Elevate core skills with new Library Foundational Training (LiFT) courses

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Chat Discussion:

How did you learn core library skills?

Outline

Project overview

- ABLE courses needed, popular, and dated
- IMLS grant awarded August 2024

Our survey findings

- Field scan, staff survey, and CE Coordinators survey

Library Foundational Training: LiFT

- Background and scope, survey
- Survey findings
- Courses: Collection management

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From ABLE to LiFT

ABLE courses: Needed, popular, and dated

Alternative Basic Library Education courses

Started in late 1990s

Addressing needs of library staff without MLS degrees

WebJunction added these to their Course Catalog in 2015

In 2023, 6 of top 20 most-used WJ courses were ABLE courses

LiFT project overview

Awarded IMLS grant in August 2024

OCLC partnering with Idaho Commission for Libraries

Reimagine current ABLE courses

Free, online courses for public library staff to build core skills

Back to basics: Sharpening foundational skills with LiFT

Change, disruptions and uncertainties

Increased volatility and risk

Staff turnover

Core services vs. innovation

[Back to basics: Sharpening foundational skills with LiFT](#)

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Project team

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Samantha Bouwers, State Library of Iowa, Continuing Education Consultant

Colet Bartow, Montana State Library, Continuing Education Coordinator

Rachel Lunden, ARSL representative

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Clarifying the need

Understand what people liked about ABLE and where to improve

Field scan of what other foundational training is available

Surveyed library staff

Surveyed continuing education staff

Updated and enhanced, based on community feedback

Designed to help today's public library staff succeed

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Basic library skills training field scan

Reviewed available training, certifications, competencies

ABLE: Free, self-paced, widest usage – over 10,000

Other options are not abundant or affordable

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Staff survey

1,152 responses

84% of respondents are from public libraries

59% of respondents have worked in libraries 10+ years

26% of respondents have worked in libraries 0-5 years

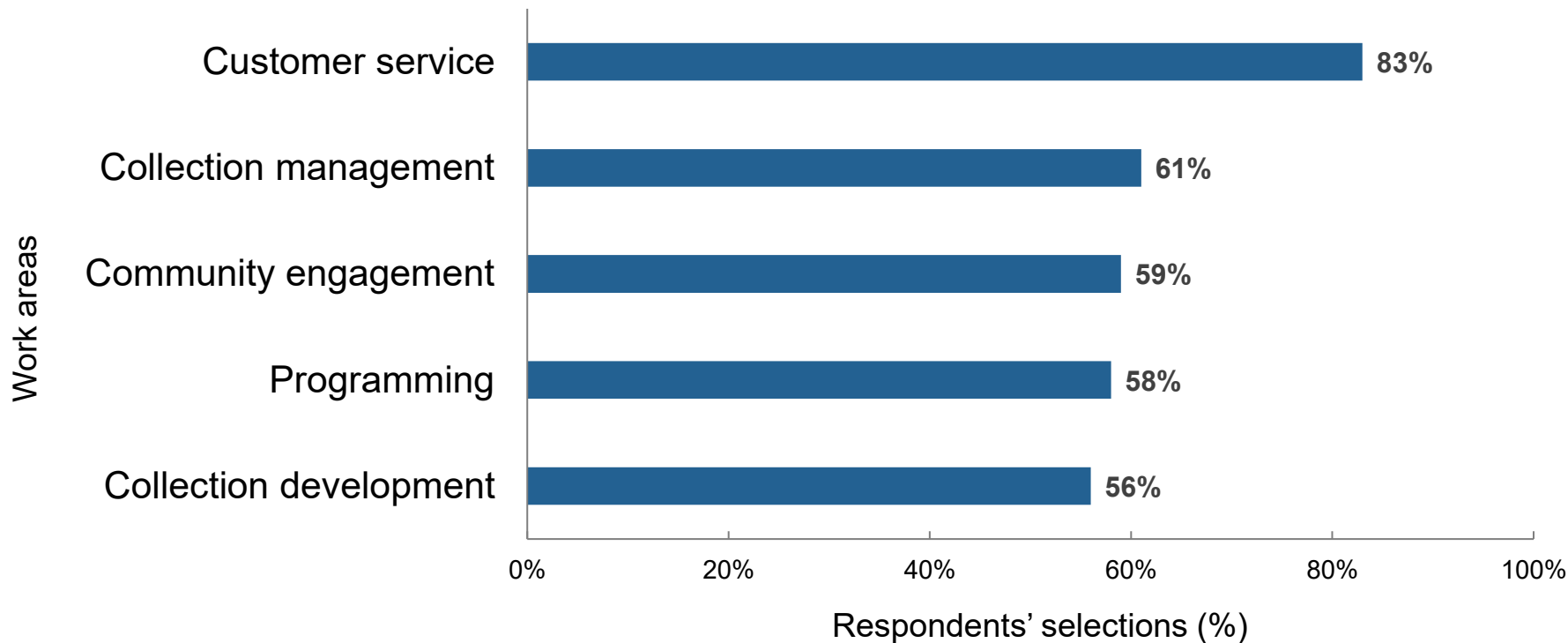43% of respondents have an MLS degree or higher

