



# Executive Summary

- This report presents findings from TRL's first systematic assessment of in-person customer service, capturing feedback from over 1,500 patrons across 5 counties during a two-month window between January and March 2026.
- A short-form survey was selected to support ease of participation. Final survey questions were chosen based on standard customer service survey metrics, Customer Satisfaction (CSAT), Net Promoter Score (NPS), and qualitative value questions designed to assess frontline customer service.
- Overall customer service perceptions are highly positive: 90% of respondents reported being somewhat or very satisfied. The district had a strong Net Promoter Score (NPS) average of 4.71 out of 5.
- Library staff are TRL's greatest asset. Patrons describe staff as friendly, helpful, kind, knowledgeable and welcoming. Many respondents shared examples of staff creating belonging, safety and meaningful support.
- Opportunities for improvement were limited in number (6% of respondents offered suggestions) and rarely related to staff performance. Focusing instead on environmental conditions, staffing availability, management decisions, and facilities with a modest increase in concerns noted later in the survey window.
  - The first portion of the survey had an 85% positive towards frontline service.
- Factors that could influence survey responses: organizational budget communications released in late January mid-survey and the use of an open survey link which allowed for the possibility of multiple submissions.

## **Recommended actions:**

- Sustain high-quality frontline service practices
- Increase consistency of greetings, while continuing to enhance consistent patron-centered training
- Address branch-specific environmental and operational concerns that impact overall experience
- Continue using patron feedback to guide improvements
- Regularly repeat survey to monitor trends over time



# Purpose & Methodology



<b>Technique</b>	Online Survey – 2 minutes Focus: in-person, frontline service assessment
<b>Access and Promotion</b>	TRL website TRL self-checkout TRL news release QR code bookmarks QR code located on frontline service desks Released in TRL newsletter & Regional Manager newsletters
<b>Survey Window</b>	January 16 – March 16, 2026
<b>Participants</b>	Advertised district-wide to 5 counties Open link: Multiple responses enabled Current Library users
<b>Geography</b>	5 counties: Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Thurston counties in SW Washington
<b>Total Responses</b>	1,581 completed in English English Results Pages 2-18 8 completed in Spanish Spanish Results Pages 18-27
<b>Weighting: none</b>	Survey responses were analyzed as submitted and were not weighted. Results reflect the perspectives of respondents and are intended to highlight patterns in customer experience rather than represent a statistically balanced sample of all library users.
<b>Reliability</b>	Surveys were not attached to individual account or IP address; individuals could submit multiple responses during the survey window.



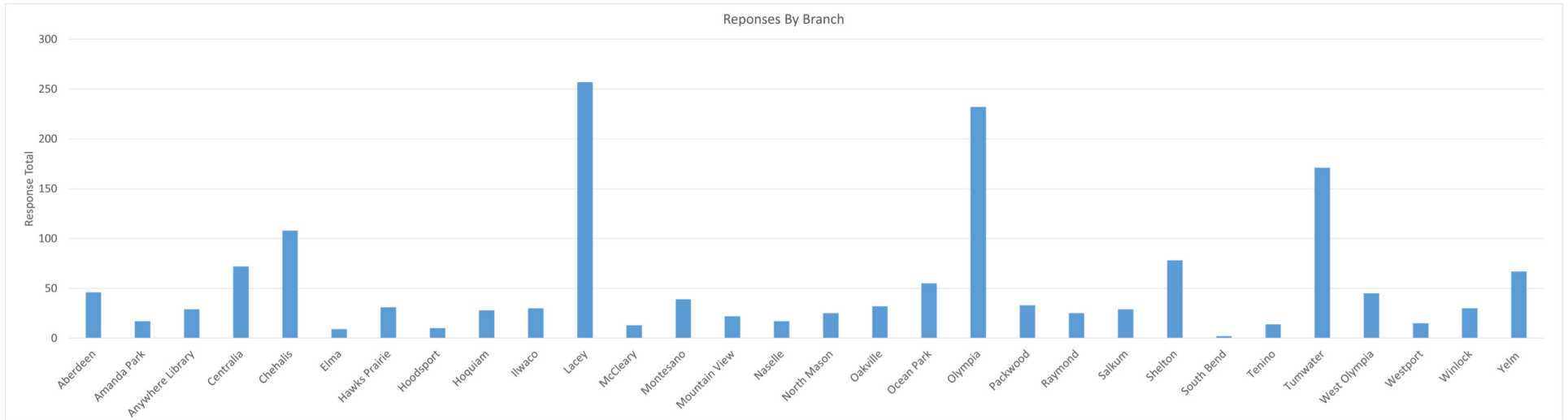
# Overall Results / Key Metrics



## Number of Responses by Branch: Total 1,581

Question 1(Q1): "What Timberland Regional Library did you visit?" (multiple choice)

Chart A.1: Total Response by Branch



### Key Points

- We received responses for each library branch, with the 3 largest receiving the most responses: Lacey (257), Olympia (232), and Tumwater (171)
  - Response volume mirrors branch size, visit volume, and staffing presence
- We received the least number of responses in areas of lower population, Elma (9), Hoodsport, (10) and McCleary (13)
- One South Bend response has a data correction<sup>1</sup>
- Local promotion and access could factor into total number of survey responses by branch size—urban branches have more self-checkout stations and Internet Stations (INETs) per branch
- Social media promotion was observed in some regions and light in others

### Recommended action:

- Standardize promotion expectations across the district in future surveys
- Provide additional support or alternative promotion strategies for rural and medium locations



## Greeting by Branch

Question 2 (Q2): "Were you greeted by a staff person during your visit?"\* (open text)

