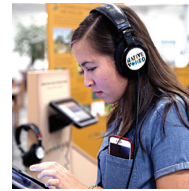


JUNE 2019



National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment

SUMMATIVE REPORT



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Citation: Barchas-Lichtenstein, J., Norlander, R., Voiklis, J., Nock, K., Fraser, J., & Danter, E. (2019). *National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment: Summative Report*. NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.06. Chicago: American Library Association & New Knowledge Organization Ltd.

Date of Publication: June 2019

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library (Grant #LG-96-17-0048-17). The views, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.06

Executive Summary

From 2017 to 2019, the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office (PPO) implemented the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA): Phase 1. NILPPA: Phase 1 was the first step of a multi-phase strategy, which responds to the rise of public programs to the forefront of operations in libraries throughout the United States, and the need to document the impact of public programs on libraries, their communities, and society. The NILPPA initiative was originally developed through an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership planning grant and published in a white paper in 2014. The current Phase 1 study was also supported by an IMLS National Leadership grant (#LG-96-17-0048-17).

Two interrelated research questions drove NILPPA: Phase 1.

1. How can we characterize and categorize public programs offered by libraries today?
2. What competencies and training are required for professionals working with library programming today?

ALA PPO oversaw and implemented this project, and New Knowledge Organization Ltd. led the research. A team of six library experts guided the research: Carolyn Anthony, Jennifer Weil Arns, Michele Besant, Terrilyn Chun, Janine Golden, and Jamie Campbell Naidoo. A group of advisors with expertise in library public programs and research supported the project as well.

Over the course of two years, we used a mixed methods research strategy to address each research question. These methods included but were not limited to an analysis of existing information, several national surveys, discussion forums, and interviews. As a result of this process, the research team created a set of products to serve the library and research fields:

- A **Framework for Library Public Programs Categories** that, in response to Research Question 1, characterizes

four unique dimensions of public programs, as well as subdimensions.

- A **Framework for Library Public Programs Competency Areas** that, in response to Research Question 2, presents nine interdependent skills that are uniquely needed for developing and running library public programs.
- A **White Paper** designed for a broad audience of library leaders and policy makers, which describes the NILPPA: Phase 1 work, the need for this research, and the two frameworks.
- Two **Peer-Reviewed Papers** for academic journals, currently in preparation, which describe the NILPPA: Phase 1 study methods and results in detail for the library research field. One paper addresses Research Question 1, while the other addresses Research Question 2.
- This **Summative Report**, which serves as a comprehensive record of the research activities and presents the frameworks for both Research Questions, so that funders and administrators understand the results of the investment in this project.
- In addition to these products, the project team and guest authors wrote blog posts as updates on the project research for the NILPPA website (www.nilppa.org), as well as an op-ed that was posted on the NILPPA website and ProgrammingLibrarian.org.

The two frameworks developed by the NILPPA: Phase 1 project team concretely describe, for the first time, library public programs categories and competency areas. These frameworks – with their definitions, categorizations, and prioritizations – provide an important foundation for understanding library public programs in the United States, the work of library public programming workers, and the large-scale impacts of these programs. This research can ultimately influence investments in libraries and how library workers are trained.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii	Measuring Value	17
Introduction	1	Validity Study	19
Research Team	2	Methods	19
Key Terms	2	Instrument	19
Program	2	Recruitment & Participants	19
Public	3	Validating Definitions	20
Instruction	3	Validation of Framework	20
Competency	4	Program Development Model	20
A Note on Research Terminology	4	Primary Intended Outcome	20
Research questions and Work overview	4	Increasing Representation Across Library Types	21
Question 1: Program Categorization	5	Case Study Research	22
Question 2: User-Focused Programming Competencies	5	Methods	22
About this report	6	Instrument	22
PART 1. PROGRAM CATEGORIZATION	7	Recruitment & Participants	22
Developing a Framework to Categorize Library Programming	8	Results	22
Methods	8	Considering Programming Audiences	22
Meta-Analysis Results	8	Exploring the Development Model	23
NILPPA Planning White Paper	8	Intended Outcomes – Validating the Draft Framework	23
ALA PPO Archives	9	Examples that Expand the Framework Categories	24
PLA Project Outcome	10	Suggested Modifications to the NILPPA Categorization Framework	26
Programming Librarian	11	PART 2. PROGRAM COMPETENCIES	28
University of Washington Impact Survey	12	Analysis of Curricula and Competencies	29
Measures that Matter	13	Methods	29
Pew Library Typology	13	Review of Competency Frameworks	29
Public Libraries Survey	14	Online Job Listings	29
WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field	14	Review of ALA-Accredited Programs	29
The Draft Categorization Framework	14	Results of the Review of Competency Frameworks	29
Library Profile	15	ALA Core Competencies	29
Program Characteristics	15	WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field	30
Program Audience	16	Envisioning Our Information Future	33
Program Administration	16	Results of the REview of Online Job Listings	33
Emphasizing Key Questions	16	Results of the Review of ALA-Accredited Programs	33

Degree Structure	34
Coursework	34
Competencies	34
Competency Survey	36
Methods	36
Survey Question Text	37
Data Analysis	37
Participants	37
Results	37
Self-Reported Abilities	37
Training & Degree Status	38
Position & Library Characteristics	39
Required Skills	40
Partnerships	42
Pathways to Programming Skills	42
Discussion Forums	45
Methods	45
Participants	45
Results	45
Competencies	46
Navigating Challenges	47
Preparation	49
The Unique Role of Tribal Libraries	49
Final List of Public Programming Competencies	49
PART 3. SYNTHESIS	51
Discussion	52
Accomplishments	52
A Unique Approach	52
What does it all mean?	52
Conclusion	55
Glossary	56
References	58

List of Tables

Table 1. Organization of the Summative Report.	6
Table 2. Old and new Program Topic menu options.	12
Table 3. Old (Age Group) and new (Target Audience) menu options.	12
Table 4. Responses to “Does your library offer programs whose primary outcome does not fall under those listed (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes...)?”	21
Table 5. Draft text used for case studies, modifications, and final text for Primary Intended Outcomes.	26
Table 6. Graduate courses that involve programming training or topics, ranked in order of frequency.	34
Table 7. In what type of library do you work?	36
Table 8. Do you believe that you personally have the skills or abilities necessary to successfully run public programs at libraries?	37
Table 9. Have you completed a MLS / MLIS degree?	38
Table 10. How did you acquire relevant skills or abilities?	39
Table 11. Number and proportion of MLIS degrees by library type.	40
Table 12. How do you describe the community your institution serves?	40
Table 13. What size population does your institution serve?	40
Table 14. “What skills or abilities do you think are necessary to successfully run public programs at libraries?”	41
Table 15. “What are the core knowledge or skill areas that you believe should be part of a MLS / MLIS degree in order for graduates to be able to run successful public programs?”	41
Table 16. Full data set: How did you acquire relevant skills or abilities?	43
Table 17. Number of librarians in each discussion forum.	45
Table 18. Positions held by librarians in discussion forums.	45

List of Figures

Figure 1. Distribution of agreement with definitions.	20
Figure 2. Program categorization framework.	27
Figure 3. Self-perceptions of public programming skills plotted against whether one has completed an MLS / MLIS degree.	38
Figure 4. Formal training status of respondents.	39
Figure 5. What is your current role?	39
Figure 6. Programming competency framework.	50

Introduction

As U.S. libraries transform to meet the needs of a changing nation, public programming is rising to the forefront of daily operations. While libraries have always had a broad educational mission, many people outside the library world hold an image of libraries based in how they carry out that mission: they see libraries as collection holders and lenders. Yet libraries have expanded to become centers for lifelong experiential learning, hubs for civic and cultural gatherings, and partners in community-wide innovation. In particular, libraries have moved away from expecting patrons to find the library on their own, and are increasingly conducting proactive outreach and deep community engagement efforts. Despite this change in how libraries operationalize their missions, few national data are available to illustrate its impact in libraries or in their communities. A literature review conducted by New Knowledge Organization Ltd. (NewKnowledge) in 2015 determined that much anecdotal information about library programs exists, but we lack adequate evaluative data on impact and research to describe effective practices across the field.

New research is imperative to better understand this transformation and to prepare library workers to embrace their changing role. We need to assess current program offerings in public, academic, school, and special libraries and identify the skills and training necessary to support library workers to meet these new demands. This research will develop a broad characterization of contemporary library public programming, its impacts, and the necessary competencies for libraries and their programming workers to excel in this work.

To meet this need, the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office (PPO), with the support of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership, has conducted a research project: National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA): Phase I. This project begins to implement the first research recommendations of a multi-phase strategy developed through an IMLS National

Leadership planning grant and published in a widely distributed white paper in 2014.

In NILPPA: Phase 1 – a first-of-its-kind project – ALA brought together a network of researchers, practitioner-researchers, and advisors to implement a comprehensive research strategy to understand and document the characteristics, audiences, outcomes, and value of U.S. library public programming.

This project was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. **How can we characterize and categorize public programs offered by libraries today?**
2. **What competencies and training are required for professionals working with library programming today?**

This research effort gathered information from across a range of program types, topics, formats, audiences, and partners to build a framework that aligns impacts, program types, audiences, and other variables. This project lays the groundwork to serve the emerging needs of library workers and provides a foundation for establishing national metrics to assess how programming is impacting library services and users. The research is believed to be unique in its ability to link professional skills to program impact assessment, and to establish the training needs to support both.

Although our focus on the impact of library programming across public, academic, school, and special libraries may be the first of its kind, we leveraged other current research efforts to guide the study, such as the Public Library Association's (PLA) Project Outcome and the IMLS-COSLA Measures that Matter (MtM) initiative. A meta-analysis of Project Outcome data related to programming was critical for building our framework of program types. The MtM initiative, designed to streamline public library data collection and storage practices, informed our design, and we are fortunate to count MtM working group member Annie Norman, director

and state librarian of the Delaware Division of Library Services, among our longtime NILPPA advisors.

Research Team

Three-person research teams were set up to work on each NILPPA research question separately, supported by NewKnowledge researchers and ALA PPO staff. However, due to the interrelated nature of the questions, teams were often asked to review instruments and findings or provide input on both research questions, not just the one to which they had originally been assigned.

Assigned Q1 Team:

- Carolyn Anthony, Public Library Consultant
- Jennifer Weil Arns, University of South Carolina
- Jamie Campbell Naidoo, University of Alabama

Assigned Q2 Team:

- Terrilyn Chun, Multnomah County Library
- Michele Besant, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Janine Golden, University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business

Advisory Team:

The following list includes the entire advisory committee.

- Miguel Figueroa, ALA
- Sara Goodwin Thiel, University of Kansas
- John Horrigan, Pew Research Center
- Robert Horton, Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- Richard Kong, Skokie Public Library
- Colleen Leddy, Stair District Library
- Samantha López, PLA
- Annie Norman, Delaware state librarian
- Emily Plagman, PLA
- Manju Prasad-Rao, Long Island University
- Kathy Rosa, ALA
- Marsha Semmel, Marsha Semmel Consulting
- Rebecca Teasdale, Rebecca Teasdale Consulting
- Sandy Toro, IMLS
- Angel Ysaguirre, Illinois Humanities Council

KEY TERMS

The feasibility of this project hinges on developing a common understanding of several terms that appear deceptively simple: program, public, instruction, and competency. Understanding of these terms may vary across library type, and it is imperative to identify definitions that are widely applicable.

We began this phase of NILPPA with working definitions for program and public, which we continued to refine as the project progressed. The need for definitions for instruction and competency became clear only after the October 2017 meeting in Chicago. The working definition of instruction is based on conversations in Chicago, while our working definition of competency is based on several competency frameworks from the library field.

Program

We began this project using the IMLS definition of programs:

A program is any planned event which introduces the group attending to any of the broad range of library services or activities or which directly provides information to participants. Programs may cover use of the library, library services, or library tours. Programs may also provide cultural, recreational, or educational information, often designed to meet a specific social need (IMLS, 2015).

This definition was overly broad for the present study, because it includes some types of programs that are not public programs. In conversations with the full project team, including both researchers and advisors, we recognized the need for two additional definitions to anchor our study. First, we needed to define public. Second, the team agreed to exclude instruction from our definition of programming – which then required a definition of instruction.

A member of the team then proposed an alternative definition: *A program is a proactive and intentional service in a social setting developed to meet the needs of an anticipated target audience.* This definition was later refined through the validity study to our current working definition: *A “program” is an intentional service or event in a group setting developed proactively to meet the needs or interests of an anticipated target audience.*

Public

Many libraries serve a subset of the population, and we need an understanding of *public* that is meaningful for those libraries. While a number of school and university libraries focus only on students, faculty, and staff, many others are actively engaging with the wider communities where they are located. The NILPPA planning white paper (ALA, 2014) set a precedent for defining *public*:

The advisors concluded that, for the purposes of this research, “public” and “public programs” refer to the library’s public — the community the library serves or the audiences the library targets for its programs. For public libraries, this may mean the whole community or, perhaps, seniors. In the case of academic libraries, the public may be the student body, the chemistry department, or incoming freshmen. For a special library such as the Pritzker Military Museum & Library it may be veterans, servicemen, or veterans service organizations.

Using the white paper definition allows us to reconcile the different forms public programming takes in different types of libraries. For a program to be public, it need not be open to all comers. However, we do not consider programming public if attendance is required in some way, for some audience; this definition naturally excludes instruction when it forms part of K-12 or academic coursework.

A program that gives preference to certain types of attendees may still be public, as long as nobody is penalized for failing to attend. For example, a program that gives priority seating to those who make a reservation in advance may still be public. Similarly, a university library may entice students to attend programs by granting students extra credit, and we may still consider these programs public if attendance is not required as part of coursework. Events at an academic or school library may also be considered public even if they are open only to the student body, to the faculty, or some other restricted public.

Through the validity study conducted as part of Q1 research, we refined this definition:

All libraries, regardless of type, have a public. “Public” and “public program” refer to the library’s public, or community — the people the library serves or the audiences the library

tailors its programs to. For example, in the case of academic libraries, the public may be the student body, the chemistry department, or incoming freshmen. For public libraries, the public may mean the whole community or, perhaps, a subset like youth or seniors. That means a program can be public even if it is tailored to a specific audience (e.g., women’s book club).

Ultimately, based on all input received from research participants to date, the NILPPA project team recommended a few final changes, including combining the definitions for “public” and “program.” The working definition at the time of writing this report is:

A “public program” is a service or event in a group setting developed to meet the needs or interests of an anticipated target audience. All libraries, regardless of type, have a public — the audiences the library tailors its programs to and the people the library serves.

Instruction

Excluding instruction, as suggested above, then raises a further question: what, precisely, is instruction? Without a clear definition, we have no way of determining when instruction should be excluded from our definition of programming. A definition needs to clarify the boundaries of library instruction and whether instruction is primarily a matter of format or content.

Potential cases that this definitional question raises:

- Does a computer skills class at a public library count as instruction? As a public program?
- Does a drop-in workshop on citations at an academic library count as instruction? As a public program?
- Does a tour of a library count as instruction? As a public program?
- Does the way in which the above are planned, advertised, conducted, or the number of participants change the answers?

We believe that NILPPA should include all of the above examples as public programs. As such, we recommend adopting the following definition of instruction and excluding it from our definition of programs: *An event that occurs in an academic or school library and otherwise meets the*

project's definition of a program is considered academic instruction only if all of the following conditions are met:

- *The event occurs during a course meeting time or as part of coursework;*
- *The event is restricted to students and instructors affiliated with that particular course; and*
- *Students are penalized for failing to attend or meet this requirement.*

Competency

Finally, understanding the competencies required to work in library programming requires a shared understanding of what a competency is.

Many of the competency frameworks we reviewed did not give explicit definitions of competency; rather, these definitions were implicit in the text. To inform our shared understanding, we began with the Library Leadership and Management Association's (2012) definition:

Professional competencies comprise the knowledge, skills, and abilities which are teachable, measurable, and objective and which define and contribute to performance in librarianship.

The words "teachable" and "measurable" require further specification. We recognize that many of the competencies in question are either not currently taught in formal educational settings, or are difficult to teach in those settings. We also recognize that a competency need not be fully quantifiable to be measurable; qualitative measures are also valid.

The question of measurement helps us differentiate between a competency and a skill. A competency has two dimensions:

- The knowledge, skill, or ability; and
- The level of mastery of that knowledge, skill, or ability.

A Note on Research Terminology

Although the words typology and taxonomy are often used interchangeably, they represent the two major approaches to multidimensional classification. The goal of all classification schemes is to maximize within-group homogeneity while minimizing cross-group homogeneity (Szostak, 2004, p. 9), and these two methods work quite differently. Typology is a top-down categorization; *[its] dimensions are based on the notion of an ideal type, a mental construct that deliberately*

accentuates certain characteristics and not necessarily something that is found in empirical reality (Smith, 2002, p. 381). Taxonomy, on the other hand, is a bottom-up approach: taxonomies begin with empirical and measurable traits, and are typically developed quantitatively (Bailey, 1994, p. 6).

