



One Small Business at a Time

Building Economic Opportunity in America's Communities

Libraries propel entrepreneurship and economic opportunity across the United States. To research or brainstorm new ideas or markets, develop business plans, gain access to emerging technologies, leverage local business resources, and sustain an enterprise, the 123,000 libraries across the country are ideal partners. Libraries offer a cost-effective national network that can be leveraged to support both aspiring and existing business owners—including those not traditionally served by business support networks. To advance economic opportunity for all, we urge decision makers in the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, and other federal agencies; the White House; U.S. Congress; business-related associations, foundations and corporate philanthropy; think tanks; and other organizations to include libraries in their plans to promote and advance entrepreneurship and small business development.

Library support for small businesses

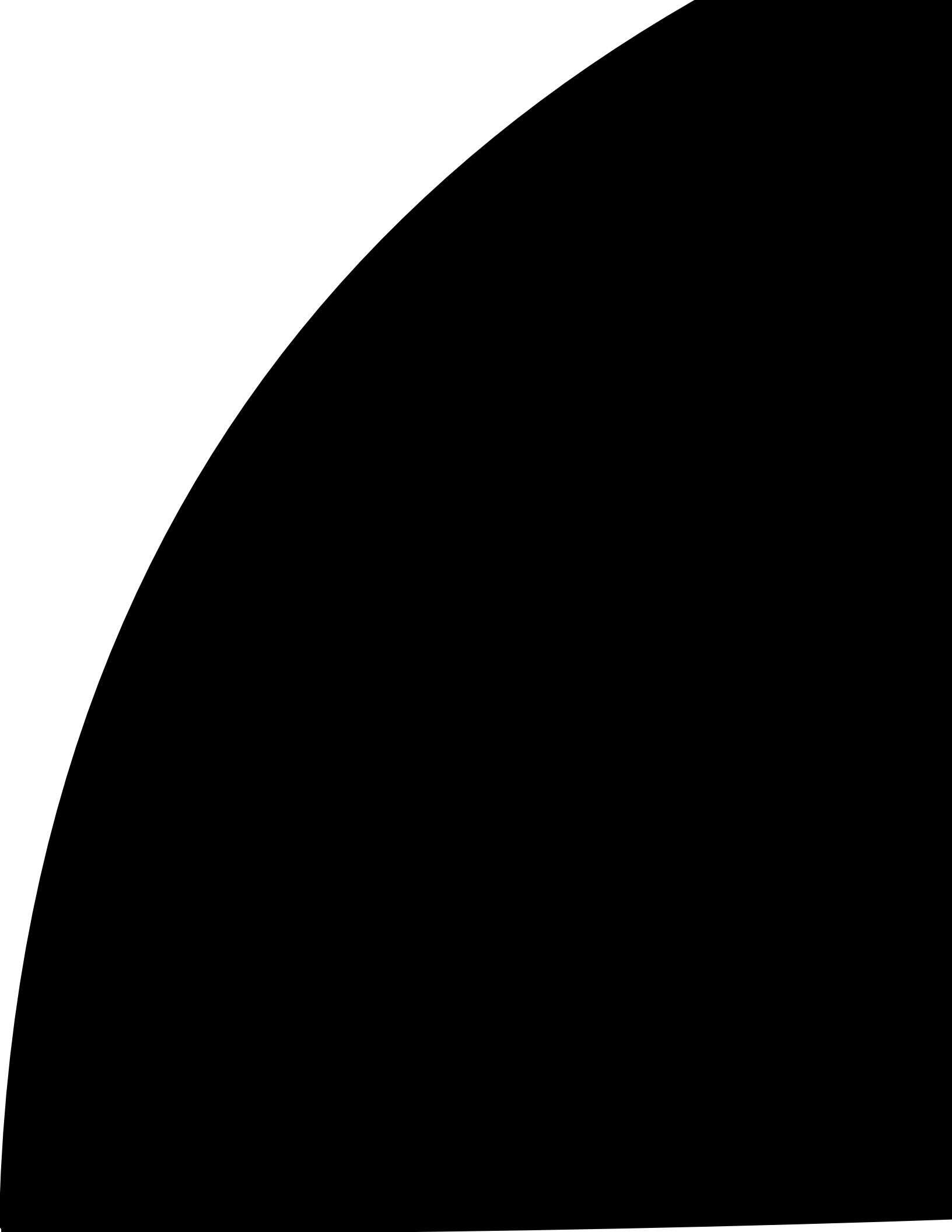
Nearly all public libraries offer baseline support for entrepreneurs by providing meeting spaces, public computers, and internet access, as well as access to e-books, magazines, and newspapers. Many libraries of all types offer introductory to advanced support such as locally relevant business start-up classes, market research help and database access, and guidance in

leveraging social media and other online tools. The LA Law Library (CA), for example, offers a class series to take budding entrepreneurs from business idea to business plan, and provides legal perspective on starting and operating a business. In Pennsylvania, small business

owners, including a beauty consultant, an artist, and a pet care specialist, that took part in the Bosler (PA) Memorial Library's "Get Your Business Online" workshop learned how to use online tools to build a website and maximize web ads. These essential information resources, equipment, space, and services help to defray costs for budding entrepreneurs, leveling the entrepreneurial playing field. The St. Louis County (MO) Public Library, for one, estimates that their business databases and customized research expertise save small business owners \$13,000 each year.

Connecting entrepreneurs to community

Moving beyond their own walls, libraries play a critical role in connecting individuals seeking business support to a wider range of local resources, including working with organizations such as Small Business Development Support Centers (SBDCs) and SCORE. The Community Library Network in Idaho, for one, partners with the North Idaho SBDC to offer workshops for start-ups such as "Starting a Business in Idaho." In the workshop, participants were introduced to different ways of entering into business—such as buying an existing business, purchasing a franchise, or starting their own. Class topics include:



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