

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) seeks a Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program implementation grant to 1) develop library leaders among its staff by offering a scholarship program for non-librarian staff from groups underrepresented in the library and archives field to pursue a master’s in library and information science (MLIS) degree and 2) create a framework and resources that other libraries systems and library and archives associations can use to develop diverse library leaders.

The Pathways to Leadership scholarship covers the entire cost of an MLIS program at any New York State public university or can be applied towards the tuition of other local or online programs. BPL will provide scholars with student support services including mentoring, job shadowing and professional development. The goal is to prepare staff for librarianship positions at BPL and other library and archive-focused organizations. Over the three-year project period, 25 scholars will be scholarship recipients and 16 scholars will earn their MLIS; nine will earn their degrees after the grant period.

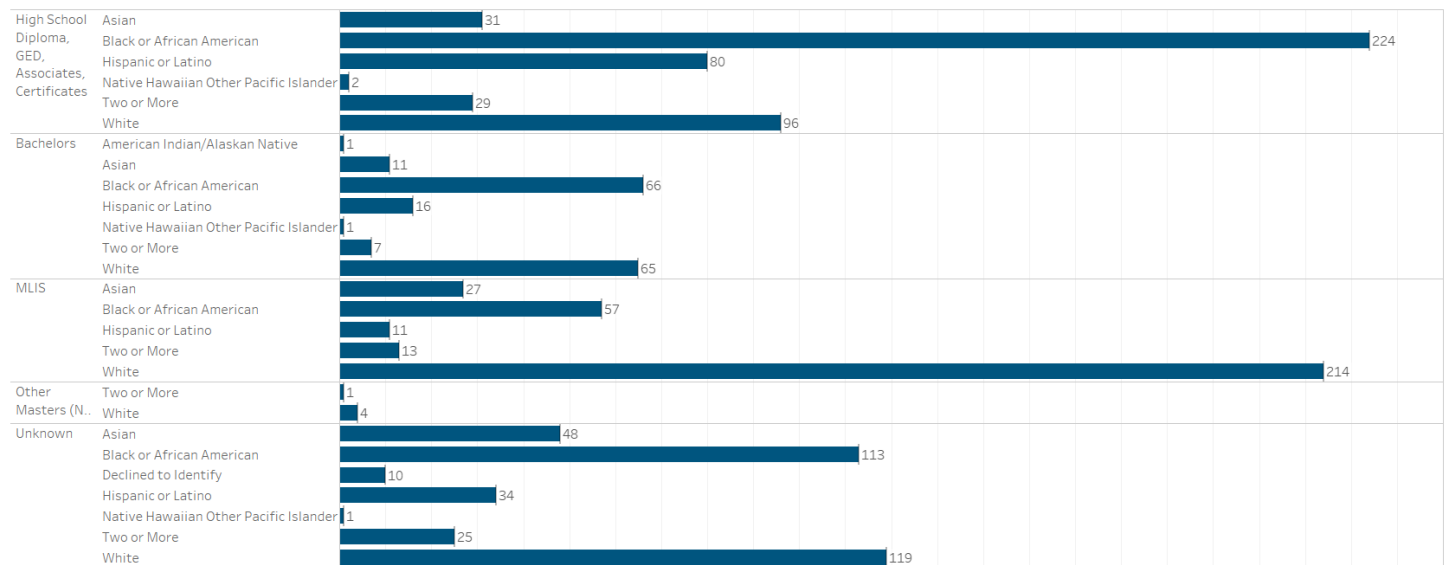
As part of this work, BPL will develop resources targeting libraries and affiliated associations seeking to support leadership development among current and future staff with a focus on promoting diversity in the library and archive field. Resources will be relevant to library systems of all sizes and include information on implementing mentorship and library trainee programs; best practices for accommodating barriers staff and students have encountered in their work and school schedules; training modules on topics such as leadership skills, core competencies and mentoring; and a toolkit for launching a staff scholarship program that covers outreach to graduation.

**I. Project Justification**

Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Goal and Objective Alignment: Pathways to Leadership will give BPL staff the experience and credentials needed to pursue librarianship opportunities while also creating a model for other library systems on ways to provide similar educational opportunities that support leadership development for staff in all stages of their careers, as well as future librarians considering or enrolled in MLIS programs. This work aligns with Goal 2, Objective 2.1 by increasing BPL’s capacity to provide opportunities for staff to develop as leaders in the library and archive field and specifically to implement meaningful and replicable organizational change that addresses diversity, equity and inclusion.

Addressing Field-Wide Needs & Challenges: In summer 2020, BPL held four organization-wide sessions for all employees to discuss how the institution can better live up to its values of diversity, equity and inclusion. In these Real Talk sessions, participants noted a lack of diversity among librarian staff and the data bears out: librarians at BPL are much less diverse than the borough they serve. Only 34% of staff working in MLIS-titled positions are not White, compared to 63% for the population of Brooklyn<sup>1</sup>. Nationally, the field of librarianship is remarkably homogenous. January 2023 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that of the 168,000 librarians and media specialists 86% are White, 4.3% are Black or African American, 5.7% are Asian<sup>2</sup>. According to the American Library Association (ALA)’s 2012 “Diversity Counts” report, individuals who identify as having a disability account for less than 4% of the total population of credentialed librarians.

Figure 1: Educational Attainment of BPL staff



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/kingscountynewyork,US/RHI825221#RHI825221>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

Figure 1. *Aligning with national trends, most BPL staff with their MLIS degrees are White (66%), despite there being a significant number of non-White staff who have their bachelor's degrees and would be potential candidates for their MLIS degrees (61%). Note that the “unknown” category is made up almost entirely of part-time staff (91%). Anecdotally, BPL knows that many part-time staff have their bachelor's degrees and are eligible for and interested in obtaining their MLIS degrees, and other staff in the “high school diploma, GED, associates, certificates” category have completed their bachelor's degrees since joining BPL (data reflected above was collected at time of hiring).*

