LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS
ALA American Library Association

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INTRODUCTION TO THE LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

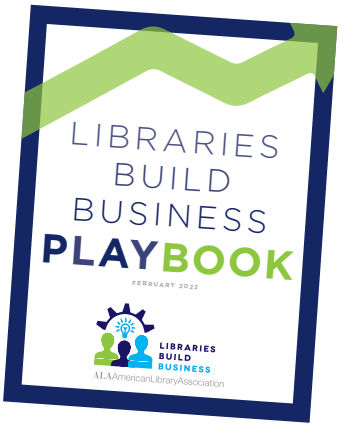
All libraries, no matter their size or budget, can support aspiring and existing small business owners and entrepreneurs. Public libraries have a long history of fostering equitable economic development, small businesses, and entrepreneurship in their community.

They excel at addressing many of the unseen barriers to economic advancement, even though libraries often do not frame their work in terms of its economic benefit. For example, in addition to providing programs and resources on business-related topics, libraries build digital skills; offer literacy, ESL, and GED classes; provide internet and technology access; support Green Card and citizenship application processes; connect people with affordable health care; offer early education programs; and provide youth of all economic backgrounds the opportunity to engage with STEAM learning. If you're reading this toolkit, you probably already understand how the library can play a role in supporting a thriving and equitable local economy. But does your community know it?

The library is an important stakeholder in business development, but not everyone knows what the library is already doing, or could be doing. This toolkit is here to help. It provides approaches to outreach you can use to connect with new partners, community leaders, funders, and program participants. As a result of using this toolkit, you should be better able to:

- **Educate** the business community and public about library business services
- **Change or expand** public perceptions of what the library has to offer businesses
- **Improve** the efficiency and effectiveness of library business services and programs, regardless of library size or budget

The toolkit can help you tailor how you talk about your goals, resources, and impact to appeal to a variety of stakeholders. You can leverage stories and resources from within your own programs, or borrow some from the **Libraries Build Business Playbook** or the **Libraries Build Business Initiative Highlights Report** to get started.



This toolkit is designed to help you confidently get the word out about the great work you are already doing in your community for four key audiences:

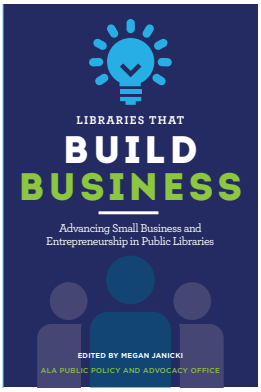
- Aspiring and existing small business owners/entrepreneurs (your target audience for your programs/services)
- Community leaders: elected officials, funders, and other stakeholders
- Potential partners: community organizations, non-profit organizations, and business support groups
- Library Administration: the library board, executive staff and leadership, friends groups, and other departments

The content in the toolkit is based on the knowledge gained through ALA's **Libraries Build Business** initiative. As part of a multi-year, $2 million dollar investment, ALA worked with a cohort of 13 public libraries from a diverse set of communities across the country. They collaborated to answer questions, engage in research, pilot projects, develop resources, and share these learnings

The St. Louis County Library in Missouri created the Small Business Value Calculator in 2018 in order to put a monetary value on the services they provide. To build the calculator, they listed all the small business services and resources they offer at the library and looked for what they would cost on the open market. Resources may include: marketing, demographic, industry, and consumer research; computers and technology; and classes and workshops. The staff totaled up the dollar value of using everything the library offers just once in a year and determined that the library was saving customers more than $13,000 each year. This piece of data catches the attention of business owners, community partners, and decision makers and helps to illustrate the great work the library is doing on small business development.

with the wider library community. LBB projects have impacted more than 15,000 small business owners and entrepreneurs across the United States, serving a range of entrepreneurs with a focus on BIPOC and marginalized groups, including individuals re-entering the workforce from jail or prison, primarily Spanish-speaking sidewalk vendors, rural entrepreneurs, tribal members, and minority-owned tech startups. Other deliverables from the project include:

- The **Libraries Build Business Initiative Highlights Report** highlights the key learnings and program elements of Libraries Build Business. It demonstrates how libraries can narrow economic divides and empower diverse entrepreneurs.
- The **Libraries Build Business Playbook** is a resource collaboratively developed by LBB cohort members to share practical resources and advice, promising strategies and models, and inspiration for programming and services for any library, no matter their size or budget, to adapt in their context. It will guide your library to a local program fit with resources including monitoring and evaluation tools that your library can use to track progress and drive impact; specific strategies to prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion; and accessible suggestions for getting started, building partnerships, and more.



- **Libraries that Build Business: Advancing Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Public Libraries**, edited by Megan Janicki (ALA Editions, 2022). This book collects 26 essays on a variety of real-world library programs and services. It provides an in-depth look at what libraries of all sizes and types around the country are doing, as well as tips for how you might adapt some of these ideas to your own community.
- Libraries Build Business Evaluation **Resource Guide** and **Case Study** are easy tools to walk you through using the Public Library Association's evaluation tool, **Project Outcome,** and the customized Libraries Build Business evaluation materials. Create a simple survey tailored to your library's small business or economic development program and get feedback to continuously improve.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY!

Libraries Build Business continues today with a peer coaching program and active Slack community for library workers. For the most up to date information on Libraries Build Business, visit the website at **ala.org/advocacy/workforce/grant**.

With all the great work underway at your library, it's not always easy to find time to focus on promotion, but outreach is critical to your success, sustainability, and growth. This toolkit is here to help you engage with community stakeholders and let your small business and economic development community know what the library can do.

TOOLKIT NAVIGATION QUIZ

I'm looking at this toolkit because...	Then you might want to start with...
I want to broaden the community's perception of the library.	*The sections you might want to look at first are* Elected Officials, Funders, and Community Leaders *and* Business Support Organizations*. Then look at* Library Staff*.*
I want to increase usage of my library's small resources or services.	*Start with the* Small Business Owners *and* Business Support Organizations *sections, then* Library Staff*.*
I want to learn more about what small business owners in my community need.	*Start with the* Small Business Owners *section, then look at* Business Support Organizations*.*
I want to encourage social, political, or funding support.	*Jump to* Elected Officials, Funders, and Community Leaders *and* Business Support Organizations*.*
I want to find community partners for my programs or services.	*Start with* Business Support Organizations*, then consider* Small Business Owners*.*

An event I'm trying to prepare for is...	Then you might want to start with...
A presentation to business owners, like a Chamber of Commerce lunch or meeting.	Small Business Owners
A presentation to other community stakeholders, like a community service group.	Business Support Organizations *or* Elected Officials, Funders, and Community Leaders *(depending on the composition of the group)*
A round table or coalition meeting, where I may share information informally.	Business Support Organizations *or* Elected Officials, Funders, and Community Leaders

An event I'm trying to prepare for is...		***Then you might want to start with...***
A meeting with a potential partner	→	Business Support Organizations
A meeting with a small business owner	→	Small Business Owners
No event—I'm just trying to generally increase awareness of the library's economic value and business resources.	→	Library Staff

My level of comfort talking about the library's business resources is...		***Then you might want to use this toolkit because...***
LOW I don't have a lot of experience with this or I'm not sure how to put the library's value into words.	→	*This toolkit is for you! By reading the section introductions, you can use it to learn about the different audiences you might encounter and how you might want to work with them. Then the materials in each section can give you an idea of where and how to start.*
MEDIUM I have some experience promoting the library's business resource, but I'm open to learning new, effective ways to get the word out.	→	*This toolkit is for you! The materials in this toolkit include compelling talking points and stories based on learning from a recent, large-scale national initiative. It's a simple way to keep your communications up to date.*
HIGH I'm the face of small business services for my library. But I'm really busy, so could you make me a presentation or handout to save me time?	→	*This toolkit is for you! With easy-to-adapt templates for presentations, handouts, emails, and more, this toolkit can save you time so you can focus on making connections.*

All the pieces in this Toolkit are free downloads from the LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS website: ala.org/advocacy/workforce/grant

1

BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

"[Biz.ability] is a free resource for local business owners who may not have the knowledge of how to find this type of information. **It is also amazing how it brings the small business community together** in a way that builds an incredibly strong network."

—Tina Ward, Co-Owner, Fades Barbershop
Round Rock Public Library
Round Rock, TX

Communicating with...

BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Business support organizations (sometimes called entrepreneur support organizations, or ESOs) refer to formal groups or institutions that provide education or support to current or aspiring small business owners.

These types of organizations can vary widely in size and focus, ranging from large, established government agencies to for-profit businesses to small local nonprofits. Which types of support organizations exist in a community will also differ. However, nearly all communities have access to some of these.

Examples of Business Support Organizations are:

- **Governmental:** Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Indian Economic Development (OIED), city or county economic development departments
- **Organizational or Commercial:** Chambers of Commerce, Downtown or Main Street Associations, banks or credit unions with small business lending programs, coworking spaces, nonprofits such as SCORE
- **Educational:** Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), local universities or community colleges with a business program, instructors in digital or job skills training programs such as Goodwill
- **Cultural:** Grassroots organizations or nonprofits that provide comprehensive services to a particular demographic, such as immigrants or refugees, women, youth, veterans, BIPOC populations, etc, and that have a small business education or support component.
- **Social:** Conveners of social gatherings for current or aspiring small business owners, such as Green Drinks, One Million Cups, or local business meet-up or networking groups.

Despite their differences, business support organizations share some common goals and characteristics. They all offer services to small business owners and entrepreneurs. As such, they have subject matter expertise in technical business topics, awareness of some of the goals and needs of the small business community, and relationships with small business owners who may not be current library users. Support organizations are often looking to bring in new users by increasing awareness of their programs or services, especially among populations they are not effectively reaching.

As a result of these attributes and goals, libraries may want to pursue one or more of the following goals in their communications with business support organizations.

- **Education.** Libraries should make business support organizations aware of their services, programs, and resources for entrepreneurs. These organizations offer a very effective pathway for getting the word out about business-specific resources and services at the library, because both they and their clients are the target users. For their part, business support organizations appreciate learning about free resources they can use with their clients.
- **Referrals.** Business support organizations are potentially good referral partners. Like libraries, support organizations have limited resources; unlike the library, they tend to have a limited scope. As a result, they are generally happy to send people to the library for resources or support they do not provide in-house, that are outside their area of expertise, or for ongoing support after a class or program ends. In the other direction, the library may benefit from referring patrons to a business support organization. For example, the library might refer a patron who is looking for business advice, or is seeking access to a program like a business incubator. Business support organizations often appreciate, measure, and even rely on referrals, so cross-referrals to and from the library build strong relationships over time.
- **Potential partnerships.** Business support organizations may make good partners for programs or services. For example, staff from an SBDC may be able to present a program on starting a business that goes beyond library staff's subject matter expertise. Libraries may offer access to individual mentors by partnering with SCORE, business-related legal information by partnering with the Bar Association, or financial or tax assistance from a credit union. While not every business support organization will be the right fit for a full partnership at all times, partnerships can be fruitful when their subject matter expertise and existing audience may allow the library to expand its range of services and programs, and the library's platform helps them reach new audiences.

The key message for libraries to communicate to this audience is that the library can help them expand their client base and serve their clients better.

