# IDEAs from Project Compass Workshop World Café Conversations

## Core Services and Job Seekers

**Discovery: understanding the needs**

* *Really* get to know your community. Pay attention to how your community and who you serve is *changing*.
* Find out what’s available for job seekers in your community so you are not duplicating efforts.
* “Before designing a new program or service, ask yourself, is it Necessary, Relevant, Appealing?
* Communicate (!) so that everyone knows what’s going on at the library.
* Identify types of jobseekers:
  1. First timers
  2. Hard to employ
  3. Career change
  4. Immigrants, refugees
  5. Retired, returning to workforce
  6. Most difficult profile: low income, alcoholism, poor social skills, no computer skills, sometimes transient with deviant behavior
* “Patrons are often overwhelmed and panicked.” “People most at risk have the worst people skills.” Recognize that anyone can use these “life skills.”
* Recognize that social skills, as well as computer skills, are much needed; “it’s now our job.” Need a state level advocate to recognize the need for social support from state and federal agencies at a local level.
* Review role as “latchkey library.” Deal with the perception “libraries aren’t really doing anything; they can take on this role”
* Determine if state resources align with the real needs of libraries.
* Look at all rules (policies) and ask “why?” Make a new rule: No stupid, pointless, unneeded rules. Remove barriers: Make it as fun and easy as possible for those using your services.
* People with the greatest need are the least likely to go to classes. Less structure is better for them.
* Provide flexible hours to accommodate job seekers; open early.
* Devote wireless and laptop to direct patrons to community services, such as unemployment, housing, emergency healthcare and food stamps.

**Collections**

* Put links to job seeker resources on the home page of the library website.
* Link to community resources on website.
* Link to job help resources like [Indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com/), [TWDL.org](http://twdl.org/).
* Create a “book” display for local workforce services using scanned covers of job seeker resources for visual interest.

**Services for job seekers**

* Free resume faxing
* Give away flash drives, especially as a reward/incentive for creating a resume. Ask the Friends to purchase or ask a local business to sponsor, putting their logo on it if they buy to give away to patrons.
* Have patrons create a document for themselves with all their usernames and passwords. Online website for storing usernames and passwords.
* Create a job seeker “survival kit”—include Payday candy bar, stress bar, bookmark with library phone numbers and resources, coupon for free cup of coffee from local business, etc.
* Offer help to test-takers (Learning Express Gale and other databases). GED requirements are changing in 2014. Make sure library is prepared as testing site.
* Stage mock interviews for job seekers. Videotape the interview so patrons can see themselves, get instant practice and feedback.
* Devote a meeting room for Skype interviews when needed.
* Install a full-length mirror with a sign at the top: “would you hire this person?”
* Check out laptops for 3 days at a time for patrons to work on job seeking needs outside of the library.
* Help with unemployment applications online.
* “Job Mobile”—a partnership between library and workforce services to provide an internet-connected van (bookmobile) with work stations (or laptops) to go into rural/remote areas and offer resume writing, job seeking help and help with unemployment benefits forms, food stamps, etc.  
  Staff it with a librarian and a workforce development staff member.
* Host a “Community Resource” fair to include not just job fair types, but add social agencies, financial institutions, small business.
* Provide transportation to the library.
* Help people see the possibilities, see the vision. Help patrons identify their transferable skills: “what do you *know*?”

*Special populations*

* Pay attention to Spanish or other language needs. How do we build services for Spanish-speakers? Brochures? Website? Other local agencies providing training?
* Older worker programs

*Classes and workshops*

* Library partners with Heritage Makers (for-profit business) to teach class on digital scrapbooking; highlight library resources; allow presenter to leave business cards at the end.
* “Tech Tuesdays”—bring in outside presenters from workforce agencies, genealogy clubs, etc. to deliver a variety of technology training.
* Have an open lab for basic computer skills.
* Take job training workshops *outside* of the library, to the local bar, for instance.

**Collaboration and partnerships**

* Collaborate with local workforce services: invite them to staff meetings but most important, JUST TALK TO EACH OTHER!
* Ask the VFW for training space if you don’t have enough in your library.
* Invite temp agencies to visit the library.
* Partner with local schools to assist first time job seekers. Overcome barriers between public schools and libraries
* Partner and collaborate with other groups: Headstart, Red Cross, Cooperative Extensions.
* Some communities have a Community Betterment staff member who writes grants for all community betterment efforts, not just the library.
* For rural libraries that have few agencies in the area to partner with, use online resources.

