

**THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS**  
**Policy Research Institute**

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**The Role of Public Libraries in Local Economic  
Development**

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**Prepared for**  
**The Kansas State Library**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Institute for Public Policy and Business Research undertook this study on behalf of the Kansas State Library. The purpose of the study was to determine how Kansas public libraries could play a more active roll in supporting business and economic development in their communities. The study focused on three primary questions. (1) What is the current level of support for business and economic development by Kansas public libraries? (2) What are the ways that Kansas public libraries might be helpful to local businesses and economic development? (3) What specific steps can Kansas libraries take to develop more active economic development and business assistance programs?

The research employed three main tools: (1) focus groups with librarians and businesses, (2) case studies of four local libraries, and (3) surveys of public libraries, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.

#### *Focus groups*

Focus groups with librarians and businesspersons were held in Hays, Dodge City, Wichita, Topeka, and Iola.

The library focus groups explored librarians' interest in, understanding of, and ability to provide resources for their business communities. The business focus groups probed what businesses think that public libraries can do to support businesses in their local communities. Focus group results were important in designing the questionnaires for the surveys and in interpreting the survey results.

#### *Case Studies*

Case studies were undertaken in Johnson County, Wichita, Hutchinson, and Meade to provide an in-depth look at how selected libraries provide economic development and business resources to their communities.

#### *Surveys*

Surveys of Kansas public libraries, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers were conducted. These surveys were designed to assess the current capacity of the state's public libraries to serve the informational needs of the business community and the extent to which businesses and other economic entities currently make use of public library facilities. In addition, the surveys attempted to explore public libraries' perceptions of their role in serving the business community, and where such service fits into their overall priorities. Finally, the surveys were designed to gather the attitudes of the business community and economic development agencies about the use of the public library for business purposes and possible changes that would allow libraries to better serve the needs of the business community.

## Major Findings and Recommendations

### 1. Major findings relating to the role to be played by public libraries in local economic development and recommendation 1:

The case studies of large libraries such as those in Wichita and Johnson County clearly show that those libraries play an important role in providing materials and services to the business community.

Information gathering and research are essential for many (but not all) types of businesses. This is supported by the fact that about a third of businesses have their own libraries, as shown by the survey of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers. The results of that survey show that nearly a third of businesses and economic development organizations in all parts of the state use public libraries as a resource. These results also show that businesses need general as well as specialized knowledge; a high proportion of businesses that have their own libraries also use the resources and services of public libraries, in most cases their local public libraries.

Furthermore, the businesses that do use public libraries as a resource express a fairly high degree of satisfaction with the resources and services that they receive from the libraries.

However, there is room for an expanded role for the states' public libraries. Beyond the provision of traditional business reference service, public librarians do not always know how to assist in informational activities that would proactively foster local economic development. Many business people do not think of the public library as a source of such help, because although librarians are more than willing to exert extra effort on behalf of businesses, they often lack funds for narrowly-focused collections and the training needed to meet highly-specialized business needs.

**Recommendation 1:** Public Libraries could and should play a larger roll in local economic development, especially in providing resources for existing business and for potential business startups.

### 2. Major findings related to the training of library staff in the area of serving the needs of business and economic development and recommendation 2:

Although most libraries have staff that are trained in generalized skills, such as the use of electronic resources in the library, that can be made responsive to the needs of the business community, the majority of libraries do not have a staff person who has received training in serving the needs of patrons who request business or economic information. In addition, only about a third of the public libraries have a person who is designated to handle the requests for information and services from the business community.

Public libraries themselves state that an important barrier to providing effective service to the business community is staff who are insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community. And businesses that use the public library say that the library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request is a major barrier faced when businesses use library services.

Currently, it appears that library staff members often get their training in serving the needs of business by getting experience on the job. This may not be the most efficient method for training staff in fulfilling the demands of business; even worse, unless a staff member is given time to learn the necessary skills on the job, he or she may never reach an appropriate level of expertise.

Several methods of meeting the training needs of library staff in satisfying the demands of the business community could be explored. One avenue might be to have the library school at Emporia State University offer a course in managing business collections for those getting a library science degree. Such a course would prepare librarians with library science degrees to handle the diverse requirements of the business community.

Simply making formal training available to those obtaining library degrees would not be sufficient to solve the training problem, however. First of all, it would take some time before such personnel were generally employed in the state's public libraries. But more importantly, there are many libraries in which a high level of formal training is simply not present; nearly two-thirds of the state's public libraries have no staff with a Master of Library Science degree. A complementary training program with the goal of producing one specially trained staff member in each library with an annual budget of \$100,000 per year or more could be developed under the leadership of the Kansas State Library. The actual program could be developed under the guidance of the business librarians from the Johnson County Library, the Wichita Public Library, and perhaps one or two other large public libraries in the state and could be administered and delivered by the state's Regional Library Systems.

Public libraries with annual budgets of less than \$100,000, though less stressed in terms of business-demands, may find themselves met with economic development requests as well. A statewide electronic and telephone referral list of business reference and economic development specialist librarians could be developed for their use by the Kansas State Library.

**Recommendation 2:** The question of training for library staff in the area of serving the needs of business and economic development should be addressed explicitly.

3. *Major findings related to the level of business resources in the state's public libraries and recommendation 3:*

More than two-thirds of the libraries in the survey cited the high cost of business materials relative to their low usage rates as a very important barrier to providing

effective service to the business community. This was higher than for any other barrier. In addition, almost another fifth cited it as a somewhat important barrier. Only 12 percent of the libraries in the survey felt that it was not a barrier.

Well over half of the libraries feel that having an inadequate budget to purchase materials and services requested by business patrons is a very important barrier to providing effective service to the business community. Another fourth feel that it is a somewhat important barrier. Only 17.5 percent feel that it is not an important barrier.

In most libraries, interlibrary loans are the means of fulfilling business information requests less than 10 percent of the time. One interpretation of this number, born out by the responses of some businesses in the focus groups, is that inter-library loans are often too slow to meet the information needs of businesses.

Even the Wichita Public Library, with its large size and significant history of providing service to business, appears to be struggling a bit with moving to electronic and Internet-based references. The state library system could probably provide basic Internet-based reference services for all libraries in the state at a lower cost than if all of the libraries sought to acquire them on their own. The role of the local library would be to provide computer access along with some trained staff to assist individuals in using the references.

**Recommendation 3:** The state library system should investigate the possibility of providing additional business resources on-line for all of the libraries in the state.

4. Major findings related to computer capacity in public libraries and recommendation 4:

It is clear from the business survey results that the size and resources of public libraries varies widely. A large number of the libraries in the state are relatively small and have very limited budgets. About two-thirds of the public libraries impose time-limits on their on-line searching, indicating that the resources for accomplishing such searches are scarce.

On the other hand, technology improvements, including new and upgraded computers, are the top priority for the next 5 years among public libraries across the state. In libraries that have specific programs or policies designed to meet the needs of the business community, those programs are most likely to involve computing – the creation of a computer lab, Internet use, or Web page development.

Providing funding for computing that is explicitly a part of a state library system program aimed at improving the services and resources that public libraries provide for business and economic development is an example of public support for libraries in this area. On a smaller scale, such support by the Wichita City Commission for business references and information, was the impetus for the public library to really get started in the business

area. Perhaps statewide support would provide impetus to public libraries across the state. This impetus would be even stronger if the state library system provided additional support for business and economic development resources through setting up a training program and providing electronic databases for public libraries.

**Recommendation 4:** The state library system should investigate the possibility of providing funding for computer equipment in libraries across the state.

5. Major findings related to relaxing resource constraints in public libraries and recommendation 5:

In terms of the resources available for improving service to business patrons, most libraries face severe budget constraints. The library survey showed that for most libraries, their highest budgetary priorities did not specifically include a focus on providing resources and information for business and economic development. This is most clearly indicated by the fact that when asked “How important, relative to your budget, would the adding to a business or economics section be?” only 13.3 percent of the libraries responded that it would be very important.

Libraries' resource constraints are also illustrated by the fact that libraries find the lack of funds or staff time to promote library resources and services to the business community to be one of the most significant barriers to improving service to the business community. More directly on point, libraries also find that having their staff insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community poses an important barrier to improving service to business.

In the library survey, libraries were positive about the possibility of “obtaining resources from a centralized site with specialized resources and personnel” as a way of improving service to business patrons. More than 60 percent of libraries were “very willing” to do so, while another 30 percent were “somewhat willing.”

Although currently most businesses go to the library in order to access business information and services, telephoning the library was the second most frequent method of access. In case studies, the large libraries with business reference librarians reported a high volume of business requests that were handled completely over the telephone. Businesses say that the most important improvement that public libraries could make to improve their service to business is to make the library electronically accessible from the office. Barring that, the next closest thing might be to make library resources and expertise available over the phone.

A telephone reference service requires access to a very extensive set of reference materials. An equally critical part of such a system is highly-trained librarians to interpret business requests for information, to gather the information quickly, and to communicate the information to the businesses and economic development professionals. Supporting such an operation is undoubtedly beyond the capabilities of small or even medium-sized

libraries. For smaller libraries especially, the volume of requests would be low enough that such an operation would not be cost efficient.

A centralized telephone business reference system could be operated from a single location. One of the large urban libraries like the Johnson County Library or the Wichita Public Library would already be well along in terms of collections and staff expertise. It might make sense to locate a telephone business reference service in one of those libraries. Or if libraries and businesses would be more likely to call a regional center (a position that was expressed during the focus groups), such centers could be established at both of the libraries mentioned above as well as at one more location further west.

**Recommendation 5:** The state library system should investigate the possibility of a centralized phone reference service for business questions.

6. Major findings related to the standards for business resources that should be available in libraries of different sizes and recommendations 6A, 6B and 6C:

Both the surveys and the focus groups brought out the growing importance of the Internet to businesses and economic development as a source of information. It is likely that this source of information will become even more important as time goes on. An adequate number of computers as well as computers with sufficient power and features are important not only for providing Internet access but also for giving the library a basis for searching on-line and CD-ROM or DVD databases that may become available to the library. More than 90 percent of public libraries currently allow patrons to use the Internet at the library.

From the surveys, local economic and demographic information and local government regulations and reports are two types of information that are not specific to particular kinds of business that businesses frequently use. It is appropriate for this type of information to be kept at the local library level.

Although the survey of existing businesses could not bring out the importance of materials on business startups, the focus groups and the surveys of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers raised the importance of such a resource. Such materials could have a general component that could be common to all libraries in the state and also features that would be specific to the local community, such as local regulations or resources available in the local community. Two-thirds of libraries already have resources for small business startups.

Although the resources available at the local library may be minimal, it is important that library staff be aware of what these resources are and how they can be used to answer business questions. It is also essential that they know what questions cannot be answered using local resources, and be able to access outside resources or send businesses to them. Such outside resources may be contained in other public libraries or in regional centers as suggested in another recommendation.

Marketing and in general keeping businesses and potential new businesses aware of the public library's resources for helping business is crucial. Businesses that do not use a public library cite the library's failure to market or communicate its services to business patrons as a significant barrier to the use of the public library by businesses. To the extent that they do so, small libraries today tend to use newspaper or radio advertising and special promotional events to inform the business community of the resources that they have available. Whether these are the most effective forms of marketing and communication, and whether they are extensive enough, should be investigated further.

Public libraries have generally established relationships with local business organizations, either by having a representative who is a member of such an organization (nearly three-fourths of public libraries), or by meeting with business people to explain the resources that the libraries have (three-fourths of public libraries). Furthermore, libraries firmly express a willingness to establish strong relationships with local Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers as a step in improving their services to the business and economic development communities. As some in the focus groups pointed out, such relationships could pay off in broader community support for all of the library's activities.

**Recommendation 6A:** There should be a minimal configuration of business resources in small libraries. The general shape of this configuration would include:

1. Internet access;
2. Adequate number of sufficiently high quality computers;
3. Local demographic and economic information;
4. Local government regulations and reports;
5. Materials on business startups;
6. Staff training on the business resources, materials, and services available at the library;
7. A plan or schematic for where to send patrons who seek business-related materials when they are not available at the public library;
8. Some training for staff on whom to contact or where to send patrons for business resources that are not available at the public library;
9. A kit for businesses that describes the resources available to them at the public library;
10. An ongoing method of informing businesses and potential businesses of the library's business resources and services;
11. Regular contact with local business and economic development organizations.

The features of medium sized libraries would include those listed in recommendation 6A for small libraries plus some additional features. Some of the features of small libraries might themselves be more extensive in medium-sized libraries. For example, an adequate number of computers for Internet access will be greater as the library gets larger. Furthermore, the amount of staff training that will be necessary so that a staff member

knows what business references and services are available at the library will be greater simply because the quantity of references and services will be larger and more varied.

Many libraries provide resources and services in addition to the ones in listed in recommendation 6A. One-fourth of the libraries surveyed have CD-ROM/DVD databases. Standard and Poor's Register and the Thomas Register are the most commonly held. About one-fourth of the libraries provide access to on-line vendor systems. First Search was the one most commonly cited by librarians in the survey. About one-third of the libraries have on-line databases. OCLC and INFOTRAC were the ones most frequently mentioned by libraries that have such systems. ABI/INFORM and Business Periodicals Index are ones that are most commonly searched.

**Recommendation 6B:** There should be a minimal configuration of business resources in medium-sized libraries. The general shape of this configuration would include, in addition to the resources and services listed for small libraries:

12. Most commonly used CD-ROM/DVD databases; such as Standard and Poor's Register and Thomas Register;
13. Most commonly used on-line vendor systems, e.g. First Search;
14. Most commonly used on-line database systems: e.g. OCLC, INFOTRAC, ABI/INFORM and Business Periodicals Index;
15. State government regulations;
16. A more intensive program of marketing services to business than small libraries;
17. A training program for people interested in using business resources in the public library.

Large libraries can provide an even more extensive array of business services than medium-sized libraries. Among many other resources and services directed towards business, the Johnson County Library and the Wichita Public Library both have a business librarian, a complete set of business references, and an intensive program of marketing services to businesses. As suggested above, these libraries, with some additional resources, might serve as the basis for regional centers for business and economic development information and services.

