Appendix I: Case Study Interview Protocols

This semi-structured interview protocol contains a list of questions that will be used in interviews with individuals participating in the library case studies. As a flexible framework, probes may be added or omitted from the interview in response to participant feedback. Every effort will be made to limit questions to those needed for relevant information or perspective. Interview questions are expected to stay within the content areas detailed below.

Interview email request for all case study interviews

In coordination with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the study team will email each site in advance to request a time to interview the individuals at each site. An email requesting the participant's willingness to participate and availability is copied below.

SUBJECT: Interview Request for Workforce Development and Libraries

Dear *[NAME]*,

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out as part of case study research that Mt. Auburn Associates is completing for an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) project to explore the role libraries play in workforce and business development in their communities. We are completing a series of case studies, including one on *[YOUR LIBRARY NAME]*, to understand to gain a deeper understanding of what libraries are doing in this area, if and how the outcomes of these services are being measured, and how external stakeholders perceive the role of libraries in the workforce and business development systems. These findings will contribute to research briefs that will be published at the conclusion of the study which will support future library efforts to innovate around workforce development services.

You were identified as being involved at *{the library system level in the design, implementation, or measurement of activities} {one of the library outlets serving local residents}, {someone knowledgeable about workforce development and business development services in your community}* by *[INSERT CONTACT NAME]*.

Hearing more about your work, reflections about measuring libraries' impact, and perspective of the role that the library plays in the workforce and small business development systems in your community would greatly contribute to the success of our research. Here are some times that I am available to meet, let me know if you have time for a 45-minute meeting *[specify if over phone/zoom/in person]*:

[INSERT AVAILABLE TIMES TO SCHEDULE]

Feel free to follow-up with any questions about the case study research, or if there is a better time to connect. Looking forward to hearing your unique perspective! If you have questions about the validity of this request, please contact Emily Plagman at IMLS at eplagman@imls.gov.

Thank you,

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{Site Associate}

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Interviewer in-person or phone instructions for all case study interviews

Each individual interviewed will be informed about the confidentiality of the interviews and how the interviews will be used in the case studies and project findings. In addition, the interviewer will ask each individual interviewed for permission to record the discussion. If permission is granted, the interview will be recorded and then transcribed and edited using transcription software.

The following instructions will be reviewed with each individual that is interviewed prior to beginning the interview:

Interviewer introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. Our firm is conducting case studies as part of an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) project to explore the role libraries play in workforce and business development in their communities. The purpose of this project is to gain a deeper understanding of what libraries are doing in this area, if and how the outcomes of these services are being measured, and how external stakeholders perceive the role of libraries in the workforce and business development systems. We want to explore with you the role that your community's library plays in providing both formal and informal services for patrons related to their employment or business development needs. We are also hoping to better understand some of the challenges in tracking the outcomes of these services.

*We are conducting this interview with you because you have been identified as a person who is involved at {**the library system level in the design, implementation, or measurement of activities**] {**one of the library outlets serving local residents**}, {**someone knowledgeable about workforce development and business development services in your community**}*

Our discussion will take approximately 45 minutes of your time.

Responses provided in this interview will be reported anonymously and your identity will not be disclosed. In addition, only the project team will have access to interview transcripts that can link your answers to you. We will <u>not</u> link your name or your role/title to specific responses in any reports developed from this assessment, and your identity and your answers to any questions that I ask you during this interview will be kept private. Information will be synthesized and

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shared in a final case study and a report which will include the examination of the data collected across libraries, and this information will be reported in aggregate so that any information you share cannot be linked to you or your organization.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer some of the questions, or you may choose not to participate without penalty. You can choose to discontinue the interview at any time for any reason.

As the interviewer, with your permission, I will audio record our conversation; an additional member of the project team will take notes during our discussion.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Emily Doglio, the project manager, by email at edoglio@mtauburnassociates.com.

Before we begin the discussion, I would like to get verbal consent to proceed. Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Yes: Thank-you. I am confirming you are willing to answer questions during this discussion and will note your verbal consent. We also would like to record the conversation to make sure we don't miss anything.

No: Thank participant for his or her time and end conversation.

Do I have your permission to turn on the audio recorder?

Yes: *Thank-you. Turn on recorder.*

No: *Thank-you. I will refrain from recording the session.*

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Pause for participant response(s). Answer any questions the respondent has. Proceed to conducting the interview using the Interview Guide.

Site visit semi-structured interview protocol
Internal: <u>Library system staff</u>

Review the interview protocol introduction with interviewee.

1. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, how did your library help improve economic conditions in your community? (*Ask generally and then probe on*: What are the types of specific workforce and business development activities being undertaken?)

