

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Annual Conference, New Orleans
June 22 - 26, 2018

Topic: Continuing Education Report

Background: Since June 2017 YALSA has been working on a National Forum grant project funded by IMLS. As the final stage of this project, YALSA has written a report outlining recommendations for transforming teen services through improved continuing education. A public comment period was open from April 16 – 30, 2018 to get input from members and the library community. 32 individuals submitted comments, and the document was revised a final time to incorporate feedback. Linda Braun and Beth presented the information and final draft below for the Board’s consideration in mid-May so that the report could be published on time at the close of the grant project on May 31.

Action Required: Action

What to review

A copy editor and graphic designer are working on creating the final report. Please review the report for content only, and not for typos, wordsmithing or aesthetics. Please note that for brevity’s sake, the appendices are listed in the Table of Contents but are not included at the end of the board document. They will be included in the final report. Any highlighted text you see is text that has been suggested for a pull quote.

Key Changes Made after the Public Comment Period

- Flipped the order of the content so that the recommendations came first and the findings from the year-long project came last
- Created two infographics
- Changed language to be more inclusive of school libraries, where appropriate
- Added an executive summary
- Reorganized and expanded the recommendations for stakeholders
- Integrated equity of access more strongly
- Strengthened the introduction

Additions to be Made for Final Publication

- IMLS and YALSA logos
- Creative commons license info
- About YALSA statement
- Numbering for items on table of contents

- Photos, pull quotes, side bars and infographics
- Front and back cover design/art

Proposed Promotion and Dissemination

Dissemination (person responsible for oversight: Anna Lam)

- Post to the web site
- Include the Executive Summary in an upcoming issue of *YALS* with an article about the full report
- Blogging
 - YALSAblog posts: possibly one on each of the four broad recommendations
- Send to funder and partner
- Send to LIS and iSchool faculty
- Send to SLAs, including chief officers and youth consultants
- Send to state library association YA leaders
- Hand out at the symposium, ALISE conference, Midwinter, Annual, etc.
- Share out through ALA and IFLA channels
- See if we can write a post for the IMLS blog

Marketing (person responsible for oversight: Anna Lam)

- Create a house ad for *YALS*
- Create a slide for the web site & Facebook page
- Make a handout for conferences

Supplementary Materials (person responsible for oversight: Linda Braun)

- Pull out parts of the report to tailor content for specific audiences, e.g. library administrators, SLA chief officers, etc.

Adoption (persons responsible for oversight: YALSA President and Executive Director)

- Send a request to SLAs and relevant groups and organizations like LLAMA to formally adopt or endorse the document

Fiscal Implications

- Expenses are covered by grant funds

Evaluation

Staff and member leaders can employ a variety of strategies to track the adoption of the recommendations in the report, including

- Track web page hits for the report
- Embed survey questions in member surveys to identify changes in knowledge or behaviors tied to the report's recommendations
- Analysis of SLA and LIS/iSchool usage and/or changes to youth-focused CE and/or course syllabi

- Track endorsement or adoption of document by SLAs and other groups

Proposed Action

The Board adopts the report, *Transforming Teen Services through Continuing Education: Recommendations and Findings* and directs the Executive Director to work with staff and member leaders to promote and disseminate it, as presented in this document.

Transforming Teen Services through Continuing Education: Recommendations and Findings

[INSERT IMLS CREDIT, ABOUT YALSA, CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE,
BOARD ADOPTION DATE]

Executive Summary

Introduction

Library Staff Need to Gain Knowledge and Skills to Implement A New Approach to Teen Services

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2. Connect with Others to Provide a Richer Learning Experience
3. Create an Organizational Culture that Prioritizes Staff Learning
4. Embrace Effective Models for CE

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Part III: Learnings from the National Forum on Transforming Teen Services through CE

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Recognizing the Knowledge and Skills Gap

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Competency Content Areas - Learning Environments and Learning Experiences

Competency Content Area - Interactions with Teens and Youth Engagement & Leadership

Competency Content Area - Community & Family Engagement

Competency Content Area - Cultural Competency and Responsiveness

Competency Content Area - Equity of Access

Competency Content Area - Outcomes & Assessment

Competency Content Area - Continuous Learning

The Value Competent Library Staff Bring to Teens & Communities

The Current State of Library CE

CE is Frequently Planned in Isolation

Capacity Dictates Delivery

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Acknowledgements

About the Authors

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Appendix A - Putting Teens First Infographic

Appendix B - The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action Executive Summary

Appendix C - Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff Snapshot

Appendix D - Learning Plan Template

Appendix E - Sample Innovative CE Models

Appendix F - Selected CE and Project Resources

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Executive Summary

In 2014, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) published the report, *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*, which was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The report (commonly referred to as the Futures Report) described a paradigm shift in library services for teens which takes a “Teens

First” approach where youth engagement, youth voice and youth leadership are embedded throughout teen services. Subsequent surveys of the YALSA membership showed that most library staff have been slow to embrace the recommendations in the report.

Library staff want to have a positive impact on their community and help all community members thrive. Organizations that support them must provide them with the tools, resources, knowledge, skills and support they need to be successful. Therefore, YALSA determined that a focus on continuing education (CE) for all library staff could best help accelerate the adoption of the recommendations for teen services as outlined in the Futures Report. Further, YALSA concluded that teen services-focused CE was important for all library staff, regardless of job title or job description, as 1) most public libraries do not have specialized staff just for teen services, and 2) teens tend to use all aspects of libraries, including reference, circulation, children’s services, and more.

Together with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), YALSA embarked on a year-long exploration of the CE needs of staff at state library agencies (SLA) and libraries to identify challenges and opportunities and recommend ways for improving the CE landscape as a strategy to transforming teen services in libraries. This project was funded through a National Forum grant from IMLS.

From June 2017 – to April 2018 COSLA and YALSA engaged SLA chief officers, youth-serving SLA staff, CE-focused SLA staff, and library practitioners in both in-person and online conversations to help answer the following questions:

1. What are the most critical content areas related to the paradigm shift in teen services that require public library staff to gain new skills and knowledge?
2. What strategies must SLA youth services staff put in place to build competence and confidence in the critical content areas identified in #1, to provide quality CE and supports to library staff in their state?
3. What leadership skills must SLA youth services staff develop to leverage relationships with other SLA staff to overcome operational challenges and manage change?
4. What are the ways in which CE models, best practices, and relationships with other organizations can be best leveraged to support the development of SLA youth services staff related to teen services?
5. What unique assets and challenges do SLA youth services staff face in supporting library staff in teen services?
6. How do SLAs best develop CE for teen services that is sustainable and responsive to variations in demographics, communities, and teen needs?

By exploring these questions, COSLA and YALSA were able to come up with four overall recommendations for stakeholders such as SLAs, library associations, and CE providers to improve the CE landscape for teen services in libraries, which are discussed in Part I of the full report:

1. Commit to CE that promotes deeper learning

2. Connect with others to provide a richer learning experience
3. Create an organizational culture that prioritizes staff learning
4. Embrace effective models for CE

COSLA and YALSA also identified recommendations for specific stakeholders, which are described in Part II of the full report. They identified the following stakeholders:

- National organizations working with and for libraries
- State library agencies
- LIS and iSchool graduate programs
- Regional and state library associations and consortia
- Library administrators
- Public and school library staff
- CE providers, designers, and trainers
- Vendors
- Funders

The following recommendations emerged from the year-long project, and in the full report COSLA and YALSA identify which recommendations fit best with each of the stakeholders mentioned above. The recommendations are:

- Setting a strategy and vision for CE
- Identifying and promoting models and best practices
- Building capacity
- Embracing and promoting a culture of learning
- Advocating for high quality CE
- Embracing national guidelines
- Advancing a 21st century vision for teen services
- Adopting best practices in CE delivery
- Gathering data for informed decision making
- Reading national guidelines

Part III of the full report delves into the process and findings from the year-long exploration of teen services-focused CE led by COSLA and YALSA, including a list and description of capacity issues SLAs experience when trying to provide CE to library staff on teen services topics.

Guaranteeing that all library staff across the United States have the skills and knowledge necessary to support teens is essential—it is essential in ensuring social and economic vitality in communities, and it is essential if teens are to be able to gain what they need to succeed in college, careers, and life. The library field can make strides towards ensuring that all library staff are positioned to successfully reach and serve teens by embracing the recommendations in this report and committing to a culture of learning.

