

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

<p>* 1. Type of Submission:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Pre-application</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Application</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Changed/Corrected Application</p>	<p>* 2. Type of Application: *If Revision, select appropriate letters(s):</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> New <input type="radio"/> Continuation <input type="radio"/> Revision</p> <p>* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):</p> <p>* Other (Specify)</p>
<p>* 3. Date Received:</p> <p>2021-05-24</p>	<p>4. Applicant Identifier:</p> <p>P10287</p>
<p>5a. Federal Entity Identifier:</p> <p></p>	<p>5b. Federal Award Identifier:</p> <p></p>
<p>State Use Only:</p>	
<p>6. Date Received by State:</p> <p></p>	<p>7. State Application Identifier:</p> <p></p>
<p>8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:</p>	
<p>*a. Legal Name:</p> <p>University of Rhode Island</p>	
<p>*b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):</p> <p>223011455</p>	<p>*c. Organizational DUNS:</p> <p>1440171880000</p>
<p>D. Address:</p> <p>* Street 1: 70 Lower College Rd.</p> <p>Street 2:</p> <p>* City: Kingston</p> <p>County: Washington</p> <p>* State: RI: Rhode Island</p> <p>Province:</p> <p>* Zip/Postal Code: 02881-1967</p> <p>* Country: USA: UNITED STATES</p>	
<p>e. Organization Unit:</p> <p>Department Name: 2106 - Communication Studies Division Name:</p>	
<p>f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:</p> <p>Prefix: Ms</p> <p>* First Name: Franca</p> <p>Middle Name:</p> <p>* Last Name: Cirelli</p> <p>Suffix:</p> <p>Title: Assoc Dir Sponsor Project PRE</p> <p>Organizational Affiliation:</p> <p>University of Rhode Island</p> <p>* Telephone Number: 4018745891 Fax Number:</p> <p>* Email: franca@uri.edu</p>	

9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

H: Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*10. Name of Federal Agency: <input type="text" value="Department of Homeland Security"/>	
11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: <input type="text" value="97.132"/>	CFDA Title <input type="text"/>
*12. Funding Opportunity Number: <input type="text" value="DHS-21-TTP-132-00"/>	* Title <input type="text" value="Fiscal Year (FY) 2021"/>
13. Competition Identification Number: <input type="text"/>	* Title <input type="text"/>
14. Areas Affected by Project(Cities, Counties, States, etc.): <div>Add Attachment</div>	
*15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project: <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 5px;">Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence</div>	
Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.	

16. Congressional Districts Of: *a. Applicant <input type="text" value="RI-002"/>	*b. Program/Project <input type="text" value="RI-002"/>
Attach an additional List of Program/Project Congressional Districts is needed. <div>Add Attachment</div>	

17. Proposed Project: *a. Start Date <input type="text" value="2021-10-01"/>	*b. End Date <input type="text" value="2023-09-30"/>
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18. Estimated Funding(\$):	
*a. Federal	<input type="text" value="700066"/>
*b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0"/>
*c. State	<input type="text" value="0"/>
*d. Local	<input type="text" value="0"/>
*e. Other	<input type="text" value="0"/>
*f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0"/>
*g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="700066"/>

* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	
<input type="radio"/> a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on. <input type="radio"/> b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review. <input checked="" type="radio"/> c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.	

* 20. Is this Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes", provide explanation below.)	
<input type="radio"/> Yes No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
<div>Add Attachment</div>	

21.*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that and false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.(U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> **I AGREE **The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.	

Authorized Representative:	
Prefix: <input type="text"/>	
* First Name: <input type="text" value="Theodore"/>	
Middle Name: <input type="text" value="A"/>	
* Last Name: <input type="text" value="Myatt"/>	
Suffix: <input type="text"/>	
* Title: <input type="text" value="Assoc Vice Pres Research Admin"/>	
* Telephone Number: <input type="text" value="4018742636"/>	Fax Number: <input type="text"/>
* Email: <input type="text" value="tedmyatt@uri.edu"/>	
* Signature of Authorized Representative: Completed on submission to Grants gov	*Date Signed: Completed on submission to Grants.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, and officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contract under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:























If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION <input type="text" value="University of Rhode Island"/>	
* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Prefix: <input type="text"/>	
* First Name: <input type="text" value="Theodore"/>	
Middle Name: <input type="text" value="A."/>	
* Last Name: <input type="text" value="Myatt, Sc.D."/>	
Suffix: <input type="text"/>	
* Title: <input type="text" value="AVP for Research Admin"/>	
* SIGNATURE: Completed on submission to Grants.gov	* Date: Completed on submission to Grants.gov

ATTACHMENTS FORM

Instructions: On this form, you will attach the various files that make up your grant application. Please consult with the appropriate Agency Guidelines for more information about each needed file. Please remember that any files you attach must be in the document format and named as specified in the Guidelines.

Important: Please attach your files in the proper sequence. See the appropriate Agency Guidelines for details.

1) Please attach Attachment 1	FINAL CCC Narrative 5.25.21.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
2) Please attach Attachment 2	CCC Logic Model 5.13.21.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
3) Please attach Attachment 3	CCC IMP 2021.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
4) Please attach Attachment 4	BUDGET CCC Summary 5.21.21.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
5) Please attach Attachment 5	Final Budget Narrative CCC 5.21.21.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
6) Please attach Attachment 6	LOSforCCC-MLN.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
7) Please attach Attachment 7	Letter of Support, URI Providence Campus Arts a ...	Delete Attachment	 
8) Please attach Attachment 8	scan (1).pdf	Delete Attachment	 
9) Please attach Attachment 9	Letter of Support, RIPR.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
10) Please attach Attachment 10	Letter of Support, RILA.pdf	Delete Attachment	 
11) Please attach Attachment 11	Lettter of Support RIDH pdf	Delete Attachment	 
12) Please attach Attachment 12	Add Attachment		
13) Please attach Attachment 13	Add Attachment		
14) Please attach Attachment 14	Add Attachment		
15) Please attach Attachment 15	Add Attachment		

**Creating Courageous Communities:
Developing a Statewide Learning Community in
Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence**

Applicant: University of Rhode Island

Location: Rhode Island

Track: Promising Practices: Multiple Projects Track

Date: May 25, 2021

Proposed Start/End Dates: 24 months

Amount of Funds Requested: \$700,066.07

Abstract. Disinformation, conspiracy theories, and propaganda have become large-scale social problems, shaping the way citizens view facts, define truth, and make decisions. Because extremist communities coalesce around disinformation and propaganda, exposure to messages that promote hateful ideologies can lead to violent conflict. Learning to critically analyze news, information, digital media and popular culture through media literacy education can benefit all members of society because it can diminish the appeal and efficacy of us-vs-them persuasive paradigms that rely on activating strong emotions and oversimplifying ideas and information. Media literacy education should be a component of civic education, but many educators lack knowledge and skills for how to bring it into the civic education curriculum to address the threat of domestic extremism. Targeted public service messages can increase public awareness of the threats by individuals encouraging violence and attempting to radicalize others through spreading disinformation, conspiracy theories, and false narratives on social media and other online platforms. Because students develop media literacy competencies through creating media for authentic real-world audiences, a statewide creative media contest can be an effective way to develop media literacy competencies while increasing public awareness of the risks of targeted violence and terrorism. This statewide initiative aims to empower people in Rhode Island to be resilient to violent messaging and recruitment while building resilience through media literacy education that protects and champions democratic responsibilities and values. The statewide program includes 3 components designed to reduce the threat of domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, and active listening among the people of Rhode Island. In Program 1, courageous community conversations provide meaningful media literacy dialogue to learn about propaganda, disinformation and domestic extremism. We seek to reach military spouses and family members, public health and public safety employees, K-12 educators, librarians, high school and college students, and media and public relations professionals. Participants learn how to apply digital media literacy strategies to critically analyze controversial and contentious examples of propaganda and disinformation and learn practical strategies to reduce high conflict through dialogue and active listening. In Program 2, high school and college educators will receive training on how to integrate media literacy into civic education, where topics including disinformation, propaganda, and domestic terrorism and extremism are addressed in the context of civic literacy competencies. They implement practical instructional strategies that help their own learners build resilience to harmful forms of contemporary propaganda and disinformation that advocates violence. In Program 3, a statewide student media campaign engages high school and college students in social media, video and audio public service announcements and billboards creation, with support from local state public safety experts as well as communications and public relations professionals. raising public awareness of the harms of violent extremism and the importance of applying digital media literacy competencies in responding to false narratives, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and disinformation.

Introduction

The state of Rhode Island (RI), along with every other state in the nation, has its share of problems with political extremism, rage, and anti-government fantasies that can lead to targeted violence and domestic terrorism. Those who perpetuate extremist violence are motivated by ideologies, specific issues, or political causes. Today, social media and online forums are used to influence public opinion and spread violent extremist narratives and activity. Some individuals have engaged demonstrators and have targeted houses of worship and crowded commercial facilities or gatherings. Others have promoted a race war, justifying civil disorder that provides opportunities to engage in violence in furtherance of ideological objectives (DHS, 2021). Protests and political rallies have been co-opted by both far-left and far-right extremists. Violent extremists also target government, military, and police as well as private individuals based on race, gender, and other factors (Jones & Doxsee, 2020).

Rhode Island has long been recognized for its tolerance of nonconformists. It was established by Roger Williams after being banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636 for sharing his strange ideas about individual liberty and the separation of church and state. During the harsh winter of his banishment, he was sheltered and fed by the native Narragansetts with whom he had previously traded. Williams wrote that due to “having, of a sense of God’s merciful providence unto me in my distress, [I] called the place Providence, I desired it might be for a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.” Williams purchased the land for Providence and Rhode Island from the Narragansetts whom he considered the rightful owners of the land they inhabited.

However, despite Rhode Island's long history of tolerance, the contemporary threat of extremist violence is real in our small state. Residents see evidence of hateful ideologies and violence in their communities and online. We write this at a time of significant increases in gang violence in Rhode Island urban communities. We have witnessed widespread stickering of neo-Nazi and KKK recruitment messages on traffic signs and other surfaces. Members of online social networks share heinous forms of digital media that arouse strong emotions, including hatred and fear. As national security expert Dr. Herb Lin of the Hoover Institution recently told a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, “Information warfare threat to the United States is different from past threats and it has the potential to destroy reason and reality as a basis for societal discourse... Perpetual civil war, political extremism, waged in the information sphere and egged on by our adversaries is every bit as much of an existential threat to American civilization and democracy as any military threat imaginable.”

