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Project Justification

A co-creation of the New Mexico State Library Foundation and partner non-profit organization Creative Startups, *Libraries as Launchpads* is a tested and proven scalable model of support for public libraries working to build their capacity as hubs for entrepreneurship and creative business support. The *Libraries as Launchpads* Implementation project will address the following Laura Bush 21st Century program goals and objectives: Goal 3: Enhance training of library professionals to meet the needs of their communities, with associated Objectives, 3.1: Develop training to equip the library and information workforce to engage in sustained community development; and 3.2: Create and/or refine training programs that build library and information workforce skills and expertise in contributing to the well-being of communities, as well as Objective 1.2: Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.

This project builds on a 2018 IMLS National Leadership planning grant to the New Mexico State Library, which was to pilot the *Libraries as Launchpads* program with Creative Startups and five public and tribal libraries in New Mexico. Based on dissemination of our initial results, we received interest from libraries across the country including in Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wyoming as well as internationally. We now request an LB21 Implementation Grant to expand the model nationwide, develop and disseminate resources to support wide lasting benefits and easy adoption.

The New Mexico State Library Foundation is requesting \$249,877 in IMLS funding for an Implementation project to expand *Libraries as Launchpads: An Economic Revitalization Initiative* over a period of two years. The program will provide training and technical support to approximately 30 librarians from 6 states. Participating librarians will help inform the development of a How-To Guide (working title: How (and Why!) to Transform Your Library into a Hub for Entrepreneurship) for librarians around the country seeking information about how to support entrepreneurs in their communities. This Guide will be available online.

Need Statement

1)Libraries are in a prime position to support economic stability but the library workforce needs training to equip them with the skill and expertise required. The health of the national job market depends on the startup of new small businesses that start out with a strong foundation. There is ample evidence of the need to provide easily accessed, free of charge support to entrepreneurs and small businesses that meets the diverse needs of local communities. This is even more true during the recovery period following COVID-19. A report released on July 8, 2021 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed 6.2 million Americans did not work at all or worked fewer hours because their employer closed or lost business due to the coronavirus pandemic.¹ According to data compiled by Statista, 44.1% of surveyed small business owners stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a moderate negative effect on their business. An additional 22.1% stated the pandemic has had a large negative effect. Only 8.3% noted the pandemic has had a moderate or large positive effect on their business.²

¹ TED Economics Daily report; 6.2 million unable to work because employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic, June 2021 (retrieved online at: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2021/6-2-million-unable-to-work-because-employer-closed-or-lost-business-due-to-the-pandemic-june-2021.htm>)

² Overall impact of COVID-19 on small businesses in the United States as of January 2022; retrieved online at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1220920/us-covid-19-impact-small-businesses/>

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According to a report issued by the Small Business Administration (SBA) in 2019, small businesses account for 44 percent of economic activity in the United States³. Small businesses create two-thirds of new jobs and deliver 43.5 percent of the United States' gross domestic product (GDP). The COVID-19 pandemic decimated small businesses, many of which are creative industries. A Federal Reserve study in 2021 found 200,000 additional businesses permanently closed due to the pandemic - between 25% - 33% more than pre-pandemic closures.⁴ Business owners and entrepreneurs across the US have struggled to identify new market opportunities and to pivot to online marketing resources as they have struggled to survive the prolonged crisis. According to data collected by Statista, in January 2022, small businesses owners felt the biggest problems facing small businesses in the United States were quality of labor (23% of responses), inflation (22%), taxes (14%), cost of labor (11%), and government regulations (11%).⁵

Activating libraries as place-based, community-centric, economic recovery sites, and equipping librarians to support small business owners and entrepreneurs has never been more urgent. A trusted hand guiding entrepreneurs to the resources they need early on could make a great difference to their level of success, and libraries are among the most trusted sources of information in the US according to a 2016 study by Pew Research⁶. A community-centric approach is especially important given Venture Forward's recent findings that compared to pre-COVID statistics, more women, Black people, and people without college degrees opened new microbusinesses (businesses run by one owner or one owner with very few staff) in the United States during the period March 2020 - July 2021.⁷ The concluding statement from the NIH funded study *Covid-19 and entrepreneurship education: Implications for advancing research and practice*, published in March 2021, offers support to the concept of providing improved training to librarians so that they can provide better support to entrepreneurs; "*Due to the social distancing requirements and changing economic conditions more people have time to study online. This means education can transform people's lives by providing new opportunities. This includes information about how to start digital businesses and retrain for new opportunities. Government policy interventions can increase the number of entrepreneurs that in turn facilitate employment growth. The lessons from entrepreneurship education programs can strengthen the overall economy resulting in further economic gain.*"⁸

