

# Transforming Libraries



## TRANSFORMING LIBRARIES



High-speed connectivity, or broadband, has the potential to transform Missouri's libraries and the communities they serve, including:

- ensuring that libraries remain, because they are often the only source for free internet access, providing a critical link for filling out government forms, job applications, starting a business, engaging in day-to-day life;
- allowing even those who have connection elsewhere also use library computers because they:
  - need a faster connection
  - need assistance from a librarian
  - have to compete for use of the computer at home
  - want to use a computer in a safe, quiet environment;
- facilitating digital literacy training opportunities;
- enabling students to access educational materials and research material not found elsewhere;
- facilitating use of video-conferencing to allow participation in meetings and educational opportunities;
- ensuring that libraries can be a community's online link during a disaster;
- providing the ability to download audio books, video and other DVD materials;
- providing access to an online audio-video system.

*“PUBLIC LIBRARIES SERVE COMMUNITIES OF ALL SIZES AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH, A COMMUNITY MEETING PLACE, A PLACE FOR ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. LIBRARIES WITH BROADBAND BECOME GATEWAYS TO INFORMATION IN COMMUNITIES WHERE BROADBAND ACCESS IS NOT UNIVERSAL AND FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITHOUT THE MEANS TO OWN A COMPUTER OR PURCHASE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY FOR THEMSELVES. LIBRARIES HELP CLOSE THE ‘DIGITAL DIVIDE’ THAT THREATENS TO LEAVE PEOPLE BEHIND.”*

## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The FCC's National Broadband Plan includes goals for our libraries and the communities they serve. These goals serve as a starting point for regional discussions about the best way to deliver and use broadband technology to transform our area libraries. The Plan's recommendations include:

### *Expand access to broadband with common sense reforms*

Communities are best served when libraries and schools leverage their technology resources. Wireless broadband options that can serve library patrons and residents wherever they live and giving schools and libraries the choice to purchase their area's low-cost

### MoBroadbandNow Initiative

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broadband option are changes to E-rate that the FCC's plan recommends.

Other parts of the plan would:

- open up E-rate to support internal connections in libraries
- set minimum broadband connectivity goals for libraries and prioritize funds accordingly
- adjust E-rate funding for inflation
- amend the Communications Act to help tribal libraries overcome barriers to E-rate eligibility

### ***How can Broadband Transform Libraries in my area?***

Several other factors need to be considered along with the implementation of broadband technology. Are the right tools in place for libraries and library staff to leverage broadband? Do current processes and procedures allow enough room for use of broadband? Is everyone properly trained to use the technology effectively?

*MoBroadbandNow*, a five-year initiative launched by Gov. Nixon last summer, coordinates efforts to obtain funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Commerce

*“Of those who went to the public library last year, 68% used a computer there, indicating an impressive change in the role of public libraries.”*  
—Pew Internet & American Life Study

specifically set aside for broadband expansion. *MoBroadbandNow* seeks to expand broadband accessibility to 95 percent of the total population, a significant increase from the current projected accessibility of 79.7 percent.

*MoBroadbandNow* can provide education, awareness, and facilitate communication of funding opportunities for libraries.

But, we also need to more fully understand how libraries would like

to use broadband, and what are the barriers and challenges to integration?

Please share your stories with us at: <http://transform.mo.gov/broadband/>

Follow us on Twitter -- @MoBroadbandNow -- to stay up to speed on broadband news, program activities and funding opportunities.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT LIBRARIES AND BROADBAND

1. Are the right tools in place for library staff and patrons to leverage broadband? If yes, what tools are in place? If not, what hardware, software and other equipment do you need? Can you provide examples of how it would improve today's libraries?
2. Do current processes and procedures encourage the use of broadband? What could you do differently with broadband that would promote its use in libraries?
3. Is everyone properly trained to use broadband technology effectively? How can we better prepare library staff and patrons to utilize broadband to its maximum benefit?
4. Does broadband access and availability meet minimum standards to effectively facilitate library applications and those of patrons utilizing the libraries computers and Internet access?
5. Is broadband technology cost prohibitive? If so, what are some cost-saving measures that could be implemented to increase use?

*“Public libraries have helped close the digital divide by providing free, public access to computers and the Internet, particularly for people without access at home or work.”*  
—Bill Gates Foundation

*“By offering free access to computing, and therefore information, libraries bring opportunity to all.”*  
—Carla Hayden, president, American Library Association