05|12|2010

Developing Career Resources
in Public Libraries

Christine Mastalio

Abstract:

The term "career help" can encompass many things, including resume / cover letter workshops, online resources, courses taught by librarians or job fairs at the library. As of 2010, many libraries are engaging in one or more of these avenues, responding to an information need. This site seeks to give practicing librarians resources on why the library might want to get involved, examples of successful programs, avenues of funding and evaluation strategies. Although teens and young adults may also benefit from career services at the library, this website focuses on resources for adults.

Link to Full Text: http://careerhelpatpubliclibraries.weebly.com

Keywords:
career help | job resource | public libraries | librarians

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Meaningful Career-Help at Your Library: Responding to an Information Need

The term "career-help" can encompass many things, including resume/cover letter workshops, online resources, courses taught by librarians or job fairs at the library. As of 2010, many libraries are engaging in one or more of these avenues, responding to an information need. This site seeks to give practicing librarians resources on why the library might want to get involved, examples of successful programs, avenues of funding and evaluation strategies. Click on the photos below to navigate through the site or use the menu bar above. Although teens and young adults may also benefit from career services at the library, this website focuses on resources for adults. *Content on this website was researched and written by Christine Mastalio, MLIS student at the University of Iowa in the Spring 2010 semester.*
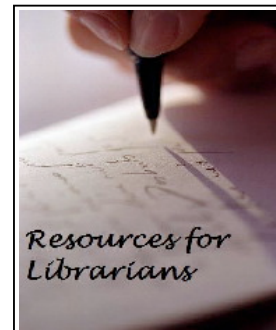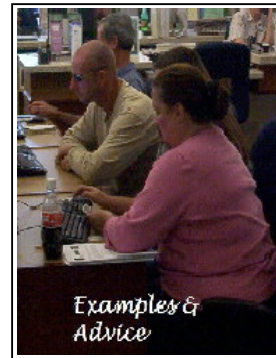
Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Past, Present & Future: Libraries as Career Centers

Why Libraries?

With all the other things for librarians to do, why should public libraries serve as career centers? It is a valid question to ask, but both scholarly literature and trade publications show public libraries who provide career resources are filling a void *and* fulfilling their missions.

Library programs should promote the collection, draw in those who do not normally use the library, help those who cannot afford to pay or increase visibility in the community (Lear, 2002). Devoting resources to job skills programs fits all of these obligations by using the collection to point people to career materials, filling a specific need for many who might not be library users, providing online access and performing a vital service for communities in the midst of a recession.

The American Library Association (ALA) Office for Research and Statistics published a report in 2009 that surveyed rural, suburban and urban librarians. Two thirds of the libraries that responded are providing some type of job assistance, up from 44 percent two years before, and "Aiding job seekers is increasingly being viewed as a vital role for public libraries..." (Jerrard, 2009, p. 1).

Furthermore, much of the modern-day job search is conducted online and a recent Gates Foundation study found a third of Americans 14 and older use library computers for some type of activity, including looking for jobs (Blankinship, 2010). While the study does not recognize libraries as the only source of computing power in a community, it is clear library resources are being used.

In fact, in the current economic recession, the nation's public libraries are becoming a type of triage center for job seekers desperately looking for free resources to help them brush up on their skills (Gronowska, 2009).

Triage Centers

"The library as an institution has many roles, but as our country struggles through an economic crisis, I have watched the library where I work evolve into a career and business center, a community gathering place and a bastion for hope," (Gronowska, 2009).

Gronowska is not alone in viewing public libraries as emergency rooms for the unemployed. In New Jersey, the state put libraries at the forefront of the economic crisis by pushing people to their local library for help in filing for unemployment benefits. The state even provided training for 100 librarians. The Gates Foundation surveyed New Jersey towns and found that 78 percent of the time public libraries were the only source for free and public internet access (McCarthy & Tumulty, 2010). According to a local politician and the state library director, since so many search and application materials are now online, libraries and their computer terminals are essential for economic recovery (McCarthy & Tumulty, 2010).

History of help

But even before the recession, evidence suggests libraries had a role to play in providing career-help resources. According to an article out of Nebraska, library computers are seen as a community resource and they are mainly used to look for jobs (Bernardi, 2005). In fact, at one inner-city library, helping people navigate employment sites is considered a main reference duty (Bernardi, 2005).

In a study of low income residents, a Washington state library district found three of the four main information needs of their users related to career-help: search, job advancement and internet skills (Armstrong, Lord, & Zelter, 2000). That study asked non-library users in low income areas what they wanted from their library and the answer was overwhelmingly more help with career related information. The American Library Association's programming statement also supports job skills workshops in libraries. According to the ALA, programming should enhance the quality of life in a community and part of that includes helping people look for work (American Library Association).

