



## **National Career Development Association**

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### **National Career Development Association Leadership Academy Action Learning Project Summary**

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**Participant(s):** Meagan Kittrick

**Board Mentor:** Niel Carey

**Leadership Academy Class:** Class of 2016

**Project Title:** Public Libraries Providing Career Services in Ohio

**Project Description:** “Estimates show that as many as 30 million Americans rely on public libraries for career search assistance each year”, reported in The Digital Inclusion Survey, managed by the Information Policy and Access Center at the University of Maryland and the American Library Association (2013). Public libraries are community hubs, providing essential job seeking support services and resources which include:

- Access to computers and free Internet (days, evenings and weekends)
- Employment and career information databases and tools
- Testing and certification materials Assistance with online job applications
- Training opportunities in technology, academics and career to improve a wide range of skills, knowledge and abilities
- At some public libraries, integrated career centers or contracts with career development professionals to provide career expertise and training to community job seekers.

This project sought to 1) strengthen the relationship with the American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA) division, 2) develop an online survey and distribute it to Ohio Public Library leaders to assess how career development is incorporated with their library and, 3) gain an understanding of ways in which NCDA can support career development standards, resources and professional development of library and/or career staff, contractors or volunteers.

#### **Summary/Conclusion:**

This survey was distributed to 202 Ohio Public Libraries through individual e-mail or through LinkedIn messaging feature to one leader (ex. Branch Manager, Director, Adult and Teen Librarians) per library and gained 66 responses (33% response rate). Results of the survey indicated the following:

- Participants were asked how often new career books are added to their existing collection (print and/or electronic):
  - 65.15% indicated “Every couple of months”
  - 18.18 indicated “Once a year”
  - 16.67% indicated “Every couple of years”

- Participants were asked if their public library offers career services to patrons (career advice, career programming, career author presentations, host community events, etc.):
  - 30.30% indicated “Yes, for adult patrons (18+ years old)”
  - 0.00% indicated “Yes, for youth patrons (14-17 years old)”
  - 27.27 indicated “Yes, for adult and youth patrons”
  - 42.42 indicated “No”
- Participants were asked how connected their public library is to the region’s Ohio Means Jobs (One-Stop):
  - 18.18% indicated “We are currently not connected”
  - 60.61% indicated “We are connected but do not communicate regularly”
  - 21.21% indicated “We are connected and communicate regularly”
- Participants were asked if their public library provide referrals for job seeking patrons 50+ years old to The AARP Foundation, Senior Community Service Employment Program (offices in Central Ohio, Cleveland and Columbus):
  - 27.27% indicated “Yes”
  - 72.73% indicated “No”
- Participants were asked if their public library utilizes career coaches or counselors (A career coach may have a bachelor’s degree and/or training as a coach. A career counselor has a master’s degree in counseling and career development experience.):
  - 3.03% indicated “Yes, and she/he/they are employees of the public library”
  - 3.03 indicated “Yes, and she/he/they are contracted with the public library”
  - 12.12 indicated “Yes, and she/he/they are volunteers with the public library”
  - 81.82% indicated “No”
- Participants were asked if library employees assist job seeking patrons with career related tasks (locating job search websites, job applications, resume writing, etc.)
  - 92.42% indicated “Yes”
  - 7.58% indicated “No”
- Participants were asked how familiar they are with the new federal statute: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that has solid plans to help the workers who struggle most in Ohio’s job market:
  - 75.76% indicated “Unfamiliar”
  - 18.18% indicated “Somewhat familiar”
  - 6.06% indicated “Familiar”
- Participants were asked how familiar they are with the National Career Development Association supporting Career Development Facilitator Training which provides individuals with relevant skills and knowledge to assist others in planning careers and obtaining meaning work. Trained career development facilitators include library professionals:
  - 78.79% indicated “Unfamiliar”
  - 19.70% indicated “Somewhat familiar”
  - 1.52% indicated “Familiar”
- Participants were asked how familiar they are with the Ohio Career Development Association which has over 150 career development professionals, state-wide, who could be contacted to provide career related activities and/or referrals:
  - 81.82% indicated “Unfamiliar”
  - 13.64% indicated “Somewhat familiar”
  - 4.55% indicated “Familiar”
- Participants were given an opportunity to leave a comment to share additional information about their public library career resources and services:
  - “We try as much as possible to work with community, county and regional services and to provide counseling through those services. We also provide a job listing board in the library local businesses and employers.”

