

WORKSHOP 3

Skills for Community-Centered Libraries

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS

This workshop incorporates Malcolm Knowles's "Six Principles of Adult Learning"¹. They are:

- Adults are self-directed in their learning experiences.
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to the learning environment/experience.
- Adults are goal oriented.
- Adults need to know that what they're learning is relevant.
- Adults learn by doing.
- Adults prefer variety in learning.

As you engage with your group and these materials, you'll see that activities incorporate these principles in different ways. They are designed to create substantive discussion and learning opportunities.

Because of the nature of the topics, there will not be "right" or "wrong" answers throughout much of the workshop. Rather, you're asked to reflect on various ideas, techniques, topics, etc. and use those that are relevant for your unique work and unique communities. An open mind is key for everyone during this process; therefore, avoid any tendencies to tell people "the right answer." Rather, ask questions to help one another uncover how to use the information in a way that is relevant to their communities. Additionally, ask for ideas and expertise from other participants to answer questions. During this workshop, you're encouraged to talk about what you currently know and do in your work and find connections, even differences throughout the workshop. Making connections and finding differences helps to reframe thinking and learn new ideas and skills.

We acknowledge that everyone in this room is coming into this training with varying levels of knowledge and comfort with this topic. For some participants, this information will be new and help them begin the engagement process with their library community. Some participants may know this information, but these workshops will allow you to examine whether you are implementing these topics in your daily practice and consider opportunities to improve these skills. Other participants will have strong knowledge and expertise in community engagement. If this is true for you, we ask that you share

¹ Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

your insights and best practices and consider this time an opportunity to reflect on how you can help others at your library home in these community engagement practices.

Ultimately this workshop is meant to be a space for all library staff to reflect on the work they do and shift their professional practices and mindset toward a common goal of community engagement *for their communities as defined by their communities*.

OVERVIEW WORKSHOP 3: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This four-hour workshop will help you develop expanded definitions and understandings of programming opportunities for and with your community. It has a particular focus on strategic planning and thinking as a way to drive sustainable, impactful programs. You will reflect on the benefits of involving community assets when creating community programs and determine how those approaches impact engagement outcomes. Small groups will discuss three key considerations when developing programs: (1) capacity, (2) sustainability, and (3) communication. Program evaluation will be explored using sample survey questions from the Public Library Association. Then, you will explore communication platforms to share programming and community successes to different audiences. Finally, you will look at how the perceived failures of certain programs can offer valuable information that leads to stronger programming and new partnerships.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

Strategic Plan	... explain your personal connection to the sample strategic plan from the Free Library of Philadelphia or the strategic plan from your library network
Program Development	<p>... analyze approaches for using community assets when developing programs</p> <p>... consider adopting a new way to approach and work with community assets</p> <p>... build effective long-term programming by evaluating your capacity, sustainability and communication practices</p>
Surveys	<p>... consider the different sources of data available to you to measure the impact of your programming and use of community assets</p> <p>... create participant satisfaction surveys that go beyond numbers</p> <p>... capture community member stories with satisfaction surveys</p> <p>... explore communication pathways to share programming and community successes with different audiences</p>
Failing Forward	... rephrase failure statements to be opportunity and growth statements

VOCABULARY AND TERMS

Community Asset: The individuals (their knowledge, skills, attitudes, talents, awareness, social connections—everything they embody), community organizations, and larger institutions that provide resources and services to your local community.

Community Engagement: Building relationships between staff and surrounding communities to empower people to take ownership of their library and its resources. Engagement is an active partnership that serves the interest of local communities and the public good. Examples: getting community members involved in the planning and execution of programming; facilitating conversations in which people can envision what they want out of their library.

Community Outreach: The act of building awareness and sharing information about programs, resources, and services with people in a community. Examples: door-knocking, tabling, flyering, phone-banking.

Iceberg: A metaphor for an individual's lived experiences. That is, if any individual were an iceberg, we would only see what's above the water. Below the water are many more, rich lived experiences that we can't see.

