Writing an Application for a Grant
under the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act – 2021 – Round Two

These suggestions are designed to help you complete your Application so that your project is clearly described and helps the reviewers understand the value and importance of your project. Please note that these are just suggestions. Following them does not ensure that your Application will be approved for funding but are provided to assist Applicants in submitting their Applications. Each Applicant should review the entire Solicitation and should become familiar with the regulations for this program.

1. Read the entire Solicitation thoroughly before writing anything in order to gain a good overview of the Application.
2. Provide full responses to all questions in the Application. If a question is not applicable, enter “n/a” or “does not apply.”
3. Determine who is the Applicant for the project. The Applicant is either the public library Board of Trustees or the County Library Commission in the case of county libraries. The Applicant may also be a municipality in the case where the municipality is building a library that will be stocked and staffed by a county or other library.
4. Be clear and concise in answering questions. When completing application questions, where appropriate, describe the process, underlying data or resources utilized to substantiate your response. For example, did your library do customer surveys or use other assessment tools to determine need for the project? Make sure the reviewers understand the process used to determine answers to questions. Do not say that you need something without explaining why or citing examples.
5. Before submitting a grant application, every Applicant must consult with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine if the project requires review and approval from either DEP or SHPO. All applicants must submit proof of consultation with DEP and SHPO regarding the project. SHPO contact is Jennifer Leynes she can be reached at jennifer.leynes@dep.nj.gov or 609-984-6016.
6. Provide a strong needs statement. A needs statement will explain why your library needs a construction grant now, and will describe how the community will benefit from the improved or new library. There are many tools that can be used to assess need and there are many resources that provide data to enhance your statement. Likewise, a data-based description of the socio-economics of the area may be compelling. Give specific examples of how the new or renovated library building and its services will address the findings of your research.
7. Check the math on the tables. Review each table and make sure there are no mathematical errors. Be sure that the dollar amount of the grant request is correct in each section of the Application, where it is needed.
8. Include all eligible project costs on the cost estimate table. Make certain that the cost is an eligible project cost before completing the table. Details on eligible projects and project costs are included in the Regulations at N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.2 and 2.6.

9. The amounts listed on the Sources of Funding table for the match requirement should total no less than the amount of the grant request. The amounts listed may exceed the grant request if more matching funds are going to be used for the project however, the amounts listed for the matching requirement must not be less than the amount of the grant requested.

10. There must be a commitment of matching funds for the project and the Application must specifically state the source of the matching funds. The commitment of matching funds can be a resolution from the town to commit matching funds, a copy of an ordinance of appropriation, a copy of a bond ordinance or other funding sources, which are listed on the Sources of Funding table. State funds are not allowed to be used as matching funds for the project; the source of matching funds must be local, private, or federal funding.

11. When computing the amount of the grant request, use the correct square footage cost for the project. Be sure that if shared space is included in your project that it is not included in the square footage calculation for your project. The Bond Act cannot pay for shared space used by another agency within the library building.

12. Provide a realistic and well-developed timeline. A realistic project timeline will identify possible areas where work may be slowed and describe plans to mitigate the impact of lost project time. An architect or contractor can help you pinpoint where your project may need to account for contingencies and what a reasonable timeline is.

13. Discuss what makes your project cost effective. Using the cost per square foot as a basis, describe energy efficiency with a new HVAC system or reduced energy costs with solar panels, etc. Indicate where improved cost efficiencies will be found in the new or renovated building.

14. If your request could be considered part of the regular library maintenance (such as a new HVAC system) explain why the library has not been able to provide upkeep and replacement within its operating budget. Address how the library will plan for replacement of new equipment.

15. If your library building is not up to code in areas such as lighting, energy efficiency, seismic requirements, water infrastructure, floor weight, etc. describe how your project will resolve required code improvements. Discuss how the safety and health of your customers and staff are addressed with the updates.

16. Resiliency. A robust description of how the library supports resiliency will discuss basic steps that can be taken, such as purchasing a generator to be able to offer shelter to the community in times of emergency or disaster. Discuss how to make libraries resilient with your architect and/or conduct research.

17. Make sure that the architect or contractor has submitted required information in the required format. Review all submission documents with your architect or contractor and any consultants that may have worked on the project/grant application to make sure all required information is submitted.

18. Discuss community partnerships fully. Community partnerships are one indication of support for a library building project. A strong description of community partnerships includes not just the names of the organization, but the role each organization will play in the new or renovated building, its services, etc.
Discuss the full range of community partners involved with the library, providing information beyond just the Friends of the Library organization.

19. Do not assume prior knowledge on the part of the reviewers.
20. Do not make reviewers hunt for required information; use headers in the narrative. This is particularly important when providing cost information.
21. Make sure that all parts of the Application agree with one another.
22. List two appropriate and accessible contact persons on the application who will be available to answer any follow up questions.
23. Submit Resolution I or II with your application. Resolutions can be found in the Solicitation, Section 8 - Appendix. The type of resolution to be submitted depends on the type of library applying for the grant.
24. Use the checklist as a guide to ensure all proper documentation is included in the submission. Checklists can be uploaded but are not required.
25. Please submit questions about the application and its requirements to QandA@njefa.nj.gov. Note that there is a limited window of time during which you can submit your question(s). Questions may be submitted from March 29, 2021 to April 23, 2021 at 4:00pm EDT. Responses to questions, if any, will be provided no later than May 7, 2021. Questions submitted by phone or fax will not be accepted.

Re-read the Application before submission. Make sure that all questions are answered, and all the required documents are included.