Figure 2: Librarians & Leadership at BPL

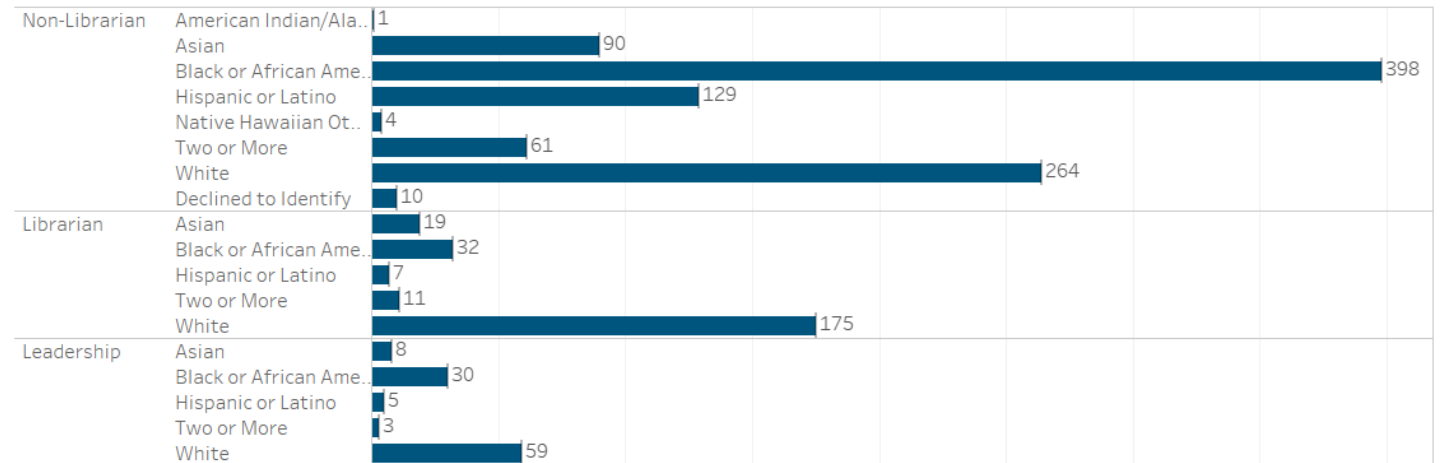


Figure 2. *Continuing to align with national trends, most BPL staff in librarian positions are White (72%). Additionally, most BPL staff in leadership positions are White (56%). Leadership is defined as chief officers, branch managers, regional directors and department heads. Note that while branch managers and regional directors are required to have MLIS degrees, only some, but not all, department heads and chief officers are. If 25 scholars graduate and move into librarian titles, BPL will have approximately 10% more librarians from historically underrepresented groups. If scholars eventually move into leadership titles, BPL will have approximately 23% more leaders from historically underrepresented groups.*

Colleges and universities also have diversity issues in their MLIS programs. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Completions shows that 70.7% of library science degrees awarded in 2020 were to White individuals followed by 9.7% to Hispanic or Latino, 5.3% to Black or African American, 3.6% to Asian and 3% to individuals who are two or more races.<sup>3</sup> Barriers to enrolling in MLIS programs include the costs of tuition, registration, books and technology; the financial aid process; class schedules conflicting with work schedules; and a lack of confidence in going back to school. These barriers can make it difficult for people who are low-income or lack sufficient social supports to pursue and complete their MLIS degree.

As libraries strive to serve as places of inclusion and belonging, the lack of diversity among staff has consequences for patrons. As noted in BPL’s Real Talk report “one other value of diversity highlighted by participants was the importance of visible representation of our communities among our staff. By being able to have examples of librarians of color, and librarians that speak the same languages as the communities we serve, we can continue to serve as an inspirational place and an institution that is not just in the community, but truly of the community.” Patrons value seeing librarians who represent them and can offer programs, book displays and material collections that address their needs and interests. While part of this goal is met by having a diverse librarian staff in branches, there must also be diversity in leadership with decision-making and strategic thinking being made by voices representing different experiences and backgrounds.

While BPL launched Pathways to Leadership in 2021 and is currently supporting 11 scholars, support from IMLS would allow BPL to expand the program to serve more people while creating resources that other library systems nationally can use to develop their own leadership programs focused on diversifying library and archives staff and building leadership skills among groups underrepresented in librarianship. While BPL cannot singlehandedly diversify the field, the institution is determined to better represent the communities it serves and provide a model to other library systems.

**Target Groups:** The target group is staff from backgrounds historically underrepresented in librarianship including but not limited to staff who are ethnically or racially diverse, living with disabilities, speak multiple languages or have accents, are from different cultures, have different life experiences, among other unique diversity characteristics.<sup>4</sup> Though staff of any tenure and in any title are eligible to apply, many who have expressed interest or applied thus far have been working at BPL in librarian-

<sup>3</sup> [https://datausa.io/profile/cip/library-science#ethnicity\\_degrees](https://datausa.io/profile/cip/library-science#ethnicity_degrees)

<sup>4</sup> <https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/types-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>

adjacent roles (i.e. clerical and technology resource specialists) for multiple decades and are unable to advance into librarian and leadership positions without their MLIS degree. Others have been working for equally long tenures but in administrative titles; getting an MLIS is an opportunity to move into a public-facing role and potentially take on a leadership role.

With funding from BPL's former board chair, Pathways to Leadership launched in summer 2021 and the first cohort of five scholars began classes in spring 2022 with one additional scholar beginning in fall 2022 (this scholar was funded through a private donation from a board member). The second cohort of five scholars began classes in January 2023. Of the 11 current scholars, seven identify as Black or African American, one as Hispanic/Latino, one as Asian, one as Middle Eastern and one as multiple races/ethnicities. Scholars have worked at BPL for an average of 14 years; three have worked at BPL for 20+ years; two for 15+ years; three for 10+ years and the remaining three for 5+ years. Scholars are all full-time employees and come from a range of departments and titles. Three scholars are circulation managers, two are technology resource specialists, one is an office aide, one is a Bookmobile driver and two work in administrative roles through Human Resources and the Adult Learning Department. The two additional scholars began the program as a custodian and technology resource specialist but were recently promoted to librarian trainees and are working in branches and receiving additional career supports.

The resources developed as a part of this grant will target library systems and library and archives associations nationally of all sizes and types (e.g., small, large, urban, rural, academic, public) seeking to build the leadership capacity of staff with a focus on fostering diversity and supporting staff from backgrounds underrepresented in librarianship. Resources will be relevant and accessible for individuals who are new or veteran staff or are interested in exploring a career in the library field. The resources will also address navigating post-degree professional life and leadership opportunities.

### Beneficiaries

*BPL Staff:* During the three-year grant period, 25 staff will be Pathways to Leadership scholarship recipients and 16 will earn their MLIS degrees, while the additional nine people will graduate after the grant period. It is anticipated that the majority will apply for and be hired to work in librarian-titled roles at either BPL or another library system within a year of earning their MLIS degree. As an organization, all staff will benefit from the program by helping to recruit and encourage applicants, serving as mentors, hosting job shadows, providing social and workplace support and in general, expanding the idea about who can be a librarian. The diversity in job titles of applicants to the program so far has highlighted that the interest in librarianship expands beyond people with or actively pursuing their MLIS degrees. BPL's librarians and leadership staff have eagerly welcomed scholars and have already begun working with them on program ideas. For example, one scholar is from an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish background and are collaborating with leadership in BPL's Outreach Services and Youth and Family Services departments to explore strategies for better serving the Ultra-Orthodox community, which is traditionally less likely to visit the public library. These strategies are borne from their current school assignments and demonstrate the intersectionality of attending school while simultaneously working in library services – the scholars can immediately apply their learnings, reinforcing their knowledge transference through practical application, benefiting communities and colleagues.

*Library Systems:* The resources developed will benefit libraries and library and archive associations nationally and of all sizes (e.g., rural, suburban), types (e.g., public, academic) and budgets by providing strategies and tools for adapting or replicating elements of Pathways to Leadership or the entire model to fit individual needs. Materials will be created through the lens of promoting diversity and will build the leadership skills of staff to help them advance the mission of their libraries, while improving patron services and expanding the types of services, resources and programs offered to their communities. Resources can be used individually or in coordination with a library system's human resources or leadership team. An advisory council will ensure resources are relevant, useful and trustworthy.

