

# All Inclusive Engagement: Utilizing University Resources for Rural Public Library Outreach

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# LIBRARIES

## Introduction

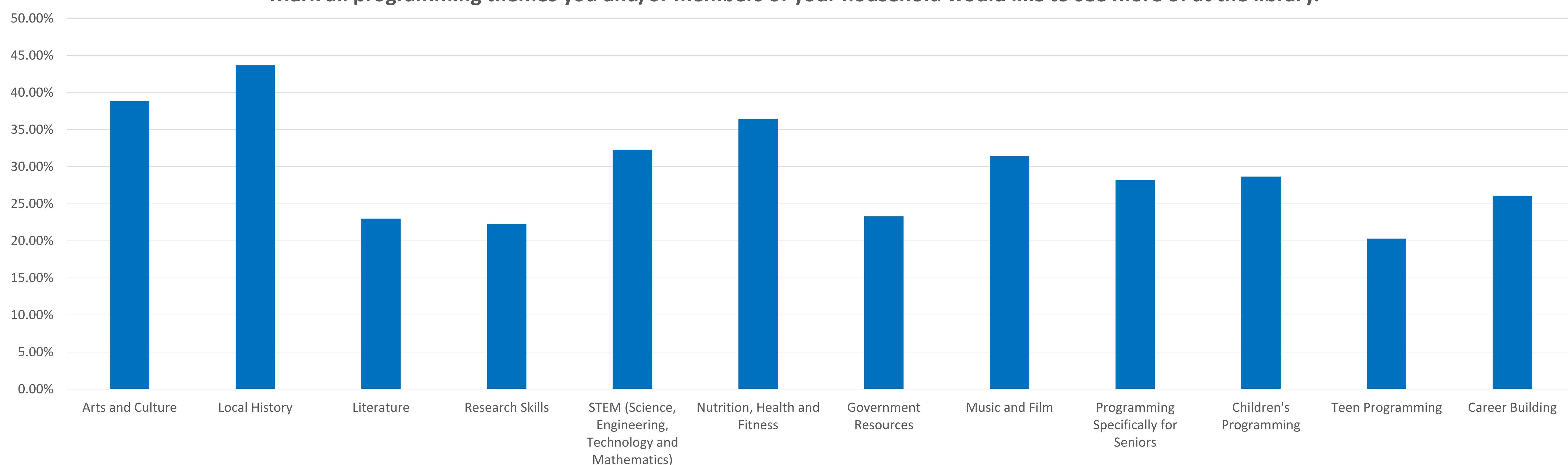
Libraries have always depended on quality outreach. State-funded academic libraries, especially those involved in agreements such as the Federal Depository Library Program, expand this outreach to the greater community outside the walls of university affiliates. After being granted funds to engage more broadly throughout the state, Indiana University Libraries and its Center for Rural Engagement proceeded in a project reaching public library patrons across 11 counties. This poster depicts the ways in which university resources, libraries and students connected with the greater rural area in the state to bring desired programming and outreach to rural libraries.

## Information Gathering

To discover more closely how various groups could connect with their libraries even further and in the most desirable ways possible, the Center for Rural Engagement funded a vast survey.

The survey was delivered to over 160,000 households, with over a 6.5% response rate. These responses naturally provided the information necessary for the next phase of the project.

Mark all programming themes you and/or members of your household would like to see more of at the library.



## Utilizing the Information

The top five programming themes survey participants had shown interest in seeing more of at their libraries were represented in five virtual programs and promoted to the entire region. During all of these, open access Indiana University, along with government and other quality, free digital resources were introduced.

- 12.33% of the participants indicated **local history** as a programming interest. In response, a virtual workshop was held titled Researching Hoosier History. Two Indiana University librarians demonstrated online searching strategies for using digital archives and newspaper databases to explore Indiana's past.
- Nearly 11% of the survey responses showed importance in **arts and culture** programs. To provide something hands-on for people to enjoy, 630 maker kits were distributed to the public libraries in the region for patrons to pick up. Each kit contained a plain canvas tote bag, paints and supplies to block print on the bag. The digital engagement librarian at Indiana University created a video tutorial on YouTube for anyone to watch at any time. To accommodate those without reliable internet access, a physical handout with directions was included with each kit.
- **Nutrition, health and fitness** was also a leading theme selected by survey participants, with 10.28% stating they would be interested in attending such a program at their library. In turn, graduate students led the instruction for a virtual program called "Open and Healthy! An Introduction to Online Nutrition, Health & Fitness Resources." Shared here were digital tools and education sites from sources like the National Institutes of Health, the Indiana State Office of Rural Health Programs, along with university resources that are made open to the general public such as a YouTube channel from the campus recreational center with instructional exercise videos.
- Nearly one out of ten responses included an interest in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics)** programming. Having learned from conversations with library directors and staff throughout this region that pre-teens or "tweens" are an age group often engaged with less than others, it seemed a great fit to create a STEM program specifically for them and simply titled "STEM for Tweens!" This event featured an overview of online materials pre-teens can access at home to enhance their knowledge and skills, as well as introduce some simple project ideas. Parents, educators and of course tweens themselves were encouraged to attend.
- Finally, with a selection rate of almost 9%, **music and film** was designated as a topic survey participants would enjoy as a library program. In "Media Mania: Open Film and Video Resources for All, The Head of Media Services at Indiana University Libraries introduced several university open media resources that members of the general public can access right from home.