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LIBRARIES  
COUNCIL



## Strengthening Libraries

## as Entrepreneurial Hubs

### LEARNING COHORT SNAPSHOT

Discover how the library systems that participated in ULC's Entrepreneurship Learning Cohort explored new ways to reach and engage potential entrepreneurs and support local economic development priorities.

**Austin Public Library** successfully increased awareness of the library as a resource to support the Austin entrepreneurial ecosystem, brought the services of the Austin Economic Development Department's Small Business Development Program to historically underserved communities and reached more than 1,000 aspiring entrepreneurs, many of whom had no previous connections with the library.

**Baltimore County Public Library and Enoch Pratt Free Library** established the Entrepreneur and Library Alliance of Greater Baltimore, a groundbreaking collaboration designed to leverage the resources of both library systems to support small business entrepreneurs in the Baltimore metro region.

**DC Public Library** developed a strategy for supporting entrepreneurs in the city's justice-involved community including strengthening relationships with key partners in the D.C. entrepreneurial ecosystem and beginning to enhance staff capacity.

**Durham County Public Library** became a more integral and credible component of the Durham entrepreneurial ecosystem by expanding its business and financial literacy programs in partnership with a local bank branch and the small business center at the community technical college.

**East Baton Rouge Parish Library** expanded awareness of the library as a starting point for aspiring entrepreneurs by hosting, presenting at and participating in many events in the Baton Rouge Business Community – reaching more than 950 people who used library entrepreneurial services.

**Kansas City Public Library** developed a richer understanding of the challenges, pitfalls and opportunities aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs face, developed a clearer strategy for how the library can best serve immigrants and refugees and realigned frontline staff to support the strategy.

**King County Library System** developed a framework for effectively engaging immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs and carried out a We Mean Business pilot program for 50 participants – primarily women and Spanish speakers – to promote equity, enable valuable connections and empower Latinx small businesses and nonprofits.

**Mid-Continent Public Library** embarked on a discovery process to enhance the library's approach to reaching and engaging immigrant and refugee business owners and entrepreneurs leading to a new emphasis on drop-by meetings as the most effective way to build long-term relationships and to increase attention to cultural awareness and humility.

**St. Louis County Library** has become embedded in the curriculum of several large entrepreneurial education programs provided by local nonprofits and incubators which has led to deeper connections with emerging entrepreneurs and an increase in the use of library services, particularly one-on-one coaching sessions which jumped by 117 percent.

**Toledo Lucas County Public Library** developed a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing aspiring women and immigrant entrepreneurs and began designing an enhanced set of support services to address those challenges, which led to a 73 percent increase in one-to-one business appointments with the library staff and a 100 percent increase in participation in small group business training sessions.

**Toronto Public Library** designed and launched a Newcomer Entrepreneur in Residence program to support diverse communities by providing information, personalized guidance and skill development opportunities to newcomers aspiring to start small businesses.

Learn more at [urbanlibraries.org](http://urbanlibraries.org)

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