

Libraries *and* COVID-19



How Community Leaders Can Partner with Libraries During the Response and Recovery

America's libraries provide crucial services during the coronavirus crisis and in the recovery to come. Community leaders should:



Partner with libraries to **expand internet access and support distance learning**



Leverage library resources to **assist impacted workers and businesses**



Ensure libraries have the resources needed to **maintain services during and after COVID-19**

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF US LIBRARIES

- **116,000 libraries**
- **370,000 workers**
- **\$5 billion** of technology, books, and capital infrastructure purchased annually
- **1.3 billion visits** to public libraries each year

Libraries are essential partners in economic recovery, workforce and small business development, student success, and digital inclusion. Although many libraries closed to in-person services as a public health precaution, library workers are continuing to deliver these services—which are more urgent now than ever.

Libraries are keeping their communities connected during the crisis. Many libraries are providing free wireless internet in their parking lots and beyond. In Williamsburg, Va., the library has deployed mobile hotspots throughout the community. At Johns Hopkins University, the library is digitizing course material for use in distance instruction.

Libraries play crucial roles in economic recovery. Impacted businesses and workers rely on library services to search and apply for jobs, develop business plans, navigate economic assistance, and learn new career skills. In Providence, R.I., the library is assisting students in its computer classes to transition to online learning so they can continue to develop technology skills.

Americans turn to libraries in times of need. Demand for library services increases during economic downturns. Americans can depend on libraries' free educational, career, and business development resources to help recover—and libraries rely on stable funding to provide these services.

America's libraries need continued support

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



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