15 Minute Presentation Template: “[Your Library] Builds Business”

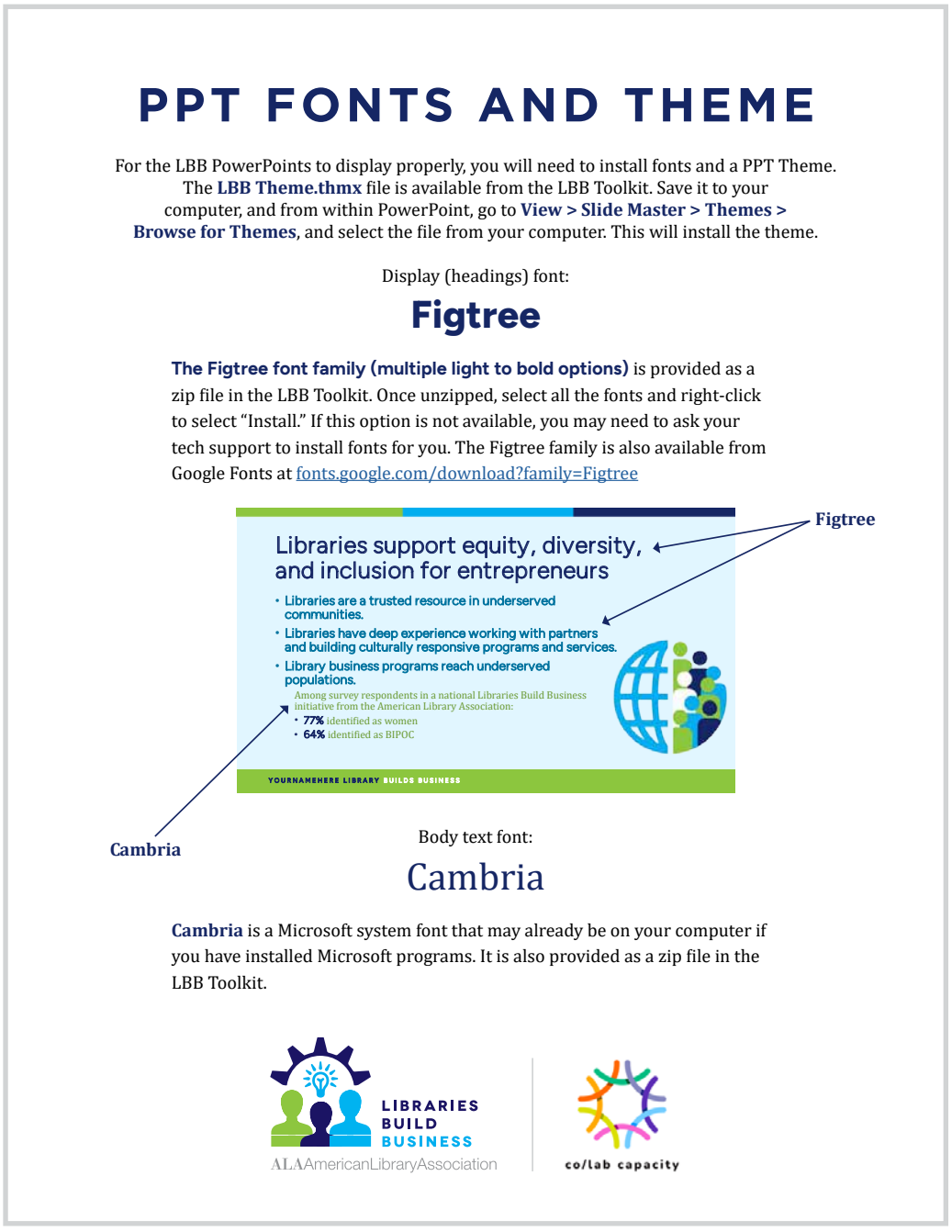
FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Customizable PowerPoint template DOWNLOAD .PPTX

This 9-slide PowerPoint file contains sample slides with key messages, a sample case study, talking points, graphics, and slide masters containing design elements and tips for placing your logo and using a font palette.

PowerPoint fonts and theme installation instructional PDF with links DOWNLOAD .PDF

This instructional PDF lists and links to the free fonts used in the LBB visual suite, and explains how to download and install the LBB Microsoft theme (.thmx file) that will pull the LBB colors and font settings into your PowerPoint slides.



PPT FONTS AND THEME

For the LBB PowerPoints to display properly, you will need to install fonts and a PPT Theme. The **LBB Theme.thmx** file is available from the LBB Toolkit. Save it to your computer, and from within PowerPoint, go to **View > Slide Master > Themes > Browse for Themes**, and select the file from your computer. This will install the theme.

Display (headings) font:

Figtree

The Figtree font family (multiple light to bold options) is provided as a zip file in the LBB Toolkit. Once unzipped, select all the fonts and right-click to select "Install." If this option is not available, you may need to ask your tech support to install fonts for you. The Figtree family is also available from Google Fonts at fonts.google.com/download?family=Figtree

Figtree

Libraries support equity, diversity, and inclusion for entrepreneurs

- Libraries are a trusted resource in underserved communities.
- Libraries have deep experience working with partners and building culturally responsive programs and services.
- Library business programs reach underserved populations.

Among survey respondents in a national Libraries Build Business initiative from the American Library Association:

- **77%** identified as women
- **64%** identified as BIPOC

YOURNAMEHERE LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

Cambria

Body text font:

Cambria

Cambria is a Microsoft system font that may already be on your computer if you have installed Microsoft programs. It is also provided as a zip file in the LBB Toolkit.

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Talking Points PDF DOWNLOAD 7-PAGE .PDF

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides in the previous pages. This presentation is intended for potential partner organizations that support small business (but where the audience is not primarily business owners—see **Section 2: Small Business Owners** for an owner-specific presentation).

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15-Minute Small Business Support Organizations Presentation Talking Points

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides called **15 minute Business Support Orgs presentation.pptx** included in this Toolkit.

This presentation is intended for elected officials, community service groups, and organizations that support small business (but where the audience is not primarily business owners—see the Toolkit for an owner-specific presentation).

[Your Name Here] Library BUILDS BUSINESS

Slide 1: Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. I'm *[name]* from *[library]*. By the end of this presentation, I hope to have completely revolutionized how you think about your public library. You all know and love us for our wonderful books and lovely space, and I hope you have warm memories of attending story times as a child or with your own children or grandchildren. But my goal is to knock your socks off with how much the library does to support small businesses and the local economy.

LBB: 15-MINUTE BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS / 1

CASE STUDY

Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce

YOURNAMEHERE LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

e 2: On this slide, you want to tell a story that frames how one entrepreneur used library resources to help business succeed. This story is an example from the Ferguson Municipal Public Library in ALA's Libraries Business Cohort. If you have a local example you can use, replace this slide with their story.

'd like to tell you about Freddie Lee. Freddie had a great product—a BBQ sauce their friends and had loved for years. But once he started his company, he found he needed some help to get it into ds of buyers. He went to the library, where a librarian helped him get on a computer, build his kills, and get started with social media marketing. The librarian connected him with a wealth of ion to help him launch his business, and maybe more importantly, with connections to people d help him, including a mentor. Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce is now made in the shared al kitchen of a business incubator and is available in 1500+ grocery stores across the United

ries are a valuable omic resource

- Libraries break down economic barriers for entrepreneurs
- Entry point to the entrepreneurial ecosystem
  - Half of all US libraries provide free services to entrepreneurs to start and grow their business
  - Classes and training, business data, Spice-And Tech, connections to experts
- Libraries increase access for underserved populations, such as women and BIPOC entrepreneurs.

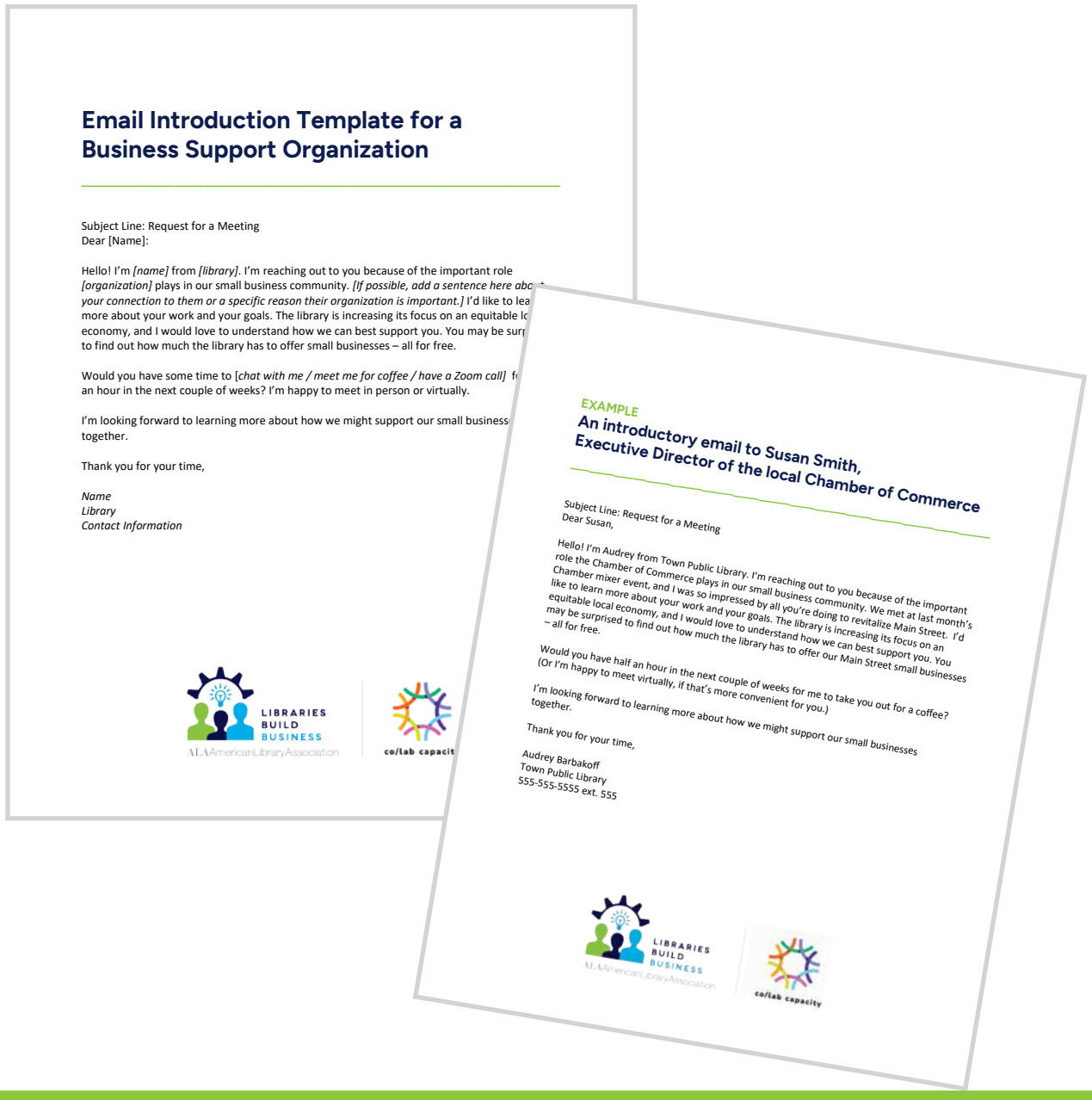
YOURNAMEHERE LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

Slide 3: You can already start to see from *[Freddie's]* story how library resources can help one small business and imagine how it might help others. But now I want you to think bigger, about how through the kinds of services we offered to Freddie, your library is making the whole local economy thrive.

LBB: 15-MINUTE BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS / 2

Email Template for Introducing Yourself and the Library

Editable suggested text and example DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .DOCX



Email Introduction Template for a Business Support Organization

Subject Line: Request for a Meeting
Dear [Name]:

Hello! I'm *[name]* from *[library]*. I'm reaching out to you because of the important role *[organization]* plays in our small business community. *[If possible, add a sentence here abo your connection to them or a specific reason their organization is important.]* I'd like to lea more about your work and your goals. The library is increasing its focus on an equitable lo economy, and I would love to understand how we can best support you. You may be surp to find out how much the library has to offer small businesses – all for free.

Would you have some time to [*chat with me / meet me for coffee / have a Zoom call]* f an hour in the next couple of weeks? I'm happy to meet in person or virtually.

I'm looking forward to learning more about how we might support our small business together.

Thank you for your time,

Name
Library
Contact Information

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EXAMPLE

An introductory email to Susan Smith, Executive Director of the local Chamber of Commerce

Subject Line: Request for a Meeting
Dear Susan,

Hello! I'm Audrey from Town Public Library. I'm reaching out to you because of the important role the Chamber of Commerce plays in our small business community. We met at last month's Chamber mixer event, and I was so impressed by all you're doing to revitalize Main Street. I'd like to learn more about your work and your goals. The library is increasing its focus on an equitable local economy, and I would love to understand how we can best support you. You may be surprised to find out how much the library has to offer our Main Street small businesses – all for free.

Would you have half an hour in the next couple of weeks for me to take you out for a coffee? (Or I'm happy to meet virtually, if that's more convenient for you.)

I'm looking forward to learning more about how we might support our small businesses together.

