



Leadership. Advocacy. Communication.

Public Libraries Help Floridians Find Jobs and Obtain E-Government Services

Florida public libraries help Floridians find jobs and conduct their vitally important business with the federal, state, and local government. Specifically they

- Help Floridians find and apply for jobs;
- Connect Floridians to government services and assist them with finding and obtaining a wide array of e-government services; and
- Provide access to those who otherwise do not have computer and Internet access and skills.

Many government agencies no longer have local offices to serve residents and require citizens to access services only online without offering any access to computers and the Internet. Public libraries often provide the only Internet access in a community and agencies increasingly refer citizens to the public library rather than provide direct assistance. ***This new role for public libraries has come without funding from the federal, state, and local government agencies that rely on libraries to serve their agencies' clients.***¹

Libraries face significant challenges when they try to help residents with job searching and in their efforts to obtain services and transact their business with government.

- Residents often have no or limited computer skills and often have limited reading skills and require extensive assistance.
- Residents' transactions with government agencies often include personal and confidential information that may create liability and privacy concerns when library employees help them fill out forms.
- Citizens prefer to access services online in order to get a confirmation number for their interaction with an agency; these numbers are not available through the alternative, automated telephone systems.

Libraries are often able to provide access to forms and services for non-English speakers.

¹ A Perfect Storm Brewing: Budget Cuts Threaten Public Library Services at a Time of Increasing Demand, The American Library Association Office for Research & Statistics, 1/22/10, (<http://www.ala.org/ala/research/initiatives/plftas/issuesbriefs/issuesbrief-perfectstorm.pdf>)

Examples of e-government related assistance to citizens are provided below.

State of Florida Agencies	Examples of E-Government Services Provided by Public Libraries
Florida Department of Children & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in application for food stamps and resolving PIN number problems for food stamps, which requires staff exposure to social security numbers and other personal information; staff exposure to possible accusations of conspiring to file a fraudulent claim ▪ Assistance in applications for cash assistance and resolving PIN number problems for cash cards ▪ Information on and assistance in applying for Medicaid ▪ Assistance in checking the status of applications and cases
Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in finding the agent name for a corporation and other records searches such as fictitious name ▪ Locating requirements for starting a business in Florida ▪ Filing of corporate returns (available only online)
Florida Department of Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in locating incarcerated persons and corrections facilities ▪ Searching for Absconders and Fugitives
Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in making driver's license exam appointments ▪ Prepare for drivers license exam (handbook online) ▪ Renew tags ▪ Acquire copy of vehicle title
Agency for Workforce Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in application for unemployment compensation claims (online and fax applications only) ▪ Assistance in filing required weekly certification claim for unemployment compensation ▪ Finding and applying for jobs (employflorida.com)
Florida Office of Insurance Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in comparing insurance rates
Florida Department of Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Search for sexual predators
Federal Agencies	Examples of E-Government Services Provided by Public Libraries
U.S. Citizen & Immigration Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assistance in making appointments (can only be made online) ▪ Assistance in finding, downloading, and completing forms; possible exposure to accusations of unlicensed practice of law
FEMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing critical access to services after natural disasters; FEMA forms can only be completed and submitted online and require specific software
Internal Revenue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ e-file income tax returns ▪ Access instructions and publications
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ File for grants, scholarships and funding for college education.
Veterans Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply online for records of service and other programs
National Institutes of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finding trusted medical information and clinical trials