Colorado Department of Education
Project Title: PRISM Project: Are PRISon libraries Motivators of pro-social behavior and successful re-entry?


**PRISM Project: Are PRISon libraries Motivators of pro-social behavior and successful re-entry?**

The Library Research Service (LRS)—an office in the Colorado State Library, a unit of the Colorado Department of Education—will conduct a groundbreaking outcome-based evaluation of prison libraries, the PRISM Project, which seeks to analyze the outcomes of prison library services related to pro-social behaviors in incarcerated people and their successful re-entry into broader society. This study differs from extant studies of the effectiveness of prison libraries because it focuses on the perspective of people who are currently incarcerated and those who were formerly incarcerated to understand what they know about prison libraries and how prison libraries are impacting the information needs and the lives of incarcerated people. Similar methodologies that include the perspectives of library patrons have long been a part of assessing public, academic, and special libraries, but the voices of incarcerated people have largely been ignored when discussing the outcomes of prison libraries, aside from anecdotes from stories about life in prison. This study aims to accomplish two goals: conduct a large-scale outcomes-based assessment of prison libraries specifically in Colorado and to create tools for other states and departments of correction to use to conduct their own outcomes-based assessments that will allow them to listen to the members of their communities of incarcerated people and use the knowledge gained through this assessment to better serve their patrons while they are incarcerated and as they move back into their communities after their incarceration period ends.

This study is based on a planning grant (LG-97-18-0127-18)[1] and LRS will directly partner with the following: Institutional Library Development, a unit of the Colorado State Library; Remerg, a Colorado-based reentry organization; and the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC). The Colorado Department of Education is seeking $108,901.33 for this project.


**Project Justification**

Prison libraries are a fixture in prisons across the country and they are often featured in anecdotes about prison life, often giving them credit for positive outcomes for people who are incarcerated. Some "common intended impacts of prison libraries include improved literacy skills, information literacy, and the 'development of critical reasoning skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, empowerment, and changed perspectives'"[2]. In the Prisoners Right to Read document, the American Library Association (ALA) makes a compelling case for prison libraries: "participation in a democratic society requires unfettered access to current social, political, legal, economic, cultural, scientific, and religious information. Information and ideas available outside the prison are essential to people who are incarcerated for a successful transition to freedom. Learning to thrive in a free society requires access to a wide range of knowledge. Suppression of ideas does not prepare people of any age who are incarcerated for life in a free society. Even those individuals who are incarcerated for life require access to information, to literature, and to a window on the world."[3] There are certainly more reasons that people support prison libraries, but these are some that are commonly discussed in the extant literature and through first person accounts. Rosen notes that prison libraries have been reliant on descriptive anecdotes over data on outcomes since at least 1968, when Gillespie "describe[d] a pervasive overreliance on description over evaluation of prison library services"[4]

There are 1,833 state prisons[5] in the United States, with 1,042,000 people incarcerated in them[6]. In Colorado alone, there are 11,716 people incarcerated in state prisons.[7]In the United States, the incarceration rate is 573 per 100,000,000 people and in Colorado it is 614 per 100,000,000 people.[8] Despite this large population of people incarcerated in the United States, we currently have very little empirical information about what libraries are doing in

[1] https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/prism
[2] Warr in Rosen, 2020, p. 40
[3] https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/prisonersrightoread
[4] (Rosen, 2020, p, 41).
[5] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html
[6] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2022.html
[7] https://cdoc.colorado.gov/about/data-and-reports/statistics
[8] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2022.html) (https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/CO.html

prisons and what their impacts are. Colorado has a comprehensive library program that has at least one library in each of the facilities overseen by CDOC and that is supported at the State Level by the Colorado State Library's office of Institutional Library Development. Garner conducted a phenomenological study with incarcerated people[9] in Australia, but to date there has not been a similar study in the United States that focuses on outcomes-based assessment grounded in hearing directly from incarcerated people or those who were formerly incarcerated. The PRISM Project seeks to learn about the specific outcomes of Colorado prison libraries from those who use them and to create a relatively simple toolkit to allow libraries in other states to recreate this study in their jurisdiction and learn about their libraries, culminating in a dataset about the outcomes of prison libraries and a dramatically improved body of knowledge about prison library services.

