



Centering Makers' Values: An Outcomes Framework for Adult Makers in Public Libraries

Rebecca M. Teasdale, Ashley Kazyaka,
and Micah Rademacher

PLA Webinar | July 14, 2026

 UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO
  DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY
  Blue Island Public Library
  MAKER CENTERED FRAMEWORK

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Today's Webinar

1. New research-backed maker outcomes framework
2. Library-tested strategies for supporting adult makers
 - a. Denver (CO) Public Library
 - b. Blue Island (IL) Public Library
3. Applying the framework in your library

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Please share
your ideas and
experiences in
the chat!



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Which type(s) of making
activities does your
library offer for adults?

Learn more in the *Makers in Library* toolkit
<https://www.makersinthelibrary.org/downloads>

1. Making-focused programming in a multi-purpose space
2. Dedicated makerspace (for adults or all ages)
3. Making activities during outreach visits or in a mobile unit
4. At-home making (e.g., take home activity kits, maker equipment for checkout)
5. Making-focused community events (e.g., Maker Faires, festivals)
6. None of these yet...but we're interested!

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Making activities in public libraries



- Expanding opportunities for makerspace participation
- Creating inclusive environments
- Fostering a sense of belonging

Chang et al, 2019; Koh & Teasdale, 2026
Lakind et al., 2019

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“Anyone could be making anything for any amount of time in a library makerspace”

Cun et al., 2019, p. 40

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How can public libraries...

- Equitably support adults' varying priorities and values?
- Evaluate their programs and services in light of makers' differing interests and needs?
- Identify improvements to better serve their communities?



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Our research team



Rebecca M. Teasdale, PhD



Gustavo M. Garcia, MA



Maitrayi S. Subhedar, MA



Jennifer Ceja, BA

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Our partners



This project was made possible in part by
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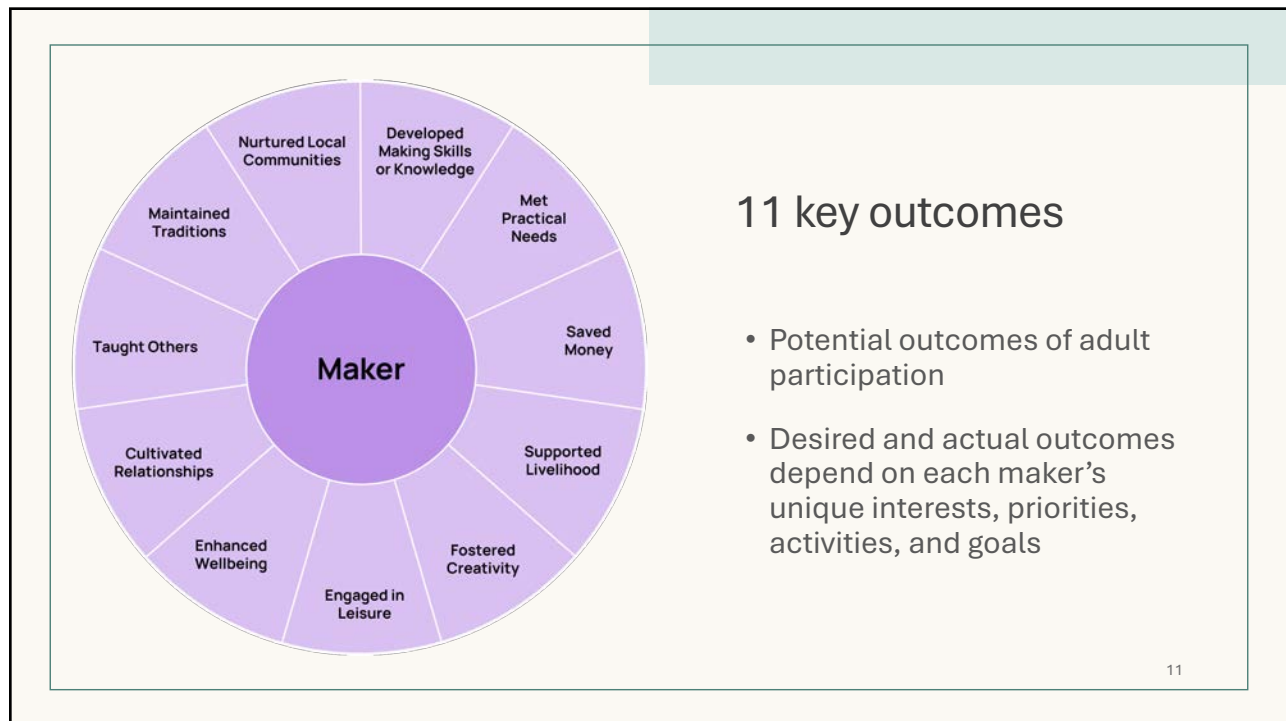
Our research study



