



## Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities

### Your Invitation to Submit an “Application of Interest & Commitment” to Participate

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This document is a summary of the Nebraska Library Commission’s *Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities* project. It is intended to provide answers to anticipated questions and to provide the information and opportunity to enable accredited public libraries in Nebraska to submit an “Application of Interest and Commitment” to be considered as one of the forty participating libraries. The first thirty-one libraries were selected through the three earlier application opportunities. The final eight to nine libraries will be selected through this forth and final application deadline scheduled for February 3, 2020.

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The Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) along with partners University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, and Regional Library Systems, are excited about the ***Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities*** project, which was awarded a National Leadership Grant of \$715,732 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project began July 1, 2017 and will conclude June 30, 2021.

The project uses Library Innovation Studios (makerspaces) hosted by libraries to support community engagement and participatory learning experiences by providing access to technological and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally. This strengthening of the maker culture in rural areas is expected to stimulate creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas to facilitate entrepreneurship, skills development, and local economic development.

The multi-faceted project:

- Establishes local Community Action Teams in forty rural and small communities and now larger communities;
- Features equipment and related materials for four rotating Innovation Studios;
- Develops/refines instructional materials and user equipment certification processes;
- Employs sustainability strategies for permanent studios;
- Provides training on the use of the equipment, focusing on Train-the-Trainer strategies;
- Assists with local marketing efforts and programming/events, including open houses and maker showcases; and
- Hosts annual maker showcases in Lincoln or Grand Island.

These three goals guide the project:

- Rural community residents will be empowered with the tools and guidance to explore, collaborate, create, learn, and invent;
- Libraries will transform their rural communities through participatory learning spaces, while establishing themselves as strong community catalysts for community change; and
- Libraries (and communities) nationwide will have access to a replicable model.

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Libraries can learn more about the project and the application/selection process by watching the following recorded webinar:

***NCompass Live, Library Innovation Studios: A Makerspace Project Update  
and Review of the Final Application Process***

<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=17367>

You will notice that this recorded session refers to July 20, 2018 as the final application deadline. The information in this recorded webinar is still accurate other than the final deadline is now February 3, 2020, and we will now consider applications from any accredited public library in Nebraska, even those in larger communities.

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## **Benefits and Services for Participating Libraries**

- Community engagement training, tools, templates, and facilitation support.
- Library Innovation Studio equipment for a hosting period of approximately twenty weeks, including components from the following categories:
  - Digital fabrication (3D printer, laser cutter, vinyl cutter, CNC router);
  - Electronics (prototype kits, microcontrollers, robotics);
  - Textiles (heat press machine and embroidery/sewing machine);
  - Digital media creation (digital photography and video);
  - Music technology;
  - Specialized software, subscriptions; and other accessories
  - Visit: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios/Components/>
- Opportunity to “try it before you buy it.”
- Opportunity for the community to see the benefits of a makerspace.
- Train-the-Trainer session at Nebraska Innovation Studio in Lincoln prior to hosting period.
  - Compensation (28 cents per mile) for one vehicle to travel to Lincoln.\*
  - Lodging (direct billed to NLC) for up to four rooms (single or double occupancy).\*
- Local Train-the-Trainer session for additional staff/volunteers.
- Troubleshooting videos and instructions, as well as access to project staff virtually or in-person as needed.
- Annual Maker Showcase in Lincoln or at the Nebraska State Fair (generally held in August).
  - Compensation (28 cents per mile) for one vehicle to travel to Lincoln.\*
  - Lodging (direct billed to NLC) for up to two rooms.\*
- Access to project staff including Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Extension, and Nebraska Innovation Studio.
- Connection to the Nebraska Innovation Studio.
- Connection to a network of makerspaces.
- Eligibility to receive one or more pieces of studio equipment at the end of the project.

\* Level of grant support for travel expenses to Lincoln listed above are contingent on available grant funds. Participating libraries will be notified of support to be provided at least thirty days prior to expected travel.

