

# Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program

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In 2006, the Minnesota State Library commissioned an evaluation of the Minnesota Voluntary Certification (MVC) Program.

Nancy Bolt of *Nancy Bolt and Associates* (NB&A) teamed with Jody K. Howard of *Creative Information Solutions for Library Organizations* (CISFLO) to conduct the critical evaluation. The consultants worked with Dr. Keith Curry Lance and Nicole Steffen from *RSL Research Group* to conduct the electronic survey.

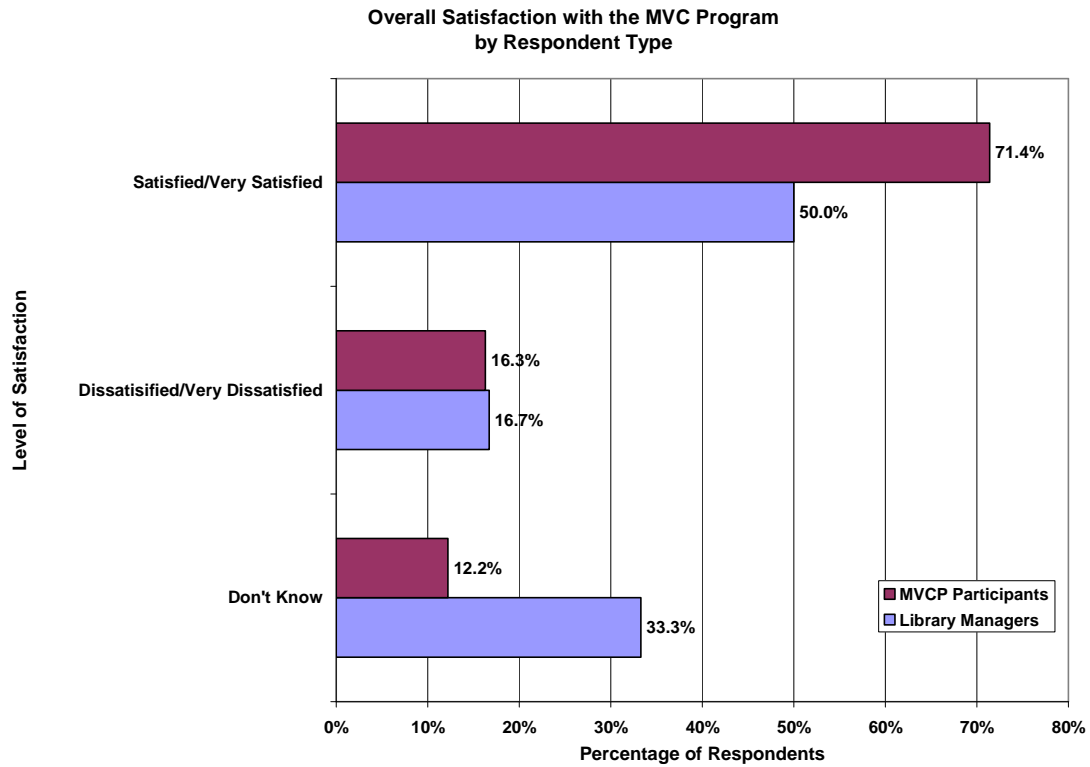
The methodology used included the following:

- In-depth interviews with MVCP leadership in preparation for the evaluation
- An online survey of:
  - Graduates and current participants in the MVCP program
  - Managers of libraries who may or may not have had employees in the MVCP program or who may have participated in the program themselves
  - Employees who had participated in a CE workshop but chose not to enroll in the MVCP program
- 11 focus groups with
- Interviews with all Regional and Multitype Library Directors
- Interviews with selected others including:

Below is a summary of key findings from the survey about the value of the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program, incentives and disincentives for participation, and overall satisfaction with the program.

