

Full Proposal Outline

Statement of Broad Need

The 21st Century Librarian is required to wear many hats, including acting as front-line support for the unemployed and underemployed as they seek to advance their personal goals. As community anchors, libraries are important partners, serving all population segments in familiar hometown locations. The training provided by this grant will empower librarians to supplement the services provided by job centers for residents not requiring in-depth counseling or coaching by professional workforce development staff.

The Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) wrote in 2014 that “Ninety-six percent of libraries offer online job and employment resources and 78 percent offer programs to help people apply for jobs.” This Community Anchors project will ensure that library services are aligned with the workforce system and quickly changing tools.

Improving collaboration and empowering librarians on how to deliberately create a mentor network that formally connects them with local workforce contacts will advance the library practice in Wisconsin. At the height of the recession, a report by the U.S. Impact Study showed that more than 30 million Americans reported using library computers for workforce related needs.

Wisconsin’s well-positioned libraries are convenient access points for job seekers, particularly in rural communities. In Wisconsin, there are more than 380 public libraries and more than 80 additional branch locations. Public libraries are organized into 16 public library systems which deliver services and training to libraries. The largest public library in each system is currently designated as a Resource Library. The Directors of the Systems and Resource Libraries comprise the Systems and Resource Libraries Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW). An approach coordinated through SRLAAW, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will allow local public libraries to supplement the access and expertise of fifty-four (54) Wisconsin Job Centers. Job centers can be large distances from more rural populations and may be difficult for people with transportation challenges to access, while 80% of Wisconsin libraries are in communities with less than 10,000 people. The process will train librarian son how to develop effective mentorship relationships with the 11 regional Workforce Development Boards (WDBs).

The U.S. Employment and Training Administration cited the U.S. Impact Study’s usage figure in a May 2016 memorandum that encouraged deeper collaboration between public libraries and the workforce investment system. This grant project will institute a customized training program designed to improve local and regional economic vitality by increasing access to workforce resources through a collaborative library and workforce system model.

The project will educate librarians across the state through training delivered by local workforce professionals, connect librarians with workforce expertise through deeper partnerships, and implement a shared online portal to disseminate a common workforce services curriculum while tracking outcomes for the effort through a transparent metrics dashboard.

The continuing education of public library staff in the broad field of workforce development requires the exploration and awareness of the new tools, information, and services that are available to our residents through the regional workforce boards, educational institutions and the DWD. This project will advance librarian's knowledge of basic workforce development services that align with career opportunities in Wisconsin companies and for entrepreneurs.

Our communities and educational institutions are challenged with limited budgets and staffing level limits. This project will develop curriculum that is designed to inform library staff of the tools available to the public to reduce barriers to career or job achievement goals of our residents. This educational opportunity is needed although Wisconsin is experiencing record low unemployment rates because issues remain with the alignment of the existing skills in the workforce and employment opportunities in specific regions that can produce high wage career opportunities, job security and higher individual and family self-sufficiency.

In addition, Wisconsin will be recruiting and training statewide to fill the labor needs of a new company that will be creating over 10,000 jobs in the next five years. Wisconsin residents from across Wisconsin will have the opportunity to participate in the employment demand of this economic development project and the multiple suppliers that will be needed as part of this development project.

The Workforce training modules will be available to all libraries. The Project Manager and the Project Advisory Council will collaborate to determine locations for in-person training and the roles of the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) and SRLAAW in implementing the project. The expertise and experience of the contractor hired to educate librarians on the roles of WDBs, and the WDBs themselves, will be vital in prioritizing outreach to libraries located in underserved, low to moderate income regions and rural markets to ensure that the library has full access to information and materials developed as part of this mentoring and continuing education program.

The project will benefit the 380 libraries, the 80 additional branches located in Wisconsin and the 16 public library systems that support the work of public libraries. While Wisconsin is beginning to invest in mobile job centers, these mobile job centers will be in high demand and rotating throughout the state and beyond our state's borders. These centers may work in concert with libraries to provide greater access to workforce services, but will not have the ability to be an ongoing community center.

Through the partnership with the workforce development system, the libraries will be a potential location for workforce development meetings and for dislocated workers to convene. The workforce system would bring in intensive services to support local librarians, which will then allow them to utilize the training from the project modules to support the increased number of library patrons during a very sensitive time in their lives. This collaborative approach will provide a locally-based support system which will be respectful of the sensitivities of residents who may have never needed services of the workforce development system and maybe unaware of the service options available to them.

