

Libraries Transforming Communities: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries

Abstract

When library workers better understand and engage with their communities, libraries become stronger, more connected institutions and librarians become more effective advocates for patrons and libraries. However, library workers serving small and rural communities often face unique barriers to developing community engagement skills. Therefore, the American Library Association's Public Programs Office (ALA PPO), manager of the Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) initiative, requests \$249,209 in IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian funding to address the community engagement needs of library workers serving small and rural communities.

This 13-month (September 2019 – September 2020) project will complement the existing suite of LTC resources by creating a series of basic facilitation tools and trainings specific to the needs of small and rural libraries. The project plan will cover development and delivery of an online learning series on foundational facilitation skills; a facilitation guide; monthly coaching sessions; an in-person workshop; and scholarship opportunities for library workers serving small and rural communities.

Through these deliverables, the project will:

- Provide relevant and accessible opportunities for library professionals serving small and rural communities to build critical facilitation skills that they will use to foster community change
- Communicate opportunities/outcomes to the field to further promote community engagement work
- Foster a network of library leaders who can help peers who are new to community engagement

To achieve this, ALA PPO will collaborate with the National Coalition of Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) and Convergence Design Lab to create a series of basic facilitation trainings and resources that will provide small and rural library workers with access to no-cost training, on-demand online learning and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

ALA will also work with New Knowledge Organization (NKO) to implement a mix-methods evaluation of the project using participant interviews and existing learning session evaluation tools. Evaluation will be conducted to measure participants skills acquisition; attitudinal and behavioral changes; and quality of instruction.

The key outcomes of this project will be a suite of facilitation tools and trainings tailored to small and rural libraries and a burgeoning network of small and rural library workers committed to community engagement. The project aligns with the IMLS goal of building capacity for library workers to improve the well-being of their communities by equipping them with the skills necessary to listen and lead conversations on important local and national issues.

When library workers better understand and engage with their communities, libraries become stronger, more connected institutions, and library workers become more effective advocates for patrons and libraries. However, library workers serving small and rural communities often face unique barriers to developing community engagement skills. **The American Library Association’s Public Programs Office (ALA PPO), manager of the Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) initiative, requests \$249,209 in IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian funding to address the community engagement needs of library workers serving small and rural communities.** This 13-month project will complement the existing suite of LTC resources with a focus on basic facilitation skills training specific to the needs of small and rural libraries. The project aligns with the IMLS goal of building capacity for library workers to improve the well-being of their communities by equipping them with the skills necessary to listen to constituents and lead conversations on important local and national issues.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Opportunity

As trusted institutions, the library is often a “first responder” to issues that arise in their communities. In spring 2015, Baltimore erupted into protest after Freddie Gray, an unarmed African American man, was killed in police custody. Enoch Free Public Library was one of the few institutions that remained open to the public during the unrest, and in fact, took a leadership role, developing a series of facilitated conversations and bringing the fractured community together to discuss the issues at the heart of the conflict.¹ Currently, libraries all over the country are working to respond to the opioid crisis. Several libraries, such as the Loveland (CO) Public Library², are seeking to address this issue by facilitating conversations with their communities. As “drug overdose deaths are rising in rural areas, surpassing rates in urban areas,”³ community dialogues have the capacity to both inform those affected by the crisis and develop a community plan to address the problem. For many small and rural communities, the local library is a natural (and sometimes the only) home for such dialogues. *LTC: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries* would present a valuable opportunity for small and rural library workers to gain the basic facilitation skills needed to lead dialogues with their communities on critical issues like this one.