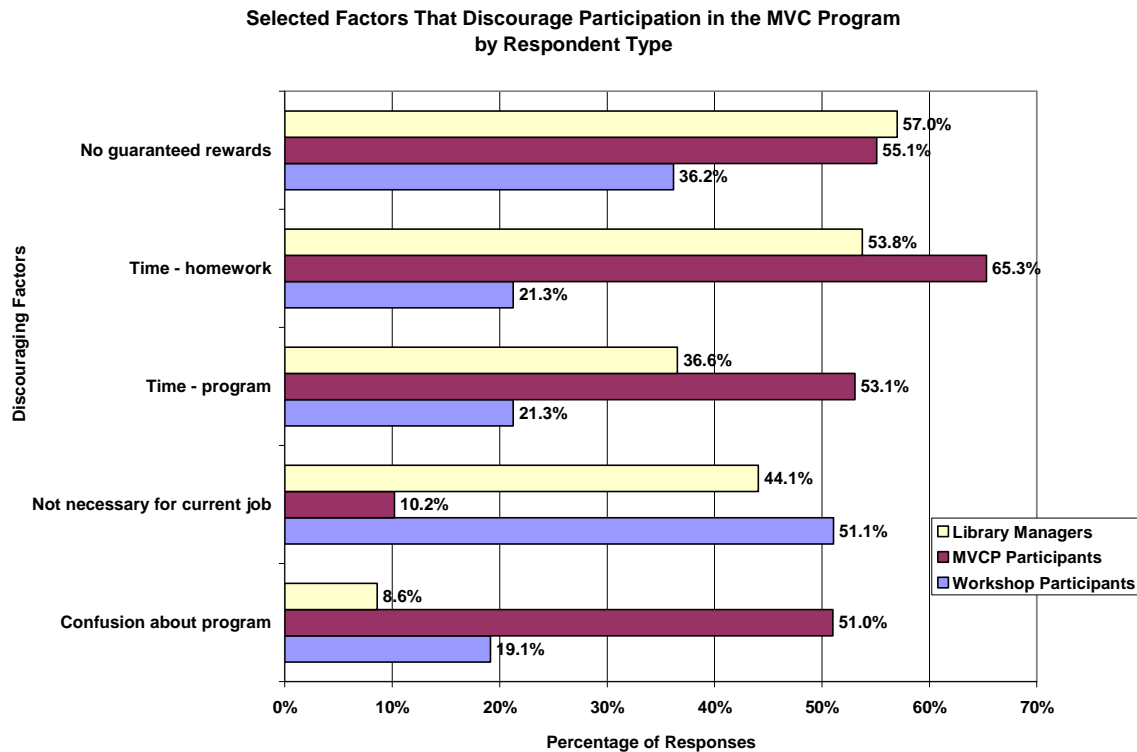
Focus groups and interviews confirmed the findings of the surveys. The Minnesota State Library used the results of the evaluation to improve the certification program for library support staff.

## OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE MVC PROGRAM



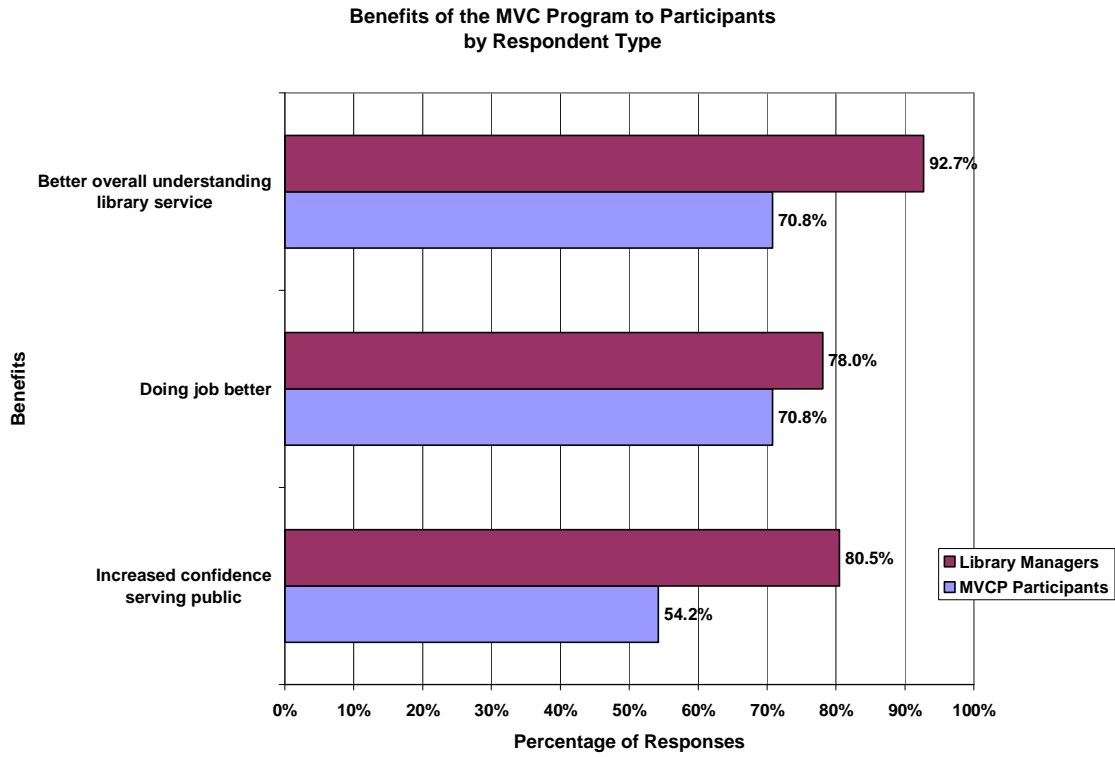
- Most respondents indicated they were satisfied with the MVC Program, including 71.4% of MVCP graduates/participants and 50.0% of library managers.
- Notably, one-third of library managers were unsure of their level of satisfaction with the certification program.

## SELECTED FACTORS THAT DISCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN THE MVC PROGRAM



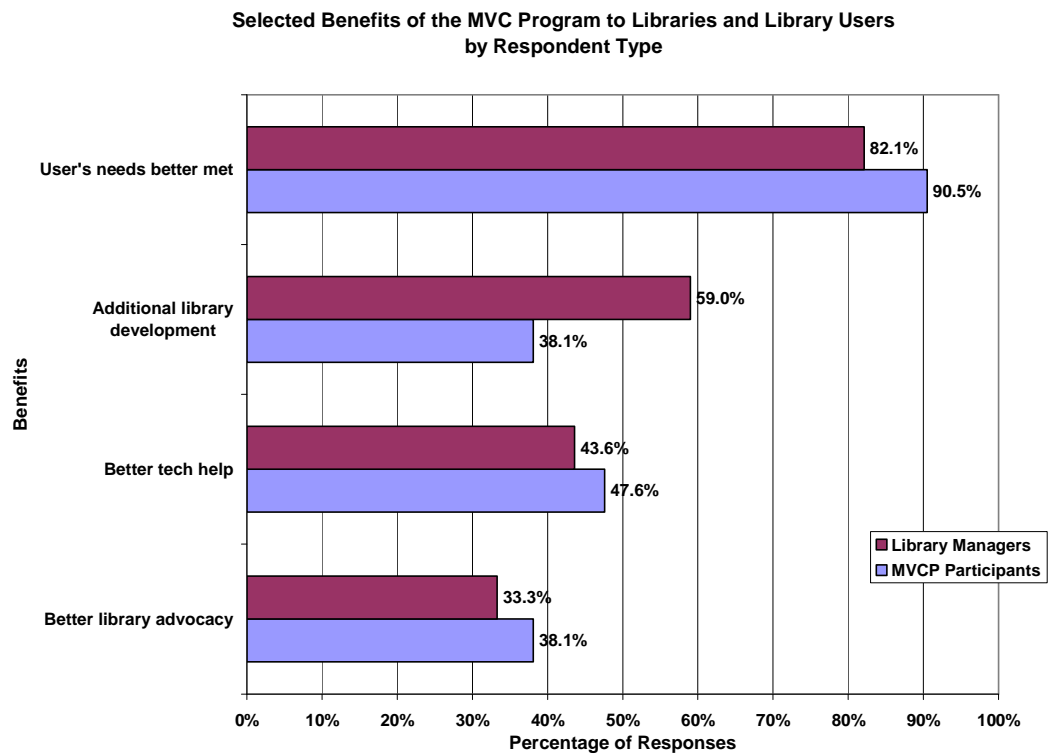
- The perception by survey respondents is that the MVC Program has no clear pay-off, it is time consuming, and it isn't necessary. The exception, only 10.2% of MVCP participants said the certification wasn't necessary for their current job.
- Half of MVC Program participants (51.0%) indicated "confusion about the program" was a discouraging factor. However, other groups were much less apt to cite this as a problem. This begs the question, what do MVCP participants know that non-participants don't.

