CASE STUDY: Hartford Public Library

Mt. Auburn Associates, Inc.
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Introduction

Purpose of the case

The Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), launched the Measures that Matter initiative in 2016 to examine, evaluate, and map the landscape of public library data collection in the United States. COSLA retained Mt Auburn Associates with Program and Policy Insight (the Mt. Auburn team) to pilot a research effort to provide insights into how to measure library activities related to workforce and business development. In addition to completing an extensive literature review, the core research for this project involved ten case studies of library systems across the U.S. The case studies examine the processes in play for designing and delivering workforce and small business development-related services, identifying the role of libraries in workforce and business development in their community, and, most importantly, understanding if and how public libraries share the story of their work related to workforce and small business support through the tracking of outcomes. These case studies represent a diversity of public libraries in terms of the size of the community, the structures of the library system, and the types of state support for a library's role in the workforce system. The Mt. Auburn team selected Hartford Public Library (HPL) because of its unique programming for immigrants and refugees, its numerous certificate training and technology courses, and its planned workforce training and business expansion build out of the Swift Factory, an adaptive reuse development project in Hartford's North End neighborhood.

Overview of the case

Hartford Public Library has long played a significant role in the city's workforce development system. In addition to its standard services around advice and referrals to individuals seeking employment, pursuing career development, or looking to start a business, it established and has operated The American Place (TAP) since 2000, covering adult education, careers, and immigrant services.[1] In addition, a satellite of the region's American Jobs Center (AJC) occupies a large area on the first floor of the main library branch and offers a suite of career services, and local branches have been innovative in their approaches to serving the needs of neighborhood residents interested in starting a business or building their skills.

More recently, HPL is taking on an increasing role in the city's small business development system and deepening its workforce services through an exciting transformation of the former Swift Factory in North Hartford. Hartford has sought to redevelop this factory for many years and now, through a collaboration of multiple funders and service providers, construction is underway. This facility will create a new library branch and job training center with the nonprofit Community Solutions. In addition, HPL plans to offer entrepreneurship classes as part of the offerings at the new branch.

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[1] The American Place. Hartford Public Library. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://tap.hplct.org/

HPL provides an exemplary case study of how a public library can build its capacity to deliver core services to meet the needs of the city's diverse residents, become an invaluable participant in a community's efforts to address workforce-related needs, and contribute to efforts to build the economy.

Methodology

During the first phase of this project, the Mt. Auburn team completed a literature review on libraries' role in workforce and business development and identified public libraries with interesting or exemplary models. In addition, the team developed a Theory of Change (TOC) that presents a framework for thinking about the public libraries' role in contributing to the economic wellbeing of residents. The TOC identified three distinct roles that public libraries play: standard, specialized, and community hub (see sidebar). This framework became an important element in the case study research. Working with an Advisory Committee, the Mt. Auburn team identified 80 public libraries to consider for case studies, developed criteria for site selection, and selected ten public library systems.

Role of libraries in workforce and business development system

	Workforce development	Small business development
Standard services (Library Designed and Led Services)	• Access to computers for resume writing • Help filling out applications or submitting resumes • Books and online information related to job search • Access to online training programs • Direct librarian assistance and referral to other resources	• Access to computers for tax, regulatory, and other forms • Books and online information on entrepreneurship, small businesses, specific industries • Access to databases for business plans and market studies • Access to technology for prototyping - 3D printer • Direct librarian assistance and referral to other resources
Specialized services (Library Designed and Led Services)	• Computer literacy workshops and training • Career readiness workshops and training • Occupational training • Adult education and ESOL training • Digital navigation and one-on-one coaching • Designated career space • Facilitate job search support groups	• Business plan development and other specialized workshops • Maker spaces, co-working space, media and technology space • Pitch contests and other specialized programs • One-on-one coaching or mentorship programs by dedicated small business staff • Entrepreneur networking events
Community hub services (Partnerships)	• One Stop Career Center location • Facilities for training providers • Training programs run with other partners • Host job fairs with partners • Trusted convener of community service providers • On-the-job training and internship placements	• Joint programs and workshop with other small business service providers such as SCORE • Facilities for small business support organizations to meet clients and hold workshops • Trusted convener of community service providers

The first step in the case study process was to conduct baseline research on the communities in which the libraries reside. This baseline research included a demographic and economic overview of the market area that the library system operates within, an overview of the library system, an analysis of the state policy environment relevant to libraries and workforce development, and background information on the workforce development and business development ecosystem in the community. After gathering the baseline information, the Mt. Auburn team had an introductory phone call with the library system lead to further our understanding of the library and identify the internal and external stakeholders whom system leaders believed would be critical to interview.

In terms of the library system, the Mt. Auburn team interviewed library system staff, including leadership at both the system and outlet levels, library staff directly involved in workforce or business development activities, and communication- and technology-related staff. The external interviews focused on stakeholders in the workforce and business development ecosystem in the library's service area, including "partner" organizations engaged in active collaboration with libraries, organizations providing workforce or business development services in the region but not engaged in a formal library partnership, and other civic leaders.

The case study interviews were in-person as part of a site visit to each library system or completed virtually for those unable to meet in person. In the case of HPL, the Mt. Auburn team conducted 12 interviews. The team conducted five of these interviews onsite at the main library branch during a June 3, 2022 site visit and held an additional seven interviews virtually over Zoom during the second and third weeks of June. Of the 12 individuals interviewed, two were library system staff, three were library outlet staff, four represented workforce development organizations, and three were civic leaders. The Mt. Auburn team used semi-structured protocols to guide stakeholder interviews.

Community context

To better understand HPL's role in providing workforce- and business development-related services, it is necessary to understand the context within which it operates. This section looks at the library itself—its history, governance, and structure—and provides a demographic and economic profile of the city of Hartford.

Library System

HPL is a seven-branch library system serving the residents of the city of Hartford, Connecticut. Founded in 1774 as a subscription-only library, HPL opened to the public in 1892. The main branch of the library, built in 1957, is on Main Street. This facility underwent a $42 million expansion, completed in 2007.

