



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-260450-OLS-26
Project Category: Forum

Georgia Tech Library

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$195,245
Amount of cost share:	\$0

Georgia Tech Library will conduct a forum to address academic library accessibility after the Title II implementation deadline. The forum will emphasize two complementary lenses: Internal Operations and Implementation (workflows, governance, and responsible artificial intelligence-assisted remediation) and External Ecosystems and Accountability (campus partnerships, vendor relations, and user-facing impacts). Project results will include a 75-page Sustaining Compliance Playbook; an openly accessible Georgia Tech Digital Repository collection that will include recordings from presentations on the first day of the conference; and a moderated community of practice listserv to extend adoption and shared learning beyond the convening. Partner organizations will serve as contacts for identifying experts for inclusion, promotion and editorial partners in the Playbook, and seeds for the community of practice.

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.

Sustaining Compliance: A Summit on Academic Library Accessibility After the Title II Implementation Deadline

Georgia Tech Research Corporation (GTRC), with implementation led by the Georgia Tech Library, requests \$195,245 through the IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries (NLG-L) Forum project type. The goal of this grant is to convene a national expert forum focused on sustaining Title II accessibility compliance in academic libraries. Academic libraries are building compliance approaches in real time, while navigating evolving expectations, complex digital collections and media, and persistent vendor accessibility gaps. This work will not end with the deadline. Georgia Tech will host the forum in Atlanta at the Georgia Tech Library on May 20–21, 2027, bringing together up to 60 funded experts (with additional participation as funds and local attendance allow). Participants will be selected to ensure diversity across institution types and contexts. The forum will emphasize two complementary lenses: Internal Operations and Implementation (workflows, governance, and responsible AI-assisted remediation) and External Ecosystems and Accountability (campus partnerships, vendor relations, and user-facing impacts). Project results will include a 75-page *Sustaining Compliance Playbook*; an openly accessible Georgia Tech Digital Repository collection that will include recordings from presentations on the first day of the conference; and a moderated community of practice listserv to extend adoption and shared learning beyond the convening. Partner organizations to serve as contacts for identifying experts for inclusion, promotion and editorial partners in the *Playbook*, and seeds for the community of practice include the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, Clemson University, Emory University, Florida State University, Georgia State University, North Carolina State University, University of California – Berkeley, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, University of Tennessee – Knoxville, and Vanderbilt University.

Project Justification

The forum addresses the operational reality created by the U.S. Department of Justice’s ADA Title II Web and Mobile App Accessibility rule, which requires public entities, including public colleges and universities and the library services they provide, to ensure their web content and mobile apps meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA by staggered compliance dates. For public entities with a total population of 50,000 or more, the compliance date is April 24, 2026; for entities with a population of 0–49,999, the compliance date is April 26, 2027. Academic libraries are responding by auditing and remediating large volumes of legacy digital content (including PDFs, images, and audio and video files), strengthening accessibility practices for new content creation, improving vendor accountability when third-party platforms and databases fall short, and coordinating with campus partners to deliver timely, consistent access to resources. This convening is designed to capture “year one after the deadline” lessons, identify persistent gaps and emergent problems, and produce a practical playbook and templates that help academic libraries sustain compliance as an ongoing, evolving set of workflows rather than a one-time project.

From April 2026-April 2027, academic libraries are learning quickly to meet the demands of this standard, often in parallel and in isolation, while the expectations, tools, and constraints continue to evolve. This forum will convene experts across a wide range of academic library types to build durable professional connections and foster a network that academic libraries can rely on as this work becomes part of normal operations.

The need is immediate and concrete. 19.4% of individuals have a cognitive or visual disability that the requirements of Title II compliance are designed to remediate (National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, 2024). However, the scope of the challenge is enormous. For instance, Georgia Tech Library provided 6,518,620 e-resources in 2024 to an audience of 63,067 Georgia Tech community members; this implies that over 12,000 individuals may have disabilities, which will necessitate Title II remediation to ensure equitable access. The Georgia Tech Library (like many institutions) does a large amount of its work through digital documents that have varied levels of accessibility based on where they come from and the vendors involved.