PROJECT DESIGN

Goals:

1. Improve Wisconsin's librarians' skills and access to workforce services and systems

2. Through collaboration, ensure residents of Wisconsin have full access to basic workforce development services regardless of location.
3. Ensure that library systems are a full partner in the workforce development model being implemented in Wisconsin.

Objective 1: Offer continuing education programs in which librarians learn the basics of:

- Workforce development system and the roles of the various workforce partners
- Career exploration tools and systems for youth and adults.
- Unemployment Insurance in Wisconsin.
- Job Center of Wisconsin services and the data tools available to residents, businesses and entrepreneurs.

Objective 2: Create a mentor network to enable true collaboration between librarians and the workforce professionals to support and expand outreach of workforce services at their local library. Continued engagement of public libraries with DWD and regional One Stop Centers, and Workforce Development Boards to ensure that the full resources of all service providers are known and used and robust collaboration continues to achieve the project's objectives.

Outcomes: The success of the Library Workforce Development Training Modules will be determined by the following:

Outcome 1: Develop a strategy for forming partnerships between the library systems and the Workforce Development system to enhance services at local libraries.

Outcome 2: 100% of the Workforce Development Training Modules will be provided to the 16 library systems in Wisconsin that will document improved partnerships, collaboration with the workforce system.

Outcome 3: 80% of the training participants will indicate an increase in skills and confidence that they will apply the skills at their local libraries.

Outcome 4: Partners which may include the organization contracted to train librarians on effective interactions with the WDBs, DWD or other assigned workforce partners, will connect with 100% of the libraries in their region to monitor and measure the interaction with the library network at a minimum of two times annually upon the formation of the Library Mentor Network.

The project has built a partnership with vital partners of the workforce development system in Wisconsin. These partnerships will be expanded as the project curriculum is designed and the Project Advisory Team and project staff design content to fully consider the opportunities and level of services that libraries can effectively implement as a community anchor in the diverse regions of Wisconsin.

By working with the lead state agencies, the regional workforce boards and the library systems, the project risk is minimized. The grant investment will leverage previous investments of federal, state and private dollars to support the library role as community anchors. In fact, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development assisted rural libraries in receiving access to internet through an agreement and infrastructure investment in 2015.

The project will be designed to take into consideration the high degree of turnover and retirements that are being experienced within Wisconsin's Library System. The project will be sustainable due to the programming being connected to:

- Regional mentorships with the local workforce boards
- Expanded relationships with State Workforce Development professionals.

The library systems will be supported through local personnel changes, by retaining access to a web portal with the training modules available for training as required to support local library staff. Relationships with regional workforce boards and with DWD will ensure new librarians will also have access to job center materials that are designed to support targeted populations of the workforce system. This local connection is to provide immediate access to support services that may be required in between scheduled training opportunities of the workforce development modules. DPI's cloud-based content repository and learning system platform are available to all public library systems, and can be used in implementing the grant activities.

A Project Coordinator will be hired by DPI to be responsible for primary project implementation. The project coordinator will be the person responsible for implementation, but a Project Advisory Council will support the Project Coordinator and monitor the efforts to ensure successful delivery of the project in the timeframe outlined in the grant. The curriculum development will be coordinated with the Project Advisory Council and will combine the expertise of library, workforce development experts with a curriculum consultant to design an impactful series of workforce development training modules.

An organization will be hired by the DPI to educate librarians on understanding how to develop effective relationships with Wisconsin's 11 Workforce Development Boards.

The Project Advisory Council role will be to plan, monitor, and modify project implementation efforts, when barriers are met during the implementation of the project. The members of the Project Advisory Council will include representatives from: DPI, DWD, Wisconsin Workforce Development Association, Wisconsin Library Association, the System and Resource Library Administrator's Association of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin Technical College System, and the Great Lakes Education and Training Association.

Each of the training modules developed through this grant will be designed to address common questions and services a potential library patron may have, based on data collected through the workforce development system. In addition, special examples or case studies will be incorporated for community populations, such as veterans, unemployed, English as a Second Language and individuals with disabilities to ensure that librarian staff feel confident with their ability to serve as a reference resource.

- **Training Module One – Workforce Development Boards Roles and Responsibilities** This program will be delivered by an organization contracted to educate librarians on the roles, responsibilities and resources available through the regional WDBs to ensure the formation of mentor relationships between the libraries and the WDBs located in the same region of the state. This module will be designed to allow for distribution of the curriculum to other library systems,

regions and states. This curriculum will incorporate handouts and tools to help the library staff deal with special populations and common workforce development requests.

- **Training Module Two - Career Planning and Resume Development** and will be provided by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The resume development component will ensure library staff understand and can navigate the resume builder features within the Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) web site. This module will be focused on exploring and explaining the different tools from the educational institutions that are related in the Inspire, Career Cruising, Internship and other tools available to libraries for skill advancement and career planning. This module will have two on demand video instruction versions, one developed for librarians to send patrons and one specifically for library staff.

- **Training Module Three - The Basics of Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance System**

The Wisconsin DWD will serve as the trainer of this curriculum. The DWD has existing on-demand video explaining the unemployment insurance process for their workforce partners. The curriculum will be modified for library staff to provide more general guidance to existing and new unemployment insurance participants. This training module will be customized to the State of Wisconsin and the content is unlikely to have transferability to other states. However, the system delivery will be a model that can be replicated. The module will be developed for on-demand delivery to provide access and refresher information to library staff. Based on feedback during the pilot of this session, a webinar format maybe developed to address specific questions.

- **Training Module Four – Job Center of Wisconsin and Labor Market Research Tools** This training module will assist library staff in navigating the various tools available to job seekers, entrepreneurs and business owners in locating data to help make informed decisions. The session will focus on mastering the basic features of the JCW portal, while also expanding the depth of research in data collection and the appropriate tools for gathering specific information. This session will develop a “How-To” reference guide to assist in the locating common data sought by potential library patrons. This session will be a webinar format with a portion of the content being developed into common data search videos to show new patrons the functions and features of JCW tools. This module will empower library staff to conduct regional and locally-focused research that will aid community members seeking job opportunities and entrepreneurs and business owners seeking data to explore business opportunities.

Prior to the implementation of each training module, an assessment method will be developed to document staff proficiencies in the training. The goal of these assessments will be to ensure that the librarian staff are meeting the Performance Measures from the IMLS:

1. My understanding has increased as a result of this training/program
2. My interest in this subject has increased as a result of the training
3. I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training.

The training modules will be piloted in year two of the grant for refinement. Based on the results of the proficiency tests, the training modules will be modified prior to launching the curriculum to all of

libraries in Wisconsin. Upon completion of this stage of the project, the digital learning objects developed will be shared with IMLS and COSLA sponsored Continuing Education Connectors network.

The Workforce Development project will be implemented over a three-year period to ensure that the design and alignment of the curriculum is connected to goals of SRLAAW and the changing workforce development tools in Wisconsin. The project budget is \$245,000 to incorporate all aspects of program development and the implementation of training and the development of a mentoring network between the regional workforce development organizations and libraries.

In Year One, DPI, the grant recipient, will convene the Project Advisory Council. This Project Advisory Team will be involved in the recruitment and selection of the Project Coordinator and the organization to be contracted to educate libraries on effective interactions with the WDBs. The Project Advisory Council will formalize an outline of the course content, so that during the selection of the Project Coordinator, the background needed for a successful project is more clearly defined.

In Year Two, the grant will focus on training librarians on strategies for developing effective relationships with the WDBs and participating in creation of the Workforce Development/Librarian Mentor Network in concert with the development of the curriculum for the four modules. These two tasks will be developed simultaneously to ensure that the library and workforce development staff will have interactions aligned to ensure the Mentor Network will be a valuable tool on the specific topics being of a librarian patron are beyond the scope of the community anchor training modules. Mentor relationships will be managed by the regional workforce organization or the Job Center staff based on capacity of the organizations in each region.

During the curriculum development process, the Project Coordinator will collaborate with the Project Advisory Council to implement a "Train the Trainer" strategy for Modules One, Two and Four. These sessions are developed to support the Library System efforts in advancing consistent training and local support of their staff. Since the sixteen library systems and the eleven workforce areas do not have common borders, it is important that the curriculum provides flexibility in development, due to different service providers and workforce structures existing in each workforce region.

The Project Advisory Council will develop a dashboard tied to the goals, objectives and outcomes of the grant. This dashboard will also include project timelines and key performance measurements. Upon implementation of the training, the proficiency tests will be reviewed by the Project Advisory Council to ensure that the outcomes are consistent with the intent of the project. If the training modules are not meeting expected outcomes, the training modules will be modified.

The Project Advisory Council includes the Great Lakes Education and Training Association, which will be the organization to share results with Midwest organizations. In addition, the Wisconsin Library Association and DPI will share the results of the training and the web site portal with their partners across the nation.