The library system is a nonprofit entity with a board of directors consisting of community members and public officials, including the mayor. The board oversees the library, guiding HPL's strategy and direction.[2] The city of Hartford provides the majority of HPL's funding. In 2019, 79 percent of the library's $10.2 million in

Library	Hartford Public Library
Service area	Hartford, CT
Population of service area	122,587
# of branches*	7
Administrative structure	Nonprofit
Operating revenue	$10,287,427
Operating revenue per capita	$83.92
Total paid staff (FTE)	103.3
# of adult programs**	1,713
# of internet computers	206
Computers per 1,000 population	1.68

* Number of branches including central branch, but not including bookmobiles
** Number of adult programs is estimated as the number of total programs that are not children's or young adult programs.
Source: *PLS 2019 data*

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[2] Board of Directors. Hartford Public Library. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.hplct.org/about/board-directors

revenues were from the city of Hartford. Another 17 percent of revenues are from donations and investment income related to its endowments. In addition to the many corporate funders, HPL is a beneficiary of Endow Hartford 21, an initiative of the Zachs Family Foundation.[3]

In 2022, HPL released a new strategic plan after an extensive planning and outreach process. This strategic plan[4] set out the following four goals:

1. Continue providing a wide variety of high-quality services and carefully assess priorities, including opportunities for expansion.
2. Prioritize community engagement.
3. Expand physical and virtual access to HPL programs and services throughout Hartford.
4. Continue to prioritize employee development and internal communication.

Community conditions

Hartford, Connecticut, is in the north-central part of the state of Connecticut. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Hartford has a population of 121,219, a decrease of 3 percent since 2010.[5] Hartford, the fourth largest city in the state, is Connecticut's capital city and the core of the Greater Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area. The city is predominantly Hispanic or Latino (44.7 percent), with a large Black or African American (37.2 percent) population. At 21.1 percent, its foreign-born population far exceeds that of the total United States (13.5 percent).

Community Conditions	Hartford	United States
Unemployment rate	11.3%	5.4%
Persons in poverty	28.0%	11.0%
Median household income	$36,154	$64,994
In civilian labor force	60.1%	63.0%
HS graduate or higher (> 25 y.o.)	73.9%	88.5%
BA or higher (> 25 y.o.)	17.0%	32.9%
Foreign-born persons	21.1%	13.5%
Households with internet access	76.3%	85.2%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-year average, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs		

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the median household income in Hartford is $36,154, and the poverty rate is 28 percent.[6]

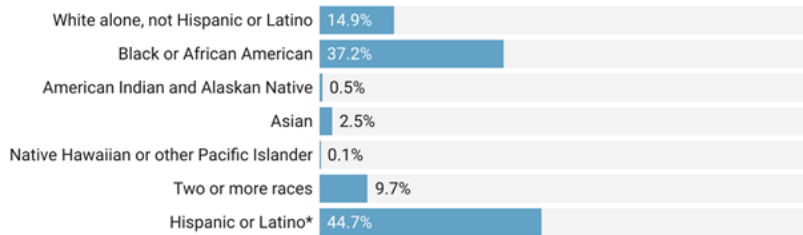[3] Endow Hartford 21. Hartford Public Library. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.hplct.org/support/community-support

[4] TDC. "Hartford Public Library Strategic Plan." Hartford: Hartford Public Library, January 2022. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.hplct.org/assets/uploads/files/HPL%20strategic%20plan%20w%20logic%20model%20vF.pdf

[5] U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: Hartford City, Connecticut. U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed July 1, 2022. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hartfordcityconnecticut

[6] U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: Hartford City, Connecticut. U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed July 1, 2022. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hartfordcityconnecticut

Racial and ethnic breakdown of Hartford

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	14.9%
Black or African American	37.2%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.5%
Asian	2.5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Two or more races	9.7%
Hispanic or Latino*	44.7%

* Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race, and are also included in applicable race categories. Total percentages exceed 100%.

Source: 2020 Census • Created with Datawrapper

Hartford is on the traditional land of the Mohegan and Quiripi tribes.[7] European settlers arrived in Hartford in 1635. Insurance was Hartford's predominant industry in the late 18th century, leading the city to become the wealthiest city in the U.S. by the late 19th century.[8] Facing a significant downturn and disinvestment, Hartford was among the first cities in the country to undergo a revitalization program under urban renewal in the late 20th century.[9] Today, Hartford is home to six major industries: insurance/financial services, aerospace/defense, manufacturing, healthcare, broadcasting, and distribution.[10] Top employers include Aetna, UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, The Hartford, Eversource Energy, and Connecticut Children's Medical Center.[11]

Hartford Mayor Bronin is currently serving his second four-year term after a successful re-election bid in November 2019. Currently, the city is undertaking a master planning effort, Hartford400, which will envision a new path for Hartford in preparation for its 400th birthday in 2035.[12]

Relevant systems

The state-enabling environment—the policies and practices of state agencies related to both public library support and workforce development policies and priorities—influences each public library. Moreover, each public library operates within a very different local environment related to the workforce and small business ecosystems. This section reviews the state-level and community-level systems in which the Hartford Public Library operates.

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[7] Native American Tribes of Connecticut. Native Languages of the Americas. Accessed July 14, 2022.
http://www.native-languages.org/connecticut.htm

[8] Connecticut History | a CTHumanities Project. CTHumanities. Accessed July 14, 2022.
https://connecticuthistory.org/towns-page/hartford/#:~:text=First%20settled%20in%201635%20by,wealthiest%20city%20in%20the%20country

[9] Condon, Tom. "City Revival — Did We Learn From the Urban Renewal Era?" CT Mirror. June 24, 2019.
https://ctmirror.org/2019/06/24/city-revival-did-we-learn-from-the-urban-renewal-era/

[10] Hartford Major Industries. MetroHartford Alliance. Accessed July 14, 2022.
https://www.metrohartford.com/major-industries/

[11] 20 Best Biggest Companies to Work for in Hartford, CT. Zippia. Accessed July 14, 2022.
https://www.zippia.com/company/best-biggest-companies-in-hartford-ct/

[12] Hartford400. The iQuilt Partnership. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://hartford400.org/

State-level support: policies, funding, and infrastructure

State Library administrative agency

The Connecticut State Library (CSL) is an executive branch agency of the state of Connecticut. CSL's mission is "to preserve and make accessible Connecticut's history and heritage and to advance the development of library services statewide."[13] The Division of Library Development (DLD) produces the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) five-year plan, administers the LSTA funding, and supports public libraries throughout the state. In addition, the State Library oversees the Connecticut State Archives, the Office of the Public Records Administrator, and the Museum of Connecticut History. The State Library administers researchitct.org, Connecticut's source for free online resources.

