

PHYSICAL DELIVERY STUDY

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PHYSICAL DELIVERY STUDY

OBJECTIVES

In Fall 2021, MLS Executive Director Sarah Sogigian began a series of on-site and virtual visits to organizations that offer physical delivery between multiple locations. The purpose of these visits was to learn about the various models of delivery, the pros and challenges of the service, and learn about the funding that provides the service.

Her objectives include:

- Gain a broader understanding of what Physical Delivery looks like in other states.
- Share challenges and solutions with libraries related to physical delivery.
- Apply learnings to keeping MLS Delivery sustainable.

Related, the Physical Delivery Interest Group of the Reference and User's Section (RUSA) of the American Library Association (ALA) conducted their first national survey of physical delivery post-COVID. As their report provides meaningful information for this project, their summary is included as well.

FUNDING

Though there are minor differences in funding in various places, generally physical delivery is paid for by local, state, and in some cases, federal grants and tax dollars. Some places charge patrons for particular items, most notably journal articles and eContent.

SCOPE

Most interviewees serve counties or specific areas. While several cases have a semi or partially statewide service, none offer a "one service model" that covers the whole state.

AT A GLANCE

- **Funding Concerns:** Almost ALL cases reported that should funding physical delivery become an issue, other services would be cut or eliminated in favor of delivery sustainability.
- **Staffing.** Regardless of whether delivery staff were contracted or in house, all experienced staffing issues similar in timing and reasonings to ours. Happily, most have reported that staffing is more stable now.
- The efficiency that MLS and Optima provide this service is leaps and bounds ahead of many locations. Optima's Sort to Light, coupled with coordination done in conjunction with Optima and MLS staff, bring our libraries an appropriate number of delivery stops, relatively quick turnaround, and low theft/damage rates.

There are a great number of places in the U.S. that do not have access to materials outside of their state, their network, or their home library.



Massachusetts Library System

AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: State funding, with limited contributions from participants*
- Number of items per year: 11.5 M
- Number of libraries on delivery: 555 multi-type libraries
- Frequency of stops per library: between 1 and 5 times/week
- Delivery provider: contracted

*Optima offers a dedicated service called Holds and Returns Sorting. This service provides substantial labor savings in a busy library, assisting library staff to process holds and get them to patrons faster. This voluntary service is offered to the top libraries by volume; these libraries also contribute \$1K a year to the costs related to this special sorting.



Staff sort materials moving through delivery

NARRATIVE

The Massachusetts Library System provides the physical delivery of materials to over 500 member libraries. It is funded by Line 7000-9401 in the MA State Budget; the service is offered at no direct cost to libraries or patrons*. This work is possible through coordination with our vendor Optima Shipping and the nine automated networks across the state.

Optima, which runs the service out of 3 warehouses, utilizes a technology called Sort to Light; 85% of items in delivery are processed without routing slips, saving the time of library staff, while significantly cutting down on mis-sorts. Using Sort to Light has saved over 863 miles of paper a year...enough to reach from Boston to Chicago!

MLS and the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) have also teamed up to provide free delivery courier services to member libraries in each state who participate in the interstate delivery program. This partnership gives our members access to more resources, fosters interstate fellowship, and reduces postage costs, particularly benefiting our members who routinely request items that can be requested through delivery only.

MLS DELIVERY



555
participating libraries



104, 052 stops



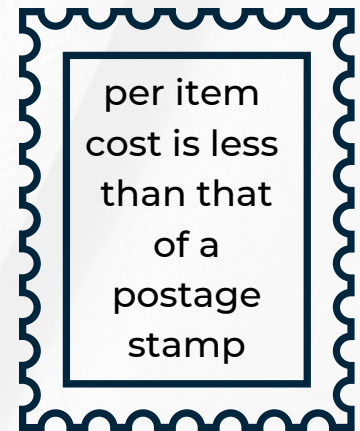
11,350,000
items processed



covers 10,565 mi²



\$5.3M budget



FY22 statistics

www.masslibsystem.org
guides.masslibsystem.org/mlsdelivery



Case Study: New Hampshire State Library

AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
- Number of items per year: 350K
- Number of libraries on delivery: 234 publics, some academics
- Frequency of stops per library: between 1 and 3 times/week
- Delivery provider: In House

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE LIBRARY
MARCH 22, 2023
CONTACT: CHARLES SHIPMAN,
SUPERVISOR, REFERENCE
SECTION

VIA TELEPHONE

NARRATIVE

Library delivery is run out of the New Hampshire State Library, using IMLS funds. There is **no charge to the libraries, the patrons, or the state.** There is one major statewide network, with a few smaller cooperative networks. The state delivers to all libraries on the major network, plus a few others (including some academics, but no schools).

The state is divided into 5 regions, with almost all regions running out of the state library in Concord. The one exception is the North County, in which case, the driver assigned to that area keeps the van at her home and delivers locally, with 1/stop a week in Concord.

Staff includes 3 full time drivers and 4 part time drivers. The state library owns 6 vans. Sorting and management is done by state library staff. **If drivers are out, state library staff step in to ensure delivery is done for the day.** All sorting is done by hand on the vans and at the circ desk of the state library.

Rules include a **maximum of two bins or bags at a time**, but they will work with the library under extraordinary circumstances. Right now they have about 100 bins in circulation. No one receives daily delivery: “big” libraries receive delivery 3 times a week; most receive it 1 time a week.

Approximately 350K items circulate per year, though they are seeing an increase in items. Right now, there is no contingency plan should federal funds no longer support the service. It is acknowledged that delivery is one of the most important services the state library offers.



Case Study: Beaufort County Library System, Beaufort, SC

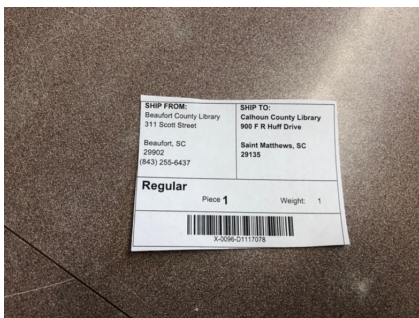
AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: County tax revenues
- Number of items per year: 2.21M in the state system, SCLENDS
- Number of libraries on delivery: Beaufort County: 6 locations; SCLENDS system: 20 county library systems and the state library
- Frequency of stops per library: between 2 and 3 times a week
- Delivery provider: In House

BEAUFORT COUNTY LIBRARY (SC)
JUNE 29, 2022

CONTACT: AMANDA DICKMAN,
DIRECTOR
IN PERSON VISIT



Sample inter-county delivery slip; sorting is not automated.

NARRATIVE

The Beaufort County Library System offers delivery to their 6 physical locations. Outside of the county library system, they participate in SCLENDS, the South Carolina Library Evergreen Network Delivery System. SCLENDS connects the county libraries systems' catalogs together.

Additionally, the program, coordinated out of the South Carolina State Library, makes stops at each county library "hub"; from there, the local county delivery brings the item to its destination. County libraries pay a fee to be a part of SCLENDS, which includes the connected network. Additionally, each SCLENDS library pays for the courier service that provides county-to-county delivery. The fee is covered by county library budgets and is provided at no cost to the user. Around 30% of the state's population has access through the SCLENDS program (it is not a statewide program). Beaufort County receives delivery 5 days a week. County delivery runs daily except on weekends. Beaufort County has 1 driver and 1 van that runs on a weekly schedule to each of the branches and is done in house. Sorting is done with handwritten slips.

Fun fact: Amanda mentioned that they are exploring the possibility of opening a branch or delivery service to an island community. I mentioned that in MA, we contract with the ferry companies to get materials delivered from the mainland to the islands. She expressed interest in reviewing our model for possible implementation in her county.



Case Study: Utah State Library

NARRATIVE

AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: State and federal dollars
- Number of items per year: avg 42K (statewide)
- Number of libraries on delivery: n/a ILL is done via USPS
- Frequency of stops per library: n/a
- Delivery provider: USPS

Library delivery is primarily done by the county library systems, which each operate their own delivery services. USPS is used to transfer materials between library systems, and to deliver Inter Library Loans (ILLs) from the state library. In some cases, ILLs are mailed direct to patrons' homes. The Utah State Library falls under the Utah Department of Cultural and Community Engagement and is funded by both the state and federal dollars.

Fun fact: The Utah State Library has one of the largest collection of books in braille in the world.

UTAH STATE LIBRARY
OCTOBER 19, 2021

CONTACT: CHAUNDRA JOHNSON,
STATE LIBRARIAN/DIRECTOR

IN PERSON VISIT



Case Study: Salt Lake County Library System, UT

NARRATIVE

Salt Lake County Library System operates an inter-branch system, delivering to 19 physical locations, serving 1.18 million people. Delivery is funded through property tax monies to the county. There is no charge to patrons or the library for inter-county delivery.