Introduction

In 2014 the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) published the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded report, *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* (see the report’s Executive Summary in Appendix B). The report (commonly referred to as the Futures Report) described a paradigm shift in library services for teens. This shift takes a “Teens First” approach where youth engagement, youth voice and youth leadership are embedded throughout all aspects of teen services (see Appendix A for an infographic covering Teens First concepts). This shift requires that library staff:

- Item #1. Provide year-round connected learning opportunities for and with teens
- Item #2. Build strong connections with family and communities to inform programs and services
- Item #3. Support teen development of traditional and non-traditional literacies skills
- Item #4. Take on leadership roles to advocate for the needs of teens
- Item #5. Focus all work on teen-specific needs and interests over the library’s (or library staff member’s) own needs and interests.”¹

Library Staff Need to Gain Knowledge and Skills to Implement A New Approach to Teen Services

State Library Agencies (SLAs)
In each of the 50 United States and territories there is an agency responsible for statewide library development. These agencies vary from state to state with many providing continuing education services including training and development for public library youth services staff.

Library staff want to have a positive impact on their community and help all community members thrive. Organizations that support them must provide them with the tools, resources, knowledge, skills and support they need to be successful. Following the publication of the Futures Report, YALSA developed a range of materials to support library staff in gaining the skills necessary to design and implement library services for and with teens that reflect the paradigm shift. These include webinars and conference programs; articles, books, case studies, and infographics; a research agenda; and an updated set of teen services competencies. Although the association expended resources to develop these supports, the changes needed as outlined in the Futures Report have been slow to take root in libraries across the United States. This slow pace is clearly reflected in YALSA’s 2016 and 2017 member surveys in which there was no increase in knowledge or integration of core areas of the Futures Report.²

Recognizing the need for development of staff skills and knowledge, YALSA and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) received funding from IMLS to spend a year exploring the needs of both State Library Agency (SLA) and library staff, to better understand the teen services oriented continuing education (CE)³ needs of those working in libraries. It

¹ Braun, Linda W., Maureen Hartman, Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Kafi Kumasi. *Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*. YALSA, 2014, p. 4-19.
www.ala.org/yaforum/sites/ala.org.yaforum/files/content/YALSA_nationalforum_Final_web_0.pdf.

² In both 2016 and 2017 YALSA members were asked which of the recommendations of the Futures Report they integrated into their services for and with teens. Overall, little changed between 2016 and 2017 with the key recommendation areas of youth voice, connected learning, and outcomes-based assessment each having less than 50% of the respondents reporting increased work in and/or attention to those areas.

³ In this report CE is used to refer to all aspects of continuing education, professional development, continuous learning, and professional learning.

included activities such as virtual meetings with CE staff at SLAs, virtual and in-person meetings with SLA chief officers, and a 1.5 day in-person meeting with youth serving SLA staff (see Appendix G for more information on each of these activities).

Throughout the year of exploration COSLA and YALSA gained an understanding of:

- Effective models of CE for library staff
- The needs of library staff in accessing and using those models
- Strategies stakeholders can leverage to advance CE for and with library staff

That learning is detailed in this report.

Part I of this report focuses on what effective CE models and transformative CE looks like. Part II looks at how stakeholder groups can lead the way in moving the work forward. Part III describes the findings from the year of exploring this topic, including barriers to success and why providing CE on library services for and with teens is critical for all library staff, for libraries, and even more importantly for teens in communities across the U.S.

Part I: Recommended Strategies for Transforming CE

“Be open to learning and keep trying. Remember that you are not fixed, your environment is not fixed, and that you can become an agent in continuous improvement and positive change.”⁴

There is no one size fits all model for CE that has the potential to transform library services for and with teens. There are, however, four concepts that organizations must embrace and adopt to improve learning opportunities for library staff.

[INSERT OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS INFOGRAPHIC]

1. Commit to CE that Promotes Deeper Learning

Transformative CE that leads to internalizing new information and changes in practice requires learning experiences that are scaffolded and give learners the opportunity to:

- Develop skills and understanding
- Practice what’s learned in a real-life setting
- Receive feedback on that practice
- Engage with other learners from within and beyond the library field
- Reflect and analyze what’s been learned
- Move on to a next level in the learning

This transformative learning is not accomplished through a one-time workshop or a one-hour webinar, rather, a sustained level of focus and intensity is required. This learning “is not about hard problems or hard work, but it’s about designing student experiences at the appropriate level of complexity and stretching students through productive struggles within a learning environment that supports the intended learning outcome.”⁵ It requires staff, administrators and CE providers to commit to spending the time and resources necessary to make the learning meaningful.

⁴ Peterson, Shannon. National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE, Louisville, KY

⁵ “RIGOR: A Key Principle for High-Impact Learning Experiences.” *EdWeb*, home.edweb.net/webinar/rigor-high-impact-learning-experiences/.

Many of the current CE models that library staff participate in are not transformative in this way. Staff participate in one-time only events and even if a course may take place over several weeks, the learning isn't intentionally integrated into real-life practice and/or a plan for integrating the learning into real-life practice is not developed as a part of the experience. Similarly, much of the CE is done in silos in which library staff do not have the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge by working with others from related fields or with other types of youth development organizations.

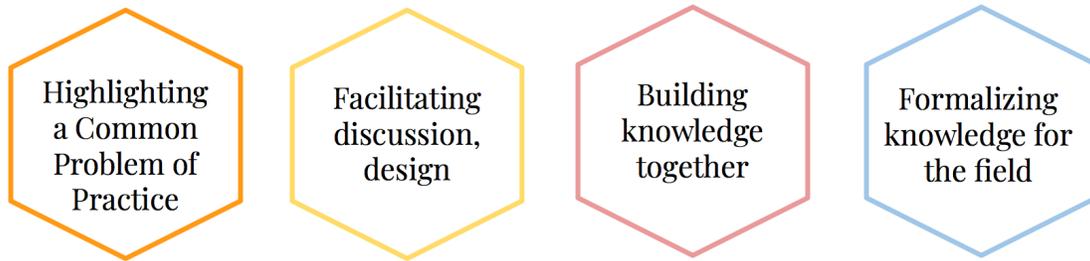
The table that follows further illustrates the difference between the CE formats widely in use today, and transformative formats that should be adopted to improve learning experiences for library staff.

| Non-Transformative | Transformative |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| One-and-done sessions such as webinars, workshops, conference programs, etc. | Multi-part series that give participants the chance to take a deep dive into a particular topic. |
| Learning that focuses on a singular experience and point of view. Sessions at which learners are passive participants who hear lectures. Ideas that are presented as the singular way for achieving a particular goal or outcome. | Multi-part series that acknowledges more than one approach may yield success and which provide participants with the opportunity to critically reflect on their learning, integrate it into real-life practice, then join with other learners and facilitators to evaluate how implementation went, and try again with changes based on the assessment. |
| Workshops and other events that are designed, developed, and facilitated by only those who work in a library environment or do not have experience outside of the library world. | CE that enables partnerships and collaborations between library workers and those in other fields including education, technology, leadership development, advocacy, and diversity and inclusion is critical to supporting the learning needs of all library staff. |

2. Connect with Others to Provide a Richer Learning Experience

Working with other organizations that support youth during out-of-school time, such as museums, can prove to be an excellent opportunity for building relationships with non-library youth serving organizations, for building excellent CE, and for building relationships with teens. During this project's in-person meeting, NYU researcher Dixie Ching discussed the work of Hive NYC, and how organizations working with the Hive were able to come together to "develop a deeper understanding of how to support youth pathways."⁶ Ching highlighted four key steps in this work:

⁶ Ching, Dixie. "Innovation in CE." National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE, Louisville, KY.



Transformative in this approach is the focus on organizations with like goals coming together to learn and solve problems. This is not a traditional form of CE, and at first many might not see this experience as CE. However, as Ching pointed out, in the work these organizations did together learning took place as they analyzed a problem and came up with solutions. This co-learning approach is not only essential in the work that library staff do as a part of their own continuous learning, it's also essential to the work library staff do in providing learning opportunities for and with teens.

