

Erikson Institute

Supporting 21st Century Librarians: Media Literacy Professional Development for Youth Librarians

In partnership with four geographically diverse public libraries and key library staff including: Dorothy Stoltz (Carroll County Public Library, MD), Louise Capizzo (Scarborough Public library, ME), Kristain Johnston (Chandler Public Library, AZ), and Claudia Haines (Homer Public Library, AK), Erikson Institute's Technology in Early Childhood (TEC) Center respectfully requests \$228,193 and \$79,521 for student support for a total of \$307,713 for a 2-year Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Lifelong Learning **project grant**. This project will develop and implement continuing education programs (CE) for 75 youth librarians nationwide based on the TEC Center's Media Literacy in Early Childhood Report (IMLS funded # LG-98-18-0052-18). There is a **broad need** to develop a diverse workforce of librarians who are better trained to meet the media literacy needs of children and families given the ways in which youth use technology starting at young ages. This **project aims** to (1) develop and deliver a 10-hour CE series for youth librarians nationally, (2) build capacity of library professionals to implement media literacy education, and (3) provide publicly available resources to all youth librarians to expand their media literacy knowledge, confidence, and abilities.

Statement of Broad Need: There is a significant need for media literacy education for youth and families as it will provide them with lifelong skills that will help them consume and engage with media, especially digital media, thoughtfully and critically. Our previous IMLS project (# LG-98-18-0052-18), determined that media literacy education fits well within informal learning contexts, particularly within libraries¹. Youth librarians have contact with both children and families, providing a unique opportunity to support media literacy skills of multiple generations. However, librarians need media literacy training and resources to become confident and successful in this role. The goal of this project is to increase librarians' **knowledge of and confidence** in support media literacy and generate a model for CE which can be easily replicated.

Project Design: This project is a strategic collaboration between the TEC Center and four geographically diverse public libraries in the US. The team of technology and library experts will produce and deliver high-quality on media literacy CE program. We will also evaluate the developed resources and provide access to content freely to all youth librarians through the TEC Center website. This project will advance the goals of the **Lifelong Learning category** of the LB21 program by (1) increasing librarians' knowledge of and confidence in media literacy practice and (2) generating a model for media literacy CE for youth librarians.

The project will consist of three main parts: 1) Librarian Media Literacy CE, 2) Children's Media Literacy Program Implementation 3) Research and Evaluation. This project will utilize the **expertise** of a diverse team of experts (Dr. Alexis Lauricella, Ph.D, Erikson Institute), library partners (Dorothy Stoltz, Louise Capizzo, Kristain Johnston, and Claudia Haines), consultants (Melissa Johnston, University of West Georgia, Linda Braun, LEO), and advisory board (Jamie Naidoo, PhD, University of Alabama).

1. *Librarian Media Literacy CE (August 2021-December 2022).*

a. CE development and recruitment will occur in Fall 2021. TEC Center will collaborate with partners and seek support from consultants and advisory board members on content development. The CE will be informed by resources partners have contributed to such as the Media Literacy in Early Childhood Report, the Peer Coaching Media Mentorship Toolkit, and other media literacy resources. Partner libraries will support recruitment of library CE participants in order to recruit staff from diverse settings (urban, suburban, rural), socio-economic status (focus on supporting low-income communities), and access to technology in the communities

¹ Rhinesmith, C., & Stanton, C. L. U. (2018). Developing media literacy in public libraries: Learning from community media centers. *Public Library Quarterly*, 37(4), 420-440.

b. CE delivery will include three cohorts of 20-25 librarians. Each cohort's CE will span four months, with one month in between each cohort to allow time for analysis of data and application of feedback. Cohort 1 will occur November 2021 - February 2022; Cohort 2 will occur April - July 2022; Cohort 3 will occur September - December 2022. The librarian media literacy CE will be a mix of synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning experiences including webinars, online discussions, and small group check-ins for a total of 10 CE hours. The webinars will focus on the following topics: children's media use and comprehension, media literacy actions and activities, and inequities related to media. The online discussions and small group check-ins will focus on reflection to support implementation of media literacy programming in their libraries.

2. *Children's Media Literacy Program Implementation (March 2022-March 2023)*. After completing the CE program, librarians will develop and host media literacy programs in their libraries, either in person or virtually. The participants will be encouraged to attend monthly meetings for optional online discussions hosted by TEC Center's program manager to reflect on their programs and seek mentorship and guidance from peers.

3. *Research and Evaluation (August 2021-July 2023)*. All participants will complete a pre-CE survey to document their media literacy knowledge and program offerings. A second follow-up survey will be given to participants post-CE to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the training by assessing the change in media literacy knowledge, skills, and confidence. Survey data will be analyzed and used to inform improvements on each interaction of the CE. TEC Center will publish the project findings and CE model in a report and academic publications, and present outcomes during a free public webinar and at academic and library conferences. The team will also develop media literacy resources for librarians based on the effectiveness of the CE trainings which will be available to download on TEC Center's website. **Indicators of success** for this project include increased librarians' knowledge of and confidence in media literacy practice, as well as a model for librarian media literacy CE that other libraries can adopt and implement to **reach even broader diverse audiences**.

Broad Impact: This project will result in three immediate outcomes: (1) improved media literacy knowledge and confidence for 75 librarians, (2) increased and improved media literacy programs for families through youth libraries and (3) a model for media literacy CE and resources for that can be widely adapted and replicated. We will ensure the deliverables are readily adaptable and useable in other communities by working with our advisory committee and consultants. The longer-term outcome is an increase in accessibility to library media literacy programming across the US, resulting in young children, families, and librarians all having strengthened media literacy skills. Beyond the conclusion of the project, this team will sustain these benefits by continuing to work with libraries to scale up the media literacy CE and programming.

Diversity Plan: Given the diversity of our partners in terms of populations served (rural, suburban, and urban) and from each geographic corner of the US (MD, ME, AZ, AK), and that we are providing financial support to participating library staff to encourage participant attendance, we will recruit a diverse group of youth librarians to participate the CE. We will seek out diverse, accurate representations of librarian experiences such as setting (rural, suburban, urban), socio-economic status, and access to technology. All participants must demonstrate that their population is high-needs which can be a function of lower-SES, low access to technology, education, or due to a lack of funding and opportunity for these communities in general. Moreover, we will work with partners and the advisory board to ensure project deliverables are marketed to and widely accessible for diverse communities across the nation.

Budget: The requested \$307,713 will cover student support (\$79,521), project team salaries and fringe (\$99,053), library stipends (\$53,500) for library partners and stipends for participants, honoraria and fees (\$10,000) for advisory board members and consultants, and supplies (\$3,080).

Erikson Institute's TEC Center and partners are grateful for the opportunity to propose this project and we look forward to your review.