

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) has long served as a critical technology access point for students, families, jobseekers, and people with unstable housing or experiencing homelessness. The NHFPL has worked to build a technologically informed and digitally literate public, advocating for and investing in robust IT infrastructure to expand broadband and Wi-Fi internet access, providing on-site computers and e-devices, staff support and assistance, and creating a digital literacy curriculum that meets a spectrum of patron needs. Libraries have traditionally played a critical role to help to close this technology gap, and NHFPL has made critical investments in digital access during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Library is eager to adapt to meet the changing needs of our patrons, and to this end we are continuously looking to improve critical network infrastructure, particularly in assessing current bottlenecks, areas of concern, security and availability and consistency of high-speed internet for all library users.

The Library is applying for the second stage of the Connecticut State Library's Fiber to the Library Communications Grant Program that will provide the funding needed to allow the New Haven Free Public Library to continue maximizing its high-speed fiber connection by improving the technology infrastructure in all five locations in New Haven. This stage will be used to execute recommendations as assessed by the State Library's designated contractor in their comprehensive review of the library's network infrastructure. This revenue will be used to purchase necessary equipment and cover labor costs.

This funding will allow the New Haven Free Public Library to continue prioritizing digital equity and literacy and technology access for all while also greatly expanding the Library's agility in responding to the rapidly changing needs of a thriving community.