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California Librarians Small Business Toolkit

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OVERVIEW

This project began with a desire to help underrepresented adults. To do this, we have focused our efforts on designing a toolkit that will empower Librarians throughout the state to provide the necessary resources that underrepresented adults need to establish small businesses and succeed as entrepreneurs. We reviewed the literature of libraries and economic development and we conducted an extensive review of existing library programs for small businesses. This digital toolkit is the end result. We invite librarians to use this toolkit to establish business programs and business centers that support local economic development. By focusing many of our efforts on the results achieved by smaller libraries and libraries that serve underrepresented and marginalized groups, we hope to make business development programs accessible to all of California's disparate libraries.

GOALS

1. Provide underrepresented individuals in all communities the tools to build their business
2. Provide a centrally located guideline for Librarians to create business-building programs and assist new entrepreneurs in business growth and expansion
3. Bridge the gap between libraries, local businesses, and the community

SPECIFICATIONS

The toolkit resides as a website. Currently, it is split into two separate hemispheres: Librarian Resources and Patron Resources. The Librarian Resources section outlines how to create a business-building program, where to find information about the local community, creating partnerships, learning from others and a victory sharing blog. The Patron Resources section contains information regarding creating a business plan, obtaining grants, legal information, books and grant information. They work together to both inform the Librarian of resources available and patrons of how to build or grow their business.

Recommendations

We hope that the State Library can host and maintain the toolkit after its completion. A grant funded by the State Library would catapult this toolkit so that libraries can use the toolkit as a guide to start their own business centers. Highlighting and promotion of the toolkit for librarians interested in increasing or building a presence as a resource for small businesses is our vision.