

# Library Services for Customers Experiencing Homelessness

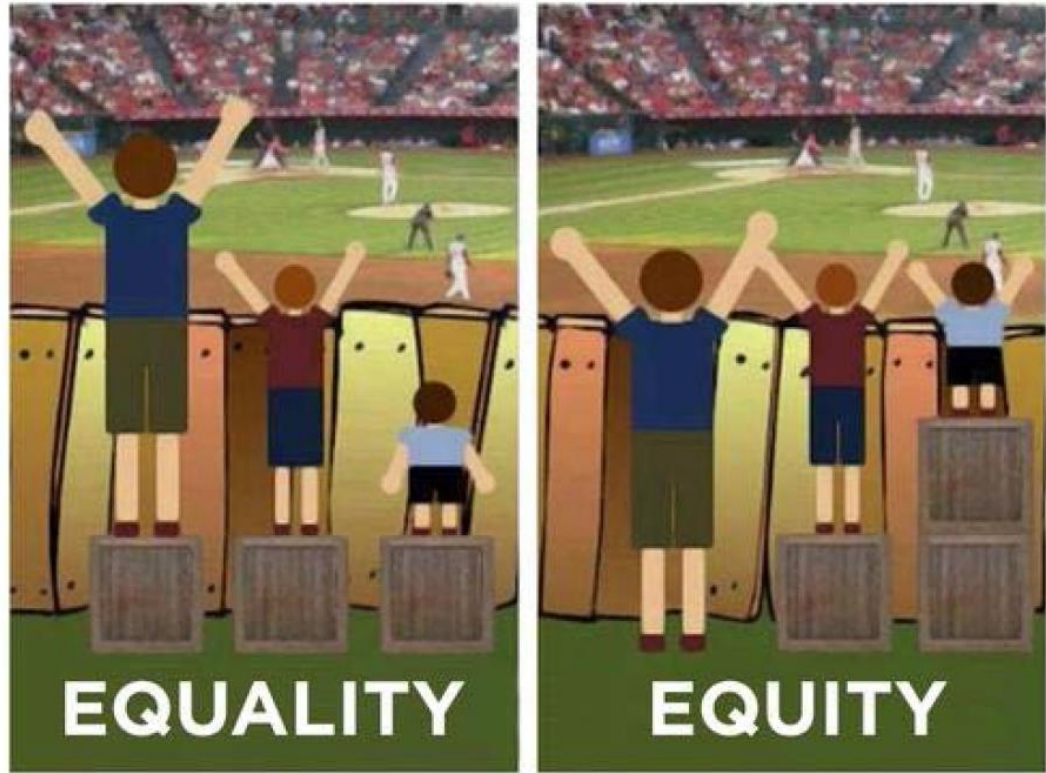
Virginia Library Association  
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# Keep in Mind



- Community Engagement is key
- Be an advocate for equity
- Everyone who walks through the door is a customer
- Empower staff to get involved.
- Can still help if have limited resources

Why  
do  
we care?



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# Chesapeake



- ✓ 8% of Chesapeake residents live below poverty
- ✓ 24,000 residents are receiving SNAP benefits
- ✓ 1,000 residents are receiving TANF
- ✓ 465 public housing units
- ✓ CAST houses up to 50 people each night November – April
- ✓ 1250 homeless in South Hampton Roads,  
50-100 in Chesapeake
- ✓ The Union Mission in Norfolk sheltered 180 people from  
Chesapeake in one year

Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# VIRGINIA



- ✓ 1 in 10 (768,000) Virginians live in poverty
- ✓ Children are more susceptible, 13.8% of youth residents are living in poverty.
- ✓ About 10% of residents receive SNAP benefits
- ✓ 35,000 are receiving TANF benefits

Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

## Customers Experiencing Homelessness

- ✓ 74% self identify as having a mental illness
- ✓ 3-4x more likely to have premature death than those who are housed
- ✓ 40,000 Virginia residents will experience homelessness in a year
- ✓ 20% of children ageing out of foster care will experience homelessness after age 18

Homelessness	USA	Virginia
People experiencing homelessness	578,424	7400
Chronically Homeless	99,434	1600
Homeless People in Families with at Least One Child	216,261	984
Children	135,701	
Unaccompanied Children	6,275	5 families
Veterans	49,933	719

# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## San Francisco Public Library

