

Applicant Organization: Nashville Public Library Foundation

Project Title: Transforming Learning, Transforming Community: A Holistic Approach

Statement of National Need: America is facing a set of challenges that are rooted in our nation's history and exacerbated by current conditions—including the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of technology and social media to negatively influence our society, emboldened racism, and a climate crisis. Despite this, there is another story that is emerging in communities that have been working together for years to catalyze change: when we create space to explore and connect community assets, we discover our capacity to transform our communities. Thanks to IMLS' Community Catalyst Initiative (CCI), Nashville now has a shared vision that defines what children/youth need to thrive in education, work, and life, and especially helps those in informal education settings (afterschool and summer programs, libraries, parks, museums, etc.) leverage the power of learning outside of school. Nashville's Vision for Holistic Youth Development (the Vision) is especially critical now, as children/youth and learners of all ages are accessing learning in new ways, oftentimes outside of traditional learning environments. The Vision's practices and assets provide a roadmap to support the conditions that will help our community and its children/youth thrive in these uncertain times.

Throughout the nation, libraries are stepping in to support their communities by endeavoring to provide universally accessible educational opportunities. Libraries have an unprecedented opportunity to shape learning outcomes for children/youth through their proven, consistently innovative programming, as well as by convening their communities to collaboratively develop a vision for how to support children/youth in thriving. With the support of Nashville Public Library's rich network of relationships, the Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA), which is housed in NPL and supported by the Nashville Public Library Foundation, is uniquely positioned to convene communities locally and leverage what we are learning to support partners throughout the nation in advancing their own journeys to create communities where children/youth can thrive. These efforts will be powered by the knowledge that learning is happening all the time, across many settings, and that children/youth are impacted by the ecosystem in which they are embedded—including relationships, systems, and our society's beliefs.

Project Design: The proposed project aligns with the "Build Capacity" goal within IMLS' *Transforming Communities* strategic plan and the objective "Share and adopt best practices and innovations." Goal 1 of this proposed three-year CCI project grant is to strengthen Nashville's capacity to support children/youth in building skills and assets that will help them thrive in education, work, and life through the implementation of the Vision. The objective for goal 1 is to strengthen community youth and adults' readiness to co-create a plan for action in alignment with the Vision. To accomplish this goal, in years 1-3, NAZA will advance the Vision by supporting community-based institutions (e.g. Metro Nashville Public Schools, Alignment Nashville, Mayor's Office) and other partners as they consider how to integrate the Vision into their strategic plans, resulting activities, and intended eventual impact. NAZA will focus especially on building the capacity of local youth development organizations to help Nashville-area children/youth thrive and develop to their full potential by working alongside these organizations, children/youth, and other stakeholders to co-create strategies for how to 1) advance the 12 practices and four assets through formal and informal education and other approaches, and 2) measure progress on implementing the Vision. Goal 1 outcomes include: 1) 85% (or 850) of 1,000 local adults and youth will report that they have partnered to co-create the conditions that support children/youth in thriving in alignment with the Vision; 2) 75% (or 450) of 600 participant youth will report that they have strengthened at least three of the twelve practices/skills; 3) 25% (or 150) of 600 participant youth will report having a meaningful participation/leadership development opportunity within their programs; and 4) The Vision will be integrated into Nashville's new Child and Youth Plan.

Goal 2 of this proposed project is to strengthen the capacity of other communities to help children/youth thrive in education, work, and life. The objective for goal 2 is to support the readiness of other communities' stakeholders to advance their own local journeys to support children/youth in thriving. Throughout the grant, NAZA will share its progress, approaches, and tools with communities across America at national and international conferences, such as the American Library Association Annual Conference, Every Hour Counts' National Institute, Forum for Youth Investment's Ready by 21 National Meeting, and the Best of Out-of-School Time conference. By year 3, NAZA will develop implementable tools that can be shared with the field (for example, a youth/adult co-created engagement toolkit that can be utilized by the field to elevate and support youth leadership). Goal 2 outcomes include: 1) 85% (or 170) of 200 stakeholders in other communities will report that the strategies and resources shared by NAZA will help them advance their own local journeys to support children/youth in

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thriving; and 2) 60% (or 120) of 200 stakeholders in other communities will report that they agree or strongly agree that libraries can be catalysts for community change.

Diversity Plan: NAZA shares IMLS' commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Throughout the implementation of NAZA's current CCI grant as well as the activities that established the need for the grant-funded project, NAZA was intentional to ensure that the following project components included the leadership and voices of people who, at a minimum, represented Nashville's diverse communities, or overrepresented people of color: focus groups prior to the project, the working group that was assembled to guide the Vision process, the focus group participants whose ideas formed the eventual Vision, and a smaller team that engaged in extensive conversation and decision making to finalize the Vision. Fifty-nine percent of focus group participants whose ideas formed the eventual vision were youth and caregivers and 20 percent of the focus groups were with youth or caregivers who spoke English as a second language (interpretation was provided in Spanish, Kinyarwanda, and Zomi). Key collaborators in the grant (Vanderbilt Peabody College's research team, the Mayor's Youth Council, and NAZA's *Youth In Action!* initiative) centered DEI as a theory and practice. "Equity, access, and justice" is one of four community assets that the Vision defines. It will continue to be centered in all of the proposed project activities. In the new grant cycle, NAZA will continue to work to support the shifting of power to community residents (e.g. youth, caregivers) and partners utilizing tools and resources that NAZA has gained through the CCI grant, including asset mapping, the power ladder, storytelling, and the learning community fostered with grantees.

National Impact: Through IMLS' investment over the last two years, NAZA has demonstrated its capacity to envision a multi-year community change initiative and implement the necessary steps alongside local community stakeholders to support the development of a vision that prioritizes the whole child. Throughout the process, we have heard from local stakeholders that there is no whole child, without a whole community. As a result of rigorous, community-based research, NAZA is well positioned to support the implementation of a vision which bridges theory (Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory) and practice (the lived experiences of our community members). While NAZA is deeply rooted within Nashville, we have robust relationships with partners throughout the country including current CCI grantees, Every Hour Counts members, Wallace Foundation's second cohort of afterschool system builders, and How Learning Happens conveners. During the current CCI grant, NAZA was selected by America's Promise Alliance as one of five grantee communities throughout the nation to convene the community around How Learning Happens, a framework developed by the Aspen Institute, which endeavors to advance the notion that learning happens all the time, everywhere and is an integrated social, emotional, and cognitive process. Whether drawing upon existing partnerships or fostering new partnerships with other communities (as described above), the proposed project is poised to support transformation in communities throughout the nation.

Budget Summary: The estimated cost of this project over three years is \$1,627,327. The request for IMLS funds is \$602,516. A match of \$1,024,811 will be provided by non-federal sources.

1. Salaries and Wages are budgeted for \$352,770, including \$177,000 in IMLS funds and \$175,770 in match funds. One FTE Initiative Manager and one intern are budgeted for the grant. Two NAZA/Metro-funded positions (Strategic Initiatives Director & Chief Executive) will oversee the grant and their time is calculated as a match, at 60% and 15%.
2. Fringe Benefits are budgeted for \$69,476, including \$21,635 in IMLS funds and \$47,841 in match funds. Benefits are calculated for the grant-funded staff (at 100%) and the staff funded by other sources (at 60% and 15%).
3. Travel is budgeted for \$7,200, which includes national and local travel for managing staff.
4. Contracts and Subawards are budgeted for \$418,000, including \$355,000 in IMLS funds and \$63,000 in match funds. All funds will support capacity building components and will be made available to community experts, partners, and youth leaders with a focus on equity and equal access.
5. Student Support will be entirely matched by non-federal funds. We estimate that annually 12-15 program sites will engage in capacity building through the grant and NAZA will match the program investments to ensure that adults have adequate time to support youth in their afterschool programs in building the practices/skills that they need to thrive.
6. Other costs include incentives for events and engagements (\$3,000), food (\$5,000), and translation services (\$5,000).
7. NPLF does not have a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate and will charge 5%, or \$26,682, for administration.