

## **Wyoming State Library: Advancing Creative Aging through State Library Leadership**

The Wyoming State Library will partner with the Florida Division of Library and Information Services and Lifetime Arts to implement ***Advancing Creative Aging through State Library Leadership***, a three-year, capacity building Continuing Education project designed to improve older adult (55+) services through professional development and training for public librarians, pilot programming, and national dissemination. Supported by a \$666,000 IMLS/LB21 grant and \$666,000 in cost share, the project builds on Lifetime Arts' pioneering model for delivering structured, research-based arts education in public libraries. It will demonstrate the efficacy and adaptability of the model to strengthen public libraries across the nation as centers for positive aging.

**Statement of Broad Need:** With the enormous growth in the nation's population age 55 and over, library leaders and librarians are seeking new models for programs that promote older adult creativity and strengthen the library as a center for positive aging. New research demonstrates the benefits of structured learning, social engagement, and creative expression during the older years. However, systemic and relevant training, support, and resources to enable public libraries to respond to this need is lacking.

Adult services and programming librarians need a replicable, sustainable programming model that reflects new scholarship on aging. They require training and opportunities to put skills gained into practice through pilot programs so they can initiate, implement, and sustain meaningful programming for older adults.

### **Project Design:**

Planning/Promotion: In Year I, a national advisory group of senior staff from partner organizations will convene regularly to direct, monitor, and evaluate project activities. Working through public library systems in each state, the state libraries will promote the initiative, and Lifetime Arts will deliver informational webinars.

Training: Lifetime Arts will deliver ten multi-day Creative Aging Training Institutes — four fully online and six in-person — beginning mid-year in Year I of the project. Each training will accommodate 25 librarians for a total of 250 librarians. Curriculum topics include:

- Creative Aging Best Practices
- Adult Learning
- Ageism and its Impact on Program Design & Delivery
- Developing Community Partnerships
- Adapting Creative Aging for Remote Program Delivery
- Synchronous & Asynchronous Programming & Resources
- Planning and Implementation Strategies
- Determining Community Interests
- Identifying, Engaging, and Working with Teaching Artists
- Promotion & Recruitment
- Strategies for Sustainability

Resources: As a supplement to the scheduled Training Institutes, Lifetime Arts' online professional development will be disseminated as a free resource to all librarians in the partnering states. Piloted in Wyoming during 2021, these unique and proprietary resources will provide librarians with information, tools, and programming templates. In Year III, all state libraries will have access online to programming examples drawn from this project and its results.

Pilot Programs: All libraries that attend the training will be eligible to apply for a \$2,700 seed grant to support

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either in-person or remote programs, allowing library staff to practice and further develop the skills gained in the training workshops. For remote programs, librarians will choose from Lifetime Arts' catalogue of online Creative Aging programs. Librarians will be trained to support synchronous workshop series with asynchronous library resources — keeping the connection between patrons and the physical library

Coaching/Technical Assistance: For each funded library, Lifetime Arts will provide up to six hours of customized coaching and technical assistance. In addition, Lifetime Arts will establish and support an online forum for information and collegial exchange to develop a community of practice.

Evaluation: Employing a variety of tools (pre/post surveys, feedback forms, focus groups, and interviews), an independent evaluator will assess (1) impact of professional development and technical assistance on libraries' capacities to deliver successful creative aging programs, (2) impact of the project on programming practices, development of community partnerships, and resource development at both state and local levels.

National Dissemination: All partners will present project information at national, state, and regional conferences, via webinars, and at other convenings through their cross-sector network of Creative Aging stakeholders including libraries, state agencies for both arts and aging, funders, and the general public.

**Diversity Plan** To support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 125 seats in the training and 50% of the subgrants will be targeted to libraries that serve diverse and underserved communities. In addition, the two state libraries will work through library directors to encourage participation by staff from underrepresented groups.

**Broad Impact:** *Advancing Creative Aging* advances IMLS Goal 2 of building capacity for libraries to improve the well-being of their communities. Creative Aging programs, designed and facilitated by professional teaching artists, actively engage 55+ adults in arts learning and decrease social isolation. This project supports mastery of new skills for librarians including in-person and remote program delivery, project management, and community partnership development. It will address the urgent need and critical opportunity to expand library services to homebound and otherwise “at a distance” older adults by incorporating extensive training and resources for remote delivery of Creative Aging programming. Libraries will develop new cross-sector partnerships to support future in-person and online programs for older adults.

*Advancing Creative Aging* will have national impact. It will demonstrate the efficacy and adaptability of the model in two states that share the challenges of a rapidly aging patron base, but have significant demographic, economic, social, and cultural differences. It will build library workers' capacity to strengthen public libraries as centers for positive aging. Using two such disparate states — Wyoming the least populous and Florida the third-most populous — will ensure wide adaptability of this model for libraries facing varied community circumstances. Training resources, including examples of pilot programs, will be made available nationally.

**Budget: Grant Expenses:** \$666,000. Re grants to Libraries systems: \$270,000; Lifetime Arts Trainings/Technical Assistance: \$227,000; New Digital Resources: \$18,000; Live Training Hospitality Costs: \$15,000; Travel Costs: \$15,000; External Evaluation: \$60,000; Documentation & Dissemination: \$25,000; WY Indirect Costs: \$36,000.

**Cost Share Total:** \$666,000. Local Librarians Salaries: \$360,000; Staff Salaries (WY and FL State Libraries): \$36,000; Training Costs: \$30,000; Lifetime Arts Adm: \$95,000; Lifetime Arts' Professional Development Online Resources: \$145,000. The overall three-year project budget is \$1,332,000.