

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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Libraries Offer a Place to Learn & Connect

This recent article by Richard Florida and Brooks Rainwater

highlights the need to reknit the nation's social fabric. We've all been impacted by Covid, isolation, remote work, moving to exurbs, etc. Many institutions can help play a role, but libraries have long bolstered communities in an open, democratic way.

Libraries are so much more than store-houses for books. They are crucial pieces of the social infrastructure that facilitate human connections, interaction, and civic engagement. A survey found that 20% of remote workers spend part of their work day in public spaces, such as coffee shops and libraries.

Libraries provide services and connectivity to a wide range of people across genders, races, ages and income. Besides reading, libraries offer so much more - the chance to interact with someone, find informative exhibits, or join a
(continued on p. 6)

FOLIO Scholarships

Three \$1,000 scholarships are available to library staff from FOLIO. The Lillian Born Norberg and Mary Lou Atkinson Staff Support Scholarships are offered to full- or part-time employees of a public, academic, or special library in Oklahoma in the process of furthering their education. Applications must be received by December 30, 2022. Information is available on the FOLIO website: <http://www.okfriends.net/scholarshipshtml.html>

Scholarships will be presented at the FOLIO Annual Meeting during the 2023 MPLA/Oklahoma Library Association Conference on March 10, 2023 in Norman, OK. FOLIO has awarded scholarships since 1997. Please share this information with library staff.

Sandra Austin, chair,
 FOLIO Scholarship Committee



Best Friends Awards

Each year FOLIO recognizes two Friends of the Library that demonstrate exemplary success in support of their local library. The John Harkey Best Friends Award recognizes a Friends group serving a community with less than 10,000 population. The

Oklahoma Best Friends Award recognizes a Friends group serving a community of greater than 10,000 population. Your Friends group may apply as a FOLIO member. Information and the application form are available on the FOLIO website: www.okfriends.net/award.html

Awards are presented at the FOLIO Annual Meeting held during the OLA Conference on March 10, 2023. The application deadline is December 30, 2022.

Diane Pennington, Chair,
 FOLIO Best Friends Awards Committee

Q-My library is very good, but there are needs in the community that are not being met. What can Friends do to assist the library in better identifying needs?



A-Friends are great leaders in the community who can assist the library staff in understanding the community and what service gaps there may be. This input may run from informal conversations to group discussions to proposing a formal needs assessment.

A community needs assessment can help libraries plan for the future and develop a strategic plan. This is an evolving understanding of existing needs as well as forecasted future needs. This process assists libraries in making decisions about the future, capturing the residents' hopes, dreams, frustrations, as well as their aspirations, impressions, and other library-related feedback. The assessment can include focus groups, interviews, and surveys.

What friends can do:

- Suggest a needs assessment.
- Help fund a needs assessment.

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From the President. . .



With Thanksgiving just around the corner, we begin to wax nostalgic, and our thoughts turn to family gatherings, roasted turkey and pumpkin pie, and if you are like my husband, football. We also engage in the proverbial counting of blessings, enumerating all for which we are thankful. Like many people here in Oklahoma and around the United States, I have more than my share of blessings.

A few years ago, it became trendy to keep a gratitude journal, supposedly writing down their daily blessings improved people's attitudes and mental health. I admit I did not participate in that daily exercise, but it did make me think about my life in a more positive light. I realized that the good far outweighed the not-so-good.

Like many people, I tended to go through life overlooking or not acknowledging blessings right in front of me. Of course, I was always thankful for family, friends, home, and career; but I took for granted some of my life's most precious assets. Perhaps I even failed to appreciate the ubiquity of public libraries here in Oklahoma.

While libraries are plentiful in Oklahoma, their existence is not guaranteed. They take the funding and support of our government from the local and state levels to the federal government. The availability of a wide variety of reading material is also something to be thankful for but not to take for granted. Some in our society would use government to limit what reading materials libraries can offer. Because our government is supposed to work for all citizens, we need to make our voices heard by advocating for library funding and by speaking out against censorship.

FOLIO members are the perfect advocates for libraries. Unlike library employees, our efforts are not seen as a conflict of interest. We are just concerned citizens who simply love libraries. Therefore, we need to engage our state legislators in the discussion of the value of libraries in our free society. We can invite our legislators to our libraries, take pictures, and share them. We also need to email our Congressional Representatives. While all of Oklahoma's representatives are supportive of libraries, we still need to let them know how we stand and encourage their continued support.

