

# PUBLIC PROGRAMS OFFICE 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS OFFICE

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**ALA** American  
Library  
Association



ALA American Library Association



FROM ITS  
BEGINNINGS,  
THIS BUILDING HAS  
SERVED BOTH AS  
AN INSTIGATOR  
AND A MIRROR OF  
SOCIAL CHANGE.”

—Author and speaker Susan Jacoby

PHOTO CREDIT  
Davide Cantellie

As communities change, libraries change and vice versa. In a year of divisions in our nation, ALA’s Public Programs Office is fortunate to witness the many dynamic ways in

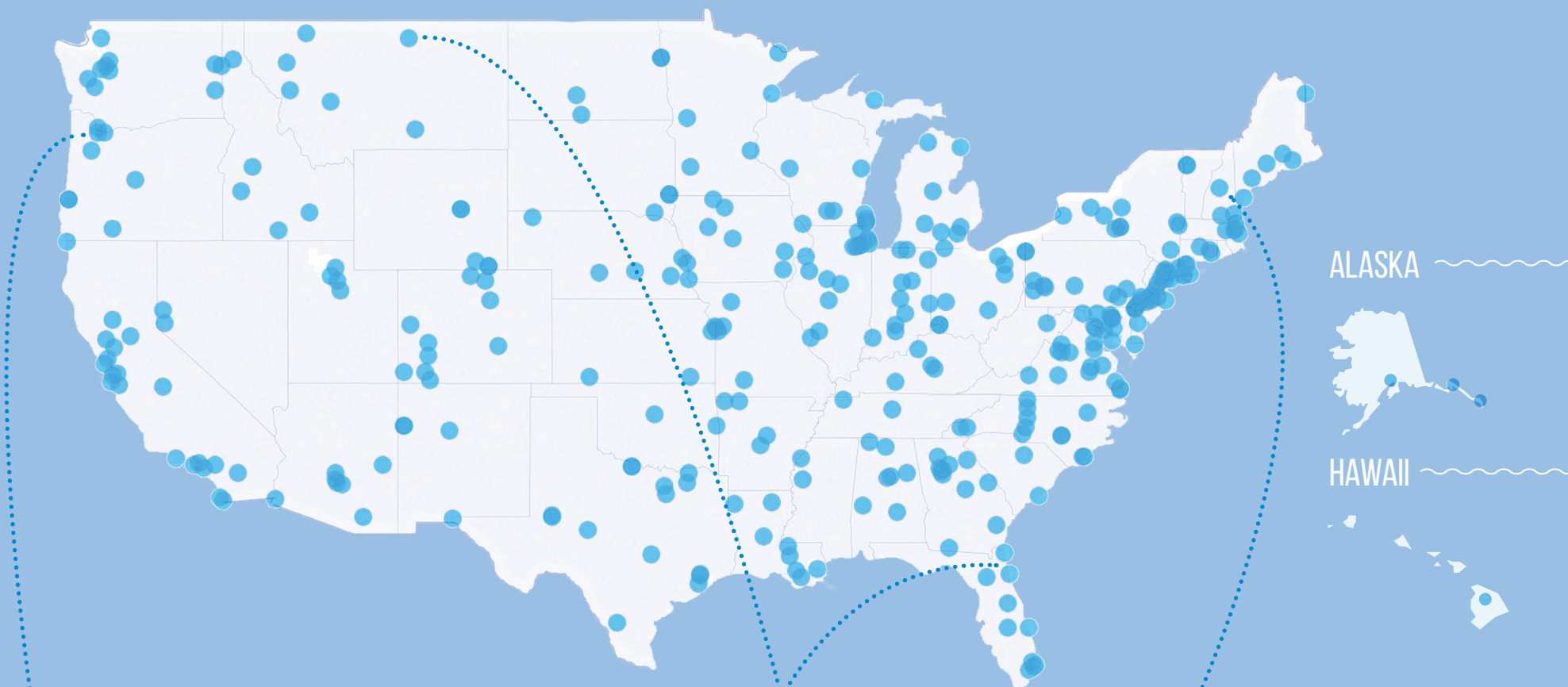
which libraries continue to support and unify their changing communities. In turn, we strive to create opportunities, resources and professional development to help libraries deftly assess

and respond to their patrons’ unique needs.

In the past year, these included free training to help libraries bring disparate voices together and lead change; a project to

help libraries lead the way in the fight against fake news; research to quantify the impacts of library programming nationwide; and grants to bring hands-on STEM learning to under-resourced areas.

