

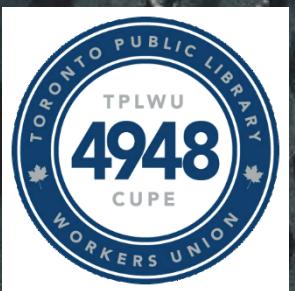


# Alternative Approaches to Safety and Security

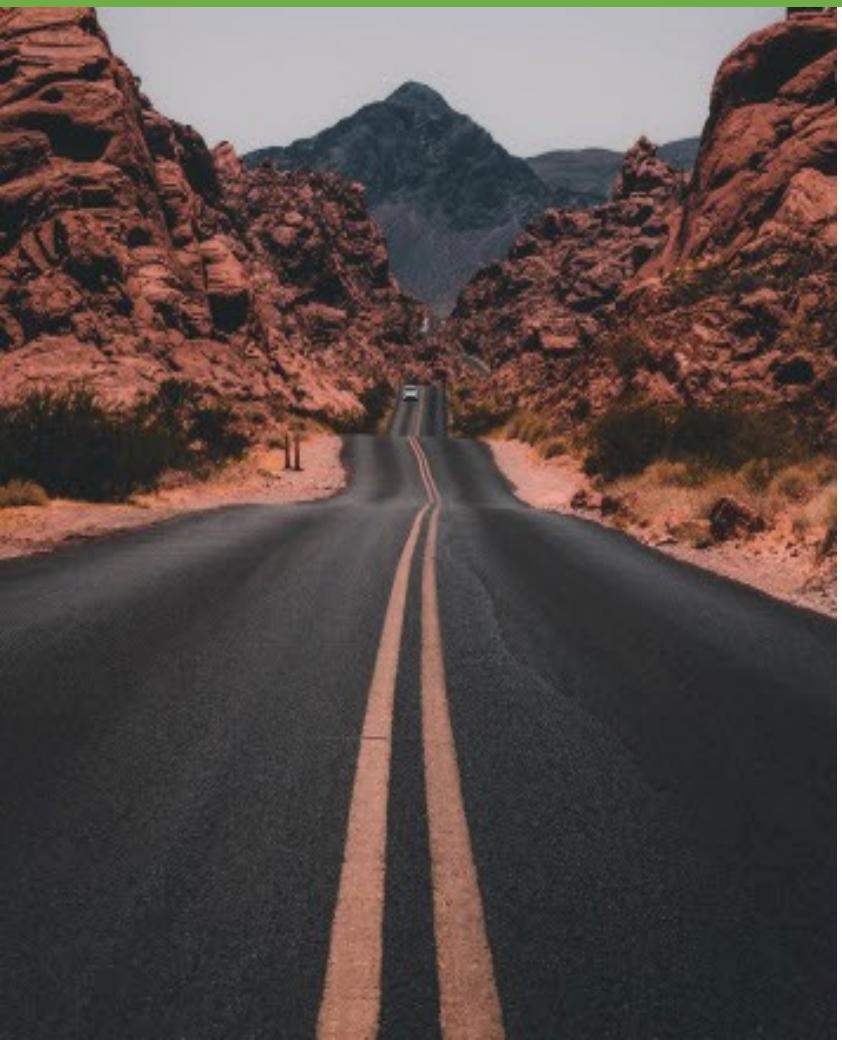
Presentation to Toronto Public Library Board



May 24, 2022

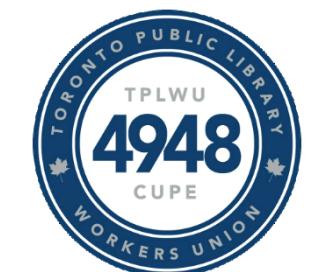


# Background



**"The Toronto Public Library is the **busiest public library system in North America** and second busiest in the world. It circulates more books than the libraries of Los Angeles and Chicago combined. Toronto's public libraries are **so popular** they enjoy **more visits than any other entertainment draw in town**—more than even the Toronto Maple Leafs. But an examination of **the past 20 years** of Toronto's public **library budgets** shows this cherished community hub is reeling from **chronic underfunding**."**

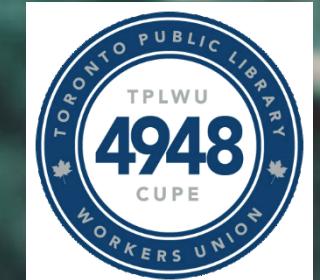
(Rao, Govind C., 2012)



## Staff Perspective

**Staff want to be able to work in a safe environment in order to serve the under represented, often marginalized citizens of the City.**

**But they are concerned with the rise of violent incidents over the years and fear for their and the public's safety.**





# How did we get here?



**Underfunding**



**Understaffing**



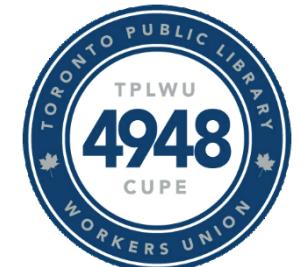
**Precarious  
Work**



**Changing  
Communities  
with complex  
needs**



**Covid-19  
Pandemic**





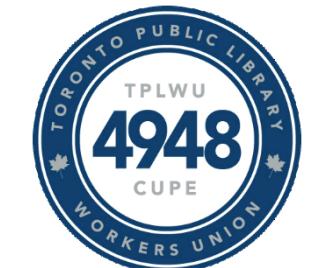
## Issue: Impacts of Lack of Social Supports

**"It's really tragic that the library can't be more of a resource for them."**

(Beattie, S. (2021, October 2))

**"We are the ones expected to pick up the pieces, but we simply can't."**

(Beattie, S. (2021, October 2))