And speaking of library-related blessings, OLA's annual conference next year is in conjunction with the Mountain Plains Library Association, which includes library associations in Oklahoma, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

The presence of library staff and Friends from MPLA will give us the unique opportunity to meet people from other states and hear about successful programs in their libraries. FOLIO's day at the conference is Friday, March 10, 2023. The conference is being held at the Embassy Suites in Norman. Registration will be online, and I encourage all FOLIO members to attend. In addition to our sessions on early childhood literacy and appropriate responses to book challenges, we will award scholarships,

present Best Friends Awards, and a Hall of Fame Award. We will also hear acclaimed author Mariana Llanos. I hope to see many of you there.

So as you celebrate this Thanksgiving, keep these words of Ralph Waldo Emerson in mind. "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you and give thanks continuously." Remember that your library is truly one of the good things that come to you. Give thanks.

Judy Haught, President

FOLIO Board Actions

The FOLIO Board met on October 21, 2022. Discussions included:

- Confirmed Bill Young as a FOLIO Advisory Board member.
- Learned about federal and state budgets impacting libraries. (*Sign up for the federal advocacy emailing list at: www.ala.org/advocacy/getting-started*)
- Reviewed OLA's Legislative priorities include maintaining existing funding base, supporting broadband access, budgeting for the OK Department of Libraries to provide federal library matching funds and funding commensurate with the role of the state library. OLA supports open access to information and literacy (reading, early literacy, health, info, and media.)
- Reviewed conference programs. (*See the President's Message and plan to attend March 10, 2023. Registration will be available in December at: www.oklibs.org/page/annual_conference*)
- Reviewed FOLIO committee activities - finance, marketing, Ambassadors, membership, and awards. (*See separate articles on some of these reports.*)

Ask a Friend

(continued from p. 1)

- Serve on the project committee or assist with identifying those who serve.
- Assist in getting the word out: promote and recruit participants.

The needs assessment has no pre-determined findings, but rather identifies possible opportunities for the library and other community agencies. Focus groups, interviews with leaders, community surveys, or other modes of investigation might identify:

- Ways the library could reach others in the community.
- Dreams of what library service might be in 10 years.
- The unmet or critical needs in the community.
- Funding needs for library services not available at the current funding level.

Libraries continue to change to meet community needs and engage new partners to leverage community resources.

-David Katz, Programs & Services Manager, Library Strategies/The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library



News from Around the State



Puzzles for Sale at Elgin

The Friends of the Elgin Community Library sold puzzles this summer to support teen services.



Friends Helping Friends

FOLIO Ambassador Sharon Douthitt visited with the officers of the Tahlequah Friends of the Library this summer. After hearing some of the activities the Friends of the Will Rogers Library in Claremore does, the Tahlequah President Carol Lee contacted Sharon and said they were interested in expanding their Executive Committee of officers to a Board. Carol requested attending one of Claremore's Friends of the Library (FOL) board meetings to see the group in action. The FOL's incoming President, Bobbie Cary, graciously consented.

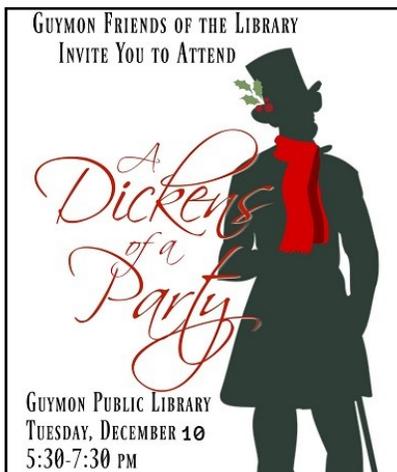
Tahlequah representatives met with the FOL Board in late August and shared ideas. The electronic lobby sign welcomed the visiting Friends. It was the FOL's first meeting of the fiscal year, but the meeting and lunch went well. Friends really go out of the way to help other Friends. Best wishes to Tahlequah Friends!

MLS Friends Help Fund Imagination Library

The Friends of the Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma County and the Library Endowment Trust have given a generous donation to make Dolly Parton's Imagination Library available to Oklahoma County residents with local partners. Free books are mailed each month to help children get excited about reading and to encourage reading in the home. Patrons are invited to sign up and donate: <https://supportmls.org/imagination-library/>.