Colorado is uniquely positioned to ensure the success of this initial study, The Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) is unique in the way that it structures its libraries, with a support office, Institutional Library Development (ILD) in the Colorado State Library. Rosen identified cooperation of departments like this as one that would support a comprehensive, outcomes-based assessment of prison libraries: "dissolving professional and institutional barriers can also go a long way in empowering prison librarian to better measure the impact of their services."[10] CDOC is also committed to supporting research within their institutions to learn more about how programs and services impact incarcerated people and they have committed to allowing this research to take place in their facilities, as demonstrated in the attached letters of support. The Library Research Service (LRS) is also well positioned to support this research because of its close relationship with Institutional Library Development, the office's commitment to large scale research in libraries, and its current involvement in supporting librarians and academics in other projects that are related to the provision of services to incarcerated people.

The almost total lack of information available about prison libraries[11] is poised to change in 2022 and beyond and the Colorado State Library is supporting these efforts in several ways. There are interrelated efforts underway all over the country to begin to gather more information about prison libraries and services to incarcerated people. Librarianship in the US is moving quickly toward a holistic understanding of the modern role prison libraries and the field of prison librarianship across the country. In the Colorado State Library, ILD is currently working with the American Library Association (ALA) to update their prison library standards for the first time since 1992.[12] The ILD team has also recently worked with CDOC to update the guidelines for institutional libraries in Colorado and with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to update the international standards. LRS assisted the authors with the recent Library Journal article and survey that reached out to people working in public libraries to find out what services they provide to incarcerated people.[13] And LRS is supporting San Francisco Public Library's ambitious project that will map services to incarcerated people and bring prison librarians together in an unprecedented way  to "encourage greater access to information and resources for people in jails and prisons nationwide."[14] These projects together are already advancing our understanding of librarianship within prisons and other penal institutions, and they make it an opportune time to complete this outcomes-based assessment of prison libraries. As we as a country and librarianship as a profession are building and adding to our understanding of prison libraries as institutions, the PRISM Project will help to foreground the experiences of incarcerated people and give prison libraries more tools and add to their ability to positively impact the lives of incarcerated people.

The PRISM Project supports the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Goal 2: "Build the

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[9] Garner, JM. (2017) Experiencing the use of Australian prison libraries: a phenomenological study. PhD Thesis: RMIT University

[10] Rosen, J. (2020) Evaluating impact in the forgotten field of prison librarianship. The serials librarian 79:1-2.

[11] Ibid. p. 38

[12] https://www.ala.org/asgcla/resources/librarystandards

[13] https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Outside-and-In-Services-for-People-Impacted-By-Incarceration

[14] https://sfpl.org/releases/2022/01/13/san-francisco-public-library-awarded-2-million-expand-services-incarcerated

capacity of libraries and archives to lead and contribute to efforts that improve community well-being and strengthen civic engagement" and it will support Objective 2.1, "develop or enhance replicable library programming, models, and tools that engage communities and individuals of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds." The gap in the library profession's knowledge about the impact of these libraries stands in contrast to public and academic libraries, which have been pursuing outcomes-based assessments for decades and have developed tools such as Project Outcome to make this kind of assessment easily obtainable at scale.[15] This study will fill that gap by refining and deploying the survey instrument creating in the PRISM planning project and a scalable research plan and toolkit that can be replicated in other states to learn more about their specific prison libraries and contribute to the body of knowledge about prison libraries. The information gained in this study will support prison library services in determining how to best provide library services and demonstrate their value to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and the communities to which they belong and return to after their incarceration. By building knowledge about outcomes of prison libraries and how to complete outcomes-based assessments in this context, the research team will have the opportunity to make positive impacts on communities, in and outside of prisons, throughout Colorado and the rest of the United States. This study will allow us to generate data that will establish a unique dataset that will be useful to prison librarians and that can be supplemented with additional data by states and territories that choose to use the PRISM Project toolkit to assess their prison library services. It is crucial that we include the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in the research about library services, which is uniquely foregrounded in this research study. This study will allow prison libraries to have the same outcomes-focused evaluation tools and understandings that academic and public libraries have, which directly strengthens the community and advances access to relevant collections for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated members of the community.