**Recommendation 6C:** There should be a minimal configuration of business resources in large libraries. The general shape of this configuration would include, in addition to the resources and services listed for small and medium-sized libraries:

18. A business reference librarian;
  19. A "complete" set of business references – including CD-ROM/DVD databases, on-line vendor systems, on-line database systems;
  20. A more intensive program of marketing services to business than small or medium-sized libraries.
7. *Findings related to the role of the state library system in increasing the role played by public libraries in local economic development and recommendation 7:*

The core of the above recommendations involves a strong leadership role for the state library system. The budget limitations and competing demands of local libraries make it extremely unlikely that most will undertake changes that involve a substantial reallocation of their limited resources. However, the stated priorities of local public libraries make it at least possible that strong leadership at the state level could guide them. That leadership would have to take the form of providing some resources (computer equipment, staff training programs, and centralized information resources and services), as well as providing guidelines and a plan for local libraries to move in the desired direction. The examples of Johnson County and Wichita, although they are in many ways atypical, do show that injections of support from their county and city commissions, respectively, have strongly influenced the development of business resources and services at the public libraries. It could be that if the state provides to the state library system some funding dedicated for economic development and business support, public libraries across the state would respond in the same ways that the Wichita Public and Johnson County Libraries have responded to the funding from their county and city commissions.

**Recommendation 7:** The state library system should take a lead role in moving the state's public libraries into taking a larger role in local economic development. State-level leadership and resources will determine the nature and extent of improved library services to business and economic development.



## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Public Policy and Business Research undertook this study on behalf of the Kansas State Library. The purpose of the study was to determine how Kansas public libraries could play a more active roll in supporting business and economic development in their communities. The study focused on three primary questions. (1) What is the current level of support for business and economic development by Kansas public libraries? (2) What are the ways that Kansas public libraries might be helpful to local businesses and economic development? (3) What specific steps can Kansas libraries take to develop more active economic development and business assistance programs?

The research employed three main tools: (1) focus groups with librarians and businesses, (2) case studies of four local libraries, and (3) surveys of public libraries, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.

Focus groups were used to explore the underlying issues and concepts as seen by participants in the relationship between libraries and business. Ten focus groups were conducted in all, five with librarians and five with businesspersons. The focus groups were held in Hays, Dodge City, Wichita, Topeka, and Iola.

The library focus groups explored librarians' interest in, understanding of, and ability to provide resources for their business communities. The business focus groups probed what businesses think that public libraries can do to support businesses in their local communities. The focus group results, aside from being of interest in their own right, were important in designing the questionnaires for the surveys and in interpreting the survey results.

Case studies were undertaken to provide an in-depth look at how selected libraries provide economic development and business resources to their communities. Case studies were undertaken of public libraries in Johnson County, Wichita, Hutchinson, and Meade. The case studies included interviews with librarians as well as local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.

Finally, surveys of Kansas public libraries, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers were conducted. These surveys were designed to assess the current capacity of the state's public libraries to serve the informational needs of the business community and the extent to which businesses and other economic entities currently make use of public library facilities. In addition, the surveys attempted to explore public libraries' perceptions of their role in serving the business community, and where such service fits into their overall priorities. Finally, the surveys were designed to gather the attitudes of the business community and economic development agencies about the use of the public library for business purposes and possible changes that would allow libraries to better serve the needs of the business community.

This report presents the results of the library survey and the survey of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers in detail. It then

presents conclusions and recommendations based on a synthesis of the results of the focus groups, case studies, and surveys. Separate reports on the focus groups and the case studies are contained in an appendix to this report. The survey instruments and frequency tables for the surveys are also included in an appendix.

## SURVEY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### Methodology

A telephone survey of Kansas public libraries was conducted during late November and early December of 1999. The survey population consisted of all Kansas public libraries that provide at least 25 hours of public service per week. The Kansas State Library provided a database of all such libraries. The sample consisted of the entire population of 173 such libraries. A total of 143 surveys were completed.

The survey questionnaire was developed based partly on the results of the focus groups and case studies. The questionnaire was submitted to the Kansas State Library and reviewed by several public libraries throughout the state. Revisions in the survey were made based on this review, leading to the final version that appears in Appendix IV of this document.

### Survey Results

The results of the survey are organized into eight sections. In section 1 the general characteristics of the surveyed libraries are presented to provide a broad picture of the libraries that responded to the survey. Section 2 covers the training of library staff that is relevant to the library's ability to serve the needs of the business community. Section 3 describes the types of business clients that are served by public libraries. Section 4 details the resources – physical layout, materials, and services – that public libraries currently have available for serving the business community. Section 5 discusses the extent and means by which public libraries market their services to, and interact with, businesses. Section 6 summarizes the direction of change of public libraries over the past few years, as perceived by the public libraries themselves. Section 7 examines the attitudes of the public libraries toward serving the business community and ranks the perceived priority of their serving the business community among their many other goals. Section 8 discusses public libraries' perceived barriers to serving the business community and investigates the attractiveness to public libraries of various changes that could be made to improve their service to the business community.

#### *1. Profile of the surveyed libraries*

The characteristics of the libraries that responded to the survey are summarized in Table 1. The salient feature of the table is the size distribution of the state's public libraries; by almost any measure, most of the state's public libraries are relatively small. Looking at their total budgets, nearly 60 percent of the public libraries had budgets of less than \$100,000, while more than 80 percent had budgets of \$300,000 or less. About 10 percent of the libraries had budgets of \$300,000 to \$1 million dollars, while 9 large libraries (6.3 percent) had budgets of over \$1 million. (Of the 146 public libraries in Kansas that were not part of the survey population, only one had an annual budget of about \$50,000 and only six others had budgets over \$20,000.)

Table 1  
Characteristics of Surveyed Libraries

Library Size as Measured by Total Budget

Total budget	Number	Percent
Less than \$100,000	84	58.7
\$100,000 to \$300,000	35	24.4
\$300,000 to \$500,000	8	5.6
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	7	4.9
Over \$1,000,000	9	6.3

Population Served

Number of People	Number	Percent
2000 or less	47	32.9
2001 to 5000	50	35.0
5001 to 10,000	20	14.0
10,001 to 25,000	13	9.1
25,001 to 100,000	9	6.3
More than 100,000	4	2.8

Hours of Service per Week

Hours of service per week	Number	Percent
25 to 30	18	12.6
More than 30 to 40	27	18.9
More than 40 to 50	36	25.2
More than 50 to 60	27	18.9
More than 60 to 100	27	18.9
More than 100	8	5.6

Fulltime Equivalent Staff

Staff	Number	Percent
1 or fewer	24	16.8
More than 1 to 2	33	23.1
More than 2 to 5	47	32.9
More than 5 to 10	18	12.6
More than 10 to 20	11	7.7
More than 20 to 50	6	4.2
More than 50	4	2.8

Total: 143 surveyed libraries

The wide discrepancy in library size is reflected in the distribution of the populations served by the libraries. Nearly a third of the libraries in the survey sample serve populations of 2000 or less, while more than two-thirds serve populations of 5000 or less.

Roughly a fourth of the surveyed libraries serve populations of between 5000 and 25,000, while less than 10 percent serve populations of more than 25,000.

The variability in library size is also reflected in the hours of service per week that libraries provide. Our survey population included only public libraries that provide 25 or more hours of service per week. Among such libraries, nearly a third provide 40 hours per week or less of service. Another fourth provide between 40 and 50 hours per week. Nearly a fifth of the surveyed libraries provide between 60 and a hundred hours of service to the public per week, while 8 of the libraries (5.6percent) provide more than a hundred hours of service per week. (For some large libraries with branches, the number of hours of service per week can be very large because the hours for each branch are counted.)

Finally, the number of full-time equivalent staff varies considerably across libraries, as one would expect. Nearly 17 percent of the surveyed libraries had one or less full-time equivalent staff, while nearly two-fifths had two or less and nearly three-fourths had five or less. Only ten of the surveyed libraries had more than 20 full-time equivalent staff. A few large libraries had full-time equivalent staff of more than 50, with the largest library having more than 200.

There is a wide range on the size of the public libraries in Kansas. Any policy for improving the library’s ability to serve business patrons will have to take explicit account of this extreme variability.

## 2. *Training of library staff*

Table 2 summarizes the full-time equivalent Master of Library Science (MLS) librarians in the surveyed public libraries. A majority of the libraries (65%) have no full-time equivalent MLS librarians, while slightly more than another fifth have between zero and 1 full-time equivalent MLS librarian. Only 7.7 percent of the libraries have more than 2 full-time equivalent MLS librarians and 6 libraries (4.2 percent) have more than 10 such librarians.

Table 2  
Fulltime Equivalent MLS Librarians

MLS librarians	Number	Percent
Zero	93	65.0
More than 0 to 1	31	21.7
More than 1 to 2	8	5.6
More than 2 to 10	5	3.5
More than 10 to 25	3	2.1
More than 25	3	2.1

Total: 143 surveyed libraries

Serving business community needs can possibly be done with less extensive, more focused training than that required for a Master of Library Science degree. Some other types of training are summarized in Table 3. Most libraries have at least one librarian who has received training in using electronic resources in the library (89.5 percent), and most have at least one librarian who has received specialized training in using the Internet (90.2 percent). Many fewer libraries (44.1 percent) have at least one librarian with specialized training in serving the needs of those patrons who request business or economic information.

Table 3  
Libraries in Which At Least One Librarian Has Received Specialized Training in an Area

Area	Number	Percent
Using electronic resources in the library	128	89.5
Using the internet	129	90.2
Serving the needs of those patrons who request business or economic information	63	44.1

Total libraries = 143

Libraries in Which At Least One Librarian Has Received Specialized Training in an Area  
By Size of Library Budget  
(Percent is Percent of Libraries in Size Category)

Total budget	Using electronic resources in the library		Using the internet		Serving the needs of those patrons who request business or economic information	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$100,000	72	85.7	73	86.9	35	41.7
\$100,000 to \$300,000	33	94.3	33	94.3	18	51.4
\$300,000 to \$500,000	8	100.0	8	100.0	2	25.0
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	6	85.7	7	100.0	2	28.6
Over \$1,000,000	9	100.0	8	88.9	6	66.7

Total libraries = 143

These overall training percentages do not vary much when we look at libraries of various sizes. Even among the smallest libraries surveyed (budget less than \$100,000), 85.7 percent report that at least one librarian has received specialized training in using electronic resources in the library. Of these same libraries, 86.9 percent report that at least one librarian has received specialized training in using the Internet, and 41.7 percent report that at least one librarian has received specialized training in serving the needs of those patrons who request business or economic information.

### *3. Types of users of business-related materials served by public libraries*

The types of users and frequency with which they use business-related materials in the public libraries are shown in Table 4. The two types of users of business-related materials that most frequently use these materials are individuals seeking personal investment information (39.9 percent of the libraries reported such users as “frequent” or “very frequent”) and students seeking information about business-related subjects (30.8 percent of the libraries reporting such users as “frequent” or “very frequent”).

The next most frequent type of user of business materials is entrepreneurs or start up companies (20.3 percent of libraries reported such users as “frequent or very frequent”). Personnel from small and medium sized businesses were reported to be “frequent” or “very frequent” users by 11.9 percent of libraries, but very few libraries (2.1 percent) reported personnel from large corporations as “frequent” or “very frequent” users of business-related materials.

Special interest groups seeking information about business-related subjects were cited as “frequent” or “very frequent” users by 9.8 percent of libraries, while companies or institutions with job-training needs were cited as “frequent” or “very frequent” users by 5.6 percent of libraries.

The frequency with which libraries serve various types of business material users is sensitive to the size of the libraries for some types but not others. For instance, the most frequent type of business patron, an individual seeking personal investment information, was cited as a frequent or very frequent type of user by 86.6 percent of the 22 libraries with budgets over \$300,000, but by only 32.2 percent of the libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000. On the other hand, students seeking information about business-related subjects were cited as at least frequent users by 45.5 percent of libraries with budgets over \$300,000 and 28.8 percent of libraries with budgets under \$300,000, and as at least moderate users by 77.3 percent of the former and 63.5 percent of the latter. Libraries appear to serve students seeking business related-materials fairly regularly regardless of library size.

Entrepreneurs and start-up companies appear to be served with greater frequency by larger libraries. Of 22 libraries with budgets greater than \$300,000, 19 (86.4 percent) serve them with at least moderate frequency, while 50 of 118 libraries with smaller budgets (42.4 percent) serve them with at least moderate frequency. Perhaps surprisingly, library size does not seem to be strongly related to the rate at which libraries serve small to medium sized-businesses. Only 2 larger libraries (9.1 percent) said they serve such clients at least frequently, while 15 smaller libraries (12.7 percent) cited such service. The larger libraries were, however, somewhat more likely to say that they serve small to medium-sized businesses moderately than were the smaller libraries.

Table 4  
Types of Users of Business-Related Materials and Frequency of Use  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Type of User	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Moderately	Frequently	Very Frequently
Personnel from small and medium-sized businesses	44 (30.8)	43 (30.1)	36 (25.2)	13 (9.1)	4 (2.8)
Personnel from large corporations	119 (83.2)	14 (9.8)	4 (2.8)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)
Entrepreneurs or start-up companies	43 (30.1)	28 (19.6)	40 (28.0)	23 (16.1)	6 (4.2)
Researchers or technicians from business or government	85 (59.4)	33 (23.1)	18 (12.6)	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)
Students seeking information about business-related subjects	23 (16.1)	25 (17.5)	48 (33.6)	33 (23.1)	11 (7.7)
Special interest groups seeking information about business-related subjects	62 (43.4)	39 (27.3)	25 (17.5)	10 (7.0)	4 (2.8)
Companies or institutions with job training needs	93 (65.0)	26 (18.2)	13 (9.1)	4 (2.8)	4 (2.8)
Individuals seeking personal investment information	23 (16.1)	24 (16.8)	36 (25.2)	31 (21.7)	26 (18.2)

Total Respondents 140; Missing 3.

#### *4. Facilities, materials, and services for serving business patrons.*

Physical facilities for serving business patrons. Libraries' abilities to serve business patrons are influenced by the physical resources of the library, the materials that can be accessed at or through the library, and the services that the library can provide. This section characterizes capacity of the state's public libraries to provide such service.

Only 41 of the 143 libraries surveyed (28.7 percent) have a special reference or service area devoted to business and economics. As one would expect, the existence of such an area depends on the size of the library. All but one of the 9 libraries with budgets over \$1,000,000 have such an area, while 8 of 15 libraries with budgets between \$300,000 and \$1,000,000 have one. Only about a fifth of the smaller libraries (budget less than \$300,000) have a special reference area devoted to business and economics. However, such areas are not totally absent even in the smallest libraries (budget less than \$100,000); 19 of 84 such libraries have a special reference area devoted to business and economics.

