

Project name: Libraries as catalysts for unveiling more inclusive data in rural areas

The Califa Group, in collaboration with the University of Washington (UW) Information School (iSchool), requests \$249,994 in funding for a two-year Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program grant **to create a training program for rural libraries aimed at developing community engagement strategies to implement inclusive data practices** (Goal 3: Objective 3.1). Library workers, policymakers, and community organizers often struggle to find datasets that accurately represent the realities and aspirations of rural communities. Rural libraries need support in engaging communities in data generation that better represents rural areas and facilitates the development of more equitable programs, services, and public policies. To do this, we will create a free, on-demand online course that will equip rural library workers with the skills and tools to facilitate inclusive data practices in rural communities. The training course will be informed by a rural library data needs assessment and a co-design process with a cohort of 10 rural libraries from across the United States.

1. Project Justification: In our data-driven world, there is an increasing need for libraries to use data to ensure their services respond to community needs. However, rural libraries struggle to find data that accurately reflects the diversity and complexities of their communities. By providing community members with the skills and opportunities to participate in defining, understanding, and solving social problems through better data, libraries can enhance the role of these groups in informing more equitable policy making, resource allocation, and overall assessment of communities' well-being. We call this approach **inclusive data practices**. This project builds on our previous efforts to develop inclusive data practices training for library workers. However, this training was not tailored for rural libraries. Feedback from rural library workers who participated in the training indicated that they found the content valuable but identified challenges in implementing some of the tools and engagement strategies within their communities. For example, a rural library worker serving an agricultural area noted difficulties with asset-based mapping due to the fluctuating population, mainly from seasonal workers. Another rural library worker expressed concerns about designing inclusive data collection efforts, citing privacy issues stemming from the small size of their community.

As part of this new project, Califa and the University of Washington Information School will closely collaborate with rural library workers to conduct a rural data and community engagement needs assessment, facilitate a series of co-design workshops with a cohort of ten rural libraries to revise existing training materials and develop two new modules, gather feedback from the broader rural library community, and organize a series of webinars to raise awareness about the project and promote the training. These project results will support LB21 Goal 3 and Objective 3.1 by developing training to equip the library workforce to engage in sustained community development through inclusive data practices. Our target group for the project will be rural library workers. We will collaborate with a cohort of 10 rural libraries with approximately 1-2 library workers from each library, for a net total of 10 - 20 rural library workers. Project beneficiaries will be rural library workers that participate in the published online training, rural communities, state libraries, and other library organizations

Need 1: Understand the current state of data in rural communities through the perspective of public libraries.

Rural America encompasses a wide range of geographic regions, cultural backgrounds, and economic opportunities. Across this rich and diverse landscape, nearly four thousand rural libraries serve communities, playing a vital role in supporting over 30 million residents in these regions (Institute of Museum and Library Services, [2017](#); [2020](#)). Existing narratives often emphasize the challenges faced by rural America using data derived from available national demographic and economic datasets, relying on measures such as population, poverty, and industry growth and decline ([Scally et al., 2020](#)). While these narratives are important for highlighting issues, they can inadvertently reinforce a perception of rural communities as struggling and homogeneous, perpetuating stereotypes that may not accurately reflect the diversity and resilience of these areas ([Rembert & Blatchly, 2024](#); [Koyejo, 2024](#); [Scally et al., 2020](#)). “These analyses, and the stories told with them, can draw national attention and influence how stakeholders and the public view rural communities. They can also frame how we discuss rural policies and decision making” ([Scally et al., 2020](#)).

Rural libraries, local organizations, and public agencies face significant challenges in accessing public data that truly reflects the diverse realities of their communities. One of the primary challenges stems from the lack of granularity in

available data, which often fails to capture the nuanced characteristics of rural areas ([Scally et al., 2020](#)). Additionally, ongoing demographic changes further complicate data availability, as rural populations may experience shifts in composition and needs over time (Johnson & Lichter, [2022a](#); Johnson, [2022b](#)). Moreover, with over 10 federal definitions and various state-specific ones, categorizing rural areas becomes challenging to accurately assess prosperity in rural communities. This complexity, combined with inherent community differences may lead to unintended outcomes, skewed data interpretations, and potentially misinformed decisions and policies impacting the present and future sustainable development of rural communities ([Rembert & Blatchly, 2024](#); [Scally et al., 2020](#)).

In this complex data landscape, it's vital to recognize the current strategies rural libraries employ to gather community information for program and service development. Equally important is understanding the challenges rural library staff encounter in accessing data and the implications for more equitable program design and resource allocation.

