



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-259698-OLS-26
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

University of Memphis University Libraries

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$99,090
Amount of cost share:	\$5,665

The University of Memphis University Libraries, in collaboration with Tenn Share will create and implement a Title II Accessibility Implementation Toolkit (Title II Toolkit) for Tennessee libraries. Title II is a recent update to the Americans with Disabilities Act that requires compliance and remediation, which is often cost-prohibitive and time-intensive for libraries. This project will research and implement a web-based Title II Toolkit to address the challenges and opportunities faced by Tennessee libraries seeking compliance with Title II. The Title II Toolkit draws inspiration from and builds upon the Digital Lending Toolkit from the Boston Library Consortium. The immediate beneficiaries of the grant will be the more than 600 academic, school, public and special library members of Tenn-Share, a nonprofit membership organization for libraries that serves as Tennessee's only purchasing consortium for all library types. The intended results are a web-based toolkit with Title II training resources and guidance tailored to the needs of librarians that have been vetted by legal and accessibility experts.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Narrative

Introduction

The University of Memphis' (UofM) University Libraries, in collaboration with Tenn-Share, is requesting \$99,350 for a two-year Community-Centered Implementation project addressing Agency-Level Goal 3 and 1.2 to create and implement a Title II Accessibility Implementation Toolkit (Title II Toolkit) for Tennessee libraries. Title II is a recent update to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that requires compliance and remediation, which is often cost-prohibitive and time-intensive for libraries. This IMLS grant will fund the research and implementation of a web-based Title II Toolkit to address the challenges and opportunities faced by Tennessee libraries seeking compliance with Title II.

Project Justification

Title II is a law that was ruled on April 24, 2024, with a compliance deadline of April 25, 2026, for public entities with a service population of over 50,000, and April 25, 2027, for those with a service population of less than 50,000. This law is an extension of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applied to state and local entities, which were previously exempt from compliance. As a result, libraries must bring their digital resources up to the standards imposed by Title II. Title II will have a tremendous impact on library operations, including but not limited to electronic resources licensing, online digital collections, electronic reserves, interlibrary loans, and document delivery in electronic formats. Due to limited staff and funding, many libraries across Tennessee are seeking guidance to confidently address Title II compliance. Ensuring the accessibility of digital resources is expensive both in terms of employee effort and specialized software to address compliance.

To address the needs of Tennessee libraries with limited staff and funds to contribute towards Title II training and compliance, the investigators propose a Title II Toolkit. The toolkit will be designed for librarians to improve their knowledge of and compliance with Title II law. Just as with the Copyright Act of 1976, perpetual Title II guidance from multiple sources and institutions is expected. In collaboration with an accessibility lawyer, UofM's Disability Resources for Students (DRS) department, and the UofM Computer Science graduate program, this toolkit will include guidelines, information, checklists, software recommendations, and additional resources and services based on an environmental needs scan.

Currently there is no centralized resource for Title II compliance with the specific needs of librarians in mind. As both stewards and creators of digital resources, the uncertainties of libraries extend beyond one area of the library, and into daily tasks and workflows performed throughout the library. This toolkit will serve as a state-wide educational resource which can prepare librarians in Tennessee to be Title II specialists within their communities, securing high-paid skilled trade jobs for Americans.

The Title II Toolkit draws inspiration from and builds upon the *Digital Lending Toolkit* from the Boston Library Consortium. Both projects attempt to interpret complicated legal concepts that deeply affect the work of librarians with a freely accessible web-based resource. A web-based toolkit allows for library personnel requiring compliance with Title II to review and share resources, knowledge, and information about Title II compliance. This grant will fund the creation of such a website and ensure that security measures and user registrations are intentional and thorough, as well as Title II compliance with the website itself. By modeling Title II adherence in the toolkit itself, the investigators can model best practices of accessibility standards for other librarians.

The immediate beneficiaries of the grant will be the more than 600 academic, school, public and special library members of Tenn-Share, a nonprofit membership organization for libraries that serves as Tennessee's only purchasing consortium for all library types. However, as Title II is federal law that impacts all libraries in the United States, the investigators anticipate that the proposed initiative will benefit libraries generally.

Project Work Plan

To achieve the desired results, the following project work plan for the Title II Toolkit is proposed:

Phase I: Environmental Needs Scan

- Recruit stakeholders and form an advisory group of experts
- Use surveys and open web forums to determine current practices and users' needs assessments
- Review existing accessibility standards

Phase II: Content Development

- Draft toolkit's core modules
- Create documentation templates
- Conduct Round 1 testing with a pilot library

- Review initial usability and implementation data
- Conduct Round 2 testing with 5-7 libraries of varying types: academic, public, special, rural
- Revise toolkit based on Round 2 testing and feedback
- Review revisions with advisory group

Phase III: Digital Toolkit Compilation

- Develop design for website site map, navigation, and account registration
- Create Title II-compliant staff trainings, compliance roadmaps
- Develop webinars, workshops, training modules
- Assign Creative Commons license to content
- Launch website
- Review effectiveness and compliance of toolkit website

Phase IV: Dissemination

- Present toolkit at conferences and among practitioners
- Evaluate statewide dissemination activities
- Create maintenance plan

Phase I: Environmental Needs Scan (August 2026-December 2026)

In Phase I, the environmental scan will survey Tennessee librarians in coordination with Tenn-Share to gather information about their compliance heretofore with Title II law, existing support/resources they use, and gather data about their institution's most pressing concerns about Title II. While conducting the environmental scan, the investigators will explore and review existing relevant software and other resources related to Title II remediation and compliance. Simultaneously the investigators will begin identifying and convening a group of experts, which will include an accessibility legal consultant, a disability expert, and Tennessee librarians from different library types, such as academic, public, and school libraries. The investigators will seek diversity in terms of libraries located in urban and rural areas throughout the state.

Phase II: Content development (December 2026 – August 2027)

In Phase II, the investigators will begin to draft the core modules and create documentation based on the findings from the Phase I needs assessment of Tennessee stakeholders. The investigators will then work with pilot institutions – an academic library, a public library, a special library, and a school library – to conduct first round testing of the toolkit materials. Based on the feedback from the pilot libraries, the investigators will

review the toolkit's usability and implementation data, followed by another round of testing with five to seven libraries of different types. The investigators will continue revising the toolkit based on user testing and present the findings to the expert advisory group for comment and approval.

Phase III: Digital toolkit compilation (August 2027 – April 2028)

In Phase III, the investigators will begin developing the website site map, navigation, and account registration, which will eventually become the final deliverable. Additionally, the investigators will start creating Title II-compliant staff training and compliance roadmaps in consultation with the expert advisory group. The investigators will begin preparing for dissemination by developing webinars, workshops, and training modules for the intended audience. Near the end of Phase III, overlapping with Phase IV, the investigators plan to launch the website and continue evaluating its effectiveness and accuracy in compliance with Title II.

Phase IV: Dissemination (November 2027 – July 2028)

The final phase of the project is organized around dissemination of the toolkit. The investigators plan to present at conferences, webinars, and other venues among practitioners. The investigators will use this time to execute and evaluate the statewide dissemination activities, create a five-year maintenance plan for the content, and create a five-year maintenance plan for the website.

Project Personnel

PI: Caitlin Harrington, Associate Professor, Information Access Services Department Head, University Libraries at the University of Memphis. She will be responsible for overall project management and toolkit implementation, data management workflows, and reporting. Furthermore, she will supervise the graduate students working on the project. Professor Harrington will form an advisory group of experts, participate in the interpretation and evaluation of findings, review usability and dissemination activities.

Co PI: Sofiya Petrova Dahman, Assistant Professor, Interlibrary Loan and Resource Delivery Librarian, University Libraries at University of Memphis. She will contribute by performing an environmental scan of current accessibility practices and users' needs. Professor Dahman will also help analyze the quality, effectiveness, and timeliness of the toolkit. She will promote and present the toolkit at conferences and among practitioners.

Co PI: Brannen Vick Varner, Assistant Professor, Graduate Student Outreach Librarian, University Libraries at the University of Memphis. She will participate in the interpretation

of findings and dissemination activities. Professor Varner will create staff training, compliance roadmaps, and develop webinars, workshops, and training modules.

Expert advisory group: The expert advisory group will be formed by the PI, and will be comprised of an accessibility legal expert, whose role will be to ensure the accuracy of all toolkit materials, and a disability expert, who will advise on the toolkit content. Other members of the advisory group include the Tenn-Share Executive Director, who will facilitate dissemination of the final product throughout Tennessee, and Tennessee librarians from public, school, and public libraries to advise on issues related to their specific library types.

Student workers: The students will support study operations under the PI's supervision, conducting initial testing, website development and launching, maintenance, participant recruitment and scheduling; administration of procedures and instruments; documentation of toolkit functionality.

Evaluation & Impact

The investigators will work with Tenn-Share's Executive Director to form a special interest group through the consortium that will meet monthly via a video conferencing platform, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. During monthly meetings Tenn-Share members will be invited to provide feedback and share their concerns regarding the toolkit and Title II compliance generally. Participation in and outcomes of the special interest group will be used to evaluate the Title II Toolkit and demonstrate impact.

Impact will be further demonstrated by toolkit web metrics, and a feedback form will be available on the website to further evaluate the effectiveness of the Title II Toolkit.

Project Results

The intended results are a web-based toolkit with Title II training resources and guidance tailored to the needs of librarians that have been vetted by legal and accessibility experts. Toolkit users should feel confident that they are in legal compliance with Title II law after engaging with the toolkit materials. Desirables include building confidence for users when remediating and complying with Title II law by using vetted resources and information.

The Title II Toolkit will address the need of librarians to confidently navigate Title II compliance with an easily accessible resource that is designed with their needs in mind. The toolkit will be an authoritative source that librarians can refer to without needing to decipher or interpret the law on their own, or work with their institutional legal counsel, who may not understand the breadth and scope of their work.

The Phase I environmental needs scan will ensure that the Title II Toolkit addresses the many and varied needs of librarians relating to Title II compliance. The investigators will attempt to create a toolkit that is adaptable and generalizable for the diverse audiences that the investigators seek to support through the Phase I needs assessment.

The investigators plan to disseminate the toolkit to intended beneficiaries in a variety of ways, including conference presentations, webinars, email marketing, and workshops. The Phase I environmental scan will provide insights into which venues will be most appropriate to reach the intended audiences.

The investigators plan to sustain the Title II Toolkit for a minimum of five years after the end of the grant period or less depending on changes to the law. The investigators will create a toolkit that addresses the law as it was passed on April 24, 2024, but do not have the ongoing funds to retain legal counsel for compliance with future updates without additional funding. Additionally, the investigators are willing to hand over the toolkit to another entity that desires to maintain it and has the funding available to do so.

Community-Centered Implementation - 1-2 years Completion

Year 1 - Schedule of Completion

[illegible]

Year 2 - Schedule of Completion

[illegible]