

John. J. Heldrich
Center for
Workforce
Development



Public Libraries: A Community's Connection for Career Services

Stephanie Holcomb
Amy Dunford
Fopefoluwa Idowu

September 2019

RUTGERS
Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report are Stephanie Holcomb, Amy Dunford, and Fopefoluwa Idowu. Kathy Krepicio and Sean Simone provided guidance and oversight during the course of the research. Editorial and graphic design assistance was provided by Robb C. Sewell.

The authors would like to thank the following individuals who provided valuable feedback on the scope of this study and offered significant insight and feedback on the findings. Many thanks to Larra Clark (American Library Association - Public Library Association), Andrea Simzak Levandowski (New Jersey State Library), Lisa Shaw (Maine State Library), and Tammy Westergard (Nevada State Library).

This report was funded through support from the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development's Academic Excellence Fund. The research results and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors. The authors accept sole responsibility for any errors or omissions in this report.

About the Heldrich Center

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University is a university-based organization devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center, located within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policy-making and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective educational and training programs. It is deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

As captured in its slogan, "Solutions at Work," the Heldrich Center is guided by a commitment to translate the strongest research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and government officials can use to strengthen their workforce and workforce readiness programs, create jobs, and remain competitive. The center's work strives to build an efficient labor market that matches workers' skills and knowledge with the evolving demands of employers. The center's projects are grounded in a core set of research priorities:

- Disability Employment
- Education and Training
- Unemployment and Reemployment
- U.S. Labor Market and Industry
- Workforce Policy and Practice
- Work Trends Surveys

Learn more: www.heldrich.rutgers.edu

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Executive Summary | iii |
| Introduction and Background | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Methodology..... | 3 |
| Findings | 7 |
| What is the Role of Libraries in Providing Career Services? | 7 |
| What are the Characteristics of Libraries that Enable them to Provide Career Services? .. | 10 |
| How Do Libraries Partner with Other Stakeholders to Provide Career Services?..... | 12 |
| What are Challenges that Librarians Face in Providing Career Services? | 14 |
| Do Libraries Collect Data on their Career Services? | 15 |
| Conclusion | 17 |
| References..... | 18 |
| Appendix A. Methodology..... | 20 |
| Appendix B. Interview Questions | 24 |
| Appendix C. Survey Topline | 26 |

Executive Summary

Local public libraries serve an important role in the national workforce development system. This role has increased since the Great Recession and became formalized through changes in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Public libraries offer a range of career services, including résumé and cover letter support, job application assistance, interview preparation, training, and referrals to American Job Centers/other support services. The purpose of this study is to chronicle the extent to which public libraries across the United States are providing these career services.

Researchers used three strategies to address the research questions for this study: a literature review and data collection from library websites, a national survey of state library staff that included open-ended responses, and structured telephone interviews with local library staff. The research team used descriptive statistics and rigorous qualitative coding methods to analyze the data. While data are not nationally representative, researchers collected data from 42 states.

Findings from the report include:

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of survey respondents reported that libraries in their state provide career services. Most library staff respondents describe a strong demand for career services; for some, demand has slowed with the improving economy, but for a few, the demand has increased.
- Respondents reported that public libraries are regarded as accessible alternatives to traditional workforce service providers due to their flexibility, accessibility, and openness to all patrons. However, library staff reported that not all community members and potential partners are aware that libraries play a role in the workforce system.
- Survey respondents noted that their public libraries have partnerships with nonprofit organizations (79%), One-Stop Career Centers/American Job Centers (69%), and community colleges or universities (69%).
- Respondents noted that the lack of funding affects programming. Among other challenges, this leads to variation in what libraries can offer, with some providing formal workforce development programming and others offering informal job search support.

Given the local focus of individual public libraries, future research should include staff from all local libraries to better assess the variation of demand and services provided at the local level. Future research should also include patrons and community partners to provide insight from multiple stakeholder perspectives on how libraries may be better able to meet the needs of patrons and the national workforce system.

Introduction and Background

Introduction

Across the United States, public libraries serve an important role in the U.S. workforce development system by offering a wide range of free career services and job-seeking activities for job seekers and the general public (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2017). During the Great Recession, over 30 million people, roughly 10% of the total U.S. population at that time, reported using computers in public libraries for employment-related activities (Becker et al., 2010; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education [OCTAE], 2014). While public libraries have historically been involved in the workforce development system, today, they offer critical supports in advancing employment and education at over 16,500 public library outlets in the United States (Perez & Duncan, 2015). It is the goal of this research to chronicle the extent to which public libraries across the United States are providing career services and the various types of services they offer to the public.

To better understand the role of public libraries in helping Americans with career and employment-related information and assistance, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University conducted a national study of libraries to document, as well as better understand, the successes and challenges associated with the provision of employment- and career-related programs, information, and services at public libraries at the state and local levels nationwide. Heldrich Center researchers developed the five research questions listed below to guide this study.

1. What is the role of libraries in providing career services?
2. What are the characteristics of libraries that enable them to provide career services?
3. How do libraries partner with other stakeholders to provide career services?
4. What are the challenges that libraries face in providing career services?
5. Do libraries collect data on their career services?

For purposes of this study, the research team defined and distinguished between “job-seeking activities” and “workforce development services,” where job-seeking activities offer individual support in job searching and applications, and workforce development services connect individuals with training and human capital development. “Career services” as discussed in this report are inclusive of both categories. See Table 1 for examples of these, and Appendix C for a list of potential services from the survey.

As part of this national scan, Heldrich Center researchers surveyed and interviewed state and local library staff and representatives to gather information on the specific job-seeking activities and workforce development services offered in public libraries in the United States. Questions in the surveys and interviews focused on the structure and implementation of library career services, data collection and challenges, and the strengths and benefits of providing career services at libraries.

Table 1. Types of Career Services at Libraries

| Job-Seeking Activities | Workforce Development Services |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Résumé and cover letter assistance • One-on-one interview practice • Test preparation • Job search and application support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and referral services • Educational opportunities and classes • Literacy services • Referrals to training or other services • Small business development • Skill development |

Background¹

WIOA, the primary federal workforce development legislation designed to bring about increased coordination among the nation's workforce development and related programs, allowed for the formal recognition of public libraries as potential partners for the American Job Center network (U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, 2014). WIOA promoted the expansion of public libraries' ability to provide employment training and broadly defined services to job seekers through a variety of library partnerships and programs (U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, 2014). The acknowledgment of libraries as partners of the One-Stop² delivery system strengthened the growing collaboration between libraries and the public workforce system through joint One-Stop infrastructure cost funding (U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, 2014; Stoltz, Sanders, & Wilson, 2018). Prior to WIOA, the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, introduced through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, provided funding that enabled public libraries to expand computer access and provide digital literacy training. This has had a significant impact on the expansion of library career services (American Library Association, 2013).

Public libraries offer a wide range of employment-related services. First and foremost, it is well documented that libraries are a source of digital access for job seekers to connect to employment opportunities and career information. For example, today public libraries are at the forefront of providing free computer and Internet access and teaching digital literacy (Bertot et al., 2015; Garmer & Aspen Institute, 2014; Koerber, 2016). Library staff have developed expertise in teaching both digital and foundational literacy classes and providing assistance with job-related needs that can help job seekers gain the skills necessary for navigating employment opportunities (Wapner, 2016). Garmer and the Aspen Institute (2014) report that in addition to connecting people with information and educational opportunities, public libraries play a critical role in the digital era. Other common employment and career services provided by public libraries include but are not limited to access to career coaching; financial literacy services; digital and technology classes; General Education Diploma training programs; one-on-one résumé, interview, and job application assistance; and youth career programs (Bertot et al., 2015; Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2012).

A review of the literature also shows that the career services and programs offered by libraries can be particularly important to specific populations that may have barriers to accessing other traditional government workforce services offered primarily through state and local labor, education, and human services

1. While there are many reports and studies about libraries, little scholarly work exists on the formalized career services libraries provide. Therefore, several of the sources used in this report are not from peer-reviewed journals.

