

## **2017 CSAC CHALLENGE AWARDS - "TARGETING SOLUTIONS" - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***LOS ANGELES COUNTY- LIBRARY OFFERS LIFE SKILLS TRAINING FOR TEENS***

**(POPULATION: Urban; ISSUE AREA: Government Finance, Administration & Technology > Libraries)**

**OVERVIEW:** The Adult 101 series offers 21<sup>st</sup> Century life skills workshops and classes to teens age 13-18, aiming to help them thrive professionally and personally.

**CHALLENGE:** Teenagers no longer learn the skills necessary for success in adulthood. The 2011 U.S. Department of Labor Study "Skills to Pay the Bills" found that 75 percent of employers felt high school graduates were not properly prepared for the workforce, especially in "soft skills" like effective communication and interpersonal flexibility. Yet few, if any, high schools still offer courses like home economics. Many teens already use the library as a safe place to stay after school, or as a place to gather and socialize in a social media-dominated world. Between 2004 and 2015, teen library programs experienced a 900% participation increase, and the Library wanted to expand on this success.

**INNOVATIVE SOLUTION:** Adult 101 allowed libraries to teach what schools aren't offering. A variety of soft skills topics were developed: Etiquette; Financial Savvy; Nutrition and Fitness; Persona; Personal Safety; Public Speaking; Social Media and Cyber Smarts; and Workplace Know-How and Time Management. Content and marketing materials were designed to appeal to teens. Adult 101 was piloted at fifteen of LA County's 87 libraries, with twelve sessions at each. To lead each workshop, the Library either hired an expert consultant (e.g. an etiquette coach, a nutritionist, a certified teen life coach), or partnered with local organizations (personal safety coaches from Children's Rescue Alliance) and even other LA County Departments (Consumer Affairs lead workshops on finances). Presenters also helped create programs-in-a-box—description, instructions, and materials—for ease of replication.

**ORIGINALITY:** Adult 101 offered new services to County residents, focusing on an often underserved population: teens. It was LA County Library's first attempt at mega-programming, a shift from programs done in isolation to a cohesive, thoughtfully-grouped series with a shared goal: impacting teens' skill

sets across the Library system. The series positively impacted training for County employees, our Teen Librarians, who were given the chance to take a leadership role in the development of a collaborative program, and will help run it in future years. Adult 101 represents two of the Library's strategic initiatives: affirming the library as a center for learning, and developing a staff prepared for the future.

**COST EFFECTIVENESS:** The Library applied for and received a 2016 California State Library LSTA grant in the amount of \$75,000 to cover this program. Funding was used to purchase books and DVDs (\$15,000); equipment and supplies (\$15,000); and consultant fees (\$45,000). The program is intended to be replicable at any funding level without the grant monies; LA County Library can continue to use many of the materials from the original grant as they are not consumables (yoga mats, exercise equipment, games, etc). Additionally, consulting fees also included assistance developing program content, so librarians can sustain the program without the paid presenters in the future.

**RESULTS:** In Adult 101's first year, 1,200 teens attended 180 sessions. The goal was to improve teens' skill sets, and survey results indicate success. When asked "How confident are you about entering the workforce?," 79 percent of teens who reported feeling average in the pre-survey reported feeling good or excellent in the post-survey. Those who felt good increased from 30 to 60 percent, and excellent increased from 14 to 29 percent. Teens reported not realizing the magnitude of their skills knowledge gaps until after attending Adult 101. Participants learned how to get along with co-workers; be punctual and meet deadlines; communicate appropriately with supervisors; handle credit and debt; build healthy personal habits; and convey confidence as they moved into adulthood and the workplace. Due to overwhelming interest, the program was expanded—as of September 2016, Adult 101 is now offered in all 87 LA County Library locations, thanks in part to a small \$4,000 grant received for expansion.

**PROGRAM CONTACT:** Jessie Towers, Marketing Analyst, LA County Library. 7400 E Imperial Hwy, Downey, CA 90242. (562) 940-4153. [jtowers@library.lacounty.gov](mailto:jtowers@library.lacounty.gov).

**OPTIONAL SUBMISSION:** Program guide, sample flyer, website content and program photos.