

The Practice Model for an Equitable Workplace Transition Program (EWTP): Disability and Neurodiversity

Summary

The Library & Information Science (LIS) program at the U of Denver (DU), in partnership with the iSchool U of South Carolina (UofSC), U of Colorado (CU) Boulder Libraries, and UofSC Libraries, seek a \$149,966 National Leadership Planning grant for the two-year planning project (8/1/22-7/31/24) that will lay the **groundwork and develop a practice model for a future equitable workplace transition program (EWTP) for recent LIS graduates with disabilities¹ and neurodiversity**. In this case, ‘equitable’ refers to the workplace transition program that will level the playing field for disabled and neurodiverse candidates by proposing changes to job advertisement, application, hiring, and interviewing processes, and by suggesting ways to improve the inclusive workplace climate in libraries. These changes will account for the disabled and neurodiverse job candidates’ unique needs, create a work environment that capitalizes on their strengths, and help to remove undue barriers to employment and workplace integration (e.g., exclusive wording in job ads, inflexible interview schedules, inability to work remotely) without dropping the standards of hiring and professional practice. While this model will not be tested or finalized by the end of the grant cycle, it will lay the groundwork for future piloting, improvement, and implementation (see Future Steps, p.9) Working with a small sample of disabled and neurodiverse LIS graduates, the team will (1) explore participants’ employment experiences during the MLIS program and upon graduation; (2) examine library managers’ perceptions of and preparedness for working with disabled and neurodiverse employees; (3) examine peers’ attitude toward working with disabled colleagues; and (4) evaluate the current workplace policies in terms of inclusion, accessibility, and equity. These data will allow the team to (5) create **guidelines** for policy change (i.e., equitable and inclusive job advertisement, application, interviewing, and onboarding), and (6) develop a practice **model** for an EWTP, integrating remote opportunities discovered during the pandemic. At this planning stage, our data collection and the relevance of the developed model will be limited to academic libraries. Eventually, when tested, piloted, and improved, the practice model of an EWTP will be replicable and transferrable beyond a single library type (see Future Steps, p.9). These goals will align with the National Leadership Grant goal 1, objective 1.1, that is, creating replicable library programs and models that contribute to the development of the diverse workforce and increase employment equity. The project team includes disabled and non-disabled scholars and practitioners, recipients of multiple research, teaching, and service awards, and leaders of library diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, who have worked in the area of DEIA, disability advocacy/workplace equity for many years, authoring [articles](#), [book chapters](#), [editing special issues](#), [co-founding SIGs](#), and [developing open access resources in libraries](#).

Project Justification:

Problem: Libraries of all types have come a long way in being more inclusive of disabled and neurodiverse patrons in their programs and services and improving these patrons’ access to resources and technology. One area that has remained dishearteningly unchanged is the low representation of people with disabilities in the LIS workforce [1; 2; 3; 4], who remain a “neglected demographic” [5]. Employees with disabilities and chronic health conditions often appear as “unexpected workers” in the workplace environment [6, p. 151] and are not fully included despite the existing legislation [1; 7; 5]. Job application, interviewing, and onboarding procedures in LIS remain heavily oriented toward a pool of non-disabled applicants despite the rhetoric of equity and inclusion, as do job evaluation, tenure, and promotion practices in academic libraries, specifically [2; 8; 9]. Despite the positive changes in legislation and institutional policies, the negative public perception and stigmatization of disabilities at the workplace persists. Hidden disabilities and neurodiversity are frequently unrecognized; a misunderstanding of behaviors and communication styles may ensue and negatively impact employee workplace experiences [1; 10]. Employment rates for disabled and neurodiverse professionals remain persistently low while both recruitment and retention efforts fall short [1; 4; 11; 12], which mirrors the general employment situation for individuals with disabilities.

According to the Current Population Survey [13], in “2020, 17.9 percent of persons with a disability were employed, down from 19.3 percent in 2019,” while the comparative numbers for non-disabled individuals are 61.8% and 66.3%, respectively (p. 1). Similarly, “[a]cross all educational attainment groups, unemployment rates for persons with a disability were higher than those for persons without a disability”; “[w]orkers with a disability were more likely to be employed part time than those with no disability”; and while disabled individuals were more likely to work in production, retail, and material moving professions, they were “less likely to work in management, professional, and related

¹ In recognition that both disability first and person first language is used in the context of disability advocacy, we’ll be using both terms interchangeably in this proposal

occupations” “than those without a disability (36.1 percent, compared with 43.3 percent)” (pp. 1-2); the latter describes LIS professions. Also, a “large proportion of persons with a disability—about 8 in 10—were not in the labor force in 2020, compared with about 3 in 10 of those with no disability” [13, p. 3]; in 2021, in the age group of 16 to 64, the labor force participation indicator for disabled individuals stood at 35.1% and unemployment rate – at 10.8%, compared to 76.5% and 5.2%, respectively, in the non-disabled population [14].

In reality, it is not known exactly how many disabled and neurodiverse people are employed or underemployed in general and in libraries of all types, or how many disabled and neurodiverse students are enrolled in and graduate from LIS programs every year. This is because many choose not to disclose their disability and/or decide not to request formal study or work accommodations, fearing negative consequences for their learning and career progression [15]. Based on experience and observations, we know that many of them do not find LIS jobs commensurate with their qualifications and skills, if at all. Their resumes may not have a sufficiently strong employment history compared to those of non-disabled candidates; they may not get a chance at a job interview structured to their needs; there may be hurdle wording in the job descriptions that make them feel as though they would not be welcome as an applicant (e.g., must be able to lift 25 pounds) [16]; and cover letters by neurodiverse students may give away their condition through the peculiarities of style. This situation raises serious questions of inequity and exclusion, as well as ethical and moral concerns. LIS programs promise not only an equitable learning opportunity but also an equitable chance of job market preparedness to all graduates [17]. We help disabled and neurodiverse students complete the program through a combination of Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations and Universal Design for Learning; yet, we do not level the playing field for future employment. While we add their tuitions to departmental revenue, we do not provide equitable practical training opportunities for them, and professors who accommodate disabled and neurodiverse students academically may be hesitant to give them job references. Despite the recent resurgence of studies on the experiences of librarians with disabilities [18; 19], none focuses on recent graduates or the benefit of a strategic school-to-workplace transition programs for disabled and neurodiverse graduates. IMLS has previously funded impactful [Project ENABLE](#), set to help librarians serve neurodiverse patrons; however, no project supporting employment equity for disabled and neurodiverse librarians has been implemented just yet. At the same time, examples from the corporate world (e.g., the [Microsoft recruitment of neurodiverse staff](#)) show that, in inclusive work environments, disabled and neurodiverse employees thrive, if employment support programs are in place [20].

Theoretical Grounding: Epistemologically guided by hermeneutic phenomenology, addressed in the Project Work Plan section, our approach is framed through the lens of the World Health Organization (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health model (ICF); see Figure 1. This model also helps us define disability. For the purposes of this study, we **define disability as a state whereby individuals experience limitations in daily activities** (e.g., walking, speaking, writing, seeing) and **resulting restrictions on participation in social roles** (school, work, family, leisure). Disability, so defined, can stem from a wide range of congenital and acquired conditions that lead to impairment and variations in human function. However, we do not automatically equate impairment with disability or “poor health and functioning” [21, p.80]. Potentially disabling conditions include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, neurological and psychiatric disorders, and so on. We only refer to individuals as disabled or people with disabilities when their conditions cause limitations in activities and restrictions on participation.