2) *The path to entrepreneurship needs to be accessible to ALL potential business owners.* Business resources abound, yet they are not accessible to those who do not know where to find them. Underserved and low-income communities generally have few nearby resources at their disposal. COVID-19 recovery funds have also been distributed inequitably. A University of Michigan study found in May 2020, less than one half of 1% of Black business owners reported receiving relief benefits from the government, compared to 9% of non-Black business

³ Retrieved online at:

<https://advocacy.sba.gov/2019/01/30/small-businesses-generate-44-percent-of-u-s-economic-activity/>

⁴ The pandemic may have caused 200,000 business closures — fewer than expected; retrieved online at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/small-business-closures-pandemic-less-expected-past-year-fed-survey-2021-4>

⁵ Single most important problem for small businesses in the United States in January 2022; retrieved online at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/220371/single-most-important-problem-for-small-businesses-in-the-us/>

⁶ Pew Research Center; retrieved online at:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/30/most-americans-especially-millennials-say-libraries-can-help-them-find-reliable-trustworthy-information/>

⁷ How the Great Resignation is driving a boom in startups from more diverse founders; retrieved online at:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/the-great-resignation-boom-in-startups-from-more-diverse-founders/>

⁸ Vanessa Ratten, Paul Jones; Covid-19 and entrepreneurship education: Implications for advancing research and practice; *The International Journal of Management Education*; Volume 19, Issue 1, 2021, 100432; ISSN 1472-8117; retrieved online at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2020.100432>.

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owners.⁹ As more and more support resources move online, low-income families are disproportionately affected by an increasing tech divide exacerbated by COVID-19: 29% don't have smartphones, 46% don't have home computers and 64% don't have a tablet¹⁰.

3) *Libraries need to advocate for themselves with community leaders and decision-makers.* Even with their unique ability to fill the gaps in the local ecosystem through a myriad of services, libraries are often undervalued and overlooked as a potential for economic development. Activating libraries as economic development sites and equipping librarians to support small businesses has great potential for reaching diverse underserved entrepreneurs.

Target Group

The New Mexico State Library Foundation in collaboration with the nonprofit organization Creative Startups is proposing to serve a cohort of at least 30 participant librarians from 6 partner library networks. Each library network is located in a different state to ensure our cohort is representative of the needs of librarians in different regions. Each partner library network will recruit approximately five librarians from different libraries in their region to participate in the *Libraries and Launchpads Initiative* training.

The 30 participating librarians will form a cohort and will receive training, technical assistance, and ongoing support focused on supporting entrepreneurs in their communities. This initial cohort will allow identification of a smaller cohort composed of one librarian from each region. Members of this smaller cohort will receive more in-depth support over the course of a year to further develop their skills in facilitation and entrepreneurship education. The smaller cohort will work with project consultants to:

- Test out ideas for supporting entrepreneurs that they developed during the initial cohort sessions.
- Host workshops for entrepreneurs that incorporate their new ideas and get entrepreneurs into the library of virtual meetings for face-to-face feedback.
- Refine and retest their ideas based on further observations and feedback from entrepreneurs.
- Emulate the experience of an entrepreneur prototyping a product or service through this process. Allowing them to better understand entrepreneurship.
- Translate refined ideas into plans ready to "pitch" to local organizations for support and funding.

Committed partners for the proposed *Libraries and Launchpads Initiative* training include: Managing partner-Creative Startups and confirmed state/regional partners- 1) New Mexico State Library system; 2) Cuyahoga County Public Library System, 3) New Jersey State Library-NJLibsGrowBiz, 4) Memphis Library System, 5) Idaho Commission for Libraries, and 6) a to-be-determined west coast state/region. Our ideal 6th partner will be located on the west coast to ensure we have a wide variety of U.S. regions represented in our cohort of librarians.

Project Beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries of *Libraries as Launchpads* are librarians seeking to learn new skills, potential entrepreneurs, small businesses, libraries interested in ways to better advocate for themselves, and the communities serviced by the participating libraries. The provision of training to librarians will generate a more in-depth level of support to entrepreneurs which will increase their ability to build successful businesses. The *Libraries as Launchpads* program was originally developed before the COVID-19 crisis. The program implemented

⁹ Black business owners, entrepreneurs left out of small business coronavirus support; retrieved online at <https://news.umich.edu/black-business-owners-entrepreneurs-left-out-of-small-business-coronavirus-support/>

¹⁰ ALA State of America's Libraries report 2020; retrieved online at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnipocajpcgiclfndmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ala.org%2Fnews%2Fsite-s%2Fala.org.news%2Ffiles%2Fcontent%2FState-of-Americas-Libraries-2020-web.pdf&clen=8585346&chunk=true>

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under this grant will incorporate lessons learned during the pandemic to help local economies and entrepreneurs rebuild from the pandemic's impacts and thrive well into the future. We acknowledge market conditions continuously fluctuate with local, national, and world events, and are committed to preparing librarians to effectively contribute to the economic growth and security of their communities. Reliable and defensible data regarding the number of businesses served will be developed over time as each participant library builds the means to track and record data on the service they provide.

