

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IMLS American Rescue Plan Grant will allow the New Haven Free Public Library to address community needs created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and assist with recovery.

People turn to the library for a great variety of information related to basic needs, and the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) strives to meet the diverse needs of all who walk through our doors. Some of the Library's most frequent users are New Haven's most vulnerable residents, and we serve many individuals and families who deal with mental and physical health issues, isolation, and a lack of safety and independence.

This project will build upon a successful 6-year partnership between NHFPL and Liberty Community Services, Inc. (LCS) to provide full-time, on-site consultations and case management services with a licensed social worker across three NHFPL locations: the Ives Main Library in downtown New Haven, the Fair Haven branch library in the Fair Haven neighborhood, and the Wilson branch library in the Hill neighborhood. LCS's services are inclusive, culturally competent, trauma informed and, when programmatically indicated, gender-specific. Key to project success is intensive outreach and "in-reach," and the purpose of the service is to respectfully meet people where they are – geographically, economically, and psychologically – in order to address critical concerns in their lives.

Patrons heavily utilize the case management services located at NHFPL and we anticipate need to increase as pandemic emergency response measures lapse. These community needs have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and as patrons increasingly return to the library the need for case management services to supplement traditional library services is also growing. As the pandemic recedes and associated emergency support services, unemployment benefits, and housing assistance lapse, we anticipate the need for case management services to further increase.