Training Librarians

The internet has rapidly changed the way people search for and find jobs. In fact, that is one reason public libraries are so essential in providing career-help because they provide both access and expertise. However, even with good intentions, librarians may not be trained to
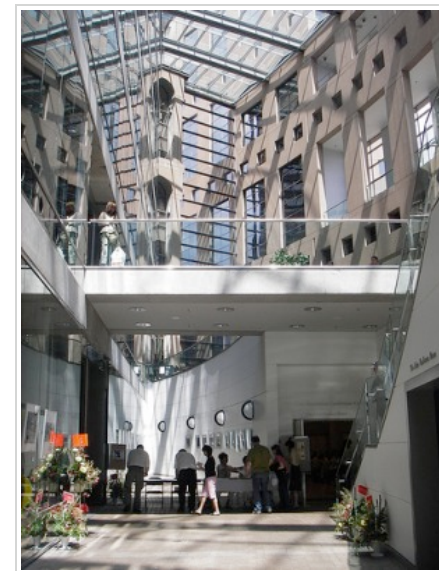
help. E-government is being touted as a function of public libraries, but librarians may not be qualified to help with complicated forms or even to direct people to the right resources (Jaeger & Bertot, 2009). Unemployment benefits and other forms of federal aid, along with job applications, may fall under what patrons expect librarians to know. For ideas on how to ensure librarians are up to speed, visit the Advice & Cautions page.

What next?
There is a precedent and a current need, but how does a library get started? Check out Examples & Advice for an idea of the wide range of career-help activities public libraries are currently providing. Find out how to get funding and see if your program was a success. The Resources for Librarians page also has suggestions for starting out.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

A Google search for career-help and public libraries yields more than 11 million results showing that libraries around the world are undertaking projects in this arena. To check out just a small sample of what is going on, visit the Role Models page. For a general overview of concerns and things to think about before starting, visit the Advice & Cautions section.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

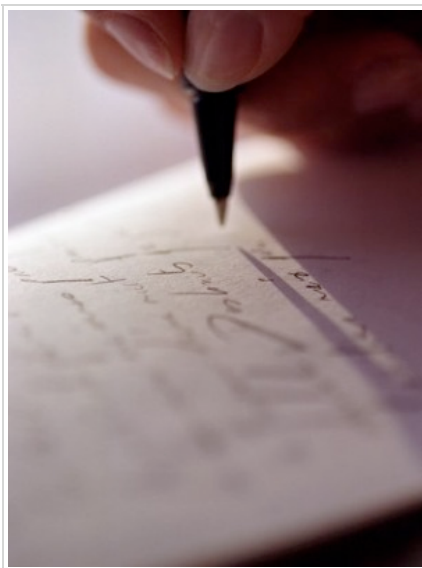Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Learn by Example: What Other Libraries are Doing

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sylvar/ / CC BY 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sanjoselibrary/ / CC BY-SA 2.0

europe3d.vwi.ro/participation/participation-form/

Although many libraries are engaging in some kind of career-help, the depth and form this takes can be very different. Examples range from offering a one-time resume workshop, having regular computer training classes, or hosting a full-blown career fair. This section highlights the different kinds of services being performed by libraries across the country. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it seeks to give a range of examples from different sizes of libraries in different parts of the country.

Whetting your appetite

Davenport Public Library (Iowa)

During the recent recession, the Davenport Public Library in Iowa was facing pressure of across the board cuts from the city. However, according to a *Quad-City Times* article, the library had a few simple ideas in place to help those looking for a career. One option was to reserve a librarian for one-on-one help, which could involve computer training or resume review. The library also had sample job applications so people could practice before turning in the real thing (Tibbetts, 2009).

Omaha Public Library (Nebraska)

A branch of the Omaha Public Library took on a more ambitious project by hosting a career fair in the library parking lot. According to Bernardi (2005), the library serves an inner-city, low-income population and the main use of library computers was to look for jobs.

"Employers enjoy being so close to the library because they can refer people inside to apply online and prepare resumes. We work closely with the circulation managers of The Employment Guide and JobDig, local employment publications," (Bernardi, 2005, p. 322).

Bernardi (2005) says the career fair gave the library an advantage in the state legislature when it was time for the budget to be developed because legislators had a tangible example of how the library was serving community needs.

Career-Help on the Web

The key to most of these "role model" sites is content, not flashy design. Job-seekers are looking for information that is easy to find and understand (Gronowska, 2009). It is worth noting that many people do not have online access and will not be able to get to these sites from home. Libraries should also think about developing print resources for those without internet access.

Riley Guide

http://www.rileyguide.com/execute.html

Developed by librarians, this guide is comprehensive; covering internet job searches, resumes and salaries. Started in 1994, the site is updated regularly. This is a professional resource for both librarians and patrons. The website is section 508 compliant, so it is also compatible with adaptive technologies. The guide includes information on copyright of its articles and contact information.

Long Branch Public Library (New Jersey)

http://www.lmxac.org/longbranch/Virtual%20Career%20Center%20Template/index.html

The New Jersey Library has pulled together resources for all types of job-seekers, including Hispanics, the disabled, ex-offenders, teens and seniors. There are links to local government and local education opportunities and a clearly marked section of library resources, including helpful databases. Opportunities to sign up for one-on-one help with a librarian seems to be popular at many libraries. This site is not just for those who are out of work though. It includes information for working parents and women in the workplace. New Jersey libraries had a lot of resources to draw

U of I SLIS Journal

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sylvar/ / CC BY 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/jhoweaa/ / CC BY-SA 2.0

on. The state library was a go-to place for how to build a career-help site and it partnered with workforce development to train public librarians in e-government (McCarthy & Tumulty, 2010).

