



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-260279-OLS-26
Project Category: Planning

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, Madre Maria Teresa Guevara Library

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$199,867
Amount of cost share:	\$49,584

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón's Madre Mara Teresa Guevara Library will create a framework that pairs embedded librarians with designated faculty liaisons and subject-matter experts to co-produce research knowledge. The planning grant will reposition librarians from information mediators to active members of research development teams, leveraging information literacy expertise, while curating collaborative research experiences. Using a mixed-methods approach, the project team will address specialized capacity building and technical upskilling for the research lifecycle, solidify alliances through the faculty liaison framework, co-design an advanced information literacy curriculum, launch a research-driven hub pilot at the library, and develop a feasibility analysis and blueprint for scaling. As a result, the project will establish a scalable model for embedded librarianship.

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.

The Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship

Introduction:

Academic libraries at institutions transitioning to research-intensive models face increasing demand for advanced research support services. Yet many library professionals lack the specialized training needed to fully participate in the research lifecycle. Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (Sagrado) requests \$200,000 from the *Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program* (LB21-FY26) for a two-year Planning Project. This initiative is strategically designed to align directly with both the overarching agency goals and the specific program objectives, as outlined below:

Framework Level	Strategic Goal	Specific Objectives Addressed by the Project
LB21 Program-Level 2	Goal 2: Train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff	Objective 2.1: Develop or enhance professional development and training programs to enable the library and archival workforce to meet the needs of their communities.
IMLS Agency Level	Goal 2	Objective 2.1 Promote broad public engagement.

[Sagrado](#) is a private postsecondary education institution with the oldest roots in Puerto Rico, established in 1880. Sagrado is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and licensed by the Puerto Rico Council on Education. The University is committed to Puerto Rico's socio-economic development and values its role as an institution responsible for training the next generation of professional, scientific, and cultural innovators. Our mission is to educate people in intellectual freedom and moral conscience, willing to participate in the construction of a more authentically Christian Puerto Rican society: a community of solidarity in justice and peace. Our vision is to offer a unique academic project, an innovative educational experience in which the classroom is the world, in an environment characterized by a community life of excellence and supported by the principle that the human being and Christian values are the very center of the project.

The Madre María Teresa Guevara Library ([BMMTG](#)) serves as the central hub for teaching, research, access to information, and academic enrichment at Sagrado. The library has transformed into a Learning Commons model designed to foster collaboration, exploration, and knowledge creation. Its spaces provide students and faculty with access to diverse resources, specialized services, research support, and advanced technologies within an environment conducive to active learning.

The library's on-site resources include multidisciplinary collections in print and digital formats, study rooms, computer workstations, and areas dedicated to collaborative and individual learning.

Through the Learning Commons, students benefit from integrated academic support services that connect information literacy, research skills, and the effective use of technology in the learning process.

In addition to physical holdings, the library provides robust electronic access to scholarly resources. Its [online library](#) offers a comprehensive collection of more than 85 licensed databases covering the humanities, social sciences, communication, health, business, and the natural sciences. These databases provide access to full-text academic journals, e-books, reference works, newspapers, and audiovisual resources. Users can access these materials remotely, ensuring that learning and research are fully supported beyond campus.

The library also maintains open educational resources (OER) and subscribes to specialized research platforms that enhance teaching and learning. Faculty and students have access to citation management tools, subject guides, and tutorials designed to strengthen academic work.

As a result, the Madre María Teresa Guevara Library is not only a service unit but also an active learning center that plays an integral role in students' academic success and faculty's professional development. Its dual emphasis on on-site services and digital access ensures the breadth and depth of resources required to meet the needs of a 21st-century higher education institution.

Despite the Library's strong support for undergraduate research instruction, Sagrado's transition to a teaching and research university has created new demands for advanced research services that exceed the library workforce's current training and infrastructure. Librarians must develop specialized competencies in research data management, open science practices, and research collaboration to effectively support faculty, graduate students, and emerging doctoral programs. Addressing this workforce development gap is essential for enabling the Library to function as an active partner in the institutional research ecosystem.

Building on the BMMTG Library's success in the undergraduate research sequence, this project seeks to scale the impact of library faculty through high-level research partnerships by adopting a specialized Embedded Librarianship (EL) model. Under this model, Sagrado proposes a strategic transformation that elevates librarians from information mediators to active members of research and development teams. As a newly designated research institution, the University will leverage its expertise in Information Literacy to adopt the proposed model.

The needs of the BMMTG Library arise directly from institutional priorities established in the Sagrado 2030 Strategic Plan. This plan was developed through a university-wide participatory process in which students, faculty, and administrative staff collaborated to identify the institution's strategic priorities. As a result, the plan represents a shared institutional roadmap and reflects a consensus among stakeholders regarding Sagrado's future direction.

Need #1: Transformation Toward a Teaching and Research University

The Sagrado 2030 Strategic Plan establishes the institutional transition from a teaching-focused university to a teaching and research institution. This transformation began formally in January 2026 and prioritizes the development of faculty research, creative, and knowledge production that

contribute to the common good and to the advancement of Puerto Rico's intellectual and cultural development.

This transition is already underway with the approval of Sagrado's first doctoral program, and the University's long-term strategy envisions developing additional doctoral programs across academic schools. Expanding research capacity and supporting graduate-level scholarship are, therefore, central institutional priorities. (*Details in Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 1-4*)

Need #2: Foundations for Doctoral Education

The Sagrado 2030 Strategic Plan (Goal C.2) establishes the institutional priority of building the foundations for doctoral education by defining academic structures, identifying priority research areas, strengthening faculty research capacity, and developing funding and scholarship models that support high-quality doctoral programs and enhance the University's academic reputation.

Need #3: Strengthening the Library Workforce

The Sagrado 2030 Strategic Plan (A.9.4) calls for an analysis of compensation structures for library personnel and their alignment with emerging academic support functions, including research assistance and scholarly support services. The plan also emphasizes strengthening professional development in areas such as information literacy, data management, and academic research support.

These efforts align with Executive Order #14278: Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Jobs of the Future and support IMLS LB21 Goal 2: Train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff, specifically Objective 2.1: Develop or enhance professional development and training programs to enable the library workforce to meet the needs of their communities.

Need #4: Community Engagement Through Puerto Rican Literature

The Sagrado 2030 Strategic Plan (B.2.2) calls for developing an outreach and programming strategy, supported by a defined investment plan, to position the BMMTG Library as a community reference center for the study of contemporary Puerto Rican literature. This initiative will be implemented through curated collections, author events, academic collaborations, and public engagement programming.

This mandate aligns with Sagrado's new Doctorate in Creative Writing and supports IMLS Agency-Level Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement, specifically Objective 2.1: Promote broad public engagement.

Need #5: A Research Library Model for Graduate and Doctoral Education

As Sagrado advances its transformation into a teaching and research university, the institution has identified the need to develop a conceptual model that redefines the Library's role in supporting research and graduate education. This model envisions librarians not only as mediators of information resources but also as active collaborators in research, data management, and knowledge production.

To support this transition, the University is advancing an institutional framework to strengthen the research capacity of faculty and library staff, and to identify priority areas in which the Library can

contribute to scholarly activity and research development. The initiative also seeks to identify the infrastructure, partnerships, and resources required to support the Library's evolution from a unit primarily focused on undergraduate services and community engagement into a comprehensive research support center.

The framework will align library services and internal processes with the University's transition to a teaching and research institution and position the Library as a research partner for scholars in Puerto Rico and beyond. It will also integrate library services with the development of graduate education and establish sustainable structures to support doctoral training, including research support, information literacy, and scholarly communication services.

The proposed project, Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship, responds directly to these institutional needs. The addition of an Embedded Librarian model and the creation of the Research Empowerment Hub will strengthen the BMMTG Library's capacity to support faculty research and graduate education by providing integrated, end-to-end research support services aligned with the University's strategic priorities.

To inform this initiative, the BMMTG Library has initiated exploratory collaboration with the Graduate Research & Innovation Center (GRIC) at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, an established research support center that integrates embedded librarianship within its research infrastructure. These exchanges will inform the development of the proposed model by incorporating lessons learned and best practices from existing research support ecosystems.

Project Justification:

Research-focused academic libraries increasingly integrate librarians directly into research teams through embedded librarianship models. In these models, librarians collaborate with faculty and students throughout the research lifecycle, providing expertise in literature discovery, research methodologies, data management, scholarly communication, and grant development. Rather than serving solely as intermediaries between information resources and users, embedded librarians function as active research partners who help improve the efficiency, transparency, and impact of scholarly work. This approach enables libraries to expand their role in supporting institutional research agendas while strengthening the professional competencies of library faculty.

Embedded librarianship strengthens the research ecosystem by providing structural support for research teams, fostering a culture of effective information use, and empowering researchers to engage more confidently with the scholarly process. Academic libraries across the United States have increasingly adopted this model to support research productivity and enhance collaboration between librarians and academic departments.

At Sagrado, the Embedded Librarian (EL) initiative will expand the current scope of library services by moving beyond instruction in research skills toward active participation in the research process itself. While existing services primarily support research instruction through the General Education research sequence (GIV courses), the EL model will extend this support across the full research lifecycle—from project conception and literature review to data management, analysis, and dissemination.

The primary beneficiaries of this initiative will be faculty researchers, undergraduate students engaged in research courses, and graduate students participating in emerging doctoral programs. Faculty researchers will benefit from direct collaboration with Embedded Librarians in areas such as literature discovery, research data management, and scholarly communication. Undergraduate students will gain expanded support in developing research projects through advanced information literacy labs and guided research workflows. Graduate students and emerging doctoral researchers will receive specialized support across the research lifecycle, including data management practices, research visibility, and publication preparation.

More broadly, the project will strengthen the University's research ecosystem and increase institutional visibility within the broader academic community across disciplines, including science, technology, arts, mathematics, business, and the social sciences. The digital component of the initiative—the Research Empowerment Hub—will be developed as an open-source platform designed to facilitate collaborative research support and information exchange.

Over the past five years, the BMMTG Library has supported undergraduate research instruction through workshops integrated into the University's Information Literacy program (Table 1). These workshops demonstrate the growing demand for research training and highlight the Library's expanding role in supporting the development of research skills. As Sagrado advances toward a teaching and research university model, the Library must expand its services beyond instructional support to include direct participation in research processes. To remain aligned with the institution's evolving research agenda and with faculty- and student-led research initiatives, the BMMTG Library must reengineer its service model to leverage the impact of information literacy and integrate librarians more fully into the research lifecycle (*Details in Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 5-7*)

Table #1: Library Workshops Given 2020 - 2025							
Couse	Course Name	Workshops	2020 -2021	2021 -2022	2022 -2023	2023 -2024	2024 -2025
GIV 201	Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Research in the Post-truth Era	Workshops	6	45	54	54	92
		Students	149	911	718	812	1,373
GIV 301	Research Design and Methodologies (Prerequisite: GIV 201)	Workshops	2	4	29	41	74
		Students	23	88	380	571	892
GIV 302	Data Management (Prerequisite: GIV 301)	Workshops	0	9	54	38	14
		Students	0	101	665	414	165

Tailored to Sagrado's research efforts, this framework pairs Embedded Librarians with designated Faculty Liaisons—subject-matter experts—to serve as co-producers of knowledge. Together, they will provide specialized support throughout the research lifecycle, reinforcing the undergraduate research sequence and creating a seamless pathway toward the University's doctoral and graduate agenda.

Our five identified institution-driven needs enabled the BMMTG to develop the following objectives.

1. Specialized Capacity Building and Technical Upskilling for the Research Lifecycle

To equip library faculty with the technical and analytical expertise necessary to transition from information mediators to active research partners and co-producers of knowledge. This professional development program will focus on three core competencies:

- a. Research Data Tools
- b. Open Science & Data Management
- c. Methodological Research Support

The librarians will be trained to serve as Embedded Librarians, delivering workshops on advanced tools and data management, promoting transparency in the research process, and acting as co-leaders in source verification, while supporting the research lifecycle and ensuring information flow and visibility.

2. Solidifying Alliances through the Faculty Liaison Framework

Establish and formalize a collaborative network of Faculty Liaisons who serve as strategic links between the library and the University's research community. This objective focuses on structural empowerment and institutional alignment through:

- a. Recruitment and Role Definition
- b. Specialized Training for Research Advocacy
- c. Structural Empowerment & Transparency

The faculty liaisons act as the subject-matter bridge between the library's infrastructure and the specific academic disciplines. They ensure the research remains grounded in scientific rigor and disciplinary relevance. Their main responsibilities include: 1) leading group discussions on the scientific content found in databases and identifying external researchers to inspire projects; 2) designing and delivering discipline-specific information literacy labs for students and professors; 3) ensuring the research aligns with Sagrado's values and the specific field of study, and 4) acting as the primary link between the library and the broader research community.

They should be active faculty members with a proven track record in their specific field, willing to be trained in Open Science, Scientific communication, and research visibility, have experience in curriculum or module design, and know the research lifecycle from the initial conceptual phase to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and final publication.

3. Co-Design an Advanced Information Literacy Curriculum

Develop a series of discipline-specific Advanced Information Literacy Labs focusing on five key research areas: Arts and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Business, Education, and Communication. Co-designed and co-facilitated by Embedded Librarians and Faculty Liaisons. The curricula will be tested with research advisors, graduate students, and Library and Information Sciences (LIS) professionals to evaluate the efficacy of the dual-support model.

4. Launch the Research Empowerment Hub Pilot at the Library

Execute a pilot study of the proposed research empowerment hub, testing the practical application of the Embedded Librarian framework. The Research Empowerment Hub will function as a hybrid service model combining a physical collaboration space, a digital research support platform, and a coordinated embedded librarian service. By providing targeted support to student projects originating from undergraduate and graduate research courses and faculty research agenda, this objective will assess the feasibility of the service model and its capacity to elevate the institution's overall research lifecycle. This will begin in the first quarter of year 2.

5. Feasibility Analysis and Actionable Blueprint for Institutional Scaling

Develop a comprehensive feasibility analysis and an actionable blueprint for scaling the dual Embedded Librarian and Faculty Liaison model across Sagrado's graduate and undergraduate programs. By assessing the pilot's outcomes, this final phase will detail resource requirements, explore future funding resources, and outline long-term sustainability strategies. Ultimately, this strategic work plan will solidify the library's role as a core research stakeholder and ensure the continuous enhancement of institutional research capacity and professional development. In addition, this immersive long-term scaling and progression will position the BMMTG to evolve into a sustainable, fully in-service, island-wide research center, fulfilling Sagrado's 2030 strategic plan.

Project Workplan:

Project Plan: Key Personnel	
<i>The Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship</i>	
Person Responsible	Role / Responsibilities / Experience
Alejandro Escobar Nieves , Library Director	PD: Planning-Implementing-Monitoring-Full Oversight-Reporting & Financials Experience leading the integration of BMMTG resources to general education undergraduate courses, developing specialized library guides and training modules that supplement academic content across undergraduate programs
Dr. Javier Hernández Acosta Dean of Graduate Students	Co-PD: Planning-Implementing-Monitoring-Full Oversight Strategic research leader bringing the discipline-specific authority and high-level research experience necessary to mentor the Faculty Liaison network.

Project Plan: Key Personnel	
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Person Responsible	Role / Responsibilities / Experience
Sandra R. Pedraza Torres Dean of General Education	Co-PD: Planning-Implementing-Monitoring-Full Oversight Experienced in designing and implementing comprehensive research programs, with a focus on project management, research community training, and the scaling of academic empowerment initiatives
Faculty Liaisons (5) (TBD)	Research and subject specialists recruited from each school (Science, Business, Arts, Communications, & General Education working in tandem with the Embedded Librarian and research students.
Embedded Librarian (4) Research Embedded Librarian (1) Research/PhD New Hire	EL: The Embedded Librarian will enhance current library support services, curating each research project by user. <i>(Important Note: The Library Director is one of the (4) noted here.)</i> Specialized Research New Hire EL will train standard librarians, report to the Library Director, and serve as a liaison to research faculty.
Internal Evaluator (1)	The Institutional Researcher will evaluate outcomes and project performance annually.

(Details in Resumes.pdf & in Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 16-17)

Sagrado conducted campus-wide stakeholder outreach via surveys, meetings, interviews, posted announcements, and emails to identify strategic priorities. With consensus among all stakeholders (students, faculty, and administrative staff) on the direction the university should take, the Provost convened with the leadership team to review the collective feedback. The Director of Madre María Teresa Guevara Library (BMMTG) participated in this review session. Together, the Laura Bush 21st Century Library Program was reviewed and discussed as a formidable resource to support the identified needs. The Director of Madre María Teresa Guevara Library (BMMTG) was assigned full oversight and would be our LB21/FY'26 Project Director, for the 'Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship' planning proposal.

Year 1: Foundations, Capacity Building, and Co-Creation

During the first quarter of Year 1, the project will focus on solidifying alliances and conducting a needs assessment. Key activities include the formal recruitment of Faculty Liaisons from the core disciplines of Arts, Sciences, Business, Education, and Communication, as well as a baseline feasibility analysis of existing research data management skills among library faculty. Deliverables for this phase include formalized agreements with academic units and a comprehensive needs assessment report on institutional research capacity. In the second quarter, the focus shifts to capacity building and professional development. The project will execute certified upskilling workshops for librarians in research data management tools and Open Science principles, while training Faculty Liaisons in information transparency, research advocacy, and structural

empowerment. This quarter will yield training certifications and a role-specific competency framework. *(Table format: Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 16-17)*

The latter half of the first year is dedicated to curriculum design and infrastructure prototyping. During the third quarter, librarians and liaisons will collaborate to co-design discipline-specific Advanced Information Literacy Labs for graduate researchers. This phase will also involve developing specialized research guides and metadata workflows, resulting in co-designed curricula and discipline-specific research toolkits. In the fourth quarter, the project will design and configure shared digital workspaces and institutional repositories to facilitate information exchange. Furthermore, a prototype of the Research Empowerment Hub (both physical and digital) will be developed within the Madre María Teresa Guevara library, finalizing the operational workflow for the dual liaison model. *(Table format: Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 16-17)*

Year 2: Pilot Implementation and Active Collaboration

The second year begins with the implementation of the pilot study. In the first quarter, the university will launch a pilot program to support faculty and students in undergraduate research courses and formally implement the Embedded Librarian role across selected research project lifecycles. Initial deliverables include launching the Pilot Research Empowerment Hub and data logs that track librarian-researcher collaboration hours. During the second quarter, the project will establish a proof of concept through active collaboration, with joint participation in the research lifecycle, from project conception through data management and publication. Information transparency flows will be tested, and user feedback will be collected via surveys and focus groups, culminating in a documented proof of concept and an interim pilot performance report. *(Table format: Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 16-17)*

Year 2: Impact Measurement and Scaling Blueprint

The final stages of the project focus on conducting feasibility analysis and strategic scaling. In the third quarter of Year 2, the team will use mixed methods to evaluate pilot results and assess the project's impact on researchers' empowerment and subjects' competence. This period also includes a thorough evaluation of the technical, financial, and human resources needed for scalability. The project concludes in the fourth quarter with the development of a practical blueprint to expand the dual liaison model across all of Sagrado's graduate and undergraduate programs. Additionally, the team will identify future funding sources for implementation based on pilot findings and deliver a final Institutional Capacity Enhancement Report to IMLS. The institutional Academic Researcher will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the project. *(Table format: Supportingdoc1.pdf, Pages 16-17)*

Project Results:

Although this is a Planning project, it lays the groundwork for a transformative, far-reaching impact by establishing a scalable model for embedded librarianship at a newly designated teaching and research institution. We will achieve this impact by structurally integrating upskilled Library faculty with subject-matter Faculty Liaisons, shifting the library's role from a passive resource center to an active co-producer of scientific knowledge. By prototyping this dual-support framework within the undergraduate research sequence and piloting it for graduate stakeholders, the project will

create a sustainable infrastructure that elevates the research culture across the entire university. Furthermore, Sagrado's actionable blueprint will serve as a replicable model for similar academic libraries seeking to enhance their research lifecycle support.

To measure this impact during the planning and pilot phases, the project team will employ a mixed-methods evaluation framework focused on four key areas:

- **Workforce Capacity Gains:** Pre- and post-training assessments will be administered to measure library faculty's competency growth in research data management tools (e.g., SPSS, Dedoose) and Open Science principles.
- **Collaborative Output:** Impact will be measured by the successful co-design and delivery of the five discipline-specific Advanced Information Literacy Labs, tracking the hours of collaborative development between Librarians and Faculty Liaisons.
- **Pilot Effectiveness & User Empowerment:** During the Research Empowerment Hub pilot, we will utilize user logs, surveys, and focus groups with participating researchers (students and faculty) to assess improvements in information transparency, research efficiency, and structural empowerment.
- **Scalability & Feasibility:** The ultimate metric of success for this planning grant will be the completion and institutional approval of the Feasibility Analysis and Actionable Blueprint. This document will quantify the pilot's success and provide clear data on the financial, technical, and human resources required to scale the model to all graduate and undergraduate programs.
- **Dissemination:** The Library Director will share outcomes at the following locations: the Puerto Rico Library Society (SBPR), the Association of Caribbean University Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL), with the Red Internacional de Estudios Generales (RIDEG) and digitally on the BMMTG Library website; as well as through the university's social media, and quarterly at internal faculty meetings. The Co-PIs will also share with senior management and, where applicable, at internal and external forums.
- **Sustainability:** Understanding the dynamics of a Planning Proposal informs the development of a framework to achieve long-term sustainability. Sagrado intends to establish a productive foundation of librarian-based research and development support. Anticipating successful outcomes will allow the BMMTG Library to pursue either the IMLS Community-Centered Implementation or similar funding opportunities to supplement this initiative.

Year 1: The Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship

[illegible]

Year 2: The Research Empowerment Hub: Elevating Institutional Research Culture through Embedded Librarianship

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