

School Library System of Genesee Valley BOCES

Libraries.Today: A National Forum Series on Post-COVID School Libraries

Statement of National Need

The School Library System of the Genesee Valley Board of Cooperative Educational Services (GVBOCES) is applying for the National Leadership Grant for Libraries in the area of a National Forum in response to the need to identify recommendations for effective post-COVID school library programs. Given the high level of complexity, national scope, and emergent nature of the investigation, a collective impact approach will be used to gather together diverse viewpoints from across the country [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_progress_through_collective_impact].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, school libraries across the country made changes to procedures, spaces, and instructional practices out of necessity. Across the many models of in-person, hybrid, and remote instruction adopted by districts around the country, there were even more models for school librarians and the services they provide. It is essential that we take time after the immediate pressure of the pandemic emergency to reflect, understand, and evaluate those modified practices. The need for investigation is especially critical in those communities where school library programs were already at-risk prior to the emergency.

This need is made clear by what little data emerged during the pandemic. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), has been tracking school librarians' situations within the pandemic since March, 2020 [<http://www.ala.org/aasl/about/pandemic>]. The surveys revealed a rapid shift to online teaching and remote delivery of services, but also that the transition was problematic in many situations. School Library Journal also conducted a number of surveys [<https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=slj-covid-19-response-survey-shows-librarians-preparation-and-response-to-school-closures-coronavirus-COVID19>] showing changes in assignments, instructional practices, and space utilization as a response to the COVID pandemic. During the 2020-2021 school year, additional surveys collected quantitative information on changes in the moment, but without significant qualitative data analysis. For example, EveryLibrary Institute published "School Librarians in the Second Wave" [<https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/school-librarians-in-second-wave-report>] on school libraries and COVID that included anecdotes of new practices without evaluation. These anecdotes, like this one on moving to a digital space for the library, demonstrate the need for additional investigation and understanding of the positive and negative impacts of the changes.

A suburban middle school librarian from Maryland had to rethink the idea of a library "space". Utilizing the school's Learning Management System, Donald Whitby created a virtual environment for students to communicate and collaborate in a safe, virtual environment. He utilized this space to share school resources, engage in readers advisory, and stay connected with his students. (Baltimore County Public Schools, Nottingham, MD)

This proposed national forum series will differ from those surveys by providing a deeper qualitative investigation of the situation. The forums will consider all aspects of changes like those made by Donald Whitby in order to evaluate their impact and efficacy. Virtual meeting and communication technologies will be used to capture voices from the field to allow all of us to better understand the situation and where we need to go moving forward. These forums will be planned as virtual events to avoid any lingering impacts from COVID on district budgets and travel. This move to a virtual forum will also have the unintended side effect of allowing greater participation from the field than is

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normally seen in national forums. Unintended, yet potentially beneficial, consequences like this are exactly the type of phenomenon this project will investigate.

Even after COVID-19 is no longer directly threatening our schools, the long term changes brought about by this pandemic will still be a factor in our education systems. School librarians were forced by exigent circumstances to adopt practices made necessary by the pandemic situation. There was likely no time or opportunity to carefully consider the validity and efficacy of those practices within the moment. For example, school librarians were reassigned as classroom teachers and library spaces were taken over for other purposes. As we look ahead to an end of the pandemic emergency, it will be necessary to retroactively evaluate the changes to school libraries across the country.

This forum series will provide an opportunity to look back at the changes and intentionally accept or reject modified practices moving forward as a profession. For example, will communal spaces like school libraries return to pre-COVID use models, or will emerging models of use prevail? Given changing roles of school librarians during this school year, what expectations will take root over the next few years? How much need is there for a physical collection moving forward? These questions can best be explored within the larger perspective provided by a series of national forums bringing together school librarians, school administrators, and other stakeholder groups from related library and educational fields. This proposed forum series will directly address a clear national need and provide community developed solutions and recommendations for practice across the country. These findings will be gathered in professionally generated reports shared through multiple channels.