Community-driven inclusive data practices could play a pivotal role in creating more representative and nuanced data about a community. Understanding who is represented and who is not in these datasets, as well as how rural prosperity is measured and which stakeholders are involved, can have a direct impact in the development of more inclusive programs and services. This knowledge extends beyond rural libraries to benefit other organizations and government agencies seeking to serve rural communities more effectively.

Need 2: Increase the ability of rural library workers to engage the community using inclusive data practices.

Rural public libraries have a rich history of providing spaces for public dialogue and fostering civic engagement within the diverse communities they serve. With deep local connections, these libraries are recognized as safe spaces and trusted institutions where community members can come together to address important social issues ([Coward et al., 2018](#); [Gibson et al., 2017](#); [Jaeger, Shilton, & Koepfler, 2016](#); [Kranich, 2012](#)). Additionally, rural libraries provide essential services working with their communities to address persistent challenges with broadband access, lifelong education, youth engagement, workforce development, and access to reliable information ([Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2017](#)). Given their role as trusted community spaces, rural libraries are well-positioned to take on a more active role in collaborating with their communities to develop inclusive data practices.

Libraries have long embraced their role as informational authorities helping to inform the public. We envision public libraries not only as places to access information and knowledge, but also to co-create knowledge and facilitate agency in and with their communities. Efforts to democratize the creation and dissemination of knowledge have long and rich intellectual roots, within academia in general, and also within the library field ([Kranich, 2012](#); [Cigarini et al., 2021](#); [Hernandez-Perez, 2022](#)). In recent years, however, calls are mounting for new approaches that can significantly elevate community knowledge in finding solutions for pressing social problems, including the availability and quality of data to better assess community prosperity and needs (i.e. [Schwabish, Feng, and Jenkins](#) (eds), 2024; [D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020](#); [Thinyane, 2018](#)). This collection of work forms the cornerstone for defining the guiding principles of inclusive data practices in this project, emphasizing an asset-based approach to community development, prioritizing people-centered strategies, and fostering a space for community engagement to enhance rural libraries' effectiveness in serving their communities. Traditionally, libraries have focused on using data to assess the impact of their services and programs within their communities. However, libraries now have the opportunity to emerge as vital partners in discussions surrounding inclusive data efforts. These efforts aim to enhance the availability and quality of data, leveraging the strengths and assets of rural communities to more accurately measure equitable rural prosperity and well-being.

Need 3: Create scalable training model centered on rural library needs.

Rural libraries need customized training to help support the implementation of inclusive data practices and address their unique needs and challenges related to the lack of relevant and available data as documented above. Our project expands upon prior projects funded by IMLS focused on enabling open data use by public library staff (e.g., “Leveraging Use of Open Data by Public Library Staff for Community Benefit” (LG-246255-OLS-20); “The Regional Equity Atlas” (LG-94-18-0278-18); the “[Civic Data Education Series](#)” (RE-254899-OLS-23) and the [Data Privacy Project](#) (RE-06-15-0050-15)). For rural areas, a narrow focus on open data does not meet library needs. In his IMLS funded

project (LG-246255-OLS-20), Senior Personnel Jowasis heard from rural library workers that due to a lack of open data about rural areas, they often turn to closed data sets from community partners such as school districts in order to gain access to basic data about their community. Our training will go beyond accessing currently available data and shift the focus to incorporating community engagement methods in data identification, generation, and use.

By leveraging co-design or participatory design methodologies, it is possible to integrate diverse perspectives and lived experiences of a diverse group of rural library workers, ensuring that their voices resonate throughout the co-design process and in the outputs developed as part of the project (i.e. [Dogunke, 2021](#); [Miettinen, 2020](#)). Through active engagement and iteration, these methodologies not only foster a sense of ownership and investment among participants but also yield more relevant and impactful outcomes tailored to the unique needs of rural library settings. Incorporating diverse voices in the training design process will also enhance scalability, increasing the training program's potential for broader uptake.

Creating an on-demand, modular training course would allow rural libraries nationwide to learn about and implement inclusive data practices in their own communities. Based on our previous work with rural libraries, we have heard that virtual professional development opportunities increase accessibility. Since many rural libraries have fewer staff members, traveling for in-person events is more difficult. In the original iteration of the *Inclusive Data* training, training participants gave feedback that a modular, asynchronous format would be valuable.

