




ALA  
Public  
Programs  
Office

**ALA** American  
Library  
Association

**2018 Annual Report**



How to make sure your voice is heard

“The library serves democracy by providing **a neutral forum in which all types of information and all points of view find equal voice.**”

—Patricia Wilson Berger, ALA past president (1989–1990)

Bettina Chang presents on civic journalism at the Skokie (Ill.) Public Library.  
Skokie Public Library

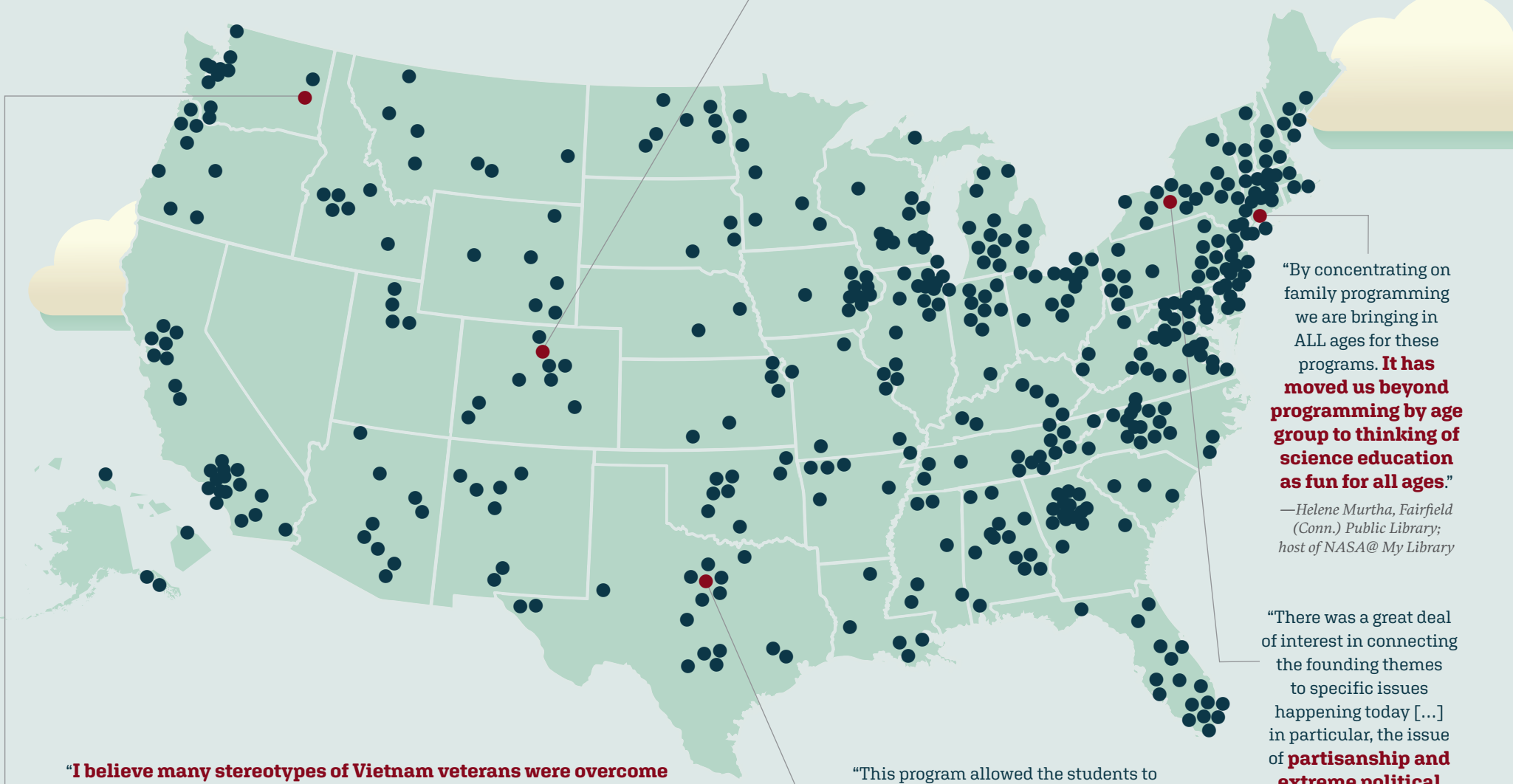
**T**hroughout our nation’s history, libraries have served as truly democratic institutions, striving to make themselves accessible and inclusive for all. ALA’s Public Programs Office has been fortunate in the past year to support

many libraries in their continued efforts towards inclusivity as they’ve facilitated important conversations and ensured access to information and lifelong learning to all members of their communities.

