Thomas Edison State University, *Reconnecting Returning Citizens with their Communities at Public Libraries*
Proposal to the IMLS FY2019 *National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program*
Abstract

New Jersey State Library (NJSL), an affiliate of Thomas Edison State University, is the lead applicant of the proposal, *Reconnecting Returning Citizens with their Communities at Public Libraries*. Project partners in addition to NJSL include New Jersey State Parole Board, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Long Branch (New Jersey) Public Library, and Free Library of Philadelphia. An Advisory Committee includes librarians and social workers from San Francisco Public Library, Denver Public Library, and DC Public Library. NJSL seeks $628,774 in grant funds to support public libraries in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, in collaboration with other government and nonprofit organizations, to provide services to citizens returning to their home communities after being paroled or after completing their prison terms. Libraries that will provide direct services to returning citizens, in addition to Long Branch Public Library and Free Library of Philadelphia, are Newark Public Library, Paterson Free Public Library, Trenton Free Public Library, Cumberland County Library, and Atlantic City Free Public Library. The Advisory Committee, whose members have experience serving returning citizens, will inform and monitor the project during its two-year period from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2021. New Jersey State Library, New Jersey State Parole Board, and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development will contribute $671,449 in cost share.

The long-term goal of this project is to provide public libraries with a model to help them build capacity to serve the significant number of returning citizens residing in communities nationwide. The project aims to position public libraries as key collaborators in strengthening the work of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that help returning citizens find jobs, acquire stable housing and complete other essential tasks. *Reconnecting Returning Citizens* builds on the locally tested collaborative model of Long Branch Public Library to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in that community. For this proposed scaled-up effort, the project will rely on New Jersey State Parole Board to advise returning citizens about available assistance and refer them to the participating libraries.

The work to serve returning citizens in the participating libraries will center on two approaches: community resource fairs and individualized assessments and services. NJSL's Project Director and the Project Coordinator (hired with grant funds) will focus on building relationships with social service organizations, government agencies, and businesses open to hiring so that these organizations will attend monthly community resource fairs at the seven libraries. The project aims to serve over 1400 returning citizens at the community resource fairs over the two years. Two project social workers (hired with grant funds) will rotate among the participating libraries to assist with the community resource fairs and meet individually with returning citizens. The social workers will refer individuals to occupational skills training provided by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development or adult education/GED prep programs and other classes offered at the participating libraries. The project aims to individually assess and serve 875 returning citizens.

The work to build the capacity of libraries will center on the documentation of the project process by incorporating the feedback of the Advisory Committee, the external evaluator, project partners, and the participating libraries. The project will develop a model of process and a toolkit of best practices for libraries to actively assist in the reentry process and meet the needs of this sizeable target population in communities across the United States. By recognizing, analyzing and testing local conditions for this work at public libraries in urban and rural locations in New Jersey and in the metropolitan area of Philadelphia, the project team of *Reconnecting Returning Citizens* will develop a model for serving returning citizens through public libraries in diverse communities across the United States.

Thomas Edison State University, *Reconnecting Returning Citizens with their Communities at Public Libraries*
Proposal to the IMLS FY2019 *National Leadership Grant for Libraries Program* (Narrative)

New Jersey State Library (NJSL), an affiliate of Thomas Edison State University, seeks $628,774 in funds for a two-year project for public libraries in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, in collaboration with other government and nonprofit organizations, to provide services to citizens returning to their home communities after being paroled or after completing their prison terms. Project partners in addition to NJSL include New Jersey State Parole Board, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Long Branch (New Jersey) Public Library, and Free Library of Philadelphia.

An Advisory Committee, including representatives from public libraries with experience helping returning citizens[1] in San Francisco, Denver, and Washington, D.C., will inform and monitor the project during its two-year duration. The project will develop a model of process and a toolkit of best practices for libraries to actively assist in the reentry process and meet the needs of this sizeable target population in local communities across the United States. New Jersey State Library, New Jersey State Parole Board, and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development will provide cost share of $671,449.

Statement of National Need

National Statistics: During the 30-year period from 1980 to 2010, the number of people incarcerated in the U.S. increased fivefold. As state and federal prison populations reached a nationwide peak in 2009, several states and the federal government sought to make reductions through policy changes and reforms in sentencing practice. These efforts substantially increased the number of returning citizens living in communities outside prison. By 2015, the number of people living in communities on parole or probation was more than double the number of people incarcerated in corrections facilities: 4.7 million versus 2.2 million.[2]

The National Institute of Justice notes that, "returning to the community from jail or prison is a complex transition for most offenders, as well as for their families and communities."[3] Returning citizens may struggle with substance abuse, mental health issues, and the consequences of an incomplete education. They must navigate barriers enacted by law, such as policies excluding felony convicts from public housing.[4] Returning citizens face high odds against successfully reentering society; the national rearrest rate of individuals within three years of their release from prison is 67.8%.

