

Leading the Charge: Advancing the Recruitment, Retention and Inclusion of People of Color within the Library and Information Science Field

Hampton University's William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library is seeking funding in the amount of \$249,970 for a 3-year project grant entitled *Leading the Charge: Advancing the Recruitment, Retention and Inclusion of People of Color within the Library and Information Science Field*. This grant seeks to build the capacity of libraries to develop and implement sustainable and successful core practices and initiatives which change, evolve and improve the experiences of people of color working within Library and Information Science (LIS). The grant will support the IMLS category of lifelong learning. With funding from the IMLS, this **piloting** project will provide library leaders with the opportunity to engage and strategize with colleagues and experts regarding effective ways to plan and lead diversity initiatives for people of color (POC) within their organizations. Project participants will receive guidance on developing, implementing and assessing an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiative which will address the recruitment, retention and inclusion of POC within their libraries. The project results will serve as a collection of actionable diversity initiatives which can be shared throughout the field. With guidance from an advisory board consisting of EDI experts and library leaders, the project will consist of a conference, virtual meetings, individual site visits, assessment and a follow-up conference. Tina D. Rollins, Hampton University Library Director, will serve as Principal Investigator (PI) and Raeshawn McGuffie, Assistant Director of Technical Services at Hampton University's Harvey Library, will serve as Co-PI.

Statement of Broad Need

It is no secret that libraries continue to have serious issues regarding the diversity of library workers. The lack of diversity, inclusion and representation remains one of the biggest limitations to the field. Many have highlighted the historic wide representational gap in LIS (Adkins & Espinal, 2004; Jaeger, Subramanian, Jones, & Bertot, 2011; Cooke, 2013). Research supports that many diversity aims do little to focus on mentorship or minority socialization in a predominantly white profession. This project will build upon the success of the 2018 Hampton University Forum on Minority Recruitment and Retention in the LIS Field which revealed a need for additional opportunities to train library leaders regarding methods to improve inclusion and diversity practices within their organizations.

Project Design

The three key project groups of this grant will include the following: 1) the *Project Administrative Team* which will consist of the PI, Co-PI, and project manager who will be hired to assist with administrative tasks, 2) *The Advisory Board*, which will consist of library leaders and EDI experts who will assist in conference planning and serve as conversation partners to the participants and 3) *Project Participants* which will consist of library leaders selected for the project.

Pre-Conference Planning -The Project Administrative Team and Advisory Board will meet virtually to discuss conference goals and select participants. Outreach to prospective project participants will be disseminated via a variety of platforms including but not limited to social media and listserves. Interested parties will be required to submit an application for participation in the project. Components of the application package will include a resume, statement of interest, two references and submission of at least three possible initiatives which they would like to implement. Approximately 20 participants will be selected.

Conference- The two -day conference will be held during August 2021. The IMLS grant funding will cover travel costs and a stipend for participants. During this conference, participants will hear from leaders and practitioners in the field who will discuss topics and concepts of diversity, inclusion and leadership. Participants will then choose one idea to develop into a proposal. They will be paired with an advisory board member who will serve as a conversation partner throughout the project.

Virtual Meetings-Participants will meet in a follow-up webinar the week after the conference to discuss information shared. Webinars will continue monthly which will discuss further topics of EDI through guest speakers and readings. Participants will also continue to speak with their Advisory Board conversation partner regarding their selected initiatives for implementation.

Site Visits and Assessment –Each participant will be visited by either a member of the Advisory Board or Project Administrative Team to further discuss their initiatives and implementation efforts. This will serve as an opportunity for mutual engagement and learning regarding the project goals. Participants will be required to maintain assessment data related to their initiatives. The Project Administrative Team will also conduct assessments of participant progress during the initial conference, year two of the project and the post conference.

Follow-up Conference -Participants will return to Hampton University to debrief their results and submit their final report in June 2023. Project information and data collected will be compiled into a publication to share research findings and best practices.

Diversity Plan

The overall focus of the project seeks to improve efforts of diversity by libraries regarding POC. The speakers, Advisory Board and participants will represent various types of libraries throughout the country. This will allow different ideas and views to be presented throughout the project to ensure a well-rounded discussion and input regarding strategies to improve diverse representation in the field.

Broad Impact

The initiatives will be widely disseminated and discussed in subsequent conferences, publications and workshops. The project impact is far reaching and has the capacity to re-shape the way EDI efforts are implemented into organizations. From this effort, other projects may be modeled and a paradigm shift may occur in helping to recruit and retain librarians of color in the field. With this overall effort, we can continue to move from rhetoric and toward a concerted effort to implement initiatives to provide true equity, diversity and inclusion.

Schedule of Completion

The project will take place from August 1, 2020 – July 31, 2023 and will proceed as follows: *Aug.-Dec.2020* Advisory board meetings and hiring of Project Manager, *Jan. –July 2021* outreach, application solicitation, selection notification and conference planning, *Aug. 2021-* conference, *Sept.2021-Dec. 2022-* follow-up virtual meetings, monthly webinars, and site visits with participants, *Jan.–May 2023* continued virtual meetings and webinars with participants, *June 2023*, follow-up conference, *July 2023* final project report.

Project Budget

The proposed budget of \$249, 970 will request \$20,000 per year for three years for the salary of a part-time program manager, \$45,650 travel costs and stipends, \$32,500 in consultant fees, \$12,250 for supplies, printing, copying, marketing/advertising and postage. Funding in the amount of \$9,000 will be used for conference meals and \$9,097 will be utilized for equipment and software with the remaining funding supporting university indirect costs for project.