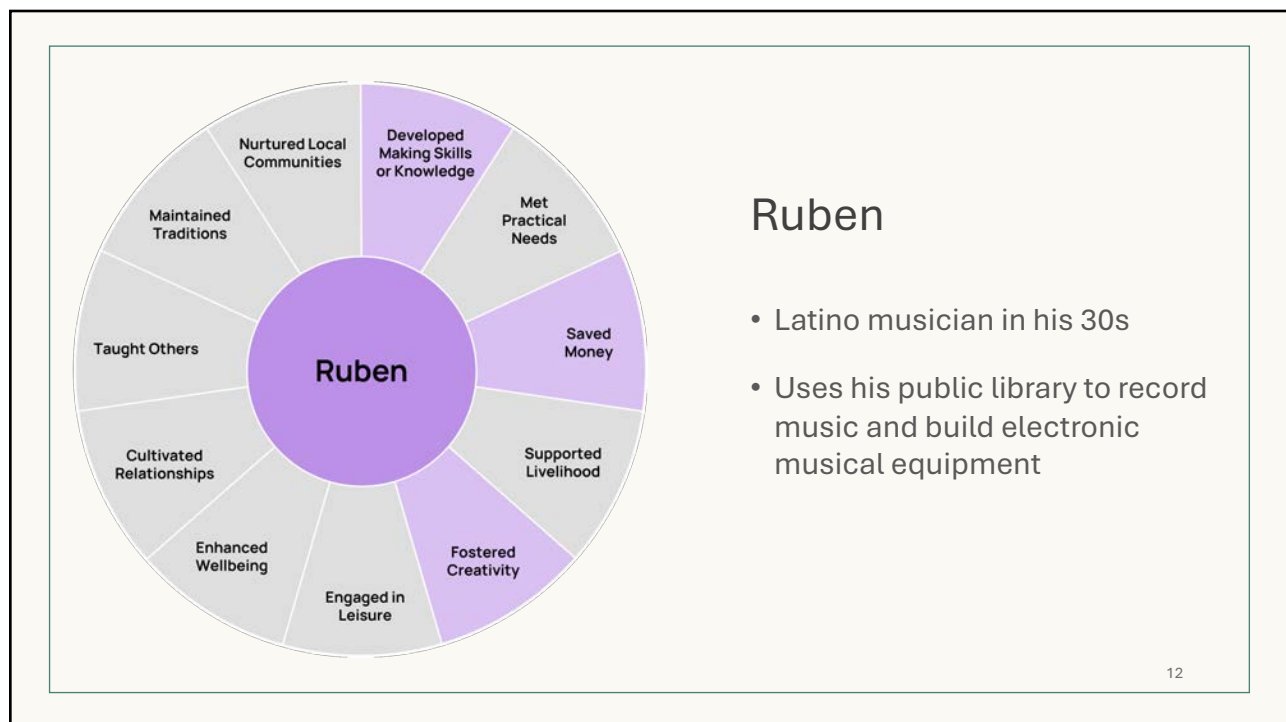
- Conducted 21 focus groups in 6 public libraries serving diverse communities
- Participants included:
 - 62 adult makers
 - 29 staff members
- Documented broad spectrum of benefits adults seek and achieve in public library making activities

