

21

Learning Objectives for
Library Programming



Public Library &
Community Center



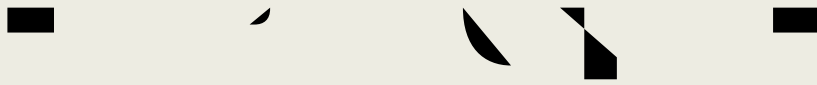
Knology



This report was the result of a collaborative project involving people from both the American Library Association and Knology. We would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions.

Kathryn Nock, Hannah Arata, Samantha Oakley, Sarah Ostman, Elena Pepe-Salutric, Tammy Bagge, Judy Bergeron, Nicole Cooke, Cindy Fesemyer, Rolf Hapel, Susan Hildreth, Tamara King, Emily Mross, Deb Ripley, Miguel Ruiz, Dale Savage, and Mimosa Shah.

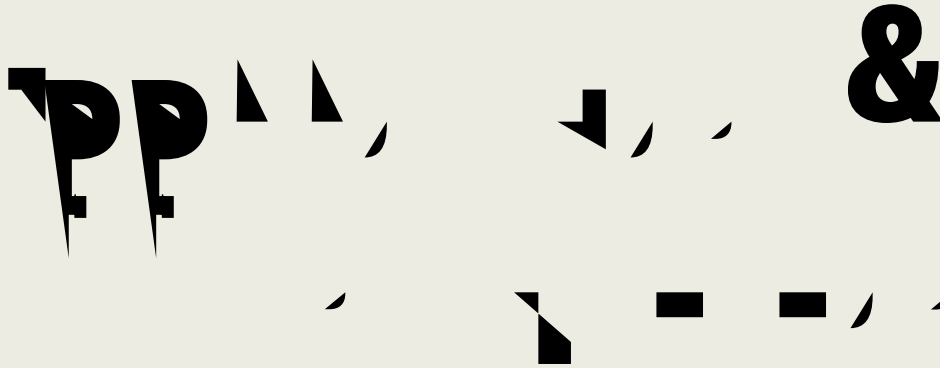
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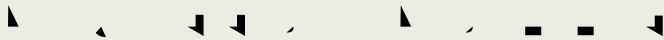
The task force reached consensus about the following:

- There is a real need for a curriculum that covers all of these competency areas, and a great deal of excitement about creating it;
- The effort to develop the curriculum needs to be two-pronged: while ALA's Public Programs Office can lead the development



The task force also discussed a number of challenges and opportunities to keep in mind as we move forward.

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY #1:



At the beginning of this process, we reviewed the landscape of training opportunities. While the review was not exhaustive, we found several telling patterns.

There were many more opportunities for short-term professional development than for formal coursework.

Formal coursework was most likely to cover **knowledge of the community**—and quite unlikely to include **financial skills**, **creativity**, or **organizational skills**. Other areas were covered to a greater or lesser degree, and there were opportunities to expand all of them.

Meanwhile, professional development courses were particularly likely to cover **content knowledge** and particularly unlikely to cover **financial skills, evaluation,** or **organizational skills**.

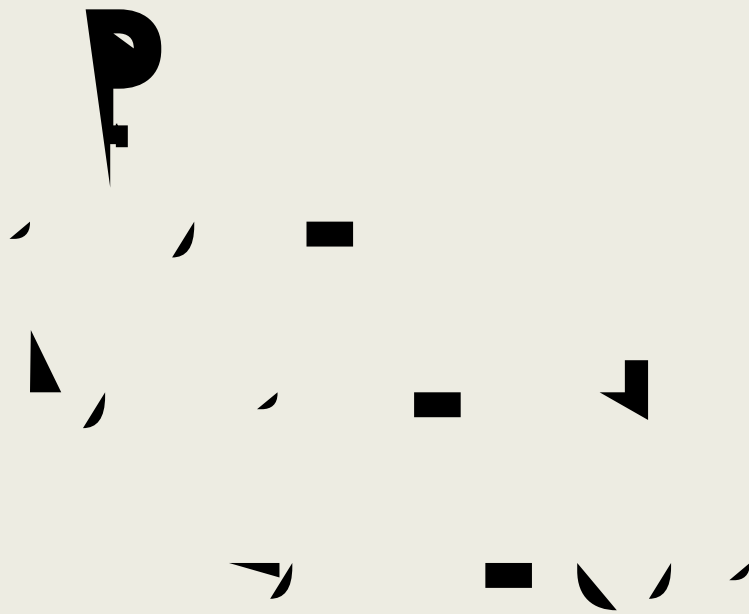
Task force members' professional opinions largely aligned with these findings. They saw a particular need for more formal training in **interpersonal skills, event planning,** and **evaluation** as well as more professional development in quite a few areas.

