



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **Oakland Public Library**

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Oakland Public Library Lets You “Check Out the Internet” with New Hotspot Lending Program

Oakland, CA – The Oakland Public Library (OPL) has implemented a new program offering WiFi hotspots for check-out to help bridge the digital divide and give Oakland residents access to the internet where they need it.

According to the Pew Research Center, home broadband access has reached a plateau. “On one hand, Americans...are increasingly likely to view home broadband as a key tool for accessing information that is important to their lives. But at the same time, the monthly cost of broadband service is now cited...as the most important reason for not having a home broadband subscription.” For more details from this study, see <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/>.

The Oakland Public Library believes their new program can help.

Funded by a generous grant from the Friends of the Oakland Public Library, these mobile hotspots from Sprint can be borrowed from the Melrose and West Oakland Branches of OPL by any OPL cardholder in good standing. The hotspots provide mobile internet access at no cost to the library patron.

The library is also providing hotspots to Hack the Hood, an award-winning local non-profit organization, for an extended period of time. Hack the Hood introduces low-income youth of color to careers in tech by hiring and training them to build websites for real small businesses in their own communities. The hotspots provided by the library are offered in support of these goals.

As Library Director Gerry Garzon says, “With this new program, we hope to reach youth who might not have access to the internet at home, people who need access to apply for a job or housing, or just anyone who wants to connect in all the ways that many of us take for granted. We live in a diverse community with a variety of information needs, and bringing solutions from the library out to where folks are is part of the OPL mission.”

Hotspots are the latest in a growing list of non-traditional items that library users can borrow from OPL. The library also lends out bike repair kits and bike locks, toys, seeds, tools, and e-readers.

For more information, please visit <http://oaklandlibrary.org/hotspots>, contact Sharon McKellar, Community Relations Librarian, at 238-3513 or smckellar@oaklandlibrary.org; or Mary Schrader, Supervising Librarian for Special Projects, at 510-238-6720 or mschrader@oaklandlibrary.org.

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