*Enlist volunteers*

* When looking for volunteers, advertise for specific skills to help job seekers, like resume writing or interview skills: “I need a volunteer who can…”
* Use the retirement community; enlist retired professionals to review resumes and do mock interviews for job seekers and teens.
* Train high school kids to assist with technology skills.
* Hire a sixth grader as tech coordinator; include teens to run web page/facebook/Twitter accounts.
* Leverage a volunteer to create/train more volunteers, or enlist retirees to volunteer.
* Have something to do for those people who stay at the library for a long time

**Marketing and communication**

* Make the local newspaper a resource.
* Articulate library’s value: communicate value of services, value to local economy.
* Market your book club collection to other book clubs in the area.
* Publicize classes by saying “Save $50 by attending this class.”
* Job seekers don’t ask for help or sign up for classes until they are frustrated. Find ways to overcome the embarrassment factor of patrons resistant to asking for help or attending training.
* Use your personal Facebook page to let your “friends” know what job resources the library has; if you’re on Facebook and someone mentions they lost their job, remind them to visit their library for help.

**Staff training**

* Make sure that staff have the training they need:
  + Close early one day per month to conduct training sessions.
  + Close for an entire day each month (or so) for intensive staff training.
  + Make it staff training, not a staff meeting.
* Try new things, share, and learn from each other; use the Project Compass workbook.
* Encourage staff to take online webinars; give prizes to those who take the most training and apply what they learn.
* Train staff to work with highest risk patrons who need job services.
* Respect the library; model what you expect from patron behavior.
* Train staff on e-gov and job-searching techniques

*Stress reduction*

* Create more time in your schedule:
  1. Stop doing something;
  2. Cross-train so that all staff can do all things;
  3. Conduct monthly mini-trainings for staff.
* Have a panic button for staff.

## Support for small business and entrepreneurs

**Discovery: understanding the needs**

* The term “entrepreneur” is not always about products or business; it’s primarily about ideas and the spirit to see an opportunity and pursue it.
* Say “economic development” to everyone first (educate the community about its significance) and then tell them what the library is doing.
* Help small business without favoritism.
* Library should focus on “basic” community development need, for example: a) starting online business; b) marketing collection to Main street businesses; c) online resources.

**Collections**

* Create a small business startup kit, including online resources.
* Write a pathfinder for how to start a business; identify the “first steps” to starting a small business, writing a business plan, and end with where to get further information.

**Services and training for entrepreneurs**

* Gear what you are already doing toward small business (fax, copy, computers) on an information sheet to distribute.
* Host an entrepreneur resource center with books, handouts and web links for starting and supporting small business.
* Create a small business work center a-la-Kinko’s—provide stapler, guillotine, envelopes, etc.
* Hold an Entrepreneur Fair where various local entrepreneurs can display, sell or promote their services; encourage attendees to ask entrepreneurs about their experiences.
* Start a monthly small business discussion support group.
* Offer workshops on:
  + Marketing for small business, how to promote and create flyers, sell locally
  + Human Resources workshops—how to hire, fire and manage people
  + entrepreneur training for teens so they see a wider future
  + applying for grants as a small business
  + doing market research, writing a business plan, locating customers
  + forming an LLC (limited liability company)
* Arrange author visits by authors of small business books.
* Connect patrons with online business success courses
* Offer small business training for employed persons—tell employer through chamber organization.

**Collaboration and partnerships**

* Potential partners:
  + SBA (Small Business Administration) is a partner who will come to your library.
  + Contact the nearest SCORE chapter.
  + Small business development center (SBDC) collaboration.
* Ask successful small business owners in the community to give presentations about how they “did it” and what they learned.
* Work with Chamber of Commerce to provide an entrepreneurs’ class. They often offer business card exchange networking events.
* Partner with Chamber of Commerce to subscribe to Reference USA and other databases.
* Have an attorney talk on legal issues.

**Marketing and communication**

* Get out in the community; attend county commission meetings, etc.
* Library support for small business (for example, how to use online financial databases, partnership/marketing opportunities) is a great activity to tell (brag about) to the city council, mayor, county commissioner. Get credit for supporting economic development.

## Personal financial skills

**Discovery: understanding the needs**

* First step: educate ourselves (staff) about what is involved in personal finances; define “financial literacy.”
* Help patrons understand the definition of “financial literacy.”
* Underemployed need financial planning skills. Focus on classes about paying bills, budgeting and prioritizing—not building portfolios.
* The local rotary defines “5 steps for literacy” so ask them to define 5 steps for financial literacy.
* Find good times for programs that work for those that need it, possibly evenings.