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Top five areas considered core to respondents' library work

Work areas

Work area	Respondents' selections (%)
Customer service	83%
Collection management	61%
Community engagement	59%
Programming	58%
Collection development	56%

Respondents' selections (%)

N = 1,152

Respondents could choose more than one area

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Identified areas to increase confidence

Work areas

Cataloging — 141

Community engagement — 75

Collection management — 71

Other — 67

Leadership / management / HR — 66

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160

Respondents' selections

N = 977

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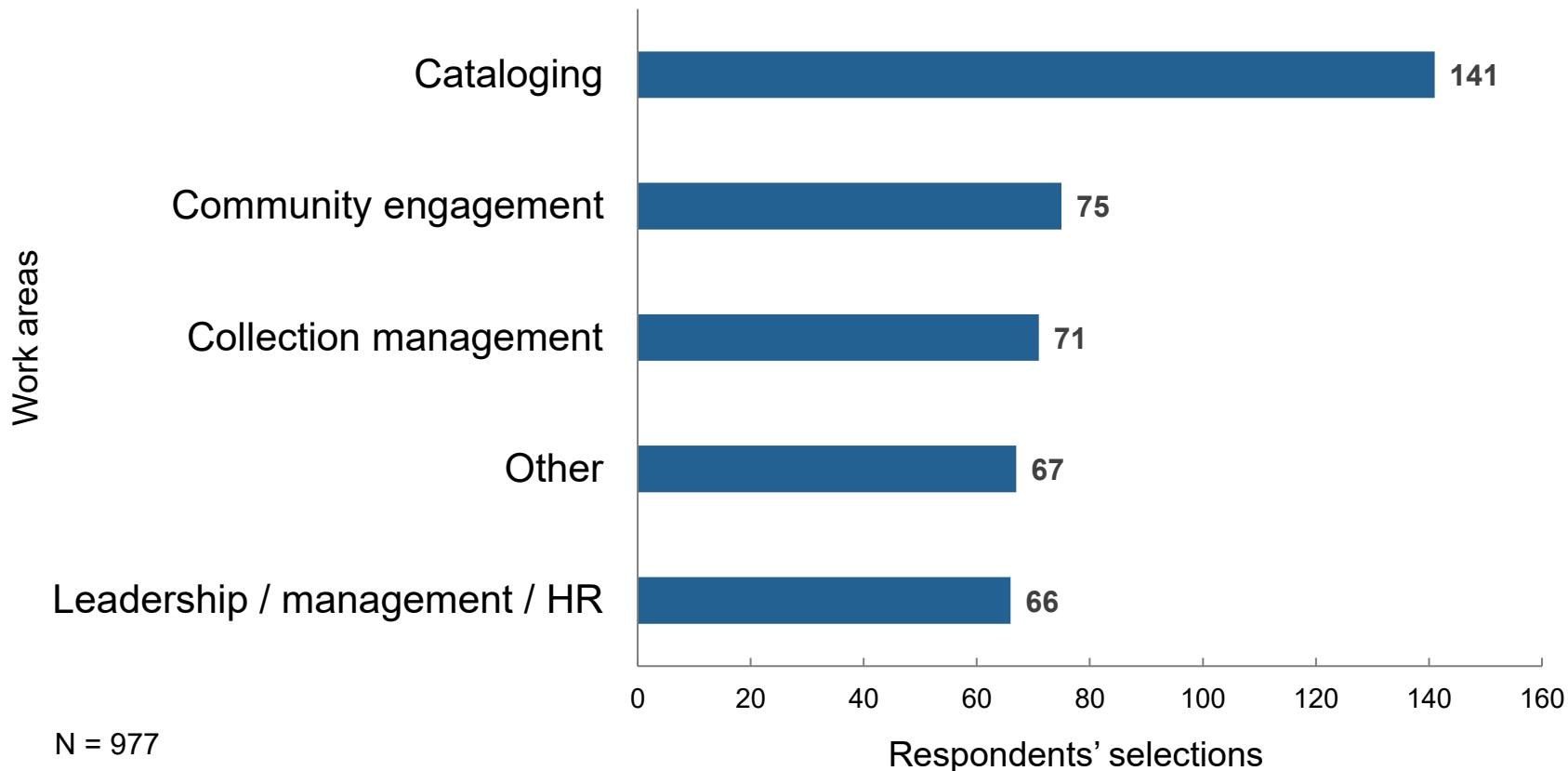
Other training needs