# BENEFITS OF THE MVC PROGRAM TO PARTICIPANTS



- Benefits to participating staff cited by library managers and MVC Program participants related to better library service, not personal gain.

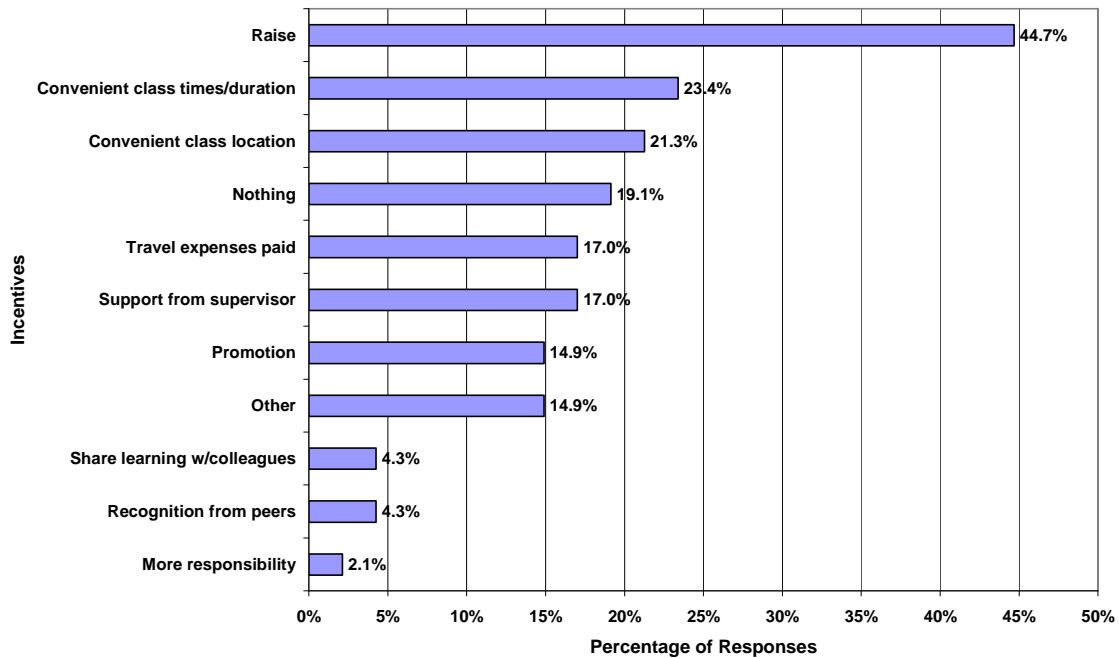
## SELECTED BENEFITS OF THE MVC PROGRAM TO LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY USERS



- When asked how the library and library users benefited from the certification program, both library managers (82.1%) and MVCP participants (90.5%) indicated that library users' needs are better met.

