

## **Project Title**

Planning for *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: A Coordinated Early Literacy Training Plan for Public Library Staff*

## **Description of Project Partners**

The long term success of the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* initiative relies on the development of partnerships to help libraries reach those in need of early childhood services and to expand the impact of the program. This project brought together carefully selected stakeholders to help create a sustainable and comprehensive training program for public library staff to support early learning services. These partners brought a variety of resources to the New York State Library's project including personnel, expertise, materials, financial and in-kind assistance, and contact with families and caregivers most in need of the early literacy training. In the proposal, nine partners were identified. Through the course of the grant year, the State Library expanded the list of formal partnerships from nine to twelve:

- Family Reading Partnership;
- New York Library Association and the Youth Services Section of the New York Library Association;
- New York State Council on Children and Families;
- NYS Head Start Collaboration;
- NYS Infancy Leadership Circles;
- NYS Parenting Education Partnership;
- NYS Educational Television and Public Broadcasting Stations;
- New York State Education Department Office of Early Learning;
- Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO);
- QUALITYstarsNY;
- Reach Out and Read; and
- Read Aloud 15 Minutes.

## **Overview**

The primary purpose of the *Planning for Ready to Read at New York Libraries* project was for the New York State Library to engage in collaborative planning activities with partners, early literacy experts and key stakeholders to enhance and sustain the capacity of staff to deliver early literacy and learning services for families and caregivers at more than 1,000 public library locations. The State Library successfully completed all grant activities. Planning activities culminated in an exciting two-day *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Summit held in March 2015 that energized participants and further refined implementation strategies. As a result, the State Library now has a comprehensive training program, *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* that serves as a blueprint for project execution. The State Library and its many partners are well-positioned to begin initial implementation and will seek additional resources from IMLS for 2016-2019 to carry out this exciting new multi-year initiative.

## **Changes**

Funds equaling \$3,850, originally allocated for travel, were used to cover the cost of a Summit presenter. This was less than 10% of the total allotment from the grant and IMLS was notified of this change.

## **Activities Completed During Project**

The New York State Library completed all proposed activities during the grant year including creating and establishing a project management team, advisory and training groups, developing training curriculum, and an evaluation protocol for the training. The project culminated in a statewide *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Summit in March 2015. The Management Team oversaw all aspects of the project. Project activities were carried out by Project Director and Advisory Group Chairperson Karen Balsen with the assistance of a grant-supported project coordinator and graduate student assistant.

**Convened an Advisory Group.** The Management Team identified a group of well-connected, early literacy leaders who were invited to serve on the Advisory Group. These experts represented all regions of New York and are equal parts library practitioners and community stakeholders. During the grant year, the Advisory Group met 10 times, each member spent 11 hours reviewing materials, and participated in the 2015 Summit.

**Established a Training Cohort.** The State Library established a Training Cohort consisting of 33 Youth Services librarians representing 22 out of 23 Public Library Systems throughout New York State. During the grant year, the Training Cohort met 5 times, participated in one training workshop, offered 112 hours of pilot training to 296 local library staff, offered feedback to revise and finalize training materials, and participated in the March 2015 Summit.

**Engaged Partners, Stakeholders, and Experts.** In order to expand and support the impact of the program, the Advisory Group and Management Team cultivated partnerships with statewide organizations and engaged stakeholders and experts in a range of project activities:

- State Library staff provided presentations about the project in a webinar to the Public Library System Directors, to the library community at the 2014 New York Library Association Conference, and to a variety of stakeholder groups at the March 2015 *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Summit.<sup>1</sup>
- The expertise of the Advisory Group and the Training Cohort contributed to the development of the training program and all training materials.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentations have been shared on the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website:  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html>

- Expert evaluation services for the project were provided by Dr. Joette Stefl-Mabry, Associate Professor with the College of Computing and Information's Department of Information Studies, Associate Research Professor in the School of Education, and the Director of the School Library Program at the University at Albany.
- All partners, stakeholders and experts participated in the March 2015 Summit.

**Developed a Comprehensive Early Literacy Training Program.** The State Library designed a comprehensive curriculum, *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* targeted at public library staff and designed to enhance the capacity of public libraries to serve the early literacy needs of their communities. This program consists of:

- Five Foundation Training Components: *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis (ELCAA)*; *Using 'Every Child Ready to Read®' (2nd Ed.) (ECRR2)*; *Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children*; *Early Learning Spaces*; and *Everyone Serves Families with Young Children*;
- Two training plans, one geared for members of the Training Cohort and another for local library staff;
- Enhanced training for the Training Cohort and local library staff that builds on the skills developed through training in the Five Foundation Training Components technologies;
- “*Ready to Read at New York Libraries Early Literacy Trainer*” certification for the Training Cohort; and
- A training program timeline

**Developed and Tested Training Materials and Assessment Tools.** To guide the outputs and outcomes of the training program, the Management Team worked with an evaluation expert, Dr. Joette Stefl-Mabry, to develop a logic model. Dr. Joette Stefl-Mabry and the Management Team, with feedback from the Training Cohort, also developed training program assessment tools and protocols.

In order to develop the training program materials, assessment tools, and training protocols the State Library began providing training sessions for the Training Cohort. The first session was a day-long train-the-trainer workshop for the Training Cohort in the first Foundation Training Component *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis (ELCAA)* in March 2014, just prior to the beginning of the IMLS planning grant year. The Training Cohort then held training sessions for library staff and provided feedback. As a result the State Library revised and perfected the ELCAA toolkit. This feedback was invaluable, as it reflected actual trainer experiences using the training materials and the evaluation tools in

face-to-face and online training environments, and affected the overall assessment tools and protocols of the training program. The assessment tools and protocols were also applied and tested during the second Foundation Training workshop for the Training Cohort, *Using Every Child Ready to Read® (2nd Ed.)*, in March 2015.

**Held a *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Summit.** The New York State Library organized a two day summit held in March 2015 where the Training Cohort met for an all-day training workshop in the second Foundation Training Component of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* on the first day. On day two of the Summit, fifty five library leaders and early learning partners came together from across the State to reflect on the results and accomplishments of the planning year, discuss next steps for implementation of New York's *Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* and work towards developing relationships that will benefit New York's youngest learners.<sup>2</sup>

**Developed a *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website<sup>3</sup> and Facebook community page<sup>4</sup>.** The primary target audience for the website is the library community and a secondary audience is the larger community of professionals who work with families of young children. The Facebook page is targeted at child care providers, parents, and professionals working with families of young children.

## **Project Results**

The overall goals of this 2014 Laura Bush Planning Grant-funded project were to enable the New York State Library to develop a collaborative early literacy training program and partnerships to support *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*.

Through the development of a training curriculum, the establishment of project management, Training Cohort, Advisory Group, and associated partnerships a sustainable and comprehensive training program was developed. This program will assure that all public library staff in the state have access to the training and materials they need for the public library to be a vital community hub of early learning and a key community partner.

The results from this planning year project will be used in the development and submission of a future IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program Grant application which would assist in the implementation of the train-the-trainer model to train library staff from 1,000 library outlets.

**The Advisory Group provided invaluable project recommendations, guidance and assistance with the development of collaborative and lasting local and national partnerships.**

The Advisory Group's wealth of experience in early childhood and early literacy, library best practices, and New York State's education policy and standards provided guidance on the overall initiative and assisted the State Library and the members of the Training Cohort

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<sup>2</sup> 2015 Summit: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/summit/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Ready2ReadNY>.

in developing collaborative partnerships to ensure that early literacy work is done effectively on a regional and local level. The Advisory Group:

- Identified and reached out to organizations for project partnerships;
- Assisted the State Library in sharing information and other early childhood/early literacy related support resources among these organizations and with the library community;
- Reviewed training protocols, procedures, and training materials that improved product quality and relevance;
- Provided expertise and input critical to the success of the March 2015 *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Summit.

**A committed, enthusiastic Training Cohort is now established and has begun providing effective training, along with coaching for local library staff across the State.**

The project's train-the-trainer model has resulted in the creation of a peer group of trainers who can rely on each other to strengthen early literacy outcomes through continuously improved training opportunities. Evaluation results show that through participation in train-the-trainer sessions, the Training Cohort learned the techniques and mastered the skills to train public library staff in two of the five Foundation Training Components. Training Cohort members also began the process of:

- Providing consistent, effective training that prepares public library staff to identify needs and partnerships;
- Providing high quality services to meet the early literacy needs of young children and their parents and caregivers;
- Supporting implementation of the *Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* through ongoing learning, collaboration and sharing.

**Key partners are providing continued, strong support for the project.**

Twelve formal partnerships are now in place and the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* webpage provides a place for these organizations and libraries to share information with each other.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Partner Organizations: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/resource-partners.htm>

- The public library system directors' have provided ongoing support for and formal commitment to the participation of their youth services experts in the Training Cohort;
- The New York State Council on Children and Families provided the Training Cohort and library staff with webinars on the use of their Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse (KWIC) website<sup>6</sup> for collecting demographic data about families with young children. The State Library is working with the KWIC website to add library locations to their Community Assets Maps;
- Through the partnership with the New York State Council on Children and Families, Patricia Uttaro, Director of Rochester Public Library and the Monroe County Library System and member of the Advisory Group, was nominated to the New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council.<sup>7</sup>
- The NYS Head Start Collaboration Project is working with the State Library to encourage public libraries and local Head Start outlets to share community asset analysis report information;
- Reach Out and Read is surveying New York State public libraries to develop a best practices document for Reach Out and Read/Public Library collaborations;
- The NYS Infancy Leadership Circles (ILC), currently in 13 regions statewide, is working with *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* to expand across the state and incorporate libraries in each ILC; and
- All twelve of the formal partners sent representatives to the March 2015 Summit.

**The State Library completed the design of the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program*.**

All training materials were fully developed for the first of the five Foundation Components: *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis (ELCAA)* and model training materials were developed to be tested for *Using 'Every Child Ready to Read®' (2nd Ed.) (ECRR2)*.

**Evaluation tools were designed and tested to assess the training components of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*.** Logic models and evaluation tools were created to:

- Determine the effectiveness of using a Training Cohort to provide statewide training to public library staff;
- Assess if Training Cohort members have mastered the knowledge, skills and abilities gained from their training; and

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<sup>6</sup> Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse (KWIC): <http://www.nyskwic.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Early Childhood Advisory Council : <http://ccf.ny.gov/council-initiatives/ecac/>

- Assess if local library staff have mastered the knowledge, skills and abilities gained from their training.

**The *Ready to Read at New York Libraries Summit*<sup>8</sup> was held on March 10 and 11, 2015 at the Guilderland (NY) Public Library.** As a result of attending the Summit, participants indicated that they:

- Better understand national and New York State goals for enhancing early literacy and the important role that public libraries play in those efforts;
- Better understand the goals of the entire *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* program;
- Learned more about the goals and priorities of each of the different partner organizations;
- Developed and nurtured regional and state-level partnerships and collaborations for early literacy;
- Shared best practices for building collaboration and partnership development;
- Have a better understanding of the *Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program*;
- As Advisory Group members, gained a better understanding of and additional knowledge about the work of the Training Cohort;
- As Training Cohort members, found immense value in coming together as a peer support group; and
- As Training Cohort members, found the train-the-trainer session and training materials for the second Foundation Training Component, *Using 'Every Child Ready to Read®' (2nd Ed.) (ECRR2)*, extremely valuable and highly effective.

## Next Steps

The New York State Library plans to submit a proposal for a 2016 IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program Grant. This grant will enable the State Library to fully develop and implement the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program*. Through this program, public library staff across New York State will gain the knowledge, skills, abilities and resources necessary to help families and caregivers prepare their young children for the school years ahead. Public libraries will be able to continue

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<sup>8</sup> 2015 Ready to Read at New York Libraries Summit: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/summit/index.html>

developing partnerships which place public libraries as their community's early literacy hub. Grant funds will enable the State Library to:

- Continue training for the Training Cohort in the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries'* five Foundation Training Components;
- Train and coach 1,000 local library staff from the 23 New York State Public Library Systems in all five of the Foundation Training Components by 2020;
- Implement an outcome-based evaluation model that will inform the quality and practicality of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*. Data collection and evaluation will continue to occur at all training sessions;
- Continue to grow partnerships for the benefit of all families with young children in New York State;
- Replicate the success of the work from the planning and program grants and share with other State Libraries beginning now and through 2020;
- Provide enhanced training sessions for Training Cohort members and library staff using digital and online formats. These sessions will build on skills developed in the Foundation Training Components and will focus in the areas of math, discovery, and science;
- Expand access to early literacy resources for young families and caregivers by creating a Spanish version of the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* early literacy website, *DayByDayNY*;<sup>9</sup>
- Have the Training Cohort members, as "*Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Early Literacy Trainers," be included in New York Works for Children (NYWFC), the State's integrated professional development system for the early childhood and school age workforce. These library professionals will be recognized as expert early literacy educators throughout the early childhood workforce;<sup>10</sup> and
- Share all completed program information and toolkits on the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website.

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<sup>9</sup> DaybyDayNY: <http://daybydayny.org/>

<sup>10</sup> New York Works for Children: <https://nyworksforchildren.org/>

## **Grant Products**

Advisory Group Members

Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program (curriculum of study)

ELCAA Tool Kit: Handbook

ELCAA Tool Kit: PowerPoint Presentation

Evaluation of 2014 Model Training Sessions for Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis

Logic Model

*Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Facebook community page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Ready2ReadNY>

*Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html>

Summit 2015: Contact List

Summit 2015: Overview of Remarks & Presentations

Summit 2015: Program Day 2

Training Cohort Roster

Training Cohort: ELCAA Workshop Evaluation Report

Training Cohort: Using ECRR2 Workshop Evaluation Report

Using ECRR2 Model Toolkit: Handbook

Using ECRR2 Model Toolkit: Handouts (a representative sample from the 5-segment training is included here) (Segment 1 of 5)

Using ECRR2 Model Toolkit: PowerPoint Presentation (a representative sample from the 5-segment training is included here) (Segment 1 of 5)