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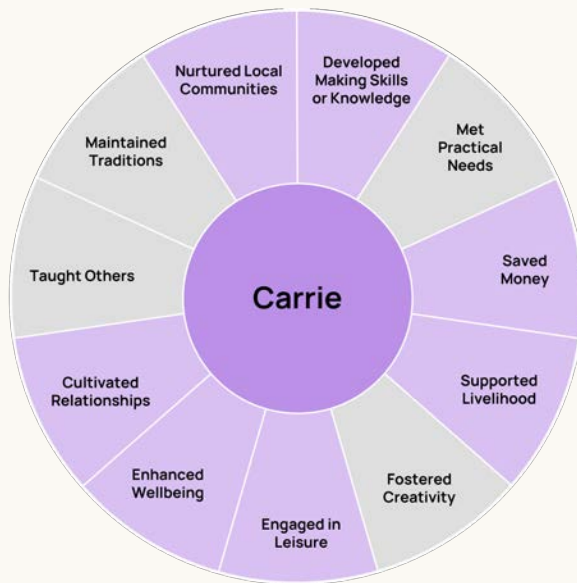
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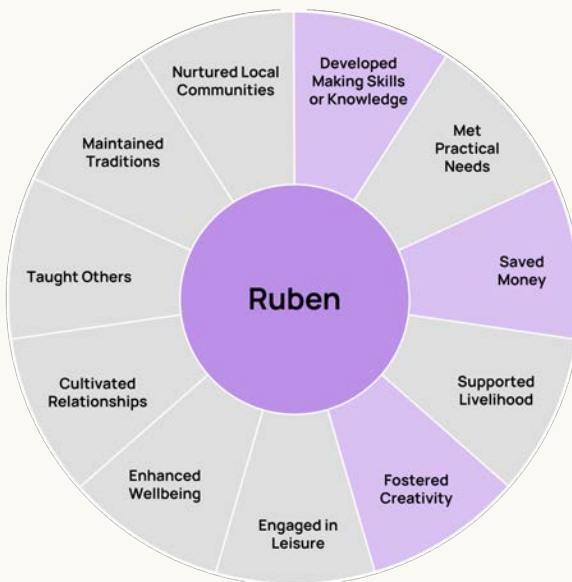
Carrie

- Black woman in her 40s, avid crafter who works in the legal system
- Visits her public library makerspace multiple times a week to take classes and work on craft projects



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Using the framework



- Identify outcomes that are most relevant for specific makers and communities
- Assess alignment between makers' values and library offerings
- Develop services and train staff to support varying priorities
- Communicate the broad range of outcomes makers prioritize

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Strategies for
supporting adult
makers:

Denver Public
Library

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About the ideaLABs



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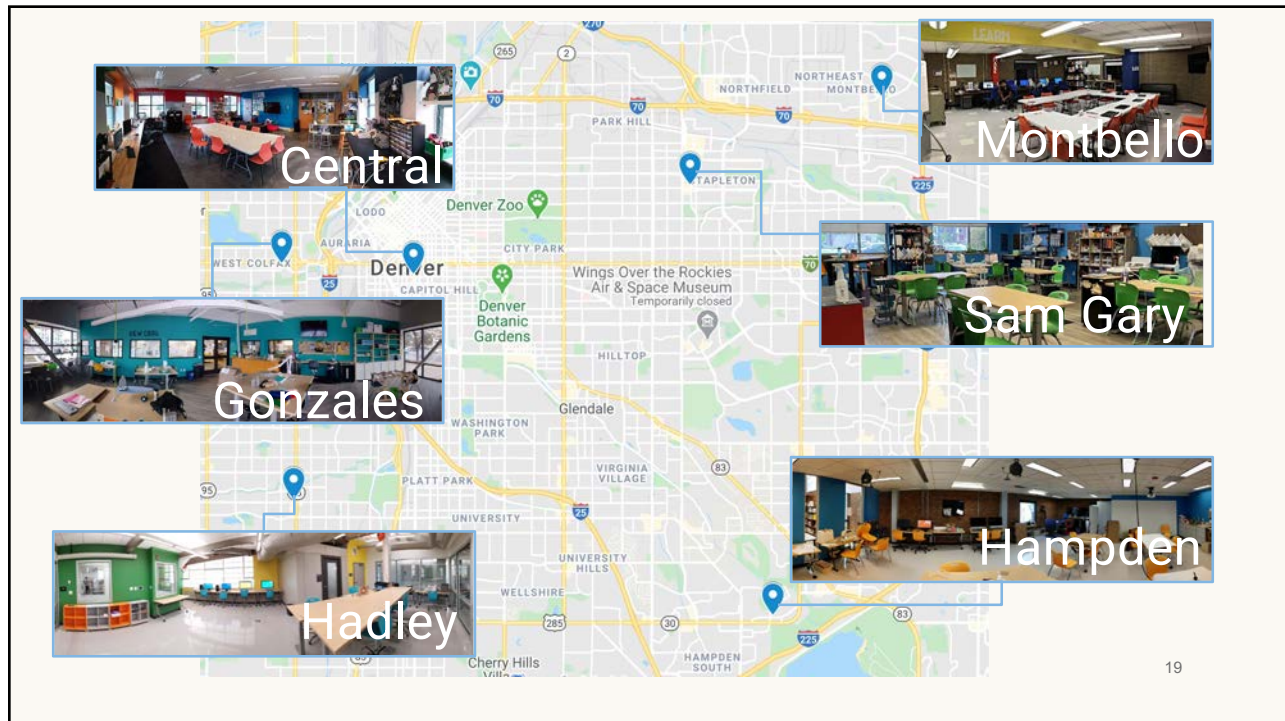
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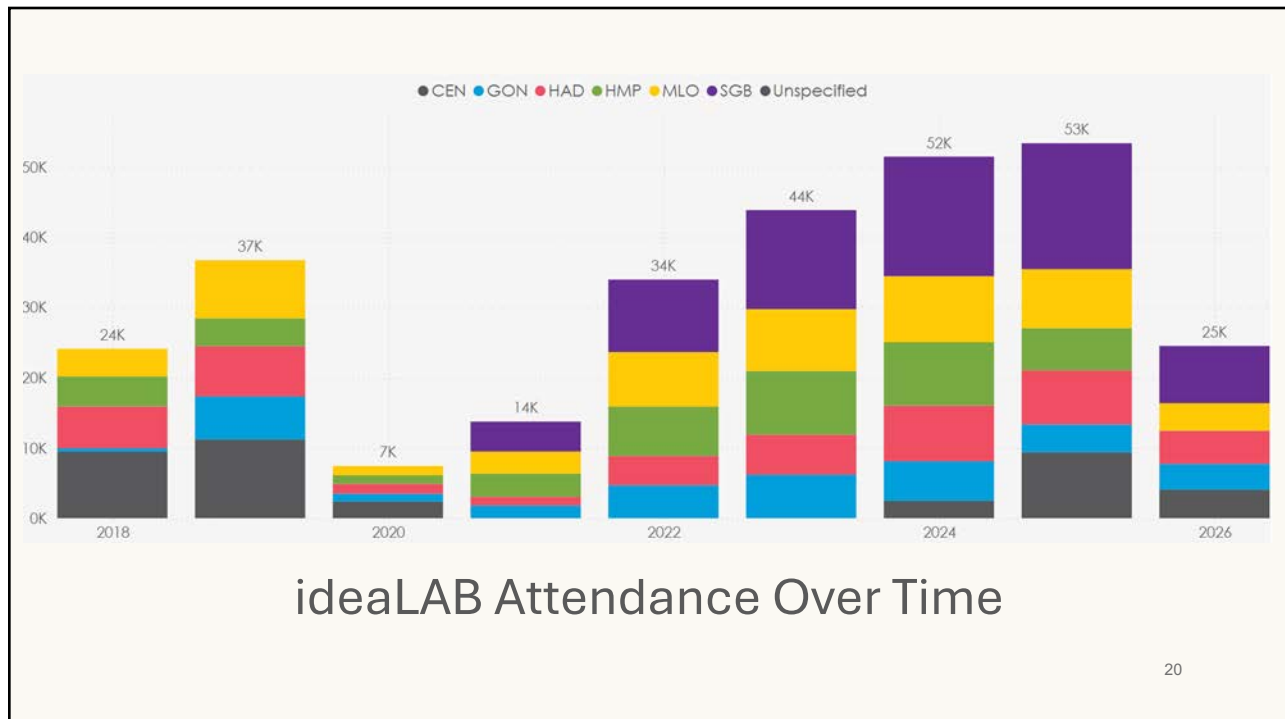
Teen coding club (circa 2012) | Original ideaLAB (2013)