The view of libraries as natural hosts and community engagement leaders is affirmed by the Knight Commission on Trust, Media and Democracy, which recommends the creation of community dialogues hosted by trusted institutions to address local and national issues that are plagued by misinformation/disinformation. In the recommendation, libraries are listed as an “obvious place for such discussions”.⁴ This is further supported by ALA’s National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA) white paper finding that “libraries can help map the social needs of communities, identifying local and national topics of concern to voters. People turn to libraries when they need information.”⁵

Current Practice

ALA is committed to the support and development of library-led community engagement work. Over the past five years, ALA has created, curated, evaluated and assembled a robust array of LTC professional development resources fostering community engagement in libraries. These materials have provided library workers with

¹ American Libraries, “[Baltimore’s Library Stays Open During Unrest](#)” (May 1, 2015)

² Loveland (CO) Public Library, “[Civil Conversations – Opioid Crisis](#)” (Feb 21, 2019)

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “[Opioid Misuse in Rural America](#)” (2017)

⁴ Knight Commission on Trust, Media and Democracy, “[Crisis in Democracy: Renewing Trust in America](#)” (February 2019)

⁵ American Library Association, [National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment white paper](#) (2015):

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training on a variety of community engagement models including Everyday Democracy’s Dialogue for Change method, National Issues Forum and World Café. More than 2,334 U.S. library workers have sought out LTC web sessions and in-person workshops, learning community engagement approaches that can be adapted to suit the needs of their communities. Through the independent evaluation of the first two phases of LTC, several needs were identified, including learning opportunities suited to the requirements of small and rural libraries; support at different skill levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced); expanded MLIS instruction; and more diffuse training opportunities nationally.

ALA is moving forward to address these gaps through LTC’s initiative strategies, including the development of an MLIS textbook, train-the-trainer opportunities, free online learnings, a continued collaboration with the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD), and an annual workshop co-sponsored with the Harwood Institute. Response to the *LTC: Models for Change* series (IMLS grant RE-40-16-0137-16) for libraries serving small, mid-sized and/or rural communities (40 applications for 25 scholarships, 50 in-person workshop attendees and 1,212 online learning participants) affirmed the interest in and need for skills training for small and rural libraries. Participating small and rural library workers expressed the need for opportunities that alleviate their professional (and often geographic) isolation through access to no-cost training and on-demand online learning sessions. Thus, ALA expects this project will have strong pick-up from the field. This proposed project will enable ALA to focus *specifically* on the needs of small and rural library workers by providing free basic facilitation skills training, coaching access and pathway resources that consider the unique challenges they face (e.g. staffing shortages, isolation, travel barriers, etc.).

Maturity Model Alignment

As *Libraries Transforming Communities: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries* seeks to develop and provide skills training for a specific sector of library workers, it fits within the pilot phase of the IMLS maturity model⁶. This project will create an accessible, digitally deliverable facilitation training series for small and rural library workers. During this grant, the series will be disseminated, evaluated and adoption of skills will be incentivized by a stipend-supported in-person workshop. Although all library workers will have access to coaching to support implementation, practitioners who also complete the workshop will be positioned to lead this work in the small and rural library sector. This project exists within the larger LTC initiative, which falls under the scaling phase of the maturity model. By supporting this proposal, IMLS will expand capacity for a sector of the field in need, while strengthening the overall scaling of library-led community engagement.

Alignment with Project Category

In alignment with the IMLS Laura Bush Program community catalysts category, this project will (1) build the capacity of small and rural library workers to contribute to the well-being of their communities, (2) enhance existing LTC training to provide foundational facilitation skills to strengthen library professionals’ ability to build civic and cultural engagement opportunities in their communities, and (3) decrease social isolation by helping library workers bring together disparate voices in their communities to discuss important issues.

To accomplish this, the project will:

1. Provide relevant and accessible opportunities for library professionals serving small and rural communities to build critical facilitation skills that they will use to foster community change
2. Communicate opportunities/outcomes to the field to further promote community engagement work

⁶ Institute of Museum and Library Services, “[Biscuits vs. Granola: Innovative Ways for Libraries, Archives, and Museums to Scale Up](#)” (June 8, 2018)

3. Foster a network of library leaders who can help peers who are new to community engagement

PROJECT DESIGN

Goals, Assumptions and Risks

The primary goals of this project are to (1) provide small and rural libraries with accessible professional development opportunities focused specifically on facilitation skills, and (2) to correlate resources (coaching, facilitation guides, pathways to existing community engagement models that have been adopted and adapted by non-rural, non-small libraries and library workers over the course of the five-year LTC initiative).