Through this experience, Dixie Ching identified the following elements of innovative CE:

- Start with a problem that is important to your staff and is grounded in their practice
- Make the learning hands-on, design-oriented, participatory
- Encourage peer leadership
- Consider multiple entry points (channels, expertise, and modalities)
- Always be critical and question “conventional wisdom” --it's not just about learning new things
- Consider partnering with researchers (or a doctoral student!)⁷

3. Create an Organizational Culture that Prioritizes Staff Learning

A key element to ensuring that all library staff are able to continuously build their knowledge and skills is creating and prioritizing an organizational culture of learning. The Collaboration for Impact website highlights the following three areas as being core to creating this institutional culture:

1. Cultural norms that allow for openness, trust, and risk-taking
2. Ability to get feedback and insight from community members
3. Supportive leadership that fosters learning, experimentation, and transparency⁸

It is essential that as stakeholders including COSLA, YALSA and SLA staff move forward with this work that they focus on helping libraries develop cultures of learning throughout their whole institution. This can be achieved through engaging with administrators and staff at all levels and addressing the value of continuous learning for libraries and communities. Administrators and staff need to have the tools, opportunities, and experiences to test out risk-taking and to give and receive reflective feedback. Administrators can shift library culture by demonstrating openness in their own learning. Through that shift in culture, a shift in mindset that supports the importance of understanding the how and why of teen services will more rapidly follow.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wright, Olivia. “The Three Elements of Continuous Learning: Priorities, Plans, and Culture.” *Collaboration for Impact*, 24 Aug. 2015, www.collaborationforimpact.com/the-three-elements-of-continuous-learning-priorities-plans-and-culture/.

4. Embrace Effective Models for CE

One step for stakeholders such as COSLA, YALSA and SLA staff to take is to build on the positive elements of existing CE models and integrate those into future CE opportunities for library staff. As a part of this project the following were defined as successful elements of CE.

Note: It is not expected that CE providers integrate all of these elements. Instead providers should determine what is most important for their own learning situation and integrate the aspect(s) that are most beneficial to that instance.

| Successful CE Element | Examples |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community of Practice: In-person | A Resource Development Retreat (RDR) is a meeting where practitioners and administrators, who are part of a larger network, gather to develop materials on behalf of the network. In the YOUmedia Learning Labs Network, RDRs are opportunities for labs in a variety of contexts (libraries, museums, community organizations, and schools) to connect and actively collaborate on shared resources, curriculum, and strategies for moving their work forward. Concretely, an RDR is an opportunity to make time and space to create resources that are of equal value to the contributing organizations as they are to the network as a whole. Once created, these resources can be used in a local context by the contributing labs and shared through the YOUmedia Network and Community of Practice (CoP) for implementation on a national scale. |
| Community of Practice: Virtual | The American Library Association’s Libraries Ready to Code project, sponsored by Google, successfully uses a virtual CoP to facilitate learning in a cohort of staff from 30 U.S. libraries comprising rural, small, tribal, suburban, and urban populations. Cohort members meet weekly in live sessions at which staff from one of the participating institutions facilitates conversation with peers on topics related to their specific project. These weekly meetings also include discussion of a topic of interest to the cohort - connected learning, strategies for overcoming barriers, family engagement, and so on. The lead role that cohort members take in these presentations and discussions leads to high engagement and co-learning. |
| Mentorship | Leadership Anchorage is a program of the Alaska Humanities Forum that centers on leadership development, intensive training sessions, a group project, and one-on-one mentoring. The mentors are selected by each participant with input from the program leader. As the Leadership Anchorage website states, “...mentors play a critical role, pairing with participants to support their learning process and helping to build a larger network across an area of interest or industry. Mentors meet with their mentees on a regular basis, guiding them in |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | meeting their goals for leadership development and community contribution.” ⁹ |
| Research Practice Partnerships | The National Science Foundation funded Robot Backpack project brings University of Washington (UW) researchers together with public library and museum staff to research, design, and implement activities for families with limited access to technology. Through the project University staff support library staff learning in the design and development of project activities. As UW staff learn from their research related to the project, they iterate new models of family engagement and learning with library staff. |
| Reflection/Feedback Loop & Peer Engagement | The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA) National Science Foundation funded project, ACRES (Afterschool Coaching for Reflective Educators) uses the video conferencing platform Zoom to train educators in how to facilitate STEM learning experiences for and with youth. The project incorporates small group live Zoom sessions, time for learners to try what they learn in day-to-day practice, and opportunities to reflect and receive feedback from peers. |
| Scaffolded Learning | The best learning happens when it’s not a one-and-done experience. With that in mind the IMLS funded YX (Youth Experience) program at the University of Maryland College of Information Science provides a model of scaffolding learning in the suite of four classes that librarians take in order to gain a certificate. The courses build on each other beginning with a foundations course that embeds ideas of connected learning, a class on creating rich learning experiences with technology that embeds outcomes and facilitation, a design thinking course, and a capstone project in which students must turn all that they have learned into practice. |
| Train the Trainer | The YALSA/COSLA Transforming Teen Services: A Train the Trainer Approach project is the next step for the partnership of the two associations. Following the Transforming Teen Services through CE project, IMLS funded a three-year project that supports SLA staff and front-line library staff to build skills in facilitating computational thinking activities through a connected learning lens. In a three-day face-to-face session, SLA staff and front-line staff from each state will be trained on how to train others in the work. All of the participants will also receive coaching and mentoring that encourages risk-taking, trial and error, assessment, and reflection. |

(see Appendix E for links and more information on examples of promising models)

⁹ “Leadership Anchorage.” *Alaska Humanities Forum*, www.akhf.org/leadershipanchorage.

The subsequent sections of this report refer to “high quality” CE. The use of this term connects to models and best practices described in Part I of this report.

Part II: Recommended Actions for Stakeholders

*“If we really want to transform Teen Services we really need to look outside our library for best practices...”*¹⁰

There are a number of ways stakeholders, including YALSA and other ALA units, COSLA, SLA staff, LIS and iSchool graduate programs, library staff, and vendors can move this work forward. It is not expected that each stakeholder group implement all of the recommendations at once or that each stakeholder become familiar with all of the recommendations made here. Instead stakeholders should determine which of the recommendations is the most significant to move forward for and with their specific community and continually assess how to integrate other aspects of the recommendations over time. The recommendations are divided into three broad categories:

- Category 1: Organizations working with and for libraries
- Category 2: Library staff
- Category 3: Partners

[INSERT STAKEHOLDERS & RECOMMENDATIONS INFOGRAPHIC]

Category 1: Organizations Working with and For Libraries

For National Organizations Working with and for Libraries

- Set a strategy and vision for CE that advances a 21st century vision of teen services as outlined in key documents, such as YALSA’s *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*
 - Promote, create, and distribute foundational documents, when warranted
 - Embrace national and international guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums’ *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museum.*
 - YALSA’s *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.*
 - Update existing or create new position statements, guidelines, standards, etc. as needed that emphasize the importance for library staff to commit to learning throughout their career as well as the importance of creating a culture of learning within libraries.
- Identify and use effective CE models and share emerging and best practices

¹⁰ Hughes-Hassell, Sandra. “Re-imagining the Future of Library Services for and with Teens.” National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE. Louisville, KY.

- Publish emerging and best practices, resources, case studies, etc., in a variety of formats, to support developing innovative CE.
- Partner with appropriate organizations to develop and maintain an online resource which compiles and shares high quality CE models.
- With COSLA and SLAs, lead the way in creating opportunities for ongoing virtual and in-person discussions to consider innovative ways to provide CE for and with library staff.
- With partners, seek out existing, pilot new, and evaluate innovative models of CE in both in-person and virtual formats.
- Build capacity
 - Create opportunities for collaboration among ALA and its units, COSLA, LIS and iSchool graduate programs, and CE and youth-focused organizations outside of the library community.
 - Partner with organizations and agencies outside of libraries to guarantee inclusion of CE perspectives that support teens with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds.
 - With stakeholders, develop a method for identifying qualified CE trainers, who can provide a range of voices and perspectives on high quality library teen services, and disseminating that information out to the library community.
 - Seek out short-term and long-term funding to help design, development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative CE.
 - Conduct and use programmatic evaluation information to improve outcomes and refine CE models.
- Promote a culture of learning
 - Work with partners to develop and disseminate resources that support libraries in creating a culture of learning among their institution's staff.
 - Develop CE for administrators and library staff on how to embrace a culture of learning across an institution.
- Advocate
 - Lead a national advocacy effort to call attention to the importance of CE and continuous learning for all library staff.
 - Advocate nationwide for the importance of teen services related CE for all library staff, regardless of job title or job description.
 - Promote existing and create new methods for honoring high-quality training and innovative CE models.
- Gather data for informed planning and decision making
 - Continue to learn about the current needs of teens and library staff training.
 - Regularly assess the value and content of the teen services related training provided to library staff.

