

Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR): Climate Action in Libraries Digital Workshops

Summary: NLG Goals and Objectives: 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 | Lead Organization: Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) | Project type: Implementation | Amount requested from IMLS \$249,940 | Partner organizations (optional): N/A | Overall need: for information professionals to respond to the climate crisis | Intended impact: create an informed community of librarians who can take individual and joint action.

Project Justification: The climate crisis is our lifetime's biggest collective action problem, and everyone has a role to play in responding to it. Many librarians are acutely aware of the urgent need to act but struggle with determining their course. Resources exist with information on libraries and climate change, but most favor identifying problems over actionable approaches. Moreover, most existing resources are self-directed, such as readings and syllabi, and do not offer opportunities to connect with a community. To address this, CLIR proposes to host an online workshop series that identifies the key areas of action that librarians, archivists, and other cultural workers can take to address the climate crisis. All sessions will be approached from a climate justice vantage point, centering the voices of the most affected people and communities.

CLIR has experience with online education, having organized a [6-part online certification program on collections management](#) and hosted regular online meetings and webinars for its fellows, sponsors, and participants in the Leading Change Institute. CLIR has also contributed to climate education in libraries through its *Material Memory* podcast, which devoted its 2020-2021 season to [Climate Change and Cultural Memory](#). In 2023, CLIR will publish a report called “A Green New Deal for Archives” by Eira Tansey. CLIR’s Digital Library Federation (DLF) program supports a grassroots working group of library professionals dedicated to climate justice, which will help organize and contribute expertise to the series.

This project addresses three objectives of the IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries under Goal 2: “Build the capacity of libraries and archives to lead and contribute to efforts that improve community well-being and strengthen civic engagement.”

Objective	Alignment with project
<i>2.1: Develop or enhance replicable library programming, models, and tools that engage communities and individuals of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.</i>	The series will create an open resource library with tools that can be replicated and adapted to different contexts. The workshops focus on both the direct and indirect effects of the climate crisis, and will consider economic, health, and social justice impacts, in addition to environmental.
<i>2.2: Develop or enhance collaborations between libraries and stakeholders, and leverage opportunities to address community needs.</i>	The series will emphasize collective action and forming strategic partnerships with key stakeholders affected by and working on the climate crisis.
<i>2.3 Establish or refine approaches that equip libraries and archives to contribute to the well being of communities</i>	The central question guiding the curriculum will be how best to serve a library’s core communities in the face of the climate crisis. The series will help participants identify approaches and put them into practice.

Project Work Plan: The workshop series includes six 90-minute online modules, each focused on a unique topic pertaining to climate action in libraries. A diverse curriculum committee composed of individuals from a wide range of professional and personal backgrounds will select topics and speakers. The committee will identify priority webinar topics and nominate 2-4 experts to lead each session. The first 45 minutes of each online workshop will be a pre-recorded expert presentation, followed by a 45-minute live, moderated discussion session with the presenters that includes interactive components enabling participants to test and apply what they have learned.

Possible topics for the workshops include but are not limited to emergency planning, managing collections in the climate crisis, serving marginalized communities most affected by the crisis, adapting

institutional budgets and policies for resilience in the face of crisis, reducing the environmental footprint of libraries, supporting existing climate movements, climate change, and open knowledge, and helping communities prepare for the direct and indirect effects of the climate crisis. The final webinar topics will be further informed by a community survey prior to selection by the curriculum committee.

The workshops will be held monthly. In between workshop sessions, we will offer participants opportunities to connect, process, make plans for action, and stay accountable by hosting “climate circles” inspired by the [All We Can Save](#) model. To further strengthen the community, the series will host three in-person meet-ups at library conferences in different regions of the US, including at CLIR’s DLF Forum where participants can further their collective efforts through the DLF climate justice working group.

The digital and distributed format was selected because it minimizes travel emissions and makes the program more equitable and accessible, while still providing opportunities to build collaborative partnerships. The series is designed with the understanding the participants have different life circumstances and availability. Participants can attend just sessions that interest them or participate in all of them. They can watch the recordings when they are live streamed, or on their own schedule. Likewise, participation in climate circles and in-person meet-ups are optional. Participants interested in receiving professional development credit for participation will have the opportunity to receive a climate action in libraries certificate for completion of all six modules. All sessions will be recorded and made freely available, along with a digital resource library. Following the series, the curriculum committee will publish a report synthesizing the workshops’ recommended outcomes.

CLIR will hire a coordinator to organize the curriculum committee meetings, issue a survey of librarians and archivists to help gauge interest in potential topics, facilitate the webinar sessions and climate circles, compile the digital resource library, and oversee the final report. All speakers and members of the curriculum committee will be offered equitable compensation for their time and expertise. Digital inclusion and accessibility will be prioritized in all project-related activities.

Diversity Plan: It is critical to center voices from the communities most affected by the climate crisis, and in the US, this includes BIPOC groups, particularly Black, Latine, and Indigenous populations. This will be top of mind when hiring the program coordinator and selecting representatives for the curriculum committee, and will be emphasized to the committee as they consider potential speakers. The webinar sessions will include 2-4 speakers to offer a variety of perspectives. This series will help shift perspectives about what a “climate expert” is, with the understanding that community experts with a lived experience of the climate crisis are best positioned to envision effective ways to plan for it (e.g. anti-gentrification organizers can help prepare communities for threats of climate displacement).

Project Results: The webinar series will offer librarians and information professionals who want to do something about the climate crisis free workshops and a community that will help them prepare to take action. The webinars and workshop materials will be made freely available and will be designed to be adaptable and usable by other institutions and communities nationally. Deliverables include six recorded online workshops, six informal climate circles (held between workshops), three opportunities to meet in person in different parts of the US, an accessible online resource bank, and a publication. Recordings of the webinar series and related digital resources will be available for a minimum of 10 years, allowing people to partake in the training after the program is completed. The community built around the project will be bolstered through continued engagement around these issues through CLIR’s DLF climate justice working group.

Budget Summary: CLIR requests \$249,940 to support the activities outlined in this proposal. This includes \$39,500 to support payments to the curriculum committee and webinar presenters, \$690 for a Zoom license (up to 1000 participants) and \$1,800 for webinar closed captioning costs, and \$16,500 for costs related to the project’s website and publication. \$18,300 is requested to support costs related to the three in-person meetings including meeting space rental, supplies and staff travel. \$173,150 is requested to offset the costs of a dedicated project coordinator and other staff who will contribute to the project over the 31 month project period.