The other major differences between these two approaches flow from this starting point. Categories in a typology often have fuzzy boundaries, while taxonomic categories are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. The strength of typologies is typically their descriptive, comparative power; taxonomies are more likely to be explanatory or predictive (Smith, 2002).

While taxonomies are prototypically hierarchical and evolutionary, they need not be (Bailey, 1994, p. 6). For example, if each dimension of a classification scheme is largely independent of the others, we would not necessarily expect to find a hierarchy. However, if each dimension is empirically measurable, developed through clustering or similar methods, this non-hierarchical scheme would be taxonomic rather than typological.

Hybrid categorizations are also possible. Categories can be developed iteratively, tacking back and forth between theoretical and empirical approaches. Theoretical instincts can be confirmed with empirical methods, and empirical distinctions can inform theory.

In the original grant, we used the terms typology and taxonomy; however, in response to the findings regarding the specific differences between, and implications of, the two terms, in this report we use categorization, categories, categorization scheme, and framework as neutral terms. We use typology and taxonomy only when we intend to be explicit about the distinction between the two.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND WORK OVERVIEW

This report describes work done to address both research questions within the NILPPA initiative. In 2019, the results from all data collection activities were used to prepare a white paper and two peer-reviewed journal submissions to communicate findings to the field and solicit practitioner feedback throughout the life of the project.

Question 1: Program Categorization

The first NILPPA research question asks: *How can we characterize and categorize public programs offered by libraries today?*

This descriptive study characterized the range of library public programming by type, using data to explore the role of the programming professional in development and implementation of public programs, and aligning information with existing ALA research data and emerging trends.

The first research task iterated between qualitative, typological development of categories and quantitative, taxonomic development of categories. This qualitative work was largely developed by the research team at a June 2017 meeting, while the empirical process was based on Project Outcome's extensive programming data and other major library data collection efforts. The NewKnowledge team synthesized findings from these two efforts to develop a draft categorization, which the full team then reviewed and refined.

The next two studies honed and validated this categorization. Quantitative validation was undertaken via a survey distributed in several waves to members of a number of different ALA-affiliated groups and listservs. After that, qualitative case studies provided further depth and nuance. This strategy ensured minimum burden while maximizing input from professional and user voices.

Developing a Framework to Categorize Library Programming

In June 2017, the Q1 academic researchers and practitioner experts developed a basic categorization structure and listed examples in each of five categories: Library Profile, Program Content, Program Delivery, Program Audience, and Financials. This framework was then distributed for peer review to the advisory panel and the refined model and definitions were then used in the first-wave national quantitative survey.

Validity Study

We distributed this quantitative survey in three waves, refining items iteratively between waves, and aimed to test the validity of the categorization by inviting practitioners to

review the framework. Practitioners were invited to supplement the categorization with descriptions of the depth and range of their own programs where there is variation from the initial categorization, and help define common terms for the field.

Case Studies

In Year 2, following completion of the categorization of programming types, the research team developed a case study strategy to determine if the draft framework held true according to library workers' real-life experience. This phase focused on practitioners delivering programs that represent core types emerging from the categorization. The case study research design featured coding textual data from the Validity Survey, six 30-minute interviews with selected case study libraries, and reviewing online and print materials from libraries to illustrate or expand the current framework.

Question 2: User-Focused Programming Competencies

The second NILPPA research question is: *What competencies and training are required for professionals working with library programming today?*

This mixed-methods research effort developed community-wide definitions for core competencies necessary to be a library programming professional (e.g., degrees, training, certifications, aptitudes, expectations, and mid-career professional development). Working with academic programs, program practitioners, and administrators, the NILPPA team described current practices, desired competencies, and challenges facing the field. This effort employed parallel data collection strategies to create a large set of data types for analysis.

Analysis of Curricula and Competencies

In Y1, research committee members collected and analyzed curriculum offerings and syllabi from Masters of Library and Information Sciences (MLIS) and related graduate programs and solicited feedback from professionals on learning outside of graduate programs that helped prepare them to work in programming in their field.

Competency Survey

Simultaneously, we deployed an online survey on current needs to ALA PPO's Programming Librarian email list. The survey was later redeployed to ensure that library workers from the following types of libraries and settings were adequately represented:

- Rural areas;
- Tribal libraries;
- Research and academic libraries;
- State libraries;
- Special libraries;
- Academic programs (MLIS faculty); and
- K-12 school libraries.

These data were synthesized for a presentation at ALA's 2018 Annual Conference.

Discussion Forum

During the first half of Y2, the team hosted a series of discussion forums to assess recommendations from prior research phases. Originally conceived as online, field-wide practitioner and academic discussion forums, we decided to conduct a mix of live and online discussions in order to ensure the participation of a wide range of library workers.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is organized by parts that correspond to the research questions (Table 1). Each part consists of chapters providing details of each component of the project.

Table 1. Organization of the Summative Report.

Part	Chapter	Research Question
1	Developing a framework to categorize library programming	Q1
1	Validity Study	Q1
1	Case Study	Q1
2	Analysis of Curricula and Competencies	Q2
2	Competency Survey	Q2
2	Discussion Forums	Q2
3	Discussion	Q1 + Q2
3	Conclusion	Q1 + Q2
3	Glossary	Q1 + Q2

Part 1. Program Categorization

Developing a Framework to Categorize Library Programming

METHODS

Meta-Analysis of Existing Categorization Schemes

Before developing a categorization scheme that would meet the needs of the present project, the research team's first task was to systematically consider the various ways of categorizing programs currently in use. Undertaking what we refer to as a meta-analysis, the NewKnowledge team synthesized information from a range of library resources in order to understand the current state of the field. These resources include:

- Information from the planning phase of NILPPA, particularly the NILPPA planning white paper and a preliminary meta-analysis conducted in 2014;
- Reports and other data from major library data collection efforts, including PLA Project Outcome and the Public Libraries Survey; and
- Practical resources developed for library workers themselves, most notably Programming Librarian's metadata.

Samantha Lopez and Emily Plagman at Project Outcome also undertook a bottom-up categorization of their database in order to develop a mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive set of program topics.

Developing and Refining a Draft Framework

In June 2017, NewKnowledge staff, ALA PPO, and NILPPA researchers met to develop a tentative categorization structure and listed examples in each of five categories: Library Profile, Program Content, Program Delivery, Program Audience, and Financials. The research team articulated the challenges involved in creating a categorization of public programs and began to define key terms. That process laid the foundation for the findings presented in this report.

In October 2017, ALA PPO hosted a meeting of the full research and advisory teams in Chicago to refine the draft framework for categorizing library programming by

interrogating each dimension and subdimension. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that dimensions would be relevant to all library types. The resulting categorization was shared again at the research team meeting in Denver in February 2018 and refined through further discussion.

META-ANALYSIS RESULTS

Before developing a categorization scheme that would meet the needs of the present project, the research team's first task was to understand ways of categorizing programs currently in use.

The meta-analysis included the following sources: NILPPA Planning White Paper, ALA PPO Archives, PLA Project Outcome, Programming Librarian, University of Washington Impact Survey, Measures that Matter, Pew Library Typology, Public Library Survey, and the Web Junction Competency Index for the Library Field.

NILPPA Planning White Paper

The planning for this project was presented in a white paper (ALA, 2014) that laid out the increasing importance of programming for libraries. This white paper also developed the framework and research activities for the current project.

The white paper emphasizes a key point that informs the project: *Programming is effective to the degree it serves the authentic needs and interests of its target participants.* We need to consider what those needs and interests are, and ways to measure and meet them.

The white paper suggests a categorization by program development, noting there are three main pathways through which libraries can develop programming:

- Library staff may develop programs locally;
- Libraries may co-develop programs with partner organizations; and
- Regional or national entities may develop and distribute programs to libraries.

While each pathway has different affordances, program success does not initially seem to be tied to the pathway. However, these pathways differ significantly in the affordances they offer for impact on the institution and stakeholders, with regional/national programs most likely to build capacity whereas locally grown programs may fulfill very specific needs or desires.

ALA PPO Archives

In 2014, NewKnowledge conducted a preliminary meta-analysis (Fraser, Sheppard, & Norlander, 2014, NewKnowledge Publication #IMLS.74.83.02) based on documents in the ALA archives, dating between 1987 and 2013, and a three-question survey of 275 programming library workers across the country.

This preliminary analysis considered three main dimensions for classifying library programming content. The first dimension comprises both content and format, while the second categorizes library programming by intended audience, and the third considers the intended outcomes for participants.

Programming Types

The ALA PPO Archives file programming under the following categories: exhibits, films, musical performances, workshops, crafts, public forums, interactive dialogues, lectures, performances, storytelling, book clubs, digital programming, and distance learning.

A previous assessment conducted by ALA PPO with the support of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund (Wilcox Johnson, 1999) studied 461 public libraries serving populations of 100,000 or more, and a sample of 1,039 libraries serving between 5,000 and 99,999 people. This study included nine program types: book discussions, creative writing programs, author presentations/readings, reading incentive programs, lecture series, musical performances, dance performances, dramatic performances, and film series. All of the nine program types were offered in at least some public libraries. The NewKnowledge analysis confirmed the wide range shown in the 1999 analysis, while suggesting a slightly different categorization:

- **Author programs**, particularly with local authors or, in the case of academic libraries, institutional authors;
- **Discussion programs**, including film, audio, and radio discussions; family reading; discussion and storytelling series; and thematic book discussion groups;
- **Traveling exhibits**, typically high-quality programs coordinated and supported by PPO, often in collaboration with academic institutions;
- **Summer programming**, largely for children who lack exposure to reading and writing when school is not in session;
- **Community co-created programming** that focuses on issues relevant to library users' needs and interests, often in response to local events or patrons' suggestions; and
- **Social service and literacy programs**, including health education, financial literacy classes, computer and technical skills, and English-language and civics education for new immigrants.

Audience Segmentation

We also considered various possibilities for segmenting library audiences, beginning with library type. Public libraries have the widest user base and demographic range. Meanwhile, academic libraries keep a narrower range of needs in mind: they cater primarily to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and institutional affiliates, who typically have a similar set of needs. Similarly, school libraries' audiences include students, parents, staff, and sometimes the community. Finally, special libraries (such as corporate, medical, law, and religious libraries) have much more limited audiences. We also explored age segmentation: many library workers recognized trade-offs between children's programming and adult programming, and many libraries are actively trying to develop more intergenerational programming.

Intended Outcomes

A third possibility for categorizing library programming is by intended outcomes. Programming typically had one of two primary goals; participants were typically expected to acquire either knowledge or skills. Because good programming is inclusive, relevant, and culturally responsive, both types of programming often served a third goal: to help shape

perceptions of public libraries as essential public services for the whole community.

PLA Project Outcome

The PLA launched Project Outcome in 2015 to help libraries and library workers understand how effective their programs and services are.

Project Outcome provides libraries with free, standardized patron surveys as well as web-based tools for data entry, analysis, and visualization. By aggregating data from all of these surveys across different libraries, Project Outcome will help improve programs at both the level of the individual library and the national level.

Project Outcome breaks down its work in several different ways. At the top level, Project Outcome categorizes library service into seven key areas:

- Civic / Community Engagement;
- Digital Learning;
- Economic Development;
- Education / Lifelong Learning;
- Early Childhood Literacy;
- Job Skills; and
- Summer Reading.

All of these areas encompass both services and programs, and there is significant overlap between them.

In one presentation (PLA, 2016b), Project Outcome categorized programming within Education and Lifelong Learning, developing the following categories:

- Book Clubs;
- Crafts;
- ESOL / Languages;
- Gardening;
- General;
- Health / Food;
- History / Genealogy;
- Skills;
- Technology; and
- Workforce Development / Job Skills.

The inclusion of Technology and Workforce Development / Job Skills in this list illustrates the significant overlap of the seven key areas.

Project Outcome found that different outcomes were linked to these categories, suggesting an outcomes-based classification could be useful. Project Outcome staff's instinct was to develop topical categories based on program content, rather than beginning with another variable such as program format, audience characteristics, or library type. The researchers suspect that most library workers will share this intuition – content must be one of the dimensions of any final categorization scheme.

Yet developing content categories that are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive is extremely challenging and reflects the difficulty of the present exercise. Of course, library workers are quite familiar with this challenge – the various book classification systems all have their own strengths and weaknesses. The way libraries are structured and the way programs are funded may further complicate the classification system. For example, some libraries treat educational programming differently from other programming – although definitions of *education* may vary widely.

NILPPA Categorization

For the current phase of NILPPA, staff at Project Outcome compiled a list of all programs across these seven areas in order to develop a categorization. From a list containing 4,408 unique program names, staff began with top key words to create categories, then sorted programs by number of survey responses and categorized the most frequently occurring program names. This preliminary categorization allowed Project Outcome staff to validate and refine as they went. After categorizing approximately 300 programs, they shared a first categorization scheme with NewKnowledge. NewKnowledge then suggested a structure with mutually exclusive categories, and Project Outcome staff returned a second iteration of the categories.

In the first iteration, all programs were sorted into high-level categories: Arts & Leisure, Business & Finance, Computers & Technology, Education, Events, Health, Literacy, Job Skills & Career, STEM, and Miscellaneous. Each of these categories contained several subcategories. While these categories are not fully mutually exclusive, they have the potential to become much more so. STEM, for instance, could explicitly

exclude applied technology skills, as could the job skills category.

In general, Project Outcome's first iteration of the categorization scheme took topic rather than format as the primary approach. The one wild card category was "Events", with subcategories that crossed both format and content. Those subcategories were Designated Time / Space, Topical Lecture / Discussion, Community Event / Outreach / Volunteering, and Entertainment.

The second iteration retained all the strengths of the first, and gained some additional strengths, more closely approaching mutual exclusivity. For example, the Events category became Community, with a clearer rationale behind it. Still, the fact that overlap persists is testament to the challenge of the task, one that categorization attempts throughout history (e.g., Dewey Decimal Classification System, Library of Congress Classification System) have come up against.

Programming Librarian

Programming Librarian is a website run by ALA PPO to promote public programming. On the website, libraries can share information about their current programs, and browse model programs along a number of dimensions in order to gain inspiration from what peer libraries are doing. Grants and professional development opportunities are also posted on the website, as are programming resources like checklists and curricula.

Programming Librarian recently revised their menus based on analytics, removing options – and in one case an entire dimension of programming work – that were not widely used, and adding information based on search terms. That process makes their metadata particularly useful for developing categorization as they have already considered which categories are either unintuitive or unhelpful to programming libraries.

Furthermore, because Programming Librarian used website analytics to determine which categories were being used and how, these lists provide us with a data-driven rationale to use, or not use, certain types of categories. In particular, event format appears to be less salient to library workers than other ways of categorizing programs.

The original dimensions on the Programming Librarian site were program budget, library type, program topic, program type, and age group. Several of these categories changed names or were removed altogether in the update.

Budget

The budget categories range from free to \$5,000 or more. Given the opportunistic nature of most current public programming, sorting by cost is likely to be useful for library staff looking for opportunities and inspiration. These options did not change.

Library Type

Programming Librarian recognizes five types of libraries: academic or college libraries, public libraries, K-12 school libraries, special libraries, and rural libraries. The rural library category is a recent addition.

Program Topic

Programming Librarian's topic listings underwent significant change (Table 2). Many of the old topic listings disappeared altogether, while others moved to other menus. For instance, *Special Needs & Underserved Populations* moved to *Target Audience* (Table 3). Meanwhile, *Commemorative Months/Celebrations* has been split into two specific topics: *Black History Month* and *Women's History Month* (Table 2).

Table 2. Old and new Program Topic menu options.

Old	New
Grants and Program Starters	Black History Month
STEM	Books and Authors
Literature/Literacy	Coloring, Crafts and Hands-on
History/Politics/Civics	Community Engagement
Arts and Culture	Health and Wellness
Business/Finance	Passive Programming
Crafting/Hands-on	Program Grants and Marketing
Commemorative Months/Celebrations	STEM
Food and Drink	Tech and Gaming
Foreign Language	Women's History Month
Gaming/Just for Fun	
Special Needs & Underserved Populations	
Sports/Fitness/Health	

Note: This list was provided to the report's authors. The current menu is titled *Popular Topics*, and it contains *Grants and Marketing* rather than *Program Grants and Marketing*.

Age Group or Target Audience

Age Group is becoming *Target Audience* and is broadening with this shift. In particular, this menu has added several audience categories that are not based on age and were not listed in the prior version of this category (Table 3).

Table 3. Old (Age Group) and new (Target Audience) menu options.

Old	New
Adult	Adult
Children / Family	Children / Family
College Students	College Students
Community Members	Older Adults / Seniors
Older Adults	Special Needs
Young	Tweens and Teens
	Rural
	Urban
	Homeless Populations

Note: This list was provided to the report's authors. The current *Audience* menu does not contain *Special Needs*, while it includes two additional items not listed here: *Community Members* and *Young Adult*.