## Expectations of Participating Libraries

- Conduct community engagement activities to garner input, build consensus, and get buy-in from local partners related to makerspaces and the Library Innovation Studio.
  - Organize a Community Action Team and engage local organizations to gain support for the program, find volunteers and staff to coordinate local logistics, and participate in community engagement activities prior to the hosting period.
- Identify staff and recruit volunteers (minimum of five) for the two Train-the-Trainers opportunities. (Of these five, two must be trained at the Lincoln session and one of those must be library staff.) Generally libraries send 4-5 trainers to Lincoln, and have 8-15 training at the local library.
- Prepare space for installation of equipment including:
  - Tables, carts, and/or counters to hold the components.
  - Tables and chairs for groups working together on projects
- Assist the project team as follows:
  - Assist with loading and unloading of equipment and consumables at the library.
  - Making staff and volunteers available during the local installation and training.
  - Assist with the sale of consumables provided by the Nebraska Library Commission.
  - Let the project team know the dates of the Open House and Maker Showcase in advance.
  - Report any issues you are having with studio equipment as soon as possible.
  - Respond in a timely fashion with requests for information from the project team.
- Market the Library Innovation Studio prior to and during hosting period including:
  - Hold an open house after installation of studio.
  - Hold a maker showcase.
  - Outreach visits to community groups.
  - Distribute promotional material to target audience(s).
  - Conduct an (optional) drive to collect “consumables” (fabric, wood, etc.).
- Make studio components available to the public on a regular basis and report any issues to the project team.
- Schedule open studio hours, local training and user equipment certification sessions, and regular weekly programming hours to feature particular content areas.
- Assist users with equipment certification, enter new certifications into the database, and verify users are certified to operate equipment (applies to select components only).
- Encourage local users to showcase their creations/inventions at the annual Inventors Showcase following your local hosting period.
- Assist with the collection of information and surveys from participants and the local team, as directed by project staff to aid with evaluation and assessment.
- Work with your Community Action Team to secure and maintain makerspace equipment in your library or within your community OR use the community engagement process to work with community partners on other important projects and initiatives that relate to library services.
- Respond in a timely manner to information requests from the Library Innovation Studio’s project team.

## Questions & Answers

### **Which libraries will be eligible to participate as one of the forty libraries?**

- In this final application cycle, the Nebraska Library Commission will consider any accredited public library to host a *Library Innovation Studio*. In this final application opportunity, up to three libraries in communities larger than 25,000 in population may be selected as host sites. The balance of the remaining eight to nine libraries will be public libraries in communities under 25,000 in population.
- To see if your public library qualifies based on accreditation requirements, check accreditation designation at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/libaccred/standings.asp>. Public libraries that do not qualify due to non-accreditation are blank in the Accreditation Designation column.

### **Does the Library Innovation Studio have to be set up at the public library or can it be set up at another appropriate space within the community?**

Yes, the studios will be installed at public libraries and will employ sustainability strategies to encourage participating libraries to house a permanent studio after the hosting period. The funding source is the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Service National Leadership Grants for Libraries. If local library space is limited, Nebraska Library Commission staff can provide assistance with creative layout and space repurposing solutions.

### **Will we be able to choose the hosting period (still available) that works best for us?**

Since there are only eight hosting slots available, although you are asked to indicate your preference, selected libraries may be assigned hosting periods to make the best use of the project's travel budget. We will consider selecting two libraries as mini studios to fill one of the eight hosting slots.

### **Tell me more about the Community Action Team that we need to activate prior to our hosting period?**

A main component of the grant is that the library serves as a community anchor and as a community catalyst working with community partners in a collaborative effort. The Community Action Team and the community engagement process, is key to the success of the twenty-week hosting period and will serve as a model for replicability in other communities.