Program: The workshops, classes, services, and gatherings organized and facilitated by library staff to explore relevant subjects, topics, and themes.

GROUND RULES

Creating a Space to Share Ideas and Thoughts

Directions: Read the list below. These ground rules² will guide our discussions. Add rules that you think are missing.

- One speaker, one mic
 - ◆ One person speaks at a time
- No one knows everything, together we know a lot
 - ◆ Each person brings different levels of lived experience and embodied expertise to the conversation
 - ◆ Let's all practice being humble and look for what we can learn from each other
- Move up, move up
 - ◆ If you're someone who tends to not speak a lot, please move up into a role of speaking more
 - ◆ If you tend to speak a lot, please move up into a role of listening more
- We can't be articulate all the time
 - ◆ People can feel hesitant to participate for fear of "messaging up" or stumbling over their words
- Embrace curiosity
 - ◆ We make better decisions when we approach our problems and challenges with a question ("What if we...?") and curiosity
- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact
 - ◆ If someone says or does something that causes harm they must take responsibility for the negative impact

Insert your rules here:

- _____
- _____
- _____

If at any time you would like to revise or add an idea to this list, please share your thoughts with the facilitator and the whole group.

² Adapted from Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance. (2017). *Anti-oppressive facilitation for democratic process*.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONAL PURPOSE

My Connection to the Strategic Plan

As our library system becomes more community-centered, our roles, responsibilities and programs will inevitably change to meet our community's needs. However, our purpose and passion for the work does not need to change. Today you will be evaluating your personal connection to the strategic plan from your library network. Connecting with a strategic plan gives us a unified vision for what we are working towards and all of us will contribute towards that goal and vision in our own way. Below is an example of a Strategic Plan from the Free Library of Philadelphia.



Discuss

1 Which goal connects most with you personally?

2 Why have you selected this goal from the strategic plan?

3 How does your day-to-day work support the library's strategic plan?

PROGRAMMING SCENARIOS

Library Staff Approaches

Directions: Read each scenario.³ Then complete the analysis charts that follow to compare the approaches to programming.

Scenario A

Meet Linda. She has worked at her library as a children’s librarian for two years. She runs a children’s story group each week. She has noticed that many of the children who attend her story group are significantly overweight. She researched childhood obesity online and read that 40% of children in her town are considered overweight. Because of this information and her observation, she planned a healthy eating program. This program was intended to bring in families of overweight children to teach them about the risks of childhood obesity and provide them with a healthy eating cookbook. When Linda first handed out the flyer advertising this program at her weekly children’s story group, 10 families immediately signed up to participate. However, only one family attended the first program; this family also had perfect attendance at the story group. Linda advertised this program for the next four weeks by hanging flyers at the library, handing out flyers to library patrons, posting on Facebook, adding the events to the library calendar, and sending a flyer to the local elementary school. Despite these efforts, she was only able to get one more participant to attend, and it was another regular attendee of her children’s story group. Linda was very disappointed by the turn-out.

Notes

³ These scenarios were created after talking with various staff members across the Free Library of Philadelphia and public library directors from both urban and rural public libraries.

Analysis Chart⁴

Scenario A: Linda		
Did she...	Circle one	How do you know? Provide information from the scenario
...observe a need?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...confirm interest with community assets (community members and stakeholders)?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...verify need through informal or formal research?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...create a comprehensive action plan involving community assets, objectives, materials, marketing, enrollment, etc.?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...identify/secure team members/roles to implement?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...consider how to measure success?	Yes / No / Somewhat	

⁴ These criteria were created based on conversations with various public library staff members who have executed successful programs with community partners.

