



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New grant aims to support increased Latinx parent participation in U.S. libraries

Public Library Association, National Center for Families Learning partner to lead expansive family engagement project

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (August 24, 2020) – On July 23, the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) announced that the [Public Library Association](#) (PLA) and the [National Center for Families Learning](#) (NCFL) will receive a planning grant under the National Leadership Grants for Libraries category. The grant, made to the American Library Association, is part of an IMLS \$18.2 million investment in U.S. library initiatives, meant to support projects that address significant challenges and opportunities facing the library field and have the potential to advance theory and practice with new tools, research findings, models, services, practices, or alliances that will be widely used.

As one of the [38 projects selected](#), PLA and NCFL will receive \$99,949 to develop and document methods for how library staff can support authentic Latinx parent participation. Working in three (urban, suburban, and rural) locations, PLA and NCFL will co-design a process to involve Latinx parents in creating services designed for them. The project will undertake an environmental scan and engage in community-based learning with library staff and parents. The intent is to generate strategies and practices for authentic parent participation and identify approaches and best practices that can be piloted on a national scale.

[Family engagement](#) is a shared responsibility among families, educators, and communities to support children’s learning and development. The potential for public libraries to support family engagement and family literacy is substantial, given their unique position in the community as free, accessible learning environments which serve all ages and their ability to address a wide range of caregiver needs, such as employment or access to social services. PLA has offered tools and training on family engagement to libraries since 2015, including publications such as [Public Libraries: A Vital Space for Family Engagement](#) and [Ideabook: Libraries for Families](#). These tools offer a [family engagement framework](#) to help libraries move beyond family engagement as random, individual programs led by youth services staff toward systematically and strategically applying family engagement concepts to their work.

“Public libraries are doing incredible work to motivate and support parents to engage in their children’s education,” says Jo Giudice, Dallas Public Library Director and co-chair of the [PLA Family Engagement Task Force](#). “With hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s even more critical to find new ways to engage all families, in person and virtually, and counter the COVID-19 learning slide. Libraries can help

families facing new stresses, like loss of employment, overcome those challenges while also inspiring them to help their children learn.”

NCFL will bring three decades of pioneering family engagement programs and resources for low-income communities, training expertise, and facilitation of co-design work to inform the project. With NCFL’s deep expertise in family engagement and family literacy across multiple disciplines and PLA’s understanding of library programs and its national network, the two partners will work together to develop strategies to advance, spread, and sustain engagement of Latinx families in libraries.

“Latinx families can position themselves to thrive both now and in generations to come through increased engagement with libraries. Cultural barriers and misconceptions about libraries have historically served as barriers to access for Latinx families, and we must change this narrative. NCFL is excited to bring more than 30 years of experience engaging families through literacy to this project as we seek solutions together,” says Dr. Joshua Cramer, NCFL Executive Vice President.

The project, which will begin Sept. 1, 2020, will employ a co-design process, involving recipients of services in the creation of those services, to identify culturally responsive practices and resources that fully and authentically engage historically marginalized Latinx communities in library programs. This strategy aligns with components of the PLA family engagement framework urging libraries to “raise up” family voices, elevating family perspectives to develop and improve programs and services. The project will work with the Dallas Public Library, Arapahoe Libraries (Sheridan, Colo.), and Forest Grove City Library (Ore.) and Latinx families in their communities.

This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant number LG-246412-OLS-20.

About the Public Library Association

The Public Library Association (PLA) is the largest association dedicated to supporting the unique and evolving needs of public library professionals. Founded in 1944, PLA serves nearly 10,000 members in public libraries large and small in communities across the United States and Canada, with a growing presence around the world. PLA strives to help its members shape the essential institution of public libraries by serving as an indispensable ally for public library leaders. For more information about PLA, contact the PLA office at 1 (800) 545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or pla@ala.org.

About the National Center for Families Learning

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) works to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families. Partnering with educators, literacy advocates, and policymakers, NCFL develops and provides programming, professional development, and resources that empower and raise families to achieve their potential. Since 1989, NCFL has helped to change the lives of millions of families across the country. Engaging multiple generations from the same family has been a fundamental and distinguishing aspect of NCFL work, because this holistic approach creates a stronger impact and greater success for families.

Tags

[Public Library Association](#), [Family Engagement](#), [National Center for Families Learning](#), [Latinx families](#)

SEO Description

The Public Library Association (PLA) and the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) received funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to help libraries engage low-income, Latinx families in education.

Contacts:

Shea Coughlin
Vice President, External Affairs
National Center for Families Learning (NCFL)
502-655-0770
scoughlin@familieslearning.org

Scott Allen
Deputy Director
Public Library Association (PLA)
sallen@ala.org

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