ALA's LTC initiative acts as a professional development provider, aggregator of community engagement resources, and amplifier of the growing and innovated community engagement work of all types of libraries. Although we have seen through past phases of LTC that all library types benefit by distribution of skills training, it is imperative that small and rural libraries receive access to resources that resonate with them. They cannot be left behind while the rest of the field moves forward in this work. Through thorough evaluation, ALA has identified facilitation as a basic, cross-cutting skill useful in a variety of settings that small and rural library workers often face (e.g. municipal meetings, staff meetings, issues-based gatherings).

Project Supporters and Partners

For this project to succeed, ALA has identified key partners:

- **National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD)**, a national membership network of more than 700 individuals and organizations who bring together people across divides to “tackle today’s toughest challenges by helping communities to have more productive conversations on what matters most.”⁷
- **Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL)**, a member network of over 1,000 library workers and organizations focused on libraries situated in small and rural communities. ARSL has committed to hosting LTC programs at its 2019 and 2020 national conferences; contributing four members to the project advisory group; promoting LTC project resources through its network; and offering onsite peer support for library workers participating in the in-person workshop (see page 5).
- **Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)**: COSLA represents the state and territorial agencies responsible for statewide library development. The group has committed to providing one member of the advisory group; promoting LTC project resources through their network; and acting as a thinking partner in the interests of regional and state support for library-led community engagement in rural and small communities. In addition to COSLA’s commitment to advise and communicate project opportunities to its network, potential opportunities to collaborate to support the work of small and rural libraries may exist.

In addition to these national partners, the work plan will be collaboratively led by a project team of staff, partners and **advisors**. The ten-member advisory group will consist of four ARSL members; one COSLA state representative; two NCDD dialogue facilitators; two libraries experienced in community engagement from previous phases of LTC; and one MLIS instructor who teaches community engagement. ALA will distribute a call for advisors to the partner organization networks in September 2019, and the final selection of advisors will be announced in October 2019. The opt-in advisory application will help ensure a diverse pool of advisors.

Advisor responsibilities will include:

- Leveraging feedback from their networks and providing input on deliverables (e.g. facilitation guide)

⁷ [National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation](#)

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- Serving as subject matter experts who suggest information resources
- Acting as ambassadors for library-led community engagement work; assisting with communication/promotion of project deliverables
- Serving as presenters and mentors on a national, regional and state level

Key Activities and Schedule

Kick-off Activities: Virtual and In-person Programs (September 2019)

ALA and NCDD will lead a two-hour program at the 2019 ARSL Conference in Burlington, VT (estimated conference attendance: 600). Participants will be introduced to community engagement models, learn how to do community mapping, and work together to craft discussion questions around local issues and interests. The program will also introduce participants to the free LTC resources available on ALA's website; preview the upcoming LTC offerings for small and rural libraries; and promote the call for project advisors. ALA will also host a peer learning reception for interested library workers.

Despite the growth of the ARSL conference, the majority of small and rural libraries are unable to send staff to attend, therefore ALA will offer the presentation in a webinar format the week following the conference.

Facilitation Guide (January 2020)

ALA, NCDD staff and the project advisory group will create an introductory facilitation guide featuring tips and best practices for small and rural library workers. The guide will be available for free download from ALA's LTC website. It will provide guidance on the following topics:

- Clarification of what it means to be a dialogue facilitator as a library worker
- How to facilitate a dialogue
 - The basics
 - The role of the facilitator (and other supporting roles)
 - Ground rules
 - Analysis skills – content analysis, distinguishing process from content
 - Communication skills – active listening, summarizing, reframing, asking good questions
 - Process models – tools and techniques for decision making, problem solving, consensus building and moving to action
 - Further Skills Building
 - Developing questions and topics
 - Best practices for steering, ending and pulling action items out of a dialogue
 - Suggestions/prompts to spur deeper and continuing conversation in a group
 - Ideas for decision/consensus-building in conversations to drive change/action
 - Conflict management tips for divisive topics
 - Steps in planning a dialogue
 - Identifying your purpose, expected outcome and topic
 - Building your agenda
 - Identifying and recruiting partners and participants
 - Logistics
 - Sample program models for community conversations

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The professionally designed facilitation guide will be made available as a free, accessible, downloadable PDF via the ala.org/LTC project site; promoted via a robust communications effort in collaboration with partner organizations; and a limited run of print copies will be distributed at project programs.

