

# THE LIBRARY... EMPOWERING AMERICANS

## The library empowers Americans with alternatives to spending

Americans are using libraries more in this challenging economic environment—a lot more.

To make ends meet, economically impacted Americans have reduced spending on leisure activities and entertainment, with the most substantial decreases in dining out and apparel. They buy fewer books, CDs and DVDs, and spend less on entertainment.

Library use fills the gap created by spending reductions.

More than a third (37%) of economically impacted respondents said they are using the library more often than they did before the economic downturn. Increased library use is substantially higher than any other lifestyle activity increase measured.

**13 million** economically impacted Americans—that is more than the populations of New York, Chicago and Houston combined—are using the library more during the challenging economic time.

One area where Americans have not cut back: cell phones and Internet access to stay connected. The majority did not change Internet, cable television, landline or mobile phone services. Americans will sacrifice other spending to stay connected.

Noneconomically impacted Americans use the library more, too. Sixteen percent (16%) of these respondents—or **23 million** nonimpacted Americans—cite an increase in library use. Library use is the lifestyle activity with the largest increase for all Americans.

We explore highlights from our data about Americans, economically impacted or not, who have increased their library use due to the economic environment.

ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED

### Consumer spending has decreased.

**76%**

have reduced spending on books, CDs and DVDs.

### The library fills the gap.

**75%**

who use the library more borrow books, CDs and DVDs instead of purchasing.

### Library usage has increased.

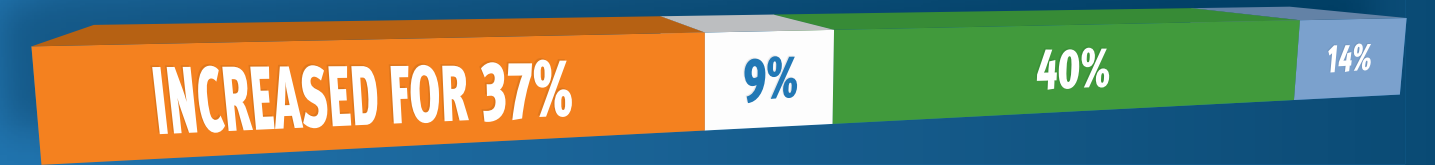
ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED

## Library use soars

Economically impacted Americans are using the library more—a lot more.