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY #2

Task force members shared a sense that library degree programs and professional development have very different goals. While professional development tends to cover the day-to-day realities of librarianship, degree programs focus on principles of librarianship. Combined with Challenge/Opportunity #1, this points to a need to separate the development of these two types of library training.

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY #3

When the task force began meeting in early 2021, some participants raised concerns that the competency areas might need to be updated because they



This section lays out specific learning objectives to prioritize within each of the nine competency areas. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all learning objectives that fall within each competency area, but rather a set of objectives that are instructable, important, and currently under-instructed. Not all library workers will need to develop all of these skills, as they may be working as part of a team. Furthermore, different library types operate in different contexts with different missions.

Task force members identified these learning objectives through deliberation, including review of other courses and learning materials (both inside and outside the library field) where available. As ALA continues to build additional professional development and work toward incorporating these competencies

Works toward sufficient knowledge of program content to deliver, manage, or evaluate programs, according to role.

Learners will be able to:

- Identify content priorities based on their community's needs, particularly the needs of underserved library users and stakeholders;
- Assess their own knowledge and gaps in their understanding and build partnerships to complement their gaps; and
- Assess the expertise of potential presenters and partners and incorporate them effectively into programs.

Resources Recommended by the Library Field

- ALSC's Intellectual Freedom Programming Toolkit [bit.ly/alsc-ifpt]
- Let's Move in Libraries [letsmovelibraries.org]

