YALSA
Young Adult Library Services Association
A Division of the American Library Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRANSFORMING LIBRARY SERVICES FOR AND WITH TEENS THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION

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.

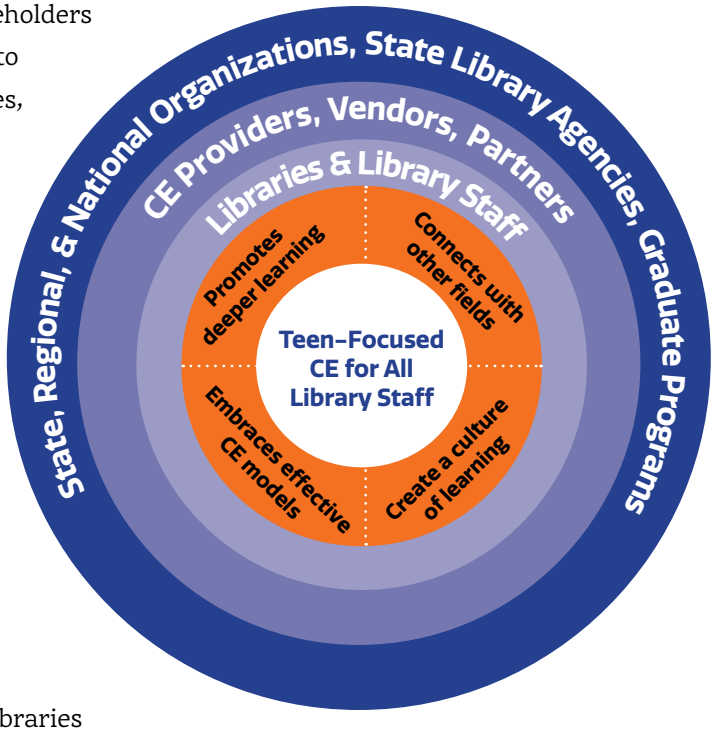
Library staff want to have a positive impact on their community and help all community members thrive. Organizations that support them must provide them with the tools, resources, knowledge, skills and support they need to be successful. Therefore, YALSA determined that a focus on continuing education (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, so 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.

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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INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

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Chief Officers of COSLA State Library Agencies

https://tinyurl.com/YALSA-TransformingthruCE

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