

**Narrative****PROJECT JUSTIFICATION****Statement of Need**

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is requesting \$249,530.59 for a 3-year Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant in the **Implementation** funding category aligned with **Goal 2, Objective 2.1** of the program to launch the ARL Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Institute, which is meant to increase the capacity of participants to effect positive change with and within their respective communities through the acquisition and application of specific knowledge, awareness, and skills related to DEI, organizational development, and leadership. As a standalone program aimed at sustainable transformation, the ARL DEI Institute is intended to provide a scalable, modular structure that increases access to resources for sustaining diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces and offers metrics to chart the efficacy of DEI capacity building within individual institutions. These efforts are designed to fill the gap created by a reliance on ad hoc tools and interventions currently employed by many libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions to address DEI related concerns. While the vision of this effort is to support professionals across Library, Archive, and Museum (LAM) settings, the proposed grant will focus on the implementation of a pilot for academic and research libraries and archives with the goal of providing resources to support the adaptation of the curriculum for the provision of parallel offerings for broader LAM institutional communities. As such, the target group for this project is research libraries and archives. The intended beneficiaries of this project extend far beyond the target group alone. As an initiative developed to support the ability of libraries and archives to create, develop, maintain, and advance more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just communities, programs, offerings, and services, the institute supported by this grant would provide beneficial outcomes to a wide array of stakeholders of the varied participating institutions including—but not limited to—employees, users, partners, and additional communities members. While specific counts of these groups are unavailable, this proposal asserts that systemic changes have systemic impacts. Within the membership of ARL, there are public and private universities, US federal government entities, public libraries, and an international consortium; each of these members engages with numerous internal and external stakeholders. As the proposed institute will be open to participation from representatives beyond ARL member institutions, the intended beneficiaries of this project includes groups well beyond the participants of the institute and ARL member institutions. The ARL senior director for Learning + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will serve as the Project Director, who will work in collaboration with a Task Force with broad and diverse representation, a team of institute faculty, and additional ARL staff. ARL will lead the overall project, be responsible for grant reporting, and provide facilities and infrastructure.

For decades, leaders of research libraries and archives have been advocating for meaningful, substantive change that centers diversity, equity, and inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Many academic libraries have engaged in their DEI efforts, to varying levels of success and longevity.<sup>2</sup> More often than not, these efforts have not resulted in sustainable transformation. Relying on ad hoc tools and interventions, DEI programs can result in “awareness without action, recognition without results, and intentions without deeds.”<sup>3</sup> Organizations that fail to follow through on

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<sup>1</sup> Hathcock, April, M. 2015. “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS.” *In The Library with a Lead Pipe*. (October): n. pag; Brown, Jennifer, et. al. 2018. “We Here: Speaking Out Truth,” *Library Trends* 67, no. 1 (Summer): 163–181. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2018.0024>; Collins, Anastasia. “Language, Power, and Oppression in the LIS Diversity Void,” *Library Trends* 67 no. 1 (Summer): 39–51. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2018.0024>, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity>.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Geiger, Lauren, et al. 2023. “Academic Libraries and DEI Initiatives: A Quantitative Study of Employee Satisfaction.” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 49, no. 1: 102627–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102627>.

<sup>3</sup> Dali, Keren, Norda Bell, and Zachary Valdes. 2021. “The Expectation and Learning Impact Framework (ELIF): Evaluating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Professional Development Events for Academic Librarians.” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 47, no. 6: 102456–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102456>.

their commitments, particularly as they relate to DEI, risk eroding trust, which can lead to a range of consequences, such as turnover, reputational damage, and lack of confidence in organizational leadership.<sup>4</sup>

Sustainable transformation requires more than a reactive approach to issues, often devoid of assessment or accountability. Rather, DEI transformation requires deep engagement with equity on the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels. The ARL DEI Institute aims to provide a structured opportunity for such deep engagement.<sup>5</sup> Under the guidance of experienced DEI facilitators, participants will have the dedicated time and space to unpack deeply held cultural scripts that can be impediments to learning and engage in critical self-reflection, while also building a community of practice. The ARL DEI Institute also provides participants with practical and relevant DEI implementation strategies, which they will apply to their particular contexts through the development of an action and accountability plan.

