

Consortial Collaboration for Academic Library Leadership Success (CCALLS)

Introduction: *Consortial Collaboration for Academic Library Leadership Success (CCALLS)* is an LB21 Planning Grant application. *CCALLS* supports LB21 Goal 3, Objective 3.1., “Develop training to equip the library and archival workforce to engage in sustained community development.” The lead applicant organization is the [Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois](#) (CARLI). The [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library](#) is the partner organization. CARLI requests \$139,519 in IMLS funds to conduct this two-year project.

Project Justification: The goal of *CCALLS* is the engagement of U.S. library consortia in participatory planning for a national continuing education program to develop academic library workers’ assessment skills. Academic libraries face continuing demands to demonstrate their impact on student learning and success in the contexts of competitive campus budgeting processes, accreditation reports, and program reviews. Success requires thoughtful service design and delivery based on clear goals and outcomes that reflect local institutional priorities and strategies. A growing body of evidence supports the assertion that academic libraries positively impact student learning and success; however, many library workers struggle to use that evidence in service design and delivery, lack training in program evaluation, and do not have access to professional development and coaching services that can help build their skills.

Academic library consortia are well-situated to provide at-scale training/support programs but often lack expertise and models to respond to the intensive requirements for teaching assessment skills. The *CCALLS* project seeks to build capacity for academic library consortia to provide needed training and support by developing a cohort of consortia that will work together to design a strategy to scale [CARLI Counts](#) (2018-2023 LB21 grant), an immersive continuing education program that prepares library workers to make effective use of research findings on the impact of academic libraries on student success for the purposes of service development and program evaluation. This LB21 Planning Grant will provide the needed support for this capacity building. After a *CARLI Counts* presentation and conversations in-person at the [International Coalition of Library Consortia](#) (ICOLC) 2022 Annual Meeting, as well as follow-on email discussions, consortia leaders identified the potential for developing a cross-consortia collaborative approach to supporting their members with this training. This *CCALLS* proposal is the next step in building capacity for academic library consortia to provide needed training to academic libraries in service design and assessment of impact.

Why *CCALLS*? Following the ICOLC 2022 meeting and the discussions sparked by the *CARLI Counts* presentation, divergent threads echoing the question, “how can we replicate *CARLI Counts* in our consortium,” pointed to the need for a deliberate, planned, and coordinated effort. Consortia leaders need time, place, and support for a discussion about cooperative implementation. Possibilities carried from one email or conversation to the next lose momentum and harmonization, even when the messenger is committed and persistent. Time and resources available during ICOLC gatherings and capacity at CARLI was not sufficient to ensure a robust planning effort. *CCALLS* will enable U.S. library consortia to work together to develop a plan to collaboratively propagate the *CARLI Counts* curriculum. Without the capacity created by the grant to support discussion and collaboration, the success of the eventual implementation would suffer from lack of coordination, engagement, and preparation. **This project is, therefore, a linking piece, a connector that builds a space for a participatory design process for collaborative implementation.**

***CCALLS* builds on the success of *CARLI Counts*.** CARLI is a consortium of 128 public universities, private and research institutions, and community colleges located in metropolitan, suburban, and rural communities. More than 119 library workers from 81 member libraries have participated in *CARLI Counts*; another 22 librarians from 21 institutions are taking part in the 2023-24 program. *CARLI Counts* was intentionally designed to be highly participatory and team based; each cohort is together about one year. Drawing on the IMLS-funded, immersive models developed in the Illinois State Library’s *ILEAD USA: Innovative Librarians Explore, Apply and Discover* (LB21 2011), and the Association of College and Research Libraries’ *Assessment in Action (AiA)* (NLG 2012), both IMLS-funded grant projects, *CARLI Counts* uses peer-to-peer learning and community of practice approaches as the fundamental organizing structures for the curriculum and the design of participant experiences. *CCALLS* uses *ILEAD*, *AiA*, and *CARLI Counts* as building blocks, particularly with respect to the emphasis on participatory and peer-to-peer learning.

***CARLI Counts* is effective:** As a result of *CARLI Counts*, Illinois academic librarians report they can effectively and systematically leverage data and communicate impact narratives that convey to stakeholders how their libraries bolster student learning and success. By leveraging the structure of the consortium, *CARLI Counts* has provided concentrated and scalable impact for program development and support in Illinois’ academic libraries; this collective impact can be amplified through replication at other consortia. Consortia leaders are eager to help their members develop assessment skills which are an absolute necessity for academic librarians and archivists today who must meet the demands of campus governing authorities for evidence of impact. No academic library today can effectively compete for campus resources without investing in this skill set for their staff. Consortia leaders have also recognized that, even though they have experience hosting professional development programs, the consortia individually lack deep expertise in the curricular content of *CARLI Counts*, and that there is tremendous value in replicating a successful model.

Project Work Plan: *CCALLS* brings together U.S. library consortia staff to explore possibilities for adoption and/or adaptation of the *CARLI Counts* curriculum. **The *CCALLS* initiative will be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1** (August 1, 2024 - July 31, 2025) will consist of a series of bimonthly virtual planning sessions, culminating in the **Community Dialogue**, a one-hour, in-person convening *during* the ICOLC Annual Meeting in April 2025 (location TBD), with an anticipated attendance of 50 attendees from U.S. library consortia (consortia directors and continuing education coordinators). **Phase 2** (August 1, 2025 - July 31, 2026) will focus on the day-long **Planning Collaborative**, which will be held *adjacent to* the ICOLC Annual Meeting in April 2026 (location TBD), with an anticipated attendance of 40 attendees from U.S. library consortia (directors and CE coordinators). The project work plan is anchored in a partnership between the project staff and the Planning Committee to collaborate on planning the two meetings, the **Community Dialogue** and the in-depth **Planning Collaborative**. ICOLC meetings have been selected for these key events as consortia leaders already attend. Project staff Anne Craig (PI), Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (Co-PI), and Catherine Mayer (Project Coordinator), will work with the Planning Committee (Maija Anderson, Orbis Cascade Alliance; Gillian Harrison Cain, Atla; Elaina Norlin, ASERL; Hannah Rosen, Ohionet; and Rob Ross, NC LIVE), to gather input and perspectives on design, ensuring concerns/barriers for consortia are identified, and assist with the development of the **two work products/capstone activities, the White Paper and the Webinar**. [Kate McDowell](#), lead researcher on *Data Storytelling for Librarians* (LB21 2021), has been an important support for program content during all five years/cohorts of *CARLI Counts*; her work will be incorporated into *CCALLS* project design, especially during Phase 2/Planning Collaborative.

Why the iterative process from Community Dialogue to Planning Collaborative? Because of the extremely diverse characteristics of U.S. library consortia, it is not possible to assume a one-size-fits-all model; the pathway to collaborative replication of *CARLI Counts* is one that will require a thorough self-examination of capacity *at each individual participating consortium*. This examination is guided and supported by both gatherings. **The Community Dialogue meeting is one hour** and is intended to assist the Planning Committee and project staff in planning the content of the Planning Collaborative meeting. The Community Dialogue meeting is also intended to acquaint and engage ICOLC members with the project's goal early on, identify barriers to adoption, and garner commitment to attend the Planning Collaborative. **The Planning Collaborative is all day** and will consist of a deep dive into the *CARLI Counts* curriculum and facilitated exploration of different models for collaborative consortial implementation. The goal of the Planning Collaborative is for consortia staff to work towards a shared understanding of requirements for the project's replication, achieved through a detailed review of the *CARLI Counts* agenda to highlight its timeline, design as a year-long program, evaluation process, and the team/mentor setup.

Diversity Plan: The **target audience is library consortia that have academic library members**. The participants in both phases of the project will be consortia staff members. Of the more than 250 ICOLC members, approximately 25% serve academic libraries. Most academic library consortia have at least five member libraries, though some have more than 100. As such, the impacted academic library beneficiaries of this collaborative project are quite large in number. And, the ultimate beneficiaries, the students and faculty served by these strengthened academic libraries, are in the hundreds of thousands or possibly millions. Consortia serve the entire range of higher education institutions including rural, suburban, and urban; public and private; community colleges, trade schools, liberal arts colleges, and research universities. Geographic diversity will be ensured by seeking participation from consortia serving libraries in at least four other states outside Illinois or regions outside of the Midwest.

Project Results: [The *CARLI Counts* curriculum is available](#) as a strong foundation, but its replication and scaling will require planning and an understanding of costs, needed expertise, challenges, and benefits. Through *CCALLS*, consortia will have a greater awareness of their own capacity to provide assessment training to their members and the potential benefits of pursuing a national-scale program through consortial collaboration. While some consortia may decide they cannot commit to such a programmatic offering, *CCALLS* staff anticipate that a significant number will be prepared through the program to develop their capacity. As such, next steps are likely to include the submission of a LB21 Implementation Grant application that supports participating consortia to bring the *CARLI Counts* program to their members, through the program design developed through *CCALLS* discussions, and the formation of a cohesive working group of consortia staff dedicated to executing a collaborative program. The capstone activities/work products—the White Paper and the Webinar—will outline these next steps.

Budget Summary: Total costs are **\$139,519** (Direct: \$123,628; Indirect: \$15,891). **Direct detail:** Salaries and Wages: \$29,315; Fringe Benefits: \$11,926; Travel: \$8,800; Student Support: \$50,400 (travel, airfare, per diem costs); Other Costs: \$23,187 (Project Coordinator contract \$9,000/travel \$4,400; conference hosting \$6,787; conference registration \$3,000).