<u>**Narrative**</u>

Social Services in Public Libraries

Florida State University seeks **$266,702** in **National Leadership Grant Applied Research Grant** funding for a two-year project **(Aug. 1, 2023 – Jul. 31, 2025)** to explore the experiences and perceptions of library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians in providing social services information and working alongside social workers in public libraries. This project will explore the point of view of public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth librarians to understand how they see the professional scope of librarianship and what their visions are for how to best respond to the social service needs of their communities. Since the San Francisco Public Library hired the first library social worker in 2009 (Knight 2010), other libraries have followed suit. This trend has continued largely unevaluated. To date, there are no established professional guidelines or models for librarian/social worker collaboration, and the potential impact of the placement of social workers in public libraries on the profession of librarianship and the public library as an institution has not been fully considered. The opinions of public librarians have not been sufficiently canvassed and the profession has not fully considered what role librarians should take in the provision of social services information, what the relevant issues are for assimilating social workers into the workplace, and/or how to disambiguate the professional scope of the two professions. This research will utilize a mixed-method exploratory, sequential model designed to examine how public librarians perceive the inclusion of social workers in the public library, how they see their professional scope of practice, and how they envision the best ways to respond to social service needs in the public library context. This research project will include collecting focus group and survey data as well as utilizing previously gathered interview data and data from relevant literature. This proposal responds to IMLS's **Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement and Objective 2.1: Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences** by providing a national data set reflecting the views of professional librarians on the provision of social services information in public libraries, ideas on how the profession can move forward in the face of increasing user needs, and the necessity for libraries to be involved in the provision of social services information through services and programs. It will support **Objective 2.2: Support community collaboration and foster civic discourse** by exploring librarian views on expanding the role of the public library in responding to community social service needs and opening up the discourse on collaboration in service provision.

Project Justification

Across the country, social workers, social work interns, and others are being recruited to provide various types of social services information and social services in public libraries. In support of this trend, the IMLS has supported multiple National Leadership Grant proposals (2017, 2018, 2019) placing social workers in libraries as part of their commitment to community well-being. The Public Library Association set up a social worker task force (n.d.) to make training recommendations, identify model programs and share best practices, and consider how to integrate social work methods into libraries toward the goal of assisting libraries to serve diverse communities. Their work is ongoing. IMLS research has demonstrated that libraries play an important role in promoting the well-being of our communities and also provides case studies of libraries in which social workers are on staff (Norton et al., 2021). Nonetheless, there has been an underlying tension in librarianship about where professional boundaries lie vis-a-vis social work and questions about the appropriateness of librarians providing these services. Social work and librarianship are similar professions with very similar origins and concerns. Both, for example, are helping professions. Moreover, the provision of social services information by public librarians is ingrained in the history of the profession (Maack, 1998). In recent years, the emergence of the library as an important resource in disaster recovery and in response to social issues such as homelessness, drug abuse, food insecurity, and more has necessitated that librarians provide services that many

do not feel trained for (Gross et al., in press) and did not anticipate being part of their professional scope of practice. In response, new approaches to library services such as learning to talk to people in crisis (Westbrook, 2015), understanding the effects of trauma (Tolley, 2022), and whole-person librarianship (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019) have been introduced in the literature. Trauma-based approaches and the incorporation of social work concepts into librarianship tend to bring the scope of the two professions even closer. Along with these developments, there has emerged a growing interest in placing social workers, social work interns, or others in positions in libraries to help alleviate the burden on librarians who may not feel prepared to provide social service information, but also lack the time to assist these users. However, there is evidence that not all librarians and library administrators believe that social workers are needed in libraries or that the presence of a social worker alleviates the need for librarians and other staff to provide social service information and programs (Cathcart, 2008; Gross & Latham, 2021; Westbrook, 2015). The placement of social workers in public libraries is not a one size fits all solution as not all libraries have access to community agencies or institutions of higher education that can provide personnel or interns and funding for social work positions is generally not easily come by (Gross & Latham, 2021).

The **focus** of this project, which **requires the collection of empirical data,** is to understand from the point of view of public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians how they see the professional scope of librarianship and what their visions are for how to best respond to the social service needs of their communities. To date, the perspectives of this **target group** regarding developments in the delivery of social services information have not been fully explored and social services information provision from the point of view of youth services librarians, in particular, has largely been ignored. We do not know what public librarians see as the best way to handle social services information provision in libraries based on their training, experiences, and knowledge of their communities.