## Issue: Rise in Violence

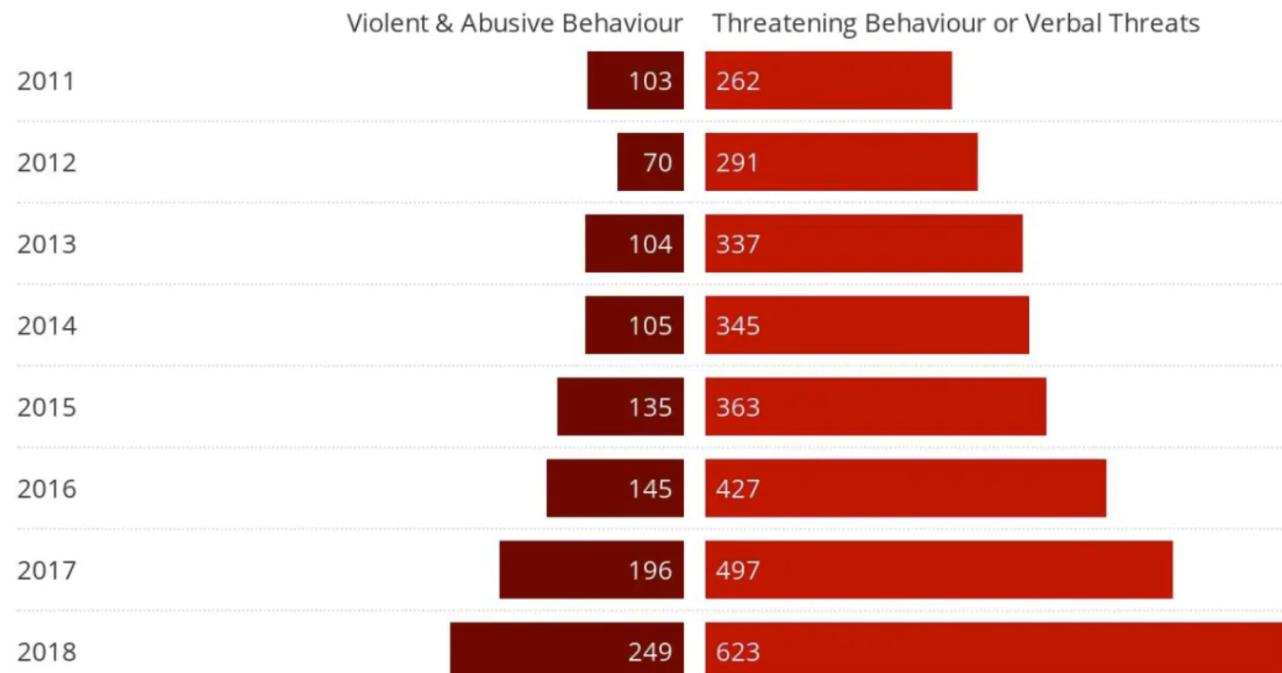
"There's that tendency for customers to feel that they can **intimidate you more**, that they can push the envelope **because you're a woman**...It's not nice to have to be **consistently dealing** with a lot of that kind **misogynistic tendency and sexism**."

(Beattie, S. (2021, October 24))



# Issue: Rise in Violence

## Violence against librarians on the rise

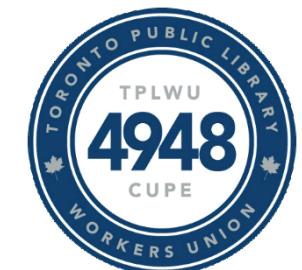


Source: Toronto Public Library



### Please note:

Violent Behaviour includes  
Harassing/Threatening Behaviour  
under the Occupational Health  
and Safety Act.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY CULTURE AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

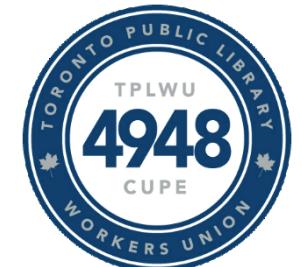
LISTENING TO THOSE ON OUR FRONTLINES



IMAGE CREDIT: ALEKSANDRA SUZI/ADOBESTOCK



Siobhan Stevenson | [siobhan.stevenson@utoronto.ca](mailto:siobhan.stevenson@utoronto.ca)

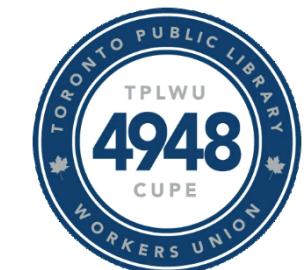




## Issue: Impacts of Violence on Mental Health

**“The message I have received so far is that **my mental wellness and stability is my responsibility alone and has nothing to do with my workplace.**”**

(Stevenson, S. (2021, Nov/Dec))

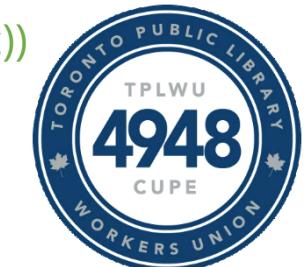




## Issue: Too many incidents

Pre pandemic, the frontline staff were **so overwhelmed with incident reports** and the demands of their other duties that they did not have time to write-up incident reports for all of the incidents. They were terribly fatigued," and "**there are too many things going on at one time** and not enough time away to write up, so 'minor' incidents that 'just involve shouting, swearing, etc. are considered 'not worth writing up."

