Libraries respond to COVID-19

Connecting communities during a critical time and ready to aid in recovery

Libraries deliver essential community services— which are more urgent now than ever

The Public Library Association surveyed libraries about their responses to COVID-19, including connecting people to critical broadband services:

- **93% of public libraries provide** (or plan to provide) **free Wi-Fi access** on their grounds even when their buildings are closed to the public
- One-third of public libraries have moved **routers outdoors to improve public access**
- **22% of libraries surveyed also provide Wi-Fi hotspots** for patrons to check out and use at home

Library staff are also **innovating to adapt and respond to community needs,** including:

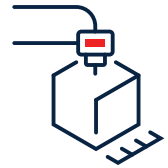|				
Digitizing course material for use in distance instruction and online learning to develop technology skills.	**Reallocating staff and resources** to support other government entities, including providing meeting space, distributing supplies, and staffing 211 centers.	**Expanding access to library services** with e-cards, virtual programs, phone help, outside delivery, and more.	**Providing community resources** related to COVID-19, both online and physically posted for those without online access.	**Producing personal protective equipment (PPE)** and other supplies through library maker spaces.

Libraries will be integral to recovery

- Libraries are **essential partners** in economic recovery, workforce and small business development, student success, and digital inclusion.
- Demand for library services **increases during economic downturns.**

America's libraries need ongoing support

Libraries need support and funding from local, state, and federal policymakers, as well as philanthropic and business partners, to keep communities connected, help students keep learning, and help small businesses and workers get back to work.

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# America's local libraries in action

Across the country, library staff are adapting and launching services to meet changing community needs and preparing to accelerate recovery for all.

Library systems from Mississippi to Maine have made maps of available **Wi-Fi library parking lots.**

The Denver Public Library in Colorado is helping with **career preparation and high school equivalency certification via its Career Online High School.**

The Parkersburg-Wood County Public Library and branches in West Virginia **boosted their Wi-Fi coverage** to include their parking lots to better support students lacking home internet.
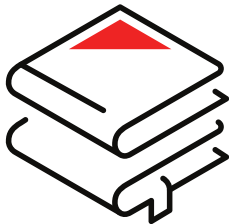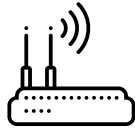
The Gustavus Public Library in Alaska has closed its building but **offers "take out" services;** patrons can collect 20 books or 10 DVDs each from staff outside the library.

Librarians in Kanawha County, West Virginia, are **staffing the phones for patrons** that need a personal connection in isolation.

Staff in San Mateo County Libraries, California are using their 3D printers to **create face shields and ear guards for front line medical staff.**

East Baton Rouge Parish Library in Louisiana built **a comprehensive directory for local residents** with information for businesses and family preparedness as well as entertainment and information from the library's collection.

Workers seeking unemployment benefits can Skype with library staff in Kingsport, Tennessee, **for assistance with unemployment benefits applications.**

Library workers in Rockland, Maine have **STEM programming live on their Facebook page** to keep kids engaged while parents work.

The Lexington Public Library in Kentucky has launched virtual programming for **kids and adults** across the area.

Kansas' Topeka and Shawnee Public Library have **equipped a bookmobile with a Wi-Fi hotspot** and are using it to provide service to those who need to get online.

For more information or questions contact ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office at alawash@alawash.org, or visit ala.org/advocacy.