

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills BRIDGE

## Shift the mindset.

This document builds the bridge between a library's responses to the needs of the workforce and the infusion of 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking at every step.

Libraries have a critical role in helping citizens build skills and knowledge that will keep our nation strong and viable on the world stage.

The great news for libraries is that they have long been focused on many of the skills listed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century IMLS project report.

As libraries step up to help the unemployed build skills, it is equally important to introduce a mindset that grasps the new economic realities and is prepared for a competitive workplace.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century skills framework can underwrite all efforts to provide lifelong learning experiences. Even a basic introduction to computers class can include a discussion of the online and digitized nature of our modern world.

## Build the skill set.

**“Lifelong learning is not an option anymore; it’s a necessity!  
SMART is the new RICH.”**

*(Bernie Trilling, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills)*

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

**Critical Thinking &  
Problem Solving**

**Communication &  
Collaboration**

**Technology Literacy,  
Media Literacy**

**Flexibility & Adaptability**

**Social & Cross-cultural Skills**

**Creative Thinking &  
Innovation**

**Productivity &  
Accountability**

**Teamwork**

**Global Awareness**

Discovery & Assessment	Collections	Training & Programming	Collaboration	Communication
<p><b>Discover and assess top needs of the community for workforce recovery.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand how the 21st century economy has impacted the needs of the unemployed and how the library can help patrons adapt.</li> <li>▪ Use current technology tools for research and community assessment; make exploration of new tools and platforms an ongoing effort.</li> </ul> <p><b>Identify what the library can do to help.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide online information about programs, services and events.</li> <li>▪ Enable two-way communication with audiences about special events and programs, using current technology tools (blogs, Twitter, online forms, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Engage in lifelong learning, modeling 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to patrons and the community, as well as keeping abreast with change.</li> <li>▪ Encourage and integrate community input in planning &amp; decision-making.</li> <li>▪ Enable community stakeholders to participate in evaluation and refresh library responses.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide a current and relevant collection of online and print materials.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide resources for the economically impacted that help them grasp the changing demands of the workforce.</li> <li>▪ Provide resources that increase users’ global awareness and understanding of the impact of globalization on the workforce.</li> <li>▪ Provide guidance to support new users’ effective use of online and digital resources.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop topical bibliographies and pathfinders.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide guides and pathfinders that encourage patrons’ exploration of new tools and technologies.</li> <li>▪ Work with patrons to personalize and customize guides for the particular needs and priorities of target audience.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Connect patrons with online self-directed learning.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify learning opportunities that enhance 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving or collaboration.</li> <li>▪ Educate information seekers about the value of self-directed and online learning.</li> <li>▪ Provide support for learners to develop skills and attitudes for success with self-directed learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Offer programs and classes that explore new ideas and opportunities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customize programs to heighten audience engagement; offer at times when target audiences can easily participate.</li> <li>▪ Design programs and classes to include consideration of 21st century skills as learning outcomes (interactive, focused on project-based learning, emphasis on teamwork, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Ensure that programs provide 21<sup>st</sup> century context for the unemployed in the current job market.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for patrons’ peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and networking.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the use of current technology tools for virtual connection through online communities and social networks.</li> <li>▪ Seek to stimulate creative thinking and encourage innovation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build relationships with community-based agencies.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reinforce the role of the library as community leader through networking and engaging in community activities.</li> <li>▪ Pursue continuous improvement in communication skills and social and cross-cultural fluency.</li> </ul> <p><b>Collaborate with partners to develop programs and services.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build coalitions of multiple partners to achieve program goals.</li> <li>▪ Identify non-traditional partners.</li> <li>▪ Work to achieve partnerships that are scalable and sustainable over time.</li> <li>▪ Build toward a community-wide vision of a workforce that is able to thrive in the 21st century..</li> <li>▪ Engage audiences, partner organizations, and the wider community in lifelong learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Connect patrons with community agencies.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Become familiar with community agencies; maximize the role of the library as a hub of the community.</li> <li>▪ Engage community stakeholders and other institutions where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with other agencies to make collections readily accessible by patrons.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Promote library services and programs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use social networking tools to market programs and services.</li> <li>▪ Reach new or underserved audiences through the library website and other online venues.</li> <li>▪ Embrace the concept of the library’s “virtual branch.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Communicate the value of the library as an essential support system for economic recovery.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate actively in the community and use these experiences to inform and deepen interactions with patrons.</li> <li>▪ Track metrics over time for measurable outcomes of services and programs for the unemployed.</li> <li>▪ Collect and broadcast stories and anecdotes about patrons’ successful acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and concepts.</li> </ul>