INSTITUTE *of*
Museum and **Library**
SERVICES

IMLS's Learning Agenda & Child Reading + BONUS CONTENT: Infrastructure Study

Matthew Birnbaum and Emily Plagman-Frank, Office of Research & Evaluation

A Lay of the Land

- IMLS's First Learning Agenda
- Child Reading Initiative
- Infrastructure Study Updates

Map of Wisconsin
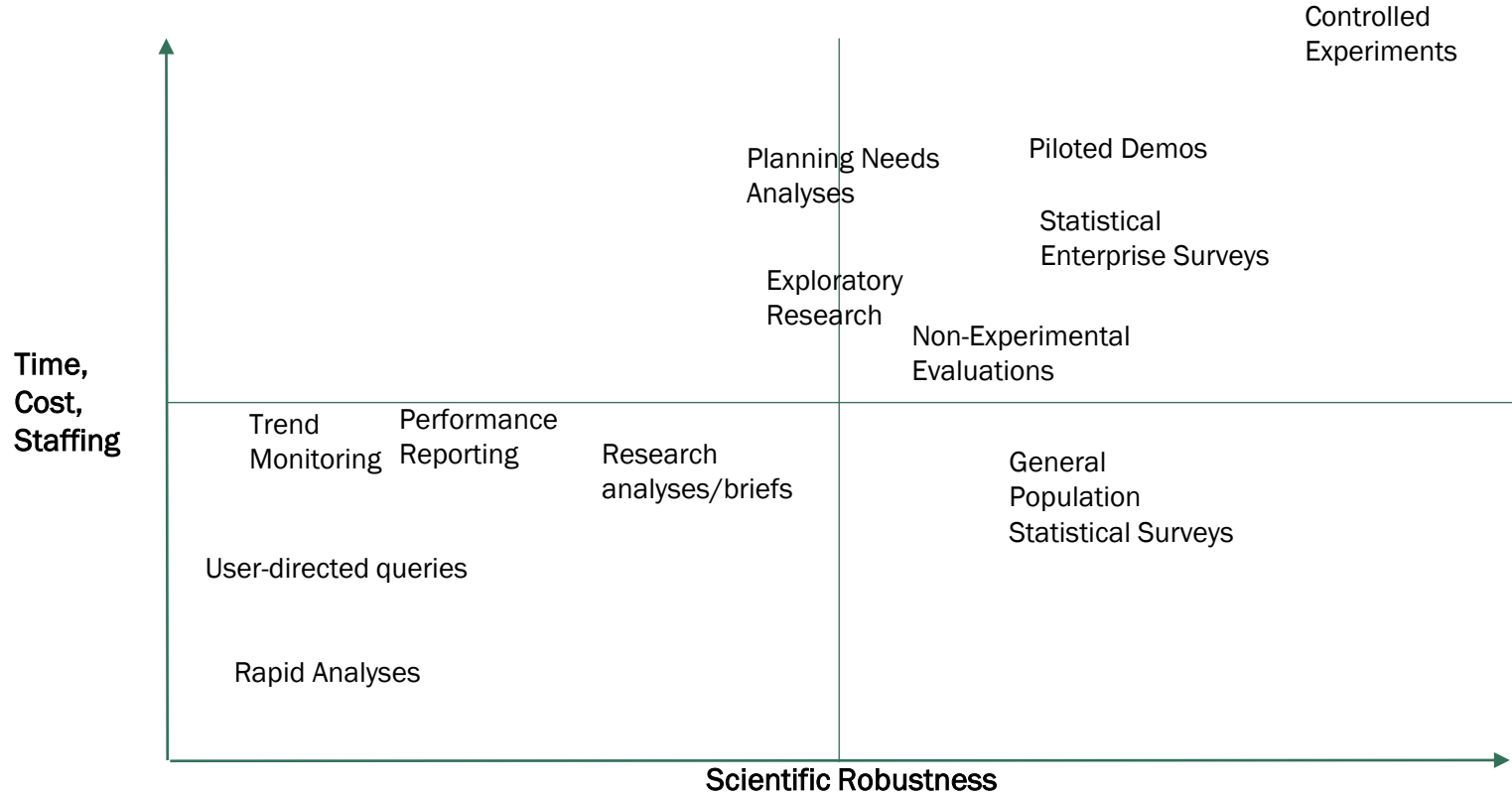Photo credit: Emily Plagman-Frank

Learning Agenda

Learning Agenda (Evidence Act, 2018): Understanding the Vernacular

- **Learning Agenda:** R&E plan accompanying an agency's strategic plan.

- **Learning Questions:** Strategic questions that can be at least partially answered with evidence from R&E; such evidence should influence the administration and outcomes of an agency's prioritized programs, policies, and/or rules.

- **Evidence-Building Activities:** Research and evaluation (R&E) activities for scientifically collecting and analyzing evidence to answer learning questions.

- **Evidence Methodologies:** quantitative and qualitative R&E methodologies comprised in learning-building activities.

- **Learning Processes:** Approaches for engaging shareholders in designing and executing evidence-building activities and disseminating learnings throughout the lives of the R&E endeavors.

Choices in Evidence-Building Activities to Answer Learning Questions

Time, Cost, Staffing (vertical axis)

Scientific Robustness (horizontal axis)

Controlled Experiments

Planning Needs Analyses

Piloted Demos

Statistical Enterprise Surveys

Exploratory Research

Non-Experimental Evaluations

Trend Monitoring

Performance Reporting

Research analyses/briefs

General Population Statistical Surveys

User-directed queries

Rapid Analyses

IMLS Learning Agenda Scope

Developed in **2023** by IMLS Director, OLS and OMS Deputy Directors, and ORE team

Three **multiyear R&E priorities, aligned with** IMLS's strategic objectives

Learnings may lead to new grantmaking using controlled experiments

IMLS's Learning Agenda: FY24-26 R&E Priorities

1 **Child Reading**

2 Future of Museums

3 Equitable Grantmaking

FY24-26 Learning Agenda Priorities

Other FY24-26 R&E activities:

- Statistical Surveys: PLS, SLAA, National Museums Survey (NMS)

- Evaluation of IMLS's COVID emergency grantmaking

- Evaluation of Native American/Native Hawaiian grantmaking

- Infrastructure Study

Child Reading

Literature Review Background

Research on Motivation, Literacy, and Reading Development: A Review of Best Practices

Final Report for the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Ozen Guven, PhD

Yasmina Haddad

- Follows March 2022, "Empowering Readers, Empowering Citizens" convening hosted by IMLS

  - Discussion from participants informed research direction

  - Priority: Identify research-based best practices

  - Long-standing interest in measuring contribution to children's reading

- Literature review of research about influence of motivation on reading performance (finalized fall 2023)

- Dr. Ozen Guven & Yasmina Haddad with American Institutes of Research conducted the study on behalf of IMLS

Hypothesis

IF: Motivation is a critical component when developing reading skills & performance for early learners

(Literature Review, 2023)

IF: Motivational components are core to library reading strategies and programs

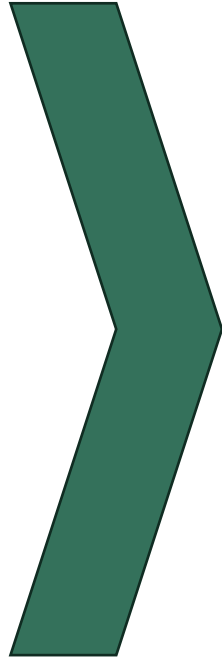(Learning Agenda Research, 2024-2026)

THEN: Libraries are helping to build reading skills for early learners as evidenced by research on motivation and literacy performance

Research Questions

AIR Literature Review:

1. What are the best practices that promote children's motivation and positive attitudes toward reading?

2. To what extent, and in what ways, are these practices also related to improving reading competence?

IMLS FY 24-26 Research Priorities, Learning Agenda Question 2:

What do libraries do to engage children in reading? What do they find as effective? What do they find as ineffective (or less impactful?)

https://www.imls.gov/research-tools/data-collection/learning-agenda

Scope of Literature Review

Inclusion Criteria	Included Studies	Excluded Studies
Target groups	Early learners and students in general elementary education (age < 12 years)	Participants of • remedial, preventive, and special education programs; • gifted education programs; • middle and high school reading programs; and • programs for English learners or multilingual children
Content focus	Literacy and reading programs	Language development programs (included when they have a literacy focus)
Target program outcomes	Child-level outcomes on literacy skills, reading performance, motivation to read, and attitudes toward reading	Studies focused on family literacy, family and community engagement, or librarians' knowledge and skills without showing effects on child outcomes
Target literacy and reading skills	The scope is not limited to any particular reading skill. However, included papers are largely focused on oral reading fluency and comprehension of written texts, so these are the two primary skills explored in the review.	

- Early learners (<12 years)

- Literacy & reading programs

- Research that seeks to measure literacy skills, reading performance, motivation, and attitudes toward reading

Evidence Gaps

Very little national research about the efficacy of reading programs in public libraries, especially motivation

- Public library evidence tends to be *limited and anecdotal*
- More causal evidence found in schools or other organizational research
  - Lit review expanded examination of institution types for more rigorous research
  - Allowed for AIR to focus on "motivation"

Theoretical Approach to Examining Motivation

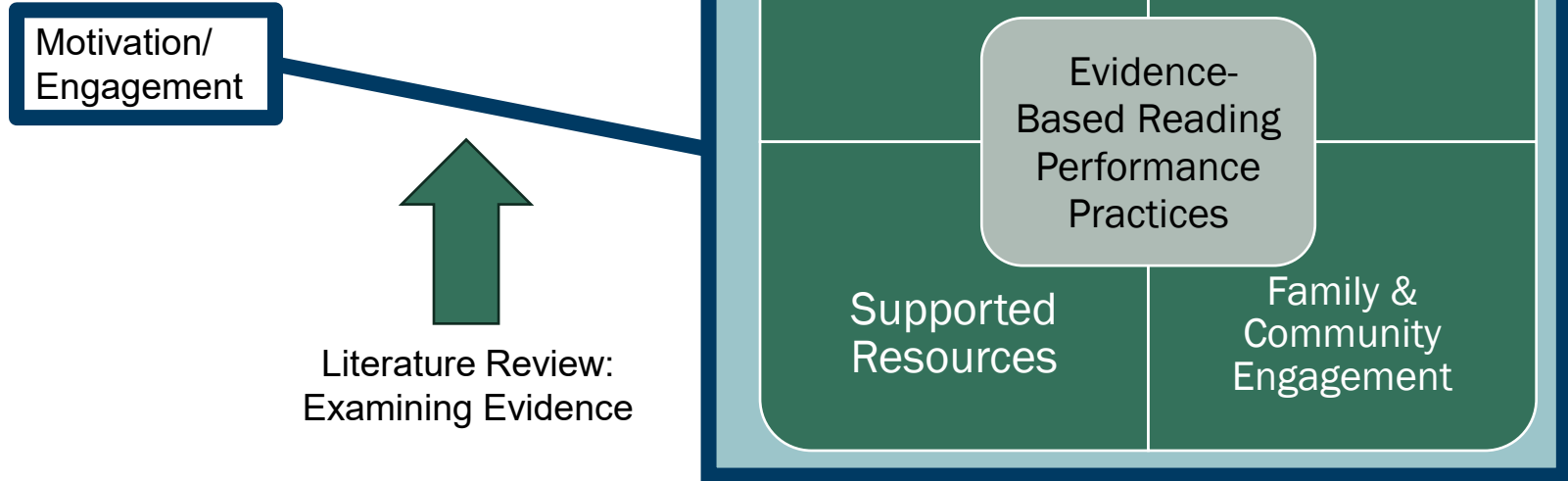*"To improve reading performance...it is critical to integrate practices focused on motivation and attitudes with effective content, instructional strategies, and resources*

(Guthrie et al., 2004, 2007; Wigfield et al., 2004)."*

Baseline assumptions:

- Children's engagement & enjoyment in reading positively affect reading performance (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000)

- Positive attitudes about reading ->motivation & engagement -> increased reading achievement (McKenna et al., 1995)

*Page 18, https://www.imls.gov/publications/research-motivation-literacy-and-reading-development-review-best-practices

Lit Review & Theory

Motivation/
Engagement

Effective
Content

Instructional
Strategies

Evidence-
Based Reading
Performance
Practices

Supported
Resources

Family &
Community
Engagement

Literature Review:
Examining Evidence

Ayyyy! The Findings!

1. Motivation matters!

2. Combining motivation with literacy development practice improves reading performance

3. Books with high-value content *on their own* are not strong enough motivators to influence performance
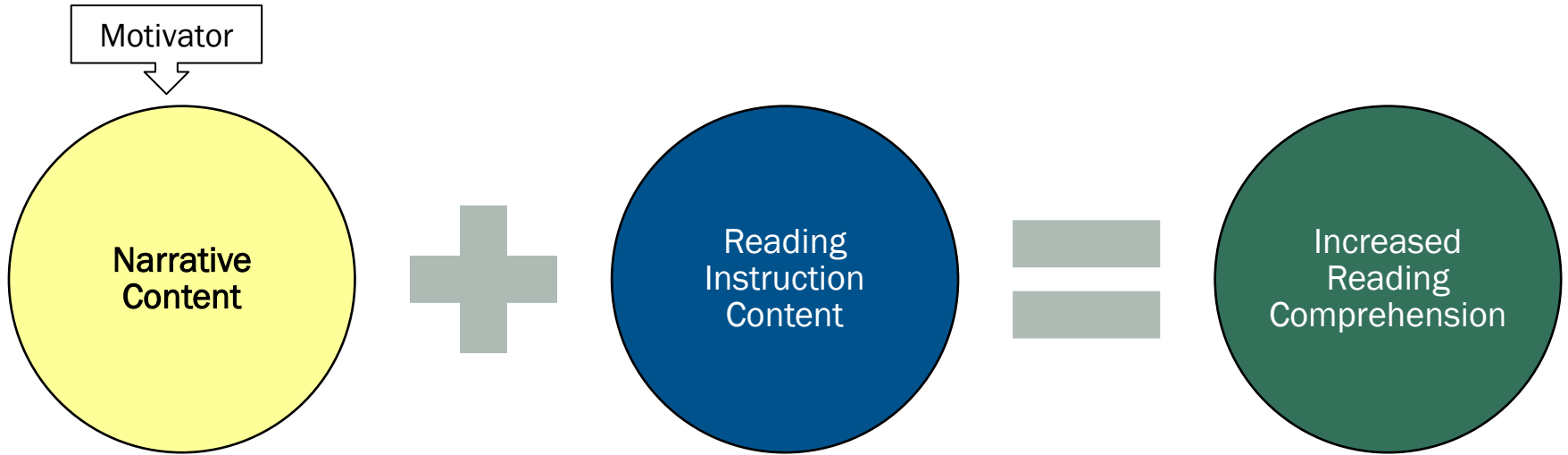

The Fonz Statue
Photo credit: Emily Plagman-Frank

Findings: Incorporating Motivation into Literacy Development Practices

1. Content-Based Approaches

2. Instructional Practices

3. Supportive Resources

4. Family & Community Engagement

Content-Based Approaches

Motivator

Narrative Content $+$ Reading Instruction Content $=$ Increased Reading Comprehension

Findings rely on non-library studies only: Guthrie et al., 2004 & 2007

Instructional Practices With Positive Motivational Indicators

1. Read-aloud
2. Developing cognitive strategies (e.g. re-read, summarize)
3. Using interesting texts
4. Independent/self-selected reading with individualized support
5. Book discussions
6. Collaboration & social interaction (e.g. book sharing, reading together)

Supportive Resources
Embedding Motivation

- Spaces, play and games
- Assisted reading, e.g. reading to dogs
- Technology

Family/Community Engagement

Family engagement leads to positive effects in children's reading*

Most research comes from non-library summer reading & book giveaway programs that include family engagement

Roundtable Discussion

- What about this research resonates with you as you think about funding literacy projects? - *5 minutes with your table mates*

- Speed report-out – *30 seconds per table*

Opportunities for IMLS

Learning Agenda:

- Research and evaluation plan that accompanies an agency's strategic plan

- Helps IMLS determine priorities/areas of focus

- FY24-FY26 Learning Agenda Topics:
  - Child Reading Literacy
  - Equity in Grantmaking
  - Future of Museums

- Next round of research underway

FY 2023–2026

Learning Agenda
Research Questions to Guide IMLS Priorities

https://www.imls.gov/research-tools/data-collection/learning-agenda

Learning Agenda Research Questions: Children's Reading

1. What does it mean for a child to engage in reading?
2. What do libraries do to engage children in reading? What do they find as effective? What do they find as ineffective (or less impactful?) What community partnerships do they utilize, if any, during that process of engagement? How important does physical location and architectural design factor into opportunities for libraries to aid childhood learning?
3. How has the relationship between libraries and families evolved regarding child reading opportunities? What has caused these changes, and are they seen as positive or negative?
4. How do schools, community-based institutions, museums and other cultural institutions, as well as any other important literacy-focused institutions engage children in reading? Where do libraries fit into this ecosystem? How do these other organizations perceive the role of libraries in promoting literacy? What practices do they perceive as effective? What other potential key partners should they need to work with in the future?
5. What equity factors influence engaged child reading?
6. What factors does IMLS need to consider if it should pursue impact-driven grantmaking with controlled experimentation in testing the effectiveness of the accumulating evidence on promising ways for engaging children in reading?

https://www.imls.gov/research-tools/data-collection/learning-agenda

INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Goals of the Study

- Understand infrastructure conditions & needs for Museum & Library facilities across a diversity of organization types (rural, underserved, disaster-prone)

- Understand the landscape analysis of existing Library & Museum infrastructure funding

- Compare institutional needs to past and current federal agency funding

- Report findings to Congress as it considers infrastructure & related funding opportunities

- Findings and recommendations set the stage for future research efforts

2008 Madison Polar Plunge
Photo credit: Emily Plagman-Frank

Research Questions

1. What are the physical conditions of library and museum facilities in rural, underserved, or disaster-prone communities across the United States?

2. What are the physical conditions of library and museum facilities at risk or impacted by natural disasters and extreme weather?

3. What are the potential costs for bringing public library and museum facilities in rural, underserved, and disaster-prone communities to a state of good repair?

4. What are the main infrastructure and facility gaps that the IMLS should consider as top priorities for grant distribution if funds are allocated by Congress?

History (1)

FY23 Senate Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations Act, S.4659, pg.191

For carrying out the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 and the National Museum of African American History and Culture Act, $301,800,000: Provided, That notwithstanding section 210A of the Museum and Library Services Act, $20,000,000 shall be available through September 30, 2024 for the purpose of making grants to support improvements to public library and museum facilities: Provided further, That in awarding such grants, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services shall give priority to public libraries and museums located or serving in rural and underserved communities, including economically disadvantaged areas, as determined by the Director: Provided further, That the Director shall reserve not more than $2,000,000 of the funds described in the first proviso to conduct a comprehensive study of the physical condition of public libraries and museums in each State and outlying area

History (2)

FY23 House Labor Health and Human Services [Explanatory Statement](#) (Report) pg.312

Public Library Assessment.—The Committee notes growing concern regarding the <mark>*physical condition of public libraries.*</mark> *The Committee supports efforts to assess the availability and condition of public library facilities, the availability and condition of public library facilities located in* <mark>**economically disadvantaged**</mark> *or* <mark>**underserved communities**</mark>*, the accessibility of public library facilities for* <mark>**individuals with disabilities**</mark>*, the condition of public library facilities affected by natural* <mark>**disasters and extreme weather**</mark>*, and potential costs associated with bringing public library facilities to a state of good repair.*

IMLS & FedWritersTeam

IMLS:

- Project Lead: Office of Research & Evaluation (lead)
- Construction Huddle: Office of Library Services, Offices of Museum Services, Office of the Director (Legislative Advocacy), General Council, Communications, Chief Operating Officer

FedWriters: Federal contracting firm that has worked with dozens of government agencies.

- Prior work with Libraries & Architectural Site Inspections
- Research Team:
  - Social Science Methodologist
  - Quantitative Data Methodologist
  - Public Policy & Research Expert
  - Architectural & Engineering SMEs
  - Federal Grant SMEs

Study Components

Secondary Research (*Synthesizing Existing Data*):

- Literature Review
- Administrative Data Analysis
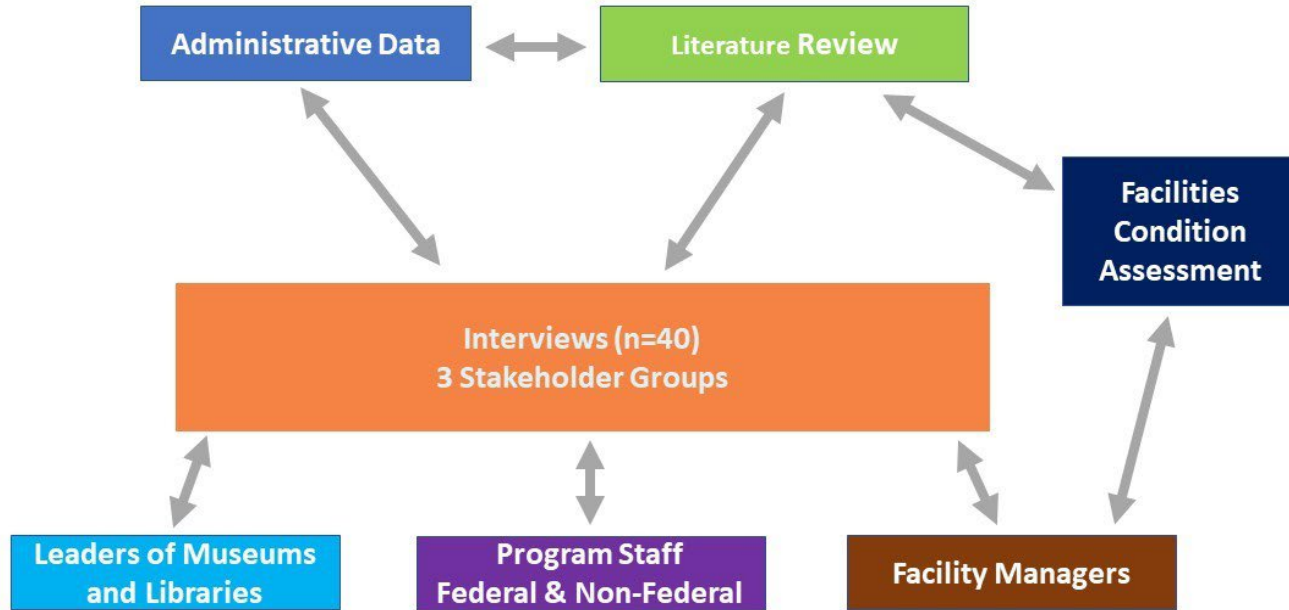- Federal Grant Benchmarking
- Geospatial Mapping

Primary Research (*New Data Collection*):

- Interviews w/ Subject Mater Experts
- Facility Condition Assessments

Go Pack Go
Photo credit: Emily Plagman-Frank

Data Integration

New Data Collection (1)

Interviews w/ Subject Matter Experts (40)

- Federal & Non-Federal Program Staff

- Museum & Library Leaders (6 each, libraries completed)

- Facility Managers: *Subset of selected from FCA site participants*

New Data Collection (2)

Facility Condition Assessments

- 10 library locations confirmed!

- Stratified Random Sample of eligible organizations: urbanicity, disaster-prone, underserved

- Libraries – diversity of administrative governance structures

Name	Location
HENRY M. SEYMOUR LIBRARY	Indianola, MS
LAFOURCHE PARISH PUBLIC LIBRARY	LaFourche, LA
CLARKTON PUBLIC LIBRARY	Clarkton, NC
LAMAR PUBLIC LIBRARY	Lamar, CO
KODIAK PUBLIC LIBRARY	Kodiak, AK
BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY - Towson Branch	Baltimore, MD
Rosenberg Library	Galveston, TX
Ann Arbor District Library	Ann Arbor, MI
Quapaw National Tribal Library	Quapaw, OK
Harlan County Public Library	Harlan, KY
Atlantic City Free Public Library	Atlantic City, NJ

Study Components: Timeline

Fall 2023
- Contract Kick-Off
- Research & Study Design Development
- Requesting new data collection approval from Office of Management & Budget (e.g. Paperwork Reduction Act)

Spring 2024
- Facilities Site Assessment Planning
- Interviews: Federal Program Staff
- Administrative Data Collection
- Literature Review

Summer/ Fall 2024
- Facilities Site Assessments
- Interviews
- Administrative Data Cleaning/Coding

Winter 2025
- Data Analysis and Report Drafting
- GIS Mapping

Spring 2025
- Report Published
- Outreach & Dissemination

Questions?

Q: Will the Brewers win the World Series this year?
A: Yes

Q: Will the Green Bay Packers win the Super Bowl this year?
A: Yes

Q: Are the Milwaukee Bucks going to win the NBA Championship?
A: Yes

Q: Are Wisconsin sports teams the best?
A: Yes!!!

Let's Go Brewers
Photo credit: Emily Plagman-Frank