2. Project Work Plan (August 2024 - July 2026): We propose a two-year timeline for this project and will focus on the following goals:

Goal 1: Create an asynchronous online training course on inclusive data practices for rural libraries: Through co-design with 10 rural libraries, we will revise the existing synchronous online training into an asynchronous course that meets the needs of rural libraries. In addition to the revision of the original course, the co-design sessions with rural library staff will produce two new training modules.

Goal 2: Create an action plan for inclusive data practices for rural libraries: Informed by a needs assessment, the co-design process and lessons learned from the implementation plans of the library cohort, we will create an action plan for rural libraries for adopting inclusive data practices in their communities. This guide will complement the training, but also act as a stand-alone resource for library workers that want to understand the basics of inclusive data practices.

Goal 3: Promote training, action plan and supporting materials: Finally, we will promote the training and action plan through a nationwide dissemination campaign to increase uptake across rural libraries. We will leverage Califa's and UW iSchool's extensive communication networks as well as the networks of partners' Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL) and Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL).

2.2 Description of prior work: This project will build upon the expertise of project partners and prior work.

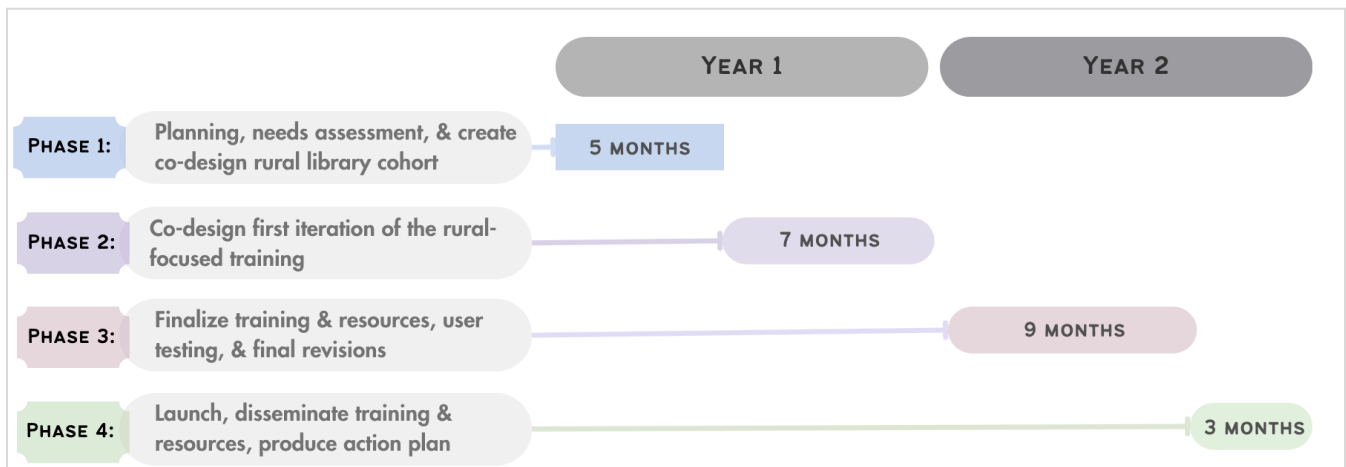
Existing training course: Co-PI Maria Garrido with consultant Chris Rothschild, developed for Infopeople a four-week online course for 71 library staff and paraprofessionals in California on inclusive data practices. Infopeople, run by Califa, provides continuing education and professional development to library workers. As part of the course, [*Inclusive Data: Why it Matters to Underrepresented Groups and How Public Libraries Can Help*](#), library staff developed community engagement strategies that could collaboratively address social problems through creating and collecting better and more inclusive data. This curriculum initiative served as the basis for an *online data equity workshop and a data bootcamp* offered in December 2020 and March 2021 for approximately 200 Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL) participants. As part of this collaboration, we also developed a series of short videos, training materials, and other resources made available for RIPL's members through its website and social media. In addition, we collaborated with the Rochester Regional Library Council in 2022 and the Minnesota's Metropolitan Library Service Agency in 2023 in designing a two-session online webinar titled: "*Why Inclusive Data Matters to Underrepresented Groups and How Public Libraries Can Help. New opportunities for community engagement.*" These trainings provided customizable techniques to library workers, including librarians and paraprofessionals, to support their development of *community engagement strategies* in order to enhance data literacy, community advocacy, and participation in processes that build knowledge to

inform decision-making. Themes covered included: identifying critical data gaps; assessing the representation of diverse voices in government datasets; factors that affect underrepresentation; and mapping community assets and other stakeholders relevant to creating inclusive data practices. The curricula and training developed through these collaborations will serve as a foundation for co-designing a rural-focused inclusive data training (Phase 2). (See Appendix A for a detailed outline of the course).