2. In this report, One-Stop Career Centers refer to the outlets of American Job Centers developed through WIOA to provide employment services to government aid recipients and the public.

agencies. Populations that benefit from such services at local libraries include low-skilled adults, older adults, immigrants, English language learners, low-income populations, and unemployed or underemployed individuals (Horrigan, 2015; Milam, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE, 2014). Many Americans view public libraries as anchors in their communities, with lower-income individuals, Hispanics, and African Americans more likely to state that libraries help them navigate their job search and seek training opportunities (Horrigan, 2015). In addition, research suggests that libraries can have the potential to bolster local economic development by supporting small businesses through the provision of workshops on business start-up and development, which can be influential in reducing market-entry barriers and costs for prospective businesses (Milam, 2008). Lastly, libraries are typically seen as convenient locations that are open for longer hours on weekday evenings and on weekends (Gutsche, 2012) than, for example, publicly funded American Job Centers.

Nationwide, public libraries have identified challenges in providing career services; most notably, limited resource capabilities and the ability to collect data to measure outcomes. Librarians report that with an increase in demand for digital literacy services and public access computers, along with shrinking budgets and limited staff time, they struggle to meet the demand (Jaeger et al., 2011; Mantel, 2011). Data collection and reporting on what they offer to the public in the area of workforce and career service can be especially difficult for many libraries because of limited staff time, inconsistent long-term library utilization by patrons, and privacy concerns (Smith et al., 2017).

Methodology

Research for this report was conducted during the period of June to December 2018 and was implemented in three phases. Researchers used three research strategies: a literature review and data collection from library websites, a national survey of state library staff that included open-ended responses, and structured telephone interviews with local library staff.

Literature Review. Heldrich Center researchers reviewed national literature and program material on library websites, as well as other resources that documented career services efforts taking place in state and local libraries, including but not limited to state and national reports, newsletters, articles, and other documents that offered information and insight into the efforts of various libraries offering job-seeking and workforce development services.

Online Survey. The Heldrich Center developed and distributed an online survey to 150 state library representatives to better understand the role of public libraries in providing career services.

The survey was open from July 19 to August 24, 2018. Several reminder emails were sent during that time, and researchers conducted several rounds of follow-up via email and telephone to contact states that had not yet completed the survey. In total, 55 officials from 35 states responded to the survey for a response rate of 36.6%. The survey topline can be found in Appendix C.

For states that did not complete the survey during the survey period, researchers contacted staff directly through phone and email with a request to complete the survey. Following a series of reminders through phone and email, researchers sent the five primary research questions via email to gather a response. For states that did not respond to the email questionnaire, researchers collected data from public websites to complete Table 2.

Table 2. State-by-State Career Service Offering

| State | Offers Career Services | Collects Data on Career Services | Population | Library Branches (including bookmobiles) | American Job Centers |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|--|----------------------|
| Alabama | Y | N | 4,874,747 | 307 | 47 |
| Alaska* | Y | Y | 739,795 | 97 | 14 |
| Arizona* | Y | Y | 7,016,270 | 233 | 54 |
| Arkansas* | Y | N | 3,004,279 | 235 | 44 |
| California | Y | Y | 39,536,653 | 1,166 | 209 |
| Colorado* | Y | Y | 5,607,154 | 271 | 54 |
| Connecticut* | Y | Y | 3,588,184 | 233 | 19 |
| Delaware | Y | Y | 961,939 | 34 | 4 |
| District of Columbia* | Y | N | 693,972 | 26 | 5 |
| Florida | Y | N | 20,984,400 | 558 | 107 |
| Georgia | Y | Y | 10,429,379 | 411 | 57 |
| Hawaii | Y | N | 1,427,538 | 52 | 7 |
| Idaho | Y | N | 1,716,943 | 154 | 25 |
| Illinois | Y | Y | 12,802,023 | 798 | 96 |
| Indiana | Y | N | 6,666,818 | 453 | 81 |
| Iowa | Y | Y | 3,145,711 | 561 | 19 |
| Kansas | Y | N | 2,913,123 | 372 | 23 |
| Kentucky | Y | N | 4,454,189 | 280 | 101 |
| Louisiana | Y | N | 4,684,333 | 367 | 64 |
| Maine | Y | Y | 1,335,907 | 235 | 12 |
| Maryland | Y | N | 6,052,177 | 204 | 27 |
| Massachusetts | Y | Y | 6,859,819 | 466 | 26 |
| Michigan | Y | Y | 9,962,311 | 649 | 93 |
| Minnesota | Y | N | 5,576,606 | 363 | 49 |
| Mississippi* | Y | Y | 2,984,100 | 238 | 36 |
| Missouri | Y | N | 6,113,532 | 388 | 44 |
| Montana | Y | N | 1,050,493 | 118 | 17 |
| Nebraska | Y | Y | 1,920,076 | 273 | 13 |
| Nevada* | Y | Y | 2,998,039 | 88 | 11 |
| New Hampshire | Y | N | 1,342,795 | 224 | 12 |
| New Jersey | Y | Y | 9,005,644 | 437 | 28 |

| State | Offers Career Services | Collects Data on Career Services | Population | Library Branches (including bookmobiles) | American Job Centers |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|--|----------------------|
| New Mexico | Y | N | 2,088,070 | 117 | 22 |
| New York* | Y | Y | 19,849,399 | 1,071 | 89 |
| North Carolina | Y | Y | 10,273,419 | 406 | 100 |
| North Dakota | Y | N | 755,393 | 86 | 9 |
| Ohio | Y | Y | 11,658,609 | 763 | 89 |
| Oklahoma* | Y | Y | 3,930,864 | 218 | 35 |
| Oregon | Y | Y | 4,142,776 | 231 | 42 |
| Pennsylvania | Y | Y | 12,805,537 | 643 | 66 |
| Rhode Island | Y | Y | 1,059,639 | 71 | 4 |
| South Carolina | Y | Y | 5,024,369 | 223 | 43 |
| South Dakota | Y | N | 869,666 | 147 | 13 |
| Tennessee | Y | Y | 6,715,984 | 287 | 69 |
| Texas | Y | Y | 28,304,596 | 877 | 167 |
| Utah* | Y | N | 3,101,833 | 141 | 31 |
| Vermont | Y | Y | 623,657 | 165 | 12 |
| Virginia | Y | Y | 8,470,020 | 379 | 47 |
| Washington | Y | Y | 7,405,743 | 371 | 50 |
| West Virginia* | Y | Y | 1,815,857 | 181 | 22 |
| Wisconsin | Y | Y | 5,795,483 | 465 | 56 |
| Wyoming* | Y | Y | 579,315 | 77 | 20 |
| Total | | | | 17,210 | 2,384 |

**Note: Representatives from these states did not respond to the survey, and information included in this table was found on public websites. For all states, responses are based on either website information or responses from a few individuals who may not be aware of all of the programs in their state.*

Source: Library data collected from the Institute of Museum and Library Services' 2015 Public Libraries Survey. American Job Center data are from the U.S. Department of Labor CareerOneStop website (www.careeronestop.org).

Structured Interviews. Heldrich Center researchers conducted 22 in-depth telephone interviews with staff from libraries in 21 states, as well as a representative from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. These interviews focused on the existence and administration of career services at their library. Researchers selected individuals using two methods: 12 were identified through a random selection process, and 10 were recommended by survey respondents. For the random selection process, researchers sought diversity in states represented, library service area categorization (urban, rural, suburban), and library type (central or branch).

The research team's data analysis was based on an in-depth thematic analysis of the online survey and structured interview results. The main research questions guided both the data collection and the analysis. The research team used specific terms to ensure consistency in the reporting of the number of comments attributed to an interpretation. These terms include **most** (nearly all participants), **half** or **many** (around half), **some** (less than half), and **few** (more than one). Details of the methodology are provided in Appendix A, and interview questions are listed in Appendix B.

There are several limitations to note regarding this research. First, the study relied on self-reporting from survey respondents and interview participants. Given the complex and localized structure of libraries, and that respondents were not selected or screened for their knowledge of these services across the state, library staff interviewed and surveyed might not have been fully aware of all career services offered in their state or library systems. Moreover, those who were unable to respond to the survey may have provided a different outlook and perspective on libraries' role in the career services area than those who did respond. It is also possible that self-selection bias led respondents with certain attitudes and views on career services in libraries to respond more than others with different views. In addition, some states had multiple survey respondents, so the percentages reported in the findings reflect the percent of respondents and not the percent of states that responded to the survey questions. When there were conflicting responses between state representatives, researchers accepted one affirmative response to signify a presence of the activity in question within the state, as one respondent may not have known about a program elsewhere in the state that the second respondent reported.

