



Sobering Statistics

25 percent

of all public high school students fail to graduate on time

74 percent

of U.S. eighth-graders read below the proficient level

34 million

Americans between ages 6 and 17 are not receiving sufficient developmental resources

21 percent

of public secondary schools do not have a paid, full-time, state-certified librarian

49 percent

of public libraries do not have one full-time staff member dedicated to youth services

2 billion

number of visits to U.S. public libraries since 2005



Teens Need Access to Library Services

The most dangerous hours of the day are 3–6 p.m.. Three-quarters of Americans believe it is **a high priority for public libraries to offer places where teenagers can study and congregate.**

Only 61.8% of U.S. households have a computer and 54.7% have Internet access. **Millions of teens, mostly from low socioeconomic households, must rely on libraries for computers and Internet access.**

Public libraries offer important educational resources: **79.6% of public libraries offer online homework resources and 89.6% of all public libraries offer access to online databases,** with content in virtually every school subject including history, literature and science.

A yearly individual online subscription to World Book Web costs \$49.95. Libraries provide access. **In South Dakota, for example, residents can use World Book Web for free in school and public libraries or at home using their public library card.**

Participation in library programs for kids under 18 rose from 35.6 million a year in 1993, to 54.6 million a year in 2005. In a 2007 poll, **one-third of teen respondents indicated they visited the public library ten times a year or more.**



Libraries Improve Learning & Literacy

90% of students recognized that the school library helped boost their confidence as proficient information seekers and users; **91.8% of the students appreciated the school library's help in sorting and analyzing information and gaining media literacy.**

Students in programs with more school librarians and extended library hours **scored 8.4 to 21.8% higher on ACT English tests and 11.7 to 16.7% higher on ACT Reading tests** compared to students in schools where libraries had fewer resources.

In Minnesota, **twice as many schools with above average scores had full-time media specialists.** Student reading achievement is related to increases in school library spending.

Both affluent and disadvantaged students made similar achievement gains during the school year. But disadvantaged youth fall behind in reading over the summer. **Differences in out-of-school access to books, positive reading practices, and connections with institutions supportive of self-discovery and reading, account for much of the disparity in academic success.**

How you can help



- » Sponsor or support legislation that aids libraries
- » Volunteer at your library
- » Become a Friend of your Library or start a Friends group
- » Serve on your library's board of Trustees

For more information, contact



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Sources

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American Library Association, Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study, www.ala.org/plinternetfunding

American Library Association, Office for Intellectual Freedom, www.ala.org/oif

American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics, www.ala.org/ors

American Library Association, State of America's Libraries 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/State2010>

National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov>.

Neuman, Susan B., www.sbneuman.com

U.S. Census, www.census.gov

Resources

For the latest information on federal library legislation, visit <http://capwiz.com/ala/home>

For information on becoming a Friend or Trustee, visit www.ala.org/altaff

To learn more about advocating for libraries or to make a donation, visit www.ilovelibraries.org.

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Libraries
improve teen
learning and
literacy.

They prepare
teens to be
productive
citizens.



They provide
teens with
a sense of
community.



Teens need
libraries.



There is not such a cradle
of democracy upon the
earth as the Free Public
Library, this republic of
letters, where neither
rank, office, nor wealth
receives the slightest
consideration.

—Andrew Carnegie

My mother and my father
were illiterate immigrants
from Russia. When I was a
child they were constantly
amazed that I could go
to a building and take
a book on any subject.
They couldn't believe this
access to knowledge we
have here in America.

—Kirk Douglas