One of the 2021 participants in the 8-week Entrepreneurship Librarian Training put it into perspective how exactly the librarians will be able to respond to ever changing needs when she shared, "*I found Libraries as Launchpads to be an engaging and informative program that entirely changed my viewpoint on how libraries can better assist entrepreneurs. But more importantly, I learned how libraries can use entrepreneurial development tools to better serve our [patrons]. Focusing on "pains" in my community, and how I can "kill" them, has changed my outlook on practically every professional responsibility. Most especially this new approach will benefit our library programming, which will in turn benefit our community. I would definitely recommend this eye-opening course to all librarians.*"

We have seen a wide range of businesses supported through the libraries as launchpads program, all who have benefited their communities in different ways: an entrepreneur opening a food truck to feed oil field workers and get out of the grueling field himself, the new generation taking over the family farm and expanding into value added food products, a mother and daughter opening a restaurant and working with their local MainStreet initiative to fill vacant space downtown, crafts people wanting to expand their customer base and take their side job full time, individuals seeing a need and starting childcare facilities, among others.

Building on Existing Theory, Scholarship, and Practice

The movement to equip public libraries as support services for entrepreneurs has been growing over the past two decades. The *Libraries as Launchpads* program has learned from and acknowledges the important work that has been accomplished by the American Library Association in building entrepreneurial support systems that are accessible to libraries across our nation and their efforts to expand digital skills training through a collaboration with Google. We have also learned from and acknowledged the important work of the Public Library Association and their Skilling for Employment project that is partnered with LinkedIn Learning, GitHub and Microsoft, and the National Urban League Entrepreneurship program that focuses on economic empowerment of people of Color. *Libraries as Launchpads* aims to connect with and support these and other existing programs as it builds on current resources by adding a crucial component to the landscape of libraries as entrepreneurial hubs. We are seeking to provide training for librarians that develops a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship and offers steps to assess the unique challenges and gaps for entrepreneurs locally. Other organizational leaders in the library and information science field do not offer the personalized, community-based training focused on increasing librarians' capacity to support entrepreneurs proposed under this grant. We will further test and measure our replicable model of cohort training to librarians interested in discovering ways to offer support to the underserved entrepreneurs in their communities, a model that is adaptable, community focused, and can work anywhere. *Libraries as Launchpads* training is coupled with technical assistance and peer support to provide accessibility to every type of learner.

Libraries as Launchpads was developed in New Mexico, a state with a population that consists of a broad range of cultural identities and one of the highest poverty rates in the U.S. Our partner for this program, Creative Startups, a 501(c)3 charitable organization has over 15 years of experience growing creative entrepreneur ecosystems and training entrepreneurship educators and was founded within the economies of New Mexico. Our plan to utilize libraries as support for new business startups is based in grassroots response to community needs.

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By utilizing existing structures and building the capacity of librarians to better understand what entrepreneurs need and how to identify gaps in support in their communities we can meet the needs of underserved community members with creative ideas by offering free access to information, resources, and assistance as they determine how to get started. As recognized knowledge centers with existing infrastructure, rural, urban, and tribal libraries nationwide are poised to act as leaders and catalysts for local creative economies. Since being launched as a pilot program in 2018, *Libraries as Launchpads* has demonstrated the effectiveness of equipping library leaders and staff with the knowledge, confidence, and networks they need to provide more effective support to creative economy entrepreneurs and ecosystems. Built-in partnership with Creative Startups and with support from an IMLS Planning Grant (Log Number: LG-97-18-0219-18), local foundations, and the US Small Business Administration, *Libraries as Launchpads* has been scaled to 41 public libraries in New Mexico and has served 124 entrepreneurs with over 2,000 hours of mentoring and workshops. *Libraries as Launchpads* has trained 19 community-based “Educators” supporting English and Spanish workshops and developed a Librarian’s Entrepreneur Reference Interview and creative entrepreneurship library collections guides to equip librarians with the knowledge and tools needed to support their local small business community. Creative Startups has established an online learning portal for library patrons to discover basic entrepreneurship knowledge and build pathways toward success. The next step is to scale the *Libraries as Launchpads* into five new states by 2023.

