

**Lead Applicant/Collaborators** Dayton Metro Library (DML) is the lead applicant for this Sparks Grant, focused on the Library as a Community Anchor. Committed planning partners adding their expertise to the discussion and supporting outreach efforts include Learn to Earn Dayton, Help Me Grow/Brighter Futures, Five Rivers Community Health Centers, Dayton Children's Hospital, Family and Children First Council, Passport to Kindergarten, and Preschool Promise. Numerous preschools will serve as distribution partners.

**What do you plan to accomplish and why?** With the Love Them Out Loud Preschool Kit, Dayton Metro Library will deliver a quality early literacy tool directly to families in need. This fulfills the mission of the library as a partner in education, supports the overall educational health of the community, strengthens the role of the library as an anchor institution, and creates a new outreach method in supporting at-risk families.

**Timeframe** The discovery session for kit design launches in October 2018. The materials will be finalized and created by early 2019, aligned with the timing for preschool outreach. Initial review of results will begin in June 2019. Future production runs and distribution of kits to partners across the nation will be ongoing.

**Library/Community Needs** Love Them Out Loud kits reaffirm the role of the Library as a significant community partner for lifelong learning. The Library is meeting a specific need for kindergarten readiness by provide a valuable early literacy tool that supports learning and encourages parent engagement.

**Intended Audience** The end user for this program are families with preschool aged children. Through the innovative distribution method, community partners (day cares, preschools, health clinics, etc.) also benefit by receiving a valuable tool that helps them better deliver their respective missions. Finally, libraries and educational/social service agencies across the nation can benefit, as the kits will be made available for purchase, and the results of the outreach/distribution will be shared to inform future practices.

**What are the specific project activities, performance goals, outcomes, results, and tangible products?**

DML begins the project with discussions with area health partners, literacy experts, librarians, educational partners and designers. Early conversations determine what the goal of the kit should be and what types of tools are best for caregivers and children at that age. For the LTOL Preschool Kit (30-48 mos.), a flip book with rhymes and finger play, handheld objects, manipulative toys, tip sheets for caregivers and a beautiful book embedded with positive tips on literacy will be targeted to the appropriate level of development. As an expansion of an already successful model, the project design has been tested and proven; each LTOL kit/story includes the popular characters Felix (black male) and Fiona (white female) and their families and pets at the center of the storytelling experience.

Once designed and fully produced, LTOL kits are distributed through trusted parenting educators and physicians to families living in poverty. New for this project, expanded partnerships with day cares and preschools in underserved communities will serve as distribution partners as librarians visit to launch an early literacy campaign and gift the kits. In support of bridging the educational gap in early learning and ensuring a broader impact, DML will also make these kits available to libraries across the nation.

**What are the intended outcomes in terms of measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behavior?**

DML will produce 1,500 kits for distribution. Short-term outcomes to be tracked will include: feedback from partner organizations as they share qualitative results and case studies from caregivers and the number of new library card applications utilizing the special application form included in the LTOL kit. Longer term goals will be measured with the feedback from preschool partners and interest from national library partners.

Dayton Metro Library, in collaboration with seven planning partner organizations, will launch a new project to provide families with resources and support to help their preschoolers get ready for kindergarten success, promoting the library as a strong community anchor. This proposal is for the extension of the successful “Love Them Out Loud” (LTOL) kits, with the design, development and creation of an early literacy kit for preschoolers (36-48 months). Distributed at preschools and through social service/health care partners, these kits will reach approximately 1,500 families, guiding caregivers with suggested activities that promote early language and literacy development through nurturing interactions. Babies are born ready to learn, but many parents don’t know how to capitalize on the early years, which are a critical period of development. The LTOL Preschool Kits offer an early literacy model that encourages children and families on a path of lifelong learning. Designed to be easily replicable at a low cost, there is great potential to support national library efforts. (*More at DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Love*)

## **STATEMENT OF NATIONAL NEED**

Libraries are a lifeline for many families with low incomes, providing workforce development, education, and entertainment at no cost. Unfortunately, those in greatest need often can’t benefit from our services, for a myriad of reasons (geography, work schedules, etc.). As libraries, dedicated to literacy and education, we must be the resource, not only providing books and programming, but also empowering families with the knowledge and resources to leverage everyday situations that encourage early learning. Sometimes this requires going outside of our doors through innovative partnerships and surprising collaborations. With the distribution model of the LTOL Preschool Kit, libraries can fulfill their promise to better deliver on mission and better address the needs of underserved communities.

