

The Impact of Libraries on Economic Development



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

Libraries support economic growth through the provision of direct access to information from library collections and databases, public access computers, spaces to work that include access to wireless networks, word processing software and Internet access for job searches and the submission of resumes, and support from staff trained to provide assistance with business resources. In a global economy, where much of the job growth is associated with entrepreneurship and the development of small businesses, the provision of these resources has become essential to economic development. Libraries also provide a means to facilitate resource sharing by expanding the reach of service-related organizations.

Libraries Support the Growth of Small Businesses

- Delaware's public libraries assist start-up businesses by providing information. Examples of the most requested items are books of sample business forms, legal forms, and business plans; books on patents and trademarks, how to incorporate, and franchise opportunities; books on starting specific types of businesses such as child care services, cleaning services, restaurants, landscaping services, construction, retail, and home-based businesses.
- Libraries provide one-stop access to Small Business Resources through library websites such as www.nccdlib.org with links to local and state organizations offering assistance to small business owners and those starting small businesses, and access to databases of full-text articles from business journals and newspapers.
- For job seekers, libraries offer computers with Internet; Microsoft Word for creating resumes; books on job hunting, resumes, and interviews; study guides for job-related exams such as Police Officer, Paramedic, Pharmacy Technician, and Postal Worker; directories and databases for identifying employers; access to online job sites; and access to online job applications.

Action Items

- The development of regional business information centers in libraries to provide assistance with on site training on how to search business databases and websites.
- The creation of library programs targeting the information needs of unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Libraries Connect People, Services, and Support

- The Delaware Libraries Community Resource Exchange (Exchange) strengthens efforts to serve Delawareans in need by extending the resources and expanding the reach of service-related organizations across the state through the public libraries.
- The Exchange supplies librarians with up-to-date service and referral information to share with the public.
- Libraries coordinate information exchange among Exchange Partners in five critical areas: Basic Needs, Children & Families, Employability, Health and Miscellaneous.
- Partnerships and collaborations are fostered through face-to-face events (e.g.: forums and showcases) and print/electronic communications (e.g.: guidebooks and a listserv).

Action Item

- Communicate with elected officials, colleagues, friends and family about how libraries are involved in solving community issues and encourage other agencies/organizations to join the Exchange.