**Project Work Plan**
The PRISM Project will seek to answer the following research questions as defined in the Planning Project[16]:

1. Which prison library collections, services, and programs are associated with former library user perceptions of library contributions to their development of pro-social behavior and information and learning skills, and their preparation for re-entry to the community?
2. What motivated people who were incarcerated to use prison libraries, and what conditions encouraged or discouraged them to sustain library use during incarceration?
3. How and how much do people returning to the community perceive that prison libraries helped them develop pro-social behaviors and information and learning skills?
4. How and how much do people returning to the community perceive that prison libraries helped them address and ameliorate obstacles to mastering information and learning skills (e.g., language barriers, lower literacy, educational gaps, learning disabilities, mental health issues, social isolation)?
5. How and how much do people who have been incarcerated perceive that prison library use helped them occupy themselves constructively while incarcerated, prepared them for release, and reduced their risk of recidivism?
6. How and how much do people who were incarcerated perceive that prison libraries supported them in maintaining contact with family members, especially their children, and facilitated offender participation in family literacy activities?
7. How do former users of prison libraries believe those libraries could be improved?

Project Goals as defined in the Planning Project:
1. Identify outcomes of prison library use experienced by individuals recently released from Colorado Department

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[15] https://www.ala.org/pla/data/
[16] https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/prism

of Corrections (CDOC) prisons. Of special interest are outcomes related to developing pro-social behaviors, and information literacy and learning skills, and preparing for successful re-entry to the community.

2. Identify types of collections, programs, and services associated with positive outcomes of prison library use in the view of the service users.

3. Identify ways prison libraries can be improved, either by increasing the variety of positive outcomes to which they contribute or by improving their effectiveness in contributing to current, known outcomes.

Random sampling of people who are currently incarcerated and those who were formerly incarcerated "was rejected as a practical impossibility" by members of the research team and CDOC in the planning grant. Since this study will also face the factors that impacted the ability to engage in random sampling, namely "a lack of [CDOC] available resources to fulfill such a request as well as the constraints of administrative regulations, and privacy protection statutes," it will engage in purposive sampling of currently incarcerated people and formerly incarcerated people. For the focus groups, age, and race/ethnicity will be additional factors considered for inclusion in the focus groups, to ensure that the makeup of these groups matches as closely as possible the racial and ethnic makeup of Colorado prison populations, gender will be considered insofar as it is a determinant for where people are incarcerated. "For this study, it is especially important to identify and select research subjects—both survey respondents and focus group interviewees—who have substantial knowledge and experience of incarceration in CDOC facilities and thus had access to, and experience with, prison libraries. It is even more vital that these individuals be willing and able to participate, openly reflect, and articulate the thought processes, experiences, and perceptions that describe 2their experience of incarceration and prison library use. Partner organizations—re-entry organization Remerg—will be leveraged to assist in securing research subjects."[17]

**Data Analysis Plan**

This study will rely on a mixed-methods approach, using focus group interviews, a standardized set of surveys, and analysis of available quantitative data from the prison's offender information systems and the libraries' integrated library systems. Once this project is funded, a first priority will be engaging an independent IRB to review the research to ensure that it meets the requirements for conducting research with subjects who are a part of a vulnerable population, including subsequent reviews as we develop the focus group questions with the research team and of the final surveys prior to their deployment. It will additionally go through additional research review by CDOC using their own research protocols to protect incarcerated people.

Focus group interviews are an integral part of this research plan. They will allow incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people to speak about their library experiences directly and will inform the survey and its deployment. "Separate interviews will be conducted with individuals who are currently or were incarcerated in facilities for men and women. Given the uncertain status of the global COVID-19 pandemic and for the convenience of participants, these focus group interviews may be conducted online if access to the prisons is not possible"[18] The use of the survey developed in the Planning Grant (Appendix A) will allow the research team to gather a great deal of information to analyze than is possible with focus groups and will support a broader analysis to support our findings.

The following steps will be taken to analyze data obtained from the survey and focus group interviews.

- Information obtained via focus group interviews will be coded thematically and content analyzed for additional insights, which might inform slight changes to the surveys prior to them being deployed.
- All answers to all questions will be reported by number and percentage of those responding.