Of the 41 libraries that have a special service area devoted to business and economics, 33 described it as a business information area located in the main library. Of the other 8, four described their business and economics reference area as being a part of the reference section or mixed in with the general collection.

Staff allocated to serving business patrons. Only 47 of the 143 libraries (32.9 percent) have a specific person or persons who primarily handle the requests for information and services made by the business community. Half of the larger libraries (budget greater than \$300,000) report having such a person, while 29.4 percent of the smaller libraries (budget less than \$300,000) have such a person. This distribution is stable within smaller groups; for example, 5 of the nine libraries with budgets over \$1,000,000 have such a person and 31 percent of the 84 libraries with budgets less than \$100,000 have such a person.

Materials and services available to business patrons. Libraries were asked about the availability of business information and reference materials. The results are shown in Table 5. The most commonly available of the materials listed are legal indexes, dictionaries, and encyclopedias (available in 86.0 percent of the libraries), employment, occupation and job training resources (available in 81.1 percent of the libraries) and local and state regulations and reports (available in 76.2 percent of the libraries). The distribution is somewhat uniform relative to the size of the libraries. Looking just at libraries with budgets of less than \$100,000, legal indexes, dictionaries, and encyclopedias are available in 84.5 percent of the libraries; employment, occupation and job training resources are available in 72.6 percent of the libraries; and local and state regulations and reports are available in 71.4 percent of the libraries.

The next most commonly available materials are government documents (available in 48.3 percent of the libraries), industry data, statistics and trends (available in 42.7 percent of the libraries), subject and industry-specific newspapers and journals (available in 39.2

percent of the libraries), and company reports and company data (available in 37.1 percent of the libraries). The availability of government documents does not depend on library size. However, industry data, statistics, and trends are available in 79.2 percent of the libraries with budgets over \$300,000 versus only 35.3 percent available in libraries with less than \$300,000 budgets. Subject and industry-specific newspapers and journals (63.5 percent versus 34.5 percent) and company reports and corporate data (79.2 percent versus 28.5 percent) are all more likely to be available in a library with a budget of more than \$300,000 than in a library with a budget of less than \$300,000.

Table 5  
Libraries Whose Collections Contain Specific Business Information or Reference Materials

Type of business information or reference materials	Number	Percent
Subject-specific indexes, like Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company Data	24	16.8
Any government document	69	48.3
Company reports or company data	53	37.1
Industry data, statistics, trends	61	42.7
Subject and industry-specific newspapers, journals	56	39.2
Newspaper clipping files	41	28.7
Newsletters	41	28.7
Local and state regulations and reports	109	76.2
Legal indexes, dictionaries, encyclopedias	123	86.0
Employment, occupation and job training resources	116	81.1

Total libraries = 143

The least commonly available resources are newspaper clipping files and newsletters (each available in 28.7 percent of the libraries) and subject-specific indices like Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company data (available in 16.8 percent of the libraries). The availability of newspaper clipping files does not depend on library size. However, newsletters are about twice as likely to be found in libraries with budgets greater than \$100,000 than in those with budgets less than \$100,000 (40.6 percent to 20.2 percent). Subject-specific indexes are available in over half of the libraries with budgets greater than \$300,000, but in only 10 percent of libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000.

Libraries were also asked if their library holdings contained any CDROM/DVD databases. About one-fourth of the libraries (36 of 143) indicated that their holdings included such databases. The existence of such databases is closely correlated with library size. All 9 libraries with budgets of more than \$1,000,000 have some such databases. Among libraries with budgets between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000, 32 percent have some such databases. Only 13 percent of the smallest libraries (budget less than \$100,000) have any CDROM/DVD databases.

Some types of CDROM/DVD databases that libraries have are shown in Table 6. The most commonly-available databases are Standard and Poor's Register (available at 12 libraries) and Thomas Register (available at 23 libraries). Both of these databases are available at some smaller as well as some larger libraries. The Thomas Register is available at 14 libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000, while the Standard and Poor's Register is available at 6 such libraries. The other databases in the table are available at only a small number of libraries. Four of the five libraries that have ABI/INFORM have budgets of over \$1,000,000. On the other hand, two of the three libraries that have CIRR have budgets of under \$100,000, while three of the 5 libraries that have Compact Disclosure have budgets of under \$300,000. In answer to an open-ended question, five libraries mentioned American Business Disc as a CDROM/DVD database available at their library.

Table 6  
Libraries Whose Collections Contain Various CDROM/DVD Databases

CDROM/DVD Database	Number	Percent
Compact Disclosure	5	13.9
ABI/INFORM	5	13.9
Business Abstracts	1	2.8
CIRR	3	8.6
Standard and Poor's Register	12	33.3
Thomas Register	23	63.9

Total: 36 libraries having any CDROM/DVD databases

Respondents were asked if they had any on-line vendor systems available in their libraries. Thirty-nine of the 143 libraries (27.3 percent) reported having an on-line vendor system available. Half of the 16 libraries with budgets over \$500,000 had an online vendor system available, while 24.4 percent of libraries with budgets under \$500,000 had such a system available.

The particular on-line vendor systems that libraries reported having available are shown in Table 7. The number of libraries that reported having any one of these systems is small. The Dow Jones News Retrieval, DIALOG, and WILSONLINE were each available at four libraries. The Dow Jones News Retrieval was available at 3 of the smallest libraries with budgets under \$100,000 and one library with a budget over \$1,000,000. DIALOG was available at one library with a budget of less than \$300,000, one library with a budget between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000, and two libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000. WILSONLINE was available at two libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000 and two libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000. The other four instances of available on-line vendor systems in Table 7 (two libraries with BRS and one each with Lexis/Nexus and Orbit) occurred at libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000. Three of the four were at libraries with budgets of less than \$100,000. In response to an open-ended question, 9 respondents reported First Search as an on-line vendor system that is available in their library.

Table 7  
Libraries With Various Online Vendor Systems

CDROM/DVD Database	Number	Percent
BRS	2	5.1
Dow Jones News Retrieval	4	10.3
DIALOG	4	10.3
NewNet	0	0.0
Lexis/Nexis	1	2.6
Orbit	1	2.6
VU?TEXT	0	0.0
WILSONLINE	4	10.3

Total: 39 libraries having online vendor systems

Libraries were asked to indicate which online databases library staff or patrons looking for business or industry information frequently search. The results are shown in Table 8. The two most commonly cited online databases are ABI/INFORM (11 libraries) and Business Periodicals Index (7 libraries). ABI/INFORM was cited by 3 libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000, one library with a budget between \$300,000 and \$500,000, and 7 libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000. Four libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000 and three libraries with budgets of under \$100,000 cited business Periodicals Index.

Table 8  
Libraries Responding That Currently Online Databases are Frequently Searched by  
Library Staff or Patrons looking for Business or Industry Information

Online Database	Number	Percent
ABI/INFORM	11	28.2
American Banker Full Text	0	0.0
BioBusiness	1	2.6
Business Dateline	3	7.7
Business Periodicals Index	7	17.9
Business Software Database	0	0.0
CENDATA	1	2.6
Chemical Industry Notes	0	0.0

Total: 39 libraries having online vendor systems

Libraries were also asked if they subscribe to any on-line database services. Fifty-three libraries (37.1 percent) said that they do subscribe to such services. The largest libraries are somewhat more likely to subscribe to such database services. Six of 8 libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000 subscribe to such database services, while 27 of 83 libraries with budgets of less than \$100,000 (32.5 percent) subscribe.

The specific on-line databases that libraries subscribe to are shown in Table 9. The most frequently-cited databases are OCLC (33 libraries) and INFOTRAC (26 libraries). In addition, 24 libraries mentioned First Search in response to an open-ended question asking what other on-line databases they subscribe to. All 6 of the libraries with budgets over \$1,000,000 that subscribe to an on-line database service subscribe to OCLC, while 5 of the 6 subscribe to INFOTRAC. Seventeen of the 27 libraries with budgets under \$100,000 that subscribe to an on-line database subscribe to OCLC, while 11 subscribe to INFOTRAC.

Table 9  
Libraries Subscribing to Various Online Data Bases

Online database service	Number	Percent
DIALOG	4	7.5
INFOTRAC	26	49.1
OCLC	33	62.3
PROQUEST	6	11.3
RLIN	0	0.0
SIRS	7	13.2
SORKINS	2	3.8
WESTLAW	0	0.0

Total: 53 libraries that subscribe to some online database service

Table 10 shows the restrictions that libraries place on online searching by business patrons. The main restrictions are fees for printing (imposed by 83.2 percent of the libraries) and time limits on searches (imposed by 63.6 percent of libraries). The existence of both fees for printing and time limits for searches are independent of library size. Twelve libraries (8.4 percent) impose a fee for downloading. Eleven of these libraries have budgets of less than \$300,000.

Table 10  
Libraries with Various Restrictions on Online Searching by Business Patrons

Type of restriction	Number	Percent
Fee based reference searching	4	2.8
Restrictions on number of data bases searched	3	2.1
Restrictions on the number of citations printed	3	2.1
Restrictions of full text records printed	5	3.5
Time limits on searches	91	63.6
Fee for printing	119	83.2
Fee for downloading	12	8.4

Total: 143 libraries

Services provided to business patrons. Libraries were asked about services that were directed toward business users and more general services that could be of use to business users as well as other library patrons. When asked if their libraries had developed any specific programs or policies designed to meet the needs of the business community, 17 of the 143 respondents said yes. Four of the nine libraries with budgets over \$1,000,000 have developed such programs, while 13 of the 119 libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000 have developed such programs. No libraries with budgets between \$300,000 and \$1,000,000 have developed such programs.

The most common type of program developed by libraries to serve business is one that has some relation to computing; 10 of the 17 libraries described programs that involved a computer lab, the Internet use, or web-page development. The libraries with budgets under \$100,000 tended to try to make information available by setting up web pages. The libraries with budgets between \$100,000 and \$300,000 were more concerned with making technology available by setting up computer labs or upgrading their computers.

Libraries were asked if they have any special services or resources designed to help a person who is trying to start a small business. Ninety-five of the 143 libraries (66.4 percent) answered in the affirmative. The distribution of affirmative answers by size of libraries was nearly uniform. For example, 61.4 percent of libraries with budgets of less than \$100,000 answered yes, while 55.6 percent of libraries with budgets of over \$1,000,000 answered yes. However, libraries with budgets under \$100,000 were more restricted in what they tried to do for business and in about 40 percent of the cases could not provide a description of what they had done for business. For the larger libraries, only about 20 percent could not identify what they had done for business.

The main type of resource or service that libraries reported having was books or other media (pamphlets, brochures, videos, and information packets) that provide guidance for those who are starting a small business. Seventy-three of the 95 libraries that reported having resources or services to help a person starting a small business reported resources of the above type.

Libraries were asked if they include referring patrons to corporate libraries as part of the services. Twenty-eight libraries (19.6 percent) said that they do. Libraries of all sizes said that they made such referrals. Nine of the libraries that said that they make such referrals named large public libraries as the target of their referral. Some mentioned the state library, law libraries, medical libraries, technical libraries and academic libraries. A few identified the libraries of private corporations.

Interlibrary loans are a service that libraries provide to their general patrons that can be of use to business patrons in particular. Table 11 shows the percentage of libraries' interlibrary loan requests that are for business or economic information. For the vast majority of libraries (about 4/5), interlibrary loan requests for business or economic information make up no more than 10 percent of all interlibrary loan requests, and for all but a handful they make up no more than 20 percent.

Table 11  
Percentage of Interlibrary Loan Requests for Business or Economic Information

Percentage of Requests	Number	Percent
0-5	81	56.6
5-10	33	23.0
10-20	12	8.4
20-40	8	5.6
Don't know	3	2.1

Total: 143 libraries; 6 missing

Table 12 tabulates the importance of various types of interlibrary loan requests for supplementing libraries' business collections. Resources in other related subject fields (cited as important or very important by 42.7 percent of libraries) and back-file periodicals (cited as important or very important by 42.0 percent of libraries) were the most important types of interlibrary loans for supplementing the business collections of libraries. Government documents (rated as important or very important by 30.8 percent of libraries) and obscure or scholarly periodicals (rated as important or very important by 28.0 percent of libraries) were the next most important types of interlibrary loan requests for supplementing the library's business resource collection. Company and industry data (rated as important or very important by 23.1 percent of libraries) and dissertations or theses (rated as important or very important by 16.1 percent of libraries) were the least important types of interlibrary loan requests for supplementing a library's business collection.

The importance of resources in other related subject fields, obscure or scholarly periodicals, and dissertations or theses does not vary by library size. However, back-file periodicals and government documents on interlibrary loan are less important for the largest libraries (budget over \$1,000,000) than they are for other libraries. Furthermore, company and industry data are not at all important for the largest libraries.

Another service that libraries provide to their general patrons that can be of particular use to business patrons is Internet access. The vast majority of libraries (92.3 percent) allow patrons to use the Internet in the library. The percentage varies somewhat by size of library, but even among the smallest libraries (budget less than \$100,000) more than 90 percent of the libraries allow patrons to use the Internet. However, only libraries with less than \$300,000 budgets charge for Internet access (8 libraries) and do not allow Internet access (10 libraries).

In Table 13, two of the features of the Internet access provided by libraries are summarized. First, most libraries, small, medium or large, do not charge for access to the Internet. The 8 libraries that do charge are all smaller libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000. Second, nearly three-fourths of the libraries allow patrons to have E-mail accounts. The size of the library is not correlated with whether it allows patrons to have E-mail accounts or not.

Table 12  
 Importance of Types of Interlibrary Loan Requests  
 For Supplementing the Library's Business Collection  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Type of Resource	Not at all important	Marginally useful	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Don't know
Resources in other related subject fields	22 (15.4)	15 (10.5)	37 (25.9)	17 (11.9)	44 (30.8)	7 (4.9)
Obscure or scholarly periodicals	57 (39.9)	23 (16.1)	20 (14.0)	17 (11.9)	23 (16.1)	2 (1.4)
Dissertations/theses	72 (50.3)	27 (18.9)	17 (11.9)	11 (7.7)	12 (8.4)	3 (2.1)
Back-file periodicals	28 (19.6)	17 (11.9)	34 (23.8)	28 (19.6)	32 (22.4)	2 (1.4)
Government Documents	40 (28.0)	35 (24.5)	21 (14.7)	23 (16.1)	21 (14.7)	1 (0.7)
Company/Industry data	59 (41.3)	27 (18.9)	20 (14.0)	19 (13.3)	14 (9.8)	1 (0.7)

Total: 142 libraries; 1 missing. Note: Respondents were asked to rate the importance from 1 to 5, with 1 being "Not at all important" and 5 being "Very important". "Marginally useful" in the table corresponds to a response of "2", "Somewhat important" to a response of "3", and "Important" to a response of "4".