The communities to which they return often do not have the personnel and financial resources necessary to help returning citizens deal with their difficult problems. The availability of specific programs to help returning citizens with the reentry process is dependent upon the priorities of the various municipal, state, and federal departments and agencies involved in the criminal justice system. In some locations, reentry support may only be provided by faith-based or other private social service organizations.

The success or failure of these millions of returning citizens, when taken together, has a tremendous collective impact on the economic and social health of communities across the United States. Returning citizens who successfully obtain employment contribute to their local economies by paying taxes and spending their wages on groceries and other essentials at area stores. Employed and housed individuals are less likely to participate in illegal activities; public safety is thus improved. If an individual is reconvicted, community resources are again directed to the high cost of imprisonment, which in 2015 averaged $33,274 per inmate annually.[5]

Building on and Scaling up Previous Work in New Jersey: As a state leading the nation in reducing its prison population[6], New Jersey's government agencies and nonprofit organizations have focused efforts on the process of reentry. New Jersey State Parole Board convened "Reentry Task Forces" as one means to help address the rate of recidivism (rearrest, reconviction, and/or reincarceration) of individuals released from

prison on parole. These county-based Task Forces bring together Parole Officers and any organization with a mission that could help returning citizens succeed in their communities. Area residents are also invited. Task Force members share their observations of the needs of local returning citizens, and brainstorm and coordinate program ideas that help support their success.

The involvement of project partner Long Branch Public Library (LBPL) with the Monmouth County Reentry Task Force (MCRTF) spurred the partnership leading to this *Reconnecting Returning Citizens* (hereafter known as *RRC*) proposal. As LBPL librarian prior to her promotion to director, Tonya Garcia helped returning citizens in Long Branch as they came to the library searching for job assistance. Ms. Garcia subsequently developed the "Fresh Start" initiative at LBPL, which incorporated specific classes for returning citizens to learn how to use computers, write resumes, and conduct job searches. Ms. Garcia also contacted local businesses to ask if they were open to hiring the returning citizens coming to the library. Ms. Garcia eventually hosted MCRTF meetings at LBPL which led to introductions with such organizations as the local chapter of the Salvation Army, and connecting them with returning citizens coming to the library. The reach of the "Fresh Start" program increased when Ms. Garcia hired social worker David Perez. Mr. Perez meets individually with returning citizens, assesses their needs, provides information, and makes referrals to the appropriate classes offered by LBPL and connects individuals to the organizations and businesses with which LBPL has relationships. During the MCRTF meetings, the State Parole Board witnessed the commitment of LBPL to help returning citizens and recognized that public libraries throughout New Jersey could be partners in this work. Understanding that the needs of returning citizens are great not only in New Jersey (there are 15,000 individuals currently on parole), but also throughout the nation, NJSL started discussions with the State Parole Board about the possibility of partnering on this proposed *RRC* project in late 2017.

Incorporating other Efforts: New Jersey State Library recognizes that public libraries have long provided valuable library services to incarcerated individuals while they are serving their sentences in prison. Knowledge of such prison-based projects and further research confirmed NJSL's decision to focus on returning citizens, as this is a population not currently well-served across the country. There are just a small number of public libraries (both with and without staff social workers) that have identified returning citizens as a specific population to serve in their communities. During the planning process for this project, LBPL social worker, David Perez, facilitated the introduction of representatives from three libraries who have assisted returning citizens, and helped to secure their agreement to serve on the project's Advisory Committee. These Advisory Committee members are Rachel Kinnon, Manager of the Jail and Re-entry Service program of San Francisco Public Library; Elissa Hardy, Community Resource Manager at the Denver Public Library (which plans to expand its own services to returning citizens in Denver); and Jean Badalamenti, Health and Human Services Coordinator at DC Public Library. These Advisory Committee members will share their own experiences with returning citizens, provide feedback regarding the progress of the project, and inform the development of the toolkit of best practices.