Thank you for your time,

Audrey Barbakoff
Town Public Library
555-555-5555 ext. 555

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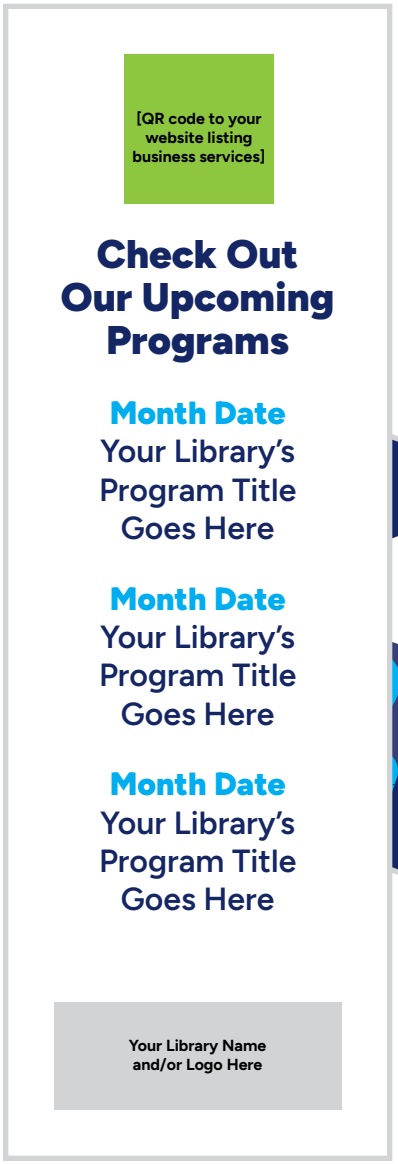
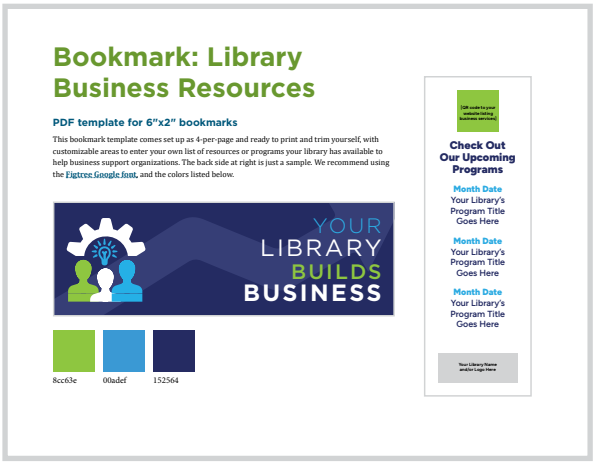
Bookmark: Library Business Resources

PDF template for 6x2 bookmarks DOWNLOAD 3-PAGE .PDF

This bookmark template comes set up with 4-per-page and ready to print and trim yourself, with customizable areas to enter your own list of resources or programs your library has available to help business support organizations. Instructions are also included for creating your bookmark and using the 2-sided template.





Flyer Template: Partner with the Library

PDF template for 8.5x11 flyer DOWNLOAD .PDF

This flyer PDF has customizable areas for entering your own content. Installing the Google font **Figtree** will preserve all text attributes while you edit.

SUPPORT LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS!

PARTNER WITH

Your Library Name Can Go Here

Partnering with the library opens a universe of free resources and support for you and your clients. Expand your reach, enrich your services, and get connected with the community today.

BENEFITS TO YOU:

- Reach a wider, more diverse community of small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Book meeting and event space in a convenient, easily accessible location.
- Increase referrals to your services.
- Stay up to date with resources that can help you and your clients succeed.
- Discover and connect with other local organizations supporting small businesses.

BENEFITS TO YOUR CLIENTS:

- Premium business intelligence, market research, financial benchmarks, and the latest business news and publications. *[Note: adjust list to reflect your library's databases and subscriptions]*
- Custom research and research training from a library expert.
- On-demand training on hot topics like technology, business management, and language learning. *[Note: adjust list to reflect your library's databases and subscriptions.]*
- Holistic, sustained support for a variety of needs small business owners face but your organization may not cover, like personal finance, digital literacy, and work-life balance.

"The CASH Campaign of Maryland has worked in partnership with the Baltimore County Public Library throughout the years on several programs. Together, the free programs and services provided in collaboration are **highly effective at reaching our shared goal of supporting the economic advancement** and financial capability of Marylanders."

—Francesca Jean-Baptiste, Director of Tax Partnerships, CASH Campaign of Maryland

Ready to explore the possibilities?

Contact:

Your Name Here
Your Library Name Goes Here
Email address
Phone number

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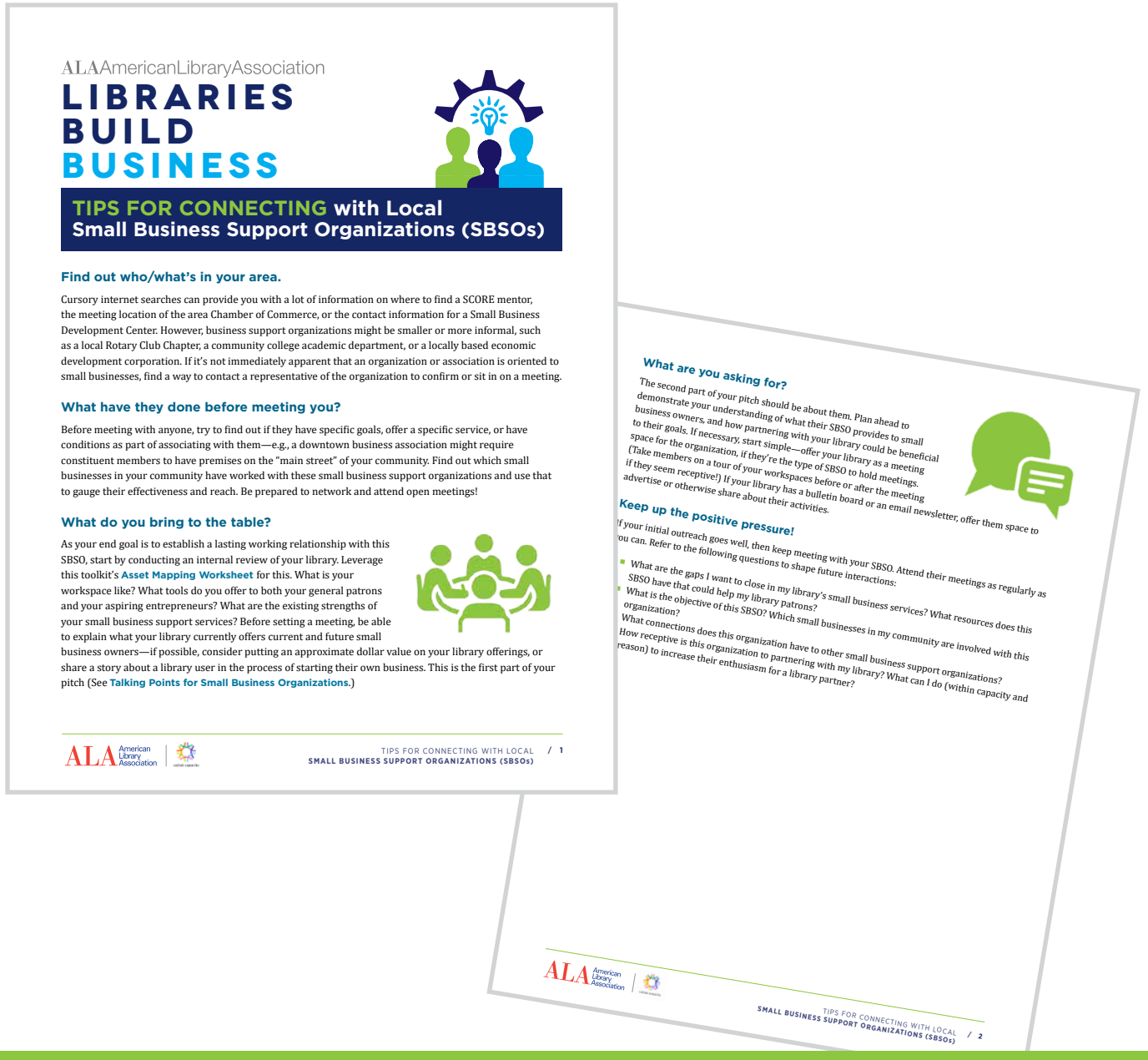
Tips for Connecting with Business Support Organizations

PDF tip sheet DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .PDF



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TIPS FOR CONNECTING with Local Small Business Support Organizations (SBSOs)

Find out who/what's in your area.

Cursory internet searches can provide you with a lot of information on where to find a SCORE mentor, the meeting location of the area Chamber of Commerce, or the contact information for a Small Business Development Center. However, business support organizations might be smaller or more informal, such as a local Rotary Club Chapter, a community college academic department, or a locally based economic development corporation. If it's not immediately apparent that an organization or association is oriented to small businesses, find a way to contact a representative of the organization to confirm or sit in on a meeting.

What have they done before meeting you?

Before meeting with anyone, try to find out if they have specific goals, offer a specific service, or have conditions as part of associating with them—e.g., a downtown business association might require constituent members to have premises on the "main street" of your community. Find out which small businesses in your community have worked with these small business support organizations and use that to gauge their effectiveness and reach. Be prepared to network and attend open meetings!

What do you bring to the table?

As your end goal is to establish a lasting working relationship with this SBSO, start by conducting an internal review of your library. Leverage this toolkit's **Asset Mapping Worksheet** for this. What is your workspace like? What tools do you offer to both your general patrons and your aspiring entrepreneurs? What are the existing strengths of your small business support services? Before setting a meeting, be able to explain what your library currently offers current and future small business owners—if possible, consider putting an approximate dollar value on your library offerings, or share a story about a library user in the process of starting their own business. This is the first part of your pitch (See **Talking Points for Small Business Organizations**.)

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TIPS FOR CONNECTING WITH LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (SBSOs) / 1

What are you asking for?

The second part of your pitch should be about them. Plan ahead to demonstrate your understanding of what their SBSO provides to small business owners, and how partnering with your library could be beneficial to their goals. If necessary, start simple—offer your library as a meeting space for the organization, if they're the type of SBSO to hold meetings. (Take members on a tour of your workspaces before or after the meeting if they seem receptive!) If your library has a bulletin board or an email newsletter, offer them space to advertise or otherwise share about their activities.

Keep up the positive pressure!

If your initial outreach goes well, then keep meeting with your SBSO. Attend their meetings as regularly as you can. Refer to the following questions to shape future interactions:

- What are the gaps I want to close in my library's small business services? What resources does this SBSO have that could help my library patrons?
- What is the objective of this SBSO? Which small businesses in my community are involved with this organization?
- What connections does this organization have to other small business support organizations?
- How receptive is this organization to partnering with my library? What can I do (within capacity and reason) to increase their enthusiasm for a library partner?

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TIPS FOR CONNECTING WITH LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (SBSOs) / 2

2 SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

"There is so much information you need to organize to start a business and be successful. We learned how to organize our plans and dreams and to make them functional [at the Macedon Public Library Entrepeneur Workshop series]. We developed a plan and broke down the steps to achieve what we wanted to do. . . . **A workshop series like this, with your peers to bounce ideas off of, mentors to guide you, and speakers to inspire you, is a great way to begin. Libraries are the perfect place to have a program like this.**"

—Melinda Kelsey, Proprietor, Kitten Around Cat Boarding
Macedon Public Library
Macedon, NY

Communicating with...

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Small business owners and entrepreneurs are those who own, run, or are considering starting a small business in your community.

They may be long-time owners, new founders, or people considering whether or not their idea could become a business. You may be able to see their brick-and-mortar businesses in the community, or they may be less visible in home-based businesses or working remotely on technology-based companies. They span demographic groups and industries.

The library can communicate its value to those with any level of experience, industry, or type of business. Because of the important role the library can play in equitable opportunity for BIPOC, women, and entrepreneurs from other marginalized groups, you may also choose to focus on services tailored to particular groups in your community.

Because business owners and entrepreneurs are diverse, the library may want to use multiple avenues to reach them. Established business owners may be members of formal organizations, like Chambers of Commerce or Downtown Associations, which may be interested in a presentation from the library. Grassroots networking or social groups, which may be specific to a demographic (e.g., a quarterly women's business mixer) or an industry (e.g., artists or tech companies) may attract people with a range of experience. Business support organizations may refer their clients to library resources.