**Collections**

* When you think of collections for financial literacy, think of websites, brochures, small/short tip sheets from reputable sources. Consider the attention span of users; determine how many resources to include and at what different levels (basic, etc.).
* Make sure your books (resources) on the topic are current and accurate.
* Be aware that “for financial issues, books are not always the best solution.”
* Acquire (and display) books like Cheapskates guides, Suzie Orman, Thrifty Series. Include “Cooking for 4 on $4 a Day” or other titles you might not think of as relating to financial literacy.
* Create a bookmark of what to have in a personal finance emergency kit: ID the important financial documents, account numbers, spare cash, homes, etc.

**Services and training on financial literacy**

* Conduct “fix-it” session on bankruptcy and foreclosure.
* Organize financial book clubs; read titles like Suze Orman; use this as a way to attract non-library users to the library. One librarian told a story about an all-woman book club that switched its focus from novels to financial topics and invited their husbands, who then became active participants for the first time. Book discussion on “Not Buying It” by Judith Levine.
* Since many payroll and federal benefit payments are now direct deposit, offer training on how it works; the [Go Direct Campaign](http://www.godirect.org/partners/community-based-organizations/) has free resources for community organizations.
* Participate in Money Smart Week @ your library. Financial Literacy Month is in April 2012.
* Have a financial institution vendor fair where a number of banks can share information and answer questions about personal financial skills.
* Start a produce exchange for people with excess yield from their gardens; start a community garden; have a recipe swap.
* Collect newspaper coupons in a box at the front desk for anyone to take and use. Or offer a coupon exchange event. One library had 89 people show up when they usually get 3-4 at more conventional workshops. Ask the local grocery store who the couponers are and enlist an “extreme couponer” to teach a workshop.
* Download classes from Open Office to personal laptop on spreadsheet budgets etc.
* Credit counseling service program

*Workshop topics*

* Offer workshops on:
  + basic money management skills, how to balance a checkbook, pay bills on time
  + buying a first home, working with realtors, mortgage broker, banker, insurance agents
  + repairing credit, the responsibilities of having a credit card, debt consolidation
  + spreadsheet skills for budgeting; use OpenOffice, which is a free open source program.
  + moving beyond living paycheck by paycheck
  + “Retire Happy”
  + “how to get off disability”
  + “How to shop online without getting scammed” and other education about avoiding scams
  + Bankruptcy classes; FINRA Tech Tuesday
  + Identity theft, online banking, online bill paying
  + How to pay for college
* Provide training on financial software

*Special populations*

* Focus on seniors’ financial issues; offer “Financially Wise” seniors’ class.
* Work with senior centers on their unique needs (medicare, supplemental insurance).
* Offer a “Money Smart” week for kids; invite parents to a dinner event with kids as cooks, waiters, etc, with fake money to pay for the meal; provide good spending/earning examples.
* Children’s story hour on spending, saving allowance, and include info for parents on local bank savings account program.
* “Captain Cash” existing program in November for children and for parents to help kids with Christmas shopping.

**Collaboration and partnerships**

* Partner with banks, credit unions, attorney general’s office, police department (for id theft and scams) and host their classes.
* Ask bank employees to give workshops on topics like online security or identity theft. Trust officers from bank to help in planning trust.
* Partner with the County Extension Office.
* If your state has a law library, invite them to do a system workshop on their resources.
* [FINRA](http://www.finrafoundation.org/) for grants and resources (books, legal forms); NOLA.com has matching grants up to $1500
* Go to the Chamber and ask what resources the members would like to see.
* Collaborate with school district to repeat course info format for adults. Children learning skills in class but seeing poor examples at home.
* Partner with organizations and businesses to hold food drives, school supply drives, etc.
* Pay special attention to court ordered “volunteers”
* “library expectation” training for volunteers.

**Marketing and communication**

* Come up with interesting (compelling) titles for workshops, like “Why I’m rich,” “making your money work” or “Swimming to the top” to reverse the typical negative message. Think about the impact of the title when it gets advertised. Change the language for “class” on financial literacy, consider using “coaching” instead of “class.”
* You may not think the library is reaching people but you are.”
* Market your book club to other book clubs in the area.
* Promote FREE stuff available at the library: “libraries provide “free” entertainment.