The School Library System of GVBOCES is uniquely suited to lead this collective impact investigation of post-COVID school libraries. One challenge of the collective impact model is that it requires an organization that can provide a core set of staff to serve as the backbone for the shared work. The GVBOCES team consists of five certified school librarians acting in a regional, administrative capacity supporting the school librarians of the 22 districts within the GVBOCES region. This is the second largest such team in the country, with one less certified position than the New York City School Library System. Led by Dr. Christopher Harris, the team at the School Library System of GVBOCES has been recognized nationally with two current members (Dr. Harris and Andy Austin who will be working on this project) and two former members named as Library Journal Movers & Shakers. Dr. Harris was also the lead presenter on a series of international webinars hosted by EveryLibrary on preparing school libraries for the pandemic [https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/school_libraries_and_covid]. Dr. Harris also participated on a national advisory board for a prior national forum in 2019 and so is familiar with the process and scope of a national forum project.

Project Design

The project director will coordinate work on this project with the established national advisory board to address the following goals, project plan, and evaluation measures. The project director and other staff at GVBOCES will serve as the backbone for the collective impact approach taken in this project.

Project Goals

This project addresses the IMLS agency-level goal of *building capacity through sharing and facilitating adoption of best practices and innovations*. As a national forum grant, this project falls within the category of *community catalyst* with a focus on *exploring widespread challenges and opportunities for growth* within school libraries and the education community as a whole. There are three project specific goals.

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Goal One – Identify changes made to school library programs as a result of exigent circumstances during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The primary goal of this National Leadership Grant is to investigate the changes to school libraries that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through reflective conversations across the field, four national forums will provide insight into what changes were enacted during the emergency followed by reflection on the efficacy and impact of those changes. To capture diverse equity, diversity and inclusiveness (EDI) perspectives, the four, virtual forums will each be co-hosted by different partners across the country. The co-hosts will include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). The four forums will each focus on a set of specific topics and populations identified by a national advisory board as detailed below.

Goal Two – Facilitate community conversations during each national forum using a collective impact model to evaluate the impact of changes to school library programs during the pandemic. Collective impact is a model that can help investigators understand complex problems and identify emergent responses. While many school librarians have expressed frustration with COVID response changes, it is expected that with honest reflection some changes will be deemed beneficial even if the circumstances that forced the change were not positive. In other cases, changes like the reassignment of school librarians into other positions were obviously detrimental and need to be undone as the emergency concludes. The second goal of this project is to facilitate those honest evaluations across the school library community and with stakeholders including administrative staff from districts using a collective impact process. The forums will provide a common agenda, identify shared measurements for collecting and evaluating data, provide an opportunity for mutually reinforcing conversations, and support continuous communication as facilitated by the GVBOCES backbone.

Goal Three – Identify, publish, and widely distribute a series of school library forum reports establishing best practices and policy recommendations for post-COVID school libraries.

The final goal of the project is to publish and widely distribute best practices reports from each of the forums that will guide school librarians through the process of reimagining their post-COVID library program. The four forum reports and a final project report will be the published outputs of the project. The intended outcome is that school librarians and school districts across the country will engage in a local evaluation of their school library programs and make changes based on the reports from these forums. Additionally, the policy recommendations in the final report will provide actionable items that school librarians across the country can work to implement.

Activity Sequence

The Libraries.Today project will run from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2023 during which time the School Library System of GVBOCES will convene four, virtual national forums to investigate post-COVID school libraries through a collective impact lens. The core work will be managed by the project director, Dr. Christopher Harris from the School Library System of GVBOCES. To bring additional diverse viewpoints to the final forum planning, a national advisory board will be selected from across the country. This advisory board will guide the project through four cycles of planning the forum, the virtual convening of the forum, evaluating input from the forum, and publishing a forum report. Near the end of the project, the advisory board will gather to review, analyze, and recommend best practices for a final project publication based on the four forum reports. A final meta-report by the project director will document the model, technologies, and planning process for future replication.

Key Project Staff

Four key project staff have been identified for the Libraries.Today forums. They include the project director, a technology support person, the project evaluator, and the report writing lead.

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The collective impact model recommends the identification of a backbone, a core set of staff that will anchor the efforts of the community. The five certified school librarians at the School Library System of GVBOCES led by Dr. Christopher Harris will provide the core of the backbone. Dr. Harris will dedicate 20% of his time as project director as funded by this grant at \$29,032 for salary and benefits for year one and \$29,752 projected for year two with a project total of \$59,144. As project director, Dr. Harris will coordinate the efforts of the national advisory board, the report writing team, report publication/distribution, and project evaluation. Dr. Harris has served as a member of a prior IMLS national forum advisory team and so understands the process. Andy Austin from the School Library System team will also spend 5% of his time on technical and web support for the project as funded at \$5,789 for salary and benefits in the first year and a projected \$5,924 for the second year of the project for a total of \$11,713. The core project management staffing will therefor cost a total of \$70,496 across the two years of the project. Additional support by the other three members of the School Library System will be allocated by Dr. Harris as needed with costs borne by GVBOCES.

Dr. Patrick Whipple, Director of Professional Learning Services for GVBOCES will serve as project evaluator as detailed below in the Evaluation section. John Chrastka, lead at EveryLibrary Institute, a non-profit support libraries of all types, will serve as the report writing lead as detailed in the Forum Reporting section below. EveryLibrary Institute has published multiple research reports on libraries including two recent reports on the role of school libraries during the pandemic [<https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/school-librarians-in-second-wave-report>].

National Advisory Board

The national advisory board for the Libraries.Today forums will be finalized in August, 2021 at the outset of project work. The twelve member advisory board will provide additional, diverse viewpoints from members including urban/suburban/rural representatives, BIPOC members, a tribal library representative, and different types of stakeholders from the school library community. Members will include the co-hosts of the four forums, four additional school library stakeholder representatives from the co-host communities, the current President of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and a school library education representative. Two additional members, the evaluator and the report writing team lead, will serve in an *ex officio* capacity without stipends.

Confirmed Advisory Board Members

- Melisa Jacobs, Director of the New York City School Library System
- Alicia Thompson, Director of the Erie1 BOCES (NY) School Library System
- Priscille Dando, Dir. of Library/Information Services, Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools
- Amanda Kordeliski, Director of Libraries for Norman (OK) Public Schools
- An additional tribal library representative
- Craig Seasholes, Elementary Librarian, Seattle (WA) Public Schools
- Erin Hollingsworth, District Librarian, North Slope Borough (AK) School District
- Kathy Caroll, President, American Association of School Librarians
- Dr. Jen Cannell, St. John Fisher (NY) College Graduate School Library Program
- An additional school admin representative

Members of the national advisory board will meet regularly throughout the planning process as well as during and after the four forums. The advisory board will help finalize the topics and sequence of the four forums. During the forums, advisory board members will serve as co-hosts of their specific forum convening as well as potential speakers and participants in the other forums. After each forum, the advisory board will meet to discuss initial findings from the forum and provide guidance to the

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report writing team. These meetings will take place using a Zoom pro account provided through the School Library System of GVBoces. Transcripts will be captured for the report writing team.

Near the end of the project, in May of 2023, the national advisory board will gather in-person for three days to review the work of the project and recommend a final set of best practices for post-COVID school libraries. For their work on the board, participants will be remunerated with a stipend of \$1,500 for each year of the project at a total cost of \$30,000. The stipend includes an expectation that the advisory board will travel to Rochester, New York in the second year of the project to work on the final report during a three day meeting. The evaluator will serve with no stipend and the report writing lead will be remunerated through the report writing contract.

National Forums

The primary activity of the Libraries Today project will be to hold four virtual national forums investigating different aspects of changes made to school libraries during the public health emergency and exploring best practices for moving forward in post-COVID school libraries. The forums will be held in January, May, and September of 2022 and January, 2023. Each forum will last for five days, from Wednesday to Sunday, to allow interactions during the week and on a weekend. A featured speaker will be included as either a synchronous or an asynchronous video presentation on each day to start the conversation. Featured speakers will be drawn from the advisory board as well as outside experts. \$8,000 total, \$2,000 per forum, will be included in the budget for payments to external featured speakers. Additional activities, technologies, and expectations of outputs and outcomes will be similar across the four forums as described below.

Each of the forums will focus on a primary topic and secondary discussion areas as identified by the national advisory board. Potential topics might include instructional practices, collection development, space utilization, school library staffing, public and school partnerships, or similar topics of broad interest. Targeted discussions will also examine different challenges facing rural, urban, tribal, and other types of school libraries and school populations as well as other areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. These discussion areas will cross over the different topics but will also be highlighted at specific forums based on the co-hosts community concerns as addressed in the Collaboration Plan section following.