In this new effort, we believe that by leveraging the expertise and insights of rural libraries throughout the four phases of the project, the training will more effectively support the development and integration of inclusive data practices, fostering community engagement, and enabling rural libraries to better serve their communities.

2.3 Specific activities and sequence: Our project work will take place across four phases. The process will involve engaging rural library staff in a needs assessment (Phase 1); collaborating with 10 rural libraries in a co-design process to revise the existing training curriculum and develop two new modules (Phase 2), transforming the new curriculum into an asynchronous course and supporting materials and developing a broad dissemination plan (Phase 3), and execute the dissemination plan for to encourage rural library uptake (Phase 4). Figure 1 outlines our two year process.

Figure 1: Summary of the work plan and timeline



Phase 1: Planning, rural libraries data and community engagement needs assessment, and creating a co-design rural library cohort (August - December 2024 | 5 months)

Phase 1 | Summary of work plan and timeline

Year 1 Phase 1 Aug - Dec 2024 (5 months)		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Planning, needs assessment, and creating a co-design rural library cohort		Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024
1	Plan and host needs assessment event at ARSL 2024					
2	Analyze data from needs assessment event					
3	Use needs assessment & existing training to create outline for co-design sessions					
4	Finalize cohort selection criteria, application process, and publicize opportunity					
5	Select and announce cohort participants					
6	Dissemination activity #1 - Webinar on needs assessment & value of inclusive data practices					

This first phase of work includes three parallel work streams: 1) engaging rural libraries in a data and community engagement needs assessment; 2) recruiting library staff for the co-design of the training curriculum materials and 3) planning for the co-design of the training. Before co-designing the training, our team will gain insights into the types of

datasets rural library staff currently use, the obstacles they encounter when seeking relevant community data, their current collaborations with local stakeholders, and their broader community engagement initiatives. To do this, we will host a World Cafe style event at the [2024 Association for Rural and Small Libraries \(ARSL\) Conference](#). The World Cafe method is designed to explore a topic from different perspectives and engage the range of stakeholders present ([The World Cafe](#)). Califa will lead the outreach efforts with a goal of recruiting 30 participants for the event. The information gathered during the event will serve as the foundation for the first iteration of the rural-focused inclusive data training course.

During these first five months, we will create and finalize a plan for the co-design sessions. The co-design session plan will have flexibility to adjust to address needs identified by the participants while also providing enough structure to ensure it accomplishes the curriculum revision process. The outline and session plan will be based on the needs assessment conducted at ARSL and the existing training curriculum.

We will recruit 10 rural libraries to participate in the co-design work. The entire project team has experience in recruiting rural libraries for project participation. We will identify interested libraries from ARSL, our professional networks, ARSL listserv, state library agency listservs, RIPL listserv, Infopeople listserv, Califa member libraries, and social media platforms. Interested libraries will fill out a short application, to explain why they are interested in the project, the communities they want to work with, and what the library hopes to gain from the project. The project team will review applications with the aim to build a diverse cohort through geographic, funding, community demographics, and library organizational structure. We will then meet with potential partners over Zoom to review the time expectation, general overview of the work to be completed, and level of effort expected. In early December, we will host a webinar to share the results from the rural library data and community engagement needs assessment and raise awareness about the project and its purpose. During Phase 1, the core team will meet weekly to plan and make adjustments to our training co-design plan based on the needs of the cohort.

Outcomes: By the end of Phase 1, we will (1) identify rural libraries’ data and community engagement needs assessment; (2) organize a webinar to share insights from the needs assessment; (3) recruit 10 libraries to participate in the co-design process; and (4) finalize a plan for the co-design sessions.

Phase 2: Co-design the first iteration of a rural-focused inclusive data training (January - July 2025 | 7 months)

Phase 2 | Summary of work plan and timeline

Year 1 Phase 2 January - July 2025 (7 months)		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
Co-design the first iteration of a rural-focused inclusive data training		Jan 25	Feb 25	March 25	April 25	May 25	June 25	July 25
1	Co-design cohort kickoff session							
2	Co-design workshops with rural library cohort (9 total sessions)							
3	Libraries create implementation plan with support from the project team							
4	Dissemination activity #2: Webinar on co-design insights and implementation plans							

Our next phase of work will be co-designing the first iteration of a rural-focused inclusive data practices training. Co-design is a particularly useful method for surfacing knowledge based on the skills and expertise of rural library workers. The co-design process will be iterative, with engagement of participating library staff elicited through virtual meetings and providing written feedback through feedback templates provided by the project team. The series of co-design sessions are structured so that each participating library will have completed an inclusive data practices implementation plan by the end of Phase 2.