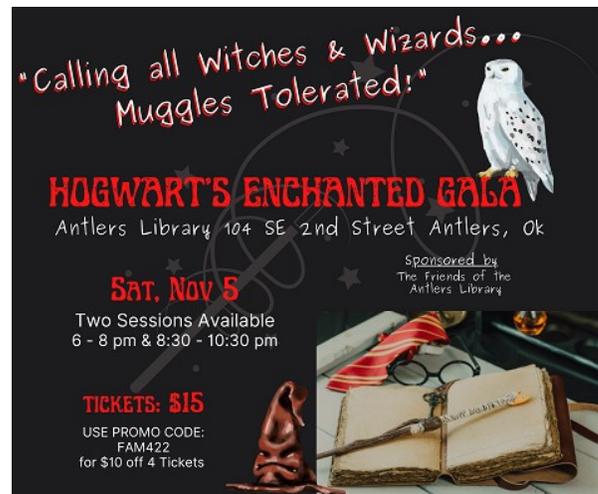


In making the announcement at the staff development meeting, Executive Director Larry White said that with Oklahoma County, Tulsa City-County Library System and the Pioneer Library System over 80 percent of the children in Oklahoma under 5 will be eligible for a free book each month. Almost 5,000 have signed up on the MLS web site in the first two weeks. Many other cities and counties are providing this great service around the state also.



Party in Guyton

Guyton Friends of the Library are hosting "A Dickens of a Party" on December 10 with carols, musical entertainment, photo booth, book readings, refreshments, light tour and contest, and children's activities.



The Friends of the Antlers Public Library held a Hogwart's Enchanted Gala. The two sessions included dinner, dance, unlimited drinks, snacks, and a chance to win a Tour for Two at the Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo. Participants could try their hands at freeing Dobby or pinning the nose on Valdemort. Tickets were \$15 with all proceeds going to the Antlers Public Library programs.

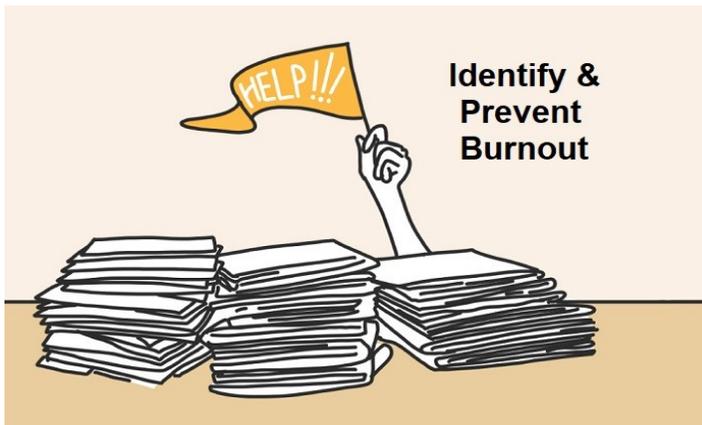
How to Ask for Money

Are you reticent to ask people for money? Kathy Johnson Bowles says, "I don't ask for money; I ask people to share our vision and make an investment. The resources aren't for me personally; they are to achieve a greater good."

Ask for money, you'll get advice. Ask for advice, you'll get money. Don't ask people for money the first time you meet them. Build up trust and an understanding of shared interests, values, and aspirations. Cultivation provides time to understand the donor's interest, capacity and best time to give.

People give to vision, not need. Donors are inspired to give by the what and the why of the ask, not out of desperation. What are you trying to do? Why is it important? The most effective way to secure donor support is by taking them on a mental journey of "what if..." or "imagine this..." This provides an inspirational and hopeful exploration where the donor imagines endless possibilities of their money doing good.

Bowles, Kathy Johnson. "How to Ask for Money." *Inside Higher Education* (13 Sep. 2022) www.insidehighered.com/blogs/just-explain-it-me/how-ask-money



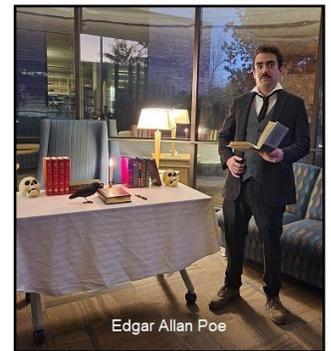
Friends and volunteers sometimes feel overwhelmed. Here are some hints for you and those dedicated volunteers and Friends to maintain well-being and avoid burnout.

