

Tennessee Public Libraries: A Critical Resource for Job Seekers

Libraries provide vital assistance to citizens during tough economic times. Public library use continues to increase, straining already scarce resources and staff. According to a study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the American Library Association:

- **71%** of public libraries are the **ONLY** provider of free internet computer access in their community.
- **80%** of rural public libraries are the **ONLY** provider of free internet computer access.
- Over **90%** of Tennessee public libraries offer information technology training to their patrons.

This access to computers & the internet is critical when employers increasingly require online applications for employment. Many libraries have expanded their technology training to assist people with job searches. In Williamson County, for example, they conduct a "Job Searching on the Internet" workshop. The Knox County Public Library offers Saturday workshops on surviving the recession.

Facts: Tennessee Public Libraries

- Over 20 million visits annually
- 3,051,224 registered borrowers
- Circulation of 25.1 million items
- Over 3,968 public access computers with internet access
- 5,994,138 internet users

The Portland Public Library in Sumner County offers 5 computer classes a week on 3 different levels of knowledge. Each Friday they set aside 4 hours to help people work on their resumes.

The Tennessee State Library & Archives teamed up with the Department of Labor & Workforce Development to train librarians to help people who come to the library to complete online unemployment forms. Sixty-five librarians from 45 public libraries received this training and are now better able to assist Tennesseans as they face the crisis of unemployment.

"We have helped fill out unemployment forms, create or improve resumes, sign up for email accounts,. We even came up with a list of websites for our customers to use when searching the Internet for jobs. . I truly hope that our leaders read about the things we're willing to do and can find a way to actually fund these efforts and more."
- Philadelphia Public Library (Loudon County)



Everett Horn Public Library, Lexington

Claude, 33, told the Memphis Commercial Appeal that he comes to the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library to search for work. "I've been coming every day to jump online and try to find me something." He has applied online for jobs in retail, security and at warehouses.