We will have a kick-off meeting in January with the cohort of 10 libraries to get to know one another, review the project timeline, and give an introduction to inclusive data practices. We will host a series of 9 co-design sessions from February - July with each session running 90 minutes. To set a common starting point, in the first workshops of the series, we will 1)

share the data collected during the needs assessment event at ARSL and get the cohort’s perspective on rural library data needs; and 2) share the contents of the current training through in-workshop sessions and light pre-work outside the meetings. The bulk of the workshops will focus on revising the existing course materials and co-designing the two new modules. The last meeting will focus on the creation of an implementation plan for inclusive data practices at each library. At the end of Phase 2, we will have revised 5 training modules and created two new training modules. At the end of the co-design sessions, each library will create an individualized implementation plan for the next year based on what they have learned. The implementation plan and activities to promote inclusive data practices in each library will vary depending on resources and needs. They can involve various activities, including organizing workshops with library staff to identify missing voices in library user data, collaborating with community actors to map community assets and key stakeholders, or facilitating youth sessions to discuss the implications of data underrepresentation in rural sustainable development, among others. We will closely collaborate with the library cohort to develop their implementation plan, and the project team will be readily available to provide consultation and support to libraries throughout the activity implementation period (May - November). In addition, the project team will gather monthly progress updates from each individual library to document the implementation process, and provide support as issues emerge. This process will help us better understand the desired learning outcomes from the libraries participating in the training, identify gaps in the training and modules, assess if there are areas that require additional resources, and document lessons learned from the library plan and implementation process. Insights from this process will inform, in part, the action plan that we will develop in Phase 4.

In June, we'll host a webinar to present insights from the co-design workshop, share the library-cohort implementation plans, and keep the rural library community informed about the progress of the project, timeline, and learnings as the project progresses. During Phase 2, the core team will meet weekly to plan and make adjustments to our training co-design plan based on the needs of the cohort.

Outcomes: By the end of Phase 2 we will: (1) identify gaps in the current training (2) run 9 co-design workshops with 10 libraries; (3) revise 5 training modules of the existing training materials; (4) develop two new training modules created during the co-design sessions; and (5) have a cohort of 10 libraries ready to implement inclusive data practices in their communities.

Phase 3: Finalize training modules, tools and resources; convert the training modules into the online learning platform; conduct user testing with library cohort; integrate final revisions (August 2025 - April 2026 | 9 months)

Phase 3 | Summary of work plan and timeline

Year 2 Phase 3 August 2025 - April 2026 (9 months)		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Finalize training & resources, user testing, & final revisions		Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	April 26
1	Plan / Host feedback session on revised training at ARSL 2025									
2	Revise training materials based on ARSL feedback session									
3	Host cohort mtg for success & challenges in implementing plan									
4	Revise training materials based on feedback from cohort / field									
5	Convert training materials into online learning modules									
6	Conduct user testing with co-design library cohort									
7	Prepare & publish action plan for inclusive data practices for rural libraries, brief with lessons learned, and facilitators' guide									
8	Develop dissemination strategy									

During Phase 3, we will finalize the training modules, tools, and supporting resources following three steps: First, we will host a session at ARSL 2025 to get feedback on the revised training content. After the conference, we will integrate the

feedback into the modules and supporting resources. In November, we will reconvene a working session with our library cohort to solicit information about the successes and challenges in implementing inclusive data practices in their community. We will also share the feedback from the ARSL Conference with the library cohort and gather additional feedback on the training modules and resources based on their experience implementing the inclusive practices plan. Next, Califa’s instructional designers will adapt the training modules for their online platform. We will conduct user testing of the newly developed training with our library cohort to ensure that it supports self-paced learning, including short video lessons, activities for participants to apply their learnings, and supporting resources.

Concurrently, we will create an action plan that identifies key strategies for applying inclusive data practices in rural public libraries. This plan will be based upon the data gathered during the project, including the rural data needs assessment, co-design cohort input, and feedback from other rural library workers provided at the in-person events or webinars. The action plan will be published on the project website and will serve as a learning resource for library workers wishing to implement inclusive data practices. To support uptake of the online course, we will develop a facilitator’s guide that will help state libraries and library organizations gain familiarity with the concepts, modules, and the process for developing an inclusive data practices plan. In the spring, we will design a dissemination strategy for the public launch of the materials in Phase 4.

Outcomes: By the end of Phase 3, we will have (1) completed self-paced, online training and supporting resources; (2) a brief documenting successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the experience of the cohort of 10 libraries implementing inclusive data practices; (3) created and published an inclusive data practices for rural libraries action plan; (4) a dissemination plan.

Phase 4: Launch online training, training resources, and host outreach and dissemination webinars (May - July 2026 | 3 months)

Phase 4 | Summary of work plan and timeline

Year 2 Phase 4 May - July 2026 (3 months)		M1	M2	M3
Launch, disseminate training & resources, & host outreach and dissemination webinars		May 2026	June 2026	July 2026
1	Launch online training course			
2	Conduct outreach and dissemination webinars			

At the beginning of Phase 4, we will launch the free, on-demand version of the training program for open enrollment of library staff on Califa’s InfoPeople website. The published training will also have resources for library support organizations and state libraries to implement training in structured asynchronous or hybrid cohorts. We will publicize the training, supporting materials, and resources through a variety of methods. Califa and Infopeople have a wide reach, with more than 2,000 social media followers and nearly 1,000 newsletter subscribers. In addition, Califa serves more than 200 member libraries. We will host a series of three online webinars to publicize the training, share highlights from the data needs assessment, lessons learned, and the inclusive data practices for rural libraries action plan. We will conduct outreach about the webinars and the training through networks that include national and state library associations, project partners, and prior training participants.

Outcomes: By the end of the project, we will have (1) a published, free, self-paced, online training with supporting resources including an implementation plan available online at Infopeople; (2) a rural libraries data and community engagement needs assessment; (3) a brief with successes, challenges, and lessons learned; (4) an action plan for inclusive data practices in rural libraries; and (5) a series of webinars about the training, needs assessment, lessons learned, and action plan.

Planning, execution, and management of project:

The project director will be authorizing agent Veronda Pitchford. Pitchford is the Califa Assistant Director. Pitchford is a librarian with extensive experience managing and directing complex grant projects. Pitchford will lead the organizing in

both of the ARSL events, assist in library recruitment, oversee the development of the online training, assist in overall project outreach and dissemination, and oversee the budget. Project co-Director Maria Garrido is a Principal Research Scientist at the University of Washington Information School. Garrido is the co-creator of the original training and has experience leading co-design projects. Garrido will co-lead the development of the needs assessment, design and implementation sessions, and inclusive data practices. Garrido will also help support the ARSL sessions, library recruitment, and dissemination. Project co-Director Stacey Wedlake is a Research Scientist at the University of Washington Information School. Ms. Wedlake has experience developing training and professional development resources for public libraries and experience engaging rural public librarians in co-design projects. Wedlake will co-lead the development of the needs assessment, design and implementation sessions, and inclusive data practices. Wedlake will also help support the ARSL sessions, library recruitment, and dissemination. Senior personnel Chris Jowaisas is a Senior Research Scientist at the University of Washington Information School and has experience with co-design with public library workers and in open data projects. Jowaisas will support both ARSL sessions, the development of the co-design sessions, the creation of the new training modules, and dissemination and outreach activities. Consultant Chris Rothschild is the co-creator of the original training and has extensive experience developing professional development training for a wide variety of practitioners. Rothschild will take part in the co-design sessions and assist in revising existing modules and developing new ones. In Phases 1 and 2, the project team will hold weekly meetings, and in Phases 3 and 4, the project team will hold bi-weekly meetings to monitor progress and plan next steps.

The Califa Group is a nonprofit library membership consortium of more than 200 libraries and is the largest library network in California. Founded in 2004, it is committed to unleashing the impact of libraries through various initiatives including Infopeople, its online continuing education arm for library workers in the United States and beyond. Infopeople has provided high-quality training opportunities for more than 51,000 library workers. Its team of instructional designers, trainers, and subject matter experts has decades of experience providing online training that is engaging, interactive, and relevant to the real-world challenges faced by libraries today. Califa and Infopeople have a wide reach, with more than 2,000 social media followers and nearly 1,000 newsletter subscribers. In addition, Califa serves more than 200 member libraries. UW iSchool has a dedicated communications team that will support dissemination and outreach. The UW Information School also has multiple centers willing to support dissemination and outreach, including the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) and the Center for Advances in Libraries, Museums, and Archives (CALMA). Additionally, as noted in the letter of support, partner RIPL will actively promote the resources and look for opportunities to incorporate it in the RIPL curriculum.