Chart A.2: Percentage Greeting by Branch

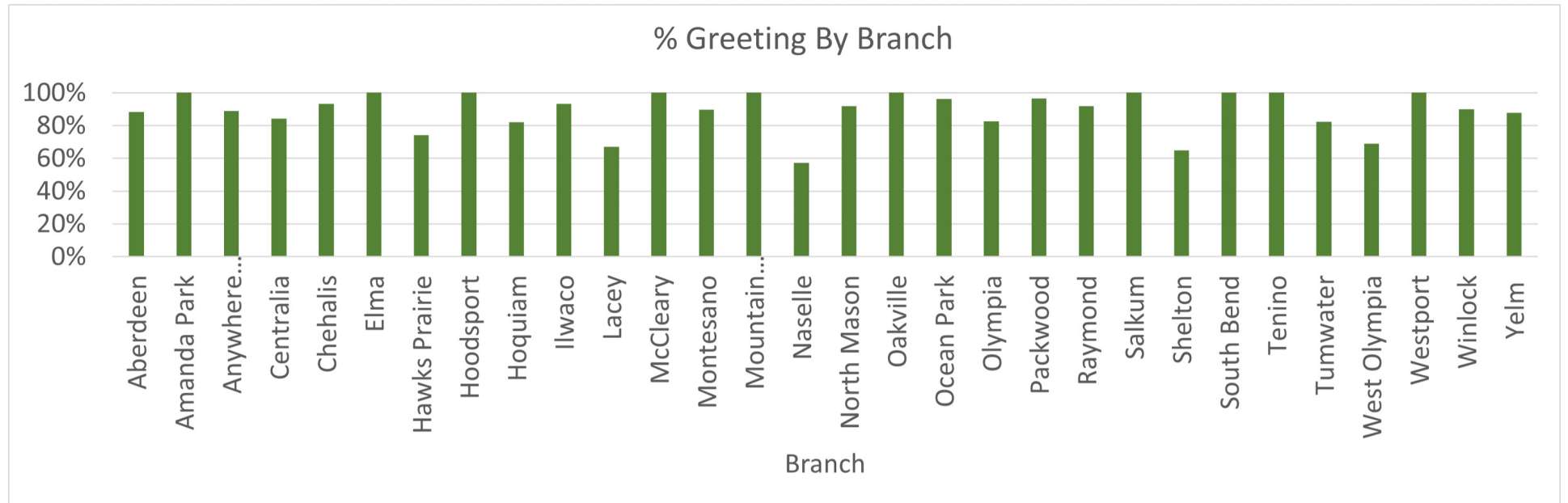
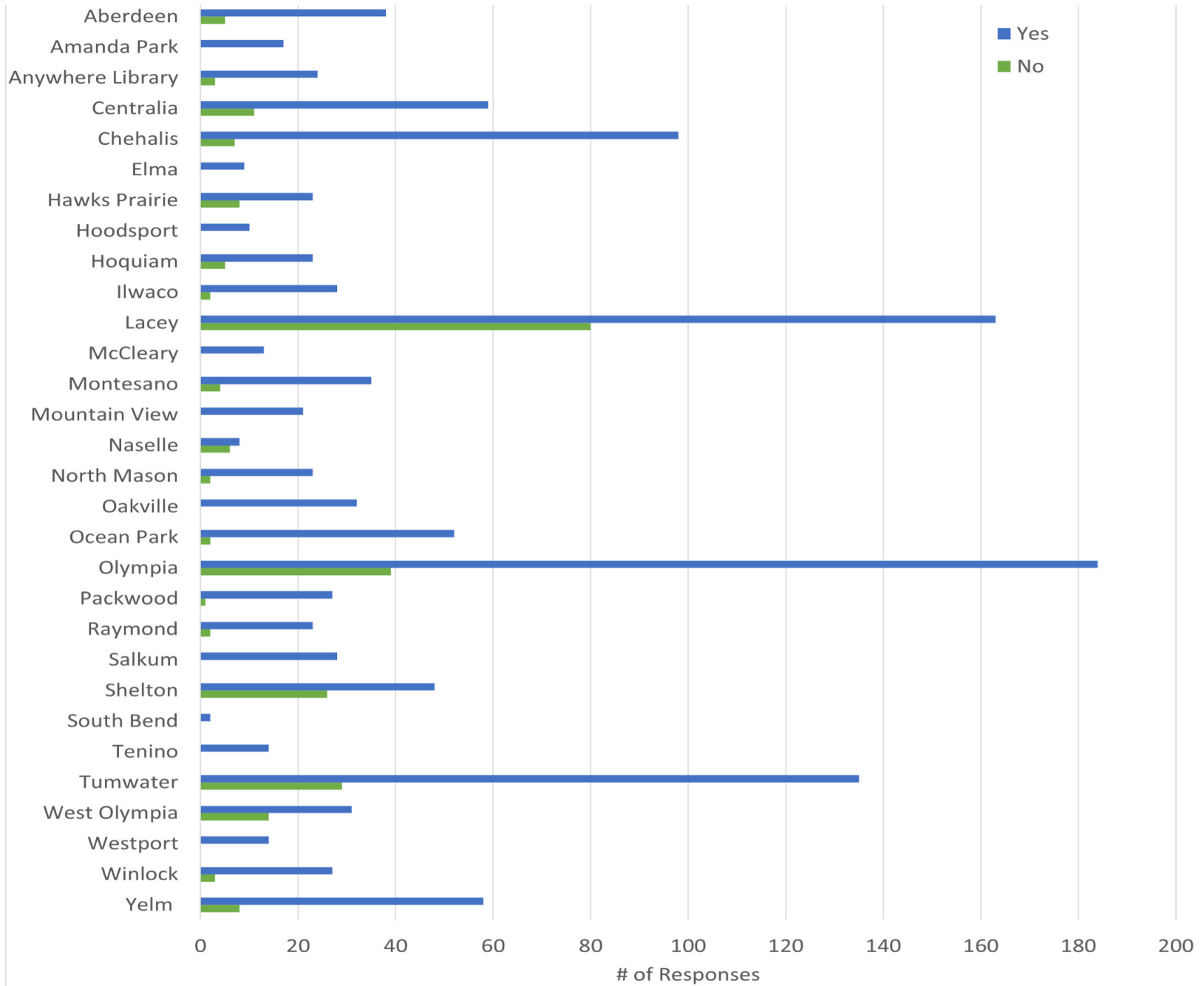


Chart A.3 Greeting by Branch Yes/No



## Key Points

- Patron responses indicated a variability of greeting practices by branch: respondents indicated 100% greeting at 10 branches and the lowest greeting percentage is above mid-range at 67%
- Patrons who were greeted show higher satisfaction
- Some patrons explicitly stated they do not require a greeting; however, most respondents say greetings and acknowledgements indicate a welcoming environment

## Recommended action:

- Continue greetings and acknowledgements according to the CARE model
- Improve greetings in a few locations to improve overall patron experience: focus on visibility, and shared expectations for patron centered service