Second, the research team's inability to collect data and input from some states through interviews and surveys because of non-response could lead to potential bias in the findings. To mitigate this bias, the research team also relied on secondary sources such as website scans of career services offered in public libraries in a state. As a result, this report contains more comprehensive information on some states than others. Nevertheless, researchers obtained primary data from a majority of the states (42) in the nation.

Finally, this study is not intended to be nationally representative from a statistical sample perspective. While conducting the interviews, this study sampled different regions in the United States, branch or central library composition, and varied population density so that potential findings could be applied to many contexts. However, the study may not have been able to account for all existing variations due to the limited number of interviews conducted. Further details on the methodology and selection of study participants are provided in Appendix A.

Findings

The Heldrich Center identified several findings based on the nationwide survey of state library staff and interviews with local library staff. The findings are organized into key questions that address strengths, challenges, and areas libraries identified as important to improving quality of career services. These findings offer insight on the role of libraries in providing career services, their partnerships, funding, and data collection efforts.

What is the Role of Libraries in Providing Career Services?

Nationwide, library staff reported that public libraries actively contribute to the public workforce system by providing a myriad of job-seeking activities and career services, and addressing workforce needs in their communities. Most library staff respondents describe a strong demand for career services; for some, demand has slowed with the improving economy, but for a few, the demand has increased. Many respondents believe the role of libraries providing career services will grow in the future.

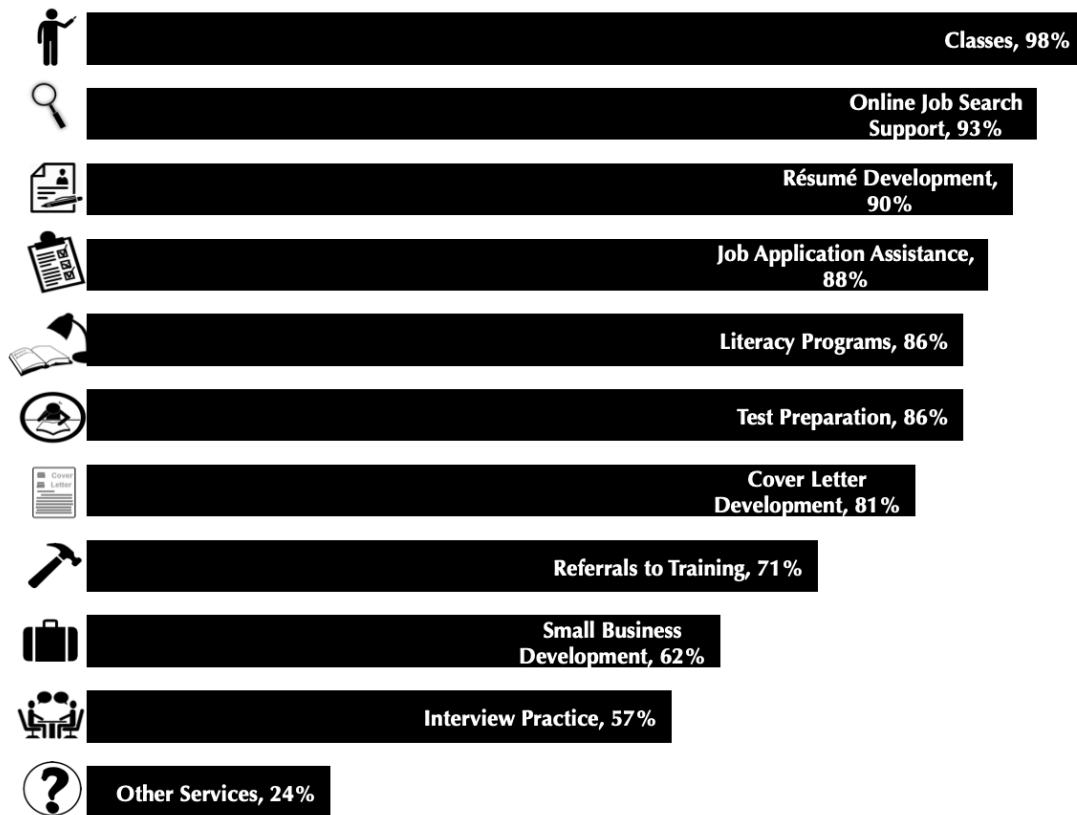
Current Offerings

Based on the survey results, 75% of respondents reported that libraries in their state provide some type of career services. These findings are similar to the 2014 American Library Association's Digital Inclusion Survey, which found that 73% of libraries help people with interviewing and applying for jobs (Bertot et al., 2015). When analyzing results by state and gathering publicly available information, Heldrich Center researchers found that all states have libraries that offer career services in some format (see Table 2 on pages 4 and 5). Of those that provide career services, survey respondents reported that their state's public library systems most frequently offer basic career services such as classes (98%), online job search support (93%), and résumé development (91%) (see Figure 1). As reported by survey respondents, public libraries provide job seeker assistance services and more targeted workforce development programs. Some of these services include testing and career preparatory software, technology classes and training, access to databases and learning materials, and free Wi-Fi, which enable library patrons to develop skills needed for employment, search and/or apply for jobs online, as well as for life-long learning purposes. More details on the distinction between service types is provided in Table 1 on page 2.

75%
of survey respondents reported
public libraries in their state
provide career services

When asked about the benefits of providing career services through the public library system, survey respondents indicated that public libraries serve as “community anchors” and are advantageously positioned in their communities. Survey respondents also reported that libraries strengthen and support communities by acting as a hub for various activities and patrons. Both survey and interview respondents indicated that public libraries are often the only free option for computer and Internet access in communities, and they are able to fill workforce development gaps by offering career services that are tailored to community needs and local economic demand. As mentioned by the survey respondents, public libraries can contribute to economic development in communities by assisting individuals with their job search and potentially increasing their earnings through career services, assistance during economic downturns, and referring patrons to additional services such as job training.

Figure 1. Types of Career Services Offered at Libraries within States, 2018



Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

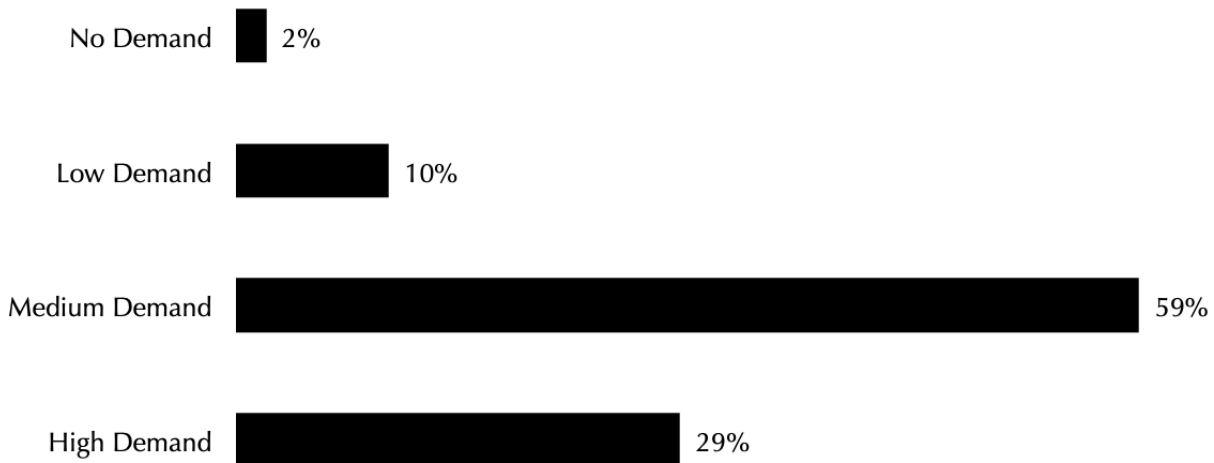
Current Demand

Most library staff describe a strong demand for career services. However, this demand is nuanced; some library staff point to the decrease in demand for career services in general due to the low unemployment rates in recent years but library staff also note that demand isn't being met due to cuts in government funding. Others see a higher demand for specific needs and customized services.

In the survey, 88% of respondents described the current demand for career services in their state library system as high (29%) or medium (59%) (see Figure 2).