The institute will build on and extend ARL's record of designing high quality, intentional learning experiences for leaders, such as the Leadership Fellows Program and Kaleidoscope. As described in the next section, it will produce outcomes that differ from other library and archive DEI programs. For academic leaders, such as library leaders, "routine 'everyday' demands are overwhelming, and there is little 'space' to think about ways to improve."<sup>6</sup> The ARL DEI Institute provides the necessary time and space for deep and focused engagement. A collaborative experience, participants will co-create knowledge, share tools and strategies, learn from one another, and question each other's thinking. The communities of practice created through the ARL DEI Institute will allow for continued engagement, ongoing access to resources, support, and opportunities for learning and growth, which can help sustain their momentum over time. They also provide a space where participants can share progress updates, discuss challenges, and hold each other accountable for achieving their goals. Longer term, the creation of DEI centered communities of practice will facilitate "new ways of conceptualizing and addressing issues of equity," which can lead to "a rippling effect that will influence the larger campus community and beyond."<sup>7</sup>

## Context

The three-year implementation grant being requested is intended to allow ARL to successfully pilot the institute, intentionally assess the pilot institute's efficacy, and host an updated and enhanced institute informed by the assessment results. The launching of this institute marks the beginning of the third and final phase of a multi-year, three-part, interorganizational partnership. The **first phase** was the development of the [ALA/ARL Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework](#) (CPRE), which was scoped and funded by ARL and partner library associations. The framework was independently approved by the boards of Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), American Library Association (ALA), ARL, & Public Library Association (PLA) in the summer of 2022. The **second phase** of this process is the development of the institute's curriculum. The development process began in December 2021 and concluded with the creation of an initial draft of the curriculum in January 2023, which was led by an ARL Task Force that is supported by a [FY21 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program planning grant](#). This Task Force included representation from ALA and ACRL as well as several library and DEI thought leaders:

<sup>4</sup> Prabhakar, Kavitha, et al. 2022. "Build Trust in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitments." *Deloitte Insights*. June 20, 2022. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/building-employee-trust-dei-programs.html>; Renjen, Punit. 2020. "The value of resilient leadership: Renewing our investment in trust." *Deloitte Insights*. October 8, 2020.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/covid-19/trust-in-leadership-organization.html/>

<sup>5</sup> Petty, Sheryl and Mark Leach. 2020. "Systems Change & Deep Equity: Pathways Toward Sustainable Impact, Beyond 'Eureka!,' Unawareness & Unwitting Harm." *Change Elemental*. July 15, 2020.

<https://changeelemental.org/resources/systems-change-and-deep-equity-monograph/>

<sup>6</sup> Bustillos, Leticia T. and Robert Rueda, et al. 2012. "The math project at Los Angeles City College." *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the Equity Scorecard in theory and practice*, edited by Estela Bensimon & Lindsey Malcolm, 117-36. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, page 136.

<sup>7</sup> Rueda, Robert. 2012. An activity-based approach to promoting equity in community college settings: Considering process and outcomes. *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the Equity Scorecard in theory and practice*, edited by Estela Bensimon & Lindsey Malcolm, 159-90. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, page 186.

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The 14-month development process included multiple points of input from a wide range of stakeholders. The Task Force research scholar and Task Force chair contacted a dozen organizations that were identified by the Task Force as already providing DEI learning and capacity building programs for various academic library communities. The emailed messages included context for the project as well as request for any information they were willing and able to share related to their program goals and outcomes, program curriculum, program evaluation methods, program evaluation results. While many of these organizations were unable or unwilling to share details about their curricula or assessment processes and results, the Task Force did receive responses from the Public Library Association; Califa Group; University of North Carolina Libraries' Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Council; Racial Equity Institute; Asian Americans Advancing Justice—Chicago; and Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. The content and nature of the items received from these organizations varied greatly, which emphasized the idea that there is no singular approach that is proven to be the most effective.

The Task Force then developed and opened a public survey that invited members of the LAM community to share their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences related to DEI related work already being done as well as DEI related needs in LAM spaces—at the individual, institutional, and industry levels. The survey also requested information about respondents' institution type and respondents' salient social identities (open response, optional item). Respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not they had interest in participating in follow-up focus groups; for those that did express interest, the survey also collected additional details that allowed the composition of focus groups to be informed by racial identity, institutional role, and years in the profession. The survey was open for 24 days and received 316 responses—of which, 33.5% (n=106) indicated interest in the focus groups. In the following weeks, three focus groups with eight participants each were held via Zoom, facilitated by the Task Force research scholar. One focus group was a BIPOC specific group; all three groups had an intentional variety of years of experience represented by the participants. The transcripts of the focus groups were reviewed and coded by the research scholar, ARL staff, and a research assistant; the research scholar then identified a list of themes across the groups. A separate survey was created to allow for respondents to the original survey who were not invited to participate in a focus group due to lack of space to provide more specific input on a potential "DEI Institute" design and structure. Lastly, the Task Force designed a session that was offered during the 2022 ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition in Washington, DC. The session, led by the Task Force chair, provided attendees with an update of purpose, efforts, and status of the

work of the Task Force as well as invited additional input into a potential “DEI Institute” design and structure through the previously created survey, individual reflection activities, and group conversations.

