Benefits of Public Library Accreditation

Membership in the Texas Library System

TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION

Eligibility for accreditation begins with submission of a Texas Public Libraries Annual Report and meeting the minimum standards of library accreditation. The library can then participate in the following programs.

STATEWIDE INTERLIBRARY LOAN (ILL): Accredited libraries in Texas can participate in the statewide interlibrary (ILL) program, which connects collections across the state, allowing patrons to borrow materials from other libraries and share their own. This program not only enhances access to resources but also provides reimbursements for each loan processed through the statewide system and a partial subsidy of the TExpress statewide courier service.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT: Accredited libraries are eligible for E-Rate, a federal program offering up to 90% discounts on Internet costs. Accredited libraries can also join TSLAC's Libraries Connecting Texas (LCT) program, which provides free expert help with E-Rate paperwork to simplify the process. Learn more on TSLAC's technology services page.

GRANTS AND FUNDING: TSLAC provides competitive grants to accredited public and academic libraries to support innovative practices aligned with specific program goals, which may vary from year to year. These grants have enabled libraries across Texas to promote early literacy, expand services for all ages, digitize and increase access to local history collections, and enhance technology resources.

TEXSHARE PROGRAMS

TEXSHARE CARD: This is a reciprocal borrowing program. It is designed to allow the registered users of participating institutions, which could be public or academic, directly borrow materials from other participating institutions.

TEXSHARE DATABASES: Accredited libraries are members of the TexShare Consortium. For a modest, formula-based participation fee, this program provides access to electronic databases offering full-text articles from journals, newspapers, magazines, and other sources, as well as entire books available for online reading. Topics range from student homework help and health information to business, genealogy, literature, and archival resources. Examples include Chilton Library, Learning Express, and Consumer Health. These databases are accessible 24/7 to registered patrons from their homes or offices, delivering substantial cost savings compared to individual library subscriptions.

In both the ILL and TexShare Card programs, libraries set policies and procedures locally regarding lending and borrowing.

The State Library periodically offers special programs and project opportunities for accredited public libraries, such as the Family Place Project, which supports early learning initiatives. Beyond this, accreditation serves as a quality-of-life indicator, fosters statewide library connections, and is often used in community marketing to highlight the value of local library resources.

More information on accreditation can be found on the TSLAC website.