For State Library Agencies

- Embrace national and international guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE, and use them to inform the development of CE

- The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums.*
- YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action and Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.*
- Build capacity
 - Support opportunities for petitioning for unclaimed LSTA funds to be used for teen focused CE projects.
 - Seek out short-term and long-term funding to help design, development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative CE.
 - Leverage existing opportunities for planning and development, such as the LSTA five-year plan, agency strategic planning efforts, and the agency's strategic directions to incorporate specific items that relate to aiding staff in gaining competence in teen services.
 - Guarantee that SLA staff have the opportunity and resources to collaboratively design CE that supports current needs of today's diverse teens.
 - Develop opportunities for SLA staff to build leadership skills to become successful advocates and leaders in designing, implementing, and assessing effective teen services CE.
 - Partner with organizations outside of the library and education realms to bring in relevant training expertise that may not be available within the SLA and to ensure that the needs of diverse teens are included.
 - Re-envision the budgeting process to balance resources across age groups, based on state population information and on the skills and knowledge needed by all library staff.
 - Seek out culturally competent and diverse trainers who can provide a wide range of perspectives on high quality library teen services.
 - Use programmatic evaluation information to improve outcomes and refine CE models.
- Promote a culture of learning
 - Work with partners to disseminate resources that support libraries in creating a culture of learning among their institution's staff.
 - Implement CE for administrators and library staff on how to embrace a culture of learning across an institution.
 - Highlight the ways in which CE supports successful job performance.
 - Encourage library staff to use tools such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to assess their CE needs and prioritize areas for growth.
- Advocate
 - Advocate for the importance of teen services related CE for all library staff, including those that work outside of teen services.
 - Lead the movement to recognize teen services focused CE as being as valuable as CE that builds on early learning and early literacy.
 - Identify and promote existing high-quality CE to library staff in the state.
- Gather data for informed planning and decision making
 - Continue to learn about the current needs of teens in your state and update library staff training accordingly.

- Regularly assess the value and content of the teen services related training provided to library staff in your state.
- Advance a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents
 - Audit existing curricula and revise as needed to ensure alignment with national guidelines such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Embed recommendations from Part I of this report and best and emerging CE practices into teaching and learning.
- Identify and adopt best practices, and experiment with emerging practices
 - With COSLA and other national organizations, lead the way in creating opportunities for ongoing virtual and in-person discussions to consider innovative ways to provide CE to library staff.
 - Partner with library organizations to pilot innovative methods for providing high quality teen services CE.
 - Use YALSA's *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to audit existing conference programs, workshops, webinars, etc. to identify gaps and in teen services focused content and take steps to close the gaps.
 - Design feedback mechanisms to help understand the challenges and gauge the knowledge and skills gaps of library staff to identify CE needs and leverage them to plan CE.

For LIS and iSchool Graduate Programs

- Embrace and promote existing foundational documents
 - Embrace national guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE, and integrate them into the curricula, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*.
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*
 - The University of Maryland iSchool report, *Re-envisioning the MLS: Findings, Issues and Considerations*.
- Advance a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents
 - Audit existing curricula and revise as needed to ensure alignment with national guidelines such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Embed recommendations from Part I of this report and best and emerging CE practices into teaching and learning.
- Build capacity of the field
 - Conduct and disseminate research on the quality and effectiveness of teen-focused CE for library staff and disseminate findings.
 - Conduct and disseminate research on the effectiveness of CE models and practices.
 - Develop research practice partnerships with library organizations and library staff in support of teen services learning.

- Work with SLAs to connect faculty and staff in LIS and iSchool graduate programs who can bring their expertise to libraries to support staff teen services focused learning and growth.
- Seek out short-term and long-term funding to help in design, development, implementation and evaluation of innovative CE.
- Conduct and use programmatic evaluation information to improve outcomes and refine CE models.
- Promote a culture of learning
 - Emphasize to students the need for continuous learning beyond the LIS and iSchool graduate program and to proactively seek out CE opportunities.
 - Partner with SLAs or other library-based organizations to host teen services-focused events or meet-ups for graduate students and library staff.
 - Include doctoral students and faculty members in specialized events, meetings, and communities of practice along with library directors, teens, and community members.
- Advocate
 - Promote opportunities for library staff to enroll in semester long courses that will help them to gain skills needed to serve teens successfully.
 - Promote CE certificate programs that support teen services learning to all public library staff.

For Regional and State Library Associations and Consortia

- Embrace and promote foundational documents
 - Embrace national guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums.*
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action and Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.*
- Adopt best practices, and experiment with emerging practices
 - Partner with SLA staff and library organizations to pilot innovative methods for providing high quality teen services CE.
 - Use YALSA's *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to audit existing conference programs, workshops, webinars, etc. to identify gaps and in teen services focused content and take steps to close the gaps.
 - Design feedback mechanisms to help understand the challenges and gauge the knowledge and skills gaps of library staff to identify CE needs and leverage them to plan CE.
- Build capacity
 - Seek out short-term and long-term funding to help libraries engage in high quality CE.
 - Partner with YALSA, COSLA, and SLA staff to develop a plan for high quality teen services CE at conferences, workshops, and other sponsored events.
 - Partner with organizations and agencies outside of libraries to guarantee inclusion of CE perspectives that support the needs of diverse teens.

- Seek out diverse trainers who can provide diversified perspectives on library teen services and offer CE that supports a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents.
- Seek out partnerships with those inside and outside of the library field that are able to help in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of high-quality innovative CE.
- Gather data for informed planning and decision making
 - Continue to learn about the current needs of teens and update library staff training accordingly.
 - Regularly assess the value and content of the teen services related training provided to library staff.
- Advance a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents
 - Audit existing training materials and revise as needed to ensure alignment with national guidelines such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Embed recommendations from Part I of this report and best and emerging CE practices into teaching and learning.
- Embrace a culture of learning
 - Work with libraries to support the integration of a culture of learning within the institution.
 - Highlight the ways in which CE supports successful job performance.
 - Encourage library staff to use tools such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to assess their CE needs and prioritize areas for growth.
- Advocate
 - Advocate for the importance of teen services related CE for all library staff, including those that work outside of teen services.
 - Identify and promote existing high-quality CE to all library staff.
 - Articulate the need for all library staff to accept their role in providing excellent service to all community members, including all teens.

[insert recommendations category 1 chart here]

Category 2: Library Staff

For Library Administrators

- Embrace and operationalize national guidelines, standards and recommendations for teen services and CE, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*.
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
- Build capacity
 - Include funding for high quality CE activities in annual budgets.
 - Partner with SLAs and youth-serving nonprofit organizations to expand the range of CE opportunities available to staff.

- Seek out culturally competent and diverse trainers who can provide a range of perspectives on library teen services and offer CE that supports a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents.
- Create and execute a plan to ensure staff have equitable access to teen-focused CE opportunities.
- Forge partnerships to allow library staff to connect with and learn alongside staff at relevant local organizations.
- Promote and maintain a culture of learning
 - Create opportunities for staff to reflect and work together to solve problems of practice.
 - Create opportunities for staff to practice what they've learned in a real-world setting.
 - Identify and promote existing high-quality CE to library staff.
 - Provide incentives for staff to participate in CE activities.
 - Embed CE into staff goal setting and personnel evaluations.
 - Integrate development of professional learning plans into job descriptions and evaluations.
 - When vetting potential new employees, seek out those who have committed to keeping their skills up to date and embraced YALSA's 21st century vision for teen services.
 - Ensure that all new public services staff receive training in best practices for working with teens, and that veteran staff have opportunities to refresh and further develop their skills.
 - Ensure that all new dedicated youth and teen services staff receive more intensive teen services-focused training, including but not limited to cultural humility, youth voice, youth-adult partnerships, fostering connected learning environments and mentoring.
 - Work with library staff to use tools such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to assess their CE needs and prioritize areas for growth.
- Advocate
 - Advocate for the importance of teen services related CE for all library staff, including those that work outside of the teen services department.
 - Identify and promote existing high-quality CE to all library staff.
 - Articulate the need for all library staff to accept their role in providing excellent service to all community members, including all teens.

