



CENIC connects California to the world – advancing education and research statewide by providing a world-class network essential for innovation, collaboration, and economic growth.

86M+

Visits to libraries in 2023-24

86%

of Libraries connect to CalREN

8.3M+

Users of public Internet connections

California Public Libraries and CENIC

Libraries in more than 80% of California library jurisdictions connect to CENIC's California Research and Education Network.

CENIC is a nonprofit organization created in 1996 by California's research and education community to provide themselves with the most advanced networking and support designed to meet their unique needs. We connect California's research and education institutions to one another and to resources and colleagues around the globe, with an estimated 20 million Californians using our services.

CENIC is governed by our Charter Associates, which include the California Public Libraries, the University of California system, the California State University system, California's Community Colleges, the California K-12 system, and independent universities Caltech, Stanford University, the University of Southern California, and the Naval Postgraduate School. Other members include scientific and cultural institutions, hospitals and specialized medical institutions, space and environmental research organizations, and Tribal nations.

Libraries in Action with CENIC

Libraries are unique among knowledge-driven institutions in that they serve people of all walks of life and of all ages—from preschoolers to senior citizens—by connecting them with resources they need to participate in and contribute to society, such as job searches, online classes and training, telehealth, cultural events, and other assets that improve their lives.

Before joining CENIC, three-quarters of California's libraries had very slow Internet connections—at or below 20 Megabits per second (Mbps), far slower than many private homes. For two-thirds of libraries, these connections would fill to capacity soon after opening their doors for the day.

Now, after a decade of CENIC membership, many libraries are connected to the Internet at game-changing speeds 10 to 100 times faster than before that would not otherwise be affordable to them. Of the 968 libraries connected to CalREN either directly or behind a directly connected main branch, most connect at speeds between 1–5 Gbps, with over 80 connecting at 10 Gbps and three at 100 Gbps. In fact, the Los Angeles Public Library was the first public library in the world with a 100 Gbps connection.

Without CENIC, this level of connectivity would simply not be possible for libraries without tough or even impossible trade-offs.

CENIC membership also allows libraries to overcome any limitations presented by their physical infrastructure. In some library systems, older buildings make it difficult to maintain reliable, on-site network infrastructure. However, improved connectivity through CENIC has opened the door to cloud-based solutions that provide greater flexibility and resilience.



Did you know?

CENIC Helps Connect You to the Funding You Need

Before CENIC, over half of libraries were not taking full advantage of federal and state telecommunications discounts: E-Rate and the California Teleconnect Fund. Now, CENIC facilitates E-Rate discounts from 20% to 90% on one-time and recurring costs for Internet access and upgrades. CENIC also applies for the California Teleconnect Fund discount for monthly recurring costs, which is 50% after applicable E-Rate discounts.

With these improvements, Californians of all ages can trust their libraries to provide a high level of connectivity to online resources worldwide as well as a robust, best-in-class network path to California K–12 schools, institutions of higher learning, cultural and healthcare institutions, and more.

California's Public Libraries Connected to CalREN



CENIC partners with national and international research and educational, governmental, and commercial networks to expand access, working to support broad public access to the educational, research, and cultural assets that position California for a prosperous future.

Positioning California for the Future

California's leaders are dedicated to solving many pressing issues confronting the world, and California's Public Libraries in partnership with CENIC are critical to this. Libraries play a part by connecting all socio-economic groups with digital assets of all kinds and increasing online literacy through digital navigator programs that teach people how to make the most of these resources. To achieve this, robust, future-facing broadband connectivity, uniquely responsive network support, opportunities for collaboration across segments, and a meaningful voice in governance and policy are a necessity.

Digital Education and Broadband Access: A Shared Mission

Libraries connect everyone in California to resources that enable full participation in modern society, making broadband access, and adoption a central part of their missions. It's a central part of the CENIC mission as well. CENIC offers many opportunities for all members to learn from one another and collaborate on programs that promote broadband adoption and impactful use of digital resources. We design and create broadband solutions for all Californians including those with little to no broadband access, and we represent broadband access and related policy interests at the state and even federal level as well.

Did you know?

CENIC is Governed by its Members

As Charter Associates, libraries are represented on the CENIC Board of Directors along with other Charter Associates and participate extensively in decision-making. All members may choose to participate in committees, advisory councils, and events that spur collaboration with other segments on not only networking but also educational and research opportunities, broadband adoption program development, funding, last-mile connectivity solutions, and more.

Did you know?

Around-the-Clock Network Support Tailored for You

Libraries also enjoy support from CENIC's 24/7 Network Operations Center, staffed by highly trained network engineers with over 25 years of experience working with our segments to create bespoke solutions that address and scale to each segment's unique needs.