

## Califa Group: Evaluation Capacity Building for Public Libraries

Public libraries face a pressing need to evaluate their offerings and use the resulting evidence to inform internal decision-making, demonstrate their worth, and secure sufficient funding. As former Public Library Association president Carolyn Anthony (2016) noted, “We have a lot of anecdotes about transformative experiences at the public library, but no real data to back that up” (p. 8). Evaluation is particularly critical to support IMLS’ Lifelong Learning priority—which advances new, inquiry-based learning opportunities in libraries—to ensure the effectiveness of these opportunities and demonstrate their value. Currently, several initiatives seek to address these needs by providing instruments or toolkits librarians can use to evaluate programs and services. In addition, the Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL) has delivered introductory evaluation training to nearly 1,370 library staff nationwide.

Califa Group—in partnership with the Colorado State Library, State Library of North Carolina, Rebecca Teasdale & Associates, LLC and LH Evaluation & Training Group—requests \$249,239 to build on RIPL’s success through *Evaluation Capacity Building for Public Libraries*. The project will develop and test a 9-month cohort-based peer learning process to further develop evaluation skills, knowledge, and attitudes among RIPL alumni and/or public library staff with equivalent education and/or experience. During each year of the 3-year project, a regional training cohort will be convened (Cohort 1 in California, Cohort 2 in Colorado, and Cohort 3 in North Carolina) that includes teams from 5 public libraries. Each team will design and implement a robust evaluation of a library program or service, with priority given to projects focused on innovative, inquiry-based learning activities. To accomplish their projects, teams will participate in 6 key activities: (1) a 2-day in-person kickoff training institute; (2) 6 online coaching sessions for each library; (3) access to a library of coaching videos created by the instructors; (4) 6 online peer discussions for the full cohort; (5) online support including email support by instructors and a web-based community of practice space for participants; and (6) a 2-day in-person wrap-up training institute.

Through this in-depth training and coaching, participants will develop and apply their evaluation skills over an extended period of time, maximizing the potential for lasting change in their libraries. By the end of the project, at least 30 public library staff members, representing 15 public libraries in three states, will complete the cohort experience. At least 1 library per cohort will be small and/or rural. Each team will evaluate a library program or service and produce empirical evidence to support internal decision-making and/or demonstrate library value. Success will be indicated when at least 75% of participants across all cohorts will report increased understanding and interest in evaluation, increased confidence in applying what they learned, and improved buy-in for evaluation within their library. In addition, the regional cohort design will seed enduring communities of practice dedicated to improving public libraries’ capacity to design, conduct, and use evaluation and to building a culture of evaluation within the profession. As a result, an additional indicator of success is that at least 75% of participants across all cohorts will report an increased level of connection with a regional, state and/or national community of practice committed to evaluation.

The project will also produce a library of at least 20 coaching videos that will be made freely available through the project website, Infopeople platform, and the RIPL Community of Practice to provide just-in-time coaching on key topics in public library evaluation. Each cohort will share lessons learned by submitting session proposals to library conferences, and the instructors will develop a pre-conference and journal article to share lessons learned and foster evaluation capacity building across the broader library community. Taken together, the project will build a culture of evaluation in public libraries, improve libraries’ ability to evaluate the new, inquiry-based learning activities they provide, and, ultimately, improve the effectiveness of learning opportunities for communities nationwide.

## Statement of Broad Need

Public libraries face a pressing need to evaluate their programs and services and use the resulting evidence to inform internal decision-making, demonstrate their worth to policy makers, and secure sufficient funding. The call to evaluate library services emerged in the late 2000s and early 2010s when The Great Recession led to reduced budgets across the public sector, and funders and governing authorities urged libraries to provide outcome data to support claims about their value (Aldrich et al., 2018; see Supporting Document 1 for bibliography). As former Public Library Association (PLA) president Carolyn Anthony (2016) noted, “We have a lot of anecdotes about transformative experiences at the public library, but no real data to back that up” (p. 8).