In 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center identified several active hate groups in the state. A recent *Boston Globe* article about Rhode Island residents who attended the January 6th rally in Washington that escalated into the insurrection that breached the Capitol Building stated, “They left their homes in Richmond, Johnston, and Cranston, in Newport, West Greenwich, Providence, and Warwick, responding to the call of a leader who needed his ‘Patriots.’” In other words, they were from every part of this small state - north, south, east, and west.

For this reason, this project puts forward a statewide model for addressing the threat of violent extremism using media literacy, dialogue, and active listening by mobilizing a coalition of diverse residents of the state as key stakeholders. The practice of media literacy education is rooted in dialogue, which may enable people to overcome the dangers of “high conflict,” a phenomenon that occurs when people are baffled by the insanity of the “other side”—in politics, at work, or at home (Ripley, 2021). People can learn to be resilient in the face of high conflict, especially in their encounters with harmful propaganda that distills discord into an us-vs-them kind of feud (Hobbs, 2020). Media literacy helps people recognize and resist harmful propaganda, conspiracy theories, and disinformation that may take the form of memes, news, activism, websites, videos, and social media posts.

It will take a sustained community-centered advocacy initiative to build the capacities of Rhode Island

residents to be resilient to harmful propaganda and disinformation that activates high conflict that can lead to violence. For this reason, we will design, implement, and assess a series of three programs to create a flexible model of community-wide digital media literacy education that can be used by people in other states to help all American citizens navigate today's information system in ways that reduce the potential harms of propaganda, disinformation, and conspiracy theories.

We request grant support from the Department of Homeland Security to design, implement, and evaluate the following three programs:

- Project 1. Courageous Community Conversations
- Project 2. Civic Education and Media Literacy in Schools
- Project 3. Statewide Community Creative Media Contest

We expect 10,300+ residents to participate in three programs: In Program 1, 2,000 community members will receive direct service; in Program 2, 6,800 educators and students will receive direct service; and in Program 3, 1,500 high school and college students will receive direct service and 1 million Rhode Island residents will encounter the core messages of the program through mass media or social media. Each of the three projects is described in more detail below. In total, this 2-year program will build capacity that sustainably embeds media literacy and terrorism prevention in many different kinds of community programs for people of all ages.

Problem Statement: How can a coalition of diverse community stakeholders help Rhode Island residents to recognize, analyze, and resist harmful forms of propaganda and disinformation that promotes violent extremism? By building a coalition of diverse community stakeholders who apply digital media literacy to advance dialogue and active listening as a means to critically evaluate propaganda and disinformation, we intend to limit the dangers of domestic extremism through prevention. We anticipate the following long-term outcomes:

- Resilience to harmful propaganda, conspiracy theories, and disinformation increases
- Reduced appeal for messages that justify, celebrate, or advocate extremist violence
- Increases in tolerance and appreciation of political differences
- Sense of urgency about the importance of media literacy and civic education is increased.
- Increased public understanding of the value of using communication & information for social good
- Increased respect and appreciation for the talents of Rhode Island adolescents and young adults
- Public demand for media literacy in civic education increases.

1. Needs Assessment

Help People Understand and Recognize Messages that Justify, Celebrate or Advance Violent Extremism. Domestic terrorism is intended to inflict injuries beyond the direct victims by threatening and intimidating entire communities. Democracies are at risk when violence is used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. White supremacists and other like-minded extremists conducted two-thirds of the terrorist plots and attacks in the United States in 2020. Anarchists, anti-fascists, and other like-minded extremists orchestrated 20 percent of the plots and attacks, though the number of incidents grew from previous years as these extremists targeted law enforcement, military, and government facilities and personnel (Jones & Doxsee, 2020). These groups engage in groundless conspiracy theorizing and may advocate extreme antigovernment doctrines. Of course, not all groups advocate or engage in violence or other criminal activities, but many warn of impending government violence or the need to prepare for a coming

revolution. Members of the militia movement also engage in paramilitary training aimed at protecting citizens from a feared government crackdown. Active groups in Rhode Island include Oath Keepers (North Kingstown), Rhode Island Patriots (statewide), Rise of the Moors (Pawtucket), and TruthRadioShow.com (Providence).

Although many people in Rhode Island get exposure to divisive, hateful social media messages, they may be aware of their corrosive social and civic effects. Although extremist attacks represent just a tiny proportion of the violence that takes place in the U.S. each year, it poses a persistent threat to vulnerable communities, particularly communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ people, women, the disabled, and religious minorities (Hawdon, et al, 2019). This program taps into the powerful role of the bystander, which is a critical function in interrupting potential domestic terrorism activity. This project extends the role of the bystander, helping people learn to recognize communication behavior (online and offline) that may be used to justify, celebrate or advance extremist violence. In examinations of disrupted terrorist activity, members of the public provided nearly one in five of the initial leads to law enforcement, and one in ten was discovered in the investigation of other criminal activity (RAND, 2019).

Population and Participants. We seek to empower Rhode Islanders from all walks of life to navigate today's information system in ways that reduce the potential harms of propaganda, disinformation, and conspiracy theories. We will use the power of high-visibility, youth-created persuasion to build awareness among the entire population of 1 million residents. Specifically, the Creating Courageous Communities program will reach:

- Members of armed services and veterans, and their spouses, partners, and family members
- Rhode Island school, public, and academic librarians
- High school civics and social studies educators and school leaders
- High school and college students
- Community college and college faculty, including pre-service teacher educators, from the 13 higher education institutions in the state
- State public safety and public health professionals
- Public relations professionals with expertise in social media
- Rhode Island media professionals

Reduce the High Conflicts Among Us. Even as most people rely on access to a mobile phone and internet, the digital ecosystem has become more and more challenging for people of all ages to navigate. Every day, people access information, entertainment, and persuasion online, where the line between fact-based evidence and opinion can be blurry. Emotionally compelling content can be so eye-popping that it can compel people to share it. A host of websites that look like news offer false and inflammatory rhetoric on a wide range of controversial topics. With the rise of algorithmic personalization, people's information ecosystems have narrowed, making it less likely for them to encounter unfamiliar or new ideas (Hobbs 2020). Plus, when hateful propaganda and disinformation are delivered through forms of entertainment like memes, pop music, and videos, its appeal can lead people to bypass critical thinking (Hawden et al, 2019). For all these reasons, many people are not well-equipped with the cognitive and affective skills necessary to navigate this environment.

Propaganda and disinformation have become disruptive phenomena that affect people in Rhode Island and around the world. The media representation of the 2020 U.S. election and its dramatic aftermath — along with propaganda and misinformation concerning topics including immigration, racial justice, the coronavirus pandemic, and vaccination-- build on top of concerns about so-called "fake news" and "cancel culture." Indeed, some of Rhode Island's leading citizens function as "conflict entrepreneurs," the terms used to describe those

who seek to exploit or profit from us-vs-them conflict (Ripley, 2021). Even among those who do not have direct contact with members of neo-Nazi, alt-right, Antifa, or militia groups, many Rhode Island families have experienced interpersonal tension as a result of increased political polarization. These disruptions have been felt in the workplace, the community, the school, and in family life, exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory propaganda. But many Rhode Islanders feel helpless to address the situation, leading people towards an avoid-and-deny stance which may provide temporary respite but also interfere with the building of the social consensus that is essential for human flourishing (Ripley, 2021).

Media Literacy: A Prevention Intervention for Civil Society. Media literacy (ML) education is an important approach that aims to improve how participants consume, create, and share information, entertainment, and persuasion. The term is often used as a shorthand for critical thinking about media, but it is fundamentally part of an expanded conceptualization of literacy that includes both “reading” and “writing” practices that are now essential for work, life, and citizenship (Hobbs, 2019). The Department of Homeland Security has recognized the value of media literacy (DHS, 2021). In a systematic review of the literature, the RAND Corporation concluded that ML could be a useful tool for combating truth decay, and they recommend that policymakers and practitioners increase participation from diverse constituencies in scaling ML efforts (Huguet et al, 2019). According to RAND, ML is “made up of several specific competencies, such as the abilities to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate media messages in a variety of forms... ML education teaches participants to consider the implications of message construction from numerous angles, such as how the motivations of those disseminating information could influence content selection and framing how different kinds of media and other technologies affect the nature of communication” (Huguet et al, 2019). Substantial research evidence exists for the value of media literacy education. A meta-analysis of 51 ML interventions by Jeong, Cho, & Hwang (2012) was found to demonstrate strong positive effects on outcomes including knowledge, criticism, perceived realism, influence, behavioral beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, and behavior. This research also found that programs with more sessions on a focused topic were more effective than shorter programs with more components. Other research has demonstrated that media literacy competencies are associated with knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that constitute active and responsible citizenship (Bulger & Davdson, 2018).

Teacher Training in Media Literacy for Civic Education. In Rhode Island, the civic education curriculum has been recognized as substantially deficient and a class-action lawsuit was filed in federal court on behalf of Rhode Island students to address shortcomings in civic education (Borg, 2019). Rhode Island District Court Judge William Smith wrote: “This case ... [is] a cry for help from a generation of young people who are destined to inherit a country which we — the generation currently in charge — are not stewarding well. What these young people seem to recognize is that American democracy is in peril. Its survival, and their ability to reap the benefit of living in a country with robust freedoms and rights, a strong economy, and a moral center protected by the rule of law is something that citizens must cherish, protect, and constantly work for” (Center for Educational Equity, 2020).