The *RRC* project is a National Leadership Grant proposal in the IMLS Community Catalyst category and supports the IMLS agency level goal to Build Capacity. With the goal of supporting returning citizens, a population whose success or failure can significantly impact local communities, this project aims to position public libraries as key collaborators in strengthening the reentry work of government agencies and nonprofit organizations. This collaborative approach builds upon accepted practice as articulated in published reentry resources, in particular that a critical first step in starting a reentry initiative is "encouraging collaboration among stakeholders."[7] By recognizing, analyzing and testing local conditions for this work at public libraries in

urban and rural locations in New Jersey and in the metropolitan area of Philadelphia, the project team will develop a model for serving returning citizens through public libraries in diverse communities across the United States.

Project Design

Project Goals: The long-term goal of this project is to provide public libraries with a model to build their capacity to serve returning citizens. This model centers the libraries as a linchpin that will connect returning citizens with the variety of available services in their communities and at the libraries. To meet this goal, the project design consists of activities, projected outputs, and outcomes that concern two audiences: the returning citizens being served and the libraries participating in this project.

In planning for this project, NJSL and partners assumed that adult education and GED preparation classes and occupational skills training will be among the greatest needs of the returning citizens referred by New Jersey State Parole Board to the participating libraries. NJSL also recognized an opportunity to incorporate the extant classes and programs at the participating public libraries: five of the six New Jersey participating libraries are considered "Career Connections" libraries and have received specific training from New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to support job seekers. New Jersey State Library decided against offering an online high school option through this project, such as the Smart Horizons Online High School or the Cengage Learning ed2go Career Online High School. Following a grant funded project in 2015, NJSL learned that the diploma issued by these Career Online High School programs is not accepted by the New Jersey Department of Education when a diploma holder seeks licensure for specific occupations such as cosmetologist/hairstylist and must provide proof of successful completion of high school or its equivalent. Bearing this information in mind, this project selected a path approved by the New Jersey Department of Education, that of the GED.

Required Resources: NJSL and project partners seek $628,774 in IMLS grant funds and provide $671,449 in cost share to conduct this project over two years from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2021. Grant funds will support necessary project personnel, including a full-time Project Coordinator and two part-time "circuit rider" social workers; adult education and GED software, workbooks, and materials; and testing fees for returning citizens. Occupational skills training of returning citizens will provide a significant portion of cost share. Grant funds additionally support contracting with an external evaluator and project dissemination activities. Additional resources for the project will come from the time donated by the members of the Advisory Committee and the space, staff time, and extant programs committed by the participating libraries. Five of the seven participating libraries are Paterson Free Public Library, Newark Public Library, Trenton Free Public Library, Cumberland County Library, and Atlantic City Free Public Library. Long Branch Public Library will continue to provide services to returning citizens, but it will require less assistance from a project social worker due to its own social worker on staff. Free Library of Philadelphia will choose a branch to participate in project year two.

The work to serve returning citizens in the participating libraries will center on two approaches: community resource fairs and individualized assessments and services. The work to build the capacity of libraries will center on the documentation of the project process and development of the project toolkit, incorporating the feedback of the Advisory Committee, the external evaluator, project partners, and the participating libraries.

Initial Project Implementation Activities

- Hire a full-time Project Coordinator and two part-time "circuit rider" social workers to split their time among the participating libraries.
- Develop process of communication and project documentation utilizing Google Docs, the project website, and other tools so that Project Director, Project Coordinator, social workers, project partners, the Advisory Committee and participating library staff liaisons can continuously share information and discuss problems as they arise.
- Contact county, municipal and other state government agencies (beyond our partners) and social service organizations whose missions align with the needs of returning citizens (e.g. Department of Housing, Legal Services of NJ, Salvation Army, Dress for Success); initiate outreach to area businesses open to hiring returning citizens; make initial invitations to these agencies and organizations to share information and provide services to returning citizens at community resource fairs at the libraries; create community resource guides for returning citizens to be distributed at the libraries.
- Train all staff of the participating libraries in "Parole 101."
- Develop systems and protocols for scheduling of community resource fairs and individual assessments, processes for referrals, and data collection, including intake forms, surveys, and interviews.
- Set up a project kick-off (virtual) Advisory Committee meeting .

