

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.

- 1. It is stated in the Overview to the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act Rules that "the State Librarian may seek to administer a phased solicitation process awarding funds in more than one round in order to most effectively respond to the needs around New Jersey" [15:24-1.1 (d)].**

Does this mean that there will be future cycles in which grant applications will be accepted? If so, is there a timeline for additional cycles?

A1. Pursuant to the Solicitation for Grant Applications ("Solicitation") issued on January 6, 2020 ("Winter 2020 Cycle"), the New Jersey State Librarian (the "State Librarian") and the President of Thomas Edison State University (the "President") reserve the right to administer and award Grants in more than one (1) solicitation in order to most effectively suit the needs of New Jersey's eligible libraries and to allocate grant funding accordingly. Funding in an amount not to exceed \$87.5 million will be available in this first Solicitation.

As stated in the Technical Assistance (TA) Session webinar, a second solicitation cycle for grant funding is anticipated. There are currently no details available on a second or subsequent solicitation cycle.

- 2. I have a question that falls under Part II: Eligibility of Applications and Projects for Funding.**

My library system is a system that works with municipally constructed buildings that are operated as individual library branches. I have been working with our various borough and township leaders for many months leading up to the publication of the NJLCBA Application. The plan had been for me to compose much of the application to ensure organizational consistency and parity for all of our applicant locations.

My question falls under section 2.1.1. and the notation "the application shall be made only by the body charged with the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of the public library."

While the submitted application will be in the name of the individual municipality, I

wanted to ensure my involvement and research was put forward in a transparent and acceptable way.

A2. The regulations and Solicitation require that the application be submitted electronically by an authorized agent. Parties utilized by the Applicant in completion of the application prior to submission are at the discretion of the Applicant.

3. For acquisition projects, to be clear, is a full appraisal needed with the application, or simply a real estate comparison prepared by a licensed appraiser?

A3. A full appraisal is needed for acquisition projects. Section 2.4.7(ii)(a) of the Solicitation requires documentation of the value of the land, and, if applicable, any structures upon it, will be required to determine that each land purchase is reasonable and comparable in price to other land purchases in proximity to the land to be acquired. The Applicant must provide at least one (1) recent real estate comparable. The appraisal shall be prepared by an independent appraiser licensed by the State.

4. I am writing to inquire, if you know, roughly what time the Technical Assistance Webinar (referenced in Section 1.3.8 of the Solicitation for Grant Applications) will be held on January 22, 2020?

Also, it appears that attendance on January 22 is not mandatory, as the webinar may be viewed at a later date. Please let me know if I am incorrect (as we may have a time conflict.)

A4. The Technical Assistance Webinar was made available to the public on January 22, 2020 at 3:30 pm on the State Library website and can be viewed at any time. Viewing of the webinar is not mandatory, but it is recommended.

5. Does a library that has already started construction qualify for the grant?

A5. Completed projects are not eligible for funding under the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act. In progress and incomplete projects may or may not be eligible. Eligibility requirements are outlined in the [Library Construction Bond Act regulations](#). Libraries with projects currently under construction should review **sections 15:24-2.2 and 15:24-2.6** of the regulations and seek advice from project professionals to determine if a specific project is eligible for grant funding and reimbursement of expenses. Also see response A6 below.

- 6. My question is if we have the work associated with the submitted project done while waiting for a decision can we be reimbursed for the incurred expenses if the project is approved?**

A6. As discussed in the TA Session webinar, Applicants may use as matching funds, and grant funds may be used to reimburse any expenditures incurred on or after the day a list of recommended projects is submitted to the Legislature.

Therefore, projects, or portions of projects, already completed before the date the list is submitted to the Legislature will not be eligible for grant funding.

Note that no cost will be reimbursed unless and until the Legislature enacts an appropriation for the project and there is a fully executed Grant Agreement in place for the project.

- 7. Can approved applicants start the bid process upon receiving news of their award?**

A7. Applicants can start the bid process at their discretion, however grant funds may be used to reimburse any expenditures incurred on or after the day a list of recommended projects is submitted to the Legislature. See response A6.

- 8. What is a realistic start date for construction projects? (Note: this affects the cost estimate)**

A8. This is a determination of individual Applicants considering their respective project needs and the requirements of the Solicitation. Regarding reimbursement of eligible costs see response A6.

