

Narrative

Statement of National Need

The goal of the PRISM Planning Project is to address a unique national challenge: determining how best to assess prison library contributions to offenders' development of pro-social behaviors and information literacy and learning skills that help them stay occupied productively and out of trouble while incarcerated and maximize their chances of successful re-entry into the community. Currently, the prison library sector has no extant efforts to encourage and facilitate outcome measurement. Public libraries have the Public Library Association's Project Outcome; school libraries have several decades of school library impact studies and, more recently, the American Association of School Librarians' C.L.A.S.S. (Causality: Librarians And Student Success) project; and academic libraries have the Association of Research Libraries' continually evolving suite of assessment tools: LibQual+, MINES, and LibValue. A comprehensive, large-scale study to assess the impact of prison libraries on their users is long overdue. Because Colorado champions offender rehabilitation over punishment, it is an excellent state to model a first-of-its-kind study that can be replicated in other states. Ultimately, the study resulting from this Planning Project will benefit current and former offenders as well as corrections stakeholders. Corrections decision-makers, administrators, and staff will gain quantitative and qualitative evidence—statistical analysis and best practices—about specific ways their libraries can contribute more effectively to rehabilitation. And, as a result, offenders will have more and better opportunities to learn and practice pro-social behaviors and information literacy and learning skills they need to succeed and contribute in free society.

Research that informs the rehabilitation mission of prisons is urgently needed. U.S. incarceration and recidivism rates are extremely high and their costs are high and rising at a ruinous rate. According to the International Centre for Prison Studies, the U.S. has the world's highest incarceration rate: 716 of every 100,000 population (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/gqkavkw>). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the U.S. also has high rates of recidivism, defined as re-arrest, re-conviction or return to prison within three years of release: 67.8% overall, 56.7% in the first year (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/zrrmmnc>). Studies confirm that factors contributing to recidivism include age, gender, race, length and severity of criminal history, length of incarceration, education and skill levels, and conduct in prison (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/jhn52qr>). The Hamilton Project of the Brookings Institution estimates the nation's annual price tag for incarceration at \$80 billion. That means the average U.S. resident pays \$260 per year for prisons, up from \$77 in 1980 (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/yacj6e42>).

There is promising evidence that prison libraries may play a significant role in promoting pro-social behaviors that contribute to successful re-entry and reduced recidivism. Such behaviors, which benefit others as well as one's self, include: helping, sharing, cooperating, building relationships, and accomplishing goals. Offenders who exhibit more pro-social behaviors are more likely to have better self-esteem and less social anxiety, participate in social interaction, engage in conversations and discussions, collaborate with others to achieve a goal, and express informed opinions. As a result, they are more likely to make friends who help them avoid trouble, finish school, keep jobs, and exert positive influences on future generations (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/y9wq8ysr>).

Pro-social behaviors are foundational to many information literacy and learning skills, such as functional literacy, voluntary reading, library use, information-seeking and inquiry-based learning skills, digital literacy skills, and early and family literacy skills. The research design produced by the Planning Project will build upon theoretical and practical scholarship related to these skills. Consulted scholars will

include reading expert Stephen Krashen and colleagues (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/yb9strz9>); information search-process theorist Carol Kuhlthau (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/jmhfl6v>); Guided Inquiry Design advocates Kuhlthau, Ann K. Caspari, and Leslie K. Maniotes (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/ycn4thqk>); and contributors to the National Institute for Literacy's scientific synthesis about early literacy development and its intervention implications (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/ycdfckl6>).

Prison libraries enable their users to access popular reading materials and information to support re-entry, to engage in independent learning and family literacy, and to participate in formal education and treatment programs (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/y7syjuvj>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y8eu4x2d>). These activities have a potential impact on developing and sustaining beneficial re-entry behaviors and skills.

In addition, isolated, largely anecdotal evidence indicates that use of prison libraries by offenders may reduce recidivism (e.g., <https://preview.tinyurl.com/yamhg73s>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/yc8gqsol>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y7tb5jjd>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y79jxj7a>). Partnerships between prison and public libraries in particular are believed to contribute to successful re-entry and reduced recidivism (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/aeh23n6>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y7zz7399>).

This project addresses the Community Anchors category, because prison libraries offer a bridge to offenders, seeking to help them make constructive use of their time while incarcerated and to prepare them for release back into the community, where they may be served subsequently by public and academic libraries. Prison libraries encourage offenders to participate in civic and cultural engagement, community dialogue, family engagement, early learning, lifelong learning, and digital inclusion. Libraries also may enable them to achieve enhanced equity and access to information and services necessary to economic viability.

