



In an era when the public is demanding greater efficiency and program consolidation at all levels of government, Pennsylvania’s libraries – public, academic, and school libraries – serve as models of cost-effective service. Libraries stretch the public’s resources through sharing books, computers, online resources, DVDs, facilities, and expertise. By their very definition, libraries serve the public broadly and efficiently.

Yet, much potential remains for libraries to do even greater things to prepare Pennsylvanians to compete successfully in the Information Age labor force and to live healthy, productive lives. Our libraries – properly leveraged – can help solve some of the Commonwealth’s biggest economic and social problems.

**PA Forward | Pennsylvania Libraries**, a new initiative of the Pennsylvania Library Association, aims to make sure that libraries have what they need to help people reach their greatest potential and meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century life. This initiative establishes new **public-private partnerships** and builds on the belief that libraries are uniquely positioned to help Pennsylvanians improve their command of **five types of literacy** essential to greater success in all vital roles of life, from citizens, students, and parents, to employers, employees, and consumers. The five essential literacies are:



**BASIC LITERACY** – Libraries can push Pennsylvania to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the country, a better trained and more skilled workforce, and a growing tax base, economy, and population.

**INFORMATION LITERACY** – Libraries can help all Pennsylvanians learn how to use online resources and current technology to improve their education, to enhance their job skills, and to participate fully in a digital society.

**CIVIC AND SOCIAL LITERACY** – Libraries can give citizens of all ages the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives, contribute effectively in their communities, and participate in civil discourse.

**HEALTH LITERACY** – Libraries can play an important role in helping citizens actively manage their own and their family’s well-being, making them effective partners with their health care providers and reducing costs.

**FINANCIAL LITERACY** – Libraries can help citizens become informed consumers and guide individuals, small businesses, and other organizations in ways to better manage their finances and contribute to the economic vitality of their communities.

# PA Forward Partner Organizations

## Businesses, Non-Profits, and Corporations



Comcast Corporation



Giant Food Stores



Citizens Bank



Keystone Initiative for Network Based Education and Research



TechQuest Pennsylvania



Pfizer



Pennsylvania Humanities Council



United Way of Pennsylvania



State YMCA of Pennsylvania, Inc.

## State Agencies



Department of Corrections



Department of Health



Department of Labor & Industry



Department of State



Department of Education



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA ELECTS  
Judicial Independence Commission of  
The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

## Statewide Associations



American Academy of Pediatrics  
Pennsylvania Chapter



Pennsylvania Association of  
Community Bankers



Pennsylvania Chamber of  
Business and Industry



Pennsylvania Credit Union Association



Association of Pennsylvania Public Library Systems



Pennsylvania School Librarians Association



Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc.  
Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc.



County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania



Association of College and Research Libraries,  
Delaware Valley Chapter



Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants



Pennsylvania Municipal League



Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania



Pennsylvania Newspaper Association

# BASIC LITERACY

We ENVISION a Pennsylvania with *one of the highest LITERACY RATES in the country, a TRAINED and SKILLED workforce, and a GROWING economy, tax base, and population.*

## Rationale

### High Tech

#### PRE-K

Tumblebooks: an animated online library of more than 100 talking picture books in five languages

Storyline Online: videos of noted actors reading popular picture books

Read the Books: a dynamic website of animated book reviews with direct links to library holdings for convenience

#### K-12 AND BEYOND

Elementary, middle, and high school real-time, online, one-on-one tutoring with expert tutors

POWER Library databases

Online science and math resources

Learning Express Library's Online Campus

### High Touch

Baby library cards and promotional messages to parents distributed at birthplaces

Collections of age-appropriate, engaging materials with outreach collections in offsite locations

