

## READCON: A Curriculum for Library Readiness, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment During Challenging Conditions

In this Implementation Project proposal, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the University of Iowa, request \$248,700 from the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian program for a two-year project resulting in the design of an innovative and scalable professional development curriculum for public, academic, and school library workers. Aligned with LB21 program Goal 3 Objective 3.2, “create and/or refine training programs that build library and archival workforce skills and expertise in contributing to the well-being of communities,” READCON: A Curriculum for Library Readiness, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment During Challenging Conditions (READCON) partners experts in academic, public, and school librarianship with experts in education and family law, crisis communication, public, and media relations, community reconciliation, and youth leadership, to develop a targeted suite of blended professional development experiences. The overarching goal of the READCON curriculum is to equip library workers with the culturally responsive professional soft skills needed to build strong civic networks that bring together and empower different community constituencies, interests, and populations for proactive support of diverse library services, programming, and collections.

### Project Justification

This project is designed to meet two urgent and critical needs in librarianship: a) **the need to develop training on proactive, impactful, and *broadly applicable* techniques for community collaboration and civic engagement in service to library advocacy**; and b) **a need to build up culturally responsive professional soft skills not typically addressed in LIS educational curriculum, within the context of challenging conditions**. The project’s primary intended audience are library practitioners, library organizations (academic, public, school libraries and associated systems), and library and information science educators.

**Challenge 1: The Demand to Tackle Challenging or Controversial Issues Amidst Growing Distrust.** Civic engagement is the cornerstone of democratic society. Through it, “people contribute to their communities in meaningful, productive, and sustained ways<sup>1</sup>. Historically, libraries played a key role as anchor institutions that promoted civic engagement through services, programs, and targeted communication efforts – specifically through the development and delivery of diverse library services, programming, and collections. The library’s fulfillment of its role as a facilitator and community advocate through these programs and services benefitted from the institution’s large store of public trust. In 2017, 78% of U.S. adults credited libraries with helping them “find information that is trustworthy and reliable”<sup>2</sup> with Black and Hispanic adult respondents reporting a level of 83%<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, the social disruption brought on by a political landscape where misinformation is amplified through divisive rhetoric, further exacerbated by the isolation of a global pandemic and irresponsible social media infrastructure, seems to have significantly drained the U.S. public’s trust. Libraries now face a growing public demand to tackle challenging or controversial issues, heal community wounds, and help their stakeholders embrace community change. Their efforts to “create an environment in which people of all ages and from all ethnic socioeconomic backgrounds feel they have a voice, a role, and a valued place in their communities”<sup>4</sup> are being met with calls for increased oversight, distrust, ignorance, defunding, and fear-driven program/material challenges.

While there are multiple resources available that independently address library skill development in public material challenges, library advocacy, or community building and engagement; the majority of resources, trainings, and toolkits on these topics have been developed with the following approaches in place: a) centering of community building within redesign of library services for user needs related to [health and wellness](#), or community [interest and engagement](#); b) [lengthy training times](#) requiring team completion with organizational pre-approval and/or [financial investment](#); or c) brief, [non-detailed](#), and with a reactionary lens in place. The design of these resources relies on already overwhelmed librarians to not only oversee organizing and leading any challenge-response efforts, but cobble together last-minute community support without the ability or time to apply the long-term

approaches recommended by existing resources. READCON will be designed as an open-source, customizable training, available at the point-of-need, that prepares library workers to *proactively* develop a strong civic network of support for diverse library services, programming, and materials through targeted policy, message development, and community action training – and *quickly react* to programming, service, or material challenges with a consistent and detailed plan scaffold in place.

**Challenge 2: The Demand for Culturally Responsive Professional Soft Skills.** The American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom continues to track the significant increase in book challenges and book ban attempts across the U.S. (167% since 2020, with 2022 exceeding 2021 records in the first 8 months)<sup>5</sup>. This trend is mirrored in increased legislative activity curtailing librarians’ ability to provide resources and services and maintain diverse and inclusive collections, even making circulation of some materials a criminal offense<sup>6</sup>. 2022 ALA President Lessa Kanani’opua Pelayo-Lozada explains: “The unprecedented number of challenges we’re seeing already this year reflects coordinated, national efforts to silence marginalized or historically underrepresented voices and deprive all of us – young people, in particular – of the chance to explore a world beyond the confines of personal experience”<sup>7</sup>. Book challenges are being exacerbated by protests against library programming and events. While 2017 saw the El Paso Public Library, with funding from a Texas LSTA grant, create a pop-up civics lab, introducing civic literacy to local families by sharing bilingual materials and media in different areas of the city; January 2021 witnessed the Lafayette Parish Library Board of Control vote to reject a grant by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities that funded books, speakers, and discussion on voting rights history<sup>8</sup>.

Despite frequent media presentations depicting a politically polarized population where half of communities supposedly are behind these challenges, recent bipartisan survey teams found large majorities in all political parties (75% of Democrats, 58% of Independents, and 70% of Republicans) oppose efforts to ban library books, services, and programming<sup>9</sup>. The same survey found widespread support for access to materials addressing slavery and racism (84%), police violence against Black people (68%), and LGBTQIA+ characters and stories (65%)<sup>10</sup>. This incongruence between loud, public efforts and private community thought provides library workers with an opportunity to bring people of different points of view together to have empathetic, respectful, and empowering conversations on what the library is, what it does, and how the existence of diverse and inclusive library programming, services, and collections aligns with a broad range of goals and needs shared by a library’s community. To do so, library workers need culturally responsive professional soft skills.