IMLS provided Connecticut $2,142,520 in funding in 2021 through the Grants to States program, and CSL's top priority for the use of these funds was to emphasize the role of libraries as anchor institutions within their communities and to help librarians gain skills, knowledge, and resources to serve community needs. Specifically, CSL wanted to support efforts that helped libraries establish themselves as "essential organizations that are central to the quality of life, civic and cultural engagement, and economic vitality in every municipality."[14]

IMLS awarded Connecticut $2,775,022 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to benefit Connecticut libraries. CSL prioritized these resources to address digital inequities, deliver pandemic emergency relief, and support library services to communities. The DLD made grants to public libraries, directing funds to key spending priority areas. In particular, DLD, in partnership with the Connecticut Education Network and Office of State Broadband, launched the Digital Navigator Pilot project.

Finally, and of most relevance to the role of libraries in workforce development, DLD used the ARPA funding to expand its online resources and to provide access to LearningExpress Workforce Solutions to all residents of the state with a library card. This resource provides resources to study for and take high school equivalency exams, work toward occupational certifications, and explore jobs and careers. Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding and state funding through the Everybody Learns Initiative supported this effort.

State workforce system

The Connecticut workforce development system has been in a state of transition over the past few years as a result of transferring most responsibility of services to the Governor's Workforce Council

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[13] Wiggin, Kendall F. "Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan, 2018-2022." Institute of Museum and Library Services, June 2017. https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/state-profiles/plans/connecticut5yearplan.pdf

[14] Wiggin, Kendall F. "Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan, 2018-2022." Institute of Museum and Library Services, June 2017. https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/state-profiles/plans/connecticut5yearplan.pdf

(GWC), the state's workforce board, and the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), a division of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Governor Lamont signed an executive order in 2019, which the state codified in 2021. Executive Order No. 4, among other changes, added representation from community-based organizations and other sectors to GWC and established the chief workforce officer as the OWS department head.

Along with the administrative changes to the system's structure, GWC released its Workforce Strategic Plan in 2020. This plan recommended strategies in four areas: business leadership, education, and training in support of career pathways, equity and access, and data.[15]

The GWC oversees the efforts of the five local workforce investment boards in Connecticut. These boards are responsible for planning and policy development at the regional level and oversight of the American Jobs Center (AJC, also referred to as One-Stop Career Centers). The one-stops provide job search and career workshops, have fully equipped computer labs and resource libraries, and provide career counseling, skill assessments, and job placement assistance to job seekers.

The state of Connecticut offers funding for adult education and literacy through the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). CSDE explicitly notes public libraries as eligible to receive funding.

Local workforce and business development ecosystems

Workforce development system

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is the workforce development board covering North Central Connecticut, which includes the city of Hartford. A consortium of the region's chief and elected officials oversees CWP as well as its board, which consists of representatives of business, education, and labor. CWP has a long history of designing innovative workforce programs with other organizations in the Hartford region, including community-based organizations, the region's community and technical colleges, and businesses in targeted sectors. CWP also oversees the region's one-stop system. Currently, six comprehensive centers in the region provide a full range of workforce services. In addition to the comprehensive centers, Hartford Public Library hosts a satellite site.

Hartford also has a large number of community-based organizations that are actively involved in serving the workforce needs of residents, in addition to collaborative groups such as the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of MetroHartford, which is currently supporting two sector partnerships, the Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership and the Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare. Other organizations that provide workforce development services include the Urban League of Greater Hartford, Our Piece of the Pie, Community Renewal Team, Goodwill Hartford Career Center, Catholic Charities, and the Capitol Region Education Council.

Business development system

The city of Hartford does not have a highly developed entrepreneurial development and small business support ecosystem. The major entity supporting small business is the Entrepreneurial

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[15] State of Connecticut Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Unified State Plan 2020 - 2023 (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023) –2-Year Modification: Draft. Accessed July 4, 2022. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/GWC/DRAFT-WIOA-State-Plan-Modification-3322.pdf

Center at the University of Hartford Barney School of Business. This center also houses the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Women's Business Center, which supports women in starting and growing businesses. While there is a network of SBA-supported Small Business Development Centers in Connecticut, the closest one to Hartford is in East Hartford.

In addition to these resources, there are some accelerators and technology-oriented support organizations in the Hartford region. reSET is an organization whose mission is to advance the social enterprise sector by providing entrepreneurial programs, mentoring, and co-working space. Other relevant players in this space include the Spanish American Merchants Association, Upper Albany Main Street, MetroHartford Alliance, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Connecticut Business & Industry Association, and SCORE.

Library workforce and business development services

Overview of the library's approach

The main branch of the HPL system operates as the primary source of workforce development services, with the branch managers offering more customized support based on patron interests. Staff from the main branch or a partner may present on various workforce-related topics at the branches if there is enough demand. The library system provides its own programming, most notably through its TAP program, focusing primarily on providing free services to immigrants and refugees to adjust to life in America but offering its suite of services to other populations as well. The main branch also serves as a host for local partners to deliver workforce development services. For instance, the first floor of the main branch hosts the AJC, which CWP operates, offering numerous workforce-related services.

HPL has played the role of a trusted community anchor for many years and is in the midst of expanding the role it plays in workforce and business development through a major economic development project at the Swift Factory, a formerly abandoned gold leaf factory. In April 2022, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration awarded Community Solutions, in partnership with HPL and Harriott Home Health Services (HHHS), $3.7 million to build out the factory space to include a center for workforce training and small business support. According to the application, the space will include an "expansion of HHHS, a black-owned, full service, state-licensed, in-home health care services business and the creation of Next Gen @ Swift, an 8,000 square foot space for workforce training, career readiness, technology training, small business support, and community learning." The library will be an anchor tenant in this project, moving its Barbour branch to this location. The project will also include "a Community Financial Center and a federally sponsored pre-K and family services program." HPL is currently in the planning process for expansion and expects to begin construction in the fall of 2022 and open its doors 18 months later.[16]

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[16] "Swift Factory Renovation Effort Receives $3.7 Million Investment." City of Hartford, April 11, 2022. https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/Mayors-Office/Mayor-News/Swift3.7Mil

Workforce development services

Standard services

HPL provides patrons access to computers and internet connections for writing resumes, searching for employment opportunities, completing job applications, and attending virtual courses or workshops. HPL also subscribes to online programs (e.g., Universal Class and LearningExpress) to help individuals build and update their resumes. The main library and its branches supply access to the critical technology necessary to look for and apply for employment, while the AJC, with Capital Workforce Partners staff, provides many of the standard workforce development services other libraries offer (e.g., job search assistance, access to computers, and referrals to specific resources) on the first floor of the main library branch.

