

# Connecting Rural Public Libraries to LIS Education and Research: The Case of Health Services, Programs, and Partnerships

Denice Adkins<sup>a</sup>, Jenny S. Bossaller<sup>a</sup>, Susan K. Burke<sup>b</sup>, Christine D'Arpa<sup>c</sup>,  
Noah Lenstra<sup>d</sup>, Bharat Mehra<sup>e</sup>, Ellen L. Rubenstein<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Missouri, United States of America

<sup>b</sup>University of Oklahoma, United States of America

<sup>c</sup>Wayne State University, United States of America

<sup>d</sup>University of North Carolina at Greensboro, United States of America

<sup>e</sup>University of Alabama, United States of America

adkinsde@missouri.edu, bossallerj@missouri.edu, sburke@ou.edu, christine.darpa@wayne.edu,  
lenstra@uncg.edu, bmehra@ua.edu, erubenstein@ou.edu

## ABSTRACT

In our increasingly interdisciplinary field, health professionals, advocates, and researchers frequently look to public librarians as partners. This trend may be particularly important in small and rural communities, where the public library occupies a uniquely important role given the disinvestment in health infrastructure in those communities. How are both current and aspiring small and rural public librarians receiving the education, training, and ongoing support needed to foster and sustain health services and programs with local, regional, and national partners? This panel draws attention to and discusses these issues in three ways: 1. Showcasing connections across three Institute of Museum and Library Services funded projects focused on small and rural public libraries and health; 2. Fostering audience interaction by soliciting questions and feedback prior to the conference; 3. Engaging in dialogue about how LIS educators can form and sustain connections to public librarians, particularly in small and rural communities. Topics the panelists will explore or discuss include, 1. What challenges and opportunities are associated with forming and sustaining partnerships with small and rural librarians, particularly in grant funded projects? 2. How can LIS educators learn from the experiences of rural and small librarians to ensure that LIS graduates have the knowledge and skills to be successful in their communities? 3. What additional work is needed to understand and support small and rural public librarians as catalysts of social justice and health justice?

## ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

public libraries; community and civic organizations; community-led services; social justice

## AUTHOR KEYWORDS

rural health; public libraries; health equity; community engagement