Online Learning (February – May 2020)

ALA will release five free online learning sessions that provide in-depth training on the material presented in the guide. Sessions will be taught by trained facilitators from NCDD's network and experienced librarian practitioners. Library workers may access a Credly.com badge and a certificate upon completion.

The online learning sessions will provide in-depth instruction on the following basic facilitation areas:

- Session 1: Introduction to dialogue and deliberation in the library, the role of the facilitator
- Session 2: Ground rules and developing questions
- Session 3: Facilitator skills – analysis and communication
- Session 4: Process models – tools and techniques for decision-making, problem-solving, consensus-building and moving to action
- Session 5: Dealing with divisive topics and conflict in dialogue

To lessen small and rural librarian's scheduling challenges, ALA will work with a curriculum designer to develop a set of purposeful, deliberate and systematically organized instructional sessions. Convergence Design Lab (CDL), the learning design studio in the School of Media Arts at Columbia College Chicago, will work with our team to build these sessions and to develop an interactive, learner-centered pathway to empower small and rural libraries to chart their learning journey based on their needs and local context.

The online learning will be free, compliant with ALA Policy 54.3.2 (Level 2 Success Criteria as defined by the Web Accessibility Initiative) and made available on the LTC website. These sessions will combine professional instruction with practitioner expertise from experienced community engagement library leaders. ALA's participation goal is 1,000 participants for the five online learning series.

In-Person Workshop (June 2020)

ALA will lead a free, one-day in-person workshop at the 2020 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, IL. Led by an experienced librarian facilitator and an NCDD member trainer, the preconference will cover challenges facing small and rural libraries and provide opportunities for them to practice facilitating in a friendly environment.

In response to reviewer comments to our two-page preliminary proposal, which stressed the budget challenges facing small and rural libraries, ALA has budgeted to provide full scholarship stipends for 25 participants. Each will receive an average of \$1,600 (rather than \$800 stipends for 50 participants, who may have required matching funds, as initially proposed). Exact stipend amounts will depend on participants' travel needs. Stipends will cover all transportation costs to/from Chicago, two nights lodging and a \$50 per diem for meals. ALA hopes to accommodate library workers from as far away as Alaska.

ALA is seeking private funding to increase the total number of participants to at least 50 but has not secured that funding at time of submission. Should additional funds be secured, ALA will double the size of the workshop and provide stipends to an additional 25 library workers representing rural and small communities.

Participants will be selected from a competitive application pool of library workers from small and/or rural communities who have completed the asynchronous online learning series, and who are motivated to engage in a more in-depth, in-person facilitation training and modeling workshop experience.

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ALA is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or other group identity. Therefore, participants will be informed of and agree to observe ALA's statement of appropriate conduct⁸ during the workshop.

ALA's experience with *LTC: Models for Change* showed that providing small and rural library workers travel stipends to enable their attendance of an in-person training permitted many library workers with a way to attend ALA's Annual Conference. This was demonstrated in the post-training evaluations, with one participant writing, "I couldn't have been here without the stipend. Thank you!"

Additionally, as the ALA Annual Conference can be overwhelming for first-time attendees, ARSL will offer its support to the awarded small and rural library workers by arranging opportunities for networking with others attending conference who also serve this type of community. ARSL will also arrange additional opportunities to connect with other library workers and tips for navigating sessions throughout the conference.