The county library runs delivery; they do not outsource. Stephanie, who manages delivery, shared that coming back from the pandemic, (when delivery and the libraries were closed) was a tough road, specifically because of staff turnover of sorters/drivers. There was a lot of turnover for a year, but it has evened out at the time of our meeting.

She reports that she created three groups of scheduling to accommodate driver shortage: Green (all routes are covered daily), Code Red (some routes had to be canceled/stops were skipped on certain days), and Mission Critical (only major hub branches received delivery on those days). Backlog evened out after several weeks.

The county library uses bins similar to ours and we discussed specific topics, like theft of materials (it happens on occasion, but not a major detriment), fragile items in delivery (some are allowed, others are for pickup only, e.g. telescopes), and rain damage to items (they reported using waterproof bags, similar to those used on fishing boats, but that it became too expensive, so they now use trash bags to cover bins when it rains).

Sorting is done manually, with handwritten slips or receipt printer generated slips.

AT A GLANCE

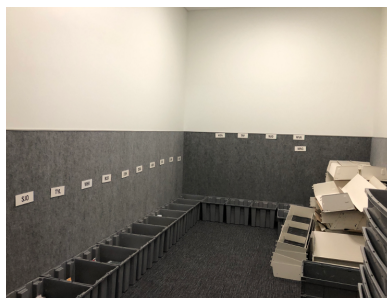
FACTS

- Funding: county funds through tax revenues
- Number of items per year: n/a
- Number of libraries/branches on delivery: 19 locations
- Frequency of stops per library: every day, with exceptions (see narrative)
- Delivery provider: in house

SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM (UT)
OCTOBER 12, 2022

**CONTACT: CHRISTA WARREN, SENIOR
MANAGER OF LIBRARY MATERIALS &
TECHNICAL SERVICES AND STEPHANIE
BERTIN, TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER**

IN PERSON VISIT



Delivery room at a Salt Lake County Branch Library. Branch abbreviations are above each bin. Turnaround time for inter-county delivery is 2 -7 days, depending on opening hours.



Case Study: Lee County Library System, FL

AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: county funds through tax revenues, costs approx. \$200K a year.
- Number of items per year: 350K
- Number of libraries/branches on delivery: 13
- Frequency of stops per library: every day
- Delivery provider: in house

LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM (FL)
APRIL 26, 2023

CONTACT: CHRIS BARBER,
TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER
AND MATTHEW HARDY,
OPERATIONS MANAGER

IN PERSON VISIT



Delivery room at the East County Regional Library. Each bin is labeled with branch abbreviations on color-coded cardstock..

NARRATIVE

The Lee County Library System operates an inter-branch system, delivering to 13 physical locations (14 pre-Hurricane Ian), serving just under 1 million people. Delivery is funded through tax monies to the county. There is no charge to patrons for in-county delivery.

The county library runs delivery from the Library Processing Center, which is housed in one of the library buildings; their service is outsourced to a delivery company. Chris and Matthew, who manage the service, shared that service is stabilizing from the effects of the pandemic, and then the aftermath of Hurricane Ian.

The county system delivers about 350K items a year; it is highly used and regarded as the most critical service the county division provides. While there is no contingency plan in place should the budget not cover costs, it is highly likely all other services would be cut/eliminated before the delivery budget was touched. In terms of cost per item, it is very similar to ours, though the scale of items is different.

The county library is a member of the Florida Library Delivery program, which connects 200 libraries to each other to share Interlibrary Loan materials (ILL). Much like in SC, county libraries pay a fee to be a part of the statewide program. The service is provided at no cost to the user and costs are negotiated between the state and the vendor. Currently, the state uses FedEx as their ILL contractor. FedEx is guaranteed to deliver items in 1-5 days. There are weight and size limits on pickups. FY21 was contracted at \$721K. Note that this cost does not include libraries' in-county/network delivery costs.



Case Study: Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

AT A GLANCE

FACTS

- Funding: state funds through tax revenues, costs approx. \$3.5M a year.
- Number of items per year: 8.9 million items in FY22
- Frequency of stops per library: dependent on volume.
- Delivery provider: in house

**REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS
LIBRARY SYSTEM (RAILS)**
JUNE 24, 2023

**CONTACT: MARK HATCH,
FACILITIES AND DELIVERY
DIRECTOR**

IN PERSON VISIT

The form is a yellow paper slip with the RAILS logo at the top left. It includes a 'Route' field with a small 'optional' label. Below are three main sections: 'TO:' with a line for 'Code or full name of library', 'FOR:' with a line for 'Code or full name of destination library if different from above', and 'FROM:' with a line. At the bottom, there is a 'NOTES/DATE DUE' section with a line.

Delivery paper slip

NARRATIVE

RAILS is a state supported system that provides physical delivery to approximately half the state of IL, including some of the most populous counties in the state. The RAILS delivery service is similar to MLS's service in terms of operations and funding.

RAILS runs delivery from **several warehouses**; they do not outsource, with the exception of two legacy systems in different counties. Mark Hatch shares that staffing, as well as truck maintenance and vehicle stock have been ongoing concerns since the pandemic. Currently, there are **44 staff people** that work on delivery, 9 vans, and the service covers 27K square miles.

The delivery service is highly used and regarded as the most critical service that RAILS provides. Should funding for the service become a concern, Mark suggests that cuts to each service point that RAILS provides would be the option the organization would take if needed. Their cost per item (\$.40) is similar to MLS'.

RAILS connects with the rest of the state through the Illinois Heartland Library System. There is a swap point that is visited at night to transfer items between systems. Through this process, all IL communities are connected. Similar to MLS, RAILS members have varying integrated library systems (ILS), but unlike MLS, there is no **technology assisted sorting**. Libraries must fill in paper slips for every item that goes into delivery. In some instances, materials are mailed to libraries with low volume (if mailing is more efficient than van delivery).

RAILS delivery is highly regarded by its libraries, as one member said, "RAILS delivery is as good as Gold"!



PHYSICAL DELIVERY INTEREST GROUP

NATIONAL DELIVERY SURVEY

POST PANDEMIC 2023

Results March 3, 2023

This survey was conducted in January 2023. It was sponsored by the ALA, RUSA Physical Delivery Interest Group to gather data on the post pandemic and current inflationary period effects on library delivery. Responses were analyzed by survey creators Greg Pronevitz, Independent Consultant, and Mandy Malikowski, Interest Group Chair. The results will be shared with the Interest Group and be publicly available without specific institutional or personal names, e.g., by identifying responses from the Northeast, Southeast, etc.

Much data is presented in chart format from the raw data. We have normalized and interpreted data to create segmented results to illustrate cost increases and quality change by region and number of weekly stops serviced. There are discrepancies in total responses because some respondents did not answer every question.

Responses - 56

Range of items shipped annually - 11.35 million – 55

Range of locations served - 695 – 1

Range of stops serviced per week – 2,348 – 1

Conclusions:

- Issues related to the employment and retention of drivers and staff was a critical factor among respondents.
- Costs of providing delivery services have increased by less than 20% since 2019 for most respondents. One quarter of respondents experienced a larger percentage of increase. A smaller percentage (14%) experienced no cost increase.
- Cost increase trends were similar across all regions, provider sizes, and in-house vs. outsourced.
- Cost increases were frequently attributed to driver/staff retention and cost, fuel costs, and general inflation.
- Quality of services improved for 9% of respondents and declined for 25% of respondents. Most respondents reported about the same quality. We analyzed results for various sizes of service and found that quality declines were more common in the largest systems. Trends were similar across regions and other size providers. We also found that quality decreased more often in outsourced vs in-house services.
- Improved quality was attributed to using couriers that could track packages and a switch from comingled routes, in which drivers carried cargo for libraries and other customers, to dedicated library routes. Declining quality was often attributed to hiring and staff retention issues.
- Few providers issued RFPs since 2019. Among the 13% that have, satisfaction with the results was low.

Follow this [LINK](#) to a pdf of the blank survey.

Please contact greg@pronevitzconsulting.com with any questions.