As many business owners or potential entrepreneurs are not connected to groups, libraries may also reach out to individuals. Simply taking a walk along a main street or commercial district and visiting shop owners can start developing relationships and raising awareness. As many small business owners may be using social media to market their own businesses, social posts and events may help reach them. Libraries can even use their own market research databases and skills to look up and reach out to new, home-based, or minority-owned businesses in their community that

they might otherwise miss. Libraries may also find business owners in other areas of the library. Entrepreneurs or business owners may already come to the library for other reasons, like bringing children to story time or checking out books for pleasure reading, but be entirely unaware that the library could also help their business.

The library may have several possible goals in reaching out to business owners.

- **Program attendance or resource use.** Individual small business owners or entrepreneurs are often the intended audience for library programs and resources. Libraries may want to connect with owners in order to let them know about these opportunities and encourage library use. This can be especially important because many potential patrons may not associate the library with small business support, and so would not have thought to look to the library for assistance. Shifting their perspective to see the library as a business resource is as important as letting them know about specific offerings.
- **Input or feedback.** The library may want to get input from small business owners about their goals and needs, or about the kinds of programs and resources they want the library to offer. Input from BIPOC and underserved entrepreneurs may be particularly valuable in creating inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive services.
- **Partnership.** In some cases, libraries may partner with established businesses to offer programs or services. Examples might be a craft store owner teaching a knitting class, a panel of local Latinx entrepreneurs sharing their success stories and tips in Spanish, or a group of new entrepreneurs rotating leadership of a networking group. Local business owners have much to offer as partners - subject matter expertise in the area of their business as well as in business itself, deep knowledge of local resources and opportunities, a model of attainable success, willingness to mentor, and an existing audience to attend their programs.
  Libraries may sometimes shy away from working with for-profit businesses. However, it is usually possible to partner with no ethical, legal, or policy issues, as long as certain basic guidelines are followed. For example, the library should have clear, consistent boundaries established for what is and is not permissible around selling, promoting their businesses, or collecting patron information.

Overall, to communicate with busy business owners, libraries should try to meet them at their point of need—where they are, and with resources they need at that moment. They may not remember long lists of possible services and resources that are not immediately relevant. Therefore, the library should focus its communications on letting them know about specific, immediate opportunities, or on shifting their perspective so they think of the library as a place to turn when future needs arise.

The key message for libraries to communicate to this audience is that the library can save their business time and money.

15 Minute Presentation Template: “This Presentation Could Save You $6000”

Customizable PowerPoint template DOWNLOAD .PPTX

This 9-slide PowerPoint file contains sample slides with key messages, a sample case study, talking points, graphics, and slide masters containing design elements and tips for placing your logo and using a Google font palette.

PowerPoint fonts and theme installation instructional PDF with links DOWNLOAD .PDF

This instructional PDF lists and links to the free fonts used in the LBB visual suite, and explains how to download and install the LBB Microsoft theme (.thmx file) that will pull the LBB colors and font settings into your PowerPoint slides.

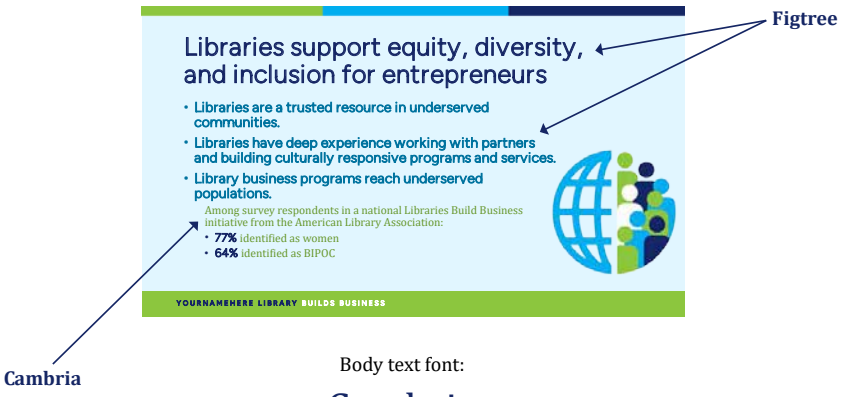
PPT FONTS AND THEME

For the LBB PowerPoints to display properly, you will need to install fonts and a PPT Theme. The **LBB Theme.thmx** file is available from the LBB Toolkit. Save it to your computer, and from within PowerPoint, go to **View > Slide Master > Themes > Browse for Themes**, and select the file from your computer. This will install the theme.

Display (headings) font:

Figtree

The Figtree font family (multiple light to bold options) is provided as a zip file in the LBB Toolkit. Once unzipped, select all the fonts and right-click to select "Install." If this option is not available, you may need to ask your tech support to install fonts for you. The Figtree family is also available from Google Fonts at fonts.google.com/download?family=Figtree



Body text font:

Cambria

Cambria is a Microsoft system font that may already be on your computer if you have installed Microsoft programs. It is also provided as a zip file in the LBB Toolkit.

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co/lab capacity

Talking Points PDF DOWNLOAD 6-PAGE .PDF

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides in the previous pages. You might use this presentation if asked to speak to a group of small business owners, such as at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon or after-hours, Downtown Association mixer, municipal awards presentation, etc.

ALA American Library Association

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

15-Minute Small Business Owner / Entrepreneur Presentation Talking Points

"THIS PRESENTATION COULD SAVE YOU $6,000"

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides called **15 minute Small Business Owner presentation.pptx** included in this Toolkit.

You might use this presentation if asked to speak to a group of small business owners, such as at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon or after-hours, Downtown Association mixer, municipal awards presentation, etc.

This Presentation Could Save You $6,000

Library Name

Your Name

Slide 1: Hi, I'm *[name]* from *[library]*. Today, I'm going to share with you a brief, 15-minute preview of what the library can do to save your small business time and money. Are you surprised, or even a little skeptical? If you think of the library as mostly about books and kids, you're missing out on so much of what we can do for you. Libraries can get you access to valuable information, resources, and connections to help your business thrive at any stage.

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LBB: 15-MINUTE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS / 1

CASE STUDY

Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce

INSERT YOUR LIBRARY NAME HERE! LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

e 2: On this slide, you want to tell a story that frames how one entrepreneur used library resources to help business succeed. This story is an example from the Ferguson Municipal Public Library in ALA's Libraries Business Cohort. If you have a local example you can use, replace this slide with their story.

'd like to tell you about Freddie Lee. Freddie had a great product—a BBQ sauce their friends and family ed for years. But once he started his company, he found he needed some help to get it into the hands of He went to the library, where a librarian helped him get on a computer, build his digital skills, and get with social media marketing. The librarian connected him with a wealth of information to help him is business, and maybe more importantly, with connections to people who could help him, including Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce is now made in the shared commercial kitchen of a business and is available in 1500+ grocery stores across the United States.

d your skills and knowledge

- ndividualized expert assistance
- Premium subscriptions for on-demand business intelligence, including market and competitor research
- In-person and online business classes
- Learn a language, get certifications, level up your tech skills, and more.

INSERT YOUR LIBRARY NAME HERE! LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

Slide 3: I love this story because it shows you several of the different ways that libraries can help businesses thrive. Let's look at a few.

- Individualized expert assistance. A librarian talked with Freddie, found out exactly what he needed, and helped him get it done efficiently. Librarians are experts in finding answers to your questions.

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LBB: 15-MINUTE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS / 2

Email Template for "Cold Calling"

Editable suggested text and example DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .DOCX

Email Introduction Template for a Small Business Owner

Subject Line: How can the library support you?
Dear [*Name*]:

Hello! I'm *[name]* from *[library]*. I'm reaching out to you because you're an important leader in our local small business community. *[If possible, add a sentence here about your connection to them or a specific reason their organization is important.]* I'd like to learn more about your business and your goals. The library is increasing its focus on serving small businesses, and would love to understand how we can best support you and businesses like yours. You m surprised to find out how much the library has to offer small businesses to save you time money – all for free.

Would you have some time to [*chat with me / meet me for coffee / have a Zoom call]* f an hour in the next couple of weeks? I'm happy to come to you, in person or virtually. you're busy, and I appreciate any time you can share.

I'm looking forward to learning more about how the library can best support your bus

Thank you for your time,

Name
Library
Contact Information

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EXAMPLE

An introductory email to Susan Smith, Bakery Owner

Subject Line: How can the library support you?

Dear Susan,

Hello! I'm Audrey from Town Public Library. I'm reaching out to you because you're an important leader in our local small business community. I heard you speak at the last Town Council meeting about the parking issues on Main Street, and you were inspiring. Plus, I love your croissants!

I'd like to learn more about your business and your goals. The library is increasing its focus on serving small businesses, and I would love to understand how we can best support you and businesses like yours. You may be surprised to find out how much the library has to offer small businesses to save you time and money – all for free.

Would you have some time for me to drop by your bakery for half an hour in the next couple of weeks? I know you're busy, and I appreciate any time you can share.

I'm looking forward to learning more about how the library can best support your business.

Thank you for your time,

Audrey Barbakoff
Town Public Library
555-555-5555 ext. 555

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Sample Social Media Posts

Suggested text/images and examples DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .PDF

Newsletter Blurb or Blog Post

Suggested text and prompts DOWNLOAD .DOCX

Newsletter Blurb or Blog Post Template

Promoting a New Business Program or Service at Your Library

We are excited to announce our new Name of your library's new business program/service at Library Name!

[Describe the program/service in 1-2 paragraphs: *What* is it? *Who* is it meant for? *Why* is it happening? *Where/when* can the program/service be utilized, attended, or found? Include a link to the program/service's webpage.]

[Insert quote(s) from your business librarian/relevant staff member/community member, highlighting *why* they're excited about the new program/service and *the benefits it will bring to your community*.]

[End with the quote(s), or close with a *brief reminder of a related library business program/service.* Include relevant links and emphasize that the library is there to help the community.]

Sample reminder messages

- After finetuning your resume during the workshop, why not bring it to our upcoming job fair? Be sure to check out our additional business services, too. Whether you are a jobseeker, entrepreneur, or established business owner, Library Name is always here to help you meet your business information needs.
- You'll be sure to leave "Entrepreneurship 101" with great takeaways. Book a study room after the session for a quiet workspace to start putting your business plan in place.

Sample Press Release

Suggested text and example DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .DOCX

EXAMPLE

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: <February 22, 2023>

Name

Your Town Library

name@yourtownlibrary.com

Your Town Library Launches Small Business Hub Program for the Business Community

Your Town, WA – February 22, 2023: Your Town Library announced today that they have launched a new initiative, Small Business Hub, to support small businesses and entrepreneurs in the area. Small Business Hub provides technology, information resources, and business mentors at the library.

Library Executive Director, [NAME], said, "Small business support is essential to strong, thriving communities. We are proud to offer resources and services that help support local makers, entrepreneurs, and small business owners be successful."

Small Business Hub includes dedicated equipment for aspiring and existing entrepreneurs including computers, 3D printers, a laser engraver, sewing machines, and more. Small business coaches are also available for one-to-one appointments on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Main Branch and the East Branch. You can make an appointment to meet with a coach at the branch or the library's website. Small Business Hub provides equity in access to entrepreneurs in Your Town and helps to create an inclusive and diverse small business ecosystem.

Your Town Library provides convenient access to a full range of innovative and cost-effective services that satisfy the changing needs of the people of Your Town for information, education and recreation. Your Town Library has seven branches across Your Town and the surrounding county, open six days pe week. More information is available at our website: www.yourtownlibraryxyz.com.

###

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Press Release Template

Name
Library
Contact Information

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: <INSERT DATE>

HEADLINE: [Your Library Name] Launches Program for the Business Community

[Location of library – date]: [Your Library Name] announced today that they have launched a new initiative, [Program/service name], to support small businesses and entrepreneurs in the area. [Program/name of service] is [quick overview of the program/service].

<Library leader title> <name>, said, "<provide quote from your organization's leadership>."

Provide details about this program/service including time/location as applicable. How do people access it? Explain how this program/service will support the small business/entrepreneur community, and the focus of your project.

[your library boilerplate language – brief standard description of your library and its mission]

###

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3

ELECTED OFFICIALS, FUNDERS, AND COMMUNITY DECISION MAKERS

In their first year of operation, over 450 graduates completed Cuyahoga County Public Library's Encore Entrepreneur Academy. **Over 94% agreed that they were better prepared to create a business, and 83% learned skills to grow their existing business.** Over 90% of their attendees were women—the majority of whom were minority women.

—Cuyahoga County Public Library
Cuyahoga, OH

Communicating with...

