



LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Business and Career Support for Immigrants and New Arrivals

In the United States, immigrants, refugees, and other new arrivals frequent their public libraries for free, trustworthy, and accessible information and services. As of 2022, 46.2 million immigrants lived in the United States, representing 13.9% of the population. This includes naturalized citizens, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, and unauthorized immigrants.

Libraries across the U.S. meet the needs of new arrivals and their families by offering services focused on strengthening job skills, increasing digital literacy, learning career-essential English language skills, and navigating the small business ecosystem. Library services for immigrants also include adult education and citizenship classes.

Recognizing that these basic skills go hand in hand with economic opportunity, libraries offer job skill and entrepreneurial programs which incorporate English language learning and information about the U.S. work, business, and regulatory systems. This support helps new Americans to identify career pathways and workforce opportunities, start small businesses, and ultimately to engage in the local economy and support themselves and their families.



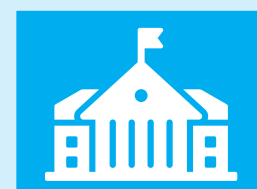
28.6 million, or 17% of the U.S. labor force is comprised of immigrants—a threefold increase since 1970.¹



25% of new businesses formed in the United States are started by immigrants, with some states reporting a rate of 40%.²



Immigrants are 10% more likely to own their own business compared to native-born Americans.³



Over 55% of new arrivals to the U.S. use their local library at least once per week.⁴



LEARN MORE AT
ala.org/advocacy/economic-opportunity

1. tinyurl.com/mig-policy 2. tinyurl.com/nber-working 3. tinyurl.com/bipart-policy
4. tinyurl.com/new-americans; tinyurl.com/imls-new-americans

CASE STUDIES

Library Career and Entrepreneurship Programs for Immigrants and New Arrivals



King County (WA) Library

System's Invest in Yourself program assists micro-entrepreneurs and jobseekers, with a particular focus

on helping immigrants to **navigate U.S. regulatory systems** (such as tax filing) and access small business support.



Appleton (WI) Public Library

developed a business skills academy designed to teach community members the fundamen-

mentals of successful business ownership, including **marketing, financial planning, and customer service**. The library also hosted a popular storytelling series for immigrant entrepreneurs to share strategies and best practices for small business and to foster connections and supportive relationships among the business community.



The Queens (NY) Public Library

offers career support, including ESOL courses and technology literacy, which has helped immi-

grants enter **careers that require English language proficiency**. In addition, the library's Ready 4 Business program offers support for immigrant entrepreneurs. Graduates of the program apply learned competencies toward a wide range of careers, including opening restaurants and real estate.

Providence (RI) Public Library's

Small Business Hub provides resources for prospective entrepreneurs and a yearlong **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for Entrepreneurs class**, focused on a business-specific vocabulary and navigating common work-related conversations. The Small Business Hub partners with SCORE, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Center for Women and Enterprise.



Los Angeles Public Library's Sea

Un Vendedor Ambulante Exitoso (**Successful Street Vending**) program provides micro-enterprise learning modules in Spanish and English for the estimated 50,000 street vendors or other microbusinesses in L.A. Topics include digital skills, community safety, business basics, and Los Angeles-specific regulatory and permitting information.



Hartford (CT) Public Library's

in-house adult education and career services hub, The American Place, provides GED preparation, ESOL courses, career support, and immigration-specific services—including **U.S. citizenship programs and green card renewal assistance**. The library also hosts a regional branch of the American Jobs Center to provide community members with specialized job support services.