Some interviewees reported a large demand for career services at their public library. A few library staff noted that because of recent cuts in state and federal resources dedicated to unemployment and career services, more patrons are seeking free services and support elsewhere. As one interviewee noted, "I've seen a dramatic increase. When the job center closed, we had a huge impact." Some have seen the demand go down because of low unemployment rates, but have seen an increase in demand for technical and intensive career services such as technology classes, one-on-one sessions, and entrepreneurship/small business assistance for upskilling purposes. For example, most interviewed have seen an increase in need for digital literacy because most job applications are online and patrons need assistance creating email and job application accounts, and submitting online applications.

Figure 2. How would You Describe the Current Demand for Career Services?

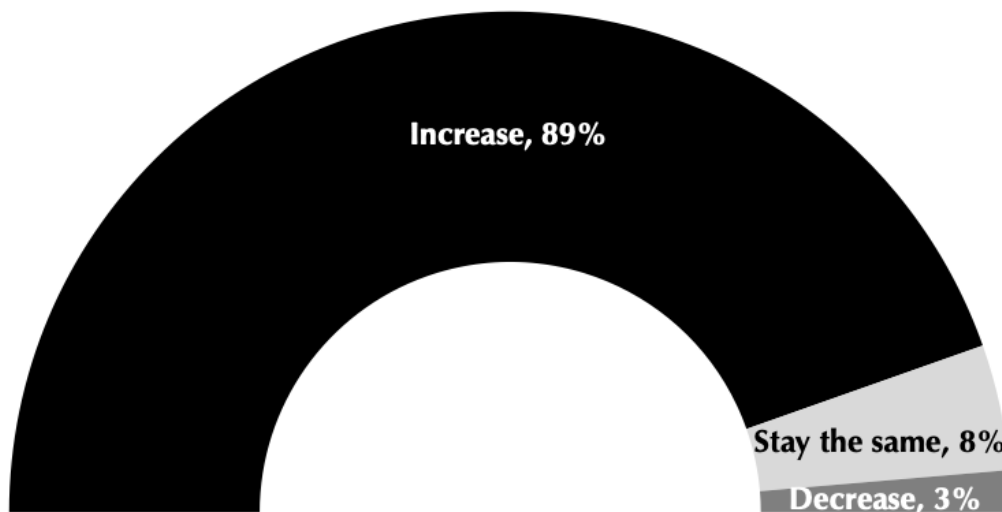


Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Projected Demand

Survey respondents believe that the role of libraries will increase due to the evolving demands of the labor market. When asked if the role of libraries will continue to increase, decrease, or stay the same, 89% of survey respondents stated that the role of libraries will increase (see Figure 3). Survey respondents noted that unemployment or underemployment continue to remain an issue in certain areas, hence the demand for library career services is likely to increase. Respondents mentioned that public libraries are typically responsive to the workforce needs of their communities, so an increase in community demand for career services would be reflected in library programming

Figure 3. Do You Think the Role of Public Libraries in Career Services will Increase, Decrease, or Stay the Same?



Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Most interviewees stated that libraries are typically attuned to the community workforce changes and needs, and as a result are constantly evolving to reflect local needs. Some interviewees reported that the career programs in their libraries have expanded in response to new demands and reductions in public workforce and career services and programs. Other library staff interviewed mentioned that the highlights of their library career services are programs that have been tailored to address gaps in their regions and states. For example, the Washington State Library Microsoft Imagine Academy not only seeks to increase employment-related skills through industry recognized certifications, but also addresses the need for training for Information Technology (IT) jobs in Washington State. A few interviewees noted, however, that libraries are limited in terms of addressing employment assistance needs when they do not have the capacity due to small staff size and tight budgets or when they are situated in communities where there are few jobs. Several rural libraries that were contacted for interviews stated they could not participate because their library provided little, if any, career services.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT Washington State Library

State: Washington

Program Spotlight: Microsoft Imagine Academy

Website: www.sos.wa.gov/library

The Washington State Library Microsoft Imagine Academy not only seeks to increase employment-related skills through industry-recognized certifications, but also addresses the need for training for IT jobs in Washington State. Microsoft Imagine Academy provides four learning pathways: productivity, computer science, data science, and IT infrastructure, and aims to bolster IT-related skills and knowledge for Washingtonians. Some of Washington State Library's goals for the Imagine Academy program include helping individuals be competitive in the job market, capitalizing on job and workforce demands, and promoting lifelong learning.

What are the Characteristics of Libraries that Enable them to Provide Career Services?

Interview and survey participants reported that the convenient, welcoming, and responsive nature of public libraries often make them one of the first stops for career-related needs. In addition, respondents reported that public libraries are regarded as accessible alternatives to traditional workforce service providers due to their flexibility, accessibility, and openness to all patrons. However, library staff reported that not all community members and potential partners are aware that libraries play a role in the workforce system.

As one survey respondent stated, “Public libraries are frequently residents’ first stop when they want to improve their skills, go back to school, find a job, or start a business. Why is that? To put it simply, it’s because residents know us.” Survey respondents describe public libraries as trusted, safe, familiar, and non-judgmental spaces that are welcoming to all individuals who have the opportunity to explore employment opportunities and garner free assistance. Some interviewed stated that libraries typically have some evening and weekend hours and are often accessible by public transportation. Survey respondents also reported that having workforce job-seeking services in libraries is a “natural fit” since public libraries are numerous and conveniently located in most communities. Respondents describe libraries as a place people are familiar with and one of the first places they go for employment-related needs. Moreover, in-

interviewees stated that library staff appear to always go above and beyond to fully answer patron questions and remain persistent and patient in their support. As one interviewee stated, “We always have back-up staff to help people...we are persistent and patient...and our staff always takes initiative to help [patrons] with whatever they need.”

In addition, survey respondents indicated that patrons perceive public libraries as less intimidating than typical public workforce development agencies such as American Job Centers. Survey respondents also indicated that libraries provide career services to everyone and are not required to conduct eligibility assessments as other organizations (such as federal or state-funded agencies and programs) may be required to complete. Moreover, respondents noted that many people do not have physical and/or transportation access to American Job Centers, particularly in small and rural communities, but they are more likely to have access to libraries (see Table 2 on pages 4 and 5). A few interviewed described that their states have pockets and regions without an American Job Center, and libraries fill in these service locations gaps.

Awareness of Services

While libraries are well known in their communities as a resource for books and computer access, some study participants discussed a lack of awareness among the public regarding library career services. Survey and interview respondents indicated that the general public and government agencies are often not fully aware of the role public libraries play in providing job-seeking activities and services as well as career information and lifelong learning opportunities. Survey respondents reported that it is a challenge to overcome the lack of awareness around career services at public libraries; this public awareness can affect residents' access to career services, and opportunities for partnerships with local workforce development boards, State Departments of Labor, and American Job Centers. Survey respondents stated that because some potential partners do not view libraries as part of the public workforce system, they fail to share information on labor market and workforce trends or referral information that can significantly benefit job seekers at the libraries.

As indicated in the Heldrich Center's survey, one reason libraries may not be viewed as workforce partners may be related to the limited amount of data collected by libraries to show the effectiveness of their workforce and career services programs, services, and activities, in contrast to traditional government-sponsored workforce organizations such as the American Job Centers. In response to the center's survey question — “What are the challenges of providing career services through the public library system?” — a respondent answered that “public libraries also have a difficult time making headway at a statewide workforce development level to receive resources and acknowledgment because they do not collect the kinds of data and outcomes necessary to show efficacy and ‘worth’ as workforce development programs typically define those things.” This is consistent with findings from the Public Library Association, which initiated its Project Outcome initiative to support data collection at libraries in an effort to highlight outcomes across a range of services. As stated in a 2018 report, “Project Outcome was born of a fertile context — to fulfill a growing need to demonstrate library value. It benefited from a well-positioned champion, due diligence, and outcome-based planning” (Project Outcome, 2018).

How Do Libraries Partner with Other Stakeholders to Provide Career Services?

The majority of respondents reported that their public libraries engage workforce stakeholders in partnerships to provide career services; however, some challenges exist developing and maintaining partnerships.

Given that the role of libraries varies based on community needs, collaboration with other state and local organizations can be helpful in the provision of career services to community members. Survey respondents indicated that a major strength of libraries is their ability to be flexible and adaptable to their varied communities throughout their states. Due to their size and oftentimes small budgets, libraries require partnerships with various entities such as the state library, local government, and workforce service providers to better support their role and enhance their ability to assist patrons with their career, job, and educational needs.

