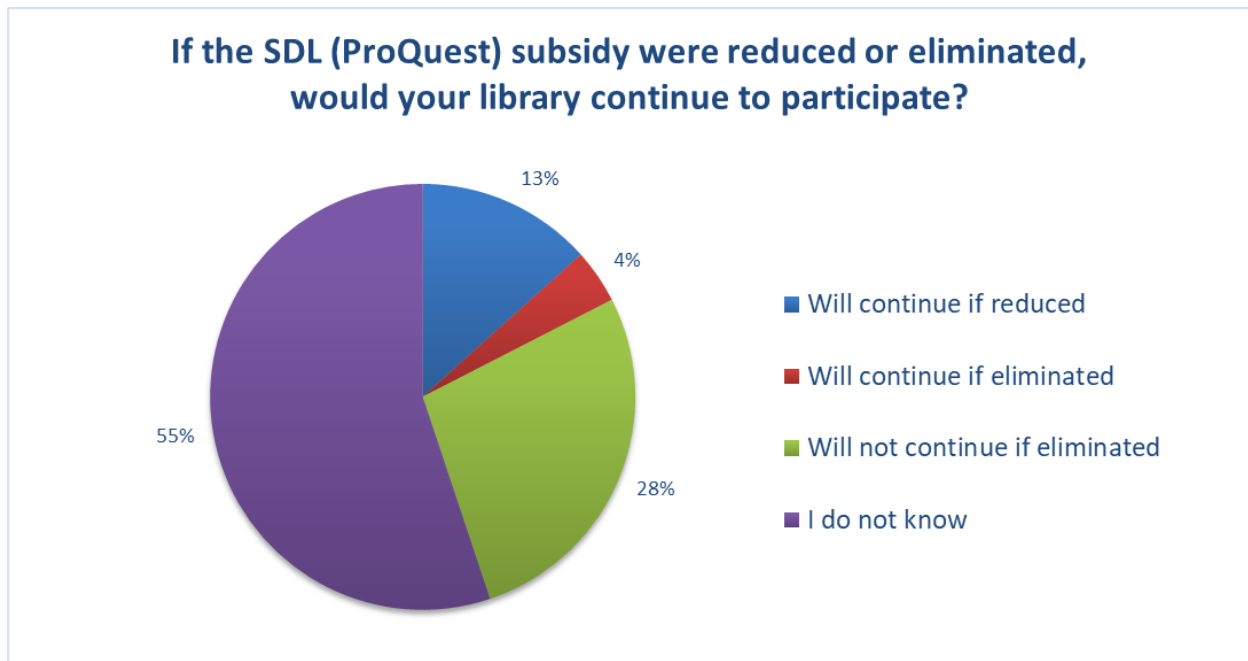# 2019 SDL Needs Assessment Survey
The Importance of Subsidies