University of Washington Impact Survey

The University of Washington's Information School conducted a national survey of public library patrons who use the library's public access technology, which includes both computers and wireless internet. More than 85,000 people completed the survey, and two-thirds of them used this technology.

While this survey did not directly attempt to categorize library programming, it created a categorization of computer use that could potentially inform library programming. The report notes: *Access to computers and the Internet ... is essential to helping people satisfy their information needs ... in a variety of areas* (University of Washington, 2017, p. 7). Library public programming serves similar goals, so these topic areas may well be transferrable.

The topic areas the survey addresses are:

- Education;
- Employment;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Health and wellness;
- eGovernment;
- Civic engagement;
- eCommerce; and
- Social inclusion.

Education includes learning about and applying to degree programs and financial aid, taking online courses, and doing research or homework. Employment comprises looking for and applying to jobs, as well as working on résumés, receiving and sending job-related correspondence, training, and doing work for a current position. Entrepreneurship, meanwhile, includes starting or managing a business, as well as performing research for that business and reaching out to customers or contract opportunities. Health and wellness includes a number of health-related learning tasks, as well as searching for support groups, doctors, or medical records. The difference between eGovernment and Civic engagement was chiefly one of formality: the first category includes interacting with government agencies and programs, while the second referred to reading the news and interacting with civic or community groups. Library patrons' eCommerce activities includes buying and selling things online, online banking, and financial literacy activities. Finally, social inclusion refers to any social or recreational activities conducted online, such as meeting friends, playing games, or looking up recipes.

As a result of this survey, we know quite a bit about how patrons use library services. Based on this work, the NILPPA validity study was designed to explore whether libraries offer programming for the same goals.

Measures that Matter

Measures that Matter (MtM) is a joint project of the IMLS and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), designed to evaluate and streamline data collection by public libraries around the US. The lack of coordination between different libraries and library systems, however, has meant that libraries may be duplicating their efforts, or collecting data that are not comparable.

A 2017 working paper (Smith, Matthews, Crandall, Nyberg, & Cherubini, 2017) reviewed various current data collection efforts, many of which the NILPPA team reviewed for programming-specific content. In particular, MtM found that all five active efforts – Edge, the Impact Survey, Project Outcome, the Public Libraries Survey, and the Public Library Data Service – collect data that can be used for program evaluation or benchmarking. However, the high-level analysis

conducted here does not address programming categories in general.

If anything, the MtM working paper illustrates how ingrained the current typology of program types is – it does not question the overlapping categories used by these other data collection efforts. For example, the paper states, *The PLDS and Project Outcome gather data related to the Summer Reading programs and other areas such as digital learning, early childhood literacy, education/lifelong learning, and economic development* (Smith et al., 2017, p. 22).

Pew Library Typology

Between 2011 and 2014, the Pew Research Center conducted a three-year study on libraries' role in Americans' lives, including which library services Americans most value (Pew, 2013) and how public libraries are perceived (Pew, 2014). Both reports confirmed that library programming is important to Americans.

The 2013 report including programming among a list of services offered by libraries. Only two of these (“programs and classes for children and teens” and “free events and activities, such as classes and cultural events, for people of all ages”) fit our definition of *program*. People overwhelmingly believe that these offerings are important: 74% believe that youth programs are very important and another 21% consider them somewhat important. Similarly, 63% of respondents believe that all-ages programming is very important and a further 30% think it is somewhat important.

The survey also asked people whether they believed public libraries should or should not implement several types of services. Among them were two types of programming: free early literacy programs to pre-school children, and interactive learning experiences like museum exhibits. Another question asked how likely people would be to use certain programs and services; listed among them was a *technology petting zoo* where library patrons could try out new technology.

Meanwhile, the 2014 report focused on the different ways people engage with libraries. That report developed a typology of library users rather than of libraries.

The Pew research is perhaps most useful for us as a reminder of the inherent blurriness between programs and services.

Public Libraries Survey

The Institute of Museum and Library Services has collected data on public libraries annually since 1988 through the Public Libraries Survey (PLS). The PLS contains data on more than 9,000 public library systems nationwide.

While the PLS is not primarily concerned with programming, NILPPA's working definition of *program* comes directly from the PLS. According to the definitions of specific terms used in the PLS:

A program is any planned event which introduces the group attending to any of the broad range of library services or activities or which directly provides information to participants. Programs may cover use of the library, library services, or library tours. Programs may also provide cultural, recreational, or educational information, often designed to meet a specific social need. Examples of these types of programs include film showings, lectures, story hours, literacy, English as a second language, citizenship classes, and book discussions. (IMLS, 2015).

Excluding one-to-one activities from the definition of program has been key to our understanding of the often-blurry line between programs and services.

Within the category of programs, the PLS differentiates two types: Children's Programs and Young Adult Programs. These types are differentiated only by target audience age, and do not represent an exhaustive categorization of all age groups for which library programming exists. The PLS defines "children" as people age 11 or younger, while "young adult" is defined as people ages 12 to 18, inclusive.

WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field

In 2014, WebJunction updated their Competency Index, first introduced in 2009 to help library staff identify skills and support they need. The update emphasized three overarching components: twenty-first century skills, accountability, and community engagement. The latter two of these are particularly relevant to NILPPA's goals. Accountability refers to the *increased need to measure and demonstrate impact*

(Gutsche & Hough, 2014, p. 1), while community engagement focuses on building strategic partnerships and identifying community needs.

The index organizes competencies hierarchically into five top-level competencies and a number of sub-competencies. Of interest to the present question is Public Services Competencies, which contains groups of programming competencies.

Like many of the sources considered here, the Index never defines either *program* or *service*. Programming is treated as a subset of services, but the distinction is left somewhat fuzzy.

Furthermore, the Index uses programming categories that are primarily but not wholly age-based. These categories are somewhat overlapping: Adult Programming (further divided into General Adult Programming and Older Adult Programming), Children's Programming, Young Adult Programming, and Patron Training. This last category, Patron Training – which encompasses one-on-one services, one-time training workshops and programs, and ongoing classes – overlaps with the others, since it cuts across age groups. Furthermore, the age-based programming categories all emphasize programs that develop skills, to a greater or lesser degree.

THE DRAFT CATEGORIZATION FRAMEWORK

Using the information gained through the meta-analysis of existing categorization schemes, we began to draft a framework for categorizing library programming. NILPPA's project goal is an evidence-based classification rather than an idealized one. Based on the preliminary data, it appeared that a taxonomic classification scheme would be more appropriate than typology for most purposes. This approach, however, creates dimensions that are largely independent and non-hierarchical:

- Library Profile;
- Program Characteristics;
- Program Audience; and
- Program Administration (originally Financials)

Each dimension has different affordances, and each is structured differently. We consider them, and their sub-

dimensions, in turn. Note that certain sub-dimensions are of necessity typological rather than taxonomic, supported by a rationale in the sections that follow.

Library Profile

This dimension allows us to classify library programming based on information about the libraries that are hosting the programming. This type of classification is particularly useful for benchmarking, and for library workers seeking to understand what kinds of programming are most common in similar institutions. Categories within this dimension include library type, geographic area, community demographics, library size, and library capacity.

Library type will continue to use the classifications already in wide use (e.g., school, academic, public, etc.). Meanwhile, Geographic area will note whether the library is urban, suburban, or rural. The Community demographics trait requires further discussion. What demographic information do we want to know about the community (e.g., age distribution, income level)? And what counts as the community, particularly for a branch in a larger library system?

Library size and capacity refers to measures that capture both the number of people served and the ability to serve those people. Which measures have the most explanatory or classificatory power is an open question. However, possible proxies to capture include number of library cards, circulation statistics, number of staff members, hours open to the public, and number of branches. For branch libraries in a larger system, we may need to capture this information for both the specific branch and the system as a whole.

Program Characteristics

Describing programs by their characteristics has value for professional and public audiences alike. It allows the public to seek out programs that are relevant to their interests or needs, and it helps library workers better understand the impact of different types of programs.

Potential subdimensions under program characteristics are: program topic, program format, multimedia use, program location, deliverer, participation style, and program frequency.

Program topic has been discussed at some length in the meta-analysis chapter of this report. Developing an empirical

set of categories that is both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive remains a challenge for this project.

On the basis of Project Outcome's data, we proposed the following categories:

- Arts, Crafts, and Leisure;
- Business, Career, and Finance;
- Civics and Government;
- Computers, Technology, and Engineering;
- Health, Fitness, and Nutrition;
- Literacy, Language, and Literature;
- Local Interest;
- Science and Mathematics;
- Social Science and Current Events; and
- Other Program Topics.

Program format, much like program topic, has typically been considered typologically rather than taxonomically. Sample models or formats include book clubs, discussion groups, classes, performances, and exhibits, but these categories require further consideration.

Multimedia use, unlike topic, needs to be represented as either a series of tags that are not mutually exclusive or a number of binary (yes-no) variables. That is, a program may use films, music, still images, other types of media, or any combination thereof.

Location addresses where the program is actually held: at a library branch, in a school, at a partner organization, or some type of mobile program. Deliverer allows us to consider who presents the program: a library staff member, a volunteer, a staff member at a partner organization, an author, and so on. These two dimensions are more likely to be of interest to library staff and library organizations than for audience members.

Participation style refers to whether program participants are active, passive, or self-directed. In early conversations held with research teams in June 2017 there was no conclusion regarding how dynamic or time-bound a program had to be for inclusion (e.g., libraries that have dedicated, permanent maker spaces). This is an open question, one that merits additional consideration.

Program frequency, meanwhile, allows library workers and the public alike to distinguish between programs that are offered only once, individual programs that are offered repeatedly, and programs that are part of a series or class.

Program Audience

Characterizing programs by target audience has benefits for library workers and the public alike. Since library funding may be targeted to specific demographics, library workers have a need to characterize programs in this way. Meanwhile, the public wants to find programs that are appropriate for them.

The two major subdimensions of Program Audience are age and other demographics. While age is easily divided into mutually exclusive categories – children, young adults, adults, and older adults – the other demographics category can most easily be considered typologically, since meaningful categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Libraries may offer programming specifically targeting groups as diverse as new US residents, job seekers, adults without a high school education, and new parents – yet none of these groups need be mutually exclusive. Careful consideration, however, is necessary to keep the number of categories small enough to be manageable.

Program Administration

Finally, the financial dimension includes four subdimensions: cost to attendee, cost to library, sponsorship or development model, and specific sponsor.

Cost to attendee is probably of more interest to the public than to library staff, while cost to library is probably of more use to library workers and agencies. Sponsorship or development model allows libraries to distinguish whether a program is developed by the library itself, by or with a community partner, or by a national organization such as the ALA. Finally, tracking specific sponsors will make it easier to see the impact of particular sponsors and funding programs across library systems and branches.

EMPHASIZING KEY QUESTIONS

Throughout the refining process, all participants recommended maintaining the four top-level categories. However, *Financials* was renamed *Program Administration* to

communicate more clearly the central role of program development models in this category, in addition to the financial aspects of programs.

While participants believed nearly all of the subdimensions originally listed were valuable (with the exception of multimedia use), they were concerned about redundancy with other library data collection efforts. To minimize both this redundancy and eventual respondent burden, the team decided to emphasize a single key question for each dimension. For all dimensions except *Library Profile*, these key questions related to program goals. Given NILPPA's eventual objective of measuring impact, the team found it important to include goals and intentions in the categorization.

These key questions were as follows.

Library Profile: *What type of library is it?*

Public means something very different depending on the type of library (e.g., public, K-12, academic, special). For example, an academic library's public may include both the institutional community and the local area, and the first audience may take precedence for most programming. Knowing what type of library we are looking at allows us to begin to understand the range of the audience.

Program Characteristics: *What is the most important intended outcome?*

The team originally agreed that outcomes fall into three main categories, although these three categories are not mutually exclusive. Programs can have **educational** outcomes, where people learn new skills or information, or they aim to change behavior in some way. Programs can have recreational outcomes, where people are exposed to something new. (Note that while *recreation* may sound less important than *education*, there is a large body of scholarship on the importance of recreation and leisure to individuals and communities, see, e.g., *Journal of Leisure Research*). Finally, programs can also have dialogic outcomes, where participants interact with others who are not like them or hear another perspective on an issue.

A typical program may combine elements of all three — but one of these types of outcomes will often be the *most*

important in determining if the program succeeds or not. The list of intended outcomes was refined using input from the field through the Validity Survey.

Audience Characteristics: *Is the program trying to appeal to the library's entire audience or a subset?*

While some programs are designed for a library's full public, others are intended to serve some particular group, often those that are underserved by other institutions or systems. Comparing the target audience to the actual audience makes it possible to see whether programs met an aspect of their intended goals. If a program is intended for the library's full audience, we expect to see that the people who show up are representative of that larger public. Conversely, if a program is meant for a specific group, we want to make sure those people are attending — and anyone else who comes is a bonus.

For example, many libraries offer bilingual programs. The primary goal of those programs might be to ensure that speakers of that second language attend library programs, or the primary goal might be to expose the broader library public to literature in that language. Each of these cases suggests a different target audience — and thus a different way of evaluating the success of that program.

Program Administration: *How was the program developed?*

There are three chief models of program development — most programs are developed by a library itself, by or with a community partner, or by a national organization such as the ALA. Each model has different possibilities.

In particular, the impact on the library as an institution — rather than on its patrons as individuals — may differ widely (cf. ALA, 2014). For instance, co-development with a community partner may help libraries build capacity to develop other programs in the future. Bringing in programs developed by partners or national organizations may afford capacity building and also make it possible for libraries to present programs on topics that go beyond staff expertise.

MEASURING VALUE

During an October 2017 meeting with NILPPA researchers and advisors, the question of value came up repeatedly.

While the first iteration of the framework emphasized program topic, workshop participants found that some programs did not fit easily into that scheme, especially programs that were not informational first and foremost. Participants also felt that the ability to demonstrate a program's value was missing, and that ability will be critical to our future ability to create metrics.

However, participants were also concerned that taking an "ROI mentality" might lead to unintended consequences, particularly when funds are limited. For example, participants noted that the current funding focus on STEM education might mean that programs focusing on other issues, or with more diffuse impact, might be more easily cut.

In general, most people in attendance felt that programs have value when they meet the needs of the communities they serve. In other words, libraries must understand and respond to genuine community needs, rather than plan "cookie-cutter programs." Community assessment — including mapping of both assets and needs — and other responsive listening techniques are a precursor for developing effective programs. As a result, programming will, and should, vary considerably across contexts.

In addition, program value is complex, and largely independent of output measures like attendance. A program might have relatively low attendance but facilitate collaboration with a partner organization or build staff capacity, both of which can lead to greater impact down the line. Nor is value simply a factor of size: an influx of human or financial resources will matter more, proportionately, to a smaller library than a larger one. Finally, value cannot be determined by the number of attendees alone: some "high-touch" activities have a much greater benefit to a small group than a large one.

With this ultimate goal of measuring impact, the group came up with two recommendations:

- Rather than characterizing programs in great detail, characterizing by primary outcome will make it easier to measure impact and compare programs; and
- Consider measuring different types of value: value to the individual attendee, value to the library or host institution, value to the community, and value to the local government

(for public libraries). Programs that benefit the library or community may have even greater impact on individuals, since capacity building at these levels ultimately pays off.

Validity Study

Between April and October 2018, three waves of a Library Programming Validity Survey were used to gather insight into and further refine the draft categorization scheme described in the previous chapter. The goal of this survey was to validate the NILPPA research team's working definitions and preliminary categorization scheme, as well as to collect some additional data to ensure that these definitions and categories were valid across different types of libraries.

After the first wave (results available in Norlander, Nock, & Rank, 2018; NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.03), the NILPPA research committee made minor modifications to the instrument to improve upon survey responses.

Public library staff were overrepresented in the sample, so we analyzed subsets to account for potential over-influence of one responding group. In the second wave, respondents supported definitions of both program and public, with a small number of recommendations to supplement these concepts. The remainder of the survey results comprised more varied responses that illustrate the range of programming purpose, reach, and skills (results available in Norlander, Nock, & Barchas-Lichtenstein, 2018; NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.04). We conducted a final wave of the survey to increase representation by academic and school libraries, but overall findings did not change substantially between the second and third waves. For that reason, a separate topline report was not considered necessary and findings across the three waves are summarized in this report.

METHODS

Instrument

To validate working definitions, we presented respondents with each definition and asked if that definition accurately reflects their understanding of the term. We then also provided an opportunity for comments and suggestions for each definition. To validate categorization schemes, we asked respondents to classify their current programs within each dimension and then asked them if they were aware of

programs that were not classifiable within each dimension, and to provide further detail about said programs.

Recruitment & Participants

The first wave of the survey was distributed initially to 250 members of the Programming Librarian listserv who had not started, partially finished, or completed the NILPPA Competency Survey from Fall 2017. To try to ensure a range of library types, we sent 50 invitations each to .com, .gov, .net, .org, and .us email addresses. In a second distribution, we sent invitations to 200 additional .edu, .org, and .us email addresses. We ultimately received 77 completed surveys as well as 13 partially complete surveys. Most respondents (91% of the 87 who provided this information) worked in public libraries.