- Partnered with the COHSF to update their Code of Conduct and train staff on de-escalation, anti-oppression, and harm reduction
- Security receives Crisis Intervention Team Training
- Project Homeless Connect
  - ✓ Resource fair to connect those experiencing homelessness with immigration information, legal aid, coffee talks, housing resources, and police
- Health and Safety Associates
  - ✓ Work under care of social worker to help connect those in need with services



Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## Madison Public Library (Wisconsin)

- Design elements included in their new building to accommodate the entire community and provide for a safer, more inviting atmosphere such as:

- ✓ Airport style bathrooms to reduce behavior against library policy.
- ✓ No bag zone in the atrium area, 1 bag per person policy
- ✓ Expanded seating area with several different styles and groups of furniture
- ✓ Provide social workers at the library 7 days a week, 2 at 20 hours each
- ✓ Work with social agencies to provide building monitors
- ✓ Separate youth services entrance, 10,000 sq. ft. dedicated to youth services



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# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## Philadelphia Public Library

- Employ bathroom attendants through Project Home
  - ✓ Monitor restrooms and provide light cleaning
  - ✓ Provide brochures with resources for services and meal assistance locations
- Homepage Café
  - ✓ Library does not charge rent
  - ✓ Provides work experience and skill building to formerly homeless staff
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Social Worker employed full time
- Legal Aid
  - ✓ Full week of legal services around Law Day
  - ✓ Attorneys visit library once a week to give legal advice

Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## Edmonton Public Library (Alberta, Canada)

- Employ social workers
  - ✓ 2 workers that provide housing referrals, employment counseling, income support, legal support, medical referrals, addiction referrals, id support, and suicide intervention.
  - ✓ 6,000 encounters in 2.5 years
  - ✓ Open door policy. Each has a cell phone number that can be given to clients, though they leave it in their office at night.

### Community Librarians

- ✓ 75% of work is outreach in the community, but do have a home branch

### Socially responsible Strategic Plan

- ✓ “The Library will be a socially responsible institution, a participant and an active initiator in community dialogue and development.”



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# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## Pima County Public Library (Arizona)

- Library funded 1 Full Time Public Health Nurse
  - ✓ Hired through the health department
  - ✓ Grew until there are now other nurses from the health department doing outreach to each of their other 5 branches and bookmobile
  - ✓ Provides immunizations, health assessments, vital checks, healthcare enrollment, crisis intervention, referrals, and education
  - ✓ 911 calls from the library reduced
- Formed several partnerships including University of Arizona, Community Food Bank, and faith based organization to provide:
  - ✓ Community assessments
  - ✓ After school snack program
  - ✓ Community garden



Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# What are Libraries Doing to Help?

## Richland Public Library (South Carolina)

- Library Hire a Public Health Nurse
  - ✓ Can't do vitals
  - ✓ Provides referrals and education
- Provide a business and job care center through grant
  - ✓ 59,000 workforce development transactions in 5 years
- Transition Center
  - ✓ Help transition people from homelessness to permanent housing
- Here Comes Kindergarten
  - ✓ Work in 10 week increments with a set number of at risk families
  - ✓ Focus on family literacy, but refer other resources and services as needed



Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# What is CPL doing to Help?

- ✓ Partnering with Community Programs to employ a social worker to provide referrals, information, and wellness checks to customers experiencing homelessness
- ✓ Workforce development instruction
- ✓ Early literacy classes
- ✓ Health and investment classes
- ✓ Mental Health First Aid training for staff
- ✓ Library security with CIT training



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# Community Programs Specialist

- ✓ Namona is a Community Programs specialist with the Department of Human Services
- ✓ Has a degree in social work
- ✓ Does not take on a case load of her own, but refers clients to agency
- ✓ Has helped find housing, receive medical care, sign up for SNAP benefits
- ✓ Comes in 2-3x a week during winter months/ “shelter season”
- ✓ Comes in once every week or two during the rest of the year.