N=455
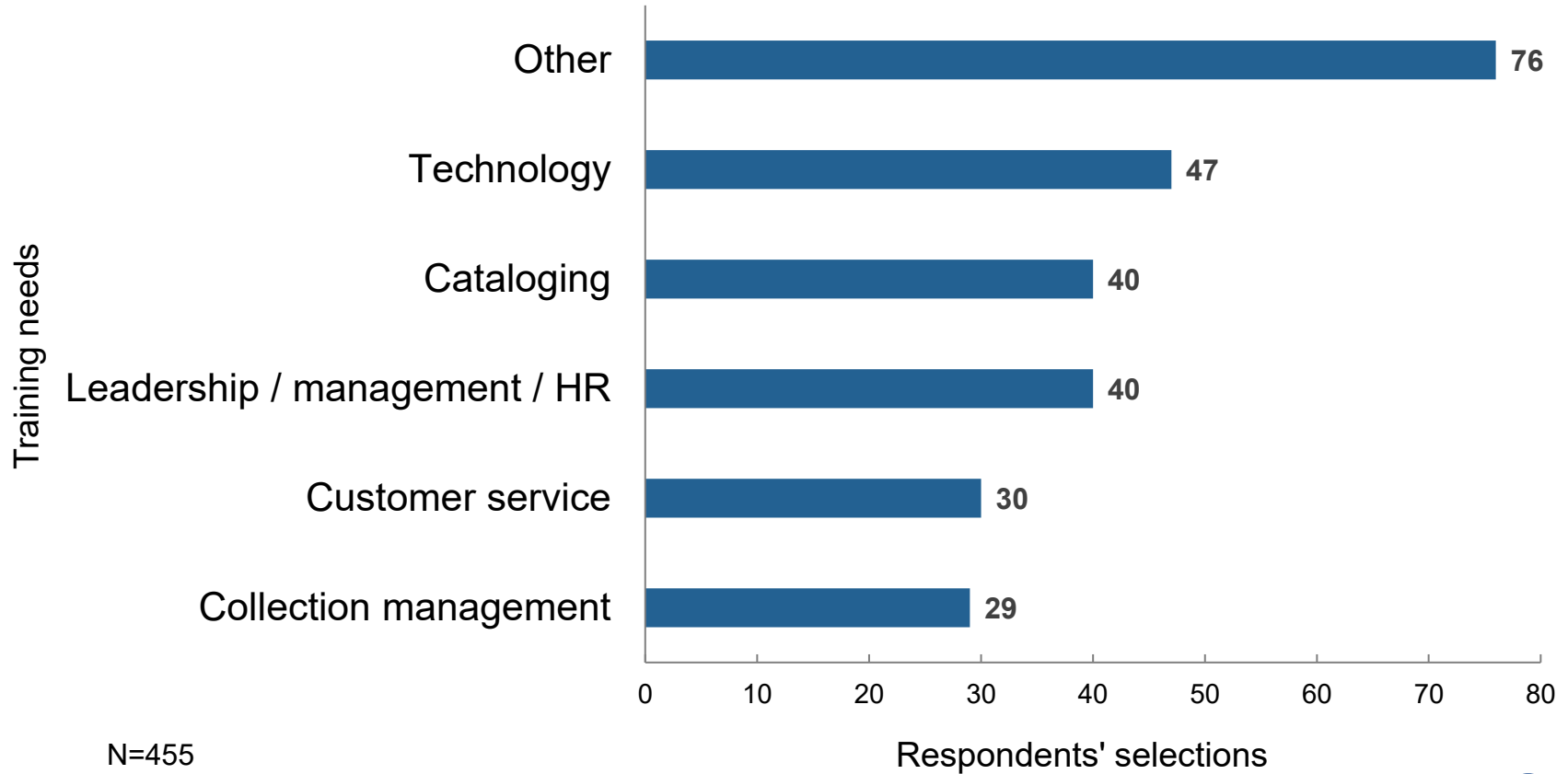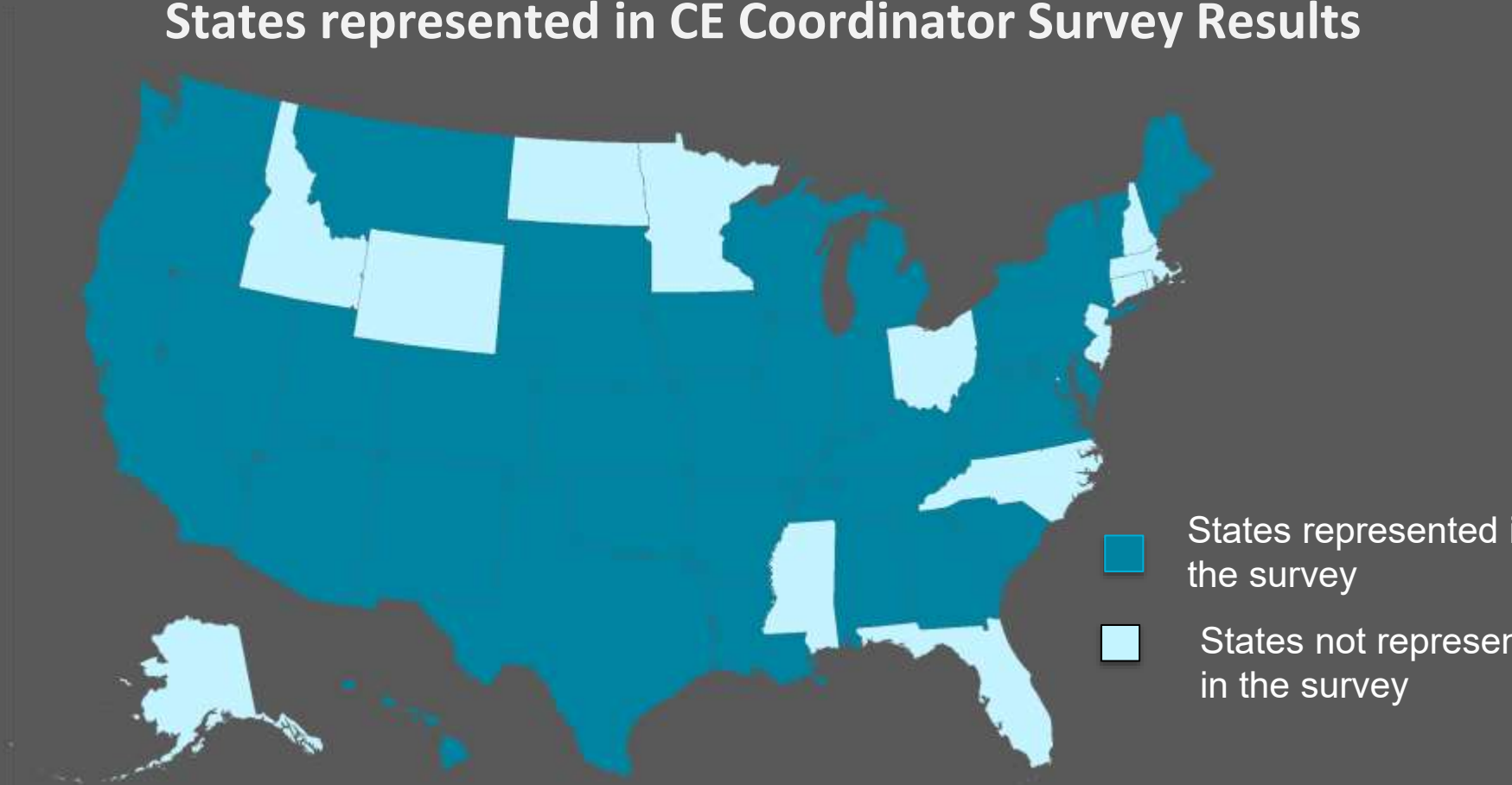
States represented in CE Coordinator Survey Results