Abbott's System of Professions (1988) provides a framework for understanding the current situation in the professions of librarianship and social work. Abbott suggests that professions are interdependent systems. A disruption in one profession will lead to a readjustment in the overall system, until balance is restored. The increased need for librarians to respond to social services needs can be interpreted as a disruption in the systems of the two professions. The insertion of another profession taking over some of the duties of librarians can be interpreted as a "jurisdictional contest" that has erupted as the overall system seeks to restore balance. Right now, Abbott's model would say that the jurisdictions of the two professions in the context of the public library are working this through. The proposed project will explore the period of disruption resulting from increased social service needs in communities to examine the effect on librarians and to understand their vision of the future of librarianship..

Relevant Literature

The literature on the placement of social workers in public libraries is small and little is provided in terms of empirical research (Giesler, 2021; Provence, 2020). The idea of including social workers in public libraries was introduced as early as 1988 (Levinson), but the direct hiring of social workers is believed to have begun in 2009 at the San Francisco Public Library. Since then the practice has grown and recently the idea of using the public library as a field placement site for masters in social work interns has risen in popularity (Johnson, 2019a, 2019b). Much of the interest in bringing a social worker into the public library has been in reaction to the ongoing problem of homelessness (Giesler, 2019, Hill & Tamminen, 2020; Kelleher 2013; Provence, 2020). A large portion of the literature contains evaluations of the services provided in public libraries by social workers (Garner et al., 2021; Giesler, 2019, Hill & Tamminen, 2020; Kelleher, 2013; Luo et al., 2012; Provence, 2020) and reveals the variety of responsibilities social workers have been tasked with such as providing resource and treatment referrals, helping users fill out applications for services, developing and attending library programs, providing coaching and training on engaging with vulnerable users, including training on de-escalation techniques, cultural sensitivity, trauma, self-care, autism, and mental health (Provence, 2020). In contrast, Giesler found that social workers in the public library were not providing direct services; rather they were involved in staff education and the development of information resources. This literature

generally concludes that both the community and library staff experience benefits from the presence of a social worker in the library.

Other investigations in the literature examine the social services needs of communities by collecting data from library users (Kelley et al., 2017, Provence et al., 2021; Wahler et al., 2022). Major findings from the literature are displayed below. It should be noted that Wahler et al., who performed a user survey, also uncovered the voices of patrons who complained about a sense of discomfort around others in the library perceived as having psychosocial needs and there were also comments from patrons who believed that meeting psychosocial needs were outside the scope of the library's mandate.

Users' most pressing social service needs	Identified by
Services to help children succeed in school Health care Mental health care Food insecurity Housing insecurity Employment	Kelley et al., 2017
Childcare Computer/Internet access Fun and safe activities Parenting skills Social connections Utilities	Provence et al., 2021
Social connections Mental health Financial assistance Dental health Education Health Insurance Housing Employment Transportation A place to keep warm or cool	Wahler et al., 2022

There are many examples in the literature that librarians can and do provide social service information and programs (Kosmicki, 2019-2020) such that one may wonder as Cathcart (2008) does:

> Perhaps there is a need for the role of librarian to evolve, with the incorporation of social service training in library schools to better prepare librarians for the social advocacy aspect of public librarianship. Or, if the blurring line between librarianship and social work is too messy for some, that too can inform decisions on library policies, staffing, and service. (p. 90)

Giesler (2021) found that librarian respondents did not always find the training provided them by social workers to be effective and that gaps in service resulted from not understanding when to call the social worker in. Crabtree et al. (submitted) conducted interviews with 15 librarians all of whom had encountered patrons with social services needs such as homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, and mental and physical health. The majority opinion was that the presence of a social worker could complement and supplement the work of librarians; however, they were concerned about the blurring of professional boundaries, space and scheduling issues, privacy and confidentiality for patrons, and liability issues for the library.

A survey of library administrators by Gross and Latham (2021) revealed that the presence of a social worker in the library increased library use, staff morale, and community partnerships. However, more than half of the library administrators who did not have a social worker in their library did not want one, mainly due to lack of funding, but also due to the belief that their communities did not need this service. Library administrators had concerns about liability, licensure requirements, and the belief that local government does not see social services as the library's role. They also felt that librarians and other staff can respond to social issues brought to the library. Geisler (2021) found that administrators were concerned with issues of funding and supervising social workers and whether there might be competing interests for social workers provided by outside agencies whose missions and priorities were different from the library's. Baum et al. (online 2022) interviewed public library branch managers and found that generally, their attitude toward having a social worker on site was positive, but there were still issues needing resolution including clarifying preferred modes of collaboration between social workers and librarians and determining what appropriate supervision and assessment of social workers in a library context look like.