## INCENTIVES THAT WOULD PERSUADE PARTICIPATION IN THE MVC PROGRAM

Incentives That Would Persuade Participation in the MVC Program  
as Identified by Workshop Participants



- Almost half of workshop participants (44.7%) said a guaranteed raise in pay would persuade them to participate in the MVC Program.
- Approximately, one in five cited convenient class time, duration, and location was a factor. In addition, almost one in five said nothing would persuade them to seek certification.

Bottom line, it's a fine program, but why should I spend my time and effort for a certification that may or may not have a concrete pay-off.

<b>Library Manager Survey: Respondent Participation in the MVC Program by MVC Program Status at Respondent's Library</b>					
	<b>MVC Program Required or Preferred For Positions at Respondent's Library</b>				
	<b>Required</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>
MVC Program Graduate or Participant	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Non-MVC Program Participant	1.6%	16.1%	72.6%	9.7%	100.0%

<b>Library Manager Survey: Respondent Participation in the MVC Program by MVC Program Status at Respondent's Library</b>					
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	<b>Required</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>
MVC Program Graduate or Participant	0	12	18	0	30
Non-MVC Program Participant	1	10	45	6	62

- Of the respondents that participated in the MVC Program, 40.0% said the certification was preferred for positions at their library, whereas only 16.1% of non-MVC Program participants indicated that their library preferred the certification.
- Of the non-MVC Program participants 72.6% said their library neither required nor preferred the certification.

<b>Library Manager Survey: Library Staff Participation in the MVC Program by Respondent Satisfaction Level</b>						
	<b>Mangers' Level of Overall Satisfaction with the MVC Program</b>					
	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Total</b>
Staff in the MVC Program	19.5%	46.3%	12.2%	4.9%	17.1%	100.0%
No Staff in the MVC Program	2.0%	34.7%	10.2%	6.1%	46.9%	100.0%

<b>Library Manager Survey: Library Staff Participation in the MVC Program by Respondent Satisfaction Level</b>						
	<b>Mangers' Level of Overall Satisfaction with the MVC Program</b>					
	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Total</b>
Staff in the MVC Program	8	19	5	2	7	41
No Staff in the MVC Program	1	17	5	3	23	49

- More than two-thirds of managers (65.8%) with staff in the MVC Program expressed some level of satisfaction with the certification program compared to approximately one-third without staff in the program (36.7%).
- Notably, of managers with no staff in the program, almost half (46.9%) said “don't know” when asked about their overall satisfaction with MVC Program.

<b>MVC Program Graduate/Participant Survey: Status in the MVC Program by Age Range</b>				
	<b>Age Range</b>			
<b>Status in Program</b>	<b>25 - 39</b>	<b>40 - 54</b>	<b>55 &amp; over</b>	<b>Total</b>
Completed certification	9.5%	66.7%	23.8%	100.0%
Working on certification	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Taking a break from program	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	100.0%
Dropped out of program	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%

<b>MVC Program Graduate/Participant Survey: Status in the MVC Program by Age Range</b>				
	<b>Age Range</b>			
<b>Status in Program</b>	<b>25 - 39</b>	<b>40 - 54</b>	<b>55 &amp; over</b>	<b>Total</b>
Completed certification	2	14	5	21
Working on certification	4	8	0	12
Taking a break from program	2	3	1	6
Dropped out of program	0	3	6	9

- Of the 21 respondents that complete their certification, 14 (66.7%) were in the age range 40 through 54. Similarly, of the 12 (66.7%) respondents that were still working on their certification, 8 were in the same age range.
- Of the 9 dropouts, 6 (66.7%) were 55 or older.
- In other words, two-thirds of those with certification or working on certification are in the 40 to 54 age range. Equally, two-thirds of dropouts are in the ready-to-retire age bracket of 55 and over.