Media literacy is a vital component of civic education – but most students in Rhode Island do not experience it. According to Michael A. Rebell, professor of law and educational practice, and executive director of the Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College at Columbia University, effective instruction in media literacy is still not provided in most Rhode Island schools. Most classroom teachers in Rhode Island have had no training in teaching media literacy skills and most schools in Rhode Island do not have on staff sufficient number of skilled library media specialists. Most teachers report in surveys that they are not adequately prepared to implement instruction to advance these competencies (Center for Educational Equity, 2020). Fortunately, political action is underway in Rhode Island to redress these challenges. In April 2021, the Civic Literacy Act was passed through the Rhode Island State Senate. The bill includes an explicit provision

for media literacy, defined as the “development of skills to access, analyze, debate and evaluate media, historical trends, and public policy issues related to the common good” (Alquist, 2021). To accomplish this goal, a substantial statewide effort in teacher education will be required.

Use Community-Created Counterpropaganda to Raise Public Awareness. There’s no doubt that propaganda is effective as a form of warfare, which is why terrorism has long been called “the propaganda of the deed” (Hobbs, 2020). But propaganda can also be used for socially beneficial purposes. Indeed, because the public has long been recognized as being suggestible, the United States has long made use of beneficial propaganda during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War (Parsons, 2021). Counterpropaganda has been found to be most effective when it is nonmilitary, focused and authentic, and based on the truth. There are numerous examples of how intentionally designed media messages can be used to shift public opinion and behavior on drinking and driving, smoking and health, voting, and many other topics (Hobbs, 2020). In the public health community, communication campaigns have long used beneficial propaganda in the form of public health communication campaigns. Careful strategic thinking about ideology and purpose, context, target audiences, organization, media techniques, and effects and evaluation are essential for these campaigns to be effective. Often these are designed top-down by public health experts -- and sometimes they fail to engage key populations. Research on counterpropaganda used to combat foreign terrorism has demonstrated the importance of focusing on regional and local audiences (Brodeur, 2011).

Newer approaches have used the power of crowdsourcing to shape a bottom-up approach that is sometimes called creative contributory contests (CCC). In these programs, many individuals are engaged in contributing creative knowledge towards the public good. Because these contests increase community engagement from a broad range of non-experts, including key affected populations, experience-rich leaders, and creative individuals, they allow for greater inclusion of perspectives from diverse sectors of the community. The diverse array of perspectives presented in CCC contests also possess a higher potential for innovation compared to conventional approaches (Zhang et al, 2015). In CCC programs, a panel of judges evaluates submissions, and finalist entries are publicly celebrated. Crowdsourcing contests have been shown to produce solutions better or at least equivalent to that of experts and have designed solutions for biomedicine, teenage sexual health, HIV testing programs, and other health topics (Matthews et al, 2020).

Current Local Efforts. We are aware of no current programs offered to citizens of Rhode Island that focus on addressing the problems of domestic extremism, terrorism prevention, propaganda, or disinformation. Historically, efforts at addressing target violence and terrorism prevention have been dominated by criminal justice stakeholders through the Rhode Island Fusion Center, which supports the gathering and sharing of threat-related information between the federal and state, local, tribal, and territorial, and private sector partners. The Fusion Center offers support to law enforcement, public safety, fire service, emergency response, public health, and private sector security personnel to understand local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling local officials to better protect their communities.

But the Fusion Center’s focus on public safety may not offer the kind of practical support needed to help local Rhode Island residents identify and address problematic forms of communication behavior (online and face-to-face) that may be linked to potentially dangerous extremism or terrorist activity. Previous research has found that terrorism prevention activities have faced design challenges in maintaining citizen engagement. Done poorly, “If you see something, say something” type education efforts have had the potential to create racial, religious, and other stigmas. Researchers acknowledge that the effects of both terrorism-specific community engagement and risk factor–reduction programming can be subtle and manifest over long periods of time (Jackson et al, 2019). It is especially important that terrorism prevention programs do not limit the full range of people’s freedom of expression or their right to criticize the government or advocate for social change. This is another reason why media literacy education, which is rooted in inquiry and respect for diverse interpretations, is particularly well-suited to address the growing problem of propaganda, disinformation and

conspiracy theories that may advocate violent extremism.

Core Values: Rooted in Respect and Inquiry. Examination of previous federal initiatives in countering violent extremism (CVE) programs has demonstrated that many people who hold views that can be described as "extreme" will never support or commit an act of violence based on those beliefs (German & Mauleón, 2019). At the same time, many who commit terrorist violence have little or no attachment to an extreme ideology (Patel & Koushik, 2017). Media literacy education celebrates diversity, civil rights, and freedom of expression. As we see it, courageous community conversations require appreciation and a sense of curiosity; this is how respect develops and grows. This project will strive to avoid demonizing lawful activities (like the formation of militia groups or Second Amendment advocacy). We also fully recognize that ideas that once seemed extreme (including women's suffrage and civil rights for African Americans) were necessary drivers of social progress.

We intend to develop an evidence-based model for media literacy as a means to prevent extremist violence through designing, implementing, and assessing this community-based program. It is our intention to create a statewide model that can be adopted in other localities, using the Media Literacy Now national network. We expect to find these short-term outcomes:

- Awareness
 - of the risks of exposure to harmful propaganda and disinformation
 - of the value of media literacy as one way to reduce the power of harmful propaganda and disinformation.
 - of how social media and propaganda may promote hateful ideologies that lead to violent extremism
- Knowledge
 - of media literacy concepts & instructional practices
 - of how to critically evaluate disinformation, propaganda and conspiracy theories
 - of how extremist communities recruit members using propaganda, disinformation & conspiracy theories
 - of how to reduce the influence of conflict entrepreneurs
- Behavior
 - Use communicative actions that signal belonging, inclusion, respect, and security
 - Use dialogue and active listening strategies to deter conflict
 - Demonstrate confidence and comfort in discussing controversial issues with adolescents & young adults

We imagine a future where members of a media literate citizenry routinely engage in critical evaluation of information, entertainment, and persuasion by engaging in robust dialogue and examining multiple points of view to discover solutions to the most pressing social problems we face. People will be able to engage in active, respectful listening with a high level of self-awareness of one's own biases and limitations, resisting the urge to demonize opponents or oversimplify complex ideas. Rhode Islanders will not only gain knowledge to understand, interpret and critically analyze propaganda; they will know how to create media messages that inspire and engage their neighbors, building on the strengths of a local community to create change from within.

3. Program Design

Media literacy pedagogy is rooted in discussion and dialogue, where exposure to multiple points of view promotes reflection that deepens people's awareness of both the constructed nature of media messages and the

process of active interpretation. The theory of change that underlies this program is rooted in the longstanding line of research known as contact theory, which aims to combat bias among conflicting groups. Developed in the 1950s by Gordon Allport, Ph.D., the theory holds that contact between diverse groups can promote tolerance and acceptance, especially when those groups have equal status and common goals. A meta-analysis of 500 studies found that conflict can be reduced through group contact because dialogue and discussion work at both a cognitive and emotional level to change people's attitudes and behavior (Paluck, Green, & Green, 2019).

Program 1: Courageous Community Conversations aims to build public awareness of how to use media literacy concepts through dialogue and active listening to reduce high conflict that results from exposure to harmful propaganda and disinformation that promotes domestic extremism. Participants will have increased awareness of the risks of harmful propaganda and disinformation and can apply media literacy concepts to identify author, purpose, point of view, and persuasive techniques. They will be able to use strategies of dialogue and active listening to deter high conflict that contributes to targeted violence and domestic terrorism.

In Year 1, we will offer 12 or more 60-minute sessions on a variety of topics related to news and current events, propaganda, disinformation, and conspiracy theories in social media, as well as strategies for reducing high conflict in family and workplace environments. This online program will be free and open to the public, marketed through social media and by building engagement with community partners shown in Appendix E, all of whom have agreed to help promote the program to their networks. Participants who complete a minimum of 8 sessions of the program will receive a CCC Badge from the Media Education Lab, along with a small cash stipend. They will receive an additional stipend if they offer a face-to-face or online event that introduces the key ideas of the program to members of their local community and report program results using our established evaluation metrics.

We expect 500 participants to attend at least 1 program and 100 people to complete 8 sessions to receive the Badge. Of those participants, we expect 50 people to replicate one or more programs with 30 people in their local communities, reaching an additional 1,500 people. In each of the program sessions, media literacy concepts are introduced along with principles of dialogue and active listening. Small groups discuss specific examples of controversial forms of current events propaganda and disinformation that have been shared on the Mind Over Media website (propaganda.mediaeducationlab.com), a crowdsourced gallery of contemporary propaganda. Additional resources will also be used to help people learn and apply media literacy concepts to identify harmful propaganda and extremist disinformation that threatens democracy and social cohesion. For example, participants will also practice “looping” as a deep listening strategy and learn to create media for counter-messaging through creative and collaborative activities.

For participants who choose to share what they learn by offering their own program to their local community organizations and social networks, coaching will occur through small-group and individualized conversations, helping participants build confidence in hosting a dialogue independently. Baseline measures of awareness, knowledge, and behaviors will be collected when participants join the program and at the conclusion of the program.

Program 2: Media Literacy and Civic Engagement Curriculum will engage teachers, college faculty, and librarians from across the state of Rhode Island in a professional development program designed to help them integrate media literacy into civic education, by offering learners the knowledge, skills, and resilience needed to be less susceptible to harmful propaganda and high conflict that contributes to targeted violence, domestic terrorism, and radicalization to violence. The program will increase knowledge about media literacy and critical thinking pedagogies that align with competencies of civic education in Rhode Island public schools. It will increase awareness of how social media propaganda and disinformation may promote hateful ideologies and foster recruitment and radicalization to violence efforts. Finally, we will increase educator

confidence and comfort in addressing controversial current events topics in the context of media literacy and civic education.

In Year 2, this curriculum and professional development (PD) program will be offered by the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with education partners shown in Appendix E. The program offers 12 or more 60-minute free, public sessions with a focus on the connection between media literacy, civic engagement, and the prevention of violent extremism, and we expect that 300 educators will attend at least one program. Rhode Island educators who complete a minimum of 8 sessions will receive a Media Literacy and Civic Education Curriculum Badge from the Media Education Lab, along with a small stipend. Participants will receive an additional stipend if they implement the curriculum with their own learners and report results using evaluation metrics supplied by our program team. Because we expect 50 Rhode Island participants to reach 130 high school or college students, we expect a total of 6,800 participants (6,500 Rhode Island students and 300 educators) to become introduced to media literacy as a means to minimize harmful propaganda and advance citizenship skills.