The ability to have field-wide reach and impact will be possible by documenting the skills and the reference information that are being incorporated into the Training Modules. Training Modules will

require customization by each state, due to the differences in workforce development systems and services.

The Project Advisory Council formation of partners will be formed to build consensus on the content and the appropriate level. The project coordinator will incorporate topic experts and local librarians in curriculum design and to ensure it is effective for patrons of the library. The topic experts in concert with the project coordinator will develop needed support materials to ensure the local librarians will have reference tools necessary for high library patron satisfaction.

Library staff are often looked to as part of the community's leadership structure. Their experience with elected leaders, community businesses and organizations, educational institutions and a wide familiarity with community members will bring critical connections to the workforce system. Library staff will be able to promote the collaborations to answer unfilled service needs within their community.

Access to Workforce Development Information and Materials will be made available through the training modules. The public libraries will be able to provide information resources equitably to all library users regardless of format, technology or delivery methods. This access insures that community members, no matter their financial means, share access to the wealth of resources available to and through the workforce system. While all services won't be available through the library, the patron with special requirements will be served through the mentor relationship and referrals to appropriate workforce partners.

Libraries work with educators, government officials, organizations, businesses and agencies in partnerships to ensure that all library users have the information needed to make informed decisions. By connecting community members with the right resources and reliable information, made possible through this project's curriculum, libraries will expand their strong web of services for underserved populations.

Diversity and Inclusion Plan:

Wisconsin public libraries are community anchors that serve the role of making their residents full participants in the local, regional and national economy. The project will consciously take on efforts that enhance opportunities of underserved urban and rural populations. It is the role of the workforce development system to advance efforts in aligning workforce training efforts with the needs of the future needs of the economy.

The Wisconsin Workforce Development system tracks interactions with the residents that need assistance with various workforce resources. This effort shows the demand by area residents that can access the Job Centers of Wisconsin. Through the curriculum of this collaborative project, several target populations will be more effectively served by the libraries across Wisconsin. These are not the only populations that will benefit but have been summarized due to the potential traffic to the library and making it the destination for life-long learners.

Youth

The regional Workforce Development Boards/Job Centers and public libraries provide valuable services to their local regions and communities. When it comes to serving middle school and high school

youth, however, their services are not readily seen. In fact, they are more necessary now than ever before, due to the high demand on career counselors within the school districts.

In Wisconsin, Academic and Career Planning (ACP), known nationally as Individual Learning Plans, are now required of all students in grades 6-12. Specifically, the ACP mandate requires that students have access to school programming and activities, as well as, an electronic platform, to do career exploration and planning for personal postsecondary goals. The funding was made available for students to access and use a software system and provide a platform for tracking life-long learning. With an average school counselor to student ratio of 1 to 425 in Wisconsin, schools need support from their local communities (libraries) to help realize the promise and intent of well-developed and delivered career development to in-school youth.

The connection of the school to local public libraries, often the centers of many small, rural communities, in partnership with the expertise provided by workforce staff, can be leveraged to support not only overburdened public schools, but also adults for more integrated and seamless career development support. These linkages aligned with Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) Career Pathways State Plan and the state's K12 ACP requirements can provide the additional expertise required to continue to build programming for life-long planning and learning for both students and adults.

Wisconsin is also implementing specific web sites tied to internships that are connected to a variety of educational institutions. It is critical that the youth are fully aware of the opportunities that match their interests regardless of location. This effort will be addressed in Training Module Two focused on Career Exploration and Resume Development.

Unemployed and the Underserved in Rural and Urban Communities

The Job Center of Wisconsin web site (JCW) is the lifeblood of the providing access to assistance for the unemployed across Wisconsin. This demand is seen across Wisconsin with unemployment insurance assistance sought by over 41,000 residents in 2017. In the most rural portions of Wisconsin, where the access to job centers are more remote, the number of requests were 7,873. The individuals are seeking assistance in the filing of their claims or documenting their weekly job searches.

The Job Center Network and the Workforce Boards provide more comprehensive services but building awareness of the services is often a challenge. In 2017, the total number of users at job centers seeking access to the Job Center Resource Room activities was 243,217. The services offered by the room are diverse, but can include the following activities that libraries and librarians can support in their role as a community anchor: access to internet for job searching and employment applications, photo copier, printing of job search materials; cover letters, resumes, applications, assistance with JCW registration, assistance with basic unemployment questions and work searches, referrals to community partners for specific assistance individuals may need – travel assistance, food banks, and emergency housing. Due to the rural nature of Wisconsin, the local library with its internet connection and computers are serving as local job centers.

