Media Literacy Education in Libraries for Adult Audiences

The American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office requests a $247,000 National Leadership Grant to support libraries responding to the need for adult media literacy training in their communities. This 16-month project will convene 30 cross-sector stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities of providing adult media literacy programming and services. Stakeholders will consider the scope of current initiatives; identify areas for collaboration between librarians, journalists, technology workers and adult educators; and identify gaps in current adult services and staff training in libraries. Two outputs will result from this convening: a landscape report, to be published online and distributed to the library field and other participating sectors, and a practitioner's guide containing best practices, resources and program examples for libraries seeking to address adult media literacy needs in their communities. Under the guidance of project stakeholders, project activities will include development of cross-sector resource web pages and a series of free online sessions for the field. The goals of this project are to identify, synthesize and share knowledge and resources that will assist libraries and community partners in effectively addressing adult media literacy needs.

Statement of Need
In 2016, a Pew Center Research report showed that "about two-in-three U.S. adults (64%) say fabricated news stories cause a great deal of confusion about the basic facts of current issues and events" (Barthel, pg. 1). As trusted institutions that are open to all, libraries are eager to respond to their adult patrons' need for media literacy services. This demand was demonstrated by the overwhelming response to "Post-Truth: Fake News and a New Era of Information Literacy," an ALA webinar presented in February 2017 by Nicole Cooke of the University of Illinois. Less than three hours after registration opened, the live session was full at 250. Since then, the archived recording has been viewed more than 7,500 times.

ALA began to respond to this need by creating *Media Literacy @ Your Library*, a project in collaboration with the Center for News Literacy (CNL) at Stonybrook University to teach public library workers how to better equip their adult audiences to be discerning news consumers. Supported by the Knight Foundation, Democracy Fund and Rita Allen Foundation, five public libraries were selected to participate in training, conduct related public programs, and serve as advisors for the development of a web-based media literacy training course. Through the work of the cohort libraries, three practitioner challenges were identified: (1) library workers may lack expertise to discern which resources are effective for reaching out-of-school adults; (2) clarity on how existing resources and projects align with best practices and (3) a lack of best practices for teaching media literacy to adults. This project will respond to these challenges with a **landscape report**, **practitioner guide** and related webinars, which will provide the baseline resources and best practices that the field currently lacks. This project will also advance discourse in the field past crisis-oriented stop-gaps to integration with existing information literacy services. The proposed participation by cross-sector stakeholders will reinforce the value of locally relevant community partnerships and coalitions to address misinformation/disinformation trends.

Aligning with the IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries lifelong learning category, our findings will (1) develop, implement and evaluate library media literacy programs and resources, resulting in opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning for adult patrons; (2) foster collaborations between libraries and formal/informal learning organizations to address the shared concern of media literacy for adults, reinforcing libraries' roles as essential community hubs for lifelong learning; and (3) investigate questions related to how library services, resources and programs on media literacy impact adult patron learning.

Project Design
This project will take place July 1, 2019 - November 30, 2020. ALA's plan builds on related activities in the field, including *Media Literacy @ Your Library,* ACRL's Project Information Literacy and other IMLS-

supported efforts such as the Know News: Understanding and Engaging with Mis- and Disinformation project and upcoming early childhood media literacy forums to be convened by the TEC Center at the Erikson Institute.

Stakeholder Convening: This two-day convening will bring together 30 cross-sector stakeholders (media, museums, adult education, libraries) to explore existing media literacy programming and services for adults; gaps in current services and trainings for adult patrons; collaborations to benefit underserved populations and rural/small communities; and partnership opportunities between educators, researchers and libraries. New Knowledge Organization (NKO), an independent social science research firm, will facilitate. (Yr.1 Q1)

Landscape Report: Immediately following the convening, ALA will work with NKO to synthesize the notes to create a landscape report for the field that documents information that surfaced during the convening. (Yr.1 Q1)

Practitioner Guide: Utilizing the landscape report and continued input from the key stakeholder group, ALA will work with NKO to create a guide that documents resources, best practices, competencies and tools, along with any suggestions and approaches for near-, mid- and long-term courses of action libraries can take. (Yr.1 Q2)

Webinars: To both inform the findings and support adoption of the guide and report, ALA will host a series of six webinars throughout the project. These interactive sessions will present the content from the landscape report and guide and foster wider discourse of media literacy practices in the field. Webinar content will be directly influenced by the outputs of the stakeholder convening, landscape report and practitioners guide, while remaining flexible in order to accommodate the fluidity of the media literacy landscape. (Yr.1 Q2 – Yr.2 Q1)

Curated Resources: Resources shared by project participants and other content generated during the project will be disseminated by ALA in a variety of formats (articles, blogs, strategic social media campaign) through ProgrammingLibrarian.org and other ALA traditional, web-based and social media channels. (Yr.1 Q1 – Yr.2 Q1)

Performance Goals and Outcomes
1. Bring together knowledge from the library and other sectors about the challenges, opportunities, resources, competencies and best practices in media literacy education for adults
2. Create a guide, landscape report and other resources, and promote them to the library field
3. Leverage the professional networks of the stakeholder group to elicit commentary, programming and demonstration opportunities
4. Disseminate findings and foster conversation with the wider library field through a series of webinars and discussion on collaborative virtual platforms (blogs, social media, etc.)

National Impact
As a result of this project, libraries will be better positioned to serve the adult media literacy needs in their communities. The project's key outputs, specifically focused on adult learners, will assist libraries, researchers, local media and community organizations to better serve their publics through programs, services and resources related to media literacy. By doing this foundational work in the context of cross-sector collaboration, this project will foster richer, deeper, more relevant and collaborative local level services.

Budget Summary: The 16-month budget for the requested grant amount of $247,000 covers: $98,000 in salaries and benefits for ALA project team; $38,000 in consultants (NKO, graphic recorder, convening participant and advisory stipends); $16,000 in meeting expenses, $13,000 in communications, $38,000 in travel for convening participants; and indirect costs of $44,000. Total project costs are estimated at $260,000, ALA will provide $13,000 as an in-kind contribution.