To develop the PD program, we will curate resources and curriculum materials for HS and college learners, building upon the media literacy curriculum developed by Renee Hobbs in *Mind Over Media: Propaganda Education for a Digital Age* (2020). Sessions will be designed to align with topics of particular interest to social studies educators, teacher librarians, college faculty, and teacher educators. We will adapt existing measures to create an evaluation rubric to document changes in learners' awareness, knowledge and skills. Participants will adapt the curriculum materials for use in their own learning contexts, in subjects including health, civics, and history. We will use evaluation instruments that enable the measurement of change in educators' knowledge, awareness, and confidence and offer educators instruments to measure growth in the media literacy competencies of their own learners. A showcase event co-sponsored with community partners will feature stories from educators and learners who describe their learning experience to a public audience.

Project 3: Statewide Community Creative Media Contest will raise public awareness of the harms of violent extremism and the importance of applying digital media literacy competencies in responding to false narratives, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and disinformation. This program will increase public awareness of the solutions to harmful propaganda and high conflict. It will increase public awareness of how media can be used in responsible ways to promote inclusion, belonging, mutual respect, and a feeling of security.

High school and college students from any Rhode Island high school or post-secondary institution will be invited to submit creative work for a statewide public service campaign designed to raise public awareness of the harms of violent extremism and the importance of applying digital media literacy competencies in responding to false narratives, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and disinformation. A statewide PSA, billboard and multimedia contest will offer cash prizes for HS and college students, and students will follow a step-by-step process that activates media literacy competencies through creative media production. To support their efforts, we will develop a scope of work statement to guide users who choose to participate in the contest, which will outline the rules and specifications for submissions. We will recruit contest jurors from among local Rhode Island public relations and media professionals, and three local media partners will be selected to sponsor the program, including Rhode Island Public Radio, Lamar Outdoor Advertising, and the Rhode Island Newspaper Group. They will receive a stipend for their participation with the expectation that they donate double the cost of time/space to promote the campaign and the contest winners.

Social media promotion and community outreach will be used to recruit participants from high schools and colleges. Local community participants who participated in Program 1 and 2 will receive a small stipend for working collaboratively to support small groups of Rhode Island high school and college students during the creative media production process. We expect 300 entries from 5-member teams of students attending 60

high schools and colleges, for a total of 1,500 students. We will award cash prizes to high school and college students for best media campaign productions to students in each of the four quadrants of the state for (a) video PSA, (b) social media, (c) radio, and (d) billboard formats, for a minimum distribution of 16 1st place prizes and 16 2nd place prizes. Three media partners will also feature the initiative and showcase winning work, which will ensure that the core messages are disseminated to all 1 million residents of the state. Student creative work will also be showcased at the public galleries of the URI Providence Campus where parents, families, and the general public can celebrate and recognize the creative contributions of students.

Each of these 3 projects follows objectives and outcomes which support the Department of Homeland Security's Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, which aims to prevent terrorism and targeted violence by enhancing community preparedness in supporting partners in the homeland security enterprise.

3. Organization and Key Personnel

The University of Rhode Island is the state's land-grant institution with roots in the Morrill's Land Grant Act of 1862 when the country was in the midst of the Civil War. Signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, it was intended "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes, in the several pursuits and professions in life." The university, which now offers 92 undergraduate majors and 91 graduate programs serving nearly 18,000 students representing 48 states and 76 countries, consists of the main campus in small-town Kingston in southern RI, and an urban campus in Providence in northern RI. The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the flagship public research university of the state. In 2019, researchers received \$100 million in grants and 255 awards were managed through the Division of Research and Economic Development. Funded programs have a significant impact on the economy of Rhode Island, supporting 1,182 jobs in 2020.

The Media Education Lab is the nation's leading provider of professional development programs in digital and media literacy, with a mailing list of 15,000 educators from across the United States and around the world. Its signature program is the Summer Institute in Digital Literacy, an intensive week-long program for educators, now in its 9th year. The Media Education Lab has also developed pioneering approaches to online professional development, offering a wide variety of programs and services during the coronavirus pandemic. The Media Education Lab has a 10-year track record of effective provision of professional development and community outreach services. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Media Education Lab engaged 20,000+ people from 66 countries in online webinars designed to advance media literacy education competencies among educators and librarians.

Media Literacy Now Rhode Island is a politically neutral advocacy nonprofit that aims to make media literacy widely understood and accepted as an essential element in public education at the local, state, and national levels. They pursue this goal through public awareness campaigns, policymaker education, research, and coalition building, and influencing regulations and legislation. In and providing structure and resources that lower the barriers to entry for activists. We are changing the way people think about media and literacy. In 2017, Media Literacy Now Rhode Island was instrumental in passing Senate Bill 106, which amends Rhode Island's General Laws by requiring the department of elementary and secondary education to consider the incorporation of media literacy education into the board of education's basic education program regulations.

Renee Hobbs will serve as Program Director and Principal Investigator for the project and will be responsible for overall quality control of programs and services, budget oversight, implementation and assessment. She is an internationally recognized expert in media literacy and a professor of communication studies and Director of the Media Education Lab. Hobbs has authored 12 books and more than 150 scholarly and professional articles on media literacy education. She has offered professional development programs in media literacy education on four continents. Her book *Mind Over Media: Propaganda Education for a Digital Age* (2020, W.W. Norton) won the 2021 PROSE Award for Excellence in Social Science from the American

Association of Publishers. This work offers a close look at the pedagogy of media literacy with a special focus on contemporary propaganda, disinformation, political polarization, and terrorist propaganda. She will be responsible for program management, design, implementation, and assessment.

Pam Steager is an independent writer, consultant, trainer, and project manager with 40 years of experience in the education, prevention, and human service fields, primarily in the prevention of substance abuse, family and community violence, cultural competence, and media literacy. She will be the Stakeholder Coordinator for the project and responsible for all outreach and communication to project stakeholders and community organizations across the state of Rhode Island. A graduate of the Felton Media Literacy Scholars Program, she has facilitated media literacy workshops for thousands of educators, parents, and youth workers in the US and beyond, and directed the three-year Media SmART! Project in the Providence Public Schools. Pam currently serves as Senior Writer and Researcher at the Media Education Lab. She wrote a regular column in the Providence Phoenix for 15 years and has recently co-authored *The Library Screen Scene: Media Literacy in Schools, Colleges, and Communities* (2019, Oxford University Press).

Lead Program Manager (TBD) will be responsible for the day-to-day operation and program management of Programs 1 & 3, including planning the overall program and monitoring the progress; social media outreach; program coordination; managing and utilizing resources across projects; and program documentation, including report preparation. This is a full-time position for 24 months.

Assistant Program Manager (TBD) will be responsible for day-to-day activities of Program 2, including scheduling events, developing curriculum, website maintenance, file management, and operational support for program implementation. This is a half-time position for 24 months.

Ebubekir Cakmak will serve as a Post-Doctoral Associate for this project. He is a Turkish educational researcher with expertise in media literacy education in elementary and secondary schools. Formerly a professor of education, he served on the writing team for the development of the national media literacy curriculum for middle-school students in Turkey. He will lead the research, program evaluation, and monitoring effort for the initiative. He will collect pre-and-post measures of awareness, knowledge, and behavior, including media literacy competencies. He will collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data from the work products completed by participants and assist with report preparation.

4. Sustainability

The Media Education Lab has a specific blueprint for raising the money to expand this statewide program in Rhode Island and to serve the needs of people in other states. After the grant program funding has expired, we will continue to offer “Courageous Conversations” as a community-based program with support from the Rhode Island philanthropic community. Then we will use a fee-for-service model to contract with municipalities and non-profit organizations in Rhode Island. This will expand the number of people who experience the power of authentic dialogue and active listening to reduce high conflict. We will also reach out to Media Literacy Now, the national organization, and engage with stakeholders in other states. Using a consulting services model to finance this work, we will help other organizations modify the program to meet the needs of their communities and states. We have high levels of confidence that this three-part program will evolve and find new stakeholders in the prevention community. Similarly, the Media Education Lab will continue to offer free professional development programs for educators that build upon the Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools program. After the grant funding program is completed, we will seek philanthropic or corporate partners to support the Statewide Community Creative Media Contest so that it becomes an annual event in our state, and we will share our methodology with people in other states, funding this effort through consulting fees.

5. Budget Detail by Program and Budget Narrative

See attached PDF and Excel files

Appendices

- A. **Completed Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP) Template – see attached PDF**
- B. **Resumes/CVs of Key Personnel - see attached PDF**

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D. Commitment & Support from Rhode Island Organizations. We have met with the following stakeholders in the development of this grant proposal:

Educators

- [RI School Superintendents Association](#) (RISSA)
- [RI Department of Education](#) (RIDE)
- [RI Office of Postsecondary Commissioner/Council on Postsecondary Education](#) (RIOPC/CPE)
- [RI Arts Education Association](#) (RIAEA)

Military & Veteran Families

- [RING Family Assistance Center and Family Programs](#)
- [RI Vet Corps](#)
- [RI National Guard](#) (RING)
- [Naval Station Newport](#) (NAVSTA)

Librarians

- [RI Libraries Association](#) (RILA)
- [Office of Library & Information Services](#) (OLIS)

Public Safety/Law Enforcement

- Citizen Trooper Academy
- [Violence Interruption & Prevention Nonviolence Institute](#)
- [RI Homeland Security Fusion Center](#)
- [Rhode Island Department of Health](#)
- Rhode Island Polic Chiefs Association

Public Health

- The Rhode Island Arts and Health Network (RIAHN)
- The Rhode Island DOH Health Equity Zones (HEZ)

E. Letters of Support - see attached files

- Rhode Island Public Radio (RINPR)
- Rhode Island Library Association (RILA)
- Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDH)
- Rhode Island Congressional Delegation

- We the People Rhode Island
- University of Rhode Island Providence Arts and Culture
- Media Literacy Now

Logic Model for Courageous Community Conversations



Logic Model for Media Literacy & Civic Education



Logic Model for Statewide Student Media Contest



APPENDIX B

Implementation & Measurement Plan (IMP)

Title: Creating Courageous Communities: Statewide Media Literacy in Rhode Island

Applicant: University of Rhode Island

Location: Rhode Island

Track: Promising Practices: Multiple Project Track

Proposed Start/End Dates: 24 months

Goal: To reduce the threat of domestic extremism by (1) advancing media literacy, dialogue, and active listening among the people of Rhode Island, (2) integrating media literacy education in civic education in Rhode Island high schools, and (3) increasing public awareness of the importance of preventing domestic terrorism through reducing high conflict.