Mississippi State University
http://guides.library.msstate.edu/economic_crisis
Although developed by an academic library, this guide could be a rubric for how to create a comprehensive resource. Mississippi State University links to national, state and local resources for career. They also provide a broader context from which to understand the financial crisis. Some of the information is technical and legal and the volume of information found here can be overwhelming, but it gives more examples of what could be included in a job-seeking guide.

Anne Arundel County Public Library (Maryland)
http://libguides.aacpl.net/content.php?pid=53133&sid=402413
The Baltimore area library has developed a libguide for job-seekers. It includes information on classes being held at the library, how to get live chat help and advice on how to research potential employers. The site is simple and easy to use--some of the resources are local but some cover a broader area. It may also be worth looking at how AACPL has set up live chat help.

Boulder Public Library (Colorado)
http://research.boulderlibrary.org/jobs-careers
The Boulder Public Library has also created a specific section on its website for job-seekers. This one clearly lists what the library can do and collates resources, including books, for people to look at. One interesting feature is a collection of RSS feeds for current job openings in the Boulder area.

Tough Times, Library Lifelines (Michigan)
http://research.boulderlibrary.org/jobs-careers
In Michigan, several libraries banded together to create one broader resource. It lists both individual library programs and other places to find aid.

Straight from ALA
ALA Editions' *Crisis in Employment: a Librarian's Guide to Helping Job Seekers* (Jerrard, 2009) has several best-practice examples for libraries of every size. Just a few will be unpacked here.

- *Nappannee Public Library (Indiana)*: In a worst case scenario, the Nappanee Public Library in Elkhart County, Indiana was recovering from an F3 tornado when the recession hit. Soon they had the highest unemployment rate in the country (Jerrard, 2009). Librarians found traditional career-help models were only treating the symptoms, so they started a Long-Term Recovery task force that included organizations from several townships and the public library. Weekly meetings were used to reassess services and one of the most important functions the library played in a time of crisis was compiling and disseminating information on food, shelter and what to do when newly laid off (Jerrard, 2009).

- *Columbus Metropolitan Library (Ohio)*: The best part about this idea is it builds on resources many libraries already have--making it a "no-cost" solution (Jerrard, 2009). The library rededicated computers to job-seekers, making sure those computers had the necessary software. Computer classes and training focused on resume and job help. Staff and volunteers rotated hours of availability for job help and geared some of their event programming toward support groups and other free sessions for job-seekers (Jerrard, 2009).

- *Dwight Foster Public Library (Wisconsin)*: Small libraries with few full-time staff members can still provide meaningful career-help services. Once a week, the lone reference librarian at Dwight Foster hosts a computer lab dedicated to job-seekers for several hours. She rotates the hours and uses local media to advertise the time (Jerrard, 2009).

Other suggestions
- Some other suggestions include having a rotating career-help center that travels off site or to other library branches and putting a part-time

staff member in charge of finding and vetting volunteers (Jerrard, 2009).

- The South King County public library in Seattle, Washington made lists in several languages of what the library can help with and what local employers provided child care (Armstrong, Lord & Zelter, 2000).
- They also had basic health insurance and labor law information translated into the most common languages in their area, because one of the biggest obstacles was that people simply did not understand how civil systems worked (Armstrong, Lord & Zelter, 2000).

The list of examples could go on forever, but this should give public librarians a place to start. To read more about any of these case studies, visit the References page. The Resources for Librarians page also highlights helpful guides for those looking to start something at their library.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Caution: Starting New Services May Come with Pitfalls

To overcome the challenges of providing career help at the public library, it may be helpful to look at what others are doing. One section of this website highlights Role Model programs, but there is also some general advice from librarians who have already undertaken the task.

Some Basics

- Try not to overlap with career services already offered in the area. Finding out what patron and community needs are is the key to a successful program.
- Presenters can be great resources to use but make sure they know what is expected of them and what to expect from you. It is probably smart to get something in writing. This is important even if the presenter is not getting paid (Lear, 2002).
- Whether or not a librarian is doing the teaching themselves, the presenter must be aware of skill levels of the patrons. In his book on library programming, Raymond Ranier (2005) says a structured class setting may be best to teach computer skills, because people may not even understand the basics like "'link', 'center' and 'backspace'," (p. 71). In fact, helping people get an email address where they receive job information may be a first step (Jerrard, 2009).
- Do not assume that because patrons belong to a certain age group or occupation that they know how to search online classifieds or fill out an online application.
- If the library does host a class, make sure people have time to practice (Rainer, 2005).

Training Librarians

The internet has rapidly changed the way people search for and find jobs. In fact, that is one reason public libraries are so essential in providing career help because they provide both access and expertise. However, even with good intentions, librarians may not be trained to help. E-government is being touted as a function of public libraries but librarians may not be qualified to help with complicated forms or even to direct people to the right resources (Jaeger & Bertot, 2009). Unemployment benefits and other forms of federal aid, along with job applications, may fall under what patrons expect librarians to know.

