Mission of the New Jersey State Library

The New Jersey State Library (NJSL), an affiliate of Thomas Edison State University (TESU), provides services for New Jersey libraries, the state legislature and government employees, Thomas Edison State University staff and students, and registered borrowers.

Purpose and Outcome of the Grant Opportunity

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Grants for New Jersey Public Libraries is an initiative of the New Jersey State Library. Through an American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), NJSL makes this funding available to New Jersey public libraries for the purpose of helping communities respond directly and immediately to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as address related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. Spending priorities for this initiative are as follows:

1) To support digital inclusion efforts to enable libraries to reach residents such as through internet hotspots, accessible Wi-Fi, and digital content and related resources, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs. The following types of data, among others, can inform efforts to reach underserved populations:
   - Poverty/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
   - Unemployment
   - Broadband availability
   - NJ Department of Community Affairs’ Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) ([https://www.nj.gov/dca/home/MuniRevitIndex.html](https://www.nj.gov/dca/home/MuniRevitIndex.html))

2) To support library services that meet the needs of communities, including costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment, and associated indirect costs.

Successful grant proposals will connect proposed project activities to the spending priorities outlined above. Proposals will be reviewed and scored on the basis of how well the applicant addresses application criteria. To better support high need communities, NJSL will use the 2020...
MRI to identify communities of high need. If the library applicant is in a high need area, as identified by the MRI, NJSL will additionally award bonus points. The maximum score without Bonus Points is 100. Proposals are eligible to receive up to five additional bonus points.

Bonus Points: Note that applicants serving communities with MRI distress scores between 100-85 on the MRI will receive five (5) bonus points; between 84-70 on the MRI will receive three (3) bonus points; and between 69-50 on the MRI will receive one (1) bonus point.

**Alignment with Goals of NJSL’s 2018-2022 LSTA Plan**

Applicants should also consider the alignment of their proposals with the goals of the New Jersey State Library’s Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan. The goals are:

- **GOAL 1: INFORMATION ACCESS** - All New Jersey residents will have convenient access to quality information resources in a format that they can use to achieve their educational, occupational, and personal/recreational goals.
- **GOAL 2: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY** – All New Jersey residents are served by local libraries that are technologically advanced and that employ knowledgeable, community-focused staff members who incorporate the best professional practices to deliver high quality library services.
- **GOAL 3: LIFELONG LEARNING** – All New Jersey residents have an opportunity to reach their full potential and to participate in and contribute to their communities.

**Funding Available**

NJSL estimates that $1.8 million is available to fund approximately 50-75 grants using funding from the IMLS Federal award titled “LSTA ARPA State Grants,” Award LS-250226-OLS-21, CFDA Number 45.310.

NJSL invites applications in two application categories: Mini-Grants and Major Grants. Mini-Grants are small, focused efforts to improve equity. Equity may include, but is not limited to, digital equity and projects to close academic achievement and other gaps. Major grants are for larger initiatives that leverage partnerships in local communities to address wide-ranging community needs.

- Mini-Grants have a minimum grant award of $5,000 and a maximum grant award of $25,000.
- Major Grants have a minimum grant award of $25,001 and a maximum grant award of $100,000.

NJSL reserves the right to offer more or fewer grant awards than 50-75 and in grant amounts more or less than the applicant’s request or the maximum identified above.
No matching funds are required. Grant funds are made available to awardees on a reimbursement basis.

**Grant Period**

The term of the grant period is estimated to be from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022. There are no options for extensions beyond August 31, 2022.

**Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants are public libraries established pursuant to Chapter 33 or Chapter 54 of Title 40 of the New Jersey Revised Statutes or a library established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 15A:1-1 et seq., and receive public funds pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:54-35.

A library administrative entity may receive only one grant award under this opportunity. A library administrative entity may also serve as a partner on one additional project awarded to another library administrative entity.

**Project Partners**

NJSL encourages partnerships in the formation of grant proposals. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to:

- Digital inclusion organizations
- State or local government agencies
- Museums
- Other libraries
- Other public or private entities
- Schools
- Nonprofit social service organizations

**Possible Project Ideas (not an exhaustive list)**

- Hotspots; including tablets and phones to use as hotspots
- Laptops/tablets/devices to support patron participation in online services such as telehealth, online classes, job interviews, and the digital economy
- Extend or add Wi-Fi coverage at your library or in the community
- Navigators, trained library staff, and/or paid consultants to assist residents with digital literacy, adult literacy, workforce development and broadband adoption or other identified community needs
- Programs to promote health literacy, including telehealth
• Expansion of online resource collections
• Out of school time activities to close academic achievement gaps

**Examples of Allowable Expenses**

All expenditures/costs must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary for the grant.

