

**The American Library Association Public Programs Office (ALA PPO) requests a \$242,406 National Leadership Grant to support the creation of adult media literacy programming resources focused on how the often-overlooked structural parts of the internet affect the information people see and find online.** This two-year implementation project continues the work started in the IMLS-funded [Media Literacy Education in Libraries for Adult Audiences](#) by building upon the finding that library workers need ready-made program models and resources that can easily be used to implement adult media literacy programming in their communities. This implementation project aligns with IMLS Goal 1: Champion Lifelong Learning and Objective 1.1: Advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all.

**Project Justification:** U.S. adults are in critical need of media literacy, specifically access to materials, tools, and opportunities to understand how to evaluate the validity of online information that is pushed to them in their social feeds or found through searches. With the ongoing pandemic, an adult’s inability to identify valid information can have a devastating effect on the health of the individual, their family, and larger community if they choose to take action (or not take action) as a result of faulty information they find. As a PEW study conducted in 2020 found, only “three-in-ten U.S. adults (28%) say they are very confident that they would know what steps to take to check the accuracy of news and information about the coronavirus outbreak” (Gottfried, 2020)<sup>1</sup>. Due to this, it is more critical than ever to provide opportunities for adults to learn how to properly assess what they see and hear through various online media.

As trusted institutions, libraries are well-positioned to educate adults on media literacy and to act as providers of accurate information for their communities. However, media literacy is a broad, ever-evolving subject and the pandemic has greatly impacted the libraries’ ability to dedicate resources to researching the most up-to-date best practices and creating new programs for their communities on the subject. While many libraries have taken on the role of sharing accurate information with their communities about the public health crisis, few are able to also create new programs/resources that help adults identify valid information on their own. This project seeks to mitigate that issue by creating a suite of ready-made program models and tools that libraries can easily pick up and immediately implement for adult patrons that will teach them these skills.

Building off the *Media Literacy Education in Libraries for Adult Audiences* initiative, this project will specifically center on creating program models and tools focused on the architecture of the internet. This is one of [five adult media literacy focus areas](#) that were identified by the 30 experts from the library and media literacy education field through the project. The architecture of the internet reveals how the digital environment functions and its impact on users. This includes how differentiated, personalized media experiences and algorithms influence our access to content, lead to polarization and groupthink, and commodify personal information; and how media business models (e.g. free content, paywalls) affect consumers’ understanding and interpretation of information. Out of the five areas identified, this one was chosen as the focus for this project as understanding the internet’s architecture and how it influences what people find or see online is a foundational step for becoming more media literate and making informed decisions when operating within the digital space.

Aligning with the IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries goals, this implementation project will build the institutional capacity for serving the information and education needs of the public. It will do this by developing replicable library programs, models, and tools that provide opportunities to support adult media literacy education needs. It will also build the capacity of libraries to lead efforts that improve community well-being by equipping libraries with needed tools.

**Project Work Plan:** This project will take place August 1, 2022 – July 31, 2024. During this period, ALA staff including deputy director, Sarah Ostman; program manager, Samantha Oakley; program officer, Brian Russell; program coordinator, BeeBee Cooper Browne; and communications associate, Hannah Arata, will perform the following activities:

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<sup>1</sup> Gottfried, Jeffrey. (5/28/20). *Around three-in-ten Americans are very confident they could fact-check news about COVID-19*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/28/around-three-in-ten-americans-are-very-confident-they-could-fact-check-news-about-covid-19/>

## American Library Association

**Project Advisory Group:** Project efforts will be guided by a group of five media literacy experts within and outside of the library field by issuing a call for applications. Advisors will be selected by ALA staff based on the applications received. These advisors will serve as content experts throughout the initiative, providing input and direction on all project deliverables. To ensure that a diverse group of voices are heard and valued, advisors will also be tasked with leveraging their networks to collect feedback on the project deliverables. (Y1, Q1 – Q2)

**Programming Guide:** The ALA PPO and the project advisory group will create a guide focused on providing ready-made resources that libraries can use to implement adult programming in their communities on how the architecture of the internet affects the information they see or find. The guide will provide program models, tools (e.g. templates), tips, and additional resources suitable for a wide variety of communities and types of libraries. (Y1, Q2 – Q4)

**Webinars:** From previous initiatives, ALA has learned that libraries greatly value the ability to connect with content experts and their peers in live webinar sessions focused on information from published material. With this in mind, ALA will host a series of five webinars corresponding to the content of the programming guide. These interactive Zoom sessions will provide participants the opportunity to ask questions to content experts, connect with peers, and share resources. These sessions will also foster discourse on the architecture of the internet by providing space for the field to share insights, express challenges, and brainstorm opportunities that the project deliverables highlight. (Y2, Q1 – Q3)

**Curated Resources:** Through our media literacy work, ALA has found the field eager to share additional resources and ideas on the subject with each other. These resources are often shared in webinar chats, responses to social media posts, and within the comments of articles. Too often these resources are lost or only see a limited audience (e.g. only to other webinar participants, only people who happen to read the comments on an article). To facilitate the sharing of this information, ALA will curate these resources and publish them in articles, blogs, and program models through ProgrammingLibrarian.org and other ALA traditional, web-based, and social media channels. (Y2, Q1 – Q4)

**Evaluation:** ALA will continue to work with Knology to implement a comprehensive evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the project and developed resources for libraries. (Y1 Q1– Y2 Q4)

**Dissemination of Deliverables:** To promote the open call for advisors, programming guide, webinars, and curated resources, ALA will launch a robust communications effort utilizing print and e-marketing to both ALA members and purchased lists of non-member library workers; targeted outreach via state/regional library associations; social media; electronic mailing lists; and other methods. (Y1 Q1– Y2 Q4)

**Diversity Plan:** Libraries play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic society. Equity, diversity, and inclusion is one of ALA’s strategic directions in which ALA commits to “addressing, dismantling, and transforming policies, structures, and bias throughout the organization and the field.” In the context of this project, equity, diversity, and inclusion means addressing the demographics of communities served, type of library, accessibility, and other considerations. ALA is committed to ensuring that a diverse array of voices from the library field is heard throughout the design and implementation of this project. This will be done through the open call for advisors to invite new voices from the field and through a comprehensive evaluation plan to collect feedback from the larger field on project deliverables.

**Project Results:** The key outcomes of this implementation project will be a suite of ready-made media literacy programming models and resources tailored to adult audiences for libraries. These resources will be the first critical step to increasing adults’ media literacy skills to empower them to make informed decisions based on accurate information they find online. This work will be foundational for fostering richer, deeper, and more relevant adult media literacy educational opportunities.

**Budget Summary:** ALA requests \$242,406 in grant funding for this two-year implementation project. Grant budget includes \$86,450 in salary/fringe for grant-funded staff; \$30,000 in advisor stipends; \$5,000 in webinar presenter stipends; \$20,000 in materials, marketing, communications and digital delivery (web, Zoom); \$30,000 in programming guide and tools creation; \$25,000 for evaluation; \$500 in supplies; and \$45,456 in indirect cost at ALA existing federal rate of 23.08% percent.