The numerous library branches provide general support to patrons on the use of Microsoft Word for resume development, assistance with online job searching, basic troubleshooting, and computer assistance to complete job applications. These smaller outlets work to match their standard services to the specific needs of the patrons from their neighborhoods. For instance, because the Park Street branch has a large Spanish-speaking population, it has the largest collection of Spanish books, which include books about resume building, skill development, self-help, and job searching.

Specialized services

HPL provides specialized workforce development services, primarily through TAP. HPL established TAP in 2000 to help immigrants adjust to life in America while enabling them to contribute to their community. TAP offers GED preparation services, English as a second language, a nationally recognized U.S. Citizenship program, and training for industry-recognized certifications. The program also integrates workforce readiness into its courses and provides participants with some level of counseling. While the program's initial intent was to welcome and support immigrants and refugees, it has expanded to provide services to U.S.-born individuals. TAP assists patrons with computer literacy and provides patrons access to loaned digital devices through HPL's Crossroads to Connectivity (C2C) program, which offers computer skill assessment, self-study tutorials, and technology lending.

TAP also offers patrons assistance in obtaining industry-approved certifications, including:

- *Cisco Networking Academy:* a series of self-paced, online technology courses that include Cybersecurity, Linux, and Python that prepares participants for a career as an IT professional.

- *Security officer training program:* a one-day, in-person, security officer training program that qualifies candidates to apply for a Security Officer ID card, issued by the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

- *ServSafe Certificate Training:* an online or in-person curriculum for food handler training, food manager training, and ServSafe alcohol training.

- *Universal Class:* over 500 continuing education online courses where completers earn certificates documenting Continuing Education Units and contact hours.

- *World language courses:* language courses, including free ESL classes (now offered in person, 13-week cycles).

- *Personal care attendant training:* training for ESL students to become homecare companions for individuals who speak their native language.

Through TAP, patrons have access to numerous software subscriptions for skill development, including software related to language skills such as Transparent Language Online, LearningExpress, Northstar Digital Literacy, and, more recently, LinkedIn Learning and Testout (which offers training preparing individuals for IT certifications). Additionally, HPL is an affiliate of CompTIA A+ and CISCO Networking.

HPL also offers driver's education as part of its adult education program, as having a license is essential for individuals to travel efficiently for employment.

Some of the branches have developed specialized programs based on the needs they have identified in their community. For example, the branch manager at the Barbour Library worked with the main branch to host three eight-week ServSafe training sessions at Barbour that incorporated classroom time, learning about food handling and safety, customer service training, soft skill development, and computer training, followed by local internships at schools or restaurants. In this case, the branch manager recognized the local interest in this course, arranged to bring this training to the neighborhood at the Barbour Library, and successfully enrolled roughly 15 individuals in three different sessions. Across all three sessions, 36 individuals completed the training and obtained employment. The Park Street branch, based on demand, offers digital literacy in Spanish to support patrons in gaining computer skills in their native language.

While much of the TAP program centers on skill development, TAP recently supported some participants in connecting with employers. TAP partnered with Amazon to offer monthly information sessions at HPL's main branch for individuals interested in entry-level employment at Amazon's Manchester and Windsor facilities, and HPL's business and career development specialist assisted multiple TAP participants in applying for those positions.

Community hub services

In addition to offering numerous specialized services through TAP, HPL is a community hub for workforce development services. First and foremost, for over a decade, HPL has hosted an AJC satellite location. The CWP-operated AJC occupies a large area on the first floor of the main library branch and offers a suite of career services, including career counseling; training and workshops on topics such as resumes, cover letters, mock interviews, and LinkedIn; evaluation for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligibility; and registration in CTHires, the Connecticut Department of Labor's comprehensive workforce development online platform. CWP's career advisor also works directly with ex-offenders through its Free to Succeed program and offers pardoning workshops to support individuals in completing applications to get their records cleared. Due to COVID-19, CWP's workshops have been virtual, though some individuals will still go to HPL to attend a virtual course on a library computer.

HPL is home to two workforce development programs that CWP administers. Through HPL's partnership with CWP as a WIOA youth provider location, the library is now one of a handful of host sites for CWP to offer youth a year-long program that includes career advising, industry-recognized credential training, case management, supportive services, job readiness, employer connections,

and, ideally, employment. HPL is a natural host for these services as it is easily accessible to youth and has resources and rooms for studying and training.

HPL also hosts CWP's Jobs First Employment Services program (JFES), a small pilot program available to individuals who receive time-limited monthly cash assistance. The program takes a two-generational approach and offers adults customer service training to earn a credential through the National Retail Federation for Customer Service and financial literacy training. It also offers families access to social workers and teachers, provides children with onsite tutoring, and delivers meals via a local caterer. The 13 families enrolled in the JFES program attend the trainings on Monday and Wednesday evenings. During that time, they can familiarize themselves with other services available through HPL, including the TAP program and the library's robust children's programming. Beyond HPL serving as a host for this program, in some cases, the library has been a site for adult participants to gain subsidized employment or work experience.

Not only is CWP working with patrons at the library to gain workforce skills, but CWP's business services team also works closely with HPL to recruit for jobs that may be a good fit for CWP's and HPL's shared customers whom they have come to know well by providing services at the library. HPL has hosted CWP's job fairs and hopes to expand this practice now that pandemic restrictions are lessening. By hosting CWP's job fairs onsite at the library, library patrons and individuals who have participated in the TAP program are more likely to attend than if the event was elsewhere, and CWP is more likely to try to draw in employers that would be a good match with the skills of CWP's and HPL's shared customers.

While the main branch is the primary location serving as a hub of services, on an ad hoc basis, select library branches have also accommodated other organizations or entities offering workforce development workshops or job fairs onsite. For instance, the Urban League has held job fairs at the Albany branch, and other organizations have conducted resume-writing workshops at the Dwight branch as one-time, informal programs based on the relationships branch managers develop with other service providers. Similarly, the Barbour branch has offered computer training in collaboration with adult education and welcomed CWP staff during the branch's Foodshare to connect with teens looking for summer employment or ex-offenders who might be interested in services available through the Free to Succeed program.