Statewide "One Book, Every Young Child" initiative

Baby and toddler storytimes

Kindergarten Readiness programs

Family Place/Preschool Connection programs

"Every Child Ready to Read" workshops

Family literacy programs

Curriculum-based early learning computer labs

Summer Reading programs

Career collections and workshops

Youth volunteer programs

Book clubs and discussion groups

"Boys Read" programs

Literacy tutor recruitment

Literacy and GED classes

New reader collections

Spanish language/other language collections

- Only 48% of parents read to their preschoolers daily.
- Eighty-five percent of all juveniles interfacing with the court system are functionally illiterate.
- The majority of children with functionally illiterate parents become illiterate themselves.
- A child's library use raises his or her fourth grade assessment scores.
- Thirteen percent of Pennsylvanians lack basic literacy skills such as the ability to read a newspaper or brochure. This percentage of Pennsylvanians who struggle with basic literacy remains unchanged from 1992.
- Children have watched 5,000 hours of TV before they get to kindergarten. By the end of sixth grade, children will have watched 100,000 acts of televised violence.
- If 50 first-graders have trouble reading, 44 of them will have reading problems in the fourth grade.
- By age three, children from privileged families have heard 30 million more words than children from underprivileged families. The three-year-old measure predicts third grade school achievement.
- More than 75% of jobs in Pennsylvania – three jobs out of four – demand education beyond high school. And yet, nearly 120,000 Pennsylvania youth ages 16-24 have dropped out of high school.
- Postsecondary institutions provided remedial coursework for nearly a third of entering freshmen in 2007-2008; public two-year colleges provided such coursework for 42% of their entering students.
- Fifty percent of the nation's unemployed youth ages 16-21 are functional illiterates with virtually no prospects of obtaining good jobs.

PA FORWARD 

PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES



# INFORMATION LITERACY

We ENVISION a Pennsylvania where citizens *know how to use ONLINE RESOURCES* and *CURRENT TECHNOLOGY* to *improve their EDUCATION*, to *enhance their JOB SKILLS*, and to *fully participate* in a *DIGITAL SOCIETY*.

## High Tech

Enhanced POWER Library

eLink portal to government resources

eLink portal and RSS feed on current news and issues

Downloadable video and audio

Online tutorials for library resources and Web services

Video classes and tutorials

Online user account access

Rapid delivery of materials from remote locations

Online safety tutorials

Live elementary, middle, and high school one-on-one, online tutoring with expert tutors

eCourses and classes building job readiness skills

Web "cluster" links to prescreened, nonpartisan websites on issues of state and national importance

## Rationale

- No regulating body monitors the reliability of what is on the Internet.
- Students lack sufficient strategies for deciding what Web information is true and what is not. Twenty-two percent of all students think 80-100% of what they find on the Internet is truthful.
- New research shows that increased access to sophisticated technological social tools and increased connectivity via smart phones, laptops, and other handheld devices is changing the behavior of several generations; other generations are taking on the characteristics of Generation Y. Frequently cited generational differences are beginning to blur.
- Nearly 29% of students say that Google, Yahoo, and other major search engines were the most important information source for their last research assignment.
- More than 9% of information needed for research papers was sourced from Wikipedia or other wikis.
- The higher the grade point average, the lower the reliance on search engines such as Google or Yahoo for research papers.
- Demand on bandwidth capacity has reached a new high as a result of video and audio downloading and uploading.
- Pennsylvania is ranked 29th in the nation for people with high-speed Internet access (60%).
- Senior citizens are the fastest growing group of Internet users. They are also the most vulnerable to Internet fraud.
- Nearly three-quarters of job seekers now use the Internet to seek employment, in part because this is the only way to apply for many job opportunities.

## High Touch

More workstations with high speed access

Information literacy classes for college freshmen

Tutorials on research skills and using complex databases through academic libraries

Computer classes and coaches

SeniorNet learning centers

Public workstations for creating digital and audio files

Loanable digital devices

Wireless access points

Online and print resources, tutorials, and databases

Government information in print and online

Workshops on using emerging technologies

Document transmission services

Information literacy programs for schools to improve students' online critical thinking skills

"Smart Desks" staffed with expert staff for customer technical support and online navigation guidance

PA FORWARD

PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES



# CIVIC AND SOCIAL LITERACY

We ENVISION a Pennsylvania where citizens have the KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS they need to IMPROVE their lives, to PARTICIPATE and CONTRIBUTE effectively to their communities, and to CONNECT with one another through discourse.

