ABOUT THE EDGE INITIATIVE

In communities across the country, local libraries offer a welcoming environment and a breadth of technology resources and services. In today's digital age, the computer access and training offered at the library are essential services to members of the community. Libraries are leading the way towards providing high-quality digital services, and continuous development is needed to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The Edge Initiative was developed by a national coalition of leading library and local government organizations, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and led by the Urban Libraries Council. It was created with the vision that all people should have opportunities to enrich and improve their lives through open access to information, communication, and technology services provided by public libraries. Edge is a groundbreaking, first of its kind management and leadership tool, helping libraries create a path for the continuous growth and development of their public technology services.

Through an easy to use suite of tools, Edge supports libraries in making strategic decisions and identifying areas for improvement. The Edge Toolkit gives libraries a look into their local data, from operations to partnerships and programming, to assess how their community is using the technology and how best practices can be put into place to align future growth and services with community priorities. It also provides useful resources to package and showcase the data to other community leaders.

THE EDGE BENCHMARKS

The Edge Benchmarks provide libraries with a system to assess and understand best practices for public access technology services. It also identifies ways to improve technology services and take them to the next level. The Edge Benchmarks are categorized into three key areas that assess:

- **Community Value:** specific programs, services and support that enable people to get value from their use of technology

- **Engaging the Community and Decision Makers:** external practices that connect the library to the community

- **Organizational Management:** internal management and infrastructure

THE EDGE TOOLKIT

The demands and challenges are different at each library, just as each community has unique needs and demographics. The Edge Toolkit is filled with useful, scalable tools that give libraries a unique line of sight into what's working and where there is room for improvement. Together, these tools help all libraries plan for the future and work directly with local leaders to align on community priorities. The Edge Toolkit includes:

- The benchmarks assessment tool for libraries to assess and evaluate current services.

- A resource guide with practical templates, tools, and tips for improving the library's public technology services.

- Case studies that feature examples of public libraries of all sizes using computers to meet community needs.

- Reporting and presentation tools that help library leaders tell the story of how computers support the local economy, workforce, lifelong learning, and a strong community.

- Training that will guide libraries in using their Edge results for planning, advocacy, and outreach activities to enhance as well as build technology services.

THE EDGE COALITION

Behind the Edge Initiative is a unique coalition of organizations who are driving toward one goal – develop the first set of national benchmarks to support public access technology in libraries. With an array of core specialties and perspectives, these organizations are dedicated to working together to ensure technology is available to all people regardless of their education or location. The Edge Coalition includes:

- American Library Association Office for Information Technology Policy
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- California State Library
- International City/County Management Association
- Lyrasis
- OCLC
- Oklahoma Department of Libraries

- Public Library Association
- TechSoup Global
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission
- University of Maryland, Information Policy and Access Center
- University of Washington Information School
- Urban Libraries Council