The forums will be hosted on a virtual platform to allow broad engagement by practitioners in the field who may still be unable to travel during the beginning of the project period. A virtual forum will also allow broader representation from diverse populations across the country. Having co-hosts from communities in different geographical regions of the country will provide a local voice that can encourage participation from their area. Robust communication and interaction will be enabled by a combination of synchronous and asynchronous video presentations, video and text discussion forums, and a ranked-voting platform that will reveal critical issues and responses from the field. These different modes of interaction will provide the mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication called for in a collective impact approach.

From a technical perspective, the forum interactions will be housed on a website at <https://libraries.today>, online now as a holding site reserving the domain name. The site will feature an interactive platform similar to that provided by <https://heysummit.com> with attendee registration, featured speakers, interactive session listings, and additional links out to content and interactive opportunities. HeySummit costs \$1,794 per year for a total project cost of \$3,588 with support for up to 7,500 attendees. Video sessions on HeySummit are made possible using Zoom. Access to Zoom will

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be provided through pro meeting and webinar accounts already licensed to the School Library System of GVBOCES for breakout rooms. A single Zoom Large Meeting account capable of supporting up to 1,000 concurrent users will be purchased at an annual cost of \$819 and a project total of \$1,638. All Zoom sessions will be recorded and transcribed using the embedded live and recorded transcription services provided through Zoom Pro accounts. The live transcriptions support accessible access.

Additional, informal synchronous video interactions will be supported using <https://gather.town>. GatherTown is an emerging communication platform where users can explore a game-like environment to review information on digital posters, view pre-recorded videos, or meet with other users for organic, small-group video conversations. GatherTown costs \$2/concurrent user per forum and the project will initially budget for up to 500 concurrent users per forum period. This will result in a cost of \$1,000 per forum for a total of \$4,000. This tool will support informal interactions, the content of which can then be reflected in the more structured opportunities.

The interactive, ranked-voting discussions will be made possible through <https://thoughtexchange.com>. ThoughtExchange is widely used as a way to distill discussions and have shared thoughts rise to the top via participant voting. ThoughtExchange will be used throughout each of the forums to explore changes that happened in school libraries during the pandemic, the impact of those changes, and desired responses for the changes. GVBOCES has an active account with ThoughtExchange and will include Libraries.Today on the existing account as a room account for \$6,000 a year, \$12,000 total for the project. This is a significant savings for the project as the regular ThoughtExchange account costs \$24,000 a year.

Forum Reporting

The main output from the national forums will be a series of reports detailing the findings from the conversations. These reports will be produced by a report writing team from EveryLibrary Institute (ELI). ELI is chartered in the state of Illinois as a non-profit corporation operating for educational and charitable purposes including research, writing, publishing and related activities around libraries of all types. ELI received its 501(c)3 nonprofit designation as a charitable organization in June 2018. John Chrastka and others from ELI authored two previous reports on school libraries during the COVID pandemic. These two reports demonstrate expertise within the project area and show clear evidence of quality report production. The report writing team will be paid \$20,000 throughout the project for their work on capturing the output of the forums and writing the reports. This payment includes remuneration for the report writing team lead's participation on the national advisory board.

Collaboration Plan

The Libraries.Today project will ensure success and provide stronger national impact by creating a national advisory board that provides input from a wide variety of members. A key role of the national advisory board is setting the common agenda for the collective impact approach to this project. The board will include school librarians and school library stakeholders from multiple types of school library situations including urban, suburban and rural settings. BIPOC representatives on the board will ensure diversity of viewpoints and a strong voice for communities of color throughout the forums. The national advisory board will also include non-librarians drawn from school administration to ensure a collaborative approach. The advisory board will include a school superintendent and a director of curriculum and instruction as well as a school library graduate program director.

Further national collaboration will be realized through the advisory board members acting as co-hosts for the virtual forums. Each forum will be co-hosted by a different geographic region in the country to

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encourage participation. The co-hosts will also represent different populations such as English Language Learners, large and small school districts, tribal libraries, and other diverse groups. Each forum will also invite experts from school libraries and other fields to provide synchronous and asynchronous video presentations. Co-hosts and the national advisory board will help ensure that those experts are inclusive and diverse.