*Library Patrons:* Libraries serve to welcome all patrons regardless of economic, education, age, race, ethnicity or ability. This is especially vital in communities lacking public gathering spaces accessible to all. To ensure that libraries are meeting the expectations of the communities they serve, it is critical that librarians reflect the communities they serve and offer a warm, welcoming and friendly space filled with diverse collections, programs and resources that are responsive to the needs and interests of residents. Patrons are more likely to visit the library and seek assistance when they see people who represent them and share similar experiences. For young people in particular, librarians can serve as trusted adults directing young people to resources that support their emotional, social and academic well-being. This impact extends beyond the patron-librarian interaction to create a lifelong library user who will share their love of libraries with their friends and family and may even be inspired to pursue a career in library services.

*Future Library Staff:* In addition to providing professional development resources targeting current library staff, BPL will create resources for individuals considering careers in the library and archives field. These will be useful for clerical, administrative and other staff working in libraries, as well as people not working in libraries but interested in pursuing a career in the field.

*Partner MLIS Programs:* BPL will partner with MLIS programs at Queens College, University at Albany and the University at Buffalo (letters of support attached), while also seeking to build partnerships with additional programs. These partners will benefit from the insights and experiences of Pathways to Leadership scholars and program staff. The partner institutions will be able to use the formal feedback provided by BPL to both improve their MLIS programs to attract and better support a more diverse student body and update coursework to better reflect the experiences of librarians working in public settings and serving diverse communities with a wide range of interests and needs. Information on partnerships including policy or curriculum changes made to the MLIS programs will be shared broadly through dissemination activities.

Relationship to Similar Projects: From 2004-2007 and with IMLS support, BPL partnered with Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Services on the Public Urban Library Service Education Project (PULSE). PULSE was dedicated to preparing cohorts of future librarians and leaders enrolled at Pratt through a combination of graduate-level coursework and career exposures including mentoring and job shadowing. During this same period, BPL launched the Library Trainee Program to provide a more affordable and inclusive program for students enrolled in MLIS programs at other ALA-accredited schools. Unlike Pathways to Leadership, participants of these programs were recruited both internally and externally and there was not a focus on diversity. Additionally, while participants received meaningful work experience complete financial support was only offered to one PULSE participant annually, while several other participants received small amounts of support.

Both programs were hugely successful in recruiting and retaining librarians and leaders at BPL. Twenty PULSE and BPL Librarian Trainee graduates currently hold librarian titles at leadership titles at BPL, including as branch managers, regional directors, director of neighborhood services and chief librarian. Participants continue to cite their community of practice (belonging to a cohort, working closely with individual mentors and spending time in different branches) as particularly formative aspects of both programs, and limited access to financial assistance a major challenge. Pathways to Leadership seeks to draw from the successes and lessons learned from PULSE and BPL's Library Trainee Program.

Libraries nationally have been working to improve diversity among library professionals. The Association of Research Libraries has partnered with groups including the Music Library Association and the Society of American Archivists to recruit and support graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds through financial assistance, hands-on work experience, mentorships and other supports. In 2021 and with support from IMLS, the Alaska Library Network in partnership with the American Indian Library Association, the Alaska State Library and San José State University launched the three-year Bridging Knowledge scholarship program providing financial and student supports to 15 American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian graduate students to earn MLIS degrees and advanced certificates in strategic management of digital assets and services.<sup>5</sup> ALA offers scholarships for underrepresented groups providing up to \$5,000. Colleges and universities have also created programs to promote diversity including the University of California's Emerging Archival Scholars Program which recruits minority students into doctoral programs focused on archival education. Syracuse University will soon launch Pathways to Librarianship, an IMLS-funded program to investigate barriers to entrance, retention and advancement in the library workforce; BPL will incorporate these findings into its Pathways to Leadership program.

Pathways to Leadership is unique in that it focuses on leadership development and providing opportunities for career advancement for BPL staff who have shown their dedication and commitment to the field of librarianship through their past work experience. There are a myriad of student supports and resources to help students succeed including 1:1 support from the scholarship program coordinator to address academic and personal needs, mentoring, job shadowing, writing workshops, membership to ALA and education days, which allow staff to take paid time off work to concentrate on coursework. Additionally, by offering the program as a scholarship, it means that the funds are available upfront and not as a tuition reimbursement which eliminates a major financial barrier. Under the tuition reimbursement model, students must pay for classes up front which may mean taking out student loans and potentially accruing interest. Once scholars complete the program, they continue to receive mentorship as they apply for librarianship roles and begin the next chapter in their careers.

Beyond BPL, Pathways to Leadership has a broader impact on the library field nationally by not requiring staff commitment to stay with BPL after earning their MLIS, allowing staff to work for other libraries and archives. Funding from IMLS would also allow BPL to extend the impact of this initiative nationally by providing professional development resources (i.e., toolkits, workshop curriculum, webinars, templates) that will be publicly accessible online and can be used by library systems of all sizes. The model can be replicated or adapted at any size and scale to meet a range of needs from offering staff workshops on community outreach best practices, networking and managing conflict to creating mentorship programs.

## **II. Project Work Plan:**

Pathways to Leadership aims to develop library leaders among BPL staff by offering a scholarship program for non-librarian

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/re-250081-ols-21>

staff from groups underrepresented in the library and archives field to pursue a MLIS degree. As part of this effort, BPL will create a framework and resources that other library systems can use to develop diverse library leaders. Goals are:

- 1) Diversify the staff in librarianship and leadership positions at BPL, while fostering a culture of professional and leadership development and peer support among all organizational staff.
- 2) Create a model for other library systems of all sizes and libraries and archive associations to replicate or adapt as they work to diversify and increase leadership and career opportunities among staff.
- 3) Create a sustainable scholarship program at BPL that has long-term and meaningful impact on staff and the communities served.

#### Activities & Timeline:

*Develop & Strengthen Partnerships (August 2023-July 2026):* BPL will partner with Queens College, University at Albany, University at Buffalo and others to strengthen the Pathways to Leadership program. College partners will help recruit applicants by leading information sessions about their degree programs and working with BPL to identify opportunities for additional student support, such as academic and career advisement, membership groups and academic support. BookOps, BPL's technical services provider, will provide mentorship to scholars focused on collection development and cataloging, while BPL's own Center for Brooklyn History will provide mentorship focused on archives and building community collections. Metropolitan Library Council (METRO), a network of libraries, archives and museums in NYC and Westchester County, will partner in brainstorming ideas, collaborating on events and forums and disseminating the program model with other library systems regionally and nationally (letters of support from BookOps and METRO are attached).

Partnerships with colleges and universities will be an opportunity for these institutions to reflect upon their own MLIS programs to ensure the enrollment process, curriculum and academic supports consider the diversity of library staff and patrons while preparing students for work in dynamic environments. Through Pathways to Leadership, BPL is in a unique position to share feedback and have ongoing conversations with partners about the experiences of scholars as they explore and apply to programs, take classes, meet with professors and access school support. Project staff will solicit feedback throughout the year and share what is learned with schools encouraging programs to apply a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion to their curricula and policies and match theory with practice. The feedback received from scholars and then provided to schools is critical to helping all prospective and current MLIS students receive a meaningful education that prepares them for careers in the library and archives field.

*Recruitment (August 2023; December-January annually):* All staff are notified when the Pathways to Leadership application phase opens. Additional outreach is conducted by the scholarship program coordinator visiting branches and speaking with staff 1:1 and in group meetings, flyers at branches and FAQs on the BPL intranet. The coordinator hosts office hours twice a week at staggered times to accommodate varying schedules. Outreach continues throughout the year to ensure staff have time to consider and plan for their application to the program. In recruiting applicants, BPL highlights the different types of diversity eligible for the scholarship including race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and life experiences.

