

## What Are the Five Literacies?

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 the new statewide initiative, **PA Forward | Pennsylvania Libraries**. 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.

### *The Five Literacies:*

1. **Basic Literacy** – Libraries can push Pennsylvania to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the country, a trained and skilled workforce, and a growing economy, tax base, 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, to develop their personal lives, and to fully participate in a digital society.
3. **Civic and Social Literacy** – Libraries can play an important role in helping citizens have the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives, to participate and contribute effectively to their community, government, and society, and to connect with one another through discourse.
4. **Health Literacy** – Libraries can play an important role in helping citizens manage their own and their family's well-being, and empower them to be effective partners with their healthcare providers so they can live longer, more productive lives.
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 community through innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development.