A child’s early years of development are vital for learning, and libraries across the nation are striving to support early literacy for all – especially low-income families. The Love Them Out Loud (LTOL) Preschool Kit will be the third step of Dayton Metro Library’s outreach effort that supports families as children develop through the critical first years of life. The first two kits were designed for babies and toddlers; as the next step, the Preschool Kit will be created with materials to encourage kindergarten readiness. The kits are designed with books, hands-on manipulatives and tips and resources to easily guide parents through the playful process of engaging with their children through language and literacy. (See “**SupportingDoc1**” & “**SupportingDoc2**” for background on the process and design of LTOL kits.)

### **How will your project address the issues identified in the category (Community Anchors: Sparks Grants)?**

Fitting the criteria for a Community Anchors project, LTOL Preschool Kits help to solidify the role of the library as an active stakeholder in addressing the important community need of early literacy and kindergarten preparedness. DML is working in partnership with regional cradle-to-career educational organizations, local schools, and parent educators to improve the educational and economic outcomes for area families, who are at-risk due to socio-economic conditions. The LTOL Preschool Kit is a responsive library programming model, easily replicable for both libraries and social service/educational organizations across the country. Findings can be shared broadly.

The Sparks Grant is one of risk and innovation, implementing existing approaches in a new context with impact beyond our local community. The LTOL Preschool Kits explore an original approach to address the challenge of kindergarten preparedness; it is an extension of a proven model, adapted for a new demographic. If successful, the results offer potential impact for the national library community with the creation of a new resource. This kit, and the innovative distribution model (offering the kits as a gift to families, separate from the library collection), could create a new protocol for libraries working to strengthen educational partnerships around the nation. If the program does not produce the potential large-scale results, we still can claim some

success with the creation of the kit, which would have supported 1,500 low-income families. This program is relatively low-cost, with the potential for high-impact.

**Who will benefit from the project? How have you identified or assessed the challenges or needs of this audience or participants?**

There are multiple beneficiaries of this project.

- DML will benefit, further solidifying its role as a trusted educational partner, reaching new patrons by delivering tangible solutions. This project positions the library as a central player in the conversation about education, kindergarten readiness and family support/parent engagement.
- Regional partners, including nonprofit organizations, Head Starts, and preschools, will benefit. With the LTOL kit, they are better able to deliver their respective missions. Many social service and health partners have a mandate to provide literacy content. This project relieves a great deal of pressure on them, as DML is creating the content, and partners distribute and use the kits.
- The families who receive the kits will benefit, as they will be introduced to easy, everyday accessible ways to encourage learning without pressure or requirements.
- Libraries across the nation will benefit. The kits will be made available for purchase, and the results of this pilot will be shared, supporting other libraries in early literacy outreach efforts.
- Eventually, as scholarship demonstrates, the larger community will benefit. As children are more prepared to learn, they will start on a path to educational success, resulting in a more highly educated community and a more equipped workforce.

**How does this proposed project differ from, complement or build upon theory, scholarship and practice in this area?**

For many years before DML launched the LTOL Baby Kit, early literacy kits were purchased from Cuyahoga County Library (Northeast Ohio). These kits were gifted to new mothers, and included a book, library card application, growth chart, information on healthy choices, etc. Once this stock was depleted, DML began discussing the opportunity to create new kits. To begin the discussion on how (or if) this should be attempted, DML gathered librarians, teachers, doctors, health partners, social service leaders and many collaborators for input. Early conversations covered research and best practices from both library and non-library sources, to avoid an unnecessary duplication of services.

It was determined that while the previous iteration of the early literacy kit was both well-researched and well-intentioned, a change was needed. The feedback from partners was eye-opening. DML learned that 1) the time of birth is too overwhelming for new parents to receive any extra material, and 2) there was too much information included in the kit, resulting in the literacy information getting lost. The doctors who collaborated on the project requested to strip away the health information (growth charts, check-up reminders, etc.); even these health care/social service partners insisted that the critical element for future health of the child is early literacy practice.

The result of this process was DML's Love Them Out Loud Baby Kit; these kits are full of suggestions for easy, fun activities parents can do at home to engage their young children in daily learning, and set them on the road to reading success. The LTOL kit is beautifully designed to appear as a present or gift that the caregiver will be proud to receive, and the contents work to encourage, affirm, and incentivize caregivers as they interact with their baby "Out Loud," with speaking, signing and healthy verbal communication. Each LTOL kit/story includes the popular characters Felix (black male) and Fiona (white female) and their families at the center of the storytelling experience. The characters engage in activities that, if imitated by caregivers, result in language and literacy development. Since parents wind up rereading board books to their children over and over again, they are also reminded of activities they can be doing themselves. Research on parent education by behavioral economists has revealed that families need to be 'nudged' into doing the things to which they aspire. The LTOL

book is designed to be that nudge. (See the attachments for details the kindergarten readiness activities that are supported through the book/kit “**SupportingDoc1**” and on process of creating the first two kits “**SupportingDoc2.**”.)

While the centerpiece of the kit is an original book, written and illustrated locally and focused on appropriately aged lessons, the packaging and additional hands-on learning materials are all designed to encourage and reinforce positive learning behavior.

Similar to the approach modeled by Reach Out and Read, LTOL Baby Kits are distributed by health care professionals in medical clinics (capturing parents’ attention during early check-ups and not at the time of birth). Taking outreach another step further, DML partnered with WIC Clinics and parent home educators/social service partners (Montgomery Children’s Services, Catholic Social Services Early Head Start, Help Me Grow, etc.). Because research tells us that parenting education happens only when there is a strong and respectful relationship between the parent and educator, the library has prioritized distribution through these educators. (See “**SupportingDoc5 through SupportingDoc9**” for Letters of Support from partnering distributors.)

Based on the incredible success of the first kit, DML and partners then created LTOL Toddler Kits, utilizing a similar model for a slightly older demographic. The familiar characters grew from babies to toddlers, and the curriculum and resources of the kit changed, to better accommodate the learning and developmental growth of an older child, but the proven distribution method continued – and grew!

With the launch of the LTOL Preschool Kit, **an adapted distribution model is needed**. While kits will continue to be available for health care partners, some of our parent educator partners stop conducting home visits once the child turns 3 years old, leaving a critical gap before children enter kindergarten. DML proposes to keep what is successful from the first two versions, but **launch an expansion in the distribution process to reach children and families in low-income preschools across the community**. A child’s early years of development are vital for learning, and the LTOL Preschool Kit will be an important step in DML’s outreach to support families as young children develop. With the LTOL Kits, families see how the library grows with them.

### **PROPOSED WORK PLAN/PROJECT DESIGN**

DML begins this process of creating the LTOL Preschool Kit with discussions with area health partners, literacy experts, librarians, educational partners and designers. Early conversations determine the learning goal of the kit and what tools are most valuable for caregivers and children at that age. For the proposed LTOL Preschool Kit, the team will explore opportunities for rhymes and finger play, handheld objects, manipulative toys, tip sheets for caregivers and a beautiful book embedded with positive examples for literacy, all targeted to the appropriate level of development. The kit also includes an opportunity for the family to better connect with the library (e.g.: library card application, literacy “text tip” registration, etc). The storyline of the kit, like the previous two, will be the adventures of Felix and Fiona and their families, as they explore the world around them. By continuing with the same characters, and showing them as they age from babies to toddlers to preschoolers, the role of the Library as a lifelong learning partner is reinforced.

Once designed and fully produced, LTOL Preschool Kits will be distributed through area preschools (specifically serving low-income families) and through trusted parenting educators or physicians serving families living in poverty. A limited number will be added to DML’s collection for circulation. To ensure a broader impact, DML will also make these kits available for purchase to libraries and partner organizations across the nation. This is an extension of the already successful model of LTOL; educational, social service, and health care organizations from across the county (Albany, NY; San Francisco, CA; Columbus, OH) have placed orders to share the kits with their clients, and have expressed interest in purchasing more kits to coincide with the developmental growth for toddlers and preschoolers. (See “**SupportingDoc3**” for national press that resulted in increased orders.)

**What are the goals, projected outcomes, and assumptions of your project?**

The goal of this project is the design, production, and distribution of early literacy kits to serve preschool-aged children and their families.

As a short-term outcome, DML strives to provide literacy resources to those who will most benefit. This project will strengthen the position of the library as an anchor institution for learning by developing better partnerships with the educators and caregivers who serve children at the critical preschool age (36-48 months).

The anticipated long-term outcome, meeting a kindergarten readiness goal, is that this kit will help children from low opportunity situations develop the basic skills they need to learn to read later. Kindergarten readiness checklists include areas such as verbal skills, listening skills, motor skills, music, movement and reading readiness. The LTOL kits fold these lessons into easily accessible games, stories, dances and songs. As they read the original book and follow the recommended tips, parents are guided along a simple path that encourages creativity. Through LTOL, children are speaking, singing, listening, pointing, seeing, practicing hand-eye coordination, playing make-believe, and, of course, reading. This is a tool to prepare children to learn. By serving the community in this innovative way, DML strives to develop a positive relationship between parents and the library system.

The assumptions of this project are aligned with research and previous practice. Age zero to five is the most critical time for brain development, vocabulary, and early literacy. Children from disadvantaged families fall behind their more privileged peers in education and development, due to lack of early literacy experiences at home. Many of these families live in high-stress environments (poverty, violence, discrimination, language barriers, geographic disadvantage, addiction, etc.). Too often, well-intentioned educational initiatives add to the stress of family life, insisting that parents attend workshops, visit the library mid-day for story times, or come to remote locations to receive help. With this project, DML recognizes the need for early literacy support, and proposes to deliver it through a well-designed, no-obligation gift that invites (rather than insists) families to engage with the library.

### **What are the potential risks to the projects and are they accounted for in the work plan?**

Children will be introduced to the characters when first gifted the kit, but there is a risk that the kit may sit unused at home. Even then, the branding reminds families that the library is there to support them, and a new book and developmentally-appropriate manipulative has made its way to the household. Because the project is relatively affordable, and the kits are produced at a fairly low-cost, the potential risk is lessened.

This project revamps a current distribution model, with the goal of stronger relationships between librarians and preschools in low-income communities. The librarians who will be conducting outreach are well established as trusted partners within area school systems. However, recognizing that preschool outreach is targeting a new demographic, the project has built in enough time for librarians to develop relationships with new school partners. Additionally, project partners (such as Preschool Promise or the Early Learning Center) have agreed to facilitate new engagement opportunities, connecting librarians with preschools in targeted communities.

### **How are project activities informed by appropriate theory and practice?**

Kindergarten readiness is a part of the national education dialogue; children who enter school with early learning skills are more likely than their peers to experience later academic success, attain higher levels of education, and secure employment. The absence of these skills may contribute to even greater disparities down the road. In the U.S., half of the children living in poverty arrive at kindergarten without the skills that they need for success at school, typically 12-14 month below national norms in language and pre-reading skills (Child Trends). Delays from early childhood tend to persist (Torgeson, 2004).

New research, by Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda and team (*In Press, Aug. 2017*) demonstrates that early learning environments predict children's 5<sup>th</sup> grade academic success, with a longitudinal association between pre-kindergarten skills and 5<sup>th</sup> grade learning. This reinforces previous research that highlighted the importance of

early vocabulary on childhood brain development (Hart and Risley, 1995; Biemiller, 2004; Baumann & Kame'enui, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2000).

The problem is not only access, but understanding. There is a generational challenge where low-income parents feel overwhelmed and underqualified to engage with early literacy experiences, or they are unaware of the impact simple, everyday early literacy interactions can have on their child's development. Jessica Lahey cites the work of Next Generation in her article (*The Atlantic*, October 2014) to explain **“there's a lack of alignment among low-income parents regarding how much talking, singing, and reading to children really matters over a lifetime...one study found that low-income parents underestimate their power to influence their children's cognitive development, sometimes by as much as 50 percent.”** Dayton Metro Library's Love Them Out Loud kits encourage parents/caregivers to use language – engaging “out loud” through singing, reading, speaking, rhyming and playing – in their interactions with their child.

Beyond the research in early literacy that drives DML to create this kit, scholarship determining successful approaches to the families is also considered. The materials included in the LTOL Preschool Kits aligns with the behavioral economics theory that “nudges” families into positive behavior. Even the best-intentioned parent workshops feel more like a pedagogical “data dump,” and don't result in behavioral change. The more effective approach is by “nudging” families into positive behavior. While DML hopes to better engage families (with the inclusion of a Library Card Application and the Text Tip Hotline), even if they never set foot in a library branch, the library mission is fulfilled. The kit itself models the type of activities that can build language and literacy skills. The book included in the kit guides families through the literacy exercises in accessible ways (**“SupportingDoc1”**). With repeated readings, use of the kit nudges parents to engage in positive activities that build skills.

#### **When and in what sequence will activities occur?**

*Assemble Partners:* The Love Them Out Loud (LTOL) planning committee gathers to evaluate the previous versions of the project (Baby, Toddler). Feedback from partners confirms progress or identifies needed changes. Discussions span from a review of the Baby Kit to a more comprehensive discussion on the roll out, successes and challenges of the Toddler Kit. Finally, the group begins discussion on the LTOL Preschool Kit. To do so, library staff and community partners consider best practices, national research and local data to determine what might be the best components to deliver the messages for preschoolers and their parents. These discussions help determine the colors, lessons and priorities that will be reinforced in the kit. (October 2018)

*Key Research and Development:* The team separates for research, narrowing down ideas through feedback from patrons, clients and potential users. With research in hand to better inform the concept, the Library staff works to confirm the details that will create the physical kit (box vs. bag, colors, manipulatives, etc.). The creation of an original book that informs and reinforces everyday early literacy activities is vital. It elevates the kit from a simple recommendation (just tips) to an actual tool. With the book in hand, parents can begin reading out loud to their children. With the first two versions (Baby, Toddler), the books focused on simple pictures and high contrast colors, making it easy for infants to focus. Faces were emphasized and home-like settings were featured. The book is not just a story, but the activities shared by parents and children model the type of activities that build language and literacy skills. The creation of the book for the Preschool Kit will follow best practices to meet the developmental needs of preschoolers. The book, manipulatives, and beautiful packaging is less like “an educational tool,” and more like a family-friendly gift, encouraging quality time and play. (October-December 2018)

*Vision to Reality:* After research further informs the developmental concepts, the design team begins the process of translating the vision to a physical kit, the planning team reviews the draft kit and provides feedback. Partner feedback helps to make changes both large (adjustment of topics to cover) and small (request to change a word or color in the book). (December 2018-January 2019)

*Logistics:* As the design team moves to production, the library applies for the copywrite and ISBN# for the materials. Behind the scenes, logistics are coordinated to create a smooth public roll-out. (January-February 2019)

*Outreach:* With the book published and the physical kits in hand, the DML volunteer network assembles the kits. While this is happening, DML Librarians reach out to their networks to set dates for school visits to coordinate the distribution of the kits to eligible preschoolers. (February-March 2019)

*Social Service Partnerships:* Assembled kits are offered to health care and social service partners who will distribute through their avenues. (March 2019)

*Preschool Distribution:* This program will succeed due to positive relationships with educators across the community. Children's Librarians at the branch level are already skilled in outreach, with multiple school visits and a special first grade outreach program as key parts of their responsibilities. They will translate those skills to communicate with preschool teachers, introducing the role of the library as an educational partner and coordinating school visits to introduce the LTOL program, including an in-classroom story time and early literacy experience, and ending with the gifting of the kits to the children. (March-May 2019, flexible based on preschool schedules)

*Evaluate:* DML builds in time to evaluate the success of each program. See evaluation section for details. (June-July 2019)

**How does the project design allow for input, consensus building, and buy-in from others inside or outside the field? If the project involved working with the community/public how will their perspectives and contributions be incorporated in to the project design?**

Committed partners adding their expertise to the planning discussion and outreach efforts include Learn to Earn Dayton, Help Me Grow/Brighter Futures, Five Rivers Community Health Centers, Dayton Children's Hospital, Family and Children First Council, Passport to Kindergarten, and Preschool Promise. These partners are at the table, sharing their insights and expressing the immediate and long-term needs for early education in the community, throughout the entirety of the development, distribution, and evaluation process.

Community members and partner organizations that serve on the planning team share input regarding the needs of the families and how to best deliver the message. There is great consensus around the development of each kit, with multiple points for feedback. Additionally, these partners facilitate introductions and develop relationships among the children's librarians and the targeted preschools where the kits are most needed. (See "SupportingDoc5" thru "SupportingDoc9" for Letters of Support from some of our partner organizations.)

**Who is the audience for the project and how will they participate?**

The audience for this project is two-fold. First, DML considered the organizations that are key distribution partners. As a collaborative project, they participate from the development stage, determining the key lessons that need to be incorporated into the kits. The final audience is the preschool aged children/families who will own the kits. Their feedback is requested from DML's community partners (Step Two of project sequence) to ensure that the kit will be a valuable resource.

**If applicable, what are your plans to meet the needs of underserved communities? How are those needs assessed and those communities involved in creating and implementing parts of your work plan?**

This project is designed specifically to meet the needs of our underserved communities. The needs have been assessed through both scholarship (national best practice) and direct feedback (local practices, shared through community partners) regarding the challenges and barriers that must be overcome. It is specifically with the needs of this population in mind that we are creating engaging kits, to be offered at no cost directly to children from underserved communities.

## **Who will plan, implement and manage your project?**

The educational components of this project are overseen by Early Literacy Librarian Kathleen Moore (see resume) and the design/marketing is overseen by External Relations Director Diane Farrell (see resume). Going into the third iteration of this project, they have created a successful method to gather partners, seek feedback, work with outside contractors to fulfill the vision, and deliver the kits into the hands of those who need them most. The division of responsibilities is an excellent complement to the outstanding skills of both leaders, as Kathleen brings her impressive educational background, plus her strong relationships with community partners, and Diane brings years of experience in the development of key partnerships and her skill in creating engaging communication tools.

While Kathleen serves as the lead in creating the educational components and ensuring that the program is appropriately aligned to the development stage of preschoolers, DML's children's librarians will be key to the community/neighborhood implementation. Selected children's librarians from each branch will work with at least one preschool that reaches our target demographic. It is through these personal interactions that relationships between the families and the library will be strengthened.

## **What time, personnel, financial, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?**

The requested Spark Grant funds contribute to the design, illustration and packaging of the LTOL Preschool Kits and the cost to produce 1,500 kits in a first run. The attached scope of work and budget justification places the creation of the kits at \$40,000. Due to the high priority and need for this program, the remaining funds will be either raised from private partners or committed from DML's operational budget. While the development stage will determine the actual components of the kit, it is likely that each will include beautiful packaging, an age-appropriate book, a hands-on manipulative, multiple tips and rhymes, and a way for parents to further engage with DML (card application, etc.).

DML and all community partners will contribute their time in the development of the kit. Once a first run is complete, and distributed, DML will make kits available to libraries and partner organizations across the nation at an (estimated) cost of \$7.50/kit. The cost of the staff to coordinate national distribution is absorbed by DML.

Additional resources covered by DML include operational costs, administration of the project, the outreach efforts of the children's librarians to distribute the kits, the creation of campaign materials to promote kit distribution, and the travel/time for opportunities to share project design and outcomes with libraries and educators through local, regional or national conferences or presentations.

## **How will you track your progress toward achieving projected goals and intended outcomes?**

While this project is in response to a great national need for early learning, it is not based solely on learning outcomes. The focus of the program, and the measurable results, will also consider how the library may develop stronger partnership and improve the process for delivering learning experiences to this targeted population (low-income, preschool age). Progress will be tracked with:

- The creation/production of 1500 LTOL Preschool Kits
- The number of kits distributed within the first year
- Feedback from children's librarians regarding access to preschools/daycares for delivery
- Tracking of processed library card applications (compared to kit distribution)
- Registration for "Preschool Text Tips" (compared to kit distribution)

## **How will you include evaluation and performance measurement in your plan?**

Because of their direct connection to the families served, our outreach partners are key to evaluation. Their qualitative feedback will guide any changes to the content (from the pilot production run to any future run) and



provide insights on the success of the distribution model. Formal surveys, while always optional, can be shared. DML created a simple three-question survey which asks 1) if the materials will inspire parent to read/sing/talk more with the baby, 2) when was the most recent library visit, and 3) how many books are at home for the baby. It's heartening to see parents state that the kits are inspiring more positive early learning interaction, and the kits are clearly meeting the target market because we see parents answer that they haven't been to the library in over a year, and they own zero books. While there are not enough surveys to be reliable, the limited data and the overwhelming positive stories are encouraging. (See "**SupportingDoc4**" for examples of survey sheets/responses.)

At the completion of the first distribution period, DML will provide the performance measure statements (from IMLS, regarding the library as a community anchor) to branch librarians who partnered in distribution.

### **How and with whom will you share your project findings? How will results of the project be made available?**

This model, with IMLS support, is easily shared with libraries across the nation who would not have the resources to conduct their own research and create their own materials. LTOL Kits, while branded as a DML project, are interchangeable with other library systems. The developed kit (with book, tips and hands-on manipulatives that encourage learning) are easily adapted to any organization.

Kathleen Moore will serve as the project ambassador, submitting Love Them Out Loud to relevant conferences, including library conferences (such as American Library Association, Ohio Library Association or Association for Library Service to Children) and partner organizations also working to close the literacy gap (such as National Association for the Education of Young Children, Job and Family Service partners, etc.). Kathleen is eager to offer webinars and online presentations in partnership with organizations who strive to reach a larger audience beyond the conferences.

Beyond the awareness raised by Kathleen's outreach, we will rely upon our many partner organizations to share this research with their colleagues. The LTOL Baby Kit has not only been requested by libraries from across the nation, but health and education focused organizations have also sought out the resource for their own use (page 5, "**SupportingDoc3**"). This trend will grow with the further promotion of the LTOL Toddler Kit and with the launch of the LTOL Preschool Kit.

### **How do you plan to sustain the project beyond the funding period?**

This IMLS grant funding supports the cost of research, design and the first run of the product. Beyond being one of the most expensive elements of the project, research and design is less attractive to funders because of the long work with little tangible payoff. Experience with the first kits demonstrated that once community partners see the LTOL kits, they realize the educational potential and are excited to contribute funds for future production.

## **DIVERSITY PLAN**

### **How does the project engage diverse or underserved communities?**

Families from low socio-economic conditions are often unable to take advantage of educational programming – even free programming – for their young children, due to lack of awareness, scheduling conflicts or inability to attend. This project overcomes those barriers by placing the educational programming directly in the home and providing guidance on use (through the school, the home visit or doctor's office).

Children in low-income families have access to fewer reading materials than children of middle- and upper-income families (Lindsay, 2010; Krashen, 2012); 61% of low-income families have no books at all in their homes for their children (McQuillan, J, 1998). These children are at further risk because they visit their library

less often, and spend considerably more time watching TV than their middle class counterparts (Kumanyika & Grier, 2006).

This program recognizes the need to target not only low-income communities, but also areas with high minority populations. According to Child Trends, in 2012, 56% of white three- to five-year-olds were read to by a family member at least seven times in the past week, compared with 34% of black children and 25% of Hispanic children. This project delivers easy and fun programming directly to those in need. (See “**SupportingDoc10**” for a letter from a mother who appreciates this resource to support her son.)

**WHO are the diverse of underserved communities that will be served by this project and how were they identified?**

At-risk communities were identified through demographic information. There is a local need that can be extrapolated to a national audience. 27.2% of the children living in Montgomery County, Ohio, live in poverty (Kids’ Count Data), with 4,874 children receiving public assistance. According to state tests assessing incoming kindergarteners’ skills, 62% of Montgomery County children require some or significant intervention to be ready for reading instruction. Among African-American and Hispanic children in Montgomery County, the percentage of those needing intervention is between 70-80%.

**What are the unique needs of the community members that will be served by this project?**

Montgomery County, Ohio, faces a huge challenge when it comes to ensuring that all our children start school with the skills they need to succeed. Recently, the local cradle to career educational organization, Learn to Earn Dayton, released their results on kindergarten readiness. In Dayton Public Schools, no demographic (race or gender) reaches even 35% ready to learn. Other communities in Montgomery County fare better, but seven of the school districts served by DML all have readiness rates below 50%. While across the board there are challenges, in every community, the readiness rates for African American boys is abysmally low. Too many children start school already significantly behind their better resourced peers.