The Task Force reviewed the input collected through these various channels on an ongoing basis, each stage informing the approaches taken in the subsequent ones. Using the information from the organizational review, surveys, focus groups, and their own experiences and expertise, each Task Force member was asked to build their own version of an institute—including proposed outcomes, general design (e.g., size, venue, components), schedule, budget, and selection process for participants. The individual responses from the Task Force members were compiled by ARL staff and shared with the group in a deidentified, aggregate format. ARL then hosted an in-person, synchronous meeting in Washington, DC for the group; facilitated by the chair, the Task Force developed recommendations for the institute curriculum as well as metrics of success and benchmarks. The remaining Task Force meetings were focused on cleaning and revising the recommendations.

The Task Force research scholar and Task Force chair are developing reports to be shared with various stakeholder communities of the organizations engaged in the Task Force (i.e., ACRL, ALA, ARL); these documents will also be made available to the public in advance of the conclusion of the planning grant.

### Institute Design & Structure

This proposal for a three-year implementation grant is meant to support the **third phase** of the process—the implementation of the ARL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Institute. This institute will continue ARL’s work to enhance DEI related offerings to library communities in partnership with allied organizations while filling a gap in ARL’s programming as well as opportunities offered to the profession at large. Working at the intersection of DEI-focused professional development specifically tailored for employees of libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions, the ARL DEI Institute will be developed by members of these communities for members of these communities. It will support the translation of theory into practice by making the plethora of academic resources examining DEI related topics more accessible and translatable to real-world situations; these resources will be drawn from a wide range of disciplines such as organizational development, leadership studies, counseling, higher education administration, community engagement and organizing, and identity-focused fields of study. ARL will open a call for expressions of interest to form an ARL DEI Institute Implementation Task Force; members can be from within or beyond ARL member institutions. Additionally, ARL will continue its collaborative work with allied organizations and invite representatives from ACRL and ALA to join the Task Force. As a nonprofit organization, ARL will use a cost recovery model for the institute—which will be open to communities within and beyond ARL member institutions—to allow ongoing implementation; ARL will also provide opportunities for financial support based on attendee need to ensure the opportunity is accessible to a wide audience. The requested grant would provide critical funds for the start-up years of the institute to allow a solid foundation for the sustainability and continued development of the institute.

The ARL DEI Institute envisions LAM organizations that acknowledge and nurture our diverse communities. To achieve this vision, the ARL DEI Institute will provide an action-oriented experience that prepares attendees to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their respective organizations through a workshop-driven structure that fosters collaboration, innovation, evaluation, and reflection. The overarching goals of the ARL DEI Institute are to:

- Provide tools, knowledge, skills, strategies, and resources to implement change
- Provide space and a sustainable platform for innovation, evaluation, and reflection
- Provide materials and ideas for furthering DEI-related key activities at participants’ institutions
- Establish a community of practice to support ongoing commitment to institutional change
- Encourage the recognition of the needs of the broader diverse society severed by LAM institutions

For additional context, ARL is currently developing a larger structure that will be collectively known as the ARL Institutes. This includes the reimagining of the longstanding ARL Fall Forum, which will evolve into the ARL President’s Institute; this will rotate through the ARL geographic regions and offer each president of ARL the opportunity to plan an event that will occur towards the beginning of their term and highlight some key areas of

interest. Additionally, ARL will be hosting institutes designed for specific populations, and combinations of populations, in an effort to meet the dynamic needs of stakeholders by offering acute and timely interventions. While the broader structure of the ARL Institutes is currently under development, it is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of opportunities and offerings, which will include the ARL DEI Institute—currently the most robust option being planned within the structure.