Neurodiversity, which most commonly includes autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc., is viewed as neurological differences and “describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one ‘right’ way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits” [22, para.1]. In workplace situations, neurodiversity can also lead to disability, as defined above. However, respecting the common stance in the neurodiverse community that does not consider neurodiversity automatically disabling, we operate with the phrase “disabled and neurodiverse” throughout the proposal.

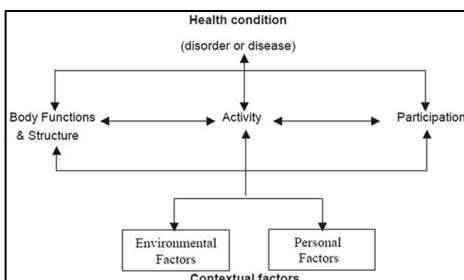


Figure 1. The original WHO ICF Model of Functioning [21, p.80]

Our reliance on the WHO ICF model is particularly useful because the model differentiates among “disability, health, and functional impairment; impairment is defined as a “difference in bodily function or structure”; and “activity limitation” is defined as a “limitation in mobility or self-care”; in turn “participation restriction” is rooted equally in “social and physical environments” that can either restrict or enable participation [21, p. 80]. It also means that by improving social and environmental factors at the workplace, we can improve activity limitations and reduce or eliminate participation restrictions, thus allowing for the equitable inclusion of disabled and

neurodiverse individuals. An example of how this model could work in our situation is given in Figure 2, whereby we superimpose our proposed EWTP intervention on MS-related disability. This project will collect data, produce guidelines, and build an initial practice model in order to make an EWTP program a reality in the future (as a reminder, creating the actual program is out of scope for this planning grant proposal).

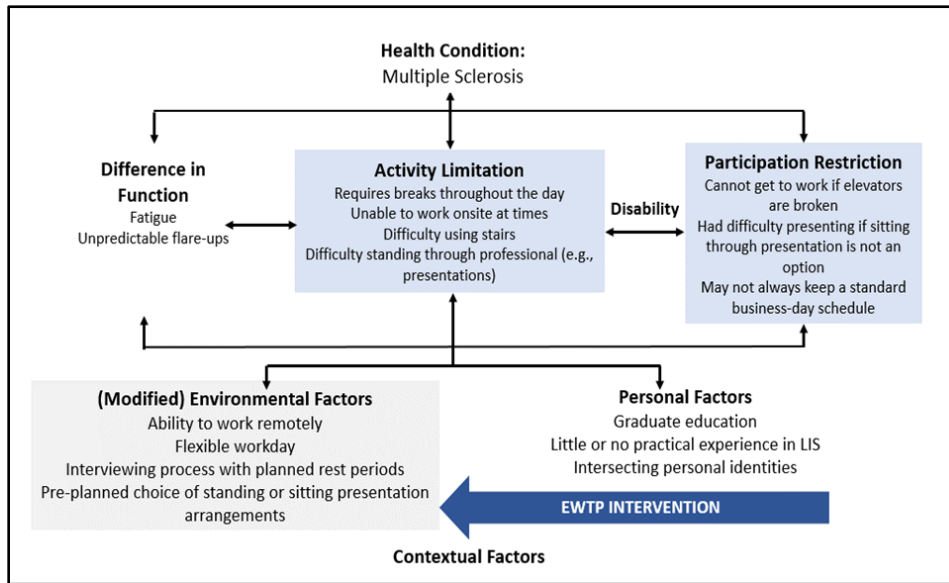


Figure 2. WHO ICF Model in application to a professional with Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Hermeneutic Phenomenology at the Heart of Interviews and Surveys: Phases 1-3 of this project (interviews and surveys) will be guided by hermeneutic phenomenology, which explores participants’ lifeworlds through their own narratives. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a study of “interpretive structures of experience” [23, para. 17; 24; 25], which focuses on people’s meaning of experiences derived from participants’ narratives. Unlike descriptive phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology values context and considers “personal knowledge [of researchers] both useful and necessary” [26, p. 729], on the condition that it does not bias study design and data collection. Hermeneutic phenomenology is predicated on the belief that “because individuals live and narrate their lives in time and place, they provide us with knowledge about much more than themselves” [27, p. 102; 28]. As a result, our study is underpinned by assumptions that: (a) phenomena (e.g., workplace experiences; experiences on the job market; the process of equitable hiring and onboarding) are best understood from the actors’ own perspectives; in this case, actors are disabled and neurodiverse individuals; (b) “the important reality is what people perceive it to be” [29, pp. 52-54], i.e., if hiring or employment is perceived as inequitable by disabled and neurodiverse candidates, we hold these perceptions true; (c) researchers’ expertise and professional knowledge needn’t be “bracketed” (i.e., kept at bay); instead, they are considered to be instrumental and should be used to help researchers in data interpretation and analysis; care is taken to avoid skewing results through other types of biases [26, p.730], such as confirmation bias, unrecognized privilege, and so on; (d) prior knowledge is not used to generate a priori hypotheses but to achieve meaningful data interpretation. In alignment with hermeneutic phenomenology principles and in departure from most current practices, demographic and other personal data in interviews and surveys will be collected through open-ended questions allowing for participants’ self-identification. These include race, ethnicity, type of disability or neurodiverse condition, gender identity, and so on. The only exception will be age, addressed through age range categories. This method is currently tested in the Dr. Dali’s survey on the learning experiences of LIS Ph.D. students with disabilities and neurodiverse conditions (internally funded by DU). Hermeneutic phenomenology is a broader interpretive framework and allows for data collection not only through the most commonly seen qualitative interviews but also through qualitative surveys [30].

Target Groups: This project is designed to collect data that will support the development of guidelines for and a model of a future EWTP for *disabled and neurodiverse alumx of LIS programs*, who graduated with MLIS in the last five years but are unemployed, employed below their qualifications, or experience greater challenges in their workplace progression than their non-disabled colleagues at the same career stage (as determined by them). Since it is a planning grant, the number of immediately involved disabled and neurodiverse alumx will be low (six in total; see Phase 1 below); also, to

keep the project to a manageable scale for a planning grant, the context will be limited to academic libraries. The second target group is *library managers/potential employers* who will be provided with requisite research-based data and guidelines for informed decision making and policy change in terms of hiring, employment, onboarding, and support of disabled and neurodiverse library staff. They will also be presented with an initial evidence-based practice model for an EWTP, enabling them to consider implementing changes in their policies, if they are interested. Once again, the immediate group will be limited to library managers with HR responsibilities from participating libraries (estimated at about 55 in both participating libraries), who can derive the most immediate benefit from the results (Phase 2 below). The process and steps involved in engaging both target groups at every stage of this research are described in the section on Incorporating Perspectives and Contributions of the Target Group, Including External Input, Validation, and Consensus Building.

Beneficiaries: This project will pave the way for improving the job market experiences and integration of a substantial number of disabled and neurodiverse LIS graduates, the number of whom we, unfortunately, cannot estimate due to the lack of requisite statistics, as described earlier. However, we expect this number to be substantial, and possibly higher into the future, as many individuals cope with the effects of “Long COVID.” Similarly, the developed guidelines and the initial practice model will be transferrable across the field, and not limited to academic libraries, thus benefiting any LIS workplace and their administrations interested in accessibility- and inclusion-oriented change. The mechanics and steps of making this model transferrable are described in the Future Steps section. The last group of beneficiaries will be library staff, colleagues, and peers who might be working side by side with disabled and neurodiverse professionals (380 staff for both participating libraries; Phase 3). We hope that the collected data and ensuing guidelines will help them with awareness of disability and neurodiversity at the workplace and with acquiring a more balanced perception thereof, without prejudice or romanticization.

