

# *Libraries as Partners for Emergency Preparedness and Response in Times of Crisis*

A 2-year Institute of Museum and Libraries Services (IMLS)  
National Leadership Grants for Libraries Planning Project [LG-254819-OLS-23]

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*Project Co-Partners:* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) Library

UIUC School of Information Sciences (iSchool)

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)



**I ILLINOIS**  
School of Information Sciences



# Project Description

- A 2-year planning type project: August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2025
- A preliminary investigation into library-community partnerships during public crises, focused in 3 key areas:
  - Emergencies
  - Scope and Nature of Partnership
  - Role of Libraries in Partnership
- Libraries of all types have provided services to their users during many types of emergencies—but emergency response groups may not know of or recognize the role that libraries can take to support emergency preparation, response, and recovery.
- Project will fill a research gap in understanding the extent of library-community partnerships during emergencies and begin laying the groundwork for future research in this area.

# Project Team

Team Member	Role
Dr. Lian Ruan— <i>Head Librarian, IFSI</i>	Project Director
Dr. Jessie Chin— <i>Assistant Professor, iSchool</i>	Research Director
Dr. Sharon L. Comstock— <i>Teaching Assistant Professor, iSchool</i>	Coordinator for the Advisory Committee and National Advisory Board
Anne Craig— <i>Senior Director, CARLI</i>	Member Engagement Coordinator
Dr. Karen Brown— <i>Professor Emeritus, School of Information Studies, Dominican University</i>	Facilitator for Community Engagement Roundtables
Kelda Habing— <i>Research and Grants Librarian, IFSI</i>	Project Assistant

# State Advisory Committee

\*Co-Chair: Julie Pryde and Leslie Bednar

Organization	Representative
Association of Illinois School Educators (AISLE)	Janine Asmus—President
Carle Foundation Hospital	Steve Peters—EMS System Coordinator, Carle Regional EMS, Illinois State EMS Advisory Council
Champaign Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD)	Julie Pryde*—Administrator
Chicago Public Library	Chris Brown—Commissioner; Maggie Clemons—Deputy Commissioner
Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)	Bob Evans—Acting Division Bureau of Preparedness and Grants Administration
Illinois Heartland Library Association (IHLS)	Leslie Bednar*—Executive Director
Illinois Library Association (ILA)	Cyndi Robinson—Executive Director; Heather Jagman—Past President
Illinois State Library	Greg McCormick—Director
Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM)	Ronny J. Wickenhauser—Chief Administrative Officer and CFO
Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)	Monica Harris—Executive Director
Special Library Association (SLA), Illinois Community	Kristin Stutzman—Immediate Past President
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), Division of Public Safety	Brian Brauer—Executive Director of Emergency Management, EMS Coordinator
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI)	Jim Keiken—Director

# National Advisory Board

\*Co-Chair: Alexandra Rivera and Sharon Strover

Organization	Representative
American Library Association (ALA)	Michael Dowling—Director, International and Chapter Relations Offices
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)	Mary Lee Kennedy—Executive Director
Florida Virtual Campus Library Services (FLVC)	Elijah Scott—Executive Director
Joint Council of Librarians of Color (JCLC)	Alexandra Rivera*—Vice President (REFORMA), Board of Directors
National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Alla Keselman—Acting Chief, Office of Engagement and Training
Public Library Association (PLA)	Mary Davis Fournier—Executive Director
Special Library Association (SLA)	Monica Evans-Lombe—Managing Director/VP of Communities and Programming
University of Texas-Austin: Moody College of Communication, School of Journalism and Media	Sharon Strover*—Director, Philip G. Warner Regents Professor of Communication
Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC)	Kim Armstrong—Executive Director

# Year 1: August 1, 2023 – July 31, 2024

## Case Study Survey of Illinois Libraries

- Online survey targeting multi-type Illinois libraries.
- Illinois will serve as a case study and microcosm of the greater national library-community partners situation.
- State advisors will be key to disseminating the survey to their community members.
  
- Will generate a fundamental understanding of the emergencies that libraries respond to, the scope and nature of library partnerships during emergencies, and the role of libraries in these partnerships.

# Year 2: August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025

## Community Engagement Roundtables

- Building upon Year 1 survey results, two virtual two-day Community Engagement Roundtables (CERs) will be developed to raise the conversation to the national level.
- 20-25 panelists and at least 100 participants will be invited to join the CERs.
- *CER I (Jan. 2025):* Will identify gaps in library-community partnership based on survey findings.
- *CER II (Feb. 2025):* Will focus on initial successes in library-community partnerships and ideas of collaborative strategies.

# Intended Results

- Intended results correspond to the project's 3 key areas:

Area	Result
<b>Area 1: Emergencies</b>	<p><i>Identification of the types of emergencies that libraries have responded to in the past, are currently responding to, or have created plans to respond to.</i></p> <p>This result will inform understanding of the scope and extent of library-community partnerships, as partnerships may vary depending on the specific challenges and needs related to emergency type.</p>
<b>Area 2: Scope and Nature of Partnership</b>	<p><i>Clarification of the scope and extent of library-community partnership during emergencies.</i></p> <p>This result will inform understanding of if or if not library-community partnerships during emergencies exist; if not, why they do not exist, and if so, what is the nature of the partnerships, and how have they been developed and maintained?</p>
<b>Area 3: Role of Libraries in Partnership</b>	<p><i>Description of the past, current, and future role that libraries play in partnerships with community partners during emergencies, and suggestions for the future role of libraries in partnership during emergencies.</i></p> <p>This result will inform both libraries and community partners of how libraries can play an equal part in emergency preparation, response, and recovery, help to develop initial recommendations for libraries to follow for successful partnerships, and provide further paths of future exploration on libraries' role as emergency partners.</p>



# Project Information Sessions

- Sept. 14: ILA Board Meeting
- Sept. 15: CARLI Board Meeting
- Sept. 18: SLA IL Community Board Meeting
- Sept. 20: Chicago Public Library Capital Meeting
- Sept. 26: IHLS Board Meeting

# Project Email and Website

- [libraries.as.partners@gmail.com](mailto:libraries.as.partners@gmail.com)
- For project updates see: <https://imlsgrant.web.illinois.edu/>

# Survey Discussion