The proposed program meets the priorities of IMLS by enhancing training of library professionals to meet the needs of their communities; continuing the development of a responsive and expandable training model that will equip the library and information workforce to engage in sustained community development; build library and information workforce skills and expertise in contributing to the well-being of communities; and support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.

Project Work Plan

Step One - Selecting Librarians - Aug-Sept, 2022: Program Manager and Program Support work closely with the 4-5 recruiting partners and New Mexico State Library to confirm 5-6 per librarian participants from each of their states/regions, including New Mexico, for a total of approximately 30 librarians.

Step Two - Entrepreneurship Librarian Training - Oct-Dec, 2022: Creative Startups will lead an 8-week online blended learning program targeted approximately 30 librarians in diverse communities. Through educational videos, weekly calls facilitated by the Lead Faculty, expert articles, and assignments, participant librarians will learn to recognize entrepreneurial challenges and understand how to assess the needs in their local ecosystem. Through the program participants:

- Join regional peer support groups and hold weekly meetings to promote collaboration, sharing of resources, and problem-solving while working through the program;
- Gain a strong understanding of entrepreneurship and the many struggles entrepreneurs at different stages of building a successful business;
- Map assets and become experts in the resources available to entrepreneurs in their communities
- Librarians develop a strategic plan that works for their library to help fill the gaps they have identified in their local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Providing broad and continued impact, thereby fostering a healthier economy within their community;
- Develop the skills to measure and communicate the library’s impact on the local ecosystem to civic and community leaders.

Step Three - A National Network - Jan, 2023-Jul, 2024: Organized by Program Manager and Program Support, *Libraries as Launchpads* will provide a monthly virtual meeting, open to librarians across the country interested in supporting entrepreneurs, for information sharing. Guest speakers from libraries offering entrepreneurship

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initiatives and economic development programs will be asked to present information about the services they provide. They share their stories of working with entrepreneurs, triumphs of supporting business growth, and/or struggles bringing their initiatives to support entrepreneurs to life. For example, a recent call hosted by Creative Startups featured a representative from the ALA offering information about their entrepreneurship program. Calls will be open to any and all librarians regardless of program participation.

Step Four - Online Learning for Entrepreneurs - Jan, 2023-Jul, 2024: Incorporation of the *Libraries as Launchpads* online Self-guided Entrepreneurship learning platform. The 30 newly certified Entrepreneurship Librarians will help build their library's capacity by providing access to Creative Startups' digital learning platform. This self-guided learning portal offers library patrons a program that can be accessed within the library or online at home. This COVID-19 friendly study platform promotes digital inclusion and increases equity and access for disadvantaged communities. Through this learning portal, patrons will be able to test their ideas to determine if they have a viable business. Online portal modules include:

- Your Marketspace
- It Has to be Full of Pain - Defining your customers' pain
- Who Do You Love? Your Customers! - Understanding a day in the life of your customer
- Build it so They Will Come - Developing your prototype
- Customer Acquisition and Sales - Building your sales pipeline

Step Five - Selecting Library Case Studies - Jan,2023-Feb,2023: A cohort of 6 of the newly Certified Entrepreneurship Librarians are selected to work more in-depth with the Libraries as Launchpads program and become Entrepreneurship Hub case studies. Program Director, Program Manager, and Lead Faculty will choose libraries based on expressed interest, performance in the 8-week training, capacity of library staff, and diversity of service area sizes and demographics for the 6 locations as a whole.

Step Six : - National Case Studies - Mar,2023-Mar,2024: The cohort of 6 selected libraries become a cohort who will receive a year of hands-on support while they work to fill the gaps they have identified in their communities and become hubs for entrepreneurship. Over the course of the year each library will work with the support of the Creative Startups team to:

- Build partnership with local and regional business support organization to combine efforts and strengthen the ecosystem;
- Deliver Minimum Viable Offering programs/events to get feedback and input for the entrepreneurial community;
- Host programming that brings entrepreneurs into the library to test their ideas;
 - Each library identifies a Local Educator (librarian, staff or other community member) and who received training to develop their skills in facilitation and entrepreneurship education. Educators gain an in-depth understanding of best practices in entrepreneurship education and classroom facilitation, they build confidence in facilitating peer-to-peer engagement, and increase their understanding of entrepreneurship. After completing the training, Educators become equipped to host the Libraries as Launchpads program for entrepreneurs in libraries again and again.
- Develop a plan to fill the needs in their community;
- Creates a "pitch deck" to share their ideas with the community, leaders, local foundations, etc. to ask for support with their plan.