Small business development services

Standard services

While HPL does not focus specifically on offering small business development services, library staff offer ad hoc support to patrons with questions related to small business development. When patrons come into the branches interested in exploring specific topics related to small business development or expansion, branch managers will do what they can to explore those questions on their own, work with the HPL's central staff to assist the patron, or work with other service providers to determine the best referral based on the need. Additionally, at the main branch, the library's programming production and engagement coordinator helps creatives (people working on art, music, design, etc.) identify platforms that can help expand their networks and give them exposure to larger audiences.

During one of the workshops, participants learned about different library resources, including researchIT CT, a Connecticut State Library resource that gives cardholders access to a large set of

collections, including EBSCO's Small Business Reference Center, which offers business and industry information that could benefit them in their business endeavors.

Specialized services

The Park Street branch is in the heart of a Latinx neighborhood. It supports female immigrants interested in starting a business through Mujeres Emprendedoras, an entrepreneurial support program (see sidebar). In addition, the Park Street branch manager is trying to build on the entrepreneurial momentum driven by the pandemic to connect with other local organizations and businesses to explore opportunities for entrepreneurs within the neighborhood. The library has partnered with the Emanuel Lutheran Church, whereby entrepreneurs in the program can utilize the Church's two full kitchens for baking and bread making, its room for general meetings, and its small nursery for childcare. Through these connections, the branch manager also learned of a local baker interested in piloting a cookie-decorating program at the library. HPL is exploring the possibility of creating a pop-up shop for entrepreneurs at the library in its former café space that shuttered when the vendor was unable to remain afloat during the pandemic.

HPL is also supporting Hartford's creative industries. For example, the library is working with MusicCat on a platform for collecting, curating, and presenting local music content. HPL recently launched The Beat[17], a professionally curated digital archive of new music by local musicians to highlight local creatives, amplify their talent, and support their careers. A library-appointed jury of community curators from the local music community selects the musicians to be part of The Beat. Selected artists will receive an honorarium and have an opportunity to perform via HPL's partnership with The Bushnell, the state's

> ## Mujeres Emprendedoras: Entrepreneurial Support
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> The Park Street branch of the HPL, located in a largely Latinx neighborhood, established Mujeres Emprendedoras, a Women Entrepreneurship program. This program evolved based on HPL's relationship with a group of nearly a dozen entrepreneurial female immigrants who had started selling their own goods from their homes and were seeking additional support. In December 2021, HPL secured a one-year, $25,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Latino Endowment Fund to offer small business development workshops (in Spanish) for these women and other community members interested in attending. The grant also covers the cost of childcare during the workshops and provides the women with $1,000 to purchase materials and other related items needed for the workshops.
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> While the Park Street branch manager is administering this grant, the library is primarily serving as a venue and a connector, linking these women with other groups that can support them in their small business journey and offering the appropriate workshops at the library branch to meet their needs. HPL fielded a survey to determine the workshop topics of most interest, which ultimately prioritized workshops related to banking, breadmaking, sewing, and artisanal art. In support of this program, the branch manager is exploring potential resources to share with the cohort related to co-op development, including information from Prospera, an entity in California that supports "Latina economic empowerment through leadership development, entrepreneurship and cooperative business ownership."[1]
>
> [1]Prospera: About. Prospera. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://prosperacoops.org/about/

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[17] Arnott, Christopher. "Hartford Library Wants You to Check out The Beat, Its New Local Music Archive." Hartford Courant, June 11, 2022. https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-ctnow-the-beat-archive-hartford-library-20220611-sbnak2hmwrccppq4dqsb6laide-story.html

largest arts organization. In an effort to expand its local authors' reach, HPL subscribes to Biblioboard, a platform that supports community members in sharing their own written content.

While the main branch does not directly run small business development programming for adults, it offers the YOUmedia program for youth that operates as a small maker's space concentrating on digital learning and media. The intent is to expose teens to media, foster interest, and explore a field that could later prove to be a possible career path.

Community hub services

Just as the library serves as a host for workforce development programming, HPL also provides community space for nonprofits and other entities to offer workshops to support entrepreneurs. For instance, HPL conducted outreach and recruitment for a series of SBA workshops at the main branch on how to start a business. HPL has offered these SBA workshops approximately two to four times annually.

One of the things they do, which is so critical, is they provide community space for nonprofits that might be having those kinds of training activities [related to workforce or small business development]....They are the community space [for] any of the nonprofits that might be trying to attract people to come to a training program, and they don't have space of their own. It's often the library that will allow them to use their space; they can access the neighborhood and the population.

Service administration

Staffing and management

HPL has multiple staff at its main branch dedicated to workforce development within the TAP program. TAP's executive director has been designing, directing, and overseeing the program since 2000 and currently oversees three full-time staff (lead immigration counsel, TAP manager, and adult education transition specialist) as well as a part-time citizenship data manager and a part-time career development specialist/digital literacy coordinator. Many of these staff supervise other staff and HPL employs 21 staff as part of the TAP program.

Outside of TAP and its grant-funded workforce programming, HPL does not have specialized workforce development or small business development staff. Branch managers and librarians field questions and make referrals concerning workforce development and small business support but are not specialized workforce or small business support staff.

CWP has three full-time staff at the main branch of the library as well as three to six other staff members who rotate to offer specific workshops or business support services throughout the system. CWP intentionally staffs the AJC with a welcome center advisor to help patrons, as needed, when they visit the AJC at the library.

System support and role

The main branch is home to the majority of workforce and small business development services, but branch managers have the autonomy to suggest local branch programming based on patron needs and, in some cases, have taken the initiative to make connections to other stakeholders in the workforce and business development ecosystem. Branch managers assist with relevant workforce and small business development inquiries to the extent they are able. They are familiar with the

services at the main branch and make appropriate referrals to the main branch or other suitable service providers.

Funding

HPL's funding for workforce and small business development services is a mix of city funding and grant funding from philanthropic stakeholders, government entities, and private corporations. Over the years, multiple agencies have financially supported TAP, including the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (the only library in the nation to receive such funding),[18] IMLS, and other sources, including the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and through the Department of Labor WIOA. Generally speaking, these funds support activity at the main branch, the biggest location serving the most patrons, with limited funding flowing to the smaller outlets for workforce and small business development services. The lack of funding for services at the branches has restricted staff members' ability to offer enriching workforce and business development programming. With the funding for development at the Swift Factory in place, this type of programming should grow significantly beyond the main branch.