(Stevenson, S. (2021, Nov/Dec))

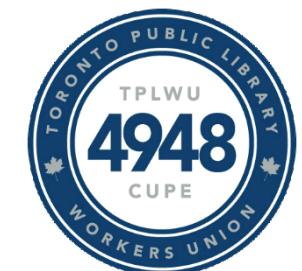




## Issue: Why Bother?

**"Incident reporting has never** included a step in the process where the staff member receives a **confirmation or the results of submitting a report**. This has caused me and other staff to question whether and **how the report was acted upon**, and whether submitting reports is actually useful at all"; and "we are encouraged to file reports, but **historically staff didn't report because they have no faith anything would be done about it.**"

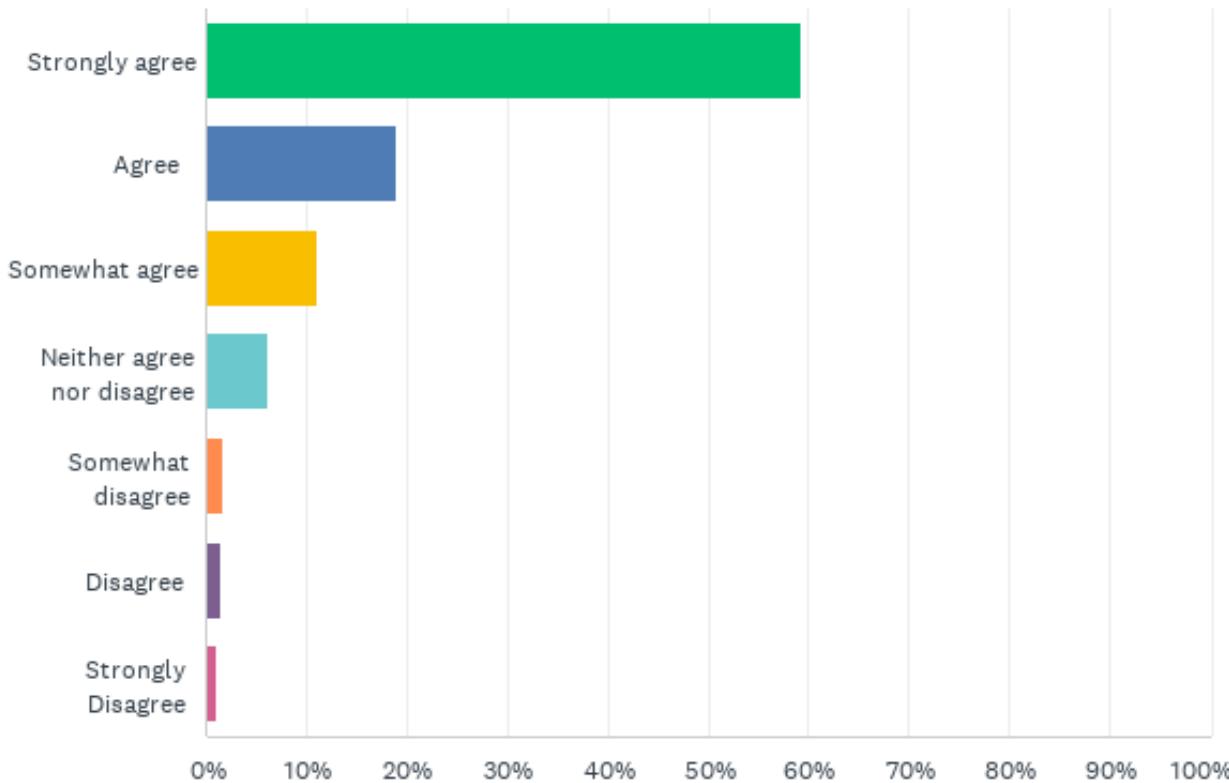
(Stevenson, S. (2021, Nov/Dec))



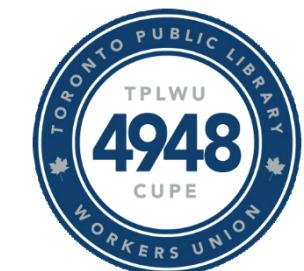
# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

**Q21: To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Chronic understaffing at TPL is having a negative impact on my mental and/or physical health".**

Answered: 510 Skipped: 56



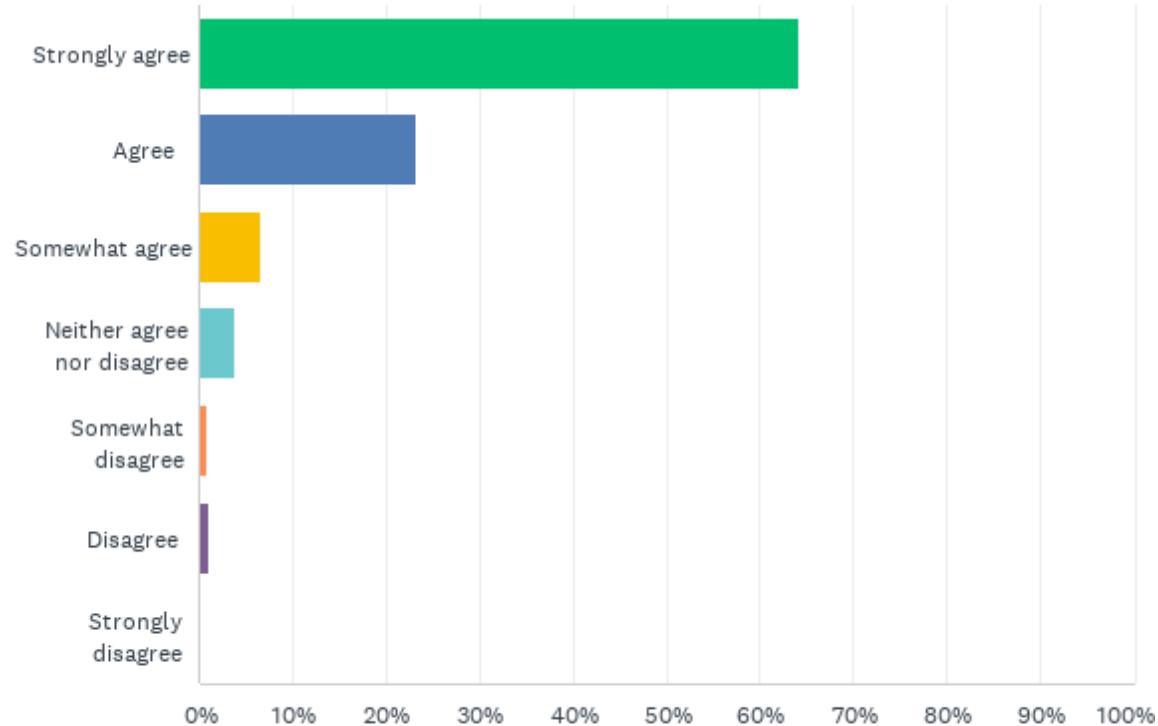
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	59.22%
Agree	19.02%
Somewhat agree	11.18%
Neither agree nor disagree	6.27%
Somewhat disagree	1.76%
Disagree	1.57%
Strongly Disagree	0.98%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>510</b>



