Texas Reads Grants Program Guidelines

State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2012

Application Due Date:
February 25, 2011

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Library Development Division
Texas State Library and Archives Commission
November 2010

Library Development Division

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Comments or complaints regarding the programs and services of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission can be addressed to the Director and Librarian.

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The Texas Reads Grant program is administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and funded by proceeds of the sale of Texas Reads specialty license plates available through the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) (see http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/agency/txreads.html for more information).

Program Description

Goals and Purposes – 13 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §2.710

This grant program funds public library programs to promote reading and literacy within local communities. Programs may be targeted to the entire community or to a segment of the community. Programs involving collaboration with other community organizations are encouraged. The agency may designate specific funding priorities for each grant cycle in response to identified needs. If this occurs, staff will provide details of funding priorities and scoring implications to applicants and to the peer review panel. These programs must meet the following LSTA goal as identified in the Texas LSTA 5 Year Plan (www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/lstaplan/2008/index.html):

Need

Texans need enhanced literacy and educational attainment.

Goal

Help public libraries promote reading and literacy within local communities.

Reading promotion programs are those that actively encourage people to read and to develop a lifelong love of reading. One goal of reading promotion programs is to develop a more literate community. Typically, this involves presenting or hosting programs that will involve people in reading activities and will generate enthusiasm for reading.

Libraries may also coordinate programs in basic literacy, family literacy, and the ability to read, write and speak English and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society.

The purpose is not for collection development, or other activities primarily focused on the acquisition of library materials or resources.

Eligible Applicants – 13 TAC §2.711

Public libraries and local public library systems, through their governing authority (city, county, corporation, or district) are eligible to apply for grants. To receive a grant, applicants must be members of the Texas Library System for the fiscal year the grant contracts are issued. Libraries or library systems will not be awarded more than one grant in a single grant cycle. Libraries or library systems will not be awarded a grant in two consecutive grant cycles.

Funds Available

An estimated total of up to $10,000 is available, subject to approval by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Maximum Award

The maximum award for FY2012 is $3,000.

Length of Funding

One state fiscal year (September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012).

Eligible Activities

This grant program will fund costs such as materials, professional services (e.g. speakers' fees, temporary personnel), and other operating expenses needed to implement a reading promotion program. Programs may include but are not limited to book talks, author visits, book clubs or discussion groups, Born-to-Read or Every Child Ready to Read programs, "One Book, One Community" programs, or programs to enhance Texas Reading Club activities. Projects must include programming designed to actively engage participants in reading activities. Except as provided in grant guidelines, competitive grants may fund costs for staff, equipment, capital expenditures, supplies, professional services, and other typical operating expenses, as permitted by 13 TAC §2.116

(Uniform Grants Management Standards). The purpose of competitive grants is not for collection development, or other activities primarily focused on the acquisition of library materials or resources.

Ineligible Activities

This grant program will NOT fund the following costs:

a. Building construction or renovation
b. Food, beverages, awards, honoraria, prizes, or gifts
c. Equipment or technology not specifically needed to carry out the goals of the grant
d. Transportation/travel for participants or non-grant funded personnel
e. Databases currently offered or similar to ones offered by the agency (i.e., a magazine index database may not be purchased if a comparable one is provided by the agency)
f. Collection development purchases not targeted directly to the grant goals nor integral to the service program
g. Advertising or public relations costs not directly related to promoting awareness of grant-funded activities
h. Performers or presenters whose purpose is to entertain rather than to educate
i. Indirect costs, overhead or Finance & Administration (F&A) costs

Criteria for Award

This grant program is competitive. Texas Reads Grant Review Panel will score proposals on the six criteria listed below (13 TAC §2.712). The maximum number of points for each category is shown.

See Appendix A for a detailed scoring rubric that will be made available to members of the Texas Reads Grant Review Panel.

1. **Needs Assessment (20 points)**
   Describe why the program is needed in the community. Address the program goals and audience. Describe the greater community to be served using demographic statistics, library records, or surveys to support these statements.

2. **Program Purpose (20 points)**
   Describe the program goals, audience, intended outcomes, and relationship to the library long-range plan or goals. Include one or more of the Texas Reads Grant Program outcomes as well as any additional outcomes specific to your program.

   Texas Reads Grant Program outcomes:

   - Participants read more.
   - Participants enjoy reading.
   - Participants have more confidence in their reading ability.
   - Participants incorporate attitudes and/or behaviors into their lives that are associated with increased family reading skills.
   - Participants report increased participation in adult education classes at the library and/or partner agency (e.g. ESL, literacy, GED classes, and tutoring)
   - Participants report increased participation in children's literacy programs at the library and/or at the partner agency (e.g. story time, summer reading club, storytelling)

   (Note: Points are not awarded on the basis of the number of Texas Reads Grant Program outcomes selected; use only those that apply to your program.)