*\*Note: Because Q2 was an open text field, responses were categorized using the following criteria:*

**Table A.2**

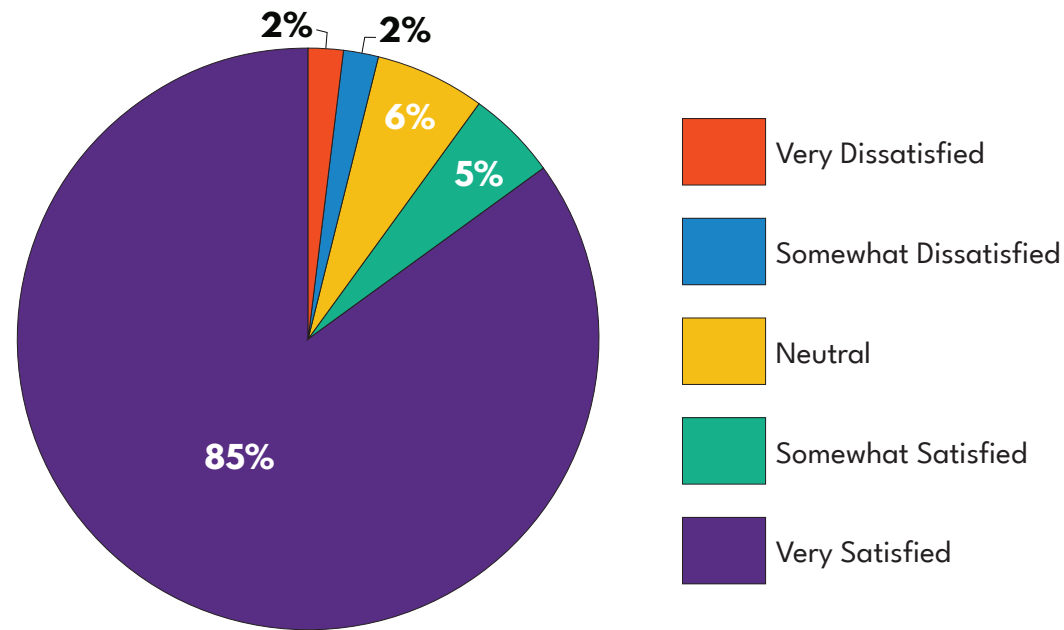
<b>Q2: Greeting Qualitative Analysis</b>	
Yes/No Unknown N/A	Unable to determine if patron was greeted Not possible (EAH, or closed)
<p><b>Answer:</b></p> <p>Online use Phone Sometimes Expanded Access Hours Don't need or want greeting Usually Anything that is not a direct yes/no</p>	<p><b>Interpretation:</b></p> <p>N/A Unknown Unknown N/A Unknown Yes Unknown</p>



## Patron Satisfaction – District

Question 3 (Q3): “How satisfied are you overall with the service you received from Library Staff during your most recent visit?” (Rating)

Chart A.4: Patron Satisfaction Score-District



### Key Points

- Responses indicated a 90% positive satisfaction rating for Staff Performance across the district—there were 1,430 somewhat satisfied and very satisfied responses
- 4% (63) of respondents selected somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied
- Of the 54 responses to the question of how could staff improve your experience, 21 dissatisfied respondents said Staff Performance
- There were 88 Neutral responses

### Recommended action:

- Sustain current frontline service practices through training, peer and supervisor engagement, and recognition of efforts and excellent service
- Address dissatisfaction categories through administrative review
- Use satisfaction data to reinforce staff morale, and enhance patron-centered services by gathering frontline staff input



## Strengths

Question 4 (Q4): "What stood out about the interactions with the Library Staff member?" (open text)

Figure A.1:



### Key Points

- 1,221 out of 1,581 answered this question
- 5 most common words to describe interactions with staff: Friendly, Helpful, Kind, Knowledgeable, Welcoming

### Recommended action:

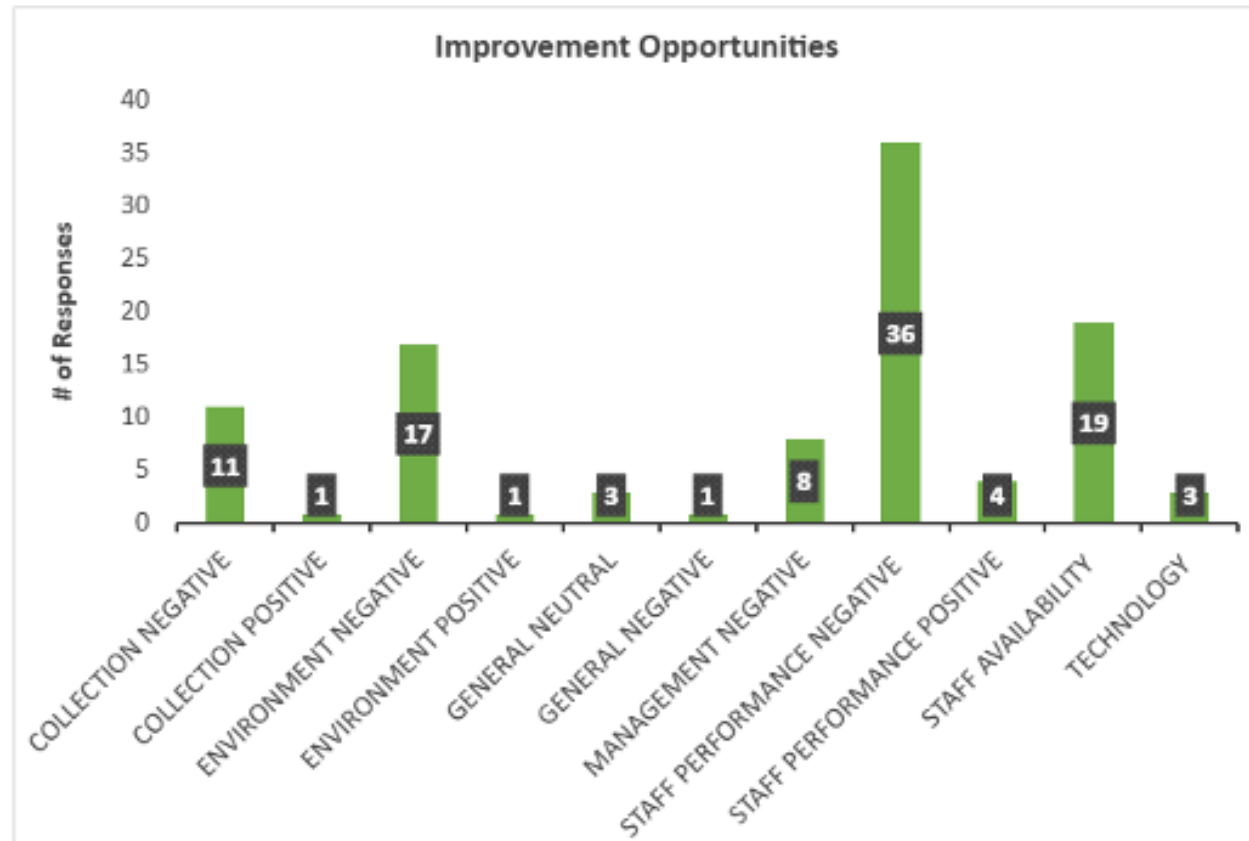
- Continue positive, patron-centered service
- Study patron-centered services by gathering frontline staff input
- Sustainability of high level of patron services