The library will be responsible for recruiting a Community Action Team composed of library staff and community members such as library board members, extension educators, chamber of commerce and economic development leaders, educators, community leaders, representatives of target audiences, and other stakeholders/volunteers/mentors with specific interests and talents. This team will be organized around ensuring that the Library Innovation Studio is a success and will be instrumental in sustainability efforts—examining ways of garnering investments and maintaining a permanent studio that meets the needs of the community.

Prior to the Library Innovation Studio's arrival at each library, staff from the Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Extension, and Regional Library Systems can assist the local Community Action Team with community engagement process using tools to garner input, build consensus, and get buy-in. This process will engage the local Community Action Team to serve local target populations with a focus on 'Making' and to address many purposes (e.g., engage residents in STEAM learning environments, demonstrate the library's role as a community catalyst for lifelong learning and business and entrepreneurship development, create new opportunities, and improve quality of life).

## What are Open Houses, Maker Showcases, and Annual Inventors Showcases?

- A **Library Innovation Studio Open House** should be held at the public library perhaps in week 3 or 4 of your library's hosting period to showcase the equipment and components and feature demonstrations of the equipment. The open house is an opportunity to communicate important details about scheduled open studio hours, local training, user equipment certification sessions, and regular weekly programming hours to feature particular content areas. Demonstrations are recommended during the open house.
- The local **Maker Showcase** will be a local community event held near the end of the hosting period, open to the public and featuring projects started and/or completed at the Studio (inventions, product improvements/alterations, art/textile pieces, audio/video creations, etc.). If library space is an issue, this could be scheduled at an alternative site within the community. Other items made outside the studio may also be displayed.
- Three **annual Maker/Inventors Showcases** will be held at the Nebraska Innovation Studio (NIS) in Lincoln (or some other suitable location in Nebraska such as the Nebraska State Fair), featuring inventions, products, and items made at the Library Innovation Studios across the state during the previous year. Each participating library will be expected to encourage local users of the Library Innovation Studio to showcase their creations/inventions at the annual Maker/Inventors Showcase that follows their community's hosting period.

## How can we learn more about the equipment and components that will be available during the hosting period at a participating public library?

- The components are featured in the Library Innovation Studios are grouped in "Stations" and can be viewed at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios/Components/>
- You will note that there are "Stations" and "Mobile Stations." Stations are those that will be installed as a unit and remain set up throughout the hosting period. Mobile Stations are those that will come in totes, cases, or other containers and should be set out for specific hours during the week and also available for check out for in-library use.
- Each Station includes the equipment that should be located together.
  - For instance, Station 1 features the 3D printer and a desktop computer. These components work together as a unit and must be set up adjacent to each other.
  - Information provided for the components included in each station include:
    - The physical size of the machines;
    - The size of table that would work for the station's components;
    - Electrical and hard-wired Internet connection requirements (great wi-fi could also work);
    - Pictures of the equipment or item;
    - Sample photos of items that can be made with the device;
    - A video of how the machine operates; and
    - Important notes such as, "moving this machine will require recalibration."
- Use the information to visualize and measure available space throughout the library so that you have an idea as to how much table and counter space you need and where you might want to locate various stations throughout your library. Another chart that will be helpful can be found at: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/innovationstudios/documents/equipmentspacechart.pdf>

## **How much square footage does a library need to set aside to host the Library Innovation Studio and does it need to be set up throughout the hosting period?**

It depends! You will certainly need space to accommodate the studio's components.

- A 20 x 20 sq. ft. meeting room that could temporarily be turned into a studio could work.
- Two 100 sq. ft. areas and a few 50 sq. ft. areas scattered around the library could work.
- A separate space for the digital media/music area would be best, but could easily be set up and taken down as needed.
- If space is still an issue, consider applying as a mini studio which is discussed in the question/answer that follows.

Keep in mind:

- Some equipment should not be moved around after setup and calibration, so it should remain in position throughout the hosting period.
- Equipment should be in public spaces where it can be easily accessed.
- Some items described as Mobile Stations (like robotic or electronic kits), will be set out only at select times and when checked out for in-library use. These kits generally have small parts that should be monitored so they don't disappear.

See <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios/Components/> for equipment size and space recommendations for the various Studio Component Stations. A handy chart can be found at: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/innovationstudios/documents/equipmentspacechart.pdf>

## **What if my library only has room for about half of the components associated with the Studio? Can we still participate?**

- The project team would like to accommodate even very small libraries or libraries with limited floor space. To accomplish this, two libraries can share a makerspace kit by hosting about half the components at a time. We call these mini studios.
- Of the eight remaining hosting periods, one can accommodate two mini studios. Mini studios will host half of the equipment during the first ten weeks and then swap the equipment with the other limited-space library so they can host the balance of the equipment during the last ten weeks.
- If you would like to participate but really do not have the space, you may indicate your interest to participate as a "Mini Studio" when you answer Question 5 and 10 in the application.
- You are not expected to identify the other mini studio.

## **How will the Studio equipment be rotated between participating libraries?**

- Four identical kits of Studio components have been assembled, which allows four public libraries to host a Library Innovation Studio at any one time.
- There are nine "hosting cycles" in total.
- Project staff members will deliver and install the studio components during a library's "local installation/initial training window" (the first two days of the hosting period). To allow enough time for installations and local training, installations at the four libraries in a cycle will generally be held about two weeks apart.

- At the end of a library's hosting period, project staff members will pick up the studio components and take the equipment directly to the next scheduled library for installation (except the set that will be used in Lincoln for the next cycle's training).
- Library staff and community volunteers are expected to assist with installation by preparing the space, and helping to unload equipment and consumables.
- Library staff will also be expected to inventory consumables prior to the Studio equipment leaving and assist with loading during the departure.

### **What are the expectations of library staff and/or local volunteers serving as trainers for the equipment/components that make up the Library Innovation Studio?**

A group of at least five local trainers (including at least one library staff member that is expected to attend both the training in Lincoln and locally) will attend Train-the-Trainers sessions at the Nebraska Innovation Studio in Lincoln, or later locally at their library. Each community generally sends 4 to 5 trainers to the Lincoln training and we have seen 8 to 15 trainers at the local train-the-trainers sessions. Some trainers focus on a single machine, and other trainers may train on up to 4 or 5 machines. The local trainers will be expected to train users and help with certification during the library's hosting period.

### **What is the User Equipment Certification Process?**

- Several pieces of equipment in the Library Innovation Studios will require a user to be certified on the machine prior to operating it.
  - To provide for the safety of the user and others around them;
  - To ensure that the equipment is used as intended and reduce the likelihood that equipment will be damaged or in need of adjustment/recalibration; and
  - To provide for the orderly and consistent training of new users.
- Local trainers will
  - Learn the process to certify users; and
  - Enter certified users' name and information into the Studio certification database. Paper forms are provided to assist libraries in the collection of data necessary for the administration and reporting of the grant. Entering this information in the online database is required. Collection of user's email is essential to our evaluation process.
- Staff/volunteers monitoring equipment will verify that a user has received equipment certification before allowing the operation of equipment that requires certification.

### **If something breaks or stops working after the studio components are installed and our local trainers cannot fix the issue, whom do we call to address equipment that is not working?**

First of all, it is important that all issues with any of the equipment are reported to the Library Innovation Studios team in a timely manner.

Host libraries will be asked to use Slack, an online forum that is monitored by Library Innovation Studio staff. This forum will allow library staff, trainers, and users to access historical information as to how others fixed issues and allows project team members to communicate with your local team about issues users are having on studio equipment. Library Innovation Studio team members are also available by email and by phone.

Help will be available to you:

- First: by working remotely with project team members with library staff following troubleshooting instructions (through Slack, by phone or email).
- Second: by a project team member remoting in to your Studio computers to address the issue.
- Third: on-site with project staff, if needed.
- Fourth: from the vendor, if needed.

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