

Public Libraries Advancing Digital Equity



- More than 1 in 5 Americans still lack internet access at home including millions with access who have not adopted it.
- Critically, more than one-third of public libraries across the country are unable to improve bandwidth because faster speeds are unavailable.

Public Libraries Advancing Digital Equity

- Libraries of all types in tribal, rural, suburban and urban communities serve as anchor institutions particularly for individuals who cannot afford internet service at home. Public libraries have long served as an essential thread in our nation's digital safety net and a launchpad for learning and exploring technology applications, services and devices.

Public Libraries and Remake Learning

- We are living in a time of remarkable change. From the way our cities work to the way our brains develop, everything in our world stands to be revised, redefined and remade.
- How do we work together to rethink our learning institutions to make them more relevant and help them prepare learners for an undefined, complex yet exciting future?

Impact of Remake Learning

- 18 public libraries are involved in the Remake Learning Network
- Remake Learning Days have brought together 150,000 children, youth and families to festivals throughout Pennsylvania and 17 regions around the country.

Lunch at the Library

- Only 16% of children who receive free lunch during school are able to access lunch in the summer.
- This makes summer the hungriest time of year for lots of children, producing long-term consequences as these children who rely on federal aid are without their daily source of nutrition.

Lunch at the Library

- As resource-rich, accessible and trusted community hubs, public libraries are natural spaces for serving and accessing summer meals.
- Launched in California in 2013, in that state alone, Lunch at the Library has served over 300,000 summer meals via 118 libraries.
- Now libraries in states across the country are serving summer meals, combined with literacy and learning activities.

Summer Learning

- Only 22% of all U.S. school-aged children are actively engaged in structured summer learning.
- Children in families with higher incomes are 3 times as likely to be enrolled in summer learning than their low-income peers.
- Research indicates that 2 months of reading skills and 2.5 months of math skills are lost in the summer without summer learning.
- Cumulatively, by the time a student reaches middle school, they've lost the equivalent of 2 years of learning.

Libraries Provide Access to Summer Learning

- Libraries have long played a pivotal role engaging children and youth in summer reading.
- Libraries today are innovating learning environments and programming that keep children reading *and* problem-solving and skill-building during the summer.
- By partnering with city/county governments, schools, museums, recreation centers and other community organizations, libraries are multiplying summer learning opportunities that develop the skills children need for early school success.

Literacy at the Laundromat

- For families living in high-poverty areas, reducing barriers to high-quality literacy activities is essential.
- Turning everyday spaces and places into opportunities to engage in talking, singing and reading serves families who otherwise may not have these opportunities.
- Literacy at the Laundromat places carefully curated collections of books and toys alongside literacy programs developed by libraries and other partners in laundromats and other frequently used community spaces.

Libraries and Literacy at the Laundromat

- 100 libraries are currently providing programming in laundromats across the country, with more joining the effort each week, including as community conveners and early literacy trainers.
- Initial research is showing that there is significantly greater participation in literacy activities when led by librarians at the laundromats.

Book Rich Environments

- This project is a tri-sector collaboration between nonprofit organizations, national government agencies and corporate publishers.
- It aims to infuse public housing communities across the country with a vibrant and accessible culture of books.
- National partners include National Book Foundation, Urban Libraries Council, HUD, U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Families Learning.
- Public housing authorities serve as local leads with support from the local public library and other partners.

Book Rich Environments

- 50 communities are involved, including public library and public housing partners in 31 states + the District of Columbia.
- Since 2017, Book Rich Environments has distributed over 1.6 million new, high-quality books to children and families living in these communities and new communities are added every year.