

## **Research Training Institute for Health Sciences Librarians: Building Research Capacity and Community Engagement in Health Librarianship**

### **Overview**

The Medical Library Association (MLA) seeks funding from the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarians Continuing Education Program (\$194,993) to create immersive learning opportunities and a support system for health librarians to acquire research skills and increase their research productivity. The Institute will offer a combination of instruction in research design, individual mentoring, a full year of post-Institute support for participants to complete research projects, membership in an ongoing research community of practice, and scholarship support. IMLS funding support will enable MLA to test and refine the Institute model at a reduced cost for participants and provide the capacity to develop an infrastructure that MLA will sustain after the grant period ends. It will also allow MLA to develop a plan to offer online research education options, extending the Institute training model to the wider librarianship community. The Institute will leverage MLA's existing educational services, web and communication tools, scholarship programs, annual conference services, and strong organizational alliances to maximize long-term impact and sustainability.

### **Need and Potential Impact**

Health libraries, the institutions they serve, patients, and consumers of health information benefit from health librarians engaging in research. Despite this, few health librarians conduct high-quality health information research and disseminate their research results. Currently, health librarians have few resources to assist them in gaining skills in conducting and communicating research. Our Institute will fill this knowledge gap. Building on similar models of research training programs for librarians, our Institute will be geared to meet the special needs of *health* librarians who support *health* providers, researchers, educators, patients, and consumers, and will directly advance the creation, integration, and communication of *health* information research.

### **Relevance to the Community Anchors Priority**

The Institute will be a community anchor for the wider health sciences community, providing librarians with a mastery of research skills that will enable them to assess end-user needs for health information, enhance library services to meet those needs, and partner with research teams in other disciplines. It will also serve as a community anchor and leader in health information research for the health librarianship community.

### **Projected Performance Goals and Outcomes**

The broad-based goals of the Institute are to increase the research competencies, output, and communication of health librarians. To achieve this we established the following specific performance goals and outcomes:

1. Plan and offer two 5-day Institutes over the three-year grant period. The Institutes will take place in July at University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) in 2018 and 2019.
2. Increase research skills and knowledge of participants (2 cohorts/40 participants for duration of grant).
3. Increase the research output of participants, ensuring that research projects are completed within one year (potentially 40 health information research projects).
4. Build research capacity and a strong community of researchers by creating and maintaining an ongoing support system that maximizes participants' learning, productivity, and collaboration.
5. Assess the effectiveness of all aspects of the Institute (overall program, learning outcomes, research outputs, online community of practice, and community impacts).
6. Offer up to 10 scholarships to librarians working in one-person, small, and rural libraries where professional development budgets are limited.
7. Communicate Institute purpose, value, processes, and outcomes to a broad range of audiences.
8. Develop a plan to offer online research education options, extending Institute training, outreach and penetration to the wider health librarianship community.

### **Proposed Work Plan**

The following work plan was developed by a team of experts in the area of health research instruction as part of MLA's strategic initiative to advance evidence-based practices in health libraries. The proposed

model consists of pre-Institute learning activities, an intensive on-site training event, and a year of post-Institute online support. The faculty will consist of a team of 5 instructors who work in the area of health library research. Instructors will be carefully selected based on expertise and teaching abilities through an annual “Call for New Instructors.” In subsequent years graduates of the Institute will be given opportunities to serve as future peer mentors/instructors at the Institute. We will use a selective application process, including the submission of a research proposal, a support letter from their supervisor, and other criteria.

Pre-Institute preparatory learning will consist of required readings, videos, a pre-assessment survey, etc. Classroom work will include didactic lectures, active learning activities, small and large group discussions, individual consultations, dedicated project time, and project presentations. Post-Institute activities will include group discussions led by instructors, peer mentorship, consults with instructors, and check-in points to ensure the completion of projects. The curriculum will be based on relevant research competencies, necessary skills to complete a research project, participant feedback, and a supportive learning environment to build confidence in participants. Specific content for each class may vary based on course feedback from the prior year and the research proposals submitted. By the end of the class, participants should be able to select an appropriate approach and research design for their individual project; write a clear and concise research question relevant to health librarianship; identify components in a research proposal; select a theoretical framework; conduct a comprehensive literature search; apply appropriate sampling, recruitment, ethics approval strategies; apply appropriate data collection and management strategies; understand data analysis strategy for their project; enumerate factors that influence the balance of research with practice; and identify venues, processes, and issues related to research dissemination.

The Institute leadership team with the assistance of expert consultants will collect/assess extensive evidence of effectiveness of all aspects of the Institute model, including post-Institute online activities, outcomes and impacts, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. MLA will promote Institute events throughout the country, attracting attendees and building a robust community of practice. It will share information on national health library electronic discussion lists and with library schools, submit press releases to library journal, news, and social media outlets, and will leverage its partner organizations to promote these events. MLA will create an Institute website as its primary communication vehicle for posting Institute, course, and applicant information. Additionally, participants will be expected to present project progress/findings at an Institute-sponsored session at annual MLA conferences.

**Year 1 (7/2017-6/2018):** Develop plans and curriculum; promote the Institute; offer scholarships for 1<sup>st</sup> Institute; establish an online research community of practice.

**Year 2 (7/2018-6/2019):** Offer 1<sup>st</sup> Institute at UIC (July 2018) and online community of practice where model, curriculum and support system will be tested and assessed; offer scholarships for 2<sup>nd</sup> Institute.

**Year 3 (7/2019-6/2020):** Offer 2<sup>nd</sup> Institute at UIC (July 2019) and online community of practice with modifications; assess/measure project outcomes and impacts; develop plan for offering online modules.

### **Project Director, Leadership Team and Partners**

The leadership team includes: Susan Lessick, MA, MLS, AHIP, FMLA, Distinguished Librarian, Librarian Emerita, University of California, Irvine (Project Director); Barry Grant, PhD, MLA Director of Education; and Mary Langman, MS, MLA Director of Information Issues and Policy. Consultants include: Joanne Marshall, MLS, MHSc, PhD, LLitt, Distinguished Alumni Professor, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Denise Koufogiannakis, MLIS, MA, PhD, Associate University Librarian, University of Alberta; and Carol Perryman, MSLIS, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, Texas Woman’s University. MLA will leverage its existing partnerships and explore new opportunities for collaboration with other professional associations, universities, industry, and government agencies. A partnership was recently developed with University of Illinois-Chicago, which agreed to host the Institute at no cost.

### **Estimated Budget**

The estimated budget for this three-year project is \$194,993. This budget will cover: 0.25 FTE staff (project director); 0.10 FTE MLA administrative support; 0.15 FTE consultants; 0.05 FTE instructional design support; instructor costs; scholarships for librarians; IT costs; and Institute operating expenses.