Population: Residents of the state of Rhode Island

Program 1: Courageous Community Conversations

Goal 1. Participants have awareness of how harmful propaganda and disinformation are risk factors that may lead some people to domestic extremism and can use media literacy concepts in dialogue and active listening to reduce high conflict.

PROGRAM 1: OUTCOMES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Outcome 1.1: Participants have increased awareness of the risks of harmful propaganda and disinformation and can apply media literacy concepts to identify author, purpose, point of view and persuasive techniques
- Outcome 1.2: Participants can use strategies of dialogue and active listening to deter high conflict that contributes to targeted violence and domestic terrorism.

Activity	Inputs/Resources	Time Frame (months)	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting
Establish roles & teamwork routines and recruit community partners using relationships and social media marketing	Staff Community partners Social media marketing consultant, graphic design services, database software, web development tools	1-4	-Logo completed -Project website completed -Social media campaign completed -Recruitment materials completed -Project management work routines established	
Design content and format of online dialogues	Staff	1 - 3	-Complete program outline with titles, topics, content, and agenda for each session	Quarterly progress report
Develop pre-post measures of risk awareness, knowledge, media literacy skills, and program satisfaction measures	Staff, statistical consultant	1 - 5	-Completed questionnaire	

Create a video to describe program expectations so potential partners understand the program goals and time commitment	Staff, video editing, sound and image subscription services	3 - 4	-Introductory video completed	Quarterly progress report
Implement 12 60-minute bi-monthly programs over 6 months	Staff, video conferencing technology	6 - 12	-12 60-minute bi-monthly programs delivered over 6 month, reaching 250 participants who attend at least 1 program and 30 people who complete 8 or more sessions. 15 people will replicate one or more programs in their local communities and each one is estimated to reach 30 people, for an indirect reach to 450 people. -Press release sent to local media in hometowns of participants -Each participant has had at least 1 individualized consultation with staff	Quarterly progress report
Offer individualized coaching online and F2F with small group activities to assist participants in organizing an event for their own constituents	Staff, video conferencing technology	6 - 12		

PROGRAM 1: OUTCOME MEASUREMENT PLAN

Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Results (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Increased awareness of the risks and dangers of extremist violence and domestic terrorism	-Meeting transcripts examined after each session to identify evidence of ability and use ML concepts	Quarterly progress report
Participants can apply media literacy concepts to identify author, purpose, point of view and persuasive techniques	-Meeting transcripts examined after each session to identify evidence of ability and use ML concepts	
Change in awareness, knowledge, and skills from pre- to post-test	Baseline data is collected when participant joins and all participants complete a post-test questionnaire	Year End progress report

Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Results (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Public awareness of the program	Engagement measures including likes, comments, shares, clicks -Reach: The number of people who have seen your post in their timelines. -Website visits	
250 people attend at least 1 program	-Registrations, attendance	Quarterly progress report
30 participants replicate a program and deliver it to their own community	-Registrations, attendance, evaluation data	Year End progress report

Project 2: Media Literacy Education and Civic Engagement

Goal: Teachers, college faculty, and librarians from across the state of Rhode Island will integrate media literacy into civic education, offering learners the knowledge, skills, and resilience needed to be less susceptible to harmful propaganda and high conflict that contributes to targeted violence, domestic terrorism, and radicalization to violence.

PROGRAM 2: OUTCOMES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Outcome 2.1: Increase participant knowledge about media literacy and critical thinking pedagogies that align with competencies of civic education in Rhode Island public schools
- Outcome 2.2: Increase awareness of how social media propaganda and disinformation may promote hateful ideologies and foster recruitment and radicalization to violence efforts.
- Outcome 2.3: Increase educator confidence and comfort in addressing controversial current events topics in the context of media literacy and civic education.

Activity	Inputs/Resources	Time Frame (months)	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting
Curate and create new resources and curriculum materials for HS and college learners to align with state and national standards for civic education	Staff, graphic design services, database software, Web development tools	13 - 15	-Pathwright online learning modules adapted for HS/college learners -Standards alignment document completed	Quarterly progress report
Promote the program on social media and through community partners shown in Appendix E	Staff, marketing consultant, social media marketing tools	16 - 23	-Content of social media marketing materials	Quarterly progress report
Adapt existing measures of risk awareness, knowledge and ML skills for use with younger learners	Staff, statistical consultant, survey software	13 - 15	-Questionnaire	Quarterly progress report

Design 12 online programs that showcase the use of media literacy pedagogies as a means to combat propaganda, disinformation, domestic terrorism, and violent extremism	Staff, video conferencing technology	13 -20	-Complete program outline with titles, topics, content, and agenda for each session	Quarterly progress report
Collect baseline data from new participants	Staff, educational and library partners, database software, survey software	17 -23	-Completed questionnaire	Quarterly progress report
Implement online professional development programs for educators	Staff, educational and library partners	17 - 23	-12 60-minute bi-monthly programs delivered over 6 month, reaching 50 participants who teach 130 high school or college students. Total reach: 6,500 Rhode Island high school and college learners	Quarterly progress report
Update community partners on program highlights	Staff, educational and library partners, community partners	20	PPT presentation, web content	Quarterly progress report
Collect post-test data from all participants	Staff, database software, survey software	23	Data collected	Year End progress report
Host a public showcase event co-sponsored with community partners features stories from educators and learners who describe their learning experience to a public audience	Staff, marketing consultant, educational and library partners, social media marketing tools	23	PPT presentation, web content, short video	Year End progress report

PROGRAM 2 OUTCOME MEASUREMENT PLAN

Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Results (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Knowledge about media literacy and critical thinking pedagogies that align with competencies of civic education in Rhode Island public schools	-Meeting transcripts examined after each session to identify evidence of knowledge and ability to align competencies to civic education	Quarterly progress report
Awareness of how social media propaganda and disinformation may promote hateful ideologies and foster recruitment and radicalization to violence efforts.	-Meeting transcripts examined after each session to identify evidence of awareness	Quarterly progress report

Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Results (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Educator confidence and comfort in addressing controversial current events topics with learners	Baseline data is collected when participant joins and all participants complete a post-test questionnaire	Quarterly progress report
Change in awareness, knowledge, and skills from pre- to post-test	Baseline data is collected when participant joins and all participants complete a post-test questionnaire	Year End progress report

Project 3: Statewide Community Creative Media Contest

Goal: Increase awareness of the importance of reducing extremist violence and high conflict through media literacy, dialogue, and active listening.

PROGRAM 3: OUTCOMES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Outcome 3.1: Increase public awareness of practical solutions to harmful propaganda and high conflict
- Outcome 3.2: Increased feelings of inclusion, belonging, and a feeling of security among program participants

Activity	Inputs/Resources	Time Frame (months)	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting
Contract with media partners in radio, television, print and billboard	Staff, social marketing consultant, media partners	12	Commitment letters from media partners	Quarterly progress report
Develop a scope of work statement to guide users who choose to participate in the contest, which will outline the rules and specifications for submissions.	Staff, marketing consultant, community partners	13 - 15	Scope of work document Criteria for evaluation	Quarterly progress report
Develop communication plan for how community partners (who participated in Program 1 and 2) support local HS and college students	Staff, community partners, media partners, educational partners	13 - 15	Communication plan	Quarterly progress report
Recruit contest jurors from among local Rhode Island public relations and media professionals	Staff, community partners	14	Commitment letter from jurors	
Develop curriculum for teachers to support media production process	Staff, community partners	13 - 14		Quarterly progress report
Develop questionnaire for HS and college students who participate in the contest	Staff	15		
Develop content for social media promotion	Staff, social marketing consultant	14 - 16	Media content	
Implement social media promotion and community outreach to recruit participants from 62 high schools and 13 colleges	Staff, marketing consultant, media partners	17	Goal: 500 targeted educators from 62 HS schools and 50 educators from 13 colleges	Quarterly progress report

Community partners support students in high schools and colleges as they create media campaigns to submit to the contest	Staff, media partners, participants from Program 1 and 2	18 - 21	Email communication with partners	
Winners are selected and media partners promote video PSAs, radio PSAs, social media, and outdoor advertising	Staff, media partners	22 - 23	Media distribution metrics	Quarterly progress report
Post-test for all participants	Staff	22		Quarterly progress report
Public showcase event at the public galleries of the URI Providence Campus for parents, families, and the general public	Staff, media partners, participants from Program 1 and 2	23	Promotional materials	Quarterly progress report
Data analysis	Staff, statistical consultant	22 -23		
Report preparation	Staff	22 - 24		Final Report
Final budget report	Staff	24		Final Budget

PROGRAM 3 OUTCOME MEASUREMENT PLAN

Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Results (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Increased public awareness of potential solutions to the risks of harmful propaganda, extremism, and high conflict	Measures of media exposure from radio, print, social media, and outdoor advertising campaigns	Quarterly progress report
Increased feelings of inclusion, belonging, mutual respect, and a feeling of security among program participants	Baseline data is collected when participant joins and all participants complete a post-test questionnaire	Quarterly progress report

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

PROGRAM 1: COURAGEOUS COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Risk Identified	Likelihood of Risk Occurring (low/medium/high)	Risk Analysis	Risk Management Plan
Some community participants may be hesitant to join due to anxiety about discussing controversial topics including political polarization.	medium	This risk is low with education and media, participants, but it is higher for public safety, veterans and family members who are expected to have less familiarity with ML education.	The program will be marketed to the general public through social media and print promotion, so that people from all walks of life may choose to attend.
Some potential participants may not get exposed to the social media promotional recruiting initiative.	medium	This risk is high for older participants.	We will use print marketing materials in public libraries and place ads in local newspapers to inform those who may not be exposed to social media marketing.
Some participants may attend only a few programs due to scheduling conflicts.	high	People are busy with work and family life. Although online programs are convenient for many participants due to ease of participation, we do not expect all participants to attend all sessions but we offer a monetary incentive for those who are most active.	In analyzing the program impact, we will treat the number of sessions attended as a dose treatment. Those who attend more sessions will be expected to have better outcomes.