Coaching Sessions (February – September 2020)

Monthly coaching sessions will be offered to participants via the video conferencing platform, Zoom.us. Coaching will be free and available for individuals participating in the LTC project to ask advice and seek guidance from workshop instructors, experienced practitioners and peers. These monthly sessions will be scheduled the week following the release of each online learning module and focused on topics covered during each of the learning sessions. After the full release of the five-part online learning series, additional monthly coaching sessions will take place on the second Wednesday of every month through the term of the grant (September 2020). National communities of practice — such as the ALA member interest group Libraries Fostering Community Engagement and the Programming Librarian Facebook Group, and COSLA and ARSL electronic discussion lists — offer existing spaces for discussion threads on community engagement and dialogue facilitation. LTC evaluation efforts have shown that mentoring is a need, so the LTC project plan strives to layer mentoring support with existing communities of practice, with the goal of increasing skills implementation and confidence. Sessions will act as continued support for library workers implementing the facilitation guide and skills learned through the trainings. Capacity for coaching sessions will be 100.

Lead the Way: Libraries at the Heart of Community Engagement⁹ (April 2020)

This conference, recently announced by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, will focus on library-led engagement by practitioners serving small and rural communities. LTC plans to submit a program proposal and collaborate with UW to host a peer learning reception for library workers.

Program at the 2020 ARSL Conference (September 2020)

ALA will close the project with a program at the 2020 ARSL Conference in Kansas (estimated conference attendance: 700). Led by small and rural library workers who have completed the trainings, participants will learn how library practitioners utilized the trainings, be provided with copies of the facilitation guide, be introduced to the available online learning sessions, and participate in a short facilitation practice session.

Evaluation (September 2019 – September 2020)

⁸ American Library Association "[Statement of Appropriate Conduct](#)"

⁹ [Lead the Way: Libraries at the Heart of Community Engagement](#)

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Independent evaluation will be conducted by New Knowledge Organization (NKO), an interdisciplinary social science think tank. NKO served as external evaluator for the first two LTC phases. They will work with existing evaluation tools to measure impact of proposed activities and gain further insight into this work in the field.

NKO will implement a mixed-methods evaluation of this project using participant interviews and existing learning session evaluation tools developed for LTC. These pre-existing evaluation tools have proven appropriate and useful for assessment of training effectiveness, and by leveraging them, ALA can link this project to prior work, gaining depth of analysis.

Participants in each virtual or in-person professional development session will be given pre- and post-training surveys modeled on the instruments used in LTC (see SupportingDoc2.pdf). These pre- and post-surveys measure skills acquisition, attitudinal and behavioral changes in participants, and quality of instruction. They will contribute to an iterative feedback loop throughout the project. Data will also be collected in support of each of our IMLS project performance goals:

- Participants' understanding of facilitation has increased as a result of the trainings
- Participants' interest in facilitation has increased as a result of the trainings
- Participants' confidence that they can apply what they learned in the trainings has increased

Project Resources: Personnel, Time, Budget

ALA PPO promotes cultural and community programming as essential to library service. Through programming resources, model programs, grant opportunities and professional development activities, PPO supports libraries as they fill their roles as community cultural centers and places of civic engagement and lifelong learning. PPO employs a staff of nine and is advised by ALA's Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee (PCPAC). Members of the staff who will have key involvement in the project are Mary Davis Fournier (PPO deputy director), Samantha Oakley (program officer), Brian Russell (project coordinator) and Sarah Ostman (communications manager). Fournier supervises all ALA LTC initiative work and coordinate project goals with other ALA-wide efforts; Oakley will lead collaborative work and conduct project planning, Russell will coordinate project activities and offer general program support; and Ostman will implement the communications strategy. Oakley and Ostman are grant-funded employees. Their allotted time will be spent on this grant, and there will be no conflict with ongoing duties. Resumes for key project staff and consultants are attached (see Resumes.pdf), and the budget includes a breakdown of staff time devoted to the project.

ALA requests **\$249,209 in grant funding**. Grant budget includes \$47,981 in salary/fringe for grant-funded staff; \$6,110 in travel and stipend; 7,000 in meeting expenses; \$40,000 in scholarship stipends to 25 small and rural library workers; \$14,000 in materials, marketing, communications and digital delivery (web, Zoom classroom); \$20,000 for curriculum design; \$45,000 for content co-creation, instruction and coaching fees (NCDD, advisors); \$3,500 library practitioner/trainer; \$3,500 in advisor stipends; \$25,000 for evaluation (NKO); \$350 in supplies; and \$35,567 in indirect cost at ALA's federal rate of 22.42 percent. ALA will provide \$24,516 in-cost-share. The overall 13-month project budget is \$273,725.

