



# Digital Equity and America's Libraries

**B**roadband access, adoption, and use are essential to every aspect of life. Yet one in five (or 24 million) U.S. households lack home internet. Low-income individuals and families, those in rural or tribal areas, people of color, and people with disabilities are disproportionately under connected, a reality exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. America's libraries are essential to addressing these gaps.

Libraries: (1) provide internet access both at and beyond the library (2) spur home adoption by increasing awareness of and confidence in using online resources and services, and (3) support digital learning opportunities that boost K-16 education, workforce skills, entrepreneurship, telehealth, and other areas.

Federal funding helped millions of Americans access the internet during the pandemic. Now initiatives driven by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) promise to expand high-speed

broadband access and digital literacy for unserved and underserved communities. State and federal decision-makers and other public and private entities should look to libraries as critical players and partners as they plan and implement digital equity strategies.

## Providing Internet Access and Bridging Gaps

Libraries across the country have a long record of providing no-fee public internet access and increasingly have extended this service beyond library walls.

For example, Alamance County (NC) Public Libraries'

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# About America's Libraries

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