

The Five Literacies of PA Forward

In an era when the public is demanding greater efficiency and program consolidation at all levels of government, Pennsylvania's libraries – public, academic, and school libraries – serve as models of cost-effective service. Libraries stretch the public's resources through sharing books, computers, DVDs, facilities, and expertise. By their very definition, libraries serve the public broadly and efficiently.

Yet, much potential remains for libraries to do even greater things to prepare Pennsylvanians to compete successfully in the Information Age labor force and to live healthy, productive lives. Our libraries – properly leveraged – can help solve some of the Commonwealth's biggest economic and social problems.

To refocus and reinforce the ways in which libraries can support Pennsylvanians in leading successful, productive lives, the Pennsylvania Library Association is pleased to introduce a new statewide initiative, PA Forward. This initiative redefines the library's role in our Commonwealth within the context of five essential Literacies that Pennsylvanians must attain in order to succeed as citizens, parents, students, employers, employees, and consumers:

1. **Basic Literacy** – Libraries can push Pennsylvania to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the country, a better trained and more skilled workforce, and a growing tax base, economy, and population.
2. **Information Literacy** – Libraries can help all Pennsylvanians learn how to use online resources and current technology to improve their education, to enhance their job skills, and to participate fully in a digital society.
3. **Civic and Social Literacy** – Libraries can give citizens of all ages the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives, to contribute effectively in their communities, and to participate in civil discourse.
4. **Health Literacy** – Libraries can play an important role in helping citizens actively manage their own and their family's well-being, making them effective partners with their health care providers and reducing costs.
5. **Financial Literacy** – Libraries can help citizens become informed consumers and guide individuals, small businesses, and other organizations to contribute to the economic vitality of their communities.

Across the state, libraries are creating special programming to address each literacy and we've provided examples in each literacy background. Small, medium, and large libraries are highlighted and each example includes a contact name and number in case you want to learn more. Below, we've included an example from one library that created a week's worth of programs to address each of the five Literacies.

Five Literacies Example:

Five Days, Five Ways to Use Your Library, Altoona Area Public Library

Targeted Populations: Preschool and Younger, Youth, Adults, Older Adults

Library and Contact Information:

Altoona Area Public Library

Amy Horell, 814-946-0417 ext.134, dlc@altoonalibrary.org

Event Addresses:

Basic Literacy, Information Literacy, Civic and Social Literacy, Health Literacy, and Financial Literacy

Event Description and Community Partners:

During National Library week, the library presented a day of activities that focused on each literacy; one literacy was highlighted each day.

Financial Literacy – A free program titled *The Truth about Kids and Money* was presented by a local public accountant and financial planner. In addition, a special children's story hour focused on financial literacy.

Information Literacy – Barnes & Noble gave a presentation about the NOOK eReader. The Reference Librarians & District Consultant presented a program on using Facebook and the Verizon Thinkfinity website.

Civic and Social Literacy – The library celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Day. A Blair County Commissioner spoke about Civil Service and Volunteerism in the Library Theater; and a local harpist was honored for his service to the library.

Health Literacy – A program was given on homeopathic methods and ingredients for good health. In addition, a workshop was held to teach patrons about the Library's NEW Verizon Thinkfinity Laptop Lab and how they could use it to find quality, reliable, and up-to-date online health resources. The local Diary Princess took part in a story hour filled with crafts, snacks, and fun, and the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Mid-Penn, LICC of Blair County, Usborne Books, and The Wolf Kuhn Foundation sponsored a family movie.

Basic Literacy – The Library, Parent-Child Home Program, AASD Family Literacy, and Head Start sponsored a free story time presentation from the 2011 *One Book, Every Young Child* author Stephen R. Swinburne, who read his book *Whose Shoes?* The Blair County Literacy Council provided information sessions about their programs for adult learners and sponsored a family movie.

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