

Identifying Entrepreneurial Needs

 **creative startups**

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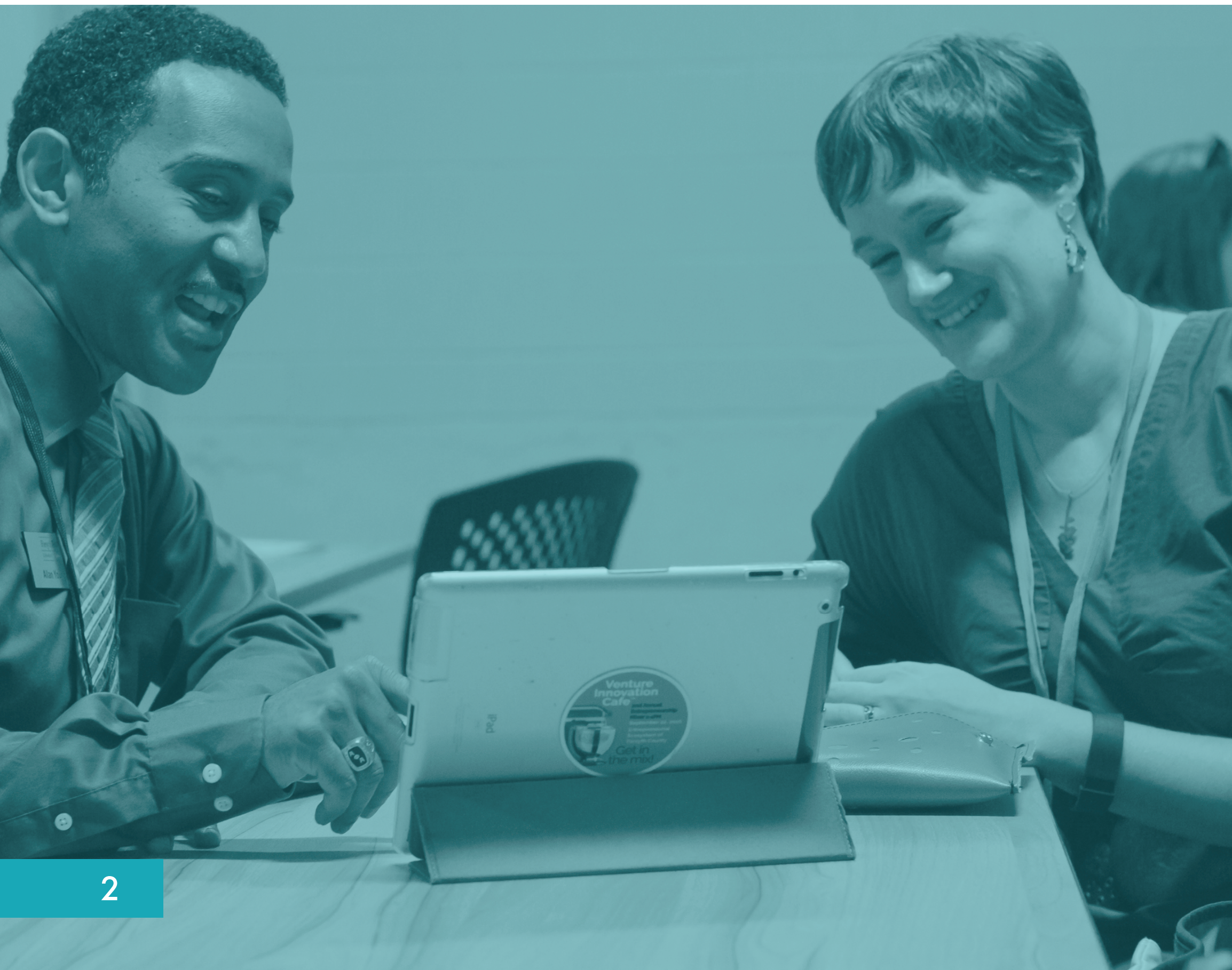
AN ENTREPRENEUR'S JOURNEY

I have an idea, now what?



Entrepreneurship by
NECESSITY **VERSUS**
Entrepreneurship by
OPPORTUNITY

*Entrepreneurs start their
journeys for different reasons.*



| By Necessity

Someone starting a business because they:

- + Moved to an unfamiliar place;
- + Can't find employment.



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| By Opportunity

Someone who starts a business because they see a gap in the market that they can fill because they have:

- + The right skills;
- + The resources required;
- + The network.



Stages

Understanding the stage a business is in helps better recommend resources.

- + **Exploring** (I have just started thinking about something...)
- + **Idea** (I have an idea that might be a business)
- + **Prototyping** (In my garage I have built a product that will make it easier to stack shoes on each other in the hallway)
- + **Prototyping with Customers and/or Users** (I have delivered my first cakes for weddings. And I am being paid!!!)
- + **Growth/Expansion** (I need a bigger kitchen to be able to sell salsa to a larger market)
- + **Mature/Steady stage** (I have been designing kitchens for 15 years. Are there any ways I can make it less labor intensive?)
- + **Exit** (I want to sell my company!)