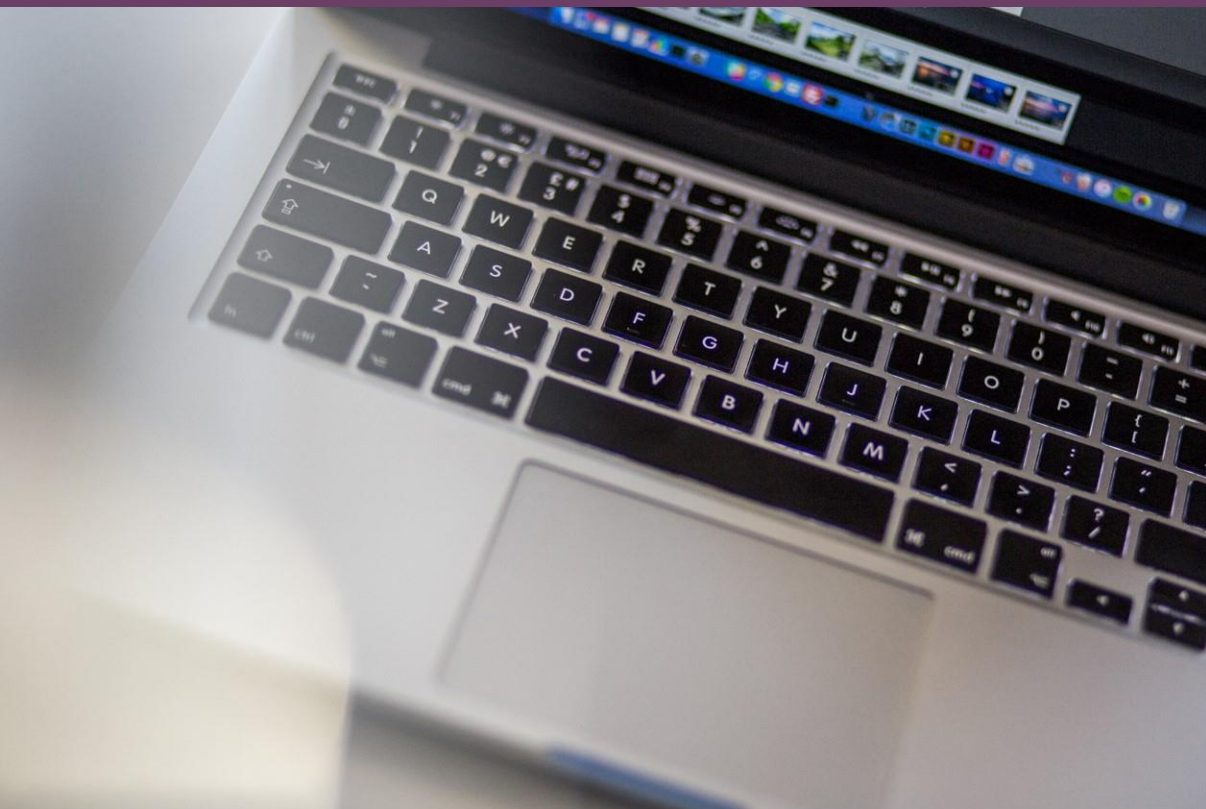


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# Job Help Services

- ✓ Resume Writing
- ✓ Personalized Job Search Help
- ✓ Interview Skills
- ✓ Classes and Programs



# Technology Training

- ✓ Tech Times
- ✓ Computer Classes
- ✓ One-one-One Instruction



# Winter 2015/2016

Hoping to offer the following workshops in the Winter

- ✓ CSB - Gap insurance
- ✓ DMV - ID services
- ✓ Health Department -Vital Checks
- ✓ SNAP- community service hours
- ✓ Veterans Administration- programs for vets
- ✓ Fireside Chat and coffee

Also may be partnering with a local church opening a Self Sufficient Center one day a week.

- ✓ Computers available for job searching
- ✓ Reference librarians may teach computer classes
- ✓ Skills room



Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography

# Possibilities

- ✓ Resource fairs
- ✓ Early Literacy classes in shelters
- ✓ Job Help in shelters
- ✓ More staff engagement
- ✓ ID services
- ✓ Health assessments
- ✓ Stronger partnerships
- ✓ Meal programs
- ✓ Adult Literacy/GED programs



Photo Credit: Robert Fields, LeggWork Photography



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# Discussion

## ✓ Policies

- Bags
- Sleeping
- Eating

## ✓ Programs

## ✓ Partnerships

- Health Department
- Human/Social Services
- Homeless Coalitions
- Nonprofits

Chesapeake Community Health Assessment 2015

<http://www.theplanningcouncil.org/pdfs/ChesapeakeCommunityHealthAssessment-2015.pdf>

Communities in Need: innovations in Service and Design for Connecting Users with Social Services, *LLAMA & The California Library Association*

The State of Permanent Supportive Housing in the Commonwealth of Virginia

<http://www.vceh.org/extras/Final%20Report.pdf>

2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

Virginia's Homeless Crisis Response System: The State of Virginia's Continuum of Care 2013

<http://www.vceh.org/extras/VCEHCoCReportFINAL.pdf>