## High Tech

Downloadable ebooks, audiobooks, videos, etc. that reflect society's historic and contemporary issues and topics of interest to communities and individuals

Databases that support inquiry into historic and contemporary topics and issues

eLink portal to government resources and information

eLink portal to current news and issues

Online language tutorials

AskHerePA online, live question and answer services staffed by information professionals

Digital archives of state and local history

Broadband Internet access and rapid delivery of materials from remote locations

## Rationale

- Only 42% of the state's registered voters voted in the 2010 gubernatorial election.
- Eighty-four percent of proficient adult readers voted in the 2000 presidential election, compared with 53% of below-basic readers.
- Less than half of all Americans can name all three branches of government.
- Good readers make good citizens. Regular readers are more than twice as likely as non-readers to volunteer or do charity work.
- Only 24% of college graduates and 27% of all Americans know the First Amendment prohibits establishing an official religion for the United States.
- Only 55% of all Americans know that Congress shares authority over U.S. foreign policy with the President. Almost a quarter incorrectly believe Congress shares this power with the United Nations.
- Although Congress has voted twice in the last eight years to approve foreign wars, only 53% of all Americans know that the power to declare war belongs to Congress. Almost 40% incorrectly believe it belongs to the President.
- Forty-six percent of Americans used the Internet to get news about the 2008 election, share their views, and mobilize others.
- Only 47% of high school seniors have mastered a minimum level of U.S. history and civics.
- In a survey that asked 12 questions on well-publicized current events, 18- to 29-year-olds had an average of only 5.5 correct. Nearly half could not name the Speaker of the House or the president of Russia, and 60% did not know how many American troops have been killed in Iraq.

## High Touch

Inviting, public facilities that provide space for community gatherings and educational programs

Strong print, audiovisual, and digital collections of up-to-date materials that reflect society's historic and contemporary issues and topics of interest to communities and individuals

Programs that educate and inform citizens about contemporary and historic topics in entertaining and meaningful ways

Government information in print and online

Citizenship resources

English as a Second Language classes

Materials to support immigrant populations' cultural and educational needs

Socrates Café programs fostering critical thinking and discussion by everyday people

National Issues Forums with facilitated discussion of social issues

Cultural and civic displays in academic libraries enriching knowledge and providing resources for further exploration

PA FORWARD



# HEALTH LITERACY

We ENVISION a Pennsylvania with *active citizens* able to *manage* their own and their family's WELL-BEING, *empowered* to be EFFECTIVE PARTNERS with their healthcare providers, and *living* LONGER, MORE PRODUCTIVE lives.

## High Tech

### PRE-K

Kids' online fitness training program with three components:

- WEIGHT-LOSS MANAGEMENT
- SPORT SPECIFIC
- AUTISM

Streaming health videos on common childhood health problems and preventions

Online family health and parenting support materials

### K-12

Online health information for school and personal use

Downloadable fact sheets and brochures on topics including allergies and asthma, diabetes, mental illness, disability, drugs and alcohol, and fitness and nutrition

### ADULT

HealthNet database of easy-to-read and navigable websites

Prescreened, trustworthy online consumer health information and magazines

Evidence-based reports, encyclopedias and reference books, news, and streaming videos on diseases, conditions, and surgical procedures

Links to support groups

Online "Information Emergency Room" to provide citizens with accurate information on public health issues, concerns, and safety