In the second wave, we issued 3,750 emails to a randomized list of ALA members belonging to AASL, ACRL, ALSC, LLAMA, RUSA, and YALSA, as well as the Social Responsibilities Round Table and the Library Instruction Round Table. Emails were issued over a two-week period, staggered so response rate and representativeness across library types could be monitored. Due to a disproportionate response from those working in public libraries, the link was sent to 500 additional library workers thought to work in school libraries (email addresses ending in .us) and 250 more library workers in academic settings (email addresses ending in .edu). ALA PPO contacted the following ALA units and affiliate organizations, and asked them to share the survey link with their members: ARSL, COSLA, JCLC, ODLIS, PLA's Project Outcome listserv, PLA's Emerging Leaders (MLIS Survey), liaisons for the 50 State Library Associations, Spectrum Scholars, and ULC. As some representatives shared the link via social media, we do not have an exact number of potential recipients. At the time of publication of the wave two topline report (Norlander, Nock, & Barchas-Lichtenstein, 2018) we had received 642 responses, still largely skewed toward public libraries despite attempts to diversify the respondent pool. For this reason, we undertook a final wave, sending the survey link to another 5,914 email

addresses ending in .edu and 1,057 ending in .us, for a total of 6,941 email addresses. This strategy resulted in 221 additional responses and more even representation across library types.

Across all three waves of the survey, 1,055 of the library workers that we invited participated in the survey, of which 721 viewed every item of the survey. While 481 of these respondents left 1-9 survey items unanswered, all respondents were retained because they completed at least 80% of the survey.

Validating Definitions

The results of each survey wave demonstrated a very high degree of validation for our proposed definitions (Figure 1). We note that the original definitions for public and program were separate in all three waves of the survey. The project team combined public program into a single definition in late 2018, as used in the introduction of this report. After indicating whether or not they agreed with the given definitions, respondents were asked to suggest modifications or changes according to their expertise working in the field, to improve the definitions. Many did so, and after each wave of the survey the definitions were refined accordingly. For this reason, we believe that if we sent out the final version of the definition, we would have near universal approval.

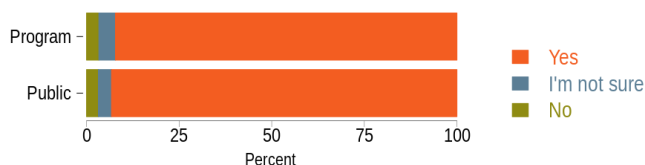


Figure 1. Distribution of agreement with definitions.

Validation of Framework

We asked respondents to classify their programs using our framework, as well as to let us know about programs that did not fit. This allowed us both to assess the suitability of the framework and gain a preliminary sense of the distribution of program types within it.

¹ Fun is "collective pleasure" that "allow[s] participants to feel that their social engagements are rewarding in themselves" (Fine & Corte, 2017, p. 66). Importantly, the temporal and spatial

organization of programs allows for this kind of shared experience which ultimately builds group cohesion.

Program Development Model

We asked library workers to estimate the percentage of their programs that fit into each of the following development models:

- Library alone;
- By or with a community partner;
- By or with a national partner; and
- Other.

Of the 721 respondents, 661 (92%) categorized all of their programs in the first three development models, suggesting that this categorization scheme has face validity for practitioners.

Among the 60 people who classified at least some programs under other models, they reported using other models for an average of only 20% of programs. Write-in responses for *other* included state organizations ($n = 17$); regional organizations ($n = 9$); other university departments ($n = 8$); hired authors, speakers, or performers ($n = 7$); internal partners ($n = 4$); grant sponsored programs ($n = 2$); and $n = 11$ unique responses. The remaining responses simply reiterated the given categories with slightly different words.

Primary Intended Outcome

We asked library workers to estimate the percentage of their programs that have each of the following as a primary intended outcome:

- Participants learn new knowledge;
- Participants learn new skills;
- Participants change their attitudes;
- Participants change their behaviors;
- Participants gain awareness of library resources, services, or programs;
- Participants have fun¹ or are exposed to something new (e.g. art, food, etc.); and

- Participants meet or engage in dialogue or interaction with others.

In addition to these options, we asked as a separate question whether respondents' libraries offer programs with a different primary outcome (Table 4). Most respondents did not have additional primary outcomes. However, enough did name additional types of primary outcomes – or weren't sure – so that we couldn't say that the existing framework had validity without additional exploration. We prioritized this aspect of the framework in the NILPPA case study research that followed this validity study.

Table 4. Responses to “Does your library offer programs whose **primary outcome** does not fall under those listed (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes...)?”

Response	<i>n</i>
No	463
Not Sure	208
Yes	50

Increasing Representation Across Library Types

Since public libraries were much more likely to respond to the validity survey invitation than workers in other library settings, wave three focused exclusively on getting increased representation from academic and school libraries. All library types run programming but may approach this work differently depending on their unique audiences and goals. For NILPPA, it is important for our categorization to reflect library workers across library types.

Overall, results did not indicate much variation between library types, with the following exceptions:

- Academic libraries report spending less time on programming than other types of libraries.
- Academic libraries are more likely to do programs with an intended outcome of increasing awareness (e.g., of library resources).
- Academic libraries are more likely to have a computer training space.

- School libraries are much less likely to do programs with community partners.
- School libraries are much less likely to have dedicated program space, but those that do frequently have large auditoriums.

Many of these differences correspond to what we could consider common sense knowledge about library types and how they function. While these differences may exceed chance, we cannot say that the results are substantive or meaningful. For that reason, we then probed deeper to explore the relationship between different variables – not just library type, but taking into account responses to survey questions about location (rural, suburban, urban), space and capacity, program development, and program goals, along with responses for hours per week devoted to public programming (calculated as hours worked per week × percent of time devoted to programming).

A clustering algorithm identified two groups of library workers. Those in one group tended to include more research libraries, those serving more urban locales, and those with greater access to computer rooms and auditoriums for public programming. Imparting new knowledge was the dominant goal of their public programs, followed by teaching new skills and promoting awareness of library resources, services, or programs. Those in the second group included almost entirely public libraries, those serving more rural locales, and those with greater access to mixed-use spaces and children's rooms for public programming. The goal of providing fun or new experiences was more common among this second group, followed by knowledge acquisition and skill development as primary intended outcomes.

Case Study Research

In January and February 2019 NewKnowledge undertook a multi-pronged case study strategy, focused on further exploration of aspects of the framework that were not sufficiently addressed through the Validity Study: namely, program audiences and primary intended outcomes.

METHODS

The case study research design included the following steps:

- Coding the open-ended textual Validity Survey data about intended program outcomes against the draft framework;
- Coordinating and conducting six 30-minute interviews with selected case study libraries;
- Reviewing a minimum of 25 additional library websites, including newsletters, event calendars, or any other programming-related information available online, identifying examples that either illustrate or expand the current framework; and
- Analyzing all data and incorporating it into the NILPPA summative report, NILPPA white paper, Q1 Peer Reviewed journal article, and NILPPA blogs.

The goal of the case studies was to identify programs that illustrate intended outcomes already included in the framework, and to determine whether new intended outcomes should be added.

Instrument

NILPPA researchers developed an instrument with details and draft communication text for reaching out to potential case study sites. The instrument was reviewed by ALA and sent to the NILPPA research team for input, then revised accordingly.

Recruitment & Participants

Libraries were selected based on their answers to the Validity Survey. We were especially interested in those who indicated conducting public programs with a different intended outcome than those we proposed in our framework. All interviewee sites had previously indicated an interest in being contacted for NILPPA research purposes. We initially selected sites

representing a range of library types. However, when not all libraries responded we issued a broader invitation to additional libraries. Ultimately, all six interviewee sites were public libraries. These six were invited to do a 30-minute qualitative interview with a NewKnowledge researcher. Twenty-five additional libraries ranging in size, type, and region underwent an online-only review, where a NewKnowledge researcher looked at program listings on the libraries' websites and gathered relevant data. This online review featured 5 academic libraries and 2 school libraries, along with 18 public library systems of diverse sizes and structures.

RESULTS

Considering Programming Audiences

Across Q1 findings we saw a wide variety of specific audiences for public programs, across all library types. The case studies reflected this broad range, where we found target audiences that include adults, teens, youth, children, students, young adults, older adults and seniors, teachers, faculty and staff, families, parents, caregivers, and non-native English speakers. Case study interviews provided additional nuance to this aspect of the draft framework. Interviewees clearly stated they intentionally consider target audience when developing programming. Other interviewees reiterated an attempt to think about non-library users or non-regulars as a potential audience.

In other instances, the target audience was not one that we had previously considered as part of our NILPPA research. For example, one interviewee said, *I've done a job fair for people re-entering the workforce who are coming out of prison. That was a really specific audience.* Instances like this were interesting but not surprising, as the audience for some programs may be very narrowly defined and the list of possible groups and sub-groups will never be comprehensive.

Interviewees also spoke about the development process as related to target audience, finding that they think about programs for specific audiences as well as developing

audiences for particular programming ideas. As explained by one librarian, *Sometimes you start with audience and sometimes you start with the idea.*

Many of the public libraries we encountered during case study research considered “families” a vital programming audience. This category unites other specific audiences (kids, teens, adults) into a single unit. Often libraries prioritize this audience to better accomplish a particular objective. One library developed programming to improve family literacy, where kids and parents read together. Another library co-developed a program with the health department aimed at supporting families’ nutrition. Other reasons for promoting programs aimed at families included family bonding and the opportunity for adults with children to meet one another, to counteract feelings of isolation among caretakers.

Family programming can be considered an example of what we call “intergenerational programming,” where groups who may not be encouraged to interact in a traditional programming format are being encouraged to do so. Many examples of intergenerational approaches surfaced in the case studies. Interviewees often spoke about patrons of different ages attending programs like chess club or STEM programming, particularly children being brought by a parent or grandparent who also engages in the activity. Some of this “intergenerational programming” seemed intentional by libraries (e.g., a program for older patrons with professional backgrounds to volunteer as tutors for students in a range of academic subjects). Other times, this programming was simply the result of how patrons of different ages might naturally be attracted to the same program, as was the case with an Elvis impersonator event. The interviewee remarked that older people knew and loved Elvis and enjoyed sharing their appreciation with younger attendees (including a 9-year-old boy who came dressed in an Elvis costume!).

For one survey respondent, the idea of promoting intergenerational programming was so critical that they suggested adding it to the framework as an intended outcome: *Providing an opportunity for different generations to interact with each other.* We believe the finalized language in our intended outcome about interaction now reflects this sentiment, even though it does not specify age.

Exploring the Development Model

According to the draft framework (and based on the earliest NILPPA work from the 2014 planning phase), there are three chief models of program development: those developed by a library itself, by or with a community partner, or by a national organization such as ALA. Having felt that the 92% agreement rate with this structure provided sufficient validation, we did not ask specific questions about development model during case study interviews. Nevertheless, additional detail emerged about the way libraries develop programs, particularly as it relates to community partnerships.

All of the library workers interviewed were active in community outreach and partnership, developing programs with other community organizations. One interviewee spoke about a partnership with the local Holocaust Museum. Another library mentioned having an outreach staff person who pursues partnerships with a local food bank, Head Start program, and senior groups. Others spoke about working with land use and outdoor recreation organizations – such as a bird sanctuary – connecting organizations with similar missions to one another and creating opportunities for library patrons to become aware of these places. One library developed a partnership with local farmers, where the farmers bring extra produce and plants into the library to share with the community. Yet another has taken advantage of partnerships with the local television and radio stations to advertise library programs for free.

Intended Outcomes – Validating the Draft Framework

Examples that Illustrate the Framework Categories

All three prongs of the case study approach (exploring open-ended survey data, reviewing library websites online, and in-depth qualitative interviews) provided solid validation of the existing intended outcome categories. By far, the majority of programs mentioned fit squarely into one of the seven categories drafted by the NILPPA research team. The following are examples from either interviews or the online review of library websites that illustrate each intended outcome included in the draft framework:

- **Participants learn new knowledge** – A local women’s history breakfast to celebrate women in the region, highlighting not only important historical figures but also influential women currently working in diverse fields who attend and speak at the breakfast.
- **Participants learn new skills** – A program to teach older adults about using cell phones for internet connection, in a rural area where internet access via computers is limited.
- **Participants change their attitudes** – A “Poetry Picnic” to help people change the perception that *poetry is stuffy*.
- **Participants change their behaviors** – A program for parents to learn about internet safety so they can help ensure children develop healthy online behaviors.
- **Participants gain awareness of library resources, services, or programs** – A university’s “Public Domain Party” on January 1, 2019, celebrating the hundreds of thousands of books, music, movies, and art first published in 1923 that have now entered the public domain. Attendees learned about copyright restrictions and celebrated the importance of the public domain.
- **Participants have fun or are exposed to something new (e.g. art, food, etc.)** – Programs focusing on painting, knitting, cooking, robotics, movie nights, and much more!
- **Participants meet or engage in dialogue or interaction with others** – An English language conversation group for Spanish speakers

Through the case studies, new layers were uncovered regarding several of these outcome dimensions. We had originally grouped participants having “fun” with doing something “new” since these two experiences were often interrelated. We also heard that an important aspect of this dimension is *supporting or increasing creativity*, as well as *to be inspired*. Ultimately, we decided to alter the wording of this outcome to read: Participants experience a sense of joy, discovery, or inspiration. We feel that being exposed to something new often fits into the other outcome categories (such as learning new skills).

The dialogue and interaction outcome also seemed to have several sub-dimensions to it that could be teased apart. For example, one librarian spoke about the importance of a program to *provide a safe space for persons with disabilities to interact with staff, collection, services, and others with*

disabilities. In this case, while the program still fits under the category of dialogue and interaction, a secondary intent of the program is to provide enrichment to a special needs population. Enrichment was the targeted outcome for another outreach program. The librarian explained, *some programs, say those done in adult facilities for those with cognitive disabilities, are meant to add enrichment to their lives*. While these considerations stretch the bounds of the current definitions for intended outcomes, we believe they are still encapsulated within these definitions.

Examples that Expand the Framework Categories

Providing Community Connections, Community Advocacy, and Community Building

Some library programs aim to connect patrons with the services they most need. One librarian said, *We find out what the community wants and needs and strive to provide that*. A validity survey respondent echoed this idea, explaining, *Patrons’ immediate needs are met (connections to food, shelter, housing, legal information, criminal expungement, eviction assistance etc.* In one example, a “Landlord-Tenant Liaison” program invites patrons to learn about and discuss issues such as home repairs, insect infestations, and evictions. Another library employs a social worker to connect patrons with local services and has a “Community Resource Outreach Project,” where patrons can *enjoy a cup of coffee and connect with services related to housing, health care, chemical dependency, employment, and youth resources*. The same library expands the theme of increasing patron awareness of relevant community issues through “Storytime with the Mayor,” a program using books to introduce young children to themes, such as housing, in an age-appropriate way. At another library, police officers meet patrons for cookies and milk and talk about services provided by police to the community. One librarian said, *We want to be a place where people can find out about what is going on in the community...We are a community center for the area*. Another reaffirmed this central place the library occupies through connecting patrons with each other and with needed services. *The point of all my programs is to keep our community connected with each other and to keep the Library at the center*.

Evidence suggests that libraries truly embrace their identities as community centers. Several library workers expressed the idea that programming is the way that a library is woven into the fabric of a community. Others described programming as educating community partners and getting them on board to collaborate and better serve library patrons. This idea of meeting community needs through library programs seemed to be central to how libraries operate, beyond a discrete intended outcome.

The idea of a library operating outside its own walls as an intended outcome of programming took on other dimensions, beyond connecting patrons to services. For example, one suggested adding *engaging the attendees in a cause or issue*. This idea can be expressed as Community Advocacy. Another interviewee expanded this thought by offering a corollary, saying, *The outcome is for customers to give back to their own community*. In both of these comments, respondents seemed to be referring to serving the community by working to improve it.

A related aspect of supporting community causes seemed to be getting involved as a way of fostering identity and Community Building. One survey respondent described this outcome as *creating and fostering a sense of community by bringing awareness or focusing on local issues / concerns / interests*. In one of the case study interviews, a librarian spoke about working in a struggling community with high rates of poverty and joblessness. Part of that library's strategic plan was to support the community's identity and improve its opinion of itself, overcoming what she felt was a *bad outlook*. One survey respondent elaborated on this idea of community building by describing their library's teen-led programming.

The Teen Advisory Committee engages teens in self-determined volunteer activities. This instills civic pride, plus a sense of belonging and ownership of their behavior and how they spend their time. They mentor younger children and assist with the many tasks required for a large programming effort and engage in self-governing behavior with purpose. This program shares some of the [other dimensions of the framework] but goes beyond and varies because it is teen driven.

Upon considering these various community-related efforts, we decided to add a new outcome to the draft framework:

"Together, libraries and participants build stronger communities."