Culturally responsive professional soft skills are communication, instructional, and inter-relational practices that “build on individual and cultural experiences and their prior knowledge...are justice-oriented and reflect[ing] the social context we’re in now”<sup>11</sup>. Culturally responsive professional soft skills are not often taught in librarian preparation programs due to the high number of foundational concepts required. This is especially the case in school librarianship programs where the curriculum frequently offers little to no room for course electives. Also, librarianship is a profession still presenting as White women, where ethnic minorities make up less than 12%, and individuals with disabilities less than 4% of credentialed librarians<sup>12</sup> – despite serving a population that is increasingly multiracial and diverse (38.9% Other Races and Ethnicities<sup>13</sup>, 7.1% LGBTQIA+<sup>14</sup>, and 26% identifying as having a disability<sup>15</sup>). The READCON Curriculum will center culturally responsive professional soft skill development as the approach to (1) engage in constructive dialogue around potentially divisive aspects of library programming, service, and material challenges; (2) build trust with and between members of diverse communities (3) de-escalate confrontational situations; (4) develop consensus and community buy-in for library advocacy needs, and (5) empower community members as active participants in local decision-making.

### Project Work Plan

Modeled after the successful design and deployment of the IMLS-funded [Project Ready](#) open-source professional development suite, the overarching project goal is to develop READCON – an open-source curriculum, adaptable to each library’s unique geographical and sociological context, that

equips library workers with the culturally responsive professional soft skills needed to build strong civic networks that bring together and empower different community constituencies, interests, and populations for proactive support of diverse library services, programming, and collections. READCON will include the nationally acclaimed [Get Ready Stay Ready: A Community Action Toolkit for Parents and Caregivers](#), as a supportive collection of curated community engagement resources, introducing a step-by-step application of these resources as part of its curriculum. Get Ready Stay Ready is an open-source, freely available toolkit for parents, caregivers, and community members, developed in 2022 by a team of library and legal professionals, under the direction of Dr. Lucy Santos Green, and through funding and graphic design support provided by Penguin Random House Publishing and EBSCO Information Services. Therefore, this proposed LB21 Implementation Project will result in two deliverables: 1) the READCON Curriculum for Library Readiness, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment During Challenging Conditions, and 2) an expanded Get Ready Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit for Parents and Caregivers, an accessible and multilingual curated resource collection. To achieve these, we will:

**Goal 1.** Engage strategic stakeholders, represented in the advisory council and content development teams (LIS Educators, LIS professionals, external experts, community organizations), in the development, beta-testing, refinement, and deployment of a fully online, self-paced, exportable, and platform-independent curriculum introducing current best practices for community collaboration and civic discourse in support of diverse library services, programming, and materials.

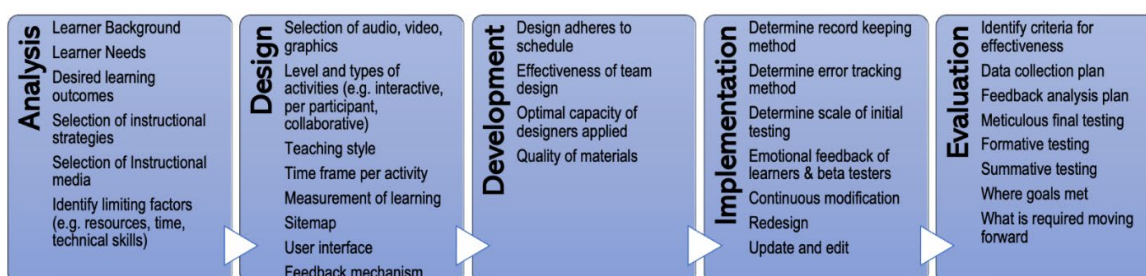
**Goal 2.** Recruit and train an initial cohort of library workers interested in beta-testing and adapting the READCON Curriculum for their library or library system's use.

**Goal 3.** Expand accessibility and applicability of the READCON Curriculum and associated Get Ready, Stay Ready Toolkit support components through captioning of all media, and translation of captions and materials into Spanish, French, Arabic, and Mandarin – expanding resource use for libraries serving first-generation immigrant and refugee populations.

**Goal 4.** Disseminate the READCON Curriculum widely to K-12 schools, academic, public libraries, and LIS preparation programs serving diverse populations across the country through partner organization digital ecosystems and professional organization listservs (e.g. ALISE's JESSE Listserv, EveryLibrary, EBSCO Information Services, and Penguin Random House Publishing), pre-conference workshops, and permanent OER hosting of the READCON Curriculum by UNCG.

