

## **Preparing Public Librarians to Deal with the Next Health Crisis Interview Protocol**

**Introduction:** Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am **[name]** from the University of Missouri, and I will be asking you several questions. Please know that there is no right or wrong answer; we're interested in exploring your decision-making process regarding your library's COVID-19 response, so that we can share the various ways public libraries succeeded in making their services available during this challenging time. We will also ask you about continuing education opportunities for your employees, particularly focused on open data and open science resources for science-related promotion.

We have sent you a consent form, but I would like to review our consent process briefly. I anticipate that this interview will take 45-60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You may leave the conversation at any time, and you may decline to answer any question if you feel uncomfortable answering it.

I will be recording this session so I can go back in and make a transcript for the research team to use. When I make the transcript, I will take out any personally identifying information and remove references to your library's name. The research team will use the transcript for analysis. We will refer to your survey and interview results by number rather than by name.

The recording will be stored offline in a password-protected computer drive for three years or until we are permitted by the university to destroy the recording. The de-identified transcript will be kept for three years after the research project ends, and then it will also be deleted.

Because you have participated in both the survey and the interview, we will offer you compensation in the amount of a \$50 gift card.

Do I have your consent to begin the interview?

*[If YES, say, "Thank you. I will now begin the recording." If NO, thank respondent for their time and end the call.]*

[Begin recording.]

I am **[name]**, and the date is **[date]**. This is an interview with participant number **[survey number]**.

### **YOUR LIBRARY'S PANDEMIC ACTIONS/REACTIONS**

- I'd like to begin with you telling me your "pandemic library decision story," as it were. What actions and decisions did you make to promote pandemic-related information services and programming for your library?
  - What were some challenges?
  - How did you work with the various stakeholders or funding/governmental agencies during the process?

[Prompt for more information as needed. Ideas might include: What were your biggest management concerns during the pandemic? Did you decide to close your library? How did you handle staffing? Were they deployed to other areas in your city or municipality? Did your circulation patterns change? Did you decide to prioritize digital over print resources?]

Thank you for sharing. Related to your library's pandemic response:

- What were the best decisions you made to support your library during the pandemic?
- In hindsight, what would you have done differently in terms of staffing? What about programming? What about providing pandemic-related information sources?

### **LIBRARY PROGRAMMING**

During the pandemic, we heard lots about public library online programming. I'd like to ask you some questions about how (or whether) you pivoted your library's programming, and how staffing played a part.

- What programming was your library able to provide during the pandemic?
- Did you move any of your programming online? How did you feel that worked?
- Did your library engage in any COVID-19 or pandemic-related programming?
  - *[If yes]* Tell me about that programming. What were your desired goals and outcomes from those programs?

Next – specific to the pandemic, did you offer any programming on the topic of COVID-19? If so:

- What pandemic-related programming was most attended by your users?
- What pandemic-related programming was most effective for your users?
- What pandemic-related programming didn't work or wasn't appealing for your users?

### **PANDEMIC-RELATED INFORMATION**

Because public libraries are noted for providing information to their users, I'd like to ask some questions about information your library provided about COVID-19 and the pandemic.

- What types of pandemic-related information did your library provide to your users?
- What resources did your library use to provide pandemic-related information?
- Did you use or share data from your local health department? or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention?
- Did you create any information resources for your users?
  - *[If yes]*. How did you share these resources? On your library web site, through social media, other?
- What information resources did you think were most effective for your users?
- What information resources were least effective for your users?
- Did you feel comfortable creating and/or sharing COVID-19 information with your community?

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION: OPEN SCIENCE AND OPEN DATA**

Finally, our research team would like to explore the possibility of creating learning opportunities for public library staff – specially around sharing open science and open data (i.e., the kinds of information that might have been helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic). The idea is, we'd like to increase the ability to respond to potential future pandemics or other health crises, and we would like a sense of how best to do that.

- How do employees at your library pursue continuing education?
  - Do they need to complete a certain number of hours each year? Is continuing education mandated by the library, or is it voluntary? What sort of topics do they pursue? Is there funding available for continuing education; if so, how much?
- What providers do your employees use for continuing education? Examples might include Web Junction, PLA and ALA conferences, city-provided training?

We are proposing increasing public librarians' training in open science and open data as a way they can be prepared to help their populations deal with future pandemics or health crises. By open science, we mean the international movement to make science accessible to all. One way open science is supported is through the availability of open data – including research data, government data, and even data from crowdsourcing initiatives. Our goal is to create a set of online classes and training modules to be accessible across the country.

Thinking of your staff and their provision of services for your community related to open science, open data, and/or crowdsourcing projects,

- What topics or areas do you think would be most effective for continuing education for librarians and library personnel?
- What training formats would be most effective?

In terms of open data and the tools for using it, what data and what continuing education would enable you to lead initiatives more effectively and would support decision making?:

- What data would be most helpful to you as a manager if you needed to pivot again because of a health crisis?
- What would you need to know to best make use of that data? -- do you have a sense of what tools, resources, additional training or staff would be needed?
- Who in the library would benefit from increased access to this data or these resources? (e.g., your reference librarians in sharing information with patrons; your web designer in creating responsive pages)