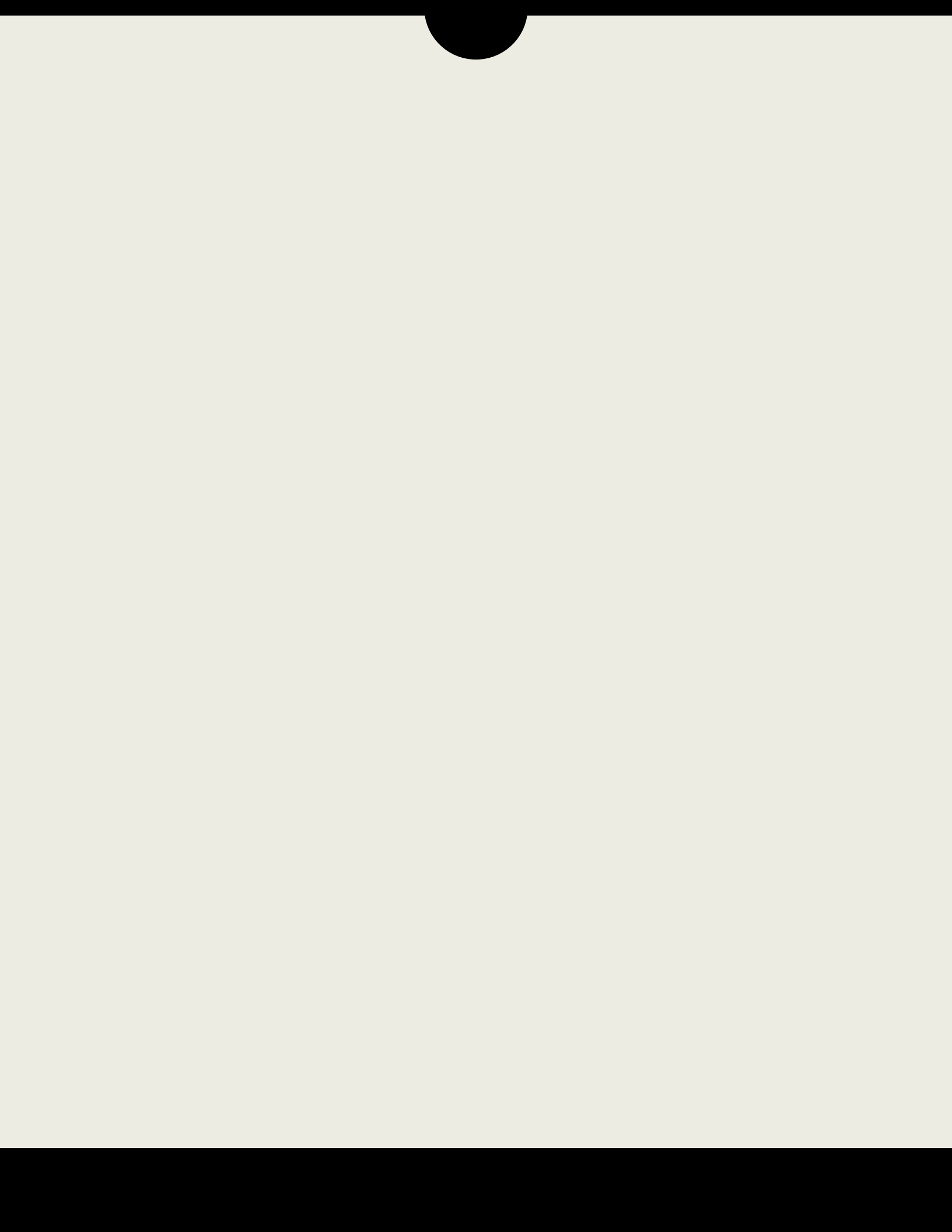
Responds to challenges and opportunities with innovation, flexibility, and creativity to resolve them.

Learners will be able to:

- Troubleshoot a number of technical and practical programming issues and develop on-the-spot solutions;
- Develop and enact contingency plans;
- Build a toolbox of strategies that promote and apply creative thinking, particularly to create more inclusive and equitable programs; and
- Foster lateral, non-linear, and iterative thinking and decision-making, both individually and in a group setting.

Resources Recommended by the Library Field

- Workshops: Design Thinking for Libraries [designthinkingforlibraries.com/workshops]
- 10 Workskills for the Post-normal Era by Stowe Boyd [www.workfutures.io/p/10-workskills-for-the-postnormal]
- Anab Jain & Alex Taylor, Experiments in Feral Futuring [publicbooks.org/experiments-in-feral-futuring]



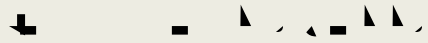
Works toward planning, managing, and implementing events that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate, and accessible for their intended audiences.

Learners will be able to:

- Explain how core values of librarianship infuse all aspects of library event planning;
- Differentiate strengths and weaknesses of online, hybrid, and in-person events, as well as different virtual platforms and participant structures, for learning, enjoyment, inclusion, and accessibility;
- Identify and address:
 - safety considerations (e.g. COVID-19, emergency exits, online harassment),
 - accessibility considerations (e.g. mobility, digital divide, language access, common allergens), and
 - sustainability considerations (e.g. environmental impact, staffing needs);
- Create contingency plans for common logistical challenges (e.g. rain);
- Employ camera and lighting techniques, as well as sounds, backgrounds, and filters, in online events to treat the screen as a stage; and
- Create a seamless and dynamic experience for different activities in a virtual environment that keeps participants engaged.