3. **Program Design (20 points)**
   Provide a detailed description of the program and its activities. Describe any collaboration planned with other community organizations. Thoroughly describe services, programs, and activities.

4. **Timetable (10 points)**
   Provide a timetable of program activities.

5. **Evaluation (10 points)**
   Describe how the anticipated outcomes will be measured. Set achievable, measurable outcomes and present a reasonable method to collect data. Present a method to count users of the services as well as the effectiveness of the service.

6. **Budget (20 points)**
   Provide a detailed budget and justify budgeted costs.

Grant Review and Award Process

13 TAC§ 2.113-2.118

Peer Review

(a) The commission may use peer review panels to evaluate applications in competitive grant programs.

(b) The director and librarian may select professionals, citizens, community leaders, and agency and library staff to evaluate grant applications. Peer reviewers must have appropriate training or service on citizen boards in an oversight capacity and may not evaluate grant applications in which there is, or is a possible appearance of, a conflict of interest.

(c) The agency staff will distribute selected applications to reviewers and will provide written instructions or training for peer reviewers. Reviewers must complete any training prior to reviewing applications.

(d) The reviewers score each application according to the review criteria and requirements stated in the grant guidelines.

(e) Each peer review evaluation of an application for competitive grants shall be appropriately documented by the peer reviewer conducting the evaluation. The documentation shall include the scores assigned by the peer reviewer. The peer reviewer may also include comments that may be shared with the applicant.

(f) To be eligible for review, each application must be submitted by the specified deadline with all required components and all necessary authorization signatures.

Funding Decisions

(a) The agency staff will submit a recommended priority-ranked list of applicants for possible funding. Final approval of a grant award is solely at the determination of the State Library and Archives Commission.

(b) Applications for grant funding will be evaluated only upon the information provided in the written application.

(c) The agency staff may negotiate with selected applicants to determine the terms of the award. To receive an award, the applicant must accept any additional or special terms and conditions listed in the grant contract and any changes in the grant application.

(d) The agency staff will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing.

Awarding of Grants

The commission has the right to reject applications or cancel or modify a grant solicitation at any point before a contract is signed. The award of any grant is subject to the availability of funds.

TSLAC Staff Responsibility

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) staff will review each application packet for the following:

- Legal eligibility of the institution to participate in this grant program and appropriate authorizing signature
- Conformance to the federal and state regulations pertaining to grants
- Inclusion of unallowable costs
- Errors in arithmetic or cost calculations
- Submission of all required forms
- Compliance with submission procedures and deadlines
- Relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the grant program

Agency staff will raise issues and questions regarding the needs, methods, staffing, and costs of the applications. Staff will also raise concerns regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the grant program. Staff comments will be sent to the grant review panel with the applications for consideration by the panel.

Applicants will be sent a copy of the staff comments to give applicants an opportunity to respond in writing. Applicants may not modify the grant proposal in any way; however, applicants' responses to staff will be distributed to the panel.

Applications with significant errors, omissions, or eligibility issues will not be rated.

Applications in which the project design and activities are not relevant and appropriate to the purpose of the grant program will be ineligible.

Agency staff will be available to offer technical assistance to reviewers.

LSTA Grant Review Panel Responsibility

The peer reviewers will review all complete and eligible grant applications forwarded to them by agency staff and complete a rating form for each. Each reviewer will evaluate the proposal in relation to the specific requirements of the criteria and will assign a value, depending on the points assigned to each criterion.

No reviewer who is associated with an applicant or with an application, or who stands to benefit directly from an application, will evaluate that application. Any reviewer who feels unable to evaluate a particular application fairly may choose not to review that application.

Reviewers will consider and assess the strengths and weaknesses of any proposed project only on the basis of the documents submitted. Considerations of geographical distribution, demographics, type of library, or personality will not influence the assessment of a proposal by the review panel. The panel members must make their own, individual, decisions regarding the applications. The panel may discuss applications. The panel's recommendations will be compiled from the individual assessments, not as the result of a collective decision or vote.

Reviewers may not discuss proposals with any applicant before the proposals are reviewed. Agency staff is available to provide technical assistance to reviewers. Agency staff will conduct all negotiations and communications with the applicants.