Of those that reported providing career services in their states, most survey respondents noted that their public libraries have partnerships with nonprofit organizations (79%), community colleges or universities (69%), and One-Stop Career Centers/American Job Centers (69%) (see Figure 4). Survey respondents also reported partnerships with economic development centers/agencies, county/city/municipal government, state departments of labor, other state agencies, chambers of commerce, and prisons. Through these partnerships, libraries work with these various community stakeholders to boost the skills of, and improve employment opportunities for, their local community members.

Some interviewees also discussed partnerships with workforce providers. Interviewees feel that public libraries serve as a “gateway” to many services for workers and unemployed individuals, since they often provide referrals to various job and social service organizations in the community. Interviewees emphasized that libraries are instrumental in connecting various types of patrons to organizations and services that provide support for employment and career-related needs. Interviewees also stated that library staff refer patrons with specific needs to other service providers whose primary focus is to address these specific needs.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT **Nevada State Library**

State: Nevada

Program Spotlight: Headed2, Nevada CareerExplorer

Website: <https://nv.headed2.com/>

The Nevada State Library Archives Public Records is working with southern Nevada workforce development leaders in a pilot project to place Nevada's public libraries at the center of the region's workforce development solutions. WIOA services provided by the Southern Nevada Workforce Connections have been co-located at 10 public libraries in the region.

For job seekers using a public library card as the key identifier, access to the Headed2 career information database, its software services, and research is made available. This promotes quality career guidance services that can lead citizens toward opportunities for quality, middle-class employment. Headed2 is an entirely web-based career information database that, with a library card, can be accessed from anywhere and provide career information and research materials.

Figure 4. Which Organizations Do Libraries in Your State Partner with to Provide Career Services?



Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Challenges with Partnerships

Respondents noted that collaboration with other organizations is a key component of effective career service approaches. Some libraries, however, find it difficult to pursue and maintain meaningful partnerships with outside agencies. As one survey respondent noted, “Surprisingly, workforce development agencies frequently do not realize that residents use libraries for career information.” Several respondents noted that their libraries have weak relationships or no partnerships with workforce development agencies, partly because of competition for funds, and the previously mentioned lack of awareness that libraries are a potential workforce partner. While partnerships can be beneficial, several library staff interviewed discussed a hesitation to formalize partnerships with government workforce providers, as they are unable to meet the strict reporting requirements associated with programs like WIOA.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT New Jersey Local Libraries

State: New Jersey

Program Spotlight: Career Connections

Website: www.careerconnections.nj.gov

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development developed an informal network of career service providers throughout the state called the New Jersey Career Connections program. Through the Uniform Career Guidance and Job Search Assistance Services grant, some public libraries within this network received funding to provide additional services such as workshops and one-on-one assistance.

Career Connections services can be accessed at local libraries in 14 of New Jersey’s 21 counties, and includes career guidance by trained library staff, guidance in using the tools on the Career Connections website, access to additional workshops and training, and referrals to local One-Stop Career Centers.

What are Challenges that Libraries Face in Providing Career Services?

While noting the positive aspects of libraries that allow them to respond to the demand for career services, respondents discussed the lack of funding that affects programming and staff time and the need for additional training to provide effective and valuable career services. Among other challenges, and coupled with local demand, these lead to variation in what libraries are able to offer, with some providing formal workforce development programming and others only offering basic, informal job search support.

Through open-ended responses, multiple survey respondents reported that public libraries are facing limitations due to financial constraints and that their libraries do not have enough funding to retain or hire needed staff for career- and employment-related programs. In some instances, the delivery of career services and programs are not a priority in libraries partly because of financial limitations. Ninety-two percent of survey respondents reported that more funding would better support library career services in their libraries.

Survey respondents reported that while the demand for these services at libraries is high, there is not enough staff to assist patrons who need extensive help. Eighty-four percent of survey respondents reported that additional staff would allow them to increase library career services activities and programs in their states. Respondents also reported that job seekers often require one-on-one staff attention to address their questions and issues, and for help improving patrons' basic and computer literacy skills. Moreover, populations such as non-English speakers and adults with low literacy may need specialized services that require more staff time.

Some local library staff interviewed pointed to only having a few informal job-seeking activities because of low capacity due to tight resources and staff time, while other respondents stated that they had more capacity to grow and maintain formal workforce development programs and services. In general, larger

92%

of survey respondents reported that more funding would better support library career services

84%

of survey respondents reported that additional staff would better support library career services

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT Millinocket Memorial Library

State: Maine

Service Area Population: 3,877

Website: millinocketmemoriallibrary.org

Millinocket Memorial Library (MML) is located in a rural area in northern Maine, and serves as a community hub and resource for several nearby towns in its service area. MML provides free Internet access for patrons using library computers, as well as for community members through portable wireless devices in two local public parks, since access to broadband Internet is an issue in the rural community. MML provides employment-related assistance that is tailored to individual needs, computer classes and programs, and space for patrons to connect with potential employers. Additionally, it supports lifelong learning. MML serves a community where access to traditional job assistance is a challenge due to the relatively remote area.

libraries centered in urban and suburban areas with bigger patron populations seem to have larger budgets to create and offer formalized, diverse, and intensive programs. Smaller libraries located in more rural regions, however, may have fewer resources and lack the capacity or staff to grow or sustain programs.

A few interviewees reported that although their public libraries are significantly limited in providing formal workforce development services, they still had the capacity to provide informal job-seeking activities using the basic resources available at most libraries such as computers, space, staff, and information. Similarly, many interviewed indicated that public libraries have the necessary infrastructure to bridge the digital divide for the public and job seekers, including libraries that are more limited in capacity. For example, the Millinocket Memorial Library in Maine provides free Internet access for patrons using library computers, as well as for community members through portable wireless devices in two local public parks, since access to broadband Internet is an issue in the rural community.

Library staff recognize these challenges and note that they are addressing them to varying degrees. One avenue libraries take to improve library staff skills is training. Survey and interview participants indicated that library staff training is beneficial for bolstering the effectiveness of library career services by providing the knowledge and information needed to serve patrons. Based on the survey, 89% of respondents reported that library staff training would better support library career services, and 44% reported that their state provides training opportunities for their staff to improve career service-related programs. Some survey respondents acknowledged that inadequate training has been a challenge in their library systems and is a barrier to playing more active roles in the workforce system in their locales. They also indicated that training is especially helpful for educating staff about how to provide effective referrals to agencies, choosing suitable organizations for partnerships, and developing programs and services that best support community members.

89%

of survey respondents reported that staff training would better support library career services

Do Libraries Collect Data on their Career Services?

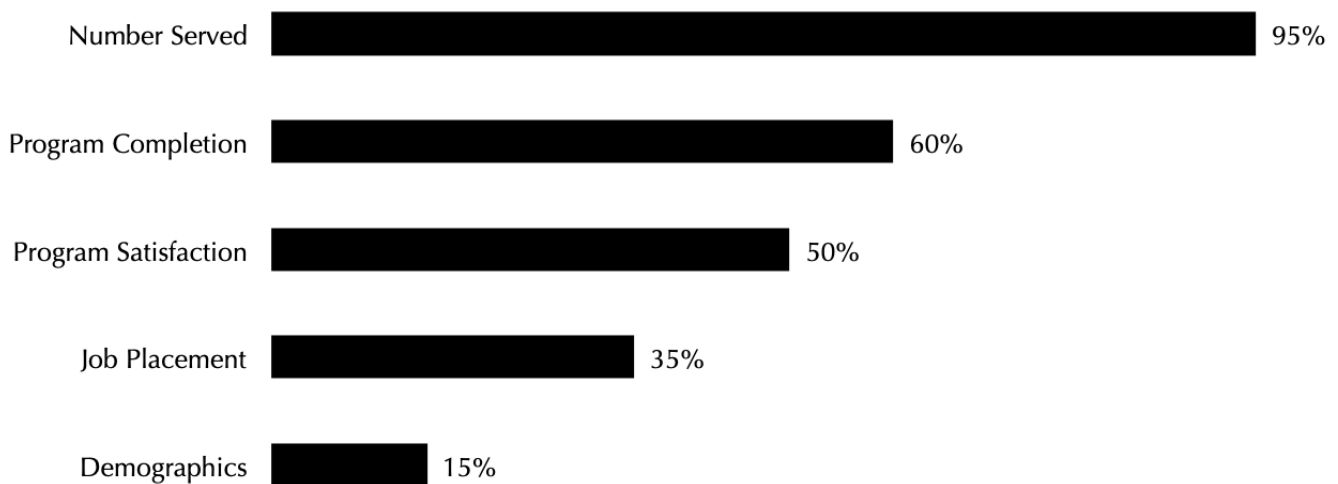
Half of survey respondents reported that their library collects data on career services. However, data collection remains a challenge among some public libraries, especially related to patron outcomes.