For Public and School Library Staff

- Read national guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*.
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
- Embrace a culture of learning

- Use tools such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to assess CE needs and prioritize areas for growth, resisting the temptation to take CE in areas of comfort and confidence, and instead focus on topics that are less familiar and comfortable.
- Be open and willing to try new things, take risks, and explore areas that might cause discomfort.
- Build collaborative opportunities between school and public libraries to build learning opportunities across institutions and work together to support teen services knowledge and skills.
- Accept a role as a co-learner, who builds knowledge and skills alongside teens.
- Seek mentors and peers, both inside and outside the library, whose work with teens can help inform and advance personal practice.
- Join and participate in personal learning networks, communities of practice, and professional associations.
- Recognize that since everyone in the library is responsible for working for and with teens, all library staff need teen services-focused CE.
- Share knowledge and skills with peers and colleagues and support their learning.
- Take time to celebrate CE achievements and include them on resumes, in portfolios, etc.
- Advocate
 - Advocate to supervisors and managers about teen services CE needs, using this report and YALSA's *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* to help make the case.
 - Research the CE offerings from library organizations as well as youth-serving organizations and advocate to supervisors and managers about the value of participating.
 - Encourage state library agencies and education organizations to expand CE opportunities that support the learning needs that school and public library staff have in common.
 -

[insert recommendations category 2 chart here]

Category 3: Partners

For CE Providers, Designers, and Trainers

- Embrace and use as a framework for teen services focused CE national guidelines, standards and recommendations, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action and Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*
- Build capacity
 - Connect with organizations and agencies outside of libraries to guarantee the inclusion of CE perspectives that support the needs of diverse teens.
 - Connect with YALSA, COSLA, and SLAs to design and implement high-quality CE for all public library staff.
- Gather data for informed planning and decision making

- Continue to learn about the current needs of teens and update library staff training accordingly.
- Regularly assess the value and content of the teen services related training provided to library staff.
- Advance a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents
 - Audit existing training materials and revise as needed to ensure alignment with national guidelines such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Embed recommendations from Part I of this report and best and emerging CE practices into teaching and learning.
- Embrace a culture of learning
 - Keep up to date on developments in emerging and best practices in planning, delivering and evaluating CE.
 - Join and participate in personal learning networks, communities of practice, and professional associations that help you hone your training skills.
 - Promote risk-taking, co-learning, reflection, and feedback in training with all library staff.
- Advocate
 - Design and implement training for library administrators on the value of all staff being able to provide high quality teen services on the dispositions and content areas of the *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Advocate for the importance of teen services related CE for all library staff, including those that work outside of teen services.
- Adopt best practices
 - Provide opportunities for deeper learning
 - Create opportunities for learners to reflect and work together to solve problems of practice.
 - Create opportunities for learners to practice what they've learned in a real-world setting.

For Vendors

- Embrace and use as a framework for teen services focused CE national guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE-focused teen services, such as
 - The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums' *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*.
 - YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
- Build capacity
 - Build an understanding of the needs of library staff in moving forward with Putting Teens First focused services to inform the development of appropriate CE.
 - Partner with organizations and agencies outside of libraries to guarantee inclusion of CE perspectives that support the needs of diverse teens.
 - Seek out culturally competent and diverse trainers who
 - Are knowledgeable of YALSA's 21st century vision for teen services.

- Come from diverse backgrounds and can provide a range of perspectives on teen services.
- Provide the kinds of transformational learning opportunities outlined in Part I of this report.
- Create opportunities for libraries to participate in high-quality teen services focused CE.
- Partner with YALSA, COSLA, SLAs, and other professional library organizations to plan, develop, deliver and evaluate high-quality teen services CE.
- Partner with YALSA, COSLA, SLAs, and other professional library associations to develop a framework for selecting topics and facilitators for teen services-oriented CE.
- Advance a 21st century vision for teen services, as outlined in YALSA's *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and subsequent documents
 - Audit existing training materials and revise as needed to ensure alignment with national guidelines such as *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*.
 - Create new and audit existing training and revise as needed to ensure they provide opportunities for deeper learning.
 - Embed recommendations from Part I of this report and best and emerging CE practices into teaching and learning.
- Adopt best practices and models
 - Provide opportunities for deeper learning
 - Create opportunities for learners to reflect and work together to solve problems of practice.
 - Create opportunities for learners to practice what they've learned in a real-world setting.

For Funders

- Promote best and emerging practices
 - Share successes, failures, and lessons learned internally and externally, as appropriate.
 - Provide a means for the library community to easily find CE resources, models, tools, reports, etc. produced as a result of projects that you funded.
- Build capacity
 - Help cultivate conditions necessary for innovation in teen services focused CE.
 - Look for improvements to open up funding opportunities to a broader range of applicants, such as streamlining application processes, right-sizing applications to the funding amounts, and reviewing processes to identify and address inefficiencies and embedded inequities that may be unintentionally excluding underrepresented audiences.
 - Use programmatic and grant evaluation information to improve outcomes.
 - Support both short-term term funding as a way to begin projects and long-term funding to allow for sustainability of those projects.
 - Fund CE which embraces best practices and national guidelines, standards and recommendations (including those in Part I of this report) for teen services and CE-focused teen services, such as

- The Coalition to Advance Learning in Archives, Libraries and Museums’ *National Agenda for Continuing Education and Professional Development Across Libraries, Archives and Museums*
- YALSA’s *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* and *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* and strategic change in libraries.
- Seek out opportunities to collaborate with other funders to increase impact.

[insert recommendations category 3 chart here]

Part III: Learnings from the National Forum on Transforming Teen Services through CE

“One of the most pressing needs in this area is that all staff, not just teen staff, don’t know how to work with the age group.”¹¹

Teens have Different Needs & Challenges than Previous Generations

Today’s teens depend on library staff having skills and knowledge required to serve the age group successfully. Consider these facts about teens.

- “Today, adolescents [youth between the ages of 10 and 19] make up 13.2 percent of the population...the population will continue to grow, reaching almost 45 million in 2050.”¹²
- The demographics of race and ethnic makeup of tweens and teens is changing. “The proportion of adolescents who are racial and ethnic minorities is on the rise. Slightly more than half of U.S. adolescents (54 percent) were white in 2014, but by 2050 that proportion is projected to drop to 40 percent as Hispanic and multiracial teens, in particular, come to represent a larger share of the population.”¹³
- In the last three decades, the skills required for success in the workforce have changed drastically. As a result, there are millions of unfilled jobs in the US. As stated in a 2017 Brookings report, “...we hear the loud voice of employers affirming that already today there aren’t enough skilled workers to meet employers’ needs globally.”¹⁴
- Today’s teens must be literate beyond traditional print literacy to succeed in school and life. In today’s world there are numerous types of literacy expanding beyond traditional text into digital, media, information, visual, critical, data, and transliteracy (the fluid movement between different literacies).
- As an age group, teens (ages 12 – 18) receive the least financial support. Government, philanthropic and nonprofit spending directed at teens lags far behind what is invested in children (birth through 11 years) and young adults (19 and up).¹⁵

¹¹ Phone interview held by project evaluator with state library agency youth services consultant

¹² Office of Adolescent Health. “The Changing Face of America’s Adolescents.” *HHS.gov*, US Department of Health and Human Services, 1 Nov. 2016,

¹³ Office of Adolescent Health. “The Changing Face of America’s Adolescents.” *HHS.gov*, US Department of Health and Human Services, 1 Nov. 2016, <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/changing-face-of-americas-adolescents/index.html#race>

¹⁴ Grob-Zakhary, Randa, and Jessica Hjarrand. “To Close the Skills Gap, Start with the Learning Gap.” *Brookings*, Brookings, 17 Aug. 2017, www.brookings.edu/opinions/to-close-the-skills-gap-start-with-the-learning-gap/.

¹⁵ “New Alliance Report Uncovers ‘Missing Middle’ in Federal Education Funding.” *Alliance for Excellent Education*, all4ed.org/press/new-alliance-report-uncovers-missing-middle-in-federal-education-funding/.

Recognizing the Knowledge and Skills Gap

During the discovery phases of this project YALSA released an updated version of the *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff* (see Appendix C for a snapshot of the core content areas of the Competencies). This update to the Competencies takes an entirely new approach to identifying the knowledge and skills library staff require to successfully work for and with teens. Instead of focusing on traditional library practices such as collection development, reference, readers' advisory, and programming, the Competencies center on a Putting Teens First approach. **This is an approach in which library staff focus their work on the needs and interests of teens in the local community.** While traditional practices are still part of putting teens first in library services, they do not allow the framing necessary to focus on the skills required to effectively engage with today's teens. For example, readers' advisory competencies traditionally focus on a knowledge of the literature. On the other hand, a competency centered on learning experiences focuses on the bigger picture need of developing activities that allow teens to gain critical thinking and problem-solving skills which they can then use when seeking out and engaging with a variety of types and formats of texts.

During the project year the knowledge and skills frequently noted as necessary for all library staff to embrace strongly correlate with YALSA's updated Competencies. The sections below provide a framework, based on the *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff*, for stakeholders to consider when investing in CE for public library staff.

Competency Content Area - Teen Growth and Development

The research brief "The Developing Brain: Implications for Youth Programs" notes that supportive adult relationships play an important role in the positive growth of youth."¹⁶ All library staff need to acquire information, competence, and confidence in understanding how the development of the teen brain has an impact on interactions with the age group. Also critical is a knowledge of how all library staff must support positive youth development through the programs and services offered for and with the age group.

Competency Content Areas - Learning Environments and Learning Experiences

In his presentation at this project's in-person meeting, MIT Learning Designer Peter Kirschmann spoke about the 4Ps of Creative Learning. These are described by Mitchell Resnick as:

- *Projects*. People learn best when they are actively working on meaningful projects – generating new ideas, designing prototypes, refining iteratively.
- *Peers*. Learning flourishes as a social activity, with people sharing ideas, collaborating on projects, and building on one another's work.
- *Passion*. When people work on projects they care about, they work longer and harder, persist in the face of challenges, and learn more in the process.
- *Play*. Learning involves playful experimentation – trying new things, tinkering with

Positive Youth Development

"PYD is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths."
http://bit.ly/pyd_ttsce

¹⁶ "The Developing Brain: Implications for Youth Programs." *Child Trends*, 2015, p. 5., www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2015-20DevelopingBrain.pdf.

materials, testing boundaries, taking risks, iterating again and again.¹⁷

A challenge in integrating the 4Ps into library activities for and with teens that surfaced during the meeting, and in follow-up online Town Halls, is a need to change the approach from a focus on specific activity and one-off programs to a focus on longer term (multi-week/multi-session) scaffolded activities. Library staff need to learn how to design 4Ps focused learning experiences, how to facilitate 4Ps learning, and how to create environments in which teens can comfortably and confidently engage in 4Ps learning.

Competency Content Areas - Interactions with Teens and Youth Engagement & Leadership

Libraries must recognize a key difference between children's and teen services. Unlike small children, teens want and need to be an active part of program design, not just program execution. This calls on library staff to adopt the role of teen coach or facilitator. Currently, the majority of libraries still view planning teen programs and services as the realm of staff, although some do sponsor teen advisory boards as a way to engage the age group in planning. As the name of these groups implies, teens are involved primarily as advisors not as leaders or partners. As noted by Juan Rubio, in *Putting Teens First in Library Services: A Roadmap*, "within library spaces, library staff working with teens should adopt a youth voice model: a model in which adults and teens work together on decision making, planning, and implementation. This model provides youth with real opportunities for having a voice in what happens in library programs and services, which is essential in developing and implementing successful, well-attended programs for and with teens. By establishing strong youth-adult social relationships through youth voice, it's possible to offer programs rooted in youth self-expression and cultural and social awareness, which helps develop agency in youth and move toward a more equitable form of learning."¹⁸ The focus on youth - adult partnerships is a new framing for teen services work that library staff must learn how to foster.

Competency Content Area - Community & Family Engagement

Engaging and building relationships with community members, organizations, teens, and their families is essential for library staff to successfully work with and for teens. To build these relationships, those that work in libraries must go outside of their buildings to listen to and learn from community members. They need to do this by listening to what others have to say and by observing what life is like for local teens. Staff need to move away from telling others what the library can provide and instead, through engaging by listening and observing, learn what others actually need from the library. Library staff at all levels need opportunities to learn how to facilitate conversations, listen, observe, and analyze what they see and hear to design and implement successful teen services.

Competency Content Area - Cultural Competency and Responsiveness

The need for cultural competency CE surfaced during YALSA's virtual Town Halls held as a part of this project. During these sessions it was noticeably difficult for participants to articulate the cultural competency CE needs of library staff. As described in the Futures Report, "Cultural competence has to do with recognizing the significance of culture in one's own life and the lives of others; and to come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics

¹⁷ Resnick, Mitchell. "Give P's A Chance: Projects, Peers, Passion, Play." web.media.mit.edu/~mres/papers/constructionism-2014.pdf.

¹⁸ Rubio, Juan. "Youth Adult Partnerships." *Putting Teens First in Library Services: a Road Map*, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a Division of the American Library Association (ALA), 2017, p. 70.

through interaction with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; and to fully integrate the culture of diverse groups into services, work, and institutions in order to enhance the lives of both those being served by the library professional and those engaged in service.”¹⁹ This is an especially important skill set to gain, given the fact that the overwhelming majority of librarians are white and female, while at the same time the teen population is becoming increasingly diverse. “Library professionals from underrepresented backgrounds as well as all library professionals who serve diverse populations should be culturally competent, and SD [staff development]/CE are an important part of this process. Not every librarian will have had diversity-related content in their graduate programs, as may be the case with many library support staff; it becomes even more important that library staff engage in SD/CE, particularly opportunities that relate to issues of diversity and diverse populations. It can be difficult to find quality and culturally relevant SD/CE offerings, as such programs and workshops tend to focus on practical skills and work-related tasks (e.g., cataloging, programming, navigating social media).”²⁰

Competency Content Area - Equity of Access

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center’s report, *Opportunity for All: Technology and Learning in Low Income Communities* brings to light the digital access challenges youth and families face. The report authors state, “Lower-income families may connect to the Internet in different ways: through broadband access at home, via a data plan on a mobile device, or by using Wi-Fi-enabled devices in local places that offer them access. When Internet access is intermittent—either because families have trouble paying monthly service charges or are using the Internet only in community locations—they face constraints on what they can access online, compared with those who have consistent access. The devices that families own and feel comfortable using also matter; complex tasks, like submitting a job application or a homework assignment, are much more difficult to accomplish on a smartphone than on a computer.”²¹ Libraries play a critical role in ensuring that all teens have the consistent access to technology and technology experts required to succeed in school and in life. All library staff therefore must have skills in assessing the technology needs of youth and families in their local community and in designing activities and services that will have the impact necessary to fill those needs.

Competency Content Area - Outcomes & Assessment

During this project’s in-person meeting, SLA staff discussed the challenge of moving from a focus on programmatic activity to a focus on outcomes. At the in-person meeting participants noted that “it’s about the impact not about the 3D printer.” In phone interviews SLA staff stated that a focus on outcomes over outputs is new within their own agencies. As staff at these agencies become more familiar with the role of outcomes in their own work, they should consider how to translate that into opportunities for supporting library staff in making similar strides. This may include CE at which library staff review data about their specific community, including looking at gaps in serving teen needs, and then develop outcomes that focus on filling

¹⁹ Braun, Linda W., Maureen Hartman, Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Kafi Kumasi. *Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*. YALSA, 2014, p. 3, www.ala.org/yaforum/sites/ala.org.yaforum/files/content/YALSA_nationalforum_Final_web_0.pdf.

²⁰ Cooke, Nicole A. *Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*, by Nicole A. Cooke, Libraries Unlimited, an Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2017, p. 87.

²¹ Rideout, Victoria, and Vikki S. Katz. *Opportunity for All? Technology and Learning in Lower-Income Families*. Joan Ganz Cooney Center, 2016, *Opportunity for All? Technology and Learning in Lower-Income Families*, joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/jgcc_opportunityforall.pdf.

in those gaps. This can also lead to SLA staff working with library staff to develop programs based on the intended impacts developed through previous CE.

Competency Content Area - Continuous Learning

The skills needed in this area were highlighted at the project in-person meeting in a presentation by students in the IMLS funded Youth Experience (YX) program at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies. One student noted, “Librarians need to be ready and willing to transition from expert to facilitator, engaging in active continuous learning with teens and for teens.”²² Kitsap Regional Library Public Service Manager Shannon Peterson continued this line of thought: “Starting from where we were has not been easy. We’ve made mistakes. We’ve been frustrated. We’ve found ourselves barking up entire forests of the wrong trees. Some staff have gone through phases of not getting it, not liking it, or simply not wanting to do the hard work. How have we responded? We’ve embraced the mess. We’ve gotten better at knowing what we don’t know. We’ve stayed open to learning and kept trying. We’ve gotten real about the fact that there’s no instruction manual that’s able to take into account who we are, what resources we have available, and what the priorities of the staff or community that we’re serving at any given moment.”²³

The Value Competent Library Staff Bring to Teens & Communities

There are multiple opportunities for libraries to have an impact on the positive growth and development of teens. The chart below describes how these opportunities connect with the competence that library staff need.

| Teen Needs | Competency Connection |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Preparing for Adulthood Teens are in one of the most transformative periods in their lives -- developing personal identities (sexuality, career orientation, educational attainment, ethnic identity, etc.) -- along with ongoing changes in their brains and their bodies.</p> | <p>Teen Growth & Development and Cultural Competency and Responsiveness As teens better understand who they are all library staff play a powerful role in helping teens navigate that growth and development. This is achieved through connecting teens to physical and human resources - such as community mentors who help teens accept their own unique personal identity.</p> |
| <p>Gaining Critical Life Skills “Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”²⁴</p> | <p>Learning Environments and Learning Experiences Libraries are a core community resource for engaging with teens to develop SEL. Library staff help youth succeed in this area through a range of activities from out of school time programs to interactions at service desks. Social emotional development requires that library staff partner with teens in the design and</p> |

²² Youth Experience Student. National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE., Louisville, KY.

²³ Peterson, Shannon. National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE., Louisville, KY.

²⁴ “What Is SEL?” CASEL, casel.org/what-is-sel/.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | implementation of engaging informal learning activities within environments that foster learning, |
| <p>Building Connections to Community “Youth civic engagement is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community. It also involves developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. These activities enrich the lives of youth and are socially beneficial to the community.”²⁵</p> | <p>Youth Leadership & Engagement and Community & Family Engagement To support teens in quality civic engagement opportunities, library staff must engage with youth and provide leadership opportunities. To achieve this, staff need to build relationships with community and families so that youth are able to integrate learned skills into real-life experiences.</p> |
| <p>Preparing for College & Careers Succeeding in life after high school requires that teens are ready for what comes next, whether that’s college, an apprenticeship, an internship, or a specific career.</p> | <p>Community & Family Engagement Community and family play a central role in teen college and career readiness. Library staff engage with community members who can coach and mentor teens to help them determine what their aspirations are. When libraries engage with families in understanding college and career pathways, teens have multi-faceted opportunities to thrive in their lives after high school.</p> |
| <p>Accessing Digital Resources & Coaches Access to digital resources and tech experts is a core teen need. Teens require these for homework, pursuit of personal interests, connections to friends and mentors, and workforce development.</p> | <p>Learning Experiences When library staff know how to assess technology needs of teens and are skilled in providing learning experiences that integrate technology tools in meaningful ways, teens and their families benefit.</p> |
| <p>Mastering Literacy Skills Teen literacy is no longer simply a matter of knowing how to read and write. The literacies in a teens’ world are multiple and include digital literacy, computational thinking literacy, and media literacy.</p> | <p>Continuous Learning It is essential that all library staff keep up with the ways in which teens use technology and other tools, along with traditional reading and writing, so to interact with the world around them. Library staff need to regularly evaluate what they do and don’t know about teen literacies and develop a plan for continuous learning in the area of teen literacies.</p> |

It’s critical to recognize that engaging in these learning and growth opportunities with and for teens is not just the work of library staff that have teen services titles. As mentioned in several

²⁵ “Civic Engagement.” *Youth.gov*, youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering.

project phone interviews with SLA staff, “One of the most pressing needs in this area is that all staff, not just teen staff, don’t know how to work with the age group.”²⁶ Teens are an age group that frequently use all areas of library service from children’s to adult and from circulation to reference. With expanded SLA capacity and support from associations such as YALSA, other American Library Association (ALA) units, and COSLA it is possible to provide the opportunities necessary to build staff competence. All library staff have the potential to interact with teens in a substantial fashion. It’s through building and strengthening professional skills and knowledge, that all staff can integrate approaches that help guarantee teen success in college, careers, and life.

The Current State of Library CE

CE is Frequently Planned in Isolation

SLAs, associations, library consortia, vendors and others offer online and in-person training for library staff. The 2016 report, *Self Identified Library, Archives, and Museum Professional Development Needs* notes, “Focus group participants also identified 155 unique providers of continuing education and professional development servicing libraries, archives, and museums. These providers included professional associations of many types – national, profession, and role-based, as well as organizations that provide services to libraries, archives, and museums.”²⁷ While within SLAs, many work with community partners to develop localized training and events, there is little to no collaboration and coordination at a broader cross-state or cross-industry level. By working in isolation, organizations miss an opportunity to pool resources and increase impact. Additionally, the content of programs often overlaps. For example,

- Annually the Massachusetts Library System and *School Library Journal* each offer a teen summit.
- In 2016, Infopeople offered a webinar on “Teen Mental Illness” while YALSA offered one on “Connecting Teens to Mental Health Support and Services”
- In 2015 YALSA offered a webinar called “Commence Learning - College Career Readiness Programs” while soon after tutor.com offered one called “Helping the College Bound Patron”

The teen services CE landscape is competitive and requires collaboration between for-profit businesses, YALSA, and SLAs to design and provide high quality CE that will most benefit library staff and ultimately the teens in their community. The different organizations bring a variety of skills to the table which should be leveraged to create high quality learning.

Capacity Dictates Delivery

While online learning has been widely used across the profession, in-person learning remains a relevant method of providing CE. In a 2017 YALSA survey of SLA staff, when asked what formats were used for CE, 90% of the respondents selected face-to-face.²⁸ Yet, in-person learning presents challenges to SLAs. One SLA staff member noted in a phone interview, “We are still struggling to find the best method for providing professional development in the area of teen services. Until the recession we always had one in-person teen oriented professional development session every year. Once the recession hit the small attendance made the return on investment not worth continuing.”

²⁶ Phone interview held by project evaluator with state library agency youth services consultant

²⁷ Drummond, Christina and Katherine Skinner, eds. 2016. *Self-Identified Library, Archives and Museum Professional Development Needs 2016 Edition*. Atlanta, Georgia: Educopia Institute.

²⁸ YALSA survey of state library agency staff, December 2017.

Due to issues such as capacity, much of the CE currently being provided is also a “one-and-done” type of activity, such as a webinar or workshop. As noted in Part I of this report, these do not provide for a deep dive into the content, or for opportunities for learners to re-engage with the content to internalize the learning. As stated in the Harvard Business Review, “...Webinars aren’t generally especially effective teachers. Why? Content isn’t tailored to the viewer, the virtual experience offers few opportunities to engage with speakers, there are no consequences if you don’t attend, and no rewards if you do.”²⁹

Cost is a Barrier

High quality CE costs money to create, and often time that expense is passed on to the learner. YALSA provides a range of CE for library staff including webinars, e-courses, and conference programs. The association regularly tests out new models of professional learning. However, the cost of these trainings often is a barrier to participation. While members of the association are able to participate in monthly webinars (and have access to the archived recording) free of charge, non-members pay a small fee for the recording and do not have access to the live event. In phone interviews with SLA staff several of those interviewed noted that the perceived expense of YALSA/ALA membership and/or the cost of learning opportunities is often a barrier to their own participation and the participation of the library staff they serve. Similarly, in Town Halls for library staff a majority of participants noted that the cost is their number one barrier to participation in this CE.³⁰ It is also worth noting that because the learning opportunities that vendors offer are usually extremely low cost or free, many library staff opt for these, with little regard for program quality or relevance of the topic, and therefore walk away without the knowledge or skills needed to drive their teen services program forward.

Quality Varies Widely

While there are myriad opportunities for library staff to take part in CE, the quality of what’s available varies greatly. There is no standard for what constitutes quality CE that has been adopted profession-wide. Similarly, there is not an authenticating body to vet CE and CE providers for competence and quality. Learning experiences often are led by practitioners who may not be aware of or have embraced YALSA’s future vision for teen services, or they may be enthusiastic about the topic at hand but lack the facilitation skills or depth of knowledge necessary to support the learning that’s required.

Incentives are Lacking

Unlike jobs in the medical profession, for example, many library staff are not required to keep credentials up-to-date by participating in CE. Lacking a profession-side requirement relating to CE, the decision whether or not to engage in these activities is mainly left up to supervisors or individual staff. Therefore, many library staff choose not to engage in CE. For those who do, they often focus CE on popular topics or topics they are personally interested in, instead of opting for the more challenging or difficult subjects most important to learn. This is problematic for associations and library supervisors, as library staff participate in CE and, from their point of

²⁹ Burstein, Rachel. “Making the Most of Webinars.” *Harvard Business Review*, 7 Aug. 2014, hbr.org/2013/03/making-the-most-of-webinars.