While ARL has a long history of offering learning and development opportunities for professionals in the field (e.g., Leadership & Career Development Program; Kaleidoscope Program [formerly the Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce]; Leadership Fellows Program; Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility in Libraries and Archives [IDEAL] Conference), this institute is unique in its design and implementation, which are intended to result in differentiated impact. As a specific comparison, the IDEAL Conference is designed to allow broad participation (>10x the number of institute participants) to convene in a shared space; however, as a conference, attendees will have the agency to choose their level of engagement and type of content they consume. The DEI Institute will offer a shared experience and set agenda that is focused on common goals and activities. In general, the majority of ARL learning programs and offerings use either a cohort or event model; each have specific benefits and limitations. Cohorts provide opportunities for deep exploration of a wide range of topics over an extended period of time in conjunction with the development of strong relationships among the participants; however, they are often only available to a small number of people at a time. Moreover, the breadth and scope of the topics, while relevant to the cohort generally, may not be immediately applicable to their work and, thus, does not always result in real-time application. Events often provide opportunities for larger numbers of participants to engage and explore what are often more focused topics; these benefits are linked to and informed by common limitations such as shorter time frames with fewer opportunities to build relationships among the participants.

The proposed institute aims to split the difference between these cohort and event experiences. As an institute, it will be smaller and more focused than many conferences or other large gatherings. With a projected maximum attendance of 75, the institute is designed to allow tailored and meaningful experiences through a variety of interactive and action-oriented activities. Additionally, as a three-day, synchronous, in-person experience, the institute offers opportunities for meaningful connections, ongoing engagement, and wide-spread impact. To accomplish this task, the institute will use a delegation structure. Institutions that wish to apply will identify a delegation to attend on their behalf. Delegations will ideally consist of up to three people, one of whom is a senior or executive leader. This design allows institutions to send a single attendee (for whatever reason, including capacity or resource limitations) while encouraging structures that better support the ability of attendees to be successful in their application and implementation of institute content due to collective participation and leadership involvement. The delegation model also recognizes the importance of connecting positional power and access within an organizational structure with the perspectives and experiences of people driving and leading DEI efforts within institutions—as well as the reality that these populations do not always directly overlap at every institution. Finally, this delegation structure ensures that there are a variety of institutions present. At full capacity, there would be at least 25 different institutions represented. The institute design is meant to draw on the collective wisdom of the group while affirming the shared experiences and unique situations that inform each of the participants' context and needs.

This institute is meant to support and enhance the DEI work being done in participating institutions; it is not meant to be an organizations' initial or entry point in engaging with this work. Many other opportunities for foundational work already exist (e.g., [Racial Equity Institute](#)). While there are a number of consultants and firms that support the continued work of institutions related to DEI, there are often barriers to access including institutional resources and capacity. This institute aims to provide a more accessible and community-based approach to continuing beyond introductory DEI efforts. Still, the value of such efforts should not be disregarded; as such, the following prerequisites, intended to provide a shared foundation for all institute participants, are currently recommended in order to apply to participate in this institute:

- Trainings [knowledge]
  - Unconscious Bias

- Intersectionality
- Microaggressions
- (proto)Needs Assessment
- Review for potential utilization:
  - [ALA/ARL Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity](#)
  - [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Scorecard for Library and Information Organizations](#)

The application process for the institute is meant to be streamlined and accessible to encourage applications from numerous institutions while still allowing for informed decisions to be made about participation. Applicants will be asked to speak to the following items:

- How has your institution prepared for impactful DEI work?
  - provide 2 examples of previous DEI efforts—may include unsuccessful efforts
  - list additional DEI training already completed/currently scheduled
- By participating in the ARL DEI Institute, what do you hope to achieve:
  - within your institution?
  - for and/or with communities with which you (want to) engage?
- Describe the potential value of using the ALA DEI Scorecard and/or ALA/ARL Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity in your institution's efforts to advance DEI.
- Proposed delegation: for each attendee (1–3), provide their name, title, and role in institutional DEI work
- Commitment from executive leader via signed form

The Task Force will finalize and operationalize the criteria-based rubric to guide the evaluation of application materials; the current recommended criteria are: 1) Prerequisites, 2) Value of Impact, 3) Transparency; 4) Commitment, 5) Humility, and 6) Leadership Support. A separate Selection Working Group will be charged with using the rubric to evaluate application materials through a deidentified process. The Selection Working Group will review the aggregate ratings and meet in a synchronous, virtual deliberation meeting to determine a final ranked list of applications to be provided to the Task Force. This list will be reidentified by ARL staff to allow the Task Force to make final decisions on the institute participants. The Task Force will not be permitted to change the rankings of any applicants. They will have the opportunity to consider factors such as institutional diversity and cohort composition. The actual number of accepted institutions will depend on the size of individual delegations invited to participate.