• Consulting or contractual services;
• Accessories and supplies that are necessary to support the project;
• Hardware, software, and/or technology necessary to support the project;
• Salaries and benefits for temporary staff to be employed for the project OR temporary staff to be employed to cover duties of full-time personnel while the full-time person works on the project. Temporary staff means part-time or full-time personnel hired specifically to help carry out the project, or additional hours for existing part-time staff. The project description should clearly explain the need for added staff.
• Subscriptions and licenses within the grant period;
• Travel and/or training expenses related to the project for library or project staff;
• Evaluation to show the extent to which the project has met its goals;
• Indirect costs; and
• Other expenses that are reasonable, allocable, and necessary to support the project.

**Indirect Costs**

You may choose to request reimbursement for eligible indirect costs incurred for this federally funded project. An indirect cost is an organization’s costs that cannot be readily isolated or identified with just one project or activity. These types of costs are often referred to as “overhead costs” and typical examples include office space, utilities, telephone and Internet costs, and administrative or financial operations for an entire organization. There are four options when using an indirect cost rate:

• Use a current indirect cost rate already negotiated with a federal agency. You will be asked to submit your approved federal indirect rate plan letter if you are awarded a grant;
• Use an indirect cost rate proposed to a federal agency but not yet approved;
• Use a rate not to exceed 10% of the Modified Total Direct Costs (de minimus rate) if your organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and you are not subject to other requirements (i.e., for local governments); or
• Do not include any indirect costs.

When determining the amount that can be charged to indirect costs, the modified total direct costs (MTDC) must be used as the amount of funds that the indirect costs are calculated against. The MTDC is the sum of all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to $25,000 of each contract or subaward, regardless of the period of performance of the contract/subaward. MTDC excludes equipment with a per-unit cost.
of $5,000 or more, capital expenditures, rental costs, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each contract or subaward in excess of $25,000. See 2 CFR 200.414 for more information on indirect costs.

Federal Budget Guidelines
Expenses included in the project budget must be allowable under federal and state laws and must be expended for purposes and items described in the grant application. In addition, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Equipment with a useful life of more than one year and per-unit cost of $5,000 or more must be approved by IMLS prior to purchase. A grant award is NOT considered prior approval of a purchase. NJSL will request and receive approval from IMLS after a grant agreement is executed and prior to the acquisition of the item(s).
- Equipment purchased with grant funds must be tracked for audit purposes. Grantees must use, manage, and dispose of equipment acquired under a Federal award in accordance with the requirements specified in 2 CFR §200.313 (c)-(e).
- Records must be maintained for three years after the submission of the last LSTA State Program Report (SPR) for NJSL’s current LSTA State Plan. The current LSTA State Plan expires September 2022, with a final SPR to be submitted in January 2023. Grant records must therefore be retained through January 31, 2026.

Examples of Unallowable Expenses (not an exhaustive list)

- Construction, pre-construction planning, or renovation of facilities (generally, any activity involving contract labor in the construction trades is not allowable);
- Promotional items and memorabilia including gifts, incentives, and souvenirs;
- Refreshments, entertainment, ceremonies, receptions, or social events;
- Salaries, wages, and/or benefits for existing staff;
- Subscription plans, services, or software licenses that extend beyond the project’s funding period.

For additional guidance on allowable and unallowable costs, see also the Uniform Guidance in the Code of Federal Regulations, 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E, and also the IMLS Tip Sheet for Allowable Costs:

2 CFR Part 200:
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6214841a79953f26c5c230d72d6b70a1&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

IMLS Tip Sheet for Allowable Costs:
General Application Criteria

Only complete applications received by the stated due date will be reviewed. Complete applications include all required information and documents as described in the grant application instructions. Grant reviewers will score applications with a rubric, based on the below criteria:

- Application targets a high need community. Description of the community to be served supported by appropriate, relevant community data.
- Application includes a well-defined benefit or planned benefit to patrons demonstrating it is user-focused. Application makes a compelling case as to why the project is needed in the community.
- Application provides a detailed description of the project, its goals, and its activities. It describes any collaboration planned with other community partner organizations, detailing benefits to the library and to the community partner organization.
- Application sets achievable, measurable outcomes, and presents a reasonable method to collect data. Applicant should present a method to count users of the services, as well as a method to measure the effectiveness of the service. Use of outcome-based evaluation (OBE) is recommended in addition to output data.
- Application should demonstrate consideration of its ability to sustain the project impact beyond the grant period.
- Funds requested must be for reasonable, necessary, and allocable (i.e. allowable) costs to achieve the project’s goals; the application should provide rationale to support how the proposed expenditures were determined and why each is needed to achieve the project goals.