**Theory and Design Model.** The design process for the development of the READCON Curriculum will follow the ADDIE Instructional Systems Design Model<sup>16</sup>. ADDIE, an acronym that stands for **A**nalyze, **D**esign, **D**evelop, **I**mplement, and **E**valuate, has been found to facilitate strong design and effective implementation of training programs. When combined with the use of rapid prototyping (the receipt of continual or formative feedback while instructional materials are being developed), ADDIE saves time and money by catching problems while they are still easy to fix<sup>17</sup>. This proposed project will implement rapid prototyping through its use of an Advisory Council representing community activists, library professionals, and library system leaders to provide continuous feedback during the READCON Curriculum design process. Figure 1 describes the design steps that will be the focus of the project's team through each ADDIE stage:

**Figure 1.** ADDIE Instructional Systems Design Model

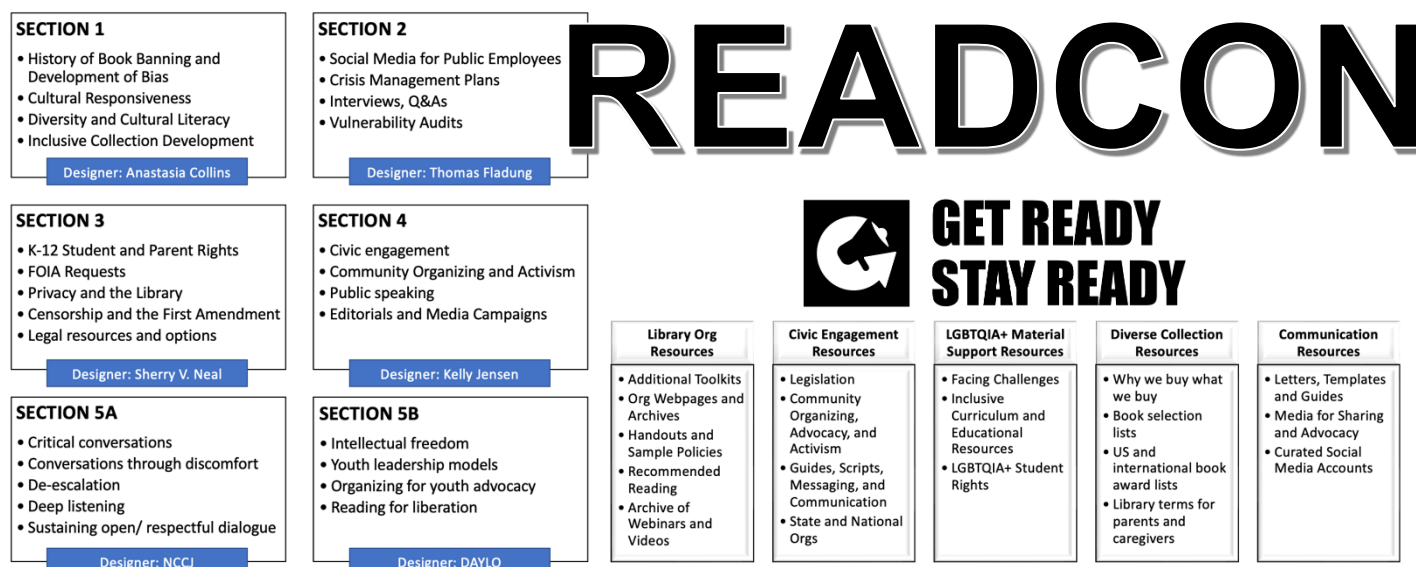


To enable the successful application of ADDIE, followed by a speedy deployment, the proposed project will be completed in three major design phases (**Phase one:** Analysis, Design, Development; **Phase two:** Implementation, Evaluation; **Phase three:** Translation, Dissemination and Amplification).

**Phase 1 (Goals 1 & 2): Development of the READCON Curriculum (Aug 2023-June 2024).** To achieve project goals, we will work with our content developers and instructional design expert to design and develop the READCON curriculum and complete media caption and language translation of the GRSR Toolkit.

Figure 2 depicts an overview of the initial READCON Curriculum structure on the left (developed in preliminary meetings with, and feedback from READCON's advisory council and content development teams) with components from the Get Ready Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit supporting curriculum listed on the left:

**Figure 2.** Overview of Preliminary READCON Curriculum Structure and GRSR Toolkit Support Components



### Phase 1A: Onboarding of project developers and expansion of Toolkit accessibility (Fall 2023)

During Phase 1A the project team will develop a communication plan for quarterly updates to the Advisory Board, content developers, and partner organizations. The project team will contract with the content developers and onboard the graduate assistant. The team, content developers, and instructional designer will create a curriculum map to guide them through the design process. Content developers will work with the instructional designer to develop content in their areas of expertise. Additionally, during Phase 1A, the project team will guide the complete media caption, language translation, and expansion of the existing GRSR Toolkit. Translation of the toolkit and subsequent translation of the curriculum is extremely important to guarantee accessibility for all potential users of the toolkit and the curriculum.

The toolkit will be a resource used by librarians completing the READCON Curriculum, to engage with their stakeholder communities whose languages may or may not be English. It is imperative that the toolkit is translated into languages that are accessible to our intended audiences and as one way to build trust with stakeholder communities. During Phase 1A, we will translate the toolkit components into the following languages based on the predominant languages (other than English) that are commonly spoken in the United States as a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> language by first-generation immigrant and refugee populations: Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin<sup>18, 19, 20</sup>.