The implementation of the institute will be led by ARL staff as well as a team of institute faculty. ARL has made a number of updates to its staffing model that support the implementation of this institute. In 2020 and 2021, ARL conducted national searches and hired a senior director of Leadership and Organizational Development and a senior director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion respectively. In 2022, these portfolios were reorganized under a single senior director for Learning + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion after a member of the ARL staff accepted a position with a different organization. This reorganization included the creation of two new positions, a director of Learning and a director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Again, ARL engaged in national searches to fill these positions. The director of Learning, selected from 250+ applicants, joined the ARL staff in March 2023; the director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion search is currently underway and has received 240+ applications. The members of this team bring a wealth of experience from a number of fields beyond libraries and archives including higher education administration, clinical mental health counseling, consulting, and law. These perspectives will enrich the development and implementation of the curriculum. It also allows the institute content to integrate informed practices from multiple disciplines to benefit institute participants.

The institute faculty will be selected through a process that parallels the participant application. ARL will open a call for expressions of interest. Individuals within and beyond ARL member institutions are eligible. Application materials will be evaluated through a deidentified process by a Selection Working Group using a rubric developed by the Task Force. All selected faculty will be expected to have a demonstrated history of leading DEI change in complex organizations and experience in libraries and other cultural heritage and

memory institutions; additionally, they should possess strong facilitation skills and familiarity with group processes and dynamics. Direct attention will be given to ensuring that faculty selection parallels the institute curriculum so that each section is supported by the experience and expertise of someone on the team. The project director will develop a faculty preparation experience as well as numerous resources to support faculty in the successful fulfillment of their responsibilities. There will be a faculty orientation and onboarding session, during which the group will discuss roles and expectations, review the institute curriculum, and agree upon specific facilitation assignments within the institute agenda. A significant portion of the faculty responsibilities will be the management of the small group experiences. Each participant will be assigned to a small group of up-to-10 people; each group will have an assigned faculty facilitator that will work with them for the duration of the institute. The faculty preparation will focus on ensuring that the faculty are ready to support the participants with the various aspects of the action planning process during the institute. Finally, the faculty will be able to leverage their expertise and experiences by informing the details around the facilitation of the specific parts of the agenda assigned to them. The faculty preparation will also include a significant amount of team building. The preparation process will conclude with and in-person experience at the institute venue that will take place one or two days before the participants arrive.

### Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to provide an action-oriented experience that prepares attendees to advance DEI in their respective institutions through a workshop-driven structure that fosters collaboration, innovation, evaluation, and reflection. Under the leadership of the Project Director, the Task Force charged with informing the management and implementation of the institute curriculum. Throughout the lifespan of the project, the institute curriculum will be reviewed and updated to ensure relevance and efficacy. The curriculum includes three main sections: 1) pre-institute, 2) institute, and 3) post-institute. The learning outcomes are as follows:

After participating in the ARL DEI Institute, participants will be able to:

- Identify institutional/community needs related to DEI
- Identify strategies to translate statements into practice
- Describe the benefits to diversity
- Describe the value of DEI professional development
- Describe challenges to effecting institutional change
- Describe opportunities/strengths to effecting institutional change
- Describe the value of relationships in efforts to advance DEI
- Describe strategies for effecting institutional change
- Discuss strategies for ensuring the sustainability of efforts to advance DEI
- Utilize assessment strategies to measure impact of efforts to advance DEI
- Develop institutionally relevant DEI programming
- Develop an action plan for their institution

**Pre-institute**, institutions invited to participate in the institute will attend a virtual orientation in advance of the institute. This will serve as the initial introduction of the participants to one another as well as the institute faculty and ARL staff. It will also allow for community norms and expectations to begin being developed and communicated. Additionally, the orientation will build upon the prerequisites to ensure the institute participants possess a strong, shared understanding of framing concepts and topics upon which they can individually and collectively build. Finally, it will provide clarity about the required pre-work for institutional participants in advance of attending the institute. All attendees will be required to:

- Complete: [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Scorecard for Library and Information Organizations](#)
- Respond to reflection questions:
  - Based on the prerequisites, what are your institutional needs? Create a prioritized list of these needs and include a goal statement for each.

- What three areas of the DEI Scorecard and CPRE are of the greatest importance to your institutional DEI goals and why?
  - Draft an institutional profile describing both people and values
  - Draft a demographics matrix that identifies the social identities of various stakeholder groups as well as what data they currently have or do not have based

This pre-work will be used throughout the institute as participants work on building institution specific action plans in response to the identified needs.