Throughout the entire history of the Statewide Database Licensing (SDL) project, extending back to 2000 and even before, the Washington State Library (WSL) has subsidized fully one-half the statewide contract cost, while the remaining 50% was divided between participating libraries on the basis of population served and/or FTE enrollments. This subsidy, formerly a half a million dollars (up through 2004-2005), has more recently been a little over half that, slightly exceeding a quarter of a million dollars.
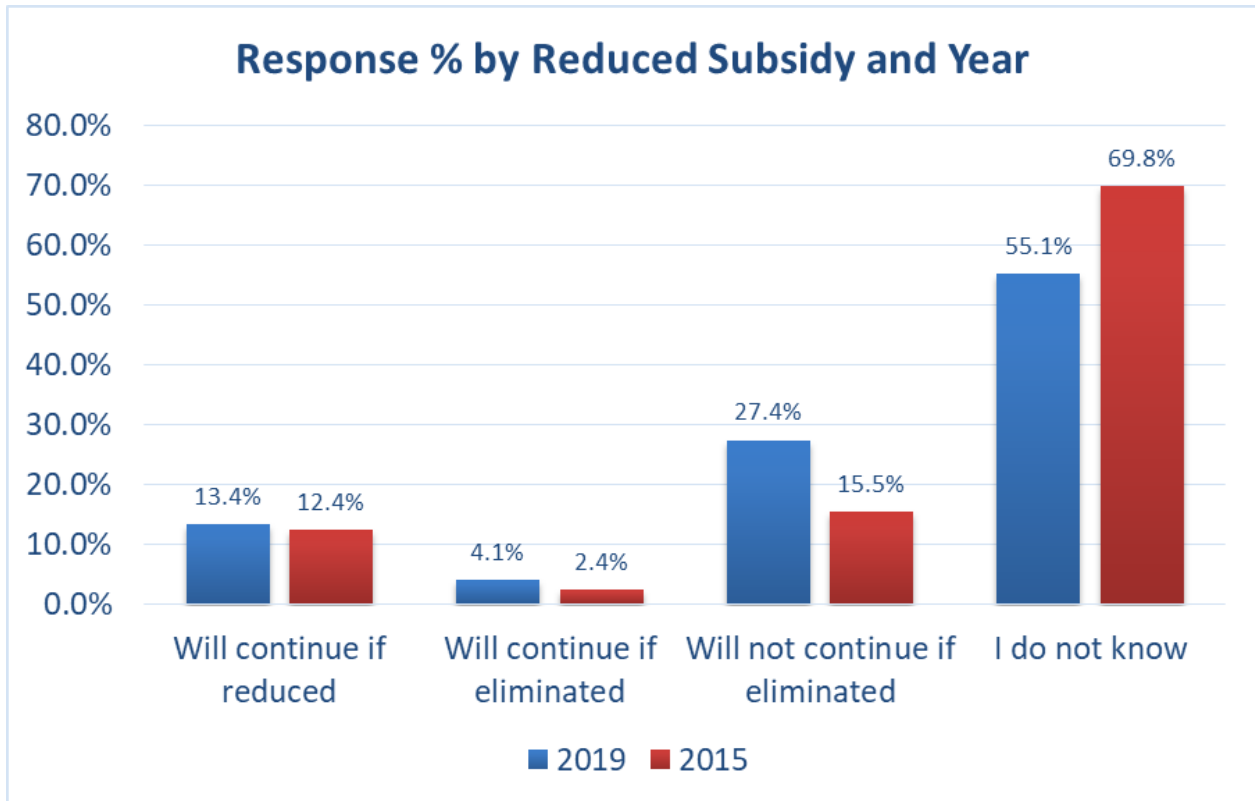
The effect of this substantial subsidy has been to make the package of research databases affordable for all interested Washington libraries, and has freed up library funds for other purposes, including the purchase of other resources. Originally, the subsidy was only expected to last for an initial "pilot" phase of the project, after which the project was to intended become self-supporting. But the subsidies proved so popular that it became unfeasible to remove them, and so they continue, some 20 years later.

The question of whether or not libraries could or would continue to participate in the project should the subsidies be substantially reduced or eliminated, is, of course, of considerable interest, and was included in the 2019 and 2015 surveys. Unfortunately, for the majority of respondents, the answer is simply unknown. Results are shown in the charts below.

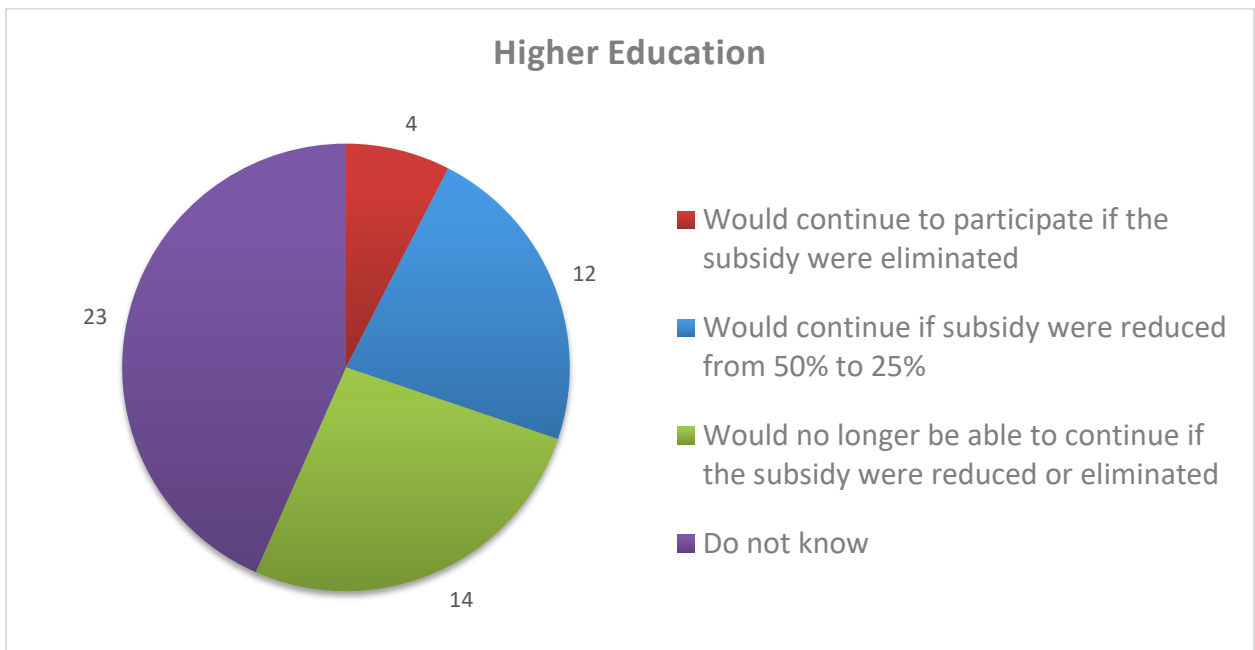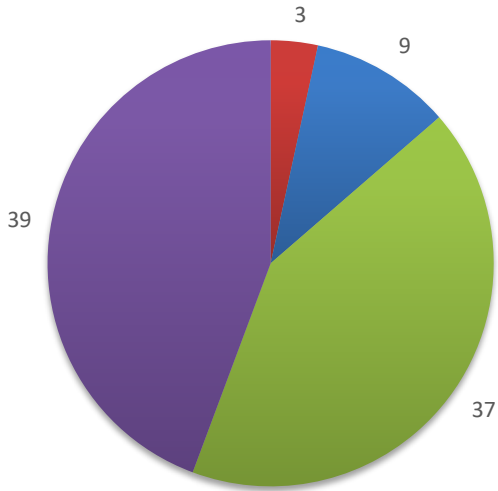2019 Survey Question:

If the SDL (ProQuest) subsidy were reduced or eliminated, would your library continue to participate?

- 13% Will continue if reduced
- 4% Will continue if eliminated
- 28% Will not continue if eliminated
- 55% I do not know

2019 compared with 2015 survey responses:

Response % by Reduced Subsidy and Year

	Will continue if reduced	Will continue if eliminated	Will not continue if eliminated	I do not know
2019	13.4%	4.1%	27.4%	55.1%
2015	12.4%	2.4%	15.5%	69.8%

■ 2019 ■ 2015

2019 responses by type of library:

Higher Education

- 4 — Would continue to participate if the subsidy were eliminated
- 12 — Would continue if subsidy were reduced from 50% to 25%
- 14 — Would no longer be able to continue if the subsidy were reduced or eliminated
- 23 — Do not know

K-12 Schools

- 3
- 9
- 37
- 39

Legend:
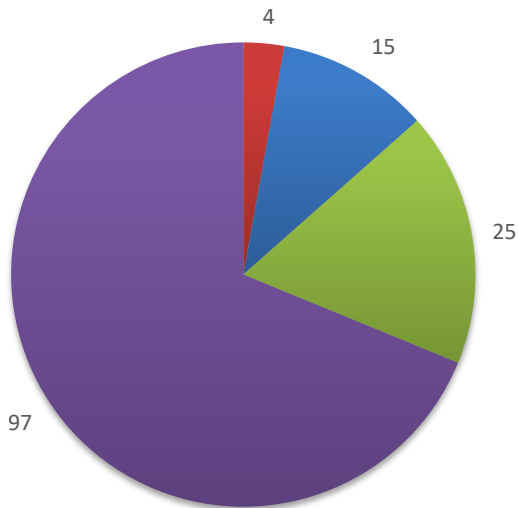- ■ Would continue to participate if the subsidy were eliminated
- ■ Would continue if subsidy were reduced from 50% to 25%
- ■ Would no longer be able to continue if the subsidy were reduced or eliminated
- ■ Do not know

Public Libraries

- 4
- 15
- 25
- 97

Legend:
- ■ Would continue to participate if the subsidy were eliminated
- ■ Would continue if subsidy were reduced from 50% to 25%
- ■ Would no longer be able to continue if the subsidy were reduced or eliminated
- ■ Do not know

More recently, the State Library has fully subsidized an extended trial period during which libraries have been able to provide access to a large newspaper collection from NewsBank. Starting in 2021, libraries that choose to continue will begin paying the prices set by the vendor to increase over a 3-year period, with a 50% subsidy the first year, and 25% the second year. We asked a similar question regarding NewsBank:

Will your library continue to participate as the NewsBank subsidy decreases?

Will your library continue to participate as the NewsBank subsidy decreases?