3. Diversity Plan: The project focuses on redressing data gaps for communities in rural areas. It provides rural libraries with tools to better serve rural, low-income, racially and ethnically diverse communities in ways that empower underrepresented people to have a voice in creating more inclusive data practices. To support the project's objectives, we'll strive to select and work with a group of rural libraries in the co-design process that best reflects this diversity within a group of this size. Our selection process for the co-design participants will include criteria to ensure that we have geographic, organizational, and funding diversity along with community demographic diversity. We would utilize datasets such as the Public Library Survey and data.gov to gather summary data about the potential participating libraries and communities. Recognizing that datasets do not represent the full picture, we will also provide opportunities in the selection process for the library workers to describe the challenges and opportunities that they see in their community for inclusive data practices to have a positive impact. We believe this more holistic approach for selection will help us to select a diverse cohort within the constraints of group size. We will also actively solicit input and feedback from other rural libraries through other mechanisms, including webinar and conference interactions, to address where we might not have representation among the co-design participants. Additionally, the co-design process that we will employ is structured to encourage full participation and assist in inclusion of diverse perspectives in final outputs. The project team has deep experience working with rural libraries through various grant projects and has been successful in past efforts in creating and sustaining diverse cohorts in those projects.

Our team has experience working with rural libraries from across the United States. We will use the broad reach of Califa, RIPL, and UW iSchool networks to recruit library partners through organizational listservs, state library and library associations, and contacts from previous projects. We will also use our ARSL 2024 session to identify interested library partners.

4. Project Results: This project will have the following **outcomes which support national impact:**

Result 1: *Free, on-demand, online training, hosted by Infopeople for rural library staff* on how to implement inclusive data practices with their communities created through iterative co-design with rural library workers. After completing the training, rural library staff will be able to begin implementing inclusive data practices at their library. The training will contain seven modules. Five of the modules will be revised from the original training during the co-design process, and two new modules will be developed with the rural library cohort. The training will be hosted on the Infopeople website using the Moodle Learning Management system. Rural library staff will be to take the training asynchronously and save and track their progress through the modules. The training will incorporate text, video, audio, and interactive worksheets to meet a variety of learning needs.

Result 2: *Increased capacity of rural library workers to engage their communities about data gaps* needed to address local social issues in a more equitable manner. The cohort of ten rural libraries will develop knowledge and skills around inclusive data practices including identifying critical data gaps; assessing who is and who is not represented in public datasets; factors affecting underrepresentation; the implications for equitable policy and program design; and mapping community assets and key stakeholders to creating inclusive data practices. Each library will create an individual implementation plan and begin acting on the activities within the plan during the grant period.

Result 3: *Advance an understanding of the current state of data in rural communities and community engagement* needs and opportunities for future work. We acknowledge that one training cannot address all the data and community engagement needs for rural libraries and their communities. We will compile data collected during the ARSL sessions, webinars, and co-design sessions into an action plan for future work. This additional resource can be used for advocacy and planning by rural libraries (regardless of their participation in the training), state library agencies, and library organizations.

This project will also lay the foundation for future work in the area of inclusive data practices in rural libraries. Future efforts will focus on increased understanding of the critical factors in successfully implementing inclusive data practices in a rural locale. This would inform the creation of new or revised training modules, additional supporting resources to facilitate in-person training opportunities, and pilot projects with state library agencies to implement a statewide training program for their rural libraries.

Dissemination: We will conduct outreach and disseminate information and resources through the project period to maximize the reach of the project results. In Phase 1, we will host a session at ARSL to share about the project and assist with recruitment. At the end of Phase 1, we will host a webinar covering inclusive data practices, their importance to rural libraries, and share insights from the needs assessment event. By introducing the conceptual and practical information in this webinar we believe we will increase interest in the utilization of the online course that will be developed as part of the project. In Phase 2, we will host another webinar with an update on the co-design process and implementation plans. In addition, in Fall 2025, we will seek a presentation opportunity at a conference in a related field, such as the International City/County Management Association, to gather feedback and perspectives from a wide range of local government professionals working outside of libraries. In Phase 3, we will host a webinar to share the initial outputs from the co-design session and update on the project timeline. We will also host a session at ARSL 2025 to get feedback on the modules and supporting resources. At this time, we will finalize a detailed dissemination strategy to maximize the visibility of the completed training. In Phase 4, we will implement our dissemination plan and host three webinars to share highlights from the data needs assessment, lessons learned, and the inclusive data practices for rural libraries action plan. All outputs of the project will be co-hosted and archived on the training website for findability and accessibility. We will

use the expansive networks of the project team and engagement with ARSL to disseminate the results and the newly-developed training.

