

**RE-252376-OLS-22 - The New York Public Library
Proposal to IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program**

Building Public Library Capacity for Supporting Young Adult Engagement and Wellbeing

Introduction

The New York Public Library (NYPL) respectfully requests \$249,804 over three years in order to develop, pilot, iterate, and disseminate a Teen Engagement & Wellbeing virtual training for Young Adult librarians and library staff. After the enormous social, academic, and community disruptions adolescents have experienced in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, librarians and library staff require tools and resources to address mental wellness, create safe and welcoming teen spaces, and build culturally responsive programs. During Year 1 of the project, NYPL will partner with an external expert on adolescent development and mental health to develop the curriculum, which will include a series of modules with both asynchronous and live learning components. The pilot phase of the project in Year 2 will include two cohorts of 20 for a total of 40 library staff - half drawn from NYPL and half from libraries across the country - who will provide valuable feedback and insight on the project before broader dissemination, as well as gain new knowledge and skills to share with their respective communities. In Year 3, NYPL will launch the training online for free use, broadly promote the training, and continue to gather feedback from the pilot cohorts and new users to further refine the project. The Young Adult Engagement & Wellbeing training will meet the goals of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program by enhancing the training and professional development of the national library workforce to meet the needs of their communities (Program Goal 3) through creating and refining a training program that builds library workforce skills and expertise in contributing to the wellbeing of communities (Objective 3.2).

Project Justification

Statement of Need

In the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, American adolescents already experienced historically high levels of depression and anxiety.¹ The pandemic, however, added loneliness and social isolation, and libraries, which have always served as safe harbors and community builders, were, by necessity, closed. While many libraries, including The New York Public Library (NYPL or “the Library”), were able to offer virtual programs to teens, those interactions did not make up for the loss of the ability to experience in-person community and belonging. Further, research shows that Black and Latino/a/x teens are more likely to experience mental health issues due to a complex set of factors that include racial trauma and poverty²; and these communities were also disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic³. Now, more than ever, libraries need to reach out to teens in their communities and offer them safe, inclusive spaces

¹ Racine N, McArthur BA, Cooke JE, Eirich R, Zhu J, Madigan S. Global Prevalence of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Children and Adolescents During COVID-19: A Meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2021;175(11):1142–1150. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2482

² Williams DR. Stress and the Mental Health of Populations of Color: Advancing Our Understanding of Race-related Stressors. *J Health Soc Behav.* 2018;59(4):466-485. doi:10.1177/0022146518814251

³<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2020/09/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-households-across-america.html>

where they can develop agency and voice, build resilience, and feel that they belong to a larger, supportive community of teens and caring adults, all of which recent research highlights as central to teen mental health and developmental wellbeing.

NYPL recently conducted a survey of YA-serving staff and library managers across its 88 branches that illustrated the need to better equip staff to support our teen patrons. Of the 72 non-managerial survey respondents, only 22 percent felt strongly confident in their ability to support teens' mental health, and only 18 percent in leading culturally-relevant programming. Staff also expressed strong interest in bridging this knowledge and confidence gap through additional training. In order to respond to this need both at NYPL and nationally, the Library seeks to develop a Young Adult Engagement & Wellbeing training and toolset to help librarians and library staff achieve the following:

- Understand the communities they work in, inclusive of demographics, history, and community assets, such as community-based organizations and schools;
- Conduct outreach to teens and bring them into library spaces that are inclusive, community-centered, and culturally responsive; and
- Offer teens library experiences that address their mental wellness, and provide them with opportunities to express teen voice and agency within a supportive community—mechanisms that adolescent development research cites as critical to creating self-confident and resilient teens.

Critically, the training's approach to supporting engagement and wellbeing will address building cultural competency, defined as "recognizing the significance of culture in one's own life and in the lives of others; and to come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics through interaction with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; and to fully integrate the culture of diverse groups into services, work, and institutions in order to enhance the lives of both those being served by the library profession and those engaged in service."⁴

Recent U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that over 80 percent of librarians identify as white, while over half of youth ages 10-19 identify as Latino/a/x (25%), Black (14%), Asian (5%), multi-racial (4%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.5%). By learning how to build culturally responsive programs and support mental well-being, YA library staff from all backgrounds will become better equipped to bridge gaps between their lived experiences and that of the patrons they serve. The development of the training will also support deep investment in teen library users, reflecting a holistic approach to supporting adolescents as they explore their interests, develop technological fluencies, connect with peers, and develop their unique voices.