Direct Service Activities and Desired Outputs and Outcomes

- Organize monthly community resource fairs at the libraries: attending organizations provide information and help returning citizens with specific tasks such as reinstatement of driver's licenses, expungement of criminal records, or assistance with finding a job; distribute community resource guides to returning citizens.
  - Project goal to serve 1,440 returning citizens at all of the community resource fairs (average of 100 attendees at each library each year). Goal for returning citizens to increase their knowledge of the resources available to them. (Progress measures: door counts, surveys)
- Schedule one-on-one meetings between social workers and individual returning citizens to assess their needs. Refer returning citizens to relevant extant programs and classes at participating libraries.
  - Project goal for the social workers to individually assist 825 returning citizens (average of 58 served at each library each year). Goal for returning citizens to progress towards meeting one personal education or occupation goal. (Progress measures: intake forms, interviews, surveys)
- Provide returning citizens with referrals to occupational skills training for industry recognized credentials offered by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, e.g. building trades, information technology or health care.
  - Project goal for Labor and Workforce Development to train a total of 125 returning citizens. Goal for returning citizens to learn a new skill. (Progress measures: referral forms, feedback from Labor and Workforce Development)
- Provide returning citizens with the opportunity to meet educational goals by providing resources at the participating libraries and through testing subsidies for returning citizens to take the GED test and/or the TECEP (Thomas Edison [State University] Credit-by-Exam) program.
  - Project goal of 675 returning citizens to complete the Aztec adult basic education or GED test preparation program or college placement preparation computer-based program or to take GED classes offered by the participating libraries. Goal for returning citizens to advance at least one educational level. (Progress measures: surveys, opt-in tracking through software)

- o Project goal of 650 total returning citizens to take the GED test utilizing test subsidies. Goal for returning citizens to pass the test. (Progress measures: number of subsidies utilized, interviews)
  - o Project goal of 25 returning citizens to take a TECEP exam utilizing test subsidies. Goal for returning citizens to earn college credit. (Progress measures: number of subsidies utilized, interviews)
- Organize project-end "Second Chance Reentry Job Fairs" to be held at two separate locations accessible by public transportation in northern and southern New Jersey (project staff will seek contributed space for these fairs). Invite potential employers and corporations and motivational speaker, Rakia Reynolds, to encourage returning citizen attendees in their job seeking and life goals. Partner with Dress for Success and Career Gear to provide professional attire for attendees. Provide lunch for attendees to network with representatives from businesses open to hiring. Offer interviews in the afternoon.
  - o Project goal of 100 returning citizens to attend each of the job fairs. Goal for returning citizens to receive job offers at the fairs. (Progress measures: door counts, interviews)

Documentation and Evaluation Activities and Desired Outcomes Related to Building Library Capacity

- Review design elements, service elements, documentation, and outcomes by the external evaluator at beginning, midpoint, and end of the project period.
  - o Project goal to determine the ability of the network of partners to effectively assist returning citizens. (Progress measures: surveys, interviews)
  - o Goal for all participating library directors to report an intention to continue serving returning citizens after the project period. Goal for all librarians to gain at least one level of confidence in serving returning citizens. (Progress measures: surveys collecting key performance measurement statements related to the project's selected IMLS Agency-Level goal to Build Capacity).
- Review project implementation activities and direct service activities through continuous communication among project staff, partners, and participating libraries, and through quarterly (virtual) Advisory Committee meetings.
  - o Project goal to approve documents related to the model of process and best practices to include in the toolkit. (Progress measures: Draft documents assembled halfway through year two.)

Dissemination Activities

- Communicate information about the project through a variety of channels.
  - o Develop project web pages as a section of NJSL's website.
  - o Create and deliver a webinar presentation open to public librarians throughout the U.S.
  - o Present at two library conferences and two corrections conferences.
  - o Write four blog posts about the project to publish on the project website.
  - o Utilize all NJSL, project partner, and Advisory Committee member social media channels to publicize the project.
- Create toolkit of best practices; place toolkit on project web pages as downloadable pdf (use web analytics to track downloading of toolkit)
  - o model of process documentation

- o checklist of steps to implement a program for returning citizens
    - o resource guide to extant reentry programs at public libraries
    - o tips to build and maintain partnerships
- Submit session proposals about the project process to national library and corrections conferences
    - o Spark Talk round of the Public Library Association Conference, February 25-29, 2020, Nashville, TN (The timing of the solicitation for session proposals precludes a regular session proposal.)
    - o American Jail Association, April 4-8, 2020, Aurora, Colorado
    - o American Correctional Association, February 5-9, 2021, Long Beach, CA
    - o ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, June 24-29, 2021.
- Encourage participating libraries to submit sessions proposals at the New Jersey Library Association Annual Conferences in May 2020 and May 2021 and/or the Pennsylvania Library Association Annual Conference in October 2020.
- Explore potential for the *RRC* model of process as a template for other target audiences, such as new immigrants and special needs populations.