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Examples of Outcomes in Action



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Outcome:
Teaching
Others

2025 Light-up
Valentine
Workshop

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Outcome:
Meeting
Practical
Needs

Repairs in
progress

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Strategies for Engagement



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- Hiring staff who love engaging with others
- Ongoing regular evaluation
- Adjusting workshops, supplies, and activities to match community interests
- Making lots of supplies visible

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Strategies for
supporting adult
makers:

Blue Island Public
Library

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Tech Annex
- High Tech!



Makerspace
- Low Tech!

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Creative Nonsense - 2014

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Makerspace Grants 2014-2022

From a single book cart of art supplies, to a dedicated space



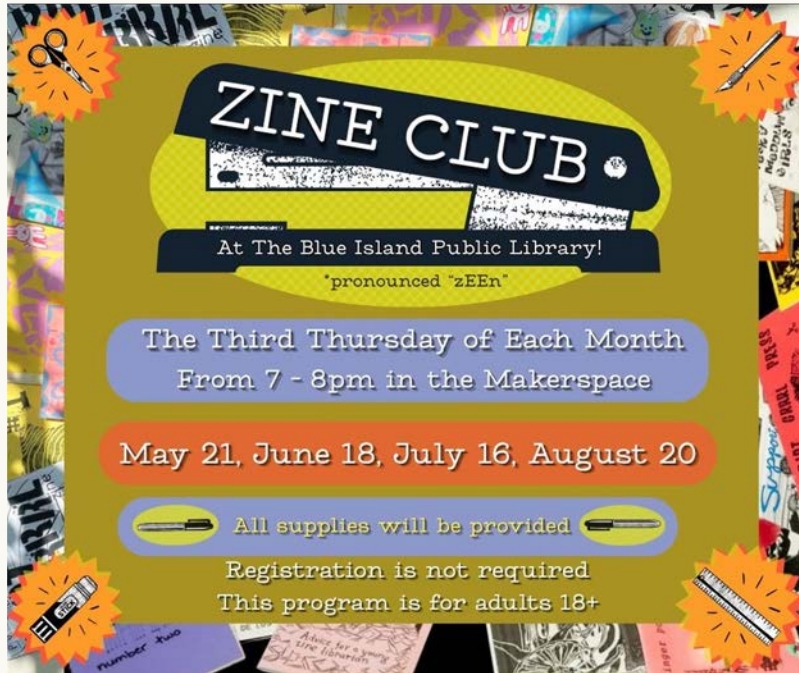
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Examples of Outcomes in Action



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Outcome:
Fostering
Creativity

Zine Club

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Outcome:
Fostering
Creativity

Recording
Studio

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Outcome: Nurturing Local Communities



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Celebrate art, science, and the cycles that move us.
FRIDAY, July 24th
2pm- 4pm

The Flowstate Fair

The Flowstate Fair is for showcasing talented patrons in the community and raising awareness of the period product insecurities. Period poverty is a public health issue that impacts the health, education, and dignity of millions. Help us create a welcoming, stigma-free environment by showcasing resources, your career, and hobbies.

Show us how you reach flowstate and get things done!