The ALA Public Programs Office supported programming at more than **450 libraries nationwide** between September 1, 2017, and August 31, 2018, by providing traveling exhibitions, book and film discussion programs, hands-on learning materials, programming grants and awards.

**“News Literacy was our first major effort to bring together community members with opposing viewpoints** in order to engage in civic dialogue and find common ground. Our success with this project has given the program team confidence in our ability to facilitate a conversation about a challenging, timely topic.”

—Diana Laughlin, Estes Valley Library, Estes Park, Colo.; participant in Media Literacy @ Your Library



“By concentrating on family programming we are bringing in ALL ages for these programs. **It has moved us beyond programming by age group to thinking of science education as fun for all ages.**”

—Helene Murtha, Fairfield (Conn.) Public Library; host of NASA@ My Library

“There was a great deal of interest in connecting the founding themes to specific issues happening today [...] in particular, the issue of **partisanship and extreme political polarization.**”

—Alex Andrasik, Penn Yan (N.Y.) Public Library, Revisiting the Founding Era programming grant recipient

“This program allowed the students to **associate reading with pleasure, progress and healing.**”

—Monique Christian-Long, Dallas (Texas) Public Library; participant in the Great Stories Club series on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation

**“I believe many stereotypes of Vietnam veterans were overcome** as a result of this program. Many residents (myself included) learned that our local veterans come from all walks of local life, and also that you never know who served as most don’t talk about it.”

—Kristie Kirkpatrick, Whitman County Rural Library, Colfax, Wash.; The Vietnam War programming grant recipient

# The Vietnam War

**“When we did the photos at the Vietnam Reunion, we had so many vets thanking us for taking the pictures. We expected people to fill the signs up with one or two sentences; however, many of them wrote paragraphs, and **we could tell that it was therapeutic for them.**”**

— Trisha Shively, Kokomo-Howard County (Ind.) Public Library

With their documentary *The Vietnam War*, filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick started a national conversation about one of the most consequential, divisive and controversial events in American history—while also helping those who experienced the war, on all sides, to tell their own stories. In collaboration with the film’s production company, WETA Washington, D.C., and with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the ALA Public Programs Office helped 50 U.S. public libraries participate in the conversation, providing copies of the 18-hour documentary, with public performance rights, and additional programming support resources.

The resulting programs—like Kokomo-Howard County Public Library’s photo exhibit featuring local Vietnam vets holding handwritten signs about their war experiences, and Princeton (N.J.) Public Library’s music performance entitled “Songs of Protest, Songs of Peace”—helped those that lived through this controversial time be seen and heard.



Kokomo-Howard County (Ind.) Public Library

# Great Stories Club

Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation



Alexandria (Va.) Library



Zion-Benton Township (Ill.) High School

**“It is our hope that young adults who participate in the racial healing sessions will establish a relationship with both community members and school personnel so that they have mentors and advocates by their side long after this program concludes, [and that] . . . young people who participate will gain the skills to communicate and advocate for themselves.”**

— Deborah Will, IMC Coordinator, Zion-Benton Township (Ill.) High School

**W**ords are powerful. Sometimes, the words of others can help teens facing challenges open up about their own experience. Since 2006, the Great Stories Club—a thematic reading and discussion series that engages underserved teens through literature-based library outreach—has helped libraries of all types connect with young people who need their expertise most.

In 2018, 25 libraries participated in a pilot round of a new Great Stories Club series on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT). These host libraries—like Zion-Benton Township High School in Zion, Illinois, shown above right—worked with groups to explore the program theme “Growing Up Brave on the Margins,” which highlighted the coming-of-age experience through books featuring authors and protagonists from historically marginalized groups. The teens also participated in racial healing sessions, using an engagement process championed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism.