### Phase 1B: Creation of Curriculum Map and Accessible Curriculum Content (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

During this phase, the instructional designer and content development team will create all READCON curriculum content. Each content area expert will be developing content based on their areas of expertise in consultation with the instructional designer. Examples of these areas are (1) engaging in

constructive dialogue around potentially divisive aspects of library programming, service, and material challenges; (2) building trust with and between members of diverse communities (3) de-escalating confrontational situations; (4) developing consensus and community buy-in for library advocacy needs, and (5) empowering community members as active participants in local decision-making. This phase will also include the creation of our openly accessible online platform for content delivery. This will include accessibility modifications and captioning of recorded content. Our accessibility modifications are intended to make our text content screen reader ready and our recorded video acceptable for those who need text available.

**Phase 1C: Review, Update, and Creation of the Online Accessible (OER) Curriculum (Spring 2024)**

During Phase 1C, content and materials will be shared with the Advisory Board prior to our First Advisory Board Meeting. During the meeting, the Board will provide feedback and critique of the READCON Curriculum and Toolkit. They will assess appropriateness, breadth, and depth, of content, effectiveness of content delivery, accessibility, and clarity of content presentation. After their feedback, the READCON Curriculum and Toolkit will be revised and updated. Design and uploading of content to the online accessible platform for content delivery will be completed. Final accessibility checks completed after the adjustments. Throughout this phase, the project team will be preparing for the second phase by recruiting individual and organizational beta testers who represent diversity in both geography and potential stakeholder groups.

**Phase 2 (Goals 1 & 2): Testing and Deployment of the READCON Curriculum (June 2024-**

**January 2025)** To achieve our project goals, we will complete beta testing with individuals and organizations. Additionally, the project team will create an amplification plan for dissemination of all project deliverables (READCON Curriculum and expanded GRSR Community Action Toolkit). Analysis and integration of feedback will be ongoing throughout Phase 2.

**Phase 2A: Beta Testing (Summer and Fall 2024)**

During this phase, the team will present the READCON Curriculum at the ALA Annual Conference in partnership with United for Libraries (Supportingdoc1.pdf). The team will elicit feedback during the presentation. To ensure feedback is elicited from a broad and diverse representation of library workers (e.g. geographic, library setting, accessibility needs), after ALA, we will recruit fourteen individual beta testers who will independently work through the entire curriculum. Upon completion, they will provide critiques on each module, module delivery, and the potential impact of READCON and GRSR Toolkit on their work with their communities. Two organizational beta testers will also be recruited to implement the READCON curriculum with their entire library staff. Their feedback will help us to craft guidance for organizational implementation and adaptability of project deliverables.

**Phase 2B: Final Preparation of READCON Curriculum and GRSR Toolkit (Fall 2024)**

During this phase, the team will complete analysis and integration of feedback. Final accessibility checks, captioning of additional content, and integration of adjustments made from feedback will be completed. During Phase 2B, READCON will be fully captioned. We will be sharing READCON with LIS educators through state and national conferences where we are accepted to present. This will allow us to emphasize the ability of the content to be integrated into existing LIS courses and preparation programs. The final version of the READCON Curriculum and GRSR Toolkit will be shared with the Advisory Board prior to the second Advisory Board meeting so they may review and provide additional critiques.

**Phase 2C: Marketing and Amplification Plan (Fall 2024)**

During this phase, the co-PIs will meet with the marketing team formed from the Advisory Board and representatives from EveryLibrary, EBSCO Information Services, and Penguin Random House Publishing – three organizations with vast information ecosystems who agreed to disseminate and amplify project deliverables upon completion. The team will put together a marketing plan and timeline. The team and partner organizations will develop marketing materials and finalize the plan for deployment with a widespread push and kickoff at ALA LibLearnX in January/February 2025, an event that has already been scheduled with United for Libraries (Supportingdoc1.pdf). The second

Advisory Board meeting will be held for final review of the READCON Curriculum, review of the dissemination plan, and discussion of the final phase of the project, as well as recruiting of organizational participants in implementation of the curriculum.

**Phase 3 (Goals 3 & 4): Evaluation and Dissemination of GRSR Curriculum (Feb 2025- July 2025)** To achieve our project goals, the project team will work with our marketing team to widely disseminate the READCON Curriculum and Get Ready Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit through several online webinars and conference presentations.

*Phase 3A: Introductory webinars and official launch. (Spring 2025)*

The project team will develop and present six webinars as part of our plan for dissemination of this project. In coordination with our organizational information ecosystem partners and content experts, each webinar will provide an overview of a different content strand of the curriculum. Webinars will be recorded and added to the READCON Curriculum as additional resources and content strand introductions. The project team will work with organizations to help facilitate their implementation of the curriculum and how it can be tailored to meet the distinct needs of their library staff and community.

*Phase 3B: Amplification through conferences (Spring and Summer 2025)*

Curriculum presentations and/or preconference workshops will take place at conferences where the project team is able to secure presentation slots, during the final phase of the project. Conferences targeted for their broad and diverse library worker representation: Association for Rural and Small Libraries, AASL (Pre-conference workshop), COSLA, Texas Library Association, Public Library Association, Council of State Library Officers. Following each presentation at conferences, participant feedback will be reviewed to determine additional resources needed and areas for improvement.