## Opportunities for Improvement

Question 5 (Q5): "What could Library Staff have done to improve your experience?" (open text)

Chart A.5 Improvement Opportunities\*



\*Note: See Table A.3 Positive and negative categorizations reflect how respondents expressed their views about a specific topic, not a judgment of the comment itself.

### Key Points

- We received 96 total responses to this question of improving experience
- 6% of responders had improvement suggestions focusing on staff availability, environment and collections rather than staff performance or behaviors
- Feedback suggest staff are highly valued even when frustrated by systems or facilities
- Improvement themes increased slightly during the latter half of the survey window, coinciding with organizational budget communications



# Net Promoter Score by Branch

Question 6 (Q6): "How likely are you to recommend this library to a friend or family member?" (Likert Scale)

### Chart A.6: Net Promoter Score by Branch

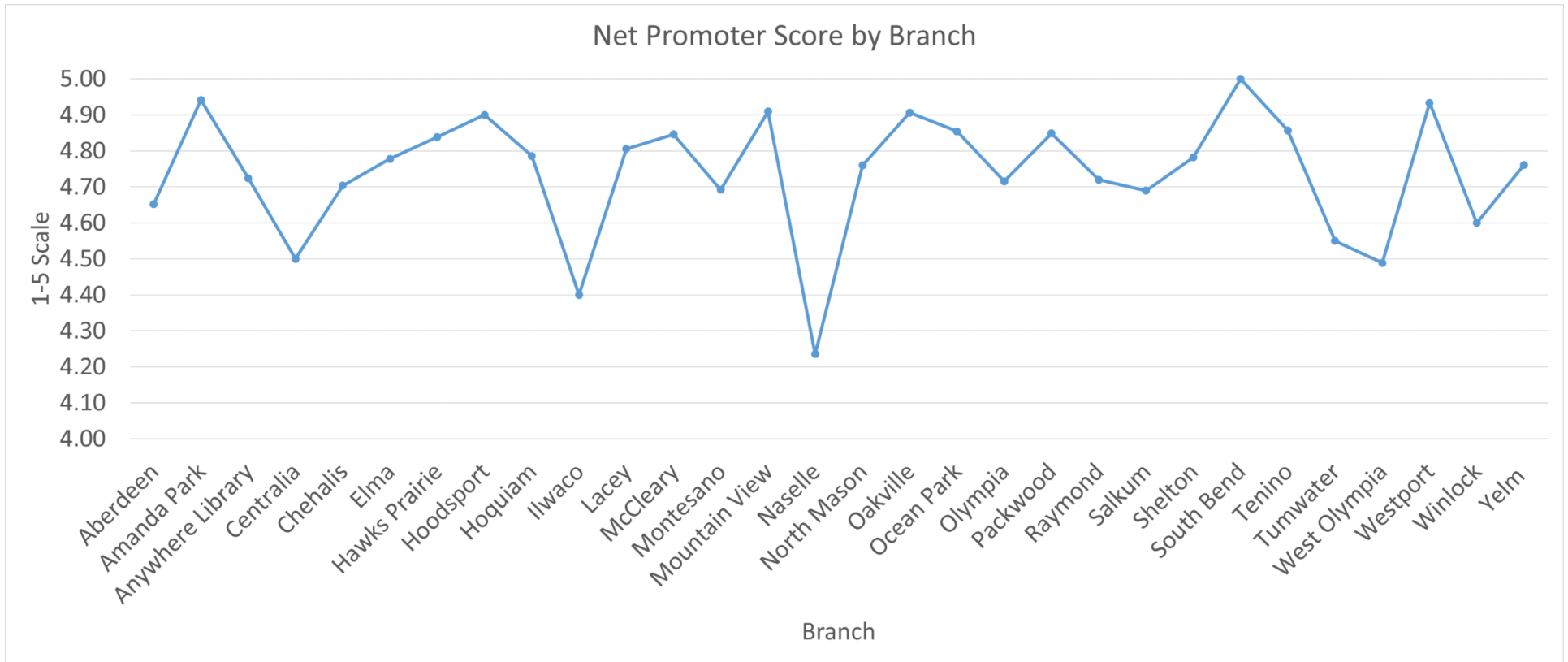
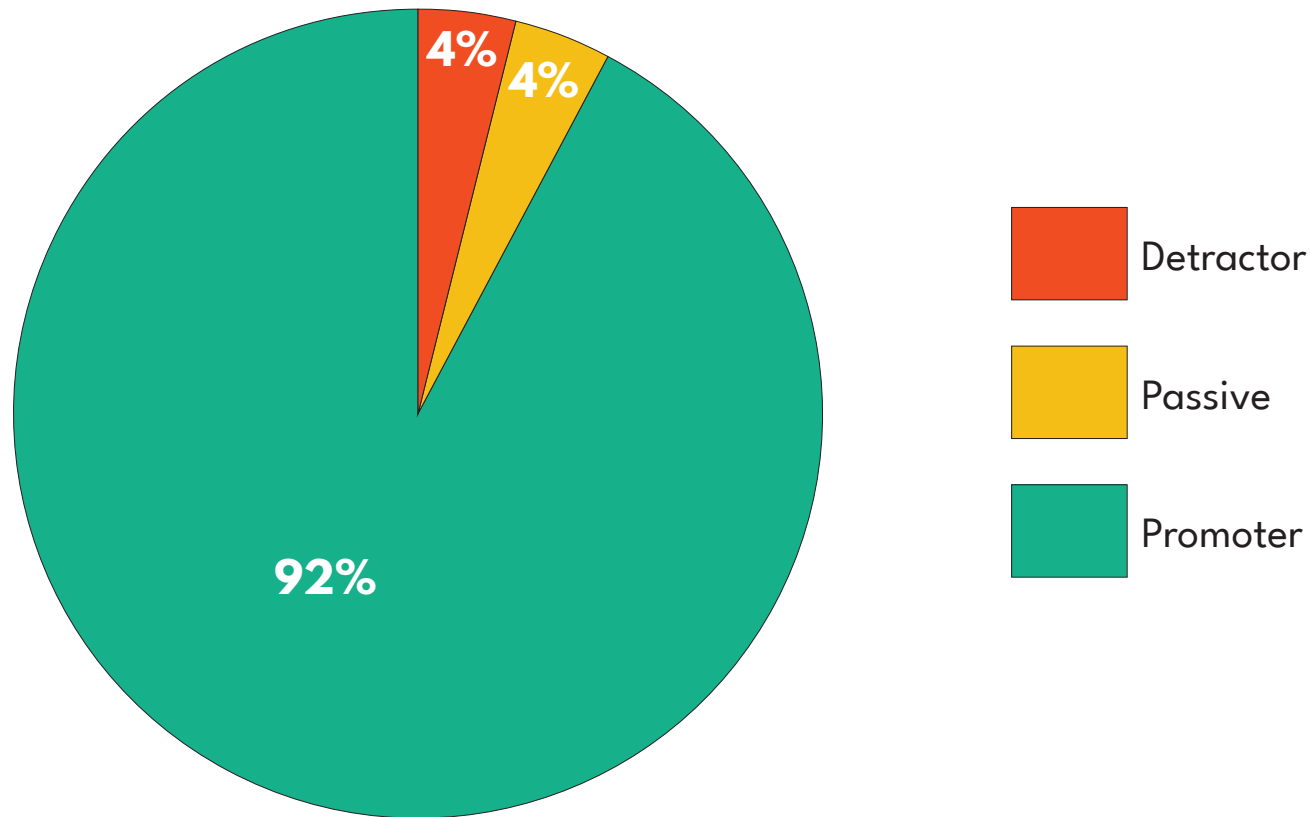