Reviewers may recommend setting conditions for funding a given application or group of applications (e.g., adjusting the project budget, revising project objectives, modifying the timetable, amending the evaluation methodology, etc.). The recommendation must include a statement of the reasons for setting such conditions. Reviewers who are ineligible to evaluate a given proposal will not participate in the discussion of funding conditions.

Reviewers will submit their evaluation forms to the agency. In order to be counted, the forms must arrive before the specified due date.

Decision Making Process

To be considered eligible for funding by the commission, any application must receive a minimum adjusted mean score of more than 50 percent of the maximum points available. To reduce the impact of scores that are exceedingly high or low, or otherwise outside the range of scores from other reviewers, agency staff will tabulate the panel's work using calculations such as an adjusted mean score.

Step 1

Applications will be ranked in priority order by score for consideration by the commission.

Step 2

If sufficient funds remain to fully fund the next application, the staff will negotiate a reduced grant with the next ranked applicant.

Step 3

If the panel recommends funding an application that, for legal, fiscal, or other reasons, is unacceptable to the staff, a contrary recommendation will be made. The applicant will be informed of this situation prior to presentation to the commission and may negotiate a revision to the application. A positive recommendation to the commission will be contingent upon successfully completing these negotiations prior to the commission meeting.

Step 4

If the panel is unable to produce a set of recommendations for funding, the agency staff will use the same evaluation procedures to develop recommendations to the commission.

Awarding Grants

The commission has the right to reject applications or cancel or modify a grant solicitation at any point before a contract is signed. The award of any grant is subject to the availability of funds.

Multiple Applications

Applicants for competitive grants may submit more than one grant application for different projects, in different grant categories. Applicants may not submit the same, or nearly the same, application in more than one grant category.

Instructions for Applying

Project Development and Draft Review

TSLAC consultants are available to help throughout application development. For more information, **contact Library Development at 512-463-5527 or via e-mail at ld@tsl.state.tx.us**.

As the written application of the proposal is the only information the grant review panel will receive, the commission strongly encourages applicants to **send a draft of the proposal to TSLAC staff for review**. To ensure staff will have time to review the draft proposal, submit the draft by the due date listed in the Timetable in Appendix C.

Grant Management System (GMS) Guidelines and Forms

TSLAC uses a Grant Management System (GMS) that enables applicants to apply for grants electronically through a web portal. In order to apply for the grant, you must obtain a user name and password for GMS (please allow up to 5 business days). You will then be able to access and fill out the application. Step-by-step GMS instructions can be found at: www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/funding/lsta/gmsmanual.pdf

Application Components

1. Applicant Information – To be completed on GMS. Once you have completed the form, click the "Printer Friendly" button to print the form. The printout must be signed by an individual authorized to enter into contracts with the Texas State Library & Archives Commission.
    - To determine Congressional, State Senate, and State House representation, visit www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/
2. Budget -- To be completed on GMS.
3. Narrative – To be completed on GMS.
4. Children's Internet Protection Form (CIPA) – This form can be downloaded from GMS, but it cannot be submitted electronically**.

**Deadline

Complete applications must be submitted in GMS by 5 p.m. Central Time on **February 25, 2011.**

The Applicant Information printout and signed CIPA form must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on February 25, 2011. Attn: Library Development via email to ld@tsl.state.tx.us, or fax at 1-800-252-9386 or mail to Library Development Division, TSLAC, P.O. Box 12927, Austin, TX 78711. (TSLAC street address: 1201 Brazos, Austin, TX 78701)

Post-Award Training

Successful applicants will be required to attend a post-award online training on best practices in grants management in the fall of 2011.

Appendix A: Scoring Rubrics

Project Scoring Total in Six Areas: 100 points		
Relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the goals and purpose of the Texas Reads grant program will be considered in the scoring of all criteria. Members of the LSTA Grant Review Panel may score each criteria as follows: 0 points: Project does not meet the goals and purposes of the Texas Reads grant program. 1-3 points: Project partially meets the goals and purposes of the Texas Reads grant program. 4-5 points: Project is a clear fit for the goals and purposes of the Texas Reads grant program.		
1. Needs Assessment:		
Points: 5 max.	Describe why the program is needed in the community. Address the program goals and audience. Describe the greater community to be served using demographic statistics, library records, or surveys to support these statements.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Provides no evidence of need for program in community. • Program goals and audience are not defined. • Does not describe needs assessment process and/or how need was determined (i.e., no description of community served, demographic statistics, library records or evidence or surveys).	• Provides partial/some evidence of need for program in community. • Program goals and audience are defined but show little to no connection to description of community need. • Needs assessment process seems vague and incompletely describes how stated need was determined.	• Provides clear and convincing evidence of need for program in community. • Program goals and audience are clearly connected to description of community need. • Clearly describes needs assessment process including how stated need was determined (e.g., statistics, records, surveys).
For final score, Needs Assessment score will be multiplied by a weight of 4 = 20 points max.		
2. Program Purpose:		
Points: 5 max.	Describe the program goals, audience, intended outcomes, and relationship to the library long-range plan or goals. Include one or more of the Texas Reads Grant Program outcomes (see p. 5) as well as any additional outcomes specific to your program.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Program goals are not	• Program goals are	• Program goals are