Prepared by:

Amanda Malikowski, Massachusetts Library System
Greg Pronevitz, Pronevitz Consulting

[PDF of the Blank Survey](#)

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Responses by Region

Total – 56

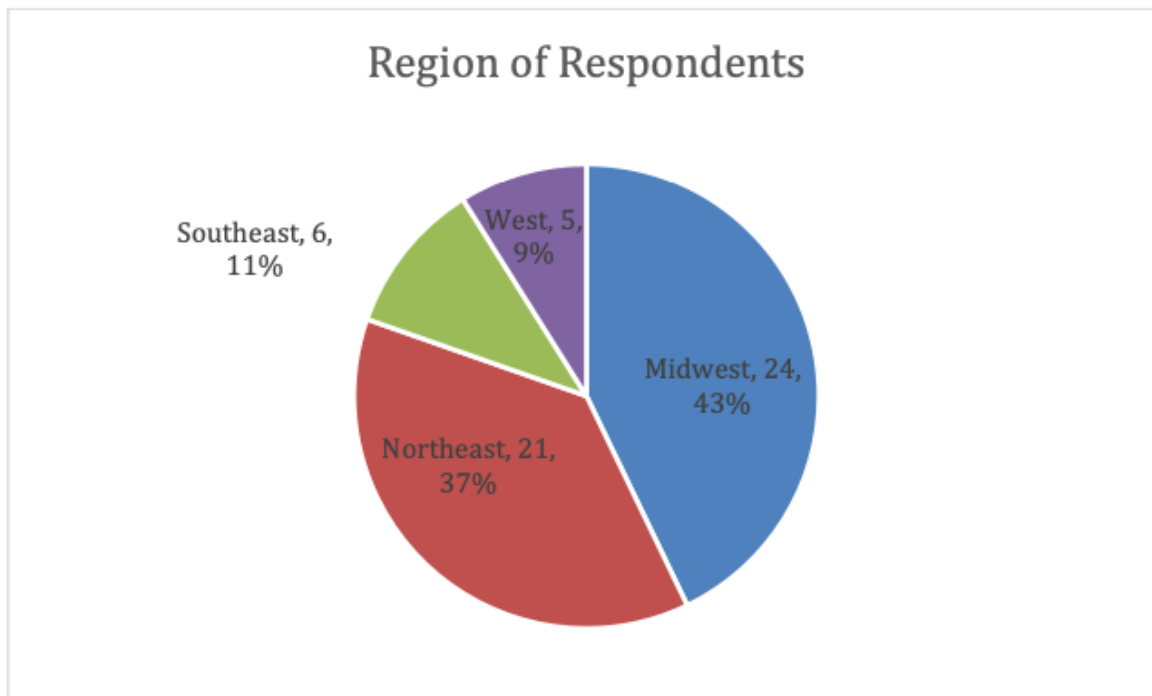
Regions with 2 or fewer responses were combined to create larger groups.

Midwest – 24

Northeast (includes 1 Mid-Atlantic) – 21

Southeast – 6

West (includes 2 Mountain, 2 Southwest, and 1 Northwest) – 5



Number of stops per year

Number of stops per year provided a useful measure of the size and scope of delivery providers.

Responses by Provider Size (i.e., number of stops serviced per week) - 56

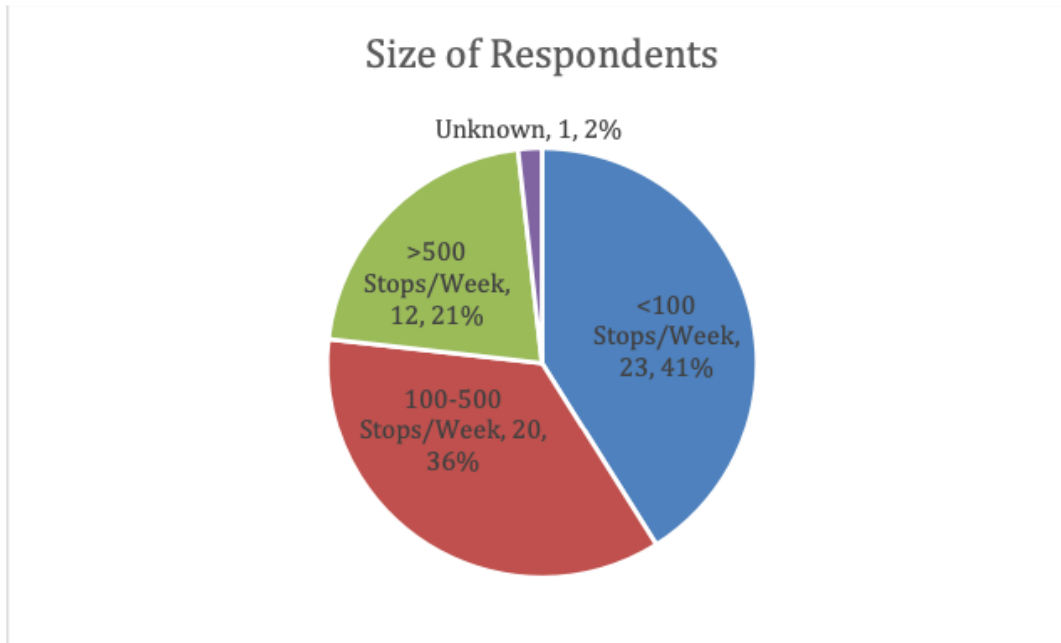
Less than 100 stops per week – 23

100-500 stops per week – 20

More than 500 stops per week – 12

Unknown – 1

Size of Respondents



Items Delivered per Year

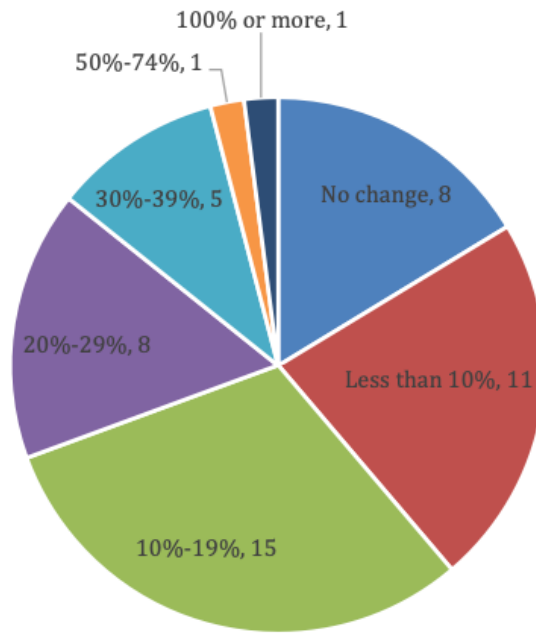
Responses to how many items were delivered per year varied and were difficult to compare because various providers count different things, e.g., books, bags, and totes. The range of responses was 55 – 11.35 million.

Please describe "Items" Delivered per Year Books, Bags, or Bins? We assume that other types of materials are shipped while books are generally the bulk of shipping.

56 responses



Cost Increase - All Responses



Cost Increases

Most respondents experienced cost increases since 2019. This is normal as it is with other services with annual cost increases. More than 60 percent of respondents said costs were about the same or somewhat higher. We interpret this to mean increases of less than 20 percent (as indicated in the chart, “Cost Increase – All Responses”).

The charts illustrate the fact that costs increased by less than 20 percent in more than one-half of respondents services all segments. There were two cases in which increases exceeded 50% or more one of which exceeded 100%. In one of these cases the cost increase resulted in significantly higher quality because the courier switched from comingled library and other cargo to dedicated routes for library cargo.

How have your delivery costs changed since 2019 (pre-pandemic)?

56 responses



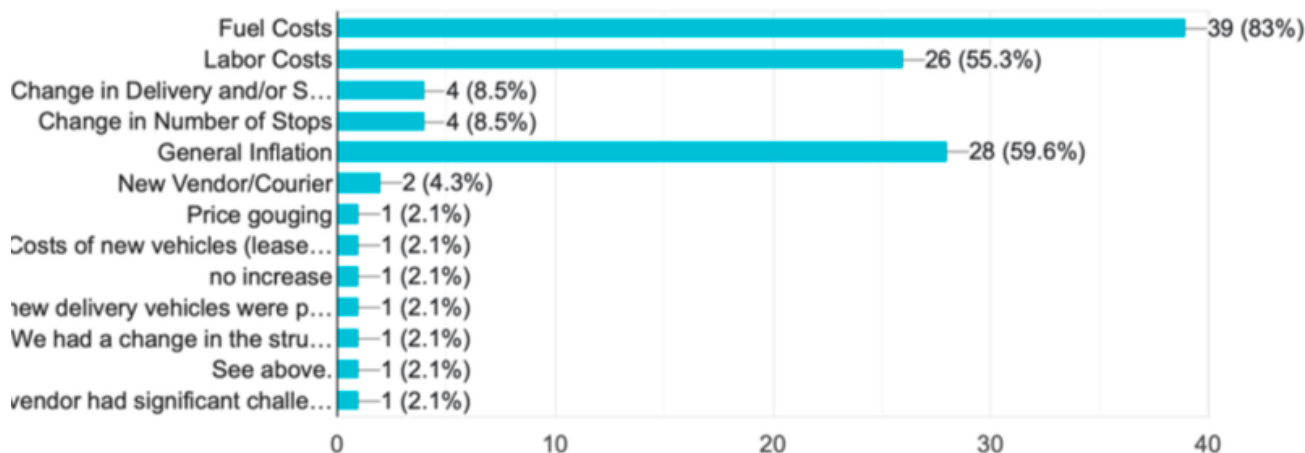
Can you attribute the cost increase to a specific factor or factors? If so, please check all appropriate factors below.