Project Background

The Teen Engagement & Wellbeing training project draws from existing theory, research, and practice in young adult library service and adolescent mental health. Adolescence is a crucial period for developing social and emotional habits important for mental wellbeing, and building healthy communities, of which libraries are key centers, is an important element for promoting

⁴ Patricia Montiel Overall, "Cultural Competence: A Conceptual Framework for Library and Information Science Professionals," *Library Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2009): 175–204.

positive mental health. Key protective factors for adolescent mental health include: presence of mentors and support for development of skills and interests; participation in nurturing environments within school and community; positive norms and clear expectations for behavior; and physical and psychological safety.⁵ NYPL's training will support these factors through three main areas of impact:

- Facilitating strong relationships with caring adults;
- Engaging teens in programs that elevate their voices and nurture their interests and skills; and
- Creating physically and psychologically safe and welcoming environments that help teens build community.

More broadly, the training will encourage librarians to take a teen-centered approach to developing programming that responds to their needs and interests and incorporates their voices. Public libraries, which have long been community spaces for self-directed learning and exploration, are ideal for implementing a connected learning model, defined as learning that is socially embedded, interest-driven, and oriented towards educational, economic, or political opportunity. NYPL's current logic model of teen services draws from YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* report⁶, and the proposed training project is inspired in part by YALSA's IMLS-funded "Transforming Teen Services" training, which used a train-the-trainer model and benefited many NYPL staff. The University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill's Project READY curriculum⁷ similarly provides a model of a successful online curriculum that was beneficial to NYPL YA staff.

NYPL will also draw from the lessons learned from its "Raising the Bar" early literacy training project, developed with IMLS funding (grant number RE-40-16-0158-16) and released for widespread use online in 2019, which equipped library staff with child development knowledge and caregiver engagement skills to deliver higher quality 0-5 programming. The four-part training, developed in partnership with the City University of New York's Early Childhood Professional Development Institute and advised by a national group of experts, was offered as a hybrid model with both synchronous and asynchronous learning for NYPL staff, and later released nationally through a digital learning platform (nypl.teachable.com). The curriculum was originally designed with a "train the trainer" model, which encouraged learning by teaching and allowed facilitators to become experts in the material as they teach participants, and was later offered in an individual learning format for self-directed participants as well. Since its launch, 208 NYPL staff have completed the training, and an additional 1,939 people from across the country have enrolled in the online course. In the same way that NYPL brought its early literacy practice to the next level by infusing early childhood development and brain development research-based practices throughout its training, with the help of external early childhood educational experts, the Library now seeks to respond to critical, emergent adolescent needs by infusing its teen programming and services with research-based adolescent development and mental health approaches through partnering with relevant experts. Through both the initial pilot

⁵ O'Connell, M. E., Boat, T., & Warner, K. E.. (2009). *Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among young people: Progress and possibilities*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2009).

⁶ https://www.ala.org/yaforum/sites/ala.org.yaforum/files/content/YALSA_nationalforum_Final_web_0.pdf

⁷ <https://ready.web.unc.edu/>

cohort and broader dissemination, the YA Engagement & Wellbeing training will ultimately enhance teen library service across the country.