Project Team

Project Director Peggy Cadigan is Deputy State Librarian for Innovation and Strategic Partnerships at NJSL. By positioning the work of innovation and strategic partnerships at the senior managerial level, NJSL enables Ms. Cadigan to meet regularly with representatives of state-level agencies, including New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission. These relationships have led to partnerships with state agencies and NJSL that enable public libraries to help meet the needs of the residents of the state. For example, a recent partnership project with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development resulted in $1.5 million in grant funds awarded to 19 New Jersey "Career Connections" libraries. These libraries assisted Labor and Workforce Development in offering services to the unemployed, including one-on-one, in-person job search and career navigation assistance by specially trained librarians. As the Project Director, Ms. Cadigan will supervise the Project Coordinator, maintain relationships with the project partners, work to build new relationships with statewide and regional agencies and nonprofit organizations, communicate the work of the project with national library organizations, attend the State Parole Board's Regional Reentry Task Force meetings, work with the Project Advisory Committee and outside evaluator, and oversee the work of the project as a whole. NJSL is contributing the percentage of Ms. Cadigan's time spent on the project to the required cost share.

Ms. Cadigan will undertake the hiring of three employees once the project commences: **a full-time Project Coordinator and two part-time social workers**. Reporting to Ms. Cadigan, the Project Coordinator will manage all aspects of the project. The social workers will report to the Project Coordinator and will each be assigned to rotate among the participating public libraries. The Project Coordinator will support Ms. Cadigan in the building of relationships with government agencies and nonprofit organizations through research, phone calls, emails, and the scheduling of and attendance at meetings. The Project Coordinator will oversee the work of the social workers and assist them with their work in the libraries by connecting them with the appropriate agencies and organizations to attend the community resource fairs and maintaining a master schedule of the fairs. The Project Coordinator will manage project timelines, track project data and document project outcomes. The Project Coordinator will organize the Project Advisory Committee meetings, help create intake forms and survey materials for the social workers to administer, maintain documentation for the project and organize the materials created for the project toolkit.

The project's two social workers will be assigned to rotate their days among the participating public libraries. Each social worker will work three days per week. One social worker will be assigned to Newark Public Library, Paterson Free Public Library, and Long Branch Public Library. The other social worker will be assigned to Trenton Free Public Library, Cumberland County Library and Atlantic City Free Public Library. The assignment of a social worker to the Free Library of Philadelphia branch location will be decided in year two. Each library will assign a staff member to serve as liaison with the social worker in order to coordinate the scheduling of the community resource fairs and to keep the social worker informed about the library's relevant programs and classes so that the social workers can refer individual returning citizens to attend them. The libraries will provide space and work resources (computer, phone, etc.) for the social workers to meet with individual returning citizens. During these individual meetings, the social workers will assess individuals concerning their employment and educational needs and make referrals to the Labor and Workforce Development occupational skills training classes and to the adult basic education or GED prep offered by the libraries. Grant funds will enable the licensing of Aztec Software's Adult Basic Education series and GED prep series and the purchase of Steck-Vaughn GED Test Prep workbooks for individuals to work on their own. The social workers will help track the data concerning these referrals. The social workers will determine if any individuals have attained sufficient education level to be eligible to take Thomas Edison State University's TECEP exam in order to qualify for college credit there or at another higher education institution. The social workers will stay in touch with individual returning citizens through texting services such as Club Texting, and confirm individual appointments with the GoReminders application.

David Wolfsgruber, Sherry Sandler, and Robert Kantor will represent New Jersey State Parole Board on the Project Team. All three work in the Community Programs Division. As Assistant Director, Mr. Wolfsgruber oversees the Regional Reentry Task Forces, with the assistance of Mr. Kantor, and collaborates with several New Jersey departments to provide coordinated programs and services to returning citizens on parole. Mr. Kantor manages and facilitates the Regional Reentry Taskforces and serves as a Parole Hearing Officer. Ms. Sandler monitors and conducts reviews of contracted residential community programs for parolees and serves as the State Parole Board representative at meetings across New Jersey. To reach a large number of returning citizens, the project will rely on these three Project Team members to share information about the *RRC* project with their colleagues at the State Parole Board, and identify and advise parolees and other returning citizens who will benefit from the services that will be available and refer them to the participating libraries. They will offer initial "Parole 101" training to all staff involved in the project so that all will understand the requirements and barriers that individuals face when returning home from prison. They will communicate regularly with the Project Coordinator and attend the quarterly Project Advisory Committee meetings. Their work on this project is contributed by the State Parole Board as cost share.

