



AASPIRE

# Healthcare Toolkit

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## Computer and Internet Access

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# Computer and Internet Access: Computer and Internet Access

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[www.aaspire.org](http://www.aaspire.org)

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## 1 What is this topic about?

The AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit includes tips on using the Internet to search for healthcare providers and online links to other information about health, healthcare, and your community. In addition, the Autism Healthcare Accommodations Report can only be used online. This topic is about how to access a computer and Internet service when you don't have a computer or Internet service. We hope some of the tips in this section will be helpful to people who want to use these resources but do not have good Internet access of their own. This information talks about using a computer to access the Internet. Smart phones, tablets, and other devices will work just as well as a computer.

## 2 Where can I access a computer with Internet service for free or for a small fee?

- **Share a computer** with family, friends, or neighbors. Others might share their computer and Internet service in exchange for something like babysitting, house sitting, yard work, walking their dog, or taking out their trash. Be careful about doing banking or shopping online when you're sharing Internet service. Make sure you fully trust the person or people you're sharing with.

- **Libraries** often provide computers and free access to the Internet as part of their mission to meet the information needs of their communities. Computers and free Internet access are available in many libraries.
- **High school and university computer labs** are usually available to students. If you're a student, you can probably access a computer and the Internet for free at school. If you're not a student, ask your local community college if they offer computer lab hours to the public. Be sure to ask if there's a fee.
- **Parks and recreation centers** may require you to have a recreation pass to use any of the facilities, including computer labs, if they are offered. Fees for center passes vary depending on whether you live in or outside the zone the center serves.
- **Community centers** are similar to parks and recreation centers. Many community centers will charge a small fee for in-district visitors.
- **Senior centers** often offer computer labs and classes. Some don't require you to be a senior, and others might have a small annual charge for use of the computers. Check with the senior center in your community to see if it has computers for public use and to find out if you can use them.
- **Career centers**, if your community has one, might have computers, printers, Internet access, telephones, and fax machines at no cost. These centers are usually meant to be used for job banks, resume design, and employment research.
- **Non-profit and government agencies** might have additional resources. If you receive services from a local nonprofit or government agency, ask if there are computers available for use as part of the program.

### 3 I already own a computer. Where can I access Internet service for free or for a small fee?

- **Free Internet Service Providers (ISPs)**; for example, [NetZero](#) offers up to 10 hours a month for free. [AOL](#) offers new customers free access for one month. [The Free Site](#) has a list of free Internet access providers.
- **Share an ISP** with family, friends, or neighbors. Others might share their Internet service in exchange for something like babysitting, house sitting, yard work, walking their dog, or taking out their trash. Be careful about doing banking or shopping online when you're sharing Internet service: make sure you fully trust the person or people you're sharing with.
- **Free Wi-Fi** is offered by many cafes, bookstores, and coffee houses. Make a purchase, such as a small cup of coffee, and then ask the salesperson or associate if a password is needed to access the Internet. In some places, you may be able to get Wi-Fi without making a purchase. For example, some shopping malls, community centers, or libraries have free Wi-Fi.
- **Airports and hotels** sometimes offer free Internet service to customers. This is handy when you're traveling. Some hotels and airports charge a fee for Wi-Fi privileges.

### 4 Summary

Some places to access free or low-cost computers with internet access are:

- Libraries
- School computer labs
- Parks, recreation centers, and community centers

- Senior centers
- Career centers
- Non-profit and government agencies

Some ways to get fee or low-cost Internet access if you already have a computer are:

- Free Internet Service Providers
- Sharing an ISP with others
- Using free Wi-Fi offered by a business
- Using Wi-Fi in airports and hotels while traveling