Notice of Funding Opportunity

TSLAC CARES

Grant Program Guidelines

CYCLE 2

Application Due Date:
Sunday, September 20, 2020

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Comments regarding the programs and services of the
Texas State Library and Archives Commission can be addressed to:
Director and Librarian
P. O. Box 12927 ◆ Austin, Texas 78711-2927
512-463-5460 ◆ 512-463-5436 fax

A. Program Description

The TSLAC CARES grant program funds community needs identified by Texas libraries in areas of digital access and inclusion to include programs, training, and tools necessary to increase community access to vital digital technologies and services. Additionally, funds may be utilized for library initiatives that support prevention, preparation, and response to the COVID-19 emergency. Programs should meet the following LSTA goals as identified in the 2018-2022 LSTA 5-Year Plan (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/pubs/lstaplan/LSTA 2018-2022-final plan FINAL.pdf).

Needs
- All Texans and Texas communities need access to Internet-connected resources and services and support to use the resources and services to meet individual and community needs.
- Texans of all ages need access to resources and services that promote and enhance literacy and further formal and informal learning.
- Texans need access to resources and services for workforce development in order to prosper and enhance the economic development of their communities.

Goals
- Texans and Texas communities will have access to Internet connected resources and services through Texas libraries to meet community and personal goals and the support needed to use the resources and services successfully.
- Texans will receive library services that effectively respond to community needs.

This reimbursement grant program will fund operating expenditures such as library supplies and materials, technology, furniture, and contractual services. To be eligible, grant expenses must be reasonable and in accordance with appropriate state or local operating policies and procedures. Further, all grant expenses must be designed to respond directly to the COVID-19 emergency.

B. Award Information

At least $250,000 is expected to be available for Cycle 2. Funding is provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136).

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): LS-246561-OLS-20

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.310

Maximum Award

The maximum grant award will be $25,000 for a single library location and $50,000 for a multi-branch library location.

Length of Funding

TSLAC CARES – Cycle 2 will open for application on Friday, August 28, 2020. Applications will close at 11:59 p.m. CST on Sunday, September 20, 2020. All funded projects in Cycle 2 must be completed by August 31, 2021. All Cycle 2 grant funds MUST BE OBLIGATED by July 31, 2021.

Cycle 2 funding can be utilized retroactively to cover expenses incurred beginning April 21, 2020. Expenses incurred before April 21, 2020, are not eligible for reimbursement.

C. Eligibility Information

Through their governing authority, accredited public libraries, local public library systems, libraries that are members of the TexShare Library Consortium, or non-profit organizations that are applying on behalf of accredited libraries and/or TexShare members, are eligible to apply for funds. Public library applicants must be accredited by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for the fiscal year in which the grant contracts are issued.

There is no requirement for cost sharing, matching funds, or cost participation with this grant program.

Applicants may only receive one award under the TSLAC CARES grant program. For example, a subrecipient for Cycle 1 funding is not eligible to submit an application for funding in Cycle 2 of the TSLAC CARES grant program.

Eligible Activities

This grant program will fund expansion of digital access in areas of Texas where such access is lacking, including the purchase of internet-enabled devices and provisions for technical support services in response to the disruption of schooling and other community services during the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, funding may be used to address efforts that prevent, prepare for, and respond to situations arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

Cycle 2 funding can be utilized retroactively to cover expenses incurred beginning April 21, 2020. Expenses incurred before April 21, 2020, are not eligible for reimbursement.

Suggested supplies, materials, and services are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and is provided to aid your planning process:

Supplies/Materials

- Camera/video equipment/accessories
- Computers – network
- Computer hardware, software, and accessories
- Consumables (paper, toner, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- E-books/books related to program
- Furniture
- Mobile devices and related apps
- Printers/scanners
- Wi-Fi hotspots (including service through August 31, 2021)

Services

- Databases (dissimilar to TexShare or TexQuest offerings)
- Postage, printing, signage
- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- IT support (computer/web)
- Training – patron and/or staff
- Venue fees (room rental, etc.)
- Contract temporary help
- Equipment rental
- Professional services (workshop speakers, graphic design, etc.)
- Promotion

The grant may also cover indirect costs as permitted in 2 CFR 200.