Target Group and Beneficiaries

The target group for the training will be library staff who work with teens between the ages of 12-18. During the pilot phase of the project, NYPL will directly train two cohorts of 20 YA staff each, for a total of 40 YA professionals. In order to ensure that the training meets the needs of library settings that reflect national diversity in terms of socioeconomic and cultural background, geographic location, and setting (urban, rural, and suburban), NYPL will reserve 10 seats in each of its two initial pilot cohorts for librarians from across the country, outside of the NYPL system. While testing the training model, the pilot cohorts will provide feedback that NYPL will use to further iterate and refine its training resources to make them inclusive and useful to library workers in different environments and facing different community challenges. During the grant period, NYPL estimates it will train YA-serving staff from at least 20 NYPL branches. Once the pilot phase of the training is complete, NYPL anticipates training approximately 40 NYPL YA-serving staff annually, eventually training all YA-serving staff across its 88 branch libraries to impact the entire NYPL system. Through the dissemination of virtual resources and modules, the virtual training is also expected to serve hundreds of additional non-NYPL YA staff nationally.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project will be teenagers, both those who are current library users and those who have yet to be reached by library programs and outreach. Over the last two years, young people have experienced unprecedented levels of social isolation, learning disruption, and stress. Nearly 4 in 10 teens and young adults (38%) report symptoms of moderate to severe depression, an enormous increase from 25% just two years ago.⁸ The impact of the pandemic on today's teens, and on children entering adolescence in the coming years, will continue to be felt for years to come. As a free, public "third space" separate from school, work, and home, libraries are uniquely positioned to provide a safe gathering place and responsive programs to support young adults as they rebuild frayed social and community connections, navigate COVID-19 learning loss, and develop their own voices and identities.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, NYPL routinely reached nearly 200,000 in teen attendance annually through in-person programs and outreach. During the height of the pandemic, NYPL drew an attendance of approximately 40,000 to its virtual YA programs. As NYPL rebuilds its audiences post-pandemic, the Library estimates that young adult attendance will fall somewhere between these numbers in the coming years. As pilot participants from outside of the NYPL system share their learning with their peer and patron communities, and as YA-serving staff across the country access NYPL's training, the YA Engagement & Wellbeing training will ultimately benefit young people nationally, who make up a significant portion of library users. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, there were nearly 42 million youth ages 10-19 in the United States, 13% of the total U.S. population, in 2019. Prior to the pandemic, an Opportunity

⁸<https://www.common sense media.org/about-us/news/press-releases/one-year-into-the-pandemic-a-new-survey-reveals-that-teens-and-young>

for All study reported that youth ages 14-24 make up 25% of all library users⁹, and a 2013 Pew Research survey found that 72% of 16- to 17-year-olds had used a public library in 2012¹⁰.

Project Design and Work Plan

Key Staff and Partners

Project Director Siva Ramakrishnan, NYPL's Associate Director of Young Adult Services, will lead the project and oversee overall strategy, field outreach, and budget management. She has worked for NYPL for nearly nine years, and leads a team of ten central staff who support college and career programming, connected learning experiences, teen publications, teen internships, collections management, and patron engagement. She holds an MA in English and American Literature from Hunter College and is expected to complete an MLIS degree from San José State University in 2024. She also recently served as a 2021-2022 Presidential Task Force Member for YALSA, leading a webinar on teen social capital.

Project Manager Caitlyn Colman-McGaw, NYPL's Manager of Young Adult Programming, will oversee all day-to-day aspects of the project, including coordinating with project partners, managing curriculum development, and supervising pilot cohorts. She holds a MLIS degree from University of Illinois, and has worked to develop and support engaging young adult programming at NYPL for seven years in partnership with over 100 Young Adult Librarians and staff at 90 branches across three New York City boroughs. In addition to leading intensive staff trainings at NYPL, she has presented at YALSA and ALA on topics such as college access and creating inclusive events.

A *Qualitative User Insights Researcher* from NYPL's Strategy & Public Impact team will work with the project leads and the Project Partner to analyze data from evaluation tools like surveys and interpret results. The evaluation overall will be led internally by Katarzyna Kowalska, Ph.D., NYPL's Associate Director of Service Innovation & Impact.

The to-be-selected *Project Partner* will contract with NYPL to provide expertise in adolescent development and mental health and ensure that the training incorporates the latest research-based best practices in community interventions for mental wellness on both the individual and communal level. NYPL will seek a project partner with both research and clinical backgrounds in serving diverse adolescents, especially in underserved communities. The Library will also prioritize a partner who has an institutional review board (IRB) to inform ethical research design and dissemination of results. For instance, NYPL has previously partnered with Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry and the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI), who have also provided a letter of support for this proposal, to create and distribute community mental health resources and expert-led programming.

