

10-16-2020

## Assessing the Health Information Needs of Nebraska Public Libraries

Christian I.J. Minter

University of Nebraska Medical Center, [christian.minter@unmc.edu](mailto:christian.minter@unmc.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Minter, Christian I.J., "Assessing the Health Information Needs of Nebraska Public Libraries" (2020).  
*Posters and Presentations: Leon S. McGoogan Health Sciences Library*. 10.  
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# Assessing the Health Information Needs of Nebraska Public Libraries

Christian I.J. Minter, MSLIS

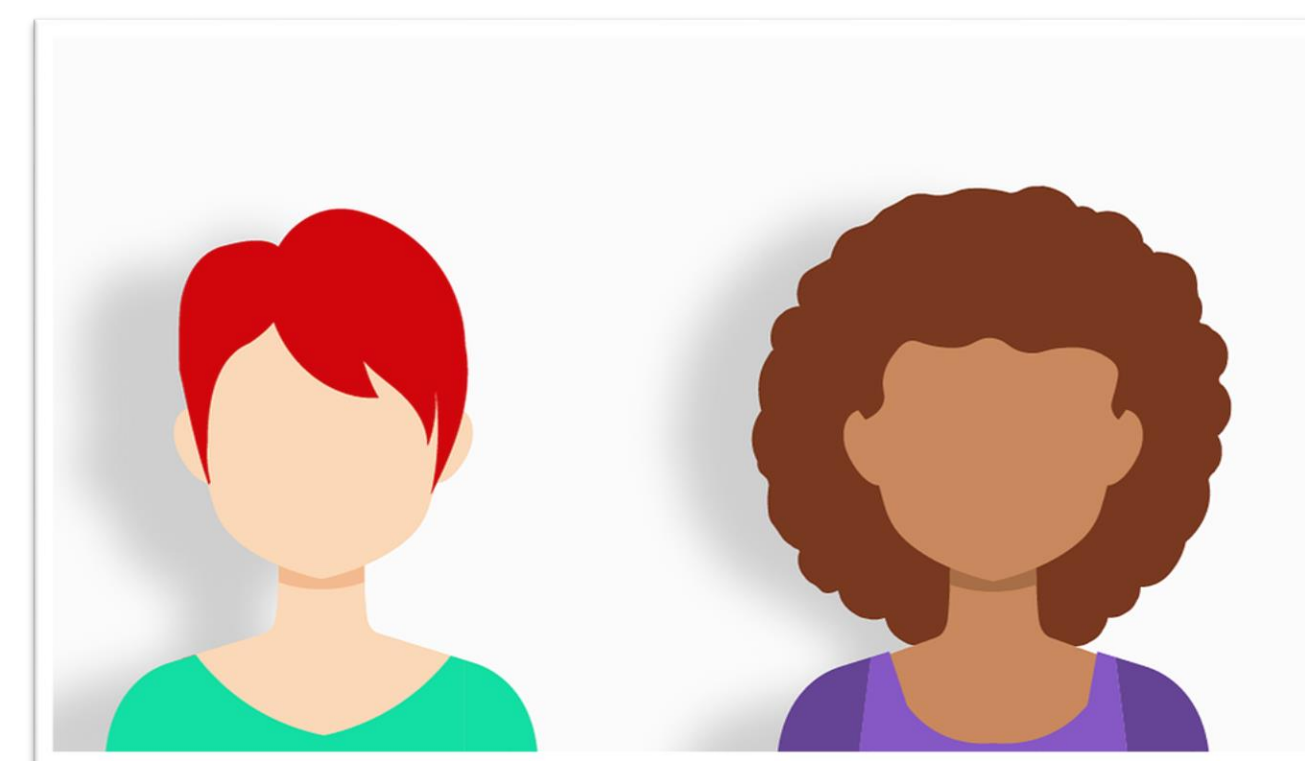
Leon S. McGoogan Health Sciences Library, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198

**Background:** The Network of the National Library of Medicine, MidContinental Region launched an initiative to increase the number of public library staff in the region with a Consumer Health Information Specialization certificate. As a part of this initiative, the McGoogan Health Sciences Library received a subaward to provide consumer health information trainings to public library staff in Nebraska. With over 200 public libraries serving urban and rural communities across the state, there is the potential for a range of needs for continuing education and support for health information services and programming. The aim of this project was to assess the health information needs of library patrons and staff to determine the type of trainings that would be most relevant.

