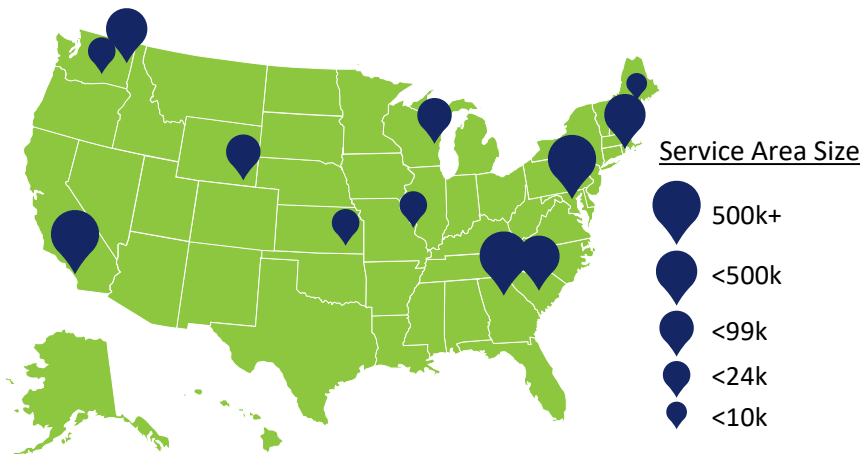


May-June 2020

**Libraries Build Business** is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), with the support of Google.org, with the goal to identify and scale successful entrepreneurship programs in public libraries across the U.S. and create learning resources for any library to support entrepreneurs in its community.

From May to June 2020, two focus groups were conducted with staff from 12 of the cohort's libraries to explore unique **challenges, solutions, and needs of small business programming** as a result of COVID-19. These libraries represented a diverse geography, service area, and service size. The following represents key findings which emerged from the study.



### CHALLENGES

- Local businesses are focusing most of their energies on **staying afloat** rather than accessing library resources.
- Nonprofit partnerships that deliver small business programming are faced with **funding challenges** and having to **pivot service delivery models**.

### SOLUTIONS

- Libraries are engaging in **peer learning** with other libraries.
- Partnership engagement has become **more proactive**.
- Although “not perfect solutions,” libraries are shifting to **virtual programming**, and some are utilizing **curbside services**.

### NEEDS

- Libraries have identified creative solutions to challenges but often need **increased funding** for these unforeseen costs. Additionally, libraries need **certainty in budgeting** for future years.
- Despite an availability of certain resources, usage is limited due to a **lack of awareness** from patrons. Libraries need **increased marketing and promotion**.
- Technological capacity** needs to increase, both in the resources libraries provide as well as expertise of library staff.