States represented in the survey

States not represented in the survey

CE Coordinators: Core training needs for new staff

N=49
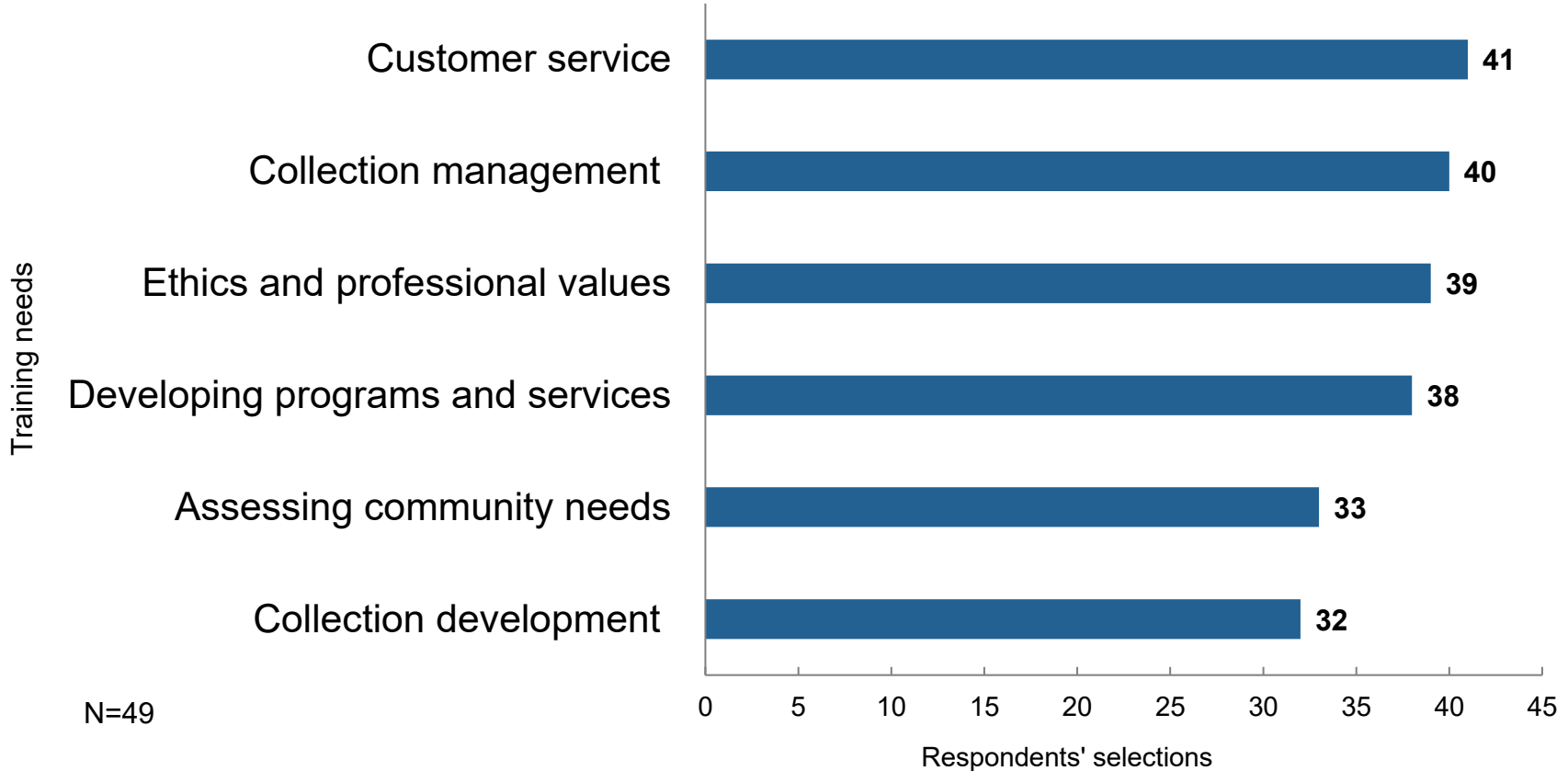
CE Coordinators: Staff skills needed 5-10 years out
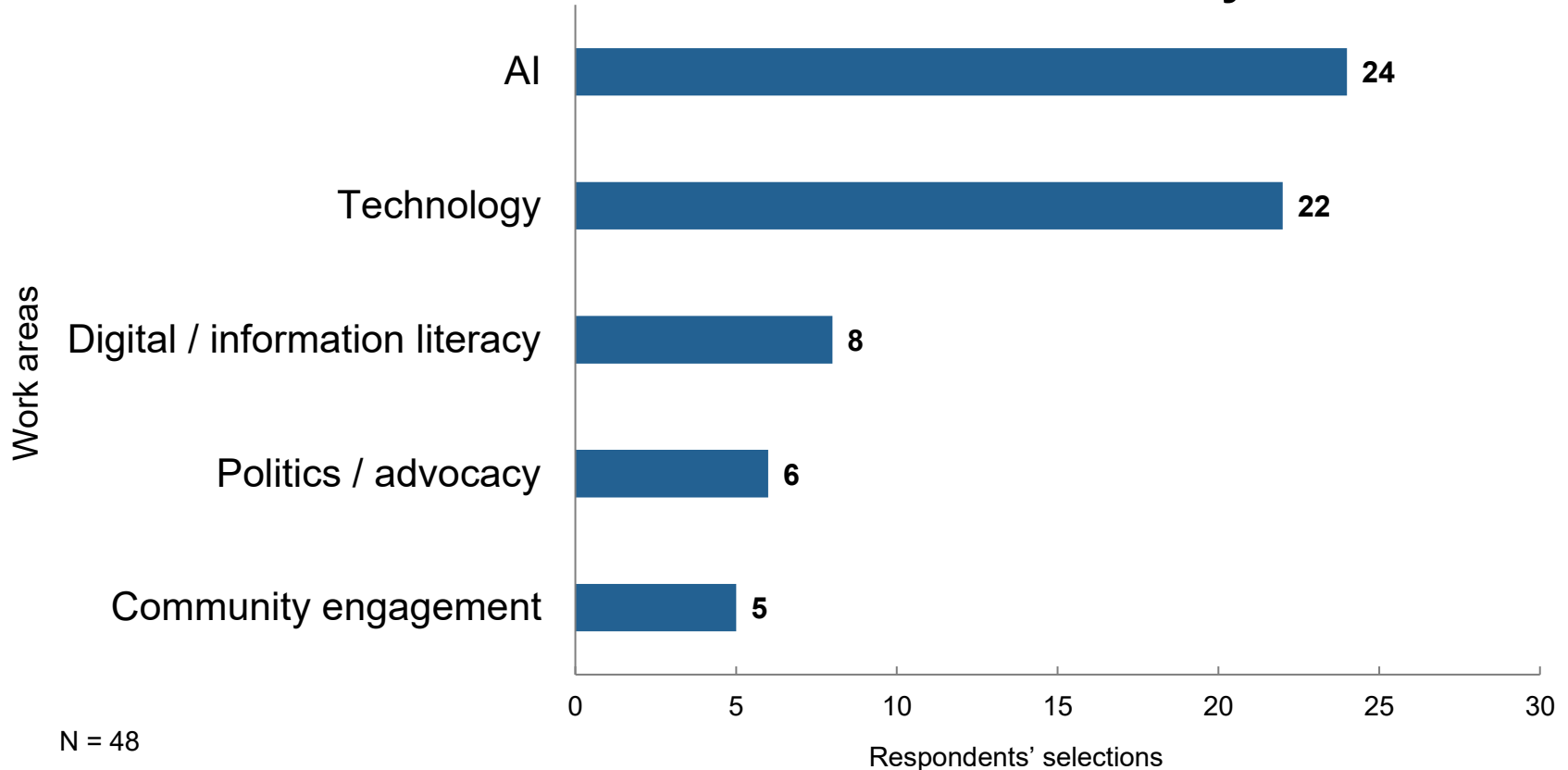
Work areas