Check all that apply.

- Fuel Costs
- Labor Costs
- Change in Delivery and/or Sorting Volume
- Change in Number of Stops
- General Inflation
- New Vendor/Courier
- Other: _____

Can you attribute the cost increase to a specific factor or factors? If so, please check all appropriate factors below.

47 responses



Comments on Cost Increases

Labor cost increase was due to minimum wage increase.

UPS has increased prices. Fees appear. With gas prices going down, they still seem to keep fees.

Labor costs have gone up significantly as both our driver and helper asked for increases to stay on during the labor shortage of 2021. The driver got a 15.24% increase and the helper got a 22.6% increase.

Inflation, including inflation on fuel costs, also raised expenses in FY2022-FY2023 about 6%.

Fuel was high nationally. Labor cost saw minimal annual increases per employee, but we also had to hire additional employees due to increased volume. New stops added also brought in new revenue but net was a cost to us as we heavily subsidize our operations.

No change.

Fuel costs have been the most significant factor. We also added a second delivery each week.

For instance, in 2019 the avg. fuel surcharge was 11.67%; in 2022 it was 24.6%. Turnover has also increased their wages to stay competitive which is reflected in higher annual increases, i.e. 3.2% for 2019; 8.5% in 2022

Our labor costs are relatively unchanged. Pay has ranged between 1-2% per year since 2019. However, costs related to benefits have increased also (health insurance). As we approach 2023 and beyond, we are needing to make strong consideration for moving the cost of salary to a more competitive position relative to our labor market. We are dangerously close to being unable to attract and keep staffing at current pay levels.

Fuel and material costs related to maintenance have spike significantly. Fuel was running 35-40% higher than in 2019, depending on the month in 2022. We have made some efficiency efforts to mitigate the cost of fuel and mileage related costs.

All tangible hard-good supplies are up at least 10% from 2019. Depending on the item, some supplies (office, fleet, etc) have increased as much as 50%. Motor oil is an example of this. Tires, parts, and other supplies range from 10-30% higher in cost just in the last year.

Fuel costs are now significantly higher; our extremely effective van delivery driver was given a raise (and personnel costs like healthcare increase each year anyway); and general inflation has affected the cost of supplies we use for van delivery, such as labels, crates, rubber bands, tape, etc.

Our vendor indicated that these factors have necessitated price increases.

Our contract uses a base rate per day which increases with fuel surcharges.

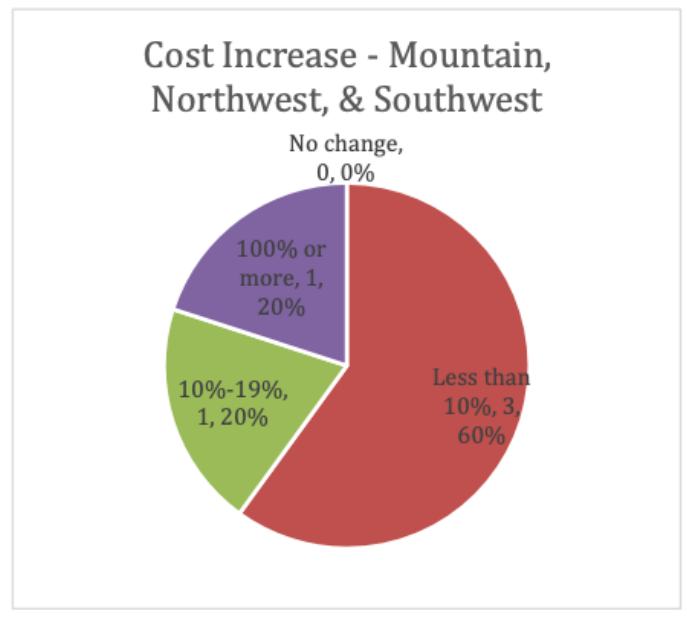
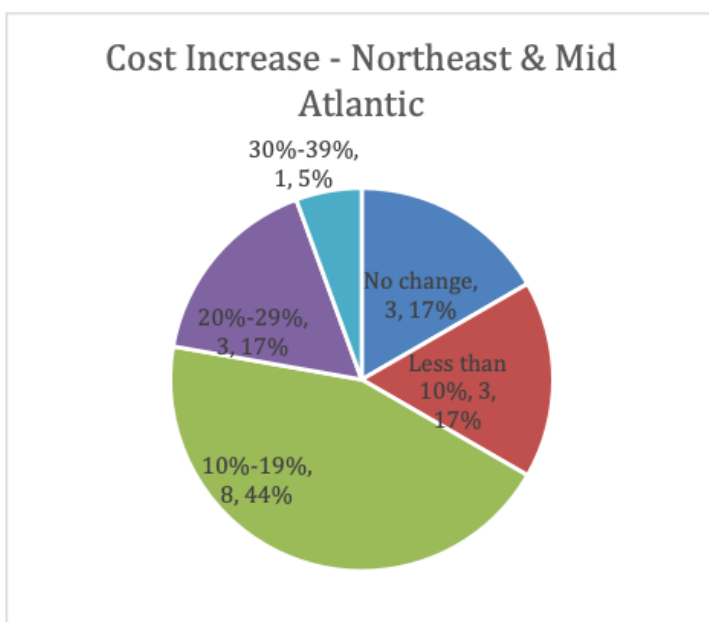
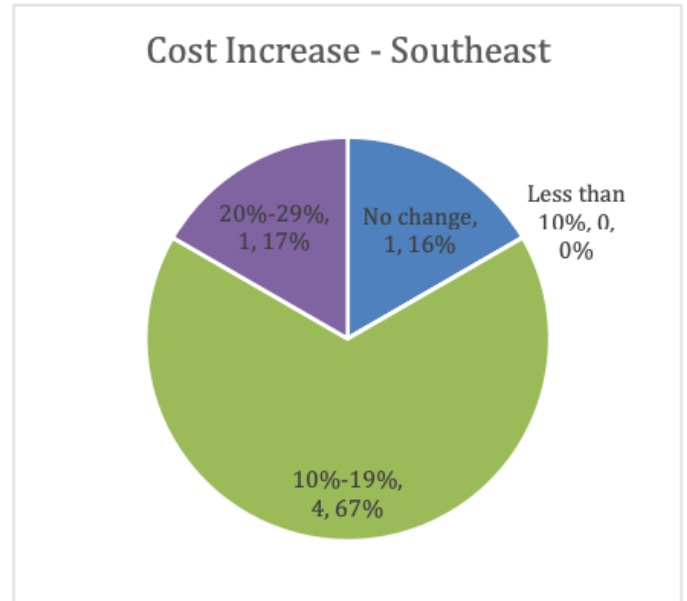
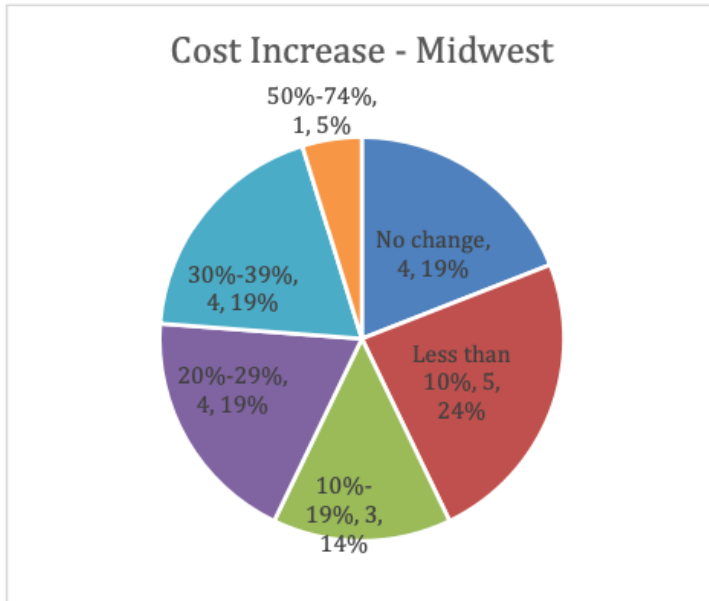
Fuel costs substantial increase; labor state employees received retroactive raises 5-11%

Cost of fuel, employee salaries, and general expenses have gone up across the board.