*Phase 3C: Evaluation and Future Steps (Summer 2025)*

This phase will include the compilation and analysis of feedback from organizations that have implemented the READCON Curriculum and Get Ready Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit, along with completion of remaining captioning and translation work. Additionally, comments and critiques from participants in webinars and conference workshops/presentations will be discussed and integrated. The project team will prepare a draft of the Final Project Report to share with the Advisory Board. The final Advisory board meeting will take place in July 2025 to share the evaluation results from workshop and conference presentations, and from individuals and organizations who have completed the READCON curriculum. They will also provide input for the Final Project Report.

**Personnel for Planning, Designing, Implementing, and Managing.** The personnel for READCON have the necessary experience in instructional design, crisis communication and de-escalation, school, public, and academic librarianship, community reconciliation training, community activism, library training, grant administration, and technical writing related to the goals and outcomes for the proposed implementation project. The Co-PIs, Content Developers, and Advisory Council will work closely and collaboratively throughout the lifetime of READCON so that all components align and support each other appropriately. Percentages of effort for project personnel are detailed in the budget narrative:

I. [April Dawkins, Ph. D.](#) (Co-PI): Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Dawkins has over twenty-seven years of experience as a classroom teacher, school librarian, library and information science educator, and internationally recognized intellectual freedom expert with presentations and publications in material selection policies, e-book usage, self-censorship, and diversity in youth literature. She is currently a lead reviewer for the Council on Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) and past chair of the American Association of School Librarians CAEP Coordinating Committee where she was responsible for leading revisions of the AASL Preparation Standards for School Librarians, chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee and past president of the North Carolina School Library Media Association. Dr. Dawkins will be responsible for: project leadership and oversight of project logistics

including oversight of project Graduate Assistants and linguistic translators, coordination of the project team, project budget management, expenditure approvals, yearly grant reports, onsite training, and dissemination of project deliverables through publication and presentation venues.

II. [Lucy Santos Green, Ed. D.](#) (Co-PI and Instructional Designer): Professor and Director of the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Iowa, Green has over twenty years of experience as a classroom teacher, school librarian, teacher and library and information science educator, and internationally recognized instructional designer for digital learning environments with publications in technology-integration for library, higher-education, and K-12 settings, instructional design and online pedagogy in higher education and K-12, online learning communities, and culturally competent school librarianship. She is currently Co-PI of IMLS-funded "Online Ready: Designing Culturally Competent and Impactful K-12 Online Learning." Green is past chair of the Educators of School Librarians Section for the American Association of School Librarians, past president of the School Media Technology Section of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology, and president-elect of the Association for Library and Information Science Education. As the project instructional designer, Dr. Green will be responsible for: READCON instructional design and project layout for online delivery including oversight of all phases of ADDIE, development and deployment of all project evaluation tools and evaluation processes, coordination of content developers and translators, oversight of advisory council logistics, and dissemination of project deliverables through amplification partners.

III. [Valerie Byrd Fort](#) (K-12 Liaison and Webinar Coordinator): Literacy Outreach Coordinator at the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, Byrd Fort is past-president of the South Carolina Association for School Librarians, a former school librarian, and current library and information science instructor at the University of South Carolina. She has led national and state efforts in intellectual freedom, diversifying children's and young adult literature, caregiver/ parent education, and community engagement. Byrd Fort will be responsible for oversight of youth activism content development, coordination of beta-testing site recruitment and registration, web-based communications and marketing, and infrastructure and registration for grant-related webinars.

IV. The Content Development Team comprises four individuals and two community organizations that bring a wide-ranging and crucial range of expertise in education and family law, public relations, crisis preparation, crisis communication, de-escalation, community reconciliation, community engagement, youth activism, print and digital journalism, and school, public, and academic librarianship. The Content Development Team will be responsible for working with the Instructional Designer to develop all content modules of the READCON Professional Development Curriculum. They are: 1. [Anastasia Collins](#), experienced academic and school librarian, anti-racism and anti-oppression educator with expertise in social work, sociology, education, literary & critical theory, and youth literature studies, 2021 Library Journal Mover & Shaker. 2. [Thomas Fladung](#), managing partner at Hennes Communications, a crisis communications firm specializing in crisis and reputation management. Award-winning journalist with 33 years of experience in reporting, writing, editing, and leadership of newspaper staffs. 3. [Kelly Jensen](#), former public librarian with dual masters in information science and clinical mental health counseling, current lead editor at Riot New Media Group, BookRiot.com and Algonquin Young Readers, overseeing national coverage of education and library-related legislation. 4. [Sherry V. Neal](#), JD, MLIS, school librarian and managing attorney at Neal & Wright LLC with over twenty four years of experience and bar memberships in Georgia Superior Court, Georgia Court of Appeals, Georgia Supreme Court, United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. 5. [North Carolina for Community and Justice](#), a human relations organization that works with other community groups and organizations to develop compassionate, inclusive, and equitable work, school, and community environments through targeted programming on culturally responsive soft skills, bias, bigotry, racism, de-escalation, civic engagement, and guided discourse. Two NCCJ trainers will join the Content Development Team. 6. [Beaufort High School's DAYLO](#): Diversity Awareness Youth Literacy Organization is one of the

largest student organizations at Beaufort High School with more than 50 members. Founded and directed by youth activists, DAYLO uses a book club model to engage in works celebrating diverse viewpoints and to learn and teach themes of social justice and inclusivity. DAYLO provides a model for youth and student leadership in service and building a community of intellectually curious and empathetic readers dedicated to service learning and positive social change. A team of five youth from DAYLO will join the Content Development Team and be overseen by project K-12 Liaison, Valerie Byrd Fort.