Around the same time, public libraries began investing tax dollars to provide new, innovative learning opportunities for their communities, including digital media labs (Austin, et al., 2011; Tripp, 2011), video and analog gaming (Gauquier & Schneider, 2013; Nicholson, 2009), and makerspaces (Koh, Abbas, & Willett, 2018; Moorefield-Lang, 2015). In contrast to some traditional library initiatives such as *Every Child Ready to Read* that have a strong evidence base (see National Reading Panel, 2000; Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman, Moland, & Celano, 2017), these emerging services require evaluation to determine their relevance to community needs, understand the extent to which libraries are successful in implementing them, and identify the benefits and constraints of participation. For example, in their examination of one public library’s maker programming, Halverson and colleagues (2017) note that library staff members wondered how they could determine what makers were gaining from their participation and how those benefits might relate to the library’s goals. Answers to these evaluative questions are necessary to inform decisions about program design and resource allocation.

Despite the need to evaluate library offerings, research has identified gaps in librarians’ ability to design and conduct evaluations. In a 2017 survey of academic librarians, 50% of respondents reported they were “not at all confident” knowing which statistical tests to run to analyze a set of data and just 17% indicated their MLIS program adequately prepared them to conduct original research (Thomas & Urban, 2018). While a similar survey has not yet been conducted with public librarians, it is reasonable to assume responses would be similar. In 2014, the Colorado State Library conducted a national survey of State Library Administrative Agencies to determine the need for public librarians to develop evaluation skills (N = 53 respondents from 31 states including chief officers, state data coordinators, Library Services & Technology Act coordinators, and library development directors). The vast majority of survey respondents indicated high or moderate need for public librarians in their states to learn about all topic areas asked about in the survey, including outcome-based evaluation (100%), data use for strategic planning (98%), and needs assessment (94%).

Several initiatives have been developed to address these needs, including Project Outcome (PLA, 2015), the Edge Initiative (2015), and Impact Survey (n.d.), that focus on the mechanics of evaluation by providing instruments or toolkits librarians can use to collect and analyze data. However, as Lyons (2012, 2016) cautions, effective use of these tools requires

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sound methodology and high standards of evidence to ensure evaluative claims are credible. Lyons recommends the library profession draws on the field of professional program evaluation as a resource in building the necessary knowledge and skills.

The Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL) has begun to address these concerns by providing introductory training to nearly 1,370 library staff members nationwide between 2015 and 2018. Through in-person events ranging from 1 to 3 days, RIPL has focused on equipping participants with basic skills for data collection, analysis, and use, as well as fostering buy-in and a culture of evaluation. Califa Group—in partnership with the Colorado State Library, State Library of North Carolina, Rebecca Teasdale & Associates, LLC and LH Evaluation & Training Group—requests \$249,239 to build on the introductory training RIPL provides through *Evaluation Capacity Building for Public Libraries* (see Supporting Documents 2 and 3 for letters of support from the Colorado State Library and State Library of North Carolina). In this project, we will develop and test a professional development model for RIPL alumni and/or public library staff with equivalent education and/or experience to deepen their evaluation knowledge and further develop their skills by designing and implementing an evaluation project over a 9-month period with the support of instructors and peers. We envision this project as part of an emerging suite of evaluation training resources and opportunities that, collectively, will embed high-quality evaluation practices into the ongoing work of public libraries.

Our project is informed by Preskill and Boyle's (2008) Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) in the field of program evaluation. ECB focuses on developing evaluation skills, knowledge, and attitudes among staff who do not have formal training in evaluation (King & Stevahn, 2013; Stockdill, Baizerman, & Compton, 2002). As Preskill and Boyle (2008) note, "the ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice—where [staff] members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action" (p. 444). Although empirical testing of the Multidisciplinary Model of ECB is just beginning (for examples, see Hilton & Libretto, 2017 and Owens, 2014), use of the model has been reported across a range of professional contexts including museums (Ensminger et al., 2015), social services (Adyero, 2016; Owens, 2014), health care (Gee & Ramuscak, 2018; Hilton & Libretto, 2017; Kamonratananuna et al., 2016), and even agricultural research (White et al., 2018). The model has been described as "comprehensive; clear and accessible; logically congruent; supported by theoretical and empirical literature; transferable; and useful" (Gee & Ramuscak, 2018, p. 2).

