

Helping Libraries Meet the Needs of Diverse Teens 2012 Final Report



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I. About the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

ALA Connect in preparation for Teen Read Week, which will be celebrated October 14 – 20, 2012.

Giving needy 30 libraries in 24 states (see Appendix A for a map) the chance to purchase resources and implement programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of their community's teens helped make strides toward ensuring the teens develop key literacy skills and the opportunity to take advantage of the many resources libraries offer for personal and educational use. The expected outcome of this program was that more teens in the communities of participating libraries, especially those from diverse backgrounds, have access to appropriate resources and visit their libraries regularly to borrow reading materials and avail themselves of other services the library offers.

For the teen summer intern program, 184 teens worke

Resources included lists of recommended reading in Spanish and English, demos of the free Teen Book Finder app, information about Teen Read Week and summer reading programs and more.

Method

YALSA utilized its existing communication channels, including its web site, blog, email listservs and Twitter feed to promote the mini grant opportunities. Press releases about the funding opportunities were distributed widely to the library community through ALA's Public Information Office. Resources, including demos of the Teen Book Finder app, were disseminated to attendees at the various conferences.

Grant applications were forwarded to specially appointed YALSA member taskforces, who vetted the applications and chose the winners based on an established set of criteria. All grantees went through two initial training sessions: one via conference call and the other via webinar. For the duration of the project, grantees communicated

While the overall goals were to increase the ability of libraries to provide materials, services and resources to targeted groups such as Spanish speaking teens, several libraries did see some unintended outcomes, including changing teen perceptions of libraries, which led to increased use of the library in general, not just for the duration of the grant program. Lindsey Tomsu from La Vista Public Library in Nebraska noted that the biggest achievement of the grant program for

continued economic difficulties have put a real strain on libraries' ability to meet the needs of their community. As a result of libraries' financial hardships, YALSA, whose main source of revenue comes from this community, also felt the economic impact. The grants YALSA was able to offer through the funding provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation enabled YALSA to provide needed support to libraries that we would not otherwise have been able to do.

Additionally, the initiative helped YALSA establish stronger ties with state library agency youth consultants, who are important stakeholders in the library community. Historically, this group has focused a significant portion of their work on summer reading programs. This initiative not only gave YALSA a good reason to reach out to these individuals, but it also helped raise the profile of YALSA from this group and increase awareness about our mission, services and resources. As a result, YALSA now offers quarterly free webinars to the youth consultants as well as a free monthly newsletter, which have been well received by many of the youth consultants. Several of them have taken the step to join YALSA as a personal member and to become active in the organization through committee service. Stronger ties with these state level stakeholders can only help YALSA increase its impact.

Selected Media Coverage:

- Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grants Funds to ALSC, YALSA, <http://ow.ly/owQ2k>
- YALSA and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation Award Grants to 40 Libraries, <http://ow.ly/owQeV>
- YALSA Names Niles Public Library Winner of a Dollar General/YALSA Summer Teen Intern Program Grant, <http://ow.ly/owQts>
- OCL Receives YALSA Grant for Teen Read Week, <http://ow.ly/owQET>
- Colony Public Library Wins Grant, <http://ow.ly/owQQz>

IV. Lessons Learned

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For the purpose of measuring impact more precisely, it would have been helpful to be more specific when asking the number of hours teen interns worked.

- **Capacity:** YALSA significantly scaled up the size of its mini grant program from 30 in 2011 to 70 in 2012. We underestimated the amount of additional work this involved.
- **For Grantees:** many grantees reported that they needed to plan further ahead, including beginning their marketing sooner. More than one grantee reported that the funds allowed them to try a new program or service in their library, which was well received by the teens, so they were encouraged to try more new things. There were consistent reports from the teen intern grantees that they were impressed by the skills and professionalism of the teens and felt the need to provide more opportunities for teens to be engaged in the work of the library.

V. Financial Statement

Activity	Description	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
10 mini grants for Teen Read Week	At \$1,000 each	\$10,000	\$10,000
20 mini grants for summer reading programs	At \$1,000 each	\$20,000	\$20,000
Mobile application expansion	Create the Teen Book Finder app for other devices -- project delayed	\$5,000	N/A

40 grants for teen summer interns
 Training and materials for 70 grant winners

VI. Sustainability Plans

- **Resources:** many of the resources created during this project will live on and have already been made available to the library community and/or public, including:
 - Webinars
 - iPhone app
 - Downloadable pamphlet of recommended reading
- **Funding:** to further the program and YALSA's reach, there are options to explore for obtaining funds to support this effort, including:
 - Seeking foundation support
 - Seeking corporate support
 - Setting aside a portion of existing YALSA funds, such as interest from the William C. Morris Endowment, to help fund the effort

VII. Appendices

Appendix A