DIVERSITY PLAN

Libraries play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic society. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is one of ALA's strategic directions in which ALA commits to "addressing, dismantling, and transforming policies structures and bias throughout the organization and the field." Within ALA and in the services and operations of libraries, efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education are ongoing and encouraged. In the context of this

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project, EDI means addressing dimensions of geographic isolation and distribution, demographics of communities served, type of library, MLIS and non-MLIS library workers, and other considerations. ALA is committed to ensuring that the spectrum of the library field serving small and rural communities is heard throughout the design and implementation of this project.

BROAD IMPACT

Project scaling

Through its 2014-2015 *LTC: Turning Outward* initiative, ALA sought to learn about the potential of library-led community engagement by working with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. Interest in this work was affirmed when ALA issued a request for proposals to take part in the project and more than 100 libraries applied for the 10 available cohort team spots. Online and in-person learning sessions also far exceeded attendance goals (see SupportingDoc3.pdf, LTC eval). With support from IMLS, ALA launched *LTC: Models for Change*, which responded by broadening access to a variety of community engagement resources, methods and skills training. Targeted toward public and academic libraries, and in partnership with NCDD, *LTC: Models for Change* provided free in-person and online training on a variety of community engagement models. Thousands of library workers, community partners and trustees participated in in-person trainings, viewed the online learning sessions and continue to download resources from the LTC website. The site received more than 30,000 unique visitors in 2018.

Independent evaluation continues to support the library field's need for accessible, adaptable community engagement resources and professional development opportunities, and stresses the unique challenges faced by libraries that serve small and rural communities. This third phase of LTC will not only offer libraries training opportunities in basic facilitation for community engagement, but also provide them with a highly transferable skill that can be used in a variety of situations. While the trainings will be focused specifically on the needs of small and rural libraries, the collection of online learnings and resources will be publicly available on the project website and promoted as useful tools to the wider library field. From an institutional learning perspective, pursuing this project design, which combines asynchronous learning with follow-on coaching, will help ALA to evaluate effectiveness of needed learning-to-action support for these often-isolated practitioners.

Building Skills for Wider Impact

Evaluation (see Supportingdoc3.pdf, LTC evals) of *LTC: Turning Outward* and *LTC: Models for Change* identified that basic facilitation skills training for library workers is a critical gap limiting accessibility to featured training and resource models, especially for libraries serving small and rural communities. In their analysis of the project data, NKO found that facilitation is a cross-cutting skill needed to implement all models, and that the libraries most effective at implementation could afford to bring facilitation trainers to train their staff. New York Public Library is one prominent example: To implement their multi-branch Community Conversation series, NYPL followed up staff immersion in LTC online and in-person learning sessions by hiring a facilitation skills trainer. All staff charged with leading NYPL Community Conversations completed this basic facilitation skills workshop before going into the field.¹⁰

This skills gap presents a major barrier for many small and rural libraries who are unable to afford the additional training they may need to implement the skills they learned through LTC.

Small and rural libraries need readily available facilitation training that will not further strain their limited resources. *LTC: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries* seeks to fill the facilitation skills gap in the

¹⁰ Programming Librarian, "[Community Conversations Across Neighborhoods: Dialogue-Driven Programming](#)" (December 5, 2018)

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current suite of LTC trainings, while focusing explicitly on the needs of small and rural libraries to ensure that they are accessible and applicable to their professional development needs.

