**Appendix C: Letter of Invitation**

Note that the following letter of invitation is broad enough to apply to all three participant groups – community leaders, community members, and public librarians. The letter will be specified to the group in question as indicated in *italics* and numbers in parenthesesin the letter text below.

Dear *Participant*,

My name is Vanessa Kitzie and I am an Assistant Professor at the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) at the University of South Carolina. I am working on a three-year grant-funded project through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) examining public library service to LGBTQ+ communities for health information. As part of the project, I am looking for *(1,3) LGBTQ+ community leaders, (2) LGBTQ+ community members, or (3) public librarians* to participate in *(1) individual interviews, (2) focus groups, or (3) community forums* to learn more about *(1) how your community seeks, shares, uses, and creates health information; (2) how you seek, share, use, and create health information; or (3) how public libraries can better meet the health information practices of LGBTQ+ communities*.

*(1,2) If you decide to participate in this study, we will schedule a time to meet* *(1) at a location convenient to you or virtually via a video-chat client like Skype or (2) at a nearby location with a meeting space, such as a local LGBTQ+ center*. *(3) If you decide to participate in this study, we will meet on [date] at [time] at [location]*. During the *(1) interview, (2) focus group, or (3) community forum,* we will discuss the following topics:

* *(1)* 
  + *Defining “leader,” “community,” and “identity” as shaped by both individual experience and collective meaning*
  + *Identifying the health information practices of the leader’s LGBTQ+ community*
  + *Identifying the social and structural factors affecting these practices*
  + *The public library’s role, if any, in shaping these practices*
* *(2)*
  + *Defining “community” and “identity” as shaped by both individual experience and collective meaning*
  + *Identifying the health information practices of your LGBTQ+ community(ies)*
  + *Identifying the social and structural factors affecting these practices*
  + *The public library’s role, if any, in shaping these practices*
* *(3)*
  + *Engaging in dialog between community leaders and public librarians regarding findings from interviews and focus groups*
  + *Strategizing how libraries can facilitate the health-related information practices of local LGBTQ+ communities*
  + *Gaining a more holistic sense of LGBTQ+ communities’ health-related information practices*

The study will take approximately *(1) 90 minutes, (2) between 90-120 minutes, or (3) a half day* to complete. With your permission, the study will be audio-recorded to assist the researcher with analyzing the study data. The audio recordings will be deleted once they are transcribed or typed up. If you do not want the study to be audio recorded, this will not disqualify you from participating; the researcher will take detailed notes instead. Following your participation, you will be contacted again with a draft write-up of research findings. You have the option to read the findings and provide feedback on how well they reflect your lived experiences.

Your identity will be kept confidential in this study. This means that only the grant research team will know your identity. *(2,3) Since you are participating in a group study, other participants will be privy to other identifying characteristics (e.g., seeing you in person) and could potentially discuss the information you disclose outside of the (2) focus group or (3) community forum. To prevent this disclosure, we will make announcements before and after the (2) focus group or (3) community forum, asking participants to refrain from discussing what was shared outside of the study*. To preserve confidentiality, we will refer to you in all research presentations and publications using a pseudonym. *(2,3) In addition, other participants will only know you by your pseudonym*.Other identifying information about you, your institution, and your community will be referred to using pseudonyms. Our internal research team will maintain one file linking identifying information to your pseudonyms – this file will be saved on a password-protected folder on a computer in a locked office and on a password-protected cloud server account.

For your participation, you will be paid *(1) $50, (2) $75, or (3) $75. (3) There is the opportunity to serve as a table leader and receive $100. The table leader will need to attend a 30-minute training session prior to the community forum, take detailed notes during the forum, and guide forum discussion. If you are interested in being a table leader, please specify this interest in a response to this letter of invitation. (2,3) Travel stipends of up to $50 to the (2) focus group or (3) forum location are available. Please specify your request for a travel stipend in response to this letter.* You will receive payment as a debit gift card upon study completion. *(2,3) If you require a travel stipend prior to the study, please specify this request in response to this letter.* Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there will be no negative consequences for withdrawing from the study.

This study has received approval from the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board, Protocol # *insert* number. If you have any questions about the study please contact the Principal Investigator, Vanessa Kitzie:

Telephone: 803-777-1136

Email: [kitzie@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:kitzie@mailbox.sc.edu)

*Insert project website URL*

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board office via telephone: (803) 777-7095.