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

- To the extent possible, all answers to all questions will be cross tabulated with demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, and age).
- Responses to survey items 9 through 11 (reported outcomes of prison library use) will be cross tabulated with responses to relevant responses to survey items 3 through 8 (frequency of library use and different types of materials, programs, and services used).
- To supplement the quantitative analysis of structured-response items, responses to the survey's final "Please tell us your library story" item will be coded thematically and their content analyzed to identify patterns and trends.
- Stories which best illustrate some of the survey's quantitative findings will be selected for use as sidebars in the study report (Planning grant, p. 2).

Data collection will take place in phases, depending on what kind of data is being gathered:
- ILS and Offender information data gathering will take up to six months
- Focus group data will be collected over six months
- Survey data will be collected over 8 months

The analysis and reporting phase will take approximately 15 months, ending in March 2024. Data collection will begin with 8 informational focus groups with formerly incarcerated people currently on parole and focus groups inside at least 15 CDOC prisons, with a preference for convening one focus group at every one of the adult facilities run by CDOC in Colorado. The LRS research team, in collaboration with the ILD team will conduct focus groups inside prisons and Remerg will conduct the focus groups with formerly incarcerated people with the support of LRS staff. Surveys will be given inside prisons with the support of LRS, ILD, and CDOC staff, collecting a minimum sample size of 267. The Remerg team will give the surveys to formerly incarcerated people across Colorado, collecting a minimum survey sample size of 264. CDOC has agreed to allow the research team to have access to limited internal prisoner data, including disciplinary and behavioral records, which will be anonymized and analyzed to help. Information will also be gathered from the ILS systems of the prison libraries. This project will be considered a success if we are able to conduct the focus groups and surveys as described, gain access to institutional data from Colorado Department of Corrections, and analyze and report on that data to the broader library community in a way that is statistically sound and creates a repeatable study for other states to use to survey their populations.

Human subjects research involving incarcerated people involved special consideration above and beyond the usual requirements for human subjects research. The PRISM project will meet the requirements as set out by HHS and using the guidelines as described in Guidance for Research Involving Prisoners.[19] According to these guidelines, the project will engage a commercial IRB that includes at least one person who is currently or formerly incarcerated to review the research to certify that we have met their standards for gathering information from and about incarcerated people. Additionally, the study will undergo the internal CDOC process for approval for human subjects research, including their specific protocols for access to information about incarcerated people. The subjects in this study are at minimal risk, their participation does not carry risks that are higher than everyday life while incarcerated and are substantially the same as risks for people who are not currently incarcerated. CDOC staff will be aware of who participates in the survey only because it will be taking place in institutional libraries and ILD and CDOC staff are on the research team. This information will not be used to determine any part of the terms of their incarceration.

**Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Collected**

Information on library usage and behavioral records will be collected for cross-tabular analysis to attempt to determine if there is a relationship between library use and disciplinary action but will be maintained confidentially by members of the Library Research Service staff and anonymized as soon as is practical after collection. The resulting

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[19] https://research.cuanschutz.edu/comirb/home/comirb-announcements/new-guidance-for-research-involving-prisoners

anonymized data set will be shared with the other members of the research team.

The following information will be gathered:

Focus groups will be recorded, transcribed, the transcripts anonymized, and the recording destroyed as soon as it is transcribed. For people who are currently incarcerated, this information will be gathered by members of the Colorado State Library, offices of Library Research Service and Institutional Library Development. For people who were formerly incarcerated, this information will be collected by members of the research team from Remerg. Transcripts will be made by Rev.com, with any identifying information removed from the recording prior to being sent to the company for transcriptions. After transcription, the recordings will be destroyed. The anonymized transcripts will be housed in Colorado Department of Education controlled secure document storage (currently Syncplicity) with access only given to members of the research team as needed. Focus group members will be chosen using purposive sampling from the list of people interested in participating in the study. The research team will weight demographic factors including age and race to ensure that the focus groups are as representative as possible of the populations inside the prisons.

The surveys will be given by members of the Remerg staff, CDOC employees working in libraries, and members of the research team from the Colorado State Library LRS and ILD offices. These surveys are entirely anonymous and carry no identifying information, however people will be identified as currently incarcerated or previously incarcerated based on the survey that they fill out. A version of each survey will be made available in Spanish initially and then other languages upon request by a member of the research team, CDOC staff, or a currently or formerly incarcerated person.