Target Group

The **target group** of primary interest in this project is public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians. A national survey will be developed and will seek the broadest participation by the target group as possible. The IMLS (https://www.imls.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey) reports that for fiscal year 2019 there were 9, 057 public libraries in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. There were 50,925 librarians at these libraries; 66.78 percent (34,006) have ALA-accredited degrees. Statistics on youth librarianship are not tracked consistently. One career company (https://www.zippia.com/youth-services-librarian-jobs/demographics/) estimates there are 7,622 youth librarians, 24 percent of whom have master's degrees. It is unclear how many of them work in public libraries. These numbers provide a broad idea of the potential participants whose careers and day-to-day work life are likely to be impacted by ideas about how the library and librarians serve the social services needs of their communities.

It is unknown to what extent the target group will benefit from the changes in professional jurisdiction that are underway, but the collection of empirical data may impact the decisions the profession makes as to how to proceed. Potential impacts include library organization and staffing, library training, library policy and procedures, and the relationship between the library and other community agencies. Abbott's model suggests that ultimately balance in the systems of professions will be restored, one way or the other, but the profession has the ability to impact the jurisdiction that defines its responsibilities. The ultimate goal of both librarianship and social work is to serve the diverse information needs of the community and the ultimate group to gain from a restored balance in the professions is the community the library serves.

Intended Impacts

A comprehensive picture of the experiences and opinions of public library managers and adult and youth services librarians at the national level will enlarge our understanding of what members of the profession are doing and want to do in the face of increasing social services information needs brought to the library. This will inform our knowledge of what the profession needs in order to move forward in providing these kinds of programs and services, and the development of new models for how to best promote **inclusive engagement of communities** seeking social services information assistance. These outcomes will translate into improved services that promote community well-being, including for youth; **the improved ability of libraries to provide broad access to information,** as improvements in being able to help individuals in crisis (as is the case with day-to-day social services needs) relates to the library's ability to help in community crises situations (as in more informed service provision in the event of a disaster).

The goal of this project is to examine the disposition of public librarians on changes to their professional scope of practice in the face of the expanding trend of placing social workers in public libraries to support community social services information needs, perform outreach, and engage in other activities that have previously fallen to public librarians as part of their job (Cathcart, 2008; Westbrook, 2015). Social workers are being placed in libraries without clear guidelines for how they should function within a library, and collaborate with librarians and other staff. As noted above, research on social workers in libraries has mainly focused on case studies or evaluations of particular services that highlight the benefits of having a social worker in the library and less on providing the full range of reactions and positions of library professionals. The data provided by this project will assist the profession to make more conscious decisions about whether the scope of the practice of public librarianship should or should not change in response to increased social services information needs in communities. This trend of placing social workers in public libraries represents a shift that has begun in the professional jurisdiction of librarianship. This project will make a major contribution by describing the experience and perceptions of librarians and managers concerning the provision of social services information and the trend to place social workers in public libraries. In addition to the mixed method approach described below, ongoing external input, validation, and consensus will be sought from the target audience through a Facebook project page that describes the project and what is being learned and solicits comments from the field.

The mixed method approach proposed in this project will document the experiences and perceptions of professional librarians regarding the inclusion of social workers in public libraries as well as uncover issues, concerns, and the potential benefits associated with adjustments to the professional scope of librarianship that could result from the installment of social workers as an expected feature of public library services.

Methods

This project does not propose a treatment or a program. This project will employ a mixed-method exploratory, sequential model utilized to develop a data collection instrument (survey). This approach builds on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive view of the research problem.
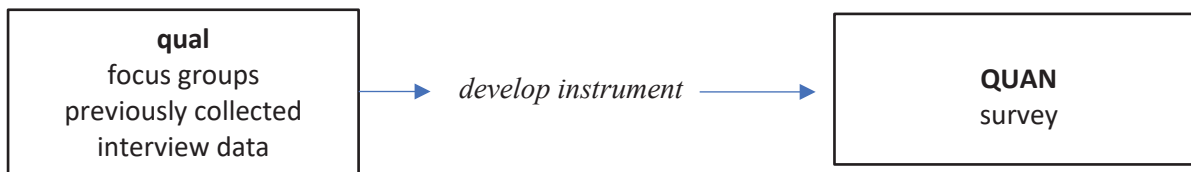
In the qualitative phase (qual), six online focus groups tailored to three groups, public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians, will be performed. Data from these focus groups will be compared to data from interviews with managers and librarians collected in two preliminary studies (Baum et al., in press; Crabtree, et al., submitted), as well as findings reported in the library and information science literature. The project's advisory board will assist in the development of focus group questions and will be asked to comment on the implications of the findings for the development of survey questions. A national survey on the topic of social workers in public libraries will then be developed that is tailored through skip patterns to collect the opinions of each of the three groups: public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians.