Chart A.7: Net Promoter Score District Percentage



**Key Points**

- Every respondent included a star rating; rating was 1-5 stars; this chart shows the average scores range in the 4-5 star ratings
- District average NPS is 4.71 out of 5 stars, reflecting an exceptionally strong likelihood to recommend TRL services
- 85% of responders are Promoters who rated 5 stars
- Detractors (less likely to recommend) rate their recommendation level at 1-2 stars, Passives rate at 3 stars, and Promoters rate recommendation level at 4-5 stars (most likely to recommend)
  - Most responders are Promoters with satisfaction rating of 4-5 (1,461 responses)
  - Detractor (63 responses)
  - Passive (57 responses)



## Qualitative Theme Analysis

Question 7 (Q7): “Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your customer service experience at TRL?” (open text)

For this question, there were 996 Responses that can be categorized into themes of relating to patron experience in libraries in a broad sense such as technology, collection, environment, facilities, staff performance versus availability, and administration etc. (See Table A.3).

**Table A.3**

<b>A4, A5, A7: Response Qualitative Analysis</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
General: compliments Neutral statement General: concerns	General library: positive General: neutral General library: negative
Technology (EAH, etc)	Technology: positive Technology: negative
Collection (Circulation, courier, etc.)	Collection: positive Collection: negative
Environment (noise, odor, refresh, furniture)	Environment: positive Environment: negative
Staff performance	Staff performance: positive Staff performance: negative
Staffed hours/staffing libraries	Staff availability
Facilities (driveup window, meeting rooms, hours, etc.)	Facilities: positive Facilities: negative
Programming (Outreach, Anywhere)	Programming: positive Programming: negative
Administrative, policy, procedure, Board, etc.	Management: positive Management: neutral Management: negative

Staff availability is distinct from staff performance. Staff availability is the possibility of staff operating at a branch. Naselle and South Bend were libraries where staff were not operating during the time of the survey.



## Key Points

- Responses highlight that library staff are our strongest asset by far
- Staff consistently create positive experiences and patrons separate staff from their concerns with other aspects of the library (facilities, collection, technology etc)
- Patrons consistently describe staff as:
  - Remembering names and preferences
  - Providing individualized help
  - Taking extra time with technology
  - Supporting children, seniors, neurodivergent patrons and vulnerable populations
  - Creating a sense of belonging, community, safety
- Patrons are not anti-refresh, anti-children, or anti-community; they are asking for choice and balance
- Family needs & quiet spaces, are being perceived as competing rather than co-existing



## Recommendations/Next Steps

- Continue sustainable frontline service excellence through training, peer support and modeling, and staff recognition
- Increase consistency of greeting and acknowledgements, focusing on visibility of patrons in workflows
- Add staff recognition for excellent service in core and visible places (Teams, SharePoint, TRL website, staff and patron stories etc.)
- Assess feedback for potential improvements in areas distinct from frontline staff customer service
- Identify staff practices that create positive, welcoming library experiences and gather input from staff to inform TRL service standards
- Use this survey as benchmark and repeat regularly to track trends over time
- Share findings with staff and TRL patrons to acknowledge staff contributions and emphasize the strong trust and appreciation expressed by patrons