- “Although our library offers career programming for teens in the form of workshops, we do not currently provide career counseling and/or assessments for those 18 years of age and under.”
- “We used to offer programming and classes for job seekers. That may start up again but has been in a hiatus for 6 months.”
- “We often have people who want help with resumes and applying online for jobs. The best we can do is set them up with a resume template on Word and guide them through the basics of using the web.”
- “We include career development materials as part of our regular collection development and assist patrons with things like resume and job applications, but that’s about the extent of it. We would be interested in finding practical ways to improve these services for our patrons.”
- “We partner with a location organization, Hometown Opportunities, to assist with local opportunities. With recent renovations, we added a career center dedicated to assisting patrons.”
- “We are actively engaged in trying to help job seekers-we are now part of TalentNEO (coordinated by Towards Employment, TalentNEO is a regional initiative in Cuyahoga and Summit County...aims to expand employment opportunities for job seekers who have the required skills but lack the educational credentials or experience traditionally used to screen job applicants).
- “Staff will help patrons locate websites and resource for resumes, etc. and we have a flyer of resources, and will help with uploading files for applications, but we don’t help to write resumes.”
- “Our patrons (and staff) have found the Ohio Means Jobs site to be incomprehensible. As a result, we have our own subscription to Learning Express Library which gets a lot of use.”
- “Our local Community Services organization works with locals who are seeking jobs - so much of our assistance (other than basic resume help) is referral.”
- “We do make resume writing software/databases available in addition to Ohio Means Jobs link on our website. We are available to assist patrons with basic computer skills they may need to access job search/counseling on the internet.”
- “We offer computer classes to job seekers.”
- “Programs we have been offering include resume writing and other similar classes, GED classes, and budgeting seminars. Resources are mostly found or purchased as e-books, our databases, and from outside initiatives. It is seldom that we purchase this information in a book form. “
- “People looking for work are helped at the library as much as we can and are always referred to the One Stop which has many services for them to use. They are close by and do a great job.”
- “We host the county Job & Family Services office every quarter or so. They have access to our PCs and review Ohio Means Jobs, help craft resumes, and discuss interviewing tips with library users.”
- “I will definitely familiarize myself with these resources now that you have brought them to my attention – thank you!”
- “We are a small library in a small town with a small budget, limited open hours and small staff or part time workers. We have offered to do some job seeking training, but like other programs and services, it takes a lot of time and effort to get the word to those who might be interested in using such services.”
- “We don’t do hands-on career help yet but our reference department wants to hold a career fair next year. Also, we are a county site for College Now, which helps individuals

with education (not just traditional college) that will lead them to increased employment opportunity.”

- “The past two years we have housed an AmeriCorps Guiding Ohio Online worker whose primary goal is to assist adult patrons with all things digital including job searching, resume building, etc. this has been a huge asset to our ability to provide essential job assistance services to our community. I hope after this survey and affiliated research is complete NCDAs plans to share more information with public libraries!”
- “We post area job announcements received from local Ohio Means Jobs office and update weekly. We have a very limited staff and do not get involved with assisting people in filing for unemployment, etc. beyond getting them to the appropriate website. We have no means to teach computer classes or other training but have hosted outside agencies who use our meeting rooms to meet with clients and/or hold informational meetings.”
- “We have a long way to go...”

### **Results/Recommendations:**

As a result of this project and online survey, recommendations include:

1. NCDAs leaders to use the project results and an opportunity to continue building a stronger relationship with the American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA).
  - Results indicated opportunities to enhance knowledge of NCDAs to public libraries:
    1. Market free online career resources to include but not limited to:
      - Resources (Internet Sites for Career Planning, Occupational Trends, Need Career Help?)
      - “*Career Convergence*” web magazine
      - Professional Development Opportunities
      - NCDAs Career Development Month Poster & Poetry Contest
      - NCDAs Career Resource Store
      - Membership Benefits (payment required)
    2. Increase knowledge of additional career development resources to include: One-Stops (state specific), AARP, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
    3. Education of career coaches versus career counselors (education, training, and credentialing)
2. Advocate for State CDAs leaders and members to connect with public libraries in their state (or state PLA organization) to establish a partnership to assist with potential career related activities and/or referrals:
  - *Career Convergence* article, “[Public Libraries Providing Essential Support Services for Job Seekers](#)” by me, Meagan Kittrick, provides current career-related resources and services offered by many public libraries as well as partnership ideas to build career programming to share with job seekers.
  - As a result of this project, I will be writing a follow-up article in *Career Convergence* that will be submitted by July 1, 2016.