Project Design

The PRISM Planning Project will lay a foundation for a Research Project that will address both descriptive and analytical research questions. Preliminary research questions in need of refinement include:

1. Which prison library collections, services, and programs contribute to the development of offenders' pro-social behavior and information literacy and learning skills, and how and how often do offenders use them?
2. How and how well do prison libraries help to bridge the digital divide for offenders?
3. How does collaboration between prison libraries, other prison-based programs, public and academic libraries, and social service organizations support and encourage offenders in their use of prison libraries while incarcerated and preparing for re-entry?
4. What motivates offenders to begin using prison libraries, and what conditions and incentives encourage them to sustain library use through their period of incarceration?
5. How do the custody level, demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and personal interests and life goals of offenders influence prison library use?
6. How and how well do prison libraries contribute to the development of pro-social behaviors and information literacy and learning skills?
7. How and how well do prison libraries help to address and ameliorate obstacles to mastering information literacy and learning skills (e.g., language barriers, learning disabilities, mental health issues, social isolation)?

8. How and how well does prison library use occupy offenders constructively while incarcerated, prepare them for release, and minimize their risk of recidivism (e.g., create future education plans, prepare for and find employment)?
9. How and how well do prison libraries support offenders in maintaining contact with family members, especially children, and facilitate offender participation in family literacy activities?
10. What can prison libraries do differently, do more of, or do better—either alone or in collaboration with other organizations—to maximize their positive impact on current and former offenders?

After these questions are refined, the researchers will develop a mixed-methods research design, involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In formulating the research design, they will rely on multiple available data sources (e.g., from prison libraries, other prison-based programs, and Colorado Department of Corrections Office of Planning and Analysis); preliminary interviews of scholars, officials, and expert practitioners; and—to the extent permitted—input (via interviews, surveys, or both) from current and former offenders themselves.

A Research Project proposal to address such ambitious questions would be highly premature and, potentially, a great waste of the time of many, unless challenging and sensitive issues associated with the corrections environment can be addressed and resolved by this Planning Project. Ordinarily, assessments of library outcomes and impact are fairly straightforward; however, in correctional institutions, there are complexities requiring substantial planning and negotiation for a study to be possible. Owing to security and privacy policies, scheduling practices, geographic distance between institutions, and other factors, the PRISM Planning Project must build-strong partnerships with prisons, prison and public libraries, colleges and universities, and social services organizations; identify and establish rapport with available-data gatekeepers within these organizations; refine research questions based on expert and participant input; and develop and test methodologies and data collection instruments appropriate for use with current and former offenders, librarians, and other stakeholders who work with them.

The Planning Project team has had multiple preliminary conversations with the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) Executive Team (i.e., the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, and the Director of Prisons) as well as the Associate Director of the CDOC Office of Planning and Analysis. While they have expressed enthusiastic support for the idea of such a study, their participation in this Planning Project to its successful completion is a pre-condition of formal approval of the Research Project.

Consequently, the overarching goal of this Planning Project is to guarantee the viability of conducting the envisioned Research Project in the corrections environment. Among the many issues associated with that very restricted environment is the need to learn as much as possible about the extent to which CDOC and potential participating institutions in particular can, and will, permit those currently incarcerated to participate in the planning and implementation of such research. It will ease the process that one of the co-directors is the statutorily designated CDOC General Libraries Coordinator. Although employed by the Colorado State Library, her CDOC status is “contract worker,” with employee-level access to data systems, facilities, staff, and offenders. While the expectation is that access will be easier for an insider, there is still be a need to negotiate agreements with CDOC as well as all participating organizations to ensure that everyone involved is well-informed and in agreement about what is permissible and how to proceed together.

First, we must ensure that the research is meaningful to the prisoner. Second, we must ensure that the research will in some way lead to an improvement in the life of the prisoner, or future prisoners. The best way to ensure both objectives are attained is to actively involve the prisoner in the entire process.