The ALA Public Programs Office supported programming at more than 400 libraries nationwide between September 1, 2016, and August 31, 2017, by providing traveling exhibitions, discussion programs, hands-on learning materials, programming grants and awards.



“The greatest value of the exhibit was to demonstrate that financial literacy topics don’t need to be boring or scary.”

—Anne Scheppeke, Salem Public Library, Salem, Ore., host of *Thinking Money*

“This year’s GSC had a significant impact on our library because it compelled us to take on a book club theme [teen violence and suicide] that library staff ordinarily shy away from.”

—Jonathan Sandbach, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville, Fla., recipient of *Great Stories Club: Structures of Suffering*

“We had a large number of young girls sign up for STEM-based programming centered on *Discover Space*... We hope this has been the start of a positive trend here in Plymouth.”

—Diane Lynch, Pease Public Library, Plymouth, N.H., host of *Discover Space: A Cosmic Journey*

“I believe the programs helped bring awareness to an unspoken truth — differences in Native health issues vs. mainstream health issues.”

—Eva English, Aaniiih Nakoda College, Harlem, Mt., host of *Native Voices*



# TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE/ NASA@ MY LIBRARY

With the 2017 solar eclipse, libraries nationwide found themselves at the center of a nationwide frenzy — especially those located within the 70-mile-wide “path of totality” that cut across the country from Oregon to South Carolina.

Many libraries, stocked with free eclipse-viewing glasses from science organizations like NASA and the National Center for Interactive Learning at the Space Science Institute (SSI), handed out gear to long lines of patrons eager for a chance to experience the eclipse in full effect.

Seventy-five public libraries — including Anaheim Public Library, shown at right — took their eclipse day programming to the next level as part of NASA@ My Library, a nationwide initiative from ALA, the SSI and other partners that brings hands-on space science programming to communities across the country, many of which lack access to STEM learning opportunities.



NASA@ My Library, a nationwide initiative from ALA, the SSI and other partners that brings hands-on space science

programming to communities across the country, many of which lack access to STEM learning opportunities.

PHOTO CREDIT  
Blossom Blue Photography



NASA@ My Library has sparked creativity and imagination in our community’s underserved populations, and the eclipse-viewing event helped our mission of promoting scientific and technological literacy, as well as facilitating learning and community building.”

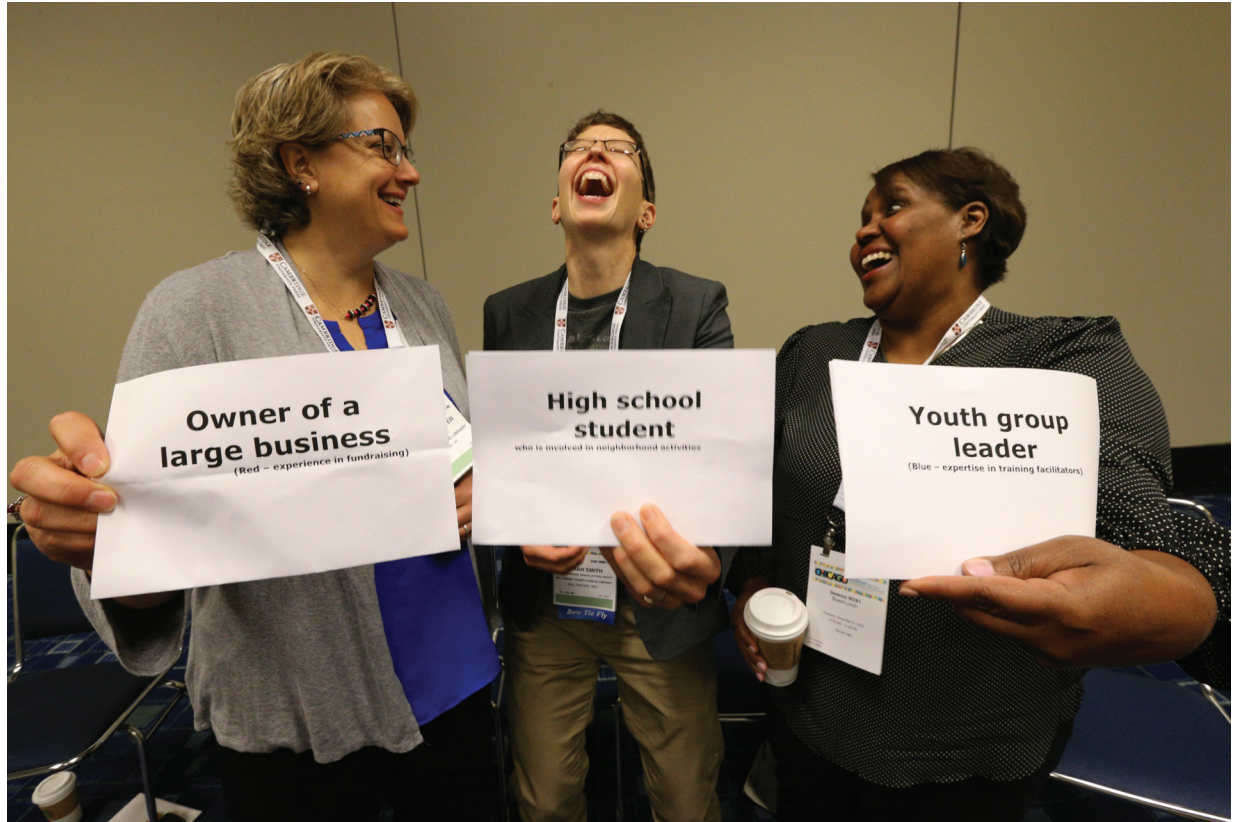
—**Katrina Ford, Librarian, Anaheim Public Library**



# LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES: MODELS FOR CHANGE

Communities today need conversation more than ever — and libraries are responding. In 2017, ALA and the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation kicked off Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Models for Change, an initiative that seeks to equip library workers with the tools to build coalitions and facilitate conversation.

Through webinars and in-person workshops — all free of charge — libraries learn a variety of dialogue and deliberation approaches proven to bring people together, whether in a town hall meeting or a library strategy session. At an LTC: Models for Change workshop at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference, representatives of large or urban public libraries used Everyday Democracy’s equity lens to role-play and gain new perspectives on potential partnerships and community members’ needs.



I love the many ways that libraries use these models of dialogue and discussion. It is what is appropriate for that specific community and is not ‘one size fits all’ — which is OK!”

—LTC: Models for Change workshop participant

# MEDIA LITERACY @ YOUR LIBRARY

False news is a real problem. Who better to educate their patrons than libraries, a central source for a community's information needs?

Through the pilot program Media Literacy @ Your Library, the ALA Public Programs Office and the Center for News Literacy @ Stony Brook



University are training teams from five public libraries to help their adult patrons become better news consumers. In Auburn, a city of 22,000 in

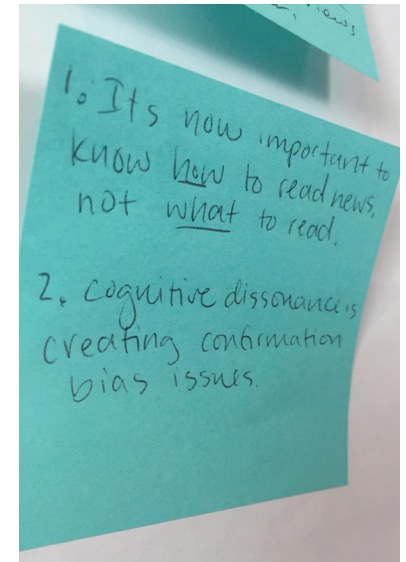
southern Maine, the public library will collaborate with the local newspaper to combat misinformation related to a proposed merger with a neighboring town. Other cohort libraries will host hands-on workshops, panel discussions, community conversations and more.

In addition to starting news literacy programs in their communities, the library cohorts will serve as advisors for a forthcoming online training series so more libraries can become involved in this important work.



We hope to learn to combat the un-truths, the 'alternative facts,' and the accompanying cynicism that develops from a barrage of confusing and alienating words filling our lives."

—Mamie Ney, Library Director,  
Auburn Public Library





# NATIONAL IMPACT OF LIBRARY PUBLIC PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT

Library workers see the impact of their work every day, from young people developing comprehension skills through summer reading programs, to older adults finding companionship and learning new skills through arts classes. But the library field lacks sufficient data on whether, and how, these efforts are working — knowledge that is necessary in order to prepare librarians to provide the best possible learning experiences for our nation.

The National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA) is a comprehensive, nationwide effort to categorize the types of library programs currently being offered and the skills needed to bring them to life. Over the next two years, ALA will work with a talented group of library advisors and researchers at the New Knowledge Organization Ltd. to delve into the landscape of library public programming, find its strengths and gaps and determine recommendations for the future of the field.