The first two cohorts of scholars were recruited in Summer 2021 and Summer 2022 and begun classes in the Spring of the following year. Starting in 2024, however, applicants will be recruited in January of each year with the goal of beginning classes in the Fall. This change in recruitment and enrollment schedule is based on the experience of scholars to date as it will give them more time to work on their applications and an opportunity to pursue a more typical academic schedule. For the 2023 program year, however, BPL will recruit applicants in August with the expectation that scholars will begin their programs in January 2024 to maintain existing momentum among staff.

*Scholar Selection & MLIS Program Enrollment (September 2023; January-February annually):* A new selection committee will be formed each year that consists of 3-5 staff from diverse backgrounds and with different roles at BPL who are librarians and/or have leadership experience and who have a deep understanding of the requirements and commitment needed to successfully complete the MLIS program. The selection committee will evaluate scholarship program applications using a rubric that assesses applicants based on their demonstrating the following qualities: strong communication skills, strong work ethic, eagerness to learn, commitment to the field, ability to multi-task, excellent team member and willingness to take initiative.

In their applications, applicants will be asked to share why they are pursuing the scholarship and why they want to pursue a MLIS degree. The first written response is brief and leaves room for a broad definition of diversity. The second written response mimics the main essay prompt of most MLIS program applications with the goal of easing the MLIS program application process for successful scholarship recipients who will already have a draft essay to build on. Applicants will participate in an interview with the selection committee where they will be asked a combination of situational, behavioral and competency questions to assess how prepared they are for a rigorous MLIS program and what supports BPL can provide to

ensure success. Final evaluations will be based on applicants' written responses, resumes, undergraduate transcripts, recommendations from BPL colleagues and interviews with the selection committee as compared to the rubric.

During the grant period, BPL will serve the 11 current scholars (cohorts 1 & 2) and award scholarships to an additional 14 (five scholars each in cohorts 3 and 4, two scholars each in cohorts 5 and 6) (The decrease in number of scholars in cohorts 5 and 6 is due to BPL fundraising for an endowment to support costs over the long-term; refer to the Sustainability section). BPL will work closely with each new cohort on their graduate program applications. New scholars will attend private information sessions with university partners and take an intensive writing class hosted by Gotham Writers Group, a resume-writing workshop hosted by BPL's Business and Career Center and receive individual essay coaching sessions with staff mentors. All scholars will receive support from the scholarship program coordinator with enrolling in their programs of choice and Pathways to Leadership-branded incentives such as tote bags and t-shirts to build excitement and a sense of community for the program. It is expected that students will take two years to complete the required thirty-six credits (six courses a year).

*Student Support Services (August-graduation annually):* Supports will include mentorship provided by staff at BPL, BookOps and the Center for Brooklyn History; job shadowing at branches across BPL's 61-location system; skill-development trainings; panel discussions; access to use and develop a special internal collection of core texts recommended by MLIS programs; community-building opportunities like mixers, dedicated online spaces and a weekly newsletter; annual membership in ALA and attendance at ALA's annual conferences for second year students. Paid education days will be provided to help scholars balance their work commitments with coursework. BPL's goal is to provide scholars with a supportive, flexible, community-based experience that recognizes individual needs.

Since the launch of the program, BPL has learned how far-ranging the needs of scholars are. Some scholars have required schedule flexibility for studying and tutoring, while others have requested support in the form of laptops and hotspots or coaching and counseling. Proactive and individualized support are critical to the success of the program as scholars apply and transition back into and persist through school, as evidenced by feedback solicited during monthly meetings with scholars and routine check-ins with external partners, including universities. The scholarship program coordinator will continue to meet regularly with scholars 1:1 to check in about progress, address individual needs and track goals, and the manager of learning and development will provide quarterly leadership and workplace coaching.

*Advisory Council (August 2023-July 2026):* BPL will form an advisory council comprised of 8-10 members representing libraries, archives, library and archives associations and universities from across the country. The council will be comprised of librarians and non-librarians from library systems of varying sizes and regions, MLIS program chairs and faculty, Pathways to Leadership scholars and other experts in the field. Members will have a shared commitment to promoting diversity in the field and will have experience in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; strategic planning; public-facing services; management; community-building and community outreach. Meeting quarterly, the council will serve as thought partners on the professional development resources being created by BPL and will provide feedback on all materials created to ensure they are useful to a range of library systems and individuals. It is expected that council members will become advocates helping to develop and strengthen career and leadership development opportunities for staff underrepresented in the field.

The following people have confirmed participation in the council: Traci Mark, Program Manager - Equity, Archives & Media Preservation at METRO and Christopher Platt, Director of Mono County Free Library (California). Others have expressed interest including Tim Furgal, Regional Library Manager at Ventura County Library (California) and Rachel Ivy Clarke, Associate Professor at Syracuse University (Tim and Rachel are Pathways to Librarianship Primary Investigators for the Syracuse University project; refer to the attached letter of support). In addition, BPL has reached out to Cindy Hohl, Bridging Knowledge Project Manager, Alaska Library Network (an IMLS grantee highlighted in the Project Justification section).

*Professional Development Resources (development August 2023-July 2024; dissemination and refinement August 2024-2026):* A publicly accessible webpage and website will be created to share information on the Pathways to Leadership scholarship program as well as resources that will be created through the lens of diversity and that libraries can use to support leadership development among staff; it will also share information for people interested in pursuing a career in the library and archives field and address navigating post-degree professional life and leadership opportunities. Resources will include information on implementing mentorship and library trainee programs; best practices for accommodating barriers staff/students have encountered in their work and school schedules; training modules on topics such as managing people, core competencies and mentoring; and a toolkit for launching a staff scholarship program featuring information including financial assistance, application support and tutoring. Resources will be shared on a dedicated webpage on BPL's website in Year 2 that will be used as an agile development space and in Year 3 will be migrated to an external dedicated Pathways to Leadership website.

BPL is presenting on Pathways to Leadership at ALA's June 2023 conference and during this event the library will host a focus group seeking feedback from librarians and library systems nationally as to the types of professional development resources that would be the most helpful and impactful. The goal of this focus group is to learn about the needs of library systems of all sizes and representing a wide range of geographies and demographics.

Project Staffing: *Caroline Kravitz, Scholarship Program Coordinator (Project Director, 100% FTE):* Caroline works closely with Pathways to Leadership scholarship recipients, supporting them from application through graduation. Additionally, she manages recruitment, partnerships with universities and other external partners, plans and implements enrichment activities, liaisons with the advisory council and manages program coordination and operations. Prior to joining BPL, Caroline worked in a Title 1 high school preparing students to graduate from high school and succeed in college and career.

*Sophie McGrath, Manager, Learning & Development (15% FTE):* Sophie is a professional learning and development expert with operational human resources experience in non-for-profit, government and higher education organizations supporting employees and senior leaders and has extensive experience in graduate programs and talent pipelines in government and nonprofit environments. In addition to providing quarterly leadership training, Sophie's core responsibilities will be the program's strategic direction aligning with larger organizational change and development initiatives.