Half of survey respondents reported that the library systems in their state collect data on the participation or outcomes of career services at public libraries. Of those that collect data on these services and programs, most survey respondents reported collecting data on the number of people served (95%) (see Figure 5). Survey and interview participants reported collecting limited data on long-term employment outcomes.

50%

of survey respondents reported that libraries in their state collect data on career services

Survey respondents also reported the challenges faced by public libraries when collecting data; these include inadequate data collection tools (60%), privacy concerns (55%), and lack of staff training on data collection techniques (55%). Survey respondents and a few interviewees reported that they lacked adequate resources to collect robust data. Some interview participants mentioned that they lack the time due to staff shortages to collect extensive data and follow up with patrons for long-term tracking. Survey respondents and interviewees also indicated that privacy concerns are a challenge when collecting data, given their culture of and commitment to patron privacy. For example, one interviewee in Texas men-

Figure 5. What Data Do You Collect on Career Services Programs?

Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

tioned that balancing strict privacy laws pertaining to public libraries in Texas is a challenge for library staff since they are prohibited from collecting certain types of data on patrons, per the Texas Government Public Information policy (TX Code 552), which can hinder the collection of outcome data. A few interviewees and survey participants noted difficulty in receiving or accepting resources or funding, including WIOA funds, due to reporting requirements that would jeopardize privacy. Per the survey, another challenge public libraries face during data collection is lack of staff training on data collection techniques. Accordingly, an interviewee from a public library system in Minnesota noted that there is difficulty in getting all library staff to correctly track data and staff lack knowledge on what appropriate measures to use for data collection.

Nevertheless, some public libraries have been able to collect outcome data on patrons who used their workforce services. The Providence Public Library in Rhode Island collects some outcome data on patrons who receive career services to measure educational gains and job attainment. Similarly, the Cuyahoga County Library in Cuyahoga, Ohio also collects outcome data through various data collection techniques and tracks patrons long term for evaluation purposes and employment outcomes. Although both libraries contend with some challenges in collecting data such as lack of response and follow-up, misreported information, and limited staff time and capacity, they are able to use the data for program evaluation and funding-related objectives. A few interviewed stated that increased staff training could be a feasible way to increase data collection in libraries and ensure that staff make effective social service referrals.

Of those collecting data, survey respondents indicated that public libraries in their states most frequently use data for improving program delivery (95%) and for required reporting (55%). Lastly, of those that collect data on career services and programs, 80% of survey respondents reported using manual electronic collection (i.e., Microsoft Excel) to collect data, 70% reported using manual collection by hand (e.g., paper forms), 25% reported using specialized systems or software, and 15% reported using other tools to collect data.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

Providence Public Library

State: Rhode Island

Service Area Population: 131,533

Website: www.provlib.org

The Providence Public Library provides various career services for patrons, including adult and digital literacy classes and small business assistance. Providence Public Library staff collect outcome data on patrons who receive career services to measure educational gains and job attainment, which is balanced with privacy measures.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

Cuyahoga County Library

State: Ohio

Service Area Population: 616,527

Website: www.cuyahogalibrary.org

Cuyahoga County Library, which provides career workshops, coaching, basic job assistance, and small business development, also collects outcome data through various data collection techniques. With patrons' informed consent, Cuyahoga County Library staff track patrons long term for evaluation purposes and employment outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings in this study highlight the dynamic role of public libraries providing career services throughout the United States, as well as the successes and challenges of serving in this role. When asked to provide examples of standout library programs offering these services, respondents pointed to programs that had formalized partnerships, digital literacy services, entrepreneurship programs and services, and targeted job search assistance. While the future role of public libraries in this area depends on community need, their convenient locations, extended hours of operation, ubiquitous presence, and strong community roots present an opportunity to continue to improve partnerships and strengthen the career services provided to patrons.

As stated, there are several limitations to this research as noted in the methods section; the lack of rural libraries and selection bias will result in findings skewed to libraries that provide career services and have more resources to provide services. However, sufficient data were obtained to offer findings that rural libraries had limited resources and supports to provide a robust package of career services. Future research could include a national survey of local-level library staff to better assess the variation in demand and services provided at the local levels. While this study sought to gain an understanding of services from state-level officials, the limited timeframe did not allow researchers to contact every library, and the local nature of library efforts likely left some experiences omitted from this report. Overall, future research could also look to understand the level of services provided through local libraries to job seekers, assess opportunities for growth and partnerships, and develop methods by which libraries can better report on their outcomes while maintaining their commitment to patron privacy.

References

- American Library Association. (2013). *U.S. public libraries and the broadband technology opportunities program*. Chicago: Author. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from https://districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/uspl_btop_4.30.13_large.pdf
- Becker, S., Crandall, M. D., Fisher, K. E., Kinney, B., Landry, C., & Rocha, A. (2010). *Opportunity for all: How the American public benefits from Internet access at U.S. libraries*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P., Lee, J., Dubbels, K., McDermott, A., & Real, B. (2015). *2014 digital inclusion survey: Survey findings and results*. College Park, MD: Information Policy & Access Center, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/2014DigitalInclusionSurveyFinalRelease.pdf>
- Garmer, A. K., & Aspen Institute. Dialogue on Public Libraries. (2014). *Rising to the challenge: Re-envisioning public libraries: A report of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries*. Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <https://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/Aspen-LibrariesReport.pdf>
- Gutsche, B. (2012). *Library partnerships with workforce agencies*. Dublin, OH: OCLC. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Library_Partnerships_with_Workforce_Agencies.html
- Horrigan, J. B. (2015). *Lower income Americans and communities of color more likely to see libraries as community anchors*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center Internet & Technology. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/09/15/lower-income-americans-and-communities-of-color-more-likely-to-see-libraries-as-community-anchors/>
- Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2012). *Talking points: Library/workforce partnerships spur economic development*. Washington, D.C.: Author Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Workforce.pdf>
- Jaeger, P. T., Bertot, J. C., Thompson, K. M., Katz, S. M., & DeCoster, E. J. (2011). The intersection of public policy and public access: Digital divides, digital literacy, digital inclusion, and public libraries. *Public Library Quarterly*, 31(1), 1-20.
- Koerber, J. (2016). *Working toward change: Workforce development*. New York: Library Journal. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2016/09/public-services/working-toward-change-workforce-development/>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mantel, B. (2011). Future of libraries. *CQ Quarterly*, 21(27), 625-652.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.) Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
-

-
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Milam, D. P. (2008). Public library strategies for building stronger economies and communities. *National Civic Review*, 97(3), 11-16.
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5), 1189-1208.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Perez, T. E., & Duncan, A. (2015). *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act notice of proposed rulemaking*. Chicago: American Library Association. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/advleg/federallegislation/06-15-2015%20ALA%20Comments%20on%20the%20WIOA%20NPRM%20%28RIN%201205%E2%80%9393AB73%29.pdf>
- Project Outcome. (2018). *Project Outcome: Insights for adopting the model*. Chicago: Author. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from https://www.projectoutcome.org/ckeditor_assets/attachments/402/pro_out_pages_010719.pdf.
- Smith, J. L., Matthews, J., Crandall, M., Nyberg, S., & Cherubini, T. (2017). *Landscape of major U.S. public library data collection efforts: A working paper for the Measures that Matter initiative*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Museum and Library Services and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/40725/COSLA_MeasuresThatMatter_Landscape_V11_FINAL.pdf?sequence=1
- Stoltz, D., Sanders, C., & Wilson, W. (2018). *Supporting workforce development with libraries work*. Chicago: Public Library Association. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/01/supporting-workforce-development-with-libraries-work/>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. (2014). *Libraries and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved January 22, 2019 from <https://sites.ed.gov/octae/2014/11/14/libraries-and-the-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act/>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. (2017). *Training and employment guidance letter one-stop operating guidance for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act No. 16-16*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Wapner, C. (2016). The people's incubator: Libraries propel entrepreneurship. *OITP Perspectives*, 4.
-

Appendix A. Methodology

Research for this report was conducted during the period of June to December 2018 and was implemented in three phases. Researchers used three research strategies: a literature review and data collection from library websites, a national survey of state library staff that included open-ended responses, and structured telephone interviews with local library staff to allow for triangulation validation of the survey findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The research team collected data primarily through the survey and interviews. Researchers chose this specific combination of methodologies with open-ended survey responses and interviews to produce “richly descriptive” findings (Merriam, 1998, p. 8).

