

# **The Role of Libraries in the National Workforce Development System**

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**Introduction**

Background on career services at libraries in NJ  
NJ State Library efforts in this area

2

**Study Overview**

Summary of Heldrich's study history and methods

3

**Services Overview**

Highlights of key career services offered at local libraries

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**Common Challenges and Examples**

List of common challenges expressed by library staff and examples of local efforts to working to address them

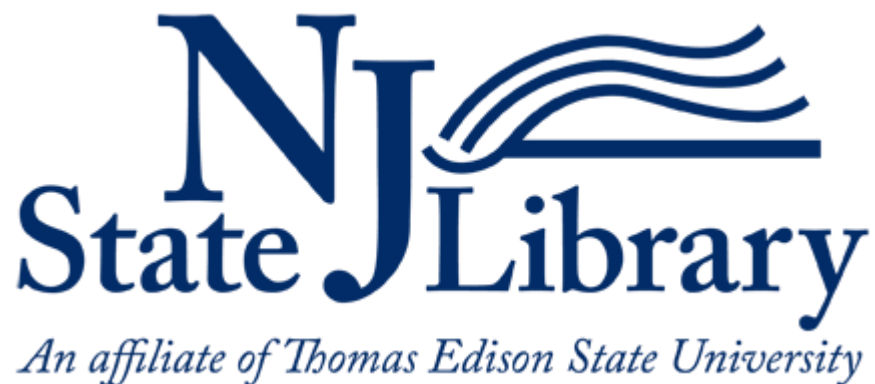


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# HELDRICH CENTER STUDY

## Performance Metrics for Libraries Providing Career Services

JUNE 2018

Stephanie Holcomb, Research Associate  
John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

**RUTGERS**  
Edward J. Bloustein School  
of Planning and Public Policy

## Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Study: Performance Metrics for Libraries Providing Career Services

### About the Heldrich Center

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University is a university-based organization devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center, located within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policy-making and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective educational and training programs. It is also deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

As captured in its slogan, "Solutions at Work," the Heldrich Center is guided by a commitment to translate the strongest research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and government officials can use to strengthen their workforce and workforce readiness programs, create jobs, and remain competitive. The center's work strives to build an efficient labor market that matches workers' skills and knowledge with the evolving demands of employers. The center's projects are grounded in a core set of research priorities:

- Disability Employment
- Education and Training
- Unemployment and Reemployment
- U.S. Labor Market and Industry
- Workforce Policy and Practice
- Work Trends Surveys

Learn more: [www.heldrich.rutgers.edu](http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu)



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Planning

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- Proposal Review
- Research Plan
- Research Questions

2

Data Collection

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- Document Review
- Survey
- Interviews

3

Evaluation Analysis

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- Thematic Coding
- Analysis of Findings