Ineligible Activities

This grant program will <u>NOT</u> fund the following costs:

1. Capital expenditures related to the purchase of real property, buildings, or motor vehicles
2. Capital expenditures related to the construction or expansion of facilities, including fixtures and services
3. Capital expenditures related to renovation costs, including fixtures and services
4. Food, beverages, or food delivery equipment or services
5. Awards, honoraria, prizes, or gifts
6. Equipment or technology not specifically associated with COVID-19 emergency services and programs.
7. Transportation/travel for participants or library personnel
8. 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)
9. Collection development purchases not specifically associated with COVID-19 emergency services and programs
10. Advertising or public relations costs not specifically associated with the COVID-19 emergency services and programs
11. Performers or presenters whose purpose is to entertain rather than to educate
12. Staffing or fringe benefit costs
13. Other expenses as excluded in the guidelines

D. Application and Submission Information

Application Components

The grant application consists of the following components:

1. Application Certification Form signed by appropriate signing authority

2. Program narrative and budget

3. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) certification form

Grant Management System (GMS) Access

TSLAC uses a grant management system or GMS that enables applicants to apply for grants electronically through a web portal at https://grants.tsl.texas.gov. Applications and required documents must be submitted in GMS by the due date to be eligible for consideration. To submit your application online, you must have an active GMS account. To create or activate an account, please have your library director submit a contact import form to grants@tsl.texas.gov. The template is linked on this webpage: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/cares/faqs. The e-mail should reference "GMS Access" in the subject line. TSLAC staff will review the request and grant appropriate access.

If needed because of difficulty using the Internet or for other accessibility reasons, potential applicants may submit copies of materials to Bethany Wilson, TSLAC Grants Administrator, via e-mail at grants@tsl.texas.gov.

Fillable PDF versions of the application and all other application components can be found at: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/cares

Other requirements

Before submitting an application, the applicant organization must have a current and active D-U-N-S® Number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number may be found on D&B's website (https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html). Obtaining a DUNS number is free.

Who can submit the application?

Any individual authorized to use GMS and having the correct security role will be able to submit the application in GMS. Applicants will be required to submit the signed application certification form. The application certification must be signed by an individual authorized to enter into contracts with the State of Texas (e.g., county judge, city manager, etc.).

Deadline and Submission

Completed applications and **_all_** required documents must be submitted **by 11:59 p.m. Central Time, Sunday, September 20, 2020.** *Please be advised that technical support will not be available after 5 p.m., Friday, September 18, 2020.*

If you are unable to submit your application and/or required documentation via GMS, you may submit documents via e-mail to grants@tsl.texas.gov with subject line, **TSLAC CARES Grant**. Please send mail submissions to:

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TSLAC CARES Grant
Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Library Development & Networking Division
PO Box 12927 (1201 Brazos St.)
Austin, TX 78711 (78701)

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Cycle 1 Program Timeline

August 28, 2020	Application opens
September 20, 2020	Applications and required forms due
September/October 2020	Application packets evaluated by Grant Review Panel
October 2020	Applicants notified of Grant Review Panel recommendations
November 9, 2020	Commission meets and approves projects
November 2020	Contracts issued to grant recipients
November 2020	Projects begin (retroactive to April 21, 2020)
August 31, 2021	Projects end

E. Application Review Information

Criteria for Award

This grant program is competitive. Agency staff will score proposals on the four criteria listed below. The maximum number of points for each category is listed.

The detailed scoring rubric that will be used is provided below.

1. **Needs Assessment (50 points)**

    Describe identified community needs arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency.

2. **Program Purpose (25 points)**

    Describe how your program or service can meet identified community need arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency.

3. **Budget (15 points)**

    Please indicate what items the library will purchase, as well as a cost per unit, where indicated. If exact quantity and/or cost information is unavailable, please provide an estimate.

