National Need & Relevance to Project Category

Capacity of state libraries: State library agency youth consultants (YCs) are uniquely positioned to provide support to their state's library staff around the topic of teen services. Unfortunately, many YCs don't always have the necessary capacity to provide this support. In a recent survey (http://svy.mk/2c93ITz) of YCs, 64% of the 44 respondents reported that they spend 20% or less of their time on teen services (99% of respondents spend less than 60% of their time on teen services).   This is partly due to the fact that early literacy services are often prioritized over services for older youth, as well as the fact that many YCs have "limited personal experience with direct teen services, as I never worked as a teen librarian." Further, as another respondent pointed out. "I am the only person providing support for birth – 18 [services], and I have no budget. I would like to get more training around teen services, but I have to pay out-of-pocket for all of my own professional development." In fact, over 40% of YC survey respondents indicated that they need to know more about the following in order to better serve the library staff in their state: connected learning, community engagement and outreach, adopting an outcomes approach, partner development, and community assessment—which are all competency areas imperative to delivering high quality teen services.

In addition, YCs work mostly in isolation, with an ad-hoc email listserv their primary means of connection. As a result of these multiple challenges, there is not a strong vision or consensus among state library staff around what teen services should focus on in order to meet the needs of today's teens; nor are there adequate supports in place to help YCs build essential knowledge and skills, which leads to the inability to provide appropriate CE for library staff. Ultimately, these significant challenges have led in many states to inadequate teen services. 75% of the YC survey respondents indicated that in their opinion the quality of library teen services in their state was only "fair" (9% rated them "poor").

Evolving continuing education needs of library staff: In YALSA's recent member survey (http://bit.ly/2c2CdMd) more than 35% of member respondents stated that they need to learn more about the following priority areas as identified in YALSA's 2014 report, "The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: a Call to Action" (http://bit.ly/1n6PoKS): connected learning, community engagement and outreach, partner development, building cultural competence skills, and embedding youth voice into programs and services. Some of these areas are newer within the world of teen services, and there aren't yet readily available models and opportunities to develop the skills required. According to one YC survey respondent, "we just don't have enough time to meet all the requests for continuing ed. and consultant visits that we get in a year." Building the capacity of YCs to provide continuing education (CE) and other services for library staff in their state is a key step to improving library services for and with teens. Additionally, competence in these content areas is also directly related to helping libraries become effective community anchors. By building the capacity of state agencies through empowering YCs to plan and deliver supports and programs for front line library staff to better serve teens, the nation's libraries will be able to position themselves as strong community anchors and focus on current needs and interests to serve a new generation of life-long learners.

Proposed Work Plan

YALSA proposes a year-long National Forum that leverages virtual and in-person opportunities to bring together YCs as well as representatives from other disciplines in order to facilitate discussions that will lead to a joint vision for teen services and the identification of CE priorities among state library YCs. YALSA will implement a design thinking approach to engage a variety of stakeholders and ensure rich discussions. YALSA will partner with COSLA, who has informally expressed support for this project, and the core project team will include: Beth Yoke, YALSA ED; Linda W. Braun, YALSA CE Consultant; a TBN Project Evaluator; and a TBN Design Thinking Expert Facilitator. An advisory committee will be formed including representatives from organizations such as: the Afterschool Alliance; the Association of Children's Museums; the Association of Science Technology Centers; the Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums; COSLA; LRNG; the National Writing Project; Web Junction; and the YOUmedia Network.

Steps	Related Activities
Step 1: **Empathize** done in 2016	YALSA, through surveys and conversations with YCs, anecdotal data, analysis of the COSLA CE Connector Project, and analysis of research determined the **need to support YCs in their efforts to assist front line library staff with teen services**.
Step 2: **Define** (months 1 – 5 of grant project)	YALSA will dig more deeply into the needs of state library agency staff, via hosting **virtual meetings at which state library staff - youth and administrative - will discuss topics related to teen services**. YALSA will connect with front line library staff across the U.S. to learn from how they envision expanded state library supports for teen services.
Step 3: Ideate (month 6 of grant project)	Ideation will occur at a **1.5 day in-person Forum** (75% of YC survey respondents stated a face-to-face meeting would be "very valuable"). State agency library staff will: learn about findings from steps 1 & 2, gain insights from experts on teen services best practices in libraries and other informal learning environments, explore ideas for how best to expand and enhance CE opportunities related to teen services, and begin to articulate a unified vision for teen services and how that informs CE needs.
Steps 4/5: **Prototype & Test** (months 7-10 of project)	The ideas from the Forum will be **compiled into draft findings & recommendations** that will be **tested via a variety of virtual engagement opportunities** for front line library staff, library administrators, stakeholders from informal learning institutions, and state library agency staff. Feedback will be used to revise and re-test the document.
Step 6: Publish (month 11-12 of grant project)	YALSA will finalize findings and recommendations and **publish a report** providing an overview of the YCs unified vision for teen services and prioritized CE needs. The report will also include recommendations and a framework for moving forward in order to support the CE and resource needs of front line library staff.

Performance Goals & Outcomes
- Goal #1: Create a unified vision for teen services among state library staff.
- Goal #2: Develop a thorough understanding of the CE needs of YCs to inform future training efforts for and with them, especially those that will support library staff in their library's function as community anchor.
- Goal #3: Build relationships and strengthen ties among and between state library staff and stakeholders, such as leaders in the afterschool and informal learning communities.

As a result of this project, the library community will gain a clear understanding of what the key CE needs are relating to teen services, which will be used to build the knowledge and skills of YCs and ultimately better position libraries to implement responsive programming models and tools to engage young people in their community. YALSA will work with an evaluator (TBN) to develop protocols and tools for measuring outcomes.

Budget
Total budget costs are estimated at $134,404 with $34,784 being contributed by YALSA. No indirect costs are estimated for this project.
- **IMLS contribution:** $36,000 for consultant fees; $34,500 for travel; $2,000 for materials and supplies; and $27,120 for Forum expenses and final report printing & distribution
- **YALSA contribution:** $20,732 in salaries; $6,842 in benefits; $2,000 in travel; $2,600 in services (creating web presence & space for virtual discussions); and $2,610 in Forum expenses