English as Second Language

The Wisconsin population is becoming more diverse and the number of non-English speaking residents living and working in rural and underserved regions of urban communities is in-demand. The rural community's need for migrant workers to serve the agriculture related industries, from the vegetable fields of central Wisconsin to the statewide dairy industry, has been documented through the current national immigration policy discussion. In 2017, the Job Centers of Wisconsin provided bilingual services to 4,868 individuals. As a community anchor, the libraries will not be expected to provide these services but will be a location for distribution of materials to assist this population in finding the services that are required. This effort will help leverage the equal opportunity requirements that each of the regional workforce boards manage as part of being recipients of federal funds.

Veterans

Wisconsin is dedicated to advancing veterans employment options and have specific programs to assist in the training of these individuals. Building awareness of these programs and options is critical to ensuring that services are quickly aligned with the needs of the veteran.

Since the Job Centers will remain the primary location of customer service, the needs of the customer populations will be monitored through the various agencies dedicated to serving these populations. The Project Coordinator will work closely with agency and workforce staff to ensure that customer feedback from the job center locations are incorporated into the librarian training modules. If a clear consensus is not gained from the customer feedback, the Project Coordinator will enlist the help of the workforce boards to conduct focus groups of select populations to understand any regional differences to the services or information sought by the patrons of the statewide workforce system.

After the development and implementation of the Workforce Development Training Modules, the library systems, in their role as community anchors, will help ensure that individuals are not left out of economic opportunities that maybe viable based on their skills and their ability to relocate. The library staff are already a critical community partner by providing access to statewide job opportunities promoted through the Job Center of Wisconsin web site and the potential training resources of the regional educational institutions and their local workforce boards. This training will ensure that the library patron will be effectively served and referred to appropriate services that are being developed to address barriers that impact the limited economic opportunities of Wisconsin residents.

Broad Impact

Through the partnerships formed in the project, the local librarians will have a greater awareness and become a greater resource to the patrons of the library system and the workforce system. Their expertise will assist library patron's ability to navigate the sometime confusing services available to them and their community. The changing services are also difficult for community members to monitor and track. With the implementation of the career counseling platform by Wisconsin, it is critical that the local librarian be fully informed and engaged in the efforts for effective career planning.

The skills of the library staff will be able to assist in referrals to workforce agencies by:

- Mentors with the Workforce Boards will ensure that the librarians will have a point of contact for their questions.

- Awareness of and access to new tools and data that can assist residents, businesses and elected officials in planning. The library will also have access to a mentor, a point of contact, when an in-depth question is asked by the patron.

The librarians will now have access to better reference materials to help library patrons navigate the workforce tools. If a patron seeks specific services, the Mentor Network will allow the librarian to refer the patron to an experienced workforce professional to help address the specific needs of the individual in the community. This level of partnership and collaboration will help expand the confidence of the library staff. The curriculum will be designed to have librarians serve as a workforce resource, with access to a mentor for difficult questions or for patron referrals

The skills of the librarian will expand to better support and provide leadership to support the needs of the unemployed and other populations. The curriculum modules can be distributed regionally and nationally to share as a foundation for customization by each state to their specific system. The baseline information in modules will be consistent, but the tools will need to be customized by each state. The local library system will be able to share the best practices with each of their partners.

The development of the curriculum for each training module will involve entities that are part of federal and or state programs and understand the common program regulations. This will be a vital part of ensuring that the programming design will allow customization of the common federal and state rules. During the development of the curriculum, the project coordinator will contact key partners with progress updates and for feedback on adaptability of content to other regions, populations and audiences.

There will be notations in the curriculum of sections that will require customization by other entities. For example, the common features of the American Job Center will be incorporated, while the unique tools of the internship portal in which Wisconsin is an early entrant will be outlined for the benefit of future adaptability by other institutions. An instructor's guide will be developed for the "Train the Trainers" which will allow other entities to customize the curriculum for their purposes.

Assessments of each training module will be conducted using either a simple survey or a more detailed test developed with input from the Project Advisory Council. Performance measurements will be tied to each of the modules and the common questions of the library patron. The project curriculum will be retained by DPI on their web site portal with the curriculum.

The members of the Project Advisory Council will bring resources to sustain the collaboration beyond the scope of the grant. These results will be sorted by Library system to monitor if the priorities for geographic (rural) and special populations are being advanced.