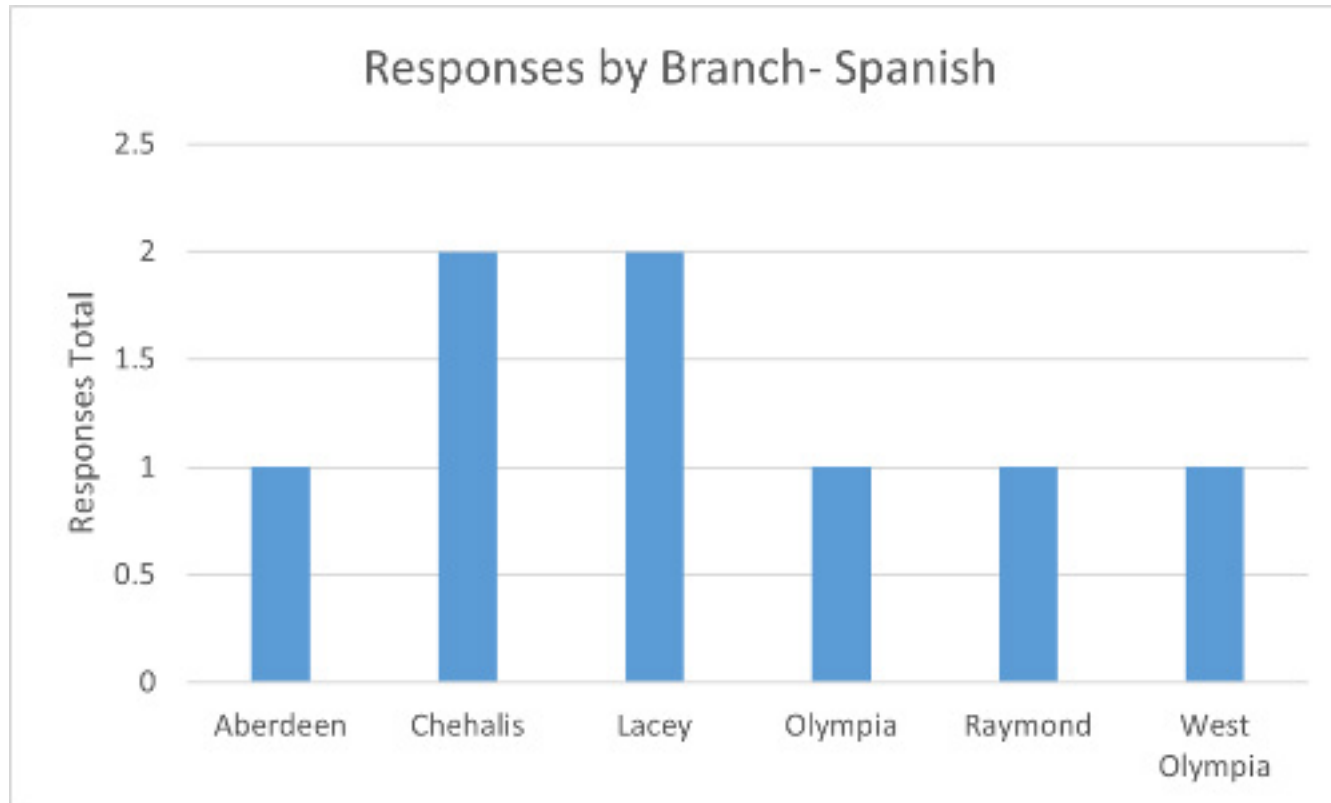


# Overall Results / Key Metrics — Spanish

## Number of Responses by Branch: Total 8

Question 1(Q1): ¿Cuál biblioteca regional de Timberland visitó?, “What Timberland Regional Library did you visit?” (multiple choice)

Chart A.8: Total Response by Branch - Spanish



### Key Points

- We received 8 responses in 6 branches
- Local promotion and access could factor into total number of survey responses



## Greeting by Branch

Question 2 (Q2): ¿Le dio la bienvenida algún miembro del personal durante su visita?, "Were you greeted by a staff person during your visit?"\* (open text)

Chart A.9: Percentage Greeting by Branch - Spanish

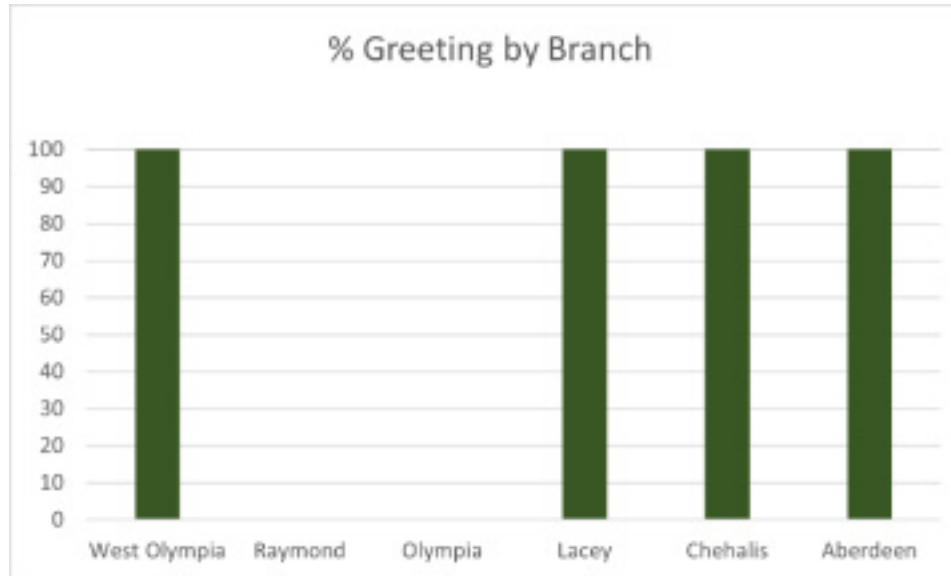
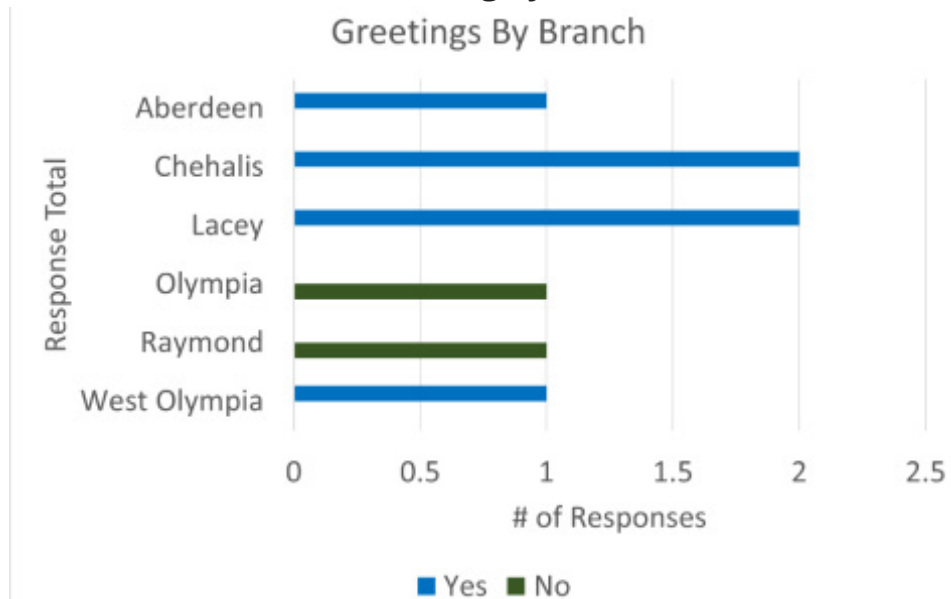


