

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **OUTDOOR WI-FI NOW AVAILABLE AT ESPL LIBRARIES**



ACCOMAC, VIRGINIA – July 27, 2020) Free outdoor public Wi-Fi has just expanded! Eastern Shore Public Libraries in Accomac and Nassawadox now have improved Wi-Fi signals in the library parking lots. Public library Wi-Fi is free and open to the public. Library e-resources and more are available from the comfort and personal space of your car. Funding for this increased broadband access was made possible with a grant from the Public Libraries Association and Microsoft Corporation.

The Public Library Association (PLA) and Microsoft are working together to increase access to technology in rural communities during the COVID-19 crisis. In April 2020, Microsoft provided \$120,000 to help public libraries in rural communities with hardware and support to install public Wi-Fi access points on or near library grounds. Libraries have been and continue to be essential to the nation's digital safety net, connecting communities to the internet and teaching computer skills.

Through this grant opportunity, PLA and Microsoft hope to accelerate the ability of libraries, particularly those in underserved areas, to locate Wi-Fi access points outside the library. These new access points help rural libraries increase access to the internet while maintaining the health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only rural libraries in specific counties were eligible. This project aligns with Microsoft's efforts to close the broadband gap. PLA and Microsoft targeted resources at libraries that may not otherwise have capacity to purchase and install public access points.

Public Wi-Fi is also available outside the Chincoteague Island Library through a Broadband Authority project. To learn more about Eastern Shore Public Library's online resources or to register for a library card online, go to [espl.org](http://espl.org) or call the library at 757-787-3400.

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