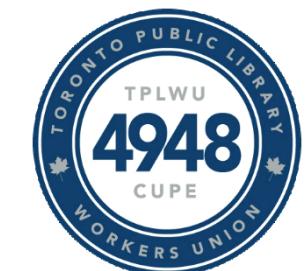
# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

## Q22: To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Chronic understaffing at TPL is having a negative impact on customer service"

Answered: 510 Skipped: 56



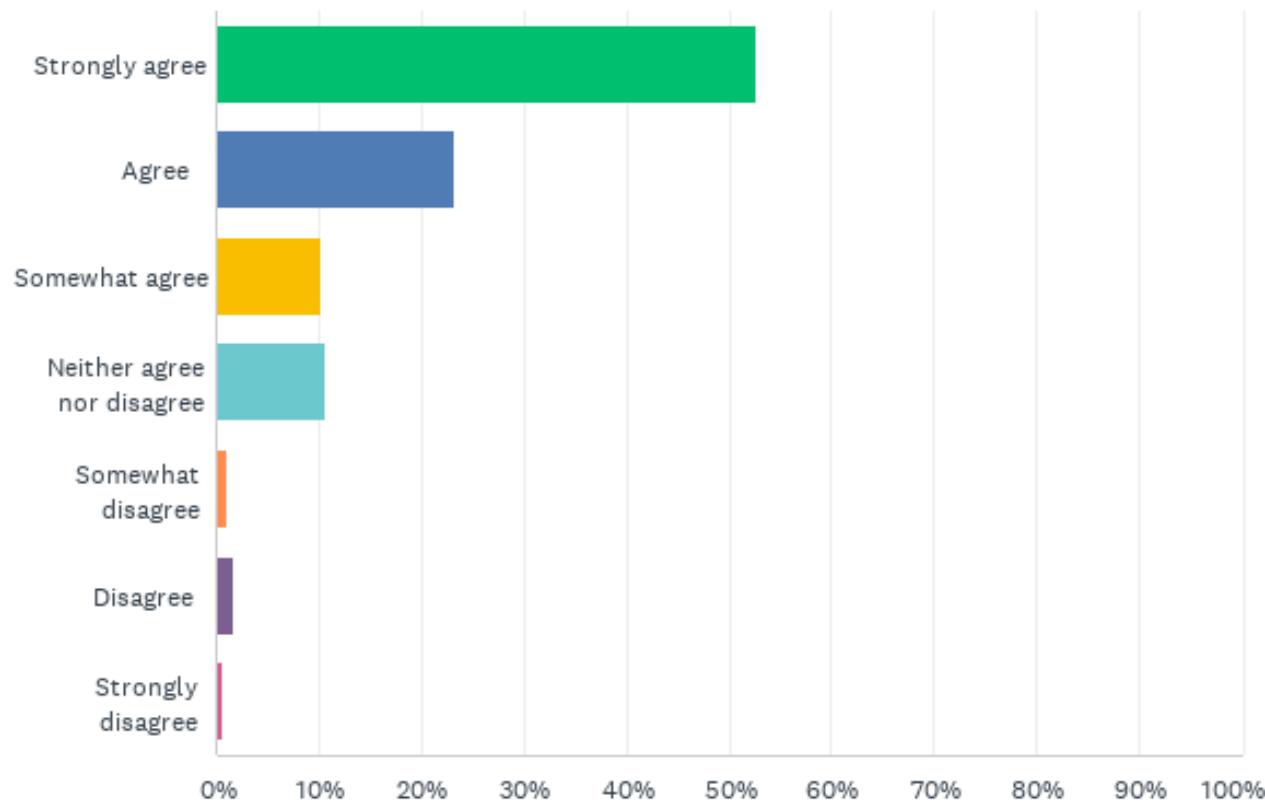
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	64.12%
Agree	23.33%
Somewhat agree	6.67%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.92%
Somewhat disagree	0.78%
Disagree	0.98%
Strongly disagree	0.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>510</b>



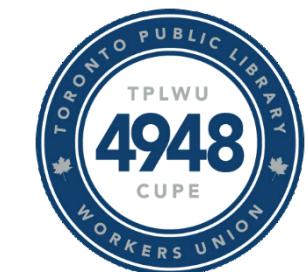
# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

## Q23: To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Chronic understaffing at TPL affects my personal safety and/or the safety of patrons"