4. **Sustainability (10 points)**

    Describe the resources that will be used to support the program or service developed through the grant in the future.

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 Texas 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

Agency 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.

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.

Grant Review Panel Responsibility

Agency staff will review and score grants based on established criteria under an expedited process.

Decision Making Process

To be considered eligible for funding by the commission, any application must receive a minimum adjusted mean score of more than 60 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.

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

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

(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.

(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.

Scoring Rubric

Project Scoring Total in Four Areas: 100 points
Relevance and appropriateness of the project design and activities to the purpose of the TSLAC CARES grant program will be considered in the scoring of all criteria. Staff may score each criterion as follows: **0-1 points:** Project does not meet the purposes of the grant program. **2-3 points:** Project partially meets the purposes of the grant program. **4-5 points:** Project is a clear fit for the purposes of the grant program.

1)	**Needs Assessment (Points: Raw score = 5 max, weight = 10; Final score = 50 max)**

Describe identified community needs arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency.

0-1 points	2-3 points	4-5 points
• Provides no evidence of need for program and/or service in community. • Program and/or service 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 and/or service in community. • Program and/or service goals and audience are defined but show little to no connection to description of community need. • Needs assessment seems vague and incompletely describes how stated need was determined.	• Provides clear and convincing evidence of need for program and/or service in community. • Program and/or service goals and audience are clearly connected to description of community need. • Clearly describes needs including how stated need was determined.

2)	**Program Purpose (Points: Raw score = 5 max, weight = 5; Final score = 25 max)**

Describe how your program or services can meet identified community need arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency. Describe in detail the materials, services, and/or activities to be funded.

0-1 points	2-3 points	4-5 points
• Program and/or service goals are not defined. • Audience is not defined. • Project purpose is unclear.	• Program and/or service goals are defined. • Audience is defined. • Project purpose is defined and has some relationship to community needs.	• Program and/or service goals are clearly defined and related to the Needs Assessment. • Audience is clearly defined and related the Needs Assessment. • Project purpose is clearly defined and is strongly related the Needs Assessment.

3)	**Budget (Points: Raw score = 5 max, weight = 3; Final score = 15 max)**

Provide a detailed budget indicating what items the library will purchase, as well as a cost per unit, where indicated.

0-1 points	2-3 points	4-5 points
• Budget table is incomplete. • Provides no narrative description, beyond the budget column, of how funds will be spent.	• Budget table is complete. • Budget description exists but does not clearly relate to the project. • Costs do not seem reasonable.	• Budget table is complete. • Budget clearly describes how the funds will be used for the project.

		• Costs are reasonable and justified in the program and/or service purpose.
4) Sustainability (Points: Raw Score = 5 max, weight = 2; Final score = 10 max)		
Describe the resources that will be used to support the program or service developed through the grant in the future.		
0-1 points	2-3 points	4-5 points
• Description of resources used to support and sustain the project after grant completion is vague and unspecific.	• Some evidence of future support and sustainability described.	• Clear evidence of sustainability described. • A written commitment of future support from governing bodies is provided, if applicable.

F. Award Administration Information

Notice of Award

Applicants will be notified of the funding decisions via e-mail. Once the awards have been awarded, successful applicants will receive instructions on how to proceed. TSLAC will provide mandatory training for successful applicants.

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 seven days after the appeal is mailed or delivered.

(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.

Policy Requirements

TSLAC competitive grant recipients are subject to the State of Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS) (*https://www.comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/docs/ugms.pdf*) and federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (also known as the Supercircular) *(https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-30465).*

Reporting

Grantees must submit financial and a performance report at the end of the reporting period as will be outlined in the grant contract. Reports will be submitted electronically through TSLAC's Grant Management System (GMS).

G. Contacts

TSLAC staff members are available via e-mail during regular business hours (8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Central) to assist with competitive grants.

Bethany Wilson, Grants Administrator
Fax: 512-936-2306
E-mail: bwilson@tsl.texas.gov

Erica McCormick, Program Coordinator
Fax: 512-936-2306
E-mail: emccormick@tsl.texas.gov