



## The value of libraries

In this chapter community foundation leaders support their local libraries. Yet in many communities journalism classes and library media programs at the high school and college level can be cut to save money.

### Activities for students:

**Flashlight:** Consider this report on the [success of high school journalism students](#). Discuss in class. What is it about media skills that helps these students succeed academically? Could digital media skills similarly be linked to the success of a community? Where do people go to learn those skills?

**Spotlight:** Read this press release about [California joining a program to advance 21<sup>st</sup> century skills](#). Find the latest statistics on school budget cuts in that state. Focus on libraries and journalism programs. If possible, compare funding levels for these programs over the last 20 years. Discuss the implications on student achievement.

**Searchlight:** Ask students to read this paper by Susan Montgomery and Jonathan Miller, ["The Third Place: the library as collaborative and community space in a time of fiscal restraint"](#) (2011, *Faculty Publications*, Paper 32.) With other research as needed, ask students to write an opinion column on the state of libraries in their community. Give students the extra-credit option of publishing or posting their stories or sending them directly to the libraries.

**Further Research:** Ask students to explore public versus private school funding. How many students now attend private schools compared to public? Imagine two students: one a male at the poverty level attending a Los Angeles public school, the other a female from a wealthy family attending New York's top private school. Will their educational experiences be equal? Does this framing put public school budget cuts in a different light?