PROGRAM 2: MEDIA LITERACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION

Risk Identified	Likelihood of Risk Occurring (low/medium/high)	Risk Analysis	Risk Management Plan
In some school districts, educators may be discouraged from participating in professional development program during times of contract negotiation.	medium	Union contract issues do affect educator participation in professional development programs, especially in communities facing budget crises	We may lower the number of programs required for educators to receive the Badge if district contract issues affect educator participation.
In urban school districts, it can be difficult to communicate with teachers directly.	medium	We rely on school principals and superintendents to help transmit information about the availability of this program.	We will specifically target educators and librarians through social media and enroll teacher influencers in our network to help relay information about this program

PROGRAM 3: STATEWIDE STUDENT MEDIA CONTEST

Risk Identified	Likelihood of Risk Occurring (low/medium/high)	Risk Analysis	Risk Management Plan
In some school districts, students may have had little experience with creative media production projects. In other schools, there is a high volume of attention to creative media production.	high	There are substantial structural inequalities between school districts in Rhode Island. Some schools have plentiful access to creative media production learning experiences; others have little opportunity.	We have designed the prize structure of the program to enable 16 1 st prizes for each of four types of media: video PSA, audio PSA, outdoor advertising and social media and we will award prizes to participants from four regions of the state: north, east, south and west. Community partners who participated in Programs 1 and 2 will function as volunteers to assist students in school districts where there are few specialists.

BUDGET
Courageous Community Conversations:
Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in
Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence

Applicant: University of Rhode Island

Location: Rhode Island

Track: Promising Practices: Multiple Projects Track

Date: May 26, 2021

Proposed Start/End Dates: 24 months

Total Funds Requested: \$700,066.07

PROJECT 1: Courageous Community Conversations

Funds Requested: \$329,577.26

<u>PERSONNEL</u>	
Renee Hobbs	15,331.35
Cakmak, Post Doctoral Associate	21,515.00
Steager, Community Engagement Coordinator	23,480.00
Asst Program Manager	42,975.00
Program Manager	111,062.00
Subtotal Personnel:	214,363.35
<u>NON-PERSONNEL</u>	
Computer Automated Data Processing Services	7,884.00
Consultant Services	1,500.00
Human Subject Costs	37,500.00
Advertising/Promotion	2,500.00
Media Partnerships	0.00
Prize for Contest Winners	0.00
Graphic Design Services	2,800.00
Travel-Domestic	2,760.00
Subtotal Non-Personnel:	54,944.00
Total Sponsor Direct Costs:	269,307.35
MTDC	231,807.35
Sponsor F&A:	60,269.91
Total Sponsor Costs:	329,577.26

PROGRAM 2: MEDIA LITERACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION

Funds Requested: \$98,331.12

<u>PERSONNEL</u>	
Renee Hobbs	7,857.32
Cakmak, Post Doctoral Associate	11,188.25
Steager, Community Engagement Coordinator	12,033.50
Asst Program Manager	22,410.00
Program Manager	0.00
Subtotal Personnel:	53,489.07
<u>NON-PERSONNEL</u>	
Computer Automated Data Processing Services	4,040.55
Consultant Services	0.00
Human Subject Costs	18,750.00
Advertising/Promotion	2,500.00
Media Partnerships	0.00
Prize for Contest Winners	0.00
Graphic Design Services	1,750.00
Travel-Domestic	1,380.00
Subtotal Non-Personnel:	28,420.55
Total Sponsor Direct Costs:	81,909.62
MTDC	63,159.62
Sponsor F&A:	16,421.50
Total Sponsor Costs:	98,331.12

PROGRAM 3: STATEWIDE STUDENT MEDIA LITERACY – TERRORISM PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Funds Requested: \$272,157

<u>PERSONNEL</u>	<u>COSTS</u>
Renee Hobbs	7,857.32
Cakmak, Post Doctoral Associate	11,188.25
Steager, Community Engagement Coordinator	12,033.50
Asst Program Manager	22,410.00
Program Manager	113,838.55
Subtotal Personnel:	167,327.62
<u>NON-PERSONNEL</u>	
Computer Automated Data Processing Services	4,040.55
Consultant Services	6,500.00
Human Subject Costs	18,750.00
Advertising/Promotion	2,500.00
Media Partnerships	15,000.00
Prize for Contest Winners	7,200.00
Graphic Design Services	1,750.00
Travel-Domestic	1,380.00
Subtotal Non-Personnel:	57,120.55
Total Sponsor Direct Costs:	224,448.17
MTDC	183,498.17
Sponsor F&A:	47,709.52
Total Sponsor Costs:	272,157.69

BUDGET NARRATIVE
Courageous Community Conversations:
Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in
Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence

Applicant: University of Rhode Island

Location: Rhode Island

Track: Promising Practices: Multiple Projects Track

Date: May 26, 2021

Proposed Start/End Dates: 24 months

Total Funds Requested: \$700,066.07

OVERVIEW. This grant proposal requests a total of \$329, 577.26 in Year 1 for Program 1 and \$370,488.81 in Year 2 for Programs 2 and 3, for a total grant request of \$700,066.07. The University of Rhode Island applies a federally-negotiated indirect facilities and administration (F&A) rate of 26% to total modified direct costs of \$478,465.13 for a cost of \$124,400.93.

PROGRAM 1: Courageous Community Conversations

Year 1 Funds Requested: \$329,577.26

PERSONNEL

1. **Principal Investigator.** Renee Hobbs is the PI for this project whose annual salary is \$144,855, with \$53,350.78 in fringe benefits and whose summer salary is \$48,236.72. Over the 2-year period, she is contracted for 30% effort during the 9-month academic year and 50% effort during the 3 months of summer. To support Program 1 in Year 1, grant funds will cover \$13,478 of her salary and \$1,853 in fringe benefits (36.36%) for a total of \$15,331.
2. The **Community Stakeholder Coordinator** is Pam Steager, with an annual salary is \$80,000. For Program 1, Year 1, she is contracted for 30% effort for a 12-month calendar year. Year 1 grant funds will cover \$20,000 of her salary and \$3,480 in fringe benefits (17.4%)
3. Ebubekir Cakmak is the **Post-Doctoral Associate** for this project whose annual salary for the 9-month academic year is \$50,000. For Program 1, Year 1, he is contracted for 30% effort, and grant funds will cover \$12,500 of his salary and \$9,015.00 in fringe benefits (60.1%) for a total of \$21,515.
4. **Lead Program Manager** (TBD) works full-time on Program 1, Year 1 at an annual salary of \$70,000 in Year 1 with \$41,062 in fringe benefits (58.66%), for a total grant-funded request of \$111,062.
5. **Assistant Program Manager** (TBD) works on Project 1 half-time for 12 months at an annual salary of \$25,000 in Year 1, with \$17,975 in fringe benefits (71.9%), for a total request of \$42,975.

Personnel costs for Program 1 are \$214,363.35.

NON PERSONNEL EXPENSES

1. **Automated Data Processing Costs.** We expect to spend \$7,884 in Year 1 for data processing and multimedia production services. These costs include domain and hosting services (\$350 annually),

Pathwright LMS platform (\$950 annually), digital audio licensing (\$200 annually), photo licensing (\$300 annually), email marketing (\$2400 annually), survey software (\$336 annually) graphic design software (\$960 annually), social media marketing (\$1188 annually), and video production support, estimated at \$1,200 (48 hours at \$25/hour).

2. **Consultant Services.** To support data analysis services for the quantitative research, we have budgeted \$1,500, or 7.5 hours of consultation at \$200/hour. To support social media marketing services, we have budgeted 7.5 hours of consultation at \$200/hour for a total of \$1,500.
3. **Human Subjects Costs.** For participants who complete the Courageous Community Conversations Badge for Program 1 in Year 1, we will offer up to 150 stipends at \$250, for a total of \$37,500.
4. **Other Costs: Advertising.** For Program 1 in Year 1, we expect to spend \$2,500 in Facebook and Instagram advertising to draw Rhode Islanders to the Courageous Conversations series. To generate a first touch (awareness), we will spend \$1,500 in the month before the program begins. To increase engagement and conversion, we will spend \$1,000 over the second 3-month period, for a total cost of \$2,500.
5. **Participant: Other.** No expenses for Program 1, Year 1.
6. **Participant Stipends: Prizes.** No expenses for Program 1, Year 1.
7. **Publication. Graphic Design Services.** For Program 1 in Year 1, we expect to spend \$2,800 for logo design (\$1,800), and infographics (\$1,000).
8. **Travel-Domestic.** Face-to-face networking by the Community Stakeholder Coordinator will be done via auto, estimated at 1 trip weekly for 48 weeks, 100 miles roundtrip, reimbursed at .575/mile. We expect to spend \$2,760 for Program 1, Year 1.

Non-Personnel costs for Program 1 are \$54,944.

Program 1 Summary. Total sponsor direct costs are \$269,307 and modified total direct costs are \$231,807. Sponsor Facilities and Administrative cost for the University of Rhode Island are calculated at the federally negotiated rate of 26%, for a total of \$60,269. Total program cost is \$329,577.

PROGRAM 2: MEDIA LITERACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION

Year 2 Funds Requested: \$98,331.12

PERSONNEL

1. **Principal Investigator.** For Project 2, Year 2, Renee Hobbs is contracted for 15% effort during the 9-month academic year and 25% effort during the 3 months of summer. Year 2 grant funds will cover \$7,857.32 of her salary and fringe benefits.
2. The **Community Stakeholder Coordinator** is Pam Steager, with an annual salary is \$80,000. Over the 2-year period, she is contracted for 15% effort for a 12-month calendar year. Year 2 grant funds will cover \$12,033.50 of her salary and fringe benefits.
3. Ebubekir Cakmak is the **Post-Doctoral Associate** for this project whose annual salary for the 9-month academic year is \$50,000. For Program 2, Year 2, he is contracted for 15% effort. Year 2 grant funds will cover \$11,188.25 of his salary and fringe benefits.
4. **Lead Program Manager** does not work on Program 2.

