforce patrons wearing a mask in the study rooms makes me feel unsafe and makes me feel that the library is not prioritizing employee concerns about safety.*

- *I think we should continue to mask up in the library -- staff and patrons. With new variants coming and children still being unable to get a vaccine, I worry about what the Fall and Winter will bring us.*
- *Until kids can get vaccinated, patrons should be required to mask at least in those areas*
- *This is speaking from my experience working at another library that has the policy of "masks not required for fully vaxxed people, with the exception of Children's area." Currently we are experiencing more and more interactions where parents or even their kids walk into the department with no masks. Then the responsibility is on the desk staff to track them down and ask those patrons to wear a mask, not knowing whether the response we get will be a positive or negative one. It's been exhausting, in my opinion. I hope the management team will take these scenarios into consideration before revising our policy.*
- *If patrons don't have to wear mask, it would be nice if they don't stay longer*
- *Regarding masks - unless vaccination cards are required upon entering all public spaces, there won't be a full proof system for determining who is and isn't vaccinated. Most likely only a dramatic turn of unfortunate events with viral spread would change the current format. It doesn't hurt to wear a mask in situations where it may appear additional measures may be necessary or helpful. Because logically, it's more than likely a percentage of the population is mask free and unvaccinated. More than we realize. It's going to remain a guessing game for awhile.*
- *We are being too conservative in our approach. Most other libraries are already fully open and have removed mask mandates for vaccinated patrons.*
- *I think that we should be mindful of the variants and the effectiveness of the vaccine protecting us from them; as well as remembering that not everyone is honest about having had the vaccine. In particular, the patrons.*
- *Regarding question #8, would staff still be required to wear masks in public spaces, if we don't require it of patrons? Also, I guess my answer to #7 and #8 go hand-in-hand. If we keep the masks for everyone, we need to keep the greeter in my opinion, if we don't keep the masks for everyone, the greeter, while nice, is not mandatory.*
- *Masks should continue to be required in public areas for reasons stated in the 7/6/21 staff email blast. The conditions and values that brought about those reasons have not changed.*
- *I don't think everyone would be honest about being vaccinated if we said people could opt NOT to wear masks.*
- *We have patrons not following the mask rules now, there is no way to trust them to not lie about their vaccination status. Further, there's been no change to the eligibility of young children for vaccination yet and the library is open concept, with everyone intermingling. We had a patron come to the Adult Desk and tell us that he appreciated that we still have masks required because other libraries aren't and he feels safer here. Also, we've already been having problems with patrons not wearing masks in the study rooms, if the meeting and program rooms are back to being public areas, we'll probably have the same issue there as well. I haven't had a problem with the rollout as it stands now. However, I worry about things looking good and then we begin to rush services. I still maintain that a measured and steady pace to increase services is the best way to do it.*
- *As long as we keep in mind the patron population we serve that is unable to get vaccinated, I'll be happy with the decisions we continue to make.*
- *I am not sure the public is honest about being vaccinated , so I would want them to wear a mask.*
- *I am strongly uncomfortable with the thought of dropping patron masks (and unvaccinated staff masks), even with lower numbers. As is, we have some patrons who cannot follow the mask rule, which is an example of how we will have unvaccinated patrons who will still refuse to wear a mask. We are seeing the delta variant skyrocket, and my vaccine does not protect me as much as I would like against that. I also am uncomfortable offering notary services, due to the close interaction, handled materials, and long time periods, and hope we hold off on offering that. There are plenty of other places in the area where they can access that service.*

No changes to the mask policy are planned at this time.

Other comments, questions or concerns

I hope we can offer more small in-person programs soon.

- We are offering several [in-person programs](#) now: weekly Sun & Fun Storytime, concerts, art classes. For fall, the management team is working on parameters under which indoor programs could be offered safely. Plans are to offer ESL space for classes in the main building as long as those safety marks can be met. More info will follow as it develops.

Could we put some puzzles out in YSS?

- Puzzles encourage lingering even if it is an individual activity. Plus, we would not be sanitizing puzzles between use, and the youngest kids are most likely to put pieces in their mouth. Circulating puzzles at least have time to sit unused between different kids.

Please inform staff of changes happening in the library like [eating in the cafe](#).

- Food is not allowed right now and there is no change planned at this time.

Worth noting is **what we did not hear from you:** [concerns about patron sentiment](#).

- In April, when we asked an open-ended question about comments or concerns, a number of you shared concerns that the public was unhappy with us. We asked the same question on the July survey, and no one had any comments along those lines.
- We did notice that among the main building staff, the sentiment that we are moving “too slow” tends to track with in-person hours. It’s not a majority opinion, but there is a hint that those of you spending the most time with the public may sense a demand for additional services. Details about what you are hearing and what services people are looking for is always appreciated. Even if we can’t offer things “the old way,” when patrons express a need, we can look for new ways to meet those needs safely.

Finally, there were a handful of other comments that are not included in this report because we did not have enough information to respond. If you feel your comment was not addressed and would like an answer, please talk to your supervisor, HR, Cindy, or provide more information through the [anonymous feedback form](#).