Scenario B

Meet Carlos. He's a librarian and he has been running workforce development workshops and programming for three years. These workshops focus on résumé writing, career exploration, interview skills, and follow up communications. Carlos noticed that a majority of individuals who attend his program are male and struggle with reading. This isn't a surprise to Carlos as he knows that data shows approximately 30% of the local population struggles with reading and writing. Down the street from Carlos's library is a local nonprofit that has a large GED program; Carlos knows both the library and this nonprofit serve the same population. Carlos decided to reach out to the nonprofit and see if they noticed struggles with GED completion due to low-literacy rates in his community. As Carlos expected, their answer was a strong affirmation that low literacy was preventing community members from (1) successfully preparing for the GED and (2) entering the workforce earning a livable wage. The nonprofit also mentioned that they see a lack of confidence and leadership from this group. Carlos knows there is a lot of research to support the practice of "extensive reading" (reading for pleasure with some guidance/directed engagement). He thinks creating an extensive reading group incorporating themes around confidence building and leadership could be beneficial for this population. The nonprofit thought this was a great idea and offered to support it by referring their learners. Carlos created a plan with objectives, measures for success, materials, staffing needs, and marketing strategies. He then presented it to his participants in the workforce development workshops. Their first question: when does it start?

Notes

Analysis Chart

Scenario B: Carlos		
Did he...	Circle one	How do you know? Provide information from the scenario
...observe a need?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...confirm interest with community assets (community members and stakeholders)?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...verify need through research?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...create a comprehensive action plan involving community assets, objectives, materials, marketing, enrollment, etc.?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...identify/secure team members/roles to implement?	Yes / No / Somewhat	
...consider how to measure success?	Yes / No / Somewhat	

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Comparing Scenarios to Each Other and Your Personal Experiences

Discuss the following questions with your group.

Discussion Questions:	Notes
1 Compare scenarios A and B. How are the approaches similar and different?	
2 Of the scenarios, which approach is more likely to lead to long-term engagement with the community? Why?	
3 What are the strengths of each approach?	
4 What are some limitations of each approach?	
5 How did Linda and Carlos consider their target audience's "iceberg" as they planned for programming?	
6 What other thoughts, ideas, concerns, etc., did you think of while reading about these scenarios?	

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT MY LIBRARY

How Do These Compare with Programming at My Library?

Directions: Answer the following questions with your partner. Share some observations you've made at your library about programming that is sustainable and impactful versus programming that is not.

- 1** How do Carlos's or Linda's approaches to programming compare with how programs are developed at your library?
- 2** Has your library involved community assets in program development in the past? How could you utilize community assets in future programming projects or as additions to current projects?
- 3** Are your library's programs typically library-focused or community-focused? How might your library team develop more programs that are responding to your community's needs?

Notes

BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR THE LONG-TERM

Capacity, Sustainability and Communication

If you want to build community-centered programs that last, consider capacity, sustainability, and communication.

Directions: Think of a current program at your library. Tell your partner about the program and then answer the following questions about that program to the best of your abilities.

Capacity

Capacity is not just person power. It's also resources, time (including not over-programming), space, effectiveness, and knowledge/expertise.

- Does this program fit well with the person power and staffing you have at your library?
- Does it make effective use of the other elements of capacity listed? If yes, how are you achieving that?
- Could you consider using your Community Asset Map from Workshop 1 as a way to expand capacity?
- Is there a person or organization in your community who could increase your knowledge/expertise in an area of need?

Sustainability

- If you want a program to last for a whole year or longer, what type of planning do you need to ensure success?
- Would this program exist if one member of your library team transferred to a different library? If yes, you've built great capacity! If no, why not? What can you do to ensure the program exists without this team member?

Communication

With Patrons

- Are you presenting information about library processes, policies and programming in accessible ways? If so, how are you doing that?
- Are these documents translated into the languages that are spoken by your library community? If you are having difficulty sharing information about a specific topic, could you consider another way to share this information such as a video tutorial?
- Are your programs advertised in multiple formats to reach a wider audience (website, social media, flyers, bulletin board, etc.)?
- Does your community prefer programs to be ongoing? Would your community attend a six-week series? Or are one-off programs more successful?
- Are you communicating with your community about their needs regarding programming? How can the planning of programs include more community feedback?

With Library Staff

- Does your library use a template to document the processes and information related to its programs? That is, are they documented in a consistent way? If so, how are you doing that?
- Can you easily review and distribute information in shared formats? Could your programs be replicated by other staff members at your library? If yes, do you find this beneficial? If not, do you think this might be useful?

MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS

Who Defines It? How?

“Measure what you value instead of valuing only what you can measure.”

—Andy Hargreaves

What does this sentence mean to you?

Data and statistics are useful measurements when evaluating programs. Do you use them to communicate the real-world success of programs your library offers your unique community? Who determines what’s successful, and how? Are you collecting different sources of data to measure your impact and use of community assets? First, let’s discuss evaluation in general. We’ll then move on to how to collect data that tells the story of success as defined by your community.

Sources of Data	
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How many people attended the program?▪ How did participants rate your program on an evaluation?▪ Outcomes after learning a skill at the library (Example – 4 out of 6 people in our career workshop were given interviews)
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Personal narratives about what participants learned and how it has impacted their life, work, or skills.
Expanded and Strengthened Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Which organizations do you collaborate with for specific programs or events?▪ What types of services does this partnership provide (volunteers, materials, services, expertise)?▪ How often does this organization partner with your library for programs and/or events?

Reflection Questions

- 1 How does your library measure program success?
- 2 Is collecting data such as the number of attendees useful? Why or why not?
- 3 Does it show the full picture of whether the program had any impact? Why or why not?
- 4 What could be added to include more community voices?

Notes

EVALUATING BEYOND NUMBERS

Participant Satisfaction Surveys/Story Collection

The Public Library Association⁵ (PLA) has sample survey questions that library staff can use to capture changes in competencies and confidences that result from program participation and attendance.

These surveys allow for community members to respond to a program by answering with yes/no responses, rating programs according to a defined scale, and answering open-ended questions that allow community members to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

Let's take a look at two sets of survey questions and discuss how you could revise and use them.

Scenario

Think back to Scenarios A and B with Linda and Carlos. Choose one for which your group will create a participant survey. You'll use the PLA's suggested sentences/questions as a guide to write your questions.

PLA's Civic/Community-Engagement Outcomes and Sample Survey Questions

- 1** You are more aware of some issues in your community
- 2** You feel more confident about becoming involved in your community
- 3** You intend on becoming more engaged in your community
- 4** You are more aware of applicable resources and services provided by the library
- 5** What did you like most about the program?
- 6** What could the library do to better assist you with your involvement in the community?

⁵ <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performanceasurement/pilotsurvey>

PLA's Education/Lifelong Learning Outcomes and Sample Survey Questions

- 1** You learned something new that is helpful
- 2** You feel more confident about what you just learned
- 3** You intend to apply what you just learned
- 4** You are more aware of applicable resources and services provided by the library
- 5** What did you like most about the program?
- 6** What could the library do to better assist you in learning more?

Additional Ideas for Open-Ended Questions

- 1** How did you hear about this program?
- 2** Would you recommend this program, for whom, and why?
- 3** In what way would you like to get more involved?

Directions: With your group, write a user-friendly survey on the flip chart that Linda or Carlos can use to capture their community's voices.

- Types of survey questions to consider:
 - ◆ Using a "circle yes or no" response after the question
 - ◆ Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree
 - ◆ Asking two or three open-ended questions to capture stories and experiences

Each group's survey will be displayed on the wall so that others can view your work and observe different strategies.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Sharing the Outcomes and Stories from our Community

The voices and stories from your community are a powerful source of data that represent the success of your library programming. Current funders of your library as well as potential new funders are eager to hear how their donations are creating true change within your community. As you begin to share your success, new members of your community may want to become more involved in your programming and support your work.

Each library community must evaluate how they can best communicate these stories with their funders and local community. You may want to consider sharing your success in your library newsletter, local newspaper, social media, a monthly email, through word-of-mouth, or a culminating event. The goal is to find the platforms that allow you to share your everyday success!

Discuss

- 1 How do you share your success currently?
- 2 How can you communicate these outcomes to wider audiences?
- 3 What communication platforms/media can you use to share your library success stories?

Notes

SMALL STEPS FORWARD

Failure is a Small Step Toward Success

As you engage more with your community, you'll experience slow, deliberate, hard work. It's important to understand the slow process of community change. Sometimes aspects of our daily responsibilities or programs feel like failures. In reality, this sense of failure is a form of information about community needs and ways we may need to shift in order to meet those needs. Remember, not all people are sure how to ask for help, what kind of help they need, or whether a program will fit with their intended desires and goals. Things we can do as public service employees include paying attention to what people are doing and asking for and responding to these "requests" through programming.⁶ Each step you take, whether it results in a desired or undesired outcome, gets you closer to understanding the needs of your community as defined by your community.

Example: Parents use the library as a babysitter.

What we learn: Parents trust us with their children or parents like their kids to be in an environment that promotes learning.

Programming Idea/Partnership: Create more high interest programming for these young children who like to spend so much time at our libraries.

Example: The school across the street from the library only invites me to do outreach at their parent-teacher night.

What we learn: Curriculum demands do not allow time for library outreach during the school day or schools want to provide parents free educational resources.

Programming Idea/Partnership: Partner with the school's after-school program for outreach with students. Connect with the parents of the school during out-of-class time such as "Back-to-School Night," parent teacher conferences, or school advisory board meetings, home and school associations, etc.

⁶ Note, not all of the rephrased sentences will have a programming outcome.

Directions: Read each of the statements below and reflect on the information you are learning or the message you are receiving from your community. Then consider whether there is a programming idea or partnership that you could incorporate to address this message that you're receiving through community members' actions and behaviors.

1 People keep asking me to help write their résumés.

◆ What we learn: _____

◆ Programming Idea/Partnership: _____

2 Community members showed up but our community partner didn't!

◆ What we learn: _____

◆ Programming Idea/Partnership: _____

3 Only two people attended the meeting.

◆ What we learn: _____

◆ Programming Idea/Partnership: _____

4 Example from your library: _____

◆ What we learn: _____

◆ Programming Idea/Partnership: _____

Discuss

- 1** How have you used information from your community to develop programming or partnerships?
- 2** How do you decide when a program isn't working or isn't the best use of your library teams' time?
- 3** How could you use an evaluation tool to improve a specific program that is struggling at your library?

Notes

STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES

Self-Evaluation

Directions: Reflect on each of the skills we discussed today. What are your areas of strength for each skill? In what ways can you stretch to develop this skill further or share this skill with your library team?

Strengths	Stretches
Strategic Plan	Strategic Plan
Program Development	Program Development
Surveys	Surveys
Failing Forward	Failing Forward

WORKSHOP REVIEW

Personal Thoughts

Directions: *Your table's note taker will answer the questions below on a flipchart. Then, create action statements about how you can apply what you've learned.*

- 1 What did YOU learn today? Share your personal moments of realization or anything you learned that will improve your community engagement practices.

- How can you TAKE what we talked about today and TURN it into action?

TAKE AND TURN

Satisfaction Surveys, Programming for the Long-Term, and Celebrating Success

Directions: You will use strategies from today's workshop to make improvements to current programs. Choose a program at your library, one that is successful or one that needs improvements. First, think of action items that can build your program **capacity** using community assets, create **sustainability**, or improve team **communication**. Next, you will design a **satisfaction survey** using the framework from the PLA website as a guide. Make sure you include open-ended questions to capture your communities' stories and experiences after attending your programs. Lastly, list the platforms that will help you reach the largest audience for **sharing your communities' success stories**. <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performance/performancemeasurement/pilotsurvey>

Program Name: _____

Capacity

- _____
- _____

Sustainability

- _____
- _____

Communication

- _____
- _____

Survey Questions

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Platforms to share success with my community

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



<https://www.freelibrary.org/>