Table 13  
 Features of Internet Use by Patrons at Libraries

Feature	Number	Percent
Charge for access	8	6.1
Patrons allowed to have E-Mail accounts	96	72.7

Total: 132 libraries allowing internet use

*5. The marketing of public libraries' business resources and public libraries' interaction with the business community*

A particular focus of the library survey was to determine the extent to which public libraries market their business resources to the members of the business community, the methods that they use for marketing, and the extent and types of interaction of library staff with the business community. The size of a library influences whether the library markets itself to the business community. Twenty-one percent (30 of 143 libraries) actively market their business information and reference services. Eleven of 24 libraries with budgets of more than \$300,000 (45.8 percent) market their business and information services, while 19 of 119 libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000 (16.0 percent) market such services.

Table 14 summarizes the types of marketing used by libraries that market their business information and reference services. Radio and newspaper advertising and promotional events like book sales are the most commonly used methods of marketing a library's business resources. Large libraries (those with a budget of more than \$1,000,000) are more likely to use a newsletter or direct mail. The smallest libraries (ones with a budget of less than \$100,000) are more inclined to use newspaper or radio advertising, or promotional events like book sales. Libraries with budgets between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000 are most likely to use radio or newspaper advertising to promote their business information and reference services. These libraries are also more likely to have newsletters and use direct mail to inform the business community.

Table 14  
Libraries Using Various Types of Active Marketing  
of Business Information and Reference Services

Type of Marketing	Number	Percent
Newsletter	10	33.3
Direct mail	10	33.3
Radio or newspaper advertising	24	80.0
Promotional events like book sales	20	66.7

Total: 30 libraries that actively market

Table 15 summarizes public libraries' modes of interaction with business groups. Slightly more than three-fourths of the libraries have met with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce or attended meetings with members of the business community to explain what resources the library has. All but one of the 24 libraries with a budget of more than \$300,000 has attended meetings with business people to explain the library's resources, while 85 of 119 libraries (71.4 percent) with smaller budgets have done so. All but three of the 24 larger libraries have met with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, while nearly three-fourths of the smaller libraries have done so. However, the libraries with less than \$100,000 budget are less likely to have interacted with the local Chamber of Commerce than the libraries with budgets over \$100,000.

Table 15  
Libraries That Have Had Outside Interaction with Business Groups

Type of interaction	Number	Percent
Attended meetings with members of the business community to explain what resources the library has	108	75.5
Become a member of a business organization such as the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary	99	69.2
Met with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce	109	76.2
Had any interaction with the Small Business Development Center	51	35.7

Total: 142 libraries, 1 missing

Nearly 70 percent of libraries reported having a representative become a member of a business organization such as the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary. All but one of the 24 larger libraries reported such an action, while nearly 74 percent of the smaller libraries had done so. A much smaller proportion of libraries had had any interaction with the small business development center, just under 36 percent. Half of the 24 larger libraries had done so, while a third of smaller libraries had such an interaction.

6. *Recent changes experienced by libraries.*

The library survey explored libraries' perceptions of changes in their environment related to the services that they provide to business customers. Specifically, the survey probed libraries' perceptions of changes in their budgets, resources devoted to providing resources and services to the business community, the number of persons from the business community seeking materials and services from the library, and the number or proportion of all patrons requesting business, economic, investment, or industry-related material. The results from this part of the survey are presented in Table 16.

Table 16  
Changes in Library Budgets and Activities  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Activity	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased	Don't Know
Library Budget	100 (69.9)	33 (23.1)	7 (4.9)	0 (0.0)
Resources committed to purchasing materials or providing services for members of the business community	41 (28.7)	94 (65.7)	5 (3.5)	0 (0.0)
Number of individuals from the business community seeking materials or services	43 (30.1)	89 (62.2)	8 (5.6)	1 (0.7)
Number or proportion of all patrons requesting business, economic, investment or industry-related information	63 (44.1)	73 (51.0)	4 (2.8)	1 (0.7)

Total: 143 libraries

Nearly 70 percent of libraries say that their budgets have increased during the last few years, whereas only about 5 percent perceive a decrease. This distribution is nearly independent of the size of the library, although 5 of the 7 libraries that said that their budgets had decreased were small libraries with annual budgets of less than \$100,000.

Nearly two-thirds of the libraries feel that the amount of resources committed to purchasing materials or providing services for the business community have remained the same over the past few years. A substantial 28.7 percent, however, believed that the

amount of such resources had increased during the last few years. A very small fraction of libraries (3.5 percent) perceived a decrease in these resources. This distribution did not depend significantly on the size of libraries.

More than three-fifths of the libraries (62.2 percent) said that the number of individuals from the business community seeking materials or services has remained the same over the last few years. Nearly a third (30.1 percent) responded that the number of such individuals had increased. Only 5.6 percent of libraries said that the number of individuals from the business community seeking materials or services has decreased over the past few years. This distribution is nearly independent of the size of the libraries, although the smallest libraries (budget less than \$100,000) were somewhat less likely to have perceived an increase in business patrons.

Almost half of the libraries (44.1 percent) said that the number or proportion of all patrons requesting business, economic, investment or industry-related information had increased, while slightly more than half said that it had remained the same. Only four libraries felt that the number or portion of such patrons had decreased. Again, the distribution is nearly the same across all size categories, except that the smallest libraries are somewhat less likely to have perceived an increase in the number or proportion of patrons requesting business, economic, investment or industry-related information.

The major area of difference between the smaller libraries (less than \$100,000 budget) and the larger libraries (more than \$100,000 budget) is the difference between the perception of increased budgets and the perception of increased demand for services. The same proportion of smaller as larger libraries perceive getting increases in budgets, but a larger proportion of larger libraries perceive an increase in the demand for business services than smaller libraries. The one group of libraries that seem to be getting squeezed the most is the libraries with budgets between \$100,000 and \$300,000. The demands by the business community seem to be more like the demands the larger libraries face, but their resources available to meet these demands seem to be more like those of the smaller libraries.

#### *7. Priorities of public libraries.*

The survey contained two open-ended questions intended to uncover libraries' priorities. The first question asked libraries what their priorities were over the next five years in terms of improving services to the public. Technology was the area that was mentioned most frequently by the libraries. Sixty-five libraries included technology-related items such as new and upgraded computers, automation of the library, adding or improving Internet access, and web page development among their priorities for the next 5 years. Adding to collections, including electronic media, was the next most frequently-mentioned category, cited by 32 libraries. Nineteen libraries listed capital improvements among their priorities and 7 included improved marketing of their library's services to the public.

The survey also asked respondents how they would spend a hypothetical 25 percent increase in their budget. The most commonly-mentioned category of increased expenditure was to add to collections, including electronic media. Ninety-one of the 143 libraries mentioned this as an area where at least part of the hypothetical budget increase would be spent. The second most frequently-mentioned area was spending on technology. Fifty-three libraries mentioned adding or upgrading computers, library automation, and adding or improving Internet access as areas in which some or all of the budget increase would be spent. The third area in which libraries would spend an increased budget is staffing. Thirty-six libraries stated that some or all of the budget increase would be spent on salary increases, increased staff, or staff training. Fourteen libraries included capital improvements or maintenance as areas to which the budget increase would be allocated. Five libraries said that they would use the budget increase at least in part to be open longer hours.

When libraries were asked specifically if their annual budget planning process takes into account any special needs for services or materials for the business community, 31.5 percent of the libraries answered yes. Large libraries (66.7 percent) were more likely to answer yes than small libraries (25.3 percent).

Libraries were also asked "How important, relative to the other needs of your library, would the adding of (or to) a business or economics section be?" The responses to the question are summarized in Table 17. Only 13.3 percent of the libraries responded that such an addition would be "very important," but another 50.3 percent responded that such an addition would be "somewhat important." Thus, nearly two-thirds of the libraries attach some importance to such an addition. Libraries with larger budgets are more likely to attach importance to adding or adding to a business or economics section than small libraries are.

Table 17  
 "How Important, Relative to the Other Needs of Your Library, Would the Adding of  
 (Or to) a Business and Economics Section Be?"

Importance	Number	Percent
Very important	19	13.3
Somewhat important	72	50.3
Not too important	37	25.9
Not at all important	12	8.4
Don't know	1	0.7

Total: 143 libraries; 2 missing

*8. Barriers to and opportunities for improving service to business.*

Libraries were asked to rank the importance of various barriers to providing effective service to the business community. The responses are shown in Table 18. The most important barriers as perceived by libraries are:

- (1) the high cost of business materials relative to their usage rates,
- (2) lack of funds or staff time to promote library resources and services to the business community,
- (3) attracting an insufficient number of business patrons to warrant expanded services,
- (4) inadequate budget to purchase materials and services requested by business patrons, and
- (5) staff insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community.

These barriers were considered important by most libraries in each size category. However, the larger libraries (those with budgets over \$100,000) consider all of these barriers more significant, except for (3) attracting an insufficient number of business patrons, than the smallest libraries (ones with budgets less than \$100,000).

Although three other barriers were not rated as important by as many libraries as the barriers above, they were nevertheless characterized as very important or somewhat important by a majority of the libraries. These are:

- (1) staff lack of familiarity with business resources or materials,
- (2) business patrons need to receive information quickly or immediately, and
- (3) staff lack of familiarity with business terminology.

The importance of the first two of these barriers did not vary significantly with library size, but the last barrier was less likely to be important to smaller libraries (ones with budgets of less than \$100,000).

Overall, libraries appear generally to perceive at least somewhat important barriers to serving the business community. Even the least important of the barriers, lack of cooperation from local agencies representing the business community, was represented as at least somewhat important by nearly half of the libraries.

Libraries were also asked about various steps that they would be willing to take in order to improve their service to business patrons. Their responses are shown in Table 19. The three steps that libraries would be most willing to take are (1) establish a strong cooperative working relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce, (2) obtain resources from a centralized site with specialized resources and personnel, and (3) establish strong working relationships with regional Small Business Development Centers. The willingness to take these steps is nearly uniform across all sizes of libraries except for cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. Libraries with budgets over

\$100,000 are more interested in cooperating with the local Chamber than the smaller libraries.

Table 18  
Library Perceptions of Barriers to Providing Effective Service  
to the Business Community  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Type of Barrier	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't Know
Staff lack of familiarity with business terminology	22 (15.4)	71 (49.7)	32 (22.4)	15 (10.5)	1 (0.7)
Staff lack of familiarity with business resources or materials	36 (25.2)	66 (46.2)	23 (16.1)	15 (10.5)	1 (0.7)
Inadequate budget to purchase materials and services requested by business patrons	78 (54.5)	38 (26.6)	14 (9.8)	6 (4.2)	5 (3.5)
Attracting an insufficient number of business patrons to warrant expanded services	78 (54.5)	43 (30.1)	11 (7.7)	5 (3.5)	3 (2.1)
Staff insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community	65 (45.5)	54 (37.8)	10 (7.0)	10 (7.0)	1 (0.7)
High cost of business materials relative to their usage rates	96 (67.1)	27 (18.9)	6 (4.2)	6 (4.2)	5 (3.5)
Lack of cooperation from local agencies representing the business community	27 (18.9)	36 (25.2)	26 (18.2)	46 (32.2)	5 (3.5)
Business patrons' needs to receive information quickly or immediately	54 (37.8)	46 (32.2)	21 (14.7)	16 (11.2)	3 (2.1)
Lack of funds or staff time to promote library resources and services to the business community	82 (57.3)	38 (26.6)	10 (7.0)	7 (4.9)	3 (2.1)

Total: 143 libraries; 3 missing.

Table 19  
Willingness of Libraries to Take Various Steps to Improve Service to Business Patrons  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Possible step	Very willing	Somewhat willing	Not too willing	Not at all willing	Don't Know
Obtain resources from a centralized site with specialized resources and personnel	89 (62.2)	43 (30.1)	4 (2.8)	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)
Hire individuals with business experience, but no specific library expertise, to assist in the requests of business patrons	10 (7.0)	36 (25.2)	30 (21.0)	59 (41.2)	5 (3.5)
Redirect your library budget to add additional business resources and services	14 (9.8)	59 (41.3)	32 (22.4)	31 (21.7)	4 (2.8)
Establish strong cooperative working relationships with regional Small Business Development Centers	73 (51.0)	57 (39.9)	4 (2.8)	6 (4.2)	0 (0.0)
Establish strong cooperative working relationships with your local Chamber of Commerce	104 (72.7)	25 (17.5)	2 (1.4)	4 (2.8)	5 (3.5)
Allocate library resources for specialized or advanced training in serving business patrons	30 (21.0)	67 (46.9)	23 (16.1)	18 (12.6)	2 (1.4)
Allocate resources to advertise or market your library's services to the business community	52 (36.4)	68 (47.6)	8 (5.6)	11 (7.7)	1 (0.7)

Total: 143 libraries; 3 missing.

Libraries are almost as positive about allocating some of their resources to advertise or market their services to the business community as they are about the above three steps; 84 percent of the libraries are at least somewhat willing to undertake such a step. Once again, this willingness is nearly uniform across all sizes of libraries. Libraries are somewhat less willing to allocate library resources for specialized or advanced training in serving business patrons; 67.9 percent declared that they are somewhat willing or very willing to undertake this step, but only about a fifth of the libraries are very willing.

Libraries are significantly less willing to either (1) redirect their library budget to add additional business resources and services, or (2) hire individuals with business experience, but no significant library expertise, to assist in the requests of business patrons. This willingness was fairly uniform across all sizes of libraries, although it appears that the smallest libraries (budgets less than \$100,000) are slightly less willing to undertake these steps than the larger libraries are.

## **Summary of Findings from the Library Survey**

### *1. Profile of Public Libraries.*

When considering the possible role that public libraries can play in aiding businesses and community economic development, the wide range of size and resources among the state's public libraries must be kept in mind. One special feature of the size distribution of public libraries in the State of Kansas is that it is strongly skewed towards small libraries. Only 24 of the 143 libraries surveyed have budgets of more than \$300,000, only 26 serve populations of more than 10,000, and only 21 have more than 10 full-time equivalent staff. Even within the smaller group the distribution is skewed to the relatively small libraries. Among the 119 libraries with budgets of less than \$300,000, 84 have budgets of less than \$100,000. Among the 117 libraries that serve populations of 10,000 or less, 97 serve populations of 5000 or less, and among those with 10 or fewer full-time equivalent staff, 57 have 2 or fewer full-time equivalent staff.

### *2. Training of Library Staff to Serve the Needs of the Business Community.*

Most libraries, including most small libraries, have staff trained in general skills. These general skills include using electronic resources in the library and using the Internet. These skills could be used specifically to aid in finding information for businesses. However, a majority of libraries do not have staff specially trained to help members of the business community.

### *3. Types of users of business-related materials.*

Currently the most frequent users of business-related materials are individuals seeking personal investment materials (especially prevalent in larger libraries) and students seeking information about business-related subjects (common to libraries of all sizes). Various types of business users are less prevalent. Among the most often cited types of

business users, entrepreneurs and start-up companies are cited as frequent users by nearly twice as many libraries as small and medium-sized businesses.

#### *4. Facilities, resources and materials for serving the business community.*

Slightly more than a fourth of the libraries have a special reference or service area devoted to business and economics. Larger libraries are much more likely to have such an area than smaller libraries. Most of these areas are in the nature of a business information area located in the main library.

Only about a third of public libraries have a specific person, or persons, who primarily handles requests for information and services made by the business community.

The business information and reference materials that public libraries are most likely to have available are legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias; employment, occupation and job training resources; and local and state regulations and reports.

About one fourth of the public libraries' holdings contain CDROM/DVD databases. All large libraries have such databases, but only 13 percent of the smallest libraries have such databases. The most commonly held CDROM/DVD databases are Standard and Poor's register and Thomas Register. ABI/INFORM, CIRR, Compact Disclosure, and American Business Disc are available at a handful of libraries.

Just over one fourth of the public libraries have on-line vendor systems available in the library. Such availability increases with library size. First Search was the most commonly mentioned on-line vendor system, with a handful of libraries having The Dow Jones News Retrieval, DIALOG, and WILSONLINE.

More than a third of the libraries subscribe to online database services. Larger libraries are much more likely to subscribe to online database services than smaller libraries. The most frequently subscribed-to online database services are OCLC and INFOTRAC.

The online databases most commonly searched by library staff or patrons looking for business or industry information are ABI/INFORM and the Business Periodicals Index.

The two restrictions that libraries regardless of size are likely to place on online searching by business patrons are fees for printing and time limits on searches.

A small number of libraries have developed specific programs to meet the needs of the business community. Most of these programs involve computer labs, Internet use, or Web page development.

Two-thirds of public libraries have special services or resources designed to help a person who is trying to start a small business. Most such resources or services consist of books or other media that provide guidance on small business startups.

For most libraries, interlibrary loan requests for business or economic information make up no more than 10 percent of inter-library loan requests. Resources in other related subject fields and back-file periodicals are the most important types of interlibrary loan requests for supplementing business collections.

More than 90 percent of public libraries of all sizes allow patrons to use the Internet in the public library. Most do not charge for Internet access and most allow patrons to have e-mail accounts.

#### *5. The marketing of public libraries' business resources and the libraries' interaction with the business community.*

About a fifth of public libraries actively market their business resources to members of the business community. Large libraries are most likely to use a newsletter or e-mail, while small libraries are most likely to use newspaper or radio advertising or promotional events like book sales to promote their business information and reference services.

More than three-fourths of libraries have met with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce or attended meetings with members of the business community to explain what resources the library has. Nearly as many libraries reported having a representative become a member of a business organization such as the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary.

#### *6. Recent changes experienced by libraries.*

Most libraries' budgets have increased during the past few years; only about 5 percent of libraries' budgets have decreased over the period.

In nearly two-thirds of public libraries the amount of resources committed to purchasing materials or providing services for the business community has remained the same over the last few years. In a few libraries such resources declined.

The number of business patrons seeking materials or services has remained the same over the past few years in more than 60 percent of public libraries and increased in more than 30 percent of public libraries.

The number of all patrons requesting business, economic, investment, or industry-related materials has increased in 44 percent of public libraries but remained the same in slightly more than half of the libraries

#### *7. Priorities of public libraries.*

Technology improvements (new and upgraded computers, automation of the library, adding or improving Internet access, and web page development) is the most frequently-cited high priority for public libraries over the next five years. Adding to collections and capital improvements are also high priorities of a significant number of libraries.

The libraries were asked how they would spend a hypothetical 25 percent increase in their budgets. The responses indicated it would be spent at least in part on adding to collections in nearly two-thirds of public libraries, technology upgrades in more than a third of the libraries, and staff (salary increases, increased staff, or staff training) in about a fourth of the libraries.

In slightly less than a third of the public libraries the budget process takes into account special needs for services or materials for the business community. Nearly two-thirds of public libraries think that adding, or adding to, a business or economics section is at least somewhat important.

#### *8. Barriers to and opportunities for improving service to business.*

Most libraries believe that

- (1) the high cost of business materials relative to their usage rates,
  - (2) lack of funds or staff time to promote library resources,
  - (3) attracting an insufficient number of business patrons to warrant expanded services,
  - (4) inadequate budget to purchase materials and services requested by business patrons, and
  - (5) staff insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community
- are important barriers to providing effective service to the business community.

The three steps that libraries are most willing to take to improve their service to business patrons are (1) establish a strong cooperative working relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce, (2) obtain resources from a centralized site with specialized resources and personnel, and (3) establish strong working relationships with regional Small Business Development Centers. Most libraries are also willing to allocate some resources to advertise or market their services to the business community. Libraries are much less willing to either redirect their library budget to add additional business resources or services or hire individuals with business experience, but no significant library expertise, to assist in the requests of business patrons.



## **SURVEY OF BUSINESSES, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS**

### **Methodology**

In order to characterize the role of libraries in providing information to business, a telephone survey of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers was conducted. The business sample was drawn from the state's unemployment insurance database (ES202). The sample was stratified to include equal numbers of firms in each of the eastern, central, and western areas of the state. A list of counties in each area is given in Appendix III. A list of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers was developed from searching the Internet. A survey instrument was developed based on the focus groups, the case studies and the library survey. The Kansas State Library and several public libraries from around the state reviewed the survey instrument. Revisions and additions were made based on that review. A total of 193 surveys of business, 58 surveys of Chambers of Commerce, and 11 surveys of Small Business Development Centers were completed. The survey instruments as well as the basic frequencies for each of the three groups of respondents can be found in Appendix IV.

### **Survey Results**

The survey results are presented in 5 sections. Section 1 provides a profile of the businesses that were surveyed in terms of their number of employees, type of firm, market region and location in the state. Section 2 looks at businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers that have their own libraries, and examines the extent, resources and frequency of use of such libraries. Section 3 covers firms, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers that use a public library, and investigates the types of information that they get from public libraries, the frequency with which they use the libraries, the types of materials that they use, and their satisfaction with the public libraries as a source of information. Section 4 examines the sources other than their own library and public libraries from which businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers gather information. Section 5 explores the barriers to the use of public libraries as perceived by businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers, and ranks the usefulness of potential changes in public libraries' service to the business community.

*1. Profile of Businesses Surveyed.* Table 20 provides a summary of the characteristics of the surveyed business firms. The firms are nearly equally divided over the three regions of the state. This simply reflects the stratified sampling technique that was employed; the sample was drawn with equal numbers from each of the three areas to ensure a good representation from businesses in all parts of the state.

There is a wide range in firm size as measured by number of employees. Just over half of the firms are very small, having from one to 5 employees. Another fourth of the firms fall

Table 20  
Profile of Surveyed Firms

Area of State

Area	Number	Percent
Central	68	35.2
Eastern	58	30.1
Western	61	31.6

Total: 193 surveyed firms; 6 missing

Size of Firm

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
1-5 employees	107	55.4
6-20 employees	52	26.9
21-50 employees	21	10.9
More than 50 employees	7	3.6

Total: 193 surveyed firms; 6 missing

Type of Firm

Firm type	Number	Percent
Agricultural services and production	16	8.3
Mining	2	1.0
Construction	17	8.8
Manufacturing	11	5.7
Transportation, communications, and utilities	7	3.6
Wholesale and retail trade	50	25.9
Finance, insurance and real estate	22	22.4
Services	59	30.6

Total: 193 surveyed firms; 9 missing

Market Extent

Extent	Number	Percent
Local: within county you are located	126	65.3
Regional	92	47.7
Statewide	46	23.8
National	27	14.0
International	12	6.2

Total: 193 surveyed firms; total number of responses is greater than 193 because firms were allowed to give multiple responses.

into the range of 6 to 20 employees. About 10 percent are medium-sized firms, with 21 to 50 employees. Only about 3.6 percent of the respondents (7 firms) have more than 50 employees.

The firms cover the full range of the private spectrum. The greatest number of firms comes from the service sector (30.6 percent), the wholesale and retail trade sectors (25.9 percent) and the finance, insurance and real estate sector (22.4 percent). The construction sector (8.8 percent) and the agricultural services and production sectors (8.3 percent) make up the next largest number of firms. Just over 5 percent of the firms are drawn from the manufacturing sector. Firms from the transportation, communications and utilities sector make up 3.6 percent of the respondents. One percent of the firms are from the mining sector.

The last section of Table 20 shows the firms' perceived market areas. Firms were allowed to give multiple responses to the question about market area, so that, for example, a firm that sells its product locally and regionally could be counted in both of those categories. Not surprisingly, most firms perceive their markets as local. But nearly half of the firms also sell regionally and nearly a fourth of the firms see themselves as having a statewide market. A significant portion (14.0 percent) of the firms see their market as being national, while 6.2 percent include international sales within their scope.

*2. Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers with their own libraries.* Many businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers have their own libraries, some more extensive than others. Table 21 shows the frequency with which this occurs among each of these groups. About a third of businesses, and slightly less than a third of the Chambers of Commerce, have their own in-house libraries. All but one of the SBDCs has such a library. Perhaps surprisingly, whether a business has an in-house library or not does not depend upon the size of the business. Among the types of firms, service firms were the most likely to have an in-house library. This is to be expected, since service firms include professionals like architects, engineers, health care professionals and lawyers.

Table 21  
Businesses, Chambers, and SBDC's Having an In-House Library  
(Percents in parentheses)

	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Yes	65 (33.7)	18 (31.0)	10 (90.9)
No	128 (66.3)	40 (69.0)	1 (9.1)
Total	143 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	11 (100.0)

Table 22  
Businesses, Chambers, and SBDC's Having an In-House Library -- Size of Library  
(Percents in parentheses)

Size of library	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
A wall	24 (36.9)	12 (66.7)	9 (90.0)
A cubicle	8 (12.3)	5 (27.8)	0.0 (0.0)
A single room	11 (16.9)	0.0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)
Larger than a single room	7 (10.8)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
Something else	11 (16.9)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
Missing	4 (6.2)	1 (5.6)	0.0 (0.0)
Total	65 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	10 (100.0)

Table 22 gives a rough idea of the physical size of the in-house libraries of these organizations. For about half of the businesses having an in-house library, it is fairly modest -- a wall or a cubicle. For just over a fourth of the businesses, the library is a single room or larger than a single room. Among the firms that described their libraries as "something else" all but two were smaller than a room. The other two businesses, however, described their libraries as "a building" and "a full-sized library".

All but one of the Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers chose either "a wall" or "a cubicle" as the description of their libraries.

Table 23 shows the categories of resources that tend to be contained in the in-house libraries of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers. The two most common types of resources found in the libraries of businesses are specialized books pertaining to the company's field of business (86.2 percent) and trade journals or magazines (76.9 percent). As might be expected, libraries in individual firms are most likely to contain information or resources that are directly and narrowly related to their fields of activity. The next two most likely resources, however, are more general; Internet access (72.3 percent) and federal, state or local government documents or reports (69.2 percent). Also found in a majority of business libraries are CD-ROMs (56.9 percent) and online database access (52.3 percent)

The most commonly-found resources in Chambers of Commerce are materials for business startups (94.4 percent), Internet access (83.3 percent), specialized books

pertaining to the labor market and economic development (83.3 percent), and trade journals or magazines (83.3 percent).

The materials and resources found in all of the SBDC's with in-house libraries are (1) Internet access, (2) materials for business startups, (3) general business, marketing or economics books, and (4) trade journals and magazines.

Table 23  
Types of Resources in Business, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC Libraries  
(Percents in parentheses)

Type of resource	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
*Specialized books pertaining to company's field of business activities	56 (86.2)		
**Specialized books pertaining to the labor market and economic development		15 (83.3)	7 (70.0)
Trade journals or magazines	50 (76.9)	15 (83.3)	10 (100.0)
*Industry reports	34 (52.3)		
**Materials for business startups		17 (94.4)	10 (100.0)
General business, marketing, or economics books	26 (40.0)	14 (77.8)	10 (100.0)
Newspaper clipping file	19 (29.2)	13 (72.2)	8 (80.0)
Federal, state or local government documents or reports	45 (69.2)	11 (61.1)	8 (80.0)
CD-ROMs	37 (56.9)	11 (61.1)	7 (70.0)
Internet Access	47 (72.3)	15 (83.3)	10 (100.0)
Online database access	34 (52.3)	11 (61.1)	4 (40.0)
Anything else	5 (7.7)	2 (11.1)	0.0 (0.0)

Total: 65 businesses with libraries, 18 Chambers with libraries, 10 SBDC's with libraries.

\*Asked of businesses only

\*\*Asked of Chambers of Commerce and SBDCs only

Note: multiple responses were allowed.

The frequency with which businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's use their in-house libraries is shown in Table 24. Not surprisingly, businesses and other organizations that invest in a library tend to use it fairly frequently. More than three-fourths of

businesses and Chambers of Commerce, and 80 percent of SBDC's, report that they use their in-house libraries on a daily basis, while more than 90 percent of businesses, nearly 90 percent of Chambers of Commerce, and all SBDCs report that they use their in-house libraries at least weekly. The frequency with which businesses use their in-house libraries does not vary significantly with the size of the firm.

Table 24  
Frequency with Which Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, SBDC's  
Use Their In-house Libraries  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Frequency of Use of In-house Library	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Daily	49 (75.4)	14 (77.8)	8 (80.0)
Weekly	11 (16.9)	2 (11.1)	2 (20.0)
Monthly	3 (4.6)	1 (5.6)	
Less Frequently	1 (1.5)	1 (5.6)	
Missing	1 (1.5)		
Total	65 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	10 (100.0)

Total: 65 businesses with libraries, 18 Chambers with libraries, 10 SBDC's with libraries.

Table 25 shows the primary uses of in-house libraries by businesses, Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers. Operational or technical research was by far the most frequently-cited use for businesses; 80 percent of businesses stated that they use in their in-house library in this way. Product development research (35.4 percent) marketing or sales information (27.7 percent), and general economic or demographic information (27.7 percent) were much less frequently cited.

Chambers of Commerce cited economic or demographic information (94.4 percent) and business start-up information (88.9 percent) most often as a primary use of their in-house library. Accessing economic development strategies (77.8 percent), labor market information (72.2 percent), and job training information (55.6 percent) are also primary uses of a majority of Chambers.

Small Business Development Centers tend to use their in-house libraries for business start-up information and general economic or demographic information (90 percent) and economic development strategy (80 percent).

Table 25  
Primary Uses of In-house Libraries by Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, SBDC's  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Use of In-house library	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
*Marketing or sales information	18 (27.7)		
*Product development research	23 (35.4)		
*Operational or technical research	52 (80.0)		
**Labor market information		13 (72.2)	4 (40.0)
**Job training information		10 (55.6)	1 (10.0)
**Business start-up information		16 (88.9)	9 (90.0)
**Economic development strategy		14 (77.8)	8 (80.0)
General economic or demographic information	18 (27.7)	17 (94.4)	9 (90.0)
Something else	14 (21.5)	2 (11.1)	2 (20.0)

Total: 65 businesses with libraries, 18 Chambers with libraries, 10 SBDC's with libraries.

\*Asked of businesses only

\*\*Asked of Chambers of Commerce and SBDCs only

*3. Use of public libraries by Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.* In addition to uncovering the uses of in-house libraries by businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers, the business survey attempted to elucidate their use of public libraries as a source of information and resources. Table 26 shows the number of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs that use a public library to gather information or do research that is related to their organization's activities. Slightly less than a third of businesses report that they use the public library, while over half of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers use the public library. Whether businesses use the public library or not does not depend significantly on the size of the firm. Interestingly, firms that have an in-house library are significantly more likely to use the public library than those that do not have an in-house library.

Table 26  
 Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's That Use a Public Library to Gather  
 Information or Do research That is Related to Their Organization's Activities  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Yes	60 (31.1)	33 (56.9)	6 (54.5)
No	131 (67.9)	25 (43.1)	5 (45.5)
Don't Know	2 (1.0)		
Total	193 (100.0)	58 (100.0)	11 (100.0)

The location of the public library that businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers tend to use is given in Table 27. Ninety percent of the businesses and all of the Chambers and SBDC's that use a public library use their local public library. Some of the organizations use other public libraries instead of, or in addition to, their local public libraries. Nearly one-fourth of the businesses and more than 10 percent of the Chambers say that they use a public library in another part of the state. Furthermore, 13.3 percent of the businesses that use a public library use one in another state. Among the "other" category, firms mentioned the Kansas State Library, university libraries, and law libraries.

Table 27  
 Location of Library Used by Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's That Use  
 a Public Library to Gather Information or Do research That is Related to Their  
 Organization's Activities  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Location	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
The local public library	54 (90.0)	33 (100.0)	6 (100.0)
A public library in another part of the state	14 (23.3)	4 (12.1)	2 (33.3)
A public library in another state	8 (13.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)
Something else	9 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

Table 28  
 Primary Uses of Public Libraries by Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, SBDC's  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Use of Public library	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Marketing or sales information	20 (33.3)	10 (30.3)	4 (66.7)
*Product development research	19 (31.7)		
*Operational or technical research	26 (43.3)		
*Researching competitors	8 (13.3)		
*Industry research	26 (43.3)		
*Investment or stock market research	8 (13.3)		
**Labor market information		8 (24.2)	2 (33.3)
**Job training information		12 (36.4)	1 (16.7)
**Economic development information		20 (60.6)	6 (100.0)
**Local Area Business Conditions		14 (42.4)	3 (50.0)
**Training Sessions		11 (33.3)	2 (33.3)
General economic or demographic information	25 (41.7)	20 (60.6)	6 (100.0)
Something else	9 (15.0)	7 (21.2)	0 (0.0)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

\*Asked of businesses only

\*\*Asked of Chambers of Commerce and SBDCs only

Table 28 shows the uses that the three types of organizations make of the public library. Operational or technical research (43.3 percent) and industry research (43.3 percent) are cited most frequently by businesses, followed closely by general economic and demographic information (41.7 percent). Marketing or sales information (33.3 percent) and product development research (31.7 percent) are the next most frequently mentioned uses of public libraries by businesses.

Chambers of Commerce are most likely to use the public library for economic development information (60.6 percent) and general economic and demographic

information (60.6 percent). They also commonly use the public library for local area business conditions (42.4 percent), training sessions (33.3 percent), job-training information (36.4 percent), and marketing or sales information (30.3 percent).

Small Business Development Centers all use the public library for economic development information and general economic or demographic information. Many also use the public library for marketing or sales information (66.7 percent) and local area business conditions (50 percent).

The specific types of materials and services that businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers use from public libraries are shown in Table 29. The most commonly used materials or services by businesses are government documents (used by 48.3 percent of businesses that use the public library), Internet or on-line resources (43.3 percent), legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias (43.3 percent) and state and local government regulations and reports (43.3 percent).

The next most commonly used materials and services by businesses are industry data, statistics and trends (38.3 percent), subject and industry specific newspapers and journals (35.0 percent), and subject specific indices, such as Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company Data (30.0 percent). Also used with some frequency by businesses are newspaper clipping files (21.7 percent), and employment, occupation and job training resources (20.0 percent).

The types of materials and services used most frequently by Chambers of Commerce are subject and industry specific newspapers and journals (used by 69.7 percent of Chambers that use the public library), newspaper clipping files (66.7 percent), legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias (60.6 percent), and state and local government regulations and reports (57.6 percent).

Also commonly used by Chambers of Commerce are government documents (48.5 percent) industry data statistics and trends (48.5 percent), subject specific indexes like Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company Data (42.4 percent), Internet or online resources (42.4 percent), newsletters (39.4 percent) and employment, occupation and job training resources (36.4 percent).

All Small Business Development Centers that use the library use subject and industry specific newspapers and journals, and 5 of the 6 use industry data, statistics and trends. Four of the six SBDC's that use the public library use subject specific indexes like Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company Data, government documents, and employment, occupation and job training resources. Three of the six use newspaper clipping files and legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Table 29  
Materials or services used by Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's  
At the Public Library  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Type of material or service	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Subject specific indexes, like Dunn's Business Locator or Moody's Company Data	18 (30.0)	14 (42.4)	4 (66.7)
Any government document	29 (48.3)	16 (48.5)	4 (66.7)
Company reports or corporate data	12 (20.0)	7 (21.2)	1 (16.7)
Industry data, statistics, trends	23 (38.3)	16 (48.5)	5 (83.3)
Subject and industry specific newspapers, journals	21 (35.0)	23 (69.7)	6 (100.0)
A newspaper clipping file	13 (21.7)	22 (66.7)	3 (50.0)
Newsletters	6 (10.0)	13 (39.4)	0 (0.0)
State and local government regulations and reports	26 (43.3)	19 (57.6)	2 (33.3)
Legal indexes, dictionaries, encyclopedias	26 (43.3)	20 (60.6)	3 (50.0)
Employment, occupation, and job training resources	12 (20.0)	12 (36.4)	4 (66.7)
Internet and/or online resources	26 (43.3)	14 (42.4)	2 (33.3)
Investment resources	8 (13.3)	6 (18.2)	1 (16.7)
Anything else	8 (13.3)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library.

Note: multiple responses were possible.

The means by which businesses, Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers access the public library are shown in Table 30. As one might expect, the most common way of accessing the public library by all three types of organizations is to go to the library in person. The next most common way of accessing the library for all three types of organization is to telephone the library. More than a fifth of the businesses that use the public library report that they access the library in this way. In some cases this is supplementary to going to the library in person. Half or more of the Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers report that they access the library by telephone. A small fraction of firms (5 percent) access the library through e-mail. Chambers and SBDCs seem to be somewhat more likely to use e-mail to access a public library than businesses are.

Table 30  
Methods by Which Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's  
Access the Public Library  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Method of Access	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
Go to the Library	50 (83.3)	33 (100.0)	5 (83.3)
Telephone the Library	13 (21.7)	17 (51.5)	3 (50.0)
E-Mail the library	3 (5.0)	6 (18.2)	1 (16.7)
Search the library's on-line catalogue from home or office	7 (11.7)	6 (18.2)	3 (50.0)
Something else	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

Businesses, Chambers and SBDCs use public library resources with varying and fairly limited frequencies. Table 31 shows the frequency with which they report using the public library. Only about 40 percent of businesses that use the public library use it 10 or more times a year, and a smaller portion of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers use the public library that often. Most of the three types of organizations that use the public library use it at least three times a year; 80 percent of businesses, 75.8 percent of Chambers of Commerce, and 83.3 percent of SBDCs that use the public library report using the library at least that often.

The larger the firm, the more likely it is to be a frequent (10 or more times a year) user of the library. Just under 32 percent of firms with 1 to 5 employees use the library 10 or more times a year, while 46.2 percent of firms with 6 to 20 employees, 66.7 percent of firms with 21 to 50 employees and 75 percent of firms with more than 50 employees use a public library that often.

Table 31  
 Frequency With Which Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's  
 Access the Public Library  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Number of times used per year	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
10 or more times	24 (40.0)	9 (27.3)	1 (16.7)
Between 3 and 10 times	24 (40.0)	16 (48.5)	4 (66.7)
Fewer than 3 times	11 (18.3)	8 (24.2)	1 (16.7)
Don't know/No Answer	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	60 (100.0)	33 (100.0)	6 (100.0)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

Table 32 shows the times during which businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers tend to use the public library. All three types of organization are most likely to use the public library during the regular workday. However, a significant fraction of businesses (18.3 percent) report that they use the public library on weekday evenings.

Table 32  
 Period in Which Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's  
 Tend to Use the Public Library  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Period Used	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
During the workday	46 (76.7)	30 (90.9)	5 (83.3)
During weekday evenings	11 (18.3)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
On the weekends	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)
Don't know/No Answer	3 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	60 (100.0)	33 (100.0)	6 (100.0)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

The levels of satisfaction with public libraries expressed by businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development centers who use a public library are shown in Table 33 and Table 34. Table 33 shows the level of satisfaction with the business materials and resources of public libraries, while Table 34 shows the level of satisfaction with the services provided by public libraries to businesses. In each case, the respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied.

It appears that the overall satisfaction level of businesses that use the public library is quite high. More than a third of businesses rated their level of satisfaction with materials and resources of the public library as 5, the highest level of satisfaction, while another third of businesses rated their level of satisfaction as 4. Businesses' satisfaction with the services that the public libraries provide is even higher. Nearly half of the businesses that use public libraries (45 percent) rated their level of satisfaction with the services of the public library with a 5, while another 30 percent rated their satisfaction level with a 4. Furthermore, only a small minority of businesses rated their level of satisfaction with either aspect of the public library as low; only 4 of 60 businesses (6.6 percent) rated their level of satisfaction with the materials or resources as 1 (least satisfied) or 2. And only 3 of the 60 businesses rated their level of satisfaction with services as 1 or 2.

Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers were nearly as satisfied with libraries' business materials, resources and services as businesses were. Although chambers and SBDCs who used the public library were a bit less inclined to give their satisfaction with materials and resources level the highest rating, 60.6 percent of the Chambers of Commerce and 5 of 6 SBDCs rated their level of satisfaction 4 or 5. Similarly more than three-fourths of the Chambers and 5 of 6 SBDCs rated their level of satisfaction with public library services as 4 or 5. Furthermore, only 2 of the 33 Chambers of Commerce rated either materials and resources or services low (1 or 2), while none of the Small Business Development Centers gave either resources or services a low rating.

**Table 33**  
**Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's Satisfaction**  
**With Business Materials or Resources Available in the Public Library**  
**(Percents in Parentheses)**

Satisfaction Level	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
1 (least satisfied)	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	2 (3.3)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
3	13 (21.7)	11 (33.3)	1 (16.7)
4	20 (33.3)	14 (42.4)	4 (66.7)
5 (most satisfied)	21 (35.0)	6 (18.2)	1 (16.7)
Missing	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>33</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

**Table 34**  
**Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's Satisfaction**  
**With Services Public Libraries Provide for Businesses**  
**(Percents in Parentheses)**

Satisfaction Level	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
1 (least satisfied)	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	1 (1.7)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
3	10 (16.7)	6 (18.2)	1 (16.7)
4	18 (30.0)	9 (27.3)	2 (33.3)
5 (most satisfied)	27 (45.0)	16 (48.5)	3 (50.0)
Missing	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>33</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

4. *Other Sources of Information for Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.* Table 35 summarizes the responses of the three types of respondents to questions about their sources of materials or information other than their own library or the public library. The most frequently cited sources for businesses were talking to people in one's industry (74.1 percent), the Internet (60.1 percent), trade journals or magazines (59.1 percent), trade associations or industry associations (40.9 percent) and trade shows or conferences (39.4 percent). Four of the five could be considered to be sources that are specialized to the respondent's own industry. The Internet, however, stands out as a general source that businesses in general find to be useful.

Table 35  
Other Sources of Information  
For Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDC's  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Source	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
*Local chamber of commerce	46 (23.8)		10 (90.9)
Local government entities	55 (28.5)	55 (94.8)	11 (100.0)
Trade journals or magazines	114 (59.1)	41 (70.7)	10 (90.9)
Trade associations or industry associations	79 (40.9)	42 (72.4)	11 (100.0)
Trade shows or conferences	76 (39.4)	45 (77.6)	10 (90.9)
Small Business Administration	19 (9.8)	45 (77.6)	11 (100.0)
**Small Business Development Center	15 (7.8)	47 (81.0)	
Professional Consultants	55 (28.5)	31 (53.4)	6 (54.5)
University or Research Library	32 (16.6)	37 (63.8)	10 (90.9)
Internet	116 (60.1)	50 (86.2)	11 (100.0)
Talking to people in one's industry	143 (74.1)	54 (93.1)	11 (100.0)
Other	23 (11.9)	5 (8.6)	1 (9.1)

Total: 193 businesses, 58 chambers of commerce, 11 SBDCs

\*Not asked of chambers of commerce

\*\*Not asked of SBDCs

Non-library sources of information that were cited most frequently by Chambers of Commerce are local government entities (94.8 percent), talking to people in one's industry (93.1 percent) the Internet (86.2 percent) and Small Business Development Centers (81.0 percent). In addition, the Small Business Administration, trade shows or conferences, trade associations or industry associations, and trade journals or magazines were all cited by more than 70 percent of the Chambers of Commerce. Once again, the Internet stands out as a frequently-used general source of information.