A contract *Online Curriculum Designer* will work with NYPL to create an engaging, interactive, module-based online training based on the curricular content developed by NYPL and the Project Partner.

⁹ Samantha Becker et al., *Opportunity for All: How Library Policies and Practices Impact Public Internet Access*, report no. IMLS-2011-RES-010, [imls.gov/assets/1/assetmanager/opportunityforall.pdf](https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/assetmanager/opportunityforall.pdf).

¹⁰ Zickuhr, Rainie, and Purcell, *Younger Americans' Library Habits and Expectations*.

The *Advisory Board* of approximately 10 people will meet two to three times a year for the first two years of the project to review and provide feedback on project design and advise on recruitment for the initial pilot cohorts. The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) will advise on Advisory Board membership and recruitment, and a member of their staff will serve on the board in order to provide continual expertise on curriculum development and implementation. The Advisory Board will broadly draw from a national pool of field experts in the fields of librarianship, adolescent development and mental health, and community development.

Work Plan

Year 1: Project Design and Training Development (August 1, 2022 - July 31, 2023)

Year 1 of the grant period will be dedicated to identifying a project partner, assembling an Advisory Board to support and review the design of the project, designing and developing the Teen Engagement & Wellbeing training project, and building cohorts for the launch of the pilot phase in Year 2. Throughout the duration of the grant period, NYPL's Associate Director of Young Adult Services and Manager of Young Adult Education Programming will lead the project, in consultation with an internal advisory group of NYPL Young Adult Services staff, an external Advisory Council, and NYPL's Strategy and Public Impact team. NYPL will seek out and identify a partner organization that specializes in community interventions supporting teen mental health at both individual and communal levels. The goals of the project will be communicated through professional organizations, such as YALSA and ULC, as well as informal library networks, to help identify the first two cohorts of non-NYPL library staff participating in the training.

During the recruitment process for the pilot cohort, NYPL will seek NYPL branch staff who work with teens, have a strong track record of creating teen-centered programs and experience with community partnerships, and a desire to implement what they learn within their respective communities. NYPL will prioritize participants from high-needs branches. For external participants, NYPL will seek to build a cohort that reflects a variety of library systems, including size, geography, and usage, and will prioritize applicants from under-resourced libraries who may otherwise have limited access to professional development opportunities. For both internal and external library staff, NYPL will ask potential participants to apply for the program via a short application form to confirm interest in participation and understanding of the commitment and expectations involved, and to collect background details on their work experiences and the communities they serve.

By the end of Year 1 (July 2023), NYPL will have designed the Teen Engagement & Wellbeing training project and developed associated staff resources, as well as finalized the two cohorts of participants, each consisting of 20 staff participants for a total of 40 participants. The Library will also have finalized the project's training schedule and will be prepared to launch the pilot training. The curriculum will train staff to work with teens in their respective communities to design intentional programs based on their specific needs, and to infuse connected learning best practices into all programs. After completing the training, participants will be equipped to create programs such as: working with teen volunteers to map mental health resources within their communities; organizing discussion-based workshops exploring trauma, coping mechanisms, stigma, and anxiety in partnership with community experts; and elevating teen voices through

publications like zines, blogs, and podcasts that center their experiences and unique perspectives. The curriculum will include an observation rubric that participants can use to facilitate further coaching and learning post-training.

The training will be conducted in a virtual format that includes both synchronous and asynchronous activities, with participants individually exploring their respective communities, critically examining their teen-dedicated library spaces, and conducting other in-person experiences with colleagues. The cohorts will meet virtually to discuss concepts essential to the training, in addition to sharing their in-person, community-based learning experiences through photographs, video where possible, breakout sessions, and whole-group presentations. NYPL anticipates a 3-4 month training period per cohort. The frequency of virtual meetings will be determined at a later date and incorporated into the program design.

NYPL will assemble an Advisory Board in the first year of the grant period, and appoint experts in the fields of adolescent mental health, community partnerships, and equitable, diverse, and inclusive library service to teens. The Board will meet and work digitally to support the design of the project, provide evidence-based advice, and issue-spot on topics such as the cohort-building process, types of professional development resources produced by the project, and training structure.

