Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities Guidelines

(https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access)

Date Posted: Tuesday, November 1, 2022
Deadline for Submission: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 by 11:59 pm (CT)
Award Notification Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2023
Apply Online via our grants management platform (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=AMALA)

Questions?

Before starting, read the grant FAQ (https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access/faq) and carefully review the requirements below in each category for the grant.

Contact the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office staff at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5045, or publicprograms@ala.org (mailto:publicprograms@ala.org).

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Initiative Description

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with community members — be they library patrons, residents, faculty, students, or partner organizations — to address issues for the betterment of the community.

Through these grants, ALA strives to:

- **Increase the accessibility of library facilities, services, and programs for people with disabilities in small and rural communities.**
- **Support libraries' community engagement efforts by providing resources to help them to work with impacted populations to guide improvement of library services.**

Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is part of ALA's longtime commitment to preparing library workers for the expanding role of libraries. The initiative is offered in partnership with the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL). It is supported by a private donor.

Eligibility

- The opportunity is open to all types of libraries serving small and rural communities in the U.S. and U.S. territories. Please read our FAQ for further information. (https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access/faq)

    - The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) defines libraries serving small and rural communities as those located in an area that's more than, or equal to, five miles from an urbanized area and with a population of 25,000 or less.

- Only complete and eligible applications that are received on time will be reviewed.

Award Information

Up to 300 libraries will be selected in this application period (November 2022 to February 2023). ALA will make up to 250 awards of $10,000 to eligible institutions. For applicants interested in undertaking a more ambitious project, ALA will make up to 50 awards of $20,000. Applicants interested in receiving a larger grant must complete an extended version of the application. These proposals will first be considered for an award of $20,000; if not selected for funding at the higher level, the proposal will be considered for a $10,000 award.

Libraries selected for funding will receive:

- $10,000 or $20,000 to support costs related to their community engagement project
- Virtual training to assist project directors in developing their community engagement, facilitation, and disability service skills
- A suite of online resources developed to support local programs, including template press releases, social media messaging, logos, digital promotional materials, and template letters that can be used to notify local leaders/officials about the library's project
- Technical and project support from the ALA Public Programs Office throughout the grant term, such as access to:

    - Online learning opportunities for grantees intended to assist project directors in promoting their project, completing grant reporting requirements and participating in evaluation
    - Community of practice for project directors and staff

Requirements

All libraries awarded an LTC grant will be required to:

- **Designate one staff member as the project director** (local coordinator). This person will commit to completing all virtual trainings (approximately 4 - 6 hours) before implementing the proposed project.
- **Share information about the library's project**, as appropriate, with area elected officials and community leaders.
- **Host a minimum of one community conversation** using skills learned from the virtual trainings. Conversation must

    - Take place between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024.
    - Include the primary audience identified in the library's proposal.
    - Focus on discussing accessibility in the community and library in order to collaboratively identify existing resources, needs, and priorities.

- **Use findings/outcomes from the community conversation to refine project plans** and submit updated plans to ALA.
- **Share information about next steps** from the conversation with the primary audience and invite their feedback on the project plans.
- **Participate in the project evaluation and reporting** by responding to requests from the independent project evaluators and completing any requested reports. This may include responding to surveys, participating in phone interviews, and/or hosting site visits.
- **Spend the grant funds** by May 31, 2024.
- **Submit a final report** to ALA by June 30, 2024.

Project Design

Libraries should identify the primary audience they wish to better serve with their project. Primary audience should be people with disabilities, such as, but not limited to, people who are neurodivergent, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, etc. Using preliminary background information (e.g., first-hand experience, one-on-one conversations with a member of the primary audience, community survey data), the library should draft a project plan to identify and address the accessibility needs of the primary audience.

If selected for funding, the library will facilitate at least one community conversation with the identified primary audience to discuss accessibility in the community and library in order to collaboratively identify existing resources, needs/gaps, and priorities. Based on the conversation outcomes, the library will revise their preliminary project plan to align with the needs/priorities of their primary audience.

The library will then implement their finalized plan while sharing information about next steps and inviting feedback from the primary audience throughout the rest of the project. Methods for sharing out information may include, but are not limited to, social media posts, direct mailers, newsletters, etc.

Eligible Expenses

LTC grant funds are restricted to project-related expenses. Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Library staff time
- Honoraria for conversation participants
- Payment to project partners for reimbursement or direct funding of services and support provided (e.g., ASL interpreters, live captioners)
- Facility upgrades (e.g., automatic door openers, accessible signage, sensory space equipment)
- Tech equipment (e.g., Braillers, iPads, virtual meeting licenses)
- Books or other collection materials
- Training for library staff (e.g., disability inclusion training)
- Project supplies (e.g., markers, index cards, Post-its)
- Promotion and publicity

Grant funds may not be used to support indirect costs (e.g. general library administrative expenses) or as donations to other organizations.