Rationale for a Planning Grant: A small sample size for Phase 1- 3 and the research site currently limited to two academic libraries shape this study as a planning project rather than an implementation or applied research project. Moreover, the goal of data collection is to begin building a foundation for an EWTP because there are no data to support this foundation or to plan any kind of intervention. That is, there are no systematically collected data that would elucidate employment-related experiences of disabled and neurodiverse LIS students through an MLIS program and/or on the job market. Hence, data collected in the course of this small project will allow for developing policy guidelines and a practice model leading up to an EWTP in the future (NB: the development and implementation of the actual EWTP is not part of this grant proposal). Although, combining interviews, two surveys, and a policy analysis study, the project may seem too ambitious at first, it is a small sample size that makes it manageable, while allowing for a variety of collected data. In turn, diverse and mutually complementary data will provide a holistic view of the employment situation.

Project Work Plan

Project Activities and Their Sequence: To address the indicated gap in the availability of data that would support the development of an EWTP in the future, our project will be rolled out through a multi-phase (Phases 1-4) approach, as follows. Data collection in Phases 1-4 will be done in Year 1; data processing for Phases 1-4 will be completed in Year 2, along with developing the guidelines (Phase 5) and the EWTP model in question (Phase 6). This division of labor is done deliberately, to maximize efficiency during the downtimes in Year 1 (e.g., waiting for IRB decisions, waiting for survey data to come back) and to avoid overloading personnel with labor-intensive tasks requiring different focuses (e.g., avoid focusing on data collection and data processing simultaneously).

Year 1. Phases 1-4 – Study Design & Data Collection

Phase 1: Participant interviews: Six disabled and/or neurodiverse LIS professionals (three persons from DU and three from UofSC) will be recruited through the listservs of graduates (as a purposeful convenience sample) for in-person semi-structured Zoom interviews. To qualify for participation, alumnx need to have graduated in the last five years and be unemployed, employed below their qualifications, or experience greater challenges in their workplace progression than their non-disabled colleagues at the same career stage (as self-determined). The notion of self-determination and self-identification will be paramount to all phases in this project and align with the hermeneutic phenomenology orientation underpinning its design. Participants will be compensated at \$1,250 per person. Effort will be made to recruit candidates with different life experiences (e.g., physical disability; hidden disability; neurodiversity; developmental and learning

disability; etc.) and intersectional identities (e.g., race, national origin, gender identity) to receive as diverse perspectives as possible. Interviews will address the following background information: basic demographic data and factual data about their MLIS program (e.g., selection of courses, specializations, internships, etc.) and answer the following Research Questions (RQs); RQ1: What are the employment experiences of participants while in an MLIS program (e.g., work-study; research assistantships; internships; field placements, etc.)? RQ2: What are participants' experiences with job hunting and employment upon graduation? RQ3: What are participants' perceptions of systemic and personal barriers to successful job seeking and employment in their own words; and RQ4: What are participants' suggestions for employers on making workplaces more inclusive of and equitable for disabled and neurodiverse employees? Ethics approval will be received in compliance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols of all participating institutions. Interviews will be conducted by the project Co-Directors, Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson; the rest of the team members will be involved in the study design and data processing and analysis. The interview guide will be tested by two practicing disabled and/or neurodiverse librarians recruited from our personal networks, including the Association for LIS Educations (ALISE) [Disabilities in LIS SIG](#). On the one hand, individuals pretesting the instrument will have life and professional experiences and insight comparable to those of the target group; on the other hand, now employed and established, they will not have the same vulnerability as the target group and will not be disadvantaged if their responses are excluded from data analysis and used only for improving the study instrument. See, Supportingdoc1.pdf, Phase 1, Interview Preparation Sheet & Interview Guide.

Phase 2: An online self-administered qualitative survey of library managers/potential employers: This qualitative survey will be conducted to gain the employers' perspectives on the equitable and inclusive workplaces for disabled and neurodiverse employees. A major consideration in choosing the anonymous survey over the confidential interview format was ensuring privacy and safeguarding participants from any possible conflict of interest tied into the fact that participating managers and some members of the research team work in the same library. (With in-person interviews limited to only a few library managers, it would be difficult to achieve complete confidentiality and to report results in a way that would not identify those who participated in the study, while still retaining the richness and integrity of findings). A hallmark of qualitative surveys is open-ended questions that emulate the experience of in-person interviewing to the extent possible [20]. The survey questionnaire, using the DU-based Qualtrics software, will be distributed to a limited number of staff in both participating libraries who are identified by both libraries as having significant HR responsibilities (e.g., hiring; promotion; onboarding; ongoing supervision, excluding supervising student workers, etc.). As stated earlier, the estimated number will be about 55 staff in total in both libraries and, given the topic, we estimate a response rate at about 50% or lower. The following RQs will be used to frame the qualitative survey: RQ1: What are the managers' views on the hiring, supervision, and retention of disabled and neurodiverse workers in libraries? RQ2: What are the managers' perceptions of disabled and neurodiverse individuals as employees and colleagues? An additional layer of securing anonymity of research participation will be provided by the fact that this part of the study will be handled only by the project Co-Directors (Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson and their research assistants) and will not engage the project partners employed in the respective libraries. Results will be reported in aggregate, with any information, which can potentially identify the library or the participating manager, removed from data analysis and reporting. IP addresses collected in Qualtrics will be eliminated when data are exported into Excel to ensure complete anonymity. Reporting will adhere to the explored phenomena, attitudes, perceptions, and opinions, and omit revealing personal examples and specifics tied into an identifiable library environment. While this set of findings will be decoupled from specific library environments, Phase 4 will remedy this gap by examining the policies and practices of specific libraries in an unobtrusive way. Implied informed consent will be integrated into the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire will be pretested by at least three library managers recruited from our personal networks who work in libraries of comparable sizes but not in the participating libraries. See, Supportingdoc1.pdf, Phase 2 (sample questions).

Phase 3: An online self-administered qualitative survey of library staff in the two participating libraries will be conducted to gauge their views on working with disabled and neurodiverse colleagues. The survey questionnaire will use scenario-based questions that address behaviors and perceptions and respond to the following RQs: RQ1: Do colleagues of disabled and neurodiverse library staff members see them as able to engage in professional activities on the level-playing field with non-disabled employees? RQ2: What are library staff's perceptions of their workplace in terms of inclusion and equity for disabled and neurodiverse colleagues? RQ3: Do library staff desire any changes to the state of inclusion and equity for disabled and neurodiverse colleagues in their libraries and, if yes, what are these changes? A hallmark of qualitative surveys is open-ended questions that emulate the experience of in-person interviewing to the

extent possible [20]. Participants will be recruited from the library staff of both partner libraries through internal distribution lists and include library staff in different lines of work (librarians, library associates/technicians, and IT, excluding student workers, etc.). Chronologically, this survey will be administered after the survey of library managers; it will ask participants if they have previously responded to the management survey. If they did, they will be automatically excluded from participation. Implied informed consent will be integrated into the survey questionnaire. There are about 380 library staff employed in both participating libraries and, given the topic of the survey and the growing awareness of DEIA in academic libraries, we anticipate the response rate to stand around 50% or below. The survey will collect information in the following sections: (a) basic demographic and job-related data (e.g., position, education, num of years in the field); (b) scenario-based questions. The questions will involve a range of disabilities and neurodiversity, on the one hand, and a range of major academic library activities in public and technical services, on the other (e.g., participation in staff activities, meetings, conference calls, participation in professional development). The questions will not be exhaustive, as they are not inquiring about preparedness for every possible scenario, but rather examining general experience, views, and perceptions. It will be a self-administered, anonymous online survey using DU-based Qualtrics. IP addresses collected in Qualtrics will be eliminated when data are exported into Excel to ensure complete anonymity. Results will be reported in aggregate without identifiers and no comparison will be drawn between the libraries (CU Boulder Libraries and UofSC Library) to maintain anonymity. Results will be reported in aggregate. The survey questionnaire will be pretested by five library staff (including librarians, library associates/technicians, and IT personnel) recruited from our personal networks outside of participating libraries. Just as in Phase 2, to secure participants' anonymity and to avoid conflict of interest, the study will be handled only by the project Co-Directors (Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson and their research assistants) and will not engage the project partners employed in the respective libraries.

Phase 4: To complement people's perspectives, the project team will analyze existing workplace policies, practices, and regulations based on the extant documentation from both libraries. *The unobtrusive method of policy evaluation* will be employed (a) to determine problems/gaps in current workplace policies and policy performance and to provide solutions and guidance to make these policies inclusive of and equitable to disabled and neurodiverse employees (content and process policy evaluations) and (b) to evaluate the intent, goals, elements/indicators, measures, and outcomes (outcome evaluation) [31]. Policy analysis will be of utmost importance and the final step toward reviewing, reconsidering and, hopefully, revising existing workplace policies and practices to make them more equitable for, accessible to, and inclusive of disabled and neurodiverse staff. Since libraries are units within a larger structure, a university in this case, their employment and human resources practices might be regulated centrally, at the level of the university. However, there may be some procedural documents and acceptable practices documented in writing that pertain specifically to managing human resources in libraries. As a result, we will be sampling policy documents at the university level and supplementing them with documents produced and utilized at the library level.

Year 2: Phases 1-4 – Data Processing. Phases 5-6 – Development.

Phase 5: Guidelines for changing workplace policies and practices will be prepared based on the analysis of results from four studies and in close collaboration with both participants and managers. To compile a set of guidelines, we will rely on information derived from the analyzed, merged, and organized aggregate results in Phases 1-4. For interviews and qualitative surveys, data coding will be done manually, in compliance with the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology. Given the number of researchers on the team and additional research assistants, each data set will be coded by at least three individuals, who will develop categories as they emerge from empirical data and negotiate consistent coding until full agreement is achieved on all coding applications (100% intersubjective reliability). Guidelines will build on the main findings from each study and grouped around the following dimensions: General Guidelines for Creating an Equitable Workplace for Disabled and Neurodiverse Employees; Proposed Policy Changes; Training for Peers; Training for Managers/Supervisors. These categories are not final. Empirical data may steer us toward more categories to be included in the guidelines.

Phase 6: A practice model of and equitable workplace transition program (EWTP) will be built collaboratively as well. In the development of an EWTP, in addition to the listed theories and empirically collected data, researchers will rely on the practical pedagogical experience accumulated in the field of adult education and collected in *Learning to Achieve: A*

Review of the Research Literature on Employment Experiences and Outcomes for Youth and Adults With Learning Disabilities [32] and resources compiled by the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs² [33].

Phase 5 and Phase 6 constitute the **intended outcomes** of the data collection and analysis implemented in Phase 1-4.

COVID-19 Mitigation Plan. This project will not be affected by any possible restrictions on participant engagement due to COVID-19 quarantines, work-from-home, or other disruptions. Interviews are done on Zoom (Phase 1); surveys are web-based and self-administered (Phase 2 & 3); and Phase 4 involves unobtrusive research, which can be done remotely or with minimal in-person contact.

The Team Planning, Executing and Managing the Project: All team members participating in the project have years of experience engaging in social justice and disability research, teaching, and advocacy, both on the LIS education and LIS practice sides. Project team members include individuals with and without disabilities and neurodiversity, thus bringing a broader perspective and insight that cannot be taught. The project will be managed by Dr. Keren Dali (DU, Project Director) and Dr. Kim M. Thompson (UofSC, Project Co-Director).

Team

[Keren Dali, Ph.D. \(Project Director\)](#): Assistant professor, RMIS, DU. She holds BASW, Master and Ph.D. in Information Science, and Certificates in Diversity & Inclusion and Project Management. With two decades of research experience and over a decade of graduate teaching experience, Dr. Dali has multiple research, service, and teaching awards and is a co-founder and co-convenor of the [ALISE “Disabilities in LIS” SIG](#). Her research focuses on disabilities and workplace equity, the intersection of LIS and social work, humanistic pedagogies in LIS, DEIA, and reading practices of immigrants.

[Kim M. Thompson, Ph.D. \(Project Co-Director\)](#): Professor, Associate Dean, iSchool, UofSC; an Adjunct Associate Professor for the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University; and Senior Fellow of the Information Policy & Access Center, UMD. Dr. Thompson’s research interests span information studies, library science, and international consulting and extend to improving information services and providing a greater understanding of social inclusion, information access, and information poverty on an international scale.

[Co-Directors’ contributions](#): Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson will share in responsibility for the overall management and oversight of the project, including coordination with library partners and advisory group members; establishing and maintaining deadlines; monitoring the timely achievement of the set benchmarks and interim outcomes; monitoring financial spendings; supervising student assistants; and ensuring the overall functioning of the project. They will take primary responsibility for the design of research instruments, the IRB submission and the implementation of the ethics protocol; ethical and timely data collection and secure data storage; development of research publications; timely interim reports for public sharing; and oversight of the open-access website development. They will be solely responsible for data collection, interpretation, and processing in Phases 2 & 3 to safeguard participants’ anonymity, as described earlier.

[Merinda McLure](#): Associate Professor and Health & Human Sciences Librarian, CU Boulder Libraries, leading the University Libraries’ Researcher Engagement Section and serving as one of the Libraries’ Open Educational Resources Co-Leads; she is a subject specialist/liaison for neuroscience; integrative physiology; and speech, language, and hearing sciences.

[Frederick Charles Carey](#): Assistant Professor and History & Philosophy Librarian, CU Boulder Libraries, Chairing the University Libraries’ Recruitment to the Profession Guild and Co-chairing the Libraries’ Deans Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; he is a subject specialist/liaison for history and philosophy.

[Rebecca L. Padgett](#): Assistant Dean, Director of Administrative Services, University Libraries, UofSC. Rebecca’s experience spans 30 years in the administrative field, managing human resources, budget, and facilities. In her current role, she manages human resources for about 280 employees (faculty, staff, student workers), a budget of \$20 million, and 9 different facilities.

[Library partners’ contributions](#): Library partners will be collaborating with Co-Directors on instrument design in Phases 1-4 of the project; on data collection and analysis in phases 1 & 4; they will collaborate on peer-reviewed publications and take primary responsibility for the dissemination of study findings at professional conferences and through other professional venues (e.g., library associations, social media, listservs). They will provide ongoing input to the content building of the open access project website. Most importantly, as researchers-practitioners from the field of academic

² We have found these resources extremely valuable although we neither use nor agree with the terminology of “special needs.”

libraries, they will provide ongoing feedback to make sure that the project is sensitive to and responsive to the latest developments in the field.

Advisory Group

The inclusivity, rigor, and overall quality of the project will also be ensured through the advisory group composed of the following members (alphabetically by last name):

[Advisor 1: Dr. Deborah Charbonneau](#) is an Associate Professor in the iSchool, Wayne State University. With Ph.D. in Sociology and an MLIS, her research interests include health literacy and equity, digital health, and accessibility. She currently teaches courses in health informatics, information policy, research methods, and library management, also serving as a co-convenor of the Disabilities in LIS SIG, ALISE and an active member of the IFLA Health and Biosciences Section. Dr. Charbonneau will provide expert advice on the design and ethical implementation of research, and support the project through the dissemination and promotion of ideas and findings in the communities of health research, medical librarianship, special libraries, health informatics, and information policy, thus reaching beyond the Directors' areas of expertise.