Year 2: Implementation, Early Dissemination, and Iteration (August 1, 2023 - July 31, 2024)

In Year 2 of the grant period, the Library will enter the implementation, early dissemination, and iteration phase of the project. The first two cohorts of participants will include both NYPL and nationwide participants, so that:

- The training and resources are enriched through diverse perspectives and real-time feedback and engagement with the project's content and materials;
- NYPL and the identified partner organization may iterate the project design through a user-informed process, which will ensure that future versions of this training will accommodate diverse audiences; and
- The training provides a rich professional development experience for cohort participants as they bond and create a community of practice with fellow teen-serving library professionals from across the country. Cohort members can share their challenges, strategies, and joys in supporting the mental health of the teens they serve, as well as leverage resources available in their communities.

To evaluate the training during the pilot phase, NYPL will collect both real-time qualitative feedback from participants, and conduct and analyze surveys of participants in collaboration with NYPL's Strategy and Public Impact team. NYPL and the identified partner organization will also begin presenting on the training design and preliminary findings through conference presentations in Year 2.

Year 3: Broad Dissemination of Resources (August 1, 2024 - July 31, 2025)

Year 3 of the grant period will focus on the broad dissemination of digital professional development resources that adhere to W3C accessibility standards and allow any library across the country to facilitate trainings on how to:

- Understand the communities they work in, inclusive of demographics, history, and community assets, such as community-based organizations and schools;
- Conduct outreach to teens and bring them into library spaces that are inclusive, community-centered, and culturally responsive; and
- Offer teens library experiences that address their mental health needs, and provide them with opportunities to express teen voice and agency within a supportive community—mechanisms that adolescent development research cites as critical to creating self-confident and resilient teens.

The published curriculum will be organized into modules that progress through community exploration, mental wellness tenets, best practices, and more. The training curriculum will include a mix of pre-recorded videos, text for self-paced reading and research, and activity prompts. The training will incorporate opportunities and resources for peer interaction and discussion, whether through asynchronous virtual methods such as a comment feature or dedicated Slack channel, or through laying out methods for staff to work with their peers in person. Participants will also be prompted to engage in-person in their respective communities, such as through an exercise in mapping community resources, and will be provided with resources like sample agendas and handouts to facilitate discussions with library peers as well as broader community members. Working closely with the Program Partner, NYPL will also create a programmatic rubric that can be used by central staff and supervisors to provide continued coaching trainees in the implementation of their training in order to ensure sustained impact.

NYPL will publish the Teen Engagement & Wellbeing curriculum, as well as accompanying resources, online for free national use, through a learning management platform such as Teachable. The virtual curriculum and training will adhere to W3C accessibility standards, which include alternative equivalent text for images, keyboard input functionality, and transcripts for audio components. The launch of the curriculum will be publicized on NYPL’s website (22 million visitors per year) and social media accounts (3.3 million followers across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok), as well as through e-newsletters. More targeted outreach will include professional listservs, panels, and forums. NYPL will engage with ALA, YALSA, PLA, and ULC to promote the training, and will apply to present at professional conferences on the training resources, how they can be used, and lessons learned during the piloting and iteration process. By the end of Year 3, NYPL estimates that at least 300 people from across the country will have completed or registered for the training.

Evaluation and Performance Measurement

Throughout the project period, NYPL will conduct monthly internal meetings to review project deliverables, determine next steps, and troubleshoot as needed. The team leads will similarly meet with external partners monthly through Year 1 of the project to ensure project workflow and communication remains on track. During the first two years of the project, NYPL will convene both external and internal advisory boards two to three times each year to review project development and seek feedback on the curriculum.

In Year 2, NYPL will collect survey data and run focus groups with the YA staff participants (a minimum of two focus groups per cohort), and collect real-time qualitative feedback during the

training through live communication platforms such as Slack. Surveys and focus groups will evaluate the quality and impact of the training through factors such as changes in confidence and self-efficacy, as well as expertise in core topics of the training. Surveys and focus groups will also capture participants' feedback on the effectiveness of the training and their ideas for improvement of content and delivery, which the project team will incorporate into future training design. NYPL will track the number of library staff trained during the pilot phase, and the number of NYPL staff trained internally after the pilot phase is complete.

