

**Pennsylvania State University**  
**National Forum on Privacy Literacy Standards and Competencies**

**Introduction:** Pennsylvania State University seeks a 2-year, \$107,939 forum grant from the IMLS's National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program to organize a national forum that brings scholars and practitioners together to establish national educational standards and professional competencies for privacy literacy in libraries. This project aligns with NLG Objective 1.1 by equipping libraries to strategically integrate and evaluate efforts to strengthen youth and young adult patrons' privacy literacy.

**Project Justification:** Section VII of the ALA's Library Bill of Rights (2019) states that "Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy." Several IMLS-funded efforts have contributed resources and training materials to help librarians meet these goals (e.g. [Library Freedom Institute](#), [Data Privacy Project](#), [National Forum for Privacy Protections in Public Libraries](#), [National Forum on Web Privacy and Web Analytics](#), [Convening on the Library Value of Privacy](#), [Privacy Field Guides](#)). While educational efforts span a range of target audiences, including children, teens, and college students, they largely focus on specific dimensions of privacy, such as data security (e.g., [Safe Data | Safe Families](#)), data literacy (e.g., [Creating Data Literate Students](#)), digital violence (e.g., [National Forum on the Prevention of Cyber Sexual Assault](#)), and educational data profiling (e.g., [Data Doubles](#), [Prioritizing Privacy](#)). As the concept of privacy literacy is gaining traction as a topic of library instruction ([Hartman-Caverly & Chisholm, 2023](#)), there is an express need for holistic educational standards to guide the creation and assessment of privacy literacy instruction ([Hartman-Caverly & Chisholm, 2020](#); [Chisholm & Hartman-Caverly, 2023](#)). This is because existing efforts in privacy skills training, which tend to focus on front-end tools and settings that people can use to protect their data, are limited in that they often fall out-of-date and do not adequately address the depth, breadth, and scope of data collection, profiling, and inference that is beyond users' control ([Hagendorff, 2018](#); [Zuboff, 2018](#)). Such efforts can overpromise the amount of control that users have to protect their personal privacy in the current information environment, contributing to unintended disclosures and vulnerabilities ([Brandimarte, Acquisti, & Loewenstein, 2012](#)). A unified set of privacy literacy educational standards, spanning K-20 education, could enable library educators to coordinate, scaffold, and assess the impact of privacy literacy instruction across library types (public, school, academic) and patron communities (children and youth, families, young adults). Additionally, if libraries are to be leaders in privacy education, then privacy literacy also needs to be part of librarians' professional competencies ([Bettinger et al., 2023](#)). Yet this is not currently the case. While the ACRL has recognized privacy literacy as an expanding literacy and area of practice ([ACRL 2021](#)) and includes privacy in its information literacy framework ([ACRL, 2016](#)), privacy literacy is not an explicit part of the standards for children ([ALSC, 2020](#)), youth services ([YALSA, 2010](#)), or school ([AASL, 2018](#)) librarians.

In response, we propose a two-day national forum that brings together privacy literacy scholars and practitioners to address two guiding questions: (1) What standards should guide privacy education in libraries? (2) What privacy literacy competencies should be integrated into the roles and responsibilities of librarians? By connecting experts who work on privacy literacy in academic, public, and school library contexts, this forum will advance a holistic approach to the development, implementation, assessment, and staffing of privacy literacy efforts, aligning with NLG Objective 1.1. The project team includes an interdisciplinary group of privacy literacy scholar-practitioners that is well-positioned to host the forum. Dr. Priya Kumar (PI), assistant professor at Penn State' College of Information Sciences and Technology, has built a foundation of scholarship on children's privacy ([Kumar, 2022](#); Kumar et al., [2017](#); [2018](#); [2019](#); [2020](#); [2023](#)) and has used this work to develop a framework to guide children's privacy literacy efforts ([Kumar & Byrne, 2022](#)). She has received [funding](#) to study how school librarians integrate privacy literacy in their practice. Sarah Hartman-Caverly and Alexandria Chisholm (Co-PIs), both reference and instruction librarians at Penn State University Libraries, are co-creators of the [ACRL award-winning Digital Shred Privacy Literacy Initiative](#) comprising a [teaching and learning toolkit](#), [published research](#), [professional continuing education offerings](#), and [undergraduate privacy literacy workshops](#) grounded in an original [privacy literacy framework](#).