This load will fall on both libraries and vendors to solve. However, some vendors have stated that they will not be compliant on Title II timelines, even when their products are essential to specific academic programs. For instance, Jane's Online, a critical resource in aerospace engineering research, has informed the Georgia Tech Library that it has no plans to make its products accessible under Title II. Similar vendors force libraries to search for other alternatives for this information.

Libraries are left negotiating risk mitigation strategies and access alternatives in real time. Legacy content remains a persistent problem. Archives and special collections add additional complexity due to file formats, descriptive practices, and the long tail of digitization.

When accessibility fails, the impact is not abstract. Scholars and community members are denied timely, independent access to information and services they are entitled to use. Accessibility gaps also create institutional exposure: compliance is a legal requirement. Failure to make progress increases legal and reputational risk for institutions. The problem is nationwide in scope, but the solutions must be operational and live in each library. Libraries need a shared language for what sustainable compliance looks like, common approaches to vendor accountability, and ready-to-use practices that can be implemented by institutions with different staffing and resource levels.

This project is intentionally structured as a curated expert forum rather than a traditional conference. A standard conference format is optimized for information sharing; this forum is optimized for field-building and production. A smaller, intentionally selected expert cohort allows participants to speak candidly about what is working and what is failing, including difficult cases involving procurement, campus governance, and vendor constraints. It also allows the co-creation of tangible outputs: a practical playbook grounded in firsthand experience. The forum

will ensure that the right voices are present in the same room: library workers, archivists, vendors, legal experts, and accessibility experts.

Georgia Tech is a strong host for this work and is widely recognized for technological excellence. It has an institutional record of convening expert working groups to create usable guidance. The Georgia Tech Library has a reputation among peers for a pragmatic approach to innovation and for hosting events that support the profession. The plan is to host the two-day event in the Price Gilbert Memorial Library and Crosland Tower library buildings at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA in May 2027.

Scope and boundaries

This forum is focused on academic libraries to keep the work practical and relevant to the campus realities libraries navigate. It will produce tools and guidance that will be useful to other library types, particularly those navigating consortial relationships, but the primary audience remains academic libraries. The forum will not function as a general accessibility conference or a comprehensive compliance training program. It will also avoid providing legal advice; legal perspectives will be included to clarify i and risk considerations at a general level.

Track framing and thematic focus

The forum is organized around two complementary tracks that reflect the reality of Title II work in academic libraries:

Track 1: Internal Operations and Implementation

Focus: Accessible internal workflows, training, and implementation practices that can be adapted across institutional contexts, including responsible AI-assisted remediation with appropriate human review and guardrails

Example topics: Sustainable workflows for technical services; quality assurance in accessible document delivery; internal accessibility governance; managing just-in-time accessibility remediation.

Track 2: External Ecosystems and Accountability

Focus: Sustainable external partnerships and cross-campus accountability structures that support accessible content delivery at scale, including coordinated service models, transparent expectations for shared responsibilities, and strategies for ensuring accessibility obligations are met when relying on vendors, collaborators, or distributed campus units.

Example topics: Vendor relations and procurement leverage; creating and sustaining campus partnerships (instructional units, disability offices, IT, archives); outsourcing and remediation support models; Title II impact on e-resource vendor negotiations; student-facing service

expectations, communications, and escalation paths when resources cannot be made accessible quickly.

Project Work Plan

Project approach and period

This project will run from September 2026 through August 2027 and will deliver a curated, two-day expert forum hosted at the Georgia Tech Library in Atlanta, Georgia on May 20–21, 2027, followed by publication of a 75-page ***Sustaining Compliance Playbook***. The forum is intentionally designed as an expert working convening rather than a traditional conference. Day 1 will generate publicly shareable content (recorded sessions); Day 2 will be an off-the-record working day where the primary artifacts are structured notes and draft toolkit components that directly feed the *Playbook*.

Recruitment, selection, and participant composition

The project will begin with a pulse survey in Fall 2026 to gauge the efforts taken by academic libraries to respond to the Title II rule deadline for large population institutions. The survey will also identify institutions and experts that librarian and archivist respondents looked toward for guidance, sample policies, or example workflows in the lead up to the April 2026/2027 deadlines. This data will serve as both a baseline for the *Sustaining Compliance Playbook* to be built from and a source of potential expertise for forum participant recruitment efforts. Additionally, the project team will connect with experts in the fields and identified partner institutions to get feedback on potential areas of focus for the forum.

The project team will recruit and select participants to ensure diversity across institution types, operating contexts, and maturity of the institution's Title II response. Recruitment for participants will begin in January 2027 with invitations for participation going out, informed by the pulse survey and feedback from partner institutions who have committed to providing potential expert names for inclusion. The core selection committee will be led by John Mack Freeman (Program Chair/Editor-in-Chief), August Engelsman, and Cliff Landis, with additional consultation from partners and other project team members as needed to refine topic priorities and identify participants.

To ensure the forum's travel support is directed to participants with demonstrated, field-relevant experience, the project will define expert using role-based and evidence-based criteria. Invitees will be selected based on current responsibility for Title II accessibility within an academic library context (for example: leading or materially contributing to operational workflows, governance, procurement/vendor engagement, digital collections/media accessibility, or campus partnership coordination). The selection committee will use a brief rubric to prioritize participants who can provide evidence of applied experience, such as examples of workflows or policies, documented/disclosable vendor remediation negotiations, or responsibility for legacy content.

Invitations will be issued by **Georgia Tech Dean of Libraries Leslie Sharp** via email and will include an RSVP and pre-work submission form. Targeted invitations will include a request for the invitee to contribute in a specific way (for example, serving on a panel, presenting a case-based talk, facilitating a working session, or contributing a template or decision framework). This expectation will be stated clearly in the invitation, so participants understand the project's production goals.

The forum will provide **up to 60 travel awards** (reimbursed up to **\$1,200 per participant** following Georgia Tech travel policies and federal allowability). Reimbursements will include airfare, lodging, per-diem meals (and ground transport. Any overage must be approved in advance and may be reimbursed as funds allow; any non-approved overage remains the attendee's responsibility. Additional participants may be invited as funds allow (for example, when invitees decline travel support or when local participants do not require reimbursement). A per-institution cap (generally **1–2 participants per institution**) will be used to protect institutional diversity and avoid overrepresentation by well-resourced or nearby institutions.

Institution-type targeting and reserved seats

To balance “implementation at scale” with “implementation under constraint,” the project will reserve seats across institution types while maintaining flexibility to address emergent needs. The selection plan is built around three elements:

1) At-scale implementation (32 seats).

A significant portion of funded seats will be reserved for institutions with complex digital ecosystems and high-capacity service environments. This is predominantly research universities that have the capacity to test and operationalize approaches on an enterprise-level.

2) Under-constraint and equity of access (20 seats).

The project will reserve funded seats for institutions where capacity constraints are a defining reality and where practical, repeatable workflows have high impact, including **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**, **Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)**, **Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)**, **community colleges**, and **rural- or regional-serving institutions**. These perspectives will help ensure the *Playbook* is usable by the full higher education ecosystem rather than reflecting only high-resource models.

3) Discretionary expertise seats (8 seats).

The project will reserve **eight discretionary seats** to ensure the right expertise is in attendance. These seats may be used for cross-cutting perspectives such as campus accessibility partners (non-library), legal perspectives on Title II compliance (not legal advice), vendor perspectives (non-sales), consortial/shared-platform leadership, or other expertise identified during recruitment and topic refinement. Vendor participation will be limited to individuals who can contribute relevant perspectives (not sales or marketing), will be governed by clear participation

expectations in the invitation and onsite guidance, and will support the forum's goal of producing best practices.

This selection structure is designed to keep the forum grounded while ensuring the output remains applicable to academic libraries of varying types, missions, and resource levels.

Pre-work and topic shaping

To support candid, discussion and to accelerate production of actionable outputs, participants will be asked to complete pre-work prior to the forum. Pre-work will be collected through a Georgia Tech-hosted web form and will be due by April 15, 2027. The pre-work will be strongly encouraged but not used as a gatekeeping mechanism for attendance.

Each participant will be asked to submit three items:

1. **An external-facing problem** (for example, a vendor, campus partner, or student-facing issue) that illustrates a Title II accessibility challenge.
2. **An internal process artifact** (for example, a workflow description, policy excerpt, decision framework, or training/onboarding resource).
3. **A “failed lesson”** describing an approach that did not work and why (with an option for anonymity).

Prompts will be finalized and focuses encouraged based on pulse survey and expert conversation results. The project team will synthesize pre-work submissions and pulse survey results to refine panel themes for the first day, identify recurring challenges, and shape working sessions on the second day around high-demand artifacts.

Onsite planning and support

Primary responsibility for the logistics of the on-site forum and day-of operations will lie with Catherine Mancini. Gabe Nagel will provide supervision of student assistants and day-of support coordination. They will also help oversee the hiring and supervision of student workers to assist with this project.

Student assistants will support the forum before, during, and after the event under project team supervision. Before the forum, they will help with participant logistics, pre-work intake/organization, and preparing working-session materials. During the forum, they will provide day-of support (check-in, room transitions, runner tasks, basic AV support with the AV lead, and structured note capture using project templates). After the forum, they will support production work by cleaning and aligning transcripts/captions for recordings and assisting with formatting *Playbook* sections for repository deposit, with all outputs quality-checked by project staff before release.

Forum structure and outputs

Day 1 (May 20, 2027): Recorded sessions and shared framing.

Day 1 will feature two parallel tracks (as described above), each designed to capture practical knowledge that can be shared broadly through recordings and supporting materials. The agenda will be: opening keynote, two morning session blocks, lunch, two afternoon session blocks, and a closing keynote. Day 1 sessions will be recorded using Georgia Tech Library AV infrastructure (likely a Zoom webinar capture) and will be prepared for public release in accessible formats after the forum.

Day 2 (May 21, 2027): Off-the-record working sessions and playbook production.

Day 2 is designed as an off-the-record working day to support problem-solving and collaboration. Sessions will emphasize moderated roundtables, facilitated working groups, and structured synthesis. The primary Day 2 artifacts will be working notes and draft toolkit components that feed directly into the *Playbook*. Breakout sessions will be supported by designated facilitators to ensure production of outputs.

Across both tracks, the forum will explicitly support development of content for two high-demand tool areas:

- **Vendor accountability toolkit elements** (for example: negotiation and escalation patterns, procurement questions, documentation expectations, mitigation decision trees when vendors cannot or will not meet accessibility requirements).
- **AI-assisted remediation guidance** (for example: where AI can accelerate remediation, where it introduces risk, minimum guardrails and documentation practices, and required human review checkpoints).

Accessibility and participant support

The forum will be hosted in accessible spaces within the Georgia Tech Library. Day 1 recordings will be published with transcripts and closed captioning, and participants will receive guidance on accessible presentation practices prior to arrival. Accessibility accommodations will be provided based on participant needs gathered through the RSVP process, and the project will allocate resources to ensure accommodations are provided in a timely and appropriate manner.

Playbook and repository dissemination

The project will publish:

- The *Sustaining Compliance Playbook* and templates (accessible formats and HTML).
- A Georgia Tech Digital Repository collection containing Day 1 recordings and supporting materials (including selected slide decks and other resources shared by participants).

Publication targets align with the project schedule: repository deposit in June 2027, transcripts and ensuring accessibility of videos finalized in July 2027, and the *Sustaining Compliance Playbook* published by August 2027.

The ***Sustaining Compliance Playbook*** will be produced through a structured editorial workflow designed to ensure it functions as a practical toolkit rather than a set of conference proceedings. Freeman will serve as Editor-in-Chief, with Engelsman and Landis as section editors, and the project team will assign lead authors for each major section based on pre-work submissions and forum participation. The Playbook will follow a defined structure, with a draft table of contents that includes: (1) Purpose and scope; (2) A sustainable operations model for Title II work; (3) Internal workflows and patterns (triage, remediation, QA, documentation); (4) Governance and training (roles, onboarding, accountability); (5) Digital collections, archives, and non-document media; (6) Vendor accountability and procurement strategies; (7) Campus partnerships and user-facing service expectations; (8) AI-assisted remediation: opportunities, risks, and guardrails; (9) templates and checklists; and (10) Case examples and “failed lessons” synthesis (de-identified). Drafting will follow an editorial calendar with section drafts completed in June 2027, internal review and accessibility quality assurance in July 2027, and publication in August 2027. To validate usability, the project will conduct a lightweight review of key sections with 6–10 forum participants representing different institution types, incorporating feedback prior to final release, and all deliverables will undergo accessibility checks before publication in accessible formats.

Listserv execution

In August 2027, a listserv will be put together hosted at Georgia Institute of Technology (or a volunteer partner institution) to provide a hub for ongoing conversations around Title II compliance. The listserv will be seeded with forum attendees and suggested members from partner institutions.

Risk mitigation

This project is designed to be feasible within the project period and resilient to common convening risks. To address recruitment and attendance risk, the project team will use a staged invitation process beginning in January 2027, maintain a waitlist of alternate invitees by institution type and expertise area, and confirm participation early enough to reissue invitations if cancellations occur. To mitigate the risk of uneven participation or low pre-work completion, the project will provide structured prompts, clear examples of acceptable submissions, and timed reminders, and will offer an anonymity option for “failed lessons” to encourage candid contributions. To manage technology and publication risks for recordings, sessions will be recorded using established Georgia Tech Library AV infrastructure with a run-of-show that includes tech checks, backup capture where feasible, and clear presenter release language. If a presenter declines recording or cannot be cleared for release, the project will capture and

publish an accessible session summary instead. Finally, to reduce the risk of delays in the *Playbook*, the project will assign section leads in advance, follow a fixed editorial calendar with internal checkpoints, and use student support for formatting and transcript/caption cleanup under staff oversight.

Evaluation and outcomes tracking

After the forum, the project will collect evaluation measures focused on participation, immediate value, and early adoption. Data collection will include: attendance, participant institution type, participant role, an immediate post-event survey, a three-month reflection survey, and repository analytics. Assessment will be led by Matt Frizzell, Assessment Librarian at the Georgia Tech Library, as an in-kind contribution. These measures will inform final reporting and will be used to refine dissemination approaches for the *Playbook* and templates.

Project Results

Intended results and deliverables

Project results and deliverables will include: (1) a 75-page *Sustaining Compliance Playbook*; (2) the *Sustaining Compliance Playbook Collection* in the Georgia Tech Digital Repository, containing Day 1 recordings and supporting materials; and (3) a moderated community of practice listserv, the Title II Academic Library Accessibility Community, for learning beyond the convening.

How results address the need and opportunity

These deliverables directly address the need identified in this proposal: academic libraries are moving from deadline-driven compliance work into long-term operational reality, where sustainable workflows are required across a wide range of institutional contexts. The *Playbook* will translate the first year of post-deadline lessons into practical guidance.

Ensuring deliverables are adaptable, generalizable, and usable

To ensure the deliverables are readily adaptable and usable by other institutions and communities, the *Playbook* will be structured as a modular toolkit that can be applied to different staffing models and resource levels. Templates and checklists will be released in accessible formats that support reuse, and each major practice will include brief context notes describing required inputs, common dependencies, and practical variations for different institution types. Usability will be validated through a lightweight review of key sections by forum participants representing different institution types and roles, with feedback incorporated prior to publication.

Dissemination plan

Dissemination will occur through open publication and long-term stewardship in the Georgia Tech Digital Repository, announcements to relevant national higher education library and

accessibility channels, and presentations by project committee members at local, regional, and professional venues as feasible (with particular focus on academic conferences with national audiences including ACRL 2029). Follow-up webinars may occur only when there is clear demand and partner interest and will be offered as a targeted support mechanism rather than a standing program.

Sustaining benefits beyond the project period

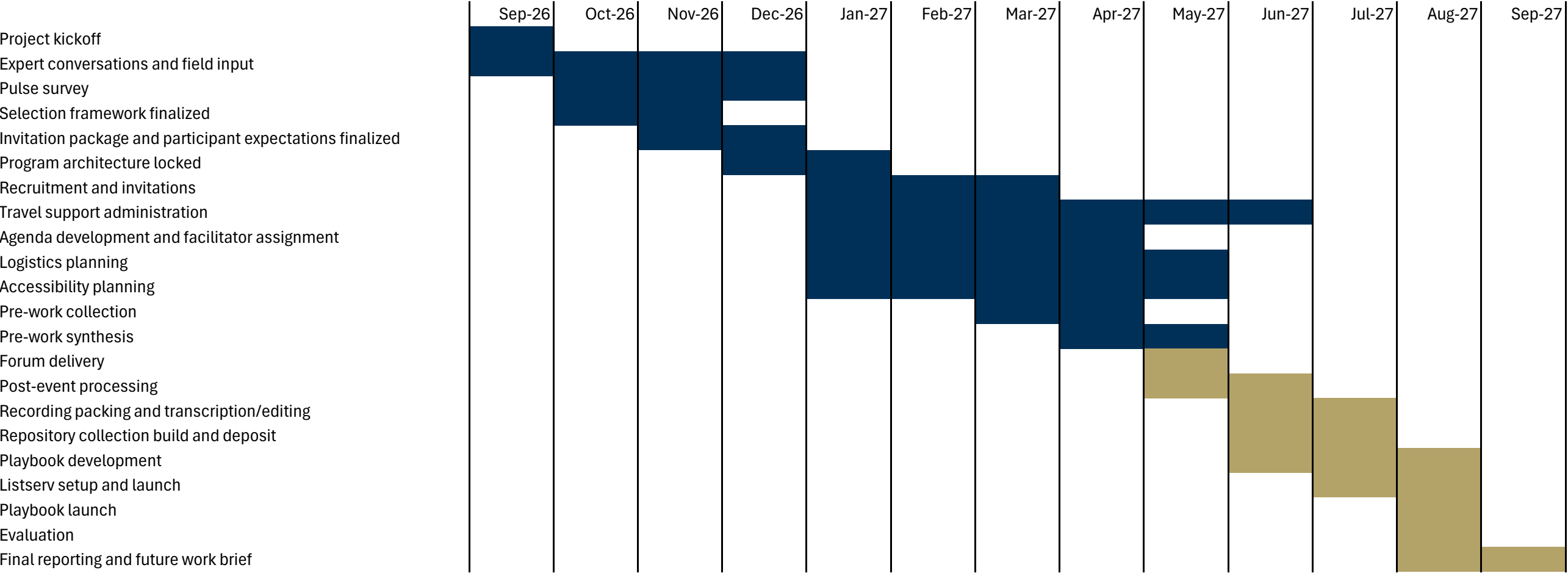
Benefits will be sustained beyond the period of performance by maintaining the collection as part of normal Georgia Tech Digital Repository workflows and moderating the listserv as a lightweight community mechanism peer exchange as standards, tools, and vendor practices evolve.

How results inform future work

Consistent with expectations for Forum projects, evaluation findings and adoption barriers will be synthesized into a short “future work” brief posted alongside the Playbook in the repository. This brief will identify unresolved questions and priority topics surfaced by the expert cohort, guiding potential follow-on work such as targeted micro-guides, future convenings, and/or partnerships. If the need for future convenings around this topic are identified, further funding may be sought.

References

National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. (2024). “Disability impacts us all infographic.” <https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/articles-documents/disability-impacts-all-of-us-infographic.html>



Project Event

Project kickoff
Expert conversations and field input
Pulse survey
Selection framework finalized
Invitation package and participant expectations finalized
Program architecture locked
Recruitment and invitations
Travel support administration
Agenda development and facilitator assignment
Logistics planning
Accessibility planning
Pre-work collection
Pre-work synthesis
Forum delivery
Post-event processing
Recording packing and transcription/editing
Repository collection build and deposit
Playbook development
Listserv setup and launch
Playbook launch
Evaluation
Final reporting and future work brief

Date Range

September 2026
September 2026 - October 2026
October 2026 - December 2026
October 2026 - November 2026
November 2026 - December 2026
December 2026 - January 2027
January 2027 - March 2027
January 2027 - June 2027
January 2027 - April 2027
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March 2027 - April 2027
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