--quote from Anne Costelloe, *Researching Correctional Education: Why We Must Advance from "Research On/" to "Research On and For/" and Ultimately to "Research On, For and With,"* Journal of Correctional Education, June 2007 (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/y78n3kmg>)

Because prisoners are an extremely vulnerable population with severely restricted rights and autonomy, as soon as this proposal is funded, CLiC will retain an independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure their protection. The IRB will be required to involve representatives of the corrections, library, and research fields; with at least one prisoner or prisoner representative; and without a majority from the corrections field. The independent IRB will be obligated contractually to function in accordance with relevant state and federal regulations (<https://preview.tinyurl.com/y9fo67mx>, <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y9p6ot9d> (pt. 46, page 131), <https://preview.tinyurl.com/y8dwro47>).

The paramount issue is determining precisely how and to what extent the IRB and CDOC will permit the vulnerable population of incarcerated offenders to be subjects of this type of research. Many details about access to prison records and limits on incarcerated offender participation in the study need to be worked out. Owing to the vulnerability of the population and the sensitivity of the issues involved, this will require more than just the standard institutional review process. Despite these challenges, involving offenders in the planning stages of this study as well as the subsequent Research Project is regarded as essential.

A related issue is the need to explore with partnering public and academic libraries and social services organizations how they can assist us ethically and effectively in identifying and engaging former offenders not under parole supervision in the design of the envisioned study. The requirements of their institutional review processes will have to be reconciled with those of CDOC, and this, too, will require time as well as special care and attention.

An advisory committee composed of project staff and up to 20 stakeholder representatives—including state and national experts—will refine and finalize the goals and desired outcomes of this Planning Project as well as the research questions and methodologies for the envisioned Research Project. The study's ultimate goal is to illuminate for corrections decision-makers the specific contributions of prison libraries to current and former offenders. The ultimate goal of this Planning Project is to do the advance work needed to make that study possible.

The PRISM Planning Project will lay a foundation for Colorado's PRISM Research Project by pursuing the following planning goals:

- Phase 1: Develop and maintain partnerships and working agreements with correctional, library, education, and social services organizations;
- Phase 2: Conduct exploratory research with participants and stakeholder representatives; and
- Phase 3: Formulate a research design and work plan for a model study that addresses the above goals and objectives of research to fill this conspicuous gap in the library literature.

Phase 1 Goal Activities:

- Identify prospects and recruit members of the Planning Project advisory committee;

- Negotiate an agreement with the Colorado Department of Corrections;
- Identify contact people at participating organizations, including correctional institutions, public libraries, colleges and universities, and social services organizations; and
- Sustain the Planning Project, and each of the partnerships on which it relies, by holding advisory committee meetings every two months, reporting promptly on those meetings to all stakeholders and participants, and communicating with all organizational representatives at least monthly.

Phase 2 Goal Activities:

- Identify, obtain, and assess relevant prison records about offenders from the Colorado Department of Corrections (e.g., intake, disciplinary, program participation, per-release, parole);
- Review the professional and scholarly literature on prison libraries as well as other programs in corrections settings that promote pro-social behaviors and information literacy and learning skills;
- Schedule and conduct exploratory interviews of current and former offenders as well as scholars and practitioner experts, including education and corrections scholars, corrections officials, and experts representing stakeholder organizations (i.e., librarians, educators, social workers).

Phase 3 Goal Activities:

- Refine research questions and specify hypothesized relationships between independent and dependent variables, taking control variables into account;
- Formulate and test questions for key informant and/or focus group interviews of current and former offenders, corrections officials, and representatives of public libraries, colleges and universities, and social services organizations;
- Design pre-test versions of survey instruments to be administered to offenders by prison librarians;
- Design and disseminate instructions to be followed by correctional library staff in pre-testing surveys to offenders;
- Outline the strategies to be followed in tabulating and analyzing all of the above types of data;
- Describe how data will be displayed in reporting results of data collection and findings of analysis;
- Formulate a dissemination plan describing where and how Planning Project products (i.e., sample participation agreements, model data collection instruments and instructions, and analysis plan documentation) will be made available to interested parties, and how the availability of these documents will be publicized to such parties.

To ensure that these goals and activities are completed satisfactorily and on schedule, the co-project directors and the independent evaluator will ask advisory committee members for their input and feedback before, during, and after online meetings at two-month intervals throughout the Planning Project grant period. Committee members from correctional institutions—offenders as well as staff—will be selected to maximize representation of all custody and security levels; those incarcerated as well as those paroled; institutions dealing with men, women, and youth; and private as well as state-operated correctional institutions. Additional committee members will be selected to represent state and national experts in dealing with former offenders in library, higher education, and social services settings. There will also be a contact person at each participating correctional institution.

