

CTBL Provides Essential Service to Community

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In the Fall of 2006, a patron survey was developed and administered, to evaluate the current services of Colorado Talking Book Library and to plan for future services.¹ Patrons, Colorado residents who are unable to read print materials, in over 43 counties throughout Colorado responded to the survey. The results of this survey overwhelmingly demonstrate that these patrons consider CTBL to be an important and useful service for meeting their informational and recreational reading needs.

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a number of different CTBL services, including the overall quality of services. Virtually all respondents rated the overall quality of service as either excellent (85%) or good (15%). (See Chart 1.)

About the Colorado Talking Book Library

The Colorado Talking Book Library (CTBL) provides services, at no cost, to Coloradans of all ages who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical or learning disabilities. CTBL provides recorded, Braille and large-print books and magazines, as well as a small collection of descriptive videos. CTBL currently has 12,000 active patrons.

CTBL is part of the Colorado State Library, a division of the Colorado Department of Education and is affiliated with the network of Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (NLS).

Chart 1
Respondents' Rating of CTBL's Overall Quality of Service

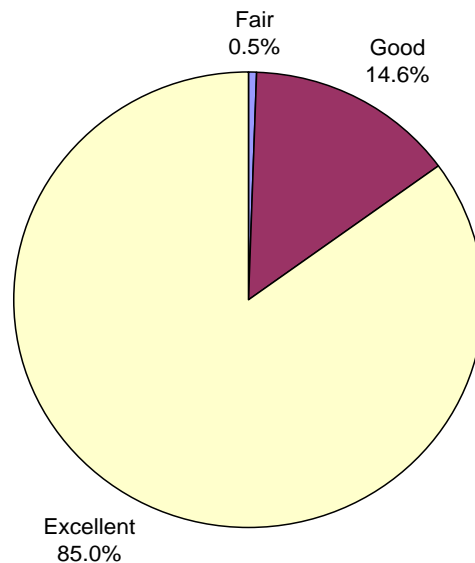
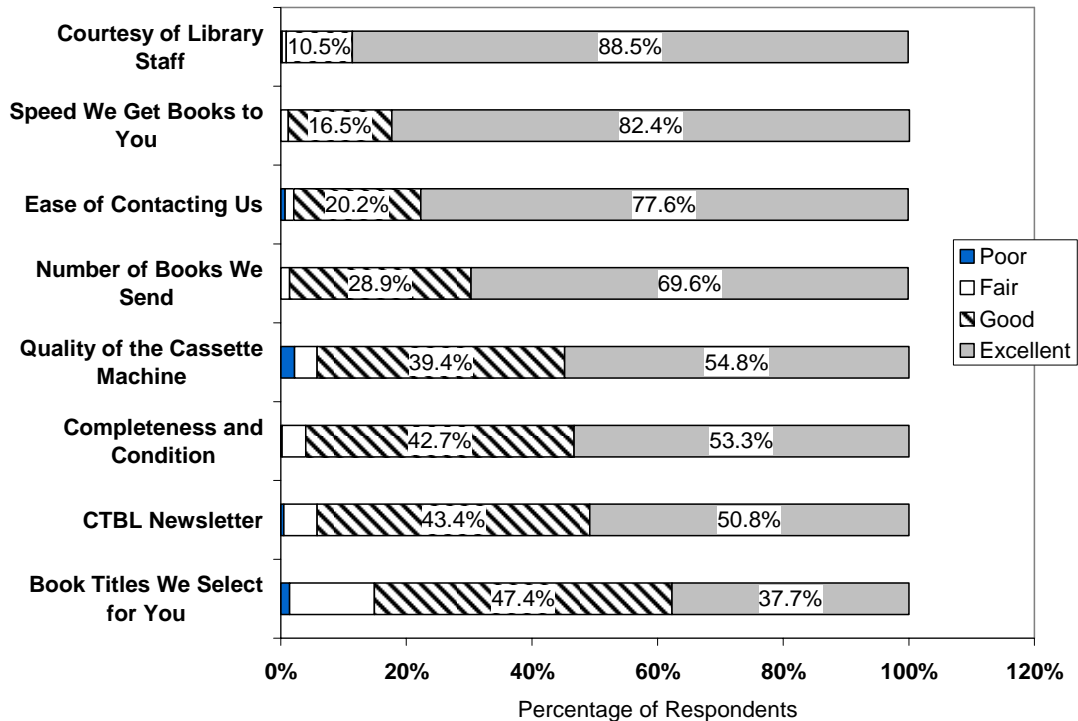


