



IMMEDIATE NEEDS GRANT REPORT

Poudre Libraries purchased 20 Chromebook Kits that included: a backpack, a Chromebook, a hotspot with a pouch, a Chromebook sleeve, a mouse, and chargers for both devices. We also created instructions in both English and Spanish that are included in the kits. These kits were made available to our community in early 2023 after going through our IT Department for procurement and set up, and later our Collections Department to be properly cataloged in our system.

In addition, we also purchased 20 extra hotspots to add to the library collection, 2 years of service for all hotspots, 10 iPads for digital programming, cases for the iPads, an Owl camera to accommodate hybrid programming, 2 carts to store and charge devices, and one UV Tech Tub to disinfect Chromebooks and iPads after programs or once they are returned after being checked out.

BACKGROUND & NEEDS

During the pandemic, we acquired several Chromebooks and Hotspots that are now part of our collection and can be checked out by our patrons. These are always in high-demand and are constantly on hold. However, they only check out for one week at a time. This week-long loan period works for those who need it for a one-time thing, but it is not as helpful for those who permanently lack access to the internet and devices. In addition, they have to be put on hold through our online catalog, creating an extra barrier to access for those who lack devices or the digital skills to do it. The extra hotspots added to the Library's collection have helped provide internet access to more people, reducing waiting times due to holds, but they still only check out for one week at a time.

In contrast, the 20 Chromebook Kits acquired with the Immediate Needs Grant check out for 6 weeks at a time, and they can be renewed by staff if the patron requests it and they are available. Furthermore, they can't be put on hold through our catalog. Instead, patrons have to fill out a form to request them. Through this form we are able to collect data on the needs of our community. For example, whether they lack access to devices, internet, or both. The form is available online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). To ensure equitable access, the application is also available on paper.

The 10 iPads were purchased to replace the old ones we had in our Outreach Department, which no longer could support certain updates and apps due to age. While the iPads don't circulate as part of our catalog (like the Chromebooks or Hotspots do) they are used to provide digital programming for all ages. Two examples of programs where we used them are:

- Memory Care: every month we take them to a memory care facility and we work with residents using different apps that target cognitive skills and "work out" the brain.
- Stop Motion: an intergenerational program for families where we combined fine motor skills, creativity, clay, and technology.

CHROMEBOOK PILOT PROGRAM

Because this was the first time we would be running a program like this, and to ensure customer satisfaction, we decided to run a pilot program. Every semester we offer digital literacy classes in partnership with Poudre School District. The target audience for these classes are parents of PSD students, whose primary language is Spanish (classes are offered in Spanish), and with no literacy skills (or very low). We decided to use the spring 2023 cohort for our pilot program. We used the Chromebook Kits for our classes, and participants were offered the possibility to fill out the request form to check them out and take them home after the last session. By giving them guided sessions where they learned basic literacy skills, we ensured that this group felt confident to request the kits to continue working on their skills at home.

CIRCULATION & POST-USE SURVEYS

We are measuring our outcomes and intended goals through circulation numbers and post-use surveys. All participants in the PSD classes but one chose to request the kit and take it home. We are also slowly starting to receive inquiries and request forms from other community members as the word spreads about the kits. We have post-use surveys that customers will be asked to complete when they return their kits. All kits currently checked out are still in use and we haven't received any returns yet. Because of this, we don't have post-use data. We'll be happy to share that once we start collecting that information.

The additional 20 hotspots we purchased for the library's collection have helped provide internet access to more people, and have reduced waiting times due to holds.

NEXT STEPS

Our main next step is to make sure we continue reaching our target audience. In order to do that we are taking 2 approaches:

- Community Leaders: our Outreach Department is privileged to have earned the trust of many leaders in the communities and audiences that we are targeting for this program. These leaders are respected members of our communities who frequently serve as a bridge between organizations. We are in conversations with them to help us spread the word about the kits.
- Evie: our recently acquired electric mobile library will spend a lot of time visiting low-income communities, offering books, internet access, and spreading the word about library resources. We'll promote our Chromebook Kits and we'll try to always have them available on Evie (unless they are all checked out). Since Evie is also a hotspot herself, we can show people how to fill out the request form online, or we can provide paper forms for those who prefer it.