Resource Requirements: As an institution, BPL requires the commitment of staff including scholars, supervisors, mentors and leadership to make this program a success. Scholars will need time to complete coursework while still managing their work responsibilities. BPL has built education days into the model which will allow scholars to take paid time off work to focus on school. Scholars are also able to take time off work using accrued paid time off days. Supervisors will need to be flexible with schedules and allow scholars to work varied shifts as needed. Mentors and staff being shadowed will need to dedicate time to ensuring scholars gain the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in school and after graduation. Financial resources pay for the cost of student support services, as well as staff to coordinate the program, provide scholars support, develop resources that have national relevancy, convene the advisory council, build partnerships, etc. BPL will also need to build strong partnerships with college and university partners, the advisory council and associations like ALA and the New York Library Association (NYLA), while partners will need to be committed to meeting with BPL, sharing ideas and thinking through strategies for increasing impact. Leveraging relationships will also be critical to disseminating the model with libraries nationally.

Library systems using the resources developed through this project will need to be committed to thinking about how materials can best be used with their staff and institutional resources, as well as time to plan and implement a leadership development program. The resources developed will be just as helpful for libraries with potential funding sources for scholarships as they are for library systems that are not able to dedicate any financial resources towards adapting the program.

Target Group Perspectives & Contributions: The initial scholarship program design incorporated recommendations from BPL's "Real Talk" conversations, which included perspectives from over 800 staff. As the program has been refined and reiterated since the initial planning stages at the end of 2020, BPL has incorporated feedback and guidance from the library's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council and used information gathered in frequent check-ins and surveys of current scholars and conversations with their direct supervisors and senior leaders to ensure the program is addressing unique barriers. When Pathways to Leadership initially launched, for example, only full-time employees were eligible to apply. The application cycle for Fall 2023, however, will include part-time employees based on feedback gleaned from prospective applicants. This feedback has also provided meaningful insight into barriers faced by staff who do not have bachelor's degrees and are therefore not yet eligible to apply for the program but still seeking to progress professionally and receive institutional support along the way. Lessons learned will continue to shape the development of Pathways to Leadership and the resources shared with library systems nationwide, in addition to general institutional policies and practices for adult learners.

The scholarship program coordinator conducts bi-monthly audits of all Pathways to Leadership work documents, events and supports to evaluate past success, identify and address areas of improvement and iterate the program design. Anecdotal and formal feedback from scholars and partners at all three university systems where scholars are currently enrolled demonstrate remarkable improvement in the learning experience for all. BPL has learned that although tuition is certainly one of the biggest barriers to an MLIS, a fear of failure and lack of confidence navigating the MLIS program application process are significant barriers too. As such, additional resources have been incorporated to support scholars as they apply to MLIS programs such as a resume-writing workshop, a business writing workshop and individualized feedback on personal statements. Since implementing these changes, all onboarded scholars have been accepted into their first choice MLIS programs.

For professional development resources, BPL will seek feedback from the advisory council and organizations and individuals accessing the resources. Adjustments will be made to materials as needed to ensure national and broad impact goals are met.

Tracking Progress: BPL will assess the success of the scholarship program through regular one-on-one conversations with scholars, mentors, staff being shadowed, guest speakers and external partners. Conversations and follow-up surveys will focus on scholars' experiences in both school and in the program, particularly if they feel a sense of community, inclusivity and belonging. Assessment information will be shared with project staff, Human Resources and BPL leadership with changes made to the program as needed to better support scholars. Relevant assessment information will also be shared with university and college partners to help shape their recruitment efforts, curricula and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The program will also be evaluated based on the number of scholars who move into librarianship or archival roles.

To measure the success of the professional development resources, BPL will collect feedback from the advisory council and through outreach to other library systems ensuring information is collected from libraries of different sizes and serving diverse populations. BPL will also conduct focus groups to evaluate areas in need of improvement. Visitors to the website will be encouraged to share feedback including the information that is helpful, unhelpful and what additional resources are needed.

Dissemination: BPL will share the Pathways to Leadership program and related resources with library systems nationally by participating in networking events, presenting at conferences and publishing articles about the program in publications such as Library Journal. In June 2023, the scholarship program coordinator and several scholars will present at ALA's Annual Conference. BPL has applied to present at the NYLA conference in November 2023 and the Public Library Association (PLA)'s conference in April 2024. BPL will continue to seek speaking opportunities at conferences, meetings and other library-focused events and will build partnerships with library and archives associations to disseminate the model and resources. At ALA, and in general, BPL will meet with staff at other library systems across the country to share experiences building and implementing the program, as well as program content including training modules, study support materials and mentorship ideas to encourage other systems to implement similar initiatives. In the coming months, BPL's podcast Borrowed, which has over 100,000 downloads to date (1,000-3,4000 per episode), will feature the initiative and interviews with scholars.

BPL will host a webinar for public libraries in Year 2 of the project and will share a white paper in Year 3. The webinar and white paper will highlight the model, lessons learned and best practices. The webinar will be recorded and made available on the Pathways to Leadership resource page. The white paper will be shared with the advisory council and partners for feedback and once finalized will be available on the resource page and shared with BPL's networks including METRO as well as library and archive associations such as ALA and PLA for wider distribution.

### **III. Diversity Plan**

Diversity is at the heart of the Pathways to Leadership program and has played a critical role from conception and design to implementation and evaluation. As the program expands to include creating resources for other library systems, diversity will continue to drive this work and will be a focal point in ensuring that the materials are relevant and impactful.

Participant & Community Involvement: Pathways to Leadership was created in response to the needs expressed by over 800 staff members during a series of listening sessions held in summer 2020. One of the key takeaways from these sessions was the need to provide opportunities and support to help staff, particularly those underrepresented in librarianship, grow within their careers and into leadership roles. From design to implementation, BPL has engaged staff at all levels ranging from prospective scholars to library leadership to learn about the opportunities, challenges and supports needed. Throughout the initiative BPL will continue to solicit feedback ranging from staff interested in learning more about or applying for the program to scholars, supervisors, mentors, members of the DEI Council and leadership. The scholarship program coordinator regularly hears from staff about the program including during system-wide, regional and branch presentations and office hours. The recruitment phase of the program provides a significant opportunity for the project team to learn about who is applying to the program and who is not. BPL will reach out to eligible applicants who do not apply to learn why and what changes to the program could be made to make it more inclusive. All feedback will be used to make improvements to recruitment and scholar supports. This past year, a scholar shared their challenges with the content in one of their courses and BPL was able to connect them with catalogers at BookOps to learn firsthand about the topic. BPL will continue to work with BookOps, while also seeking out job shadowing and advisement opportunities within BPL that can support learning. BPL is also connecting with MLIS program administrators to share challenges and discuss ways that the student experience can be improved.

The advisory council will be essential in helping BPL to better understand the challenges and needs of library systems in rural and suburban communities, as well as other urban areas, and will ensure that the materials developed have relevancy for libraries with different levels of resources. BPL will also solicit feedback from library systems of different sizes and regions through focus groups and feedback collected through the resource website. BPL will prioritize soliciting feedback from library systems that are diverse and will contact systems directly if institutions of similar sizes and geographies are not represented during focus group, the advisory council or other information sharing events.