5. **Assistant Program Manager** (TBD) works on Program 2 for 25% time over 12 months in Year 2, with \$12,875 in salary and \$9,535 in fringe benefits for a total grant funded request of \$22,410.

Personnel costs for Program 2, Year 2 are \$53,489

NON PERSONNEL EXPENSES

6. **Automated Data Processing Costs.** We expect to spend \$8,080 for Program 2 and 3 in Year 2 for data processing and multimedia production services. We have split the costs 50/50 and allocated \$4,040 to each program. These costs include domain and hosting services (\$350 annually), Pathwright LMS platform (\$950 annually), digital audio licensing (\$200 annually), photo licensing (\$300 annually), email marketing (\$2400 annually), survey software (\$336 annually) graphic design software (\$960 annually), social media marketing (\$1188 annually), and video production support, estimated at \$1,200 (48 hours at \$25/hour).
7. **Human Subjects Costs.** For participants who complete the Civic Education Badge in Year 2, we will offer 50 stipends at \$375, for a total grant expenditure of \$18,750.
8. **Other Costs: Advertising.** For Program 2 Year 2, we expect to spend \$2,500 in Facebook and Instagram advertising to draw attention to the efforts of Rhode Island educators who complete the Civic Education Badge.
9. **Publication. Graphic Design Services.** For Program 2, Year 2, we expect to spend \$1,750 for services including photography (\$250), data visualization (\$500), copyediting (\$250) and report preparation services (\$750).
10. **Travel-Domestic.** Face-to-face networking by the Community Stakeholder Coordinator will be done via auto, estimated at 1 trip weekly for 24 weeks, 100 miles roundtrip, reimbursed at .575/mile. We expect to spend \$1,380 for Program 2, Year 2.

Non-Personnel costs for Program 2 are \$28,420.

Program 2 Summary. Total sponsor direct costs are \$81,909 and modified total direct costs are \$63,159. Sponsor Facilities and Administrative cost for the University of Rhode Island are calculated at the federally negotiated rate of 26%, for a total of \$16,421. Total program cost is \$98,331.

PROGRAM 3: STATEWIDE STUDENT MEDIA LITERACY – TERRORISM PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Year 2 Funds Requested: \$272,157

PERSONNEL

1. **Principal Investigator.** For Project 3, Year 2, Renee Hobbs is contracted for 15% effort during the 9-month academic year and 25% effort during the 3 months of summer. Year 2 grant funds will cover \$7,857.32 of her salary and fringe benefits.

2. The **Community Stakeholder Coordinator** is Pam Steager, with an annual salary is \$80,000. She is contracted for 15% effort for a 12-month calendar year. Program 3 Year 2 grant funds will cover \$12,033.50 of her salary and fringe benefits.
3. Ebubekir Cakmak is the **Post-Doctoral Associate** for this project whose annual salary for the 9-month academic year is \$50,000. For Program 3, Year 2, he is contracted for 15% effort. Year 2 grant funds will cover \$11,188.25 of his salary and fringe benefits.
4. **Lead Program Manager** (TBD) works full-time on Program 3, Year 2 at an annual salary of \$71,750 with \$42,088.55 in fringe benefits (60.42%) for a total grant-funded request of \$113,838.55.
5. **Assistant Program Manager** (TBD) works on Program 3 for 25% time over 12 months in Year 2, with \$12,875 in salary and \$9,535 in fringe benefits for a total grant funded request of \$22,410.

Personnel costs for Program 3, Year 2 are \$167,327.62

NON PERSONNEL EXPENSES

1. **Automated Data Processing Costs.** We expect to spend \$8,080 for Program 2 and 3 in Year 2 for data processing and multimedia production services. We have split the costs 50/50 and allocated \$4,040 to each program. These costs include domain and hosting services (\$350 annually), Pathwright LMS platform (\$950 annually), digital audio licensing (\$200 annually), photo licensing (\$300 annually), email marketing (\$2400 annually), survey software (\$336 annually) graphic design software (\$960 annually), social media marketing (\$1188 annually), and video production support, estimated at \$1,200 (48 hours at \$25/hour).
2. **Consultant Services.** To support data analysis services for the quantitative research, we have budgeted \$3,000 divided over two years, or 15 hours of consultation at \$200/hour. To support social media marketing services, we have budgeted 25 hours of consultation at \$200/hour for a total of \$5,000 over two years. For these services, we expect to expend \$6,500 in Year 2 for a total cost of \$8,000.
3. **Human Subjects Costs.** For participants who implement student creative campaigns as part of Program 3, Year 2, we will offer 50 stipends at \$375, for a total grant expenditure of \$18,750. Any unallocated funds from this budget will be added to the Prize Awards budget for Program 3.
4. **Other Costs: Advertising.** For Program 3 Year 2, we expect to spend \$2,500 in Facebook and Instagram advertising to draw attention to the efforts of statewide student media campaign.
5. **Participant: Other.** To increase public visibility, we will engage media and public relations professionals by making targeted media buys that will showcase the winners of the Statewide Media Campaign. We expect to spend \$10,000 to engage potential partners including Rhode Island Public Radio and WRPI-Channel 12. We will also spend money to feature 4 winning student-created billboards of the Statewide Media Campaign. We expect to spend \$5,000 to rent billboards in 4 geo-locations (Westerly, Woonsocket, Cranston and Providence) for 30 days. Total cost: \$15,000.
6. **Participant Stipends: Prizes.** In Year 2, we will award cash prizes to high school and college students for best media campaign productions. We expect to spend \$4,500 in Year 2 on these awards. Judges will award 1st place prizes in each of the four quadrants of the state for video, social media, radio, and billboard formats, for a minimum distribution of 16 prizes at \$300 each

(\$4,800) and 16 2nd place prizes of \$150 will also be awarded (\$2,400), for a total prize distribution of \$7,200.

7. Publication. Graphic Design Services. In Year 2, expect to spend \$3,500 for services including photography (\$500), data visualization (\$1000), copyediting (\$500) and report preparation services (\$1,500).

8. Travel-Domestic. Face-to-face networking by the Community Stakeholder Coordinator will be done via auto, estimated at 1 trip weekly for 24 weeks, 100 miles roundtrip, reimbursed at .575/mile. We expect to spend \$1,380 for Program 2, Year 2.

Non-Personnel costs for Program 3 Year 2 are \$57,120.55.

Program 3 Summary. Total sponsor direct costs are \$224,448 and modified total direct costs are \$183,498. Sponsor Facilities and Administrative cost for the University of Rhode Island are calculated at the federally negotiated rate of 26%, for a total of \$47,709. Total program cost is \$272,157.



May 19, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of Media Literacy Now in support of the University of Rhode Island proposal to the Department of Homeland Security for a grant to fund the ***Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence*** initiative developed by Professor Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island and the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with Pam Steager and Media Literacy Now Rhode Island.

We have seen how hate and violence are used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. These disruptions have been felt throughout society and exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory language. Through the professional learning community that this proposal intends to develop, people from across Rhode Island can apply practical communication strategies that advance media literacy competencies and promote the social consensus that is essential for democratic citizenship. The program elements relevant to all our community and schools:

Courageous Community Conversations

Diverse stakeholders including members of public health and public safety, military spouses and family members, K-12 educators, librarians, college students, diverse community organization representatives, and media and public relations professionals will be introduced to strategies to reduce high conflict through media literacy, dialogue, and active listening.

Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools

High school educators will receive training on how to integrate media literacy into civic education, where topics including disinformation, propaganda, and domestic terrorism and extremism are addressed. Educators learn practical instructional strategies that help learners build resilience to harmful forms of contemporary propaganda and disinformation that advocate violence.

Statewide Community-Created Media Contest

A statewide media contest and campaign designed to raise awareness of the harms of hateful extremist propaganda will feature the creative contributions of high school and college students. Students work with public safety experts as well as communications and public relations professionals to create videos, billboards, memes, screencasts, infographics, and simple video productions, targeting Rhode Island residents.

Media Literacy Now promotes media literacy as an essential element in public education. MLN supports the work of chapters across the U.S. including Media Literacy Now Rhode Island, led by Dr. Hobbs and Ms. Steager. MLN strongly supports this grant application and the focus on reducing the threat of domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, active listening, and media creation among the people of Rhode Island.

Through this letter, we acknowledge our interest in participating in the program in the event this proposal is funded. We would expect our role in the project may include: serving on an advisory board, recommending the project to key stakeholders in our community, serving as a fiscal sponsor and conduit for other states for project sustainability efforts.

Sincerely,



Erin McNeill
President, Founder
Media Literacy Now



To Whom It May Concern:

May 20, 2021

I am writing this letter from the URI Providence Campus Arts and Culture Program in support of the University of Rhode Island proposal to the Department of Homeland Security for a grant to fund the *Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence* initiative developed by Professor Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island and the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with Pam Steager and Media Literacy Now Rhode Island.

We have all seen how hate and violence are used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. These disruptions have been felt throughout society and exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory language. Through the professional learning community that this proposal intends to develop, people from across Rhode Island can apply practical communication strategies that advance media literacy competencies and promote the social consensus that is essential for democratic citizenship. The program elements relevant to all our community and schools:

Courageous Community Conversations

Diverse stakeholders including members of public health and public safety, military spouses and family members, K-12 educators, librarians, college students, diverse community organization representatives, and media and public relations professionals will be introduced to strategies to reduce high conflict through media literacy, dialogue, and active listening.

Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools

High school educators will receive training on how to integrate media literacy into civic education, where topics including disinformation, propaganda, and domestic terrorism and extremism are addressed. Educators learn practical instructional strategies that help learners build resilience to harmful forms of contemporary propaganda and disinformation that advocate violence.

Statewide Community-Created Media Contest

A statewide media contest and campaign designed to raise awareness of the harms of hateful extremist propaganda will feature the creative contributions of high school and college students. Students work with public safety experts as well as communications and public relations professionals to create videos, billboards, memes, screencasts, infographics, and simple video productions, targeting Rhode Island residents.

