

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS IN PROVIDENCE



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.

Small Business Hub Provides Wrap Around Support for Local Small Businesses

Providence Public Library (PPL) has long supported our local small business community by providing entrepreneurs and those in the aspirational stages of business ownership the holistic education and resources necessary to achieve success. The support of the Libraries Build Business grant allows us to enhance our **Small Business Hub** offerings to the community, including:

- **Expanding our free counseling** and Small Business Support workshops done in partnership with RI SCORE with additional resources such as virtual workshop components;
- **Creating a Small Business Center** on the PPL Website to serve as a resource hub and main point of access for our community;
- **Supporting our contextualized ESOL for Entrepreneurs classes**, which build participants' fundamental English skills concurrently with crucial business skills and knowledge;
- **Opening a 3,000 square foot makerspace** and education workshop managed by a Business Navigator staff person that participants can use to prototype product ideas;
- **Establishing a student Business Corps** of ESL learners who will partner with a University of Rhode Island researcher to design and survey local immigrant-owned businesses to evaluate needs, connect businesses to resources and strategies, and to further inform PPL's program design.



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