[Advisor 2: Stephanie Sendaula](#) is Programming & Outreach Specialist at LibraryLinkNJ. She was previously an editor at *Library Journal* and continues to work as a reference librarian, where she is especially passionate about the intersection of social justice and LIS. She received her MLIS from Drexel University. With a strong background in accessibility advocacy and experience delivering workshops on making the library a more equitable and inclusive space, Stephanie will be instrumental in giving expert feedback on research design and administration; help with findings dissemination beyond academic libraries; and provide valuable insight into public and special library environments in the context of this project, thus improving the chances of making the project outcomes transferable across LIS sectors in the future.

[Advisor 3: A library/archives practitioner in a management position from outside of academic libraries](#), e.g., museum library, hospital library, public library, etc. This person will help with providing perspective on the future scalability of the project and help disseminate its findings beyond academic libraries.

Advisory Group Contributions

Collectively, the **advisory group** input will be as follows: (1) provide feedback on research instruments and study design; (2) serve as an advisor on ad-hoc issues, problems, and difficulties that might arise; (3) participate in quarterly one-hour meetings with project collaborators; (4) help with spreading the word about and promoting the project and its findings. The advisory contribution of the group members will be acknowledged on the project website and in all resulting publications. The advisory group members will be compensated at \$1,250 per person.

Required time, financial, personnel, and other resources to carry out the activities: Considering that this is a relatively contained grant project, the participation of two full-time faculty and three academic librarians with research responsibilities will ensure the needed expertise and dedicated time. For all participating partners, research time is built into the job description throughout the academic year. Dr. Dali will also have one three-credit course release in year 1 and one month of paid summer time in year 2 of the grant, in addition to 260 hours of paid graduate student support each grant-holding year. Dr. Thompson will be supported by 640 graduate assistantship hours (i.e., 20 hours a week for 32 weeks) per year. Merinda McLure, Frederick C. Carey, and Rebecca Padgett will work for 30 hours each year on this project as part of their research responsibilities at CU Boulder and UofSC Libraries, respectively, thus providing additional support for this project. Moreover, they will be supported with a stipend covering their conference participation related to the dissemination of study results. Both universities and academic libraries involved have a well-developed infrastructure to support this project in terms of technology; library resources; required spaces; funds management; and staff and faculty expertise. The budget provides a detailed breakdown of expenses.

Incorporating Perspectives and Contributions of the Target Group, Including External Input, Validation, and Consensus Building: This research is done in collaboration with two target groups: disabled and neurodiverse MLIS graduates, interviewed at Phase 1, and library managers/potential employers surveyed at Phase 2. To reiterate, there are two intended outcomes to this project: Phase 5, developing guidelines for changing workplace policies and practices and Phase 6, developing a practice model of an equitable workplace transition program (EWTP). Both will be grounded in the findings from the four small complementary studies (Phase 1-4), two of which (Phase 1-2) engage the target groups directly. Moreover, at the stage of guidelines and model development (Phases 5-6), close consultations with and involvement of both target groups will continue. The survey of managers will be anonymous, and we will not know who participated in it. However, to continue developing an EWTP and guidelines collaboratively, we will put out a call for

four (two from each library) volunteers–library managers–who will agree to provide feedback on these two outcomes, without tying this request into the prior survey participation (i.e., we will not ask them if they participated). These four individuals will be compensated with a \$250 gift card each for providing feedback. The project team and the project advisory group include both disabled and non-disabled individuals, ensuring shared responsibility and complementary perspectives. The advisory group will provide external input, feedback, and validation for research instruments and decision making throughout the process, as well as help with ethical and administrative dilemmas that may arise, and with the dissemination of findings.

Tracking Progress: There will be several mechanisms to track the progress of the project and make sure it is on schedule. A Schedule of Completion (Gantt Chart) will help with keeping deadlines and the proper resource allocations. Team members will have monthly Zoom meetings to check on the progress and debrief; quarterly meetings with the advisory group will be planned. The project website will be created early on in the process, and progress will be reflected on the website for transparency and accountability.

Dissemination of Findings: Raw data sets with confidential (interviews) or anonymous (surveys) information will not be shared to protect participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, whichever applies. However, the aggregate results will be shared as follows: The results of Phase 1-4 (interviews with disabled and neurodiverse graduates; the survey of library managers; the peer survey; and policy analysis) will be disseminated through: (a) conference presentations (e.g., ALA, ALA/ACRL, ALISE, and ASIS&T-Association for Information Science & Technology); (b) peer-reviewed LIS journals, with the preference for reputable open access venues; (c) the aforementioned associations, e.g., the [ALISE Disabilities in LIS SIG](#) and ALA Connect communities (Dr. Dali is an active ALA member); this sharing will be facilitated by the project website; and (d) the open access project website. The project website will be professionally created early on in the process and be used as follows: i) it will feature the project goals, benchmarks, and regular updates to ensure the transparency and accountability of the project; ii) if commercial journals are chosen for publication, preprints of the articles may be disseminated through the project website; iii) additionally, summaries and succinct graphic representations of results (akin to downloadable workshop handouts) will be created and made available on the website (by analogy to [another currently funded project by Dr. Dali](#)); this will allow for the timely open access dissemination of findings and help with prompt knowledge sharing during the embargo period, if one is imposed by commercial journals where the article(s) is(are) published; iv) the developed guidelines (Phase 5) and an EWTP model (Phase 6) will be freely available; v) research instruments will be shared fully and promptly.

Diversity Plan

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) is at the very heart of this project. It is focused on one of the most neglected groups in the LIS workforce, which also creates a situation whereby many disabled and neurodiverse patrons do not see themselves represented among library staff. The project will be carried out and managed in close collaboration with disabled and neurodiverse participants, in line with the motto: “nothing about us without us”; the same can be said about developing the guidelines and the practice model. Project collaborators include both LIS faculty and practitioners, from different regions of the U.S. Disabled individuals are among this proposal's Co-Directors and partners, contributing life experience and insight that cannot be taught. Members of the advisory group will be consulted continuously, which should prove invaluable because of their expertise, experience, and intersectional identities. We will also be relying on the feedback, expertise, and experience of the [ALISE Disabilities in LIS SIG](#), which was co-founded and is currently led by Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson, and which has membership comprised of both LIS scholars and practitioners. Care will be taken to include intersectional identities when recruiting participants in Phase 1. As a result, the project will be informed by both personal experiences and a rigorous research base.

Project Results

The project will result in a set of **guidelines** for changing workplace policies and practices (Phase 5) and a **replicable and transferrable practice model of equitable workplace transition program (EWTP)** for disabled and neurodiverse MLIS graduates (Phase 6). In terms of knowledge advancement, it will contribute to an improved understanding of career development and employment (rather than academic) experiences of neurodiverse and disabled LIS students and recent graduates (Phase 1); it will also enhance our understanding of workplace environments in which recent graduates find themselves, including such aspects as the attitudes and perceptions of managers with HR responsibilities (Phase 2); attitudes and perceptions of colleagues (Phase 3); and policies, practices, and regulations (Phase 4). Additionally, we will once again test the merit of collecting demographic and other personal data through open-ended questions, which is not

yet a common practice in social science research, but nonetheless a practice that can benefit DEIA research moving forward. In terms of practical applications and broader benefits for the field of LIS and society at large, the collected data will prepare grounds for the future EWTP. No such practice model for broader inclusion of disabled and neurodiverse employees currently exists in LIS or elsewhere, although some experience has been accumulated in the corporate IT sector, as narrated earlier. If this program is successful, it could be a game-changer in securing equity and representativeness in the LIS workforce for disabled and neurodiverse practitioners.