Sustainability: After the project period is complete, the training and associated materials will continue to be hosted by InfoPeople. InfoPeople has a long track record of hosting high-quality professional development and online learning for libraries. InfoPeople has the technological infrastructure to continue to host and archive the resources. The entire project team works closely with rural libraries on a variety of projects and will continue to share resources with our partners. The team also regularly works with organizations like PLA, WebJunction, and State Libraries. Beyond the project performance period, the UW iSchool, including TASCHA and the Center for Advances in Libraries, Museums, and Archives (CALMA) will continue to promote the site as an example of a university-practitioner partnership. In addition, the UW team will engage UW MLIS graduate students in yearly Capstone and class projects to refresh supporting training materials to address emerging themes in inclusive data practices.

RE-255336-OLS - Califa Group - Libraries as catalysts for unveiling more inclusive data in rural areas Digital Products Plan

Type - What digital products will you create?

The project will generate digital products that include event summaries; curriculum materials; workshop or event materials, including presentations and activity worksheets; and online instructional materials.

The digital products created in this project will either be hosted on a new project website (hosted by Califa Group) or on the existing learning management system (LMS), Moodle, hosted by Califa Group.

Digital products hosted on the project website:

1. We expect to generate 10 -12 event summaries or other similar summaries to convey project information, including but not limited to a summary of the needs assessment conducted and workshop or other event summaries to provide project updates. We plan on providing quarterly updates or more as appropriate. These products will be accessible through the use of standard web browser and will require no specialized software to access.
2. We will update 5 curriculum modules and create 2 new curriculum modules. The modules will include lesson plans, resource materials, participant materials, and instructor materials. These products will be made available in their native formats produced through widely available productivity software (e.g. Microsoft Word or Microsoft Powerpoint). They will also be made available in widely accessible formats such as PDFs. Keywords and tags will be added to the materials on the website to enable the materials to be found as easily as possible. No additional specialized software will be needed to access these materials.
3. An action plan will be developed to assist rural libraries in implementing inclusive data practices in their libraries. This plan is expected to be produced and accessible through standard productivity software that is widely available and will also be made available in alternate formats (e.g. PDF) to allow for download for those without access to the productivity software.
4. Four to six webinar recordings, including video, audio, chat transcripts, and presentation materials will be made available in standard audio-video formats that can be accessed through a standard web browser.

Digital products hosted on learning management system:

1. 7 learning modules will be created and made accessible on the learning management system (LMS). The Infopeople LMS is built on the Moodle platform and is accessed through standard web browsers. Moodle has built-in accessibility features that will be utilized in the preparation of the learning modules. All of the online learning modules will be stored on the LMS for long-term access. It is expected that the learning modules will be authored in various productivity software and exported to widely available formats for download if needed so that no specialized software will be needed to access any materials.

Availability - How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?

All resources developed as part of the project will be made freely available on the project website or the learning management system. Current materials are licensed as CC-BY-NC-SA (Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International). As described on the Creative Commons website “You are free to: Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format; Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material; The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.”

All materials will be accessible through standard, freely available or widely available commercial software. Additionally, materials will be available for download in multiple formats to allow for general accessibility.

The learning management system requires an user account to access materials. User accounts are available without charge with the only requirement being an email account. This user account allows for the tracking of progress by individual user.

Access - What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

The authors will not assert any rights over the digital products and do not plan to put any limitations, except for not allowing commercial use, on the use of the digital products. Current and planned license will allow for free access and for project curricular or toolkit resources a license for others to adapt for non-commercial use with only attribution required and sharing under similar license terms. (CC-BY-NC-SA).

We don’t expect that our products will have any privacy concerns. Any examples used in workshop or online instructional materials will either be attributed anonymously or used only with permission. The instructional designers have extensive experience in designing materials for diverse audiences and part of their design process includes a cultural sensitivity check to minimize the chance that the materials are culturally insensitive.

Sustainability- How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?

The project website will be sustained as part of the ongoing operations of Califa. The organization has sufficient technology and financial resources to operate the project website in a sustainable manner for an extended period of time. The learning management system platform will be sustained as part of the ongoing operations of Califa. The LMS is a core component of the technology and service delivery infrastructure for Califa and appropriate resources will be allocated to sustain the LMS on an ongoing basis.