ELECTED OFFICIALS, FUNDERS, AND COMMUNITY DECISION MAKERS

Leaders in your community influence the library's support and success. Sometimes their influence is direct, such as elected officials who govern a city budget that includes the library, or funders or donors who decide whether or not to give to the library.

However, even if they do not directly control library resources, the support of community leaders can still make a significant impact on how the library is perceived and supported in the community. If leaders understand the role the library has to play in supporting small business, and see the library as an ally in achieving their goals for the community, they can raise awareness and rally support for the library on a large scale or with new audiences.

Examples of community leaders may include:

- Local, state, and national elected officials
- Leadership staff for cities or municipalities, such as city managers or department heads
- Local grant-making organizations, such as Rotary or Kiwanis
- Individual donors
- Leaders of influential or trusted community organizations
- Individuals with strong relationships and networks in BIPOC and marginalized communities

The goals of communicating with this audience focus on broadening their overall perception of the library to include small business and economic support. Many of these leaders may not attend the

library's business programs or use its resources themselves, and may not be in a position to refer individual patrons. Instead, libraries want to ensure that community leaders think of the library as an engine for a thriving local economy. Specific goals may include:

- **Education.** Let this group know about the library's strong support for small business, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Instead of listing resources or programs, focus on telling stories that demonstrate library use and impact. Give examples of how entrepreneurs used library resources to help them succeed from Libraries Build Business, or better yet, from your own community.
- **Fiscal support.** Some in this group control the library's access to funding, either through oversight of its operating budget or through potential grants. When these leaders believe in the library's economic value, they may be more likely to see continued or expanded funding as a good return on investment.
- **Political or social support.** In a complex and fraught political environment, libraries may need community leaders to stand up for their importance and value to the community. This may mean speaking at Board or community meetings, authoring op-eds for the local paper, or even just speaking up as an ally of the library with their friends and family. The people in this group are thought leaders whose opinions influence the community. If they believe in the value of the library for all people at all stages of life—as a need-to-have rather than a nice-to-have - they can move public opinion.

"The CASH Campaign of Maryland has worked in partnership with the Baltimore County Public Library throughout the years on several programs. **Together, the free programs and services provided in collaboration are highly effective at reaching our shared goal of supporting the economic advancement and financial capability of Marylanders.** Thanks to our partnership with BCPL on the Entrepreneur Academy program, CASH has been able to reach hundreds of small business owners and entrepreneurs each year and advise them on a range of small business financial topics, including record keeping and tax compliance. CASH is grateful to the dedicated BCPL staff for doing their part to ensure that traditionally under-resourced communities are prioritized."

—Francesca Jean-Baptiste, Director of Tax Partnerships
CASH Campaign of Maryland

The key message for libraries to communicate to this audience is that the library can help them accomplish their goal of a thriving and resilient local economy for all.

15 Minute Presentation Template: “[Your Library] Builds Business”

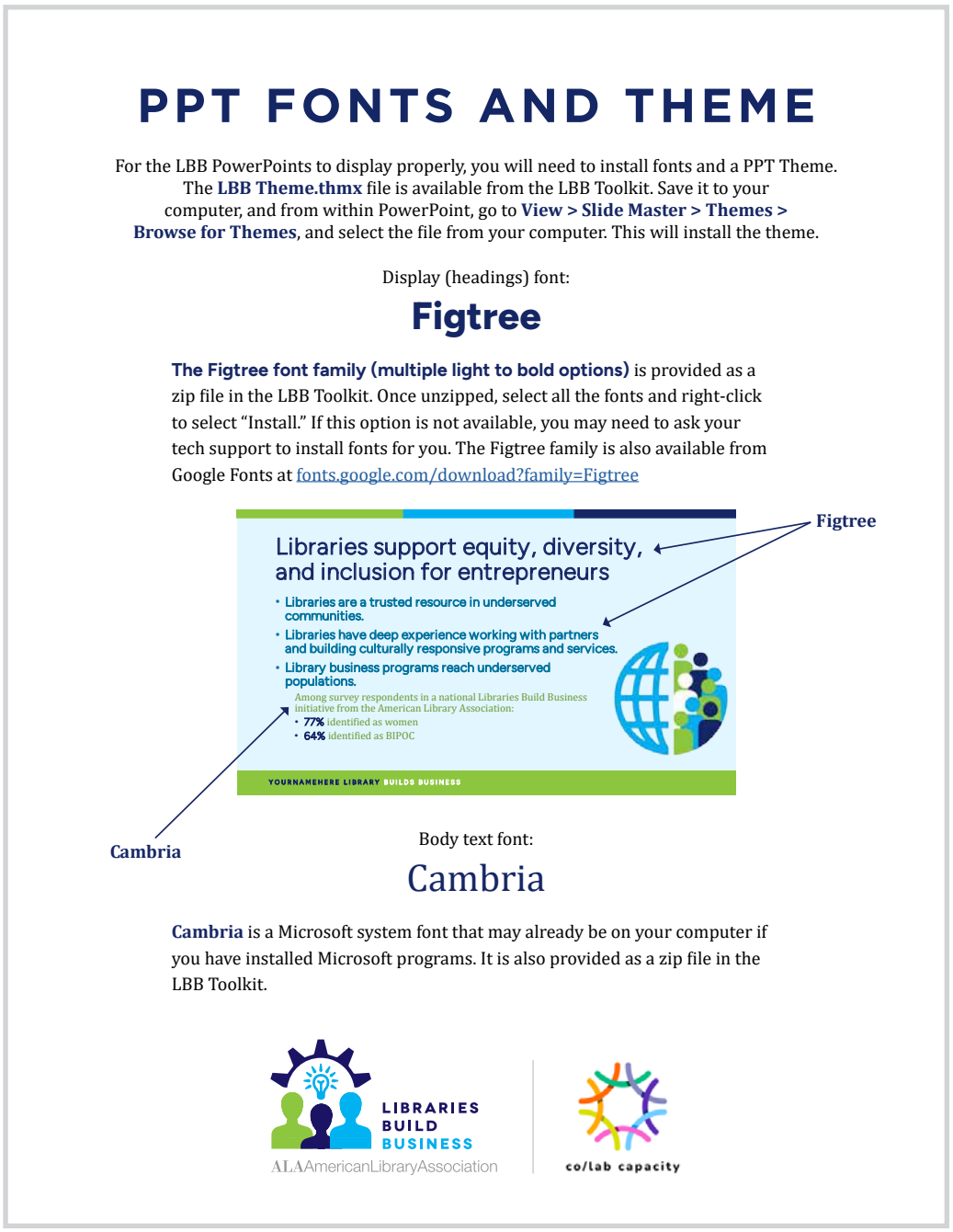
FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND DECISION MAKERS

Customizable PowerPoint template DOWNLOAD .PPTX

This 7-slide PowerPoint file contains sample slides with key messages, a sample case study, talking points, graphics, and slide masters containing design elements and tips for placing your logo and using a font palette.

PowerPoint fonts and theme installation instructional PDF with links DOWNLOAD .PDF

This instructional PDF lists and links to the free fonts used in the LBB visual suite, and explains how to download and install the LBB Microsoft theme (.thmx file) that will pull the LBB colors and font settings into your PowerPoint slides.



PPT FONTS AND THEME

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Figtree

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Figtree

Libraries support equity, diversity, and inclusion for entrepreneurs

- Libraries are a trusted resource in underserved communities.
- Libraries have deep experience working with partners and building culturally responsive programs and services.
- Library business programs reach underserved populations.

Among survey respondents in a national Libraries Build Business initiative from the American Library Association:

- **77%** identified as women
- **64%** identified as BIPOC

YOURNAMEHERE LIBRARY BUILDS BUSINESS

Cambria

Body text font:

Cambria

Cambria is a Microsoft system font that may already be on your computer if you have installed Microsoft programs. It is also provided as a zip file in the LBB Toolkit.

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Talking Points PDF DOWNLOAD 5-PAGE .PDF

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides in the previous pages. This presentation is intended for elected officials, community service groups, and organizations that support small business (but where the audience is not primarily business owners—see **Section 2: Small Business Owners** for an owner-specific presentation).

ALA American Library Association

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

15-Minute Community Leader Presentation Talking Points

These talking points correspond to the PowerPoint slides called **15 minute Community Leader presentation.ppt** included in this Toolkit.

This presentation is intended for elected officials, community service groups, and organizations that support small business (but where the audience is not primarily business owners—see the Toolkit for an owner-specific presentation).

[Your Name Here] Library BUILDS BUSINESS

Slide 1: Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. I'm [name] from [library]. By the end of this presentation, I hope to have completely revolutionized how you think about your public library. You all know and love us for our wonderful books and lovely space, and I hope you have warm memories of attending story times as a child or with your own children or grandchildren. But my goal is to knock your socks off with how much the library does to support small businesses and the local economy.

LBB: 15-MINUTE COMMUNITY LEADER PRESENTATION / 1
TALKING POINTS

CASE STUDY

Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce

2: On this slide, you want to tell a story that frames how one entrepreneur used library resources to help business succeed. This story is an example from the Ferguson Municipal Public Library in ALA's Libraries Business Cohort. If you have a local example you can use, replace this slide with their story.

'd like to tell you about Freddie Lee. Freddie had a great product—a BBQ sauce their friends and had loved for years. But once he started his company, he found he needed some help to get it into ds of buyers. He went to the library, where a librarian helped him get on a computer, build his kills, and get started with social media marketing. The librarian connected him with a wealth of ion to help him launch his business, and maybe more importantly, with connections to people d help him, including a mentor. Freddie Lee's American Gourmet Sauce is now made in the shared al kitchen of a business incubator and is available in 1500+ grocery stores across the United

ries are a valuable economic esource

- Libraries break down economic barriers
  - Technology skills and access
  - Literacy and GED support
  - ESL and citizenship help
  - Youth education and early learning
- Entry point to the entrepreneurial ecosystem
  - Half of all US libraries provide free services to entrepreneurs to start and grow their business
  - Classes and training, business data, space and tech, connections to experts
- Every dollar invested in libraries generates an average of $5 in value for the community

Slide 3: You can already start to see from Freddie's story how library resources can help one small business and imagine how it might help others. But now I want you to think bigger, about how through the kinds of services we offered to Freddie, your library is making the whole local economy thrive.

LBB: 15-MINUTE COMMUNITY LEADER PRESENTATION / 2
TALKING POINTS

Email Template to Raise Awareness

Editable suggested text and example DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .DOCX

Email Introduction Template for an Elected Official

Subject Line: [Your Library Name] Builds Business

Dear [Name]:

I am *[name]* from *[library]* in *[city, state]*. I'm reaching out to you because of your importar
work in the small business community. *[Add a sentence here from their platform – if busin
a focus, there will likely be some goals or language on their website.]* Our library would lik
help support your goal of a thriving local economy.

You may be surprised to find out how much the library has to offer small businesses in y
community - all for free. A recent study from the American Library Association found th
of entrepreneurs who utilized library resources increased their confidence in running th
small business. *[If possible, give a 1-2 sentence story or example from your own library*

As the library increases its focus on serving small businesses, I would like to know hov
best align with your goal of supporting small business. Would your office be able to n
me in the next 2-3 weeks?

Thank you for your time,

Name
Library
Contact Information

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS
ALA American Library Association

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EXAMPLE

An introductory email to Susan Smith, State Representative

Subject Line: Town Public Library Builds Business

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am Audrey Barbakoff from Town Public Library in Anytown, Washington. I'm reaching out to you because of your important work in the small business community. I know that you've committed to revitalizing main street businesses in our area, such as your sponsorship of a bill to provide relief to businesses impacted by COVID-19. Our library would like to help support your goal of a thriving local economy.

You may be surprised to find out how much the library has to offer small businesses in your communities - all for free. A recent study from the American Library Association found that 82% of entrepreneurs who utilized library resources increased their confidence in running their small business. Recently, our library held a class on using social media for business marketing. One of the attendees from Anytown used this information to successfully place his BBQ sauce in 1500+ grocery stores across the country.

As the library increases its focus on serving small businesses, I would like to know how we can best align with your goal of supporting small business. Would your office be able to meet with me in the next 2-3 weeks?

Thank you for your time,

Audrey Barbakoff
Town Public Library
555-555-5555 ext. 555

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Flyer or Leave-Behind Template for Elected Officials

PDF template for 8.5x11 flyer DOWNLOAD .PDF

This flyer PDF has customizable areas for entering your own content. Installing the Google font **Figtree** will preserve all text attributes while you edit.