We propose an ECB project focused on RIPL alumni and/or those with equivalent education and/or experience who work in the emerging role of evaluation coordinators and teams. (In our preliminary proposal, we referred to these individuals as "data librarians." We have adopted the term "evaluation coordinators" in response to reviewer feedback.) We aim to build the capacity of evaluation coordinators/teams and their supervisors in order to foster stronger evaluation within their libraries and position them as leaders within their organizations and in the field.

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Project staff will include Dr. Rebecca Teasdale (project director and instructor) and Dr. Linda Hofschire (instructor and instructional designer). Both of these individuals have extensive experience conducting evaluation of library programs and services, performing social science research, and teaching evaluation and research skills in both formal and informal learning environments. See the List of Key Project Staff and Consultants for more information about their qualifications.

The project design, which is outlined next, was developed in 3 phases. First, we reviewed feedback from RIPL participants gathered over the past 4 years at the conclusion of each event. For example, at each RIPL event, evaluation coordinators and other participants requested more in-depth training about data collection and analysis methods, evaluation design, and use of evaluation findings. Their supervisors raised questions about developing evaluation priorities and plans, structuring evaluation coordinator positions/teams, positioning them appropriately within their libraries' hierarchies, and providing evaluation coordinators and teams with ongoing training. Both groups described the challenges they face cultivating buy-in in their libraries.

Second, we surveyed alumni of RIPL National events (N=89, or 27% of alumni), about the specific knowledge and skills they hope to gain through additional training, as well as the challenges they currently face in conducting evaluations in their libraries. Three-fourths of respondents or more expressed interest in learning about technical evaluation topics including using data for strategic planning (82%), community assessment (78%), and qualitative data analysis (75%), and nearly two-thirds (65%) expressed interest in learning about quantitative data analysis. More than three-fourths (79%) of respondents were interested in learning about developing a culture of evaluation in their libraries. Among those respondents who provided answers to an open-ended question about the greatest challenges they face when working to evaluate their library's programs and services (N=40), three-fourths (75%) mentioned the need for staff to acquire evaluation skills. In addition, three-fourths (75%) mentioned workplace issues such as gaining buy-in from administration and staff and developing a culture of evaluation and 3 in 5 (60%) struggled with finding the time to incorporate evaluation into their work. Finally, among those who responded to an open-ended question regarding what RIPL could provide to increase respondents' ability to incorporate evaluation in their work (N=41), nearly half (44%) mentioned the importance of peer networking opportunities.

Third, we mapped both sets of data to the ECB objectives and strategies described by Preskill and Boyle (2008) to design the project activities. Those objectives and strategies are outlined in Supporting Document 4 and referred to in the description below (i.e., ECB Objectives 1-35, ECB Strategies 1-10).

### Relevance to the Lifelong Learning Priority

IMLS seeks to enhance libraries' ability to provide high-quality, cross-disciplinary, and inquiry-based learning opportunities for users of all ages. This project will build libraries' capacity to evaluate those innovative learning opportunities. Evaluation is essential to understand the quality and effectiveness of these learning opportunities, their relevance and

value to the community, and the extent to which they advance equity. This project will help evaluation coordinators/teams and their supervisors build capacity to conduct this type of rigorous evaluation.