2. *{These questions refer to your organization/structure prior to the pandemic}*

   How was the library organized or structured to support patrons looking for assistance related to employment or business development?

   a. How were these services provided across the system?

   b. What was the role of individual branches/outlets?

   c. Do you have any specialized collections or software applications that are relevant to patrons looking for assistance related to skill development, employment, or business development? Are these available at all outlets or only in certain locations?

   d. Were there specific programs that you operated in partnership with other organizations?

   e. Are there staff in your library system who have specific responsibilities for assisting patrons who are looking for a job or training opportunities? Do the specialized staff stay in one location or rotate to different branches?

   f. Are there staff in your library system who have specific responsibilities for assisting patrons who are interesting in starting a business or improving their existing business? Do the specialized staff stay in one location or rotate to different branches?

   g. Do any library staff have any specific training that is relevant to workforce or business development?

   h. Do you market or promote workforce or business development services to residents and businesses? If so, how and to whom?

3. During the COVID-19 crisis, how did your library system help improve economic conditions in your community?

   a. Were there any specific efforts to meet the needs of local residents related to employment or business success?

b. What were some of the factors that limited what you were able to do during this period?

c. Were there any factors that enhanced your ability to adapt during this period?

4. Do you anticipate any changes in how you will help improve economic conditions in your community as you resume more regular operations?

a. What are the challenges in continuing to contribute to workforce and business development as you resume more regular operations?

b. Do you anticipate any changes in the demand/need for your workforce or business development services?

c. Have you received any federal funds directly, or through the state or local governments related to pandemic recovery? If so, how much and how will they be used?

d. Do you anticipate any changes in how services are structured across the system as a result of the pandemic? If so, why?

e. Do you anticipate any changes in partnerships with other service providers in the community? If so, why?

5. How aware are you of the other organizations in your community who provide workforce development services? Business development services?

a. Who are the major players?

b. Do library staff regularly refer patrons to other services in the community that provide workforce or business development services? If so, who do library staff refer patrons to?

c. Do you think other organizations in the community are aware of the services in the library and refer residents to these services for help related to employment or business services? If so, which organizations typically refer residents to the library for services?

6. How do you measure and communicate your role in contributing to workforce development and business development services?

a. Do you track information on the patrons who utilize these services? For instance, their demographic characteristics? How they are using resources? The results of the assistance they are receiving?

b. What are key challenges to tracking the activities of patrons?

c. Does the system have any specialized software for tracking patron's activities?

d. What are the key challenges to tracking the outcomes of the assistance that is provided?

e. Do you participate in any state or national outcome measurement efforts?

f. Would you be willing to implement an automated online survey to patrons who are using the library's computers to understand the degree of workforce and business development activity taking place through this service? Would this be feasible from a technological perspective? Have you done anything like this before? What would you be willing to ask? What do you think would be difficult to ask?

7. Do you have interest in doing more to help patrons with their employment or business development needs? If so, what would you ideally like to do and what are the challenges you face in providing more assistance?

8. Do you receive any support from your state in terms of your role in workforce or business development? Are there any specific state program or practices that are relevant?

Site visit semi-structured interview protocol
Internal: <u>Library outlet/branch staff</u>

This protocol is only relevant in library systems that have outlets. Review the interview protocol introduction with interviewee.

1. Prior to COVID-19 how did your specific library branch help improve economic conditions in your community? (*Ask generally and then probe on*: What are the types of specific workforce and business development activities being undertaken?)

2. *{There questions refer to your organization/structure prior to the pandemic}*

How is the library organized or structured to support patrons looking for assistance related to employment or business development?

    a. How are these services provided across the system?

    b. What was the role of individual outlets/branches?

    c. What types of supports do outlets/branches get from the system?

    d. Do you have any specialized collections or software applications that are relevant to patrons looking for assistance related to employment or business development?

        i. If not, are these available at other branches in the system? Are there any challenges for residents to access these resources?

    e. Are there specific programs that you operate at your outlet/branch in partnership with other organizations?

        i. If not, do you routinely refer patrons to these programs? Are there any challenges for residents to access these resources?

    f. Are there staff in your outlet/branch who have specific responsibilities for assisting patrons who are looking for a job or training opportunities?

        i. If not, do you routinely refer patrons to these programs? To other branches in the library system? Are there any challenges for residents to access these resources?

    g. Are there staff in your outlet/branch who have specific responsibilities for assisting patrons who are interesting in starting a business or improving their existing business?

        i. If not, do you routinely refer patrons to these programs? Are there any challenges for residents to access these resources?

    h. Do the staff in your outlet/branch have any specific training that is relevant to workforce development or to business development?

    i. Do you market or promote workforce or business development services? If so, how and to whom?

3. During the COVID-19 crisis, how did your specific *library branch* help improve economic conditions in your community? Were there any specific efforts to meet the needs of local residents related to employment or business success? What were some of the factors that limited what you were able to do during this time period? Were there any factors that enhanced your ability to adapt during this period?

4. Do you anticipate any changes in how you will help improve economic conditions in your community as you resume more regular operations?

    a. Do you anticipate any changes in the demand/need for your workforce or business development services?

    b. Did your branch receive any federal funds directly, or through the state or local governments related to pandemic recovery? If so, how much and how will they be used?

    c. What are the challenges in continuing to contribute to workforce and business development as you resume more regular operations?

    d. Do you anticipate any changes in how services are structured across the system as a result of the pandemic? If so, why?