Your Library Name Goes Here

BUILDS BUSINESS

Your library supports a thriving local economy for all.

"The library has always been a place of refuge and resource for me, personally and professionally. I study the work of other artists in their monographs, take a class via [the library's online] Creativebug subscription, and read books on art history and business. I am currently enrolled in a small business course offered by my local library that would otherwise be unavailable to me."

—Megan Perkins, Artist, Entrepreneur, and Small Business Boot Camp Participant, Spokane County, WA

In a national study,* current small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs who attended business training or networking events at the library:

- **82%** said that the library's support has increased their confidence as a business owner.
- **Two-thirds** were very likely to recommend the library to other small business owners.
- **A majority** were from populations underrepresented in business ownership, such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (**64%**) and women (**77%**).

Studies consistently show that every $1 invested in libraries generates an average of $5 in value for the local economy.

Ready to learn more? Contact:

Your Name Here
Your Library Name Goes Here
Email address
Phone number

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS
ALA American Library Association

*American Library Association. (2022). *Libraries Build Business: Initiative Highlights.*

co/lab capacity

"One Small Business at a Time" Policy Brief

4-page policy brief DOWNLOAD .PDF

This policy brief is a great way to highlight examples and innovations from the library field. Use it as a leave behind at in-person meetings or send the pdf as a follow up to an email inquiry or with a post-meeting thank you note.

One **Small Business** at a Time

Building **Economic Opportunity** in America's Communities

Libraries propel entrepreneurship and economic opportunity across the United States. To research or brainstorm new ideas or markets, develop business plans, gain access to emerging technologies, leverage local business resources, and sustain an enterprise, the 123,000 libraries across the country are ideal partners. Libraries offer a cost-effective national network that can be leveraged to support both aspiring and existing business owners—including those not traditionally served by business support networks. To advance economic opportunity for all, we urge decision makers in the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, and other federal agencies; the White House; U.S. Congress; business-related associations, foundations and corporate philanthropy; think tanks; and other organizations to include libraries in their plans to promote and advance entrepreneurship and small business development.

Library support for small businesses

Nearly all public libraries offer baseline support for entrepreneurs by providing meeting spaces, public computers, and internet access, as well as access to e-books, magazines, and newspapers. Many libraries of all types offer introductory to advanced support such as locally relevant business start-up classes, market research help and database access, and guidance in leveraging social media and other online tools. The LA Law Library (CA), for example, offers a class series to take budding entrepreneurs from business idea to business plan, and provides legal perspective on starting and operating a business. In Pennsylvania, small business

Takeaways for decision makers

- **Realizing economic opportunity for all means heightened entrepreneurship and small business activity across the nation. How can such activity be promoted and supported cost effectively? One solution is libraries—123,000 strong—already present in communities across the United States.**
- **Libraries have the information resources, technology, physical presence, and expert staff to research and brainstorm new ideas or markets, develop business plans, gain access to or learn about emerging technologies, obtain information about intellectual property, and implement business plans and sustain an enterprise. Libraries help small business owners minimize risk and launch their ventures by offering online and community-based professional development classes, prototyping tools, connection to community resources, and marketing assistance.**
- **Leverage libraries in new policy initiatives to grow entrepreneurship and small business.**

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation 1

The Baltimore County (MD) Public Library's popular Entrepreneurship Academy program provides classes on writing a business plan, market research, financial recordkeeping and taxes, merchandising, pricing, and engaging with customers. In response to community mand, the classes are available in English and anish and are offered in-person as well as ine several times throughout the year. The ry hosts a regular "Pop-up Shop" event for ram participants and local entrepreneurs. 021 Small Business Day Pop-Up Shop d more than 60 vendors at three different h libraries, and more than 400 customers the shops. The Pop-Up Shops are a fun help entrepreneurs build confidence and their ideas without investing in market brick-and-mortar location.

ding studio, for example, entrepreneurs as, greenscreens, lighting, and editing soft- e audio, video, and graphics; Cleveland rary's makerspace includes 3D printers, s, and laser engravers for hobbyists and ke. These resources help minimize cost business owners and make it possible pursue their entrepreneurial visions. In ns in partnership with financial insti- artners. The Brooklyn (NY) Public nd Rock (TX) Public Library, for ch competitions for participants to win funding. For businesses ready ir products, the Central Arkansas co-retail space in their River aturdays, and Middle Country public Library offers annual small business expos, inviting emerging entrepreneurs to vend their wares and connect with prospective customers and clients.

Serving underrepresented entrepreneurs

While entrepreneurship is a growing path to economic mobility, many individuals face barriers to access. Libraries help reach these demographics by offering targeted entrepreneurship programs and assistance for underserved groups. The Providence (RI) Public Library, for one, partners with the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to offer free business education seminars for Spanish-speaking small business owners and can serve business owners in Spanish when needed. At Purdue University (IN) Libraries, business librarians work with veterans taking part in the Entrepreneurial Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities as they develop marketing plans and provide additional support by phone, email, and online, including access to relevant library databases and software. The Los Angeles Public Library worked with street vendors to develop mobile phone accessible self-paced courses to navigate business and safety concerns. Allen County (IN) and Orange County (FL) public libraries offer entrepreneurship programming targeted to teens and youth; the Norman (OK) High School Library Learning Commons includes a Maker Lab for students to engage. And, the Spokane County (WA) Library District's Small Business Boot Camp helped rural business owners with limited internet access build their business through training and micro-grants. By identifying local needs, libraries expand pathways toward economic opportunity for all.

Gwinnett County (GA) Public Library's New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator (NSEI) aims to serve community members who have spent time in prison or jail. This population faces difficulties and stigma securing employment. The NSEI program offers innovative supports such as peer learning, laptops and hotspots, one-on-one mentorship with mentors matched in terms of business interest areas, and an opportunity to secure start-up capital in a "Launchpad" pitch event with the local business community.

3 ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation One Small Business at a Time: Building Economic Opportunity in America's Communities

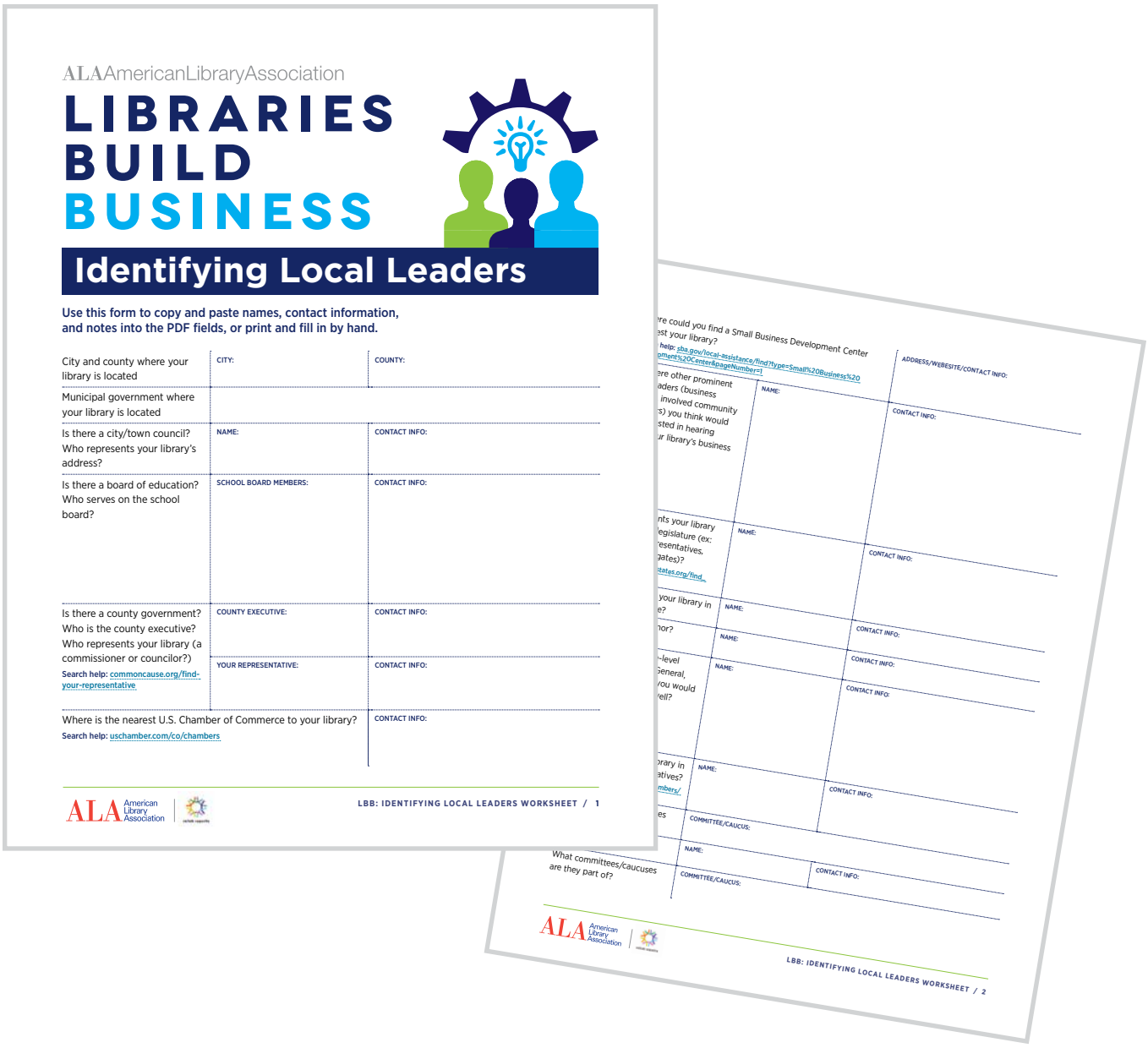
Sample Social Media Posts

Suggested text/images and examples DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .PDF

Identifying Local Leaders Worksheet

2-page fillable PDF DOWNLOAD .PDF

This worksheet helps you identify various stakeholders and decision makers in your community. Keep the information stored in one place so that the whole team can easily identify key contacts.



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LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Identifying Local Leaders

Use this form to copy and paste names, contact information, and notes into the PDF fields, or print and fill in by hand.

City and county where your library is located	CITY:	COUNTY:
Municipal government where your library is located		
Is there a city/town council? Who represents your library's address?	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
Is there a board of education? Who serves on the school board?	SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:	CONTACT INFO:
Is there a county government? Who is the county executive? Who represents your library (a commissioner or councilor?) Search help: commoncause.org/find-your-representative	COUNTY EXECUTIVE:	CONTACT INFO:
	YOUR REPRESENTATIVE:	CONTACT INFO:
Where is the nearest U.S. Chamber of Commerce to your library? Search help: uschamber.com/co/chambers		CONTACT INFO:

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LBB: IDENTIFYING LOCAL LEADERS WORKSHEET / 1

re could you find a Small Business Development Center
st your library?
help: sba.gov/local-assistance/find?type=Small%20Business%20
opments%20Center&pageNumber=1

re other prominent aders (business involved community s) you think would sted in hearing ur library's business	NAME:	ADDRESS/WEBESITE/CONTACT INFO: CONTACT INFO:
nts your library egislature (ex: esentatives, ates)? tates.org/find_	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
your library in e?	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
hor?	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
-level eneral, ou would ell?	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
rary in atives? mbers/	NAME:	CONTACT INFO:
es	COMMITTEE/CAUCUS:	
What committees/caucuses are they part of?	NAME: COMMITTEE/CAUCUS:	CONTACT INFO:

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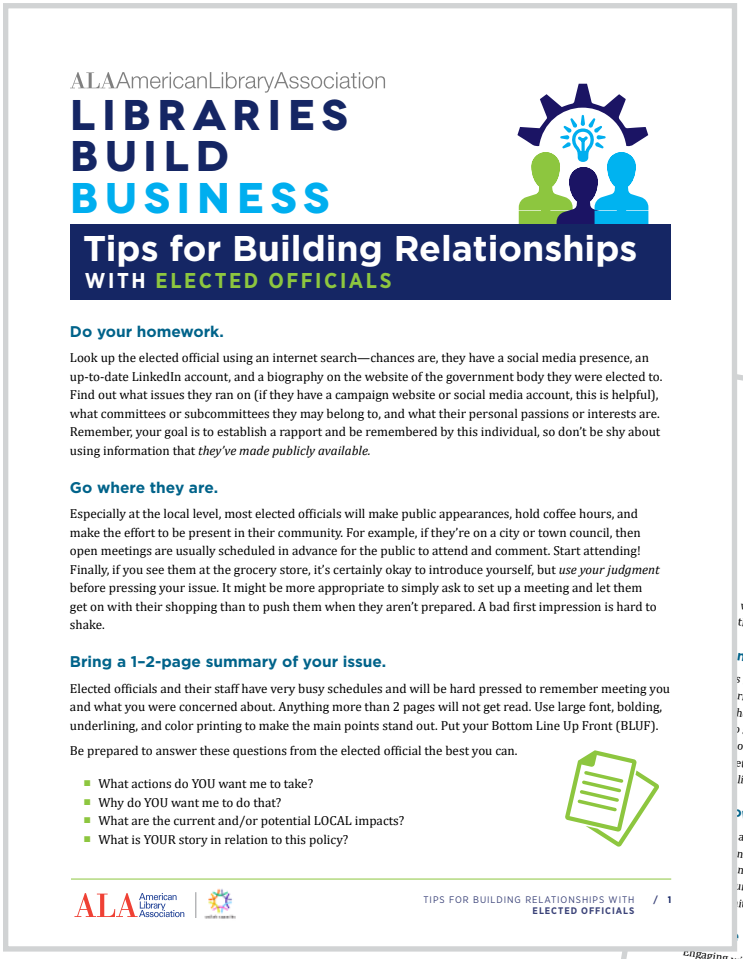
LBB: IDENTIFYING LOCAL LEADERS WORKSHEET / 2

Tips for Building Relationships with Local Leaders

PDF tip sheet DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .PDF



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LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Tips for Building Relationships WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Do your homework.