Application and Submission Information

ALA will accept applications for the LTC: Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant beginning November 1, 2022, and ending February 28, 2023, at 11:59 pm (CT).

Please review the Frequently Asked Questions (https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access/faq) before applying.

Getting Started

To submit a proposal, go to the online application form (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=AMALA) and complete the following steps. If this is your first time submitting an application through our grants management system, you may want to first review our How to Apply (http://www.ala.org/tools/programming/apply/how-to-apply) webpage.

Note: ALA recognizes that libraries that most need support are often those with the least capacity to apply for grants due to inadequate resources and staffing. If you feel you need support in developing your application, please attend the pre-application webinar (https://elearning.ala.org/local/catalog/view/product.php?productid=520) and/or sign up for a virtual, small-group consultation (https://forms.gle/sft5zXGpUTn5HUMj9) to speak with a member of the ALA Public Programs Office staff.

If you have accessibility needs that may prevent you from successfully utilizing our online grants management platform, please contact us at publicprograms@ala.org (mailto:publicprograms@ala.org)to discuss accommodations.

To apply for the *LTC: Accessible Small and Rural Communities* implementation grant, you must complete the following steps:

1. CREATE/ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT
2. ENTER PROJECT NAME
3. COMPLETE PROJECT DIRECTOR INFORMATION
4. COMPLETE LIBRARY INFORMATION
5. WRITE THE GRANT NARRATIVE
6. PROVIDE YOUR BUDGET
7. UPLOAD SUPPORTING MATERIALS
8. SIGN APPLICATION BY AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL
9. REVIEW AND EDIT YOUR APPLICATION
10. SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

1. Create/Access Your Account

Applications will be completed via the ALA PPO grants management platform. (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=AMALA)

- **Existing users** should log into the grants management platform.

    - Unsure if you have an account already? Email publicprograms@ala.org (mailto:publicprograms@ala.org)

- **New users** should sign up for an account. Please follow the instructions below.

    - Additional information for how to create an account can also be found on the How to Apply website.
    - Watch a tutorial about accessing the site and how to create an account. (https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4520338873111)

Create a New Account (New Users)

1. Visit the Log on page. (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=AMALA)

    - It's recommended that you bookmark this page in your internet browser for ease of access.

2. Click "Create New Account".

3. Enter your personal information then click "Next".

    - The email address you enter will act as your username when logging on to the site in the future.
    - Fields with an asterisk next to them are required fields, and you must complete them before moving forward.
    - Note you can always click on the "Cancel Account Creation" button to abandon the registration process.

4. Create a password for your account and click "Create Account".

5. Upon creating an account, you will be taken to the Email Confirmation page, so you can confirm that you are receiving emails from the system.

6. Follow the on-screen instructions and click "Continue" to finish the registration process.

7. Now you have an account in this system; and remember, this is an account that you will use for both present and future applications.

If at any time after creating an account, you can't remember your password, you may click on the "Forgot Your Password?" link on the Logon page, enter your email address, and you will be sent a link to reset your password.

Ensure you receive messages regarding your application! Emails regarding your application status will come from administrator@grantinterface.com (mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com). Save this email address as a contact to ensure messages are not marked as spam.

Once signed in, go to Active Requests and click "apply" to bring up a list of available grant opportunities. Select LTCAccess to begin your application for this opportunity.

2. Enter Project Name

Note: To qualify for this grant, the applying institution must be a library (public, tribal, school, academic, or special) serving a small and/or rural community.

To begin your application, enter LTCAccess into the "Project Name" field. Please do not enter an original project name.

3. Complete Project Director Information

To complete this section, provide all the information that is requested about the Project Director.

Note: The project director is the person who will be responsible for coordinating the entire proposed project. They will be the primary point of contact for the project at the applicant institution.

4. Complete Library Information

To complete this section, provide all the information about the applying library including type, total population served and community type.

5. Write Grant Narratives

Before you compose the narrative part of this application, we strongly recommend that you read these guidelines carefully. Please ensure that you fully answer all the questions listed below in each section. If you do not, your application is unlikely to be competitive.

1. **Community and Library Information**. Describe your library and the community it serves, including demographics, dynamics and key issues or challenges it faces. What should reviewers know about your library and community in order to understand your proposed community engagement project?

2. **Primary Audience**. Describe the primary audience for your project. Why did you choose to focus on this audience? How, if at all, do you currently serve this audience? What are your plans for outreach efforts to engage this audience throughout the project? What are your overarching goals for engaging this audience with your project?

