Pima County Public Library (PCPL) in Arizona has been gathering data to measure the impact of the workshops, classes, trainings, and drop-in sessions they provide in the areas of business development, job skills, and digital literacy. The data has led to enhanced partnerships.

Using the Public Library Association's Project Outcome to administer surveys, PCPL has used data to change how the library works with its partners. Project Outcome provides simple survey instruments that public library staff can use to help them measure the outcomes of their library services. The outcomes data measures changes in library users' knowledge, confidence, behavior change, or awareness.

As a PCPL project coordinator explained, "What Project Outcome has helped us do is be more strategic in how we use partnerships." In this case study, we will review two examples – one highlights data used to enhance an existing partnership and another demonstrating data being used to develop a new partnership.

Enhancing Existing Partnerships: SCORE!

Pima County Public Library offered a drop-in service for adults interested in starting a small business. Through the Project Outcome survey data, the library learned that patrons wanted a more structured learning opportunity in addition to one-to-one help.

Library leadership approached an existing nonprofit partner, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), and, together, PCPL and SCORE decided library staff would teach content from the first of five SCORE foundational business workshops during the library's drop-in hours.

PCPL and SCORE co-market their respective business development learning opportunities. SCORE regularly refers people to the library, where they get the foundational training and access to a wide array of business development resources and the library regularly refers people to SCORE when they are ready for mentoring on more advanced business development topics. In this way, the collaboration has helped SCORE with the problem of people going to them for a first appointment and never coming back, which helps SCORE "keep our volunteer mentors happy—otherwise they won't want to do this stuff, because we do it for free… Our mentors like nice, meaty business problems, that they work on with people who are enthusiastic." In this mutually beneficial collaboration, SCORE provides the library with materials, coaching, and occasional in-person support, and the library frees up SCORE mentors to provide higher-level training to patrons who have an increased level of readiness for it. Each partner is doing what they do best— maximizing the efficiency, accessibility, and impact of the services they provide.

Developing New Partnerships: One-Stop

Pima County's Economic Development Plan includes the library's contribution to human infrastructure through support of workforce development and small business creation and growth. In quarterly updates to the county, as well as their recent annual report, PCPL included evidence of their contribution, with outcomes and anecdotes obtained through Project Outcome surveys. One library leader believes these data points contributed to "the County Manager and varied department heads… seeing the library's got it going on… The library does know what they're doing…" which, in turn, led the County Administrator to refer the Pima County One-Stop Career Center to the library when the One-Stop asked the County for additional money. A library leader explains, "The County Administrator said to them, 'Well, are you doing any of that cool stuff like that's happening at the library? If you're not, maybe you need to be partnering with them in order to figure out how to make this work, and then I'll consider giving you some money.' So right there, just the fact that we're able to inform all of this reporting, and that the administrator is aware of it, now departmentally, we are interacting better." The result is a new collaborative effort between the One-Stop and PCPL to provide youth with work experience, as well as college and career readiness programming.

One-Stop youth participate in Teen 365 programming at the library, which helps teens develop skills, connections, and opportunities that can help them create a successful and happy adulthood. The year-round program addresses all aspects of teen development, from academic goals to social and personal interests, and, combined with the One-Stop's efforts to provide employability skills training, helps create pathways to college, career, and entrepreneurship. A manager at the One-Stop

shared, "We complement each other. They have strengths, and we have our strengths. We are highly connected with industry, with business, with folks that are actually making hiring decisions… The library has identified a strength that we are looking at piggy-backing on: technology. Youth today use LinkedIn, social media, they use technology to communicate effectively, and a lot of the employers are doing the same thing. We here at the county are still behind the eight-ball as far as… utilizing social media, technology, videos, YouTube. We are utilizing [the library's] strengths."

Strong leadership and an existing appreciation of the importance of measuring library impact played a big role in PCPL's success using Project Outcome data to build and strengthen partnerships.

Project Outcome is a free online toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library programs and services by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. Participating libraries are also provided with the resources and training support needed to apply their results and confidently advocate for their library's future. Learn more about Project Outcome at www.projectoutcome.org.