In the quantitative phase of the study (QUAN), the survey will be pretested and reviewed by the advisory board before being deployed for data collection. As indicated by the use of capital letters in the model above, the qualitative phase is meant to inform survey development. The support role of the qualitative data is

reflected in the use of lowercase in the model. QUAN is in all caps to signify the emphasis of the project is on the collection and analysis of the quantitative (survey) data.

Both the focus group questions and the survey questions will be designed to address the following **research questions:**

RQ1. What are the experiences and perspectives of professional librarians (managers as well as adult and youth services librarians) regarding the provision of social services information in public libraries?

RQ2. How are social services information needs currently addressed in libraries including how related services and programs are developed and assessed?

RQ3. What is the willingness of librarians to respond to social services information needs in their daily work?

RQ4. Where do librarians draw the professional boundaries between librarianship and social work?

RQ5. Where do librarians see overlap between the professional activities librarians perform and those performed by social workers?

RQ6. If librarians could have exactly the help they need to respond to their community's social services needs, what would that look like?

The development of focus group questions and survey questions and data analysis will be guided by Dervin's (Dervin & Dewdney, 1986) **sense-making theory,** which considers the context within which individuals find themselves, the ways in which they are stopped in their progress by the need for information, and an understanding of the goals desired information will help them achieve. By focusing on how public library managers and adult and youth services librarians see the current issues of the need for social services and how the library is implicated in these community needs, the ways librarians feel restrained or empowered to provide social services information, as well as the help librarians would like to have in addressing their community's social services information needs, insights on the range of librarians' viewpoints toward social services in public libraries can be gained. Question development and data analysis will also be informed by Abbott's System of Professions (1988) specifically Abbott's concepts of jurisdiction, competition, and the effects of internal and external changes to the system of a profession (in this case, librarianship). From this perspective, data can be analyzed to provide a description of the perceived professional boundaries between librarianship and social work.

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis
1. What are the experiences and perspectives of professional librarians (managers as well as adult and youth services librarians) regarding the provision of social services information in public libraries?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis
2, How are social services information needs transacted in libraries including how related services and programs are developed and assessed?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis
3, What is the willingness of librarians to respond to social services information needs in their daily work?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis
4. Where do librarians draw the professional boundaries between librarianship and social work?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis

5. Where do librarians see overlap between the professional activities librarians perform and those performed by social workers?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis
6. If librarians could have exactly the help they need to respond to their community's social services needs, what would that look like?	Focus groups Librarian survey	Qualitative analysis Quantitative analysis

Project Activities

The project will consist of the following activities:

1. The development and pre-testing of focus group questions for six focus groups, two each with public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians. Questions will be pretested with students at the FSU iSchool and reviewed by the advisory board and any needed changes will be made before the focus groups commence. During this time **(August – December 2023)** the projects' Facebook presence will be established.

2. Focus group participants will be recruited through messages posted to professional associations (PLA, ALSC, YALSA, the Black Caucus American Library Association (BCALA), REFORMA, Asian Pacific American Libraries Association (APALA), Rainbow Round Table (RRT)), and state library lists targeting a diverse pool of managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians in public libraries. Focus group members will be offered a $50 gift card for participating. Six focus groups will be conducted online with a target of eight participants in each group (48 total). Focus groups will be professionally moderated by a consultant and recorded for later transcription. The co-PIs and GA will be present for all focus groups to observe and take notes. Meetings will be held with the consultant between focus groups to discuss what is learned and to determine if any changes are needed to the focus group questions before continuing. **(January – March 2024)**

3. Focus group data will be analyzed using the constant comparative method employing NVIVO software (https://www.qsrinternational.com/) freely available through FSU and triangulated with findings from previous interviews and informed by previous research reported in the LIS literature. Focus group findings will be shared with the advisory board for comment and insights. **(April -May 2024)**