- AI — **24**
- Technology — **22**
- Digital / information literacy — **8**
- Politics / advocacy — **6**
- Community engagement — **5**

Respondents' selections

N = 48

LiFT: Collection Management

Collection Management as first series

This content was a clear need

| Introduction to Library Collections | Introduction to Collection Policies | Selection and Acquisitions | Organizing and Maintaining a Collection | Collection Assessment | Weeding the Collection |

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Updated features

Activities to put learning into practice

Modern look and feel

Improved navigation

Better accessibility for all learners

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Library collections

Library collections | Special collections | Seed libraries | **Library of Things**

Library of Things

Offering a Library of Things collection of nontraditional objects provides the community with access to expensive or lesser-used physical items to borrow from the library. A **Library of Things** may include tangible items like tools, small appliances, sporting equipment, and musical instruments, as well as technology like Wi-Fi hotspots, cameras, or drones. Like a traditional collection, a Library of Things needs to be developed with the community's needs in mind.

Oakland Public Library (CA)
Tool Lending Library

Introduction

The **collection management lifecycle** describes the ongoing, repeated stages of managing the materials of a library's collection from when each item is selected to when it's removed. There are seven stages in the collection management lifecycle, each equally important.

Click on each section to learn more about the stages of the collection management lifecycle.

ACTIVITY 1

Investigate your library's collection

Take some time to browse your library's collection. Then, answer the following questions:

- What observations can you make about your library's collection?
- What types of formats are included in your library's collection?
- Does your library include anything unique or unusual in its collection?

