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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Yakima Valley Libraries Launches Community Survey to Discover Fresh Opportunities to Better Serve Residents**

Yakima, Wash. – Today, Yakima Valley Libraries (YVL) launches an intentionally curated survey in Yakima County to check the pulse of the community by capturing challenges and opportunities that exist throughout their service area. Findings from the results will help guide their new Strategic Plan. The survey will be available for at least eight weeks, in both English and Spanish, in person at each of the 16 library locations and online at [www.yvl.org](http://www.yvl.org).

The survey is open to residents 18 and over who live in Yakima County/a city currently served by YVL. All participants who complete the survey can enter into a drawing for an Apple® iPad.

“The ideas and opinions of our community members are vital to developing our programs and services at Yakima Valley Libraries,” said Candelaria Mendoza, Executive Director of YVL. “We’re asking our community members to offer feedback about their experiences at our locations, what services they enjoy or dislike, and how we can provide more relevant and necessary materials for their learning and growth.”

The survey asks respondents to rate the importance of quality-of-life influences, such as: cultural diversity, educational opportunities, career programs, social connections, and access to resources.

“We serve individuals and families from diverse backgrounds. We want to represent their unique voices and stories and give them a platform to share their experiences,” Mendoza said. “We invite everyone to take the survey and let us know how we can better serve them.”

To prepare for the survey, YVL held nine focus groups, in both Spanish and English, with residents and organizations across Yakima Valley.

“We listened to a diverse group of people, who identified some real strengths, such as our many

libraries in rural areas and early literacy programs,” said Francisco Garcia-Ortiz, Public Library Services Director for YVL. “But we also heard concerns about information availability, particularly for those in unserved, underserved, or historically marginalized communities. There is also a growing concern for our youth and giving them the resources they need for success. These are just a few of the challenges that the survey will help us better understand and plan for.”

YVL aims to efficiently use its resources to address the most common wants and needs of those whom it serves – be it education, community integration, leisure, or any other service that one might seek from their hometown library. YVL will study the results in collaboration with its community partners and use the insights to ensure the library district continues providing valuable services to taxpayers and its communities as a whole.

After accessing the survey online, participants will be asked where they live. Users will be allowed to proceed if they live in locations currently served by YVL. YVL operates sixteen libraries from Tieton to Sunnyside and provides library services to all of Yakima County with the exception of the City of Grandview.

***About Yakima Valley Libraries***

*Yakima Valley Libraries supports lifelong learning and an informed citizenry by providing free, open, and full access to a vast array of ideas and information. The rural county library district was formed in 1945 and is now comprised of a central library and 15 community libraries located throughout Yakima County. Yakima Valley Libraries currently serves over 245,000 people in Yakima County. Visit [www.yvl.org](http://www.yvl.org) for more information.*

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