Also in 2018, the National Endowment for the Arts supported an author tour to bring Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, co-authors of the *March* graphic novel series, to visit with Great Stories Club teens. Aydin and Powell visited several groups—including the Alexandria (Va.) Library working with the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center, shown above left—and spoke during a national virtual event, sharing Congressman John Lewis’ call for people of all ages to get into “good trouble” and move towards community-based change and equity.



## No. 1 Tip for Improving Your News Consumption...



“Now that we have a better understanding of where our patrons are at in terms of media and information literacy, the opportunities ahead of us are to focus more on **bridging the gap between patrons’ media literacy confidence and their actual skills.**”

—Lynnane Pearson, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library

## Media Literacy @ Your Library

**N**early two in three adults say fake news stories “cause a great deal of confusion about the basic facts of current issues and events,” according to a 2016 Pew Research Center report. Convinced that public libraries can help clear up that confusion, the ALA Public Programs Office and the Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook University collaborated on Media Literacy @ Your Library, a prototype program that trained library workers to help their adult patrons become better news consumers.

Five public library teams were trained on media literacy skills, such as identifying trustworthy information, understanding fair vs. biased reports, and learning how to apply news literacy concepts in

real life. The library workers then used their skills to conduct related programs for adults in their communities. Skokie Public Library, for example, launched a Civic Lab News Discussion Group, which gave patrons a space to come together and collectively analyze viral news items from their social media streams.

The participating libraries also provided feedback on a web-based curriculum for the library field so that more library professionals can develop their skills in an accessible virtual environment. The prototype findings will help ALA better serve the needs of library professionals in analyzing news sources and identifying better media for their patrons.

# Libraries Transforming Communities

## Models for Change

**“I think we can offer a safe space for our community to have much needed, difficult conversation. I also feel this can be used as a tool to have the community grow together.”**

—LTC: Models for Change training participant

When it comes to meaningful dialogue, libraries are a great place to start. But leading difficult conversations isn't easy; library workers need dialogue and deliberation skills to support that work.

Enter Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Models for Change, which since 2017 has reached nearly 6,600 public and academic library workers through free webinars and in-person workshops, with a goal of strengthening their skills in coalition-building and facilitating conversation. An initiative of ALA and the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, LTC: Models for Change provides library workers with a variety of dialogue and deliberation strategies they can use to initiate conversation in their communities.

At a workshop at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, representatives of small, mid-sized and rural communities worked with trainers from Conversation Café to learn to facilitate inclusive, issues-based conversations.



# American Dream Literacy Initiative

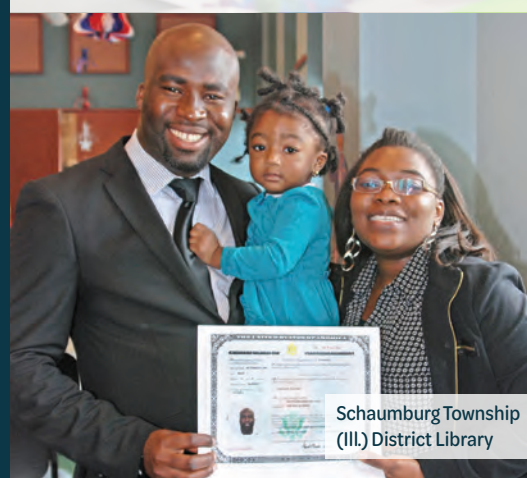
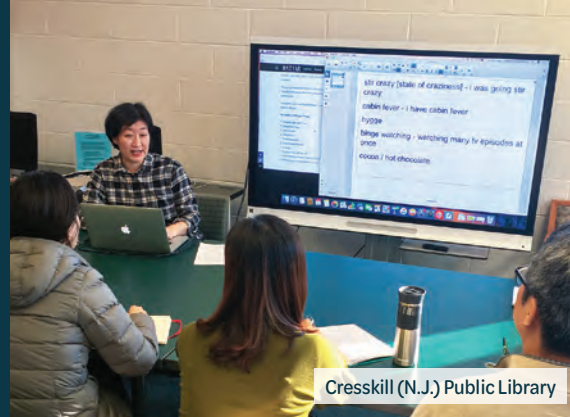
**“I hope in the future to continue learning English, teaching citizenship . . . and see my grandchildren grow up . . . because family is the best reason to live.”**

—Rafael Lleras, American Dream participant at Bemis Public Library, Littleton, Colo.