4

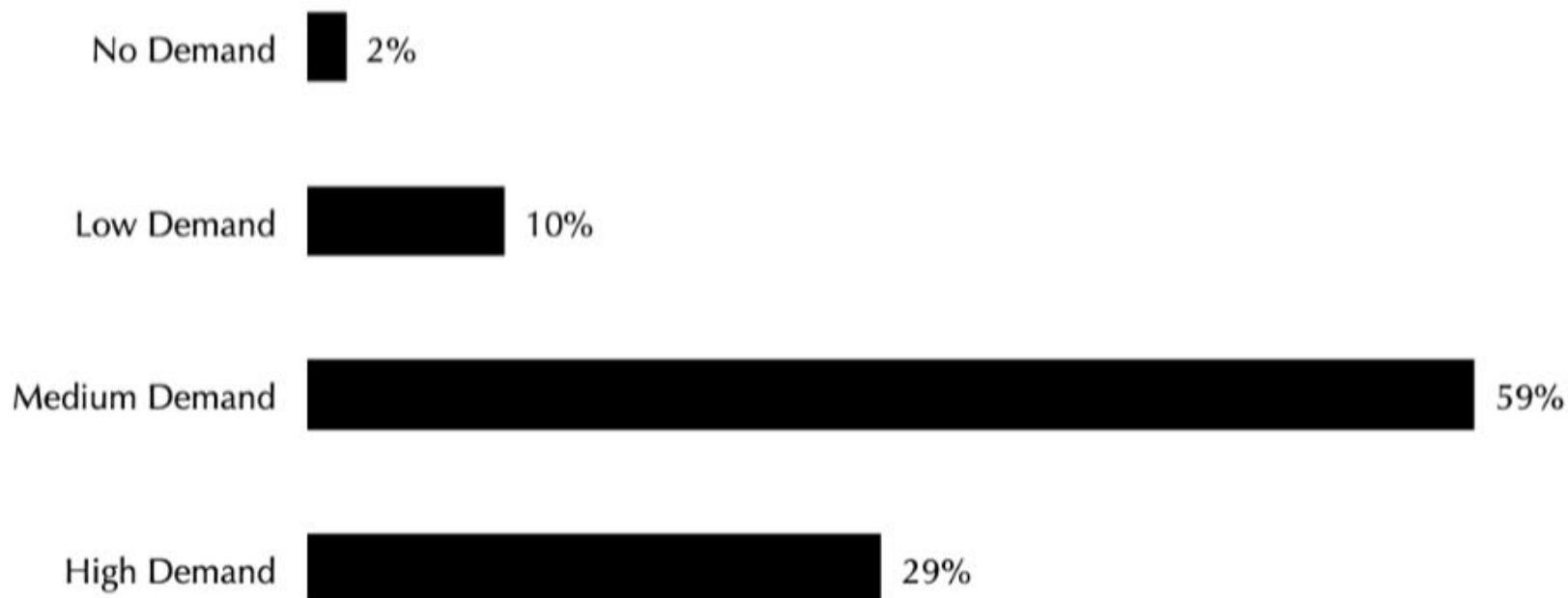
Reporting

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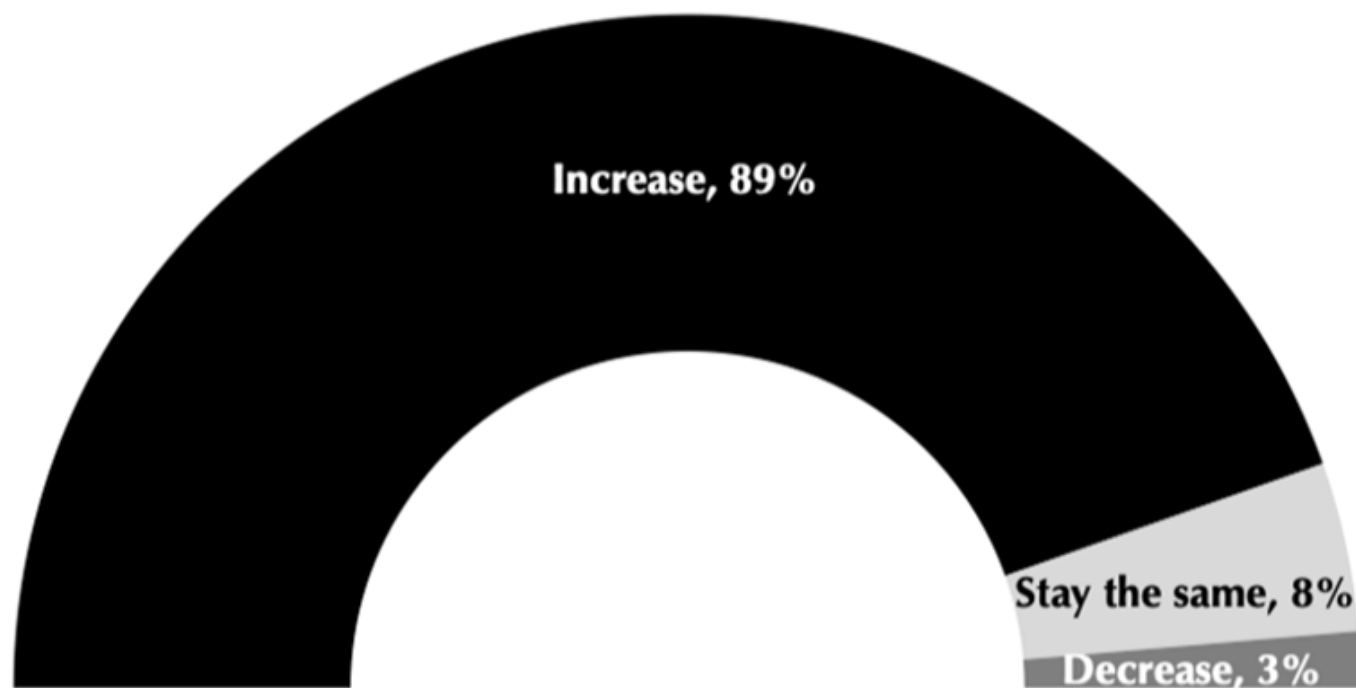
Method	Scope
Literature Review	Websites Program Materials Annual Reports
Survey	Target: Sent to 150 State Library Staff (3 per state) Response Rate: $55/150 = 37\%$ Coverage: 35 states
Interviews	Target: Contacted 60 local libraries Response Rate: $22/60 = 37\%$ Coverage: 21 states

