

Top Ten Tips for Library and America's Job Center Partnerships

1. 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 (PLWC). 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. The library provided over 150 classes on ESL and job-seeking skills, and 1,541 library users received personal assistance.

2. 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 to help them connect job seekers with appropriate materials. Workforce staff provided an overview of the JobLink services and shared information on how local libraries could partner with their local JobLink Career Centers.

3. Use library spaces to hold events sponsored by your workforce agency: career fairs, resume training, etc.

In Ohio, the Columbus Metropolitan Library introduced Job Help Centers at all 21 library branches and holds regular events such as "Job Help - Hands on Help" sessions. Staff and/or volunteers are available to assist with applying for jobs online, creating and sending resumes, and searching Internet job sites.

4. 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.

5. 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 resume- and cover letter-building software, 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 location and around the country.

Many local libraries include job-related buttons and lists of resources on their websites. For example, the Delaware Division of Libraries developed a web listing of community resources around the topic of employability. This "Community Resources Exchange" includes a short description of each partner organization's mission, populations served, services, and events.

6. Work with the libraries to 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.

In Shasta County, CA, a video was produced for a job fair at the Redding Library, which attracted nearly 500 people.

7. Create mobile career centers by working with bookmobile services.

In New York, the Southern Tier Library System 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.

8. Provide partnership agreement resources, e.g., templates for memos of understanding.

9. 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.

10. Work with your library to facilitate wider community partnerships, e.g., with economic or small business development agencies.

In California, the Alameda County Library 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.

America's Service Locator can help American Job Centers find libraries in their area.

Simply enter a zip code and hit enter.

<http://www.servicelocator.org/Libraries.asp>