The project will also test a professional development model: a 9-month cohort-based learning process that leverages in-person training, completion of a library-specific project, video-based coaching, webinars, and access to a library of coaching resources (see the Project Design section for greater detail). This model was inspired by 2 professional development initiatives for museums: the IMLS-funded Cultural Competence Learning Institute and National Science Foundation-funded One Sky Institute. If it proves successful for building evaluation capacity, the model could be adapted to build the capacity of library staff in other topical areas, such as the design and implementation of innovative learning opportunities for library users. (See the Dissemination and Broad Impact sections for additional discussion about how the model will be shared).

## **Project Design**

This project will engage evaluation coordinators/teams and their supervisors in a 9-month cohort-based peer learning process that has proven successful in previous IMLS-funded projects (e.g., Cultural Competence Learning Institute; Illinois Librarians Explore, Apply, and Discover [ILEAD USA]; IMLS-Rare Book School [RBS] Fellowship Program; Library Education And Data Science [LEADS] Program). By providing in-depth training and coaching, participants will develop and apply their skills over an extended period of time and maximize the potential for lasting change in their libraries. Success will be indicated when:

- 1) At least 30 public library staff members, representing 15 public libraries in 3 states, complete the cohort experience (described below);
- 2) At least 1 of the 5 public libraries per cohort are small and/or rural;
- 3) At least 75% of participants across all cohorts report:
  - a) Increases in understanding of and interest in evaluation;
  - b) Increased confidence in applying what they learned;
  - c) Improved buy-in for evaluation within their library;
  - d) Increased level of connection with a regional, state and/or national community of practice committed to evaluation;
- 4) Teams from 15 public libraries in 3 states evaluate a library program or service and produce empirical evidence to support internal decision-making and/or demonstrate library value;
- 5) At least 20 evaluation coaching videos are produced and made freely available to the library community;
- 6) At least 75% of participants across all cohorts report that the professional development model is effective in supporting their learning and development;
- 7) Resources and lessons learned are disseminated through regional, state, and national conferences; the project website; Infopeople (a continuing education and professional development initiative managed by Califa); and the RIPL Community of

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Practice (an online platform managed by the Colorado State Library that provides freely available resources to anyone interested in public library evaluation);

- 8) Based on the evaluation results, the professional development model is shared as a possible method for training library staff in other topical areas.

We will convene a training cohort during each year of the 3-year project. Cohorts will be organized by region to seed an on-going community of practice among participants (ECB Strategy 6). Cohort 1 will convene in California, Cohort 2 in Colorado, and Cohort 3 in North Carolina. These locations were selected because of their ongoing investments in building public library staff's capacities to conduct evaluation, and because they have large numbers of RIPL alumni working in a variety of public library settings (urban, suburban, and rural communities; large, medium, and small libraries), maximizing the possibilities for a wide range of libraries to participate. Califa and our state partners—the State Library of North Carolina and the Colorado State Library—will assist project staff with recruitment and will help secure travel funds for their respective cohorts.

Each cohort will be comprised of teams from 5 public libraries. The teams will include 2 to 4 individuals per library: 1 staff member who leads evaluation work for their library or leads the library's evaluation team (referred to as the evaluation coordinator), 1 person who supervises the evaluation coordinator (this requirement will be disregarded if the evaluation coordinator is the library director), and up to 2 additional staff who serve as members of the library's evaluation team or are otherwise involved in the library's evaluation activities.

Over the 9-month time frame, each library team will design and implement a robust evaluation project (ECB Strategy 8) of a library program or service, with priority given to projects focused on innovative, inquiry-based learning activities and/or programs and services focused on communities that the library currently under-serves. The projects will be designed to build evaluation capacity, support evidence-based decision making, and cultivate buy-in among library staff. As a hypothetical example of an evaluation project, a team may choose to evaluate a series of making-related programs by developing a logic model, designing and administering pre- and post-participation surveys, conducting both quantitative and qualitative data analyses, and creating results summaries for multiple audiences (e.g., library administration, city council, etc.).

