# N:\Project Folders\Research Projects\IMLS PAC\WEB SURVEY PROJECT\communication materials\logos\survey_logo_FINAL_vectorized.png Public Library Talking Points

*These talking points can be used by a public library leader in addressing funding agencies, local decision makers, the news media, or community groups such as the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, or Kiwanis Club about the benefits of public access computers and Internet access in public libraries and the need for support.*

*For maximum impact, before using these talking points, collect stories from library patrons about how they use library computers and Internet access. Ask them about some of the specific types of activities they use library computers for, including: job seeking, getting health information, or doing school work. Be sure to ask about the outcomes of these activities and how they made a difference for the patron. For example, did the patron’s use of a library computer or Internet access help that person get a job, make a change to their diet or exercise habits, or get into college? You can use these stories to demonstrate more clearly the impact that library Internet access has on the members of your community.*

## Background: Public Access Computers and Public Libraries

* Libraries are community hubs that offer a wealth of information and resources to our residents – traditionally through books, magazines and other printed material, and increasingly through online services, training, and one-on-one support for technology use.
* Millions of people use library technology to perform meaningful tasks. They come to the library to find work, apply for college, secure government benefits, and learn about medical treatments.
* Nearly one-third of Americans age 14 or older – roughly 77 million people – used a public library computer or wireless network to access the Internet in the last year, according to a national study by the University of Washington Information School funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
  + In [YOUR CITY/TOWN], this means that an estimated [multiply legal service area population by 0.2549 and round down to nearest whole number] people use the computers (and wireless network, if applicable) each year at the [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY]. These patrons logged [NUMBER OF SESSIONS] sessions at the library’s computers.
* A recent survey of [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY] patrons found that:
  + [insert top domain use statistics here, including end outcomes: e.g., X percent used the library’s computers and Internet connection for employment purposes. Of these users, X percent of users searched for jobs, X percent worked on their resume, and X percent applied for a job. Of these users, X percent were hired. We suggest focusing on domains that reflect current local policy objectives, such as employment , education, or health)
  + [insert 2nd highest domain use here]
  + [insert 3rd highest domain use here]
* The [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY] began offering public access computers in [YEAR] and now, thanks to funding from [DESCRIBE FUNDING SOURCES, e.g., federal, state, local, foundations, etc.] has [NUMBER OF COMPUTER TERMINALS] computers available for public use (and a wireless network that patrons with their own laptops can use to access the Internet, if applicable).
  + The [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY] also provides [LIST TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, e.g., one-on-one help, training classes, or other support].

## Library Technology Bridges the Digital Divide

* Regardless of your age, income, or educational experience, it’s almost impossible to succeed without high speed Internet access today.
  + Yet almost 40 percent of Americans – often those with lower incomes and lower levels of education – still don’t have the Internet at home.
  + According to the UW study, almost half (47%) of people who used computer and Internet access at public libraries from low- to moderate-income households reported that the public library was their sole source of access to computers and the Internet.
* Access is particularly crucial during challenging economic times. Since the economic downturn, an increasing number of people turned to technology services at our library to search for jobs, research health care information, and [INCLUDE KEY USES FROM YOUR SURVEY REPORT].
* [ANEDOTE ABOUT A PATRON IMPACTED BY USE OF LIBRARY COMPUTERS.] And there are many other stories like this from around the community.
* Librarians and library volunteers help people get online. [X] percent of [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY] patrons who use library computers get help while they’re there.
  + [ANECDOTE FROM A NOVICE USER WHO RECEIVED HELP.]

## Libraries Struggle to Keep Pace with Demand

* Despite increased use of our technology services, our library is challenged to meet patron demand.
  + Like many other libraries across the state and nation, we struggle to [LIST SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES, e.g., keep the library open enough hours; provide enough computers; maintain our computers; other major “on the ground” challenges your library faces].

## Call to Action

* There has never been a more important time to support [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY].
  + If the library is unable to keep pace with technology, public access technology could become obsolete and unusable for those in our community who depend on it.
* Funding for [YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY] must be sustained for [YOUR CITY/TOWN] to continue to provide the free computer and Internet services that help our citizens build better, brighter futures.
* [If possible, state what a specific decision maker, community group, or other local leader can do to support the library now.]