The **institute** will be a three-day, synchronous, in-person experience. The first day will focus on community building and laying the groundwork for the following days. It will begin with unpacking the participants' DEI Scorecard results from the pre-work. Participants will also engage in a discussion that explores challenges to effective institutional transformation. Because these challenges can be institution specific, participants will work with their delegation to identify barriers that may exist, such as resources, policies, culture, and environmental pressures. Participants that are the sole member of their institution's delegation will be grouped together to allow community processing and provide peer support. They will then work cross-institutionally, utilizing the collective knowledge of the group, to brainstorm potential strategies to overcome these barriers.

Day two will include a skill-building session on action planning for equity and inclusion. Drawing from expertise from a variety of disciplines, participants will be introduced to an action planning framework aimed at supporting their response to the needs identified in the pre-work. Participants will then engage in a facilitated working session where they will start to apply the framework to their own institutions. Day two also includes a discussion about assessment strategies to measure the impact of efforts to advance DEI.

Day three continues to explore action planning through a second facilitated working session. Participants will resume the development of their institutional action plan together while incorporating learning from the previous day's discussion on assessment. They will also participate in a skill-building workshop on communication during which they will learn ways to effectively convey the goals and vision of their action plans and the benefits of diversity to others in their institutions, secure buy-in, and build relationships to advance DEI. Day three will also include an focused exploration of the sustainability of their DEI efforts and how they can continue their learning as a community of practice after the institute.

All of these sessions, led by ARL staff and institute faculty, will be supported by providing an intentional balance of individual reflection, pair connections, small groups (within and across organizations), and large group activities. There will also be opportunities for participants to subgroup based on a number of factors including role in their institution, type of institution, social identities, and specific institutional needs. The agenda will also include repeated community building opportunities through structured and unstructured activities and spaces.

**Post-institute**, participants will continue to develop and adjust their action plans in preparation for implementation. Upon completion, participants will share an executive summary of their completed action plans. ARL will compile the executive summaries and disseminate them with the cohort of institute participants in advance of the follow-up session for participants. In this session, each institution will have the opportunity to provide progress reports on their work. There will also be additional opportunities to unpack needs and challenges, especially those that are identified in attempts to finalize or implement their action plans. ARL will list the institutions that participated in the institute on its website; institutions will have the option to opt-in to having their action plan included. Making their plans available to the public can increase awareness and help with accountability and buy-in from stakeholders.

While the post-institute follow-up meeting is the final component of the formal design of the institute curriculum, there participants will be welcomed and encouraged to maintain connections with one another and actively cultivate their community of practice. Through asynchronous structure—such as the Google Group



hosted by ARL—institute participants will have the opportunity to check in on one another, share progress updates, and problem solve as they progress in their action plan implementation. There will be opportunities for cohort specific reunions, both formal (coordinated by/in collaboration with ARL) and informal (at conferences or other large gatherings). Part of the larger vision is for the community of practice to regularly expand as more institutes are held. Participants from different institutes can connect with one another through shared virtual and in-person spaces; while they attended the institute at different times and places, they share a commitment to integrating DEI in their institutions and effecting positive change in their communities.

## **PROJECT WORK PLAN**

The project director (ARL senior director of Learning + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) will lead and manage the various actions and tasks related to this proposal in partnership with the ARL director of Learning and ARL director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as the Task Force. The Task Force will provide guidance and inform the implementation of the curriculum as well as the project overall. The Task Force will also be responsible for informing the selection processes for institute faculty as well as institute participants. Due to the critical role of the Task Force, the first action (August 2023) will be to open a call for expressions of interest to serve on the Task Force, which will be charged and approved by the ARL DEI Committee. Once the Task Force is in place, ARL will schedule regular (e.g, monthly) meetings for the Task Force to continue through the project. ARL will use a staggered term model to ensure that the Task Force has ongoing engagement and sustainable transitions of membership.

In the beginning, the Task Force will focus on the selection processes for institute faculty (application to open in October 2023 and decisions shared in December 2023) and participants (application to open in January 2024 and decisions shared in February 2024). To ensure information about these opportunities is widely distributed, ARL will share across its communication platforms as well as request the support of allied organizations (e.g., ALA, ACRL, NALCo) to share the opportunities with their communities. ARL staff will coordinate the logistics of the institute planning, including selecting a venue and sourcing vendors. Faculty meetings with the ARL staff will begin in January 2024. ARL will host the participant orientation in February/March 2024. Participants will have until the start of the institute in April 2024 to complete their pre-work. ARL will conduct multiple assessment and evaluation measures to collect data about both participant and faculty experiences; these will begin at the conclusion of the institute and continue at various points in the timeline. The Task Force will regularly review the information collected during their meetings. Participants will have from the end of the institute until the post-institute check-in meeting in October 2024 to complete their post work. ARL will post participating institutions and action plans (pending consent) on its website by December 2024.