Answered: 509 Skipped: 57

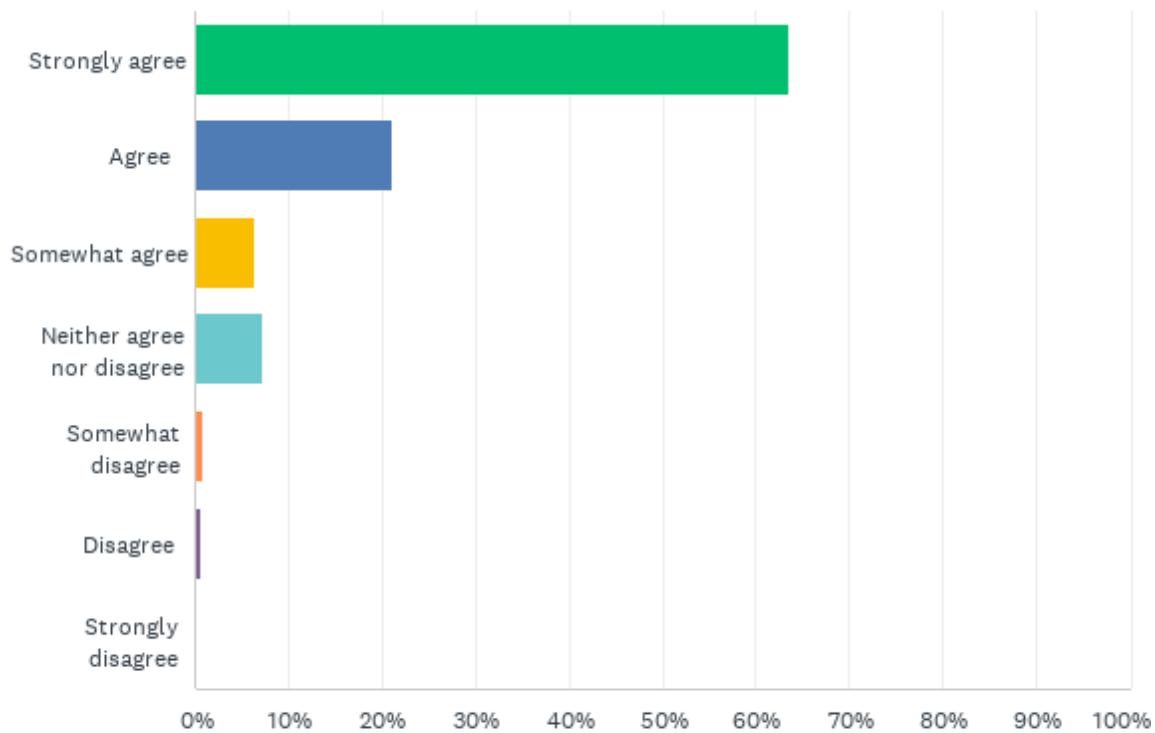


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	52.65%
Agree	23.18%
Somewhat agree	10.22%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.61%
Somewhat disagree	0.98%
Disagree	1.77%
Strongly disagree	0.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>509</b>



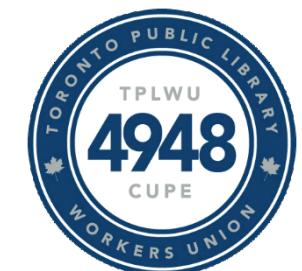
**Q26: To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Violent and/or abusive incidents are on the rise at TPL"**

Answered: 492 Skipped: 74



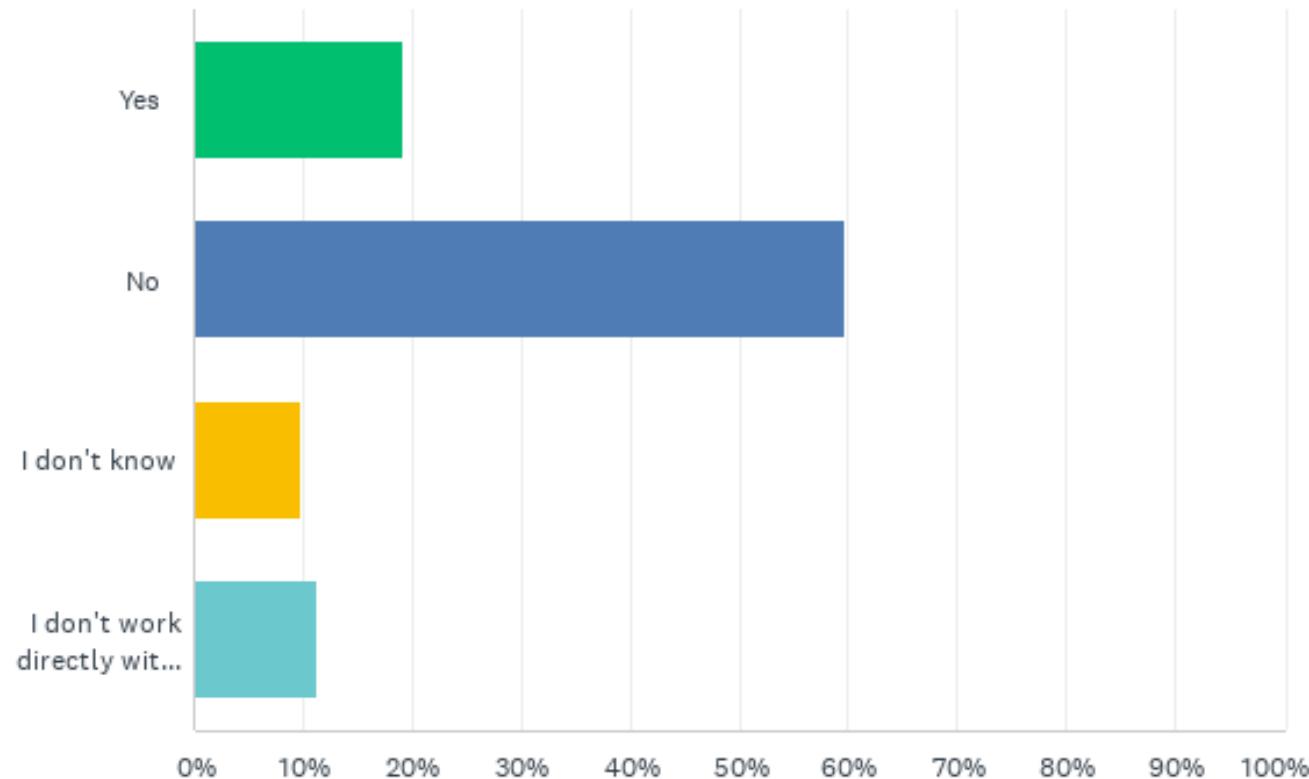
**TPLWU4948  
Bargaining Survey Results  
(2019)**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	63.62%
Agree	21.14%
Somewhat agree	6.30%
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%
Somewhat disagree	0.81%
Disagree	0.61%
Strongly disagree	0.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>492</b>