In New Jersey, hundreds of librarians were trained by workforce development to deal with workers in crisis and learned where to point them both for state and federal assistance (McCarthy & Tumulty, 2010). One librarian said their urban library turned into a triage center for the unemployed and librarians were often asked to deal with vulnerable and emotional patrons (Gronowska, 2009). E-government and basic business training for staff may help programs run more smoothly. That said, there may not be time or money to provide formal training for librarians. Workforce development officers may be able to devote hours to being at the library or volunteers may supply extra expertise (Bernardi, 2005). Just as with Funding, looking for logical partners is good way to get librarians up to speed. Truth in advertising may also help. The public library cannot solve every career need for every patron. Be clear and honest about what the library can and will do in terms of career help (Gronowska, 2009).

Liability Concerns

One of the biggest concerns for librarians is the question of liability. Ben Haines posted his concerns to the PubLib listserv in the midst of a recession, "When a patron doesn't get a job after taking the librarian's advice on how to write their cover letter, I can't help but think that the librarian (and not chance, the economy, or the patron's interviewing skills) will take the blame. This could conceivably result in lawsuits, and it will certainly result in sour patron relations," (May 6, message). To avoid liability, Haines' library was bringing in human resources professionals to review resumes, but he also saw that as outsourcing a job that librarians could do (Haines, 2009). As long as the library is clear about aims and objectives, it is unlikely a lawsuit will have weight in court, but these concerns reinforce the need for staff training and clear objectives in providing career resources.

Librarians can proofread resumes but should make it clear there is no guarantee the patron will get a job as a result of coming to the library. Focus more on introducing people to tools and resources instead of giving authoritative advice. There are hundreds of Resources available for librarians to get started and to brush up on their knowledge.

Internet Job Searching

There are so many options out there, patrons may come in feeling overwhelmed. It is important for librarians to have a sense of the tools, especially classifieds used in the local community and free websites that can store resumes or provide accounts (McDermott, 2009). In fact, knowing where to look is half the battle.

McDermott (2009) suggests thinking outside the box and helping some users navigate Craigslist or other nontraditional job sites. In terms of using social networking to job search, there needs to be a critical mass of users also wanting to social network for the site to be effective. According to McDermott (2009), Linkedin, Twitter and Facebook have reached the point where they have enough users to actually make a difference.

A role libraries might consider playing is educating users on how to separate professional social networking from personal or how to find out what is being said about them on the web. According to Schwabel (2009), one in five hiring managers conduct background checks using social networks. Eighty percent of job offers come through networking (Schwabel, 2009), so even if it is not the social media kind of networking, librarians need to be aware of this important step in career help.

Since computers are so central to career help in today's libraries, maximizing computer terminals and broadband is essential (Jerrard, 2009). Some suggestions include keeping the library's wireless on overnight and making it available outside the building, designating certain hours as "career" hours on computers and taking time limits off machines for people to fill out job applications (Jerrard, 2009).

To Really Hit a Home Run

Many libraries are incorporating parts of the above listed advice, but there is evidence that more help is needed. Jerrard (2009) says career services may need

to be treated as a department within the library for medium to large institutions. Since there is such a need during a recession, Jerrard (2009) proposes that this may be the most important reference work librarians will be doing and resources should be allocated accordingly.

In a study of libraries serving poor areas, Armstrong, Lord and Zelter (2000) found that providing career-help in English wasn't enough. Patrons had a need for worksheets and career search software to be available in multiple languages (Armstrong, Lord & Zelter, 2000). While this may not be feasible for every library, consider partnering with a language department in a local community college or an ethnic religious group to translate resume guides and other materials.

There are hundreds of examples, big and small, of how libraries are providing career help. Check them out on the Role Model Programs page.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

It is one thing to have a great idea, it is another to get the financial support to put it into practice. There is help out there, even for small libraries. And even in a tough economy, there are ways to use the resources one already has. Once the funding and the program are in place, how can a public library determine success?

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Finding Financial Support

http://www.flickr.com/photos/yomanimus/ / CC BY 2.0

Funding

- Providing job resources at your public library can cost a lot, especially when one factors in computers and broadband access.
- Many libraries may not experience direct dollar costs because they already have most of the resources to provide career-help in place. A considerable amount of staff time, however, may go into developing resources and/or training volunteers to help job seekers.
- Libraries can use existing resources including computers, internet bandwidth, printing and publicity materials, but that still may not be enough (Lear, 2002).

Don't go it alone

- One of the first suggestions is to find partners. Look for other organizations working with the unemployed in the community. Can they provide staff or training materials if the library provides meeting space?
- Maybe one company or agency in your area cannot fund the purchase of ten computers, but maybe ten companies can give you support for one computer each (Jerrard, 2009).
- Museums, local or state government agencies, schools and universities and companies in the community may be interested in teaming up to provide better service. Unemployed people may be interested in gaining volunteer experience by staffing the library's computer lab (Jerrard, 2009).
- It is important to remember that sharing resources can be almost as valuable as cold hard cash--or even a grant.

Grants

Grants are often a source of library funding and, although granters will probably have less to work with in this economic climate, career-help programs may be top priority. Some general resources to start with are the *Annual register of grant support: a directory of funding sources* or the Foundation Directory at fdncenter.org. The Foundation Center searches several databases for grant sources, but there is a membership cost. Some public libraries have agreements to offer the services to other public libraries for free (Find Funders, 2010).

