
Quotable Facts About America's Libraries

ALA American
Library
Association

Did You Know?

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with more than 167 million items on approximately 838 miles of bookshelves, which would span roughly the distance from The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., to Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Libraries are a smart investment. A recent study shows that for every dollar spent on Ohio public libraries, Ohioans received \$5.48 in economic value.

Librarians have long championed their community members' right to access information privately, and serve as an essential refuge where everyone can check out materials or browse the internet without their information being shared.

Lower-income students are especially at risk of falling behind in math and reading when school is out. Libraries help narrow the achievement gap by offering summer learning opportunities to kids of all backgrounds.

Public Libraries

There are more public libraries than Starbucks in the U.S. – a total of 16,568, including branches. Nearly 100% of public libraries provide Wi-Fi and have no-fee access to computers.

In 2016, there were 1.4 billion in-person visits to public libraries across the U.S., the equivalent of about 4 million visits each day. That's 2,664 per minute.

There were 113 million attendees at public library programs in 2016, more than all Major League Baseball, National Football League, and National Basketball Association games combined. That's 16.5 million more than in 2013.

Libraries play a critical role in the happiness of Americans. Communities that spend more on libraries, parks and highways are shown to support the well-being of community members.

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries benefit everyone on campus, yet they receive fewer than two cents of every dollar spent on higher education.

Academic libraries have almost 2.5 billion physical and electronic items in their collections available for use.

Digital media titles in U.S. academic libraries have increased by 50% since 2014.

Academic librarians provide information services for almost 38 million people each year – reaching more than four million people that attend men's college basketball games.

A growing body of evidence suggests that students' academic success is linked to library usage, including improved student retention and an enhanced academic experience.

School Libraries

Students in high-poverty schools are almost twice as likely to graduate when the school library is staffed with a certified school librarian.

Cutbacks in school librarians may be yielding unintended consequences. According to a study by Stanford University, more than 80% of middle schoolers cannot tell the difference between sponsored content and a real news article.

Research shows the highest achieving students attend schools with well-staffed and well-funded school libraries.

School libraries give students a unique opportunity for self-directed inquiry. Four out of five Americans agree that libraries help spark creativity among young people.

Libraries Transform

Libraries strengthen local economies.

- **84% of libraries offer technology training to patrons in computer software use.**
- **76.8% of libraries provide online health resources and 60% offer programs to help Americans identify health insurance resources and get better informed on health topics.**
- **73.1% of libraries provide programs that assist individuals apply for jobs, create resumes, and prepare for interviews.**
- **97% of libraries help people complete online government forms.**

Libraries create healthier communities.

- **77% of libraries offer online health resources.**
 - **59% provide programs on finding health insurance.**
 - **58% provide programs to help people find and evaluate health information.**
 - **23% offer fitness classes.**
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Libraries Transform

Libraries are the place for lifelong learning.

- **95% provide online homework assistance.**
- **95% offer summer reading programs for children.**

Library access equals opportunity.

- **98% of public libraries offer free Wi-Fi.**
- **90% help patrons with basic Internet skills.**
- **97% help people complete online government forms.**
- **9 out of 10 libraries offer access to e-books.**

Learn more at
www.librariestransform.org.

All facts compiled in 2019.
For more information about sources,
contact the ALA Library and
Research Center: alalibrary@ala.org.

**For more information about America's
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Investing in America's Libraries

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