

A New Look for Libraries:

*Transforming an Old Institution into a
Progressive Opportunity for Positive Change*

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BALTIMORE
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SEPTEMBER 23-26 **2018**



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- Why are you here?

To learn how existing public spaces and institutions can be reimaged to support vulnerable community members.

- What can you accomplish?

Leave with practical opportunities to implement changes in your community

- What will you glean from listening to us?

Actionable ways to develop and fund new ideas for public spaces and institutions

Who is in the Room?



The Peer Navigators Program

A growing need

Libraries are free and equal access for all, making them one of the few resources available to the City's most vulnerable community members.

Building a successful program

Modeled after the San Francisco Public Library, the Peer Navigator program built on proven success and adapted it to the unique challenges and strengths of the Denver community.

Finding the Funding

Library staff searched for funding to support the program and identified the Justice Assistance Program with an emphasis on mental health. The application highlighted the importance of libraries in addressing mental health in communities. Collaborations were developed to ensure the program could be staffed and managed effectively.

Finding the Funding

Key Challenges

- Developing a strategic grant plan

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- Program Evaluation

Getting started

The application was awarded on October 1, 2016. After a few weeks of planning, interviews were conducted and staff hired by January 1. Peer navigators shadowed social workers to train and eventually establish “Drop in” hours where individuals utilize the Peer Navigator’s time.

Outreach also occurs throughout the library. The Peer Navigators may offer someone a pair of socks and this leads to helping them find housing or even family reunification.

Moving forward

As the program becomes an established part of the community, additional funding has been secured to expand and maintain services level to support the City's most vulnerable community members.

Time to Apply

The Community Technology Center at DPL:

- A Floor with 126 computers and free wifi
- Where 75% of daily customers spend their time – most experiencing homelessness and life challenges
- Many security incidents daily

Time to Apply

Problem Statement:

- Reduce the number of security incidents in the CTC, while engaging the customers more positively and developing relationships between them and staff and security.

Time to Apply

Solution:

- We created a “Coffee Connections” morning once a month where staff take turns serving coffee to customers experiencing homelessness. The Peer Navigators are present during this time to offer support and help staff and customers engage in conversation.

Time to Apply

Results:

- 200 cups of coffee served on average monthly
- Customers report that they “feel welcome in the library”
- Staff report that they have developed relationships with people they were once afraid to speak to
- Security incidents decreased and connections to resources through the Peer Navigators increased

More Results:

- Identify a need in your community. (Keeping in mind vulnerable community members)
- What is the problem statement?
- What are creative solutions?
- What resources would be needed?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What is the cost?
- What are some funding opportunities?

Workshop

- Who are your vulnerable community members
- What is the problem statement you want to address?
- What are the potential solutions you could implement?

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Questions?

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