Look up the elected official using an internet search—chances are, they have a social media presence, an up-to-date LinkedIn account, and a biography on the website of the government body they were elected to. Find out what issues they ran on (if they have a campaign website or social media account, this is helpful), what committees or subcommittees they may belong to, and what their personal passions or interests are. Remember, your goal is to establish a rapport and be remembered by this individual, so don't be shy about using information that *they've made publicly available.*

Go where they are.

Especially at the local level, most elected officials will make public appearances, hold coffee hours, and make the effort to be present in their community. For example, if they're on a city or town council, then open meetings are usually scheduled in advance for the public to attend and comment. Start attending! Finally, if you see them at the grocery store, it's certainly okay to introduce yourself, but *use your judgment* before pressing your issue. It might be more appropriate to simply ask to set up a meeting and let them get on with their shopping than to push them when they aren't prepared. A bad first impression is hard to shake.

Bring a 1–2-page summary of your issue.

Elected officials and their staff have very busy schedules and will be hard pressed to remember meeting you and what you were concerned about. Anything more than 2 pages will not get read. Use large font, bolding, underlining, and color printing to make the main points stand out. Put your Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF).

Be prepared to answer these questions from the elected official the best you can.

- What actions do YOU want me to take?
- Why do YOU want me to do that?
- What are the current and/or potential LOCAL impacts?
- What is YOUR story in relation to this policy?

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TIPS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS / 1

Lead with a story, follow with data.

When you're talking to an elected official, it's important to demonstrate the depth and breadth of an issue. Give your concerns *depth* and explain what their support and/or attention will have on one person—you can talk about yourself. You're an engaged constituent.

Next, give your issue *breadth*. They've heard about the human impact, now demonstrate how wide it goes using data or statistics. If your library serves 3,000 patrons a month, then they're helping 3,000 constituents by supporting you. If your business center resources have helped 70% of its users start or maintain their small business, then share that and discuss what they can do to make that number 100%. Make sure you have data on the impact. (See "Do your homework.")

nvite them to tour the library.

s librarians seeking to build rapport, it's important to emphasize the strengths of your program and the rrent impact your library has on their community. If they haven't been already, invite them to visit, or ask hey'd be interested in holding office hours in your workspace or a conference room, if you have one. It's an opportunity to point out areas or services where you would like to improve, and ask about funding ons at the local, state, and federal levels. (Even if you've done research on this before, they may know ething you don't.) Finally, getting your elected official in the building if they haven't been before turns library from a street address to a community hub.

ow up!

and calls *from constituents* are effective follow-up methods. Either way, reintroduce yourself briefly, nk them for their time. If you haven't invited them to tour the library, this would be an excellent nity to do so. Don't send extensive attachments as part of an email unless they ask. Finally, don't uraged if a staff member responds to you—that's why they're in that position. Be excited at the ity to build an additional relationship within an elected official's office.

with library supporters.

Engaging with hostile public officials should be undertaken carefully. Be mindful of your time and energy if you decide to do so. If an elected official is openly insulting or slandering your profession and what you do for your patrons, then it may not be productive to reach out to them. Look for supporters within your community that can speak to the value of your library and the services it provides (including small business support).

A NOTE ON THESE TIPS: Some of the advice compiled here was inspired by resources from the Congressional Management Foundation and adapted to best fit library advocates.

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TIPS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS / 2

4

LIBRARY STAFF

"I think Entrepreneur Academy took me to a whole other level because **I didn't even know that the library had so many resources available to me** . . . I appreciate that [they] bring the resources to the table with the expectation to help the individual."

—Participant, Entrepreneur Academy
Baltimore County and Enoch Pratt Free Libraries
Baltimore, MD

Communicating with...

LIBRARY STAFF

The tools in this section are designed to be shared with library staff who may not be directly involved with small business services. Cultivating library-wide understanding of what you have to offer can be helpful in many ways.

- Staff who interact with patrons may receive questions from or observe people who could benefit from the library's small business resources. Even if those staff cannot answer in-depth questions about small business themselves, if they are generally aware of the types of resources the library can offer, they can make an appropriate referral to a colleague.
- Staff who attend community meetings and develop partnerships may learn about community needs and goals related to small business support. With a general idea of what kinds of support the library can provide, they can speak succinctly about the library's value and potentially connect the community partner with an expert at the library.
- Staff in back-of-house positions may be able to alert patron-facing staff to relevant new resources, or have ideas for creating support structures that build on small business services.
- Staff in any role may be asked about the library by their friends, family, or community.

Ferguson (MO) Municipal Public Library helped an aspiring entrepreneur set up a Facebook page to sell his BBQ sauce, assisted him with computer skills, and connected him with other resources, including SCORE. The BBQ sauce—**Freddie Lee's American Gourmet**—is now available in 1500+ grocery stores.

The primary goal of talking with library staff is general education. Most staff do not need to be experts in the library's small business resources. However, these services will be best supported if most staff have a broad concept of the library's value to the local economy, how the library can help small business owners and entrepreneurs, and where to look for more in-depth help.

The key message for this audience is that they do not need to be business experts to support small business owners and entrepreneurs. All they need to know is where to turn for more support.

Library Staff Talking Points

PDF talking points DOWNLOAD .PDF

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LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Business Services at the Library

TALKING POINTS FOR LIBRARY STAFF

Be sure to share information across the library staff about ongoing business-related programming, services, and resources. Recognize that existing library resources, such as printers, meeting space, and audio/visual equipment may be exactly what an entrepreneur needs to work on their business. Making sure that all library staff are sharing a consistent message about the resources available for entrepreneurs and small business owners is key to making them feel welcome and equipped to work in the library.

Business Reference Talking Points

- Whether the patron is a jobseeker, entrepreneur, or established business owner, the library offers a variety of business resources and services to help you meet a patron's business information needs.
- We host many business programs and events at the library, such as [Recurring program/event name(s)]. Check out our [events page/program guide] for upcoming events. [insert links/share flyers]
- We also offer online business research tools, such as [resource name(s)], which [description of highlighted resources].
- Need a place to work? Book a [study/meeting room] by [method of booking].
- In addition to workspaces, we have Wi-Fi access, computers, and technology such as [printers/copiers/laptops/hotspots/makerspace, etc.] at the library.
  - ➜ If you have a Makerspace in your library, include a separate talking point that describes what you offer at your Makerspace.
- For additional business offerings, please visit our website at [URL].
- If you'd like in-depth, one-on-one assistance, please schedule an appointment with our [business librarian/library staff title], who can help you with [using our online resources, other services the staff member can provide, etc.], and more. You can book an appointment by [method of scheduling/contact info].

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LBB: BUSINESS SERVICES AT THE LIBRARY / 1
TALKING POINTS FOR LIBRARY STAFF

Asset Mapping Worksheet

2-page oversized fillable poster/PDF DOWNLOAD .PDF

Asset mapping is a way to determine what resources a project needs and where they're located. Use this worksheet to appraise the current strengths and resources of your library and the community around you, and list people, places, organizations, and institutions that have the potential to elevate your library's entrepreneurship initiatives! This worksheet can be filled-in electronically or printed at a larger size for a group discussion/whiteboard and filled-in by hand.

Sample Volunteer Job Description

Sample text/format DOWNLOAD 2-PAGE .PDF

If you are looking for local businesspeople to serve as mentors, coaches, or program facilitators in your library program, you will need to post a job description. This is an example from Richland Library in South Carolina that they use to recruit their Entrepreneur-in-Residence. Use this as a template to think about the role you are seeking and what kinds of information you need about potential candidates.

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LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

JOB DESCRIPTION

Business Mentors and Coaches

If you are looking for local businesspeople to serve as mentors, coaches, or program facilitators in your library program, you will need to post a job description. This Toolkit includes an example (below) from Richland Library in South Carolina that they use to recruit their Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR). Use this as a template to think about the role you are seeking and what kinds of information you need about potential candidates.

Business mentors, coaches, or facilitators may be volunteers, paid consultants, fellows, or part-time staff.

BUSINESS, CAREERS AND RESEARCH CENTER

Richland Library Entrepreneur-in-Residence Job Description and Application

General Statement

The Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) will offer diverse entrepreneurs the opportunity to connect and interact with successful entrepreneurs and business experts who truly understand the disparities of entrepreneurship due to their own life experiences.

The EIR will be available for one-on-one mentoring appointments to inspire and motivate individuals in their business journey.

The EIR will design and present entrepreneur-focused programs with diverse subject matter experts to cultivate learning and networking.

The Details

- Residency: March 1, 2023–June 30, 2023.

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LBB: JOB DESCRIPTION / 1
BUSINESS MENTORS AND COACHES

- 40 Office Hours per month, 10 hours per week, to include 5 hours per week of administrative time for program planning, creating a blog post, TV or radio interview, or writing for a local business publication.
- Office Hours/Coaching Appointments (minimum of 5 one-on-one appointments per week).
- Public Programs (minimum of 1 per month, may be co-presented with a Richland Library Community Partner or Partners (Panel or Fireside Chat).
- $2800/Monthly Stipend, payable at the end of each month of the Residency.

quired Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

ommitment to develop Columbia's small business community by mentoring and inspiring new trepreneurs.
roven record of starting and developing a successful small to medium-sized business in Columbia.
more years of successful business experience.
llent communication skills.
rt knowledge to evaluate business ideas and plans against essential criteria for success.

date for applications: February 15, 2023
: Application Posting, February 1, 2023 for 2 weeks, Residency for March 1, 2023–June 30, 2023.

eneur-in-Residence (EiR) Website Application

ne
ne
dress
mber

Attach Here
h Here

do you think are the top 3 challenges for Small Business owners? New Business
nced business owners?
nces (x2): Please provide contact information for each reference
ebsites and social media handles.
rience with teaching/leading programs for adults? Please provide examples.
nterview, the applicant will create and present on a timely small business topic.