defined. • Audience is not defined. • Applicant has not identified one or more of the Texas Reads Grant Program Outcomes or any other outcomes specific to the proposed project. • Relationship to library long-range plan or goals not defined. • Project purpose is unclear.	defined. • Audience is defined. • Applicant has included one or more of the Texas Reads Grant Program Outcomes and, if necessary, other outcomes specific to the proposed project. • Relationship to library long-range plan or goals is defined. • Project purpose is defined and direction and some relationship to community needs.	clearly defined and related to community needs described in Needs Assessment. • Audience is clearly defined and related to community needs described in Needs Assessment. • Applicant has included one or more of the Texas Reads Grant Programs Outcomes and, if necessary, other outcomes specific to the proposed project and they clearly tie to the purpose being described and to the community needs addressed in Needs Assessment. • Program explicitly ties to the library long-range plans or goals. • Project purpose is clearly defined and is strongly related to community needs described in Needs Assesment.
For final score, Program Purpose will be multiplied by a weight of 4 = 20 points max.		
3. Program Design:		
Points: 5 max.	Provide a detailed description of the program and its activities. Describe any collaboration planned with other community organizations. Thoroughly describe services, programs, and activities.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Proposed program, activites and services lack definition and are unclear. • Issue of collaboration not addressed. • Project appears to lack direction and planning, and does not relate to described	• Proposed program, activites and services are defined. • Issue of collaboration mentioned. If not a collaborative project, so stated. • Project has direction and some relationship to described	• Proposed program, activities and services are clearly described from start to finish, including timelines, locations, and resources required. • Collaboration and potential partners identified, justified,

needs.	community needs.	and clearly addressed; if not a collaborative project, so stated. • Program shows evidence of clear direction and planning and strong relationship to described community needs and library goals.
For final score, Program Design score will be multiplied by a weight of 4 = 20 points max.		
4. Timetable:		
Points: 5 max.	Provide a timetable of program activities.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Timetable is missing or incomplete (i.e., does not include a list of actions with specific target dates for completion).	• Timetable exists, but is not clearly relevant to achieving the project goals. • Timetable seems unachievable within the project period.	• Timetable includes a list of actions with specific target dates, preferably broken down by month, and is clearly relevant to achieving the established objectives. • Timetable seems achievable within the project period.
For final score, Timetable score will be multiplied by a weight of 2 = 10 points		
5. Evaluation:		
Points: 5 max.	Describe how the anticipated outcomes will be measured. Set achievable, measurable outcomes and present a reasonable method to collect data. Present a method to count users of the service as well as the effectiveness of the service.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Does not set outcomes for the program. • Does not describe how anticipated outcomes will be measures. • Does not set achievable or measurable outcomes. • Does not present a method to collect data. • Does not provide	• Sets anticipated outcomes for the program but they do not clearly relate to project. • Some description of how anticipated outcomes will be measured. • Method to collect data provided but is not clear. • Provides some information on how	• Clearly describes anticipated outcomes that relate to the project. • Clearly describes how the anticipated outcomes will be measured. • Method to collect data is provided that clearly relates to project. • Provides a clear and well planned method

information on how users of service will be counted or its impact/effectiveness on users.	users of service will be counted or its impact/effectiveness on users, but it does not seem to relate clearly to project.	to count users of service and impact/ effectiveness of service provided.
For final score, Evaluation score will be multiplied by a weight of 2 = 10 points max.		
6. Budget:		
Points: 5 max.	Provide a detailed budget and justify budgeted costs.	
0 points	1-3 points	4-5 points
• Budget incomplete. • Provides no narrative description (justification), beyond the budget column, of how funds will be spent.	• Budget complete. • Budget narrative description exists but does not clearly relate to the project and sources for costs are not stated. • Items listed in the budget description do not match those in the budget form. • Costs do not seem reasonable and description is unclear.	• Budget is complete and clearly describes how the dollars will be used for the project. • Clearly identifies source of stated costs and justification for their reasonableness. • Items listed in the budget description match those in the budget form.
For final score, Budget score will be multiplied by a weight of 4 = 20 points max.		

