

New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act
Solicitation for Grant Application
Winter 2020 Cycle
Question and Answer Documentation

The answers below are in response to questions the State Librarian received regarding the application process.

32. Can one single resolution suffice so long as it confirms: authorization to apply (i.e. content of Resolution I), match and/or intent to bond (i.e. content of Resolution II), and that the site is for library use only? The application implies these must be three separate resolutions, but can their contents be combined?

A32. Correction: Both Resolution I and II authorize the appropriate governing bodies to submit an application.

Each resolution must be adopted by the appropriate approving body authorized to make the requisite representations and commitments.

33. Resolution II template states that you need two copies of the executed resolution with the application. However, as an online submission, how does this process work? Would you like two hard copies of the executed resolution sent via mail to accompany the online submissions? If so, is April 6th the postmark date on these resolutions, or the date the resolutions must reach your doorstep? Or, is this request for two copies perhaps a typo?

A33. As set forth in Section 1.4.2 of the Solicitation, all applications must be submitted electronically. No paper copies should be submitted. Online submission of the application and all required documentation must be received by 4:00 pm (E.D.T.) on April 6, 2020. Resolutions are to be uploaded as attachments. The Resolution II template contained in the Solicitation can be executed with all authorized signatories on one document or the template can be countersigned. Uploading the fully executed resolution once is adequate for online submission.

34. Resolution II indicates that both parties must sign each other's resolution, meaning there are two resolutions, with both party's signatures on each. This may be very problematic for towns where changing/reorganizing the signatures on their templated resolutions is an issue. Is it sufficient to simply have each party complete their own resolution as normal and not be required to sign one another's?

A34. Yes. See response A33.

35. We just viewed the webinar for the Construction Bond Grant that will start taking applications on March 9th. We just had a quick question about the Resolutions 1 and 2 that need to be signed.

Our library is a Free Public Library. We have a Library Board of Trustees, but part of our budget comes from the township and our library building is owned by the municipality. So, my question is do we only need the Resolution 1 signed by our Library Board Trustee, or do we also need to get Resolution 2 signed from someone at the municipality?

A35. Section 2.1.1 applies to your public library. Your library is a municipal library and the applicant is the Board of Trustees, therefore only Resolution I is needed.

36. I am officially submitting a question regarding the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act (NJLCBA) pertaining to Exhibit A and Exhibit B, Resolutions I and II (pages 43 and 44 within the grant application packet).

Our library is a county library system that equips, stocks, and provides employees to municipal-owned buildings that operate as county library branches per the grant application definition.

As such, as we think about our multiple submission packets, which Exhibit should be used for the overall construction project/s submission?

1. Exhibit A, Resolution I (page 43)

OR

2. Exhibit B, Resolution II (page 44)

I just want to clarify that I am getting the exact correct signatures from our municipal leadership and the Library Commission President on the correct document.

A36. Section 2.1.2 of the Solicitation applies to your library system. Applications should be submitted in the name of the municipality and Resolution II should be signed by the municipality and county library. See response A33.

37. The Library Construction Bond Act technical assistance webinar referred to the resolutions included in the packet, one for the library's governing body and another for the municipal entity in tandem with the library's governing body. There are couple of county libraries in NJ, of which we are one, whose municipal governing body (Board of Chosen Freeholders) is the library's governing body. Which is the correct resolution for those libraries?

A37. In accordance with Section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the Solicitation, if the municipality is building the building, and it will be a branch of the county library or will be stocked, staffed, and equipped by the county library, then the municipality and the County Board of Chosen Freeholders should sign Resolution II. See response A33.

If the County Library Board of Chosen Freeholders is building the building and is the library's governing body, then the County Library Board of Chosen Freeholders is the Applicant and would sign Resolution I.

38. Section 1.6.11 – This section addresses structural changes in the building plans. Can you define structural changes? Most of these projects have not yet gone to Design Development. The potential exists for significant modifications in plans during that phase.