NJSL staff will apply Bonus Points to applications as described in the Purpose and Outcome of the Grant Opportunity section of these guidelines.

Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2021</td>
<td>Release of ARPA grant solicitation package</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 14, 2021, 9 A.M.</td>
<td>Application portal opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 23, 2021</td>
<td>A pre-recorded technical assistance webinar will be posted to the NJSL YouTube site</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25, 2021</td>
<td>First application Q&amp;A document posted to the NJSL website; updated weekly through July 23, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 30, 2021, 4 P.M.</td>
<td>Application portal closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 27, 2021</td>
<td>ARPA grant awards announced on or around this date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2021</td>
<td>ARPA grant projects begin. Expenditures made before September 1, 2021 will NOT be reimbursed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 2022</td>
<td>Mid-year reports due by 4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31, 2022</td>
<td>ARPA grant projects completed; funds fully encumbered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15, 2022</td>
<td>Final day to submit reimbursement requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30, 2022</td>
<td>Final reports due by 4pm on or before September 30, 2022</td>
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Application Questions/Technical Assistance

Applicants with questions in advance of the due date may email them to grants@njstatelib.org with the subject title “ARPA Grant Question.” An initial question and answer document will be posted on NJSL’s website by June 25, 2021 and will be updated once per week through July 23, 2021.

Application Review

For review purposes, applications will be split into two pools (Mini-Grants and Major Grants), and each pool will be reviewed by a three-member evaluation panel. Panelists abstain from commenting on or recommending a project if they have a perceived or actual conflict of interest which may include but is not limited to:
• any recent relationships, financial or otherwise, with the applicant organization or any persons connected with the proposal;
• residing or working in the applicant’s community;
• having played a meaningful role in the development of the project; or,
• having previously worked for the applicant.

Appeal Procedure

Applicants whose projects are not awarded a grant may submit a written request for an informal, fair hearing before the State Librarian. A hearing will be held only if it is alleged that the State Library has violated a statutory or regulatory provision in the awarding of a grant. An appeal that challenges the final evaluation score of the application will not be accepted.

Right to Cancel

This grant opportunity does not obligate NJSL to award a contract and NJSL reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered in its best interest due to lack of funding, agency priorities or other considerations.

Acknowledgement of IMLS and NJSL Support

Grant recipients are required to credit IMLS in all related publications and activities in conjunction with use of the grant funds. Recipients should publicize grant-supported activities in available and appropriate media. The following acknowledgement statement must be used when meeting these requirements:
“This publication/activity/program is supported in full or in part with funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the New Jersey State Library, award number LS-250226-OLN-21.”
Reporting and Monitoring

Grant recipients must submit mid-year and final reports to NJSL.

- The mid-year report will ask:
  - How is your project going?
  - Are you running into any unanticipated problems/challenges?
  - Are you on track to meet the goals of your grant?
- In addition to a narrative description, grantees should be prepared to submit the following data, as applicable, in the final performance report form, to be provided, along with a final expenditure report form:
  - Project outputs
  - Project beneficiary demographics
  - Important findings and outcomes
  - Lessons learned that could impact other libraries

NJSL staff may call, email, or otherwise correspond with recipients to monitor the progress of a project.

Grant Application Instructions

All applications must be submitted through an online portal: http://arpagrants.njstatelib.org/
Instructions for using the portal will be posted on the NJSL website when the portal opens.

The portal will open June 14, 2021 at 9 A.M. and close at 4 P.M. July 30, 2021.

Applicants must be prepared with all responses and completed documents to upload within the portal in one session. The portal does not provide the opportunity to save an application and come back to it at a later date. Applicants that submit an application will automatically receive a confirmation message to the email address associated with the portal user. If you submit an application and do not receive acknowledgement within 24 hours, send a message for assistance to grants@njstatelib.org. If you wish to withdraw your application from consideration after you submit it in the portal, please send a message to grants@njstatelib.org.

A complete application consists of three types of documentation:

- Information provided in fillable fields in the portal
- Documents required from all applicants
- Documents required based on application category: Mini-Grants or Major Grants
Information to be provided in fillable fields in the portal:

- Public Library Administrative Entity Applicant name
- Library Director name, phone, and email
- Project Director name, title, phone and email
- Public Library address, city, and zip
- Tax ID # (TIN)
- DUNS #: Currently, all non-federal entities must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S®) Number in order to apply for, receive, and report on federal awards. Visit http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html to look up, request, or update the information associated with an organization’s D-U-N-S® Number.
- Fiscal Year end date
- Applicant county
- Project Executive Summary (up to 120 words): What will your project do, for whom or what, and why?
- Total grant request amount

Documents required from all applicants* (to be uploaded as PDFs through the portal):

- FORM A: Certification
  - This form must be signed. When you sign the application, you certify that you have read these guidelines and that you will comply with the approved application and budget, the assurances herein and in the official grant agreement, and all other applicable federal regulations, state statutes, and local policies, if awarded a grant.