## IMAGE CREDIT

New Knowledge Organization Ltd. (New Knowledge created these graphics based on a survey asking library practitioners “What skills are necessary to run successful library programs?” (L) and “What programming skills should be part of the MLIS degree curricula?” (R).)



This initiative will give us the data we need to better understand the critical impact of library programming and prepare future generations of library professionals to excel in this work.”

—Dr. Julie Todaro, 2016-2017 ALA President





But there was a world  
Somewhere  
Out there  
And Mrs. Long opened that wardrobe  
But no lions or witches scared me  
I went through  
Knowing there would be  
Spring”

—excerpt from “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long,” by Nikki Giovanni

Quoted with permission from HarperCollins Publishers

## AN EVENING WITH NIKKI GIOVANNI

Mrs. Long may not have known it at the time, but the Knoxville, Tenn. librarian helped shape the future famed poet, author and activist Nikki Giovanni. Standing before a standing-room-only crowd of 200 library workers in June 2017, Giovanni recounted how her favorite librarian would make special trips to white branches of her segregated library system to get the books that

the young Giovanni, a rapacious reader, requested.

That relationship marked the beginning of the poet’s “affection for librarians” — an affection that was reciprocated



at An Evening with Nikki Giovanni, a reception to benefit the ALA Cultural Communities Fund at the



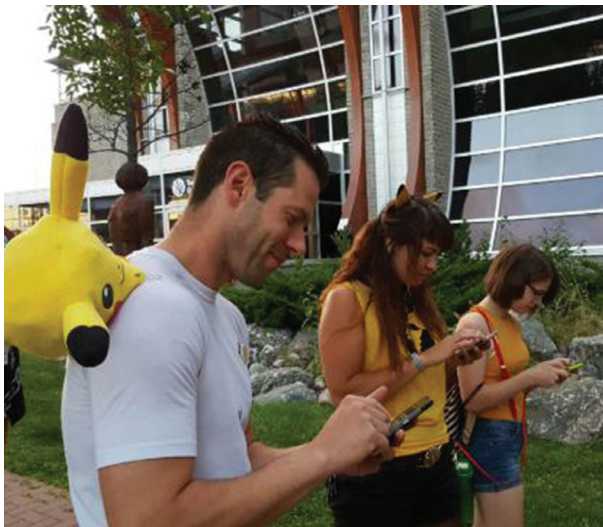
2017 ALA Annual Conference. Gathered at Chicago’s new American Writers Museum, guests chatted, dined and listened to a reading from Giovanni’s “A Good Cry: What We Learn from Tears and Laughter.” The event was an inspiring way for many attendees to start the conference, and netted nearly \$4,000 for the Cultural Communities Fund.





# BEST OF PROGRAMMING LIBRARIAN

ProgrammingLibrarian.org is an online community where library professionals share programming inspirations, successes and advice. More than 12,000 library professionals visit the site each month for program ideas, free online learning opportunities and news about grants and awards, and over 5,000 have signed up to receive the Programming Librarian newsletter. To join them, visit [programminglibrarian.org/about](http://programminglibrarian.org/about).



## PHOTO CREDITS

Clockwise from top: Indianapolis (Ind.) Public Library; Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library; Oakland (Calif.) Public Library; Cobb County (Ga.) Public Library District; L.P. Fisher Public Library (New Brunswick, Canada); San Antonio (Texas) Public Library; Prince George (British Columbia) Public Library.

# NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

## Exploring Human Origins

2017 saw the final stop of Exploring Human Origins, a traveling exhibition based on the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's Hall of Human Origins. The exhibition — which featured panels, interactive kiosks, hands-on displays and videos about human evolution — traveled to 19 U.S. libraries between 2015 and 2017, with more than 280 related programs attracting 15,000 attendees of all ages.



## Great Stories Club Author Tour

During 2016-2017, 150 libraries were selected to host the Great Stories Club (GSC) program, a theme-based reading and discussion program for underserved youth funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Each site was awarded a collection of books on one of two themes: “The Art of Change: Creation, Growth and Transformation” or “Structures of Suffering: Origins of Teen Violence and Suicide.”

Additionally, funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) supported an author tour to select GSC-participating libraries. The author tour brought five authors/illustrators of GSC books to seven library programs in six states, distributing 100 copies of the titles in

advance to each school. Each author visit lasted 90 to 120 minutes, and involved a reading from the selected work, a question and answer session, and a book signing.

## Promoting Healthy Communities

Beginning in late 2017, the ALA Public Programs Office will collaborate with the Public Library Association (PLA) and National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) on Promoting Healthy Communities, a program that strives to better equip public librarians with consumer health knowledge. The initiative will involve an assessment of the need among public librarians for patron health information, along with efforts to promote new and existing professional development opportunities in the field of health information.