Knowledge check

Now that you've completed **Introduction to Library Collections**, it's time to test your knowledge. Answer the following 10 questions using what you've learned in this course. For each question, you'll have two chances to answer correctly before being prompted to review your learning.

To pass this knowledge check, you will need to score an 80% or above. You can take this assessment as many times as you need to complete the course.

Click next to get started.

Introduction to collection policies course

Explore the impact

Collection policy

Collection objective

Library procedure

Collection benchmark

These examples are fictional, however they can help you better understand how collection policies, objectives, procedures, and benchmarks might impact library staff and the library community.

Review each of the documents while considering the following questions:

- What values does Mars Desert Public Library seem to express?
- How might Mars Desert Public Library address community needs with these documents?

Click on each of the tabs to explore the examples.

Selection and acquisitions course

Question 10

The Mars Desert Public Library is a small public library with a very popular graphic novel collection for children. Select two items to be included in the collection using the selection criteria provided.

Click on each book title to learn more about the item.

Criteria to consider:
- Suitable for ages 5-14
- Sturdiness for library use; hardcover books only
- Balance cost with need; no more than $40
- Include materials by authors/illustrators of all cultures
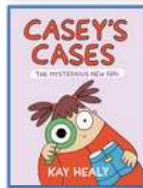- Favorable reviews, artistic, aesthetic quality

Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands, written and illustrated by Kate Beaton (2022)

The Circuit, by Francisco Jiménez, adapted by Andrew J. Rostan, illustrated by Celia Jacobs (2024)

The Adventures of Penguin and Panda: Surprise! (Book 1), written by Brenda Maier, illustrated by Fanni Mézes (2024)

Casey's Cases: The Mysterious New Girl, by Kay Healey (2025)

Submit

Organizing and maintaining a collection course

Practice shelf reading

In this activity, you'll practice your shelf scanning skills to ensure library materials are in the correct order, location, and condition. Practicing shelf reading can help you learn to spot problems quickly and improve your shelving technique.

There are five problems with this shelf. Can you find them all?

Click the magnifying glass to learn what's wrong with this shelf.

Collection assessment course

How data supports collection assessment

Click each of the examples below to learn more about how libraries might combine quantitative and qualitative data to support collection management:

Evaluating the condition of materials

Identifying unique or irreplaceable items

**Maintaining an up-to-date collection**

Quantitative data, such as a low number of total checkouts and an older last date of use, can be combined with qualitative data on how that item is unique, irreplaceable, or important to the collection. This combination helps staff determine if the item should remain in the collection.

Weeding the collection course

Types of weeding criteria

Click each of the examples to learn about the three types of weeding criteria.

Content

Condition

Unused materials
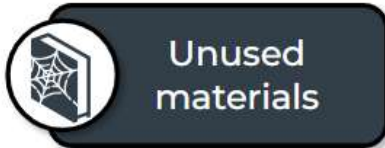
Items that have not been checked out for a defined period of time—some libraries determine 3-5 years in their criteria—or have duplicate copies that are no longer needed, should be weeded from the collection.

Collection Management Series Badge

Badges

Badges from WebJunction Course Catalog:

LiFT Collection
Management Series

| Introduction to Library Collections | Introduction to Collection Policies | Selection and Acquisitions | Organizing and Maintaining a Collection | Collection Assessment | Weeding the Collection |

How to use LiFT courses

Targeting core foundational skills for library staff

Can be introduction to content or a refresher

Renewal hours or CE requirements

Onboarding new staff

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How to use LiFT courses - continued

Filling need for CE, e.g., building is closed for renovation and staff needs work

Useful as reliable, national source of information for staff to feel more confident communicating about libraries

Helps staff advance careers

Cohort model for groups and teambuilding

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Ready to enroll?

Visit: https://oc.lc/lift-courses

Questions?

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