HOW THE LIBRARY CAN OFFER SUPPORT

You're never expected to be an expert!



How can you contribute?

Each entrepreneur will need something different so use your best judgment.

- + **Listen and ask questions** - understand where they are in their journey and what they need;
- + **Direct to relevant resources** - suggest resources, groups, organizations, and/or people that could be useful to them;
- + **Keep yourself updated** - know about current resources, new initiatives, and who to direct entrepreneurs to at local support agencies/organizations/government offices.



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Things to avoid

Your expected to recommend and direct patrons to resources - not be a business expert.

- + Spending more time than the entrepreneur - if they aren't willing to put in the time, why should you;
- + Trying to be an expert - your job is not to be a business expert, no one can be an expert in every industry or topic;
- + Doing it for them - if they are not willing to do the work, they are not likely cut out to be an entrepreneur.



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ENTREPRENEUR REFERENCE INTERVIEW

Identifying entrepreneurial needs



The Library's Role

The goal of understanding the needs of an entrepreneur is - similarly to that of any other patron - to be able to recommend, direct to, and sometimes help interpret relevant resources.

- + It's important to remember that the library can suggest, not do!
- + Your job is not to be a business expert!
- + Your job is to be a resource expert:
 - + Resources available in the library or online;
 - + Resources (or assets) that you mapped out in your community.



Reference Interview

Entrepreneur Reference Questionnaire

Name of Entrepreneurs:

Name of Business:

Contact Information: (phone) (email)
(website) (social media)

1. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF YOUR BUSINESS?

- Hobby
- Part time
- Full time just for me
- Full time with employees

2. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WILL SOLVE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS/ THOSE WHO PAY YOU?

(e.g., there is no place to get Mexican food in our town, parents don't have time to read to their kids, people don't know how to make a budget)

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Reference Interview

3. WHAT MARKET SPACE YOU ARE IN?

(e.g., food & beverage, kids yrs 3-5 entertainment, adult education)

4. WHAT STAGE ARE YOU IN RIGHT NOW?

- Exploring (I have just started thinking about something...)
- Idea (I have an idea that might be a business)
- Prototyping (In my garage I have built a product that will make it easier to stack shoes on each other in the hallway)
- Prototyping with Customers and/or Users (I have delivered my first cakes for weddings. And I am being paid!!!)
- Growth/Expansion (I need a bigger kitchen to be able to sell salsa to a larger market)
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- Exit (I want to sell my company!)



Mapping Challenges

5. WHAT ARE CHALLENGES RIGHT NOW?

Example questions to ask:

- What are you working on right now?
- What are you struggling with?
- What are the questions you are trying to get answers to?



Ask the entrepreneur to describe them.



Map the challenges to the assets you have

Challenges	Description	Asset Category and skill/ expertise needed	Comments/Notes
<i>1 Example: I have an idea for a product but I am not sure how to make or produce it.</i>	<i>I want to make a prototype and have people test my product. I need help with creating the prototype.</i>	<i>Experts - Metal smith/electrician Resources - Equipment Networks - Product testers</i>	<i>Potential prototyping needs: welding, electrical wiring</i>
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Community Resources / Assets

This morning we mapped out resources (or assets) available in our communities

- + **Experts**
(Lawyers, entrepreneurs/business owners, CPA's, subject matter experts - operations managers, marketing/social media specialists, industry experts, etc.)
- + **Knowledge**
(Small Business Development Centers, city zoning and permitting, state licensing, data analyzers, etc.)
- + **Networks**
(Entrepreneur groups - Creative Mornings, potential customer, business owners, Chamber of Commerce, local colleges, etc.)
- + **Experiences**
(Incubators/startup programs, pitch events/groups - 1 Million Cups, Makerspaces classes, public speaking groups, etc.)
- + **Resources**
(Building owners, manufacturers, Makerspaces, coder/developers, material retailers, etc.)
- + **Financing and Capital**
(Granting agents, federal funding agencies, banks/lenders, investors, crowd funding platforms, etc.)
- + **Other**
(Things you don't feel fit in the above categories.)



Directing to resources

Directing to Resources

SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT CAN BE DONE

Need	Person/Organization	Skill, resource, or expertise	Contact
<i>Example: Help with prototyping</i>	<i>Que Lab Makerspace</i>	<i>Various tools and equipment + network of experienced makers</i>	<i>Manager: Jane Doe Jane@quelab.com</i>

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A free resource for entrepreneurs

LibrariesAsLaunchpads.org

The Coronavirus crisis is hitting everyone hard, and is especially impacting our small businesses and entrepreneurs. For over ten years Creative Startups have been relentlessly devoted to creative founders executing a bold creative vision, and now more than ever they're committed to seeing creative companies thrive. To achieve that goal, they'll be offering their Libraries as Launchpads program online at no cost to creative entrepreneurs through the end of May. Re-designed to meet the urgent challenges business owners face due to coronavirus, the program supports entrepreneurs in navigating the current economic downturn.

Interested entrepreneurs who register will be invited to a self-guided course which includes a downloadable workbook, 5 modules, case studies, and a Slack community where they can engage with Creative Startups faculty and a community of support.



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