Diversity of Perspectives & Practices: Pathways to Leadership is open to all staff with a bachelor’s degree and interested in pursuing their MLIS. At BPL, this target population is diverse and represents a wide range of experiences, backgrounds and job titles. Prospective scholars as well as library staff, including those in librarian-titled and leadership positions and the DEI Council, provide critical feedback on the program both in terms of recruitment and library supports. The recruitment process is a valuable time to meet with prospective scholars to learn about their goals and challenges and identify ways that practices can be modified or implemented to support their success. This time also provides a significant opportunity to ensure Pathways to Leadership is more accessible to those underrepresented in librarianship than previous iterations of the program. Outreach is system-wide, but especially concentrated in branches and departments that, as evidenced by data, have high numbers of employees from underrepresented backgrounds with bachelor’s degrees. The selection committee is comprised of staff with diverse backgrounds and experience, and applications will be designed to be especially accessible and inviting.

Once scholars are selected, BPL works closely with them throughout the program constantly learning about their experiences. Due to the number of scholars enrolled in MLIS programs at one time (maximum of 21), BPL can stay closely connected to students ensuring there are regular formal check-ins as well as on-going informal communications. BPL’s goal is to ensure that applicants and scholars are reflective of a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, and that people understand that this program is for them, regardless of their current position or the financial and time management challenges that may normally preclude them from excelling in a master’s degree program while continuing to work full-time.

Scholars also provide feedback about their MLIS programs including coursework and academic supports. BPL has used the experience of PULSE and the Library Trainee Program to design a program focused on inclusivity and accessibility, while using the experiences of the first two Pathways to Leadership cohorts to make changes including adding additional scholar supports and strengthening relationships with MLIS programs to advocate for improved academic accessibility, including but not limited to inclusive curricular, class scheduling/mediums and diversity of instruction.

In working with library staff with a range of titles and working in branches serving diverse communities throughout Brooklyn, BPL can learn about the day-to-day competencies and skills needed to serve patrons and build those practices into the program. To date scholars have engaged in the following trainings: rekindling from burnout, providing trauma-informed services to patrons, cataloging 101 and building your “empathy muscles.” Based on requests from scholars and recommendations from current librarians and leaders across the system, as well as METRO who organized a mentorship program for Black, Indigenous and People of Color in the field, future programs will include cultural competency, building community in the field, community outreach, managing conflict, supervising 101 and leading in a diverse environment.

Insights and practices learned from Pathways to Leadership scholars and BPL staff will be integrated into the knowledge and experiences shared by the advisory council, focus groups and others to ensure online resources are relevant and impactful for library systems of all sizes, as well as individuals and other interested parties. BPL will make sure that feedback is received from a range of perspectives and practices including library staff from systems in different regions of the country and of different sizes and types of jurisdictions, as well as staff with different titles, years of experience in the field and backgrounds.

Strengthening the Field’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Through Pathways to Leadership, BPL is demonstrating an organizational commitment to diversifying the library and archives field and creating a model that other library systems can adapt or replicate. While this project will provide 25 library staff with MLIS degrees (16 during the grant period) that will increase professional employment opportunities in the field, the impact is deeper and more far reaching. BPL’s librarian-titled and leadership staff are encouraging staff without MLIS degrees to pursue the Pathways to Leadership opportunity, regardless of current library positions and backgrounds. Librarians have been welcoming and supportive of staff applying to the program and are eager to speak with applicants and scholars about their careers and graduate school, while also learning about the applicants and scholars’ experiences and what they may like to focus on during and after an MLIS program. Two scholars have already received promotional opportunities into library trainee positions which will automatically translate into librarian-titled positions at BPL upon graduation. Based on the outcomes of the previous PULSE and Library Trainee Program initiatives, BPL expects that over time many scholars will advance to leadership roles at BPL or other libraries including branch managers, regional managers, directors and chief librarians.

Library systems all over the country have staff who are eager to support the professional development of their colleagues as well as library staff who would thrive with institutional supports that propel them into careers in librarianship and leadership roles. The insights and resources shared will provide library staff nationally the tools and encouragement to create their own programs focused on diversifying the librarian workforce. In addition to offering a wide array of resources, BPL will be available to provide technical assistance and help other library systems think through program options and what supports are possible with or without financial resources. By giving staff the tools to grow in their careers, libraries will be able to retain librarians who are knowledgeable of their institutions and the communities being served. By having diverse library staff,

libraries will remain relevant and vital to their communities providing services, programs and resources that speak to the shifting needs and interests of residents. Lastly, when patrons see librarians who represent them and have similar backgrounds, they will be able to see themselves as librarians and will be more likely to pursue careers in library services.

#### IV. Project Results

Intended Results: The project will establish Pathways to Leadership as a feasible staff development model that has significant impact on an individual's career trajectory, organizational capacity and the communities served by BPL. Results will be essential as BPL looks to build a sustainable model that can be adapted by libraries with a range of resources and funding.

Pathways to Leadership will result in the following outcomes that are aligned with the project goals:

- 25 staff members earn MLIS degrees (16 staff within the grant period) and gain employment in librarianship or leadership roles (BPL typically has 40 open library-titled positions annually).
- A greater number of libraries and library and archives associations incorporate BPL's resources into career advancement and leadership training opportunities and provide supports to staff as they pursue MLIS degrees with the goal of creating a diverse and culturally competent workforce that is representative of the patrons served.
- A greater number of individuals from groups underrepresented in librarianship are employed at BPL and at library systems nationally in librarian-titled positions, leading to increased usage of the library and expanded programming, book displays and other services that are inclusive and reflect a broad array of cultures, interests and backgrounds.
- Pathways to Leadership becomes a core BPL initiative with new scholars enrolling in the program annually and an increased number of staff participating in the program as mentors, workshop facilitators and advisors.

Adaptability of Deliverables: The scholarship component of the program can be adapted to fit a range of organizational and fundraising budgets while also providing resources that support libraries with no capacity for providing financial support but that could address other barriers such as school and work scheduling. While some BPL scholars will enroll in programs that take place in-person, others will take online programs, which are available to staff nationally.

The leadership development tools will require few, if any, financial resources and will be easily adaptable to the needs of individual library systems. All materials will be reviewed by the advisory council before dissemination to ensure usefulness and relevancy to library systems of all sizes and with different levels of resources. Materials will include multiple strategies for implementation to account for differences in staffing sizes and structures, financial resources, time limitations and other challenges experienced by library systems, and will be regularly updated based on feedback received.

BPL will share the model and results with library systems, providing technical assistance as requested and thereby reducing the individual implementation and adoption costs to separate library systems. By providing technical assistance BPL will also be able to help libraries adapt the Pathways to Leadership model and materials to fit their individual needs.

Sustainability: BPL seeks to sustain Pathways to Leadership indefinitely and has created a dedicated endowment to support the initiative. By the end of June 2023, BPL expects to have raised \$175,000 from private donors. The goal is to raise a minimum of \$500,000 by the end of the proposed grant period (July 2026) and payout 5% of funds annually (5% of \$500,000 is \$25,000) which will cover two student scholarships per year. In the long-term BPL seeks to continue growing the endowment to offer additional scholarships each year and to cover the program administration costs. During this period, BPL will subsidize the administration expenses. Support from IMLS will be essential in helping BPL to prove the success and impact of Pathways to Leadership and demonstrate the value of the program on the community and field to private donors.

