Leverage Libraries to Achieve Digital Equity for All

NEW FEDERAL FUNDING CAN POWER PROGRESS

New federal programs and resources through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provide an unprecedented opportunity to build on the existing infrastructure and expertise of our nation's libraries to inform state digital equity plans and accelerate broadband adoption and skills building for all nationwide.

Libraries provide:

- **Reach with a physical presence** in communities of all sizes, as well as in K-12 schools, colleges and universities, military bases, and more that provide high-speed internet access, computers, specialty software applications, central meeting spaces, and trusted hubs for information and community referrals for people across diverse backgrounds and interests;
- **Expertise and resources** enced in tackling digital equity gaps, boosting literacies and digital skills needed to survive and thrive in today's networked world, and developing collections and resources relevant to local needs; and
- **Sustainable, flexible collaboration** ranging from digital equity coalitions to state workforce development plans to telehealth collaborations that strengthen networks and support sustainability.

These assets align with the goals of the IIJA and must be leveraged as part of upcoming state planning efforts, as well

State broadband leaders and policymakers include state library agencies in statewide digital equity planning groups and leverage their unparalleled reach into all public libraries to strengthen communications and outreach statewide;

- **State and local education agencies** include K-12 school librarians and college and university library leaders in digital equity planning and deployment;
- **Libraries** increase awareness of their local technology assets to improve coordination across all levels of government and develop proposals for forthcoming funding programs;
- **Congress** enable sustainable funding for digital equity through measures like the Digital Equity Foundation Act;
- **Federal agencies** continuously work to reduce administrative and record-keeping barriers that limit participation by small libraries and other community-based entities; and
- **National library support organizations** aggregate, amplify and advocate with and for state and local libraries to ensure full participation in digital equity planning and implementation and synthesize and share best practices to create scalable models.

More related information and resources can be found online at ala.org/advocacy/broadband.