Within each type of stakeholder organization, there are multiple communities and audiences whose perspectives and contributions will help to shape the project design and its output. Correctional stakeholders will include agency- and facility-level officials (from facility management, clinical services, education and pre-release programs, and libraries) as well as current offenders and former offenders

who are and are not under CDOC supervision. As fully as permitted, current and former offenders will be involved as advisory committee members, preliminary interviewees, pre-testers of interview questions and survey questionnaires, and reviewers of the research design that will be this Planning Project's ultimate product. Public library stakeholders will include directors as well as librarians who work specifically with current or former offenders. Educational stakeholders will include administrators, faculty, counselors, and librarians. Social services stakeholders will include service providers addressing health, housing, employment, and public assistance.

The primary audience of the PRISM Planning Project is prison library decision-makers at state and institutional levels. Secondary audiences will include decision-makers for stakeholder organizations with whom correctional institutions work, such as libraries, colleges and universities, and social services organizations. The participation of both audiences in the project design in the above-mentioned ways will be essential to developing a viable research design and to eliciting their support for the subsequent Research Project.

Sara Wright, Assistant Director, Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC), and Diane Walden, Coordinator, Colorado State Library (CSL) Institutional Library Development (ILD), will be the co-project directors and co-chairs of the advisory committee. They are nationally recognized experts and leaders in the areas of library consortia and institutional libraries. Walden is project lead and Wright is an advising member of the State Library initiative, Connecting Former Offenders with Library Services, and both are members of its offshoot, Colorado Re-entry Resources (CORR), which facilitates prison-public library partnerships. Walden is a member of the National Institute of Corrections focus group on Data-Driven Librarianship in Corrections. They will be responsible for scheduling, organizing, and chairing staff and advisory committee meetings; managing project finances; negotiating partnership agreements with participating organizations; and serving as intermediaries between the researchers, stakeholders, and the independent evaluator. Wright will supervise other CLiC staff who will provide fiscal and other project management support. Walden will supervise other ILD staff who will facilitate the participation of correctional institutions with which they work closely.

CLiC helps libraries to better serve their users. It has a long track record of seeking, supporting, and building collaborative partnerships; sharing practical information to improve library services; and ensuring that libraries have access to shared resources that support their missions. CLiC's involvement in collaborative projects like this one frequently helps small libraries—as all Colorado prison libraries are—overcome the challenges they would otherwise face “going it alone.”

ILD addresses the needs of approximately 18,000 Colorado citizens residing in state-funded institutions, including 23 prison libraries serving over 14,000 offenders. Its mission is to provide leadership and expertise these libraries need to meaningfully impact the lives of users, their families and communities. They operate on the assumption that “everyone deserves a great library”—especially those facing barriers to service, such as incarceration, learning and physical disabilities, mental illnesses, and social stigma.

Keith Curry Lance, Ph.D., Consultant, RSL Research Group, will serve as principal investigator, assisted by other RSL researchers. RSL Research Group is recognized widely for its contributions to library impact assessment research. They are best known for more than a dozen studies of the impact of school libraries on student success. More recently, they have conducted equally trailblazing studies of the impact of collaboration between public and school libraries on student success and the impact of community

college libraries on faculty as well as student success. RSL's involvement is consistent with the expanding scope of their library impact assessment research. RSL will be responsible for conducting exploratory research (i.e., analyzing available data, conducting interviews); developing and testing the data collection instruments and analysis plan for the envisioned Research Project; and taking the lead on writing the project report as well as articles and social media posts about it.

Notably, most of this Planning Project's budget is assigned to the RSL Research Group, because other personnel from co-project directors to stakeholder organization contact people will be participating in this project on the job. Only Walden, the CSL/ILD co-project director, and ILD staff are paid with LSTA Grants to States funds. All individuals affiliated with CLiC and CDOC are paid with State of Colorado funds. As cost sharing is not required of planning grant proposals, these on-the-job contributions are not included in the project budget. They are mentioned here only to clarify why most of the project budget is assigned to the RSL Research Group.

An independent evaluator will be hired to assess the project's success in achieving desired outcomes.

Contact people in participating organizations will be responsible for facilitating communication between the administrators and relevant staff in their organizations and the project team, providing access to available data from their organizational records, and participating in advisory committee meetings and/or providing feedback as requested by project staff and the independent evaluator.