## Revisiting the Founding Era

Working with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the Public Programs Office will offer a reading and discussion program based on our nation's founding era. The program, funded by the National Endowment for the

Humanities, will be available to public libraries in late 2017.

## The Vietnam War

In August 2017, 50 U.S. public libraries were awarded a programming kit for *The Vietnam War*, a 10-part documentary by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. More than 350 libraries applied for the kit, which included the full 18-hour documentary series on DVD, with public performance rights, the film's companion book and a programming guide developed by librarians. The opportunity was offered with WETA Washington, D.C.



### PHOTO CREDITS

From left: Bangor (Maine) Public Library; ASPIRA Early College/Antonia Pantoja High School (Ill.); National Archives and Records Administration.



# AWARD-WINNING PROGRAMS

## 2017 Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Exemplary Humanities Programming

Pilot Mountain (N.C.) Elementary School was awarded the 2017 Jaffarian Award for its program, Everybody Has a Story. The yearlong program taught third-graders about cultural and historic preservation by engaging them in activities involving language, arts, dance, music, food traditions and more.



PHOTO CREDIT  
Pilot Mountain (N.C.)  
Elementary School



## 2017 Excellence in Library Programming Award

The 2017 Excellence in Library Programming Award was awarded to the Monroe County Public Library in Bloomington, Ind., for Read, Discuss, Meet & Act: The Power of Words. To create the reading and discussion series — based on the National Book Award-winning graphic novel “March,” by Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Ayden and Nate Powell — the library partnered with its Friends and 12 local civic and nonprofit organizations. Michael Hoerger (center in photo at right), communications and marketing manager at Monroe County Public Library, accepted the award at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference, from 2016-2017 ALA President Julie Todaro (L) and Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee Chair Cassandra Barnett (R).



# GET INVOLVED

Learn about these opportunities and more at [programminglibrarian.org/about](http://programminglibrarian.org/about).

## Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee

As the advisory committee to the ALA Public Programs Office, the ALA Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee (PCPAC) promotes excellence in library programming; assists library staff in becoming more effective providers of cultural programming; identifies and disseminates resources for library programming; and promotes the ALA Cultural Communities Fund.

## Programming Librarian Interest Group

The Programming Librarian Interest Group (PLIG), an ALA Member Initiative Group, offers a way for ALA members to connect more dynamically with the Public Programs Office and other programming librarians. The PLIG's mission is to bring

together all types of librarians interested in public programming for their patrons. All are welcome on the group's Facebook page, where more than 8,000 library professionals share ideas, advice and support.

## Libraries Foster Community Engagement

Libraries Foster Community Engagement is a Member Initiative Group for ALA members interested in the work of library-led community engagement. In this community of practice, participants share experiences facilitating public forums, fostering community and civic engagement and leading change in communities.

## STEM in Libraries

Formed in 2016, the STEM in Libraries Member Initiative Group helps library professionals engage their communities through the development and exchange of programming resources, hands-on training opportunities and collaboration in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The group has quickly

grown, with a Facebook group membership of over 1,300.

## Support the ALA Cultural Communities Fund

The Cultural Communities Fund (CCF) was created in 2003 with a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support cultural programming in libraries. Since then, the endowment has grown to more than \$1.9 million, including over \$18,000 raised in 2017. CCF supports professional development opportunities for libraries; awards and grants that recognize excellence in library programming; the development and promotion of library program models; and more. To make a contribution, visit [ala.org/ccf](http://ala.org/ccf).

## Become a member

By joining ALA, you not only support our mission of promoting library service and librarianship; you also receive an array of benefits, from professional development opportunities to networking events and discounts. To learn more about becoming a member, visit [ala.org/membership](http://ala.org/membership).

# SPONSORS

PPO's collaboration with communities nationwide would not be possible without the following funders and partners:

- American Express
- Center for News Literacy @ Stony Brook University
- Cincinnati Museum Center
- Democracy Fund
- Everyday Democracy
- FINRA Investor Education Foundation
- Folger Shakespeare Library
- Ford Foundation
- The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
- The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- John Templeton Foundation
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Center for Interactive Learning at the Space Science Institute
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- National Library of Medicine
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine
- National Science Foundation
- Oklahoma State University Library
- Peter Buck Human Origins Fund
- Rita Allen Foundation
- Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
- WETA Productions, Washington, D.C.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation