

## Narrative

### Project Justification

The proposed project, **Fostering Empathy with Immigrant Communities to Enhance Library Public Programs and Services**, aims to build the capacity of libraries to improve community well-being and strengthen civic engagement, in keeping with the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant program's Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement and Objectives 2.1: Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences, and 2.2: Support community collaboration and foster civic discourse. This project, led by Califa Group in partnership with California Humanities, the nonprofit state affiliate of the National Endowment of the Humanities, will enhance the ability of libraries across the country to welcome and support the lifelong learning needs of immigrant communities, a need that has been given urgency because of recent migration patterns that have dispersed refugees and immigrants outside of major cities and traditional areas of resettlement.

We request \$249,946 for this three-year implementation project, which will enhance and scale-up to national scope an ongoing program, **Library Innovation Lab: Exploring New Ways of Engaging Immigrant Communities through Public Humanities Programming (LIL)**. This is a nationally recognized and award-winning program that has been successfully piloted by California Humanities in California public libraries over the last seven years with library staff from over 60 branches and 50 jurisdictions. Our intended project results are:

- a) Further development of the existing program framework to emphasize the importance of cultivating empathy for immigrants on the part of library staff and engaging immigrants in co-design activities.
- b) Recruiting and field testing the program with a national cohort of libraries in 2025.
- c) A pilot partnership with another State Humanities Council (or Councils) in 2026.
- d) An action plan for broader state, regional, and national reach that will include publication and dissemination of a DIY program toolkit to facilitate replication by libraries or library-serving organizations across the country.

### ***Meeting Immigrants' Needs Across America***

Immigrants continue to make up a large share of our nation's population. California, the most populous state, has the largest immigrant population of any state with over 10 million immigrants—23% of the foreign-born population nationwide; 27% of current California residents are foreign born, and almost half the state's children have at least one immigrant parent.<sup>1</sup> According to Census Bureau estimates, the immigrant population in the United States grew to 46 million people, increasing by almost 30% between 2005 and 2022. Foreign-born Americans made up 13.9% of the U.S. population in 2022.<sup>2</sup>

Meeting the needs of immigrants is of paramount interest to libraries across the country. The American Library Association published a white paper in 2019 that recommended public library staff include new Americans in decision-making and implementation and foster connections between immigrants and existing residents.<sup>3</sup>

Public libraries across the nation have long played an important role in supporting the integration of new Americans and are one of the most trusted institutions in America today.<sup>4</sup> By providing resources and services like citizenship classes, English language instruction, and access to information about obtaining assistance with basic needs such as housing,

<sup>1</sup> Alesi Perez, C., Cuellar Mejia, M., and Johnson, H. (2024, January). *Immigrants in California*. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/immigrants-in-california>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. <https://data.census.gov>.

<sup>3</sup> K. Flinner, R. Joy Norlander, K. Nock, J. Laursen Brucker, & M. Welch. (2019). *Library Programs & New Americans: A White Paper*. American Library Association & New Knowledge Organization. <https://newamericans.ala.org/about/>

<sup>4</sup> (2021, October 27). *Understanding the Social Wellbeing Impacts of the Nation's Libraries and Museums*. IMLS and Reinvestment Fund. <https://www.imls.gov/publications/understanding-social-wellbeing-impacts-nations-libraries-and-museums>.

food, health care, transportation, and other basic needs, libraries have long provided a portal for newcomers seeking to enter into American civic life and succeed.

However, in addition to their immediate and practical needs, immigrants, like all people, experience social, emotional, and ideational needs for connection, recognition, respect, and belonging that are equally important. Historically, the US has evidenced mixed attitudes about immigrants and immigration, often seemingly contradictory in both welcoming and celebrating immigrants while simultaneously fearing the perceived economic and social “threats” they might pose. These negative perceptions have often been mobilized by political actors, resulting in prejudice, exclusion, discrimination and even violence against immigrants. Anti-immigrant sentiments have seen a resurgence in recent years fueled by the felt impacts of global environmental, political, and economic developments that are simultaneous “pushing” people to migrate and “pulling” them to opportunities in the US and other developed countries, at the same time that armed conflicts and social unrest in every part of the world has contributed to increased refugee flows. As a result, many recent immigrants and refugees in the US experience fear and uncertainty about their place in American society while they require assistance and acceptance to successfully integrate into it. Because of the special role they play and have played in our nation’s history as welcoming agents, public libraries are uniquely positioned to help foster community connections and to promote empathy and understanding for the challenges and difficulties faced by newcomers and enabling them to maintain cultural ties and traditions, while helping them acclimate to American society, customs, and values.

### ***Previous Work: the LIL Program in California***

Building on its 45-year relationship with California public libraries and seeing an opportunity to work with libraries to address this important societal need, California Humanities undertook an 18-month long process beginning in 2015 in collaboration with the California library community. Planning began with literature reviews, an environmental scan, interviews with library leaders, and a survey of California librarians with whom we had worked previously. With support from the California State Library, California Humanities also convened an advisory group of programming library staff and experts in the field of public humanities (including several immigrants) to advise staff on program development.

In 2017, the LIL program was launched. Core objectives were to build the capacity of library partners to deliver meaningful public humanities programs to their communities on an ongoing basis, provide humanities programming to an important underserved segment of the California population (immigrants), and use the public humanities to build cross-cultural connections and foster understanding that will contribute to building more inclusive communities within the state.

Each year, LIL engages a cohort of public librarians and related staff, recruited through an open call to libraries across the state, to research, design, implement and assess a small scale, short-term public humanities project before the year’s end. Working in a collaborative learning environment that has included face-to-face and virtual group meetings as well as individualized advising, cohort members cultivate skills and knowledge in program development and project management, build confidence and develop capacity to work with immigrants, and exercise creativity and imagination through experimenting with humanities-centered public programs.

The importance of empathetic understanding is a foundational principle which is cultivated through structured exercises using Design Thinking and other user-oriented strategies, which have been part of the training since the first cohort launched and were informed by the strategies articulated in *Design Thinking for Libraries: A Toolkit for Patron-Centered Design* (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).<sup>5</sup> Through application of these methods to their own projects, cohort participants deepen knowledge and awareness of the needs, interests, and concerns of the immigrant community or communities that are the focus of their projects. This process of learning and discovery is facilitated by peer mentors, selected from previous cohorts, and supported by experts and practitioners who provide practical insights

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<sup>5</sup> (2015). *Design Thinking for Libraries: A Toolkit for Patron-Centered Design*. IDEO. <https://designthinkingforlibraries.com/toolkit>.

about community engagement, media relations, evaluation and other skills. California Humanities provides each participating library with cash grants to be used as venture capital for program research and implementation expenses.

We have found that involving a diverse group of library practitioners in the learning cohort makes for a rich learning experience that draws on insights and knowledge from many different perspectives and experiences and supports professional growth at many levels. LIL participants have included library directors, branch managers, library staff at various levels, literacy, and outreach coordinators, and even a bookmobile manager. Cohorts have included staff from urban, suburban, and rural libraries of various sizes, who have engaged immigrants from many different countries and demographic groups. Many cohort participants have been recent immigrants themselves; most have been the children or grandchildren of immigrants from Latin America, Europe, and Asia, whose own personal and familial experiences have enhanced their desire and capacity to serve others, as well as inspired their colleagues.

The primary outputs of their work have been the unique projects developed by each library in response to the needs, interests, and circumstances of their library, their community, and the immigrants they aim to engage. The 70+ projects implemented to date have used many forms and modalities common to public humanities programs, including various modes of storytelling and story-sharing; participatory oral history projects, dialogues and discussions anchored by films, books, and poetry, presentations by scholars, authors, artists, and culture bearers, and experiential activities including workshops and interactive sessions focused on the artistry, culture, and histories of immigrant communities. A selection of previous public programs produced by libraries through the LIL program are included as a supporting document (see Supportingdoc1.pdf, “LIL Program Examples”).

By cultivating library workers’ capacity to empathize with immigrant’s experiences, hopes, and dreams, LIL has enabled libraries to co-create culturally relevant programs with immigrant communities that grow organically from the desires and aspirations voiced by immigrants and respond to the specific circumstances of each library and community. Bringing a “humanities lens” that emphasizes the importance of meaning-making and connectivity to culture and heritage as immigrants navigate the challenges of adapting to life in American society, LIL effectively complements more traditional “needs-based” library programs such as citizenship and English Language Learner (ELL) classes.

The results of this work are varied, but some common elements stand out. First have been the outcomes for patrons and communities. LIL projects have empowered immigrants to represent themselves and their experiences -- either directly, by sharing first-person stories and accounts, or as mediated through artistic and cultural forms. By providing opportunities for immigrants to celebrate, practice, and share their culture and heritage, LIL programming has enabled immigrants to feel seen, heard, and valued. By connecting immigrants and other community members through programs that provide opportunities to listen and observe, as well as dialogue, exchange, and active participation, LIL projects have encouraged learning, understanding, and the growth of empathy, contributing to improving community relations and fostering more inclusive communities (see “Supportingdoc2.pdf” for a selection of LIL Impact Report Narratives from library staff).

The outcomes for the participating library staff members (mostly, but not all, credentialed librarians) have also been significant. During the past seven years, participants have reported how the program has increased their capacity and confidence to work effectively with immigrants and other underserved constituent groups; developing skills related to program development, management, and evaluation; and the providing opportunity to cultivate and demonstrate leadership abilities. As a result of their work on LIL, many participants have earned promotions or garnered other forms of professional recognition. Many have told us how the program helped them renew their interest and commitment to the profession, enabling them to overcome feelings of “burn-out,” and rediscover the joy that originally led them to work in libraries.

Participating libraries have also benefitted, as LIL activities engage teams of staff and volunteers, and require support from administrators and external partners. In virtually all instances, participants report that their libraries developed new connections with immigrant communities that have resulted in long-lasting relationships. By emphasizing the

importance of engaging community experts and resource providers, the program has encouraged libraries to strengthen connections with a host of community partners: immigrant organizations, social service providers, faith-based organizations, artists and arts and culture organizations, educational institutions, media outlets, and local businesses. All these connections help to advance positive perceptions of libraries and increase appreciation for the role they play in fostering welcoming communities in which *everyone* can feel at home.

Over the past seven years the program has drawn sustained interest from California libraries. Since 2017, 84 library staff members have participated in the program, representing over 60 branches and 50 jurisdictions across California (see Supportingdoc3.pdf, “LIL Infographic”). Several factors have contributed to raising the visibility of the program nationally. In 2020 Library Innovation Lab was recognized by the Federation of State Humanities Councils (FSHC) with its highest national award for excellence in humanities programs, the Schwartz Prize (see “Supportingdoc4.pdf” for the associated press release). The ceremony was viewed by representatives of over 50 state councils which resulted in expressions of interest in the program by other state councils. In 2021, InfoPeople, Califa’s national training project for library staff, approached California Humanities about highlighting the accomplishments of the program. Several LIL participants, along with a California Humanities staff member, participated in a national webinar that has been viewed by over 300 public librarians and administrators, many of whom expressed interest in bringing the program to their states.<sup>6</sup> Given this level of interest, we believe that this program has potential to expand beyond California.

This grant will enable us to expand the LIL program’s reach to libraries across the country and bring the program to a national scale. Over the grant period we will aim to provide the cohort experience to a minimum of 20 library staff, at least half of whom will be drawn from states other than California.

The immediate beneficiaries of this project will be the people directly touched by the programs conducted by the participating library staff – primarily immigrants, although others will benefit as well. The specific characteristics of these audiences will vary depending on the make-up of each host community, the immigrant groups that are the subject of each project, and other considerations that will factor into each library’s goals, such as a desire to engage teens or seniors or connect multiple generations or cultural groups. Based on data from previous LIL participants, we estimate an average of 500 people will attend each participating library’s programs, for a total audience of 10,000 during the grant period. The ultimate beneficiaries will be individuals in communities, both immigrants and non-immigrants, who will participate in activities to be conducted by the participating library staff and libraries in the future, that will be rooted in the approach this program will cultivate. Although this is speculative, through dissemination of project results, we imagine the project could have ripple effects, touching as many as 100 libraries and 50,000 members of the public (immigrants and others) nationally over a five-year period.

## **Project Work Plan**

### ***A New National Program***

IMLS support will enable us to build on the solid foundation established during the past seven years and accomplish several important objectives, including strengthening the theoretical framework on which the program is based; field-testing the program framework (activities and processes) with libraries outside of California; developing a pilot partnership with another State Humanities Council; codifying program processes and curriculum in a digital toolkit that can be disseminated for use and implementation by libraries and library-serving organizations in the future.

With the assistance of expert consultants and advisors, we will further develop effective ways to meet the program’s core objective of cultivating empathy among library practitioners by incorporating new methods and practices, including those offered by more recent theories such as Radical Empathy (see “Supportingdoc5.pdf” for a resource and reading list). We will also strengthen the program’s focus on the importance of engaging community members as collaborators

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<sup>6</sup> (2022, February 24). *Welcoming Immigrants Through Cultural Programming: Lessons from the Field*. InfoPeople. <https://infopeople.org/content/welcoming-immigrants-through-cultural-programming-lessons-field>.

in the process of program design, and further incorporate practical strategies for doing this as part of the trainings we provide.

This project involves various activities over the grant period, such as research, forming an advisory committee, conducting outreach, and running two full program cycles in 2025 and 2026. It also includes planning and piloting a new partnership with another state humanities council (or councils) in 2026 along with ongoing assessment of the project's impact and sharing findings. We will also develop a program toolkit for dissemination in 2027 to enable others to implement the project on their own. Throughout the project period we will continue to cultivate relationships and identify potential resources to support further development and expansion.

### ***Advisory Committee***

In fall 2024 we will convene an Advisory Committee representing stakeholders from the library and public humanities fields from across the country. The committee, some members of which have already been identified, will include past participants, mentors, and others who are familiar with the existing program along with new people who will bring a national perspective and provide new insights and experiences to inform the future development of the program (see “Supportingdoc6.pdf” for a list of confirmed and pending National Advisory Committee Members). Advisory Committee members will also be tasked with helping with outreach and dissemination of program results and work products, as well as assisting with communications with their respective networks and constituencies. The Advisory Committee will meet virtually semi-annually over the duration of the grant period (August 2024 – July 2027). Members will receive a modest honorarium.

### ***Refining LIL for Future Cohorts***

One of the key objectives of the new program is to further develop and formalize the LIL framework and curriculum. In summer and fall 2024, we will continue to research new inclusive design practices and further analyze existing data from LIL cohorts 2015-2023. We will also conduct a national survey with Califa members to gain insight into the current needs and interests of programming librarians in relation to working with immigrants and immigrant communities. The collected data will be analyzed by California Humanities staff and Califa over the fall. Findings will be factored into our ongoing program development work by staff and consultants who will make appropriate modifications to our existing LIL program framework in time for application with the 2025 cohort.

During fall 2024, we will work with advisors and consultants to further develop the theoretical framework of the program, incorporating new techniques, strategies and practices that are emerging from work in user-oriented and collaborative design into our trainings and activities. This will probably result in the introduction of new topics as well as some new activities.

By the beginning of our work with the 2025 cohort, we will have a refreshed curriculum in place that we will use as a basis for our work that year and again in 2026. Throughout the 2025 and 2026 program years we will continue to enhance the framework as needed, resulting in ongoing enhancements, both formatively and at the conclusion of each year to enhance subsequent years' activities.

In the first half of 2027 we will develop a program toolkit that can be disseminated, free, to interested stakeholders and provide a basis for ongoing program implementation. We anticipate this will be a digital document with links to references and resources that will facilitate its use on a DIY basis or adoption by libraries, humanities councils in the future as well as our own programming.

### ***Field Test with a National Cohort (2025)***

Recruitment of the 2025 cohort will begin in fall 2024 with national outreach through Califa and national partners including PLA and REFORMA to supplement California Humanities efforts in California. Selection of a cohort of participants for the 2025 program will include at least five participants from outside California. We will identify two LIL

alumni to serve as peer mentors for the 2025 cohort. Selection of the cohort will be made in late 2024 by Califa and California Humanities staff and mentors using the criteria we have established: The selection process will be designed to ensure interest and commitment to participate in an intensive, “hands-on” experience that will involve regular meetings and assignments, as well as assurance of their library administrator’s support and willingness to commit the staff time, infrastructure, and other resources necessary for successful development and implementation of a successful public humanities project.

During the year we will provide training and support to the new cohort using the enhanced framework, enabling them to develop, conduct, and evaluate their own public humanities projects before the end of that year. Participants (and all applicants) will be notified as to their status early in January. An initial installment of funds (\$1,000) will be dispersed to each participating library to support research and planning activities, including individual or group meetings with community members. Beginning with a multiday orientation meeting in February, we will host regular virtual meetings for the new cohort over the next four months, which will provide participants with learning sessions on a variety of theoretical and practical topics, along with opportunities for reflection, discussion, and problem-solving as they research and plan their public humanities projects. As in the past, these meetings, to be held virtually on a monthly or semi-monthly basis, will include presentations by mentors, staff and consultants on various topics including strategies for cultivating empathy, team-building, differing modalities of public humanities work, developing relationships with external partners and resource people, effective marketing and outreach, budgeting, and evaluation techniques. The meetings will also encourage bonding and the development of trust relationships between cohort participants as well as with the program team. During this time, staff and mentors will also provide individual assistance as needed. To help participants stay engaged and on course with the program schedule, we will assign “homework” and allocate time at each meeting for them to share their experiences, accomplishments, and challenges with the group and get feedback from their peers as well as mentors and staff.

By July each participant will have developed a written plan and budget for a small scale, short term public humanities project. Upon submission and approval of these “interim reports”, the balance (\$5,000) of their funds will be released. Over the remainder of the year each participant will implement their projects, collecting feedback from their community participants, monitoring attendance and expenditures, and making observations about successes and challenges they experience. Monthly informal “coffee hours” will provide opportunities for cohort members to share what they are learning with peers, mentors, and staff, troubleshoot problems, and brainstorm solutions. Regular blog postings and other California Humanities and Califa communications channels, as well as those of the participating libraries, will provide opportunities for sharing “real time” updates with the library and humanities communities.

Throughout the course of the year, we will model the kind of reflective practices we are asking the cohort participants to exercise by eliciting feedback about how well the program is meeting their needs.

We will hold a final convening for the 2025 cohort, which will allow each participant to make a formal presentation about their project and conduct a group debrief. A final narrative and budgetary report will allow each participant an additional opportunity to reflect on their experiences with the program, assess accomplishments, identify future areas for growth, as well as to let us know what worked well and what can be improved. As part of this formal reporting process we will collect quantitative data about expenses, number of activities and community participants, along with program collateral and documentation (photos, press coverage, audience surveys or other sources of data).

At the end of the 2025 year, we will have trained 10 new librarians, five from libraries outside California.

### ***Pilot Humanities Council Partnership (2026)***

During 2025 we will be actively seeking a state humanities council partner or partners with whom to field test the program in 2026, employing the enhanced framework we employed in 2025. Participating councils (we anticipate involving one to three councils in total) will be tasked with recruiting a group of librarians within their state who will commit to participate in the program over the course of 2026. Each council will also designate a staff member who will

also attend the trainings and provide support to “their” libraries to augment the trainings and resources provided by Califa, California Humanities, and consultants.

By the end of 2026, we will have trained personnel in at least one other state who can potentially serve as future mentors and program administrators to ground future program extension.

### ***Long-Term Expansion (2025-2027)***

Throughout the course of the grant period, California Humanities and Califa will be exploring a variety of options for long term expansion and extension of the program to ensure sustainability. We will seek to leverage our partnership with another State Humanities Council (or Councils) in 2026 and our relationship with the FSHC to attract future partners. We will continue to identify various ways in which the program might be sustained through other types of collaborations such as a “franchise” model (we provide resources, training and support to library systems or membership organizations who will recruit a cadre of library staff and libraries to participate) or continued direct program operation by California Humanities and Califa, and explore the feasibility of these through conversations with potential partners and supporters.

Again, the publication and dissemination of a program toolkit in 2027 will aid these efforts and help us raise the visibility of the program on a national scale.

The final product of our work over the course of the grant period will be an action plan for continued program development implementation which will be produced in spring 2027.

### ***Resources***

Planning and implementation will be managed jointly by staff at Califa and California Humanities over the grant period. California Humanities will manage the day-to-day work of managing the cohorts, providing the infrastructure for cohort activities including the regular meetings and work protocols, evaluation, and all grants management tasks. Califa will play an instrumental role by providing advice and expert knowledge on refining the framework, outreach and recruitment, and dissemination, helping to identify an advisory committee, and ensuring that all IMLS reports and requirements are fulfilled properly. Contracted consultants will help with research, program delivery, and any additional needs for data collection and analysis that cannot be met by California Humanities.

The project envisioned will be conducted over a three-year period beginning in summer 2024. Resources needed include support for Califa and California Humanities staff who will work directly on project planning and implementation; program consultants (contractors to provide technical assistance with project activities as outlined above), stipends for participating libraries (\$6,000 each to support design and implementation of the individual library projects) and a partner council or councils, modest honoraria for advisory council members, funds for project staff and library staff to disseminate information at professional meetings and conferences, travel expenses for project cohort meetings (virtual and in-person), and operational support for both Califa and California Humanities infrastructure. These resources will be provided by grant funds along with in-kind contributions from Califa and California Humanities and the participating libraries.

### ***Iterative Design***

This project, by its nature, incorporates iterative design and formative evaluation activities into the structure of the program. As noted above, the LIL program was initially developed with input from library staff and has continued to evolve in each successive annual iteration in response to feedback from cohort participants and new information from the field. IMLS support will enable us to again assemble an advisory committee of practitioners, experts, and community members and partners who will help us shape the program and incorporate new information, theories, and practices in refining our framework and strategies. It will also enable us to learn from experts in the library and public humanities fields who will be included in our planning activities and advisory committee.

The program framework stresses the importance of continuous reflection and assessment throughout the entire process of program design and implementation. Through an iterative design process that is reflected in the structure of the framework, participants use what they are learning to make modifications and adjustments to their plans as they proceed. During as well as at the conclusion of their work, participants are asked to take stock of what they have learned and to share these discoveries with their peers and the project team. In the same way, the project team will draw upon participant and partner feedback and our own observations to assess, on an ongoing basis, impact and efficacy, and to make adjustments where indicated to increase both. A regular schedule of interim and final reports, advisory committee meetings, and dissemination activities will provide opportunities to share these findings with stakeholders and the broader field.

### ***Measuring Progress***

Progress will be measured through setting deadlines and deliverables for each component of the workplan and assigning responsibilities to each team member. The core project team (Califa and California Humanities staff) will meet quarterly to review the workplan and we will convene the advisory committee semi-annually to report on our activities and what we are learning. Interim and final reports from cohort participants will inform our understanding of how well the project is reaching its objectives. IMLS reporting requirements will provide additional opportunities to monitor and periodically assess our progress.

### ***Communications and Dissemination***

Throughout the grant period we will communicate about our activities and share work products with the library community and other stakeholders to raise awareness and interest in the program through various means. California Humanities' communications channels include a monthly eNewsletter (14,000 subscribers) that provides opportunities for feature stories and interviews with participants and project staff. This is supplemented by regular blog and social media postings, and direct communications via email with program alumni (now over 80 individuals), along with a dedicated program page on our website. As a member of the FSHC, which includes 54 states and territories, staff at California Humanities maintain regular contact with colleagues through listservs and forums; for the past eight years we have led an Immigration Working Group session at the FSHC's annual conference which will continue to provide a vehicle for dissemination. Our National Advisory Committee will include representatives of the FSHC and other state councils, and we will make use of this network to disseminate project findings and to recruit a partner council in 2026.

As part of their duties, the Advisory Committee members will be asked to serve as program ambassadors and to assist with communications and dissemination activities as well as, in some cases, with recruitment of participants and partners. Their efforts will be aided by members of our LIL alumni circle, who have been instrumental in extending the program's reach in California.

Califa will promote the program to a national audience of library professionals. Califa is an organizational member of the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), and all of the National Associations of Librarians of Color which include: the American Indian Library Association (AILA), the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking as well as the subscribed to PUB-LIB, which is an electronic discussion list for public librarians. Califa actively posts news and information on these electronic discussion lists. Califa also has relationships with editorial staff at both Library Journal (LJ) and Publishers' Weekly (PW). Califa has had IMLS grant projects featured in articles in both publications. Califa staff also present regularly at state and national conferences and serve as consultant for State Library projects. The Califa Assistant Director is very active in the American Library Association (ALA) and currently serves on the Public Library Association board and other ALA committees. She is also the lead for Califa's national grant projects.

We will endeavor to secure slots at professional conferences including American Library Association and Public Library Association (California Humanities will be presenting at the 2024 PLA), as well as state and regional library organizations



such as the California Library Association, where California Humanities has a long-established presence. We will continue to participate in the FSHC’s annual conference to share project findings and products., and California Humanities has already received encouragement to organize a session at the national REFORMA conference in 2025.

In addition to the recognition received from the FSHC in 2020 with the Schwartz Prize, we will seek out additional opportunities to increase the visibility of and appreciation for this program through awards. Publications, such as the article in the PLA Journal (April 2024) co-authored by program alumni/mentors and California Humanities staff, will provide yet another opportunity to share information about the program with the field.

### **Diversity Plan**

DEI considerations anchor the current LIL program, which focuses on building the capacity of library staff and libraries to better serve an important constituency of underserved people—immigrants—particularly immigrants who have not been the focus of library programs and services in the past. The proposed project will allow us to extend our successful program to build capacity in libraries across the country, enabling them to authentically engage with immigrants in their communities. It will also promote a model of inclusive and democratic program planning and development that aligns with best practices in the field and are generalizable to library work more broadly.

### **Project Results**

Our aims for this project include strengthening the existing LIL program framework through incorporation of new ideas and methods; identifying effective means for expanded service delivery; and cultivating new partnerships with library jurisdictions, library- and immigrant-serving organizations, and other state humanities councils to extend the program’s reach to national scale.

As we have outlined above, the principal objective of this project is to build the capacity of libraries to better meet the needs of immigrants, a significant but underserved sector of our nation’s population. We will do this by increasing empathy and understanding of immigrant experiences on the part of library staff and cultivating other skills and capacities that will enable them to design and deliver meaningful and impactful public programs. These programs will provide welcoming experiences that meet the social and emotional needs of immigrants, promote lifelong learning, strengthen familial and community connections, and build connectivity with others. All these effects will contribute to building more inclusive communities, helping immigrants establish themselves in their new homes, bridging social divisions, and underscoring the recognition of libraries as places in which in which all community members are welcome. We will do this by extending the LIL program beyond California to engage libraries in new regions of the country who will develop and deliver programs that will center immigrants in their communities and reach at least 10,000 members of the public nationally during the grant period.

By engaging participants drawn from many parts of the country to further develop and field-test the program framework, we will be able to ensure it responds to the needs, desires, and constraints experienced by a communities and libraries across the nation, not just those in California. We will preserve and seek to amplify the principle of *responsiveness* that is an integral element of the existing program by actively eliciting and incorporating ideas and strategies provided by our cohort participants that will provide useful and actionable information for their colleagues now and in the future. As the program framework furnishes a general set of guidelines for program planning, development and implementation, we believe it will be useful and easily adaptable by libraries wherever they might be situated or whatever specific conditions they may face. In California, we have seen this program succeed in libraries in culturally conservative rural communities as well as politically liberal major cities and have every expectation it will continue to provide a flexible framework for each participating library to address the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities they experience.

We approach the matter of sustainability on several levels. First, each library staff member who goes through the cohort experience is equipped to continue to implement the methods and skills they have acquired in the future, ensuring the

potential for sustainability by *individuals*. Feedback received from past participants indicates that the vast majority continue the practices they have developed in some way, either by continuing to work with the same group of immigrants or to expand their efforts to reach and engage new immigrants and other underserved populations. Secondly, many cohort participants have used the knowledge acquired about building effective relationships and resource development to continue or extend their projects within their libraries. In at least several cases, cohort participants have either moved into leadership positions at their libraries or succeeded in advocacy efforts with administrators that have resulted in *institutionalization* of the program at some libraries at the branch or system level. We would expect similar results from this iteration of the program, this time at a national scale.

As mentioned previously, one of the principal objectives of this grant is to explore a range of options for future program dissemination: partnerships with library systems or jurisdictions at the state or regional level that might include a “train the trainers” approach; “franchising” the program for administration by state humanities councils that have established relationships with libraries and library staff along the lines of the Louisiana Humanities’ “Prime Time” family literacy program; collaboration with Califa on a long-term model of program management and administration with their partners. Although we cannot now specify which of these or other models that might be discovered might prove to be most feasible, the grant will provide an opportunity for exploring the potential each of these holds for the future and to lay the groundwork for long-term expansion of the program.

In sum, we believe this proposed project will make effective use of federal funds to accomplish the goals of the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian grant program. Federal funding will enable us to enhance and strengthen the core elements of our existing LIL program and to increase program impact through wider dissemination to engage libraries and serve communities across the country.



**Schedule of Completion: Fostering Empathy with Immigrant Communities to Enhance Library Public Programs and Services**  
 Califa Group and California Humanities

ACTIVITIES	TASK	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Activity #6</b>	<b>Project Management</b>												
	Core Team (Califa & California Humanities) quarterly management meetings												
	Formative evaluation												
	Summative evaluation												
	IMLS reporting												
<b>Activity #7</b>	<b>Dissemination and Communications</b>												
	Regular dissemination of news and information about program activities through California Humanities and Califa communications channels)												
	Presentations at professional meetings*												
	Publication of program toolkit and resource materials (online)												
	Articles in professional journals (TBD)												
Additional communications support by participants, partners and advisors (TBD)													

\*ALA, PLA, REFORMA, NHC, CLA, tbd

## **Digital Products Plan**

### **Type**

Califa Group and California Humanities will produce the following digital products: press releases, recorded expert presentations during webinars, presentation slides, new web pages with program-related content, program management toolkit, and implementation toolkit. The LIL cohorts' public programs and projects will contain a mix of digital products such as short reports, blog posts, digital marketing materials, or recorded performances and/or interviews. Because these programs are designed during the project, the specific types of digital outputs that will be created are not yet defined.

Our products will be the following file types:

- MS Office Word (docx)
- MS Office PowerPoint (PPTX)
- Audio/Video (MP4)
- Adobe Acrobat (PDF)

### **Availability**

Content will be available on a dedicated webpage linked from Califa's and California Humanities' main websites ([www.califa.org](http://www.califa.org) and [www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org), respectively). Recorded presentations will be hosted on YouTube.com, where they can be easily discovered, embedded, and linked to from the project webpage(s).

### **Access**

We intend to license the final documents and resources under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license selection allowed for the documents and resources to be adapted for noncommercial use, by libraries, and other immigrant-serving organizations, to facilitate ongoing dialogue.

### **Sustainability**

All digital assets will be stored on the California Humanities' secure shared drive during and after the award period. The final documents will remain available on the project webpage hosted by California Humanities.

## Data Management Plan

### Data Overview:

Califa and California Humanities will collect data from public library and humanities fields, as well as program participants and audiences to better inform our understanding of existing needs and programs for immigrant communities in the United States, as well as to understand how well the Library Innovation Lab program is meeting current needs.

We'll use the data to inform further refinement curriculum for formative as well as summative evaluation of program impact. Responses to the national surveys will guide outreach and recruitment of 2026 Pilot Cohort.

We aim to enrich public knowledge about the needs of immigrants to engage in public humanities programs at libraries in America. We may share our collected information (always anonymously) at appropriate venues like professional conferences to better serve the field and our constituents.

Data collection methods will include:

- Applications from 2025 + 2026 Cohorts
- Interim & Final Reports from 2025 + 2026 Cohorts
- Library Field Survey
- Humanities Field Survey

### Methods and Scope

- 2 National Community Surveys of Humanities and Library Field
- 300 Audience Surveys at Library Programs
- 40 Grantee Reports (Collected 2x year)
- 20 Narrative Impact Statements Written by Library Participants
- 2 Focus Groups with 2024-2025 Cohorts
- 40 Staff/Mentor Observation of Library Programs

### Sensitive Information

Audience surveys at library events do ask for demographic information, including age, zip code, race and ethnicity, educational attainment, and gender. These optional surveys are strictly anonymous and confidential.

When applying for a grant at California Humanities, federal regulation requires us collect project director names, organizational profiles, director work emails, and phone numbers. This information is encrypted and never shared publicly for the privacy of our participants.

Field surveys will only collect sensitive information on an optional basis. Identifiers like e-mail, name, and organizational affiliation will be optional.

No data will be collected from minors to avoid potential complications.

### Steps to Protect Data

All data collected from individuals will be anonymized and aggregated before we publicly share findings in reports, conference presentations, and marketing materials.

Only aggregated data from project directors and survey respondents will be released publicly and always anonymously. Organization names and e-mail addresses collected in the field surveys will be used internally and confidentially for formative evaluation purposes. No personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information, or proprietary information will be publicly reported.

### Requirements and Dependencies

All data will be collected and processed through our secure platform SurveyMonkey and analysis and processing will take place in Microsoft Excel by Grants and Database Manager with Project Team.

SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Excel are commercially available products.

### Documentation

We provide instructions about administering and completing audience and project director surveys. All documentation is available to library participants. It is stored in our Grantee Toolkit provided to each Project Director and hosted on the SurveyMonkey Apply platform. Analytical and procedural information about data analysis is resident in Microsoft Excel

### Post-Project Data Management

After project completion, data will be stored in secure, encrypted California Humanities and Califa repositories like SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Sharepoint, as well as in paper archives in Oakland, California. Project results and analysis will be disseminated at conferences, always with anonymous and aggregated data.

### Review and Monitoring

The Data Management Plan will be referred to ongoingly at team meetings and monitored by California Humanities Data and Evaluation Director Felicia Kelley who specializes in the ethical and effective use of program data.