**The Library as a Hub for Volunteer-Led Adult Learning Programs**

**Narrative**
The purpose of this project is to develop resources for public libraries to empower volunteers to organize and facilitate volunteer-led adult learning programs.

Providing the community with opportunities for lifelong learning is a priority for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP), which has successfully developed volunteer-led adult learning and youth mentoring programs. Our work in these areas has demonstrated the value of investing library staff time and expertise to train volunteers to deliver such programs. Using our experiences, CLP will partner with Peer to Peer University (P2PU) to develop a training model for library staff and volunteers to implement volunteer-led adult learning programs. This model will be applicable to adult learning that encompasses a variety of formats (e.g., group skill-shares and discussion groups, peer-facilitated learning circles, and one-on-one mentoring relationships). Furthermore, we will pilot this model within partner library systems representing various sizes and geographic areas, including Detroit Public Library (MI), Onondaga County Public Library (NY) and a third to be determined.

A two-year grant of $130,000 will result in resources (including web content) for libraries of various sizes to use for recruitment, training, marketing and sustaining volunteer-led adult learning programs at libraries. Using Project Outcome survey tools, we will evaluate learning by facilitators and participants in the pilot programs.

**Statement of National Need**
Libraries serve as community anchors, offering a wide array of programs to help meet the many needs of their users, yet many communities are faced with an increased demand for services amid stagnant or decreasing financial resources. Library staff have an opportunity to expand their programming capacity for knowledge sharing and skill-building by using volunteer expertise. With the availability of high-quality resources developed through this project, staff will have access to a proven, successful model to implement volunteer-led adult learning programs in their community.

**Project Design**
This project will provide libraries with resources to implement a successful volunteer-led adult learning program. With three library systems serving as pilot sites, CLP and P2PU will:

1) **Create messaging about the value of community-facilitated learning for facilitators and learners.** This messaging will focus on the idea of empowering communities to learn together.

2) **Develop and support a solid volunteer infrastructure in order to provide a meaningful volunteer experience.** CLP will leverage its history of successful volunteer-led programs to create this infrastructure, (e.g., position descriptions, best practices for volunteer/staff collaboration, scheduling processes, and marketing guidelines) to enable program delivery on a manageable schedule.

3) **Promote connections among a social community of volunteer-led adult learning programs.** P2PU will build upon their work with IMLS grant LG-95-17-0047-17 with Kansas City Public Library to design a custom program landing page for CLP's website. This page will advertise the availability of volunteer-led learning programs for participants while also inviting participation from potential facilitators.

4)  **Offer effective training and support.** P2PU will design and develop training workshops on general facilitation techniques.

*Projected Timeline*

- **Phase 1 (July 2019 – February 2020) Planning and Development**
    - o Develop a facilitator "playbook" for volunteer-led adult learning programs in libraries. This will include recommended guidelines for recruiting and supporting volunteers and a focus on specific program methodologies (e.g., group skill-shares and discussion groups, peer-facilitated learning circles, and one-on-one mentoring relationships).
    - o CLP and P2PU train staff and volunteers at selected locations.
    - o Prototype programs using Project Outcome evaluation of facilitator, participant, and staff experience.

- **Phase 2 (February – December 2020) Pilot at CLP and Detroit Public Library, Onondaga County Public Library, and a third partner library (to be determined)**
    - o Promote the availability of volunteer-led adult learning programs at selected locations.
    - o Pilot the volunteer-led adult learning programs at partner libraries.
    - o Evaluate and revise throughout the project using consistent Project Outcome surveys to allow for benchmarking and tracking of program performance.

- **Phase 3 (January – June 2021) Communication and operationalizing resources**
    - o Market and promote resources.
    - o Communicate findings to library community through a combination of in-person and online resources (e.g., webinars, conference presentations).
    - o Refine and revise program based on evaluation.

**National Impact**

The national impact of this project will be demonstrated through the increased availability of tested resources for libraries of various sizes to access when planning and offering high-quality volunteer-led adult learning programs. By developing, testing, and launching this methodology, we anticipate our community impact will result in:

- Increasing confidence in volunteers' and participants' ability to meet self-stated learning goals;
- Increasing knowledge about how to identify, organize, and achieve learning goals;
- Increasing access to informal learning resources; and
- Increasing awareness of community-based learning opportunities and supports, including the public library and P2PU.

**Budget Summary**

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| P2PU services (training, web development, communications) | $50,000 |
| Travel (in-person convenings for project teams and P2PU) | $20,000 |
| Technology (laptops and other equipment for in-library use) | $20,000 |
| Marketing | $20,000 |
| Partner stipends ($5,000 per pilot library) | $15,000 |
| Volunteer incentives | $ 5,000 |
| **Total Funding Requested** | **$130,000** |