How to Start a Device Lending Program for Library Patrons

WiFi Hotspots, Chromebooks, Laptops, and Tablets

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Types of Device Lending Programs

Adult Patrons

The digital divide impacts patrons across the community, including those living in rural areas, older adults, refugees, individuals experiencing homelessness, and more.

Start a lending program that allows any patron (18 years and older) to check-out a device to connect to online resources outside the library - telehealth services, career opportunities, and other digital resources.

Integrate Into Existing Programs

While device lending can be a stand-alone service, it can also be incorporated into existing or future programs, including:

- Digital Literacy Programs for Older Adults
- Refugee & Migrant Programs
- STEM Programs for Students
- Patrons Impacted by Incarceration (Learn More)

Youth Services

Nearly 12 million school-aged youth still do not have access to reliable, high-speed Internet access at home. With the increase of digital tools in education and online learning, these students are struggling to succeed.

Start a lending program that allows students in your community to check-out a device to complete online assignments, access digital resources, and stay connected with their teachers and peers. You can require a valid school ID to check-out these devices.

Also consider implementing web filters to keep students safe and on-task. K-12 schools and districts are required to have CIPA-compliant (Children's Internet Protection Act) filters in place.

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WiFi Hotspots **Now an E-Rate Eligible Solution**

Mobile WiFi hotspots are one of the most popular devices libraries lend out to patrons to address the digital divide in their communities. These devices, allow a single patron to connect to the Internet outside the library via LTE.

This solution is ideal for patrons that have access to a device, such as a laptop or tablet, but are without reliable Internet access. These mobile hotspots can also be bundled with a laptop or tablet and provided to patrons through your lending program.

THE KAJEET DIFFERENCE: With Kajeet, hotspot devices arrive activated and kitted with a carrying case, charger, and quick start guide.

Chromebooks, Laptops, and Tablets

Devices such as Chromebooks, laptops, and tablets will enable patrons to access digital content outside the library, including eBooks, educational resources, telehealth services, career opportunities, and more.

These devices can also be bundled with a WiFi hotspot and provided to patrons through your lending program.

LTE-Enabled Chromebook, Laptops, and Tablets

LTE-enabled devices are the newest technology being leveraged by libraries to close the digital divide for patrons. This solution solves two challenges - providing a device to patrons and providing reliable access to the Internet (without bundling two devices for patrons).

These devices allow patrons to connect via a WiFi connection or via LTE.

THE KAJEET DIFFERENCE: With Kajeet, devices arrive activated on the network of your choice. You can even mix and match networks to ensure full coverage across your community.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

How long should the check-out period be for patrons to borrow devices?

It is common to establish a 2-week check-out period, but you can adjust this to better suit the needs of your library and patrons.

Which device types are best suited for which patrons?

The best way to select devices is to understand how your patrons are using them to access digital resources. Chromebooks are often ideal for K-12 students, while a laptop may be more suitable for college students that need access to Microsoft Office applications. For adults learning digital literacy skills, a tablet may work best.

For devices with built-in LTE, which networks get the best coverage in your community?

You may need to mix and match networks. Ideally you should work with a vendor that allows you to select multiple networks.

For devices with built-in LTE, how much data do you need to purchase?

If you don't plan on having any filters in place, you will most likely need an unlimited plan.

For devices with built-in LTE, how will you handle filters and security?

Many libraries prefer not to put any filters in place (unless devices are specifically for youth and student services). However, you may want to set some parameters to save on data costs and to keep devices more secure. This can include blocking malware and viruses.

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Starting with a Pilot Program

When starting a device lending program, many libraries start with 20 - 100 devices (depending on the size of your library and number of members).

This allows you to get a better idea of the need within your community — such as which devices are checked-out by patrons and how often.

Marketing Your Program

Experience has taught us that simply adding devices to your lending program will not ensure that your patrons are fully aware of the program.

PHYSICAL POSTERS & FLYERS

- Library building
- K-12 school buildings
- Adult education centers
- Community centers
- Homeless shelters
- Domestic violence shelters

DIGITAL PROMOTION

- Post frequently on your social media channels to remind patrons about your program.
- Encourage other community organizations and stakeholders to post about your program on their social media channels (such as the school district or local government officals).
- Have a dedicated page on your website with details about the devices you offer through your lending program. Check out this example from the Miami-Dade Public Library System.

Sharing the Results

To ensure funding after the initial purchase of devices, or to justify expanding your program, sharing the results with staff, patrons, the community at large is key.

- Here are some stats and insights you can share:
- How many devices are checked out
- How long your wait-list is (if applicable)
- Engagement improvements for existing programs that have since implemented device lending

With Kajeet you can also get insights into device usage. This allows you to report out on what types of sites and applications are being accessed. This is helpful if you are trying to show that patrons are using the devices to access resources that are a focus within your library or within a certain program.

Ready to Get Started?

Kajeet has helped thousands of librarys, schools, and community organizations start device lending programs with our complete wireless solutions.

Our solutions include kitted devices, data plans, built-in security, and a platform to manage it all.

Contact us to learn more about how we can help your library implement a digital equity initiative. We can answer any questions you may have about devices, data plans, network coverage, funding and more.

Email: tellus@kajeet.com
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