Step Seven - Entrepreneurship Hub Libraries - Mar-July, 2024: Participating libraries become hubs for entrepreneurs and continue to develop resources and conduct their programs according to the needs observed in their individual communities.

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Step Eight - Program Evaluation - Mar-May, 2024: The Evaluator will conduct an in-depth evaluation using qualitative and quantitative data gathered from pre-post training surveys that measure participant percentage of knowledge gained, skill development, and level of self confidence in providing support to entrepreneurs, and from participant satisfaction surveys. The Evaluator will provide results based on both quantitative and qualitative data and will analyze librarians' and entrepreneurs' gains in knowledge, skills, self-confidence, as well as the depth to which activities support a thriving creative economy. Data collection for evaluation will be carried out by Program Support overseen by Evaluator and Program manager, activities include pre- and post-questionnaires for all library, educator, and entrepreneur participants and interviews with Hub Library participants to capture impressions, depth of impact, and individual stories of success.

Step Nine - How-To Guide - April-June, 2024: Lead Faculty and Program Manager will lead the development of a How-To Guide. Roughly based on the 8-week Entrepreneurship Librarian training and informed by the 5-6 Case Study libraries, the How-to Guide will be an accessible starting point for any librarian interested in working with entrepreneurs. The guide will guide librarians through activities that allow them to gain a better understanding of what entrepreneurs need, the gaps in support for entrepreneurs locally, and ways they can begin to fill some of the gaps they observe.

Step Ten - Dissemination - July 2024: New Mexico State Library and Creative Startups will widely disseminate project implementation, materials for broad impact, and results locally and nationally through a project website, through national library information networks, and conference presentations (COSLA, ARSL, ALA Annual Conference; New Mexico and neighboring state library conferences). Recruiting partners will share with their library networks. Creative Startups will publish an Impact Report, to be printed and distributed online.

Step Eleven - On-Going Support: The Creative Startups team continues to support participant librarians and staff via bi-monthly or quarterly virtual meetings and through providing access to Creative Startups' online learning portal. Creative Startups' team will continue to lead the effort to build a national Entrepreneurship Librarian online community where Librarians can foster collaboration and share experiences. This online community will be supported in the form of monthly virtual meetings and a librarian Slack channel. Additional entrepreneur collections will be suggested to librarians to keep up with the latest business trends.

Planning, Execution, and Management of *Libraries as Launchpads*:

Planning for the program has been conducted in partnership between the New Mexico State Library Foundation and our strategic partner, Creative Startups¹¹ who has, to date, supported 425 companies who have gone on to raise over \$301 Million in investment funding. Creative Startups will execute and manage the program. Creative Startups has worked closely with the New Mexico State Library Foundation to develop the program through multiple iterations. We believe that libraries are a critical part of the economy in every community.

Commitment of Time, Finance, Personnel, and other Resources to carry out the program:

- In-kind services from Project Director Eli Guinee: New Mexico State Library staff member Eli Guinee will dedicate approximately 10% of his time to overseeing program direction, including financial administration, contracting, reporting, and supporting participating librarians and library networks.
- The New Mexico State Library Foundation will oversee administration of the program, help create learning communities across participating state libraries, engage and support library leaders, and provide state library resources including translation services. Cost to the grant: \$22,716 in indirect funds.
- Program partner Creative Startups has been contracted to provide the following organizational staff to the program:

¹¹ Creative Startups access to information through their webpage: <https://www.creativestartups.org/>