Literature Review

Heldrich Center researchers reviewed national literature and program materials on library websites, as well as other resources that documented career services and workforce development efforts taking place in state and local libraries, including but not limited to state and national reports, newsletters, articles, and other documents that outlined the efforts of various libraries offering career and workforce services.

Online Survey

To gain a broad understanding of career services provided by libraries in each state, researchers chose to conduct an online survey of staff at state libraries. To increase the likelihood of a response from each state, researchers collected contact information for three individuals from each state library, totaling 150 contacts, to receive the initial survey invitation email on July 19, 2018. Three email reminders were scheduled for the survey throughout July and early August. The staff typically included the state librarian, an associate state librarian, and a director of library development or continuing education.

In addition, a few states forwarded the invitation email to staff at local libraries within their state, increasing the total number of responses for those states. For states that did not complete the survey following the email reminders, researchers contacted additional representatives to complete the survey. Following a series of reminders, researchers sent five primary questions via email. For states that did not respond to the email questionnaire, researchers collected data from public websites to complete Table 2 on pages 4 and 5.

Interviews

The interviews focused on the existence and administration of career services at the interviewee's library. For the random selection process, researchers sought diversity in states represented; library service area categorization (urban, rural, suburban); and library type (central or branch).

To gather more information about the experience of individual libraries, local libraries were randomly selected for phone interviews. Heldrich Center researchers conducted 22 in-depth telephone interviews with staff from libraries in 21 states, as well as a representative from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Researchers selected individuals using two methods: 12 were identified through a random selection process, and 10 were selected through purposive, snowball sampling by relying on survey respondents' recommendations to gather information from critical, information-rich case studies to answer research questions (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

For the randomly selected interviews, researchers used the Public Libraries Survey from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to randomly select 60 libraries to contact for a phone interview. Libraries were sorted by type (central or branch), location type (urban, suburban, or rural), and state. At least one library in each state was contacted for an interview. Contact information was collected from library websites, or by calling the location directly.

Through a series of emails and calls to schedule interviews, researchers were able to conduct 12 interviews through random selection. In addition, researchers conducted interviews with 10 library staff members who were recommended by survey respondents. Researchers used a purposive, snowball sample by relying on survey respondents' recommendations to gather information from critical, information-rich case studies to answer research questions (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

In total, researchers contacted 69 staff, including 10 from the survey response suggestions, and completed 21 total phone interviews (see Table A1). Researchers faced the most difficulty in contacting branches classified as rural; those they were able to contact but did not interview indicated that their libraries did not provide any career services.

Table A1. Interview Participation Breakdown, by Response Status, 2018

| | Central | Branch |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Urban | Contacted: 16 Responded: 10 Completed: 10 | Contacted: 9 Responded: 7 Completed: 5 |
| Suburban | Contacted: 10 Responded: 6 Completed: 2 | Contacted: 8 Responded: 5 Completed: 2 |
| Rural | Contacted: 14 Responded: 5 Completed: 2 | Contacted: 12 Responded: 4 Completed: 0 |

Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Data analysis was based on in-depth thematic analysis of the online survey and structured interview results. Data analysis was a collaborative effort among the research team to allow for analyst triangulation (Patton, 1999). The main research questions guided both the data collection and the analysis. Two researchers separately conducted line-by-line coding of the interviews and the open-ended responses of the survey using NVivo to identify themes structured around the research questions. One researcher then cross-walked and merged the themes together. The separate and merged themes were discussed and verified by a third member of the research team to create a master list of themes. Researchers concluded they had reached a point of saturation in data collection, as they observed similar key themes recurring as they completed each additional interview. The research team utilized specific terms to ensure consistency in the reporting of the number of comments attributed to an interpretation. These terms include **most** (nearly all participants), **half** or **many** (around half), **some** (less than half), and **few** (more than one).

As shown in Table A2, with data based solely on central libraries, those in the study were, on average, in library consortia that were meaningfully larger and with more funding than the average of all central libraries. The group interviewed includes several large library systems, which skew the data toward higher populations and funding. However, there is a wide range in this study. For example, the number of total

staff range from 1 staff member to about 370, and the number of Internet computers ranges from 5 to over 600. These data are from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Public Libraries Survey data for 2016. While this was used to generally compare those included in the study with the average across all libraries, these data are not reported at the branch level, and those included in the study were analyzed on behalf of their library system rather than the outlet itself.

Table A2. Average Statistical Characteristics of Public Libraries, by Response Status, 2018

| Topic | All Public Libraries within the United States | Interviewed Public Library Respondents |
|---|---|--|
| Service Area Population (unduplicated) | 34,317 | 251,985 |
| Number of Branch Libraries | 0.84 | 6 |
| Number of Full-Time Equivalent Librarians with Master's | 3.67 | 26.6 |
| Number of Full-Time Equivalent Librarians | 5.37 | 31.2 |
| Total Staff | 15.5 | 110 |
| Operating Revenue | \$1.41 M | \$10.5 M |
| Total Expenditures | \$1.33 M | \$10.3 M |
| Print Materials | 81,346 | 655,130 |
| Hours Open Annually | 4,096 | 17,220 |
| Visits per Year | 149,378 | 1.05 M |
| Total Circulation Transactions | 250,437 | 2.01 M |
| Total Circulation (print and electronic) | 366,951 | 2.6 M |
| Internet Computers | 32.6 | 198 |
| Uses of Internet Computers | 30,516 | 212,984 |
| Annual Wireless Sessions | 35,118 | 124,448 |

Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Limitations

There are several limitations to note regarding this research. First, the study relied on self-reporting from survey respondents and interview participants. Given the complex and localized structure of libraries, and that respondents were not selected or screened for their knowledge of these services across the state, library staff interviewed and surveyed might not have been fully aware of all career services offered in their state or library systems. Moreover, those who were unable to respond to the survey or interview requests may have provided a different outlook and perspective on libraries' role in the workforce development area than those who did respond. It is also possible that self-selection bias led respondents with certain attitudes and views on workforce services in libraries to respond more than others with different views. The triangulation of data from multiple sources may mitigate the risk of this bias.

Some states had multiple respondents to the survey, so the percentages reported in the findings reflect the percent of respondents and not the percent of states that responded to the survey questions. When there were conflicting survey responses between state representatives, researchers accepted one affirmative response to signify presence of the activity in question within the state, as one respondent may not have known about a program elsewhere in the state that the second respondent reported.

The research team's inability to collect data and input from some states through interviews and surveys because of non-response led to a reliance on secondary sources such as website scans of career services offered in public libraries in a state. As a result, this report contains more comprehensive information on some states than others. Nevertheless, researchers obtained primary data from a majority of the states (42) in the United States.

Finally, while conducting the interviews, this study attempted to be representative of different regions in the United States, branch or central library composition, and varied population density. However, the study may not have been able to account for all existing variations due to the limited number of interviews conducted.

Appendix B. Interview Questions

Background

1. To begin, please briefly describe your role in the libraries and how long you have been in this role.
2. In your own words, what do you think is the role of libraries in the delivery of career services?
3. Does your library provide career programs and services?
 - Do these services run statewide, or vary by local branch?
 - What is/are the name(s) of the career services programs offered by your library?
 - Do the career services differ based on the populations being served and accessibility to the public workforce system in your area?
 - What staff are responsible for running these programs?

Program Structure and Implementation

4. What career services are provided at your library?
 - What are the most common services?
 - How were these career services created and developed?
5. Who are the typical patrons at your library career service programs?
 - Are the patrons referred from a specific organization or service provider?
 - Do the library staff refer patrons to One-Stop Centers?
 - Do library staff refer patrons to other service providers?
6. Approximately how many patrons typically receive these career services?
 - Are these services actively marketed?
 - Are there periods with higher demand? Why?
 - Does your library compare its workforce services to other service providers?
7. What are the goals of your career programs?
8. Who is funding these career services at your library?
9. Has there been an increase in the need to provide career services at your library?
 - How has this increased need affected your library?
10. Are these services provided through partnerships?
 - What are the most common partnerships? Is the State Department of Labor involved?