**Project Work Plan:** The project will unfold in three phases. Phase 1 (Months 1-8) will focus on participant recruitment and event planning. We have identified key stakeholders working across three areas: (1) academic libraries, (2) youth library services, and (3) privacy, technology, and ethics, whom we will invite to participate. If needed, we will put out an open call with the goal of balancing participation from those who work with children, teen, and young adult populations. We expect to include up to 40 participants. We will create a website to disseminate forum information, manage the open call process, and distribute pre-event information for participants. In preparation for the forum, participants will complete an intake process soliciting information about their privacy literacy practice, including any existing educational standards or frameworks that guide their work, and be invited to propose a panel topic, lightning talk, and/or round table discussion. These proposals will guide event planning and preparation to ensure the forum meets the needs and interests of participants.

Phase 2 (Month 9) will involve hosting the two-day, face-to-face forum at the Penn State University Park campus. The first day will include a blend of planned keynotes, panel discussions, lightning talks, and roundtable sessions to establish a shared foundation about the state of privacy literacy research and practice and to surface questions, challenges, and opportunities that need to be addressed. The second day will include a series of un-conference style breakout activities where participants will self-organize into groups and complete activities that address the forum's guiding questions on privacy literacy standards and competencies in light of the questions, challenges, and opportunities raised on the first day. Each working group will have a virtual workspace (e.g., Google Drive) to document their discussion. Phase 3 (Months 10-24) will focus on synthesizing and distributing the results of the forum. The PIs will recruit a select number of forum participants to synthesize the findings and takeaways into publicly available scholarly and professional materials. These include a special issue of a relevant journal, such as *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy (JIFP)*, open-licensed self-study materials, and an action handbook. More details are included in the Project Results section.

**Diversity Plan:** Surveillance and other privacy harms touch upon all facets of society ([O'Neil, 2016](#); [Fry, 2018](#); [Broussard, 2018](#); [Barassi, 2020](#)) and have a disparate impact on members of already marginalized communities ([Barocas & Selbst, 2016](#)). At the same time, privacy literacy learning experiences are not equitably available ([Hagendorff, 2018](#)). This project seeks to support library workers in developing privacy literacy competencies, standards, and frameworks across the public, school, and academic library spectrum to scale and scaffold privacy literacy efforts and increase access to privacy literacy education. Developing professional privacy literacy competencies and roles expands opportunities for recruiting a diverse workforce into an emerging practice in the profession. Forum participants will be recruited from diverse library types (public, school, and academic), and from professional communities that strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in libraries, such as Library Freedom Institute, We Here, Rainbow Round Table, and Intellectual Freedom Round Table.

**Project Results:** Forum results will appear in four formats, all publicly available on the forum website: (1) keynote and lightning talk recordings, (2) a special issue of a relevant journal, such as the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy*, that will publish written versions of the forum keynote and lightning talks, summarize the results of round table discussions and working groups, propose resulting professional competencies and educational standards and frameworks for privacy literacy, and articulate a research agenda for privacy literacy, (3) a suite of open-licensed online self-study materials for library workers to develop and maintain privacy literacy knowledge and educational practice, and (4) an action handbook that articulates a vision for delivering privacy literacy learning experiences across the educational spectrum, including standards, frameworks, professional competencies, and staffing considerations. Project investigators will present results at relevant conferences (e.g., ALA, ACRL, LOEX) and distribute the materials to public, school, and academic libraries.

**Budget Summary:** The proposed budget is \$107,939 and covers (1) one week PI summer salary for two years (\$7,282), (2) Fringe benefits (\$3,080), (3) travel support for forum participants and for investigator conference travel (\$37,000), (4) printed materials and supplies for forum event, postage to distribute action handbook (\$1,500), (5) graphic and web design support (\$3,000), (6) hourly student support for one year (\$5,897), (7) event space rental, meals, and stipends for participants who develop the action handbook and for graphic design support (\$9,577), and (8) indirect costs (\$40,603).