Small Business Development Centers cited all of the sources of information asked about on the survey, except professional consultants, with a very high frequency. In general, Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers cited all sources of information with a higher frequency than did businesses. This is likely a reflection that both Chambers and SBDCs are to a large extent providing an information function themselves, which is not the case for all businesses.

*5. Barriers to use of public libraries by business and opportunities for change.* Table 36 summarizes the barriers to public library use as perceived by businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers. Part A of the table presents the responses of businesses, Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers that use a public library to gather information or do research. Part B presents the responses of those who do not use the public library.

The major barriers from the point of view of businesses that use the library are (1) the library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request (cited as very important by a third of the businesses and at least somewhat important by more than half the businesses) and (2) the library's lack of contemporary technology, such as FAX machines or Internet service (cited as very important by a third of the firms and at least somewhat important by nearly a half).

Businesses that used the library also pointed to library staff's lack of training to meet the demands of the business community as a significant barrier. More generally, all five of the barriers listed on the survey appear to be significant from the point of view of businesses that use the library. The least important barrier, lack of quick turn-around by the library's staff in response to business requests, was rated as at least somewhat important by two-fifths of the libraries.

The rate at which businesses that do not use the library perceive barriers is much lower than the rate for businesses that do use the library. For example, the library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request was rated as at least a somewhat important barrier by more than half of the businesses that use the library, but by only 19.5 percent of businesses that do not use the library. Among businesses that do not use the library, the most important barrier to library use was that the library does not communicate or market its services to business patrons, cited as somewhat important or very important by 31.5 percent of such businesses.

Table 36A  
 Barriers Faced When Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs  
 Use Library Services  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Barrier	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
<b>Library staff's lack of familiarity with business terminology</b>			
Very important	15 (25.0)	19 (57.6)	2 (33.3)
Somewhat important	11 (18.3)	11 (33.3)	3 (50.0)
Not too important	14 (23.3)	3 (9.1)	1 (16.7)
Not at all important	13 (21.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request</b>			
Very important	20 (33.3)	23 (69.7)	6 (100.0)
Somewhat important	11 (18.3)	7 (21.2)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	11 (18.3)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	12 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	4 (6.7)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Library staff's lack of training to meet the demands of the business community</b>			
Very important	16 (26.7)	18 (54.4)	6 (100.0)
Somewhat important	15 (25.0)	10 (30.3)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	9 (15.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	11 (18.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	7 (11.7)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
<b>Lack of quick turnaround by the library's staff in response to business requests</b>			
Very important	18 (30.0)	20 (60.6)	3 (50.0)
Somewhat important	6 (10.0)	8 (24.2)	3 (50.0)
Not too important	9 (15.0)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	17 (28.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	8 (13.3)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
<b>The library's lack of contemporary technology, such as FAX machines or internet service</b>			
Very important	20 (33.3)	23 (69.7)	4 (66.7)
Somewhat important	9 (15.0)	4 (12.1)	1 (16.7)
Not too important	10 (16.7)	4 (12.1)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	16 (26.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	2 (3.3)	2 (6.1)	1 (16.7)

Total: 60 businesses, 33 chambers, and 6 SBDC's that use a public library

Table 36B  
 Barriers to Public Library Use Perceived by  
 Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs  
 Non-Users of Public Libraries  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Barrier	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
<b>There are not enough resources to effectively answer business questions</b>			
Very important	21 (15.8)	5 (20.0)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat important	15 (11.3)	3 (12.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	20 (15.0)	14 (56.0)	1 (20.0)
Not at all important	61 (45.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)
Don't know/no answer	14 (10.5)	3 (12.0)	3 (60.0)
<b>Resources that are available are not current enough to effectively answer business-related questions</b>			
Very important	23 (17.3)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat important	10 (7.5)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	22 (16.5)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	57 (42.9)	11 (44.0)	2 (40.0)
Don't know/no answer	20 (15.0)	5 (20.0)	3 (60.0)
<b>The library staff is not familiar with the specific resources and materials requested by business patrons</b>			
Very important	16 (12.0)	2 (8.0)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat important	10 (7.5)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	18 (13.5)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	62 (46.6)	16 (64.0)	2 (40.0)
Don't know/no answer	26 (19.5)	5 (20.0)	3 (60.0)
<b>The library staff requires too much time to answer business questions or requests</b>			
Very important	3 (2.3)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat important	18 (13.5)	3 (12.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	18 (13.5)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	65 (48.9)	18 (72.0)	2 (40.0)
Don't know/no answer	28 (21.1)	2 (8.0)	3 (60.0)
<b>The library does not communicate or market its services to business patrons</b>			
Very important	16 (12.0)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat important	26 (19.5)	10 (40.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too important	17 (12.8)	8 (32.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all important	55 (41.4)	0 (0.0)	3 (60.0)
Don't know/no answer	18 (13.5)	3 (12.0)	2 (40.0)

Total: 133 businesses, 25 chambers of commerce, and 5 SBDC's that do not use the public library

The answers to an open-ended question, "Are there any other reasons that you do not use the public library for business reasons?" help to interpret the above result. More than a third of the firms believe that they have no need to go to the public library for information, or that they have all of the information that they need from alternative sources. More than a sixth of the firms indicated that they do not use the library because it does not have the information that they need, which in many cases is viewed as being very specialized. Clearly, firms do not uniformly have the potential to benefit from the information and services of the public library.

Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers that use the public libraries for information see the barriers to their use of the public library as being more significant than businesses that use the public library. All of the barriers in the table were rated as at least somewhat important by 80 percent or more of the Chambers and SBDCs. Again, among Chambers and SBDC's that do not use the public library the barriers were seen as much less significant. The most important barrier for the Chambers who do not use the public library is that the library does not communicate or market its services to businesspersons. There were no important barriers for SBDCs that did not use the public library. In answer to the open-ended question about why they do not use the public library, Chambers most commonly answered that they did not need to or that they had alternative sources of information.

Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers were also asked to rate the usefulness of potential changes that libraries might make to improve their service. The results are shown in Table 37. Part A of the table presents the responses of businesses, Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers that use a public library to gather information or do research. Part B presents the responses of those who do not use the public library.

The changes that were viewed as being somewhat useful or very useful by businesses that use the library are making the library staff and resources electronically accessible from the businessperson's office (85 percent) and devising programs, like special outreach or training for people interested in business resources, that would make the library's resources more accessible to business persons (80 percent). The next most commonly cited changes were adding more business-related books and materials (78.4 percent) and keeping business people reminded of business resources available at the library and informing them of any new business holdings (73.3 percent).

Although businesspersons who do not use the library generally rate the importance of the prospective changes lower than businesspersons that do use the library, they have roughly the same priorities. The most frequently-cited change was making the library staff and resources electronically accessible from the office (60.2 percent). Closely following was keeping business people reminded of the business resources available at the library and informing them of any new business holdings (55.7 percent). Devising programs that would make the library's resources more accessible to business patrons (48.1 percent) and addition of more business related books and materials (44.4 percent) were the next most frequently rated as somewhat or very useful.

Table 37A  
 Usefulness of Potential Changes That Libraries Might Make to Improve Their Service  
 To Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs.  
 Users of Public Libraries  
 (Percents in Parentheses)

Source	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
<b>Addition of more business related books and materials</b>			
Very useful	19 (31.7)	7 (21.2)	4 (66.7)
Somewhat useful	28 (46.7)	21 (63.6)	2 (33.3)
Not too useful	4 (6.7)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	4 (6.7)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	3 (5.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
<b>Additional staff to serve the needs of the business community</b>			
Very useful	6 (10.0)	6 (18.2)	1 (16.7)
Somewhat useful	19 (31.7)	5 (15.2)	1 (16.7)
Not too useful	21 (35.0)	10 (30.3)	1 (16.7)
Not at all useful	9 (15.0)	12 (36.4)	2 (33.3)
Don't know/no answer	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)
<b>Keeping business people reminded of the business resources available at the library and informing them of any new business holdings</b>			
Very useful	24 (40.0)	17 (51.5)	4 (66.7)
Somewhat useful	20 (33.3)	10 (30.3)	1 (16.7)
Not too useful	8 (13.3)	2 (6.1)	1 (16.7)
Not at all useful	5 (8.3)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	1 (1.7)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Devising programs that would make the library's resources more accessible to business patrons, like special outreach or training for people interested in business resources</b>			
Very useful	19 (31.7)	20 (60.6)	1 (16.7)
Somewhat useful	29 (48.3)	9 (27.3)	4 (66.7)
Not too useful	7 (11.7)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)
Don't know/no answer	1 (1.7)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
<b>Making library staff and resources electronically accessible from your office</b>			
Very useful	40 (66.7)	21 (63.6)	6 (100.0)
Somewhat useful	11 (18.3)	8 (24.2)	0 (0.0)
Not too useful	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	6 (10.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	1 (1.7)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)

Total: 193 businesses, 58 chambers of commerce, 11 SBDCs

\*Not asked of chambers of commerce

\*\*Not asked of SBDCs

Table 37B  
Usefulness of Potential Changes That Libraries Might Make to Improve Their Service  
To Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs.  
Non-Users of Public Libraries  
(Percents in Parentheses)

Source	Businesses	Chambers of Commerce	SBDC's
<b>Addition of more business related books and materials</b>			
Very useful	15 (11.3)	7 (28.0)	4 (80.0)
Somewhat useful	44 (33.1)	14 (56.0)	1 (20.0)
Not too useful	18 (13.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	49 (36.8)	3 (12.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	6 (4.5)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Additional staff to serve the needs of the business community</b>			
Very useful	4 (3.0)	3 (12.0)	1 (20.0)
Somewhat useful	28 (21.1)	4 (16.0)	1 (20.0)
Not too useful	31 (23.3)	2 (8.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	63 (47.4)	14 (56.0)	3 (60.0)
Don't know/no answer	5 (3.8)	2 (8.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Keeping business people reminded of the business resources available at the library and informing them of any new business holdings</b>			
Very useful	40 (30.1)	17 (68.0)	4 (80.0)
Somewhat useful	34 (25.6)	3 (12.0)	1 (20.0)
Not too useful	11 (8.3)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	39 (29.3)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	5 (3.8)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Devising programs that would make the library's resources more accessible to business patrons, like special outreach or training for people interested in business resources</b>			
Very useful	20 (15.0)	11 (44.0)	3 (80.0)
Somewhat useful	44 (33.1)	7 (28.0)	1 (20.0)
Not too useful	15 (11.3)	2 (8.0)	1 (20.0)
Not at all useful	48 (36.1)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	4 (3.0)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Making library staff and resources electronically accessible from your office</b>			
Very useful	52 (39.1)	16 (64.0)	5 (100.0)
Somewhat useful	28 (21.1)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)
Not too useful	10 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Not at all useful	35 (26.3)	5 (20.0)	0 (0.0)
Don't know/no answer	4 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Total: 133 businesses, 25 chambers of commerce, and 5 SBDC's that do not use the public library

For businesses as a whole, making the library's staff and resources electronically accessible from the office is the most important change that libraries could make to improve their service to the business community.

For Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development centers, electronic accessibility was also the most important change that a library could make to improve its service to the business community. This was the top choice for both those who used libraries and those who did not.

For businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers, the least important change that libraries could make is to add additional staff to serve the needs of the business community; this holds for both those who use libraries and those who do not.

### **Summary of Findings from the Business, Chamber of Commerce, and Small Business Development Center Survey.**

#### *1. Profile of Businesses Surveyed.*

A significant number of Kansas firms sell their products outside of their local areas. Nearly half of the firms sell their products regionally, while a fourth have statewide markets. Fourteen percent compete in national markets and 6 percent sell internationally.

#### *2. Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers with their own libraries.*

About a third of businesses of all sizes, and slightly less than a third of Chambers of Commerce, have their own in-house libraries. Most SBDCs have an in-house library. Service firms are the most likely type of firm to have an in-house library.

For most firms, their in-house library is modest, consisting of a wall or a cubicle. About a fourth of the in-house libraries of firms consist of a single room or more. The libraries of Chambers of Commerce and SBDCs are uniformly small.

Firms' libraries are most likely to contain specialized books pertaining to the company's field of business and trade journals and magazines. Internet access is generally a feature of business libraries. Government documents and reports and CDROM and on-line database access are also commonly found. Chamber of Commerce libraries most commonly contain materials for business startups, Internet Access, specialized books pertaining to the labor market and economic development, and trade journals or magazines. SBDC libraries are most likely to feature Internet access, materials for business startups, general business or marketing or economics books, and trade journals.

Most businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and SBDCs use their in-house libraries on a daily basis.

By far the most common use of in-house libraries by businesses is for operational or technical research. Exploring business startup information and investigating general economic or demographic information are the most common uses of in-house libraries in Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers.

### *3. Use of public libraries by businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.*

Just less than a third of businesses and over a half of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers use the public library to do research and gather information. Businesses that have an in-house library are more likely to use the public library for such purposes than businesses that do not.

Most businesses, Chambers, and SBDCs that use a public library use their local library. However, nearly a fourth of businesses use a public library in another part of the state, and more than one in ten use a public library in another state.

The most common types of research done by firms in public libraries are operational and technical research, industry research, and locating general economic and demographic information. Chambers of Commerce most commonly use the public library for economic development information, and general economic and demographic information. Small Business Development Centers are most likely to use the public library for economic development information and general economic and demographic information.

The public library resources most commonly used by businesses are government documents; Internet or on-line resources; legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias; and state and local government regulations and reports.

Public library resources most commonly used by Chambers of Commerce are subject and industry specific newspapers and journals; newspaper clipping files; legal indexes, dictionaries and encyclopedias; and state and local government regulations and reports.

Small Business Development Centers most commonly use (1) subject and industry-specific newspapers and journals and (2) industry data, statistics and trends.

Currently, most businesses, Chambers, and SBDCs access the libraries' services and resources by going to the public library. The next most common method of access is to telephone the library.

Only about 40 percent of businesses who use the public library use it 10 or more times a year. A smaller fraction of Chambers and SBDCs use the library that often. Businesses are most likely to use the public library during the regular workday; weekday evenings are the next most popular choice.