Three year contract; tried to negotiate a lower cost - still very high

Cost Increase by Region

Regions have been combined due to low response rates in the Mid-Atlantic, Mountain, Northwest, and Southwest regions. No significant differences in results were observed in any geographic region.

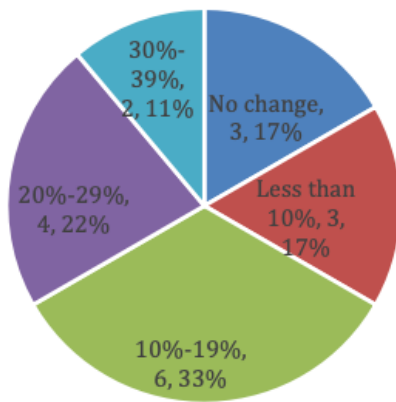


Cost Increase by Number of Stops per Week

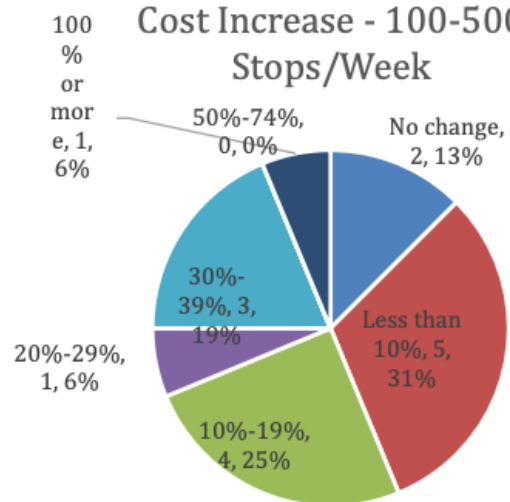
We segmented responses by the number of stops per week to look at services by relative size. Respondents counted items shipped in many ways that would have been quite difficult to normalize.

The charts illustrate the fact that costs increased by less than 20 percent in more than one-half of respondents services all segments. No significant differences in results were observed in any segment.

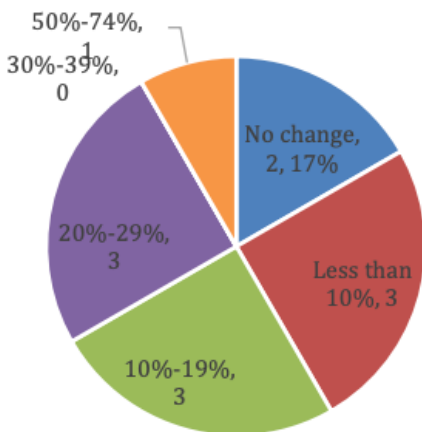
Cost Increase - <100 Stops/Week



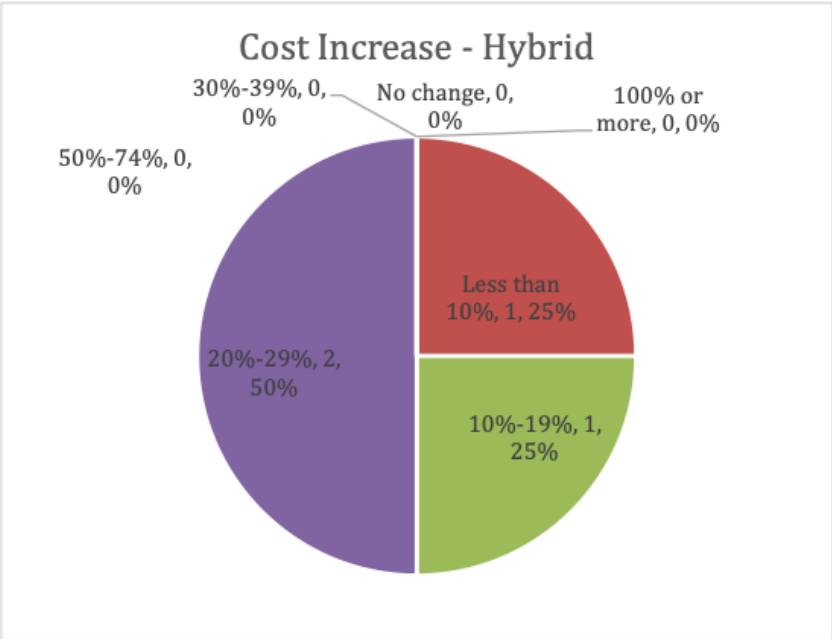
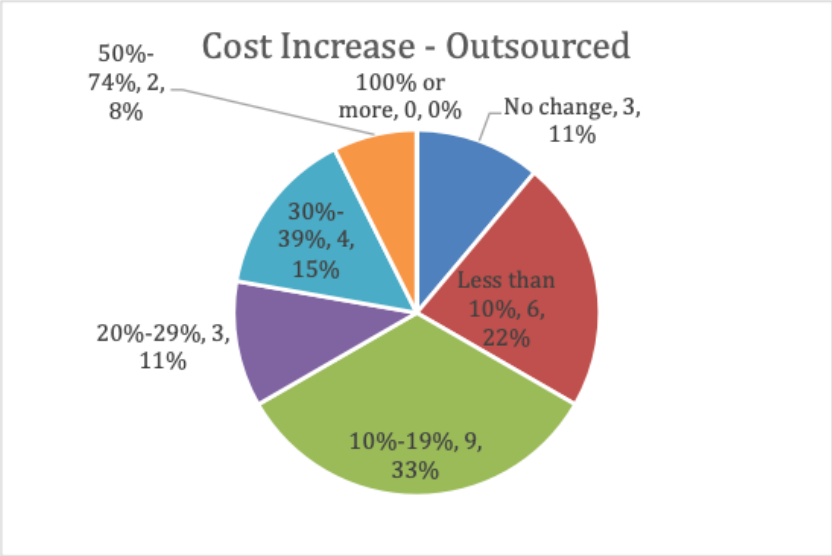
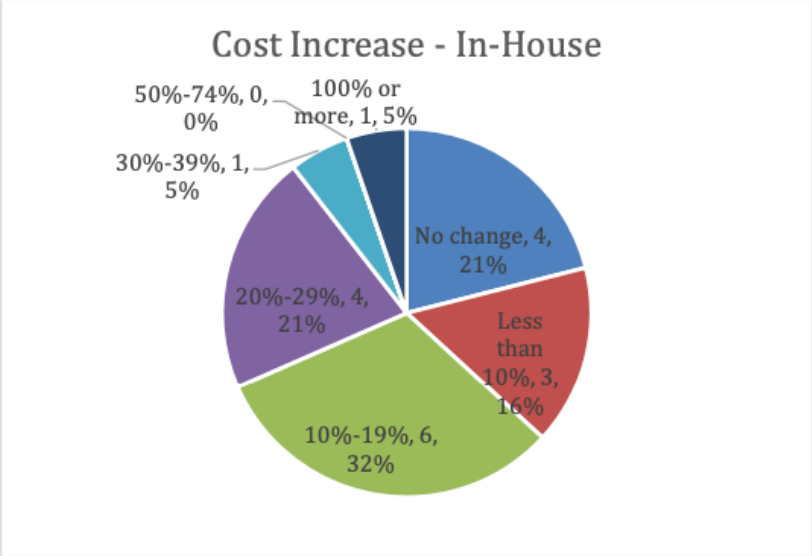
Cost Increase - 100-500 Stops/Week



Cost Increase - >500 Stops/Week



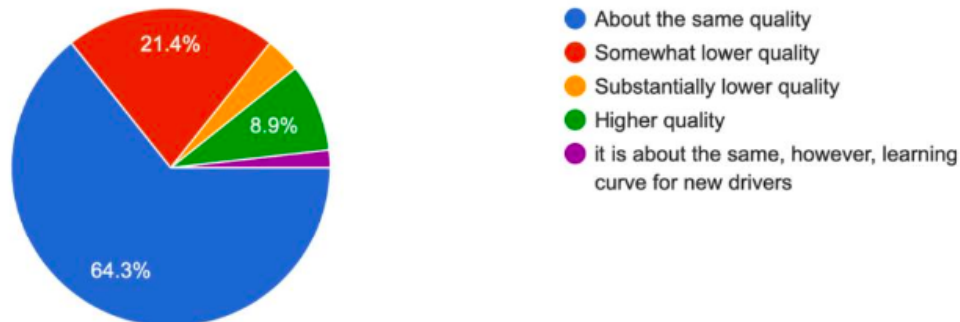
Cost Increase by In-House, Outsourced, and Hybrid



Quality Changes

How has the quality of delivery service changed since 2019 (pre-pandemic)?