Collected Data and Challenges

11. What data does your library currently collect?
 12. What tools are used to collect data?
 - Who is usually responsible for data collection and assessment?
 - What privacy measures are in place when collecting different types of data?
 - What are the most serious challenges the library faces when collecting data?
 13. What specific data are collected on the participants in these programs?
 - How do you assess the data?
 - How are the data used?
 14. Are there data you would like to see collected that are not currently?
 - What types of data? Why is this so?
 - Are there current methods through which you could feasibly collect these data?
-

Strengths and Benefits

15. Describe your library's greatest strengths in providing career services.
 - What specific data help capture these strengths?
16. How do you see employment services adding to the value of the library?
 - How are these benefits measured?
 - What specific data help capture these benefits?

Conclusion

17. Are there any other organizations or key people in your state I should speak with about library career programs?
18. Do you have any other thoughts or comments?

Appendix C. Survey Topline

Note that due to rounding, percentages may not equal to 100%.

1. In which state do you work? (N=55)

2. For which type of organization do you work? (N=55)

| | Percent | Count |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| State Library | 53% | 29 |
| Local Library (municipality, city) | 24% | 13 |
| State Library Association | 4% | 2 |
| University Library | 4% | 2 |
| Other (please specify) | 16% | 9 |
| Total | 101% | 55 |

3. What is your current position? (N=55)

4. How long have you been with your organization? (N=55)

| | Percent | Count |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Less than 1 Year | 13% | 7 |
| 1-3 Years | 18% | 10 |
| 4-6 Years | 18% | 10 |
| 7-10 Years | 18% | 10 |
| 11-15 Years | 9% | 5 |
| More than 15 Years | 24% | 13 |
| Total | 100% | 55 |

5. Do public libraries in your state offer career services? (N=55)

| | Percent | Count |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Yes | 75% | 41 |
| No | 0% | 0 |
| Not Sure/Depends | 25% | 14 |
| Total | 100% | 55 |

6. What percent of public libraries in your state's library system offer career services? (N=40)

| | Percent | Count |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| None (0%) | 0% | 0 |
| Some (1%-24%) | 10% | 4 |
| Less than Half (25%-49%) | 28% | 11 |
| More than Half (50%-75%) | 45% | 18 |
| Most (Over 75%) | 18% | 7 |
| Total | 101% | 40 |

7. How would you describe the current demand for career services on behalf of your state library system? (N=41)

| | Percent | Count |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Medium Demand | 59% | 24 |
| High Demand | 29% | 12 |
| Low Demand | 10% | 4 |
| No Demand | 2% | 1 |
| Total | 100% | 41 |

8. What type of career services and/or programs are offered at libraries within your state's public library system? (N=42)

| | Percent | Count |
|---|---------|-------|
| Offering Classes (computer courses, etc.) | 98% | 41 |
| Online Job Search Support | 93% | 39 |
| Résumé Development | 90% | 38 |
| Job Application Assistance | 88% | 37 |
| Test Preparation | 86% | 36 |
| Literacy Programs | 86% | 36 |
| Cover Letter Development | 81% | 34 |
| Referrals to Training or Other Services | 71% | 30 |
| Small Business Development | 62% | 26 |
| Interview Practice | 57% | 24 |
| Other Services (please specify) | 24% | 10 |

9. In your state's public library system, what types of organizations do libraries partner with to provide career services? (select all that apply) (N=42)

| | Percent | Count |
|--|---------|-------|
| Nonprofit Organizations | 79% | 33 |
| Community Colleges or Universities | 69% | 29 |
| One-Stop Career Centers/American Job Centers | 69% | 29 |
| Local Literacy Organizations | 67% | 28 |
| Local School Districts | 67% | 28 |
| Workforce Development Boards | 67% | 28 |
| Local Businesses | 62% | 26 |
| Other (please specify) | 24% | 10 |
| None | 0% | 0 |

10. In your state's public library system, which populations do the libraries' career services specifically target? (select all that apply) (N=41)

| | Percent | Count |
|--|---------|-------|
| Low-Income Populations | 56% | 23 |
| Youth | 37% | 15 |
| Adults | 59% | 24 |
| Older Workers (40+) | 34% | 14 |
| Immigrants | 44% | 18 |
| Veterans | 41% | 17 |
| People with Disabilities | 32% | 13 |
| Long-Term Unemployed | 24% | 10 |
| Professionals | 27% | 11 |
| There is No Focus on a Specific Population | 49% | 20 |
| Other (please specify) | 12% | 5 |

11. In your state, do libraries collect data on the participation and/or outcomes of career services at public libraries? (N=40)

| | Percent | Count |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Yes | 50% | 20 |
| No | 50% | 20 |
| Total | 100% | 40 |

12. What tools do the libraries in your state use to collect data on career services and programs? (select all that apply) (N=20)

| | Percent | Count |
|---|---------|-------|
| Manual Collection on Computer (Microsoft Excel) | 80% | 16 |
| Manual Collection by Hand (paper forms) | 70% | 14 |
| Specialized System/Software | 25% | 5 |
| Other (please specify) | 15% | 3 |

13. What type of data do the public libraries in your state collect on career services and programs? (select all that apply) (N=20)

| | Percent | Count |
|----------------------------|---------|-------|
| Number of People Served | 95% | 19 |
| Satisfaction with Services | 50% | 10 |
| Program Completion Rates | 60% | 12 |
| Job Placement Rates | 35% | 7 |
| Patron Information | 15% | 3 |
| Demographics | 15% | 3 |
| None of the Above | 0% | 0 |
| Other (please describe) | 5% | 1 |

14. How do the public libraries in your state use their collected data on career services and programs? (select all that apply) (N=20)

| | Percent | Count |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|
| To Improve Program Delivery | 95% | 19 |
| For Required Reporting | 55% | 11 |
| Other (please describe) | 15% | 3 |
| Data are Not Used | 5% | 1 |

15. In your state, what are the challenges faced by public libraries when collecting data? (select all that apply) (N=20)

| | Percent | Count |
|--|---------|-------|
| Inadequate Data Collection Tools | 60% | 12 |
| Lack of Staff Training on Data Collection Techniques | 55% | 11 |
| Privacy Concerns | 55% | 11 |
| Lack of Resources | 40% | 8 |
| Other (please explain) | 25% | 5 |

16. In your own words, what are the benefits of providing career services through the public library system? (N=31)

17. In your own words, what are the challenges of providing career services through the public library system? (N=31)

18. Do the libraries in your state provide training opportunities for their staff for improving career service-related programs? (N=36)

| | Percent | Count |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Yes | 44% | 16 |
| No | 8% | 3 |
| Not Sure | 47% | 17 |
| Total | 99% | 36 |

19. Do the libraries in your state advertise the career services they offer? (N=37)

| | Percent | Count |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Yes | 84% | 31 |
| No | 3% | 1 |
| Not Sure | 14% | 5 |
| Total | 101% | 37 |

20. What type of additional resources would better support library career services in your state? (select all that apply) (N=37)

| | Percent | Count |
|---|---------|-------|
| More Funding | 91% | 34 |
| Staff Training | 89% | 33 |
| Additional Staff | 83% | 31 |
| Assistance with Data Collection and Program Evaluations | 72% | 27 |
| Assistance with Program Development | 70% | 26 |
| Other (please specify) | 8% | 3 |

21. To support career services on behalf of constituents in your state, do public libraries offer any of the following to employers? (select all that apply) (N=37)

| | Percent | Count |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Meeting Spaces | 95% | 35 |
| Job Fairs or Other Hosted Events | 70% | 26 |
| Equipment | 54% | 20 |
| Other (please specify) | 14% | 5 |
| We Do Not Offer Services for Employers | 3% | 1 |
| Total | 100% | 37 |

22. Libraries have played an increased role in providing additional public services in recent years. Do you think this role will continue to increase, stay the same, or begin to decrease? (N=37)

| | Percent | Count |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Increase | 89% | 33 |
| Stay the Same | 8% | 3 |
| Decrease | 2% | 1 |
| Total | 99% | 37 |

23. Why do you think the role of libraries will increase? (N=33)

24. Why do you think the role of libraries will stay the same? (N=0)

25. Why do you think the role of libraries will decrease? (N=0)

26. Are there any specific career service programs offered through public libraries in your state that you think are working particularly well? (N=26)

27. Do you have any final thoughts? (N=17)