Danielle B. Jubanyik, Ed.D., will represent New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development on the Project Team. Dr. Jubanyik is the State Director for Adult Education and Literacy Services and Supervisor of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Title II literacy grantees and partners. As the lead member of New Jersey's Title II Literacy team, Dr. Jubanyik has deep knowledge and understanding of Adult Basic Education and GED curriculum and instruction. She will communicate regularly with the Project Coordinator and attend quarterly Project Advisory Committee meetings. Dr. Jubanyik and other Labor and Workforce Development staff will attend the community resource fairs at the participating libraries in order to share information about their varied literacy and occupational services available to returning citizens. She will serve as connection between the Project Coordinator and project social workers and Labor and Workforce Development's ex-offender specialists serving the six regions where the New Jersey participating libraries are located. These ex-

offender specialists, together with the project social workers, will work to identify the appropriate occupational skills training for industry-valued credentials that individual returning citizens can take at Labor and Workforce Development during the project period. The value of the occupational skills training given by Labor and Workforce Development to individual returning citizens referred through this project is contributed as cost share.

Tonya A. Garcia is the Director of Long Branch Public Library, located in the city of Long Branch, Monmouth County, New Jersey. Employed in increasingly responsible roles by LBPL since 2004, as LBPL Director Ms. Garcia has worked to empower and motivate underserved populations in Long Branch. As noted earlier, Ms. Garcia developed the "Fresh Start" program which serves as the model upon which the *RRC* project is built.

Autumn McClintock is the representative for Free Library of Philadelphia. In her role as Strategy Coordinator, Ms. McClintock works with a variety of external partners, including the city's prisons, health providers, and cultural organizations to build capacity for the Free Library. Ms. McClintock played a lead role on the team that developed the Free Library's *Stories Alive* program through the partnership with the Philadelphia Department of Prisons. Ms. McClintock's experience with that project will help inform the *RRC* project as it progresses and will communicate with project staff regarding which branch of the Free Library is selected by Free Library administrators to provide services to returning citizens in year two.

The Project Advisory Committee will benefit from the expertise of a number of individuals with experience in the social service field. **Robin Sakina Mama**, Ph.D. in Social Work and Social Research, is the Dean of the School of Social Work at Monmouth University, located in West Long Branch, New Jersey. Dr. Mama is familiar with the placement of social workers in public libraries through David Perez, who was placed as a social work intern at LBPL while he studied for his Master of Social Work degree at Monmouth University. **Jean Badalamenti**, Master of Social Work, is the Health and Human Services Coordinator at DC Public Library. Ms. Badalamenti has worked on several initiatives at DCPL concerning individuals involved with the criminal justice system, and has managed a library branch at the DC Jail. **Elissa Hardy**, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, is the Community Resource Manager at the Denver Public Library. DPL created a social work program in 2015 and it is currently undertaking its own "Reconnecting Citizens" project, and as such, Ms. Hardy will be able to share DPL's experiences serving returning citizens concurrent with this project. **Rachel Kinnon** is a librarian and manager of the Jail and Reentry Services Program at the San Francisco Public Library. Her work includes weekly visits to the San Francisco county jails to provide library services to incarcerated people. Jail & Reentry Services partners with a number of community organizations, including the sheriff's department and community-based organizations, to provide recently incarcerated people with a range of resources and information.

Martha Kyrillidou, Ph.D., of QualityMetrics, will provide the project's external evaluation services. Dr. Kyrillidou has experience in developing qualitative and quantitative evaluation protocols, and she has evaluated a number of IMLS LSTA Five-Year Plans.

Diversity Plan

State incarceration data reveal racial and ethnic disparities between the prison population and the general population. In New Jersey and Pennsylvania, African Americans comprised 60% and 48.7%, respectively, of the state prison populations in 2014, although making up less than 15% and 10.6%, of their respective overall populations. Hispanics comprised 16.1% (NJ) and 10.7% (PA) of the state prison populations versus 18.9% and 6.3% of their respective overall populations. This project then will serve primarily African American and

Hispanic individuals who are returning to communities with majority African American (Newark, Trenton, Atlantic City, and Philadelphia) or Hispanic (Paterson and Bridgeton in Cumberland County) overall populations.

