

Building relationships to connect local Black-Owned businesses with university resources

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Introduction

Outreach and relationship building are key to successful librarianship and an invitation for innovation. I began my first librarian position in October 2020 as the Business Librarian at the University of Louisville. While I knew I needed to build relationships with students, faculty, and staff in the College of Business, I wanted to be innovative and mindful of where else I could establish connections and provide research support. I moved to Louisville during a global pandemic and during national civil unrest due to the pattern of Black citizens being killed by

Academic BRASS

End neighborhood representative serving on OneWest's Board of Directors. These marketplaces are both Black-led and operated:

- < Opportunity Corner, Black Development Corporation, <https://www.blackcdcky.org/opportunitycorner>
- < MELANnaire Marketplace, <https://melannaire.com/>

I created flyers which I handed out at both marketplaces (see figure 2). I spoke with over 30 entrepreneurs. This outreach was a good start and will need to be an ongoing effort.

Figure 2. Outreach flyer

Research Support

My first goal was to hold research consultations in the library with local entrepreneurs. I already offered research appointments to students, faculty, and staff in the College of Business, and our

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I followed up with the entrepreneurs I met doing my initial outreach to schedule research consultations. I also had entrepreneurs referred to me by the Director of Business Development at OneWest. As she worked with entrepreneurs on their business plans, she recommended they come meet me in the library to do market research. These referrals accounted for the majority of my library research consultations with local business owners.

Instead of continuing outreach to increase library research consultations, I decided to pivot and explore how I could connect my work as a liaison to the College of Business with the work I was doing providing research support to local Black-owned businesses. I was providing much of the same types of research support to community entrepreneurs as to students working on hypothetical research projects for classes. A new goal developed to work with faculty to design