The professional literature also sometimes contains RFPS (requests for proposals) or there may be a state government grant directory. One of the most important things to remember when applying for a grant is to specify what need is addressed and what segment of the population is affected (Lear, 2002). This is especially important when the need is something like career-help that impacts a wide segment of the community. Visit the Resources for Librarians page to find out where to get sample grant applications.

There are some organizations that traditionally award grants to libraries. The Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) gives grants for three years. The Laura Bush 21st Century Library Program and the National Leadership Program may be the ones to apply under for providing career-help at the library (Available projects, by type, 2010). Instructions on how to apply are found online. The IMLS website also provides links to state resources and other grant opportunities.

"The mission of Staples Foundation for Learning is to provide funding to programs that support or provide job skills and/or education for all people, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged youth," (Guidelines for Grant Application, 2009). While the Staples Foundation may prefer to fund disadvantaged youth, their mission also supports adult education and specifically job skills. Their website does list several places they will not fund and that could affect a public library's application depending on who they are partnered with.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation does not fund unsolicited, individual library programs but they do fund joint projects that involve communities and technology. In fact, their foundation funded the ALA Office of Research and Statistics Study that discovered how library computers are being used by job seekers (Jerrard, 2009). One of the things the Gates Foundation does fund is projects to help bridge the digital divide. "We're helping U.S. libraries provide the free, reliable computer and Internet access that will allow patrons to make meaningful contributions to society," (U.S. Libraries, 2009).

If the state has a state library, they tend to provide guidelines for applying for grants and help in

finding them. The state library may also have funding of its own to give. The State Library of Iowa, for example, has pathfinders on how to write proposals and link to resources (Funding Resources, 2010). In many cases, state libraries are also being hit hard by the recession but they may already be providing valuable databases that an individual library can use.

Computer expenses
One of the biggest needs and the biggest expenses involved in providing career development at the public library is computers and internet access. One of the biggest reasons why libraries are becoming career centers is their ability to provide the technology needed for online applications and job searches (Jerrard, 2009). (More about how to train people to use career development technology can be found in the Examples & Advice section.)

However, many libraries may not have enough computers to support even a few job seekers. If there are not grants available, consider looking for local businesses, schools or government agencies who are upgrading and getting rid of their old computers (Jerrard, 2009). Beware of data privacy and maintenance issues, though. According to the ALA's employment crisis guide (Jerrard, 2009), the library can also consider leasing computers or renting laptops to free up space.

Since computers are so essential to providing career-help in modern libraries, maximizing computer terminals and broadband is essential (Jerrard, 2009). Some suggestions include keeping the library's wireless on overnight and making it available outside the building, designating certain hours as "career" hours on computers and taking time limits off machines for people to fill out job applications (Jerrard, 2009). Maximizing resources already in the library will be the key to expanding services in these tough times.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

How to Know if It Worked
 It is not enough to provide career-help and career resources at the library. It is also essential to determine how effective programs and resources are for today's job seekers.

"Outcomes allow us to know something about the extent to which we have (or haven't) reached our audiences. Information about outcomes allows us to strengthen our services. Equally important, it communicates the value of museums and libraries to the broadest spectrum of those to whom we account," (Outcome Based Evaluation).

In fact, according to Lear (2002), evaluation should really begin before a program even starts. This means determining user needs and expectations. Sometimes it may even mean identifying groups that may benefit from library services but are not currently using the library. One of the most basic ways to evaluate something is to count who is using it. Circulation, program attendance and website hits can all be used. However, a true evaluation will dig a little deeper--moving past the "what?" into the "why?" and "how come?".

Looking at Users & Needs
One way to do this is look at who is currently attending programs. Ask if these folks normally use the library or if they are being drawn in by a need (Lear, 2002). In Joseph Matthew's (2007) text on evaluating and measuring library services, he discusses segmenting library users by their needs, including experience seekers, scholars, facilitators and problem solvers. People may be coming to the library for social connections, research, helping a friend or with a specific question--and those are only half of the users Matthews lists (Matthews, 2007).

Surveys can be a way to look at programming needs. While surveys can be problematic, they can also be a place to start (Lear, 2002). It is important to remember that evaluation is not necessarily an objective activity. In other words, evaluation methods may only look at positive aspects of the program or be sabotaged by staff who do not want to participate or have not had the proper training (Matthews, 2007).

Job Seeking Behavior Research
In order to truly serve users needs, it may be helpful to skim through the vast body of research available on job-seeking behaviors. It is probably not necessary to do in-depth research, but understanding how patrons may be coming to the table is important. The following articles offer insight into just a few groups of people the library may be dealing with: *Coaching the Job Seeker with Special Needs* by Freddie Cheek; *The New (and Ongoing) Job Crisis for Adult Learners: How Adult Educators Can Respond* by Paul Jurmo; *Do It Now! The Job Search Kit for Those 50 and Over, Third Edition* by Marilyn Tellez.