**W**hen a person has ideas to share but struggles to communicate in the dominate language of their community, their voice isn’t heard—and their contribution to the conversation can be lost.

Libraries are among the first institutions immigrants turn to for help with accessing technology or learning to read, write and speak English. Since 2008, ALA and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation have helped U.S. public libraries expand those crucial services for adult English language learners or adults in need of basic education and workforce development.

Administered by ALA’s Public Programs Office and the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, American Dream grants have helped more than 200 libraries augment their ESL collections, increase computer access and training, hold English language, GED and citizenship classes, and raise the visibility of services for immigrant populations. For Bemis Public Library—shown center—a \$10,000 grant allowed the library to expand its English language classes. Thanks in part to American Dream funds, English language learners in Littleton attained their GEDs, found jobs, became U.S. citizens and gained confidence in a new language.







## Award-winning Programs

### 2018 SARA JAFFARIAN SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY HUMANITIES PROGRAMMING

Danville (Ark.) Public Schools was awarded ALA's 2018 Jaffarian Award for its program, Tales of the Crypt: Danville's Living History. Using a historic local cemetery as a starting point, school librarian Kelly Klober taught students about cultural and historical preservation through workshops, primary source research, community service and a final performance at the cemetery, reenacting the lives of those interred there. Learn more about the Jaffarian Award at [ala.org/jaffarian](http://ala.org/jaffarian).

### 2018 EXCELLENCE IN LIBRARY PROGRAMMING AWARD

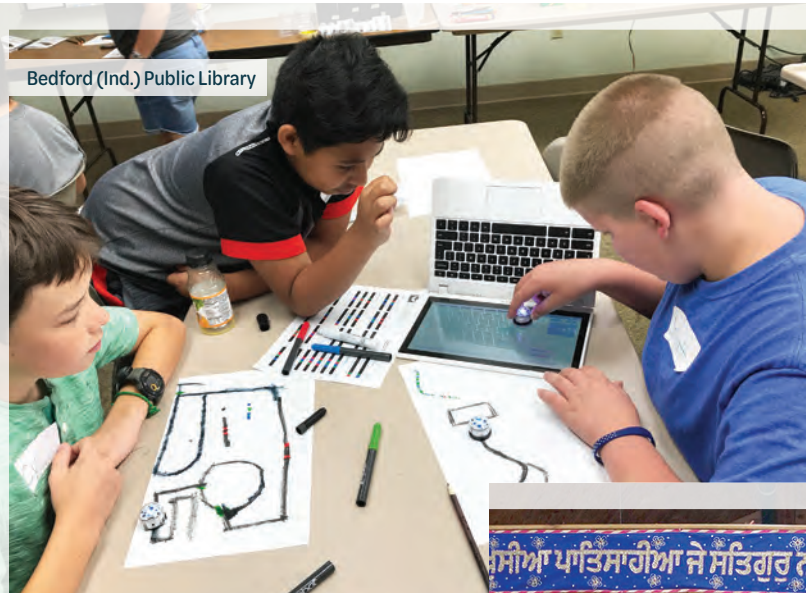
ALA's 2018 Excellence in Library Programming Award was awarded to Joliet (Ill.) Public Library for Star Wars Day, the largest public library event of its kind in the world. Created in 2009, the multigenerational event now boasts approximately 10,000 attendees annually and features cosplayers from around the country, themed music and games, and meet-and-greets with the authors and artists of Star Wars-themed books and graphic novels. All library types are eligible for the Excellence in Library Programming Award; learn more at [ala.org/programmingexcellence](http://ala.org/programmingexcellence).