## SURVEY RESULTS OF LIBRARY MANAGERS

<b>In what type of library are you currently employed?</b>		
<b>Library Type</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Academic	0.0%	0
Public	95.7%	89
School	0.0%	0
Special	0.0%	0
Don't work in a library	0.0%	0
Other	4.3%	4

<b>Do you have a graduate degree in Library/Information Science?</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Yes	32.6%	30
No	67.4%	62

<b>Have you enrolled in or graduated from the MVC Program?</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Yes	32.3%	30
No	67.7%	63

<b>Do you have staff who have participated in the MVC Program?</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Yes	44.1%	41
No	55.9%	52

<b>What factors do you think discourage participation in the MVC Program? Choose up to three.</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Time it takes to complete the program.	36.6%	34
Time it takes to do homework.	53.8%	50
No guaranteed rewards.	57.0%	53
Insufficient information about the program.	11.8%	11
Confusion about the requirements for the program.	8.6%	8
Distance to training sessions.	33.3%	31
Lack of support from library managers.	3.2%	3
Lack of funding from the library.	28.0%	26
Lack of substitutes while attending workshops.	28.0%	26
Transportation to training.	11.8%	11
Lack of family support.	1.1%	1
Not necessary for current job.	44.1%	41
Lack of interest.	20.4%	19
Don't know.	3.2%	3
Other (please specify)	10.8%	10

<b>What do you consider the benefits to <u>staff</u> of participating in the MVC Program?<sup>1</sup> Check all that apply.</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
An increase in salary/pay.	22.0%	9
More responsibility in the library.	29.3%	12
A promotion.	7.3%	3
Increased confidence in serving the public.	80.5%	33
Better overall understanding of library service.	92.7%	38
More involvement with the Minnesota Library Association.	19.5%	8
Positive recognition from my colleagues and supervisors.	43.9%	18
Doing their job better.	78.0%	32
Don't see any benefits.	0.0%	0
Don't know.	2.4%	1
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0

**What benefits has staff certification brought to the library and/or the library user?<sup>1</sup>  
Check all that apply.**

<b>Because of staff certification...</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Library users' needs are better met.	82.1%	32
New policies, services, and procedures are developed that benefit library users.	59.0%	23
Library users' receive better technology help.	43.6%	17
Library board members are better supported.	2.6%	1
Library benefits from better advocacy.	33.3%	13
No benefits to the library or library users.	2.6%	1
Don't know.	7.7%	3
Other	5.1%	2

**At your library, what support is available to MVC Program participants? Check all that apply.**

<b>Participants receive...</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Time off to attend workshops.	67.4%	60
Substitutes to cover their work.	43.8%	39
Reimbursement of travel expenses.	58.4%	52
Workshop registration.	59.6%	53
Encouragement from managers/co-workers to participate.	56.2%	50
Information/publicity about the program.	52.8%	47
Official support from the library board.	24.7%	22
No support.	5.6%	5
Don't know.	13.5%	12
Other	4.5%	4

**Is the MVC Program either required or preferred for positions at your library?**

	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Required	1.1%	1
Preferred	23.9%	22
Both	0.0%	0
Neither	68.5%	63
Don't know	6.5%	6

<b>Overall how satisfied are you with the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program?</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Very Satisfied	10.0%	9
Satisfied	40.0%	36
Dissatisfied	11.1%	10
Very Dissatisfied	5.6%	5
Don't know	33.3%	30

<sup>1</sup> These two questions were posed only to respondents who indicated they had staff who participated in the MVC Program.

## **SURVEY RESULTS OF MVC PARTICIPANTS**

<b>What is your status in the Minnesota Voluntary Certification (MVC) Program? Please check one.</b>		
<b>Status</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
I have completed my certification.	43.8%	21
I am actively working on my certification.	25.0%	12
I am taking a break from working on my certification, but I plan on returning to the program.	12.5%	6
I've dropped out of the program.	18.8%	9