56 responses



respondents said quality was about the same as in 2019.

There were five responses with higher quality! Some reasons were:

- We changed service providers. FedEx provides much better service than our previous contractor.
- Ability to track packages, 1–2-day delivery time, less lost or damaged items, ability to place claims for lost or damaged items, more consistent service.
- The change to a dedicated library delivery network improved the consistency of on-time deliveries, decreased the number of missed stops, improved customer service, and reduced the amount of time items spend in transit.

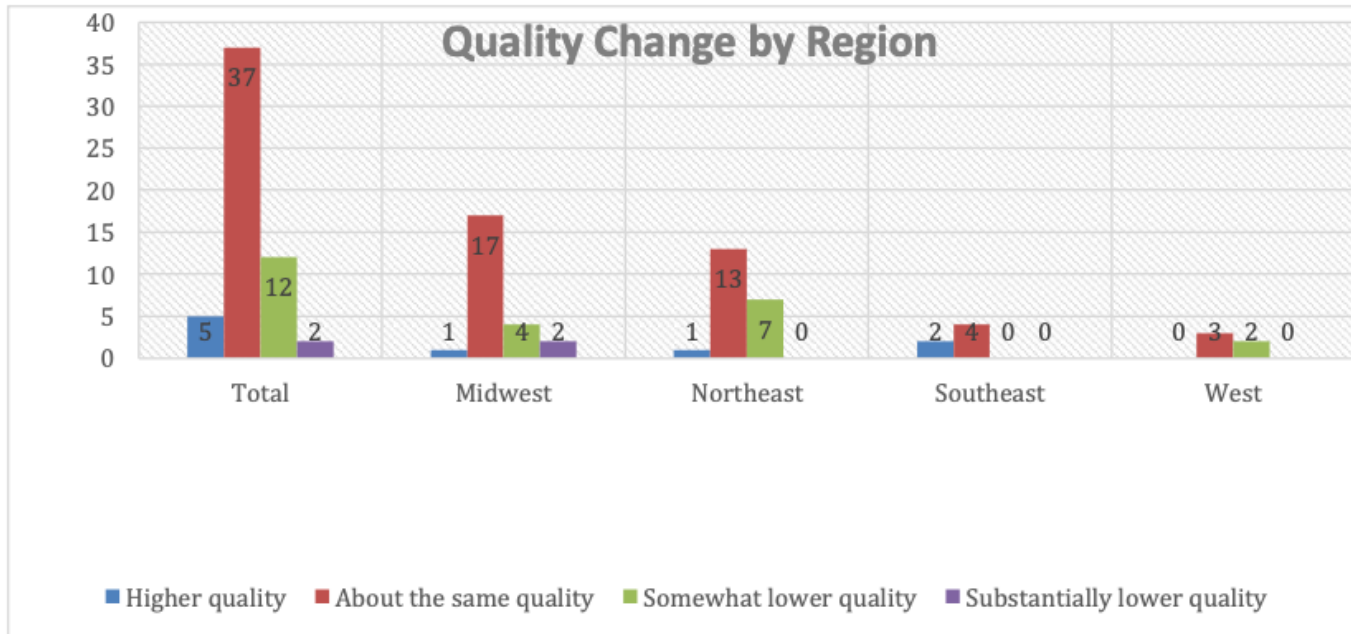
There were two cases in which respondents said quality was substantially lower. In both cases driver turnover was pointed out as a factor. The features of lower quality services were found in many responses, i.e., Sorting accuracy (the correct item placed in the correct container), Accuracy of delivery (the correct item delivered to the correct location), On time delivery (driver arrives on schedule), Transit times (number of days in transit), Missed stops, Lost and damaged items.

Among respondents who attributed a reason for changes in quality chose Hiring and/or retention of staff challenges as a cause or part of the cause.

Quality Change by Region

Regions have been combined due to low response rates in the Mid-Atlantic, Mountain, Northwest, and Southwest regions.

The charts illustrate the fact that quality was about the same or better in more than one-half of respondents services all segments. No significant differences in results were observed in any geographic region.



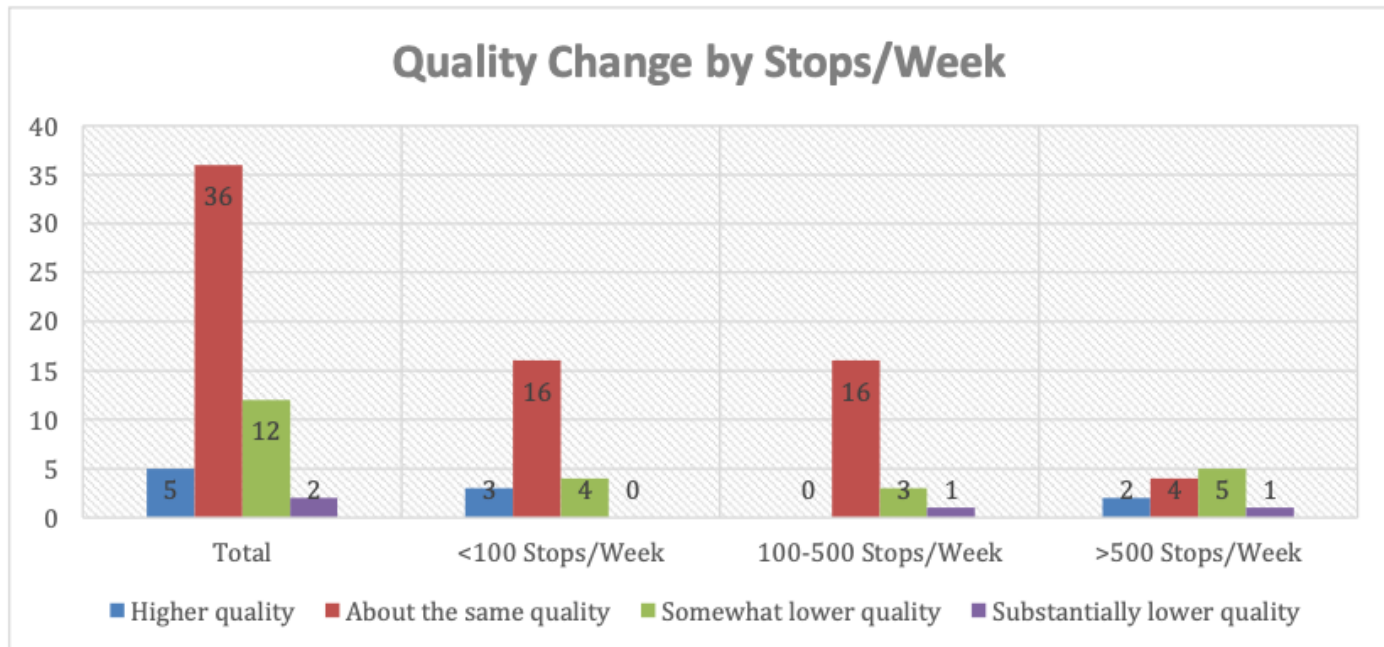
	Total	Midwest	Northeast*	Southeast	West**
Higher quality	5	1	1	2	0
About the same quality	37	17	13	4	3
Somewhat lower quality	12	4	7	0	2
Substantially lower quality	2	2	0	0	0

*Includes Mid-Atlantic

**West – Southwest, Northwest, & Mountain

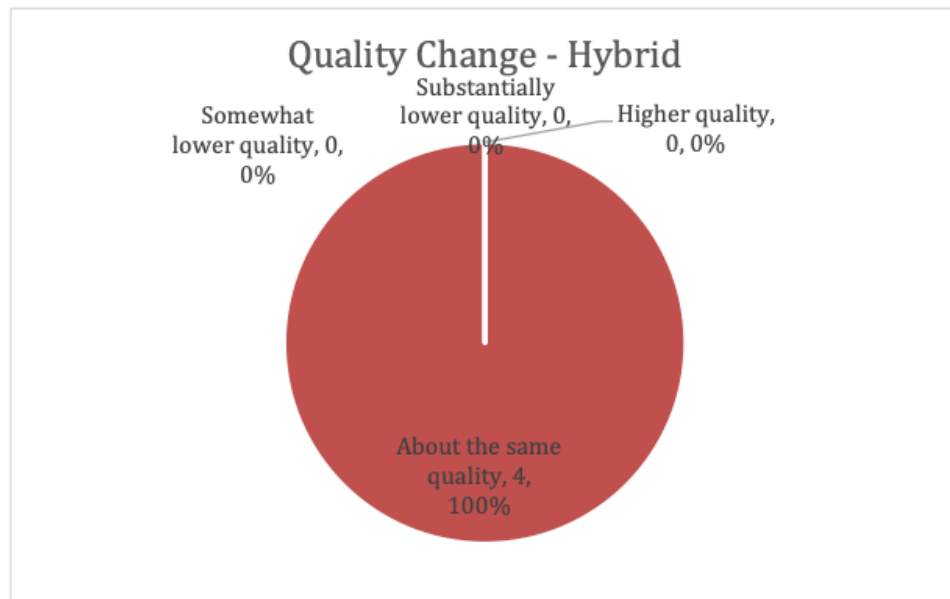
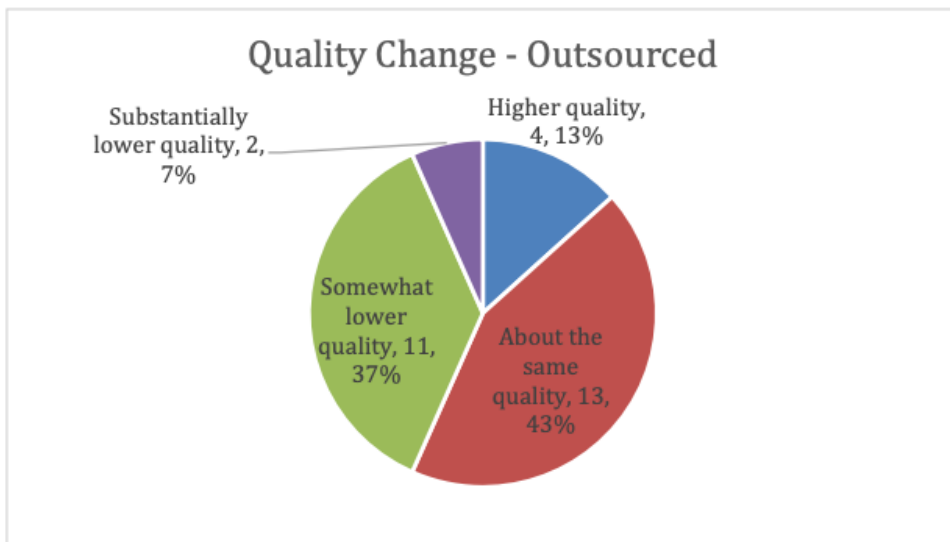
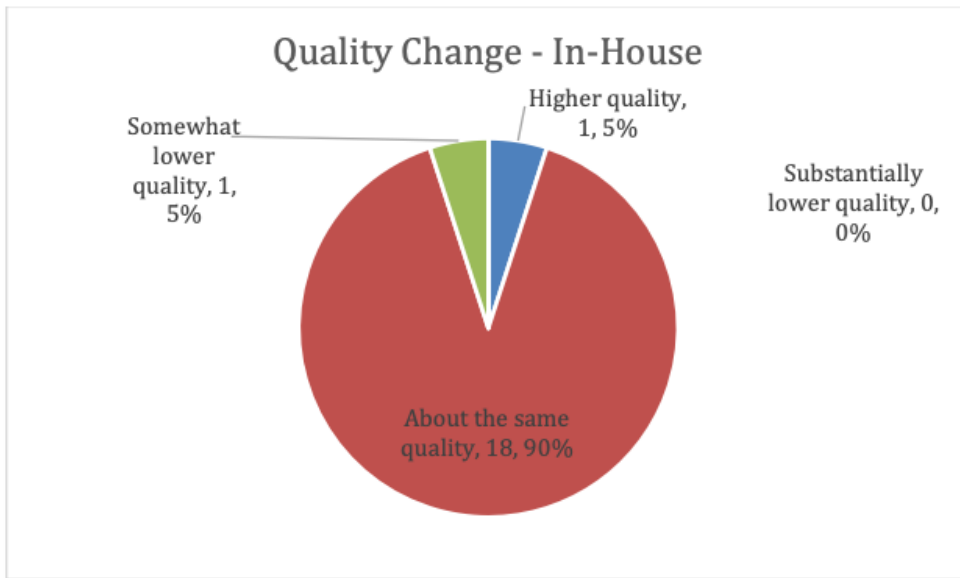
Quality Change by Size of Provider

We analyzed survey results about quality change in three segments based on the number of stops per week. The general trend was highest for about the same quality as 2019 and second highest for somewhat lower quality. This trend was observed in the two segments with fewer stops per week. The group with more than 500 stops per week had the highest number of responses with somewhat lower quality. These respondents attributed these problems most frequently to driver/staff turnover.



	Total	<100 Stops/Week	100-500 Stops/Week	>500 Stops/Week
Higher quality	5	3	0	2
About the same quality	36	16	16	4
Somewhat lower quality	12	4	3	5
Substantially lower quality	2	0	1	1

Quality Change by In House, Outsourced, and Hybrid



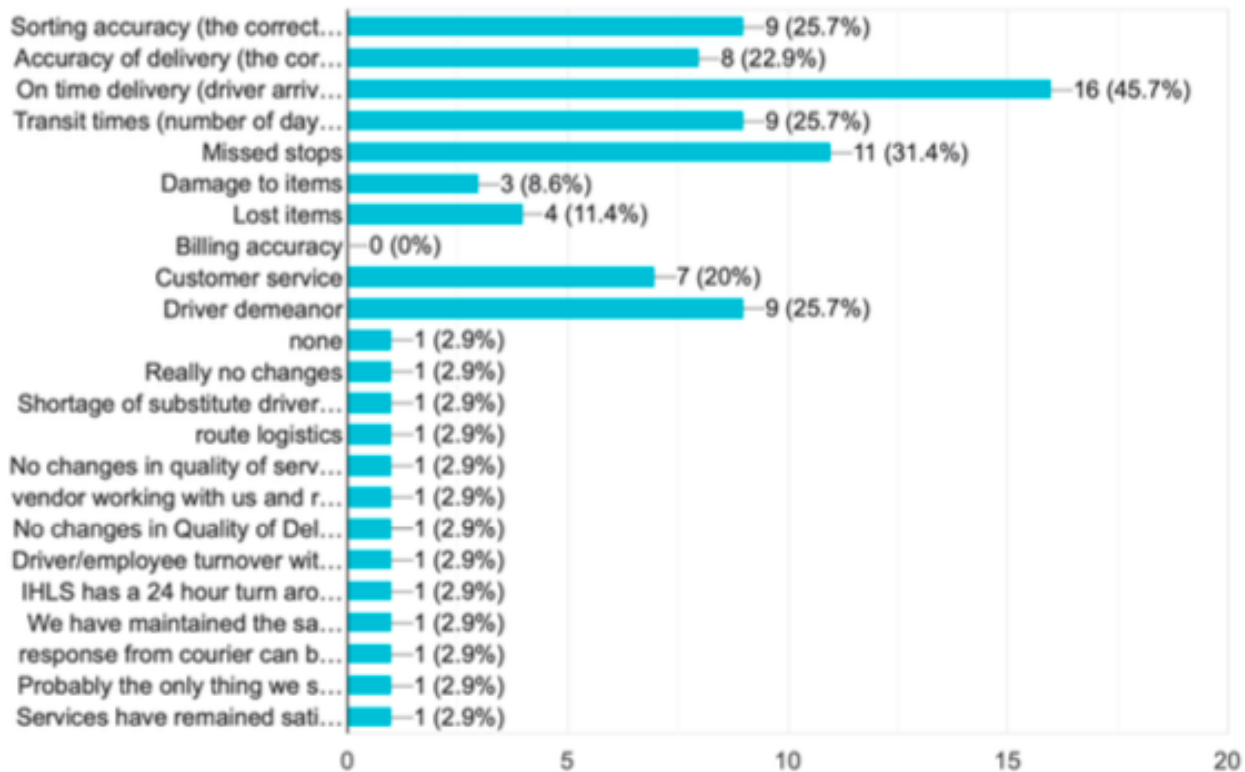
Please indicate the areas in which quality changed.

Check all that apply.

- Sorting accuracy (the correct item placed in the correct container)
- Accuracy of delivery (the correct item delivered to the correct location)
- On time delivery (driver arrives on schedule)
- Transit times (number of days in transit)
- Missed stops
- Damage to items
- Lost items
- Billing accuracy
- Customer service
- Driver demeanor
- Other: _____

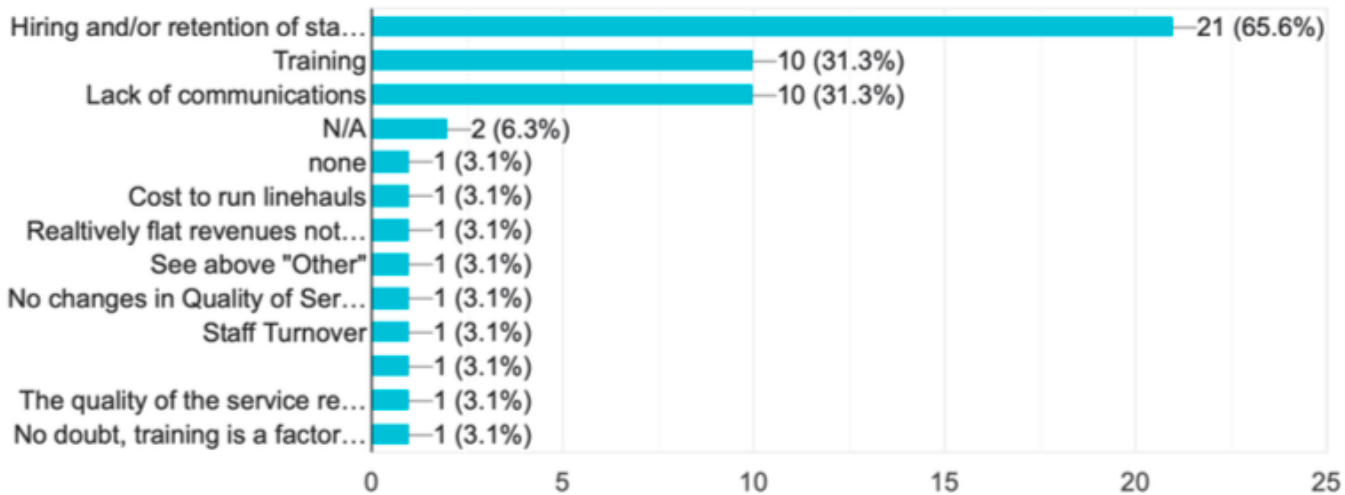
Please indicate the areas in which quality changed.

35 responses



Can you attribute changes to quality of service to a specific factor or factors? If so, please indicate:

32 responses



Sample Comments on Quality Changes

Since 2019 there has been an increase in missed or incomplete stops and a decline in sorting accuracy. Our members reported inconsistent delivery arrival times and major delays on the routes impacting library workflow. Delays can run from an hour to 3 hours. Libraries are seeing more mis delivered materials and bins. Turnaround time/ transit times have increased as well. Staff turnover has impacted the quality of service.

Less damage to items because we improved quality of bins used. Better driver demeanor because we began including contracted drivers in staff morale boosting activities.

We use the same delivery provider that we contracted with pre-pandemic, and their quality of service has not changed.

Missed stops is the top issue. Vehicle issues. Driver illness or new driver.

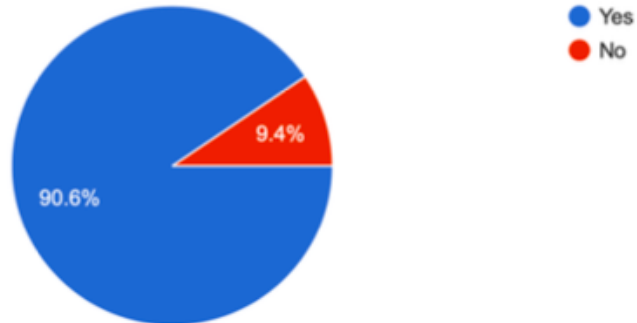
Staff recruitment retention and turnover have impacted our ability to stay fully staffed which impacted delivery and sorting Operations.

Despite the challenges of the last couple years, we have maintained the same quality of service.

Vendors and RFPs

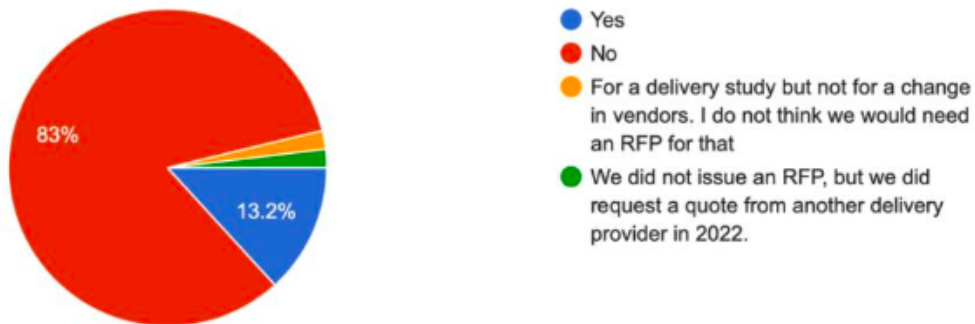
Are you using the same vendor or in-house services to provide delivery now as you did in 2019? If you have changed vendors, please describe the change. If you have issued an RFP, please see a question about RFPs below.

53 responses



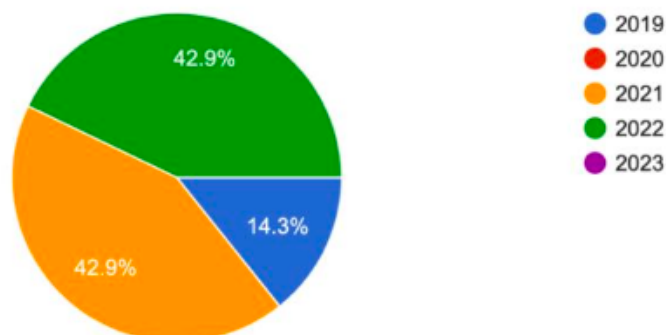
Have you issued an RFP for delivery services after March 2019?

53 responses



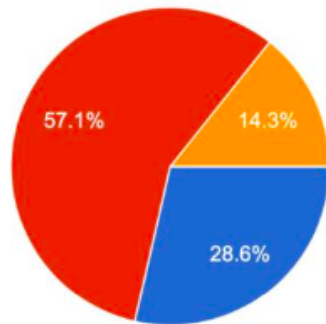
When was the RFP issued?

7 responses



We're you satisfied with the results of the RFP?

7 responses



- Yes
- No
- we negotiated a sliding scale for a fuel surcharge so that we adjust monthly based on average fuel costs and either pay extra or are credited by the vendor

Sample Comments

Only got two responses. Vendors can't cover area or don't have capacity.

The vendor that was given the contract after the RFP was not equipped to handle our state's volume

Excellent service with one provider

Received only 4 responses - 2 delivery vendors and 2 automation companies.

CONCLUSION

As seen in the RUSA report, several respondents saw increases to budgets needed to keep the service running, including MLS. MLS saw a 5.2% increase in FY22, which falls in the lower end of the reported increases. As stated in the survey summary, **cost increases were seen regardless of if the service was provided in house or via a contractor.**

As reported through the RUSA study and the Case Studies, **physical delivery is a critical component of library service**, and one that is either level with pre-pandemic use or higher. While there are various cost models, **many delivery providers are committed to ensuring access without a direct cost to patrons, an important factor in ensuring equity of access.**

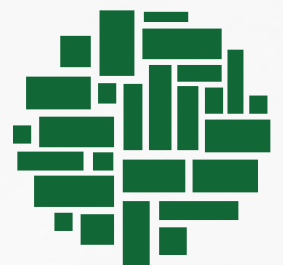
For those using mail and/or shipping services, it is important to note that each item is packaged and shipped individually, adding significant time and cost to the individual library.

Cost per item remains significantly lower for those libraries that use bin and van delivery systems. If MLS used a mailing or shipping service to manage delivery, based solely on shipping costs (using USPS' Library Rate of \$3.32 per pound), the service would cost a minimum of \$46M a year for 14 million items, and would take 7-10 days to arrive.

Moving physical materials across land, regardless of distance, is an awesome feat. In Massachusetts' case, it requires consistent communications with several people, organizations, vendors, computer programs, and advocates, as well as a robust budget and collections. The dedication to resource sharing by our member libraries cannot be overstated.

While there is always room for improvements, our system provides efficient and timely service with low error rates, responsible spending, and streamlined operations.

www.masslibsystem.org
guides.masslibsystem.org/mlsdelivery



Delivery
Massachusetts Library System