

ALA American Library Association

LIBRARY FACTS & FIGURES

- **There are over 139,000 libraries of all kinds in the United States today.**
- **In the past decade, visits have more than doubled to 1.2 billion per year—with 1.7 billion items borrowed per year.**
- **Seven out of every ten Americans say they use public libraries.**
- **Five times more people visit U.S. public libraries each year than attend U.S. professional and college football, baseball and hockey games combined.**
- **U.S. libraries purchase an estimated \$14 billion in goods and services annually.**
- **For every tax dollar invested in public libraries, there was an average return of more than \$4 in benefits to patrons, the community and the economy.**
- **Libraries employ around 350,000 librarians and other professionals, paraprofessionals, clerical and technical personnel nationwide.**
- **Since 1965, more than 60 education and library studies have produced clear evidence that school library media programs staffed by qualified library media specialists have a positive impact on student academic achievement.**
 - **Three statewide studies – in Alaska, Colorado and Pennsylvania – show that a strong library media program helps students learn more and score higher on standardized achievement tests than their peers in library-impooverished schools.**

Bridging the Digital Divide

- **African Americans and Hispanics are twice as likely to use library computers as Asian Americans and whites.**
- **In 1996, only 28 percent of public library systems offered public Internet access. Today, thanks to increased resources and the E-Rate, more than 95 percent of library buildings offer public access computing, and 14 million Americans regularly use these computers at no fee.**
- **Families making less than \$15,000 annually are two to three times more likely to rely on library computers than those earning more than \$75,000.**