Information on library use will be collected from the CDOC's integrated library systems (ILS) by members of the CDOC staff working in libraries and members of the Colorado State Library LRS and ILD offices. This information will be housed securely on Colorado Department of Education servers and released to members of the research team for analysis.

Limited information on prisoner behavior will be collected by the Colorado Department of Corrections and will be released prior to anonymization only to members of the Colorado State Library's LRS office and stored only on a Colorado Department of Education secure server that only members of the LRS team and CDE IT can access. The information will be anonymized prior to being shared with other members of the research team via a Colorado Department of Education controlled secure document storage system (currently Syncplicity). Specific information will be used only when absolutely necessary, with a preference for the use of information in aggregate.

**Diversity Plan**

It is vital to this study that the research team includes at least one person who is currently or formerly incarcerated in an advisory capacity. When decisions are made about this research, a person from one of the studied groups will be in the room and will have substantial ability to give input for decisions. This will help us to extend this diversity plan to issues that we might not have otherwise considered and ensure that we are making informed decisions throughout the research process.

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people are a sensitive and socially marginalized group. According to Rosen, "on the whole, incarcerated individuals have lower levels of education and higher rates of illiteracy, suffer more from substance abuse and mental illness, and come from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds at significantly higher rates than non-incarcerated populations."[20] Additionally, the racial makeup of prison populations is skewed relative to general population, with fewer white people and more people of color incarcerated percentagewise than the general population.[21] As shown above, the research team is committed to following best practices for research with sensitive populations. We will provide the survey

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[20] Rosen, J. (2020) Evaluating impact in the forgotten field of prison librarianship. The serials librarian 79:1-2. p. 45

[21] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/CO.html

electronically both for convenience in those libraries that can support it and to provide an ADA accessible survey for people with disabilities, who have limited reading proficiency, or who otherwise would be able to better use an ADA accessible electronic survey. We will engage telephone translators when speaking with people who are more comfortable in a language other than English within focus groups. We will also provide small incentives whenever possible to people participating in the focus groups and lottery-style incentives for participation in the surveys, to ensure that the members of this socially and economically marginalized group are realizing a small, immediate benefit for their participation and support of the research that is matched to the benefit realized by people participating who are not incarcerated. For those who are currently incarcerated, focus group incentives will be limited to perishable incentives not to exceed a value of $2.45 per person (the prevailing day rate for prison workers in Colorado).[22] For those formerly incarcerated people who participate in focus groups will consist of one $25 gift card per person. For surveys, 16 lottery style incentives will be available for formerly incarcerated people who choose to participate, and a similar structure will be negotiated for people who are currently incarcerated, but at the $2.45 in perishable goods level that was previously established to not represent a high value item or to unfairly incentivize incarcerated people to participate in the survey.

The project ensures that the surveys accurately represent the diversity of the prison population by asking limited demographic questions in the survey to make sure that the voices of BIPOC people are represented at least proportionally to their population within prisons. We will also ensure that the focus groups represent the diversity of communities within prisons by including demographic information on applications to join the focus groups. Using this information, we will give weight to the racial/ethnic demographic information while maintaining a sample of focus group participants that will ensure that participation is not tied to the material facts of their incarceration, in accordance with guidelines on research with incarcerated people.

**Project Results**

This project will provide the library community with unique and groundbreaking information on the outcomes of prison libraries from the patrons themselves, something which is unique in the field of corrections libraries and correctional institutions. When it is complete, it will give corrections librarians from Colorado access to real data about their community and provide librarians from outside Colorado access to this information and a model for how to get the same from their unique prison populations. The data repository will grow as more states are able to replicate this study, much like the dataset for Project Outcome has grown for public and academic libraries.

The research will be developed into a formal report for dissemination to partners and librarians throughout the state of Colorado and nationally, via listservs and other direct methods. This research product will be housed on the LRS.org website (https://www.lrs.org) a central and nationally accessible site, and mirrored to the PRISM site on the Colorado Department of Education/Colorado State Library website (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/prism). The anonymized data will be housed on the LRS.org website, which already functions as a repository for library assessment and research data. This data will remain wholly accessible to the public, except for the data that is shared by the Colorado Department of Corrections, which will be fully anonymized and accessible only in aggregate. The final report will also be accompanied by a webinar that will highlight the results of the survey in Colorado's specific case and demonstrate how it might be used in other library contexts.

A toolkit will be developed and placed on LRS.org that will allow other prison libraries and departments of correction to use the tools and methods developed for their study in their specific contexts. Alongside the toolkit will be a webinar produced by the Library Research Service and the research team that will demonstrate how to complete this research. The research team will apply to present this information at the ALA Annual Conference in the year after the study closes in order to reach as many corrections librarians as possible and encourage further iterations of this study across the United States. LRS is committed to the longevity of this study far beyond the grant period and will remain a resource for at least ten years for people who would like to undertake this research and for housing data about prison

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[22] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/wage_policies.html

libraries. This broad access to the data, the survey instrument, and the research design, will allow other states to undertake similar research studies and to add to the created database and build national information about the outcomes of prison libraries across different correctional environments.

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**Grant Year 1: 08/01/2022-07/31/2023**

| | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Processing and complete contract with researcher | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Process and complete contract with Remerg | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Submit research plan to IRB | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Submit research plan to CDOC for approval | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| CDOC Training for LRS staff | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Gather data from CDOC and ILS systems | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Focus Groups | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Anonymizing and transcribing focus group data | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Coding of focus group data | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| Surveys open | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Anonymizing and entering survey data into tool | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Analysis of data | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Creation of Report | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Creation of Toolkit | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Recording webinars | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Presentations of data | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Grant Year 2: 8/1/2023-7/31/2024 | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coding of focus group data | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | |
| Surveys open | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | |
| Anonymizing and entering survey data into tool | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| Analysis of data | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Creation of Report | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Creation of Toolkit | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| Recording webinars | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | |
| Presentations of data | | | | | | | | | | | ▓ | ▓ |

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Digital Products Plan

*What digital products will you create?*

- a dataset of the anonymized and cleaned data on lrs.org
- a report and infographics on the findings of the project
- a toolkit for other libraries and departments of corrections to replicate this study in their jurisdictions
- informational webinars on the results of the Colorado study and the use of the toolkit

*How will you make your digital products open available (as appropriate)?*

The site that will host this content, https://www.lrs.org/, already serves as a repository for information about assessment and statistics in libraries. This project will be an addition and extension to that already openly available and well-known site. As an IMLS-funded office, LRS is commit to having information freely available to support libraries in Colorado and worldwide.

What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

The dataset will be freely available under a creative commons CC-BY-NC-SA license, which allows users to use the dataset in the ways that they see fit, as long as they attribute the data, are not using it for commercial purposes, and commit to share any changes or additions that they make to the dataset for their use.  This will ensure that the connection to the original project remains intact, allows nonprofit researchers use in perpetuity, and ensures that any additions are trackable.

The report and infographics will be published under a creative commons CC-BY-ND license that restricts users to only copying and distributing with credit.  This will protect the specific findings in Colorado, but allow people to share them or use them in their own projects.

The toolkit will be published under the CC-BY-NC-SA license, which allows users to adapt and remix the content to support their specific project, but will keep it linked to the original project through attribution. This license will also allow nonprofit researchers to use the content in perpetuity, but prevent commercial reuse of the content.

The data will be fully anonymized prior to publication, mitigating any currently known privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities. In the event that we are made aware of issues with either of these things, we will take immediate action to rectify the situation in the specific circumstances that are brought to our attention.

*How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?*

The LRS.org site is regularly maintained for access and accessibility by LRS staff.  Its datasets and other documents are assessed for continued usability on an annual basis.  This will apply to the work product and dataset for the PRISM Project. When updates are made to the technology needed to access this data, the required upgrades will be undertaken to ensure its longevity.

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**Data Management Plan**

*Identify the type(s) and estimated amount of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use(s) to which you expect them to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use, the proposed scope and scale, and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate data.*

Data collection will take place within the first year of the grant project. The research team will collect initial focus group data in prisons and through Remerg throughout the first year, completing this phase as soon as is practical to schedule visits to the prisons for data collection, within the first 8 months of the grant cycle.

The focus group data will be immediately deidentified using audio management software and then sent to Rev.com for transcription.  Only the people conducting the surveys and LRS staff will have access to the audio recordings and after they are transcribed by Rev.com they will be destroyed on computers and drives that belong to CDE and deleted from Rev.com.