ID
RY

1431 Assembly Street | Columbia, SC 29201
P: 803 799 9084 F: 803 929 3431

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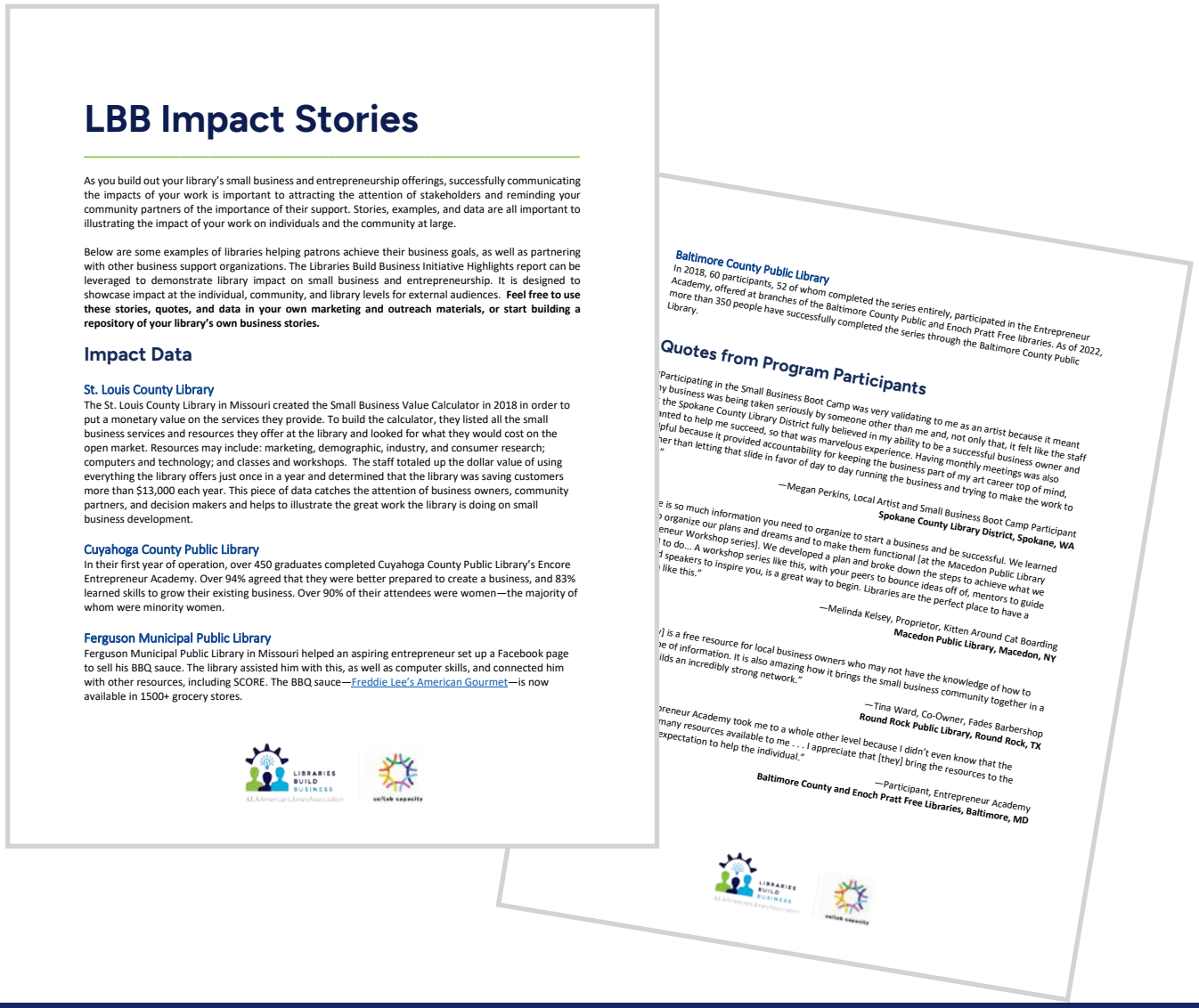
LBB: JOB DESCRIPTION / 2
BUSINESS MENTORS AND COACHES

Sample Impact Stories Sheet

Quotes, stories, and data DOWNLOAD 3-PAGE .DOCX

As you build out your library's small business and entrepreneurship offerings, successfully communicating the impacts of your work is important to attracting the attention of stakeholders and reminding your community partners of the importance of their support. Stories, examples, and data are all important to illustrating the impact of your work on individuals and the community at large. Use these stories, quotes, and data in your own marketing and outreach materials, or start building a repository of your library's own business stories.



LBB Impact Stories

As you build out your library's small business and entrepreneurship offerings, successfully communicating the impacts of your work is important to attracting the attention of stakeholders and reminding your community partners of the importance of their support. Stories, examples, and data are all important to illustrating the impact of your work on individuals and the community at large.

Below are some examples of libraries helping patrons achieve their business goals, as well as partnering with other business support organizations. The Libraries Build Business Initiative Highlights report can be leveraged to demonstrate library impact on small business and entrepreneurship. It is designed to showcase impact at the individual, community, and library levels for external audiences. **Feel free to use these stories, quotes, and data in your own marketing and outreach materials, or start building a repository of your library's own business stories.**

Impact Data

St. Louis County Library
The St. Louis County Library in Missouri created the Small Business Value Calculator in 2018 in order to put a monetary value on the services they provide. To build the calculator, they listed all the small business services and resources they offer at the library and looked for what they would cost on the open market. Resources may include: marketing, demographic, industry, and consumer research; computers and technology; and classes and workshops. The staff totaled up the dollar value of using everything the library offers just once in a year and determined that the library was saving customers more than $13,000 each year. This piece of data catches the attention of business owners, community partners, and decision makers and helps to illustrate the great work the library is doing on small business development.

Cuyahoga County Public Library
In their first year of operation, over 450 graduates completed Cuyahoga County Public Library's Encore Entrepreneur Academy. Over 94% agreed that they were better prepared to create a business, and 83% learned skills to grow their existing business. Over 90% of their attendees were women—the majority of whom were minority women.

Ferguson Municipal Public Library
Ferguson Municipal Public Library in Missouri helped an aspiring entrepreneur set up a Facebook page to sell his BBQ sauce. The library assisted him with this, as well as computer skills, and connected him with other resources, including SCORE. The BBQ sauce—Freddie Lee's American Gourmet—is now available in 1500+ grocery stores.

Baltimore County Public Library
In 2018, 60 participants, 52 of whom completed the series entirely, participated in the Entrepreneur Academy, offered at branches of the Baltimore County Public and Enoch Pratt Free libraries. As of 2022, more than 350 people have successfully completed the series through the Baltimore County Public Library.

Quotes from Program Participants

"Participating in the Small Business Boot Camp was very validating to me as an artist because it meant
ny business was being taken seriously by someone other than me and, not only that, it felt like the staff
the Spokane County Library District fully believed in my ability to be a successful business owner and
anted to help me succeed, so that was marvelous experience. Having monthly meetings was also
pful because it provided accountability for keeping the business part of my art career top of mind,
her than letting that slide in favor of day to day running the business and trying to make the work to
"

—Megan Perkins, Local Artist and Small Business Boot Camp Participant
Spokane County Library District, Spokane, WA

e is so much information you need to organize to start a business and be successful. We learned
organize our plans and dreams and to make them functional [at the Macedon Public Library
eneur Workshop series]. We developed a plan and broke down the steps to achieve what we
to do... A workshop series like this, with your peers to bounce ideas off of, mentors to guide
speakers to inspire you, is a great way to begin. Libraries are the perfect place to have a
like this."

—Melinda Kelsey, Proprietor, Kitten Around Cat Boarding
Macedon Public Library, Macedon, NY

] is a free resource for local business owners who may not have the knowledge of how to
e of information. It is also amazing how it brings the small business community together in a
ilds an incredibly strong network."

—Tina Ward, Co-Owner, Fades Barbershop
Round Rock Public Library, Round Rock, TX

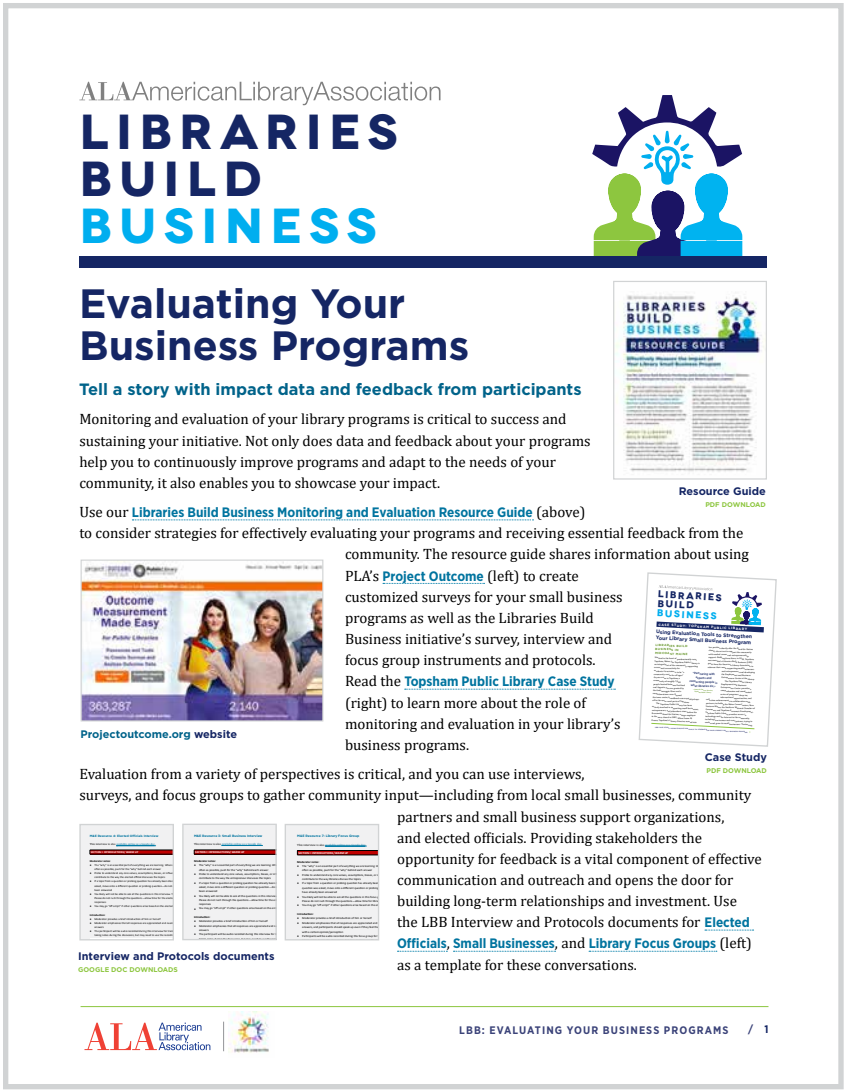
preneur Academy took me to a whole other level because I didn't even know that the
many resources available to me . . . I appreciate that [they] bring the resources to the
expectation to help the individual."

—Participant, Entrepreneur Academy
Baltimore County and Enoch Pratt Free Libraries, Baltimore, MD

Program Evaluation Resources

PDF linking to evaluation tools and tips DOWNLOAD .PDF

This resource provides links to easy evaluation tools and resources designed for library business and entrepreneur support programs. Identify the best way to evaluate your programs.



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LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Evaluating Your Business Programs

Tell a story with impact data and feedback from participants

Monitoring and evaluation of your library programs is critical to success and sustaining your initiative. Not only does data and feedback about your programs help you to continuously improve programs and adapt to the needs of your community, it also enables you to showcase your impact.

Resource Guide
PDF DOWNLOAD

Use our Libraries Build Business Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Guide (above) to consider strategies for effectively evaluating your programs and receiving essential feedback from the community. The resource guide shares information about using PLA's Project Outcome (left) to create customized surveys for your small business programs as well as the Libraries Build Business initiative's survey, interview and focus group instruments and protocols. Read the Topsham Public Library Case Study (right) to learn more about the role of monitoring and evaluation in your library's business programs.

Projectoutcome.org website

Case Study
PDF DOWNLOAD

Evaluation from a variety of perspectives is critical, and you can use interviews, surveys, and focus groups to gather community input—including from local small businesses, community partners and small business support organizations, and elected officials. Providing stakeholders the opportunity for feedback is a vital component of effective communication and outreach and opens the door for building long-term relationships and investment. Use the LBB Interview and Protocols documents for Elected Officials, Small Businesses, and Library Focus Groups (left) as a template for these conversations.

Interview and Protocols documents
GOOGLE DOC DOWNLOADS

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LBB: EVALUATING YOUR BUSINESS PROGRAMS / 1

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The **LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT** was created in collaboration between ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy office and Co/lab Capacity. We wish to thank project leads Audrey Barbakoff and Megan Janicki and contributors Jim Takeshita, Jazzy Celindro, Karen Sheets de Gracia, and the Libraries Build Business Community.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about this toolkit or the Libraries Build Business initiative, please contact Megan Janicki at mjanicki@alawash.org or visit our website: ala.org/advocacy/workforce/grant.

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