How they determine what to offer

HPL's programming has always been responsive to the needs of the community. The TAP program grew out of a clear need for services dedicated to supporting the large immigrant and refugee populations in the Hartford region. The branch managers have developed specific programs based on neighborhood needs. As noted, this has included programs targeted at the Latinx community at the Park Street branch and the program on food handling developed at the Barbour branch.

Marketing of services

HPL markets its workforce development and small business development programs through its website, weekly newsletters, social media, flyers, radio advertising, and general word of mouth. Staff also work with community organizations with large, relevant group listservs to promote library services. HPL utilizes distinct marketing techniques depending on the specific program it is advertising. For instance, for programs targeting immigrants and English language learners, HPL has advertised through the West Indian Social Club of Hartford, Inc. HPL translates its flyers into Spanish and indicates when instruction is in English.

Aspirations

HPL has been at capacity with its workforce readiness job training in its current space and is seeing growing demand for workforce and small business development services in multiple branches. HPL is interested in expanding its offerings. In partnership with Community Solutions and HHHS, the library has secured EDA funding (ARPA dollars) to undertake the major development project at the Swift Factory. This project will include the development of Next Gen @ Swift, a one-stop workforce development center run by HPL that will offer workforce readiness programming, technology classes, academic support services, and small business support. The influx of ARPA funds, coupled with HPL's partnerships, has led to an incredible opportunity for the library to move forward with its vision to expand services and create a true hub of activity for workforce and business development services

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[18] Champions of Change: Homa Naficy. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/champions/museums-and-libraries/homa-naficy

in the region. This development allows HPL to enhance its partnerships with universities, community colleges, and private sector actors and step more fully into the economic development realm.

Library system's role in the community's workforce and small business development systems

Library collaboration with ecosystem partners

As previously mentioned, HPL has a very close partnership with CWP, the entity overseeing the AJC at the main branch. HPL has an agreement with CWP to provide services through the AJC, and both parties meet frequently and regularly refer clients to one another. Additionally, the executive director of TAP is on CWP's one-stop board.

The work between CWP and the HPL is in alignment. Both parties have been intentional about how to create a successful partnership. The library attends CWP's partnership meetings, and both parties meet monthly to ensure everyone is on the same page. When HPL meets with its staff members to provide updates on upcoming activities, it invites CWP's onsite staff to attend. Overall, HPL works closely with CWP to ensure they are addressing the needs of library patrons. This could involve having a Spanish-speaking staff person or putting up a privacy screen for sensitive conversations. With such a robust and complementary working relationship, it is no surprise that both parties make "warm handoffs" to one another, frequently walking participants from library-run training to the AJC for assistance with resumes, cover letters, or enrollment in WIOA services.

In terms of higher education institutions, the University of Connecticut (UConn) is co-located in HPL's downtown library, which offers a shared collaborative and learning space that leverages opportunities of both institutions. HPL partners with UConn on its collections and offers space for digital learning and other educational opportunities. HPL conducts new student orientations to introduce incoming UConn students to HPL resources, with particular emphasis on connecting first-generation students to the library's resources. HPL has a less formal connection with Capital Community College (CCC), referring youth or patrons who have completed their Cisco training to CCC to take more advanced courses. HPL's relationship with Goodwin University is nascent, but promising, as Goodwin will soon be opening the doors of a new satellite manufacturing facility directly across from the Park Street Library branch, which should foster a natural partnership with an expectation of cross-referrals.

The city government has leveraged HPL's ability to connect to the immigrant population in numerous ways, including partnering on a municipal identification card program and distributing COVID test kits. An anchor institution with such strong ties to the community is a real benefit to all. As one stakeholder noted, *"The library is probably one of the most important partners to this city."* Its extensive reach creates an opportunity to serve a broad set of residents.

Beyond these partnerships, HPL's interface with a number of workforce and small business development stakeholders has been somewhat distant. However, the Swift Factory project provides an opportunity for several stakeholders to partner more closely. Community Solutions, HPL's primary partner for the Swift Factory project, is spearheading the redevelopment project. As part of the Swift Factory build-out, HPL is in conversations with Goodwin University to host a satellite

manufacturing facility for introductory training and with Chase Bank to offer retail banking and financial literacy services within the building.

As a critical anchor institution in the region, HPL is both a convener of collaborative efforts and a contributor. Since 2007, HPL has convened the Immigrant Advisory Group (IAG),[19] consisting of social service entities that serve immigrants in the Hartford area, to discuss relevant issues, share resources, and foster interagency communication. The IAG led to the creation of the city's Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs. HPL has also been part of the city's Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative,[20] a collective impact effort where HPL staff have been able to learn about what other education, youth development, and workforce development organizations are doing and find opportunities to partner to support outcomes for opportunity youth. While HPL has certainly participated in numerous collaborative efforts, many stakeholders in the city remain unaware of the library's role in workforce and business development. However, with the Swift Factory build-out, HPL will likely become a more prominent stakeholder in that field.

Library's position in the greater ecosystem

Stakeholder awareness of HPL's work indicated that HPL plays a critical role in the community in filling system gaps and expanding system reach.

- *Evidence of filling system gaps:* HPL is filling a gap by delivering free basic skills and industry-specific credential training to the immigrant and refugee population in the region and providing other workforce development and small business development service providers with access to offer other complementary services to this population. Because HPL is a trusted space, it serves as a connector to all services, from basic needs like food to more advanced workforce development training or educational opportunities that local partners offer. HPL's own workforce development programming is critical because of its ability to be nimble. Though CWP delivers a comprehensive set of workforce services at the library, HPL has the flexibility to offer some smaller training programs as it is not subject to the same WIOA restrictions and eligibility requirements as CWP.

- *Evidence of expanding system reach:* CWP and HPL view their partnership as mutually beneficial. HPL's strong commitment to serving immigrants and refugees through its direct specialized services has created a welcoming space for those populations; as such, the library's workforce development partners gain access to populations who might not otherwise find their way to the AJC site or specific CWP programming. CWP can leverage the fact that the library serves as a neutral location for individuals to come for assistance. The library treats individuals of all backgrounds with respect. As a result, the library is among the first places immigrants and refugees go to find a wide range of services. Because of this, HPL is a place where service providers can reliably connect to this population.