A second round of assessment, including participant focus groups, will occur between December 2024 and April 2025. After reviewing the information collected that summer, the Task Force will focus on making updates to the curriculum through December 2025 in anticipation of the second implementation of the institute. In this time, the Task Force will also refresh its membership to begin its staggered terms in August 2025 and repeat the faculty selection process (application to open in October 2025 and decisions shared in December 2025). Faculty meetings will start again in January 2026. The application for institute participants will also open this month with decisions shared in February 2026. Assuming no significant structural changes are recommended, the implementation process of the second institute will follow the same cadence of the pilot version with pre-work occurring before an April 2026 institute and a post-institute session in October 2026 being the due date for participants' post-work. The assessment and evaluation process will also restart for the second institute. These assessment efforts will provide ongoing points of reference to ensure the project is making progress toward its intended results. ARL staff will complete final project reports and materials after the conclusion of the second institute. In addition to providing the required documentation to IMLS, ARL will post a number of resources publicly on its website. This information will include the institute agendas; summaries of structure and design; basic curriculum, outcomes, and assessment tools; deidentified, aggregate assessment results; and a comparison of the first and second institutes with a narrative to inform what changes were made

and why. Beyond sharing information, the hope is that they can support the translation and implementation of the institute to broader LAM communities. Additionally, by drawing awareness to the work and results of the institute, it may be possible to identify partners for future institutes.

The budget for this grant includes funds to support the salaries of three ARL staff: the senior director of Learning + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Project Director), ARL director of Learning, and ARL director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. ARL is prepared to commit additional resources, including staff, time to the successful implementation of this institute. This will include the support of the senior program managers, director of Events, communications team, and finance team. The three staff identified in the budget were selected based on their significant roles in the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of the institute as well as the expertise that they add to the process, much of which draws from experiences beyond libraries and archives. The staffing model will become more sustainable after the initial implementations as many of the processes will be streamlined and less will need to be created from scratch.

## **DIVERSITY PLAN**

At its core, the ARL DEI Institute is designed to effect sustainable, positive transformation within libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions by addressing the need for the library workforce to increase knowledge, awareness, and skills related to intentionally integrating DEI at a systems level within and across their organizations and communities. Throughout its implementation, the project will intentionally engage diverse stakeholders that possess a range of experiences, identities, expertise, and ideas to contribute to the overall support of the institute participants and success of the project. As described earlier, the recommended curriculum was developed by a Task Force with diverse backgrounds, identities, work experiences, and expertise. The development process also included numerous opportunities for broad and targeted community input. The project work plan continues these patterns with the intention of forming another diverse Task Force that will remain in contact with multiple stakeholder communities as well as the selection of a diverse cadre of faculty. Additionally, while the curriculum for the institute is set, ARL staff and institute faculty will be prepared to tailor the implementation to provide space for participants to express their needs and interests.

## **PROJECT RESULTS**

Upon completion of this project, ARL will have successfully hosted two iterations of the ARL DEI Institute, each with a diverse cohort of participants that are poised to lead and contribute to changes in their respective institutions. Through the application of learning and resources gained from the institute, the participants will be able to advocate for, implement, assess, and iterate upon strategic shifts in institutional policies, procedures, and practices to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments and experiences for employees and the communities they serve. These outcomes align strongly with the goals of the LB21 program, particularly Objective 2.1. Additionally, through the use of a cohort model, institute participants will have access to a network of support beyond their individual institutions, enabling continued connections, engagement, and learning. As additional cohorts participate in the institute, opportunities for cross-cohort interactions increase. Participants are more likely to be able to identify partners within and outside of their institution to provide continued support and mitigate potential burnout. This institute will lessen the reliance on ad hoc tools and offer, instead, an intentionally developed DEI capacity development opportunity specifically tailored to the needs of LAM professionals. Additionally, ARL will make numerous reports and resources available for public review including the institute agendas; summaries of structure and design; basic curriculum, outcomes, and assessment tools; deidentified, aggregate assessment results; and a comparison of the first and second institutes with a narrative to inform what changes were made and why. ARL aims to continue offering the institute beyond the term of the requested grant and continue to build and expand the community of practice being created. ARL is a national leader in the field of DEI recruitment and leadership development and has successfully implemented multiple IMLS and other grants.