Future Steps

To be sure, the implementation of the actual program is beyond the scope of this grant and a possible subject of another funding proposal (e.g., another future Planning or Implementation IMLS grant). If we are successful in obtaining this grant, (1) the next step after would be implementing a pilot study to test the developed guidelines and an EWTP in order to introduce improvements and to increase the breadth and inclusiveness of their application. Initially developed in two large urban academic libraries, at the following pilot stage, the EWTP can be tested in special and public libraries. Because of their organizational structure and vastly diverse communities served, public libraries may be challenging places in terms of policy change and EWTP implementation; however, it is essential to find a way to expand this initiative into public libraries that serve the largest numbers of disabled and neurodiverse individuals. Similarly, it is crucial to test the EWTP in academic and public libraries in rural areas, as well as in smaller academic libraries (e.g., community college libraries). The pilot stage will allow for the needed modifications and adjustments. This can be funded by an additional IMLS Planning Grant. The pilot will also show which sites can prove the most suitable for the initial implementation of the EWTP. (2) The EWTP will be implemented based on the pilot results (i.e., the revised, modified, and improved EWTP; improved guidelines; and the most suitable site for initial implementation); it can be funded by a future IMLS Implementation grant. Rigorous stage-by-stage application, involving testing, adjustments, improvements, and expansion at every stage, will ensure the project scalability and sustainability into the future. It will no longer be limited to a single library type, size, and location.

This Narrative is supported by: Supportingdoc1 (Sample Instruments); Supportingdoc2 (References); Supportingdoc3 (The Partner's Letter of Support)

Year 1 (08/01/2022 – 07/31/2023)

Tasks	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	May 2023	Jun 2023	July 2023
Literature Review for Interviews with disabled and neurodiverse LIS grads (henceforth, LIS grads)	█											
Instrument Design and Pretesting for Interviews with LIS grads; IRB protocol development	█											
IRB (under review) for Interviews with LIS grads (full review & COVID-related delays possible & multi-IRB review)		█										
Participant Recruitment; Interviews with LIS grads; simultaneous interview transcription						█						
Literature Review and Instrument Design & Pretesting for the Survey of Managers		█										
IRB (under review) for the Survey of Managers (expedited but accounting for COVID-related delays & multi-IRB review)				█								
Survey of Managers Administration							█					
Instrument Design & Pretesting for the Peer Survey (no separate literature review required)								█				
IRB (under review) for the Peer Survey (expedited but accounting for COVID-related delays & multi-IRB review)									█			
Peer Survey Administration												█
Selection and Collection of Documents for Policy Analysis				█						█		

Year 2 (08/01/2023 – 07/31/2024)

Tasks	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	July 2024
Data analysis: Analysis of transcribed interview data												
Data analysis: Survey of Managers												
Data analysis: Survey of Peers												
Data analysis: Policy analysis												
Developing policy guidelines												
Developing a practice model												

Interpretation: Preliminary recommendations and conclusions. Each stage of data analysis will generate preliminary recommendations and conclusions that will become building blocks of both the guidelines and the practice model.

Digital Products Plan

Note: Many following statements of access and availability rely on the professionally designed open-access project website. The website will feature HTML pages; downloadable .pdf and .jpeg/.png files; (minimal) links (URLs) to external sites; and downloadable OneDrive documents in case of large-size files. Downloadable files will be accessible to the general public through common free apps (e.g., Adobe Reader; image viewers). Links to OneDrive, other external URLs, HTML pages, and the general site functionality will be curated by the project co-Directors at least every six months after the project ends; the general public will be given contact information to report broken links and inaccessible documents/webpages continuously. The website will be housed on the DU servers and maintained even if Director changes institutional affiliations. Moreover, digital products from Type 6-9 will be deposited to online institutional repositories at [DU](#), [UofSC](#), and [CU Boulder](#). These stipulations apply to all types of data addressed below and are not repeated.

Type 1: One interview dataset (Phase1): audio-recordings and accompanying transcripts; two survey datasets (Phase 2 & 3); two data sets in the DU Qualtrics site and two corresponding Excel spreadsheets with downloaded survey data.

Availability: All datasets, containing confidential (interviews) and anonymous (surveys) information will not be available publicly; even with surveys, there is a chance of participants being recognized. Safeguarding privacy will take top priority.

Access: These data will be accessible only to the research team and securely stored in the DU Qualtrics site (surveys); and on the DU and UofSC servers (interviews and surveys) in formats suitable for processing (Excel and Word). No raw datasets, even anonymized, will be exchanged via email or portable devices (USB); only through DU or UofSC secure OneDrive sites.

Sustainability: Interview data (recordings, transcripts, informed consents) will be stored in encrypted format. Survey data will not be encrypted. Data processing will be done on secure institutional computers of all team members and research assistants in compliance with data security protocols of all involved institutions (DU, UofSC, CU Boulder). In compliance with IRB requirements, all raw data will be destroyed in all storage sites five years after the study findings are made public (e.g., website, published articles, etc.). Until then, it will be curated by co-Directors on both sites. See Note.

Type 2: Collection of documents relevant to the analysis of workplace policies, e.g., interviewing protocols, recent job ads, hiring protocols, bargaining agreements, DEIA policies, accommodation policies, etc. (Phase 4)

Availability: Unless deemed proprietary by the respective institutions/data collection sites (CU Boulder and UofSC Libraries), the collection of documents used for policy analysis will be available on the open-access project website as downloadable .pdf documents that require the most basic Adobe Reader for the general public to access.

Access: There will be no restriction on access to documents that are allowed for public view by the respective libraries; however, they will be copyrighted to respective organizations with all the ensuing reference/use requirements when cited.

Sustainability: It is understood that policies change; eventually, these documents will become legacy data. At the end of the project, a note to that effect will be placed on the website, with a date on which these documents were in effect and valid; since they will be pdf-based documents, not URL-dependent, there will be no need to update them. After the project is completed, as legacy data, they will be available continuously. See Note.

Type 3: Research instruments (Phase1-3): an interview guide (Phase 1); two survey questionnaires (Phase 2 & 3); codes books developed for Phase 1-3.

Availability: These will be available as downloadable .pdf documents.

Access: The documents will be freely accessible and available for use under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) to encourage scholarly knowledge exchange and the replication of research but to prevent commercial use.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 4: Research instruments (Phase4): three code books (policy content, process & outcome evaluation code books); raw coded data sets (i.e., coded policy documents)

Availability: The research instruments and code books will be available as downloadable .pdf documents. Raw coded data will be available as downloadable .pdf files linked to the DU OneDrive.

Access: The research instruments and code books will be freely accessible and available for use under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) to encourage scholarly knowledge exchange and the replication of research but to prevent commercial use.

Coded documents considered proprietary by CU Boulder and UofSC Libraries will not be accessible by the general public. Other coded documents will be available to anyone asking permission from co-Directors; this will facilitate free but more controlled access to documents copyrighted to partner libraries.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 5: Preprints of peer-reviewed articles (if not published open-access).

Availability: Every attempt will be made to publish findings in reputable open-access journals; however, given the topic of research, it will not always be possible. If articles are published in commercial venues, .pdf preprints will be hosted on the project open-access website (as allowed by most large scholarly publishers these days, including Emerald, Sage, Elsevier, and Taylor & Francis). This will allow for the timely open-access dissemination of findings and help with prompt knowledge sharing during the embargo period, if one is imposed by commercial journals in which we publish.

