



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LIBRARIES

## Empowering Job Seekers Across Nevada and the Nation

As technology further shifts the economic landscape, libraries prepare American jobseekers to enter the workforce, to reskill to meet new requirements, and to succeed as business owners.

Public libraries in Nevada and nearly 17,000 strong across the country: (1) help people secure employment through job search, resume writing, and interview training, (2) provide internet access and digital skills programs that encourage use of emerging technologies and empower entrepreneurship, (3) collaborate with other community stakeholders to identify workforce challenges and build vibrant local economies.

With many communities hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and facing economic challenges, libraries are a critical part of the economic safety net, now more than ever.

### Job seeking and upskilling

Under normal circumstances the Carson City Library (NV) is open seven days a week and supports local workforce development by offering free Wi-Fi and devices, computer classes for beginners, job search workshops, coding classes for kids and teens, and makerspace workshops—where participants can use 3D printers, heat presses, vinyl cutters,

laser cutters and engravers, and learn soldering, sewing, and embroidery. During the COVID-19 pandemic the library has remained open with limited hours and services, offering virtual computer classes, coding, and an online makerspace.

Carson City Library serves a variety of jobseekers, including newcomers to the area in need of work, as well as

**TAKEAWAYS** for local, state and national public officials, and potential partners 

- Libraries in Nevada and nationally support jobseekers, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
- Libraries are well-placed to offer digital skills training and economic empowerment programs to all Americans, including those with few alternatives or resources.
- Libraries are cost-effective and efficient partners that should be included in the development and implementation of workforce and economic development initiatives.

professionals looking to expand their career opportunities. At a library job seeking workshop, held in partnership with the workforce development agency JOIN Inc., participants learned how

to use online tools to power their job search. While some workshop attendees were unemployed, the majority were employed but seeking career growth. One construction industry employee

came to the library for help after applying for a managerial position. He wanted to learn additional skills relevant to the new job, including hiring and computer-based skills, such as working with Google's online productivity tools. After attending the library workshop, he felt confident and moved forward in the interview process.

### Serving vulnerable populations

Humboldt County (NV) faces several workforce-related challenges. Although this remote community has a high median income level due to the mining sector, mining is cyclical and in the event of an economic downturn workers need to be equipped and prepared to transition to new jobs, including in technology fields. Additionally, a portion of this remote community is struggling economically.

In this context, the Humboldt County Library acts as a central community resource offering free workforce related services, including

access to the internet, computers, photocopiers, fax machines, computer skills classes, and job workshops. These library services are essential to low income and underserved groups. One

individual who benefited from a job seekers workshop at the library had just been released from prison. He had no knowledge of the digital tools introduced in the workshop, nor experience creating

a resume. After participating in the workshop, he was excited and hopeful because he learned how to create a Google account and build a resume, which helped him in his job search.

### Partnering for workforce development

Both the Carson City Library and the Humboldt County Library work together with other community actors to strengthen local economic opportunities. In Carson City the library works with the Carson City School District to offer paid internships to teach workplace skills to high school juniors and seniors. The Carson City Library also partners with Adams Hub for Innovation, a startup incubator and coworking habitat, providing databases and reference assistance for business research needs. Meanwhile, the Humboldt County Library partners with groups including the Humboldt County Career Bound Advisory Group, the Humboldt County Development Authority, and

**"The library programs give people of all ages, economic backgrounds, and different skill sets the opportunity to gain skills and feel a sense of community."**

—Carson City Library



Nevada Job Connect. Additionally, the library is working on establishing a partnership with local churches to promote library services within the bilingual community and is also planning to consult with local business owners and entrepreneurs about the skills they are looking for in employees in order to better tailor library skills-building workshops. ▀



**"During the Great Recession, over 30 million people, roughly 10% of the total U.S. population at that time, reported using computers in public libraries for employment-related activities."**

—John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University

**ACROSS** the United States

**98%** of public libraries provide wireless internet access (WiFi), a vital resource for job seekers

**90%** of libraries offer digital skills training

**73%** of libraries help people apply for jobs

SOURCE: [digitalinclusion.umd.edu/sites/default/files/DigitalInclusionBrief2015.pdf](https://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/sites/default/files/DigitalInclusionBrief2015.pdf)

## ALA American Library Association