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[19]Immigrant Advisory Group. Hartford Public Library. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.hplct.org/library-services/immigration-citizenship/community-civic-participation/immigrant-advisory-group

[20] Members. Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://youthreconnect.org/partners/

Pandemic response and recovery

Overview of library services during the pandemic

During the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the library closed its doors to visitors but still served as a hub for social services and basic needs, with branches serving as sites for food distribution, personal protective equipment and test kit distribution, vaccine clinics, and other necessities. HPL leveraged ARPA funds to buy equipment like tents, tables, heaters, and the library on wheels to enable staff to continue to provide services to the community outside of the physical building. During this time, patrons could also access the library's resources via contact-free pickup. Additionally, the library launched a new LibChat service for patrons to ask library staff questions remotely at all times of the day. When it was possible to do so, HPL was one of the earliest institutions in the area to reopen its doors to the community.

Approach to workforce and business development services during the pandemic

In terms of its workforce and small business development services, TAP programming became virtual, even with some digital and technological barriers for participants. Throughout the pandemic, HPL remained a key information source for the public and shared links for patrons to file unemployment benefits.

The pandemic highlighted HPL's ability to be nimble. Very early on, all programs transitioned to virtual offerings with no face-to-face interaction. IMLS provided CARES funds to the library to support this transition to online platforms. HPL began offering patrons independent online learning options with support and instruction through Zoom, WhatsApp, and other familiar tools. For instance, GED prep students had the option to utilize Essential Education software, and HPL offered its virtual ServSafe training via the Lifter platform, where students could complete all assignments online.

Even though HPL created a robust set of digital offerings and online education courses, at least initially, the combination of technological barriers and individuals' emotional instability with family members becoming ill reduced participant engagement. Despite these challenges, remote programming, even for citizenship courses, continued, and HPL is now moving to a blended, hybrid approach for its courses. The TAP program attendance is now where it was pre-pandemic, fully subscribed.

Helping people navigate those systems virtually was tough, especially in a city that was not well connected, there's a huge digital divide. Parents and students lacked Wi-Fi, tech, etc. It was hard to navigate these issues; it took priority over other projects. Phone calls were huge to connect with people. We also had to figure out how to make information easily accessible on the website to help direct people more easily.

The pandemic also pushed library staff to be creative and innovative. One staff member remarked, "*During COVID, we were trying to figure out how to still connect people and provide a platform for small businesses to be known, to expand their network, etc. We started doing interviews with Black business owners, giving them an online platform, [to highlight] one business a week…to share what they do and how they were surviving the pandemic.*"

Overall, the pandemic has had some structural impacts on the library. While physically, library staff have modified the layout on the first floor to spread out desks, operationally, the library has

transitioned to scheduling appointments for specific services as opposed to working with individuals on a walk-in basis, is still operating with reduced hours, and is considering continuing to offer a mix of online and in-person services rather than revert to in-person services exclusively.

Learning from the pandemic

While the pandemic pushed HPL to revamp how patrons interface with its workforce and small business programming, it also highlighted the niche HPL has carved out for itself as a trusted, community institution. As such, HPL focused to the best of its ability on addressing residents' basic needs: food insecurity, home insecurity, and job insecurity.

Although HPL already recognized digital literacy and digital access as barriers and had already established courses and programs to start bridging the digital divide, the pandemic further emphasized the importance of digital literacy and access. Library staff responded to this by continuing to support patrons in acquiring digital literacy skills and basic computer competencies and connecting patrons with new resources and tools so they can reimagine what work looks like for them.

Prior to COVID-19, HPL was looking to expand to provide a full suite of workforce and small business development services, but the pandemic could have upended this vision and caused the library to contract its services. Instead, the pandemic focused attention on communities like Hartford's North End, where COVID-19 disproportionately impacted residents. This insight provided HPL and its partners with an opportunity to secure an even greater amount of funding (due to ARPA dollars) to move ahead with the Swift Factory build-out at a time when expanding access to these services is even more critical.

The pandemic surfaced some additional needs of residents now looking to pursue an entrepreneurial path. In many ways, HPL staff learned that COVID created an underground economy of people working from home and compelled people to be resourceful to make money. The Park Street branch recognized the need to support a subset of these resourceful residents to grow their entrepreneurial endeavors and secured funding to provide this support.

Because of COVID, we recognized opportunities for people to bring in income virtually – remote jobs, the gig economy. People tapped into the creative community and the digital access to content creation and production elevated to the surface. The library is looking at ways to not just have people connect to content, but take it to the next level and have people monetize [it]. The library is adopting a new mindset around this, and staff members are already having conversations about the number of licenses to buy for programs like Adobe, and others, for creatives who can't afford those licenses on their own but could use those programs to create content to sell.

Staff are also learning from others in the field, such as Loop Lab, the Boston area nonprofit focused on empowering "Womxn and People of Color in the media arts to develop careers in audio/video through job training and job placement."[21] HPL is already executing on what staff members are learning and has created a new position for a program production and engagement coordinator. This position is responsible for broadcasting and streaming virtual and hybrid programs

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[21] The Loop Lab. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.thelooplab.org/

to the community and connecting patrons to tech resources and supports to foster digital content creation.

Tracking and measurement

The library system's approach to tracking and measurement

The Hartford Public Library primarily collects data to track and report on general library operations, meet state and federal grant requirements, and inform staff members' program-related decisions. While HPL captures general data related to library operations systematically, data related to workforce development programming is not as streamlined due to the various grant requirements. Overall, HPL collects a wealth of information but captures limited data specifically relating to outcomes of workforce and small business development activities. Specific components of data collection at HPL include:

1. *General data collection on library operations:* HPL uses Library Performance Assessment System (LibPAS) to track general data on library operations across all branches, including its main downtown branch. LibPAS tracks the number of library visits, number of items checked out, number of reference questions answered, number of program attendees, etc. HPL recently added several new measures to track in LibPAS related to community engagement goals (e.g., the number of individuals receiving food through the library's Foodshare, etc.). Additionally, once per quarter, HPL collects a sample of data during "reference week" and uses Google Data Studio to report on the data collected. Both LibPAS data and reference week data contribute to HPL's public quarterly CEO reports and its public annual reports and influence decisions on future library programming. The library also draws on this data for state reporting.

2. *Information requests and referrals:* HPL staff do not track the types of general inquiries or requests but do track the number of reference requests and report on those quarterly. Additionally, TAP tracks the referrals staff make to CWP using its in-house Access database but does not track referrals made to other entities or agencies.

