Affordable Materials Grants, Round 21:

Continuous Improvement Grants

(Spring 2022-Spring 2023)

Proposal Form and Narrative

# Notes

* The proposal form and narrative .docx file is for offline drafting and for our review processes. Submitters must use the online Google Form for proposal submission, including uploading this document.
* The only way to submit the official proposal is through the Google Form. The link to the online application is on the [Round 21 RFP Page](https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/about/rfp_r21).
* The italic text provided below is meant for clarifications and can be deleted.

The Round 21 Kickoff will include an asynchronous training module, required for all team members to complete, followed by the synchronous Kickoff Meeting on March 25, 2022 from 1pm-4pm. At least two team members from each awarded team (unless the award is for one individual) are required to attend the synchronous Kickoff Meeting.

# Applicant and Team Information

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| --- | --- |
| Requested information | Answer |
| Institution(s) | Kennesaw State University |
| Applicant name | Erin Bahl |
| Applicant email | ebahl@kennesaw.edu |
| Applicant position/title | Assistant Professor of English |
| Submitter name | Erin Bahl |
| Submitter email | ebahl@kennesaw.edu |
| Submitter position/title | Assistant Professor of English |

Please provide the first/last names and email addresses of all team members within the proposed project. Include the applicant (Project Lead) in this list. Do not include prefixes or suffixes such as Ms., Dr., Ph.D., etc.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Team member | Name | Email address |
| Team member 1 | Erin Bahl | ebahl@kennesaw.edu |
| Team member 2 | Stephen Bartlett | sbartlet@kennesaw.edu |
| Team member 3 | Mary Margaret Cornwell | mcornwe2@kennesaw.edu |
| Team member 4 | Laura Howard | lhowar40@kennesaw.edu |
| Team member 5 | Jason Rodenbeck | jrodenb1@kennesaw.edu |

If you have any more team members to add, please enter their names and email addresses in the text box below.

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# Project Information

| Requested information | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| Type of Project | * Creation of ancillaries for existing OER courses |
| Requested Amount of Funding  *$10,000 maximum total award per grant* | $10,000 |
| Course Titles and Course Numbers | (see “Project Goals” section below) |
| Final Semester of Project | * Spring 2023 |
| Currently Existing Resource(s) to be Revised/Ancillaries Created | n/a (creation of new open-access supplementary materials to address an identified gap in available resources) |

# Project Goals

This proposal builds on initial research and collaboration developed through the support of a Disability Strategies and Resources Diversity Faculty Fellowship awarded by Kennesaw State University’s Division of Diverse and Inclusive Excellence.

Building a culture of accessibility in which university writers actively work toward inclusion (rather than meeting minimal obligations) is a key concern for the field of writing studies (CCCC Position Statement, “[Disability studies in composition: Position statement on policy and best practices](https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/disabilitypolicy),” March 2020; see also Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann, Disability and the Teaching of Writing, 2007.) Designing accessible online course environments is essential to support student success in university learning communities, and is a legal responsibility for federally funded educational institutions (KSU Digital Learning Innovations, “[What is Online Accessibility](https://accessibility.kennesaw.edu/basic_accessibility_solutions/what_is_accessibility.php)?”, n.d.). Furthermore, as the Web Accessibility Initiative for the World Wide Web Consortium notes, “Making the web accessible benefits individuals, businesses, and society” (W3C WAI, “[Introduction to Web Accessibility](https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/),” 2021), which means writing and designing accessible online content is an important skill to learn for emerging professionals such as university students.

The need for accessible learning environments (including online course spaces) is longstanding and ongoing, especially for students and faculty with disabilities. However, recent widespread shifts to online learning in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated this need in ways that put additional pressure on students with disabilities and foregrounded the necessity of building accessible digital resources from the start (Runde, “[Digital Accessibility: A Pandemic Look Back—And Forward,](https://it.wisc.edu/news/digital-accessibility-a-pandemic-look-back-and-forward/)” November 2021).

The goal of this project is to create a resource that helps students write and design accessible online course content. We anticipate launching this resource first in professional writing courses, but we envision its potential for its application and adoption in courses across the university in which online writing and content creation play a role.