Advisory committee members and institutional contact people will be asked to assess project staff performance toward these goals, objectives, and outcomes on an ongoing basis, not less than every two months. They will also be asked to identify any course corrections they feel are needed, whether at the institutional level or project wide. Development of partnerships will likely result in changes as discussions to date have been preliminary.

Key desired outcomes of the PRISM Planning Project are to have collaborators and stakeholders indicate in the evaluation survey that they strongly agree about the following: the research design has the potential to generate high-quality, actionable data about the contributions of prison libraries; the study design and work plan are sufficient for the findings to inform them about library contributions to offender behavior management and re-entry preparation; and they are prepared for their participation in this Planning Project and the envisioned Research Project.

These Planning Project outcomes will ensure that the envisioned Research Project has national impact, addresses a current significant issue, and demonstrates strategic collaborations. The desired outcomes are also aligned with multiple IMLS goals: preparing people to participate in their local communities and global society; enhancing their civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality; and encouraging libraries to be better stewards of their collections and promoters of technology.

An evaluation documenting the achievement of these outcomes will be vital to inform future work. The success of this Planning Project is a necessary pre-condition for the subsequent Research Project proposal. The independent evaluator will also be asked to specify, based on stakeholder feedback in the evaluation survey, any recommendations for improving project management and/or research design as the project moves from completed Planning Project to Research Project proposal.

The findings of the PRISM Planning Project will be available to interested parties and the general public via a website to be created during this project and hosted by CSL's Institutional Library Development unit as part of its contribution to these efforts. Links to this website will be placed on the CLiC and CDOC websites. Posted information will include: advisory committee meeting agendas and minutes, reviews of relevant literature, model partnership agreements with CDOC and other stakeholder organizations, key informant and focus group interview questions, pre-test versions of survey questionnaires, and anonymized input received from exploratory interviews and surveys. Ultimately, the research design—which will be the principal deliverable of this project—will be posted to this website. All of this documentation will be foundational to the intended Research Project, and, so, it will be maintained at least until the fate of a Research Project proposal is known. If that proposal is successful, the Research Project will likely call for a more robust web presence to which these documents would migrate. If that proposal is unsuccessful, preservation plans for the digital documents will be determined at that time.

While this is a Planning Project, it is expected to generate sufficient new information and momentum to be of interest to the library community—particularly the prison library community, but the wider library community as well—due to the implications for public and academic libraries that may serve former offenders. Accordingly, articles based on this Planning Project's findings will be offered to appropriate library (e.g., *American Libraries*, *Library Journal*, *Library and Information Science Research*) and corrections publications (e.g., *Advancing Corrections Journal*, *Corrections Today*, *Prison Journal*). News of the project will also be shared via the ALA-hosted prison-l listserv for prison librarians and via Colorado's libnet listserv. As permitted, links to newsworthy project website content will be included in social media posts (i.e., LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook) at least quarterly on accounts of state and national library and corrections organizations (e.g., Colorado Association of Libraries, American Library Association, American Correctional Association).

Diversity Plan

In working with representatives of primary and second audiences, particular attention will be given to addressing the needs of underserved communities—not just the incarcerated (an underserved community more generally), but also underserved segments of that community, including individuals who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, those who did not graduate from high school or obtain an equivalency diploma, those whose first language is one other than English, those battling addiction and mental health issues, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The Colorado Department of Corrections collects data about and assesses the special needs of individual members of these groups at intake into the correctional system—data that will inform the design of this Planning Project as well as the subsequent Research Project.

The Colorado Department of Corrections monitors offender demographics on an ongoing basis and reports about them at least annually. Not surprisingly, as in many states, Colorado's offender population over-represents the state's Hispanic and African-American residents as well as those with physical and mental health issues and learning disabilities. The need for trial data collection instruments to be available in Spanish and in large-print format can be assumed. It is also assumed that all of these instruments will need to be written at third- to fourth-grade reading level. Correctional staff and current and former offenders providing input and feedback will be chosen to represent these diverse needs and interests.

Current and former offenders have unique needs owing to their legal status alone. During incarceration, their access to information is severely restricted, compared to that of a member of the general public.

They are uniquely dependent on their prison library for access to information to educate and occupy themselves during incarceration and prepare for re-entry. From the prison library, they obtain practical information about the community—particularly the types of information urgently needed in preparation for re-entry (i.e., employment, housing, social services, health care).

