

[Two Grants Fund Hotspots, iPads, and Diverse Books](#)



A tween girl uses an iPad during a children's program.

We are pleased to share that the Library is the recipient of two grants to support access to digital resources in Monroe County. The City of Bloomington Information & Technology Services Department has awarded the Library a Digital Equity Grant of \$10,500, and the Wahl Family Charitable Trust has gifted the Library \$5,300.

"Providing equitable access to information is one of the Library's most important goals and is reflective of our [core mission](#) to provide opportunities to read, learn, connect and create," said Grier Carson, Associate Director. "One of the greatest challenges posed by the current public health crisis is our inability to reach each and every Library patron when physical access to the Library carries with it a number of health considerations. These grants will help us improve upon that."

City of Bloomington Digital Equity Grant

City of Bloomington Digital Equity Grants are funded through Mayor John Hamilton's Recover Forward initiative to help Bloomington recover from the pandemic and economic collapse, and advance racial, economic, and climate

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justice. The awards are intended to support Bloomington-based nonprofit organization efforts to bridge the digital divide and increase digital resources for residents. Funds from the Digital Equity Grant will be used to purchase ten iPads and ten wireless hotspots for the Library's circulating collection.

"Whether students, seniors, or residents experiencing homelessness, many people in Bloomington lack adequate digital access," said Hamilton. "The City is glad to be able to partner with our community's nonprofits in this small step toward getting more people connected with a basic twenty-first century utility."

We have long provided access to computers and the internet at our physical locations. A collection of [circulating wireless hotspots](#) was introduced several years ago, offering patrons free access to the internet from home. Hotspots rank among our most popular "[non-traditional](#)" [Library of Things collections](#). These portable internet access points are in such high demand that they consistently circulate from one user to the next, with a waiting list of 30–40 patrons at any given time. Additional hotspots will allow more families to bridge the digital divide.

Ten iPads will also be purchased and available for patrons to borrow. The devices will be preloaded with [eLibrary resources](#), including ebook, audiobook, music, and movie downloading and streaming. It will also allow borrowers to install and use software per their individual needs.

"We view this as a pilot project which, if successful, will serve to guide the development of more freely-circulating mobile technology and help us get technology and internet access out into the public to the best of our ability," Carson said.

Wahl Family Charitable Trust Grant

An additional ten wireless hotspots will be purchased with funds from the The Wahl Family Charity Trust grant.

Additional funds from the Wahl grant will be used to purchase 100 ebooks, eaudiobooks, and physical books focusing on titles that promote diversity, inclusiveness, and antiracism. The Library often receives requests for materials that address the many complexities surrounding these issues in our community.

The purchases will build upon our recently acquired [Advancing Racial Equity Collection](#) of storytime and juvenile book club kits (funded by a grant from Indiana Humanities with funds from Lilly Endowment Inc.), providing opportunities for patrons to think, read, and talk about racial injustice and systemic racism.

"The collections fit well with our [2021–23 strategic plan](#), which emphasizes enriching our community through equitable and impartial access, as well as inclusiveness, diversity, and supporting respectful discourse," said Marilyn Wood, Library Director. "The forward-looking plan is resilient and will guide us through social, political, technological, and economic changes."

Posted by Aubrey D. on December 18, 2020 [Think Library](#)

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