- Reduce the number of meetings and make the ones you have productive.
- Permit flexibility, allowing people to accomplish tasks around their schedules, when possible.
- Make sure they understand the overall mission and how important their part is in accomplishing the purpose.
- If there's a stressor, try to identify and help alleviate it; maybe adjust assignments or realign tasks to skills.
- Provide recognition for a job well done - thank you notes, public accolades, special honor, etc.
- Encourage volunteers with training, coaching or mentoring opportunities.
- Propose team projects and collaboration opportunities for those who like to work with other people.
- Keep communication open for workload discussions and challenges that may need addressing or assistance as needed.

I Read Dead People: A Literary Ghost Walk

Friends have had mystery dinner theaters as fundraisers, but having author impersonators sounds like fun and is more manageable. At the Canton Public Library (MI), attendees were able to register for one of three tours. The tour guide wore a black cloak and carried a lantern, leading them around the library.

Edgar Allan Poe read "The Tell-Tale Heart." Then the group met H. P. Lovecraft, Washington Irving, Emily Dickinson, Bram Stoker, and Mary Shelley. Each author had their own set-up with decorations and props. The Library was decorated and snacks were served.



Ready2Read@Your Library

Last year Valerie Kimble volunteered to train library staff in integrating early literacy skills in story times. The FOLIO Board wanted to assist and wrote a grant proposal to the OK Department of Libraries for the R2R project, providing both resources and materials for story times.

Libraries who had responded to a survey from ODL about interest in having an early childhood literacy program were invited to participate with 30 responding by the deadline. Training has been ongoing since January, 2022 for libraries from the Panhandle to Southeast Oklahoma. Staff and parent/caregiver evaluations have been inspiring.

Thanks to many people at ODL, the materials and resources arrived in October. You'll find some enthusiastic photos of staff and children in story time on FOLIO Facebook (FB) and Ready2Read-OK (open group on FB).

The evaluations of the story times and training include these wonderful comments:

- "I found everything from puppeteering to storytelling meaningful. Thank you for...everything you taught us!"
- "Storytelling and puppet use were helpful. Telling a story multiple ways. Exciting. Makes me want to do programs."
- "Keeping a variety of activities - singing, reading, movement - is important in knowing. It was great!"
- "I'm an adult librarian; so I have zero training... This was great...I feel like I can help parents better."

**Ready2Read®
@Your
Library**



This project is administered by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma, and is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act.



Fundraising Ideas

Auction on eBay



The Friends of the Ashland Public Library (MA) invited bidders to their eBay auction. The Author Confidential Auction was live from October 12 to October 18. Participants could bid on

receiving a letter answering three questions from one of the participating authors.

Chili Cook Off

The Traverse City Area Library (MI) had their Annual Chili Cook Off in October. Contestants bring their favorite chili for everyone to sample. A contestant who had won three years brought a new recipe. One recipe was based on a mole chocolate sauce. Mmmm-mmmm.

Some groups have people vote on their favorite chili with money. Some Friends groups sell tickets to the event. Prizes for the winners vary - bragging rights, decorated spoons, ribbons, etc.



The Antlers Public Library (OK) asks patrons to shop the wishlist on Amazon to help replace lost and missing books. If patrons find books in better than average condition on their bookshelves or at garage sales, donations are welcome.



Book Sale/Craft Fair

The Friends of the Newcastle Public Library (OK) held a combined used book sale, craft fair and blood drive in June. Booth fees were \$15 for an 8' X 10' space. Book shoppers could fill a bag for \$5.



Book Donations

The Friends of the Lubbock Public Library (TX) collects books at the libraries, but they also have donation bins in three other locations. The Library posted a great thank you to Friends saying, "They go above and beyond in helping support our libraries."

Oktoberfest

The Friends of the Franklin Public Library (MI) held an Oktoberfest fundraiser with a variety of activities.



Book Sale and Gift & Book Nook

Friends of the Milanof-Schock Library (PA) have a combined Used Book Sale and Gift & Book Nook.



The Friends of the Wigin Memorial Library (NH) held an indoor yard sale, which included antiques, arts and crafts, household items, and a mystery book sale. They raised over \$700 to help fund their museum pass program and other activities. Their online post said the Friends "would love some fresh energy and/or your kind donations."

Libraries Offer Place to Learn & Connect...

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"A Library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert."

- Andrew Carnegie



Elk City Carnegie Library

public meeting. What other institution can offer story time, business services, financial literacy, programs ranging from author talks to musical acts, and a place to work remotely?

Perhaps even more significant is the role libraries play in spurring creativity and lifelong learning. Libraries provide knowledge about the world and learning experiences, igniting curiosity.