Accessible professional development opportunities that are applicable for library workers serving small and rural communities are critical. These communities frequently lack the public services and cultural and civic opportunities of their urban counterparts. In these cases, the library often becomes a de facto town hall. In rural areas where residents are spread out geographically, the library is even more important as a gathering place and hub for dialogue and decision-making. It is worth noting that, perhaps because of this important social position, libraries in small communities are sometimes able to make the most impactful change; an example is Red Hook (N.Y.) Public Library, a member of ALA's *LTC: Turning Outward* cohort. Serving a community of just 1,900 in upstate New York allowed Red Hook library leadership to visit hundreds of local homes, where they used community engagement tools to collect data about residents' wishes and concerns. This process led to a transformation in how the 1FTE-staffed Red Hook Public Library — and its director, Erica Freudenberger, later named a 2016 Library Mover & Shaker — served its community¹¹.

Among the pages dedicated to specific audiences on the LTC website, the training resources for small, mid-sized and/or rural libraries receives the most traffic. Based on this and the high interest in this project expressed by both ARSL and COSLA, ALA is confident that small and rural library professionals nationwide desire available, adaptable facilitation training and strategies. *LTC: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries* will offer them not only training opportunities in these skills but also a gateway into furthering their community engagement training through the pre-existing trainings. This collection, which will be publicly available on the project website and shared widely through ALA communication channels, has the capacity to make a broad impact on small and rural communities nationwide by better equipping local library workers with the tools they need to be effective community engagement leaders in the communities they serve.

Communications

Communications for this project will be carried out in two overlapping phases. The first phase will consist of the promotion of professional development opportunities (online learnings, coaching sessions and in-person workshop), the facilitation guide and related travel stipends to the library field. ALA will develop a comprehensive plan drawing upon the Association's many well-established communications channels to reach ALA members and non-members. The project and important dates will be announced in September 2019, with additional targeted waves of promotion to follow as learning opportunities approach. The plan will include internal media (member e-newsletters, e-blasts, electronic mailing lists, ALA Connect forum), and publications (e.g., *American Libraries*¹², *Cognotes* conference newspaper¹³), social media (Facebook, Twitter¹⁴), digital and print advertising and outreach to external/library media (press releases). Communications will be amplified through partnerships with ARSL and COSLA. ALA will also draw upon mailing lists from previous community engagement projects and trainings. The travel stipend opportunity for the 2020 ALA Annual Conference will be shared widely beginning with the project launch in September 2019. In addition to promoting the opportunity via the channels described above, the stipends will be mentioned at each of the in-person and online learning sessions. This will not only promote the Annual Conference workshop, but will continually remind participants of the larger LTC project plan and the other community engagement learning opportunities available to them.

¹¹ ALA, "[Case Study: Red Hook \(N.Y.\) Public Library: One Small Win Creates Huge Ripples of Change](#)"

¹² American Libraries distribution: 58,000

¹³ Est. Cognotes distribution: 20,000 (Annual Conference), 8,000 (Midwinter Meeting)

¹⁴ ALA social media reach as of February 27, 2019: Facebook – 194,690; Twitter – 184,366

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The second phase will be the harvesting and sharing of community engagement success stories from individuals and libraries that have taken part in the trainings. Existing ALA communities of practice (Libraries Fostering Community Engagement and Programming Librarian Member Initiative Groups) will provide a natural “home” for small and rural libraries as they become immersed in this work. Members will be encouraged to share questions, concerns and successes as they utilize these resources and to serve as a support network for one another; the community of practice will also be seeded by library workers who went through the *LTC: Models for Change* and *LTC: Turning Outward* initiatives, who can provide mentorship to the small and rural library workers just starting their community engagement work. ALA will tap these online communities to identify innovators and encourage them to share their stories with the greater library field. These stories (Q&As, case studies and/or blogs) will be shared on the project website and partner websites (e.g., programminglibrarian.org) and will direct readers to available tools and online learnings.

Finally, a robust, resource-filled website has proven to be critical to the success of the LTC project. ALA will add the newly created professional development tools from this project to the existing LTC website (www.ala.org/LTC), which currently houses an array of resources focused on specific community engagement models.¹⁵ The newly crafted facilitation resources will act as an entry point into community engagement for small and rural libraries, with the existing models providing an opportunity for these libraries to develop more advanced skills. Project staff will track the number of online learning views and resource downloads using Google Analytics, YouTube and Zoom tracking features. Archived online learnings will also be available on ALA’s Online Learning platform, Programming Librarian and YouTube.