V. The Advisory Council includes four professionals who bring a wealth of experience in public librarianship, school librarianship, academic librarianship, and community organizing. Council members were purposefully selected as individuals who represent the areas of librarianship and stakeholder groups most impacted by decline in civic discourse and engagement, as well as the target audience for the READCON Curriculum. Council members also represent the broadest level of diversity in geographical homebase. The Advisory Council will be responsible for aiding in beta-tester recruitment, providing continuous feedback on READCON content module quality, wide-ranging applicability, flexibility, and relevance, and dissemination and amplification of project deliverables upon completion of the proposed project. They are: 1. [Alexandria Brown](#), author, contributor to NPR's Book Concierge, and school librarian at the Thacher School with additional experience in teen services, special collections and archives, and academic librarianship. 2. [Michael Hull](#), executive director of the Southeast Oklahoma Public Library system, an award-winning rural library system in Oklahoma, McAlester, OK, with a strong background in civic engagement. 3. [Dr. Tasslyn Magnusson](#), independent researcher, editor, community activist and parent, and program consultant with Freedom to Read – PEN America, with a strong background in community and non-profit organization, development and fundraising. 4. [Dr. Tracey Robinson](#), Assistant Director of Library Services at Tarrant County College, Fort Worth, TX, overseeing early college start – dual enrollment student services, grant procurement, and reference services.

**Summary of Financial Resources Requested.** The total budget requested is \$248,700. This amount reflects salary for Personnel: \$32,386 for Dr. Dawkins salary and fringe, and \$25,000 for Dr. Santos Green salary; Travel: \$28,020 travel costs in support of 7 pre-conference workshops for onsite beta-testing of READCON Curriculum targeting school, public, and academic librarianship organizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas; Student Support: \$20,475 for a Graduate Assistant; Other Costs: \$71,450 to include advisory council stipends (\$8,000), content developer stipends (\$20,000), beta-tester stipends (\$10,500), webinar development and presentation (\$5,600), and services related to media captioning, translation, accessibility, and web hosting/development (\$27,350); Indirect Costs: \$71,369.

### Diversity Plan

The careful selection of the proposed project's Content Development Team and Advisory Council, coupled with strategic recruitment of beta-testers, ensures that during the Analysis, Design, and Development phases of this project, READCON Curriculum is created as a strong, diverse, and broadly applicable product that will support diversity, equity, and inclusion in library programming, services, and collection development through civic engagement and community empowerment – its central mission. It also ensures the content included in the READCON Curriculum accurately addresses and honors the needs and challenges voiced by the target audience for this project proposal in a variety of settings: library professionals in school, public, and academic libraries, and library and information science educators. All proposed project team members were chosen for diverse professional representation, viewpoints, experiences, geographical homebase and networks, and service populations. All five geographical regions of the United States are present<sup>21</sup>. Table 1 breaks down the unique perspective and representation of each project team member:



**Table 1.** Unique Perspectives, Experiences, and Representation of Project Members

Project Team Member	Geographical Homebase	Representations/ Expertise
April Dawkins	Greensboro, North Carolina – Southeast	Rural, Urban, Suburban, White, Low & Mid SES, First-Gen College Students, School Librarianship, Library and Information Science Education
Lucy Santos Green	Iowa City, Iowa – Midwest	Urban, Suburban, Latino/Hispanic, Low & Mid SES, First-Gen Immigrant, School Librarianship, Library and Information Science Education
Valerie Byrd Fort	Columbia, South Carolina – South	Suburban, White, Mid & High SES, Public and School Librarianship, Library and Information Science Education
Anastasia Collins	Andover, Massachusetts – Northeast	Urban, Suburban, Black, LGBTQIA+, Mid SES, Academic and School Librarianship
Thomas Fladung	Hudson, Ohio – Midwest	Rural, Suburban, White, Low & Mid SES, Crisis Communication, Public Relations, Urban Journalism
Kelly Jensen	Woodstock, Illinois – Midwest	Urban, Suburban, White, Low & Mid SES, Accessibility for Special Needs, Clinical Mental Health Needs, Public Librarianship
Sherry Neal	Atlanta, Georgia – South	Urban, White, Low-High SES, Fostering and Adoption, Education and Family Law, School Librarianship
North Carolina for Community and Justice	Greensboro, North Carolina – Southeast	Rural, Suburban, Urban, Black, First-Gen College Students, Immigration, LGBTQIA+, De-escalation, Community Reconciliation and Discourse
Beaufort High School DAYLO	Beaufort, South Carolina – South	Suburban, Black, White, Latino/Hispanic, Immigration, Accessibility for Special Needs, K-12 Student Lived Experience, Youth Leadership
Alexandria Brown	Ojai, California – West	Suburban, Urban, Black, LGBTQIA+, Academic, Public, School Librarianship
Michael Hull	McAlester, Oklahoma – Southwest	Rural, Suburban, White, Low & Mid SES, Library Leadership, Public Librarianship
Tasslyn Magnusson	Prescott, Wisconsin – Midwest	Rural, White, Low & Mid SES, Fostering, Community Organizing, Non-Profit Fundraising
Tracey Robinson	Arlington, Texas – Southwest	Urban, White, Low & Mid SES, Library Leadership, Academic Librarianship, Community College Needs, First-Gen College Students, Dual Enrollment Library Services