Chart A.10 Greeting by Branch Yes/No



*\*Note: Because Q2 was an open text field, responses were categorized using the following criteria:*

**Table A.4**

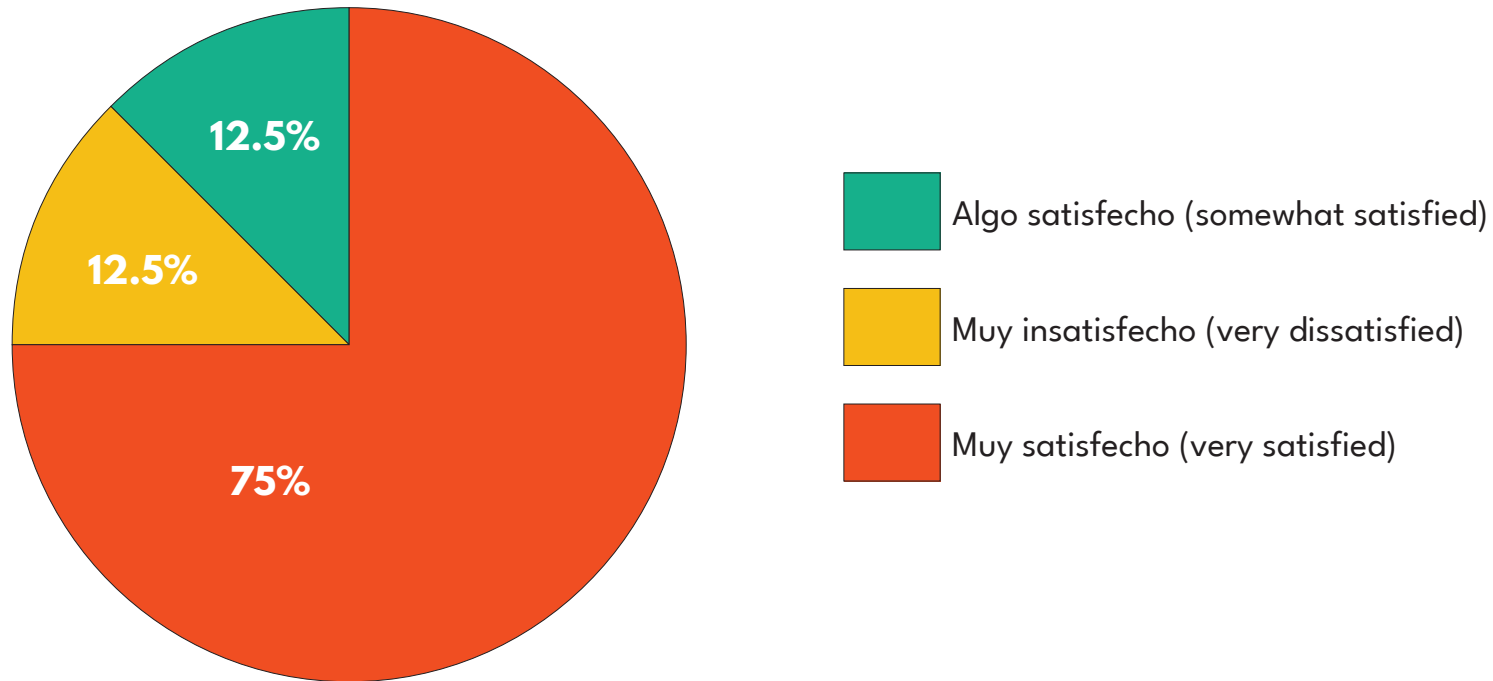
<b>Q2: Greeting Qualitative Analysis</b>	
Sí	Yes
No	No
Unknown	Unable to determine if patron was greeted
<b>Answer:</b>	<b>Interpretation:</b>
Online use	N/A
Phone	Unknown
Sometimes	Unknown
Expanded Access Hours	N/A
Don't need or want greeting	Unknown
Usually	Yes
Anything that is not a direct yes/no	Unknown



## Patron Satisfaction – District

Question 3 (Q3): ¿Qué tan satisfecho está con el servicio que recibió del personal de la biblioteca durante su última visita?, “How satisfied are you overall with the service you received from Library Staff during your most recent visit?” (Rating)

Chart A.11: Patron Satisfaction Score - Spanish District



### Key Points

- Responses indicated a 75% positive satisfaction rating across the district—there were 7 somewhat satisfied and very satisfied responses
- 1 respondent selected very dissatisfied



## Strengths

Question 4 (Q4): ¿Qué le llamó la atención de la interacción con el personal de la biblioteca?, “What stood out about the interactions with the Library Staff member?” (open text)

**Table A.5: Strengths**

¿Qué le llamó la atención de la interacción con el personal de la biblioteca?	“What stood out about the interactions with the Library Staff member?”
hubo personas que hablan español	There were people who speak Spanish
Friendly helpful	
v 6	
No me dieron la bienvenida, pero pregunto si necesitaba ayuda o si buscaba algo. Eso me pareció bueno.	They didn't greet me, but they asked if I needed help or if I was looking for anything. I thought that was nice.
Very polite and gentle.	
Su amabilidad	Their friendliness
Muy cordiales con todos.	Very friendly with everyone

## Opportunities for Improvement

Question 5 (Q5): ¿Qué podría haber hecho el personal de la biblioteca para mejorar su experiencia?, “What could Library Staff have done to improve your experience?” (open text)