Access: Available for free open-access download but copyrighted to article authors.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 6: Published peer-reviewed articles.

Availability: Every attempt will be made to publish findings in reputable open-access journals; if this is possible, final published versions of these articles will be shared on the project website, with the license used by the journal wherein it's published. If articles are published in commercial venues, preprints will be provided instead (see Type 5) until it is allowed by the publisher to provide the published version of the article (past the embargo period); the project website will be treated as an equivalent of an online repository of open-access resources.

Access: Available for free open-access download; appropriate attribution to the article authors' and publishers, as copyright holders, will be required if these articles are used in the future.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 7: Brief summaries of main research findings.

Availability: These summaries will be available in the form of both HTML pages and pdf-based downloadable handouts, stemming from the published articles, by analogy to another currently funded project by the project Director Dr. Dali (<https://lisdeipd.wixsite.com/website>). Along with article preprints, these summaries will be able to help with timely data dissemination to mitigate the embargo period if articles appear in commercial venues.

Access: These summaries will be freely accessible and available for use under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) to encourage scholarly knowledge exchange but to prevent commercial use. The summaries will necessarily include complete bibliographic references to the full published articles and disclaimers that publishers have different copyright restrictions; in other words, disclaimers will draw the distinction between CC-licensed summaries prepared by authors and articles published in commercial journals.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 8: Developed **guidelines** for policy change (i.e., equitable and inclusive job advertisement, application, interviewing, and onboarding) (Phase 5).

Availability: These guidelines is one out of two major project outcomes. Once developed, they will be available as an HTML page as well as a downloadable white paper, including the guidelines and the context and process whereby these guidelines were developed. It will resemble an expanded version of Type 7-Brief summaries of main research findings and handled similarly; it is likely that one of the published articles (Type 6) will include the guidelines as well.

Access: The guidelines will be freely accessible and available for use under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) to encourage scholarly knowledge exchange. If they are also included in one of the published articles, the white paper will make a reference to this article, with full citation information and a disclaimer on publisher restrictions on copyright and use.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 9: The Equitable Workplace Transition Program (EWTP) model, in its initial iteration (Phase 6)

Availability: The model will be distributed as both an HTML page and two downloadable documents: a pdf., which will include a visual representation of the model and its brief description, context, and process whereby it was developed; and a high-resolution (.jpeg or .png) image of the model.

Access: The model will be freely accessible and available for use under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) to encourage scholarly knowledge exchange. If it is also included in one of the published articles, website-based documents will make a reference to this article, with full citation information and a disclaimer on publisher restrictions on copyright and use.

Sustainability: These documents will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Type 10: The project description, goals, benchmarks and the schedule of completion (i.e., general project information) with brief semi-annual progress reports.

Availability: General project information and semi-annual progress reports will be available as HTML pages on the project open-access website; at the end of the project, there will be a brief closing report, directing to the other research outcomes as narrated in Types 1-9

Access: The content on this site will be available under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#) unless otherwise noted.

Sustainability: The website will be curated for functionality and continuous access as described in the Note.

Data Management Plan

Type	Data about experiences of disabled and neurodiverse recent LIS graduates (Phase 1)	Data about attitudes of library managers (Phase 2) and other library staff/peers (Phase 3) toward disabled and neurodiverse employees	Data about current library policies through the lens of inclusion and equity for disabled and neurodiverse employees (Phase 4)
Method	Semi-structured Zoom interviews	Two web-based self-administered qualitative surveys ensuring no overlap in research populations, as described in the Narrative.	Unobtrusive data collection/policy analysis and evaluation method (content, process, and outcome evaluations)
Scope and scale	Six individuals will be individually interviewed (for one hour each) (Phase 1) It's a small-scale project and data are collected for planning purposes only. It will be scaled up as indicated in the Narrative, "Future Steps."	Phase 2: Survey will be sent to approx. 55 library managers in two libraries (CU Boulder & UofSC); expected responses rate about 50% or less; 25-27 responses expected. Phase 3: Survey will be sent to approx. 380 library staff in two libraries; expected response rate 50% or less; about 170-180 responses.	Since we have not started data collection, it is not possible to provide an exact number of analyzed documents, pages, or words; but an estimate is that between five and ten policy related documents of varying length will be analyzed (e.g., interviewing protocols, recent job ads, hiring protocols, bargaining agreements, DEIA policies, accommodation policies, etc.)
Dates (see Schedule of Completion)	Phase 1: Collected between 01/2023 and 04/2023; transcribed simultaneously during this time; and analyzed in 08/2023-09/2023	Phase 2: Collected in 02/2023; and analyzed in 10/2023-11/2023 Phase 3: Collected in 07/2023; and analyzed in 12/2023-01/2024	Phase 4: Collected 11/2022-12/2022 & 05/2023-06/2023, allowing us to capitalize on "downtimes" in collecting other types of data and make sure that the most updated documents are collected. Analyzed in 02/2024-03/2024.
Documentation	The interview guide; Zoom recordings; interview transcripts; code books; summaries of findings; published articles.	Survey questionnaires; Excel documents with aggregate data; code books; summaries of findings; published articles.	An inventory of documents available for policy analysis; code books; coded documents; summaries of findings; published articles.
Sensitive information Informed consent	Some information related to disability and employment can be sensitive. However, no identifiable information will be reported; responses will be kept confidential; interview data will be linked to participants through a numeric code only; encryption will be used for data storage. The data will be transcribed by project co-Directors and their research assistants. Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson will make sure that research assistants work with completely anonymized survey transcripts. Transcriptions will be kept confidential and all identifiable	Collected data are anonymous but limited to two known sites: UofSC and CU Boulder Libraries and thus somewhat sensitive. IP addresses automatically collected by Qualtrics will be removed when data is exported to Excel. Both surveys will be handled (collection and analysis) only by project co-Directors (Dr. Dali and Dr. Thompson) and their research assistants without involving librarians/partners from either participating library to avoid conflict of interest and to protect	The only possibly sensitive information will be engaged if some policy documents are proprietary but we are still allowed to analyze them without sharing them full-text. If policy documents are intended for public consumption, there should be no concern about sensitive information. If some documents are proprietary, we will not share them in the public domain, nor will we share our coding of these documents. The documents that do not present confidentiality