Resources Recommended by the Library Field

How to Host a Manifesto for Good Online Sessions | [Online Storytelling: A Guide for Librarians](#) | [Event Planning for Librarians](#) | [Event Planning for Librarians](#) | [Event Planning for Librarians](#)



Works toward budgeting, seeking funding for, and managing the finances of a program or suite of programs, often in collaboration with external partners.

Learners will be able to:

- Understand and discuss common financial documents such as budgets, 990s, and basic contracts;



Works toward communicating effectively and appropriately with all stakeholders and audiences to provide consultation, mediation, and guidance during programs and in other contexts relating to programs.

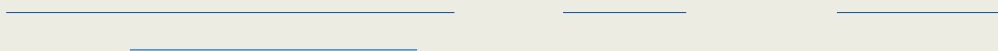
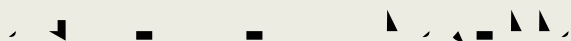
Learners will be able to:

- Create a welcoming and respectful environment;
- Identify varying norms of communication among different groups of library users and adapt accordingly;
- Recognize hindrances to effective communication, particularly online (e.g. Zoom fatigue; lack of eye contact and body language; pandemic fatigue, etc.);
- Apply de-escalation, conflict management, and facilitation techniques to encourage difficult conversations, both online and in person;
- Make programming initiatives part of larger relationship-building work within-escalr pcITw 11 0 0 1jEMC 3 0 0 11 266ae



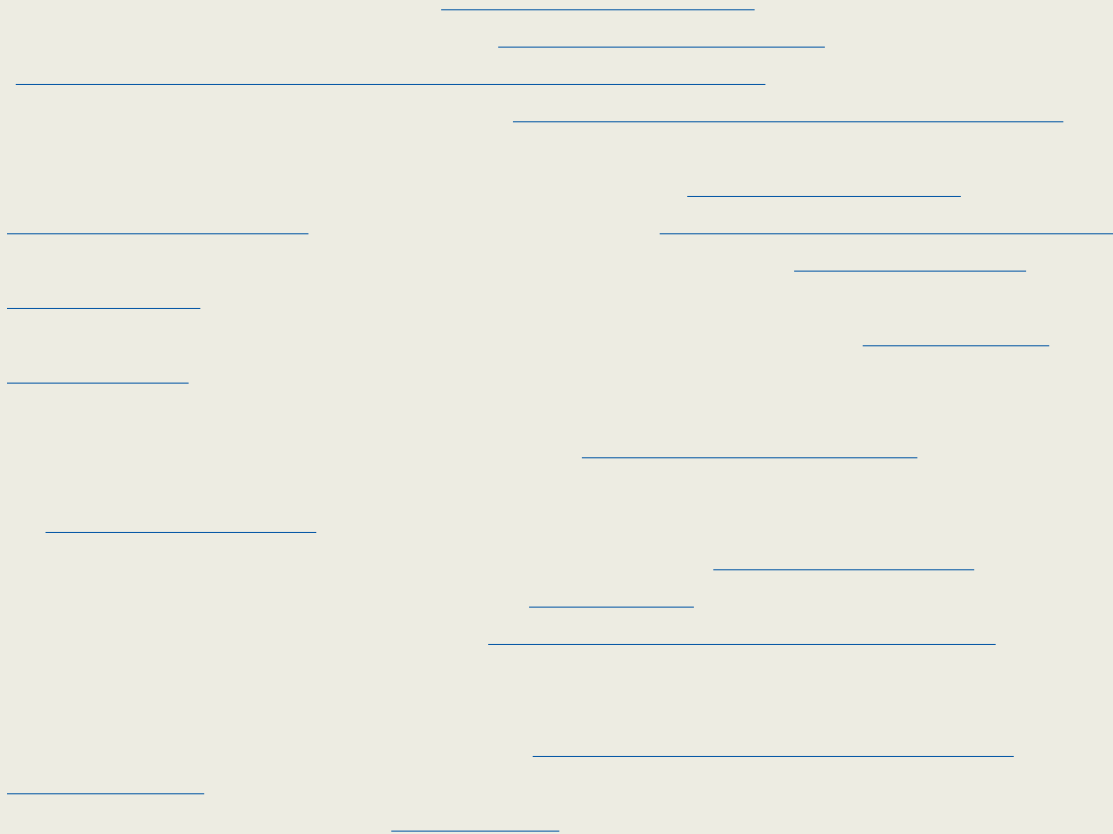
Resources Recommended by the Library Field