**How will the proposed project address the needs of those communities? How is the community involved in defining the needs and in the implementation of the project?**

Dayton Metro Library serves a diverse community – from the urban core to rural communities and suburban neighborhoods. During the design phase, the project is informed by the feedback of social service/educational partners who work directly with the diverse communities that will benefit. These partner organizations solicit direct feedback from the families to ensure that the project design meets their needs.

The outreach element of this project will be guided by communication between branch librarians (those who know their population best) and partners at the schools, WIC centers, and social service agencies that directly serve the community. The project design recognizes that while there are overlapping characteristics of communities in need, there are also unique characteristics that will require personal and direct communication.

**NATIONAL IMPACT**

The education gap between low-income and middle-class families in early literacy and kindergarten preparedness is staggering. Across the nation, libraries are hosting storytimes, gifting books, and creating opportunities to help our youngest patrons succeed. However, the gap continues and our most vulnerable children are falling behind. This project, with IMLS support, provides both a valuable kindergarten-readiness resource and a piloted distribution method, both easily shared with libraries across the nation who would not have the resources to conduct their own research and create their own materials.

The access to the LTOL kits, as well as the feedback from the distribution/outreach pilot, will be available to libraries and educational partners on a national level. If successful in Dayton, the kits and outreach could serve a

much wider audience across the country. Already, the LTOL Baby Kit has received national attention (see page 5 “**SupportingDoc3**”) through the national Office of Child Support Enforcement. As this project continues and more agencies learn about the potential, DML anticipates the impact to grow.

Love Them Out Loud, while branded as a DML project, is interchangeable with other library systems. The original content, which includes the developed box/bag, book, rhyming booklet, and parent tip sheet are easily adapted to represent the mission of any library. DML can provide support to other organizations (connections to vendors, etc.) that want to include their own logo on the materials. The DML library card application or “Text Tip” registration can easily be removed and replaced with an application for any library system.

External Relations Director Diane Farrell will continue to serve as a liaison with libraries and social service agencies across the nation, providing support as they consider utilizing the LTOL resources created by DML. The first iteration of the kit (Baby) has already been requested by partner organizations from across the nation, and the second (Toddler) kit has just been launched and will be made available soon. With the preschool kit in hand, DML will have a full spectrum of early literacy support tools for age zero-five to support libraries across the nation.

More than just the kits, the national impact is also in the creation of partnerships, a new distribution model, and expertise. Early Literacy Librarian Kathleen Moore will serve as project ambassador, sharing the challenges, opportunities and successes of the project. She promotes the kits through a regularly updated blog (on DML’s web site) and through outreach. The results of the distribution pilot to low-income preschools will be shared via conferences or webinars, providing colleagues across the nation with the opportunity to better inform their own outreach practices.

Because this project is rooted in and born from collaboration, multiple institutions will benefit. With a model that can be replicated nationally, this impact can grow. Libraries will benefit from greater engagement with an audience that is currently not utilizing services. Social service/educational organizations will benefit as the kits help deliver federally mandated literacy programming. Preschool partners will benefit by developing a stronger relationship with their local library. And, parents and children will benefit as the end user of a quality resource that makes learning fun.

This grant supports the creation/production of the LTOL Preschool Kit, but this is not a project that will be “complete” after the grant period concludes. The core team will gather again after the initial distribution to share feedback and determine successes, challenges and opportunities for adjustments to the kit. Communication with outreach partners and librarians will determine if the distribution plan is successful or requires adjustment.

	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19
<b>Assemble Partners</b>	█										
<b>Key Research &amp; Development</b>	█	█	█								
<b>Vision to Reality</b>			█	█							
<b>Logistics</b>				█	█						
<b>Outreach</b>					█	█					
<b>Social Service Partnerships</b>						█					
<b>Preschool Distribution</b>						█	█	█			
<b>Evaluation</b>									█	█	

## DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

### Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded digital products (i.e., 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. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products can be challenging. 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

- 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 format 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 (i.e., how you will 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**

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**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?