In Year 3, NYPL will monitor dissemination activities through tracking outreach contacts and meetings, press and media mentions, and conference presentations. During the dissemination phase and beyond, NYPL will evaluate use of the virtual training through methods such as number of site views, downloads, and registrations. The Library will also continue to collect qualitative feedback from users through a Google form accessible from the training landing page.

Budget Summary

NYPL requests a grant of \$249,804 over three years. Costs include project staff time (\$45,638) and fringe benefits at a rate of 51 percent for full-time staff (\$23,275); travel for the two project leads to three national conferences (\$9,000); contracted costs for the Project Partner and Online Curriculum Designer (\$120,000); two years of hosting costs for a Learning Management System (\$20,000); stipends for the Advisory Board (\$5,000); and advertising/marketing to promote the project products (\$5,000). The budget also includes IDC (\$21,891), at a de minimis rate of 10 percent and exclusive of travel.

Diversity Plan

The project is DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) driven, with a focus on equipping library staff to support teens from diverse communities through multilingual and multicultural approaches, and the resulting training will be provided to different categories of staff members, including librarians, information assistants, and later library managers, which is important for workforce inclusion and equity. Team members and NYPL branch staff are highly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, country of origin, age, native language, and disability, and many of them are from the communities the Library serves, which will support multiple perspectives during project development and iteration. With nearly 59 percent of the Library's staff identifying as members of an ethnic or racial minority group, and 60 percent identifying as female, NYPL's demographics closely align with New York City's broader population. One of the main criteria for selecting a training partner will be the partnering organization's expertise in working with the diverse populations that libraries serve.

In addition to NYPL participants, the pilot training cohorts will include a geographically diverse group of participants drawn from across the country. NYPL will work with YALSA to recruit staff representing a variety of library settings, including rural communities, the suburbs, and other urban systems. NYPL will prioritize including trainees from libraries that are less-resourced, especially those that work in underserved communities. NYPL also plans to work under the advisement of YALSA to create an advisory board that will similarly be drawn from a national pool.

Project Results

Key project results will be twofold: 1) develop and iterate a Teen Engagement & Wellbeing training for approximately 80 staff within the grant period (40 during the pilot phase and 40 post-pilot), including 20 staff from outside of the NYPL system; and 2) release an open source training curriculum and resources for widespread use by YA staff nationally, including an observation rubric. By the end of the grant period, NYPL projects that at least 300 library staff who work with teens will have accessed the training.

From past experiences developing training curricula, NYPL expects that feedback from the pilot cohorts will be critical to ensuring the broad adaptability of the curriculum to other institutions. The curriculum will go through at least two iterations in response to participant feedback—once after the first cohort training and once after the second cohort. Once the second cohort completes their training, the curriculum will have incorporated the perspectives and experiences of 20 different communities from around the U.S., in addition to 20 different neighborhoods across New York, a city of enormous cultural and economic diversity. The pilot process will allow the curriculum to be tested across multiple communities that serve a wide range of teen patrons.

Like NYPL's other training curriculum, "Raising the Bar", the Library expects that the Young Adult Engagement and Wellbeing training will have a broad and sustained impact beyond the scope of the grant period. The final iteration of the curriculum will be a "train the trainer" model that can be implemented by a facilitator in any community. Even during the pilot phase, this model will facilitate broad dissemination and implementation as pilot participants return to their respective library systems with new expertise and can facilitate trainings for their colleagues. While NYPL will not be needed to facilitate the training long-term, the project team hopes to build and encourage a community of practice among alumni of the training, who can then in turn share their learning or facilitate the training in their own community. NYPL will hold virtual meet-ups with each pilot cohort six months after the training, as well as a virtual gathering of all pilot participants. The Library is also exploring different ways to encourage continued virtual discussion, such as a dedicated Slack channel where participants can chat and share resources and ideas. The training will also continue to be used for all NYPL staff who work with young adults, as well as future hires, and the online version of the curriculum will be made available for ongoing use by librarians across the country.

Ultimately, the project will increase the capacity of libraries, already a trusted community resource, with the knowledge and resources to better support adolescent mental health, deliver creative and culturally relevant programming, and engage teens in their communities by amplifying their voices and creating agency.

Grant Year 1 Activities (August 2022 - July 2023)

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Assemble Advisory Board	█											
Seek and identify Project Partner and Curriculum Designer	█	█	█									
Design Teen Engagement & Wellbeing training project			█	█	█	█	█	█				
Course iterations								█	█	█	█	
Recruit NYPL and external participants for Cohorts 1 and 2											█	
Conduct Cohort 1 survey and introductions												█
Convene Advisory Board to discuss project design support and cohort-building process		█			█			█			█	

**The New York Public Library
Proposal to IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program**

Building Public Library Capacity for Supporting Young Adult Engagement and Wellbeing

Digital Products Plan

NYPL plans to create an online YA Engagement & Wellbeing training curriculum. Through use of a Learning Management System, such as Teachable or Bridge, the published curriculum will be organized into modules that progress through community asset mapping, creation of inclusive spaces, programs and services promoting mental wellness tenets, elevating teen voices, general best practices, and more. The training curriculum will include a mix of pre-recorded videos, text for self-paced reading and research, and activity prompts. The training will incorporate opportunities and resources for peer interaction and discussion, both through asynchronous virtual methods such as a comment feature or dedicated Slack channel, and through laying out methods for staff to work with their peers in person or virtually in real time.

The training will be freely and publicly accessible, accessed via link from a landing page on NYPL's website (www.nypl.org). The training will adhere to W3C accessibility standards, which include alternative equivalent text for images, keyboard input functionality, and transcripts for audio components. All resources will be open for free use and adaptation, though the Library will request that users credit the original project.

In order to ensure sustainability, after publication NYPL will continue to revise the curriculum as needed in response to broad user feedback. The Library plans to continue to host and maintain the training via the Learning Management System beyond the grant period, as well as continue to moderate feedback and virtual communication hubs via comments or Slack.

The New York Public Library
Proposal to IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

Building Public Library Capacity for Supporting Young Adult Engagement and Wellbeing

Organizational Profile

The mission of The New York Public Library (NYPL or “the Library”) is to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen its communities. Following its initial founding in 1895, the Library established its circulating department after consolidating with The New York Free Circulating Library in 1901. A month later, steel baron Andrew Carnegie offered \$5.2 million to construct a system of branch libraries throughout New York City (what are now the five boroughs having been consolidated into the City of New York in 1898), providing the City would supply the sites and fund the libraries' maintenance and operations. Later that year, The New York Public Library contracted with the City of New York to operate 39 Carnegie branches in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. Today, NYPL is one of the nation’s largest public library systems and comprises 92 locations, including three scholarly research centers: the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building; the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

With a physical presence in every neighborhood in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island and a service area of 3.52 million people, the Library is a vital anchor institution in some of the most underserved communities in New York and in the nation. Its service area, home to over one million immigrants, is culturally and racially diverse: 36 percent of residents are Hispanic; 35 percent Caucasian; 19 percent African American; eight percent Asian; and two percent other. In an average year 16 million children, teens, and adults visited an NYPL location, and 26 million people around the world access the Library’s online resources (nypl.org). Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library has adjusted its operations and protocols in real-time based on the latest information available and with safety as the first priority. After closing all NYPL locations to the public in March 2020, the Library began gradually restoring key in-person services beginning in summer 2020, and by October 2021, all NYPL neighborhood branches and research centers were open for full or near-full in-person services.

NYPL plays a unique role in supporting independent, equitable learning for all. The Library’s education and learning principles, objectives, and priorities build on its strengths and successes to ensure consistent, quality, impactful programs and services, while solidifying its place in New York City’s educational ecosystem. Four principles guide the Library’s education objectives and priorities: ensuring equitable access, creating engaging learning environments, investing in and prioritizing targeted programming, and contributing field leadership to a wide variety of learning environments. Within the framework of these core principles, education and learning initiatives focus on five core areas: early literacy programming, after school academic enrichment, Teen Centers, adult skill-building, and educator support. As the Library’s educational programming continues to evolve, it seeks to support both in-person and remote opportunities for exploration, learning, and growth for library patrons of all ages.