- The Marketing Library Services newsletter [infotoday.com/mls]
- Marketing Libraries Journal [journal.marketinglibraries.org]
- Mark Aaron Polger, Library Marketing Basics [bit.ly/library-marketing-basics]
- Kathy Dempsey, The Accidental Library Marketer [bit.ly/accidental-library-marketer]
- Marian Burk Wood, Marketing Plan Handbook [bit.ly/marketing-plan-handbook]



The additional resources below apply across all nine competency areas more generally.

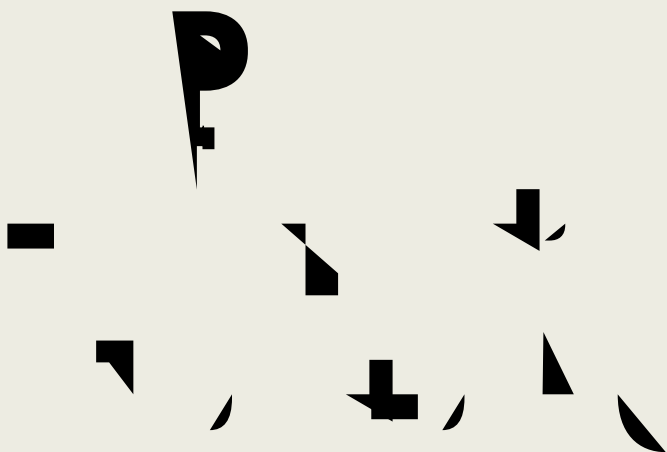
- Libraries Transforming Communities | Tools, Publications & Resources [ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities]





We recommend that ALA and its Skills for 21st-Century Librarians task force:

- **Create professional development opportunities**, with a focus on interpersonal skills, creativity, and understanding the importance of taking an EDI lens to library work. Given the different goals of library degree programs and professional development, described in Challenge / Opportunity #2 above, we recommend developing professional development resources first, while developing the relationships needed to elicit change in LIS classrooms.
- **E**



More than 40 library professionals and instructors took the time to share their thoughts with us on social media and through a short survey. The field is generally positive about this effort, the work that has been done so far, and the project's goals. We noted several consistent themes in the comments.

Nearly every person who provided feedback said that either they, their colleagues, or their students would benefit from additional training in at least some of the areas identified. Those who had received training in these areas said it helped them feel confident at work.

It's important to have a variety of training options available to library professionals. Some may prefer in-person training, while others may prefer online training. It's also important to have training that is relevant to the current needs of the library profession. This is especially true in the area of digital literacy, which is becoming increasingly important for library users. I think that providing a variety of training options and keeping up-to-date on the latest trends in the field are key to ensuring that library professionals have the skills they need to succeed in their jobs.

— PUBLIC LIBRARY LEADER

As a public library leader, I have seen the benefits of training for library professionals. It helps them stay up-to-date on the latest trends in the field and provides them with the skills they need to succeed in their jobs. I think that providing training is one of the most important things that library leaders can do to support their staff. It's also a great way to show your appreciation for their hard work and dedication. I would encourage other library leaders to invest in their staff's training and development. It's a win-win for everyone involved.

— MLIS INSTRUCTOR

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Financial Skills & Management

Multiple people highlighted the need to learn financial skills, from grant writing to grant management.

Learn more about our financial management training programs. Visit [www.impact.org/financial](#) for more information.

Financial management training programs are available for individuals and organizations. Contact us at [1-800-875-8758](#) for more information.

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