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Libraries Must Learn to Think Like Entrepreneurs in Order to Strengthen Their Role as Entrepreneurial Hubs. A New Toolkit Shows Them How.

The Urban Libraries Council launches new online resource to guide public libraries in raising the profile and impact of their entrepreneurial services

WASHINGTON — Public libraries are uniquely positioned to support individuals in pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams by offering free access to technology, meeting spaces, skills training, information and networking opportunities. However, there is no set model for how libraries can best leverage those assets, and there are opportunities for all libraries to elevate their position in their community's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Urban Libraries Council has released a new toolkit that helps libraries enhance their entrepreneurship services by adopting an entrepreneurial mindset of continuous discovery and change. Available on [the ULC website](#), the toolkit provides regularly-updated strategies and resources to help libraries reach greater success in key areas of their entrepreneurial support, including:

- Building organizational capacity
- Establishing strategic partnerships
- Developing programs and services
- Conducting strong outreach and engagement
- Getting the word out

The toolkit is an extension of ULC's Strengthening Libraries as Entrepreneurial Hubs initiative, and includes insight and resources generated from the initiative. A collaborative effort with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, this initiative aims to strengthen the role libraries play in nurturing and promoting entrepreneurship – particularly for women, people of color, immigrants, veterans and individuals returning to civic life from the justice system. Previous work in this initiative has included a national scan of contemporary library entrepreneurship support practices, the publication of a research

report and programs piloted by leading North American public library systems to explore new ways for libraries to meet the needs of entrepreneurs.

“Twenty-first century libraries embody the spirit of the entrepreneurs they serve. Libraries take risks, innovate and embrace continuous change to support local freelancers, disruptors and self-starters from all walks of life,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Susan Benton. “This new toolkit is a powerful resource to guide all libraries in intentionally increasing the visibility, relevancy and impact of their entrepreneurial support, especially for populations that have been traditionally underserved.”

About the Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council, founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and best practices that ensure community impact.

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