
Press and Publicity Report

J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 5





PUEBLO VOICES | JAYSON PETERS

Pueblo continues to Grow With Google

A partnership with tech giant Google brought valuable digital career curriculum resources to Pueblo County residents last year. Now the community will have even more time to take advantage of those resources.

The Grow With Google program, which offers courses for earning career certificates in an array of technology-related fields, has been extended through the end of 2025, according to the Pueblo City-County Library District.

The length of the courses can vary, but they typically take from three to six months to complete, with five to 10 hours of study per week. It's all online and at your own pace, though. All that's required is access to a computer, and much of the work can be completed on other personal mobile devices.

I write here from experience: I recently completed the course track in project management and received my certificate ahead of the original December 2024 deadline. The certificate is a file that's easy

to share or display on a digital portfolio or résumé.

In addition to foundational project management principles and a capstone virtual project, I learned about many problem solving strategies and people skills I can apply to current projects as a website designer.

And with artificial intelligence creeping into everything, the course I took had an AI assistant that helped me with practice questions and clarifications; it also had a module exploring the use and role of AI tools in the workplace.

“Google extended our access, and we're thrilled to be able to continue to offer these scholarships as a result,” said Lev Frank, PCCLD's adult literacy administrator in the user services department.

With a free PCCLD library card, the Google Career Certificates you can pursue in English include:

- IT support
- Project management
- User experience (UX) design
- IT automation with Python
- Business intelligence
- Cybersecurity

- Advanced data analytics
- Digital marketing and e-commerce

The IT support certificate course is available in Spanish and Portuguese, with more courses in other languages possible in the future.

“There's also a more basic data analytics class that you might take if you're less familiar with data analytics and don't want to start with the advanced data analytics course,” Frank added.

Normally, Google Career Certificates aren't free; on top of the significant investment of time involved, there's a cost for certification. Anyone can take the class, but certificates usually require a monthly fee through the learning platform Coursera. However, a Pueblo library card entitles you to a scholarship application that, at least in my case, was approved swiftly.

Frank said nearly 300 learners have enrolled in at least one course through the Grow With Google program, with many choosing to enroll in more.

“Our hope is that through providing this resource, we will enable patrons to mate-

rially improve their lives, to learn things they're interested in, and to find joy through that learning,” he said.

Of course it sounds easy, but you still have to dig in and do the work. There are online study groups and class discussions to connect learners for encouragement and support.

Frank wants the community to know they can reach out if they need help with the Google program or are interested in becoming part of the library's adult literacy programs.

“We offer support for adult learners at all levels and with all sorts of goals, and we also offer opportunities to volunteer as a tutor for those interested in supporting adult learning,” he said.

To learn more or sign up for the scholarship program, grab your library card and visit www.pueblolibrary.org/GrowWith-Google



Seeds, tools, bikes: You can borrow more than books at Colorado public libraries

Through Denver Public Library, you can check out items from Denver Tool Library and even get free passes to state parks and museums

By Mindy Sink | Special to The Denver Post

UPDATED: January 17, 2025 at 3:57 PM MST

Browsing through the stacks for the latest bestseller or a treasured tome will always be the main reason to visit a public library, but there are some newer reasons, too. Some public libraries have expanded their rental offerings beyond books.

It is truly incredible what you can check out from a library – a bike! a guitar! seeds! backpacks! You can even use your library card in the community to expand your knowledge and experience.

To get the most out of them, have a current library card and clear up any fines. Always return your items on time so the others in the community can benefit from these opportunities, too.

Check out (pun intended) these Colorado

libraries for their special sections:

Denver Public Library

When I think of the Denver Public Library and its many branches, I think of story time for kids and leaving with a stack of books to curl up with at home. I was surprised to learn that it also has a “Library of Things” for cardholders to rent things like Chromebooks (for up to three months!), bicycle repair kits (checkout onsite for two hours only), sewing machines (from the Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales branch only), and power check meters.

Plus, you can use your library card for “one carload” of people to visit a Colorado State Park or a local museum. Participating institutions include the American Museum of Western Art, the Clyfford Still Museum, the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Butterfly Pavilion, and several more places. Check with the museum first to see if a reservation is needed, and make sure you take your library card and current identification.

