

My Public Library Is...



THE BEST SEARCH ENGINE

- Librarians prevent information overload. A single Google search can return billions of results with contradictory information. Librarians are trained professionals who can help find the most trustworthy, accurate information. They can also help identify the difference between fake and real news.
- Google isn't always the best source of information—and it's not the only source. Many libraries offer books, e-books, journals, DVDs, online databases, and other materials not available online, or not available for free online.



access and job-hunting assistance, including helping people create resumes and prepare for interviews. They also offer resources and support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

STAFFED WITH INFORMATION EXPERTS

- There's something for everyone at the library—thanks to librarians, who have specific training to understand the needs of their communities and to lead customers to the best print and online resources to meet those needs.
- Librarians teach users to navigate the information world, both in print and online, not only connecting them to the newest technologies, but teaching them how to evaluate and use these resources.



AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT

- Communities that spend more on libraries are shown to support the well-being of community members much more than those that do not.
- A very small portion of a household's property tax bill (5% or less, in most cases) goes to the public library. Libraries serve the needs of the entire community with that limited amount of revenue.
- Funding libraries is an investment in the community and libraries are a smart investment. State studies show that the return on investment is between \$5-6 for every dollar spent on the library.
- Public libraries strengthen the economy of their communities. Libraries provide computer



A CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY

- Public libraries create community, a third space, for people of all ages to meet, learn, and enjoy themselves and the company of those around them, promoting a sense of belonging. And there is no cost for admission.
- Libraries are often the only place in the community where everyone is welcome including all underserved and marginalized populations such as the homeless, immigrants, and non-English speakers. Regardless of education level, income, gender, race, or age, public libraries serve everyone.



My Public Library Is... (continued)

- With the elimination of many social service programs, public libraries are often called upon to respond to issues like homelessness, mental illness, and the opioid crisis. Many libraries are hiring social workers. Others receive specialized training to spot signs of and handle an opioid overdose.
- Public libraries play a major role in fostering a love of reading among young children. A story time program can introduce new concepts, reinforce social and school readiness skills, and provide a model for caretakers on how they can share books, songs, and educational play activities with their children.
- Public libraries provide a variety of activities for school-age children and teens, including summer reading programs to combat the “summer slide,” online homework help, book discussion groups, and places for teens to collaborate and learn together.
- Public libraries provide a variety of activities for adults and seniors, including educational and reading programs, access to computers and computer instruction to minimize the digital divide, and social settings to lessen isolation.
- Many public libraries offer important community services, such as notary public, test proctoring, voter registration and voting sites, and passport services. They also have meeting rooms that can be used by community groups and others—often for free.
- Public libraries lend much more than books. Mobile hotspots, tools, musical instruments, craft supplies, sporting equipment, and even cake pans can be borrowed from some libraries.

HELPING PEOPLE NAVIGATE THE DIGITAL WORLD

- For many, the library is the primary source of computer and internet access. Over 1 million people in Illinois do not have internet access or only have access to a cellular data plan. Public libraries help bridge the digital divide.
- Because government forms, health information, and often, employment opportunities have moved online, the library's internet access has become a lifeline for those without access at home.
- In a world of technological change, librarians help people learn and adapt to the latest technology tools and advances. They provide training and support for first-time internet and computer users, as well as those looking to improve their skills.



A SAFE PLACE FOR IDEAS

- Librarians value customer privacy, freedom to read, and access to information.
- Librarians select materials for the library based on community interest, current and evolving topics, and recognition for the wide variety of diverse groups within the community.
- Library materials offer a wide range of ideas, views, and opinions. What may be objectionable to one customer may be reasonable and important to another.