To accomplish their projects, cohorts will receive in-depth training (ECB Strategy 7), coaching (ECB Strategy 10), and technical assistance (ECB Strategy 9) delivered through 6 key activities: (1) a 2-day in-person kickoff training institute; (2) 6 coaching sessions for each library (conducted via video chat): 4 with the evaluation coordinator/team, 1 with the supervisor, and 1 with the full team; (3) access to a library of coaching videos created by the instructors; (4) 6 group discussions for the full cohort (conducted via video chat); (5) online support including email support from instructors and a web-based community of practice space for participants; and (6) a 2-day in-person wrap-up training institute. All activities will be led by Drs. Teasdale and Hofschire except for 2 of the cohort discussions. These will be led by additional instructors with expertise on topics extending beyond the core curriculum that are identified as priorities to each cohort.

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### Participant Selection

To be eligible, each team must work in a public library and (a) possess basic understanding of library evaluation, gained through at least 1 team member completing a RIPL national, regional, or pre-conference event or having equivalent education and/or experience; (b) be able to participate in all cohort activities; (c) be willing to share what they learn with other public libraries in their region, state, and/or nationally; and (d) submit an application packet (see Supporting Document 5 for application requirements). Library teams will be selected by project staff in consultation with Califa Group (Cohort 1), Colorado State Library (Cohort 2), or State Library of North Carolina (Cohort 3). Upon selection, library teams will receive instructor feedback on the proposed project they describe in their application and will be assigned 3 coaching videos on evaluation ethics (ECB Objective 11) to watch prior to attending the kick-off institute. These will include 1 video each on human subjects protections, obtaining informed consent from adults and assent from youth, and addressing staff concerns about patron privacy.

### Kickoff Training Institute

The in-person, 2-day kickoff institute will be held in the state where each cohort is located and organized in 3 modules (see Supporting Document 6 for an outline of the curriculum). In the first module, team members will learn the process of designing an evaluation study through the use of a rich case study example. In the second module, instructors will coach each library team in designing an evaluation for the program or service the team has selected. (These 2 modules will address ECB Objectives 2, 6, 16, 17, and 19). In the third module, team members will learn how to cultivate buy-in as they implement their project in their libraries (ECB Objectives 29, 30, and 35). The institute will lay the groundwork for a supportive community of practice through shared learning experiences, joint problem-solving, peer feedback, and group reflection.

### Coaching Sessions

Between the second and eighth months of the 9-month cohort period, instructors will provide 6 1-hour coaching sessions via video chat for each library, including 4 sessions with the evaluation coordinator, 1 session with the supervisor, and 1 session with the full team. Participants will complete a brief reflection activity prior to each session that instructors will use to identify the ECB Objective that is most relevant to their needs and concerns, and instructors will provide coaching and resources to address that objective. We anticipate that most of the sessions will be focused on evaluation methods such as developing logic models (ECB Objective 15), selecting appropriate data collection methods (ECB Objective 19), designing instruments (ECB Objective 18), analyzing quantitative data (ECB Objective 7 and 21), and analyzing qualitative data (ECB Objective 8 and 22). Sessions with supervisors may focus on the knowledge, skills, and experience required for evaluation coordinators/teams (ECB

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Objective 14), developing evaluation budgets (ECB Objective 24), and communicating the importance of evaluation to library stakeholders (ECB Objective 25 and 33).

### Coaching Videos

Instructors will develop a library of at least 20 coaching videos over the life of the project. Each video will be 8-10 minutes in length, designed to provide just-in-time coaching on key topics in public library evaluation, and will be made freely available through the project website, Infopeople platform, and the RIPL Community of Practice. In response to reviewer feedback, the first 3 videos will focus on evaluation ethics (ECB Objective 11) as described above in the Participant Selection Process section. Additional topics will be identified by library teams and instructors as they arise during the kick-off institute and coaching sessions, with priority given to those topics that have the potential for broad applicability within public libraries (see Support Document 7 for a list of possible topics).