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- Oversight will be provided by Dr. Alice Loy, PhD, CEO, who will dedicate approximately 4% of FTE to the program. Cost: \$7,490.
- Program Manager Ginny Sterpka will oversee all aspects of development, planning, and management for the program and will dedicate approximately 60% of FTE to the program. Cost: \$84,064.
- An independent evaluator will be contracted for program evaluation and reporting. Cost: \$8,750.
- Lead Educator for *Libraries as Launchpads* training Griselda Martinez will bring 15+ years of ecosystem development and experience working with entrepreneurs. She will dedicate participants and will dedicate approximately 15% of her time over two years of the program. Cost: \$27,000.
- Program operation and Technical Support to librarians and staff for portal access, marketing, and outreach and will be contracted with an independent provider. Program support will spend approximately 12 hours a week for 20 months and approximately 20 hours a week for 4 months. Cost: \$38,784.
 - Local educators will be contracted and receive training to help provide support to entrepreneurs and facilitate peer-to-peer engagement in libraries, One educator will be contracted for each participant library. 6 local educators will work 6 hours a week for 10 weeks at a rate of \$58/hr. Cost: \$18,792.
- Guest Speakers will be contracted from a pool of experienced librarians to present and share their experience in supporting entrepreneurs during virtual meetings. Total of 4 presenters will receive a \$450 stipend. Cost: \$1,800.
- Outreach and promotional materials will be created to support the program including paid social media and print ads. Cost: \$2,100.
- Hub library stipends will be provided to participating libraries to build Entrepreneurship collections, technical supplies and/or upgrades to support the program or to support staff program time to use at their discretion. Cost: \$24,500.
- Workbooks and facilitation guides will be published to support the learning of 30 librarians, 6 educators, and 46 entrepreneurs. Cost: \$1,230.
- Travel expenses for staff visiting partner libraries, including flight, lodging, transportation, and meal costs. Cost: \$10,426.
- Translation/interpretation as needed: we will provide recording, interpretation, or translation services as needed once cohort is confirmed. Cost: \$2,225

Perspectives and Contributions of Target Groups:

Libraries as Launchpads was developed as and will be delivered as a community-based, inclusive, peer responsive program. Creative Startups has experience in providing support to entrepreneurs across national and cultural divides and brings this perspective to the *Libraries as Launchpads* training program. Entrepreneurship Librarians, entrepreneurs, and the businesses they form will be considered as individuals that bring a unique set of challenges and skills to the program. Data and feedback from program participants across New Mexico were used to inform the current iteration of the proposed *Libraries as Launchpads* training curriculum. The How-To Guide developed under this grant will be informed by the cohort of librarians who participate in our training. Librarians will bring their own experiences and perspectives as well as insights into the needs of local entrepreneurs to the training, providing information about a range of regions in the United States. By incorporating the cohorts' perspectives, the How-To Guide will be a responsive and relevant resource for other librarians and libraries across the country.

Project Tracking

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Creative Startups will use tracking tools including visit counters and time trackers built into virtual platforms to collect the number of librarians who participate in the full training program and the total number of hours of training attended by the cohort; the number of librarians who receive in-depth training and the total number of hours of training attended by the cohort; and the number of participants trained as Local Educators and the total number of hours of training attended. The professions of participants in the Local Educator training will be tracked. Creative Startups will use a series of surveys and feedback platforms to track program progress and results. All three cohorts formed for training will be asked to complete a self-assessment pre-post survey that will be used to determine percentage of knowledge gained, confidence increased, and networks grown; all participants will be asked to complete a satisfaction survey at the end of training; and all virtual and in-person meetings will be followed by a request to participants to fill out an online survey. Interviews will be conducted with 6 Hib libraries and transcribed. Data collected will be provided to an independent evaluator for program assessment and a report of findings, and will inform the development of the How-To Guide.

Diversity Plan

The Entrepreneurship Librarian training and case study Hubs will encompass a wide variety of library service areas, urban, rural, tribal, in various regions across the nation. Libraries as Launchpad's partner library systems and networks will identify and recruit librarians from a diverse group of communities in their region. We anticipate our 5 partners and New Mexico will identify 30 total librarians from 30 different libraries. Librarians will be recruited from libraries in communities that are diverse in geography and size as well as age and racial identity. In the event that more than 30 librarians are identified, priority will be given to librarians from the communities where they work and a group of librarians from each state/region who work in libraries with geography, size, and demographic profiles that are representative of that region. Current New Mexico librarians committed to participating are from El Pueblo de Abiquiu Library (pop. 231) who identify as 51% Hispanic/Latino, and Albuquerque South Valley branch (metropolitan population 923,630); library census tract reports as 80.2% Hispanic/Latino and 25.9% with incomes below the poverty line.

All program and educational materials and platforms used will be available in a variety of formats to support the inclusion of participants with physical, developmental, or learning disabilities. Creative Startups training programs are currently available in Spanish and can be made available in other languages through services offered by the New Mexico State Library Foundation including audiobook recording for sight limited participants and contracted ASL interpreters as needed. Virtual meeting platforms used for the program will have audio and visual assistance formats for accommodation of participants.

We plan to have ASL interpretation available for each training session. If the identified cohort does not include individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, the fees set aside for ASL interpretation services will be re-allocated to printing physical copies of the How-To-Guide for distribution. By ensuring our program is accessible to librarians in a broad diversity of communities and with differing accommodation needs, we hope to contribute to the ongoing process of diversifying the field of library and information sciences and retaining a diverse workforce.