Chart 2
Respondent Satisfaction Ratings of CTBL Services



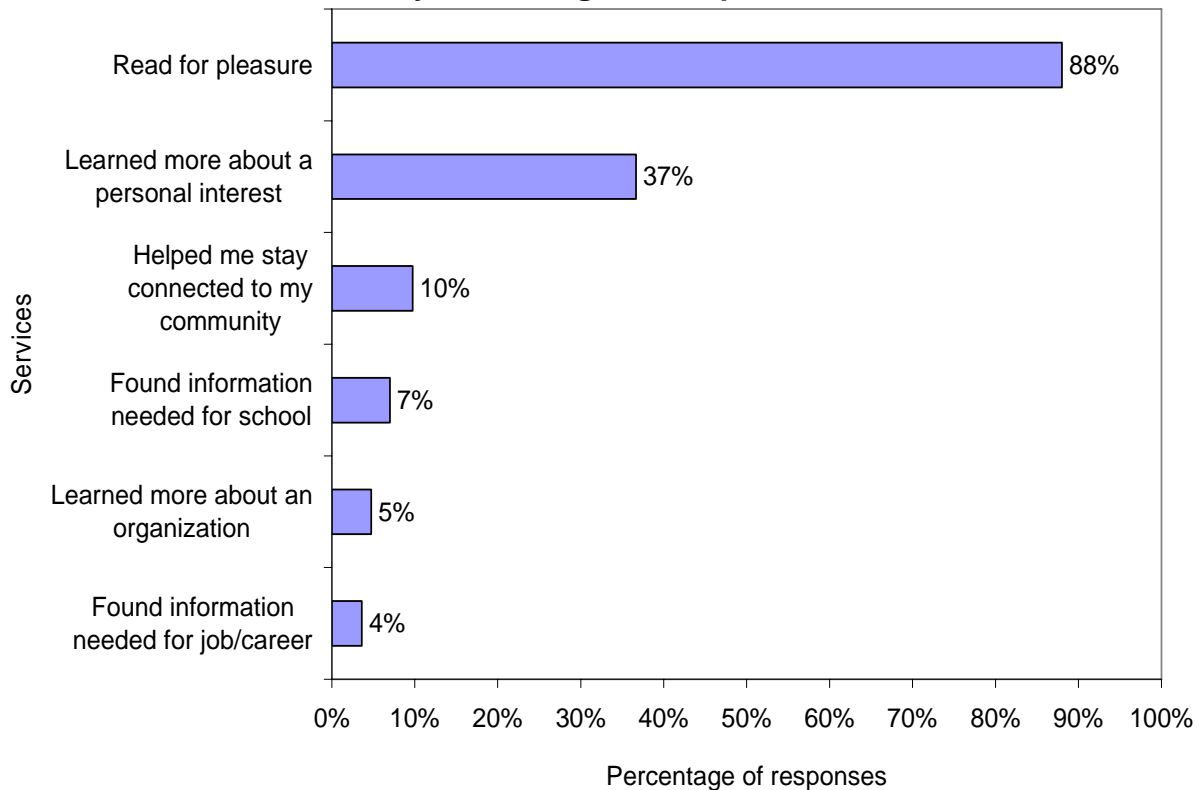
Almost all respondents (99%) rated the courtesy of library staff as either excellent or good (see Chart 2). Notably, no respondents rated it as poor. All respondents were satisfied at some level (excellent, good, or fair) with the speed and the number of books sent to them. Most respondents were satisfied (excellent or fair) with the ease of contacting CTBL (98%) and with the book titles CTBL staff had chosen for them (85%).



CTBL Services

- Books may be ordered via mail, e-mail, phone, fax, or online.
- The library loans the cassette playback machines free of charge to its patrons.
- Patrons can request specific titles or books can be selected for them based on their reading interests.

Chart 3
CTBL Services Indicated as Valuable
by Percentage of Respondents



Note: Respondents could indicate more than one service as valuable

Respondents were asked in what ways CTBL services have been of value to them (see Chart 3). An overwhelming number of respondents chose reading for pleasure (88%). This is similar to the findings from a national study, indicating “leisure reading is the most widely cited outcome” of public library patrons in general.² Over one-third of respondents (37%) selected learning about a personal interest followed by help with staying connected to the community (10%).

CTBL Collection Information

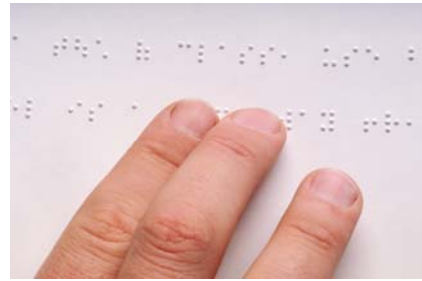
The collection includes nearly 70,000 titles of fiction and non-fiction, including 52,000 titles in recorded books, 4,000 titles in Braille, 13,000 titles in large print, and 250 titles in descriptive video.

Colorado Collection

Included in CTBL’s collection is the material recorded by volunteers in CTBL’s recording studio. Books in this collection are by Colorado authors, about Colorado history or are of regional interest. Patrons may suggest material to be recorded, however the collection development policy on the CTBL website will apply. This collection supplements the larger collection provided by Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Handicapped (NLS).



Respondents overwhelmingly indicated they consider the services CTBL provides to be valuable. More than three-fourths rated the overall quality of CTBL services as excellent. The CTBL also received high satisfaction ratings for the ease of contacting staff, as well as general staff courtesy.



Based on the results of this survey it is clear that CTBL is highly valued by the community it serves for its staff and the services it provides. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were asked to write any additional comments. Several respondents said that their lives have been greatly enhanced because CTBL has provided them with a variety of formats to access information they might otherwise be unable to read. One respondent summed it up, “[CTBL] is an absolute lifeline for me and I am grateful it is available.”

Sources:

- ¹ French, J. (2007) *Colorado talking book library 2006 survey report*. Library Research Service Colorado State Library.
- ² Lance, K.C., Steffen, N.O., Logan, R., Rodney, M.J., Kaller, S. Koontz, C.M., and Jue, D. K., (2001) *Counting on results: New tools for outcome-based evaluation of public libraries*. Colorado State Library and Bibliographical Center for Research.

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