Sustainability

The online learning sessions, facilitation guide and related resources developed by the proposed project will be available and accessible beyond the 13 months of the proposed grant on the ALA.org/LTC website. They will significantly expand the body of resources available to the field and address the needs of small and rural libraries. As a result of this project additional case studies, lessons learned and examples from practitioners will further add to the best practices for the field and amplify good work long past the project dates. The key outcomes of this project will be a needed suite of facilitation tools and trainings tailored to small and rural libraries and a burgeoning support network of library workers committed to community engagement. This network will be seeded with scheduled and grant-supported coaching sessions. ALA will work to identify peer leaders and mentors to continue the work of coaching and mentoring beyond the grant period.

Originally a two-year project, *Libraries Transforming Communities* has become an ongoing ALA initiative bolstered with dedicated staff time (.3 Fournier), supported by ongoing evaluation-driven iteration, and its work has been amplified by practitioners across the nation. ALA has demonstrated commitment to the work of library-led community engagement and action through its leadership, with ALA presidential platforms stressing the importance of all types of libraries in building healthy communities and initiatives that will help to transform the role that libraries of all types play in communities nationwide. The Association recently received a bequest that established a fund to provide an annual grant to recognize, promote and support innovative and meaningful community engagement by libraries. Through matching donations from library workers an annual grant of \$2,500 will be awarded to in recognition and support of a library’s community engagement efforts. This opportunity will launch in late 2019.

This project will lay the groundwork for richer, deeper and more actionable community engagement plans in libraries serving small and rural communities.

¹⁵ LTC website unique pageviews: 30,280 yearly

Libraries Transforming Communities: Charting the Path for Small and Rural Libraries

Activity	2019				2020								
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Project Planning	█												
ARSL Conference Programs	█												█
Call for Advisors Issued	█												
Selection of Advisors		█											
Facilitation Guide Writing and Design			█										
Facilitation Guide Publication					█								
Online Learning Series						█							
Libraries at the Heart of Community Engagement Conference Program								█					
In-Person Training (ALA Annual)										█			
Monthly Coaching Sessions						█							
Evaluation	█												
Communication and Dissemination	█												



DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded digital products (e.g., digital content, resources, assets, software, and datasets). The products you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

Instructions

All applications must include a Digital Product Form.

- Please check here if you have reviewed Parts I, II, III, and IV below and you have determined that your proposal does NOT involve the creation of digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, assets, software, or datasets). You must still submit this Digital Product Form with your proposal even if you check this box, because this Digital Product Form is a Required Document.

If you ARE creating digital products, you must provide answers to the questions in Part I. In addition, you must also complete at least one of the subsequent sections. If you intend to create or collect digital content, resources, or assets, complete Part II. If you intend to develop software, complete Part III. If you intend to create a dataset, complete Part IV.

Part I: Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

A.1 What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (content, resources, assets, software, or datasets) you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright(s)? How will you explain property rights and permissions to potential users (for example, by assigning a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, or Creative Commons to the product)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

A. 3 If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content, Resources, or Assets

A. Creating or Collecting New Digital Content, Resources, or Assets

A.1 Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and the format(s) you will use.

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to use, along with the relevant information about the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

B. Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan. How will you monitor and evaluate your workflow and products?

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance. Your plan may address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

C. Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata. Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

D. Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

D.2 Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

Part III. Projects Developing Software

A. General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

B. Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

B.2 Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

B.5 Provide the name(s) and URL(s) for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

C. Access and Use

C.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on its access and use? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses). Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

C.2 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

C.3 Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

Part IV: Projects Creating Datasets

A.1 Identify the type of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use to which you expect it to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate it.

A.2 Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

A.3 Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).

A.4 If you will collect additional documentation, such as consent agreements, along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.

A.5 What methods will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).

A.6 What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?

A.7 What is your plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?

A.8 Identify where you will deposit the dataset(s):

Name of repository:

URL:

A.9 When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?