**Schedule of Completion**

2023–24	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
Form Task Force												
Task Force orientation and virtual meetings												
Recruit Institute Faculty												
Participant applications and selections												
Faculty orientation and virtual meetings												
Institute participant pre-work												
In-person faculty preparation												
Host institute												
Institute evaluations & assessment												
Institute post-work												
Initial assessment review												

**Schedule of Completion**

2024–25	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
Task Force orientation and virtual meetings												
Institute post-work												
Initial assessment review												
Additional participant feedback												
Continued assessment review												
Curriculum updates												

**Schedule of Completion**

2025–26	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
Task Force orientation and virtual meetings												
Curriculum updates												
Recruit Institute Faculty												
Participant applications and selections												
Faculty orientation and virtual meetings												
Host institute												
Institute evaluations & assessment												
Develop final project reports												

**Digital Products Plan**

ARL will produce a variety of resources by the conclusion of this project. These materials will be generated by ARL staff in collaboration with the Task Force and will include the institute agendas; summaries of structure and design; basic curriculum, outcomes, and assessment tools; deidentified, aggregate assessment results; and a comparison of the first and second institutes with a narrative to inform what changes were made and why. These will be saved as Portable Document Format (PDF) files and made publicly available via the ARL website. The ARL communications team will ensure that links remain active and redirects are utilized when necessary. All materials will be licensed under a CC BY license. As no identifying information will be included in the documents, ARL does not anticipate the documents' creation or distribution will implicate any privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities. While the exact number of PDFs may change, currently ARL anticipates generating at least seven documents:

- pilot institute agenda
- pilot institute summary of structure and design, basic curriculum, outcomes, and assessment tools
- pilot institute deidentified, aggregate assessment results
- second institute agenda
- second institute summary of structure and design, basic curriculum, outcomes, and assessment tools
- second institute deidentified, aggregate assessment results
- comparison summary of the pilot and second institute

Additionally, participating institutions will have the option to have their action plan included with the acknowledgement of their participation in the institute on the ARL website.

## **Organizational Profile**

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) was established in 1932 in recognition of the need for coordinated action and a forum to address common problems among research libraries and archives. Since that time, the organization has grown from the founding 42 research libraries to [127 of the largest academic and public research libraries in the US and Canada](#). With scholars and scholarship at the core of all we do, our Association bridges policy and practice, contributing the greatest value at the intersection of three critical venues in the research and learning environment: research libraries and their parent organizations, research and learning communities, and public policy makers

ARL's [vision](#) is to create a trusted, equitable, and inclusive research and learning ecosystem and prepare library leaders to advance this work in strategic partnership with member libraries and other organizations worldwide. The ARL Board of Directors approved this vision statement in July 2022. ARL's [mission](#) is to empower and advocate for research libraries and archives to shape, influence, and implement institutional, national, and international policy. We develop the next generation of leaders and enable strategic cooperation among partner institutions to benefit scholarship and society. The mission was also approved by the ARL Board of Directors in July 2022. Additionally, ARL identified [core values](#) to align with the Association, which were approved by the ARL Board of Directors in February 2023. ARL's values are inclusiveness and equity, academic/intellectual freedom, sustainability, human potential, and operational excellence.

The Association's [2023–2026 Action Plan](#) states the priorities for the organization. It was approved by the ARL Board of Directors in October 2022. There are five strategic goals:

1. Advocate for an information policy environment in which research libraries advance the progress of knowledge
  - Represent, empower and activate the research library community in advocacy for the creation and dissemination of knowledge
2. Advocate for and equip research library and archives leaders as partners in advancing research and scholarship that is increasingly open and equitable
  - Bridge research policy and practice through engagement with research partners, stakeholders, and decision makers, resulting in opportunities to collectively inform and shape the research and learning ecosystem
3. Demonstrate the value and contributions of research libraries and archives to their communities
  - Lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of the tools necessary to demonstrate what it means to be an inclusive, impactful, and effective research library and/or archive.
4. Implement a strategy for leadership and organizational development through programming and events that develop library deans, directors, and staff to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the significant changes underway in research, teaching, and learning
  - Position research library dean/directors and their successors (associate/assistant level) as strategic leaders in the profession. Strengthen diverse and inclusive leadership practice throughout research libraries and archives.
5. Promote the creation of diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments, services, and collections by member institutions
  - Engage with members to realize sustainable and targeted change that addresses historical and contemporary inequities through intentional programs, frameworks, and partnerships; these efforts include advancing antiracist practices, increasing accessibility, and promoting the impactful and transformative work happening at and among member institutions.