5. How aware are you of the other organizations in your community who provide workforce development services? Business development services?

    a. Who are these organizations?

    b. Do library staff regularly refer patrons to other services in the community that provide workforce or business development services? If so, who do library staff refer patrons to?

    c. Do you partner in any other way with these organizations in your community?

    d. Do you think other organizations in the community are aware of the services in the library and refer residents to these services for help related to employment or business services? If so, which organizations typically refer residents to the library for services?

6. How do you measure and communicate your role in contributing to workforce development or business development services within the community?

   a. Do you track information on the patrons who utilize these services? Their demographic characteristics? How they are using resources? The results of the assistance they are receiving?

   b. What are key challenges to tracking the activities of patrons?

   c. Does the system have any specialized software for tracking patron's activities?

   d. What are the key challenges to tracking the outcomes of the assistance that is provided?

   e. Do you participate in any state or national outcome measurement efforts?

   f. Does your library share any data practices or platforms with workforce or business development organizations?

      i. If so, what kind of data is shared? What does this allow you to measure?

      ii. What challenges may arise in sharing data with these organizations?

   g. Would you be willing to implement an online survey to patrons who are using the library's computers or other services for employment or business development purposes? What would you be willing to ask? What do you think would be difficult to ask?

7. Do you have interest in doing more to help patrons with their employment or business development needs? If so, what would you ideally like to do and what are the challenges you face in providing more assistance?

8. Does your branch receive any support from your state in terms of your role in workforce or business development? Are there any specific state programs or practices that are relevant?

Site visit semi-structured interview protocol
External stakeholders – <u>Staff from workforce and business development service providers</u>

This protocol is only relevant for workforce development or business development organizations that are partnering directly with libraries

Review the interview protocol introduction with interviewee.

1. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, how did the library or libraries in your community help improve economic conditions in your community?

   a. Are you aware of any services they provide to patrons that helped with access to employment (i.e., resumes, job searches)?

   b. Are you aware of any services they provide to help residents gain the skills needed to get a job or advance in their career?

   c. Are you aware of any services they provide to help residents start or grow a business?

   d. *IF A SERVICE PROVIDER*: Do library staff refer patrons to you? Do you have any way of tracking these referrals? Do you refer any residents to the libraries for services or information?

   e. Do you think library workforce development services capture segments of the populations that may not be served by other providers?

   f. Are you aware of any indirect contributions of libraries to workforce or business development (e.g., impact of library location on community wellbeing, foot-traffic, business location decisions)?

2. During the COVID-19 crisis, how did the local library or libraries help improve economic conditions in your community? Were there any specific efforts to meet the needs of residents related to employment? Did they fill any critical gaps that were identified?

3. Have you ever partnered with a library on a specific program or service? If so:

   a. Can you describe the nature of the partnership and how it developed?

   b. What did you learn through this process?

c. Were there any particular challenges related to the partnership?

4. Are staff from the library ever included in any coalitions, convenings, or collaboratives in your community related to economic development (including workforce or business development)? Why or why not?

5. Do you have interest in doing more in partnership with your local library? Are there opportunities for your local library to better contribute to workforce or business development? If so, what would you ideally like to do and what are the challenges you would face?

6. IF SERVICE PROVIDER: How do you measure and communicate your role in contributing to workforce and/or business development services within the community?

   a. How do you currently track and report on employment related outcomes associated with the services that you provide?

   b. How do you track, if at all, patrons that are referred to your organization by a library?

   c. Does your organization share any data practices or platforms with a library?

      i. If so, what kind of data is shared? What does this allow you to measure?

      ii. What challenges may arise in sharing data with a library?

7. In the economic recovery related to the pandemic, what is your community focusing on, and is the library involved in any of the recovery efforts?

Site visit semi-structured interview protocol
External stakeholders – <u>Civic leaders from business community and public sectors</u>

This protocol is only relevant to individuals in the community who are involved in civic organizations, such as chambers of commerce or economic development organizations and public sector staff or elected officials.

Review the interview protocol introduction with interviewee.

1. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, how did the library in your community help improve economic conditions in your community?

    a. Are you aware of any services they provide to patrons that helped with access to employment (i.e., resumes, job searches)?

    b. Are you aware of any services they provide to help residents gain the skills needed to get a job or advance in their career?

    c. Are you aware of any services they provide to help residents start or grow a business?

2. During the COVID-19 crisis, how did the local library help improve economic conditions in your community? Were there any specific efforts to meet the needs of residents related to employment? Did they fill any critical gaps that were identified?

3. Have you ever partnered with a library on a specific workforce or business development program or service? If so:

    a. Can you describe the nature of the partnership?

    b. What did you learn through this process?

    c. Were there any particular challenges related to the partnership?

4. Are staff from the library ever included in any coalitions, convenings, or collaboratives in your community related to economic development (including workforce or business development)? Why or why not?

5. Are there opportunities for your local library to better contribute to workforce or business development? If so, what would you ideally like them to do and what are the challenges they would face?

6. Have you ever seen any data about how your local library contributes to economic well-being in your community? What type of data would be useful to better understand what role the local library plays in workforce development and economic development?

7. In the economic recovery related to the pandemic, what is your community focusing on, and is the library involved in any of the recovery efforts?