

CHINESE AMERICAN LIBRARIAN ASSOCIATION (CALA)

Path to Leadership: National Forum on the Advancing APIA Librarianship

SUMMARY: The Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), in partner with the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), seeks \$73,000 in funding from an IMLS LB21 National Forum Grant for *Path to Leadership: National Forum on the Advancing APIA Librarianship* to support leadership development opportunities for the community of Asian/Pacific Island American (APIA) library workers. Funding from IMLS will allow up to 50 participants including LIS students, professionals and educators to ideate on the direction and development of APIA library leaders along with solutions to the barriers that they experience. This one-day forum will culminate into a white paper to document ideas for leadership development pipelines among APIA library workers, which will also include an outline for a curriculum on a leadership program tailored specifically for APIA library workers interested in developing critical leadership skills. The *Path to Leadership* forum will also provide a dedicated space for APIA library workers to network while focusing on leadership development.

STATEMENT OF BROAD NEED: CALA and APALA have both supported, celebrated and uplifted APIA library workers historically, however, APIA librarians in leadership and management roles are still very limited. There is a need for community-building that aims to identify leadership development opportunities, paths and barriers to such opportunities experienced by APIA library workers today. Leadership development was identified as a need for Chinese Americans based on the latest membership survey in 2019.¹ According to the 2020 CALA Strategic Planning Task Force town hall discussions, there were broad leadership programs that would support any library worker in general but there were no identified programs that would focus on the needs of APIA library workers in the mid-career or experienced levels. As such, CALA's 2020-2025 strategic plan stated that, there is a need to "provide leadership development opportunities tailored to the needs of CALA members."² For APALA strategic plan 2016-2021, it is to "cultivate APIA leadership and engagement and actively mentor colleagues to become leaders."³ In a profession that is predominately white, both associations recognize the importance of leadership development to promote APIA library workers in leadership and management roles.⁴ These priorities also reflect the limitations of current leadership development offerings, the lack of APIA library leaders and urge us to focus on key issues experienced by APIA library workers today.⁵

PROJECT DESIGN: This project will include an assessment survey and a forum. The forum will include a panel of APIA library leaders and two invited speakers. One facilitator of APIA heritage will guide the conversations. Data from the *Path to Leadership* national forum will be synthesized to create a white paper that addresses the current experiences of APIA library workers in leadership roles and a potential curriculum outline focused on building a leadership development program for APIA library workers. An online community group like a listserv will be created for participants to support and share ideas after the forum.

Guiding Question: What are the needs and barriers in leadership development among APIA library workers?

Objective 1: Assess the needs of APIA library workers interested in leadership work and identify current APIA library leaders and directors in understanding their leadership journey and perspective.

Activity 1: Prior to the forum, a survey will be developed and sent to both associations to understand the opportunities and barriers in leadership roles experienced by APIA library workers.

Guiding Question: What do current APIA leaders perceive as most beneficial in overcoming barriers and developing leadership?

Objective 2: Identify leadership paths and barriers from current APIA library leaders.

¹ See Xiong, J.A., & et al.(2019). Scoping the Chinese American Librarians Association Services with a National Survey. *International Journal of Librarianship*,4(1), 38-58. Retrieved from <https://journal.calajiol.org/index.php/ijol/article/view/98/193>

² CALA (2020). *2025 Strategic Plan (2020-2025)*. Retrieved from <https://www.cala-web.org/docs/strategicplan2025>

³ APALA (2020). *Strategic Plan (2016-2021)*. Retrieved from <https://www.apalaweb.org/about/strategic-plan/>

⁴ Librarians (2017). Diversity. Retrieved from <https://datausa.io/profile/soc/254021/-about>

⁵ Le, B. P. (2015, March). Attainment of academic library leadership by Asian Americans: Challenges and development. In *ACRL2015 conference* (Vol. 20, p. 28).

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Activity 2: The forum will consist of 10 library directors, 20 mid-career library workers, and 10 students, 3 working group members (CALA Executive Director, CALA President, and APALA President), 4 LIS educators, 2 speakers and 1 facilitator. In the forum, participants will hear from two invited speakers of APIA heritage for high level discussion regarding challenges, barriers and opportunities to leadership for APIA library workers. The forum will also host two panel discussions featuring current APIA library directors and mid-career library workers to share the opportunities, challenges, experiences and paths to leadership. The themes will be documented in a report that will present opportunities to address the APIA leadership barriers, and the role of library associations in supporting leadership development. All discussions and responses will be anonymized to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Guiding question: *How can APIA focused library associations such as CALA and APALA better serve communities of APIA library workers in developing leadership and management opportunities and skills?*

Objective 3: Understand APIA librarians’ perspective on how CALA and APALA could provide a leadership development program that is tailored to APIA librarians through networking and shared experiences.

Activity 3: Participants will participate in a brainstorm session to reflect on the survey analyses conducted by the working group, key speakers and panel conversations. They will also work in groups to share how their own experiences align from such perspectives and what type of resources, advice or support that they would like to have from an association to support their leadership and management opportunities. They will also brainstorm an outline for a curriculum on a leadership program tailored specifically for APIA library workers.

Outcomes: Outcome 1: Participants will identify barriers and path to leadership from experience shared by current APIA leaders. Outcome 2: Participants will contribute to the development of a leadership program curriculum tailored specifically for APIA library workers based on the forum’s discussions. Outcome 3: Participants will form a networking community to support and share their leadership development experiences.

POTENTIAL PROGRAM ITINERARY:

9:00 am – Welcome.	12:30 pm – Working Lunch and Speaker 2: TBA.
9:15am – Icebreaker and Introductions.	1:30 pm – APIA Leaders Panel Discussion II.
10:00 am – Speaker 1: TBA.	3:00 pm – Brainstorm Session.
11:00 am – APIA Leaders Panel Discussion I.	5:00 pm – Concluding Thoughts and Adjournment.

BUDGET: The requested IMLS funds of \$73,000 for the *Path to Leadership* national forum will support a \$1000 travel stipend for up to 50 participants (\$50,000); forum function expenses (\$10,000), and materials (\$2000); 2 speakers and 1 facilitator (\$6000); Working Group and Advisory Board Stipend (\$5000).

DIVERSITY PLAN: CALA strongly advocates for diversity, equity and inclusion in the profession and in the communities that libraries serve. This project advances CALA’s mission, values and strategic plan in supporting the development of APIA library workers and their leadership opportunities. It also supports IMLS’s recommendations of 1. going where the diversity is; and 2. rebranding for community-based librarianship.⁶ The *Path to Leadership* project will ensure that forum participants of all APIA backgrounds will be considered, particularly underrepresentation of intersectional identities and groups in APIA communities.

BROAD IMPACT: By convening to capture the stories, voices and perspectives of APIA library workers in leadership and management roles, and those striving to be leaders, the *Path to Leadership* project aims to shape the conversation of library leadership by sharing the advances and barriers experienced by APIA library workers today and how to increase APIA presence in library leadership positions. A discussion on the white paper may be shared through a webinar with specific library leadership organizations/associations. The white paper will serve as a model to other ethnic library associations focused on building leadership development.

⁶Sands, A.E.; Toro, S.; DeVoe, T., Fuller, S., & Wolff-Eisenberg, C. (2018). *Positioning library and information science graduate programs for 21st century practice*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Museum and Library Services.