## Question: How would you describe the current demand for career services?



*Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development*

Question: Do you think the role of public libraries in career services will increase, decrease, or stay the same?



*Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development*

# **WHAT TYPES OF CAREER SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY OFFERED AT YOUR LIBRARY?**



Classes

Online Job Search Support

Resume Development

Job Application Assistance

Literacy Programs

Test Preparation

Cover Letter Development

- Flexibility to respond to community needs
- Convenient, welcoming, and responsive nature of public libraries make them the first stop for job seekers
- Historical involvement in this area
- “Residents know us”
- Longer operating hours
- Computer technology and high-speed internet access
- Meeting spaces

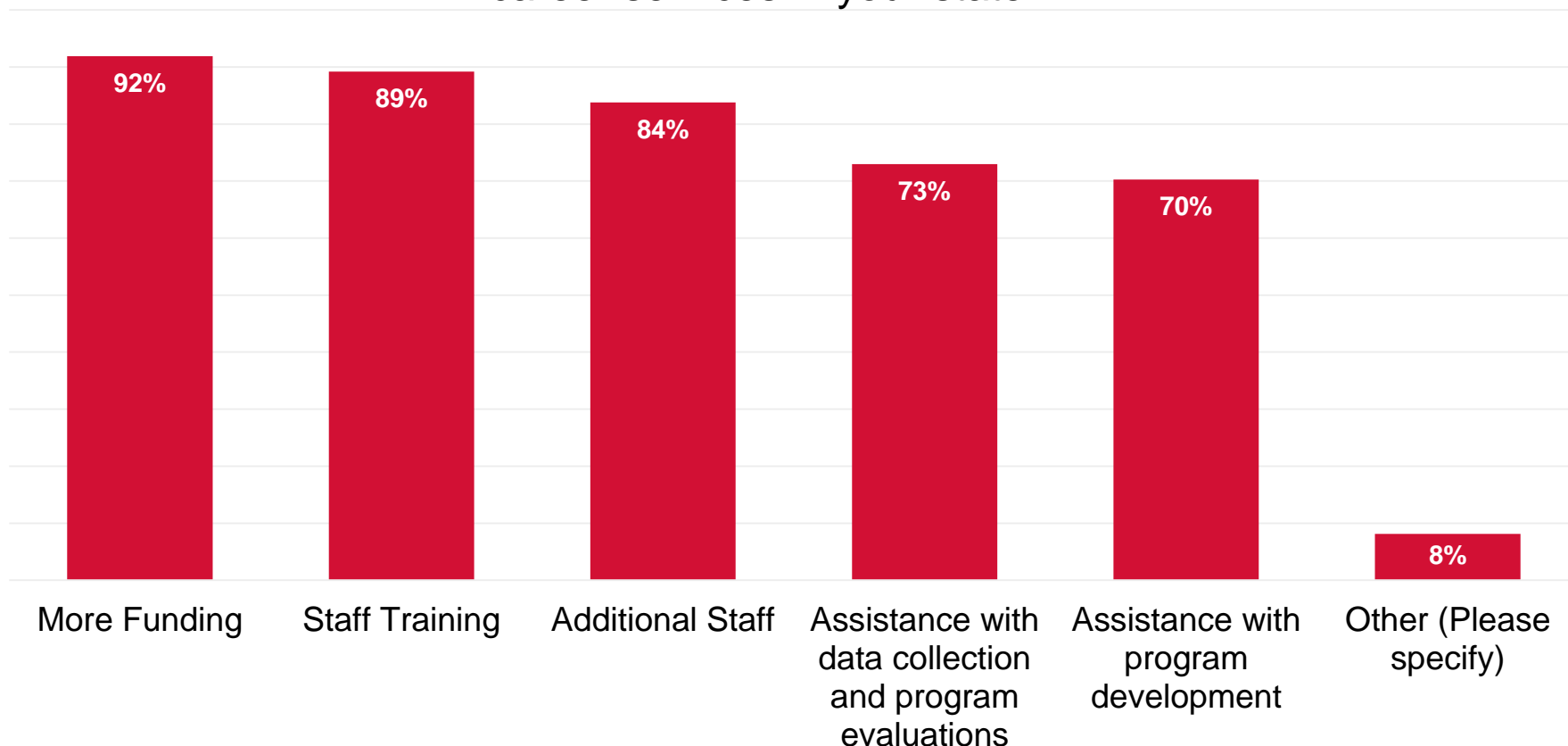
# **COMMON CHALLENGES & EXAMPLES**



# **WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED IN TRYING TO INCORPORATE OR EXPAND CAREER SERVICES?**

# Funding

What type of additional resources would better support library career services in your state?



### LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

#### Millinocket Memorial Library

**State:** Maine

**Service Area Population:** 3,877

**Website:** [millinocketmemoriallibrary.org](http://millinocketmemoriallibrary.org)

Millinocket Memorial Library (MML) is located in a rural area in northern Maine, and serves as a community hub and resource for several nearby towns in its service area. MML provides free Internet