We strongly support this grant application and the focus on reducing the threat of domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, active listening, and media creation among the people of Rhode Island.

The Arts and Culture Program at the Providence Campus of the URI College of Education and Professional Studies was created 25 years ago to provide free and open monthly exhibits in the lobby gallery and performing arts events on a variety of current topics of social justice and diversity. We share the artwork (more than 150 works each month in all media) by international, national and local professional and community-based artists for the purpose raising awareness, providing education and understanding for the members of the university and local community on issues of import such as Domestic Violence, Hate Crimes, Racism, Poverty and Homelessness in

Rhode Island. We frequently partner with other departments in the university, area schools, and community agencies as active participants in programming and audience for our exhibit events and other programming. Most recent amount these have included URI's Graduate School of Oceanography Rhode Island Public Schools, the Brown University John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and 134 Collaborative.

Through this letter, we acknowledge our interest in participating in this program in the event this proposal is funded. We would expect our role in the project may include: exhibiting artworks created for this project and hosting programming as well as serving on an advisory board, recommending the project to key stakeholders in our community, or serving as a project venue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steven Pennell".

Steven Pennell, Coordinator
URI Providence Campus Arts and Culture Program
401-277-5206/spennell@uri.edu



We the People
THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this "endorsement of support" for the grant proposal developed by the University of Rhode Island's Professor Renee Hobbs. The proposal is an endeavor to meet the guidelines of :

"Creating Courageous Communities: Developing A Statewide Professional Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence"

I have work with Professor Hobbs for a number of years. Our biggest endeavor was the successful Media Literacy legislation enacted by the Rhode Island Legislature. This legislation directed the Rhode Island Department of Education to guide local school districts to develop strategies to incorporate Media Literacy in instructional strategies. She, her colleagues, and I have established a chapter of Media Literacy Now - RI. One of the consultants for this proposal, Pamela Steager, leads that organization.

Presently, I coordinate for the Northeast states a USDOE grant entitled Project Citizen Research Program. The grant focuses on influencing Public Policy. In the grant, there is a strong focus on Media Literacy. Many of Professor Hobbs materials are used in the grant.

With a wide array of extreme violence media issues facing all corners of our society, Professor Hobbs is uniquely qualified to help others understand and face these issues. Professor Hobbs perspectives are urgent and needed.

Professor Hobbs is recognized nationally and internationally as an expert in the teaching of Media Literacy. She has given lectures across the globe and has written numerous books about the various components of Media Literacy and how best to teach them.

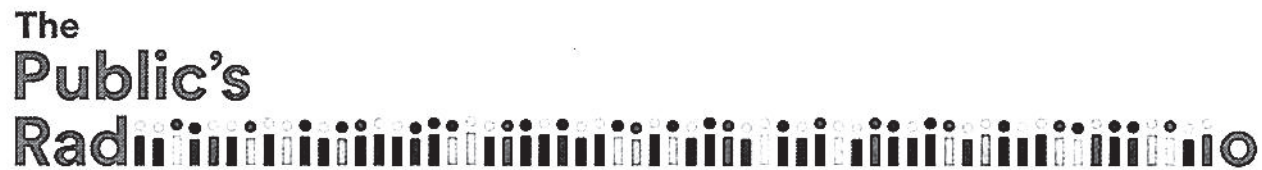
With Professpr Hobbs expertise and the stature of the University of Rhode Island, educators and others in Rhode Island civil society will have the tools to understand and how to identify the structure of negative language and actions. This, in turn, will fortify teacher efforts to assist students understand topics.

Professor Hobbs is a very dedicated professional. Her style is to be collaborative, inclusive, and respectful. Her competent, friendly but serious approach allows everyone to learn and thrive. Her plan to include a wide array of stakeholders, educators, students, and community individuals will go a long way to meeting the grant's goals and expectations.

The University of Rhode Island grant application will be far-reaching. Under Professor Hobbs guidance, determination, and skills, the stewardship of the grant will be very successful.

I whole heartedly endorse the University and Professor Hobbs grant proposal.

Michael Trofi
C/O Deering Middle School
2 Webster Knight Dr.
West Warwick, RI 02893
(O)(401) 823-1680
(F) (401) 822-8474



May 24, 2021
The Public's Radio 89.3FM
One Union Station, Providence, RI 02903

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of The Public's Radio 89.3FM in support of the funding proposal to the Department of Homeland Security for ***Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence*** initiative developed by Professor Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island and the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with Pam Steager, state coordinator for Media Literacy Now Rhode Island.

The daily news is too often filled with stories of how hate and violence are eroding community cohesion and trust and lately have witnessed how they can be used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. These disruptions have been felt throughout society and exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory language through questionable online media sources.

The diverse and statewide professional learning community that *Creating Community Conversations* intends to develop, will assist residents of all ages and from communities across Rhode Island learn to apply practical communication and relationship strategies that advance media literacy competencies and promote the social consensus that is essential for democratic citizenship. These three projects *Courageous Community Conversations*, *Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools*, and the *Statewide Community-Created Media Contest* provide creative ways for Rhode Islanders to be in conversation with each other around the important and often difficult issues of the day.

We strongly support this grant application and the focus on reducing the threat of targeted violence and domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, active listening, and media creation among the people of Rhode Island. As an organization which serves as a broadcast, digital and in person convener, we have seen first hand the value factual information has as a conduit for participation in public life to identify and solve pressing community problems. With our emphasis on original, local content for Rhode Islanders, we believe that we play a role in creating accurate, relevant information that is a bulwark against disinformation that would threaten the participatory institutions and peaceful transitions of power that is the foundation of our American democracy and our local democracies in Rhode Island.

As an interested stakeholder, we acknowledge our interest in participating in the program in the event this proposal is funded. We would expect our role in the project may include: recommending the project to key stakeholders in our community, recruiting and selecting members of our organization to participate in the program, serving on an advisory board, serving as an outlet for community-created counter-messages, and being involved in sustainability efforts for this project.

Sincerely,

Ann Alquist
Assistant General Manager
The Public's Radio 89.3FM

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Alquist". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ann" and last name "Alquist" clearly legible.

P.O. Box 6765
Providence, RI 02940

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Kristin Amaral



May 24, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of the Rhode Island Library Association in support of the University of Rhode Island proposal to the Department of Homeland Security for a grant to fund the ***Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence*** initiative developed by Professor Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island and the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with Pam Steager, state coordinator for Media Literacy Now Rhode Island.

We have seen how hate and violence are used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. These disruptions have been felt throughout society and exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory language. Through the diverse and statewide professional learning community that this proposal intends to develop, people from across Rhode Island can apply practical communication strategies that advance media literacy competencies and promote the social consensus that is essential for democratic citizenship. The program elements relevant to all our community and school libraries that we look forward to encouraging our membership participation in are:

Courageous Community Conversations

Diverse stakeholders including members of public health and public safety, military spouses and family members, K-12 educators, librarians, college students, diverse community organization representatives, and media and public relations professionals will be introduced to strategies to reduce high conflict through media literacy, dialogue, and active listening.

Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools

High school educators will receive training on how to integrate media literacy into civic education, where topics including disinformation, propaganda, and domestic terrorism and extremism are addressed. Educators learn practical instructional strategies that help learners build resilience to harmful forms of contemporary propaganda and disinformation that advocate violence.

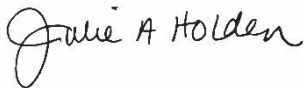
Statewide Community-Created Media Contest

A statewide media contest and campaign designed to raise awareness of the harms of hateful extremist propaganda will feature the creative contributions of high school and college students. Students work with public safety experts as well as communications and public relations professionals to create videos, billboards, memes, screencasts, infographics, and simple video productions, targeting Rhode Island residents.

We strongly support this grant application and the focus on reducing the threat of domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, active listening, and media creation among the people of Rhode Island. With our Information Literacy Action Round Table, we have worked for years informing our members on this topic, and have held several programs and featured speakers on ways to implement media literacy best practices in our libraries. This year, we offered training for several of our members on facilitation skills so that they may run Learning Circles using open online courses for their staff and patrons.

Through this letter, we acknowledge our interest in participating in the program in the event this proposal is funded. We would expect our role in the project may include: recruiting and selecting members of our association to participate in the program, serving on an advisory board, recommending the project to key stakeholders in our community, serving as a project venue, and being involved in sustainability efforts for this project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie A. Holden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie A. Holden
President
Rhode Island Library Association

president@rilibraries.org



Rhode Island Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

www.health.ri.gov

May 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) in support of the University of Rhode Island's proposal to the Department of Homeland Security for a grant to fund the *Creating Courageous Communities: Developing a Statewide Professional Learning Community in Media Literacy to Counter Extremist Violence* initiative developed by Professor Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island and the Media Education Lab, in collaboration with Pam Steager and Media Literacy Now Rhode Island.

Hatred and violence have instilled fear and distrust in our communities and have been used as a political tool by those seeking to subvert the democratic process. These disruptions have been felt throughout society and exacerbated by the systematic and widespread dissemination of falsehoods and inflammatory language via media. This poses a serious threat to the public's health. Through the professional learning community that this proposal intends to develop, people from across Rhode Island can learn to apply practical communication strategies that advance media literacy competencies and promote the social consensus that is essential for safe communities and democratic citizenship.

The program elements *Courageous Community Conversations*, *Media Literacy and Civic Education in Schools*, and the *Statewide Community-Created Media Contest* are designed to reach as wide a range and number of Rhode Island residents of all ages as possible.

As an organization that promotes health equity and works to eliminate the public health ramifications of hatred and violence, we support this grant application and the focus on reducing the threat of domestic extremism through advancing media literacy, dialogue, active listening, and media creation among the people of Rhode Island.

Through this letter, we acknowledge our interest in participating in the program in the event this proposal is funded. We would expect our role in the project may include recommending the project to key stakeholders in the communities we serve, serving on an advisory board, selecting staff and partners to participate in the program, and helping to plan for project sustainability efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Degos", written over a horizontal line.

Andrea Degos, MPH
Communications Director