

Libraries play a vital role in our nation's workforce system. In 2009 alone, thirty million Americans used a library computer to help address career and employment needs, including submitting online applications, searching for job opportunities, and working on their resumes. Some 3.7 million people reported finding work with the help of their local library. Librarians are helping job seekers navigate online employment resources to search for and find jobs every day.

Through an official partnership between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, state and local workforce investment boards, state workforce agencies, and One-Stop Career Centers (now "America's Job Centers") are encouraged to partner with public libraries to extend their career and employment services to job seekers.

As part of that collaboration, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Employment and Training Administration developed the following list of tips for partnerships between libraries and America's Job Centers:

Consider joint location of library and workforce agency services or holding open office hours in the library.

Forty-five Kentucky counties with high unemployment are helping residents seek employment opportunities at new Public Library Workforce Centers. The new centers, in public libraries across the state, give users more access to computers, training and job workshops. In Arizona, the Apache Junction Public Library provided job training and materials to local patrons as part of a one-stop equal opportunity employment center, providing more than 150 ESL and job-seeking skill classes.

Offer workforce training to library staff.

A statewide library and workforce development partnership in North Carolina included specialized training and curriculum materials for library staff. Workshops introduced librarians to a range of job search resources that will help them connect job seekers with appropriate materials. State workforce development staff provided an overview of the JobLink services and shared information on how local libraries could partner with their local JobLink Career Centers. (For more information, visit www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/project-compass.html.)

Use library spaces to hold events such as career fairs and resume training sponsored by the local workforce agency.

The Columbus, Ohio, Metropolitan Library introduced Job Help Centers at all twenty-one library branches and holds regular events such as "Job Help—Hands-on Help" sessions. Staff or volunteers are available to assist with applying for jobs online, creating and sending resumes, and searching job websites.

Share regional economic or labor information with libraries.

Libraries in many states provide regional data on economic and labor trends to help job seekers identify strong employment needs in their communities. Many also link to this information from their library websites to provide job seekers with data on wages and occupational outlooks.

Make technology for job searching and resume development available at the library.

In California, 800 libraries are offering Career Transitions, an advanced career-service tool that gives library users access to software that helps with writing resumes and cover letters, programs that assist with interviewing and networking skills, and even services that help job seekers match interests and skill sets with career paths. Career Transitions also provides detailed information on the fastest-growing careers and industries in a certain location and around the country. Many local libraries nationwide also include job-related buttons and lists of resources on their websites.

Create posters, public service announcements and other publicity materials to make the public aware of workforce development occurring in libraries.

Flyers were created for the Ohio Public Library's Job & Career Accelerator from LearningExpress, a comprehensive, online job search system. Publicity materials, including photos of the program in operation, highlighted its real-time job postings and personalized career guidance.

Create mobile career centers by working with bookmobile services.

The Southern Tier Library System in New York created a mobile job services program called JobLink. The program travels to unemployed/underemployed patrons to provide one-on-one support, including resume creation, basic computer skills and online job searches.

Provide partnership agreement resources, such as templates for memos of understanding.

The Spokane Area Workforce Development Council entered into a formal agreement ("memorandum of understanding") with local libraries and other community partners to identify and commit to common goals, services, roles and responsibilities to help address community employment needs. To view additional partnership resource ideas from the collaboration between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Employment and Training Administration, visit www.ims.gov/about/workforce.aspx.

Identify small businesses that use the business development services of the library.

Over the past several years, the Colorado State Library has delivered workshops and webinars to help libraries connect with local businesses and become "entrepreneur friendly." The Rondo Community Outreach Library in Minnesota offers a Small Business Resource Center, which provides information on small- and micro-business development.

Facilitate wider community partnerships, such as with economic or small business development agencies.

The Alameda County Library in California collaborated with a local low-income housing agency, Mercy Housing, and made new connections with the local One Stop Career Center to increase employment skills and opportunities in the Ashland area. The project established technology centers at each of the three Mercy Housing locations to offer residents computer skills, life skills and job-seeking classes.

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