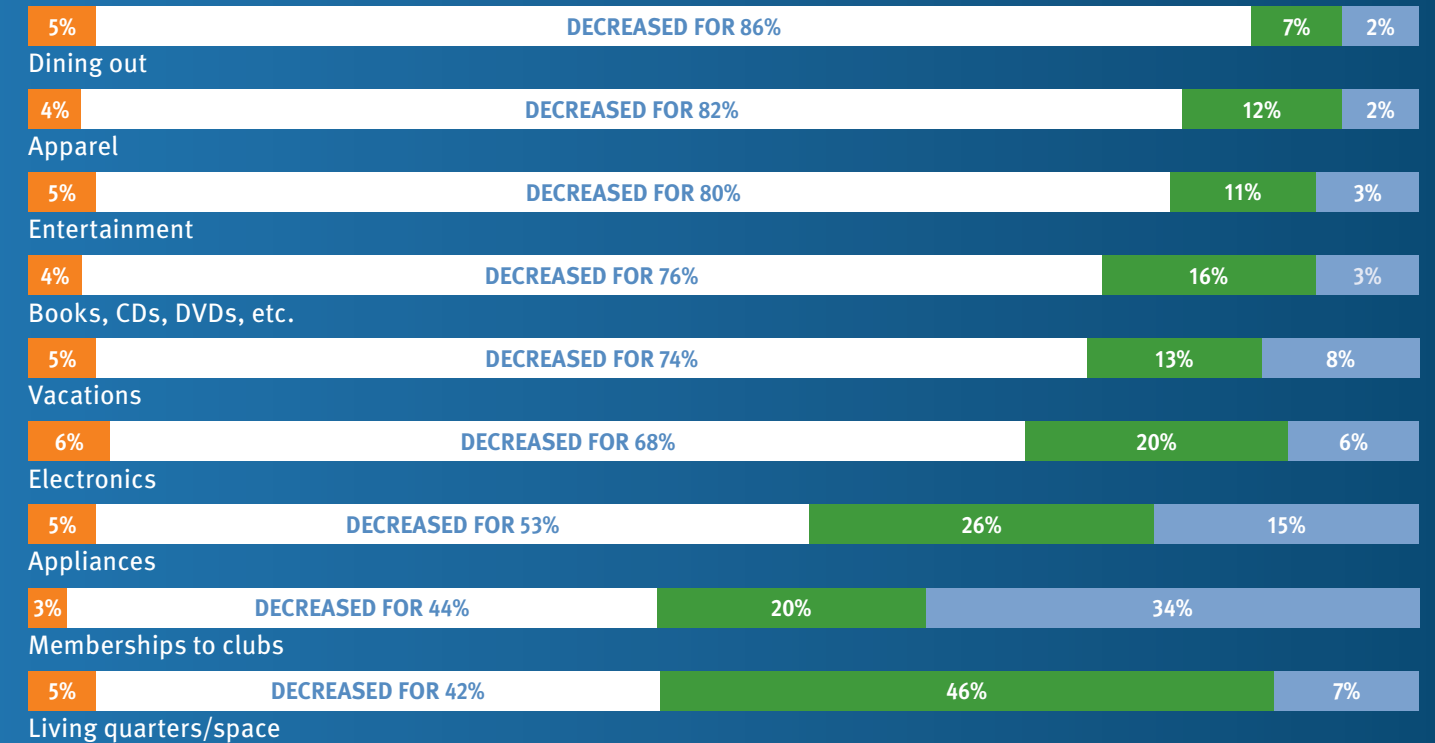
### Library use

■ INCREASED ■ DECREASED ■ NO CHANGE ■ NOT APPLICABLE

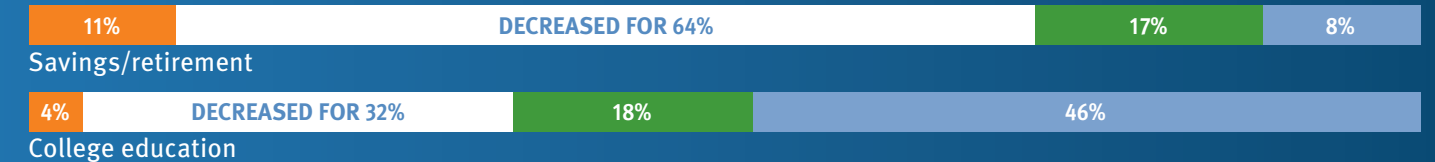


### Economically impacted Americans are making lifestyle changes due to the economy

#### Americans are cutting back



#### Americans aren't saving as much



#### Americans are staying connected



## The library empowers Americans with technology

Libraries provide access to technology for those hit hardest by the recession. More than half of economically impacted Americans who increased their library use—7 million—turn to the library more often to access technology. Free Internet and Wi-Fi access and computer use are particularly important. Economically impacted Americans use these library resources more often—at twice the rate of nonimpacted library users.

Economically impacted Americans who are using the library for computer and Internet access find real economic value in these offerings. Over half (63%) indicated they would not be likely to pay for computer/Internet access elsewhere if the library did not offer it. For most, it is their only alternative.

**7 MILLION**  
economically impacted  
Americans have  
increased their use  
of technology at  
the library.

## Technology at the library empowers

Americans who have increased their library use are...	ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED	NOT IMPACTED
Borrowing books, CDs, DVDs, etc., more often	91%	79%
<b>Accessing the Internet for free more often</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Reading magazines more often	29%	23%
<b>Using the computer more often</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Accessing the free Wi-Fi (wireless Internet) more often</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Seeking public assistance information more often	24%	2%
Completing/submitting job applications more often	20%	0%
Seeking college-related information more often	19%	4%
Attending workshops/training classes more often	18%	6%
Helping family/friends find jobs more often	18%	2%

## Economically impacted Americans are using the library to find jobs, and—for the first time—they are also...

- Using the computer
- Applying for local, state or federal aid (excluding unemployment)
- Attending a meeting/community event
- Attending child-related events
- Attending professional/career development/training classes
- Seeking unemployment information
- Reading magazines

“I have two pretty [bad] jobs and can use some help from other sources to find a new job. The library is perfect for such a task.”

47-YEAR-OLD, ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED AMERICAN

## The library empowers Americans to revive careers

Libraries are vital in providing employment resources to the economically impacted. A third rely on library resources more often, or are using the library for the first time, for assistance in reviving careers. Career-related activities conducted at the library more frequently since the economic downturn include:

- Submitting job applications
- Seeking college-related information
- Seeking public assistance
- Helping family or friends find jobs
- Attending educational workshops.

The library is essential for job-related activities, such as seeking assistance in preparing a resume and for finding general job information, for a third (33%) of those who have experienced a job impact—or 4.4 million economically impacted Americans. Many library users also say that their library provides a place to think about their future and prepare for what is next.

Americans rely on their library for job-seeking activities. Fifty percent (50%) of the economically impacted using the library for job-related activities would not be likely to pay for these services elsewhere if the library did not provide them.

## And, the library empowers beyond technology and careers

Economically impacted Americans are using the library more frequently for technology, careers and much more—discovering and using many of the more traditional resources for the first time. Economically impacted Americans are 50% more likely to visit the library weekly compared with those not impacted by the economy (18% vs. 12%). First-time library activities among the economically impacted include reading magazines, attending children’s events and participating in community meetings.