

# LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS IN RICHLAND COUNTY



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



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

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

## Entrepreneurial Launch Pad Supports Emerging Businesses

Richland Library's Libraries Build Business Project, the **Entrepreneurial Launch Pad**, supports emerging businesses at every stage of their development, with a focus on efforts to assist and encourage minority and woman-owned businesses. Our three-pronged approach provides free access to Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EiR) experts, customized learning and networking, and the Entrepreneurial Library of Things.

Richland Library's **Entrepreneur-in-Residence** program offers opportunities for aspiring and established entrepreneurs to connect and interact with peers who have successfully designed, launched and currently run their own businesses. Our EiRs facilitate learning and networking opportunities, including one-on-one **Small Business Coaching**, sharing their expertise and a desire to mentor, and encouraging other business owners to start, run and grow their businesses. Since 2018, we have contracted with three EiRs at our Main location and will expand to our other library locations to reach additional communities. Our **Entrepreneurial Library of Things** offers high-quality equipment to help grow and support creative entrepreneurs by extending free access to much-needed equipment often necessary for business startup.

Creating a risk-free business hub supports Richland County entrepreneurs through both traditional business and creative-focused programs.



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