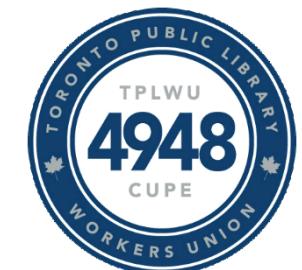
## Q29: Do you receive regular and sufficient information regarding banned or disruptive patrons from \*other\* TPL work locations?

Answered: 493 Skipped: 73



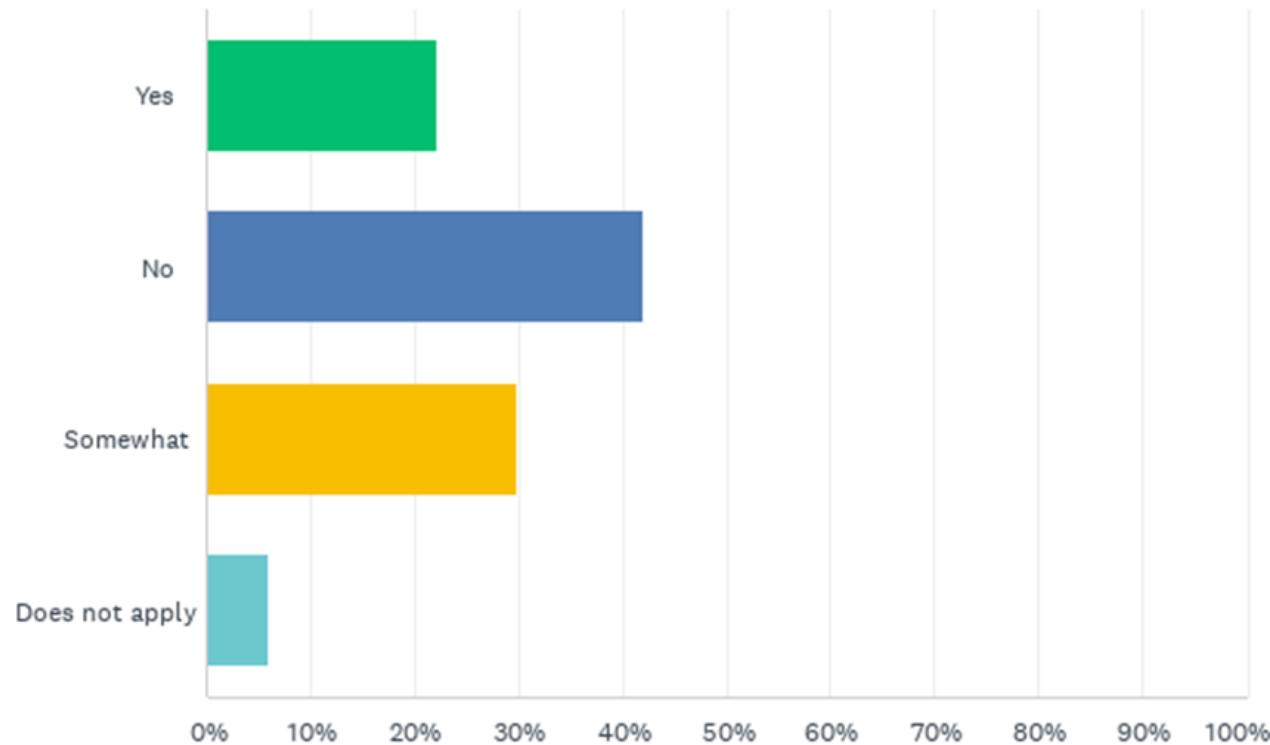
# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	19.27% 95
No	59.63% 294
I don't know	9.74% 48
I don't work directly with the public - does not apply	11.36% 56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>493</b>



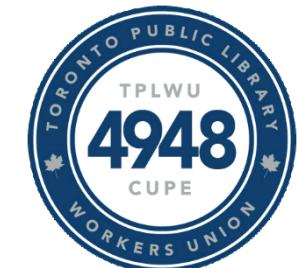
## Q31: Do you feel that there is a sufficient amount of security in your work location?