- **Evaluation Forms**: One common way to evaluate a program is to have participants fill out evaluation forms. The forms should balance demographic and program related questions. You do want to know who is attending programs, but you do not want to invade a user's privacy (Lear, 2002). Rating systems and comment fields are important to include. Check out the Resources for Librarians page on where to find example evaluation forms. The library will want to keep a programs and services file and also develop a method for dealing with negative feedback (Lear, 2002).

- **Outcome Based Evaluation**: According to the Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS), it is important to evaluate the benefits to people including, "achievements or changes in skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition, or life status for program participants" (Outcome Based Evaluation). The outcome based evaluation can include observation, questionnaires and survey answers. The librarian does not, however, have to talk to every user. With OBE, it is enough to get an idea of how you are effecting change in the community. If a program is done well, the outcomes should match up with the purposes originally stated. For example, the Computer Career-Help center should increase a user's familiarity with three major job searching sites. If users report an increased familiarity, one program outcome has been reached.

- OBE is most effective with a target audience. Perhaps this kind of evaluation could be used if the library is gearing career-help toward a specific type of worker hit hard by the recession. One other advantage of OBE is that it can be modified as programs continue. If the goals or purposes of a career-help center at the public library change over time, the outcomes may also change. However, this type of evaluation also assumes libraries are not shooting in the dark. In order to know if the library has reached the right outcomes, there has to be a sense of where the library wants to go. For more concrete examples and a better idea of how to frame OBE, visit the IMLS evaluation site.

- **SWOT Analysis:** Conducting a SWOT analysis involves listing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is another way to bring some dimension to the usage statistics compiled by the library. Librarians should ask themselves what strengths can be converted to weaknesses and what can be done better next time (Stein, 2009). It may be a good idea to gather all staff and volunteers who work on the program for a SWOT brainstorming session. It is likely that websites and other resources for career-help will be up for a long time and may need to be evaluated more than once as the economy and the community changes.

- **Cost Benefit Analysis:** Sometimes it can be hard to articulate the less tangible benefits of libraries. The St. Louis Public Library developed an effective cost benefit analysis to try and get at the heart of this problem. Holt, Elliott and Moore (2010) found that the St. Louis Public Library provided $4 in services for every $1 in taxpayer money they received. Part of the study looked at what schools and businesses would have to spend to make up for the services being provided. The totals were in the millions, and reference services, which may include fielding career-help questions, were valued at $50 an hour (Holt, Elliott & Moore, 2010). One of the key points of this analysis is to provide something that is not already being done in your community. If the public library is not filling a genuine need for career-help, the cost may outweigh the benefits. If the library is supplementing existing community services, think carefully about the staff time and other resources being spent. Are the benefits still worth the cost?

Checking Out the Resources Themselves

Outside resources including websites, videos, books, speakers and handouts will probably be used for some aspect of your career-help. According to Jerrard (2009), though, many libraries are offering patrons resources that may hurt more than they will help in today's postmodern economy. Multimedia resources may be helpful to job seekers. On the other hand, if patrons do not have home computers, the library may want to make examples and tip sheets available in print as well (Jerrard, 2009). Qualifications for workers are not the same as they were 20 years ago, it is a good idea to make sure resources reflect the newest possible information. A good way to do that might be to ask local workforce development offices or companies to evaluate circulating materials and recommend the best websites. Also, check out the Examples and Resources pages for an idea of what the latest resources may look like.

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Interested in Developing Career Resources? Start Here.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/anvilon/ / CC BY 2.0

This website should only be a starting point in the development of career-help at any public library. Below are some resources suggested by MLIS student Christine Mastalio from the University of Iowa. Also visit the References page to find out more about the information cited throughout the website. Note some of these resources may also be valuable to provide directly to patrons.

BOOKS

Jerrard, J. (2009). *Crisis in Employment: a Librarian's Guide to Helping Job Seekers.* **Chicago: American Library Association.**
If I could only recommend one resource for librarians planning career assistance, this would be it. From programming to which career websites to use to real life examples, *Crisis in Employment* is practical and easy to read. Appendix A includes key resources sorted by subject like networking, career change and interviewing. Appendix B has sample documents that libraries could adapt for their own purposes. A selection of these can be found at: http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/publishing/editions/webextras/jerrard10139/jerrard10139.cfm

Public Library Association, VGM Career Books (2004). *Guide to Basic Resume Writing second edition.* **Chicago: VGM Career Books.**
This written by the Public Library Association, is focused solely on resumes. It is pretty basic but it provides a foundation for getting started on a resume and does provide sample resumes for tricky cases like someone returning to the workforce.

Lear, B. W. (2002). *Adult Programs in the Library.* **Chicago and London: American Library Association.**
While it does not specifically address career-help, this is a good guide if your library has not done much programming for adults. If you already have strong adult programming initiatives, you can skip it. There are sample program evaluation programs at the end.

The Everything Books: School and Careers series
http://www.adamsmediastore.com/category/everything-school-careers
The "everything" brand covers everything from quilting to getting into college, but their career based books are easy to understand and practical. These provide an overview of a subject like interviewing and could be a good starting place--especially for a librarian that has not had to personally deal with the job market in a while. It may also be a good resource to recommend to an overwhelmed job seeker. While most of the books probably will not address specific situations, they do provide a broad framework to start from.