Appendix B: Protest Procedure

Protest Procedure Texas State Library and Archives Commission (13 TAC 2.55)

(a) An aggrieved person who is not satisfied with a decision, procedure, or service received from the staff of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission or who is an actual or prospective bidder, grantee, or contractor aggrieved in connection with a solicitation, evaluation, or award may file a protest with the Director and Librarian in accordance with this rule.

(b) A protest must be submitted to the Director and Librarian within 21 days after the person knows or should have known of the matter which is protested. The Director and Librarian has the discretion to allow a protest filed after 21 days if the protestant shows good cause for the late filing or if the protest raises an issue significant to the general policies and procedures of the commission.

(c) The protestant shall mail or deliver a copy of the protest to all interested persons. The Director and Librarian will furnish a list of interested persons to a protestant. For protests of a competitive selection (bid, contract, or grant), interested persons shall include all persons who have submitted a bid, proposal, or application.

(d) A protest must be in writing and identified as a protest under this section, and contain the following:

(1) A description of the protestant's interest in the matter
(2) The issue(s) to be resolved and remedy(s) requested
(3) The protestant's argument supporting the protest, including a statement of relevant facts and applicable law, specifying the statutes, rules, or other legal authority alleged to have been violated
(4) The protestant's affirmation that facts set forth in the protest are true
(5) A certification that a copy of the protest has been mailed or delivered to all interested persons

(e) Upon receipt of a protest conforming to the requirements of this section, the commission shall not proceed with the solicitation, award, or contract until the protest is resolved, unless the Director and Librarian makes a written determination that delay would harm the substantial interests of the state.

(f) The Director and Librarian has the authority to decide, settle, or resolve the protest and will make a written determination. The Director and Librarian may solicit written responses to the protest from other parties. The Director and Librarian shall inform the protesting party and other interested parties by letter of his determination, and how to appeal the determination to the commission.

(g) An interested party may appeal the determination of the Director and Librarian. An appeal must be in writing and conform to paragraphs (1) - (3) of this subsection:

(1) The appeal must be received in the office of the Director and Librarian no later than 15 days after the date the determination is mailed to interested parties
(2) A copy of the appeal must be mailed or delivered by the appealing party to all interested parties and contain a certification of mailing or delivery
(3) The appealing party must state whether or not an opportunity is requested to make an oral presentation to the commission in open meeting

(h) The Director and Librarian shall refer the matter to the commission for their consideration at an open meeting.

(i) The chair of the commission has the discretion to allow an appeal filed more than 15 days after the Director and Librarian's determination if the appealing party shows good cause for the late filing or if the appeal raises an issue significant to the general policies or procedures of the commission.

(j) An interested party may file a response to an appeal of the determination of the director and librarian no later than 15 days after the appeal is mailed or delivered. The chairman of the commission has the discretion to allow a response filed more than 15 days after the appeal of the determination by the director and librarian if the interested party shows good cause for the late filing or if the response raises an issue significant to the general policies or procedures of the commission.

(k) Copies of the appeal and responses of interested parties, if any, shall be mailed to the commission by the Director and Librarian.

(l) The chair of the commission has the discretion to decide whether or not a request for oral presentations will be granted and will set the order and amount of time for oral presentations that are allowed. The chair also has the discretion to decide whether presentations and written documents presented by Commission staff and interested parties will be allowed.

(m) The commission will determine properly filed appeals and make its decision in open meeting. The commission shall vote to uphold or reverse the decision of the Director and Librarian. Failing a majority vote of a quorum of the commission, the Director and Librarian's decision is upheld. The commission's decision is final and not subject to judicial review under the statutes governing the commission.

(n) A decision issued either by the commission in open meeting or in writing by the Director and Librarian shall be the final administrative action of the commission.

(o) Documentation concerning a protest of a competitive selection is part of the commission's records series for that selection and is retained in accordance with the commission's approved records retention schedule.

Appendix C: Timetable

Texas Reads Grant Program

Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)

November 2010	Guidelines and application link posted to TSLAC website
January 31, 2011	Draft proposals due to TSLAC for review (recommended but not required)
February 25, 2011	Applications submitted via GMS and signature page due to TSLAC
May 2011	Application packets evaluated by LSTA Grant Review Panel
August 2011	Commission meets and approves projects
August 2011	Contracts issued
September 1, 2011	Projects begin
August 31, 2012	Projects end