In addition to the goal of creating a flagship staff development program, during the three-year grant period Pathways to Leadership will provide BPL and the library field a cadre of 16 new librarians representing diverse backgrounds and experiences who will have the skills and knowledge to provide excellent services to communities. The field will also gain a suite of resources and materials that focus on diversity in librarianship and leadership development and are applicable to libraries of all sizes and in all regions. It is expected that over time many of the Pathways to Leadership scholars and staff utilizing the resources developed by BPL will move into librarian-titled positions and leadership roles, speak at conferences, join library association committees and more. Through these activities, individuals will be able to deepen their impact on the field by sharing new ideas and strengthening and encouraging staff diversity initiatives.

Investing in employees will create robust talent pipelines preventing knowledge and delivery gaps, while promoting internal movement to take on new opportunities. As library systems incorporate staff and leadership development into their activities, the institutional knowledge gained by retaining and promoting employees will provide libraries more time to focus on their strategic priorities and provide a cost savings in terms of filling librarian-titled vacancies.

**Schedule of Completion: August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024 (Year 1)**

*Note that C stands for Cohort; there would be six cohorts supported by IMLS. Cohort 1 began classes in January 2022; Cohort 2 began classes in January 2023.*

Activity	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
<b>Develop &amp; Strengthen Partnerships</b>												
Universities/Colleges	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Scholar Recruitment</b>												
Program Outreach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Upcoming Program Cohort Outreach <sup>1</sup>	C3				C4	C4						
<b>Scholar Selection &amp; MLIS Program Enrollment</b>												
Application Review Committee Formed	C3					C4						
Application Review & Selection	C3						C4					
Applicants Notified of Decisions		C3					C4					
MLIS Application Support (resume workshop, personal statement support, etc.)		C3	C3					C4	C4			
Writing Workshop led by Gotham Writers Group		C3						C4				
MLIS Program Enrollment					C3						C4	
<b>Student Support Services</b>												
Classes	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3
1:1 Meetings with Scholarship Program Coordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job Shadowing & Mentoring	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2	C 1-2
American Library Association Conference											C 1-2	
Enrichment Activities (e.g., skill development trainings, panel discussions)	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4
Cohort Building Activities (e.g., scholar newsletter, cohort-building events)	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4
Leadership and Workplace Coaching			X			X			X			X
<b>Advisory Council</b>												
Advisory Council Meetings		X			X			X			X	
<b>Professional Development Resources</b>												
Resource Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Evaluation</b>												
Scholarship Program		X			X			X			X	
Resources			X			X			X			X

<sup>1</sup> While scholars in cohorts 1-3 began/will begin classes in January of each year, BPL will move cohorts 4-6 to the Fall academic schedule to provide scholars more time to work on their MLIS program applications and provide the opportunity to pursue a more typical academic schedule.

Brooklyn Public Library – Pathways to Leadership

Schedule of Completion: August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025 (Year 2)

Activity	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
<b>Develop &amp; Strengthen Partnerships</b>												
Universities/Colleges	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Scholar Recruitment</b>												
Program Outreach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Upcoming Program Cohort Outreach <sup>1</sup>					C5	C5						
<b>Scholar Selection &amp; MLIS Program Enrollment</b>												
Application Review Committee Formed						C5						
Application Review & Selection							C5					
Applicants Notified of Decisions							C5					
MLIS Application Support (resume workshop, personal statement support, etc.)								C5	C5			
Writing Workshop led by Gotham Writers Group								C5				
MLIS Program Enrollment											C5	
<b>Student Support Services</b>												
Classes	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 3-4
1:1 Meetings with Scholarship Program Coordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job Shadowing & Mentoring	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 1-3	C 2-3	C 2-3	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 3-4
American Library Association Conference											C3	
Enrichment Activities (e.g., skill development trainings, panel discussions)	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-5	C 2-5	C 2-5	C 2-5	C 3-5
Cohort Building Activities (e.g., scholar newsletter, cohort-building events)	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 1-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-4	C 2-5	C 3-5
Leadership and Workplace Coaching			X			X			X			X
MLIS Program Completion					C1						C2	
<b>Advisory Council</b>												
Advisory Council Meetings		X			X			X			X	
<b>Professional Development Resources</b>												
Webpage Launch	X											
Updates to Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Evaluation</b>												
Scholarship Program		X			X			X			X	
Resources			X			X			X			X

Brooklyn Public Library – Pathways to Leadership

Schedule of Completion: August 1, 2025 – July 31, 2026 (Year 3)

Activity	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	
<b>Develop &amp; Strengthen Partnerships</b>													
Universities/Colleges	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Scholar Recruitment</b>													
Program Outreach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Upcoming Program Cohort Outreach <sup>1</sup>					C6	C6							
<b>Scholar Selection &amp; MLIS Program Enrollment</b>													
Application Review Committee Formed						C6							
Application Review & Selection							C6						
Applicants Notified of Decisions							C6						
MLIS Application Support (resume workshop, personal statement support, etc.)								C6	C6				
Writing Workshop led by Gotham Writers Group								C6					
MLIS Program Enrollment											C6		
<b>Student Support Services</b>													
Classes	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 5
1:1 Meetings with Scholarship Program Coordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job Shadowing & Mentoring	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 4-5	C 5-6
American Library Association Conference												C4	
Enrichment Activities (e.g., skill development trainings, panel discussions)	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 5-6
Cohort Building Activities (e.g., scholar newsletter, cohort-building events)	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 3-5	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 4-6	C 5-6	C 5-6	C 5-6
Leadership and Workplace Coaching			X			X			X			X	
MLIS Program Completion					C3						C4		
<b>Advisory Council</b>													
Advisory Council Meetings		X			X			X			X		
<b>Professional Development Resources</b>													
Website Launch	X												
Updates to Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
White Paper											X		
<b>Evaluation</b>													
Scholarship Program		X			X			X			X		
Resources			X			X			X			X	

## Digital Product Plan

Over the course of the grant period, BPL will create the following digital outputs:

- A publicly accessible webpage and website that share information on the Pathways to Leadership scholarship program as well as resources that will be created through the lens of diversity and that libraries can use to support leadership development among staff; it will also share information for people interested in pursuing a career in the library and archives field and address navigating post-degree professional life and leadership opportunities. Resources will include information on implementing mentorship and library trainee programs; best practices for accommodating barriers staff/students have encountered in their work and school schedules; training modules on topics such as managing people, core competencies and mentoring; and a toolkit for launching a staff scholarship program featuring information including financial assistance, application support and tutoring. Resources will be shared on a dedicated webpage on BPL's website in Year 2 that will be used as an agile development space and in Year 3 will be migrated to an external dedicated Pathways to Leadership website

### Type

The purpose of the Pathways to Leadership Resource digital product is to share relevant information for individuals who are interested or in the process of pursuing their master's in library and information science (MLIS) degrees, library and archives administrators who would like to implement a similar program and/or other continuing education supports (like leadership development programs, mentorship programs, etc.) and universities that are seeking to recruit and better support students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Resources will be split up into categories based on size/type of library and role in the field (i.e. prospective student, current student, library administrator, university administrator). Content will include, but not be limited to, the following:

For individuals:

- MLIS program comparison chart (provides tuition costs, application processes, eligibility requirements, etc.)
- Scholarship databases (to fund MLIS degrees and graduate school in general)
- Course registration checklists
- Timeline/steps for applying, enrolling and completing your program
- How-to guide for finding and utilizing resources your MLIS program/school offers (i.e. utilizing your school's online library, where to go for writing support, etc.)
- Free training modules (finding mentors, writing skills, organization skills, advocating for yourself, etc.)
- Justification letter templates (how to talk to leadership about implementing a program including the financial business case, data from your library and community, etc.)
- How-to guide for navigating post-degree professional life and leadership opportunities

For managers:

- Tips for supporting employees who are in school (timeline for check ins, best practices, etc.)
- 1:1 agenda ideas and templates
- Free training modules (mentoring 101, writing skills, organization skills, writing proposals, application support, etc.)
- Justification letter templates (how to talk to leadership about implementing a program including the financial business case, collecting and organizing data from your library and community, etc.)