Matthews, Joseph (2007) The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services, Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
For those struggling to determine user needs, how library computers are being used or how to evaluate current career-help programs, this book is a must. It explains common and alternative evaluation methods, including the ones discussed on the Evaluations page. There is also a chapter on how to read library statistics and one on how to apply those statistics toward community advocacy.

ARTICLES

Reed Business Information. (2010). E-SHORT TAKES. *Library Journal , 135* **(1), 145-6.**
Before reading, note the author is Reed Business Information, which may own or have vested interest in some of the products reviewed. Almost every web-based career product reviewed is subscription based. However, that may be a worthwhile route for a library. Another advantage is that the article reviews some of the newer products on the market.

Tutor.com to Launch Adult Learning Center. (2009). *Advanced Technology Libraries , 38* **(5), 9.**
Tutor.com is not a free resource but they do list public libraries as desired partners. This news snippet in *Advanced Technology Libraries* highlights some of the features that could be valuable, depending on what kind of investment the library is looking to make. They do offer a package geared toward adult learners and job seekers specifically for public libraries at: http://www.tutor.com/libraries/adults-career

McDermott, I. E. (2009). New Improved Internet Job Search Now With Social Networking. *Searcher , 17* **(4), 8-12.**
This article incorporates some newer and changing technologies into the traditional job search. Besides giving librarians some practical advice, the article includes resources for Spanish speakers.

WEBSITES

Riley Guide
http://www.rileyguide.com/execute.html
Developed by librarians, this guide is comprehensive covering internet job searches, resumes and salaries. Sta   )4, the guide is updated regularly. This is a professional resource for both librarians and patrons. The website is section 508 compliant, so it is a   :ible with adaptive technologies. The guide includes information on copyright of its articles and contact information.

Learning 2.0

http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/
This site was actually developed to help librarians learn about Web 2.0 technology at their own pace. It is a self-guided, nine week tutorial featuring various technologies. The great thing about this is its Creative Commons license, which has allowed libraries around the country to adapt the site to their own uses. It may be worth developing a shorter program for patrons or using this as a model for librarian training. The subject would not have to be limited to Web 2.0 either, but could be developed as a web technologies tutorial for job seekers.

Any of the websites from the Role Models section are also good resources to check out.

VIDEOS

 E-How Careers and Work Videos
http://www.ehow.com/guide_3-careers_videos.html
There are hundreds of short videos on this site covering how to interview on the phone, how to freshen up a resume and how to dress for success, among other topics. Searching for something specific is not always easy, but once you find a relevant video, it is easy to chain to related ones. The people producing the videos announce who they are and what their background is. There does seem to be a vetting process and they do seem to be human resources professionals, like ones that might be brought into a library setting. This could be a good thing to use in workshops or presentations or for those with a more visual learning style. It is probably not the defining resource on any topic, but it is a good way to get started or to check on some quick questions.

MULTICULTURAL OR MULTILINGUAL

McDermott, I. E. (2009). New Improved Internet Job Search Now With Social Networking. *Searcher , 17* (4), 8-12.
This article incorporates some newer and changing technologies into the traditional job search. Besides giving librarians some practical advice, the article includes resources for Spanish speakers.

Long Branch Public Library (New Jersey)
Discussed further in the Role Models section, this site includes job sites and professional associations geared towards African Americans and Hispanics. Some of the information is local to New Jersey, but there are national organizations included as well.

OTHER

The American Library Association
According to their Public Programming Office, ALA can assist in developing programs and helping you fid resources. Learn how to join a listserv and find contact information at: http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/ppo/resources/benefitspublic.cfm

State Libraries
Many state libraries may be able to purchase career reference databases or help develop websites or even help train librarians (McCarthy & Tumulty, 2010). What is available largely depends on the state and the unemployment needs of that particular state.

PubLib
This listserv is large and active. Librarians may find others who have tried similar programs or ideas. To search the archives more easily than using webjunction's search function, simply go to Google and type the subject you want to search:lists.webjunction.org (Schneider, 2005). To join the list visit, https://lists.webjunction.org/mailman/listinfo/publib

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

http://www.flickr.com/photos/linnybinnypix/ / CC BY 2.0

References Used in the Creation of this Website

Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. (2006). *23 Things.* Retrieved 26 2010, March, from Learning 2.0: http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/

(2009). Retrieved March 25, 2010, from Riley Guide: http://www.rileyguide.com/execute.html

American Library Association. (n.d.). *The Benefits of Public Programming for Participating Libraries and Audiences.* Retrieved February 28, 2010, from About ALA: http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/ppo/resources/benefitspublic.cfm

Armstrong, A. L., Lord, C., & Zelter, J. (2000). Information Needs of Low-Income Residents in South King County. *Public Libraries , 39* (6), 330-5.

Available Projects, by type. (2010). Retrieved March 6, 2010, from IMLS Grant Applicants: http://www.imls.gov/applicants/project.shtm

Bernardi, J. (2005). The Poor and the Public Library. *Public Libraries , 44* (6), 321-3.

Blankinship, D. G. (2010, March 25). Library Computers Used By a Third of Americans. *Huffington Post* .