Libraries change to meet community needs. They are being designed and redesigned with cafés, makerspaces, meeting rooms, outdoor spaces for activity, and other creative services.

As Albert Einstein said, "The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library." Those words ring ever truer today.

Florida, Richard and Brooks Rainwater. "Libraries Can Unite a Lonely, Divided Nation" (26 Oct. 2022) www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-26/in-a-divided-nation-public-libraries-offer-space-to-reconnect

Adult Play

It's time for adults to plan some play wherever they are, according to Mita Williams. Libraries should develop, host, and encourage games outdoors. Expensive apps are not necessary, but simple games can be designed by libraries that can help their community directly experience local, underappreciated spaces of natural beauty, help them discover overlooked historical places and their stories, and encourage them to stumble on local art in the landscape. Libraries can create positive mental-health interventions that can also create the potential for a deeper connection between its readers and where they live through site-specific games.

Games can assist with mental and physical health. Games and play provide significant benefit to those needing self-care and for those looking for connections to others, as part of improving mental health. Libraries have recognized a need in their communities for respite and recovery with programming and activities, i.e., yoga, mindfulness, meditation, etc.

Providing opportunities for stress-relief through playful interventions can work hand-in-hand with walking in natural settings, sharing adventures, and encouraging creativity. Such experiences can introduce attendees to

nearby places that might bring them calm, joy and wonder. Jeffrey T. Davis, a librarian with the San Diego Public Library, suggests that one should think of the community of the library as a potential collection all around them: "How can library members be helped to access the [outdoor] resources around them as easily as a story time or best-seller?"

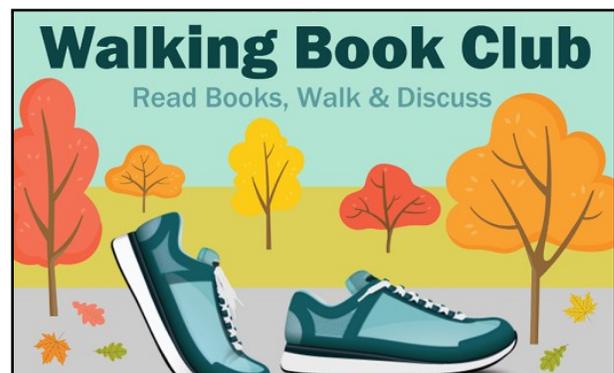
Some pathways for successful games outside the physical library are explored. Williams specifically introduces games that have been designed and developed by libraries - Pokémon Go, Geocaching, The Summer Game, StoryWalks® (and other walking programs),

Scott Nicholson suggests using these elements to help decide what game experience to utilize: SNAKS.

- Social: The social interactions between players due to the game.
- Narrative: The engagement between players and the narrative of the game.
- Actions: The actions required by the players.
- Knowledge: The knowledge that the players bring to the game.
- Strategy: The decisions required by the player.

Location-based games are recommended that have social interaction, allow intergenerational play, can be stopped and started again, play at their own pace, and discover new places or community features. Plan play and fun for adults. Get them active outdoors.

Williams, Mita. "Play Where You Are." *Journal of Play in Adulthood* (Fall, 2022):14-31 www.journalofplayinadulthood.org.uk (Creative Commons)



Want to start with a walking program? Noah Lenstra shares "9 Ways to Take a Walk with the Library" (24 Jan. 2020) programminglibrarian.org/blog/9-ways-take-walk-library.

Reach Friends with Email

We hear so much about social media, but Angela Hursh (superlibrarymarketing.com) recommends email, as the most powerful tool to reach your members (or community). 90% of Americans over the age of 15 use email.

Email is the only platform where you can build your list. If you wanted to, you could also create lists with different target groups (seniors, teens, parents, business owners). You get to decide when you send your emails. And you have complete control over the content. Think about an enticing subject line to catch attention.

To measure success of your emails, you can focus on action created by the email - use trackable links, registration for programs, ticket sales, or database logins.

Need Help?

Call your FOLIO Ambassador.

FOLIO has Outreach Ambassadors who are ready and willing to talk or consult with your Friends' groups or your officers. We want to help you be successful and strengthen your library. Let us know how we can assist you.