### Cohort Discussions

Each cohort (i.e., teams from all 5 participating libraries) will gather for 6 group discussions conducted via video chat over their 9 months of participation. Instructors and participants will select topics that reflect common themes across the cohort, provide opportunities to share success and challenges, and foster a strong and enduring community of practice after the 9-month process has concluded.

To broaden the curriculum beyond the primary instructors' areas of expertise, each cohort will have two discussions that are facilitated by contract instructors. These instructors will be selected based on their expertise in topics identified as priorities for each cohort (e.g., change management). These discussions will consist of instructional content and time for group coaching regarding specific situations within cohort members' libraries.

Members of previous cohorts will join selected discussions to provide peer mentoring (e.g., some members of Cohort 1 will join Cohort 2 discussions, etc.). Discussions will also be used to plan proposals for sessions at regional, state, and/or national conferences.

### Online Support

Instructors will provide email support to each library team in between coaching calls and cohort discussions, giving team members quick access to resources, coaching, and technical assistance. Cohort members will also have access to a web-based community of practice space in which they can share their experiences, seek peer support, and exchange resources.

### Wrap-Up Training Institute

Each cohort will conclude with an in-person, 2-day institute in its state that will be organized in 3 modules (see Supporting Document 6 for a curriculum outline). The first module will provide an opportunity for each library team to share their project and receive feedback from other cohort members. In the second module, instructors will guide team members in reflecting on their experience and identifying lessons learned personally, as a team, and in

their library. The third module will focus on identifying next steps for each library. Instructors will lead activities focused on change management, continuing to cultivate buy-in, and selecting the library's next evaluation project. This module will also engage the cohort in planning for conference presentations and for their role as peer mentors for future cohorts, as well as determining strategies to maintain the community of practice they have developed with other cohort members. For example, a cohort may decide to host informal meet-ups at state or regional conferences. Califa and our state partners (Colorado State Library and State Library of North Carolina) will assist the cohort in the implementation of these strategies.

### Project Evaluation

We will contract with Rochelle Logan, an independent evaluation consultant, to serve as the external evaluator for this project, providing both formative and summative feedback about project activities and accomplishments. The formative evaluation will be focused on assessing the quality and effectiveness of project activities for each cohort. Formative findings will be reported to the instructors following each kickoff training institute and at the conclusion of each cohort cycle. These data will be used to refine and adapt the project for subsequent activities and cohort and to identify key features of the professional development model that can be applied or adapted to build the capacity of library staff in other topical areas. The summative evaluation will be focused on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. Complete summative findings will be reported to the instructors and to IMLS, and an executive summary will be posted on the project website. Ms. Logan will design the evaluation study and select the specific evaluation methods after funding has been awarded.

### Dissemination

In addition to the 6 key activities associated with each cohort, the project staff and partners in each state will participate in 4 dissemination activities designed to ensure sustainability of the learning this project fosters. First, a project website will be developed to serve as a clearinghouse for project information and resources and will be freely available to the entire library community. Second, the library of coaching videos will be disseminated by posting them on the project website, the Infopeople platform, and the RIPL Community of Practice. The videos will be available as just-in-time coaching resources for any library seeking to enhance evaluation activities. The project staff and partner agencies commit to maintaining the project website, Infopeople platform, and RIPL Community of Practice for at least 3 years after the grant period ends. Third, each cohort will share lessons learned by submitting session proposals to regional, state, and/or national library conferences. This activity will foster peer-to-peer sharing with a larger number of public libraries and position cohort participants as evaluation leaders within their library networks. Fourth, the instructors will develop a curriculum appropriate for presentation at a pre-conference (half-day session) at various conferences including Public Library Association, American Library Association, Computers in Libraries, etc. The purpose of this curriculum is to foster ECB across the broader library community by covering such topics as developing and positioning evaluation coordinators and teams within

public libraries, fostering staff buy-in for evaluation, and developing a culture of evaluation. Taken together, these dissemination activities will extend the benefits of this project to public libraries that do not directly participate in the cohorts and seed ongoing, sustainable ECB nationwide.