- CUSTOMIZE A 3D PRINTED PERIOD PRODUCT BOX
- CHECK OUT LOCAL ARTISTS, VENDORS, & ORGANIZATIONS
- Q&A WITH MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS
- DONATE PERIOD PRODUCTS TO ENTER A RAFFLE

SCAN TO APPLY TO BE A VENDOR/PART OF Q & A

AUTHOR REBECCA GARNER
BOOK SIGNING

Blue Island Public Library

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Outcome: Nurturing Local Communities

Flowstate Fair 2026

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Strategies for Engagement



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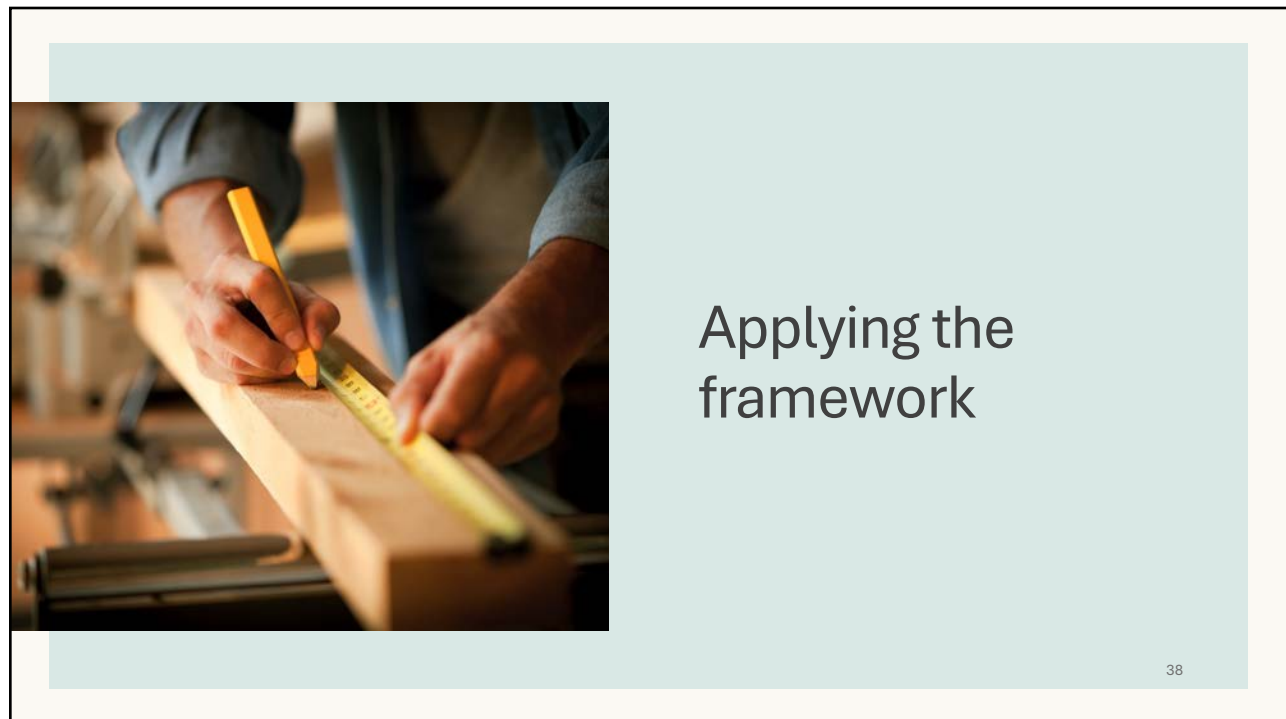
- Diverse implementation model
- Educate Staff, and let Staff educate you
- Educate the Powers That Be
- Institutional use: “we’re all makers”

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Discussion

- How does the outcomes framework align with your experiences?
- How might you use this framework to develop or enhance inclusive, responsive maker services for adults?



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www.makercenteredframework.org

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Thank you!

Rebecca Teasdale
rteasd2@uic.edu

Ashley Kazyaka
akazyaka@denverlibrary.org

Micah Rademacher
mrademacher@blueislandlibrary.org