## Rationale

- Nearly half of all adults have difficulty understanding and using health information.
- Far more people look for health information online than see a doctor on a typical day.
- On popular search engines, only one link in five leads to relevant health information.
- Nothing – not age, income, employment status, education level, or racial and ethnic background – affects health status more than literacy skills.
- Costs related to higher rates of hospitalization and higher use of expensive emergency services by lower literate patients represent between 7% and 17% of all personal healthcare expenditures.
- The savings that could be achieved by improving health literacy – a lower bound of \$106 billion and an upper bound of \$238 billion – translate into enough funds to insure every one of the 47 million persons who lacked coverage in the U.S. in 2006.
- Patients with inadequate health literacy are diagnosed with cancer at a later stage.
- Populations most likely to suffer from low health literacy include those aged 65 and over, minorities, immigrant populations, and Medicare/Medicaid recipients.
- Forty-six percent of American adults cannot understand the label on their prescription medicine.

## High Touch

Strong health information print, audio, and video collections

Dedicated health information computer workstations

Special needs workstations and adaptive technology

Wee Fit programs for children ages 2-4

Signed storytimes

CHIP application centers

Partnerships with local healthcare organizations to provide health screenings

"Reach Out and Read" early literacy programs in family practice and pediatric offices

Workshops on finding reliable online health information

Wii exercise programs for seniors

Health information classes on topics in Healthy People 2010's focus areas

Partnerships with Department of Aging to develop outreach programs for senior citizens

Partnerships with family literacy programs to incorporate health literacy into the curriculum

Workshops for healthcare providers on health literacy and strategies for communicating with adults with lower literacy

Programs using the TV411 "HealthSmarts" curriculum for adults with lower literacy

National Library of Medicine affiliate programs

Access to current medical research and data through academic libraries

PA FORWARD.  PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES



# FINANCIAL LITERACY

We ENVISION a Pennsylvania where citizens are INFORMED consumers and individuals, small businesses, and organizations CONTRIBUTE to the ECONOMIC VITALITY of their community through *innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development.*

## High Tech

Learning Express Library's online Job & Career Accelerator for job searching

Online information for local government leaders on economic development, technology, public safety, environmental and land use planning, and compensation and benefits

Online small business plans and other resources

Downloadable legal forms for business and personal use

Online consumer buying guides

Comprehensive career and employment websites

Foundation Center online

Enhanced POWER Library: online resources for scientific and high-tech business research and development

ReferenceUSA: business intelligence database for job seekers, businesses, and economic development agencies

## Rationale

- Employers rank reading and writing as top deficiencies in new hires. Thirty-eight percent of employers find high school graduates "deficient" in reading comprehension, while 63% rate this basic skill "very important."
- Right now, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require more than a high-school diploma, and yet just over half of our citizens have that level of education.
- In a knowledge-based economy, the demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce has never been greater.
- Forty-one percent of U.S. adults give themselves a grade of C, D, or F on their knowledge of personal finance.
- One in four adults does not pay bills on time. One in three has no savings for retirement.
- Thousands of Pennsylvanians contact the Attorney General's office each year about credit card charges, finance scams, and misleading solicitations.
- Good readers generally have more financially rewarding jobs. Proficient readers are 2.5 times as likely as basic readers to be earning \$850 or more a week.
- Thirty-eight percent of basic readers said their reading level limited their job prospects.
- As unemployed workers head back to school, many community colleges are reporting double digit enrollment growth.
- More unemployed and underemployed are enrolling in professional and certification programs at colleges and community colleges to improve their job prospects.

## High Touch

Financial "storytimes" to introduce financial literacy concepts at an early age

Partnerships with government and nonprofit agencies for information and workshops on financial literacy

Personal budgeting software workshops

Money Smart financial education program from FDIC

Career and workforce development resources and onsite access to workforce development online programs

Computer labs connecting e-citizens with government agencies

Tourism collection to promote visitor experiences throughout the state

Small business incubator office technology including computers, scanners, and document transmission services

Workshops on using personal budgeting software

Grant writing and foundation research workshops

In-depth business resources with online tutorials on accessing and using business data and competitive information

Online access to a menu of professional development and certification programs available through the state's institutions of higher education with online registration

PA FORWARD.

PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES

