

American Library Association
National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment Phase 2

The American Library Association (ALA) seeks **\$483,489** in IMLS National Leadership Research in Service to Practice funding for a three-year grant to conduct Phase 2 exploratory **research** of the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA). Phase 2 will explore the dimensions of library work with partner organizations during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Our central research questions are:

- *How can we describe and categorize the range of community partnership models used by libraries before the pandemic and the new models that are emerging from COVID-19?*
- *How can the outputs from NILPPA Phase 1 (practitioner competencies and programming dimensions) be modified/expanded to reflect the impacts on the library programming community during the COVID-19 era?*

Through NILPPA, ALA conducts foundational research documenting and illuminating the potential of library programs to fortify libraries, strengthen communities, and improve lives. During Phase 1, researchers identified [nine competencies](#) needed for effective library programs and put forth a [multidimensional framework](#) reflecting the current state of programming. Scholarly and practitioner response to Phase 1 (May 2019) has been strong: peer-reviewed articles have been published or are forthcoming in the [Journal of Education for Library and Information Science](#) and [Library Quarterly](#). NILPPA.org has received more than 6,300 pageviews, and the white paper and practitioner tools have been downloaded more than 2,000 times and received hundreds of social media responses. Two NILPPA practitioner-researcher-led webinars have been viewed approximately 1,000 times each since their June 2019 air dates.

Statement of Broad Need: NILPPA Phase 1 brought the significance of library programming into the mainstream of library research, spurring related research (e.g. the current IMLS-funded project *A Taxonomy of Black History Month Programming*) and citations in numerous journal articles. Phase 2 will document the emerging ways that libraries are partnering for community impact during COVID-19 and capture additional skills needed to carry out their work. Although library partnership best practices, case studies, and learning materials exist, there has been no exploration of how library partnerships are used and where opportunity lies to strengthen them. Faced with the pandemic, libraries rapidly pivoted to virtual and socially distanced programs, partnering with other organizations to use all available resources to engage their communities safely and effectively. This research will seize on this historic moment to study the mechanisms and relationships that enable libraries/library workers to adapt to such unforeseen challenges.

Project Design: NILPPA Phase 2 will be guided by a diverse, eight-member advisory group of practitioner-researchers representing all types of libraries and communities. [Phase 1 advisors](#) Terrilyn Chun (Multnomah County Library), Richard Kong (Skokie Public Library), Manju Prasad-Rao (Long Island University-LIU Post Campus), and Jennifer Weil Arns (University of South Carolina), will be joined by Nicole A. Cooke (University of South Carolina) and Jody Gray (University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences Office for Diversity & Inclusion and AILA representative), as well as representatives designated by the boards of the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). The project team will again partner with social science think tank [Knology](#) to explore the above research questions through a two-part plan:

1) Updating Phase 1 competencies and categorization: A short survey to more than 8,000 Programming Librarian newsletter subscribers will seek to describe the modifications necessary for the categorization framework and related competencies, to better serve how library scholars and practitioners now view public programming during the COVID-19 era. We will seek to ensure representation of all library types in our survey results and use targeted follow-up recruitment as needed for underrepresented types. Results of the survey will be synthesized into key findings and shared with the field via NILPPA.org, inviting public commentary and validation. The framework and set of competencies will be revised accordingly.

2) Understanding community partnerships: Results from NILPPA Phase 1 and ALA's more recent [New Americans Library Project White Paper](#) identified that library partnerships *with other community-based organizations enrich and expand service to both of their communities. Mutual benefits are well documented. Both entities enjoy increased capacity, and community members acknowledge that they receive better services and resources.* NILPPA Phase 2 will develop a more detailed description of partnership models, according to library type and service population (e.g. academic, public, specialty, and/or specific cultural user needs, such as faith communities, Deaf populations, and/or immigrant groups). It will further examine how partnerships may continue to influence virtual programming during and after the pandemic. This wave will use targeted surveying through ALA's Programming Librarian mailing list to uncover a representative range of partnership models, followed by a maximum variation sampling of libraries according to their partnership model. From these model groups, we will recruit participants into a series of focus groups, each of which represents a defined participant model. Each focus group will engage library staff from across the range of library types, settings, and service population so that researchers can identify: 1) how these models adapt and shift; 2) what commonalities remain consistent across partnership needs; and 3) what unique attributes exist among service variations. This research will enhance understanding of how variation among adaptations responds to individual library needs.

Dissemination: Phase 2 results will be publicly available: published in a white paper, disseminated via nilppa.org, that focuses on actionable takeaways for practitioners. Blog updates on nilppa.org and ALA's Programming Librarian.org will be shared on social media to elicit feedback. ALA will seek publication of two peer-reviewed journal articles (Y1/Q4, Y3/Q1). [Practitioner tools](#) will be distributed digitally, in print and via free webinars and conference presentations.

Diversity Plan: ALA demonstrates its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion through its [strategic directions](#). NILPPA supports these goals by ensuring that advisory committees are inclusive of race, ethnicity, and gender identification; and that our study addresses library type, community demographics, geographic isolation and distribution, MLIS and non-MLIS library workers, and other considerations to ensure that underrepresented voices are included.

Budget Summary: The grant budget totals \$483,489: \$143,897 in salary/fringe for grant-funded staff, \$5,000 in Y3 travel and stipend, \$400 in materials/supplies, \$271,463 in contracts/subawards, including \$16,000 in advisor stipends (8 x \$2,000), \$244,963 to research partner Knology (IRB costs, data collection, analysis, topline reporting, and coordination); Other: \$15,000 for communications, printing, and digital delivery, \$1,000 in Y3 conference presentation expenses; and \$47,729 in indirect cost at ALA federal rate of 23.08 percent. Cost share: \$51,931 in project director salary, fringe, and indirect cost. Total 30-month research budget is \$535,420.