Lakewood (Ohio) Public Library



# PROGRAMMING Librarian

Bedford (Ind.) Public Library



Kokomo-Howard County (Ind.) Public Library

Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library



Palatine (Ill.) Public Library



Milwaukee (Wis.) Public Library

## Best of ProgrammingLibrarian.org

ProgrammingLibrarian.org is an online community where library professionals share programming inspirations, successes and advice. Approximately 20,000 library professionals visit the site each month for program ideas, free online learning opportunities, and news about grants and awards, and over 6,000 have signed up to receive the Programming Librarian newsletter. To join them, visit [programminglibrarian.org/newsletter](http://programminglibrarian.org/newsletter).

# News and Highlights



## NEW AMERICANS LIBRARY PROJECT

The New Americans Library Project convenes a team of public librarians and their partner organizations experienced in providing services to new Americans, such as **literacy and civic engagement programming**.



The six-month research project will explore existing library service models, identify opportunities and challenges, and recommend a national service agenda for public libraries. Supported by the JPB Foundation, the project will result in a plan for national distribution of best practices.

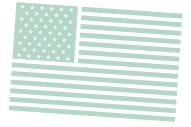
## THINKING MONEY FOR KIDS

In collaboration with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Investor Education Foundation, the ALA Public Programs Office is developing a **financial literacy traveling exhibition** for children ages 7 to 11 and their parents, caregivers and educators. The project is inspired by the success of the original Thinking Money, which traveled to 50 public libraries between 2016 and 2018, reaching an audience of 300,000 exhibition visitors and 9,000 program attendees. Applications for the new exhibition will be accepted from U.S. public libraries in late 2018.



## AMERICAN CREED: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Working with Citizen Film, the National Writing Project and Citizen University, the Public Programs Office is offering a programming grant for public libraries called American Creed: Community Conversations. The grant features *American Creed*, a PBS documentary that **invites audiences to consider what America's ideals and identity ought to be**, as a programming cornerstone. The film is constructed around a seminar-style conversation co-led by the renowned historian David M. Kennedy and his Stanford University colleague, political scientist and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Programming grants will be awarded in late 2018. The project is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.



## STEM PROGRAMS

2018 saw continued STEM-based programming at public libraries nationwide through a Public Programs Office collaboration with the National Center for Interactive Learning at the Space Science Institute. The STAR\_Net Discover and Explore traveling exhibitions, funded by the National Science Foundation, will conclude a three-year, 66-library tour in late 2018, reaching approximately 1 million exhibition visitors and 50,000 related program participants. The NASA@ My Library initiative, funded by the NASA Science Mission Directorate, will continue into its second phase, providing selected libraries with programming kits, interactive tools and professional development resources to bring **hands-on space science programming** to communities across the country.



# Get Involved

## 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. Join the conversation at <http://bit.ly/LibrariesFosterCommunityEngagement>.

## PUBLIC AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As the advisory committee to the Public Programs Office, the 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. Learn more at [programminglibrarian.org/about](http://programminglibrarian.org/about).

## 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 10,000 library professionals share ideas, advice and support. Learn more at [programminglibrarian.org/about](http://programminglibrarian.org/about).

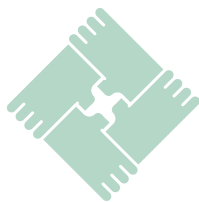
## SUPPORT THE ALA CULTURAL COMMUNITIES FUND

The Cultural Communities Fund (CCF) was created in 2003 as a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support cultural programming in libraries. Since then, the endowment has grown to more than \$1.9 million, including over \$39,000 raised in 2018. 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).



# Sponsors

The ALA Public Programs Office has been able to reach communities nationwide thanks to the following funders and partners:



Acton Family Giving

American Express

Center for News Literacy at Stony

Brook University

Cincinnati Museum Center

Citizen Film

Citizen University

Democracy Fund

Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Everyday Democracy

FINRA Investor Education

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

The JPB Foundation

National Aeronautics and Space  
Administration

National Center for Interactive Learning  
at the Space Science Institute

National Coalition for Dialogue &  
Deliberation

National Endowment for the Arts

National Endowment for the Humanities

National Library of Medicine

National Network of Libraries  
of Medicine

National Science Foundation

The National Writing Project

New Knowledge Organization Ltd.

Oklahoma State University Library  
PBS

Rita Allen Foundation

Smithsonian National Museum of African  
American History and Culture

WETA Productions, Washington, D.C.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation



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