Survey data will start to be collected after the research contractor is engaged, a process which is expected to take approximately three months. Surveys will continue to be received and entered into the survey tool for up to one year. Based on estimated numbers of people currently incarcerated in the State of Colorado and those who are currently on parole, we will collect at least 267 completed surveys from inside prisons and 264 from those who were formerly incarcerated. These numbers are the minimum required for statistical significance for the populations as of 2021.

*Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information. If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation). If the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.*

PII will only be purposefully via the informed consent forms and information gathered along with a survey for the lottery for survey incentives.  These forms will be decoupled and held separately from the focus group and survey information and will be kept electronically on the Colorado Department of Education servers and only accessible to members of the LRS staff on site or via a secure VPN.  This information will be treated confidentially as PII under current best practices for protecting personally identifiable information. It will be kept for as long as necessary and then disposed of according to Colorado document retention requirements. Before sharing with the contracted researcher and other members of the research team, all identifying information will be anonymized and access to the documents will be strictly limited.

PII may be incidentally gathered during focus group interviews or through surveys.  PII will be redacted as soon as possible from recordings and interviews, a step that will be undertaken by LRS staff prior to sharing the information with other members of the research team.  Focus group interviews will be transcribed using an outside translation service and when the anonymized transcripts are available the audio recordings will be securely deleted.

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*What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies would be necessary for understanding retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data?  How can these tools be accessed (e.g., open-source and freely available, commercially available, available from your research team)?*

*What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?*

Informed consent forms and all other documentation will be collected and stored on a secure server that can only be accessed by LRS staff and CDE IMS, which requires being in the CDE offices or using the secure VPN.

Completed surveys will be entered and stored in a secure survey platform with a contract with Colorado State Library/LRS that follows industry best practices for protecting information, currently Alchemer. z

*What is your plan for managing, disseminating, and preserving data after the completion of the award-funded project? If relevant, identify the repository where you will deposit your data.  When and for how long will data be made available to other users?*

*When and how frequently will you review your Data Management Plan? How will the implementation be monitored?*

The data management plan will be monitored at the end of each quarter throughout the grant period to ensure that we continue to operate under best practices for the storing and provision of sensitive data. During the project and after it is complete, the data will be monitored annually to ensure that the public dataset is freely available and secure and that we are maintaining the records necessary to ensure the continued validity of the dataset and the non-public research data that underpins it.

Organizational Profile

"As a dynamic service agency, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides leadership, resources, support and accountability to the state's 178 school districts, 1,888 schools, over 53,000 teachers and over 3,200 administrators to help them build capacity to meet the needs of the state's approximately 905,000 public school students.

CDE also provides services and support to boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), early learning centers, state correctional schools, facility schools, the state's libraries, adult/family literacy centers, and General Education Development (GED) testing centers reaching learners of all ages. CDE operates the Colorado Talking Book Library which provides supports for people who have vision, print, and reading disabilities.

In addition, CDE provides structural and administrative support to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and the Charter School Institute.

CDE serves students, parents, and the general public by protecting the public trust through ensuring adherence to laws, strong stewardship of public funds, and accountability for student performance.

As the administrative arm of the State Board of Education, CDE is responsible for implementing state and federal education laws, disbursing state and federal funds, holding schools and districts accountable for performance, licensing all educators, and providing public transparency of performance and financial data.

CDE is led by the Commissioner of Education, a position that is appointed by the State Board of Education" (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomm/aboutcde).

The Mission of the Colorado Department of Education is "ensuring equity and opportunity for every student, every step of the way" (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomm/strategicplan)

The Colorado State Library is a unit of CDE, reporting to the Assistant Commissioner of Education. The mission statement for the Colorado State Library is "The Colorado State Library (CSL) helps libraries, schools, museums, and other organizations improve services, making it easier for all Coloradans to access and use the materials and information they need for lifelong learning" (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/aboutus).

The Library Research Service, which will undertake the PRISM Project, is an office in the Colorado State Library. It was established over twenty years ago to support research on and with libraries. Its mission is "The Library Research Service provides library professionals, educators, public officials, and the media with research and statistics about libraries." In addition to providing statutorily required statistics and assessing and reporting on library programs, the Library Research Service works with libraries in Colorado and across the United States on innovative research projects that move the library profession forward. (https://www.lrs.org/)