The overall satisfaction level with the business materials, resources and services that businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers use at the

public library is quite high. Only a handful of respondents of any type indicated a low level of satisfaction with the public libraries.

#### *4. Other sources of information for businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers.*

Besides using an in-house library or the public library, the other most important sources of information for businesses are talking to people in their industry, the Internet, and trade journals and magazines.

Chambers of Commerce are most likely to get information from local government entities, talking to people in their industry, the Internet, and Small Business Development Centers. SBDCs seek many outside sources of information with regularity.

#### *5. Barriers to use of public libraries and opportunities for change.*

Businesses that do not use the public library are much less likely to discern particular barriers to public library use than businesses that do use the library.

Business users of the library cite the library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request and the lack of contemporary technology at the library as the main barriers to business use of the library. The lack of library staff training to meet the demands of the business community is also considered a significant barrier by a large number of businesses.

Businesses that do not use the library find the library's failure to market or communicate its services to business patrons as the most significant barrier. Many firms report that they do not use the public library because they have no need to, or that they find all of the information they need from other sources.

Chambers of Commerce and SBDCs are much like businesses in that those who do not use the library are much less likely to perceive particular barriers as being important than those that do use the library. In general these two groups are more likely to rate any particular barrier as important than businesses are.

The change in public library services that businesses would find most helpful is to make the library resources and staff electronically accessible from the business office. Businesses would also find it useful if libraries would devise special programs such as outreach or training for people interested in business resources. Businesses would also like libraries to have more business-related books and materials available.

Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers also rate making the library's resources and staff electronically accessible from their offices as the most valuable change that libraries could make.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public Libraries could and should play a larger roll in local economic development, especially in providing resources for existing business and for potential business startups.

Discussion: The case studies of large libraries such as those in Wichita and Johnson County clearly show that those libraries play an important role in providing materials and services to the business community.

Information gathering and research are essential for many (but not all) types of businesses. This is supported by the fact that about a third of businesses have their own libraries, as shown by the survey of businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers. The results of that survey show that nearly a third of businesses and economic development organizations in all parts of the state use public libraries as a resource. These results also show that businesses need general as well as specialized knowledge; a high proportion of businesses that have their own libraries also use the resources and services of public libraries, in most cases their local public libraries.

Furthermore, the businesses that do use public libraries as a resource express a fairly high degree of satisfaction with the resources and services that they receive from the libraries.

Beyond the provision of traditional business reference service, public librarians do not always know how to assist in informational activities that would proactively foster local economic development. Many business people do not think of the public library as a source of such help, because although librarians are more than willing to exert extra effort on behalf of businesses, they often lack funds for narrowly-focused collections and the training needed to meet highly-specialized business needs.

2. The question of training for library staff in the area of serving the needs of business and economic development should be addressed explicitly.

Discussion: Although most libraries have staff that are trained in generalized skills, such as the use of electronic resources in the library, that can be made responsive to the needs of the business community, the majority of libraries do not have a staff person who has received training in serving the needs of patrons who request business or economic information. In addition, only about a third of the public libraries have a person who is designated to handle the requests for information and services from the business community.

Public libraries themselves state that an important barrier to providing effective service to the business community is staff who are insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community. And businesses that use the public library say that the library staff's lack of familiarity with specific resources or materials that business patrons request is a major barrier faced when businesses use library services.

Currently, it appears that library staff members often get their training in serving the needs of business by getting experience on the job. This may not be the most efficient method for training staff in fulfilling the demands of business; even worse, unless a staff member is given time to learn the necessary skills on the job, he or she may never reach an appropriate level of expertise.

Several methods of meeting the training needs of library staff in satisfying the demands of the business community could be explored. One avenue might be to have the library school at Emporia State University offer a course in managing business collections for those getting a library science degree. Such a course would prepare librarians with library science degrees to handle the diverse requirements of the business community.

Simply making formal training available to those obtaining library degrees would not be sufficient to solve the training problem, however. First of all, it would take some time before such personnel were generally employed in the state's public libraries. But more importantly, there are many libraries in which a high level of formal training is simply not present; nearly two-thirds of the state's public libraries have no staff with a Master of Library Science degree. A complementary training program with the goal of producing one specially trained staff member in each library with an annual budget of \$100,000 per year or more could be developed under the leadership of the Kansas State Library. The actual program could be developed under the guidance of the business librarians from the Johnson County Library, the Wichita Public Library, and perhaps one or two other large public libraries in the state and could be administered and delivered by the state's Regional Library Systems.

Public libraries with annual budgets of less than \$100,000, though less stressed in terms of business-demands, may find themselves met with economic development requests as well. A statewide electronic and telephone referral list of business reference and economic development specialist librarians could be developed for their use by the Kansas State Library.

3. The state library system should investigate the possibility of providing additional business resources on-line for all of the libraries in the state.

Discussion: More than two-thirds of the libraries in the survey cited the high cost of business materials relative to their low usage rates as a very important barrier to providing effective service to the business community. This was higher than for any other barrier. In addition, almost another fifth cited it as a somewhat important barrier. Only 12 percent of the libraries in the survey felt that it was not a barrier.

Well over half of the libraries felt that having an inadequate budget to purchase materials and services requested by business patrons was a very important barrier to providing effective service to the business community. Another fourth felt that it was a somewhat important barrier. Only 17.5 percent felt that it was not an important barrier.

In most libraries, interlibrary loans are the means of fulfilling business information requests less than 10 percent of the time. One interpretation of this number, born out by the responses of some businesses in the focus groups, is that inter-library loans are often too slow to meet the information needs of businesses.

Even the Wichita Public Library, with its large size and significant history of providing service to business, appears to be struggling a bit with moving to electronic and Internet-based references. The state library system could probably provide basic Internet-based reference services for all libraries in the state at a lower cost than if all of the libraries sought to acquire them on their own. The role of the local library would be to provide computer access along with some trained staff to assist individuals in using the references.

4. The state library system should investigate the possibility of providing funding for computer equipment in libraries across the state.

Discussion: It is clear from the business survey results that the size and resources of public libraries varies widely. A large fraction of the libraries in the state are relatively small and have very limited budgets. About two-thirds of the public libraries impose time-limits on their on-line searching, indicating that the resources for accomplishing such searches are scarce.

On the other hand, technology improvements, including new and upgraded computers, are the top priority for the next 5 years among public libraries across the state. In libraries that have specific programs or policies designed to meet the needs of the business community, those programs are most likely to involve computing – the creation of a computer lab, Internet use, or Web page development.

Providing funding for computing that is explicitly a part of a state library system program aimed at improving the services and resources that public libraries provide for business and economic development is an example of public support for libraries in this area. On a smaller scale, such support by the Wichita City Commission for business references and information, was the impetus for the public library to really get started in the business area. Perhaps statewide support would provide impetus to public libraries across the state. This impetus would be even stronger if the state library system provided additional support for business and economic development resources through setting up a training program and providing electronic databases for public libraries.

5. The state library system should investigate the possibility of a centralized phone reference service for business questions

Discussion: In terms of the resources available for improving service to business patrons, most libraries face severe budget constraints. The library survey showed that for most libraries, their highest budgetary priorities did not specifically include a focus on providing resources and information for business and economic development. This is

most clearly indicated by the fact that when asked “How important, relative to your budget, would the adding to a business or economics section be?” only 13.3 percent of the libraries responded that it would be very important.

Libraries' resource constraints are also illustrated by the fact that libraries find the lack of funds or staff time to promote library resources and services to the business community to be one of the most significant barriers to improving service to the business community. More directly on point, libraries also find that having their staff insufficiently trained to meet the demands of the business community poses an important barrier to improving service to business.

In the library survey, libraries were positive about the possibility of “obtaining resources from a centralized site with specialized resources and personnel” as a way of improving service to business patrons. More than 60 percent of libraries were “very willing” to do so, while another 30 percent were “somewhat willing.”

Although currently most businesses go to the library in order to access business information and services, telephoning the library was the second most frequent method of access. In case studies, the large libraries with business reference librarians reported a high volume of business requests that were handled completely over the telephone. Businesses say that the most important improvement that public libraries could make to improve their service to business is to make the library electronically accessible from the office. Barring that, the next closest thing might be to make library resources and expertise available over the phone.

A telephone reference service requires access to a very extensive set of reference materials. An equally critical part of such a system is highly-trained librarians to interpret business requests for information, to gather the information quickly, and to communicate the information to the businesses and economic development professionals. Supporting such an operation is undoubtedly beyond the capabilities of small or even medium-sized libraries. For smaller libraries especially, the volume of requests would be low enough that such an operation would not be cost efficient.

A centralized telephone business reference system could be operated from a single location. One of the large urban libraries like the Johnson County Library or the Wichita Public Library would already be well along in terms of collections and staff expertise. It might make sense to locate a telephone business reference service in one of those libraries. Or if libraries and businesses would be more likely to call a regional center (a position that was expressed during the focus groups), such centers could be established at both of the libraries mentioned above as well as at one more location further west.

6. There should be standards for the business resources and services that are provided in libraries of different sizes. These standards cannot be specified completely based on the results of this study, but their general shape can be outlined.

#### A. Minimal Configurations for Small Libraries:

1. Internet access;
2. Adequate number of sufficiently high quality computers;
3. Local demographic and economic information;
4. Local government regulations and reports;
5. Materials on business startups;
6. Staff training on the business resources, materials, and services available at the library;
7. A plan or schematic for where to send patrons who seek business-related materials when they are not available at the public library;
8. Some training for staff on whom to contact or where to send patrons for business materials that are not available at the public library;
9. A kit for businesses that describes the resources available to businesses at the public library;
10. An ongoing method of informing businesses and potential businesses of the library's business resources and services;
11. Regular contact with local business and economic development organizations.

Discussion: Both the surveys and the focus groups brought out the growing importance of the Internet to businesses and economic development as a source of information. It is likely that this source of information will become even more important as time goes on. An adequate number of computers as well as computers with sufficient power and features are important not only for providing Internet access but also for giving the library a basis for searching on-line and CD-ROM or DVD databases that may become available to the library. More than 90 percent of public libraries currently allow patrons to use the Internet at the library.

From the surveys, local economic and demographic information and local government regulations and reports are two types of information that are not specific to particular kinds of business that businesses frequently use. It is appropriate for this type of information to be kept at the local library level.

Although the survey of existing businesses could not bring out the importance of materials on business startups, the focus groups and the surveys of Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers raised the importance of such a resource. Such materials could have a general component that could be common to all libraries in the state and also features that would be specific to the local community, such as local regulations or resources available in the local community. Two-thirds of libraries already have resources for small business startups.

Although the resources available at the local library may be minimal, it is important that library staff be aware of what these resources are and how they can be used to answer business questions. It is also essential that they know what questions cannot be answered using local resources, and be able to access outside resources or send businesses to them.

Such outside resources may be contained in other public libraries or in regional centers as suggested in another recommendation.

Marketing and in general keeping businesses and potential new businesses aware of the public library's resources for helping business is crucial. Businesses that do not use a public library cite the library's failure to market or communicate its services to business patrons as a significant barrier to the use of the public library by businesses. To the extent that they do so, small libraries today tend to use newspaper or radio advertising and special promotional events to inform the business community of the resources that they have available. Whether these are the most effective forms of marketing and communication, and whether they are extensive enough, should be investigated further.

Public libraries have generally established relationships with local business organizations, either by having a representative who is a member of such an organization (nearly three-fourths of public libraries), or by meeting with business people to explain the resources that the libraries have (three-fourths of public libraries). Furthermore, libraries firmly express a willingness to establish strong relationships with local Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers as a step in improving their services to the business and economic development communities. As some in the focus groups pointed out, such relationships could pay off in broader community support for all of the library's activities.

B. Minimal Configuration for Medium-Sized Libraries -- In addition to resources and services listed for the smallest libraries, medium sized libraries should have as a minimum:

12. Most commonly used CD-ROM/DVD databases; such as Standard and Poor's Register and Thomas Register;
13. Most commonly used on-line vendor systems, e.g. First Search;
14. Most commonly used on-line database systems: e.g. OCLC, INFOTRAC, ABI/INFORM and Business Periodicals Index;
15. State government regulations;
16. A more intensive program of marketing services to business than small libraries;
17. A training program for people interested in using business resources in the public library.

Discussion: Some of the features of small libraries might themselves be more extensive in medium-sized libraries. For example, an adequate number of computers for Internet access will be greater as the library gets larger. Furthermore, the amount of staff training that will be necessary so that a staff member knows what business references and services are available at the library will be greater simply because the quantity of references and services will be larger and more varied.

Many libraries have these features, at least in part. One-fourth of the libraries surveyed have CD-ROM/DVD databases. Standard and Poor's Register and the Thomas Register

are the most commonly held. About one-fourth of the libraries provide access to on-line vendor systems. First Search was the one most commonly cited by librarians in the survey. About one-third of the libraries have on-line databases. OCLC and INFOTRAC were the ones most frequently mentioned by libraries that have such systems. ABI/INFORM and Business Periodicals Index are ones that are most commonly searched.

C. Minimal Configuration for Large Libraries -- In addition to resources and services listed for the smallest libraries and medium sized libraries, the largest libraries should have as a minimum:

18. A business reference librarian;
19. A “complete” set of business references – including CD-ROM/DVD databases, on-line vendor systems, on-line database systems;
20. A more intensive program of marketing services to business than small or medium-sized libraries.

Discussion: These features are already essentially implemented in the Johnson County Library and the Wichita Public Library. As suggested above, these libraries, with some additional resources, might serve as the basis for regional centers for business and economic development information and services.

7. State-level leadership and resources will determine the nature and extent of improved library services to business and economic development.

Discussion: The core of the above recommendations involves a strong leadership role for the state library system. The budget limitations and competing demands of local libraries make it extremely unlikely that most will undertake changes that involve a substantial reallocation of their limited resources. However, the stated priorities of local public libraries make it at least possible that strong leadership at the state level could guide them. That leadership would have to take the form of providing some resources (computer equipment, staff training programs, and centralized information resources and services), as well as providing guidelines and a plan for local libraries to move in the desired direction. The examples of Johnson County and Wichita, although they are in many ways atypical, do show that injections of support from their county and city commissions, respectively, have strongly influenced the development of business resources and services at the public libraries. It could be that if the state provides to the state library system some funding dedicated for economic development and business support, public libraries across the state would respond in the same ways that the Wichita Public and Johnson County Libraries have responded to the funding from their county and city commissions.