To solicit feedback from the communities, the Project Director will attend monthly meetings of the Reentry Task Forces based in the counties of the participating libraries.

National Impact

The success or failure of the millions of citizens returning from prison impacts the well-being of communities throughout the United States. The availability of reentry programs to help returning citizens succeed in their communities is highly localized and variable, dependent upon the priorities and resources of a particular area's criminal justice system. With their existing programs to support job seekers and adult literacy classes, public libraries in many communities are likely already serving returning citizens. The *RRC* project aims to encourage public libraries to build upon these existing efforts by proactively developing relationships with government and nonprofit organizations conducting reentry programs and centering the libraries as a linchpin that will connect returning citizens with the variety of available services in their communities. With the guidance of its Advisory Committee and outside evaluator, the project team of *RRC* will develop a model of process and a toolkit of best practices for public libraries to engage in the work of supporting returning citizens in their efforts to lead successful lives.

How will the *RRC* project surpass its own origins as a highly localized project in one municipality, in one county, in the moderately small state of New Jersey and serve as a model for public libraries nationwide? With its multiple diverse structures of local governance and public library administration, New Jersey is an excellent setting for a project that must test its ability to succeed under diverse sets of circumstances. Populated by 9 million people, New Jersey is a state of incredible variety, with distinctly urban, suburban and rural areas, and including numerous forms and levels of government. There is a strong emphasis on home rule. New Jersey is divided into 21 counties and contains 565 municipalities, consisting of five types: 254 boroughs, 52 cities, 15 towns, 241 townships, and 3 villages. The state's public libraries mirror this administrative complexity with 234 municipal libraries, 45 association libraries, 14 county libraries, and five joint libraries. This project's participating libraries are drawn from the northern, central and southern sections of the state, areas representing urban, suburban, and rural communities, with both large and small populations. These libraries include both municipal and county administrative types. As the idea for the *RRC* developed, however, NJSL recognized that it lacked a participating library of particularly large size. The participation of Free Library of Philadelphia (located across the Delaware River from central New Jersey) in the second year of the project will help the project team consider the work of helping returning citizens within the context of a municipal library in a large metropolitan city in another state.

In developing the *RRC* project as a national model, NJSL recognizes other existing conditions here that will require acknowledgement and analysis in order to make recommendations regarding adaptation to communities in other states. New Jersey State Library's unique positioning includes the interest of New Jersey's current Governor in reentry as a priority issue (although there is current interest in the issue at the federal level, as well), strong support from a federal legislator, Senator Cory Booker, the history NJSL has of intragovernmental partnerships with other state agencies, such as New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and NJSL's connection to higher education through its affiliation with Thomas Edison State University.

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The presence of Workforce Development Boards, State Parole Boards, and State Library Administrative Agencies in all 50 states provides the more uniform potential for collaborative relationships to be established at a high level that can then result in support at the local library level. For example, a high priority need of returning citizens is help with finding a job. New Jersey State Library and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development have a strong partnership developed over several years of working together on projects to help job seekers. For three years, Labor and Workforce Development has trained and supported 19 New Jersey public libraries on the "Career Connections" online platform. Staff at these "Career Connections" libraries have learned and utilized the embedded resume writing software, the job coaching modules, and jobs search engine. Five of the six New Jersey libraries participating in the *RRC* project are "Career Connections" libraries. All of this prior experience in providing services to job seekers will help their efforts in the *RRC* project. Although public libraries in other states may not have this exact relationship with their own departments of labor, research indicates that many of them have experience in workforce development. The 2018-2022 five year plans submitted by State Library Administrative Agencies to IMLS indicate that over half (52%) of states and territories are involved in activities related to workforce development and over a third (39%) indicate plans to coordinate with workforce agencies. The *RRC* project team will document this extant condition and make recommendations for its translation to other states.

The results of the *RRC* project, including the model of process with recommendations for public libraries facing circumstances different from New Jersey and Philadelphia, along with the toolkit of best practices formulated by the Project Team, will be disseminated to the library field in a variety of ways. The Project Coordinator will develop project pages on NJSL's website where the toolkit will be available to download and will utilize all NJSL, project partner, and Advisory Committee member social media channels to publicize it. Project Director Peggy Cadigan will conduct an end-of-project webinar and submit session proposals to library meetings such as the American Library Association annual conference and through the Spark Talks at the Public Library Association's every-other-year conference. In addition, Ms. Cadigan will make proposals to present at gatherings related to the criminal justice field, such as the American Correctional Association Winter Conference and the American Jail Association Annual Conference.

