

**PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL DRAFT**

Stronger Together: Leading through Community  
Brown University Library and the HBCU Library Alliance

Brown University Library and the HBCU Library Alliance request a two-year, \$85,000 Planning Grant under the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program to establish structures of reciprocal support for developing the next generation of library leaders and fostering transformation in academic libraries. Brown became the first non-HBCU member of the Alliance at the beginning of 2020. Grant funds would help plan and pilot a set of in-person and virtual developmental activities for emerging library leaders, including a planning symposium, an intensive workshop, and staff exchange residencies. This partnership between a predominantly white R1 university library and a consortium of historically Black institution libraries will provide a model for similar mutually beneficial collaborations among academic libraries, supported by careful assessment and evaluation to inform longer-term strategies for nurturing emerging leaders.

**Statement of Broad Need:** At HBCU libraries, long tenures of deans and directors can constrain opportunities for professional growth that prepares staff for the next career step. For research libraries in general, diversification of senior ranks has been slow; leadership training is needed both to meet the needs of rapidly diversifying campus populations and provide more effective and inclusive mentorship to potential leaders in an increasingly diverse library profession. No existing library leadership programs purposefully pair R1 university libraries with HBCU libraries, and we have much to learn from each other. HBCU libraries serve a unique and indispensable role as cultural stewards of the African-American experience; R1 and other research libraries provide outstanding resources for education and advanced scholarship, yet continue to lack the diversity and cultural competence needed to support the 21st century academy. The short- and longer-term impact of COVID-19 on higher education further underscores the need for emerging library leaders everywhere to build capacity for demonstrating the importance and value of libraries to their institutions' mission. This project will plan and pilot an approach to strengthening leadership renewal within and across academic libraries.

**Project Design:** The project design respects institutional differences and creates a space to develop a mutually-beneficial suite of activities that address pressing needs for leadership development and help expand professional training and networks to help meet the demands of today's educational and research priorities. Specific activities are informed by approaches to partnership, exchange, and leadership development that have demonstrated high impact. A steering committee consisting of Brown and HBCU Library Alliance leaders would identify specific leadership development needs to focus on. A broader symposium for member representatives and selected guests would then flesh out a pilot training plan for critical leadership skills leading to an intensive two-day Emerging Leaders Workshop for staff from HBCU Library Alliance members and Brown. Lastly, four emerging library leaders from HBCUs and Brown would be selected for multi-day exchange residencies tailored to

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individual leadership development plans developed in the previous workshop. Participant feedback at all stages will help refine this sequence of activities and inform future program development, including communication to the broader library community about the work of the partnership, models of effective partnership and shared practice, and results to date. Individual participant plans will include goals allowing for longer-term evaluation of professional growth.

**Diversity Plan:** The project will strengthen diverse and inclusive leadership at the institutions involved and beyond through modeling and communicating about project activities and cultivating more diverse and inclusive leadership for the profession writ large. The HBCU Library Alliance members will take the lead in defining the specific areas for leadership development, informed by the diversity of perspectives across a large number of institutions.

**Broad Impact:** Building collaborative leadership development initiatives will strengthen diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible services, collections, and work environments in the academic library field. During the grant period, approximately 30 staff from HBCU libraries will participate directly in focused leadership development activities, and two will participate in multi-day exchanges at Brown. Brown library staff will also participate in leadership development activities, including two multi-day exchanges at HBCUs.

Planning, pilot activities, and evaluation will model a robust and mutually-beneficial partnership between a predominantly white institution library and minority-serving institution libraries that can be expanded to or adapted by other libraries. Reports and presentations in professional venues will communicate broadly about the impact of these initiatives. Building structures for sharing knowledge and expertise across institutions will strengthen library practice writ large.

### **Budget Summary:**

Year 1: recruit and convene the Steering Committee to develop logistics and curricula for the two-day Emerging Leaders Workshop (\$10,000 for meeting expenses, including travel and meals); host the Emerging Leaders Workshop (\$20,000 for meeting expenses, including honoraria, travel and meals); salary support for Project Director (\$10,000).

Year 2: host six multi-day exchanges (\$15,000: \$2,500 for each exchange, including travel and meals); conduct program evaluation (\$4,000 for program evaluator); disseminate findings (\$2,000 for HBCU Library Alliance Director to participate in national conferences); salary support for Project Director (\$10,000).

Year 1: \$40,000

Year 2: \$27,000

Anticipated overhead costs: \$18,000

Projected Project Total: \$85,000