A38. It is recognized that there could be modification of plans from the time of application, however the modification should not be a substantial change as defined by in section 15:24-1.3 of the regulations. A substantial change is defined as “a 10 percent or more change in the eligible costs as submitted in the grant application, and any internal structural changes that alter the function of the public library building or the allocation of space as submitted in the grant application.”

As described in Section 1.5.4 of the Solicitation, if a project has a substantial change after the submission period ends and before the Review Committee begins their review, the Applicant must submit the appropriate form to the Library. The form can be found on the State Library website https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/new-jersey-library-construction-bond-act/.

As described in Section 1.6.11 of the Solicitation, if a project has a “substantial change” after the Legislature approves the appropriation of funds, or after entering into the Grant Agreement, the Applicant must submit the appropriate form to the Library. The form can be found on the State Library website https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/new-jersey-library-construction-bond-act/.

39. Item 1.6.11: since it is normal for schematic designs to evolve, will projects that are at the early stage of design at the time of the application require a subsequent review by the state when they fully designed? Or, is that up to the applicant to determine if substantial changes/revisions have occurred?

A39. See response A38. The applicant must initiate the process.

40. Also, regarding Item 2.4.6: when drawings are required, please clarify if the drawings can be conceptual in nature with the intent to generally describe the scope of improvements. While preliminary, these drawings would be prepared by an architect or engineer as required.

A40. The drawing can be conceptual in nature as long as it accurately and fully shows the extent of the improvements.

41. If a library is applying for a repair project is it required to complete a community analysis and building program? The building program addresses, the allocation of space for public use but in the case where a library intends to replace a HVAC system, a building program is irrelevant to mechanical equipment replacement.

A41. No. Repair only projects do not need to complete the Community Analysis and Building Program referred to in Section 2.4.8(i) of the Solicitation.

42. I was hoping you can provide me with information related to the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act. My Township Committee members were recently told that there is \$125 million available for library infrastructure improvements. Is there a grant application currently available for this funding? Did we miss the opportunity to participate? I wasn't able to find much recent information on where the whole process stands as of today.

A42. The Solicitation for Grant Applications for the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act was released on January 6, 2020. The Act authorizes issuance of \$125 million in general obligation bonds for the construction, reconstruction, extension, improvement and furnishing of New Jersey's public libraries. Funding in an amount not to exceed \$87.5 million will be available in the first solicitation. The application window opens March 9, 2020 and closes at 4:00 pm (E.D.T.) on April 6, 2020. Additional information regarding the program and the Solicitation can be found on the State Library website. https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/new-jersey-library-construction-bond-act/

43. Who needs to submit the certification of funds? Is it the Library Board Treasurer, or is it the Municipality's CFO?

A43. Section 2.4.9 of the Solicitation refers to a certification of match. A certification that the Applicant has or will have matching funds is included in Exhibit C – Certification Statements. Exhibit C should be initialed and signed by an authorized officer of the body named as Applicant in Section 2.1.4 of the Solicitation.

44. Can you clarify square footage costs? Does the \$500 or \$350 per square foot cost include furniture, or just construction costs?

A44. The maximum square foot costs of \$500 and \$350 are all inclusive, meaning they include all hard and soft construction costs, site improvements, furniture, fixtures, equipment, etc. See N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.6(a)5.

45. I listened to the technical assistance presentation, thank you for putting that together. I have a question/comment relating to the project costs.

At Slide 35, Time 29:30 a mention is made that the square foot costs are all inclusive of the project costs. That appears to be a significant change in how the costs would be calculated. It also appears to conflict with the excel forms 6.5.1 and 6.6.1-4. Note that 6.5.1 relates to overall project costs while 6.6.1-4 identifies the building costs. If I am understanding the Eligible Costs correctly, I believe that 6.5.1 should be where the “total grant requested” amount is calculated. Perhaps on 6.6.1-4 where the term “...grant requested” is used throughout, it can be changed to “...building portion of grant requested”.