Community Engagement

The target community for the Libraries.Today forums are school librarians and the wider school library stakeholder community including school faculty, administrators, and communities. Perspectives from the target community will be gathered through the interactive, virtual forums. The very public health emergency that led to the demonstrated need for these forums and is forcing them to be held virtually will also have the unintended consequence of making these forums more accessible to the target community than normal. Unlike an in-person national forum, these virtual forums will be freely accessible to any school librarians and stakeholders who wish to participate and provide external input. This means that more voices and perspectives will be incorporated into the project reports as was experienced by the New Jersey Association of School Librarians conference [<https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/njaslspring21-part-1-planning-a-virtual-conference/>].

The use of a voting-based discussion aggregation system like ThoughtExchange will help distill the community thoughts for validation and consensus building during the forums. The intention of these forums is to give agency to school librarians through their participation in a reflective review of the changes they saw in their programs and positions during the pandemic. The opportunity to connect with other school librarians in the informal conversations made possible by GatherTown will let participants see that they are not alone in their struggles over the past year. The consensus building through ThoughtExchange will hopefully serve as a cathartic opportunity to regain agency and see a path forward towards post-COVID school libraries. The different styles of formal and informal interaction will serve as mutually reinforcing activities for the collective impact model as well as providing opportunities for continuous communication.

The challenge of engaging a wide community in an online conference has been highlighted as events moved online during the pandemic. The Libraries.Today forums will be designed using best practices revealed in studies evaluating recent virtual events. Rubinger, et. al. conducted a literature review to develop recommendations for online event engagement [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7244398/>]. The suggestions have been embedded in this project plan in the form of synchronous and asynchronous plenary sessions using Zoom webinars, small group working sessions using Zoom meetings, and an ongoing social interaction space using Gather.Town. The planning process will also be informed by documentation from Achakulvisut, et. al. (2020) of a 3,000 person online conference [<https://elifesciences.org/articles/57892>]. Libraries.Today is projecting attendance of around 2,000, with support for up to 500 concurrent users in small group and social spaces.

In acknowledgement of those that may face access restrictions to engagement with the technologies employed during the forums, the surveys developed for ThoughtExchange will also be provided for download as a simple PDF on the project website at <https://libraries.today>. School librarians and stakeholders can use these offline PDF survey forms to engage with the project.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Libraries.Today project will be led by Dr. Patrick Whipple, Director of Professional Learning for Genesee Valley BOCES. Dr. Whipple is the supervisor of the project director and will be able to provide objective review of progress. All data collection activities will be tailored to the project

goals and aligned with the IMLS program goals. Dr. Whipple will provide a formative report after the first year to the project team, including suggestions for improvement of project planning and implementation, data collection, and reporting and a summative report at the end of the final year.

Dr. Whipple will engage with the national advisory board to follow progress of the project and ensure that efforts remain on target for completion. He will also assist with development of the shared instruments for data collection and community engagement across the forums. The use of shared measurement instruments is a critical condition of collective impact success. Evaluation surveys will be sent to participants of each forum to guide changes for future project work. Dr. Whipple will present the results of these surveys to the national advisory board so that changes can be incorporated in the following forums. A more detailed overview of the process is included in the tables below.

Evaluation Plan: Goal 1 - Identify changes made to school library programs as a result of exigent circumstances during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Indicators of Success - Changes in school library programs, school librarian positions, and other aspects of school libraries as a result of the COVID pandemic have been identified and described by forum participants.

Outputs/Activities	Outcomes	Data Collection Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene four, virtual, national forums to investigate changes in school libraries resulting from pandemic using collective impact model • Report identifying changes in school libraries published after each forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants interact during forums to share experiences and knowledge of changes to school libraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcriptions from video discussions • ThoughtExchange surveys • Comments on forum website • Interviews by report writing team for clarification

Evaluation Plan: Goal 2 - Facilitate community conversations during each national forum using a collective impact model to evaluate the impact of changes to school library programs during the pandemic.

Indicators of Success - Through reflective conversations, participants of the forum evaluate and describe the positive and negative impacts of and propose recommendations to address the changes made during the COVID pandemic.

Outputs/Activities	Outcomes	Data Collection Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During four, virtual, national forums changes in school libraries from pandemic are evaluated. • Report after each forum includes evaluation of positive and negative impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants have a chance to reflect and analyze the outcomes from changes to their school libraries, positive and negative impacts of those changes, recommendations for addressing the changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcriptions from video discussions • Voting on ThoughtExchange • ThoughtExchange reports • Comments on forum website • Interviews by report writing team for clarification

Evaluation Plan: Goal 3 - Identify, publish, and widely distribute a series of school library forum reports establishing best practices and policy recommendations for post-COVID school libraries.

Indicators of Success - Best practices for addressing positive and negative changes initiated during the pandemic are distributed to and implemented by school librarians and stakeholders for successful post-COVID school libraries.

Outputs/Activities	Outcomes	Data Collection Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports published after each of the four forums with best practice recommendations for school library changes • Convening of the advisory board to discuss forums and policy recommendations • Final project report published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School librarians and district stakeholders review and implement recommendations for addressing changes to school libraries as a result of the COVID pandemic. • School library associations and other stakeholders review and implement appropriate policy recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of distribution and social media imprints from reports • Follow up surveys with participants to evaluate potential implementations • Survey of trends in school libraries with respect to policy

Publication of Findings

The main output from the national forums will be a series of reports detailing the findings from the conversations produced by a report writing team from EveryLibrary Institute. Following each forum, the national advisory board will meet virtually to review the data collected. The report writing team will join these meetings to hear feedback from the advisory board to guide their understanding of the forums. The reports will include major themes identified during the forum, evaluation of positive and negative impacts from changes in school libraries, and initial thoughts on best practices for moving forward after the pandemic.

After the fourth forum, the national advisory board will meet in-person for a three day meeting to discuss the data gathered throughout the project. Critical changes will be identified as well as recommended responses for the school library community. A final set of best practices and policy recommendations will also be identified for inclusion in a fifth, wrap-up report for the project also produced by the EveryLibrary Institute report writing team.

The reports will be shared as PDF documents for download and potential printing for local distribution on the <https://libraries.today> website. The website will include sharing links for a variety of social media platforms to encourage readers to spread the reports across their networks. Additionally, *School Library Journal* has committed to be the primary media distribution partner, providing coverage of the forums and the reports [See letter of support in Supportingdoc1.PDF].

Diversity Plan

Though a diversity plan is not required for this National Leadership Grant proposal, the Libraries.Today project is committed to a diverse and inclusive approach to addressing the issue of school libraries in a post-COVID world. The national advisory board has been selected through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. Members of the board include BIPOC representation as well as diversity in region and community setting including urban, suburban, rural, and tribal libraries. The advisory board will bring perspectives on challenges such as English Language Learner populations

and regions without equitable student access to school library programs. The diversity included in the advisory board will also help support the needs of diverse students served by school librarians.

The virtual forums will also allow more diverse participation by removing costs associated with travel and challenges of time away from a job or family to attend an in-person forum, an acknowledged problem for in-person meetings [<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42532-020-00059-y>]. The geographic diversity of the advisory board members who will serve as co-hosts will also give librarians a more local voice encouraging their participation in the process. The hope is that every school librarian will see someone who looks like them and has a job like theirs represented in the call for participation from the national advisory board.

National Impact

The Libraries.Today project will have significant national impact through engagement with school librarians across the country as participants in the four national forums. At an even broader scale, the reports, best practices, and recommendations that are developed through the forums will guide the work of enhancing post-COVID school libraries in every state. The national scope of the forums, with co-hosts drawn from diverse geographic, socio-economic, and school community populations will help every district and school librarian find a recommendation that fits their situation. The reports will be broadly publicized including planned coverage in *School Library Journal* as well as sharing across social media to reach as many of our target audience of school librarians as possible.

In terms of systemic change, this project will help school librarians clearly define the changes that took place in their libraries as a result of the COVID public health emergency. Systems were disrupted by the pandemic; librarians were reassigned to other instructional roles, library spaces were repurposed for other needs, and library collections were disrupted by physical restrictions. Every school library in the country was impacted. The Libraries.Today forums will help the entire profession reflect on the changes and evaluate positive and negative results. The collective impact approach will ensure wide participation and a chance for all voices to be heard. The resulting outputs, reports from the forums, will provide strong recommendations for best practices in post-COVID school libraries.

An additional impact of this forum will be the creation of a model that can be applied to other topics of critical importance to school libraries. Though the work of analyzing changes during the COVID pandemic is time bound by the scope of the project, the forum process can provide a template for reuse. In this way, the results of this project can be sustained beyond the funding period of this project. The need to address a lack of school librarians, the demand for diversity and BIPOC representation in the field, the inequity of library access for students, and other issues is acknowledged even though these critical issues fall outside the scope of this particular project. Yet the Libraries.Today approach of using collective impact and convening virtual forums can inspire action in other areas as well. The School Library System of GVBOCES will commit to work with others on future forums and will support use of the <https://libraries.today> website for projects that follow. To support future projects, Dr. Harris will document the process of planning and implementing these forums using the collective impact model and the selected technologies and will publish a meta report to serve as a guide for future replication.

Performance Measurement Report Plan

The Performance Measurement Report Plan for data collection is included as Supportingdoc2.pdf.

Aug 2022 - Jul 2023	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Advisory board virtual meetings	[Solid black bar]											
Write second report	[Light gray bar]											
Publish second report	[Solid black bar]											
Plan third forum	[Solid black bar]											
Hold third forum		[Solid black bar]										
Evaluate third forum		[Solid black bar]										
Write third report			[Solid black bar]									
Publish third report					[Solid black bar]							
Plan fourth forum			[Solid black bar]									
Hold fourth forum						[Solid black bar]						
Evaluate fourth forum						[Solid black bar]						
Write fourth report						[Solid black bar]						
Publish fourth report								[Solid black bar]				
Compile and analyze forum findings									[Solid black bar]			
In-person advisory board meeting										[Solid black bar]		
Write final project report										[Solid black bar]		
Publish final project report												[Solid black bar]
Publish director's report on forum												[Solid black bar]



DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to digital products that are created using federal funds. This includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data (see below for more specific examples). Excluded are preliminary analyses, drafts of papers, plans for future research, peer-review assessments, and communications with colleagues.

The digital products you create with IMLS funding require effective stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you propose to create digital products in the course of your IMLS-funded project, you must first provide answers to the questions in **SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS**. Then consider which of the following types of digital products you will create in your project, and complete each section of the form that is applicable.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

Complete this section if your project will create digital content, resources, or assets. These include both digitized and born-digital products created by individuals, project teams, or through community gatherings during your project. Examples include, but are not limited to, still images, audio files, moving images, microfilm, object inventories, object catalogs, artworks, books, posters, curricula, field books, maps, notebooks, scientific labels, metadata schema, charts, tables, drawings, workflows, and teacher toolkits. Your project may involve making these materials available through public or access-controlled websites, kiosks, or live or recorded programs.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

Complete this section if your project will create software, including any source code, algorithms, applications, and digital tools plus the accompanying documentation created by you during your project.

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

Complete this section if your project will create research data, including recorded factual information and supporting documentation, commonly accepted as relevant to validating research findings and to supporting scholarly publications.

SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

A.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for developing or creating digital products to release these files under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, or assets; software; research data) you intend to create? What ownership rights will your organization assert over the files you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on their access and use? Who will hold the copyright(s)? Explain and justify your licensing selections. Identify and explain the license under which you will release the files (e.g., a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, Creative Commons licenses; RightsStatements.org statements). Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

A.3 If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

A.1 Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and the format(s) you will use.

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the digital content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG, OBJ, DOC, PDF) you plan to use. If digitizing content, describe the quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, pixel dimensions) you will use for the files you will create.

Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan. How will you monitor and evaluate your workflow and products?

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period. Your plan should address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata or linked data. Specify which standards or data models you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., RDF, BIBFRAME, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content, delivery enabled by IIIF specifications).

D.2. Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Universal Resource Locator), DOI (Digital Object Identifier), or other persistent identifier for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same or similar functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, frameworks, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

B.2 Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

B.5 Provide the name(s), URL(s), and/or code repository locations for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

Access and Use

C.1 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

C.2 Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

As part of the federal government's commitment to increase access to federally funded research data, Section IV represents the Data Management Plan (DMP) for research proposals and should reflect data management, dissemination, and preservation best practices in the applicant's area of research appropriate to the data that the project will generate.

A.1 Identify the type(s) of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use(s) to which you expect them to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use, the proposed scope and scale, and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate data.

A.2 Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

A.3 Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information. If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation). If the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.

A.4 What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies would be necessary for understanding retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data?

A.5 What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?

A.6 What is your plan for managing, disseminating, and preserving data after the completion of the award-funded project?

A.7 Identify where you will deposit the data:

Name of repository:

URL:

A.8 When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?