

## ***Growing Providers: Supporting Business Development, Early Literacy, and Child Care Access in Brooklyn Communities***

**Project Summary:** Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) seeks a National Leadership Grant of \$240,597 to support *Growing Providers*, a seven-session program designed to help aspiring childcare providers successfully apply for New York State registration as family childcare providers, while also providing them librarian-led training on early literacy and business resources. *Growing Providers* builds on a recent, highly successful pilot project conducted at BPL's New Lots Library that assisted new and existing immigrants in registering for a State license as family childcare providers.

**Project Partners:** BPL will partner with the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF), New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI), and Business Outreach Centers (BOC) to provide a program curriculum that will fully prepare interested individuals. CHCF combines education, capacity-building, and advocacy to strengthen the support system and continuum of learning for children and youth. Their Early Care and Education Institute provides culturally-informed, bilingual professional development to Family Childcare educators. PDI is a public-private partnership that brings together a range of city agencies, a consortium of private funders, and the City University of New York to build a comprehensive system of professional development for individuals who work with young children in New York. BOC's mission is to improve the economic prospects of traditionally underserved groups, with a focus on low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs and their communities.

**Need Addressed:** Brooklyn continues to be a beacon for immigrants. However, as the population of foreign-born and first generation children under the age of five rises, so does the demand for childcare services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2010 – 2015 there was a 10% increase in the number of children ages 5 and under with at least one foreign born parent in Brooklyn, growing from 70,297 to 77,556. Within the overall population of the borough, 37% of residents are foreign born and 46% of residents speak a language other than English at home. Immigrant parents commonly seek individuals from their native land to provide childcare services. Therefore it is imperative that these individuals be provided with access to proper training and registration as accredited child-care providers. In addition, studies have shown that children—particularly immigrant children—who attend licensed childcare receive more effective early literacy education and demonstrate stronger literacy skills than those who have attended unlicensed or unregulated childcare programs. With an already existing literacy gap between children from English-speaking vs. non-English speaking households, any effort to diminish this gap is essential.

Since BPL is a national leader in early literacy initiatives, an established resource for business and career programs and resources, and a community anchor it is a natural fit for the Library to assist aspiring childcare providers in both registering for a State license and receiving training in effective early literacy teaching skills. BPL has a proven track record in providing early literacy programming—since 2004 its *First Five Years* programs have introduced young children and their parents and caregivers to great books, age-appropriate songs and rhymes, and other early literacy activities and resources, with program attendance annually reaching over 250,000. BPL has a strong relationship with the New York State Department of Early Childhood Education as well as the New York City Departments of Education and Health and Mental Hygiene (which oversees City childcare regulations). BPL's Business & Career Center (B&CC), offers free professional counseling, business education classes and online resources to the community, particularly to those re-entering the workforce, seeking better career opportunities, or looking to start a new business. *Growing Providers* will create an effective framework for reaching aspiring childcare providers and assisting them in achieving their credentials while training them in effective early literacy techniques and sound business practices.

**IMLS Project Category and Impact:** *Growing Providers* will continue to strengthen BPL's position as a community anchor for the many Brooklyn neighborhoods it serves through its 60 branches, and in particular at the three locations that the project will target. The childcare training model that will result from the project will benefit both the primary target demographic as well as secondary communities as follows:

- Promoting economic vitality by assisting aspiring child care providers, many of whom may be immigrants, in registering as State licensed childcare providers. This will in turn provide working immigrant parents with a larger pool of trustworthy, high quality childcare providers.
- Facilitating lifelong learning by ensuring that trained childcare workers incorporate BPL's proven Early Literacy Programming in the care they provide, engaging both children and their caregivers.
- Advancing local and national practice by sharing program guidelines on BPL's website and through presentations at library conferences and other professional gatherings. Project partners with a national presence

will also assist in sharing the program using their existing networks. The project will offer a roadmap for library systems across the country on how to partner with local childcare organizations and offer this training to communities in need as well as for potential replication at other BPL branches with dedicated staff.

**Project Description:** BPL's New Lots, Bushwick and Crown Heights branches will serve as program locations for the project. The neighborhoods served by these branches have been identified by the New York City Department of Planning as having a high concentration of foreign born residents. In addition, the staff and technology resources available at these branches are well-suited to support the project. Beginning in October of 2017, BPL will work with project partners to develop a seven-session training program. In January 2018, BPL will hire a project coordinator to manage the training program and serve as a liaison between partner organizations, and a part-time assistant will be hired to plan schedules, track data, and assist with programs among other duties. The coordinator will have a BA or MA in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Ideally both will be bilingual with one fluent in Spanish and the other in Haitian Creole—the two predominant languages spoken in these communities. They will report to Rachel Payne, BPL's Coordinator of Early Childhood Services and receive additional support from Maud Andrew, Coordinator of Business and Career Services.

The program will be piloted sequentially at the three selected branches with the first series running from April to June 2018, the second series from September to November 2018 and the third series from February to April 2019. A handbook for childcare providers will be developed in collaboration with project partners and given to all series participants. The preliminary plan for the seven-session training program, outlined below, will be revised as necessary after the completion of each branch series:

- Introductory Information Session—led by BPL staff
- Assistance in completing the formal New York State Application—led by BPL staff
- Overview of Early Child Development—led by PDI and BPL staff
- Training in techniques to promote Early Literacy—led by BPL staff
- Orientation on BPL's Business & Career Center resources and the business of childcare—led by BPL/BOC
- Instruction on Health and Safety—led by PDI staff
- Training in CPR—led by PDI staff

CFHF staff will be available for Spanish speakers and PDI staff will also provide additional coaching and mentoring.

Throughout the course of the training, participants will also learn about helpful free resources that are available to them at BPL including immigration information and legal assistance as well as ESL and continuing education classes. Participants will also benefit from access to technology (free computer terminals, printers, and WiFi) at BPL's Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons and at their local branches, and gain access to additional training programs via databases at BC&C. Project partners will also share information about their relevant resources.

Pre- and post-program evaluations will be collected from all series participants and used to modify the curriculum as necessary, and in May 2019 a full review of these evaluations will be conducted. Throughout the project period, the project coordinator, as well as staff at BC&C, will offer follow-up support and coaching to program participants. Beginning in the fall of 2018, BPL staff will seek to present project findings at various professional conferences including the American Library Association, the New York Library Association, and the Association for Library Service to Children.

**Performance Goals/Outcomes:** 250 individuals will attend orientations; 125 will attend two or more sessions; 45 will complete one of the three iterations of the training program (15 per branch); 100% will report an increase in knowledge of NYS childcare regulations; 85% will report an increased understanding of the importance of reading to children and other early literacy best practices; 65% of completing participants will secure State registration as a family childcare center; 50% of completing participants will be on track to opening a childcare facility.

**Budget:** Full-time coordinator (\$54,000/year, plus \$24,300 in benefits), part-time support staff (\$23,000/year); PDI partner fee (\$20,000); BOC partner fee (\$7,500); staff laptops (\$3,000); book collections for participant childcare centers (\$3,000); participant incentives (\$3,000); staff conference travel (\$3,000); marketing materials including provider handbook, flyers, radio and print ads (\$5,000); indirect costs (\$17,822). Cost share of \$69,405 will include BPL staff time from associated program coordinators, branch librarians and BC&C staff.