A45. All eligible project costs as listed in N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.6 are included in the calculation of cost per square foot. Use Form 6.5.1 to list all such costs to arrive at the total costs for your project. Cost per square foot can then be calculated by taking total project cost and dividing it by the total square feet of the project. Form 6.6.1-4 then calculates the total grant requested by multiplying the total square feet of the project by the allowable cost per square foot (or the actual cost per square foot, if lower). Since this cost per square foot is inclusive of all hard and soft construction costs, site improvements, furniture, fixtures, equipment, etc., schedule 6.6.1-4 is calculating more than just the building portion of the grant request.

46. I am officially submitting a question regarding the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act (NJLCBA) for section 4.3: Maximum and Minimum Grant Awards. Item 4.3.2 states: The minimum amount of a Grant is \$50,000.

I am working on a branch project that has an estimated total cost of approximately \$76,400.00. Does the \$50,000 minimum amount notation indicate the total minimum cost of a project overall or the total minimum cost of the required 50% match from the municipality? The answer will make a difference in the eligibility of the proposed project for this branch location.

A46. In accordance with Section 4.3.2 of the Solicitation, \$50,000 is the minimum grant award amount. It is not the minimum project cost.

There are two exceptions to the \$50,000 minimum grant award: 1) if the project provides accessibility for individuals with disabilities; 2) if the project is at a location where the population served by a library is less than 12,500 people and the 2018 equalized per capita valuation is less than \$200,000.

47. Construction of a new library vs. reconstruction

Under 6.6.1 Reconstruction has been assigned the same \$500 per square foot as new construction. Also, under 6.5.1 Cost Estimate there is the option to input the cost of reconstruction. But under section 6.1 project description and 6.2.1 floor area of project, reconstruction is not an option. Should a project that includes reconstruction identify its cost under 6.5.1 but identify the project type and floor area as new construction under 6.1.1 and 6.2.1?

A47 A project that is a total reconstruction, meaning the applicant completely levels and tears down or reconstructs an existing library or structure to build a new library, should be treated as new construction for purposes of section 6.1 and 6.2.1 and has a maximum cost per square foot of \$500. A partial reconstruction would be considered a rehabilitation project with a maximum cost per square foot of \$350. Please refer to the Response to Comments 32 through 39 in the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act Rules N.J.A.C.15:24. The cost estimate schedule 6.5.1 has been updated to remove the separate line for reconstruction.

48. When I saw the initial qualifications of the grant listed, the needs of our library seemed to make us eligible to participate. The final specs of the grant have changed and do not contain the parameters that our library has listed.

We need to

- 1. reconfigure and refurnish the Young Adult room**
- 2. reupholster worn seating**
- 3. paint the interior (has not been done since the renovation in 2005)**

It now appears that the grant is only for libraries who are doing major construction. I would appreciate any insights that you can provide.

A48. The Library Construction Bond Act is not limited to major construction. Eligible projects include: construction of a new building to be used as a public library; construction of an addition to an existing building to be used as a public library; acquisition of land on which there is to be construction of a new building(s) or expansion of an existing building(s) to be used as a public library; acquisition of a building to be used as a public library; rehabilitation of an existing public library building or a building purchased to be used as a public library; repair of public library building(s) or designated mechanical system(s), or component(s) within such buildings that are worn, deteriorated, or broken; and barrier-free improvements.

Section 15:24-1.3 of the regulations defines Rehabilitation as the renovation, alteration, or reconstruction of any building or structure.

Items two and three identified in the question above are considered refurbishing of an existing building (carpeting, painting, furnishings, etc.) and they are only eligible when part of a rehabilitation project. Unless there is some actual renovation of space involved such as altering the structure of the room/moving of walls, etc., then they are all soft costs which would be simple redecorating not renovation and thus not eligible.