3. **Rationale.** What challenge or opportunity does your project seek to address for the primary audience? How was it identified? Describe how you used relevant information from reliable sources to define the need, challenge, or opportunity you seek to address.

4. **Project Plan.** Describe your preliminary plan for addressing the challenge or opportunity identified. What activities will you carry out to execute the plan? How has the input of the primary audience influenced this plan? How will the perspectives and input of the primary audience continue to be incorporated throughout the project? How will you share information about the project and its outcomes? Do you have any community partners in mind (existing or new) that you plan to engage in the process?

Please Note: All selected sites will be required to facilitate at least one community conversation with the identified primary audience to discuss accessibility in the community and library in order to collaboratively identify existing resources, needs/gaps, and priorities. Sites will be expected to revise or affirm their preliminary plans based on the outcomes of the conversation.

5. $10,000 Budget

Describe your plans for the grant funds. What will you use the funding to purchase or support? Please be specific (e.g. $5,000 will be spent on staff time to support the development and implementation of the project, $3,000 will be used to purchase and install an automatic door opener, $1,000 will be used as incentives for conversation participants). The total amount of this section should add up to $10,000.

6. Additional $10,000 Budget - OPTIONAL

Applicants interested in hosting a more ambitious project should use this section to describe what they would use an additional $10,000 to purchase or support. The total amount of this section should add up to $10,000.

Note: All $20,000 proposals will first be reviewed for the larger award. Any that are not selected will then be included in review for a $10,000 award. If you wish to only be considered for a $20,000 award please note that in this section.

7. Upload Supporting Materials - OPTIONAL

Upload any additional materials that support your proposed project. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Letters of support
- Sample promotional materials
- Draft conversation agendas
- Draft discussion questions
- Videos

8. E-Sign Application

An application for an LTC: Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant is an application for a grant from ALA, using funding provided by an award from a private donor. ALA is required by law to ask applicants to identify a certifying official who is authorized to submit applications for funding on behalf of the institution. To complete this section, you must enter all the information that is requested.

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9. Review and Edit Your Application

10. Submit Your Application

Once you have completed all parts of your application, you may submit it by selecting the "Submit" button. All applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm CT on February 28, 2023. Applicants submitted after that time will be ineligible.

Note that once you have submitted your application, you can no longer alter it. The application will then be submitted for review. You will receive an email confirming submission of your application.

Ensure you receive messages regarding your application! Emails regarding your application status will come from administrator@grantinterface.com (mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com). Please save this email address as a contact to prevent notification emails from being marked as spam.

Application Review

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and completeness of the application. Has the applicant supplied all required information, including fully answering all questions contained in the grant narrative sections?
- Size and type of community the applicant's library serves.
- Proposed project aligns with the intent of the grant as described in the grant guidelines.
- Primary audience is identified and outreach plans are clearly described.
- The identified need, challenge, or opportunity is clearly described and fittingly supported by relevant information.
- The proposed project addresses the identified need, challenge, or opportunity of the primary audience.
- The perspectives and input of the primary audience has been incorporated into the project plan.
- Budget sections add up to the appropriate amounts and align with proposed project plans.

Applicants are encouraged to address questions about the selection guidelines, process, and requirements to the ALA Public Programs Office at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5045, or publicprograms@ala.org. (mailto:publicprograms@ala.org)

Review and Selection Process

Each application will be assessed by a panel of library workers serving small and rural communities using a reviewer rubric (/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/LTC%20Access%20Reviewer%20Rubric.pdf). ALA will make the final decisions based on peer reviewer feedback, and other possible considerations such as geographic distribution.

Grant Administration Information

- **Application deadline:** February 28, 2023, by 11:59 pm (CT)

- **Award notification**: April 19, 2023
- **Cash grant distributed by:** May 31, 2023
- **Grant implementation period:** June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024
- **Final report due**: June 30, 2024

Contact Information

If you have questions, contact:

Public Programs Office

American Library Association

1-800-545-2433, ext. 5045

publicprograms@ala.org (mailto:publicprograms@ala.org)

Online Learning (http://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/online-learning)

Get started with the free e-course, "Libraries Transforming Communities: Facilitation Skills for Small and Rural Libraries."

Learn More (http://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/online-learning)

LTC: Accessible Small and Rural Communities (https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access)

LTC: Accessible Small and Rural Communities will offer more than $7 million in grants to better serve people with disabilities.

Learn More (https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/access)

Facilitation Skills Guide (http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/PPO_LTC_Fac_Guide%20-%20revised%20v3_0.pdf)

Learn basic facilitation skills with ALA's free guide, "Leading Conversations in Small and Rural Libraries."

Learn More (http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/PPO_LTC_Fac_Guide - revised v3_0.pdf)