Northeast

- Jon and Sharon Douthitt
sdouthitt@prodigy.net

Northwest

- Dr. Karen Neurohr
karen,neurohr@okstate.edu
- Linda Pye
lindapye23@gmail.com

Southeast

- Dr. Bill Hagen
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- Teresia Jors
tjors@stratford.k12.ok.us

Southwest

- Angie Lewis
angieslewis13@gmail.com
- Bridgette Shelton
shelton.bridgette@elkcitieschools.com



- **Picture Book Month** - November
- **FOLIO Scholarship** deadline - Dec. 30, 2022
- **Best Friends Awards** deadline - Dec. 30, 2022
- **FOLIO Newsletter** deadline - Jan. 6, 2023
- **FOLIO Board meeting** - Jan. 13, 2023
- **Library Lovers' Month** - February
- **Take Your Child to the Library Day**-Feb. 4, 2023
- **Deadline for conference hotel reservations** will be early February.
- **Mountain Plains Library Association/ Oklahoma Library Association Joint Conference in Norman** - March 8-10, 2023
- **FOLIO Annual Meeting** - March 10, 2023
- **Freedom of Information Day** - March 16, 2023

Join FOLIO— being a Friend will. . .

- Provide networking opportunities to make new friends and to share information and ideas about programs, activities, fundraising, legal issues and great books to enjoy,
- Award scholarships to library support staff,
- Recognize outstanding Friends of the Library with awards for annual Best Friends and Friends of Library Week,
- Showcase the work of Oklahoma Friends in the quarterly newsletter and on Facebook,
- Honor esteemed Oklahoma authors through Literary Landmarks,
- Assist Friends groups with incorporation or reactivation,
- Advocate for library support.

Find out more about FOLIO at
www.okfriends.net

and

Facebook—@ FOLIOOKFriends

Your membership dues and donations are the primary source of funds to support FOLIO's mission which is to strengthen Libraries through Friends of Libraries.

Basic dues are:

\$20	Individual Membership
\$25	Friends Group Membership
\$30	Library Membership

Contributions above the minimum dues support FOLIO's mission, are tax deductible as a charitable contribution, and are greatly appreciated. THANK YOU!!!

Name: _____

(Name of Individual, Friends group, Library or Corporate Business)

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues Enclosed: _____

Gift Donation Enclosed: _____

Endowment Gift Enclosed: _____

In Memory of _____

OR In Honor of _____

FOLIO—We are Friends helping Friends!

Mail to: FOLIO Treasurer

P.O. Box 702585, Tulsa, OK 74170

Return Service Requested



Libraries That Build Business

Libraries That Build Business: Advancing Small Business & Entrepreneurship in Public Libraries (ALA, 2022), edited by Megan Janicki - This new book reiterates that library staff do not have to be business majors to offer services for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the community. These small businesses are vital to a strong community & economic development.

“Libraries offer low-barrier access to basic technology, equipment, and information, making it easy for an entrepreneur to explore or test out a business idea before committing or investing in it.” The Libraries Build Business Initiative by the American Library Association (ALA) is introduced.

Small and rural libraries have knowledge of the community and rapport that can bridge connections, i.e., federal programs, employment, grants, etc. Libraries can start small with a hand-out about what is available.

- What is in the collection? (Easy location info.)
- What business resources are available through the library databases?
- Who are community experts - local business groups, chamber of commerce?

Constructive ideas for finding partners and identifying funding sources are discussed with ideas on marketing and formalizing agreements. Considerations for equity, diversity, and inclusion in business development programs are given.

As in any library service, business services need to be developed around the needs of the community. Several

librarians describe their creative ideas for business services.

- A state library supports professional development on business-related topics.
- Some public law libraries have partnered with public libraries to provide access to law information.
- BizKids Club is a youth entrepreneurship program in Orange County Library System (FL). The students, ages 9 -14, attend eight, two-hour sessions with fun hands-on activities and role-playing exercises. The curriculum helps them brainstorm business ideas, create a business plan, design marketing tools, and pitch their idea.

Most of the book delineates 24 business services working in public libraries.

- Addison Public Library (IL) describes how they began business and employment services from the ground up.
- Laramie County Library System (WY) reviews a statewide business initiative for rural entrepreneurs.
- The Ferguson Library (CT) has a resource center with a network of library resources, programs and services for small businesses and potential businesses.
- Round Rock Public Library (TX) has Biz.ability Workshops series. The free programs are presented by experts and practitioners covering finances, marketing, resources, taxes, and planning.

- Topsham Public Library (ME) has an employment & business center with programs, reference and materials.

This book has very practical advice for any size library thinking of developing or expanding business services.