During the Implementation and Evaluation phases of the ADDIE instructional design process selected for this project, continuous formative evaluation is a crucial component that will help the Instructional Designer and Content Development Team redesign, update, edit, and further improve the READCON Curriculum to solidify its broad applicability and accessibility for diverse populations. Pre-conference workshops on the READCON Curriculum and GRSR Toolkit will be offered at state and national conferences (dependent on acceptance rate) that bring in a large number of library educators and library professionals representing diverse service populations, areas of library services, professional expertise, and geographical homebases (e.g. TLA, PLA, ARSL, ALISE). These workshops will allow conference attendees at each event to actively contribute feedback for instantaneous modifications to the project, making this project’s deliverables more effective and applicable. To further support a diverse beta-tester roster that includes representation of diverse perspectives not reached at, or able to attend pre-conference workshops, we will leverage the professional networks and pre-existing contacts held by all project team members to recruit 14 paid beta-testers, who will each receive an honorarium of \$750 (further supporting diversification of this recruitment effort). Finally, to “strengthen the field’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices,” the second deliverable for the proposed project, the expanded Get Ready Stay Ready Toolkit, and its collection of resources for inclusion in the READCON Curriculum, will be translated into languages most commonly present in

the United States immigrant and refugee populations. All media will be close captioned in English, as well as select languages, further expanding the usefulness of resources included in both the toolkit and the curriculum, and its applicability for library workers who are members of, and/or work closely with these service populations.

### **Project Results**

Library practitioners, library and information science educators, and library organizations constitute the direct audience for READCON: A Curriculum for Library Readiness, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment During Challenging Conditions. The eventual beneficiaries, however, are the service populations (e.g. K-12 students, college students, community members, library trustees, school board council members) that LIS professionals serve, who stand to gain critical understanding of the role they play in advocating for and supporting diverse library programming, services, and materials through civic engagement and community collaboration. These individuals will benefit from library and information services grounded in proactive, community-centered, and culturally competent professional practice. To our knowledge, there is currently no existing continuing education or professional development curriculum that weaves academic, public, and school librarianship with education and family law, crisis communication, public, and media relations, community reconciliation, and youth leadership, in one centralized product. Our development of research and practice-informed, freely accessible materials (that can be used online or exported for use at in-person professional development events) will fill this gap. In addition to the continuously curated and updated resources available in the GRSR Toolkit, the READCON curriculum will include templates, guidelines, and tools for planning, tracking, and evaluating the impact of the curriculum's implementation on library services and library professional practice (e.g. attitudinal or motivation surveys, observation checklists, interview protocols, planning guides).

All project deliverables, designed to be self-directed and online, will greatly contribute to the project's sustainability. UNC-Greensboro and University of Iowa will take responsibility for maintaining the project website, learning management system offerings, and associated materials. The READCON Curriculum, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (CC BY-NC-SA), will be immediately available for remixing, tweaking, and expanding as needed (with appropriate credit to the original design team). With its two-year timeline, where deliverables are ready at the end of year one, the proposed project will be immediately able to be applied by libraries and library workers who are presently facing an astronomic increase in challenges to programs, services, and materials.

The READCON Curriculum's inclusion of handouts, presentation slides, reading lists and guides, videos, and other materials, will also facilitate expansive and immediate adoption of READCON. Elements of the online curriculum will also be available for incorporation into coursework to help prepare preservice library and information science professionals for any forthcoming challenges. Because the design of all project deliverables will occur through multiple iterations of design and formative evaluation, we anticipate all READCON products will be usable without extensive revision for most library workers, library organizations, and library and information science educators. Ultimately, the READCON Curriculum for Library Readiness, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment During Challenging Conditions and associated Get Ready Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit will provide library workers with the confidence to push back against the small, but vocal group that is demanding a narrow and exclusive library organization funded by the whole community, but in service of a select few. It will guide library workers through this lengthy season of challenges, helping them develop the culturally responsive professional soft skills needed to build strong civic networks that bring together and empower different community constituencies, interests, and populations for proactive support of diverse library services, programming, and collections – a library for all.