Project Results

The *Libraries as Launchpads* Implementation phase builds on a National Leadership planning grant we received in 2018, which was used to plan and test the preliminary *Libraries as Launchpads* program with Creative Startups and five public and tribal libraries in New Mexico. Of the 39 librarians who have received *Libraries as Launchpads* training: 95% report they are ready and equipped to support entrepreneurs; 100% report they are equipped to connect with area resources and build their libraries as resources for entrepreneurs; 100% are likely to recommend the program to other librarians. Since 2018, *Libraries as Launchpads* Entrepreneur Librarians have

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supported 143 entrepreneurs (70% Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, 60% women) to: create 54 new jobs; earn \$385,000 in new revenues; and raise \$23,000 in business investments.

“Libraries as Launchpads Certification One was fantastic! I went from knowing very little about how to serve the entrepreneurs in our community to feeling confident, informed, and ready to help.” Entrepreneurship Librarian Training participant 2021

Intended program results:

- 1) Solidify a national network of Entrepreneurship Librarians and equip an additional 30+ librarians with the skills they need to offer ongoing support to local entrepreneurs;
- 2) Transform 5+ libraries in underserved communities into hubs for entrepreneurship, accelerating 25+ entrepreneurs as a result;
- 3) Develop a How-To Guide that will be made available to libraries nationally can be used to transform additional libraries into hubs capable of supporting thousands of entrepreneurs annually;
- 4) Shift the narrative of what a library space is and how it can be used.

Program Model Adaptability: The How-To Guide will allow for libraries or other institutions nationally to:

- 1) Gain an increased understanding of the entrepreneurial journey and what is needed along the way;
- 2) Analyze their local economic ecosystem to find specific challenges local entrepreneurs face and fill the gaps in their communities to provide critical support to new and emerging businesses;
- 3) Connect with local strategic partners and community stakeholders to create a strong local network of support.

Sustained benefits:

- 1) Entrepreneurship Librarians understand entrepreneurship, how to analyze the local ecosystem, and are equipped to offer ongoing support and adapt to the evolving challenges entrepreneurs and small businesses face.
- 2) Hub Libraries become examples and mentors for other libraries that want to support entrepreneurs;
- 3) The How-To Guide advocates for the diverse role libraries play including business recovery support in underserved communities.

Project Budget. The New Mexico State Library Foundation requests \$249,877 for this project.

Schedule of Completion

2022 - 2023												
	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>
Step One: Selecting Librarians	X	X										
Step Two: Entrepreneurship Librarian Training			X	X	X							
Step Three: Establish a National Network						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Step Four: Online Learning for Entrepreneurs						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Step Five: Selecting Library Case Studies						X	X					
Step Six: Develop National Case Studies								X	X	X	X	X

2023 - 2024												
	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>
Step Three: Launching A National Network	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Step Four: Online Learning for Entrepreneurs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Step Six: Develop National Case Studies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Step Seven: Entrepreneurship Hub Libraries									X	X	X	X
Step Eight: Program Evaluation								X	X	X		
Step Nine: Develop How-To Guide									X	X	X	
Step Ten: Project Results Dissemination												X

**Step Eleven: Ongoing Support: The Creative Startups team will continue to support participant librarians on an ongoing basis after the grant period ends.*

Digital Products Plan

Type

With IMLS funding through the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, the New Mexico Library Foundation and managing partner Creative Startups will develop and publish a How-To guide for librarians seeking to build their capacity to support entrepreneurs in their community. The How-To Guide will be published in PDF format. It will be structured as a workbook with graphic images and charts guiding librarians through exercises including gaining a better understanding of the entrepreneur's journey and mapping entrepreneurial resources in their own community.

The How-To Guide will incorporate key components of the *Libraries as Launchpads* 8-week training course delivered under this grant. Course components to be incorporated into the Guide include:

- Understanding what drives entrepreneurs to start businesses, the common struggles they face, and what entrepreneurs need to succeed in a community.
- Understanding what makes a healthy entrepreneur ecosystem and identifying assets for entrepreneurs in local ecosystems.
- Identifying gaps in the entrepreneur ecosystem and how libraries can bridge those gaps.
- Expanding libraries reach by expanding professional networks of local businesses and community leaders.
- Developing a plan for reaching individual goals relevant to each librarians' community.

Cohort participants will also provide critical insights that will inform components of the How-To Guide. Working with librarians from regions across the country will help us develop a widely-applicable publication that responds to the needs of librarians in diverse communities.