4. Based on the data collected in the qualitative phase, surveys will be developed using Qualtrics(https://www.qualtrics.com/) or similar survey software freely available through FSU. The questions will include some demographic questions (job title, years of experience, size of service area), questions about how libraries are currently addressing social service information needs, and questions about experiences and perceptions of the provision and adequacy of social services information in public libraries. Perceptions of the professional scope of librarianship, views on how libraries can best contribute to communities' social services information needs, and views of the trend of placing social workers in public libraries also will be explored. **(June-August 2024)**

5. Surveys will be reviewed by the advisory board and pretested by students at the FSU ischool. Participants will be recruited through messages posted to professional association (PLA, ALSC, YALSA, BCALA, REFORMA, APALA, RRT), and state library lists targeting a diverse pool of managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians in public libraries. The advisory board will be asked to suggest additional strategies to ensure as high a response rate as possible. The surveys will be deployed in **November 2024** and advertised through both the project's Facebook and relevant library Facebook pages, as well as state library newsletters and other media utilized by state librarians to

push information to their members, and will remain open through **February 2025.** Reminders will be sent intermittently during this period to encourage participation.

6. Survey data from each survey will be analyzed using descriptive statistics. Then data from all surveys will be triangulated. These methods are standard and replicable by others. **(March – June 2025)**

7. Comprehensive findings will be written up. Data collection tools and anonymized focus group and survey data will be uploaded to FSU's DigiNole Research Repository (https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/research-repository). Specific information about file types, availability, access, sustainability, etc., is available in the Digital Products Plan and the Data Management Plan. **(July 2025)**

8. Project findings will be disseminated on an ongoing basis. Dissemination will include, but will not be limited to the project Facebook page, other online media (e.g. Twitter), presentations at professional conferences, peer-reviewed journal articles, reports posted to professional association and state library lists and publications, webinars offered to professional associations, and YouTube videos. Preprints of published works and slides from webinars will be uploaded to FSU's DigiNole Research Repository. **(August 2023-)**

This study requires IRB approval from the Florida State University. An IRB application will be submitted at the same time this proposal is submitted to the IMLS. Currently IRB reviews take two to three months to complete. Submitting the application now will help to ensure there will be no delays in beginning this project should it be funded. We expect to have approval by June 30, 2023.

Project Management

This two-year project will begin **August 1, 2023and will end July 31, 2025**. **Melissa Gross**, professor, will serve as PI and will administer, coordinate, and participate in all aspects of the project. Dr. Gross is a seasoned researcher who has been identified among the top 2% of researchers science-wide (Baas, Boyack, & Ioannidis, 2021). **Don Latham**, professor, will serve as co-PI, participate in all aspects of the project, and convene the advisory board as needed. Drs Gross and Latham have a long history of fruitful research collaborations, including recent research projects on social workers in public libraries. Together they have obtained several research grants, published extensively, and received many accolades for their work. Graduate assistant **Brittany Baum**, a doctoral student, will assist with literature reviews, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of the findings. She will also manage the project's social media presence. Ms. Baum specializes in the information needs of youth associated with developing resilience and promoting well-being through library services and programs.

A highly experienced consultant, **Keith Curry Lance,** will moderate all six focus groups in year 1. Dr. Lance was the founding Director of the Library Research Service at the Colorado State Library in 1987. Since leaving that position in 2007, he has focused on consulting both independently and with the RSL Research Group, based in Louisville, Colorado. He is best known in the public library community as the co-creator of the Library Journal Index of Public Library Service and a long-time state and national leader in the development and use of public library statistics.

The advisory board will be comprised of five experts from across the country. The advisory board will assemble online three to four times a year for two years. They will be asked to provide feedback on data collection instruments (focus group and survey questions), give advice as needed (on recruitment strategies, for example), provide feedback on project findings, and discuss issues that emerge during the project. Members of the advisory board include: **Nicole Cooke,** Augusta Baker Endowed Chair at the University of South Carolina, who is an expert in critical cultural information studies and diversity and social justice in librarianship: **Keren Dali** faculty at the University of Denver, who has a background in social work and LIS, works in the areas of community engagement in libraries; diversity and inclusion at the workplace; and relationships between LIS and Social Work: **Amy Louttit Johnson,** State Librarian and Director of the Division of Library and Information Services at the Florida Department of State has held several positions since joining the Division

including grant coordinator, state data coordinator, and chief of the bureau of library development: **Eva Mitnick** who has worked at the Los Angeles Public Library for over 30 years, holding positions ranging from Children's Librarian to Branch Manager to Youth Services Coordinator to Central Library Director and currently directs the Engagement and Learning Division, which creates, coordinates, implements, funds, and evaluates library programs and services for all ages throughout the City of Los Angele:. **Kate Williams,** associate professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who studies the role of the public library in the sustainability of local communities and when and how people and institutions are using computers and the Internet for community development and everyday life activities.