**Table A.6: Opportunities for Improvement**

¿Qué podría haber hecho el personal de la biblioteca para mejorar su experiencia?	“What could Library Staff have done to improve your experience?”
el ambiente es muy desagradable, el olor.	The environment is very unpleasant, the smell

## Key Points

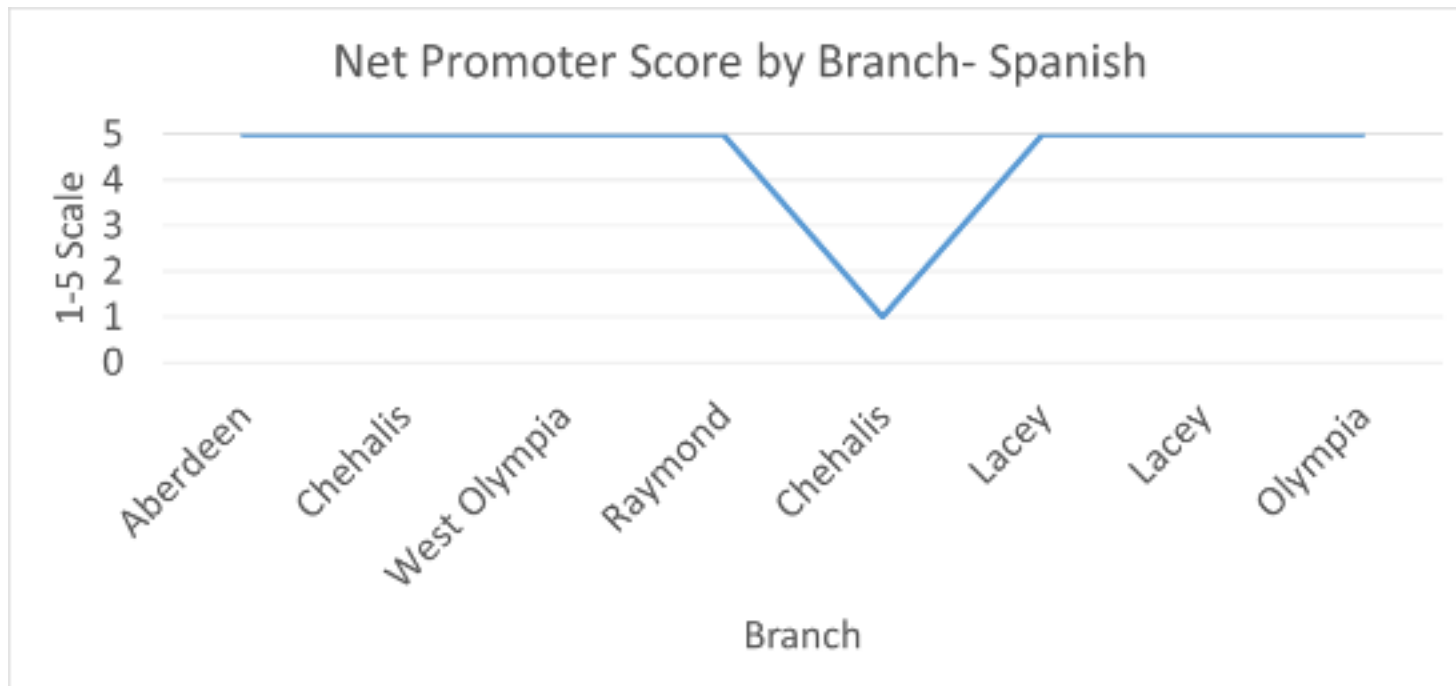
- We received 1 total responses to this question focusing on the environment of the library



## Net Promoter Score by Branch

Question 6 (Q6): ¿Qué probabilidad hay de que recomiende esta biblioteca a un amigo o familiar?, “How likely are you to recommend this library to a friend or family member?” (Likert scale)

Chart A.6: Net Promoter Score by Branch



### Key Points

- District average NPS is 4.5 out of 5 stars, reflecting an exceptionally strong likelihood to recommend TRL services
- 87% of responders are Promoters who rated 5 stars
- Detractors (less likely to recommend) rate their recommendation level at 1-2 stars, Passives rate at 3 stars, and Promoters rate recommendation level at 4-5 stars (most likely to recommend)
  - Most responders are Promoters with satisfaction rating of 5 (7 responses)
  - Detractor (1 response)



## Qualitative Theme Analysis

Question 7 (Q7): “¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir sobre su experiencia con el servicio al cliente en TRL?”, “Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your customer service experience at TRL?” (open text)

### Key Points

- Responses indicated a 75% positive satisfaction rating across the district—there were 7 somewhat satisfied and very satisfied responses
- 1 respondent selected very dissatisfied



### Recommendations/Next Steps

- Targeted feedback from Spanish speaking population for next survey will gather more responses resulting in usable data



# Appendix



## Question Set A.1

- Q1: What Timberland Regional Library did you visit?
- Q2: Were you greeted by a staff person during your visit?
- Q3: How satisfied are you overall with the service you received from Library Staff during your most recent visit?
  - Q4: If scores were 3-5 (neutral to very satisfied): What stood out about the interactions with the Library Staff member?
  - Q5: If scores were 1-2 (very unsatisfied to somewhat dissatisfied) What could Library Staff have done to improve your experience?
- Q6: How likely are you to recommend this library to a friend or family member?
- Q7: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about to know about your customer service experience at TRL?

## Q1. Data Correction

Response 1,429: User listed South Bend as the visited branch, but said Raymond was the visited branch in comments: "I went to the Raymond TRL not the South Bend TRL, the folks in the library are always kind and helpful when I go in. I appreciate them taking the time to show people how to do things instead of just talking you through it, it's very kind. "



## Q2. Greeting Qualitative Analysis Table A.2

Table A.2

Q2: Greeting Qualitative Analysis	
Yes/No Unknown N/A	Unable to determine if patron was greeted Not possible (EAH, or closed)
<p><b>Answer:</b> Online use Phone Sometimes Expanded Access Hours Don't need or want greeting Usually Anything that is not a direct yes/no</p>	<p><b>Interpretation:</b> N/A Unknown Unknown N/A Unknown Yes Unknown</p>



## Q7: Comment Qualitative Analysis Table A.3

<b>A4, A5, A7: Response Qualitative Analysis</b>	
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