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[1] The term "returning citizen" refers to anyone who has spent time in a local jail, or state or federal prison, including individuals who have completed their prison terms or are finishing their terms on parole. "Reentry" is the process of reintegrating into society, such as finding housing, getting a job, and getting a driver's license reinstated.

[2] "NRRC Facts & Trends." The National Reentry Resource Center. CSG Justice Center. csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/facts-and-trends/. Accessed 4 March 2019.

[3] "Offender Reentry." *National Institute of Justice*. www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/reentry/pages/welcome.aspx. Accessed 3 March 2019. Note that 45% percent of Americans have had a family member spend at least one night in jail. Kelley, Susan. "Study: Nearly Half of Americans Have Had a Family Member Jailed, Imprisoned." *Cornell Chronicle*. Cornell University, 4 March 2019, news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/03/study-nearly-half-americans-have-had-family-member-jailed-imprisoned.

[4] See www.americanbar.org/groups/criminal_justice/niccc/ for a link to the National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Conviction, an online catalog of over 45,000 federal and state statutes and regulations imposed on persons convicted of crimes.

[5] "Prison spending in 2015." *Vera*, Vera Institute of Justice, www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends-prison-spending. Accessed 26 February 2019.

[6] The New Jersey prison population has been reduced by 35% since 1999. *U.S. Prison Population Trends 1999-2015: Modest Reductions with Significant Variation*. The Sentencing Project, 24 May 2017, https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/u-s-prison-population-trends-1999-2015-modest-reductions-significant-variation/

[7] "Starting a Reentry Initiative."The National Reentry Resource Center. CSG Justice Center. csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/issue-areas/starting-a-reentry-initiative/. Accessed 3 March 2019.

Thomas Edison State University, *Reconnecting Returning Citizens with their Communities at Public Libraries*
Proposal to the IMLS FY2019 *Leadership Grants for Libraries Program* (Schedule of Completion)

YEAR 1 2019-2020	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Hire Project Coordinator and Social Workers	■											
Hold Advisory Committee virtual meetings	■			■			■			■		
Establish relationships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses open to hiring: phone calls, meetings	■	■	■	■	■	■				■		
Maintain and continue building relationships with agencies, organizations, and businesses							■	■	■	■	■	■
Provide "Parole 101" training to NJ and Phil. Libraries	■											
Set up and continuously update master calendar for community resource fairs			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Develop resource guides to participating library programs and available reentry services in the geographic areas of the participating libraries; review quarterly for updates		■	■	■	■	■	■		■			■
Develop systems and protocols for communication, scheduling, individual assessments, referal process, data collection, surveying		■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Initial licensing of software and purchase of workbooks and booklets. Additional purchasing at intervals throughout the project.	■	■	■				■	■	■		■	■
Attend Reentry Task Force meetings	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Initiate and continue outside evaluation activities		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Develop and update project website		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Initiate and continue community resource fairs at participating NJ libraries					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Begin and continue assessments for individual returning citizens; make referrals to occupational skills training and library programs and services					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Document project process	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Continuous communication and internal evaluation	■	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	■	■
Submit proposals to conferences/attend conferences				■		■		■		■		■

Thomas Edison State University, *Reconnecting Returning Citizens with their Communities at Public Libraries*
Proposal to the IMLS FY2019 Leadership Grants for Libraries Program (Schedule of Completion)

YEAR 2 2020-2021	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Advisory Committee virtual meetings	█			█			█			█		█
Initiate community resource fairs and individual assessments at branch of Free Library of Philadelphia	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Continue community resource fairs at participating NJ libraries; continously update master calendar	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Maintain and continue building relationships with agencies, organizations, and businesses	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Continue assessments for individual returning citizens in NJ; make referrals to occupational skills training and library programs and process	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Continue and conclude outside evaluation activities	█									█	█	
Continuous communication among project team members	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Submit presentation proposals to conferences/attend conferences	█			█	█		█			█		
Update project website	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Continue to document process process; Gather, compile and develop documents for toolkit	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
Continue updating resource guides; purchase workbooks and bookets for returning citizens	█			█			█			█		█
Prepare for end of project 2nd Chance Reentry Job Fairs	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
Hold 2nd Chance Reentry Job Fairs										█		
Create and hold webinar regarding the project										█		
Wrap-up and report												█

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?