Careers and Work. (n.d.). Retrieved March 25, 2010, from E-How Videos: http://www.ehow.com/guide_3-careers_videos.html

Cheek, F. (2002). Coaching the Job Seeker with Special Needs. Paper presented at the Annual NATCON Convention, accessible through ERIC full-text database.

Find Funders. (2010). Retrieved March 6, 2010, from Foundation Center: http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/

Fishidun, D. (2007). Women and the Public Library: Using Technology, Using the Library. *Library Trends , 56* (2).

Funding Resources. (2010, March). Retrieved March 6, 2010, from State Library of Iowa: http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info

Gronowska, E. (2009, April 6). Reading into the Future. *Newsweek (web exclusive)* .

Guidelines for Grant Application. (2009). Retrieved March 6, 2010, from Staples Foundation for Learning: http://www.staplesfoundation.org /foundapplication.html

Haines, B. (2009, May 6). [Publib] resume review and liability Message posted to publib@webjunction.org Archived at http://lists.webjunction.org/wjlists /publib/2009-May/123811.html

Holt, G. E., Elliott, D., & Moore, A. (n.d.). *Placing a Value on Public Library Services.* Retrieved February 28, 2010, from St. Louis Public Library: http://www.slpl.lib.mo.us/libsrc/restoc.htm

Jaeger, P. T., & Bertot, J. C. (2009). E-government Education in Public Libraries: New Service Roles and Expanding Social Responsibilities. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science , 50* (1).

Jerrard, J. (2009). *Crisis in Employment: a Librarian's Guide to Helping Job Seekers.* Chicago: American Library Association.

Jurmo, P. (2002). The New (and Ongoing) Job Crisis for Adult Learners: How Adult Educators Can Respond. *Literacy Harvest,* 25-31.

Lear, B. W. (2002). *Adult Programs in the Library.* Chicago and London: American Library Association.

Matthews, Joseph (2007) The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services, Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

McCarthy, R., & Tumulty, P. A. (2010). Your Public Library: A Partner in Job Development. *New Jersey Municipalities* , 54-55.

McDermott, I. E. (2009). New Improved Internet Job Search Now With Social Networking. *Searcher , 17* (4), 8–12.

Outcome Based Evaluation. (n.d.). Retrieved March 10, 2010, from IMLS Grant Applications: http://www.imls.gov/applicants/obe.shtm

Ranier, R. (2005). *Programming for Adults.* Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Reed Business Information. (2010). E–SHORT TAKES. *Library Journal , 135* (1), 145–6.

Schneider, K. (2005, June 1). Searching PubLib and an Early Party! Message posted to publib@webjunction.org Archived at http://lists.webjunction.org/wjlists /publib/2005–June/092260.html

Schwabel, D. (2009). *7 Secrets to Getting a Job Using Social Media.* Retrieved February 28, 2010, from Mashable: http://mashable.com/2009/01/05/job– search–secrets/?cp=1

Stein, M. H. (2009). Working Together with Community Groups to Provide Big–Time Programming for Adults: The Big Read: One Book/One Community and Other Opportunities for Your Public, Academic, School or Even Special Library. *Louisiana Libraries , 72* (1), 13–19.

Tellez, M. J. (2002). *Do It Now! The Job Search Kit for Those 50 and Over, Third Edition.* Yakima, Wash.: DBA, MJT Consulting.

Tibbetts, E. (2009, February 2). Library Services Boom as Economy Fizzles. *Quad City Times* .

Tutor.com to Launch Adult Learning Center. (2009). *Advanced Technology Libraries , 38* (5), 9.

U.S. Libraries. (2009). Retrieved March 6, 2010, from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:http://www.gatesfoundation.org/libraries/Pages/united–states– libraries.aspx

Developing Career Resources in Public Libraries

Home   Why Libraries?   Examples & Advice   Funding & Evaluation   Resources for Librarians   References

Credit Where Credit is Due
Most of the photos used on careerhelpatyourlibrary.weebly.com were licensed through Creative Commons, meaning adaptation and sharing are okay as long as they are properly attributed. So here it goes...

Banner photo

http://www.flickr.com/photos/beebe_library/ / CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Homepage

http://www.flickr.com/photos/padraics_travels/ / CC BY-SA 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterlibrary/ / CC BY-SA 2.0

europe3d.vwi.ro/participation/participation-form/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sylvar/ / CC BY 2.0

Funding & Evaluation

http://www.flickr.com/photos/amagill/ / CC BY 2.0

Why Libraries?

http://www.flickr.com/photos/trj/ / CC BY-SA 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/squeakymarmot/ / CC BY 2.0

Examples & Advice

http://www.flickr.com/photos/ricmartins/ / CC BY 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/ricmartins/ / CC BY 2.0

Role Models

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sylvar/ / CC BY 2.0

http://www.flickr.com/photos/sanjoselibrary/ / CC BY-SA 2.0
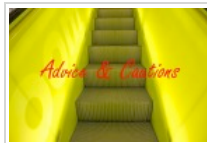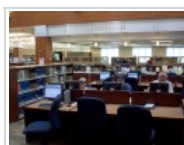
http://www.flickr.com/photos/sylvar/ / CC BY 2.0

Resources for Librarians

Funding

References