You can use your Denver Public Library card to set up a membership with the Denver Tool Library and rent a tool for up to a week. You must have a membership to use the Denver Tool Library, which start at \$150 per year — a bargain considering what just one lawn mower or air compressor or sander might cost.

Phone-a-story is a different type of library service: You can dial a number listed on the library website and listen to a story based on the age and preferred language of the listener. For example, “for a preschool story in Spanish, press 1,” or “for a song, story, or rhyme in Amharic, press 7.” The stories, read by local volunteers, are updated weekly so you might hear a Denver City Council member or former Denver Nuggets player reading.

Pueblo County

In Pueblo, the main Rawlings Library, part of the Pueblo City-County Library District, includes a Hispanic Resource Center. According to its website, this is for “all who wish to expand their awareness and knowledge of Hispanic Culture and History.” The center includes an art gallery with work by local and Hispanic artists, a Citizenship Corner, weekly bilingual storytime, bilingual staff and materials.

At the Pueblo West Library, you will find the Music Box, a small professional recording studio that is available by reservation. The Lucero Library in Pueblo has Studio 1315 for recording sessions, also by reservation. Basically, you are renting or checking out time from the library here. The Rawlings Library has a Digital Memory Lab where you can digitize photos and videos. Need one-on-one tech support? The library also offers this service for cardholders.

Telluride

Library card holders can check out an assortment of unusual non-book items from the Wilkinson Public Library in Telluride. (Mindy Sink, Special to The Denver Post)

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Wilkinson Public Library in Telluride has an expansive and well-organized “Unusual Items” department on its main level. Currently available items for loan to library card holders include a steam cleaner, trekking poles, an air compressor, a vlogging setup, a hiking backpack, an electric guitar, a violin, an assortment of tools, and much more. Imagine rolling up in Telluride and just bor-

rowing a backpack and poles for a hike!

Mesa County

Mesa County libraries in Grand Junction have “take-and-make kits” for all ages available for checkout. The kits are released quarterly with different themes such as “handmade lavender soap for 19+” and “fall leaf hedgehog for little kids, ages 3-5.”

The libraries also have a Library of Things that is fairly tech-heavy with pre-loaded Launchpad tablets for kids and teens, wireless lapel microphones, portable CD and DVD players, LED lights, selfie stick tripods, along with some other old-school items like board games and an activity kit for people living with dementia that includes a painting kit and card game.

Poudre County

The Poudre libraries in Fort Collins and surrounding areas have a “Gadgets & Things” section filled with popular options like crochet kits, telescope kits, FitBits, Chrome-books and more. There are Discover Packs for exploring Larimer County Open Spaces nearby that include maps, a brochure about water safety regulations, a book about wildflowers, and a parking pass. The Curiosity Pass is for use by Poudre River Public Library District resident library card-holders who want to explore local attractions like the Gardens on Spring Creek, the Loveland Museum, the Museum of Art Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, and other places.

Garfield County

Garfield County libraries in Carbondale, Glenwood Springs, and beyond have their own Library of Things that also include STEM kits for “multisensory learning.” An adult library card-holder needs to be the one checking out the kit and it is for one week only.

The State Parks Pass Kit includes a backpack

with the necessary entrance pass, brochures and binoculars. (Be warned: The consequences for not returning this kit are more severe than an overdue book: a lost or stolen kit results in a \$150 fine and a possible report to local law enforcement.)

At the Glenwood Springs branch of this library system, you can check out a guitar along with an instructional book to learn how to play and select some favorite new songs.

Pikes Peak libraries

The Pikes Peak Library District in and around Colorado Springs has a seed library. There are six garden locations, and two of these — High Prairie Seed Library and Manitou Seed Library — allow people to check out seeds (three packets per family per month) to grow at home or donate seeds for the collection. There are books (of course!), and classes to help beginner and expert gardeners find their green thumbs.

Boulder

Remember B-cycle? While it has disappeared from Denver streets, it lives on in Boulder, and you can use your library card to check out a bike to get around town. There is a bit of digital paperwork to complete online first, but once you have signed up you can find a docking station through the app and head out on an electric bike thanks to the library.

The Boulder Public Library also has a seed library that includes seed swaps and accepts donations, along with the lending (or giving?) out of native plant, vegetable and herb seeds. In addition, the library has an edible learning garden on site for people to learn more about the seeds.

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Originally Published: January 17, 2025 at 6:00 AM MST