access for patrons using library computers, as well as for community members through portable wireless devices in two local public parks, since access to broadband Internet is an issue in the rural community. MML provides employment-related assistance that is tailored to individual needs, computer classes and programs, and space for patrons to connect with potential employers. Additionally, it supports lifelong learning. MML serves a community where access to traditional job assistance is a challenge due to the relatively remote area.

## Staff Time & Training

Our libraries try to help with resume assistance and job searching online, but most do not have a formal program or training for these things

Staff are resistant to training and changes in duties

We don't have enough staff to provide the individual attention job seekers need

When there are not enough staff members to assist patrons with in-depth questions, jobseekers may not receive the extensive help they need

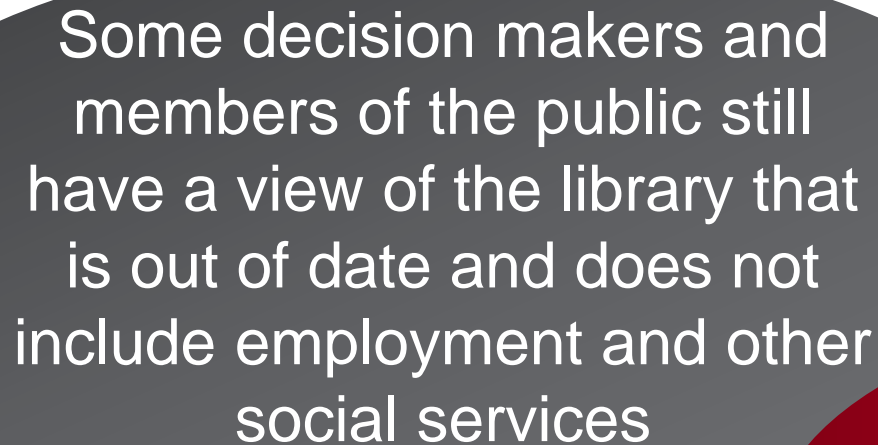


New York  
Public  
**Library**




Kentucky  
**Education &**  
**Workforce &**  
**Development**  
Cabinet

## Awareness of Services



Some decision makers and members of the public still have a view of the library that is out of date and does not include employment and other social services



The biggest challenge is often reaching the people who would most benefit from the services being offered

## Inspiration Space

Is a mini-makerspace, which are collaborative, creative spaces where people can enthusiastically learn about and experiment with technology, entrepreneurship, and DIY activities.

