

# LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS IN FERGUSON

LIBRARIES ADVANCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP across the United States. With the relevant technology, resources, and staff expertise, libraries are well-equipped to support entrepreneurs and local small businesses in conducting market research, developing business plans, gaining access to emerging technologies, and sustaining small business amidst economic uncertainty. America's libraries have a critical role in addressing inequities in economic opportunity.



**Libraries Build Business** is a national initiative of the American Library Association, supported by Google.org, to partner with a cohort of 13 public libraries. The cohort will build local capacity and expand services for small businesses and entrepreneurs with a focus on businesses owned by people from low-income and underrepresented groups, such as Black, Latinx, and women-owned businesses. With the goal of identifying promising practices and models for library-led entrepreneurship initiatives, the cohort, in collaboration with the ALA project team, will develop and evaluate practical resources for the field to ultimately scale successful entrepreneurship programs in the nearly 17,000 public libraries.

Representing 12 states and including rural and tribal, urban, and suburban communities, the cohort will create a playbook of promising models and lessons learned available to all public libraries across the country.

## The Entrepreneur and Job Skills Center Provides Equity and Access to Local Entrepreneurs

The Ferguson Municipal Public Library (FMPL), located in Ferguson, MO, is creating the **Entrepreneur and Job Skills Center**, a business and job skills center within the library to assist local entrepreneurs, small businesses, and job seekers in accessing information, creating business documents, and printing marketing materials. These opportunities and business resources have been impossible to find within Ferguson due to mobility constraints and lack of available resources. The Entrepreneur and Job Skills Center is designed to support entrepreneurs with technology, equipment, and resources to grow skills, start businesses, and market products and services in the community. The Center will include a collection of business and job resources in both print and digital formats, a poster printer and laminator available for patron use, and a meeting area with media table, laptops, and tablets for in-house use. FMPL will also host local area business experts and organizations for educational programs and mentorship, as well as connect with and work alongside the City of Ferguson's Small Business Association to provide assistance and access to needed resources and opportunities. Librarians are available for one-to-one job skills training, document development, and marketing support, as well as to assist with resources and technology.



**Ferguson Municipal Public Library**  
Ferguson, Missouri  
Rachelle Brandel  
[rbrandel@fergusonlibrary.net](mailto:rbrandel@fergusonlibrary.net)  
[www.ferguson.lib.mo.us](http://www.ferguson.lib.mo.us)  
314.521.4820