Progress on this project will be tracked in part by the production of deliverables as described in the above outline of activities within the suggested time frames. Other assessments of the success of the project focus on the recruitment of participants for focus groups in the first year and for participation in the survey in the second year. To help ensure a sufficient number of participants in the focus groups an incentive of a $50 gift card will be offered. This has been a sufficient amount in previous projects. The link to the survey will be widely advertised and distributed to multiple lists, and requests for survey participation will be released several times during the survey period. In a previous project in which the co-PIs undertook the first national survey of the information literacy practices of academic librarians in the U.S. (Julien et al., 2018) over 600 librarians completed the survey. A similar level of participation in this survey will be considered a success. If there are difficulties in recruitment, this is an issue for which help and advice from the advisory board will be sought. The long-term effects of this work may be more difficult to track, but it will be interesting to see if the findings from these efforts impact professional practice, educational practice, policy in public libraries, and/or future research on this topic. To increase the utility and fruitfulness of the work, data collection instruments and anonymized raw data generated by the project will be made available for reuse by other scholars through FSU's DigiNole Research Repository.

The total funding requested for this project is **$266,702**. This includes salaries and fringe ($77,145); graduate assistant salary, fringe, and tuition ($72640); advisory board honoraria ($5,000); consultant fees ($6,000); participant incentives ($2,400); transcription services ($675); travel ($15,780); and indirect costs ($87,062).

Diversity Plan

This study will explore how professional librarians support the social services information needs of their communities, a topic in direct alignment with **Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement and Objective 2.1: Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences**, which calls upon libraries to bridge service gaps in working to ensure that everyone's needs are valued and prioritized, especially those who are often overlooked or neglected. By recruiting professional librarians serving in multiple roles, including library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians, a diverse perspective regarding how professional librarians provide social services information and support to patrons will be achieved. Striving for inclusivity, a diverse pool of participants will be recruited that represent the myriad perspectives and experiences of public librarians and managers in the field. Participants will be recruited via listservs and newsletters from a range of professional library associations and groups such as BCALA, REFORMA, APALA, RRT, ALSC, and YALSA to better reflect the demographics of the profession and the needs of communities. Geographical diversity will also be strived for by recruiting individuals working in urban, suburban, and rural libraries, thus helping to ensure our participants are representative of the communities where librarians serve.

This diversity in perspective and experience is also visible across the five members of the project's advisory board, who represent a broad geographical region and consist of individuals working in both academia and professional library settings, with backgrounds and expertise in areas such as social work, youth services, and outreach, and the role of the public library in communities. Additionally, two of the members have an EDI focus/expertise and will provide guidance along with the other board members in promoting these principles throughout the research process, including recruitment.

Project Results

       The results from this project will impact multiple stakeholders. For library practitioners, new knowledge regarding how the profession is currently addressing their community's diverse social services information needs will help inform the development of professional guidelines/service models for social services information provision and collaboration with social workers in the library. Understanding the perceptions, experiences, and needs of public library managers and adult services and youth services librarians in responding to patrons' social services information needs will provide evidence to support more informed service provision, thus better enabling libraries to promote the inclusive engagement and well-being of their communities, especially for those individuals who may be marginalized and neglected within society. The project's results will also benefit educators within the profession in identifying potential gaps in librarian preparation/training concerning both the provision of social services information and partnerships with social workers in the library. Addressing any educational gaps will help ensure future library professionals are entering the field better equipped to support patrons' diverse psychosocial needs. The identification of potential collaborative service models through the project's findings will also benefit the social work profession in preparing their students and professionals for successful placements in public library settings. Finally, the project will ultimately benefit those patrons seeking nontraditional social services assistance through the library, as the development of better practices, training, and collaborations with outside professionals will help improve service quality and promote greater understanding of how best to support this population.

       The deliverables associated with these outcomes will help extend the study's impact beyond the two-year grant period and will include: (1) data collection instruments; (2) anonymized raw data from focus groups and surveys available within FSU's DigiNole Research Repository; (3) summary of library managers and public librarians' perceptions of and experience with the provision of social services information in public libraries; (4) dissemination of focus group findings and survey results through scholarly peer-reviewed publications and national conference presentations, as well as preprints of published works uploaded to FSU's DigiNole Research Repository; and (5) the final project report, complete with actionable recommendations—made broadly available on the IMLS website and through professional association and state library listservs, as well as disseminated via a Facebook project page to ensure results are freely accessible to practitioners. Maintaining a Facebook presence will also help build community by allowing for ongoing input from those within the field and opening the potential for new ideas, questions, and collaborations surrounding social services information support in public libraries, thus further extending the study's impact. Additionally, the utilization of features such as "sharing" and "liking" by users will allow for wider dissemination of findings and provide the research team with the ability to advertise relevant publications and presentations to the greater community. While the target audience of these resources are those within the librarian profession, they will also be adaptable and usable for social workers interested in partnering with the library. Therefore, steps will be taken to ensure these resources are easily discoverable. Additionally, given the emerging literature surrounding this area, the results from this project have the potential to lead to further research, evaluation, and development for both the library and social work professions. Ultimately, the intended project outcomes and deliverables will help move the profession forward regarding how librarians can best address patrons' increasing social services information needs and establish professional guidelines and boundaries for and between the library and social work professions in supporting their communities.

Social Services in Public Libraries
Schedule of Completion: Year One August 2023-July 2024

Activity	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Establish social media presence	——											
Develop focus group questions	——											
for library managers		——										
for adult services librarians		——										
for youth services librarians			——									
Pretest focus group questions			——	——								
Review focus group questions with advisory board					——							
Meet with focus group facilitator to review focus group questions and project goals					——							
Recruit participants for focus group						——	——	——				
Schedule and conduct focus groups												
two with library managers						——						
two with adult services librarians							——					
two with youth services librarians								——				
Analyze focus group data									——			
Triangulate findings with previous interview data and findings from the literature										——		
Share findings with advisory board										——		
Develop survey instrument												
General demographic questions											——	
Specific questions for library managers											——	
Specific questions for adult services librarians												——
Dissemination activities (includes updating social media)		——	——	——	——	——	——	——	——	——	——	——

Social Services in Public Libraries
Schedule of Completion: Year Two August 2024-July 2025

Activity	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Develop survey instrument	-----											
Specific questions for youth services librarians												
Pretest survey questions												
designed for library managers		---										
designed for adult services librarians		---										
designed for youth services librarians			---									
Review survey with advisory board			---									
Advertise survey				-----	---	---	---					
Recruit survey participants (post to lists)				---	---	---						
Deploy survey				-----	-----	-----	-----					
Analyze survey findings by type												
library managers								-----				
adult services librarians									-----			
youth services librarian										-----		
Triangulate survey data for all respondents											---	
Share findings with advisory board											--	-
Write up comprehensive findings												-----
Data collection tools and anonymized raw data uploaded to the repository												---
Dissemination activities (including updating social media)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Social Services in Public Libraries
Digital Products Plan

Type

The following types of digital products will be created:

Data collection instruments
       Focus group questions: 1 set, txt
       Survey questions: 1 set, txt

Data sets
       Focus group transcripts (personal info removed): 6 sets, txt
       Survey results: 1 set, csv

Publications and presentations
       Journal article manuscripts: minimum of 2, pdf
       Conference presentation slides: minimum of 2 sets, pdf
       Webinar slides: minimum of 1 set, pdf

Metadata will be created using the DigiNole Metadata Guidelines:
https://www.lib.fsu.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/upload/diginoleguidelines.pdf

Availability

Digital products will be made available through DigiNole: FSU's Digital Repository, specifically through the FSU Research Repository: https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/research-repository.

Access

We will share the data under a CC BY 4.0 license that will make the data freely available but will require others to attribute the data to the Co-PI's when they use it.

FSU and the Co-PI's will retain ownership rights.

Focus group participants' personally identifying data will be removed from the focus group transcripts before the dataset is made available to the public. Any publications and presentations that quote any of the focus group participants will use pseudonyms. The survey data will be collected anonymously. None of the other digital products created will involve privacy concerns.

Sustainability

During the period of the project (August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2025) digital products will be stored on Florida State University's secure cloud-based server. Digital products related to publications and presentations will be moved to the DigiNole Digital Repository as they are completed; data collection instruments and data sets will be moved to DigiNole after the project ends.

According to the DigiNole Data Deposit Policy, "The Library is committed to providing the required financial and technical resources for the long-term curation of content in DigiNole. Should the funding or organizational imperatives of the Florida State University Library change, the Library will strive to provide at least one year notice, and devote resources to support the transition to another host institution and/or returning the data to the data producers." For more information, see https://fsu.libanswers.com/library-policies/faq/378857.

Social Services in Public Libraries
Data Management Plan

Types of Data

Two types of data will be collected:

Focus group data. Six focus groups (two each with public library managers, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians) will be conducted during January, February, and March of 2024 and will be facilitated by a consultant (Dr. Keith Curry Lance). Each focus group will consist of eight participants and will last approximately 60 minutes. Each focus group will be recorded and a transcript will be produced. The transcript files will be docx files but will be converted to txt files for storage purposes. The focus group transcripts will be analyzed for the purpose of developing a national survey to be administered to public library directors, adult services librarians, and youth services librarians. Focus group findings will also be disseminated through social media, webinars, conference presentations, and journal articles.

Survey data: The survey will be developed and deployed through Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com). It will be administered during November and December of 2024 and January and February of 2025. The survey data file will be a csv file. The survey data will be analyzed for the purpose of answering the project's research questions. Survey results will be disseminated through social media, webinars, conference presentations, and journal articles.

Sensitive Information

Personally identifying information will be collected from the focus group participants. At a minimum, names and email addresses will be collected to deliver electronic gift cards to participants. During the course of the focus groups, some participants may volunteer additional information, such as the name of their library and the names of their supervisor and co-workers. All such personally identifying information will be deleted from the transcripts. Actual names will be replaced with pseudonyms before the data is released publicly.

No personally identifying information will be collected through the surveys.

Technical Requirements

The file types that will be made available are open-access file types: txt and csv. In order to access the files, one would need a computer with an internet connection in order to access FSU's DigiNole Research Repository (https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/research-repository).

Documentation

Metadata will be created using the DigiNole Metadata Guidelines:
https://www.lib.fsu.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/upload/diginoleguidelines.pdf

Management Plan Beyond the Life of the Project

During the period of the project (August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2025) data sets will be stored on Florida State University's secure cloud-based server. Data sets will be moved to DigiNole Research Repository after the project ends.

According to the DigiNole Data Deposit Policy, "The Library is committed to providing the required financial and technical resources for the long-term curation of content in DigiNole. Should the funding or organizational imperatives of the Florida State University Library change, the Library will strive to provide at least one year notice, and devote resources to support the transition to another host institution and/or returning the data to the data producers." For more information, see https://fsu.libanswers.com/library-policies/faq/378857.

Review of Data Management Plan

The data management plan will be reviewed by the research team and the advisory board prior near the end of each year of the project (July 2024 and July 2025).

Our Mission
Faculty, staff, and students at the Florida State University School of Information (Florida's iSchool) recognize the profound importance of connecting people, information, and technology for the betterment of society. We demonstrate our commitment to universal information design, creation, access, use, and evaluation within a dynamic culture of emerging technology through innovative teaching, research, and service. We are committed to preparing information professionals with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to overcome information challenges in all organizations. Our dedication to innovative and interdisciplinary research, collaboration, service, and leadership; respect for diversity; and commitment to ongoing professional development make a vital contribution to the University's mission as a research-extensive institution.

Our Vision
People-Information-Technology: Making Vital Connections

Our Core Values
The School of Information is committed to:
- Excellence and innovation in research, teaching, and service;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration to actively engage and solve information problems;
- Service and leadership in the profession, nationally and internationally;
- Recognition and respect for ensuring diversity and inclusion, establishing access, and encouraging responsibility; and
- Continual professional development to meet the emerging demands of the information fields.

Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
The School of Information at Florida State University is committed to advancing the well-being of people of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. The iSchool promotes representation and inclusion across all age, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation, religious, racial, ethnic, and ability spectrums. We recognize that information professionals play an important role in addressing social issues such as information privacy and security, information access, and information ethics. Our curriculum, programs, and services are designed to connect people with information and technology to build a more inclusive society.
We seek to:
- Recruit, support, and retain faculty, staff, and students of diverse backgrounds
- Maintain a healthy and safe learning and working environment
- Foster engagement with alumni and other diverse stakeholders

Placement Within Parent Organization (Service Area)
Founded in 1947, the School of Information has been preparing professionals to make vital connections between people and information ever since. The school's undergraduate and graduate studies are guided by the Director of the School of Information, who reports to the Dean of the College of Communication and Information. The co-PIs will be responsible for the project.

Degree Programs Offered
The flagship program of the School of Information is its ALA-accredited Master of Science in Information, which includes the ability to minor in information technology. The school also offers a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, a Master's of Science in Information Technology, a post-Master's Specialist degree, and a Ph.D. in Information.