

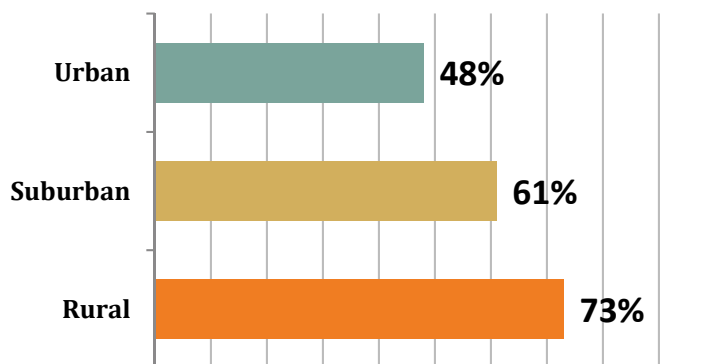
# Libraries Connect Communities: KEY FINDINGS 2010 - 2011

## Public Libraries Expand Role as Community Technology Centers

Libraries have actively adapted to their role as the community “one-stop shop” in the digital world by serving as job and career centers and satellite offices for e-government services while continuing to support lifelong learners. Most libraries report use of technology resources increased over the past year.

- 99.3% of libraries offer free access to computers and the Internet.
- 65% of libraries report that they are the only source of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities.
- On average, public libraries provide 16 public computers per location, up from 11 computers two years ago.
- 70% of libraries report public use of Internet computers increased in 2010.
- 86% of libraries provide free Wi-Fi, up from 37% in 2006.

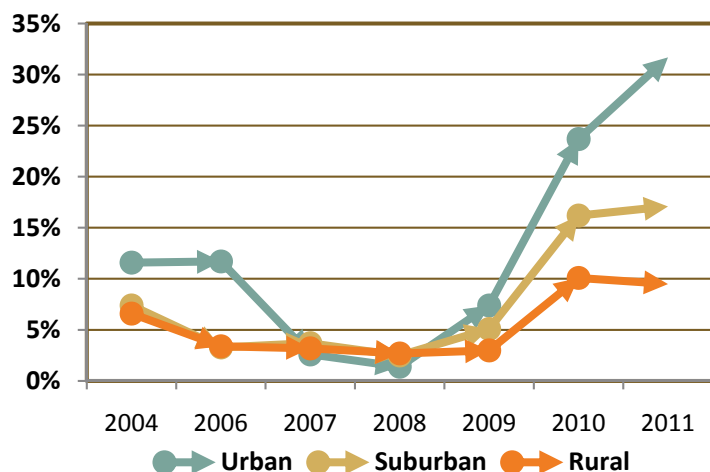
Libraries That Report They Are Only Provider of Free Public Internet Access in Their Community



## Budget Cuts Limit Access to Library Services

A pervasive “new normal” of increased demand for library technology resources paired with decreased funding has forced public libraries across the country to scale back on operating hours and access to services, just when resources are most needed.

Percentage of Libraries Reporting Decrease in Hours



- 16% of all libraries report decreased hours of operation – a jump from 4.5% just two years ago. This translates to lost hours at more than 2,600 branches.
- 56% of libraries report insufficient staff to meet patron job-seeking needs.
- A majority (60%) of libraries report flat or decreased operating budgets in FY2011, up from 40% in FY2009.
- Seventeen state library agencies (34%) report they were aware of public library closures in their states in 2010.

## Libraries Ensure Access to Employment and E-government Resources

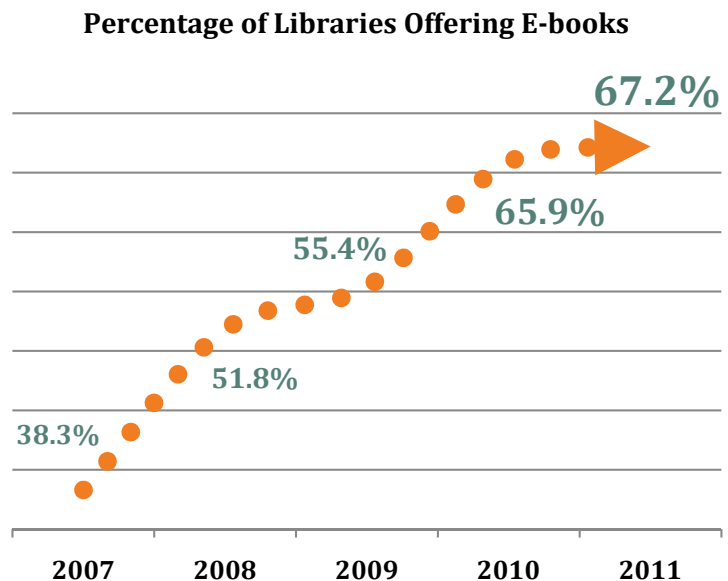
As more employers and government agencies provide information exclusively in a digital format, communities rely on public library staff and technology services more than ever. To apply for jobs or seek government services, at minimum users require Internet access and computer proficiency.

- 88% of libraries provide access to job databases and other job opportunity resources.
- 72% of libraries report that staff help patrons complete online job applications.
- 68% of libraries report that staff provide assistance to patrons completing online government forms.
- 25% of libraries partner with government agencies and non-profit organizations to provide e-government services, up from 13% two years ago.

## Libraries Provide Innovative Services and Lifelong Learning

Public libraries provide access to a wide range of Internet resources and technology training and, due to increased demand, continue to expand available resources and support.

- 67% of libraries offer access to e-books; nearly 87% of urban libraries provide e-book services, followed by suburban (79.8%) and rural (51.7%) libraries.
- 28% of libraries provide access to mobile devices, including e-readers and netbooks.
- 87% of libraries offer formal or informal technology assistance to library users, and 28% offer one-on-one technology training by appointment.



**Authors:** “Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study, 2010-2011” was prepared by the American Library Association and the Information Policy & Access Center (University of Maryland), June 21, 2011. Contact: Judy Hoffman, 312-280-4291, [jhoffman@ala.org](mailto:jhoffman@ala.org). The full report is available at [www.ala.org/plinternetfunding](http://www.ala.org/plinternetfunding).

**Methodology:** The study’s public library survey had an 86.5 percent response rate. Questionnaires also were sent to the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and anecdotal responses were collected from interviews with library staff in California and Oklahoma.

**Report Sponsors:** The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ([www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)) and the American Library Association ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)).