We plan to use Adobe Indesign to design the PDF How-To Guide because we have used Adobe Indesign successfully for other publications.

Availability

The How-To Guide will be available for free download on the Creative Startups website, the New Mexico State Library Foundation website, and shared widely through partner library networks Listservs. The Guide will be available for download as a PDF file to reduce any potential browser and operating system complications that often arise with files of other types such as Microsoft Word. We will also make a printed version of the guide available via Amazon for the minimum allowed price allowed by Amazon for printing and shipping. We will respond to the need expressed by librarians and observed in the librarian community and the Guide will be made available as needed in Spanish to increase accessibility for bilingual librarians and librarians who speak primarily Spanish and as an audiobook that adapts workbook exercises to audio content for blind and vision-impaired librarians. We will also present and promote the How-To Guide at professional conferences. If unused accessibility funds exist they will go to conference attendance and physical copies of the Guide to be distributed at in-person events.

Digital Products Plan

Access

The How-To Guide developed under this grant will be owned by the New Mexico State Library Foundation and made freely available for educational purposes and for the Federal Government's purposes. We do not anticipate the Guide will involve privacy concerns. Any examples used in the Guide will be anonymized and/or used with express permission from participating librarians and libraries and/or entrepreneurs. Participating librarians will inform the creation of the How-To Guide by sharing their insights and experiences of working and living in their communities. By recruiting a diverse cohort of librarians from regions across the country, we anticipate learning about cultural values and priorities in communities across the country. The How-To Guide will incorporate those learnings and encourage librarians using the guide to consider the cultural needs of their community as they navigate the Guide.

Sustainability

We anticipate the How-To Guide will be long-lived, with the potential for updated editions based on feedback from librarians using the book on their own and future cohorts of librarians. We will include instructions on how to offer feedback on the Guide and how to become engaged with other librarians working on supporting entrepreneurs. The PDF of the How-To Guide will be housed on the Creative Startups and New Mexico Library Foundation servers. The PDF will also be available for download on the Creative Startups and New Mexico Library Foundation websites. Both Creative Startups and New Mexico Library Foundation include the cost of maintaining organizational servers and websites in annual budgets.



innovative library programs building communities

New Mexico State Library

Mission

The New Mexico State Library's mission is to support the wellbeing and self-managing capacity of New Mexico's communities, leveraging statewide resources for local benefit, and ensuring all have the opportunity to contribute to community success. (Adopted February 5, 2020 by the NM State Library Commission as part of the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, Online at <http://www.nmstatelibrary.org/about-nmstatelibrary/library-commission>)

Governance

New Mexico State Library is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. The State Librarian is appointed by the Secretary of Cultural Affairs.

Service Area

The State Library serves all of New Mexico's over 2 million residents through both direct services as well as support for 98 public and tribal libraries. Three bookmobiles serve 90 rural locations without a local library. New Mexico is geographically the 5th largest state in the United States. New Mexico is a minority/majority state with over 47% of the population claiming Hispanic heritage, and native population that have inhabited the land for thousands of years. 19 of the 23 tribal communities in New Mexico currently have a library, and half are in rural areas as defined by IMLS Public Library Statistics locale codes.

History

The New Mexico State Library was formed in 1915 and in 1929 a new bill provided for "State Library Extension Services" to "give advice and counsel to all public libraries, and to all communities wishing to establish free libraries." Today it provides statewide services through a Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, three bookmobiles, a books-by-mail program, and a research library in Santa Fe. Our Library Development Bureau and its Tribal Libraries Program (founded in 1994) serve 98 libraries at 130 outlets. A Navajo Nation Outreach Librarian lives and works on the Navajo Nation, providing digital and financial literacy training at 50 chapter houses, as well as programs for children.

The library Development Bureau supports public libraries in the state of New Mexico by providing consulting services, professional development opportunities, administering the librarian and librarianship certification program, coordinating a state-wide summer reading program and tribal library program, and administering state and federal grants to public libraries. It comprises a bureau chief, two tribal library program librarians, and three public library consultants, and it manages over \$1M in grant and bond funding for public and tribal libraries every year. This bureau will play an important coordinating role in the project, and will be responsible for sharing out results and designing new support services based on information gained from the process.

New Mexico State Library Foundation

The New Mexico State Library Foundation was founded in June 2017 as a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status. We maintain an endowment fund for sustained support of the New Mexico State Library, working with the State Library to provide support to libraries around the state in many ways.

The Foundation funds New Mexico State Library's innovative programming, empowering libraries as community resource centers that enhance the economic, social and educational well-being of all New Mexicans (Online at www.statelibrarynmfoundation.org).