	<p>information will be stripped in reporting and data will be reported in aggregate. Informed consent will be collected prior to interviewing. An IRB review will be required prior to engaging participants. Signed consent forms will be stored separately and linked to interview datasets only though a numeric code. Data will be stored in the following formats: Zoom recordings (encrypted); transcript in Word (encrypted); aggregate analyzed data in Excel (not encrypted).</p>	<p>participants' anonymity. Results will be reporting in aggregate and no comparison between the two participating libraries will be drawn. Both surveys will have implied informed consent in the survey preamble. Data will be stored in the following formats: collected survey data in Qualtrics; exported interview data in Excel (with IP addresses removed); aggregate analyzed data in Excel and Word.</p>	<p>concerns will be shared as indicated in the Digital Product Plan (DPP). Data will be stored in the following formats: Excel and Word.</p>
	<p>Data will be stored in: the DU Qualtrics site (surveys); DU and UofSC secure servers, OneDrive sites, and faculty/research assistants' computers (downloaded surveys; interview transcripts; policy evaluation data). Original interview recordings will only be stored on secure institutional servers at DU and UofSC. Raw data from interviews and surveys will not be shared publicly and will be destroyed in all storage sites five years after the findings are published. During data analysis, no copies will be made on portable devices or sent via email. Data will be exchanged among research partners through the secure DU OneDrive and processed on secured institutional computers. Although policy analysis data does not present the same privacy concerns, it will still be shared among the team members only through OneDrive to maintain consistency in research culture on the team.</p>		
<p>Access</p>	<p>All aggregate data reports, as well as datasets from Phase 4 (policy analysis) will be very easy for the general public to access. Most data will be available as either .pdf or .jpeg/.png files, using free apps (e.g., Adobe Reader or image viewers), open-access, and free of charge. One exception would be interview and survey raw data (collected and coded); proprietary institutional documents used for policy analysis; and coded policy analysis data based on proprietary documents; these will not be shared publicly, as detailed in the DPP. Other coded policy documents will be available to anyone by permission from co-Directors, free of charge through the link to OneDrive documents. A combination of copyright regulations, CC licenses, and free access rules will be applied to the data shared publicly (see DPP).</p>		
<p>Data Management Plan Review</p>	<p>This plan will be reviewed at least twice a year by co-Directors. The following factors will play a role in both adherence and possible adjustments to the plan: requests for revisions from IRB; difficulty in obtaining responses to surveys; and deadlines and benchmarks outlined in the Schedule of Completion document. Co-Directors will report on the adherence to the Data Management Plan to the team and advisory group at their scheduled meetings.</p>		
<p>Final Project Outcomes</p>	<p>Two major project outcomes: guidelines for policy revisions to improve equity for and inclusion of disabled and neurodiverse employees and the practice model (the EWTP model) will be based on the aggregate and analyzed results from Phase1-4. Their components will be developed gradually from 08/2023 to 03//2024, and then 04/2024-07/2024 will be dedicated specifically to finalizing these two outcomes. The guidelines will be freely available to the public through an HTML page on the project website, as well as a downloadable white paper, including both the guidelines and the context and process whereby these guidelines were developed. The EWTP model will be available as an HTML page and two downloadable documents: a pdf., which will include a visual representation of the model and its brief description, context, and process whereby it was developed; and a high-resolution (.jpeg or .png) image of the model. Both the guidelines and the model will be part of peer-reviewed articles, which will be publicly accessible depending on the publication venue, as described in detail in the DPP.</p>		
<p>Dissemination after the project ends</p>	<p>Data will be disseminated through the professionally designed open access website; peer-reviewed publications with the preference for reputable open-access sources; conference presentations; direct dissemination through professional associations (greatly helped by advisory group members); additionally, the most impactful outcomes of the project (summaries of findings; published articles, developed guidelines for policy revisions, and the practice model (the EWTP model) will be stored in institutional repositories at DU, UofSC, and CU Boulder and permanently available. The website will be housed on the DU servers and maintained even if Director changes institutional affiliations.</p>		

The Library & Information Science (LIS) Program, Research Methods & Information Science Department (RMIS), Morgridge College of Education (MCE), University of Denver (DU)

Mission Statement: “The Morgridge College of Education’s mission is to be a force for positive change in the lives of individuals, organizations and communities through unleashing the power of learning.” (<https://morgridge.du.edu/about/mission-vision>). The Mission Statement is reiterated in the [MCE Strategic Plan \(2029-2024\)](#), p. 10. The strategic plan is a result of extensive consultations with all constituencies within the college community (p 25). MCE embraces the four strategic goals: “Strategic Goal 1 – Embrace an inclusive, college-wide think & action collaborative approach to achieve maximum social benefit. Strategic Goal 2 – Prepare students for an increasingly intersecting professional world. Strategic Goal 3 – Advance breakthrough solutions to complex challenges using an intersystem approach. Strategic Goal 4 – Infuse the values of the College into our everyday actions and unify the College under a collective identity.” (p. 10). These goals are related to broader initiatives within DU, namely: “The Morgridge College of Education sits within the broader context of the University of Denver, which, through the strategic plan DU IMPACT 2025, has set its sights on ‘creat[ing] knowledge that serves the public good and changes the world for the better.’ As evidenced throughout this plan, the College’s aspirations and goals embody the transformative directions of [DU IMPACT 2025](#).” (p. 2)

Governance Structure: MCE is part of DU (aka historically, Colorado Seminary), offering over 23 degree and certificate programs (<https://morgridge.du.edu/academic-programs>). It also has five research institutes and clinics, in addition to Ricks Center for Gifted Children and Fisher Early Learning Center. In October 2021, DU became an R1 institution (<https://www.du.edu/news/university-denver-joins-list-highest-level-research-institutions-united-states>). The LIS Program, administratively, is part of the RMIS department. The RMIS department has a department Chair, who is considered Dr. Dali’s (project Director) supervisor; the department Chair reports to the Dean of MCE.

Service Area: Domestic and international students at MCE are educated both onsite and online. MCE offers graduate degrees from Master-level to Ph.D. and Ed.D., also hosting postdoctoral students. The MCE educational approach is encapsulated in this statement: “We believe in education that cultivates your whole person, motivating you to pursue lifelong learning and make a difference in the world around you. The MCE Experience is grounded in a dedication to social change and empowerment, community engagement, interdisciplinary academics, and research with impact.” (<https://morgridge.du.edu/about/morgridge-experience>).

Brief History: DU was “founded in 1864 as the Colorado Seminary,” shortly after the founding of Denver, and has grown into a “a global intellectual center in a city on the rise,” awarding degrees to its “first female and African American graduates” “in 1886 and 1900, respectively.” DU was also home to one of the first business schools and schools of social work in the U.S. In October of 2021, DU achieved an R1 status “through our steadfast commitment to the teacher-scholar ideal, valuing teaching, learning, and research for all of our students and faculty”; this is something that DU proudly refers to as “R1-our way.” The university entered the 21st century with a “modernized” campus, recently opening its second James C. Kennedy Mountain Campus. There are strong traditions of community care, commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, steadfast dedication to teaching, and research excellence. At the same time, DU has been grappling with its difficult legacy of the Sand Creek Massacre. In the year of DU founding, “a U.S. militia group attacked and murdered an estimated 160 women, children and elderly members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes at Sand Creek in Southeastern Colorado.” It was “planned by Col. John Chivington, a member of [the DU] original Board of Directors,” while “the conditions under which the massacre could occur” were created by one of the DU founders, “John Evans, who was governor and superintendent of Indian affairs of the Colorado Territory.” In recent years, a Task Force on Native American Inclusivity developed a report (aka, “[The John Evans Report](#)”), which “resulted in the establishment of the office of the Director of Native American Community Partnerships and Programs, whose role is to help make the University more accessible to Native American students and provide support to them.” However, the road to understanding, inclusion, and healing is still a challenging one. (<https://www.du.edu/about/history-traditions>).

DU has a long history of leadership in LIS education; the DU Library School opened in 1931 and granted its first ALA-accredited graduate degree in 1947. Bowing to financial pressures, it closed down in 1985 but reopened in 1995, in response to critical shortages of LIS professionals in the Rocky Mountain Region, as Library and Information Services Program (LISV) at the DU University College; it later moved to the College of Education, currently MCE. During the transition it was renamed as LIS program, reflecting the more balanced theory to practice orientation and the integration of information science in the curriculum. The move has strengthened the program’s position at DU. The DU LIS program is now continuously accredited by the ALA. The LIS program has both an onsite and a fully online program, the latter offered through 2U (<https://morgridgeonline.du.edu/online-mlis-program/curriculum/>). As of spring 2022, there are about 230 students in both onsite and online LIS programs combined.