As former offenders re-enter the community, they face many unique needs, including: overcoming the social stigma associated with a felony conviction; re-establishing relationships with family and friends and establishing support system relationships; and maintaining pro-social changes and meeting re-entry requirements (e.g., a home, employment, sobriety, treatment plan, continuing education). In addition to the unique needs associated with former offender status, many of these individuals also have one or more of the above-mentioned special needs that affect their access to information.

National Impact

The PRISM Planning Project will have a national impact by initiating a new line of research about prison libraries and providing other researchers with resources to encourage replication and expansion.

The proposed study will develop a viable research design that can be replicated and improved upon in further studies. Prison libraries suffer from a serious lack of substantial research, particularly regarding their contributions to managing and rehabilitating incarcerated offenders and to preparing them for re-entry into society. The proposed research design will be shared widely in corrections and library communities nationwide. Researchers, correctional managers, and prison library professionals in other states will be encouraged to pursue follow-up studies to confirm that the Colorado findings are indeed transferable to other states and communities. The intent is that this Colorado study will be the first of many prison library impact studies, much as an earlier Colorado study initiated three decades of school library impact studies across the nation. The findings of the proposed study and those it will inspire should be instrumental in informing the design of prison library collections, programs, and services to ensure that they make the strongest contributions possible to meeting the needs of current and former offenders. A national conversation about this research should help to overcome the geographical and institutional isolation experienced by those who work in corrections, especially prison librarians.

This Planning Project will provide many resources that will give other researchers a major head start. It will identify, explore, and negotiate strategies for overcoming many potential obstacles to doing this type of Research Project. The partnership agreements that will be one of the major products of this Planning Project will be invaluable to other researchers as models for negotiating the obstacles to such research in their own states. Available data files about correctional institutions and offenders and findings of key informant and/or focus group interviews of stakeholders will also offer insights to those designing studies in other states. The ultimate product of this Planning Project, a viable research design, will also be readily available to others. It will serve as a model and starting point for new-and-improved research designs in other states.

Because all of these assets for research design will be produced as part of an IMLS-funded planning project, they will be available freely to others to be adapted to similar contexts. The project assets will also be designed for ready use by solo library staff or corrections staff who are not librarians.

Following successful completion of this Planning Project, the Colorado Library Consortium, the Colorado State Library, and the Colorado Department of Corrections are fully committed to continuing their partnership to pursue a Research grant and, if funded, to conducting the proposed study. These

collaborating partners believe this Planning Project is essential to preparing the way for a successful Research Project. They would not be parties to this proposal if they were not equally committed to seeing it through.

The IMLS agency-level goal for the PRISM Planning Project is Goal 2: Community. The performance goal for the project is to strengthen libraries as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities. More specifically, this project's goal is to strengthen prison, public and academic libraries, and other community organizations as essential partners in addressing the needs of current and former offenders.

As measures of national impact, five of the Performance Measure Statements associated with this goal will be addressed by evaluation survey questions posed to project stakeholders by the independent evaluator. After each of the following IMLS questions, the wording that will be used to make it specific to this project appears in parentheses:

1. My organization is better prepared to provide a program or service that addresses community needs. (My organization is better prepared to participate in the proposed PRISM study to assess how prison libraries can and do address the needs of current and former offenders.)
2. My organization is better able to engage my community. (My organization is better able to engage with other community organizations to contribute successfully to the proposed PRISM study.)
3. My organization is better prepared to develop and maintain on-going relationships with community partners. (My organization is better prepared to develop and maintain the on-going relationships specified in our partnership agreement for the proposed PRISM study.)
4. My organization is better prepared to share knowledge and other resources as an active contributor to problem solving in the community. (My organization is able and better prepared to share its available data about current and former offenders in the context of the proposed PRISM study.)
5. The library offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs. (I am satisfied that the proposed PRISM study will inform my organization about how to better address the needs of current and former offenders.)

The independent evaluator will ask participants in the Planning Project evaluation survey to respond to each of these questions on the scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. For each question, the independent evaluator will report the number of total responses, the number of responses per answer option, and the number of non-responses.

Ultimately, the PRISM Planning Project will be deemed successful if it achieves the following benchmarks in its independent evaluation:

- At least 12 of the Colorado Department of Corrections' 23 correctional institutions, and a majority of other participating organizations, agree to participate in the envisioned Research Project if a National Leadership Grant is awarded.
- For respondents to the project evaluation survey, there are 90% Strongly Agree or Agree responses to all of the evaluation questions specified above.