



Announcing the new Statewide Library Broadband Access Aggregator Partner

For Immediate Release:

January 9, 2024

Contact: Jenna Pontious

(279) 399-8990

press@library.ca.gov

[Sacramento, Calif.] – To improve collaboration with public schools and improve digital connectivity, the California State Library has selected the Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE) to serve as Broadband Access Aggregator to help connect more public libraries to high-speed network used by the state’s universities, community colleges and public schools.

For over 20 years, the Imperial County Office of Education has been implementing innovative solutions to connect schools, libraries, and other public agencies, receiving both state and national recognition for its efforts. The county office’s current role as program manager for K-12 high-speed connectivity provides them with unique knowledge and experience that will improve administration of the comparable program for California libraries.

“This is a great partnership that will help advance one of the Newsom Administration’s key goals – expanding access to opportunity for all Californians,” said Greg Lucas, California State Librarian. Imperial County Office of Education understands the essential role libraries play as community anchor institutions and how critical this infrastructure is for the communities they serve.”

ICOE Background:

Since 2004, the Imperial County Office of Education has successfully managed the California K-12 High-Speed Network, connecting more than 8,240 of California’s roughly 10,000 schools to the statewide highspeed broadband network operated by the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California, which is known as CENIC. This is the same network that connects the University of California, California state universities, community colleges and more than 900 of the state’s 1,130 local libraries.

For more than 20 years, the Imperial County Office of Education has operated as the network administrator for Imperial Valley Telecommunications Authority, connecting various city and county agencies, schools, and all of Imperial County’s public libraries to their regional infrastructure, which also connects to CENIC’s statewide network. This extensive experience positions them well to administer the State Library’s broadband access efforts and builds upon the county office’s existing statewide and regional work.

Because it plays a similar role statewide for the K-12 segment, Imperial County Office of Education is already familiar with the responsibilities of being an aggregator for a large group of disparate entities. The county office's work with K-12 schools include contract management, budgeting, invoicing, inventory, program development, data collection, reporting, outreach, and other functions that closely align with the role of the State Library's aggregator.

Imperial County's office of education also manages K-12's annual legislative appropriations, acts as a fiscal agent, participates in project planning, and is deeply involved in program development, working hand-in-hand with CENIC, K-12 stakeholders, the California Department of Education, the Legislature, and the Department of Finance.

Broadband Program Background:

As a Charter Associate of CENIC, the California State Library offers all public libraries in California the opportunity to connect to CENIC's high-speed network and obtain fast, reliable, low-cost broadband access to their communities via one of the world's premier educational broadband networks.

To better accomplish this, partners with an aggregator which works with California public libraries connected, or seeking to connect, to the CENIC network, and when necessary, provides consulting, project planning, implementation, and evaluation services.

Questions can be directed to broadband@library.ca.gov.

END RELEASE TEXT

About the State Library: Established in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for state government and the legislature. The library collection includes more than 4 million titles, 6,000 maps and 250,000 photographs, and includes an extensive collection of documents from and about the state's rich history.

In addition to acting as a steward of California's history, the State Library supports programs and initiatives in California's local libraries through partnerships and services. The Library has partnered with California State Parks to offer free Parks Passes in public libraries for checkout and with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to bring every California child under the age of 5 books. The Library supports a variety of workforce development and upskilling resources for all Californians through CAREer pathways in their local public libraries, and building a statewide eBook library with diverse titles in 20+ languages.