

Rhode Island's Next Generation Library Challenge

Studio Rhode Phase II

Overview

Historically, libraries have primarily served to provide access to physical collections of content. The design of library buildings and spaces--from stacks to circulation desks--even supports this mission, as does the staffing, programming, and general user experience of libraries. As a result, public perception of libraries as repositories of print-based media persists today.

In Rhode Island, efforts are underway in our libraries to find new ways to engage communities. Libraries are already embracing their role as community hubs that empower residents to be active learners and creators by providing learning lounges, computer science training, literacy programs, and makerspaces. But much more work needs to be done to truly transform the user experience in Next Generation Libraries.

To support that work, the Rhode Island Office of Innovation, in partnership with the Office of Library and Information Services, launching Round 1 of a Next Generation Library Challenge in the spring of 2017, called Studio Rhode.

[We are happy to announce that Studio Rhode Round 2 applications are currently live!](#)

This second Studio Rhode challenge will award four libraries up to \$10,000 each in unrestricted funds to buy totally new tools or to upgrade old ones, to pilot a new program, or to strengthen an existing one.

This challenge provides municipal, community, and university libraries open to the public in Rhode Island a chance to learn how to use 21st century technology to solve community problems in the library as well as the opportunity to build partnerships and develop a next generation digital community hub at their library.

Studio Rhode aims to not just change the look, feel, and service delivery of a library, but to drive creativity and positively impact a library's community. In this second challenge, applicants will need to propose how their library will use up to \$10,000 to reimagine their role as a digital community hub for multigenerational and inclusive learning in a fashion that best meets the needs of their community in a short 3-4 month pilot from March to June. For example, a library may choose to leverage the Studio Rhode framework to help young adults capture and share stories from older generations, to train the disabled to use assistive technology to find employment, or increase the number of words that a child hears by age four through the gamification of learning. Proposals may focus on accelerating existing areas of expertise, taking

initiatives to scale, or building capacity to offer new services--but they will not look to sustain the status quo. This is an opportunity for libraries to pilot an entirely new framework for serving their community.

Framework

The following are three essential tenets of the Studio Rhode Next Generation Library framework:

1. **Community Concierge:** The Community Concierge imagines a library that is shaped around the needs of all community members, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, or age. Libraries need to use the experience they hope to provide to each user as the key driver of the design of both the physical and virtual space of the library. We believe this will create an open, inclusive, engaging, and interactive place for collaboration, driven by a clear understanding of user requirements, tools, and learning activities tailored to those needs.
2. **Digital Creation Studio:** Studio Rhode envisions the library as a place for members of the community to design, create, and share knowledge with next-generation digital tools. Studio Rhode seeks to transform libraries into places to engage in crucial community building cornerstones in a 21st century way—by creating digital stories, new media, or using digital tools to develop new ideas in service of community or self.
3. **New Tools:** Studio Rhode libraries may leverage the grant to buy new technology to support the creation of the Community Concierge and Digital Creation Studio. For example, the first Studio Rhode challenge provided two public libraries with access to Apple hardware and all the content that comes with it--through the App Store, iBooks Store, iTunes U and iTunes as well as the tools to become content creators through Apple's creativity and productivity apps.

Why Multigenerational Digital Learning and Creation?

Technology provides people of all ages and all abilities with new tools, new ways to create, new sources of information, new ways to connect--and has transformative applications for learning. When effectively deployed, this type of learning can be a game changer for individuals by empowering learners to become creators of new content, culture, and enterprise, unleashing the creative potential of a community. Further, digital learning opportunities provide members within a community a common platform for engaging with one another despite disparate interests and experiences.

Studio Rhode Libraries as “Lighthouses”

A successful pilot proposal will be replicable and scalable not just at a model for how not just the Studio Rhode library, but at all libraries looking to better can support the needs of Rhode

Islanders. The Studio Rhode library will be both an exemplar for the positive community impact of the Studio Rhode framework and the potential of next generation library models generally. As a result, a successful applicant will need to propose a model that is both innovative and scalable, and commit to share their story.

Process

Studio Rhode Application

The Studio Rhode Next Generation Library Challenge seeks to engage public libraries that are reimagining the way they approach community challenges and program delivery. Grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded to sustainable, impactful projects that focus on community engagement, technology, education or key issues facing the community. Specifically, proposals should focus on a problem grounded in the needs of the community and propose an innovative solution that can be implemented within 3-4 months. Any public library in Rhode Island may apply for a Studio Rhode grant; applications that include partnerships with other libraries or community organizations are welcomed.

Applications are due by February 2, 2018. Total application length (including application form) cannot exceed five pages. Up to four grants will be awarded in mid-February; successful proposals will include a well-defined and compelling problem supported by a community needs analysis and an effective solution that can be piloted within the grant period and sustained beyond the grant period.

Completed applications are due no later than 4:00PM ET on February 2, 2018 to Bao Vang (bao.vang@innovate.ri.gov).

The second phase Studio Rhode program implementation must be completed by May 31st, at the earliest or June 29th, 2018 at the latest, with a final reflection is due by June 29, 2018. Please review the Studio Rhode Grant Timeline below for all deadlines and events associated with this opportunity.

Next Gen Library Workshop

The Office of Innovation and Office of Library and Information Services will host a Next Generation Library Workshop on [JANUARY 11 from 1:00PM to 3:30PM at the Weaver Library in East Providence](#) to help library teams reimagine how their library delivers services. While teams from any library are encourage to attend, we strongly encourage those interested in attending this workshop to come with an idea or to have drafted parts of this application prior to the workshop. Asking for patron input through surveys or brainstorm sessions with staff members are highly encouraged, before or after the workshop, to get a feel for the excitement and need for a Studio Rhode project idea.

For potential applicants, the Workshop is an opportunity to gather feedback on early-stage ideas and proposals from leaders of the Office of Innovation and the Office of Library and Information Services. For others, the workshop will offer exposure to new tools, strategies and materials to engage in rapid prototyping, collaborative design, crowdsourcing, ideation, user experience design, and community storytelling.

Application Review Process & Timeline

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a sub- committee led by the Office of Innovation and the Office of Library and Information Services.

Timeline

January 1	Application Period Opens
January 11	Next Generation Library Workshop @ Weaver Library from 1-3:30 PM
February 2	Application Due
February 16	Libraries Notified of Award
March 1	Studio Rhode Project Deployment
May 31	Minimum Studio Rhode Project Length
June 29	Maximum Studio Rhode Project Length
June 29	Studio Rhode Final Report Due

Reflection and Final Project Report

The Studio Rhode Library will be asked to reflect and share throughout the process of the project period. The purpose of this reflection is both to spread the work of Studio Rhode to a wider public audience, and to help build an example for how other libraries might successfully leverage the Studio Rhode framework. While flexible in format, public reflections will be required monthly, could take the form of a blog, vlog, user interviews, public forum, or another format preferred by the library. These reflections should tell a story that depicts the transformation of the applicant’s library through Studio Rhode and broadcast successes and challenges to a wider audience. A final project report is also required from the awarded library. This report is both a chance to reflect on the process of developing Studio Rhode and to outline the successes, failures, and lessons learned.

Contact Information

Office of Innovation and OLIS Staff are available to assist you through the application process. The selected library will be assigned an Office of Innovation and OLIS staff contact to assist you throughout the Studio Rhode development and implementation.

Applications should be submitted electronically to Bao Vang at bao.vang@innovate.ri.gov. Please contact the following individuals with questions regarding the Studio Rhode opportunity:

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