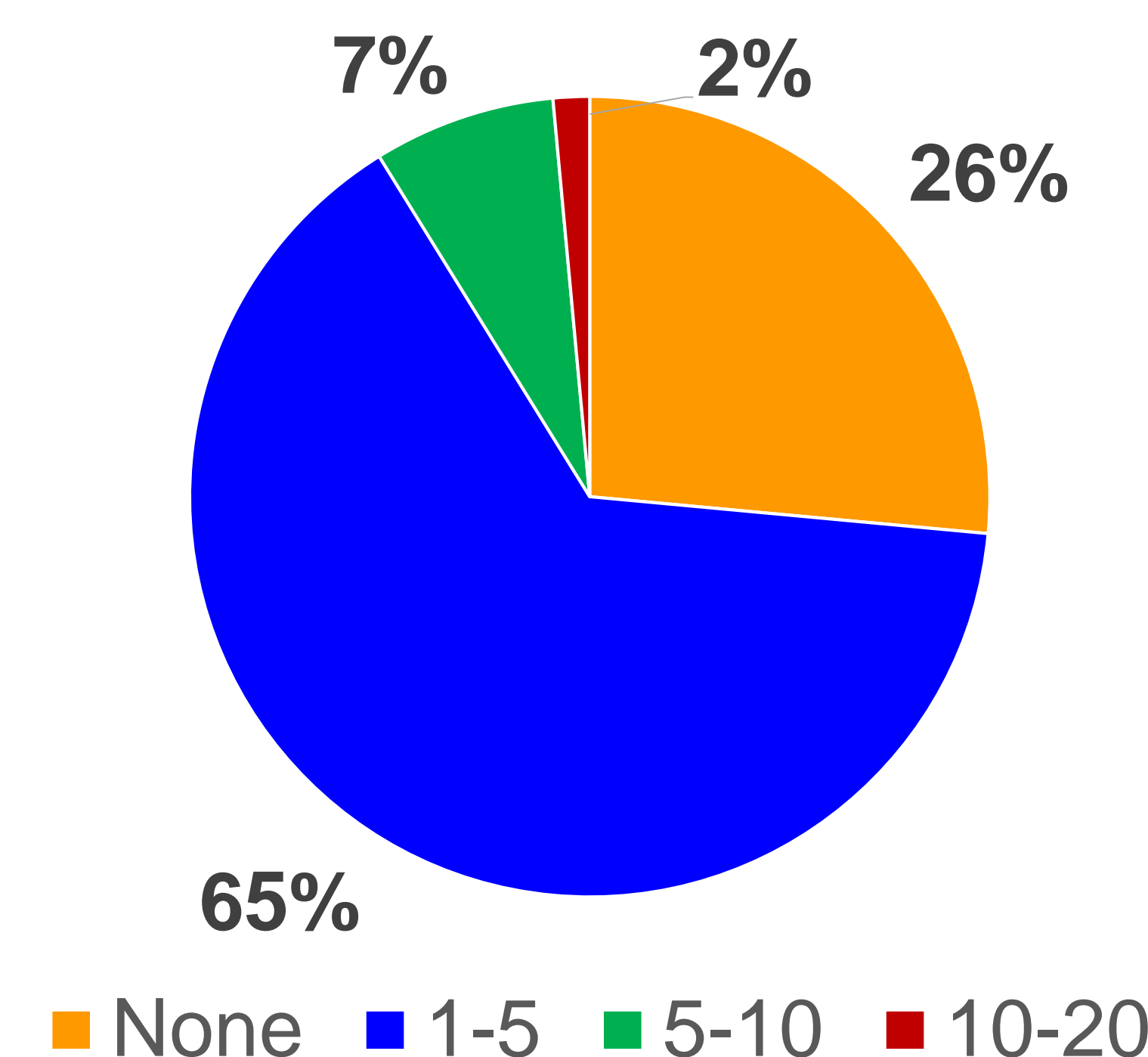
**Methods:** This study used an online survey. Questions were modified from a similar survey created by the Delaware Health and Social Service Library. Survey responses were collected using REDCap. The survey link was distributed by email to 265 public libraries, either to the director or the library's main email address. The survey was also shared via the Nebraska Library Commission email listserv. The survey period was open July 14 – August 7, 2020.

## Results

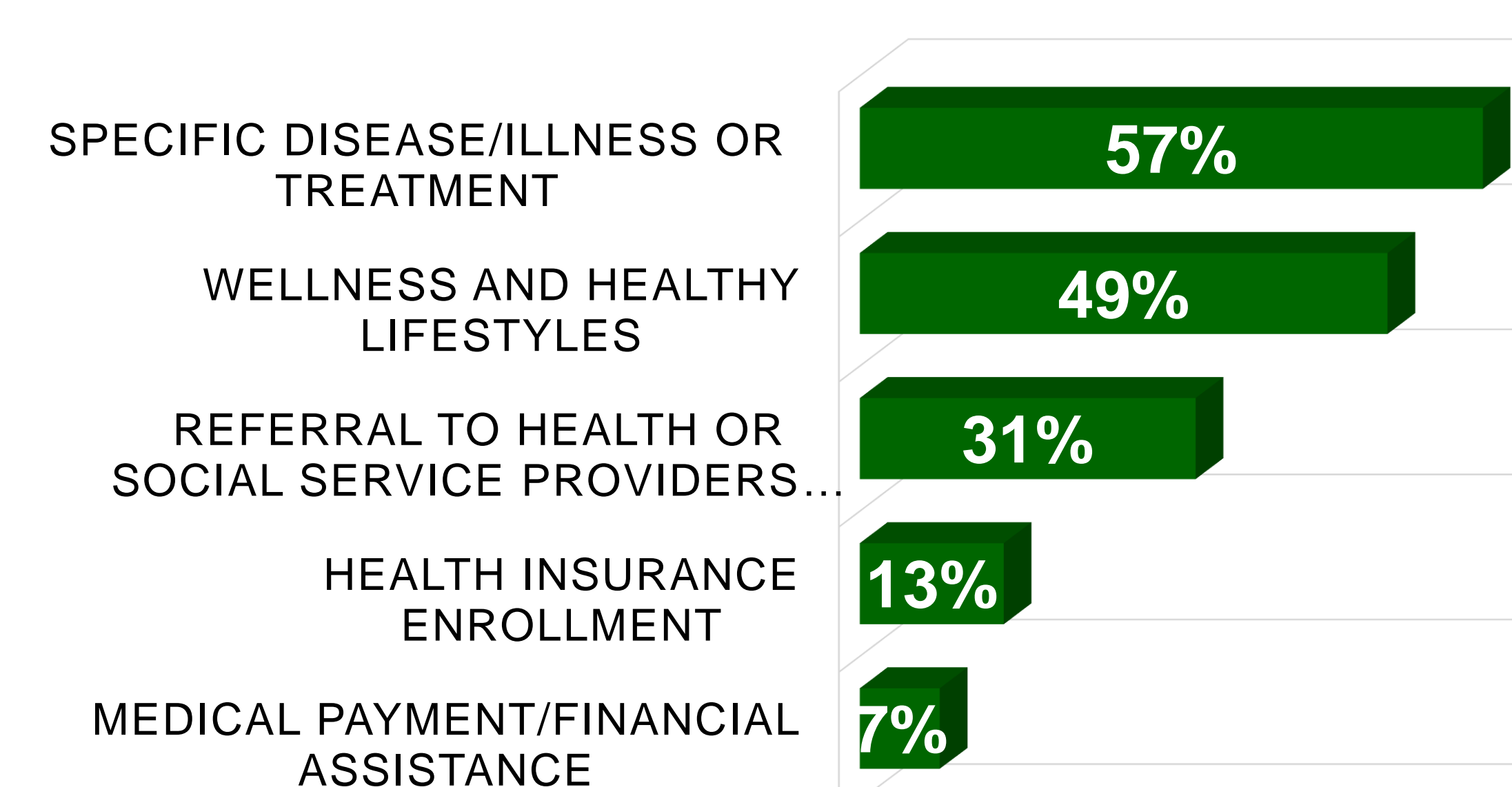
**68 public library staff responded.** Most were managers (60%) and circulation staff (35%).



**Number of health-related questions received per week.**

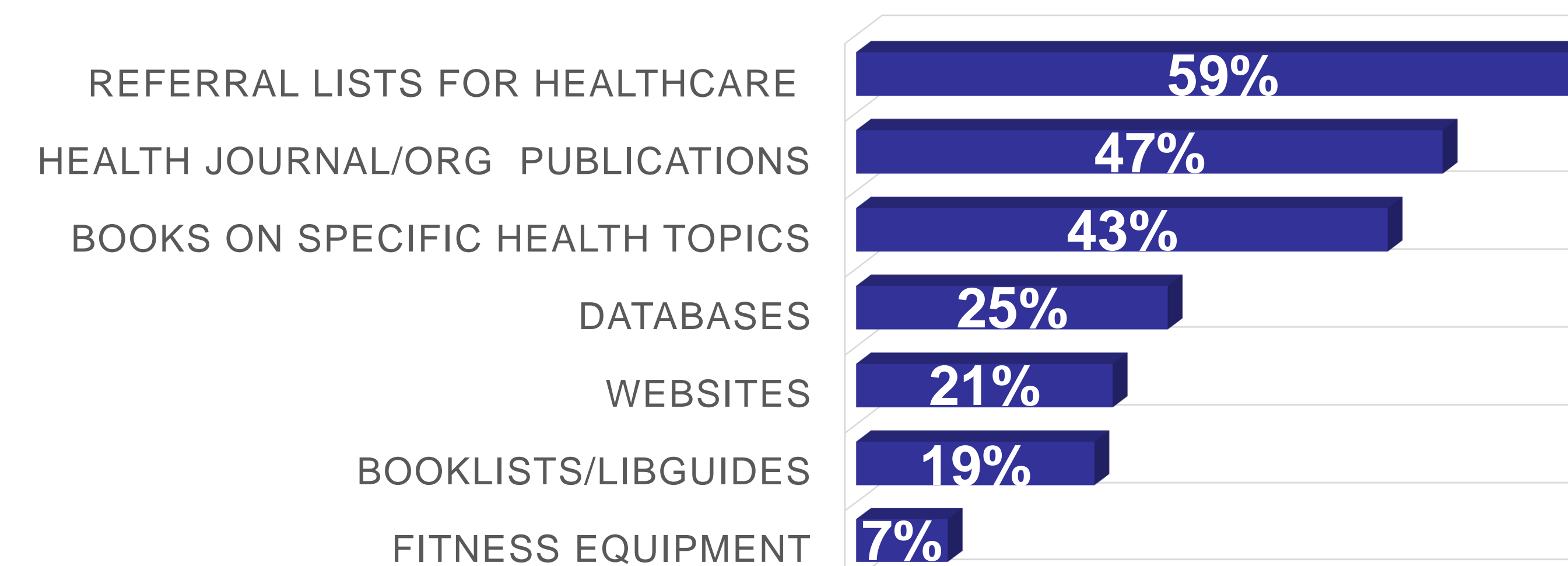


**Types of health-related questions.**

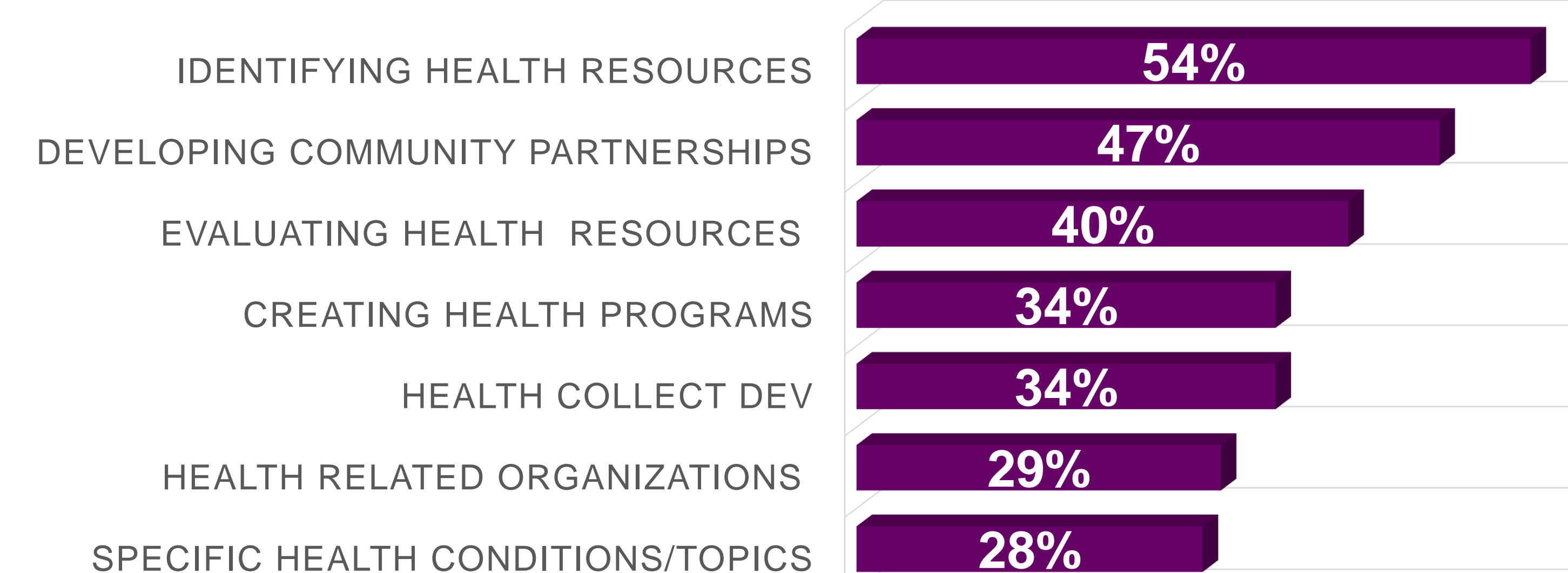


## Resource & Training Needs

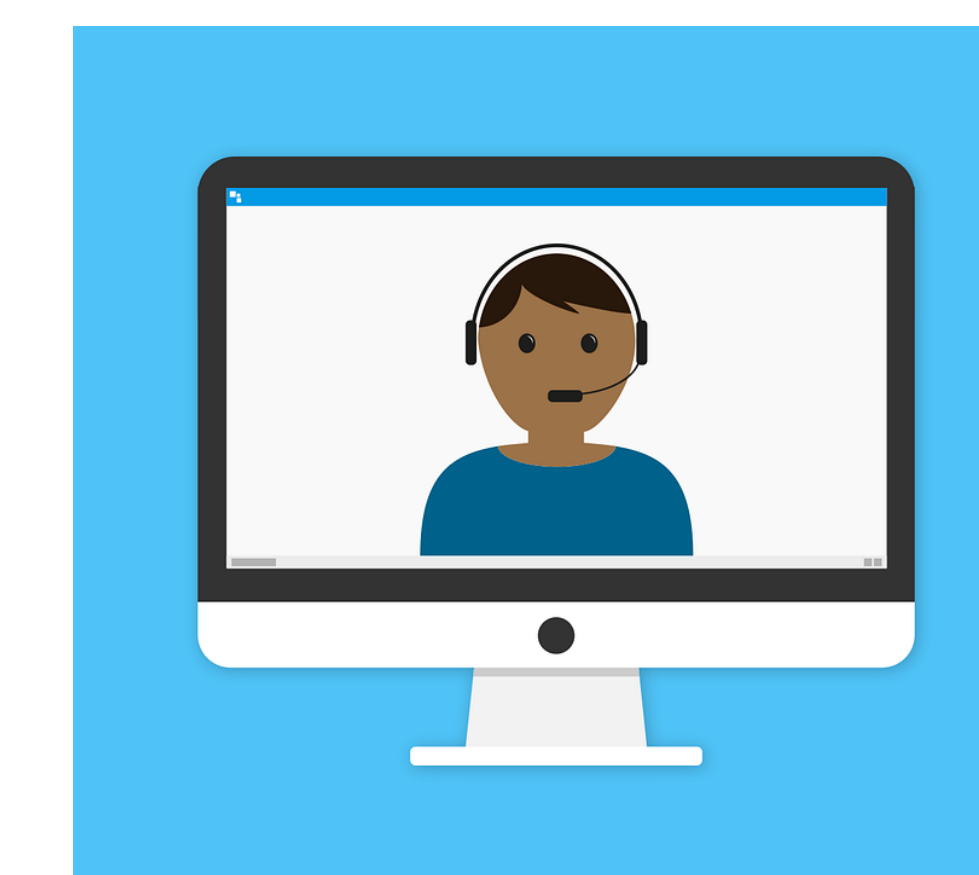
### Requests for More of These Resources



### Most Beneficial Training Topics



**Webinars are the most popular training method.** 68% preferred recorded webinars while 37% preferred live webinars.



## Top 10 Health Issues Impacting NE Communities

- COVID-19
- Aging
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Heart disease
- Nutrition/Food security
- Mental health
- Healthcare access
- Substance abuse

## Health Programs in the Library

**41% reported hosting a successful health program in last 2 years.**

Health topics included fitness, nutrition, health insurance, first aid, managing chronic disease, stress relief, and health screenings.



## Conclusions

There are opportunities to expand the influence of Nebraska public libraries as a community resource for health information. Survey participants report receiving a small number of health questions, and less than half have recently hosted successful health programs. Library staff are interested in growing their expertise in health information, and learning how to develop more community partnerships. Online learning is preferred over in-person classes. Data from this needs assessment will inform future trainings offered by the McGoogan Library.

**Acknowledgements:** Special thanks to Alison Wessel for sharing survey questions, and to Mary Winter, Kelly Gonzalez, Kristine Woods, Dawn Wilson, and Rose Barcal for helping to test the survey.

This project has been funded in whole or in part by the National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Institutes of Health (NIH) under cooperative agreement number UG4LM012344 with the University of Utah, Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library.