Answered: 494   Skipped: 72



# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

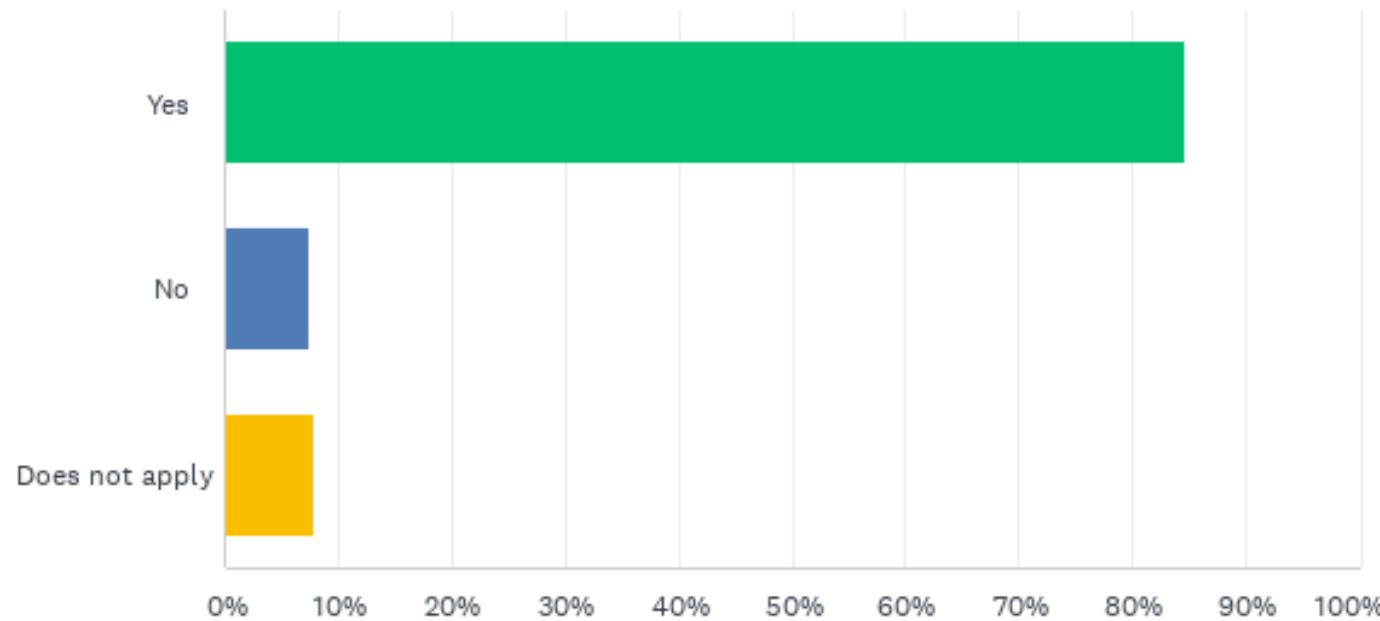
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	22.27% 110
No	41.90% 207
Somewhat	29.76% 147
Does not apply	6.07% 30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>494</b>



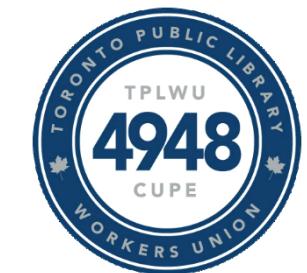
# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)

## Q32: Do you feel there should be a higher level of security in work locations that would allow more intervention by the security guards?

Answered: 489 Skipped: 77



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	84.66%
No	7.36%
Does not apply	7.98%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>489</b>

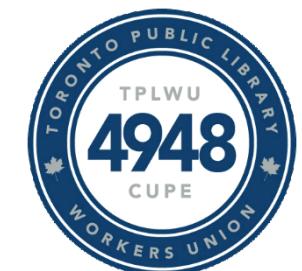
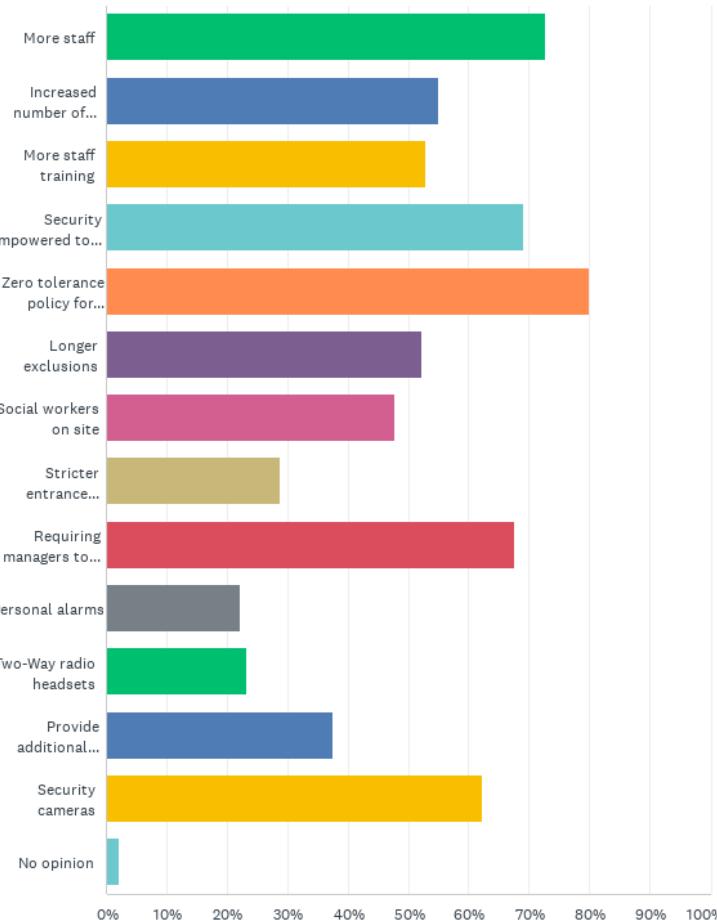


**Q35: What are some of the ways that TPL can affect positive change with regard to health and safety issues and workplace incidents? Please check any that you feel would apply.**

Answered: 510 Skipped: 56

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More staff	72.62%	358
Increased number of security guards	54.97%	271
More staff training	52.94%	261
Security empowered to deliver a higher level of intervention	69.17%	341
Zero tolerance policy for violent/abusive behaviour	79.92%	394
Longer exclusions	52.33%	258
Social workers on site	47.67%	235
Stricter entrance procedures for Youth Hubs	28.80%	142
Requiring managers to experience front line work regularly	67.55%	333
Personal alarms	22.11%	109
Two-Way radio headsets	23.33%	115
Provide additional staffing & supports to Youth Hub Librarians	37.53%	185
Security cameras	62.27%	307
No opinion	2.23%	11
Total Respondents: 493		