- 9. I am writing to find out how to request account credentials at JerseyConnect. I am working with our many borough and township leaders on the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act (NJLCBA) and a requirement of the application is to obtain a JerseyConnect account. Section 1.4 of the grant application notes:**

If the Applicant already has an account with the JerseyConnect helpdesk, the Applicant may access the portal with those credentials. Applicants without an account will need to sign up for an account.

I have been to the JerseyConnect website and it is my understanding that you have to request account credentials. It is not an option to just sign up for an account. I need to know how to obtain a JerseyConnect account. I emailed the support email at JerseyConnect and the response was that I needed to funnel my question through this email address. My full and complete work contact information follows this

email. Please let me know if there is anything else I need to do at this point. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

A9. Applicants will be able to sign up for an account to access the “live” application once the application submission period begins on March 9, 2020.

10. Section 1.3.5 – can applications be saved in draft form?

A10. Applications cannot be saved in draft form. As set forth in Section 1.4.1 of the Solicitation, the approved form of application and all other required forms, certifications, attachments, and checklists can be found now in Section VI of the Solicitation. Slide 14 through 22 of the TA Session webinar, available on the State Library website, demonstrates how to complete the online application process. As suggested in the Solicitation and during the TA Session webinar, the online application should not be started until all questions are answered and documents are ready to be uploaded. The live application will be available on March 9, 2020.

11. Section 1.4.2, third bullet – states that applications may not be saved in process. If there is a mistake that means retyping the entire application? Is there some way to make this less onerous?

A11. See response A10.

12. Can the expected file formats for the application documents be identified? I.e. Microsoft Word for text documents, PDF for drawings, Jpg for images.

A12. Yes. A complete list of acceptable formats includes Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, PDF and Jpg.

13. What file format(s) can be used to submit data in the application form?

A.13. See response A12.

14. What font, font size, spacing, margins, pagination, footers, etc... are required?

A14. No specific font style, size, spacing, or margins are required. Times New Roman, size 12, double spaced is preferred. With regards to footers or section identifiers, it is required for Applicants to identify which evaluation criteria is being addressed in each section of the 7-page narrative.

15. Does the application require a certain font style and size for our written responses?

A15. See response A14.

16. Will the application format be made public before the March 9th opening date in order to prepare the submission?

A16. See response A10 and A14.

17. I note that “Repair of public library building(s) or designated mechanical system(s), or component(s) within such buildings...” is considered eligible, and I wonder if that would include a parking lot that has deteriorated beyond repair. If the current lot has insufficient (or no) drainage, no curbing, is of insufficient size to accommodate the building need, and is riddled with years and years of patchwork repairs, would it qualify? This includes ingress and egress driveways.

A17. As set forth in Section 6.2.3 of the Solicitation, repair of a parking lot is an eligible project. Section 2.4.6 ii of the Solicitation explains what is required for a repair project.

18. Why has \$37.5 million been held back and when is the next grant cycle?

A18. \$87.5 million represents 70% of the Bond Act’s availability. Thirty percent will be held for a second round to accommodate libraries lacking administrative capacity, unable to identify an immediate match, or seeking local approvals that may prohibit meeting the April 6, 2020 deadline. We anticipate an oversubscribed program and holding a second round will also enable non-selected applicants from the current round to re-apply later with improved proposals.

19. The Library Construction Bond Act was approved by NJ Voters on November 7, 2017. It has taken more than two years to promulgate regulations and develop the application process. The Grant Application guidelines were released on January 6, 2020 with a deadline for grant application submission from March 9-April 6, 2020. The Technical Assistance Webinar is scheduled for January 22 and questions will be accepted until February 10. Final answers will be posted by February 14, 2020, leaving applicants only a few weeks to prepare their grants. Is it possible to move the beginning and end date for submission of applications so that acceptance begins in April and ends in mid-May 2020?

A19. No. The dates were set to meet the Legislative calendar. Prospective applicants who are unable to meet the current timeline for submitting an application are welcome to apply for grant funding in the next application cycle.

20. Section 1.5.3 – Who will serve on the Review Committee?

A20. According to Section 15:24-4.2 of the regulations, the applications shall be evaluated by a review committee established by the State Librarian. As stated in the TA Session webinar, the Review Committee will include representatives from various State agencies.

21. Section 1.5.6 – Does the President of Thomas Edison State College have veto power on the approved projects?

A21. Yes. As stated in Section 15:24-4.2 of the regulations the President of Thomas Edison State University shall receive a list of eligible projects from the State Librarian. The President may or may not approve said list of projects and grant amounts.

22. Section 1.5.7 – Does the Legislature have veto power on the approved projects?

A22. In accordance with Section 15:24-4.2, the Legislature must provide project-specific appropriations in order for a project to receive grant funding.

23. What is the proposed timeline for approval of applications?

A23. While there is no established timeline for approval of applications, slide 58 of the TA Session webinar, which is available on the State Library website, includes a timeline of key dates and estimated dates, which are subject to change. An updated version of the timeline is available on the State Library's website. The timeline currently estimates June 2020 for submission of recommendations to the New Jersey Legislature.

24. Question about the submission window: I have read through the entire application document and have not read that an early application will result a) in an early notice of award or non-award; b) that an early submission stands a better chance of approval over one submitted closer toward the closing date. Is my interpretation correct, that there is no clear advantage to an early submission?

A24. Applications will not be accepted prior to the submission window, and there is no advantage given to Applicants that submit their applications early in the submission window. This is a competitive process and all applications will be considered in accordance with Section 1.5 of the Solicitation titled **Application Review and Evaluation Process**.

25. In Part V, Section A, line c, what is meant by Cultural features and trends?

A25. The answer to this question should provide a good overview of the community. The answer should describe the types of schools and educational institutions; the role of the arts in the community such as museums, theater, musical venues; trends and interests of the community, such as sports or other major interests; community events occurring in

the library or by other community groups. The purpose is to offer a good overview of the interests of your community at large.

Comment 66 of the Regulations cites a book, *The Practical Handbook of Library Architecture: Creating Building Spaces that Work* by Frederick Schlipf and John Moorman, ALA, 2017. This book provides good information on analyzing your community and doing building programs.

26. In Part V, Section B, are you asking for a profile of the entire library or just of the addition I would like to build? Line d through f talk about the uses for each room in the library. Lines g and h ask for number of occupants and resources "to be accommodated, which implies a new build or addition.

Please let me know if lines g-k apply only to new builds and additions or to the existing library as well.

A26. If you are building an addition, Section V Part B. e through l is applicable for the addition only. The applicant does not have to fill out e through l for the main library.

Section V, Part B. a through d are acceptable for the main library *and* the addition. The Applicants should clearly demonstrate how the additions fit in with the library as a whole. For example, what are the library's overall objectives and what are the objectives for the addition? What are the library's services and what are the services that will be offered in the addition? What resources will be needed to carry out services in the main library and in the addition?

The flow chart or bubble diagram should show contiguous spaces in the main library and the addition so that the reviewer can clearly see the utilization of space for the library as a whole.

If constructing an entire new library building, or reconstructing, or renovating a purchased building, all of Part B should be completed.

27. Section 2.4.2 – References “building plans”, do you mean building architectural plans?

A27. This section refers to the schematics the applicant will submit prepared by an architect for new construction, renovation, and reconstruction projects.

28. Section 2.4.3 – Who is authorized to provide the “technology certification”?

A28. The technology certification is included in “Exhibit C – Certification Statements” and will be signed by the person authorized to sign the application.

29. I would like to request additional guidance on the technology request within the NJLCBA application. It was noted that all eligible projects must include a Technology Certificate defined as: "A certification that the Project will provide equitable public access to current technology and that the public library building will be adaptable to future uses of technology for all public library customers."

What exactly will the State Library need in this regard? A document that individual library systems create in-house? The library can easily write a general statement that says we promise to meet this requirement at the system and operational levels with a sign-off from the County Library Administrator.

A29. See response A28.

30. Section 2.4.8, I – What do you mean by “registered. Building consultant”, does that mean registered to do business in the State of NJ?

A30. Yes, a consultant who is registered to do business in New Jersey.

31. Page 41 – Item 21 – cost estimate can be prepared by the project architect, engineer or “company”. Please clarify “company”, assume this means a professional construction cost estimator, if so, please specify.

A31. “Company” is addressed in Section 6.4.4 of the Solicitation. Company Supplying Quote for Repair Work (for projects seeking repair work only, without an architect, building consultant, or engineer). Also see Section 2.4.6 i and ii of the Solicitation.