

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



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Erie County Public Library offers programs for entrepreneurs struggling during COVID-19

Erie, PA – The Erie County Public Library’s Idea Lab will offer two new workshops to support local entrepreneurs whose businesses are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Idea Lab staff tailored the upcoming programs specifically to address the unprecedented challenges facing Erie County businesses during the pandemic. Both programs – the Refocus workshop and Rebuild cohort – will take place virtually.

Refocus Workshop

This is a one-time, two-hour workshop for businesses struggling during COVID-19. Participants will determine immediate next steps needed to stabilize their business, strategize how to better solve their customers’ changing needs, and learn how to adapt or refine their models. The Refocus workshop is offered free of charge (normally \$25) in this time of crisis. Barb Weber of Barb Weber Coaching, who is an accredited leader in the entrepreneurial space, will lead this workshop. Refocus serves to provide guidance and applicable tools for businesses that need to take immediate action in order to survive.

- Monday, Aug. 17: 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 15: 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Rebuild Cohort

This program is designed to dive deep into the pandemic-related issues affecting Erie County businesses. They will meet twice per week for a total of five weeks. A cohort of 15 students will be led by an expert facilitator to refocus their business, stabilize it, and build toward long-term recovery. The Rebuild program is \$125 and includes a binder of actionable materials and resources in addition to the live virtual meetings.

- Beginning Monday, Sept. 14: 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. (Mondays and Thursdays for five weeks)
- Applications are due by Friday, Sept. 4

Registration and information for both programs can be found at <https://erielibrary.org/resources/idealab/co-starters/>.

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Both the Refocus workshop and Rebuild cohort are tailored versions of the international [CO.STARTERS](#) curriculum, developed by the Idea Lab to combat those issues most affecting Erie County entrepreneurs. Cohort sessions are made possible by funding through Erie Regional Library Foundation and Erie County Gaming and Revenue Authority.

Further Idea Lab programs suited for budding entrepreneurs with a goal of starting their own business will be offered. These introductory-level programs are aligned with a more traditional CO.STARTERS format and will be similar to offerings presented by Erie County Public Library last year in partnership with the Innovation Collaborative.

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