Transforming Libraries into Community Anchors in Rural Texas (TLCART)

Carol Perryman[a] and Ling Hwey Jeng
[a]Texas Woman's University, School of Library and Information Studies, Denton, Texas, U.S.A.
cperryman@twu.edu, ljeng@twu.edu

ABSTRACT

Lack of access to increasingly digital services and resources contributes to growing disparities for small and rural communities across the United States, impacting residents' quality of life. As community anchor institutions, rural librarians with expertise in digital literacy and a deep understanding of their unique communities can be an important part of efforts to improve quality of life for residents. However, traditional library education does not include the development of students as future leaders of community growth. Informed by prior efforts in Appalachia and Kentucky, the IMLS funded program *Transforming Libraries into Community Anchors in Rural Texas* (*TLCART)* supports community engagement and the use of information and communication technology in small rural communities in Texas. A cohort of students were selected based on their location, ethnicity, and a track record of community engagement, to engage in community development activities including needs assessment, stakeholder analysis, grant writing, and project planning, all within their own communities. Direct and indirect assessments are designed based on learning outcomes and participation. Evidence gathered from community needs assessment will inform future research efforts in determining and providing services, and establish a new model for LIS education that includes facilitative practitioner development.

TOPICS

Education programs; public libraries; community engagement