³⁰ YALSA Virtual Town Hall, January 2018.

view, feel that taking part in these learning experiences is adequate. In reality, the learning they select does not cover the most critical topics or provide the depth or quality most needed.

Libraries Lack Commitment to Staff Learning

Guaranteeing that all library staff participate in high quality CE is fraught with systemic challenges:

- When staff do not see teen services as important to their work they do not choose to participate in CE on that topic. Or, if they are required to participate, they may be non-engaged or not take what is learned and put it into practice.
- Frequently when staff do take part in teen services training there is no follow-up to that learning to help guarantee that skills and concepts learned are put into practice.
- Library administrators do not always hold staff accountable for participating in CE that reflects the needs of their job. Many job descriptions do not require a focus on the knowledge and skills of teen work.
- In many institutions spending time on learning is seen as taking a staff member away from the library and their day-to-day work. That focus does not consider the value that the staff learning will bring to the institution.
- Library staff are not often given opportunities to be reflective about their jobs or the skills and knowledge they need to build in order to be successful. Most staff also do not develop a continuous learning plan that they implement, review, and revise on a regular basis (see appendix D for a sample learning plan template).

Addressing Capacity Issues

Building State Library Agency Capacity

Throughout this project's year of learning, SLA staff at all levels - from Chief Officers to Youth and CE Consultants - noted challenges to the work of engaging with library staff and providing quality CE. Phone interviews prior to the in-person meeting along with, virtual town halls and meetings, and conversations during and after the in-person meeting clearly highlight areas of challenge:

- **Agency engagement and support:** There is a concern among SLA staff that administration at their agencies don't respect youth work, particularly within the context of teen services. Attendees at the in-person meeting pointed out, more than once, that it was important to follow-up the event with a conversation with the chief officers of the SLAs to give credence to the value of teen services. While this may not be a concern or a reality across all 50 states and 5 territories, the number of times which this sentiment was expressed points to a need to address it. YALSA and COSLA can work to mitigate this need by continuing to inform chief officers of SLAs about the work and by continuing to engage to learn what's needed at the agency level to support the work. This also will enable stronger leadership development opportunities among SLA staff to gain experience and skills in championing teen services work
- **Library interest and capacity:** "Plenty of library staff don't use their state library. They think, 'I can do it myself- why would I contact the state library?'"³¹ This was how one SLA staff member described the challenge of working with and for libraries. She went on to say, "people don't see the value of participating in CE unless it specifically relates to something in their job description."³² One of the outcomes of what the SLA staff

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

member describes is that CE isn't regularly required as a part of the job description of front-line staff. When staff do participate in training it is often interest-based instead of needs-based. Along with a lack of understanding related to the value of SLA programs and services, many states have libraries that simply don't have the capacity to participate in CE outside of their library buildings. SLAs struggle to provide CE to those working in rural areas, one-person libraries, and with limited library hours. These multifaceted challenges provide SLAs with the opportunity to develop innovative approaches to planning and delivering CE.

- **Budgets:** In phone interviews with youth-serving SLA staff prior to the in-person meeting, when asked if the interviewee had the ability, within their agency, to allocate resources for teen services, the majority of respondents answered, “no.” The diverse nature of the structure of SLAs across the 50 states means that resource allocation varies from state to state. However, when it comes to teen services it is clear that nearly all SLA budgets are limited in this area. When funds are spent on youth they are frequently focused on early literacy. As one SLA staff member noted in the pre-in-person meeting phone interview, “resources are not sufficient because people are at a loss of how to work with teens either in terms of collections or programming. Rather than figuring that out we just don't allocate resources for it. If there are monies earmarked for youth services more often those go to children's services and not teens.”³³
- **Time:** SLA staff are often responsible for a wide-variety of tasks. In a 2016 YALSA survey of youth-focused SLA staff, 43% of the 44 respondents reported having a non-youth focused title, such as “Public Services Assistant.”³⁴ As a result of limited staffing specific to teen services, supporting the age group often falls to the bottom of the work agenda. Similar to budgets, when an SLA youth consultant is on staff, the work of that consultant frequently focuses on children instead of teens. As one staff member noted in a pre-in-person meeting phone interview, “If I didn't have to split my full-time job between children and teens I could do more.”³⁵
- **Priorities:** In the 2017 survey of SLA staff, YALSA asked how much of the respondent's time was spent on teen services. Of the 44 respondents 63.4% (28 respondents) selected between 0 - 20% of their time. The fact that when budgets and time do exist for youth services, that SLA staff focus more on children's services than teen services is worth highlighting.³⁶ For example, some SLAs provide funding to libraries in their state for activities such as early literacy or traditional summer reading programs. These funds vary, but as one example, one SLA provides funds to libraries for these activities in the range of \$2000 to \$10,000. Prioritizing these dollars for teen services - along with early literacy and summer learning - would be a step forward in supporting staff CE needs in this area. For some SLAs the gap may be due to a lack of knowledge of the needs of teens. For others, the intention and desire are there, it's simply a matter of what is more readily accomplished. With over 25 million youth between the

³³ Phone interview held by project evaluator with state library agency youth services consultant

³⁴ YALSA membership surveys

³⁵ Phone interview held by project evaluator with state library agency youth services consultant

³⁶ YALSA membership surveys

ages of 12 and 17 in the United States³⁷ it's essential to address the gap in priorities and build opportunities to fill them.

Conclusion

Library staff want to have a positive impact on their community and help all community members thrive. Organizations that support them must provide them with the tools, resources, knowledge, skills and support they need to be successful. Throughout COSLA and YALSA's year-long exploration of library staff needs around CE relating to teen services, some critical needs were uncovered. Supporting library staff in their efforts to reach and serve teens requires stakeholders such as COSLA, YALSA and SLAs to collaborate inside and outside their organizations with community partners, associations, and their colleagues across the United States. Through this work we will not only provide better support to library staff, but we will transform teen services into the 21st century vision laid out in YALSA's Futures Report.

Transformative CE is CE that focuses on providing professional learning opportunities that:

- Support a Putting Teens First approach to the work of all library staff
- Build leadership skills so all staff are able to see the value of and advocate for teen services
- Focus on impact over program outputs
- Are innovative in their approach
- Include opportunities for co-learning and co-leading

The way in which SLAs and others integrate CE to transform teen services will take a variety of forms. In the long term, success will be demonstrated when:

- SLA across the United States prioritize and value teen services related CE and demonstrate that prioritization through resources and SLA staff support.
- SLAs across the United States make an ongoing investment in regularly providing high quality teen services-oriented CE for and with library staff.
- SLA staff are competent and confident in taking leadership roles in speaking up for the need to support teens through libraries.
- Library staff across the nation understand the value of supporting teens and how through that support teens gain needed opportunities to develop skills and knowledge that will help them to succeed in life.
- Community partnerships are an integral aspect of SLA staff and library staff teen services work.
- Library staff consistently assess the success of their teen services activities and revise and iterate to improve on their work.
- Operational documents, such as job descriptions and policies, in SLAs and libraries demonstrate a commitment to teen services and to a culture of learning.
- Libraries across the United States demonstrate a culture of learning through their ongoing support of staff participation in teen services CE
- Staff in SLAs and libraries are committed to ongoing continuous learning to provide the best teen library services possible.
- Teen needs and interests are at the center of all library services for the age group.

³⁷ "Child Population by Age Group | KIDS COUNT Data Center." *KIDS COUNT Data Center: A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016, datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/101-child-population-by-age-group?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/870/64,6/419,420.

Guaranteeing that library staff across the United States have the skills and knowledge necessary to support teen services is essential--it is essential in ensuring that libraries remain relevant in the 21st century, it's essential for the social and economic vitality in communities across the nation, and it is essential if teens are to be able to gain what they need to succeed in college, careers, and life. The library field can make strides towards ensuring that all library staff are positioned to successfully reach and serve teens by embracing the recommendations in this report and committing to a culture of lifelong professional learning. As a result, libraries will be better positioned to thrive in the years ahead, library staff will feel better supported in the important work they do, and teens will be positioned for a successful adulthood.

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About the Authors

- Linda W. Braun is the YALSA CE Consultant and the project manager for the Transforming Library Teen Services Through CE project.
- Nicole A. Cooke is a faculty member and director of the MS/LIS program at the School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign.
- Denise Lyons is the Deputy Director of Statewide Development at the South Carolina State Library.
- Sara Ryan is the Teen Services Specialist at Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon and an author of young adult and graphic novels.
- Beth Yoke is the YALSA Executive Director and project Principal Investigator.