

Title: ARL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Institute: Communities of Practice for Sustainable Transformation

Project Justification: The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is requesting \$245,953 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 aims 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 benchmarks 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.

The three-year implementation grant being requested would 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 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](#), which was scoped and funded by ARL and partner library associations. The framework was approved by the boards of ACRL, ALA, ARL, & PLA in the summer of 2022. The second phase of this process is the development of the institute's curriculum. The initial draft of the curriculum is scheduled to be completed by January 2023; it is being developed by an ARL Task Force that is supported by a [FY21 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program planning grant](#). This Task Force includes representation from ALA and ACRL as well as several library and DEI thought leaders. This group is scheduled to meet in person in the ARL offices in September 2022 to make penultimate decisions and recommendations for the draft curriculum, which will then be cleaned and organized in preparation for presentation to the ARL DEI Committee marking the completion of the Task Force's charge.

ARL is submitting this proposal for an implementation grant with full confidence that the work of the planning grant will be completed in January of 2023; waiting for the FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunities would result in significant delays in the institute implementation. As the third phase of the process, this institute will continue ARL's work to enhance DEI related offerings to library communities in partnership with allied organizations. 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 may 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. As a membership based, 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.

Project Work Plan: ARL's senior director for diversity, equity, & inclusion will serve as the project director and chair of the Task Force charged with planning the institute. Allied organizations (e.g., ALA, ACRL, PLA) will be invited to designate a representative to join the Task Force, which will also include DEI content experts from libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions as well as a liaison from the ARL DEI Committee. ARL will lead the overall project, be responsible for grant reporting, and provide facilities and infrastructure.

Under the leadership of the project director, the Task Force will review the institute curriculum draft that was produced in the previous grant mentioned earlier; the group will finalize a pilot version of the institute curriculum ensuring that the content is timely, relevant, and aligned with the needs of library leaders and

communities. The Task Force will solicit expressions of interest (EOI) to serve as faculty for the institute; to ensure the call for EOI is widely distributed, ARL will share across its communication platforms as well as request the support of allied organizations (e.g., ALA, ACRL, PLA, NALCo) to share the opportunities with their communities. Eight individuals with expertise in DEI, strong facilitation and communication skills, and diverse experience in libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions will be selected to serve in this role. With the support of ARL staff, the Task Force will guide the preparation and logistics of the institute planning including selecting a venue and sourcing vendors. Additionally, the Task Force will inform the process of determining the approximately 50 participants of the pilot institute.

The project director will develop a training process to prepare the faculty for their role in implementing the institute. This process may include faculty meetings held via video conferencing platforms as well as final preparations in-person, onsite prior to the institute. The faculty team, project director, and other ARL staff will guide participants through the pilot institute—estimated to be held in-person over three consecutive days. Additionally, institute participants will have the opportunity to reconnect with one another as well as institute faculty in post-institute events and online communities hosted by ARL. Intentional evaluation and assessment processes will be utilized to gather data about the experience of the faculty and participants as well as measure the efficacy of the curriculum. This information will be thoroughly reviewed by the Task Force to inform areas of consistency as well as areas of improvement in the curriculum for the next institute. After the data review, the Task Force members will have the opportunity to continue with the group or transition out allowing new members to join. In preparation for the second iteration of the institute, the overall process would repeat except in instances where changes were recommended based on information gathered during the first implementation.

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 needs for the library workforce—especially those in leadership positions—to increase knowledge, awareness, and skills related to DEI in 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.

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. 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. Additionally, ARL will make deidentified, aggregated assessment results available for public review along with the institute outcomes and agendas to demonstrate the efficacy and provide examples of sustainable, impactful DEI professional development and capacity building for individuals working in libraries and other cultural heritage and memory institutions. ARL is a national leader in the field of DEI recruitment and leadership development and has successfully implemented IMLS and other grants.

Budget Summary: For each year of the grant, ARL seeks partial support for the salaries of the project director (\$18,050) and ARL administrative, financial, and communications staff (\$12,000). During the course of the grant, ARL will engage the services of sixteen consultants (8 per institute at \$2,500 each = \$40,000) to serve as faculty for the institute and will coordinate their travel (\$34,400). Additional funds (\$8,600) will support the project director and event support staff travel. Grant funds will also be used for logistical expenses (\$5,400) including shipping, printing, and technology support. Total direct costs (\$178,550) plus indirect costs (37.75% of direct costs=\$67,403) totals to the requested \$245,953.