

Southwest Portland Tool Library Business Plan

Executive Summary

Operate as a non-profit lending library providing short-term off-site tool use to members based in the Southwest, South and Northwest Portland quadrants and Downtown Portland.

Proposed lending hours are 6-8pm Tuesday and 9am-2pm Saturday.

Company Description

Tool libraries empower the communities they serve in a number of ways:

- Community sustainability (reduce, reuse, recycle) - avoid buying/storing/divesting of single-use tools
- Community resilience - known local cache of tools, work with Neighborhood Emergency Teams
- Tool libraries serve local areas. While this library is called SWPTL it will also serve the Northwest/Downtown/South Waterfront areas of Portland, but not preclude them from starting a more local library of their own
- Educational opportunities: city permitting and departments, what to ask your contractor, DIY, conservation

Market Analysis

Much like traditional libraries for books, there is a demand for low-cost one-time use of tools. Rental companies compete in this space and offer a greater likelihood of tool availability and choice for additional cost. There is no intention of Multnomah County Library moving into the “Library of Things” space as has been done in Washington and Clackamas counties (though these offerings also speak to demand). Tool libraries in N/NE/SE Portland have been successful organizations in place for over a decade with strong memberships and volunteer teams.

Organization and Management

We are discussing possible fiscal sponsorship via SW Trails, but if we’re required to start as our own 501c(3) (eventual goal) we will have a 5-member board with knowledge of tool use, maintenance and safety as well as required fiscal tracking.

Marketing and Sales

There is a desire to have some low-cost initial marketing to get the word out, as well as simple branding to help get the word out that the library is available.

Financial Projections

Primary on-going funding source is membership fees (\$20 one-time new user) and late fees (\$2-10 depending on demand for tool) with grants for start-up and projects (such as new tools). The expectation is that grants will not be easy to come by, and instead overhead needs to be low.

Estimated annual expenses are \$8,750 including: rent, utilities, insurance, organization expenses, tools and inventory software. Offers of tool donations have already come in, but there is an expectation of both purchasing tools and outlay of costs for repair.

Appendix

SWPTL: <https://swptl.org>

NEPTL: <http://neptl.org>

SEPTL: <http://septl.org>

NPTL: <http://northportlandtoollibrary.org>

Green Lents: <https://www.greenlents.org/community-tool-library.html>