The proposal team will create a course resource that serves as a supplement to support the development of accessible online learning environments, rather than a replacement of a specific course textbook or delivery of particular course-specific content. Specifically, the proposed course resource will help students practice accessible online writing and design as part of their participation in online courses through tutorials on how to create structured documents, image descriptions, video captions, and audio descriptions. This resource is intended to foster a culture of accessibility in professional writing classes and university learning communities more broadly, so that all course members can contribute to creating accessible learning environments. The resource will be organized according to the following table of contents:

* Introduction
  + Includes accessibility rationale and explanation of benefit and limitations of AI tools
* Section 1: Media
* Section 2: Word and PPT
* Section 3: Html and Web
* Section 4: PDF
* Conclusion

Along with facilitating the creation of accessible online learning environments for all course participants, part of the resource’s transformative value lies in educating all university students about accessibility as part of a larger paradigm shift toward broader inclusivity. If students are writing for accessibility, it helps mainstream the effort, and may also help to counter potential faculty resistance to the need for accessible course design. Not only will this resource help students while at KSU, but it will also engrain the importance of accessible design outside of the classroom. Additionally, creating this resource for student use and marketing it to their professors will hopefully get faculty to think about accessibility in their course design.

This resource is intended to support a fundamental, transformational shift in pedagogy that builds in accessibility from the very beginning into the ways all course participants engage in the course, rather than putting the responsibility solely on the individual learner to express their access needs or on the faculty member to retrofit the course on a case-by-case basis. This resource will contribute to student success by helping make global course content more accessible to all learners with diverse learning and access needs. Furthermore, this resource will contribute to student success in future professional environments by preparing them to write and design content that can be accessed by as many audience members as possible—an important skill and responsibility in any professional environment.

Although there are a number of tutorials and resources available for faculty and general audiences learning to practice accessible writing and content design, there are few resources tailored specifically to students, and these tend to be buried in places online that students may not typically visit. The proposed project will serve as an in-depth, focused, centralized, easy-to-access resource that combines these varying tutorials into a single location with a student-oriented rhetorical framing that faculty members can share to supplement instruction in their courses. As an illustrative anecdote, one proposal team member is working with a faculty member this semester who is in the position to create accessible documents for a student using a screen reader. This context encouraged the faculty member to consider redesigning course participation activities, such as a group project in which students critique one another’s work. When pedagogical practices include collaborative work, this resource will support students’ abilities to write in ways that their colleagues can access.

The project will serve as an introduction to accessible writing and design for students that adapts a student-oriented version of Kennesaw State University’s faculty responsibilities for academic web accessibility, narrowed down to the most likely modes of student content creation and engagement: image description, audio transcription, video captions, and structured documents. Each chapter will provide a clear overview of the focal accessibility channel and how to practice it in relevant composing platforms, along with examples and links to relevant resources, guidelines, and narratives of student experiences. The goal is to create an easy-to-use reference guide that can be taken up in a number of courses depending on the kind of content course participants will be creating and sharing.

***Note from Proposal Team:*** *Because our proposal focuses on developing a new supplemental resource for use in classes across multiple departments (rather than replacing a textbook for a specific course), we offer illustrative examples of possible courses in which this resource would be especially relevant. We view the major transformational impact of our proposed resource as supporting a campus-wide culture of accessible learning environments, rather than primarily financial cost savings.*

* ENGL 1101: Composition I
* ENGL 1102: Composition II
* WRIT 3111: Professional Editing
* WRIT 3140: Workplace Writing
* PRWR 6440: Professional and Academic Editing
* PRWR 6580: Writing for the Web
* PRWR 6570: Writing for Social Media
* TCID 2170: Introduction to Digital Media and Culture
* TCID 3100: Professional Development
* TCOM 2010: Technical Writing
* TCOM 2030: Research in Technical Communication
* TCOM 2050: Issues in Digital Accessibility
* TCOM 3011: Technical Writing II
* COM 2135: Writing for Public Communication
* COM 2230: Introduction to Mass Communication
* COM 3340: Digital Media Production
* COM 3350: Editing for Today’s Media

# Action Plan

Each team member will contribute to the introduction, conclusion, and one of the central body chapters. Team members include the following individuals committed to accessible learning within their diverse roles at Kennesaw State University:

* Erin Bahl, Assistant Professor of Applied and Professional Writing, English Department
* Stephen Bartlett, Associate Director of Digital Education and Senior Lecturer of History, Office of Digital Education
* Mary Margaret Cornwell, Research Support Librarian/Librarian Assistant Professor, KSU Libraries
* Laura Howard, Graduate Teaching Assistantship Coordinator and Lecturer in English, English Department
* Jason Rodenbeck, Assistant Director of Academic Web Accessibility, Digital Learning Innovations

Team members will draft and revise their chapters during Summer/Fall 2022, then send them out for review by KSU-employed student accessibility assistants prior to final production in Spring 2023. Please see Section 5 of this proposal for a detailed breakdown of primary project activities by month over the course of the award period.

