Colorado State Library

Agency Vision Statement

The Colorado State Library (CSL) helps library staff confidently navigate change to best serve their community. We support state-funded academic, K-12, public, and special libraries to improve services making it easier for all Coloradans to access and use materials and information they need. CSL is a unit of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). CSL encompasses the CDE vision that "All students graduate ready for college and careers, and prepared to be productive citizens of Colorado" to include access to lifelong learning resources and support.

Broadband Vision Statement

Access for all requires Colorado residents to have sufficient broadband. Colorado's libraries are essential to closing broadband gaps for many Coloradans to realize the vision of universal broadband adoption and digital literacy. Libraries work in our communities to 1) provide broadband and internet-capable devices for those who need them, 2) support digital learning opportunities that empower entrepreneurship, job training and retraining, continued education, homework help, and widespread use of emerging applications and devices, and 3) spur home adoption of technology by increasing awareness of and confidence in using online resources and services.

GOALS

Physical Access to Broadband

CSL recognizes that local libraries serve as anchor institutions for broadband in local communities. As modern life occurs more online, higher speed access becomes increasingly necessary. To meet this growing need, local libraries need the capacity to provide broadband speeds and devices to their patrons. (See Appendix A for enumerated pathways in which Colorado State Library services are offered online to Colorado residents.)

Activities

1. Conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis of Low Earth Orbit units for non-fiber, remote locations. This analysis may be followed by a pilot project to evaluate and determine the value of wider deployment.

2. Develop and disseminate best practices for local/regional partnerships between public libraries, school districts, and other anchor institutions on middle and end mile broadband infrastructure.

3. Collaborate with other government agencies: Department of Corrections, Division of Youth Services, Mental Health Institute, Veterans Community Living Centers, Fort Lyons Supportive Residential Community, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind libraries. The goal is to provide resources and support to enhance and improve library services and user experience by identifying and implementing new technologies and e-resources.

Toward Gigabit Libraries

CSL will build the capacity of public libraries to make informed decisions on broadband improvement, technology purchases, and information technology planning and implementation to better serve their communities.

Activities

1. Focus on the 86 underserved public library facilities (speeds lower than 25/3 Mbps per device) as identified in the [CSL 2021 Broadband Survey](#) and using the Toward Gigabit Libraries resources (https://internet2.edu/community/community-anchor-program/cap-library-resources/toward-gigabit-libraries/).

2. Identify external technology experts for libraries without technology competencies to complete the Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit Assessment and apply for and manage broadband grant funds. (Grant funds will be required to hire these experts at many locations.)

3. Support libraries in prioritizing immediate and short-term (0-3 months) actions that they can utilize from the Toward Gigabit Libraries Assessment data to improve broadband and related performance and operations.

4. Guide public libraries in determining longer term (3-12 months) strategies and systems for continuous improvement of their broadband infrastructure (speeds, hardware, performance, planning, and operations).

Best Practices and Standards

CSL will disseminate and support best practices and standards for public libraries to continuously sustain and improve broadband access for all.

Activities

1. Maintain Colorado public library technology standards that provide current benchmarks for all libraries.

2. Promote best practices for partnerships with school districts in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Education.
3. Promote public library participation in e-rate funding for sustainable broadband.
4. Collaborate with other Colorado state institutions to establish an up-to-date institutional library technology standard; evaluate institutional library technology services; and provide relevant, easily accessible reports and information to institutions' staff and leaders.

Telehealth

CSL recognizes rural barriers to healthcare access and supports Colorado's equitable statewide telehealth access, adoption, and sustainability. By collaborating with the Office of e-Health & Innovation, CSL will assess how public libraries in rural communities can participate in the overall effort.

Activities

1. Collaborate with the Office of e-Health on an environmental scan to identify gaps in Colorado health care access.
2. Identify the requirements for implementing telehealth hubs in public libraries.
3. Develop a feasibility study and report related to public libraries as telehealth hubs.
4. Recommend a statewide strategy for telehealth in public libraries and/or other anchor institutions.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

CSL prioritizes partnerships and coordinated efforts with a variety of entities when distinct assets can be combined to meet shared goals that better our state. To ensure CSL projects are successfully implemented, assessment will be ongoing with regular collection of programmatic and project data. Categories of data include input, output, and outcome measures such as those enumerated in the Colorado State Library - Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) five-Year Plan 2023-2027.

Appendix A

Colorado State Library Services

Colorado State Publications Library provides Colorado residents with free permanent public access to state government information, 99% of circulated documents are digital. The collection of over 156,000 documents includes information produced by state agencies, such as budgets, consumer information, and legislative reports. In 2019, Coloradans used over 366,000 print and digital items and the digital repository and

blog supports 443,000 patron interactions annually. The use of digital documents from the Colorado State Publications Library increased by 35% in FY20 over the prior year. For continued government transparency broadband at the device level is essential.

Colorado Talking Book Library: The Colorado Talking Book Library is part of a national network of libraries, led by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled which is expanding streaming capabilities in their service model and equipment. New braille e-readers require an internet connection to work, as will the newest audiobook machines currently in development. While the Colorado Talking Book Library can continue to serve these patrons through the United States Postal Service, those without broadband will be at a distinct disadvantage. The Colorado Talking Book Library serves every corner of Colorado with patrons in every county. There are over 603,000 Colorado residents with disabilities, of these almost 112,000 have difficulty with their vision. To equitably serve the blind and print disabled residents of Colorado, sufficient broadband must be available.

Networking and Resource Sharing: The Colorado Virtual Library connects people and libraries throughout Colorado with a wide variety of articles, digital information, collected biographies of historically important persons with connections to the state, plus news about what is happening in Colorado State Library and libraries statewide. The Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection (CHNC) provides free online access to more than 630 newspaper titles published in Colorado from 1859 to the present day, containing a growing collection of over 2,500,000 digitized pages. The Plains to Peaks Collective (PPC) currently has 67 participating institutions from Colorado and Wyoming who, share over 716,000 metadata records with the Digital Public Library of America's national online discovery layer. Valuable resources for library staff and the public interested in knowing more about what libraries make available as resources and programming for their communities have been digitized and rely on broadband for retrieval. Primary resource sets for K-12 students encourage and grow the use of primary resources within the Colorado K-12 curriculum. These resources will be created in a format that is easy to use for educators and students. Broadband is an essential component for equitable access to these historical and cultural resources for education and lifelong learning.

Office of Library Development: Colorado libraries serve as one of the few places for free access to the internet and use of computers and other internet devices. This access is essential to quality of life and lifelong learning. To support libraries of all types in providing access for all Colorado residents, library development offers expertise, guidance, and statewide initiatives. Many of the activities indicated above will be conducted through the Office of Library Development, such as assessments, standards, and guidance to strengthen local libraries.