3. *Usage of specialized online resources and website usage analytics:* HPL tracks the use of all of its online databases/resources. HPL retrieves use from database/vendor websites and analyzes it both monthly and quarterly. HPL uses use SirsiDynix's BLUECloud Analytics product for circulation and patron data. In addition, the state of Connecticut publishes reports by library on the use of LearningExpress, including the number of sessions, registrations, page hits, tests, tutorials, computer courses, eBooks, and total number of resources.[22]

4. *Outputs related to specialized and partner services:* HPL tracks TAP program participants starting at intake using its own Access database, but because TAP is the recipient of many federal grants, each with its own reporting requirements, staff must follow specific guidelines related to data collection. As such, staff use a variety of databases to track program outputs, with each major grant having a dedicated database—LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System), Salesforce, Efforts to Outcomes, and eIMMIGRATION. While HPL staff track program data using numerous platforms, they also enter a portion of these data into TAP's Access database as well. Library staff reported they are exploring converting their Access database into a cloud-based interface with an outside vendor. CWP tracks data on the services the AJC provides at the library

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[22] Libguides Home: Researchit CT - Information: New! Workforce Solutions. Connecticut State Library. Accessed July 14, 2022. https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/researchIT_CT/about-researchIT_CT/WorkforceSolutions

and shares monthly reports of these data with library staff. These reports include information on CWP's referrals.

5. *Outcomes related to services:* Long-term employment outcomes are challenging for HPL to track. However, for its workforce development grants, HPL reports on occupation certificates attained as well as job placement, with patron-focused follow-up at six months. In addition, specific grants, such as the WIOA youth program, require library staff to follow up with graduates six times. The Park Street branch's entrepreneurship program also does not have a concrete plan to capture outcomes, though the intent is to capture feedback after each workshop and keep in touch with the participants beyond the duration of the program. Both state and federal grant requirements mandate CWP to track client outcomes. CWP tracks this information through a statewide system and through its own internal management information system.

6. *Anecdotal evidence:* HPL does not have a specific process for tracking anecdotal information related to outcomes for individuals receiving workforce or business development support, but as one staff member indicated, *"We do certainly have stories of people coming back and saying, 'You helped me get a job.'"* As a result of these types of interactions and staff members' connections to TAP participants, staff have several compelling success stories.

Outcome measurement challenges

Staff recognize the value of data collection in demonstrating the effectiveness of HPL's programs but cite limited staff capacity as the primary barrier to outcome measurement. Because the individuals HPL tracks are part of the TAP program, privacy is less of a concern as program participants sign a waiver authorizing data collection for research and grant purposes. Nonetheless, the staff capacity required to track employment outcomes for participants beyond the duration of the grant-funded program is no small feat.

Another major challenge is the ability to keep in touch with individuals who have engaged in a library program. One stakeholder captured it well, stating, *"We're trying to understand whether or not the program that we deliver has had an impact on the individuals that we intended [and that], to me, is the most important data, but the most elusive data because when someone walks out the door, it is very hard to maintain and stay in contact, in particular to the populations that they [HPL] serve[s], which are incredibly transitory."*

The large number of undocumented immigrants is another barrier to tracking data in Hartford. There is considerable sensitivity in the system to this group and caution about any type of data tracking that would in any way compromise the security of these residents.

Interest and feasibility of implementing new outcome measurement systems

HPL has no plans to implement new outcome measurement systems beyond potentially moving to a web-based Access database, but there is an argument that outcome measurement is essential for future financing. While HPL has relied on the city for a significant portion of its funding to date, the city's contribution to the library may not always be as robust. While there is no current indication that the city's contribution will change in the near term, such reliance on one funding source, particularly a public one with many financial obligations to balance, poses some risk. One stakeholder indicated that the library would need to start thinking more about how to attract support from corporate stakeholders in the future and sees data collection and measurement as one way to

position HPL favorably. This stakeholder also indicated that enhancing data collection and measurement efforts and sharing that broadly could be an outreach tool to draw additional residents to the library for programming.

Overall, library staff suggested they are open and willing to host a web-based patron survey, so long as it is short and offered in multiple languages. Because a pop-up-style survey on library computers would capture patron responses beyond TAP participants who authorize data collection for research and grant purposes, there are some privacy concerns related to asking for personal information, particularly given the large undocumented population that utilizes library services. Nonetheless, HPL staff expressed that as long as there was a way to mitigate privacy concerns, they are interested in learning more about how they currently support patrons' workforce and small business development needs and what additional services HPL could offer.

Observations

✓ **Libraries can develop targeted workforce and small business development programming to fill gaps for specific populations.**

HPL has established itself as a trusted institution for its city residents. In doing so, the library has carved out a specific niche in workforce development programming with a significant focus on immigrants and refugees. The services HPL offers are responsive to the needs of the local community and, as such, deliberately target underserved constituencies. As a result of HPL's success in creating a welcoming and respected space for all, the library can serve as an access point for other workforce and small business service providers to offer supports to the broad swath of Hartford residents who make use of the library.

✓ **When done intentionally and collaboratively, co-locating a career center within a library can offer substantial benefits for residents.**

Because HPL and CWP have established a strong partnership, staff from both entities can work cooperatively to ensure library patrons have access to a full suite of workforce development services fairly seamlessly. Together, staff have intentionally situated AJC on the library's first floor near the entrance to draw patrons in, and they meet regularly to coordinate and share relevant data. As a result, HPL and CWP offer a continuum of workforce development support services with minimal duplication. Locating a traditional career center within a library does not ensure services will be integrated or cohesive, but, as seen in this case, when staff from both entities form a real partnership, familiarize themselves with each other's services, and are committed to working collaboratively, patrons reap the benefits.

✓ **Libraries can be a valuable partner in the redevelopment of new facilities and new programming that enhances the community and offers greater opportunities for local residents.**

HPL's engagement in the redevelopment of the Swift Factory is a considerable asset. As an anchor institution and a community hub committed to creating opportunities for residents via access to knowledge and skills, HPL was well-positioned to partner with other stakeholders on the Swift Factory redevelopment project that will create additional infrastructure to enhance the region's workforce. HPL has already proven itself as a trusted community partner and has a great deal to offer as the operator of Next Gen @ Swift, given its experience with TAP and coordinating services

with CWP. The Swift Factory is a chance for the HPL to help numerous community partners work collaboratively to offer residents a cohesive set of services. With a somewhat underdeveloped small business support ecosystem, this undertaking also allows HPL the opportunity to help fill that system gap.