To the best of our knowledge, no textbook-style resources of this nature oriented toward students currently exist, whether open, no-cost, or low-cost. All materials generated in the creation of this project will be shared under Creative Commons open licensing (CC BY 4.0). As per the heart of the project itself, all content will demonstrate accessible design aligned with standards for compliance with ADA and university requirements, as informed by the most recent [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) (WCAG 2.1) from the World Wide Web Consortium–Web Accessibility Initiative. Finalized materials will be shared as open-access resources through Affordable Learning Georgia’s OpenALG hosting platform, with potential production support from the University of Georgia Press. Team members will implement the final resource in their courses and share it in their professional and university networks, such as through workshops, publications, conference presentations, and internal promotions.

This resource will continue to be updated and maintained collaboratively between KSU’s RCHSS Office of Digital Education (ODE) and Digital Learning Innovations (DLI), part of the university’s Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment unit. Continued maintenance will take place to reflect updated technical practices, accessibility standards, narratives of disabled university community members, and language preferred by disabled individuals and the broader disability community. This project has the potential to be incorporated into a number of university classes beyond professional writing, and to multiple universities. Team members will share this work through ongoing research presentations, workshops, and professional networks. Continued maintenance will take place to reflect updated technical practices to maintain compliance with ADA standards as codified by the [WCAG 2.1](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) principles of "Perceivable, Operable, and Understandable."

# Timeline

SPRING 2022

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| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Primary Activities** |
| March-April | * awards announced * team meets to coordinate next steps * finalize resource outline * assign team focal sections |

SUMMER 2022

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Primary Activities** |
| May-July | * *Note: if using funding as summer pay, some team members may begin initial drafting during this period* |

FALL 2022

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Primary Activities** |
| August | * draft resource sections |
| September | * team members review first drafts of resource sections |
| October | * revise resource sections * contact UNG Press on anticipated production needs and timeline |
| November | * team members review revised drafts of resource sections |
| December | * finalize overall draft in preparation for student reviews |

SPRING 2023

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Primary Activities** |
| January | * solicit reviews from KSU-employed student accessibility experts |
| February | * revise per feedback from reviews |
| March | * revise per feedback from reviews |
| April | * final design and production of resource (with support from University of Georgia Press) * publish finalized resource through Affordable Learning Georgia |

# Budget

* Project lead compensation: $2,000
* Team member compensation: $6,000 ($1,500/each)
* Remaining fees for production services through UNG Press Services: $2,000
* **TOTAL: $10,000**

# Creative Commons Terms

*I understand that any new materials or revisions created with Affordable Learning Georgia funding will, by default, be made available to the public under a Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY), with exceptions for modifications of pre-existing resources with a more restrictive license.*

# Accessibility Terms

*I understand that any new materials or revisions created with Affordable Learning Georgia funding must be developed in compliance with the specific accessibility standards defined in the Request for Proposals.*

# Letter of Support

*The Department Chair from the corresponding project, or the Department Chair’s direct report such as the Dean or Provost, must provide a signed Letter of Support for the project. This letter should acknowledge the following:*

* *The department will provide support for fund disbursement in correspondence with the Grants/Business Office.*
* *The department approves of the work on the proposal by the applicant(s).*
* *The department acknowledges the sustainability of these affordable resources after the grant work is complete.*

*In the case of multi-institutional affiliations, all participants’ institutions must provide a letter of support.*

*Please provide the name and title of the department chair (or other administrator) who provided you with the Letter of Support.*

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| John Havard, Chair of the Kennesaw State University English Department |

# Grants or Business Office Acknowledgment Form

*Institutional Grants/Business Offices will be responsible for fund disbursement, often in correspondence with the Department Chair, including expense and travel reimbursement. All applicants will need to provide a signed Acknowledgement Form, the template for which is linked on the RFP page, stating that the Grants/Business Office knows about the applicant’s intent to apply for an Affordable Materials Grant. Either the Department Chair or the Project Lead can work with the Grants/Business Office to get this signed form.*

*In the case of multi-institutional affiliations, all participants’ institutions must provide this form.*

*Please provide the name and title of the grants or business office representative who provided you with the acknowledgement form.*

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| --- |
| Kimberly Hunt, Grants and Contract Manager - Pre-Award |