**Year 2: August 2024 - July 2025**

<b>Phase 2: Testing and Deployment of READCON Curriculum, continued (6/2024 - 1/2025)</b>	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Integrate feedback from individual beta testers												
Organizational beta testers review, provide feedback and critique of the READCON curriculum												
<b>Community Feedback</b> at a national conference												
Integrate feedback and finalize curriculum												
Translation to final languages												
Work with marketing team to prepare for amplification and wide launch												
<b>Advisory Board Meeting 2:</b> Share final curriculum and amplification plan for review, feedback, and critique												
<b>Phase 3: Evaluation and Dissemination of READCON Curriculum (2/2025 - 7/2025)</b>	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
<b>Official Launch</b> at ALA's LibLearnX in partnership with United for Libraries												
Develop and present webinars as part of launch												
Analysis of evaluation results from early participants												
Creation and addition of resources identified from participant evaluations & suggestions												
Dissemination & Amplification: Presenting at conferences												
<b>Advisory Board Meeting 3:</b> Evaluation results of the READCON Curriculum for final comments and review												
<b>Final Project Report</b>												

## Digital Products Plan: READCON

### Product Creation

We anticipate creation of the following products:

- **4 webinars** (likely to include live transcript; chat transcript; slide decks; video and audio archival recordings)
- **Instructional content** - areas to be determined (likely to include slide decks; live transcript; chat transcript; video and audio archival recordings; Google Drive or other digital documents; population of UNCG's Canvas learning management system; PDF handouts)
- **Project Guide** (repurposed from materials above)
- **Web site** (populated with materials above)
- **Presentations** (slide decks and digital artifacts described above) and publications (papers and appendices)

To create and host these, the project will use software already provided to the project team by home institutions or freely available online (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, Microsoft Office, VidGrid, Adobe Acrobat, Canva, slide deck templates). The project website will be hosted by the University of North Carolina Greensboro on the University domain (uncg.edu). The Get Ready, Stay Ready Community Action Toolkit is already permanently hosted on an independent domain (.info) managed by the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Iowa.

### Product Availability

READCON products will be available via the project website, accessible using standard web browsers, as well as deposited in NCDOCKS (NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarship). GRSR products will be available via the toolkit website, accessible using standard web browsers.

### Product Access

The main project products can be divided into two categories: 1) Instructional materials, including the planning guide, instructional modules, and website; and 2) project publications and presentations.

**Instructional materials** will be open access and hosted on the project website. The website will be hosted and maintained by UNCG's School of Education (SOE) – the larger unit that houses the Department of Library and Information Science. Instructional materials will be published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 (CC BY-NCND) license so as to maximize availability and maintain the integrity of the work. These products will include attribution to the Project Team, all relevant stakeholders, and IMLS for supporting the project. Should participant-made materials be included in project outcomes, appropriate

permissions and licensing will be sought by the Project Director, who will provide a clear overview of the license details including attribution and how the project products can be reused. Any previously made materials brought by the project team for use in this project will retain the copyright of the original creator but will be licensed at no charge for use by the University of North Carolina Greensboro to achieve project goals.

**Project publications and presentations** will be published in open access venues when possible, with a copy of each placed in the UNC System NCDOCKS (NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarship) repository or on the project website. When open access is not possible, the Project Team will pursue agreements to publish pre-print versions.

Products (guide, exemplars, PD materials, project website, publications and presentations) will contain no sensitive information, though authorship of discrete pieces of content will be credited as appropriate.

### **Product Sustainability**

UNC Greensboro will permanently host the project website on a stable uncg.edu URL. The planning guide, exemplars, publications, and presentations will be permanently hosted in NCDOCKS or in the project and toolkit websites as appropriate. Maintenance will be the responsibility of the institutional repositories discussed above.

## Organizational Profile

### Organizational Description

The oldest public university in the nation, UNC traces its roots to the state's 1776 constitution, which held that "all useful Learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more Universities." (From the most recent ALA accreditation report 2018). The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. The UNC System is a treasured public institution dedicated to serving the people of North Carolina through world-class teaching, research, and community engagement. Today, nearly 250,000 students are enrolled in the 16 universities across the state and at the NC School of Science and Mathematics. Each shares in the overall mission of the University. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society<sup>1</sup>.

UNC

Greensboro is centrally located in the Piedmont Triad region of NC. UNC Greensboro was established as the State Normal and Industrial School in 1891. After a succession of names it became UNC Greensboro in 1963. The first African American students were admitted in 1956, and men were first admitted as part of the general student body in 1964. It is recognized as a minority-serving institution with 51% of its students being people of color. UNC Greensboro's mission is to redefine the public research university for the 21st century as an inclusive, collaborative, and responsive institution making a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves<sup>2</sup>. UNCG currently enrolls approximately 18,000 students in bachelor's, master's, professional and PhD degrees. It is ranked #1 in NC for social mobility and 49% of its students are first in their family to attend college<sup>3</sup>.

Established in 1928, the Department of Library and Information Science is the first accredited library education program in North Carolina and the second one in the South. The department boasts a student enrollment of approximately 500 graduate and undergraduate students in three degree programs. The Department of Library and Information Science is part of the School of Education at UNCG.

The mission of the UNC Greensboro Department of Library & Information Science (LIS) is to connect people, libraries, and information through research, teaching, and service to enrich living and working in a global environment. The department is an intellectually rich, community-centered program leading future-oriented library and information education, innovation, and service<sup>4</sup>.