# TPLWU4948 Bargaining Survey Results (2019)



# Issue: Security Guards

**Job  
Description  
of Guards**



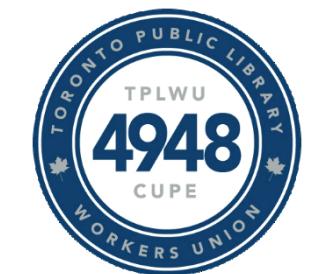
**Quality of  
Guards**

**Secondary  
to Staff**

**Not utilizing  
the  
skills/training  
they have**



## Other Approaches to Safety





## Where do we want to be?



**Safe working environment**



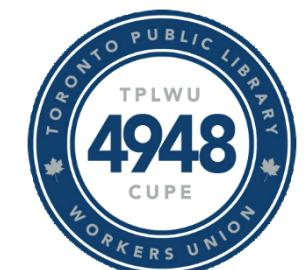
**Staff feel safe and supported**



**Support from management  
during incidents**



**More funding for TPL**



## Where do we want to be?



**TPS connection with TPL**



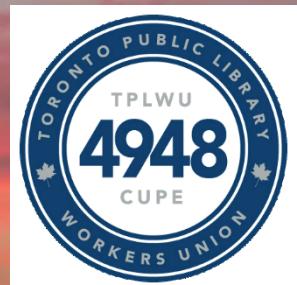
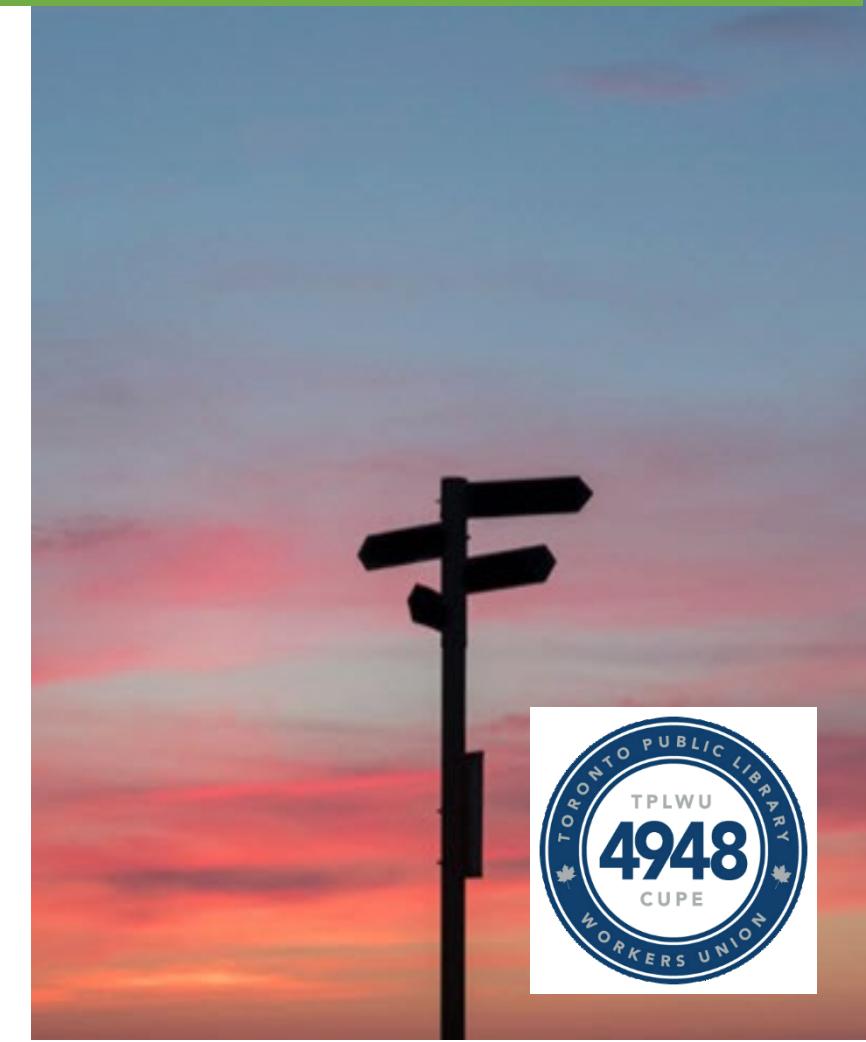
**Additional Social Workers to support public**



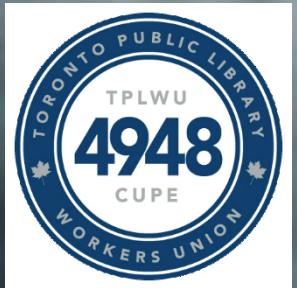
**Increase community agencies partnerships**



**Multi-way communication, open dialogue**



# Where do we want to be?



**Evaluate existing policies and services**



**Increased engagement with library workers re: safety & security**



**Actionable steps to decrease the number of incidents**



## Sources

Beattie, S. (2021, October 2). *Sexual harassment, intimidation, violence on the job worsened during pandemic, librarians report*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/sexual-harassment-intimidation-violence-on-the-job-worsened-during-pandemic-librarians-report-1.6196576>

Beattie, S. (2021, October 24). *Toronto Public Library's plan to spend \$1M more on security not enough to curb violence: union*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-public-library-s-plan-to-spend-1m-more-on-security-not-enough-to-curb-violence-union-1.6221177>

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Rao. Govind C., The Great Equalizer: The Case For Investing In the Toronto Public Library. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. November 2012

Stevenson, Siobhan. Health and Safety Culture at the Library: Listening to Those on our Frontlines. *Public Libraries*. Vol. 60 (5). November/December 2021

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