

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### News Release

#### ***Kern County Library Receives \$75K Grant to Fund Wired Furniture & Digital Literacy Workshops***

Do you need to learn how to use excel? Is your mobile device's battery sucked dry? The Kern County Library (KCL) has received a \$75K Library Services and Technology grant from the California State Library to start a pilot project at KCL's three busiest libraries: Beale Memorial Library, Ridgecrest Branch Library, & Southwest Branch Library. Starting this Fall, KCL will be offering digital literacy workshops, portable chargers and Chromebooks for in-house checkout, and wired furniture at these three library locations.

According to the countywide Kern County Library Community Survey, conducted in October – December 2015, two priorities were identified by Kern County residents. Community members are interested in seating and tables to plug in devices and more technology training and workshops. The aim of the “We Tech So You Tick” grant is to address the needs outlined by the community in the survey through the enhancement of Kern County Library facilities.

Digital literacy and online access have become a necessity for daily life and job-related tasks. Yet, as many as 31% of homes in California still do not have broadband internet connections at home, with statistics showing that Latinos and older residents are much less likely to utilize broadband than other demographic groups. According to the same study, younger, more educated, and wealthier adults are most likely to stay connected. Taking into consideration Kern County's largely Hispanic population and the direct correlation between access and income, dire statistics indicate that there is a lack of access among the majority of Kern County residents.

This project aims to close that divide and bring technology to these three Kern County communities.

*For more information about the Kern County Library & its services,  
visit [kerncountylibrary.org](http://kerncountylibrary.org).*