Nurturing Physical Health

Another outcome that showed up across all three activities was libraries developing programs intended to support patron health. We found evidence of many libraries offering health-based programming such as yoga, stress-relief, tai chi, alternative medicine, or other exercise or health-related programs. A number of libraries also had nutrition-focused programs or even served meals. These activities indicate that libraries are not only considering the physical health of individual patrons but also helping shape healthy communities.

Through case studies, a fuller picture of programs in support of healthy communities emerged. One library held a flu shot clinic, several offered support groups on topics like Alzheimer's, another conducted a survey prevention workshop focused on the warning signs of depression and resources to support someone who may be suicidal. Another program that fits into this broader community health category is a human trafficking awareness training, where attendees learn to identify the risk factors, red flags, and what types of trafficking are occurring in the local area. Other examples described by interviewees included races (like the Relay for Life and Susan B. Komen breast cancer awareness run), and story hours or gardening classes at local parks to get people outside and moving around.

To reflect this emphasis on health, we chose to add the word "healthier" to the new intended outcome about community building: "Together, libraries and participants build stronger and healthier communities." We chose not to describe "patron health" as a stand-alone outcome. This approach seemed appropriate since it appears libraries focus on health as a topic (such as STEM or financial literacy), rather than category (like knowledge or skills) for programming.

In a similar vein, upon reviewing the outcome of "Participants meet or engage in dialogue or interaction with others," the project team felt that this outcome actually describes a model or technique used to achieve another outcome, rather than

being an intended outcome itself. For example, dialogue programs often seek to strengthen community relationships or improve a community's mental health. For this reason, we believe programs with a dialogue focus could also be covered by the new outcome of building stronger and healthier communities.

The NILPPA Categorization Framework: Suggested Modifications & the Final Version

Based on case study research, we recommended modifying the Primary Intended Outcomes, a subsection of Program Characteristics in the draft framework, in several ways. Table 5 shows how the Primary Intended Outcomes changed during this validation study.

Figure 2, on the following page, presents the full framework.

Table 5. Draft text used for case studies, modifications, and final text for Primary Intended Outcomes.

Draft Text Used for Case Study Validation	Suggested Modifications as a Result of Case Studies	Final Version of Primary Intended Outcome List
Participants learn new knowledge	None	Participants learn new knowledge
Participants learn new skills	None	Participants learn new skills
Participants change their attitudes	None	Participants change their attitudes
Participants change their behaviors	None	Participants change their behaviors
Participants gain awareness of library resources, services, or programs	None	Participants gain awareness of library resources, services, or programs
Participants have fun or are exposed to something new	Adapt	Participants have fun or are inspired
Participants meet or engage in dialogue or interaction with others	Eliminate	
	Add new	Together, libraries and participants build stronger and healthier communities

What Makes a Library Program?




DIMENSION		PRIMARY SUBDIMENSION	OTHER SUBDIMENSIONS
LIBRARY PROFILE		Library Type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public • Academic • K-12 • Special 	Library Subtype Geographic Area Community Demographics Library Size and Capacity
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS		Primary Intended Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants learn new knowledge • Participants learn new skills • Participants change their attitudes • Participants change their behaviors • Participants gain awareness of library resources, services, or programs • Participants have fun or are inspired • Together, libraries and communities build stronger and healthier communities 	Program Topic Program Format Location Deliverer Program Frequency
PROGRAM AUDIENCE		Audience Scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appealing to a library's entire audience • Appealing to a subset of the library's entire audience 	Target Audience Demographics Actual Audience Demographics
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION		Development Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by the library itself • Developed by or with a community partner • Developed by a national or regional organization 	Funding (library, patron, partner, etc.) Specific Sponsors or Partners

Figure 2. Program categorization framework.

Part 2. Program Competencies

Analysis of Curricula and Competencies

In order to understand the required competencies for library programming workers, we first needed to understand how the library field conceives of competencies overall. To do so, we reviewed three types of information:

1. Explicit competency frameworks for the library field;
2. Competencies listed in advertisements for library jobs and library career websites; and
3. Websites for ALA-accredited graduate programs.

METHODS

NewKnowledge reviewed information from a number of different source types to consider the competencies required of library programming workers. We looked at several major competency listings, as well as job listings and career resource websites, and competencies listed on MLS/MLIS degree program websites from around the country.

Review of Competency Frameworks

We began our research with a review of ALA Core Competencies, since they are intended to represent competencies needed across the library field. A project researcher mapped the curriculum of the graduate program where she teaches onto this competency framework, which allowed the team to consider how it is implemented in practice.

In addition, we considered the following competency documents:

- The WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field; and
- The results of the skills and knowledge survey from *Envisioning our Information Future*.

Looking at these frameworks, which have substantial overlap, allowed us to see what competencies the library field currently prioritizes.

Online Job Listings

In September 2017, NewKnowledge reviewed approximately 50 listings posted on two major job sites: ALA JobList and the Metropolitan New York Library Council jobs page. These encompassed both academic and public library positions. In addition to skimming available listings, NewKnowledge utilized key word searches for “outreach,” “programming,” and “instruction,” and also reviewed responsibilities and qualifications for leadership positions like directors.

Review of ALA-Accredited Programs

The NewKnowledge team reviewed programming components of the 58 English-language programs among the 60 university programs listed on ALA's Alphabetical List of Institutions with ALA-Accredited Programs webpage. (One university in Canada had website content in French, and one in Puerto Rico had a website in Spanish.) As this information is not standardized across programs, the researcher conducted individual internet searches through each program website, including:

- Reading their program overview;
- Looking at the curriculum;
- Reviewing course listings and descriptions;
- Noting specializations or focuses within the program; and
- Highlighting competencies, when listed.

RESULTS OF THE REVIEW OF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

ALA Core Competencies

ALA's core competencies, adopted as policy in 2009, reflect *the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies* (ALA, 2009). The document acknowledges that library staff will need additional specialization depending on the context in which they work and the audience with which they work.

The document organizes competencies hierarchically, with eight high-level competencies, each of which contains a number of sub-competencies. The top-level competencies are:

- Foundations of the profession;
- Information resources;
- Organization of recorded knowledge and information;
- Technological knowledge and skills;
- Reference and user services;
- Research;
- Continuing education and lifelong learning; and
- Administration and management.

None of the competencies or sub-competencies deals explicitly with programming. However, competency seven comes perhaps closest, stating, *the role of the library in the lifelong learning of patrons, including an understanding of lifelong learning in the provision of quality service and the use of lifelong learning in the promotion of library services* (ALA, 2009, p. 4).

Some of the listed competencies are defined very narrowly, in ways that exclude much of their potential relevance for programming. For example, interacting successfully with the public is grouped together with reference in competency five: *The methods used to interact successfully with individuals of all ages and groups to provide consultation, mediation, and guidance in their use of recorded knowledge and information* (ALA, 2009, p. 3). Yet programming may go beyond *use of recorded knowledge and information*, and interacting with different audiences will still be necessary.

We consider ALA competencies further in the context of the University of Southern California (USC) MMLIS program. Mapping a particular curriculum to this set of somewhat abstract competencies allows us to better consider its strengths. Of USC's twelve program goals, the seven listed here are seen as particularly relevant:

- Articulate and employ professional values and ethics in a variety of situations and circumstances;
- Apply and assess management strategies, practices, and decisions;
- Locate, synthesize, and translate information to intelligence for various client groups;

- Develop, implement, and assess programs and services for enhancing use of information and ideas;
- Understand the role of current and emerging technologies and infrastructure in organizational effectiveness and service delivery;
- Manage and lead diverse projects and teams, understanding communication and leadership behaviors that affect workplace performance and client satisfaction; and
- Demonstrate a commitment to continued professional education and lifelong learning.

WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field

The WebJunction index bases its understanding of 21st century skills on the IMLS's (n.d.) adaptation of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework (2015). *Accountability* refers to *the increased need to measure and demonstrate impact* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, p. 1), while *community engagement* focuses on building strategic partnerships and identifying community needs. The latter two of these three components are particularly relevant to NILPPA's goals.

The competencies are organized hierarchically. Of the five top-level competencies, Public Services Competencies contains those competencies most directly related to programming. Two others are particularly germane to the project at hand: Essential Library Competencies and Library Management Competencies. The final two top-level competencies are beyond the scope of the present report: Library Collection Competencies and Technology Systems and IT. These top-level categories are intended to reflect the most common division of labor, and library staff are not necessarily expected to master them all. In addition, the index is intended to be exhaustive: any given library may only require a subset of these competencies.

Public Services Competencies

Public services competencies encompass two different types of mid-level skills. One group, which focuses almost exclusively on programming, is organized by the age of its target audience: Adult and Older Adult Services, Children's Services, and Young Adult Services. (While this competency index acknowledges some differences between the

competencies required for general adult programming and those required to work with older adults, the document typically treats them as a single grouping.) The others cut across all age categories: Circulation Services, Patron Training, and Public Access Technology. Of these, only Patron Training addresses programming.

Competencies for Working with Various Target

Audiences –The competencies for working with children, young adults, and adults and older adults have significant overlap, and the children’s and young adult competencies note explicitly that they build on the adult ones.

Outreach – The outreach competencies identified for all three groups emphasize determining the population’s interest and needs, analyzing that information, and using it to develop services and programs; identifying underserved and unserved populations and developing programs and services for their particular needs; and digital communication. There are additional emphases unique to children’s and young adult outreach: communicating their particular needs to staff, governance, and other stakeholders; involving caregivers and families (for children) and the teens themselves in decisions; and the centrality of learning and developmental appropriateness (for children rather than young adults). In addition, encouraging reading appears in the list of children’s outreach competencies but not the other two.

The digital communication competencies also look particularly different across the three age groups. For adult populations, library staff are expected to enhance services through online engagement, as well as keeping up with new tools and best practices. Meanwhile, nontraditional engagement with young adults is identified as *particularly important*, as is teaching *healthy and safe online behaviors* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, p. 56). For children, the focus is on supporting their digital literacy development rather than engaging with them online, as well as evaluating digital tools and supervising their use.

Programming – There is both considerable overlap and considerable diversity of focus across the four age groups for which programming competencies are listed: (general) adults, older adults, children, and young adults. The adult competencies collapsed information, entertainment, and

lifelong learning into a single category, while the children’s and young adult competencies particularly highlighted the need to develop learning spaces and programs. All four considered what their particular audience brings to programs: adult programming should *encourage peer-to-peer knowledge sharing*, while other adult programs should give older adults *an opportunity to...share their knowledge, experience, and stories* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, pp. 40, 42). Meanwhile, children’s programs should emphasize experiential and active learning, and young adults need opportunities to *hang out, mess around, and geek out* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, pp. 49-50, 59). Gaming and digital literacy were emphasized across all four age groups, but reading, STEM, and other academic subjects only appeared in the competencies for the two youth categories.

Gaps in Programming Competencies – Across all age categories, the programming competencies overwhelmingly focus on content rather than on logistics. For example, budgeting, scheduling, and fundraising are all necessary for successful programming, but none of these appear in the list of programming competencies. Instead, these appear only under Library Management Competencies, discussed below.

Patron Training – The category of patron training straddles the line between programs and services. Unlike the age-grouped competencies described above, this area focuses on a single content area, 21st century literacy skills, also mentioned in each of those groupings of skills. The program training competencies also differ in that they focus more equally on logistics and content, including budgeting, developing a curriculum, and managing trainers.

Essential Library Competencies

WebJunction’s essential library competencies underlie all other competencies, including programming competencies. They map onto general professional hard and interpersonal skills expected in nearly all industries and sectors. They are further broken down into two sets of skills: core technology skills and interpersonal skills.

The core technology skills include basic familiarity with the most common hardware and software. Specifically, all library workers should know how to use email applications, calendar applications, word processors, operating systems,

teleconferencing, web browsers, search engines, and the library's own online resources. Furthermore, they should be comfortable with basic technology terms, basic security protocols like anti-virus software, and information literacy. Library workers must have a general familiarity with computers, printers, scanners, and e-readers, and be able to help others use them.

The interpersonal skills are further organized into collaboration, communication, customer service, ethics and values, leadership, and learning and innovation. Much like the technology skills, these underlie programming work, but few if any of them are particular to the library field.

Library Management Competencies

Nearly every competency in this group is of importance to programming library workers. In particular, this section fleshes out many of the logistical competencies that are mentioned in the public services competencies only in passing, if at all. We address them in turn.

Community Relations – The community relations' competencies include conducting evaluation and assessment of both community needs and library impact, sharing results of that assessment, building support, maintaining good public relations through communication, and building relationships. Essentially, library workers must determine the needs of their particular community and context and shape programs and services to be responsive to those needs. They also need to communicate clearly about their work, and collaborate with other organizations and individuals who are trying to satisfy those needs.

Facilities – The facilities grouping explicitly calls out the shift towards programming: *As physical collections shift to increased digital availability, libraries are creatively seizing opportunities to rethink the use of their physical space. Facilities are being modified to reflect and serve the learning, collaboration, and creation needs of community members* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, p. 26). Safety, accessibility, and navigability are all considered key, as is creating flexible and modular spaces that can be used for an increasing range of programs. One of the competencies mentioned is an ability to plan *library spaces that promote community engagement and collaboration*. Part of being

able to do this planning effectively is designing *flexible and multi-use spaces to accommodate a variety of programs and services* (Gutsche & Hough, 2014, p. 26).

Financial Management – Some of the competencies covered under financial management – particularly the long-range fiscal skills – are less immediately or clearly applicable to programming. However, basic budgeting, accounting, and fundraising skills are necessary for program development.

Laws, Policies, and Procedures – These competencies are important for programming library workers in so far as they must be aware of relevant laws. They may be particularly relevant for programming librarians working with children or young adults, since these groups require specialized policies and are subject to different regulations.

Marketing and Public Relations – The marketing and public relationships competencies emphasize ongoing marketing, rather than event- or program-specific marketing. These competencies do mention programming, but chiefly as it contributes to overall marketing and public relations efforts, rather than the need to raise awareness of individual programs or series. Meanwhile, the public services competencies typically note only programming library workers should work with marketing to promote their programs.

Organizational Leadership – While not all programming library workers are in leadership roles within their libraries, several of these skills are important, particularly ensuring that programming is aligned with community needs.

Personnel Management – While these competencies may not be relevant for all programming library workers, at least some programs depend heavily on volunteers or supplementary staff such as instructors.

Project Management – For those programming library workers who develop, plan, and see programs through from conception to execution, this skillset is relevant.

Staff Training and Development – The Index notes that staff training is technically a subset of personnel management, but requires its own area given the increasing emphasis on developing 21st century skills for library staff and patrons alike. Many of the skills listed here (e.g., *develop and implement a culture that embraces ongoing learning*) are

just as relevant to patron learning as they are for staff learning.

Strategic Planning – Mastering these competencies will help programming library workers ensure that programs respond to community needs rather than developing opportunistically from staff interests.

Trustees, Friends, and Foundations – This skillset may be of less direct relevance to programming library workers than most of the others.

Envisioning Our Information Future

The #InfoFuture project is an IMLS-funded research project that seeks to understand how artificial intelligence will transform the library field. As part of that project, researchers conducted a skills and knowledge survey to understand what core and specialized skills should be taught in MLIS programs. Through that survey, they collected data from 1,117 MLIS students, alumni, librarians, and other stakeholders. The NILPPA researchers reviewed the survey topline (Simmons, 2017), the executive summary of the survey (Abels & Saunders, 2017), and the white paper that resulted from the overall project (Abels, Howarth, & Smith, 2017).

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of 53 skills and knowledge areas. More than half of respondents agreed that the following were core skills, listed in order from highest agreement to lowest:

- Interpersonal communication;
- Search skills;
- Writing;
- Knowledge of professional ethics;
- Evaluating and selecting information resources;
- Teamwork;
- Customer service skills;
- Cultural competence; and
- Interacting with diverse communities.

Several of these skills – notably interpersonal communication, customer service, cultural competence, and interacting with diverse communities – are directly relevant for programming.

RESULTS OF THE REVIEW OF ONLINE JOB LISTINGS

A review of popular library job resource websites demonstrates that many posted positions are responsible for some sort of public-facing programming. Many such positions have phrases like “outreach” or “engagement” in their title. For other libraries, public programming appears to be part of the job responsibilities of traditional public services, administrative, or teaching librarian jobs. As librarianship is a service-oriented profession, a substantial portion of job listings (not just for programming or public service positions) emphasize some comfort level in providing resources to the public or in communicating about library collections. Programming or “outreach” librarian job postings may place an even greater emphasis on the competencies that will ensure a librarian can connect with patrons. Many of these jobs contain standard qualification terminology, referring to concepts like communication skills, ability to work as part of a team, adaptability, and knowledge of current trends in library work. Many also require an MLIS degree or similar educational background. These qualifications are not exclusively applicable to programming library worker positions. Some position postings did include language that appeared specifically targeted to an applicant’s ability to organize public-facing programs. In particular, some of these positions seemed oriented more toward public outreach events, while others related more to education and teaching. Programming-specific qualification terms that appeared regularly include:

- Training or experience in teaching;
- Presentation skills;
- Customer service;
- Diversity or inclusiveness;
- Digital media or marketing;
- Program promotions;
- Information literacy; and
- Social media.

RESULTS OF THE REVIEW OF ALA-ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

The third type of information presented in this chapter, a review of ALA-accredited programs, shows considerable variability in emphasis across graduate degrees in library and information services. The researchers note that our review

may not be exhaustive. Only certain programs had publicly available course descriptions and programs also did not use terminology consistently. For those reasons, we believe that our review may slightly underestimate the representation of programming in these degree programs.

Degree Structure

Graduate programs varied widely in their degree structure. Forty-one of the 58 programs offered specializations or concentrations within the degree. Some universities used both terms to refer to different academic structures: concentration often referred to a specific type of non-degree program the university offered outside of a Master’s or Bachelor’s degree. To the extent possible, we captured focuses of the Master’s degree, rather than those of non-degree specializations. In some cases, those focuses were called specializations while in others they were called concentrations.

Only four of the 58 universities had a community engagement specialization. The titles of these specializations were: Community Embedded Librarianship, User and Community Services, Community Leadership, and Community Informatics. Whether these specializations include programming is not clear from their names, as they may be limited to service offerings.

Of the 58 programs surveyed, 40 offer internships and/or practicums. Twelve of these noted clearly that these internships were a requirement for graduation. Since these internship programs offer students real world experiences in the field of their specialization, they may provide practical experience in programming. However, the researchers believe that the degree of programming included in these internships or practicums is likely to depend on the student’s interest.

Coursework

Based on our review, 50 of the 58 degree programs offer courses that address programming. However, no university required students to take these courses. Instead, they were offered as electives. Based on course titles and content, programming appears to be heavily focused on young adults, children, storytelling, and diversity. We did not have access to

information about many of the courses besides their titles, but we assumed that core competencies for students who take these courses are the ability to effectively plan, implement, and / or evaluate programming related to the topics of the course. Table 6 represents a complete list of programming topics, ranked in order of frequency.

Table 6. Graduate courses that involve programming training or topics, ranked in order of frequency.

Programming Category	Number
Adolescent / Teen / Young Adult / Youth	38
Children	32
Storytelling, including Cultural Storytelling	19
Diversity / Multicultural	18
Adult, including Older Adults	9
Community	5
Media	3
Museum	3
Specific Populations*	3
Families	2
Archival / Rare Book	2
Disabilities	1
French / English	1
Health	1
Humanities	1
Literacy	1
Public Library	1
Science	1
Tribal	1
Underserved Children	1
Urban Library	1

Note: “Specific Populations” reflects language in the course title, and we are unable to specify further.

Competencies

Of the 58 degree programs, less than half (n = 27) listed an explicit programming-related competency that graduating students should master. Interestingly, one university noted they had created their program to meet ALA’s Core Competencies of Librarianship (2009), but did not appear to

note any competencies directly related to programming. (As discussed above, ALA Core Competencies do not explicitly mention programming.)

However, we note that the term *services* is rarely if ever defined in materials from ALA or any other library agency, and ALA Core Competencies may assume *programming* to be a subset of services. Indeed, in this research activity we noted that *service* was never clearly defined and was used inconsistently by different universities. Some universities explicitly included programming activities under *services*, while others didn't. This has added to some ambiguity around whether certain courses addressed programming or not.

Explicit programming-related competencies typically fell into one or more of six major categories:

- Community outreach and collaboration;
- Working with diverse audiences;
- Supporting general and specific literacies;
- Creative thinking;
- Experiential learning; and
- General programming competencies.

Competency Survey

In September 2017, we surveyed library workers to get an individual perspective on the skills, knowledge, and abilities they found most important. In November 2017, we deployed this survey a second time in order to ensure representation of a number of additional groups and reanalyzed the combined data set. This chapter presents the results of that analysis.

METHODS

The survey was programmed in Qualtrics and a link sent to ALA PPO's current Programming Librarian email list, a group of over 5,000 subscribers who receive a bi-monthly e-newsletter featuring library program models, blogs, learning opportunities and other highlights from the Programming Librarian site. Responses helped researchers further define the core competencies for public programming.

Survey questions covered the following topics:

- Skills needed to successfully run public programs;
- Self-assessment of ability to run public programs;
- Pathways to learning those skills (e.g., through a degree program, from colleagues, etc.);
- Competencies that should be part of degree programs even if they currently are not; and
- Institutional characteristics, such as type of library and size of community served.

Questions about skills were open-ended so that library workers could respond in their own words. This way, the research team was able to triangulate bottom-up data from the survey with top-down data from the competency frameworks, rather than making assumptions about the types of skills or competencies that would be important.

Once all data were collected, the research team compared competencies noted by survey respondents with those identified by ALA and others to reveal gaps in current academic offerings.

After these survey results were shared with the research team, they decided to redeploy the survey to include voices that were underrepresented in the first survey deployment:

- Librarians working in rural areas;
- Tribal librarians;
- Research and academic librarians;
- State librarians;
- Special librarians;
- Academic instructors; and
- K-12 school librarians.

In order to ensure representation from those groups, ALA PPO collaborated with the following professional associations to send the survey link to their current mailing lists: the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), the American Indian Library Association (AILA), the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA).

While the redeployment helped us gain more representation of academic and school library workers in particular, the majority of respondents worked in public libraries (Table 7).

Table 7. In what type of library do you work?

	Frequency
Higher Education or Research	312
K-12	61
Public	776
State	14
Special	32
Tribal	2
Other	30
N/A (I don't work at a library)	19

Note: *N* = 1,246

Determining whether this sample is representative of the U.S. library landscape is more difficult than it seems. ALA has estimates of the number of libraries in the U.S. (ALA, 2015a) and the number of people employed in those libraries (ALA, 2015b), as well as membership statistics. However, the categories are broken out somewhat differently than in the present analysis. Our goal was not to achieve a

representative sample of U.S. library workers but rather to have enough respondents in each key category to generalize about those categories and speak to statistical significance.

Survey Question Text

The survey question text did not change between waves. Questions about skills remained open-ended so that library workers could respond in their own words. This way, the research team was able to triangulate bottom-up data from the survey with top-down data from the competency frameworks, rather than making assumptions about the types of skills or competencies that would be important.

Data Analysis

After spot-checking to ensure there were no major differences in responses between the two waves, we aggregated all responses and reanalyzed them as a whole. The results presented here include both waves of survey data as aggregated and analyzed together.

Participants

The survey was deployed to the Programming Librarian email list comprised of 5,321 email addresses, of which 92 were not successfully delivered. We received a total of 791 responses. In the second wave of the survey, we received 458 responses, for a total of 1,249 responses across both waves.

RESULTS

Self-Reported Abilities

Overall, respondents were positive about their ability to run public programs. Less than 2% said they had the skills or abilities to run library public programs never, almost never, or rarely. Meanwhile, the most common answers were *Almost always*, *Usually*, and *Always*, in that order (Table 8). These results were all consistent with the first wave.

2 All told, eighteen stems appeared in more than 100 responses. We report only these stems because the others were common words that were difficult to interpret out of context. In order from most responses to fewest, the eighteen stems were: work*, run*,

Table 8. Do you believe that you personally have the skills or abilities necessary to successfully run public programs at libraries?

	Frequency
Always	230
Almost always	519
Usually	337
Sometimes	138
Rarely	16
Almost never	5
Never	2

Note: N = 1,247.

Participants were also provided with the opportunity to explain their responses to this question. Researchers analyzed these responses both qualitatively and quantitatively. The most common bigram (two-word phrase) among the responses, excluding both English stop words (e.g., articles, prepositions, and pronouns; see Lewis, et al., 2004) and words found in the prompts, was *years experience*, found in 23 of 1099 responses. While this response suggests that programming library workers' comfort with these skills depend on the time they have been using the skills rather than their training, the low frequency makes it difficult to be certain. Analysis at the word level was somewhat more fruitful for this question: *work** appeared in 233 responses, *year** in 201, and *experi** in 118.² These results confirm our interpretation.

Institutional Support

In general, programming library workers seem to feel supported by their institutions and colleagues. Respondents note that when they don't know how to do something, they know someone who does and can call on them for participation or training. In addition, library workers mentioned both needing and receiving support not only from administrators but also local businesses, community members and organizations, and all levels of fellow staff

year*, time*, can*, communit*, plan*, need*, people*, event*, feel*, learn*, experi*, organ*, also*, present*, know*, and well*.

including interns, marketers, and designers. In addition, several respondents emphasized the support provided by checklists, frameworks, and other ways of externalizing organizational skills.

However, a small number of responses were critical of the institutional support that programming library workers receive. For example: *There are reasons public program staff turnover more frequently than other positions and much of it has to do with institutional expectations and lack of support. We need to have balance and not constantly used without time off, pay raises, or at least some time to plan the next event.*

Challenges

At the same time, certain challenges came up repeatedly. Many library workers wrote that they were less comfortable leading programs in particular content areas, especially technology and multilingual programs, which are programming foci in many libraries. Working with particular populations was another area where many programming library workers struggled. One respondent described this problem in general terms: *There always seems to be one or two programs that do not play out as planned, making me question my abilities to read the population I am serving.* Meanwhile, others pointed to the challenges of working with particular age groups, especially children and teens.

Training & Degree Status

Consistent with the first wave of the survey, most respondents had completed a library degree. While 68% of first-wave respondents had completed a degree, 84% of second-wave respondents had, for a total of 74% of the full data set (Table 9). For other analyses, we combined *No*, *Currently enrolled*, and *Some courses* to compare those who had completed a degree and those who had not.

³ We reached most of our public library respondents ($n = 691$ out of 776) through the Programming Librarian listserv. Meanwhile, most

Table 9. Have you completed a MLS / MLIS degree?

	Frequency
Yes	919
No	256
I'm currently enrolled in an MLIS program	42
I took some courses in the past but did not complete the degree	22
I'm not sure / Choose not to answer	9

Note: $N = 1,248$.

We assessed the effect of degree status on self-reported ability, controlling for library type, community type (Urban, Suburban, Rural), and population size. Degree status did not have a statistically significant effect when these factors are held constant (Figure 3). In fact, the only significant effects were for two library types: respondents from K-12 and public libraries had higher confidence ratings than others.³

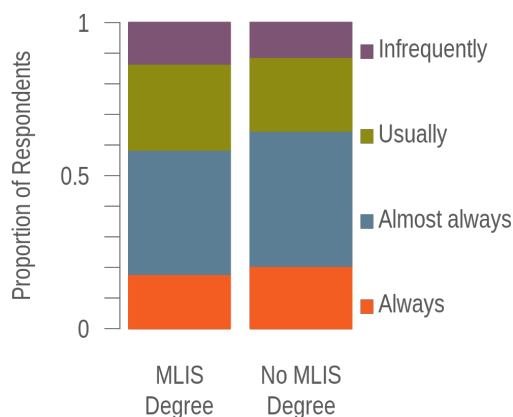


Figure 3. Self-perceptions of public programming skills plotted against whether one has completed an MLS / MLIS degree.

Note: *Infrequently* summarizes *Sometimes* – *Never* from Table 8.

Consistent with the first wave, nearly everyone reported learning how to run programs on the job. Many also said they received informal training, learned from colleagues, or both (Table 10).

other respondents ($n = 371$ out of 470) were reached through other channels and may have identified less strongly with programming.

Table 10. How did you acquire relevant skills or abilities?

	Frequency
MLIS program	506
Other formal academic training	325
Informal training	919
On the job	1,161
From colleagues	775
Other	323
N/A (I do not believe I have necessary programming skills)	14

Note: *N* = 1,247 respondents, with most of them selecting multiple answers. The median respondent selected 3 different answers. Only 129 respondents selected a single answer, including 11 of the 14 who did not believe they had programming skills.

Since nearly all respondents reported some kind of informal or on-the-job training, we collapsed these categories into those who had received formal training in programming (an MLIS program, other formal training, or both), and those who reported no formal training (Figure 4).

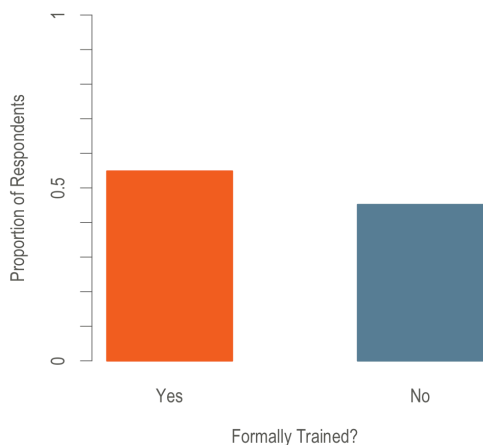


Figure 4. Formal training status of respondents.

Just slightly over half of respondents had formal training. When researchers tested responses to other questions for differences between different types of training, we focused on this overarching distinction between those with formal training and those without, rather than on specific types of training. There may be implications related to skills or managerial positions.

Position & Library Characteristics

In response to a question about their current position, the majority of respondents selected either *Other library staff member* or *Other* (Figure 5).

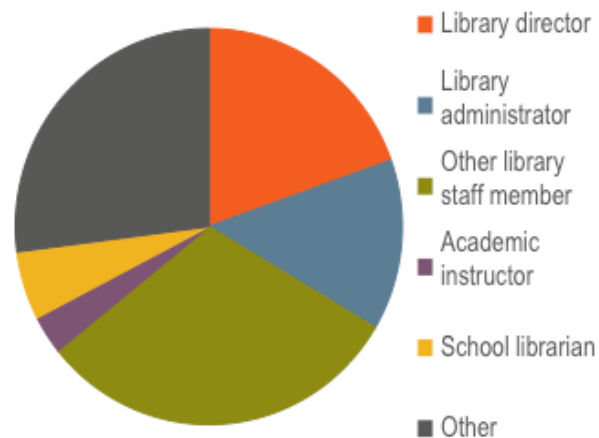


Figure 5. What is your current role?

During the first wave, respondents could only specify an exact role if they selected *Other*, while second wave respondents could also specify responses to *Other library staff member*. As a result, a large number of people who selected *Other* – particularly in the first wave – were library staff members, presumably those who wanted to specify their exact role or title, and many of them had multiple positions.

The most common write-in responses included:

- Adult services librarians, adult program coordinators, and adult specialists;
- Assistant and associate directors;
- Children’s, teen, and youth librarians or coordinators;
- Managerial positions, including branch managers and department heads;
- Programming positions (coordinators, librarians, managers, or specialists); and
- Public, reference, or instructional librarians.

Library workers in higher education or research were most likely to have graduate degrees, while those in public libraries were least likely (Table 11). We received too few responses from tribal and state libraries to generalize.

Table 11. Number and proportion of MLIS degrees by library type.

	<i>n</i> MLIS	<i>p</i> MLIS
Higher Education or Research	279	0.89
Special	27	0.84
K-12	46	0.75
Other	22	0.73
Public	516	0.66

Note: *n* Higher Education = 312, *n* Special = 32, *n* K-12 = 61, *n* Other = 30, *n* Public = 776.

Community demographics were roughly representative of the nation as a whole (Table 12).

Table 12. How do you describe the community your institution serves?

	Frequency
Urban	468
Suburban	633
Rural	437
Other	88

Note: *N* = 1,229. Of these respondents, 75% (*n* = 923) selected only one option, 18% selected 2 options, 6% selected 3 options, and 1% selected all 4.

In the first wave, 56% of libraries served communities with a population of 75,000 or fewer. Due to the emphasis on rural and tribal libraries in the second wave, 66% (*n* = 796 of the 1,208 who responded to the question) of the combined data set served communities of this size (Table 13). We have representation of all community types and population sizes for statistical power if we choose to analyze each on its own.

Table 13. What size population does your institution serve?

	Frequency
<25,000	461
25,000-75,000	335
75,001-150,000	159
150,001-500,000	149
>501,000	104

Note: *N* = 1208

Required Skills

The survey asked two open-ended questions about the skills required for programming:

- What skills or abilities do you think are necessary to successfully run public programs at libraries?; and
- What are the core knowledge or skill areas that you believe should be part of a MLS / MLIS degree in order for graduates to be able to run successful public programs?

During the first phase of the survey, we conducted parallel qualitative and quantitative analyses. A researcher familiar with the subject matter read through all the responses and suggested an impressionistic coding scheme. At the same time, we ran the data through quantitative analysis software, first stripping it of both English stop words (e.g., articles, prepositions, and pronouns; see Lewis, et al., 2004) and words found in the prompts: *librar**, *public*, *program**, and *success**. After the survey redeployment, we redid the quantitative analysis of the full data set to compile the top 20 bigrams (2-word phrases) for each question. The qualitative categories did not change between survey deployments. These lists of bigrams were broadly comparable between both survey waves (Table 14).

Table 14. “What skills or abilities do you think are necessary to successfully run public programs at libraries?”

Bigram	Category	Frequency
organizational_skills	Organization	147
communication_skills	Interpersonal skills	107
project_management	Organization	87
time_management	Organization	80
people_skills	Interpersonal skills	72
skills_ability	n/a	65
knowledge_community	Community	60
customer_service	Interpersonal skills	56
management_skills	Organization	53
social_media	Outreach / Marketing	47
marketing_skills	Marketing	42
community_needs	Community / Evaluation	41
attention_detail	Organization	40
event_planning	Event planning	39
speaking_skills	Interpersonal skills	38
ability_work	n/a	34
planning_skills	Event planning	33
organization_skills	Organization	32
skills_knowledge	Content knowledge	29
skills_creativity	Creativity	27

Note: $N = 1,191$. Grey indicates a bigram that did not appear in the top 20 in the first wave data alone.

The question about core MLIS skills (Table 15) was also quite similar between the first wave and the full data set. However, in both waves, there was much less consensus among answers to this question, as indicated by the smaller frequency of each response. While there were 9 bigrams occurring more than 50 times in response to the question about needed skills, only one bigram (project management) occurred this often in the second data set.

Table 15. “What are the core knowledge or skill areas that you believe should be part of a MLS / MLIS degree in order for graduates to be able to run successful public programs?”

Bigram	Category	Frequency
project_management	Organization	77
grant_writing	Financial	40
event_planning	Event Planning	37
customer_service	Interpersonal skills	29
community_needs	Community	22
management_skills	Organization	22
communication_skills	Interpersonal skills	22
organizational_skills	Organization	21
time_management	Organization	21
social_media	Outreach / Marketing	20
marketing_skills	Marketing	16
people_skills	Interpersonal skills	14
needs_assessment	Community / Evaluation	13
community_engagement	Community	12
graphic_design	Marketing	12
understanding_community	Community	12
community_outreach	Community / Outreach	11
project_planning	Organizational	11
presentation_skills	Interpersonal skills	11
teaching_skills	Interpersonal skills	9

Note: $N = 1,013$. Grey indicates a bigram that did not appear in the top 20 in the first wave data alone.

While an organizational competency is the most frequent bigram in responses to both questions, the way in which it is framed differs substantially. For a question about necessary skills in general, respondents answered *organizational skills* with highest frequency, while for MLIS programs, *project management* topped the list. Overall, competencies framed as personal characteristics were far more common as responses to the first question, yet predominantly expressed as teachable skills in response to the second question. For example, compare *people skills* (personal characteristic) with *customer service* (teachable skill). The same can be said for *knowledge [of the] community* versus *community needs*. Similarly, the creativity category appears only on the list of

skills needed in practice (*skills creativity*) while financial skills (*grant writing*) appears only on the list of desired MLIS program content.

In total, responses to the question about necessary skills produced 11,795 unique bigrams, while responses to the question about core MLIS skills produced 8,870 unique bigrams. Many bigrams (1,071) appeared in responses to both questions, and the frequencies of the bigrams shared by both questions were weakly but significantly correlated ($r = 0.0.8$, $p = 0.01$), as we might expect.

Differences in Responses

We also examined differences in responses across different sub-groups of respondents. Of the top 20 responses to each question, we looked at the distribution of the top 3 across types of training (informal only vs. both formal and informal), degree status, library role, library type, and library population.

For the question about needed skills (Table 14), we did not find any statistically significant differences between respondents who mentioned *organizational skills* and those who did not, nor did we find any for *communication skills*. However, library professionals who had completed an MLIS degree were almost four times more likely to list *project management* as a needed skill than those who had not completed a degree.

For the question about core MLIS skills (Table 15), we found similar results. Library professionals who had completed an MLIS degree were more than twice as likely to mention *project management* as those who had not. We did not see any significant results for *grant writing* or *event planning*. Unsurprisingly, those who mentioned *project management* in either question were more likely to mention it in both. The researchers believe this finding is largely a question of labeling; while *project management* and *organizational skills* have quite a lot of overlap (e.g., making checklists, ensuring deadlines are met, etc.), those who are not formally trained may not think of this aggregation of skills in a project management framework.

Partnerships

Researchers and advisors noted during the October 2017 meeting that partnership development was a key competency, as well as an important dimension of programming to capture. With that discussion in mind, we examined the survey data set across all questions to see how respondents discussed the role of partnerships. More than 120 respondents mentioned partnerships, relationships, or both in at least one response. In these comments, library workers emphasized not just organizational relationships but individual ones with patrons, presenters, and colleagues.

These words appeared most frequently in questions about needed skills ($n = 74$) and core MLIS skills ($n = 56$), and survey respondents also mentioned partnerships when explaining their self-assessment and their pathways to acquiring library skills. They acquired relevant skills by *meeting with community partners in person and attending community meetings outside the library*, or they considered themselves successful because they are *always looking at possible programs and partnerships when [they are] out in the community*.

These responses also indicated that library workers see partnerships as important for many different reasons. Some respondents highlighted that partners provide resources, material support, and content expertise for programs. Meanwhile, others noted that partners have close connections to the community: they can provide a better understanding of a community's needs and values, *help you get the word out*, and *draw in patrons*.

Pathways to Programming Skills

Table 16, below, summarizes responses about the pathways through which respondents learned programming skills. We also analyzed two sets of open-ended responses both qualitatively and quantitatively to further contextualize these responses.

Table 16. Full data set: How did you acquire relevant skills or abilities?

	Frequency
MLIS program	506
Other formal academic training	325
Informal training	919
On the job	1,161
From colleagues	775
Other	323
N/A (I do not believe I have necessary programming skills)	14

In particular, respondents who selected *Other* were given the ability to specify. Furthermore, all respondents were encouraged to explain their overall responses and reflect on their preferences for particular types of training.

Participants cited hands-on learning as key to developing skills relevant to programming. Many expressed the sentiment that they had been unprepared to manage library programs at the beginning of their careers, and only became comfortable with the job after a few rounds of working on project committees, and times spent trying to organize their own programs. Others echoed the sentiment, emphasizing that when considering interpersonal skills like public speaking, communicating, and anticipating the needs of patrons, classroom training is not as effective as learning on the job. For many, past experience, especially working in retail, teaching, theatre, or planning parties, is helpful to the process. Some responses describe the role of a programming librarian as more involved with marketing than librarianship, making it unlikely that new hires would be prepared without prior experience working in a different field.

Though many survey participants hold MLS degrees, responses diverged as to whether this schooling is useful to all programming library workers. Participants often described MLS coursework as focused on theory and best practices, which are not always applicable to real life situations. Some cite this as a negative aspect, as the job requires a much more direct approach to potential problems than coursework can offer. Others feel that the theory learned in graduate studies gives them a framework for their understanding of

their role, their community, and what services their institution ought to offer.

These answers corroborate our findings from the review of graduate programs: library schools differ in the courses they offer, as some prioritize programming and others do not address it. Of the 874 respondents, 119 mentioned that their MLS experience has helped them in their role as a programming librarian, while 110 disagreed, citing irrelevant courses or outdated curricula. Those who felt that the coursework was unhelpful often cited professors who were removed from the day-to-day experience of running programs, or changes in the years since the librarian had completed their degree.

For many participants, colleagues are the most useful resource when learning how to run library programs. Answers frequently mention coworkers who taught them the job in an apprentice-style relationship, with a couple even writing guides for future programming library workers at the institution. Library workers also connect with peers through conferences and social media, often finding ideas for potential events. Attending other institutions' programs is also helpful for many, as many respondents report visiting other events to learn how to assess whether certain techniques or ideas work. This critical approach to colleagues' work helps library workers evaluate their own programs. Self-assessment, whether informed by others' approaches or one's own successes and failures, helps workers learn to put on programs that have a positive impact on their communities.

Learning Over Time, in Real Time

The open-ended responses to the question about pathways provided one important clue to the near ubiquity of on-the-job learning as opposed to formal learning: degree programs may not be able to provide the same longitudinal opportunities that real-world experiences can, and they cannot always simulate the constraints that crop up in the real world.

Several survey respondents noted the length of experiences that had taught them about programming: *20 years on the job*, a typical response noted. Others echoed this sentiment: *doing it for years shows what works and what doesn't*, one wrote. Another noted, *I feel I've drawn my skills and abilities*

from nearly everything I've ever done – over a long career. Similarly, when participants were asked to explain their self-assessment, many pointed to their time on the job.

More than fifty respondents (of the 1,013 who answered the question about core MLIS skills) suggested that degree programs must provide opportunities to plan an actual program or require programming internships. Both of these approaches were seen as much more valuable than traditional coursework in teaching programming skills.

Personality & Programming

One final trend about pathways to programming cut across all open-ended questions in the survey. For some, personality plays an important role in determining whether an individual will be successful at running library programming. This theme echoes the tendency to frame certain competencies as personal characteristics, rather than teachable and measurable skills.

At one extreme, respondents suggested that programming is not a teachable set of skills at all: *I find programming is fun-although you either like it or you don't. It certainly doesn't require an MLIS degree.* Other respondents also referred to what they like or enjoy about programming throughout the survey, drawing the same connection between ability and preferences, although preferences are presumably unteachable. Another subset of responses suggested that introversion and programming were fundamentally in opposition, often noting either that they personally or library workers in general tend towards introversion. Meanwhile, the most moderate responses within this trend argued in favor of teaching customer service skills.

While the researchers note that the connection between personality and programming is based in stereotypes, we address it here because it has important implications for professional development. Specifically, creating effective professional development opportunities in library programming may require explicitly combatting these stereotypes and self-perceptions.

Discussion Forums

In June 2018, we conducted five discussion forums and three individual interviews with library practitioners. Participants were selected following recommendations from the NILPPA research committee made at the team meeting in Denver in February 2018. This chapter focuses chiefly on synthesis across all groups. For findings from each individual group, see our earlier topline report (Norlander, Nock, & Barchas-Lichtenstein, 2018, NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.05).

METHODS

We held five discussion forums in June 2018, each lasting 90 minutes. Three of these (with early career library workers, academic librarians, and librarians working in rural areas) were held in person at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. The other two were convened virtually (with K-12 librarians and a group of various library workers in diverse contexts). Due to scheduling challenges, we conducted three separate 30-minute interviews with tribal librarians instead of a single forum.

Forums and interviews were conducted using a semi-structured protocol with questions focusing on programming experience, necessary skills for programming, and pathways to learning those skills. Multiple researchers reviewed notes from each forum to elicit key findings and emergent themes; a single researcher synthesized notes from interviews with tribal librarians. Quotations from forums were checked against recordings; quotations from interviews were confirmed with interviewees.

Participants

We spoke with a total of 41 library practitioners across the six groups (Table 17). Members of the emerging leaders group worked in suburban public libraries, urban library systems, academic libraries, and K-12 libraries, while the mixed group included public, state, special, and academic library workers. All three tribal librarians worked at tribal colleges or universities on Native American reservations.

Table 17. Number of library workers in each discussion forum.

Group	Format	N
K-12 libraries	Digital Forum	7
Academic libraries	Live Forum	8
Rural libraries	Live Forum	9
Emerging library leaders	Live Forum	8
Mixed library types	Digital Forum	6
Tribal libraries	Interviews	3

Respondents worked in a range of roles, at varying levels of seniority (Table 18). About half were library directors or held other managerial roles, and most others held librarian titles.

Table 18. Positions held by library workers in discussion forums.

Level	Examples	N
Director (current or former)	-	9
Managerial	Assistant Director of Access and Delivery Services Early Literacy Program Coordinator	11
Librarian	Map Librarian Reference Librarian	14
Age-specific	Adult and Senior Services Reference Librarian Children's Librarian	6
Media or technology	Media Specialist Technology Integration Teacher Specialist	4
Other	Curator Library Associate Library Trustee	3

RESULTS

While each library type faced some distinct issues and challenges, many topics were addressed by library workers in multiple library types.

Competencies

Frequently mentioned competencies generally fell into two main categories – *people skills* and *administrative skills* – with a third category of *managerial skills* mentioned by participants who oversaw programming rather than implementing it directly. *People skills* included social and emotional skills, and were necessary for maintaining good relationships with library patrons. Meanwhile, *administrative skills* were much more internal in their focus and addressed the operational concerns of running programs. Those in supervisory roles – library directors and other kinds of managers (Table 18) – were more likely to mention *administrative skills*. Since these respondents typically did not implement programs directly, they saw their role as empowering colleagues and enabling them to succeed.

A number of participants also mentioned *metacognitive skills* – including flexibility, collaboration, and learning how to learn – that were relevant to the other skill categories.

We consider more specific competencies that were seen as important across library types below.

Assessing Community Needs

Across library types, participants discussed the importance of assessing community needs to understand how programming could be most valuable to people. The emerging leaders observed that no community is homogeneous, which makes this task challenging. Diversity of needs within the community was a particular concern for those who worked in supervisory roles in large public library systems and had to consider the needs of a dozen branches or more, but every participant had to address this need to some degree. Necessary skills included designing programs with all ages and abilities in mind; being aware of cultural backgrounds and languages; and interpersonal skills.

Participants in other forums struggled to articulate their methods for assessing needs, even if they recognized its importance. Some school libraries were particularly focused on programs that would be of interest to the broader community, including parents. Occasionally, school administrations are concerned about how programs fit into curricular requirements, meaning library staff members feel

like they cannot necessarily plan purely “fun” programs, which they said public libraries are free to do.

Meanwhile, other academic library workers did not always agree about who their public was. All participants agreed that students and faculty were part of their public, and that students were the primary program audience. However, they varied in their ability to bring in a public beyond their campus, and in institutional support to do so. Those who conducted programs for the general public described them as separate from programs for students.

All three tribal libraries represented described responding to community needs, although none of the three was explicit about how these needs were determined. Two tribal libraries focus their programming on youth in particular: *There aren't a lot of extracurricular activities for youth, so it's important to do programs for them and have a safe place for families to come.* They also focus on helping students succeed by using library resources. Some of these programs are run elsewhere on campus, in places like student centers and computer labs.

Evaluation & Measuring Impact

Another skill that came up repeatedly across library types was the need to conduct evaluation and measure impact. For academic library staff, impact was often defined narrowly (e.g. improving GPA or graduation rates). However, evidence was a challenge even when schools defined impact more broadly.

Meanwhile, workers in rural and tribal libraries focused on identifying the elements of successful programs and applying them to future programs. One interviewee has created programming guidelines to help structure the process and assist other staff members in planning and implementation. Following a given program, this person tries to elicit a “*lesson learned*” by asking questions like “*What did we do well? What could we do better?*” This helps staff avoid succumbing to the same pitfalls over and over, as much of the programming efforts described by these three interviewees rely on trial and error. Similarly, librarians working in rural areas considered the ability to identify a successful program and break it down to fit their community’s needs a valued skill.

Getting Buy-in

In some cases, measuring impact was important chiefly because it assisted library workers in getting buy-in from other stakeholders. Buy-in came up in discussion across library types, although it took many different forms.

Because academic libraries are part of a more complex bureaucratic hierarchy than many other library types, getting buy-in could be very time-consuming. Participants referred to two related needs: ideological support from their administration, and financial support. Even administrations that saw the need for programming might not prioritize it financially.

Meanwhile, emerging leaders said that talking to administration and “*managing up*” was important for a variety of reasons. Participants in boots-on-the-ground roles felt that they needed to advocate for their programs, and those in supervisory roles needed program impact packaged in ways that allowed them, in turn, to advocate at even higher levels of management.

In tribal libraries, buy-in may rest with a single person: how much and what type of programming is done depends largely on the interests of the library director. Before becoming director, one respondent had worked for six years under a different director at the same library. With that former director, there had not been much interest in programming, but that changed when the current director assumed a leadership position. This person is dedicated to creating a culture of programming because *programs help make the library a welcoming space*.

For school library workers, who were often the only employee in their library, getting buy-in required talking to colleagues with very different professional concerns. Principals might have no experience with the library field – a challenge that participants thought characterized school libraries in particular: *You report to someone who is not a librarian, they don't speak the same language or inherently have the same set of values. ... How are you evaluated by someone who has never done your job?* Similarly, teacher colleagues may not be aware of ways library programs can enhance or supplement curriculum.

Marketing & Outreach

Library workers across types highlighted generating awareness of programs as a time-consuming and critical skill, whether they referred to it as *communication, marketing, or outreach*. School library workers said they spent a lot of time developing graphics for social media, while academic librarians faced competition from many other events on campus and listed a half-dozen different strategies in the discussion forum. Meanwhile, participants in the mixed-type group noted that successful programs relied on a shift in public perception of what a library is – beyond the stereotype of libraries as limited to books or as places to study. Generating awareness was an ongoing effort for them.

Workers in tribal libraries consistently noted that communication was an important skill. They characterized communication as knowing how to connect with people and advertise programs effectively on social media. Multiple interviewees spoke about the challenge of marketing and timing communications for maximum effectiveness. Talking to people and promoting programs through word of mouth were also popular, as limited broadband access in some areas meant digital outreach was minimal: *In our own personal circles, we are library champions*. This variability made it clear that effective outreach requires knowing the community and its resources.

Navigating Challenges

Several challenges came up across multiple library types, as did common strategies for navigating those challenges effectively.

Community Partnerships & the Role of Volunteers

Resources – both time and money – were extremely tight across the board, although strategies for dealing with this challenge varied. In general, library workers saw volunteers and partnerships as a way to compensate for restricted time and budgets. However, emerging leaders pointed out that forming meaningful partnerships between libraries and schools or other organizations takes time that participants did not always have.

Working with volunteers was a critical skill for rural library workers. Recruiting, coordinating, and managing volunteers

were all important. However, the group also mentioned that, while partnerships increase programming capacity, they frequently complicate logistics. In general, this group tried to find a balance with programs, achieving the greatest impact possible for the least time investment.

Tribal library workers' concerns are similar to those working in other rural contexts. Many reservations are expansive and patrons have to travel long distances to get to the library. As a result, tribal library workers weigh the benefit of sacrificing some onsite programs in favor of community-based "pop-ups" such as a *library lodge at the powwow* to maximize accessibility. Extreme funding shortages are another point of commonality with rural libraries. Many tribal libraries operate entirely on grants and cannot afford to do more than a very limited number of programs. One interviewee described funding as "available but not always accessible" due to the time and effort involved in securing grants.

Even national programming initiatives developed by ALA and awarded to tribal libraries only provide minimal stipends. To participate, library workers sometimes have to pay for programming costs out of their own pockets and work far in excess of a 40-hour week, due to lack of funds needed to hire additional staff. One interviewee at a tribal library cited limited staffing as "the largest limitation" in programming. Sometimes this was mitigated through partnerships, such as with a larger public (non-tribal) university in the same area. Larger campuses have resources that can assist in collaborative program development and outreach – such as an office of multicultural affairs, an art gallery, an events coordinator or coordination staff, and Native American student associations.

Meanwhile, those working in K-12 libraries had a different understanding of partnerships. For these library workers, the chief value of partnerships was not simply the ability to work around constraints on funding and personnel. Rather, partnerships created the possibility of working with a larger community.

Some school libraries partner with local public libraries; in other cases, the collaboration happens between schools. In one instance, a participant said they did not partner with their local public library due to diverging ideas about the role of

libraries: *We don't necessarily rely on our public library connection – they have a different philosophy than us in the sense that they see programs as something that people come to the library for and we see it as something in which we go out of the library.* Multiple participants emphasized the importance of programming that occurs beyond library walls through community partnerships. They acknowledged that the collaborative process takes time, but is vital to seeing the library as embedded in and responding to the larger community. The central question driving programming for K-12 libraries seemed to be: How can you take what you're learning and apply it in the community?

Unlike other library types, school library workers perceived their libraries' very existence as under threat. *No one's going to say that we should just get rid of the library [at a college or university] to save a ton of money. They don't think that way in higher education so it's really sad that people think that way in K-12.* Rather than through partnerships, they responded to this challenge through effective advocacy and broader communication skills, particularly knowing how to get the word out (both internally and externally) about what's happening at the library: *We have to make a lot of noise.*

Technology

Both emerging leaders and school library staff noted that their relationship with technology could be at issue. Emerging leaders observed that many library staff members run programs to help patrons become more familiar with technology, but the staff members themselves may not be familiar with it. Meanwhile, school library workers struggled to find a balance between being knowledgeable about (educational) technology while not spending all their time working as the school's "geek squad." The focus on troubleshooting tech issues had a negative impact on participants' ability to dedicate time to programming.

Perceptions of Libraries

School, academic, and tribal libraries also faced the need to self-advocate to demonstrate their libraries' value. For school library workers, it was due at least in part to a general lack of awareness: *A lot of families don't know what a library can do.* On college campuses, it connected to a perception that libraries were chiefly sites for research. And challenges faced

by tribal library workers working in a college or university setting in some ways mirror those of other academic librarians. Dealing with campus security for programs that happen after hours or on weekends can be difficult, as is overcoming the perception that the library is limited to academic – rather than community – purposes.

Preparation

The discussion forums confirmed the findings from the community survey, and in some cases provided additional context.

When asked how well prepared they felt for their current roles, responses covered the full spectrum – and were largely independent of library degree. Respondents with professional library degrees found them valuable and particularly emphasized the role of internships and mentorship. Respondents with and without library degrees noted that many important skills were transferable from other fields, suggesting that there are multiple effective pathways to a career in library programming. However, academic librarians differed somewhat from their colleagues in this regard: they generally placed stronger emphasis on subject-area expertise as a programming competency than did workers in other types of libraries.

Beyond formal degree programs, respondents described two distinct approaches to professional learning. The first approach centered on discrete, focused opportunities for professional learning like webinars and conferences. Meanwhile, the second approach was much less bounded, treating professional preparation as a state of mind. This type of professional learning included being embedded in the local community, observing colleagues' successes, and gleaning transferable insights from seemingly unrelated activities. These approaches were not mutually exclusive: many participants described both a constant alertness to these everyday opportunities and interest in more structured and deliberate learning.

The Unique Role of Tribal Libraries

While most topics of discussion were relevant for at least two library types, tribal libraries had two unique features.

One distinction of these libraries seems to be their ability to reflect, represent, and support tribal identities and values. Tribal college and university libraries may also serve as community libraries for those who live on a reservation. Despite programming and outreach efforts, people may not understand that a library serves this dual purpose. *I think the perception is that the library is for the college, not for 'us'. We're getting the word out that this library is for everybody.* The potential for this hybrid library model is significant – if the library is viewed as public, it will bring more people into contact with the tribal college or university. *The library is the gateway to the college. It gets people onto campus, then the next step could be walking over to register for classes ... programming is a key to [long-term] community success.* Another noted how critical it is to *get outside the walls of the library* to do programs, traveling to community centers around the reservation.

FINAL LIST OF PUBLIC PROGRAMMING COMPETENCIES & THE FRAMEWORK

Based on all data collection and analysis related to Q2, we offer this final list of competencies needed for library public programming.

- Organizational skills, including project management and time management
- Knowledge of the community
- Event planning
- Financial skills, including budgeting, grants, and fundraising
- Evaluation
- Outreach and marketing
- Content knowledge
- Interpersonal skills
- Creativity

The full framework for library programming competencies (Figure 6) is on the following page.

Library Programming Competencies



ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

In addition to basic administration and management skills, this competency includes diplomacy and management skills with outside organizations.

EVENT PLANNING

This area requires two types of skills: logistical skills and the ability to “set the tone” for the event. The latter requires sensitivity and understanding of the nature of the audience and flexibility in establishing the appropriate environment.

FINANCIAL SKILLS

Programming professionals can expect to be increasingly involved in budgets related to space use, rentals, and construction or renovation, as well as basic fundraising and budgeting both internally and with collaborative partners.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMMUNITY

This competency includes open-mindedness, listening skills, intercultural and diversity skills, and group-specific skills such as knowledge of child development or language skills.

OUTREACH & MARKETING

A variety of skills are needed to ensure that programs meet the community’s needs and interests, including targeted communications strategies that inform, build support, and use digital and social media effectively.

EVALUATION

Core assessment skills will continue to be required, along with a greater focus on culturally responsive evaluation and targeted assessment of relatively small populations, including the ability to measure changing needs in the target populations.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

These competencies include such “people skills” as customer service, networking, communicating, public speaking, and facilitation—the methods used to interact effectively with many different audiences.

CREATIVITY

This broad category incorporates everything from developing unique and personalized programming, to flexibility and problem-solving to designing online communications and graphic pieces—maintaining a flexible and responsive spirit.

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

These skills may be specific to a program, library, or community culture, but at minimum require the ability to assess program quality, presenter qualifications, validity of source material, community engagement theory, and principles of inclusive practice.

Figure 6. Programming competency framework.

Part 3. Synthesis

Discussion

This report summarizes the work we have done for the first phase of a longer-term project to assess the impact of library public programs. As evidenced by the depth and detail of this report, the NILPPA research team addressed the question of competencies for library workers using rigorous approaches to data collection and analysis that reflect a diversity of opinions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In collaboration with our ALA partners, we developed a framework for categorizing public library programming including defining and validating a set of descriptive terms. Specifically, we came up with common characterizations that could represent the diversity of programs that libraries offer today. Furthermore, we detailed the specific competencies that libraries need in order to run these diverse programs effectively. These competencies represent more than just a set of basic skills that library workers need to acquire. Rather, these represent attributes that library workers should work towards in order to claim true mastery in their field. The overarching principles of these competencies may be acquired in formal educational settings, for example, as part of MLIS programs. Mid-career library workers, informed by their experience or context, may also acquire these competencies in continuing education or other forms of professional development. But we suggest that the nuances of each specific competency may be location specific. For example, people can be taught to act in more culturally competent ways, however, truly increasing culturally competency requires long-term localized interaction.

Through a rigorous process of data collection, analysis and review, we created a set of tangible, useful products that can be widely applied across the library field. We consistently heard from participants that the research findings that emerged through NILPPA are relevant to their professional lives and had important implications for their programming practice. While this is only the first step in a multi-phase effort to determine impact, the foundational step of agreeing upon a common categorization framework and list of competencies –

and making sure they are inclusive of all library types – has been accomplished.

A UNIQUE APPROACH

The success of this first phase of NILPPA was clearly due to its intentional design as an iterative process informed by experts in the library field. We set up multiple mechanisms for ongoing input – a six-person research committee who participated via both in-person and virtual meetings and by reviewing all instruments and research findings. The careful honing of instrument wording guaranteed the quality of the data received, and the critical review process following each research activity helped us determine how to proceed and where to focus our efforts. Beyond the research committee, a larger and even more diverse panel of advisors also shaped the research design and have ultimately helped us position this work so that it has maximum value for the library field.

This unique collaborative process is best seen illustrated in the many efforts to ensure our work was both inclusive and representative of all library types. For example, we deployed our surveys in multiple waves in order to gather sufficient numbers of respondents in key categories. To access specific respondents, we looked to the researchers and advisors to suggest networks they were familiar with and determine the best way of reaching them for input. In particular, the multiple survey deployments recommended by the broader NILPPA team helped us gain more representation of academic and school libraries.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

NILPPA Phase I is foundational research into understanding and strengthening the impact of public programming in libraries of all types. It provides a common language for the field to talk about public programming and its many dimensions, in particular intended outcomes. It also identifies skills that are particular to the public programming profession. Indeed, it gives shape and definition to a programming *identity*. Furthermore, library workers can use the NILPPA findings to deliver more effective public programming, use as

a self-diagnostic tool for self-directed professional development and to inform hiring processes, and shift the perspective from thinking about individual program outcomes at their own library to a broader consideration of library program impact across the US.

We encourage practitioners to use the framework for areas of competency in library programming. In particular, we recommend the following:

- Programming-specific tracks in MLIS coursework (e.g., to get started, colleges and universities can map their current offerings and consider elective options from other departments),
- Professional development for mid-career library professionals (e.g., specific recommendations and trainings can be provided by both PPO and library systems or administrators),
- Workshops for career-changers or those who work outside the library field and are interested in pursuing library programming; and
- Targeted goals for hiring and performance reviews for human resources departments.

We recognize that the work of this first phase – while it has accomplished the goals set forth in the grant proposal – is meant to be the foundation for subsequent work. Currently, the intended outcomes for library public programs are discussed in terms of individual participation and benefit, not collective. If many individuals experience personal impact (say, learning new skills or changing behaviors) – what does that amount to in the collective, spread across an entire community?

Similarly, when we use the term *fun* as an outcome in this report, we note that this outcome includes how temporal and spatial organization of programs can be attributed to producing individual outcomes of shared joy, discovery, inspiration, and a sense of belonging. While a programming professional may prioritize fun as their outcome goal, we predict that a fun experience is implicated in and predicts another outcome, such as building stronger and healthier communities. These areas, as well as others, merit additional exploration, which will be the focus of future NILPPA research.

As a way to focus our future efforts we suggest that the following questions in several key areas be considered key to upcoming phases of NILPPA:

- Documenting Impact
 - How can library-community partnerships achieve the greatest impact?
 - What impacts are programs having at the community level?
 - How has the focus on programming impacted public perception of libraries?
 - How will growth in programming impact library infrastructure and building needs?
- Building a Culture of Evaluation
 - How can a culture of evaluation become more widespread, practical, and useful? Which kinds of evaluation are best suited to which types of programs?
- Responding to Community Needs to Maximize Programming Benefits
 - How should public libraries solicit input from the communities they serve?
 - What are the particular affordances, and particular needs, of mixed audiences, especially intergenerational ones?
 - How can libraries best serve as a public forum for issues that are larger than their immediate communities?
 - How do librarians select programs?
 - How can they determine trends in community needs?
- Professional Preparedness
 - How should the Phase I competency areas be further broken down into specific, measurable, concrete aspects that account for various levels of mastery?
 - How do library programming professionals prepare for their changing roles and responsibilities?

As the work progresses, it is vital to ensure that all program dimensions and sub-dimensions are measurable. The same is applicable for the competencies, once they are contextualized. Moreover, it will be necessary to continue seeking practitioner input, in particular as the field continues to shift and grow. As a way of making these questions actionable, we recommend developing baseline descriptions (likely using existing data rather than collecting more) for

comparison, then piloting aggregate measures of how programming types and models influence public understanding of what libraries are, do, and can be in society. Now that we can categorize programs and define the skills, we can study aggregate impacts and outcomes that flow from library programming.

Conclusion

Over the past 2 years, the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA): Phase I has broken new ground and developed frameworks that can be used to understand real needs across the field of library public programming. In response to a widely distributed 2014 white paper and with the support of IMLS, ALA brought together a team of library researchers and practitioners to undertake a comprehensive research study, paving the way to ultimately determine the value of U.S. library public programming.

Through a multifaceted study design, a collaborative effort has resulted in answers to the following research questions: **How can we characterize and categorize public programs offered by libraries today? And what competencies and training are required for professionals working with library programming today?**

While the work is ongoing, NILPPA: Phase I has successfully addressed a major gap in the research and provided usable frameworks that support programming workers and, ultimately, the communities they serve.

Glossary

AASL	American Association of School Librarians	ICMA	International City/County Management Association
ACRL	Association of College and Research Libraries	IMLS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
AILA	American Indian Library Association	Instruction	An event that occurs in an academic or school library and otherwise meets the IMLS definition of a <i>program</i> is considered academic instruction only if all of the following conditions are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The event occurs during a course meeting time or as part of coursework;• The event is restricted to students and instructors affiliated with that particular course; and• Students are penalized for failing to attend or meet this requirement.
ALA	American Library Association	JCLC or Joint Council	The Joint Council of Librarians of Color is a nonprofit organization that advocates for and addresses the common needs of ALA's ethnic affiliates (AILA, APALA, BCALA, CALA, and REFORMA).
ALSC	Association for Library Service to Children	LLAMA	Library Leadership and Management Association
APALA	Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association	MtM	Measures that Matter, a project dedicated to coordinating data collection across the library field
ARSL	Association for Rural and Small Libraries	NILPPA	National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment
ATALM	Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums	ODLOS	[ALA] Office for Diversity, Literary, and Outreach Services
BCALA or Black Caucus	The Black Caucus of the American Library Association serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community; and provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians	Outcome	<i>A specific benefit that results from a library program or service. Outcomes are often expressed as changes that individuals perceive in themselves — like new or improved knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, or status.</i> (PLA, 2016a)
CALA	Chinese American Librarians Association		
Competency	<i>Professional competencies comprise the knowledge, skills, and abilities which are teachable, measurable, and objective and which define and contribute to performance in librarianship</i> (LLAMA, 2012). A competency has two dimensions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The knowledge, skill, or ability; and2. The level of mastery of that knowledge, skill, or ability.		
COSLA	Chief Officers of State Library Agencies		
The Edge Toolkit	An assessment service and network which helps libraries focus and improve their use of technology.		

Output	For the PLA (2017), outputs answer the question, <i>How much did we do?</i> (Meanwhile, outcomes answer the question <i>What good did we do?</i>)	RIPL	Research Institute for Public Libraries
PLA	Public Library Association	RUSA	Reference and User Services Association
PLDS	Public Library Data Service	Service	TBD (based on group discussion)
PLS	Public Libraries Survey	SLA	Special Libraries Association
PPO	[ALA] Public Programs Office	Spectrum Scholars	ALA's Spectrum Scholarship Program actively recruits and provides scholarships to racially and ethnically diverse students.
Public Program	<i>A service or event in a group setting developed to meet the needs or interests of an anticipated target audience. All libraries, regardless of type, have a public — the people the library serves or the audiences the library tailors its programs to.</i>	SRRT	Social Responsibilities Round Table [of ALA]
QQML	International Conference on Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries	Taxonomy	A bottom-up categorization based on empirical and measurable traits. Categories are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.
REFORMA	National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking	Typology	A top-down categorization with dimensions based on ideal types. Categories may have fuzzy boundaries.
		ULC	Urban Libraries Council
		VSA	Visitor Studies Association
		YALSA	Young Adult Library Services Association

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NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.06

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