

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS IN BALTIMORE 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.

Entrepreneur Academy Connects Entrepreneurs to Opportunity

Entrepreneur Academy is a groundbreaking collaboration between Baltimore County Public Library and Enoch Pratt Free Library, two of the largest library systems in Maryland. The libraries developed connections and a training curriculum that established a regional infrastructure that can be expanded and can set a regional standard for other libraries.

Entrepreneur Academy is a series of seven classes taught by business counselors and librarians which covers all areas of small business start-up, including market research, business structure, insurance and legal issues, business finances, taxes and recordkeeping, and marketing your business. The goal is to take budding entrepreneurs from business idea to business plan, while demystifying and de-romanticizing the notion of working for yourself. By placing the series in branches which serve either predominantly individuals of color or have a higher-than-average unemployment rate, we've targeted communities that are often underrepresented. The targeted audience includes people interested in either creating a small business as a primary source of income or in transforming a hobby or passion into a supplemental income stream. Our free small business programming allows both groups to do so in an informed process.



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