<b>How did you first hear about the MVC Program? Check all that apply.</b>		
<b>Source</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Library director or manager	55.1%	27
Regional library system	40.8%	20
Multi-type library system	0.0%	0
Direct mail	0.0%	0
MLA	10.2%	5
Branch Out	14.3%	7
SSPIN	4.1%	2
Colleague	18.4%	9
MVCP website	6.1%	3
Other	0.0%	0

<b>Did your prior attendance at a workshop encourage you to enroll in MVC Program?</b>
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Response	Percentage of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	51.1%	24
No	48.9%	23

**What do you consider to be the benefits to you of the MVC Program? Choose up to three.**

Benefits	Percentage of Responses	Number of Responses
An increase in salary/pay.	26.5%	13
More responsibility in the library.	10.2%	5
A promotion.	10.2%	5
Increased confidence in serving the public.	53.1%	26
Better overall understanding of library service.	69.4%	34
More involvement with the Minnesota Library Association.	4.1%	2
Positive recognition from my colleagues and supervisors.	18.4%	9
Doing my job better.	69.4%	34
Don't see any benefits.	2.0%	1
Don't know.	0.0%	0
Other	6.1%	3

**What factors do you think discourage participation in the MVC Program? Choose up to three.**

Discouraging Factors	Percentage of Responses	Number of Responses
Time it takes to complete the program.	53.1%	26
Time it takes to do homework.	65.3%	32
No guaranteed rewards.	55.1%	27
Insufficient information about the program.	22.4%	11
Confusion about the requirements for the program.	51.0%	25
Distance to training sessions.	24.5%	12
Lack of support from library managers.	10.2%	5
Lack of funding from the library.	12.2%	6
Lack of substitutes while attending workshops.	12.2%	6
Transportation to training.	4.1%	2
Lack of family support.	0.0%	0
Not necessary for current job.	10.2%	5
Lack of interest.	4.1%	2
Don't know.	0.0%	0
Other	10.2%	5

<b>Now that you have your certification what are your future plans? Check all that apply.<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>I plan to...</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Work towards an undergraduate degree.	0.0%	0
Work towards a Master's degree in Library/Information Science.	4.8%	1
Work towards a Master's degree in another field.	0.0%	0
Take more continuing education courses.	66.7%	14
Apply for more responsibility in the library where I currently work	14.3%	3
Look for a better job.	4.8%	1
Don't know/no plans.	28.6%	6
Other	19.0%	4

<b>What benefits has your certification brought to the <u>library and/or the library user</u>? Check all that apply.<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Because of my certification...</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Library users' needs are better met.	90.5%	19
New policies, services, and procedures are developed that benefit library users.	38.1%	8
Library users' receive better technology help.	47.6%	10
Library board members are better supported.	0.0%	0
Library benefits from better advocacy.	38.1%	8
No benefits to the library or library users.	4.8%	1
Don't know.	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0

<b>Overall how satisfied are you with the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program?</b>		
<b>Level of Satisfaction</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Very Satisfied	10.2%	5
Satisfied	61.2%	30
Dissatisfied	14.3%	7
Very Dissatisfied	2.0%	1
Don't know	12.2%	6

<b>What is your age?</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
under 25	0.0%	0
25 – 39	18.4%	9
40 – 54	57.1%	28
55 and over	24.5%	12

<b>What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?</b>		
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Less than high school	0.0%	0
High school	10.2%	5
Some college/associate degree	40.8%	20
Bachelor's degree	34.7%	17
Graduate degree in library/information science	0.0%	0
Other graduate degree	10.2%	5
Other	4.1%	2

<b>In what type of library are you currently employed?</b>		
<b>Library Type</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Academic	2.0%	1
Public	83.7%	41
School	4.1%	2
Special	0.0%	0
Don't work in a library	2.0%	1
Other	8.2%	4

<b>How long have you worked in any library?</b>		
<b>Years of Library Experience</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Less than 5 years	10.2%	5
5-9 years	24.5%	12
10 years or more	65.3%	32
Not applicable	0.0%	0

<sup>1</sup> These two questions were posed only to respondents who indicated they completed their certification.