For program coordinators (of either scholarship or mentorship programs):

- Onboarding surveys/templates
- Budget template
- Application/selection information
- Accommodations/needs of scholars to consider
- 1:1 agenda templates
- Program timeline templates (how frequently to check in with scholars, plan programs, etc.)
- Feedback survey templates
- Program ideas
- Templates for newsletters/other communications with scholars

For administrators:

- Skills audit to identify staff that can be a resource to scholars, even if they are not librarians
- Budget template
- How-to guide for establishing relationships with partners
- Proposal templates
- A “choose your own adventure” guide to figure out what your library can feasibly implement (i.e. a scholarship program, a mentorship program, a staff professional development collection, etc.)

#### Additional information

- Links to BPL’s [Borrowed](#) podcast (Pathways to Leadership will be featured in March 2023)
- Additional relevant podcasts, papers, and articles about the program, and about the field in general
- Form for questions that links to BPL’s Pathways to Leadership scholarship program coordinator email

#### Availability

This digital product will be publicly available through the BPL website in Year 2 utilizing an agile methodology. In Year 3, it will migrate to an external dedicated Pathways to Leadership website implementing a waterfall methodology. Both the webpage and website will be ADA compliant and accessible. Anyone with access to standard computing hardware, software, and the internet via standard web browsers could discover the site. The site will be designed to be discoverable and useable, whether the user is someone currently working in a large library system or an individual not yet affiliated with a library. Users can search for Pathways to Leadership through [bklynlibrary.org](#) or an internet search browser. BPL will deliver an interactive, informative, and robust website that enables users to easily navigate and personalize their visit based on their unique needs. The website will streamline the prospective and current scholar experience, providing extensive administrative and partner content. This site's mission will be to inform, serve, present, and connect our target audience in the pursuit of diversifying and successfully enabling engagement in the libraries and archives fields

#### Access

All materials created and shared by BPL on the Pathways to Leadership Resource page will credit Brooklyn Public Library. The only limitation regarding the use of the resources is that they cannot be used for profit; a disclaimer will be provided indicating the limitation.

To address privacy concerns, BPL will get consent from anyone who is shown in a photo or video or is identified in text. When needed, any identifiable features of a Pathways to Leadership scholar will be removed. BPL will only share information on the names of the library systems and organizations contacting the library about Pathways to Leadership with IMLS for reporting purposes; individual names will not be shared though BPL may share the titles or types of people seeking support (e.g., chief librarian, graduate student, college administrator) but will separate job titles from organizations.

All resources will be culturally sensitive and screened by staff and members of the Pathways to Leadership advisory council to ensure relevance, accessibility and inclusivity.

#### Sustainability

Funding has been allocated for material and webpage/website development, technical support, website hosting and maintenance, domain name acquisition and website security (Total costs are \$22,533 supported by BPL cost share and IMLS). BPL will update the website as the program evolves to incorporate new activities, lessons learned and feedback from scholars, partners the advisory council and other library systems, among others. Users of the Pathways to Leadership resources webpage and website will be able to provide feedback throughout the year. Additionally, each year BPL will put out a call for feedback to ensure resources continue to reflect the needs of the people and organizations using them.

## Organizational Profile

**Mission & Governance:** Brooklyn Public Library (BPL)'s mission is to ensure the preservation and transmission of society's knowledge, history and culture, and to provide the people of Brooklyn with free, open access to information for education, reference and recreation. The mission statement was ratified by the library's Board of Trustees on February 27, 1998, as part of BPL's revision of its Policy and Procedures manual.

**Service Area:** BPL's service area (Kings County, New York) is one of the country's most socially, culturally and economically diverse and includes 2.7 million residents. Demographically, a large percentage of the borough's population are from minority communities including approximately 27% Black or African American, 19% Hispanic or Latino and 14% Asian. Per 2019 and 2020 Census data 45 % of Brooklynites speak a language other than English at home and 35% are foreign-born. Of foreign-born residents, the majority hail from China, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ukraine, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Russia.

In a borough where 18% of residents live in poverty, including one in four children, and where the costs of necessities often take priority over spending on cultural and educational opportunities, BPL's free resources and programs are critical to ensuring all people have the tools they need to become productive and self-sufficient citizens. BPL exists in order to provide unfettered access to free, reliable information to all people, regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, ability, gender or education level.

**History:** Originally envisioned as a small network of libraries throughout the independent city of Brooklyn, the BPL system was approved by an Act of Legislature of the State of New York on May 1, 1892, and later passed by resolution of the Brooklyn Common Council on November 30, 1896. Today, BPL is one of the nation's largest public library systems, operating independently and alongside New York's two other library systems, and is among the borough's most democratic civic institutions, serving patrons in every neighborhood and from every walk of life.

A BPL branch falls within a mile of nearly every Brooklyn resident, acting as a critical hub in the neighborhood it supports and serving as a de facto town square in its community, providing essential resources and strengthening the social fabric. Many patrons rely on BPL as an alternative to school, a place where they are surrounded by books and other resources and can follow their intuitions and interests at their own pace. For patrons who want to pursue knowledge alongside others, BPL offers an enormous range of programs, classes, workshops and cultural events that introduce new ideas, practices and ways of thinking. BPL's extensive collection gives patrons four million opportunities to enjoy one of life's greatest satisfactions: the joy of a good book.

Each year, BPL provides tens of thousands of free programs and is the second largest provider of free WiFi in Brooklyn after the NYC subway system. In calendar year 2022, BPL offered 40,091 free virtual and in-person programs, with 475,365 children, teens and adults in attendance; circulated 9,695,085 materials, including books and electronic media; welcomed 3,678,728 visits to 61 locations; hosted 451,499 computer sessions; and received nearly 3.3 million website visits.

To diversify librarianship at BPL and support staff from traditionally underrepresented groups, BPL launched Pathways to Leadership, a scholarship program for non-librarian employees seeking a Master's in Library Science. In the fall of 2021, the Library announced the first six scholarship recipients, who are now pursuing their MLS degrees while receiving mentoring and professional development programmatic support from BPL. This work is being led by BPL's Human Resources department in collaboration with leadership across all BPL departments, including the chief librarian, director of neighborhood services and regional librarians, who each oversee ten branch libraries.

In addition to overseeing Pathways to Leadership, Human Resources works to increase the skills and knowledge of all library employees, regardless of title or educational attainment, by offering and promoting in-person, virtual and OnDemand trainings throughout the year on topics including leadership development, disability etiquette and awareness, understanding and responding to microaggressions, serving reentry patrons, coaching and mentoring, workplace productivity and implementing trauma-informed practices.