In addition, if the professional development model proves successful, the project staff will share the model (or the effective components of the model) with the broader library community. Project staff will prepare an article that describes the model, outlines its affordances and constraints, and offers recommendations for how the model might be leveraged to build the capacity of library staff in a variety of topical areas. The article will be submitted for publication in a professional journal such as *Public Libraries* or *American Libraries* and will include links to the project website, where readers can find additional information and/or contact project staff.

### **Diversity Plan**

This project will support diversity and inclusion in public librarianship in 3 ways. First, the 3 regional cohorts will be located in different areas of the country to maximize the diversity of libraries and library staff who have the opportunity to participate. Second, cohorts will be assembled with an eye toward reflecting the diversity of the US population. We will put out a broad call to public library staff in the selected states to apply for the cohort via multiple channels including RIPL, the 5 ALA-affiliated associations of librarians of color, the Association of Rural and Small Libraries, and the Urban Libraries Council. As noted previously, both RIPL alumni and library staff with equivalent education and/or experience will be eligible to apply. By including library staff with equivalent education and/or experience, we will open the project to an even more diverse group of participants than those who have participated in RIPL. (Inclusion of those with RIPL-equivalent education and/or experience was added in response to reviewer feedback.) In addition, each of the partner organizations has strong relationships with the public libraries in their respective states and will ensure that the opportunity is shared widely among all staff. Third, partner organizations will secure travel funds for at least 20% of cohort libraries to support participation by small and/or rural libraries and libraries serving underserved populations.

### **Broad Impact**

This project has been designed to improve evaluation knowledge, skills, and attitudes among public libraries nationwide by training library leaders, seeding communities of practice, producing a library of coaching videos, and disseminating resources and lessons learned. The cohort-based learning process will build evaluation capacity in 15 public libraries in 3 states. Those libraries—and their 30+ staff members who participate across the 3 cohorts—will be selected for their potential to serve as leaders in their region, state, and nationally. During the grant period, cohort participants within each state will develop strong connections via the project activities that will provide the foundation for enduring communities of practice dedicated to improving public libraries' capacity to design, conduct, and use evaluation and to building a

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culture of evaluation within the profession. As the participating library staff members share what they learn with their peers, the project instructors will create and disseminate a collection of at least 20 coaching videos for use by libraries nationwide. This reflects a change in project focus from the preliminary proposal. We have replaced site visits to each library with the production of coaching videos to ensure greater sustainability of the project over time. As with site visits, these videos will address the pressing needs library staff encounter when evaluating their programs and services; however, the videos will be available on an ongoing basis and can be shared with others within and beyond the participating libraries. In addition, when determining video topics, priority will be given to those that have broad applicability within public libraries. Finally, the instructors will develop and deliver a pre-conference session to share lessons learned with national audiences.

The revised project scope will establish a foundation for continued ECB activities beyond the funding period. The project curriculum, library of coaching videos, and project website will be available for use with cohorts of public libraries in additional states in the future, can be expanded at minimal cost to address new needs and topics, and can be incorporated into other ECB initiatives for libraries of all types. As a result, the investment of IMLS funds will be leveraged to not only strengthen the libraries that participate in each cohort but also to build the capacity of libraries across the country that benefit from the resources in the coming years.

The project also develops and tests a professional development model that, if it proves effective, can be used to build the capacity of library staff in other topical areas. As a result, the project's reach has the potential to extend beyond its focus on evaluation of public library programs and services and support the professional development of library staff members across a range of topical areas and library types.

Taken together, the activities supported by IMLS funding will build a culture of evaluation in public libraries; improve libraries' ability to evaluate the new, inquiry-based learning activities they provide; and, ultimately, improve learning opportunities for communities and library staff members nationwide.









## 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?