### **MakerSpace**

Makerspaces at Delaware Libraries are shared spaces where people with similar interests can meet to learn, teach, socialize and collaborate around making things. We encourage all Delawareans to engage each other through experimentation, play and creative problem solving.



### Entrepreneurship/Small Business:

Offering programs and assistance to start a business or take your business to the next level. Through our extensive Partner Network, we are able to offer programs for the entrepreneur in libraries throughout the state, as well as making connections to small business assistance in Delaware. NEW! Incorporate your Delaware Business online. Residents can complete the task online or at a Delaware public library.



## Data Collection

There is inconsistency in our data reporting, we do not have the proper tools or time

Public Libraries also have a difficult time making headway at a statewide workforce development level to receive resources and acknowledgement because they do not collect the kinds of data and outcomes necessary to show efficacy and "worth" as workforce development programs typically define those things



**Office of Commonwealth Libraries  
Public Library Workforce Development Services  
2017 Survey Highlights**

**Respondents:**

- 200 responding public libraries in April 2017

**Workforce Development Services: (questions 1, 10, and 12)**

- 72% offer workforce services. Of these, 13% focus on low-income residents.
- 50% rank workforce services as a medium priority; 14% rank them as a high priority.

**Workforce Development Assets: (question 13)**

- Top-ranked workforce service assets:
  - Operating hours, including weekend hours (90%) and evening hours (85%);
  - Computer technology and high-speed internet access (84%);
  - Library collections (74%), meeting space (72%), and physical location (67%).

**Workforce Services: (question 2, 3, 4)**

- 100% provide Internet access (desktop and Wi-Fi); 29% lend laptops or tablets;
- 70% provide online resources on subjects such as careers and occupations, text preparation, and job-search skills;
- 50% hold classes on computer job-search skills; 39% hold classes on resume writing or interviews; and
- 31% hold classes on planning for educational expenses.

**Partnerships with Community Organizations: (questions 6-8)**

- 61% have workforce-related partnerships. Top-ranked partner types:
  - Local CareerLink office (54%);
  - Non-profits that serve low-income residents (41%); and
  - Local literacy organizations (36%).
- Top-ranked partnership activities:
  - Partners providing information or resources to the library (69%);
  - Libraries making referrals to partner agencies (63%); and
  - Partners using library space for activities (45%).

**Support that Would Benefit Library Workforce Services: (question 14)**

- Top-ranked items that would help libraries provide workforce services are:
  - More funding (71%) or more staff time (66%);
  - More staff training (61%); and
  - Help developing workforce classes and programming (59%).

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG

LIBRARY

**FY17 Programming: An Overview  
September 18, 2017**

**Workforce Development Programs**

The Public Library Association's Project Outcome *Job Skills Survey* was distributed to workforce development program participants at the Library's job help centers in April and May 2017 to pilot the *Job Skills Survey*. There were 58 surveys completed.

The results were as follows:

- **96.5%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement – *You feel more knowledgeable about the job search process*
- **91.2%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement – *You feel more confident about the job search process*
- **98.2%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement – *You will use what you learned today in the job search process*
- **94.4%** agreed or strongly agreed with this statement – *You are more aware of applicable resources and services provided by the library*

## Partnerships

There are so many organizations that can provide different services to assist libraries in their mission to help, it can be overwhelming knowing where to start, or which organization would be the best partner.

Strategic partnerships can be hampered when government agencies see libraries as competition for their funding and statistics.



*Source: 2018 Career Services at Public Library Study, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development*



**Nevada CareerExplorer**  
powered by Headed2>

Explore ▾

Decide ▾

Grow ▾

Search



# What's your plan?



**DO THESE CHALLENGES LINE UP  
WITH YOUR EXPERIENCES?**

**HAVE YOU TRIED TO IMPLEMENT  
ANY OF THESE OR OTHER  
SOLUTIONS?**

# In Conclusion....

There are many strengths that make libraries a first stop when community members are looking for career services, but several key challenges inhibit some libraries from doing as much as they could. Innovative approaches, new partnerships, and targeted marketing could increase awareness and sustainability of important efforts already taking place.



# Contact Information

**For more information, please contact:**

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