- FORM B: Budget Summary Form
  - Enter the amount of funds requested in each category. Enter a zero (0) if no funds will be spent in the category. Cost share may be included, but is not required.
  - Note that:
    - Salaries & benefits may be requested for new temporary staff or additional hours for current part-time staff.
    - Subscriptions/licenses/warranties that are paid with grant funds cannot go beyond the grant period end date of August 31, 2022.
    - Examples of Equipment include: Chromebooks, hot spots, laptops, routers.
    - Funds requested to support publicity for the project may fall into more than one category, such as Other Materials & Supplies, or Contracts & Services, or Other Costs.
    - Indirect costs: Please choose one of the four options for the calculation of indirect costs. See the Examples of Allowable Expenses section of these guidelines for guidance on the inclusion of indirect costs.

- FORM C: Certifications for LSTA Grantees
  - This form must be signed. Includes specific certifications that are required of all IMLS subgrantees.

- FORM D: Assurances Non-Construction Programs
This form must be signed. The standard Federal form that is required of all federal subgrantees.

- FORM E: CIPA Compliance
  - This form must be filled out and signed. Address the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which concerns children’s access to harmful content over the Internet.

- FORM F: Resolution to Apply
  - This form must be signed.

*Applicants who have previously submitted FORMS C, D, and E to NJSIL in 2021 do not need to resubmit them.

Documents required based on application category (to be uploaded as PDFs through the portal):

Mini-Grants:

- FORM G: Mini-Grant Narrative Form: In approximately three (3) to five (5) pages, clearly address each of the topics listed in the Narrative Form.
  - Project title: A succinct phrase or sentence that captures the essence of the project. The title will be used in grant award publicity.
  - Project description: Describe the project, including the overall goal and expected outputs and outcomes. Explain why this project is needed in the community and refer to relevant data, including, as appropriate, from the Municipal Revitalization Index. Clearly indicate how the project meets the purpose of this ARPA program.
  - Project activities with dates: Outline the project activities, including the dates they will be accomplished during the grant period. Include such benchmarks as project planning meetings, purchase of supplies, program dates, etc. Articulate activities to promote the project to the community and evaluate whether the project met the overall goal.
  - Key project personnel, including roles and responsibilities, and partnership description, if applicable. Describe how the project will fit into the team members’ current roles at the library. Projects which involve one or more partners should describe their roles and the added benefit to the project.
  - Budget justification: Itemize and justify the requested funds, based on the categories listed on Form B, the Budget Summary Form. Detail all necessary, reasonable and allocable expenditures anticipated during the grant period of September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022, that align with the project goals. Cost share contributions from the applicant and project partners may be included, but are not required.

Major Grants:

- Major Grant Narrative:
Create your own document and write a narrative that includes the elements described below.

Limit the document to a maximum of 13 numbered pages.
Include the applicant name and project title at the top of the first page.
Use a font size of at least 12 points and at least 0.5-inch margins on all sides.
Save it as a PDF.

Include the following seven section headers in your narrative and respond to the provided questions and prompts:

- **Statement of Need:**
  - What challenge, issue, or need in your community does your project address? How was the need determined? Incorporate community needs data, including from the Municipal Revitalization Index.
  - Indicate how the project addresses the ARPA spending priorities, as stated in the grant guidelines.
  - Indicate how the project aligns with one of the goals of NJSL’s 2018-2022 LSTA Plan, as stated in the grant guidelines.

- **Project Goal and Outcome:**
  - What do you want to do to solve or address the need stated above? What is your project’s user-focused goal? Include target numbers for what will be better or different for library users.
  - Why was this solution selected? Was the community involved in the development of this project?
  - What will a successful project look like? Include outcomes.

- **Project Design/Timeline:**
  - What will you do and how will you do it? When and in what sequence will activities occur? How will the community learn about this project? Include dates associated with planning, implementation, and evaluation activities, and spending of funds.

- **Project Personnel and Partnerships, including roles and responsibilities:**
  - Describe the key library personnel involved in the project.
  - Provide the name(s) of any project partner(s), and a robust description of their expected contribution (financial or otherwise) to the project, and indicate any prior experience working with the partner(s).

- **Evaluation:**
  - “Before” and “after” data is important to accurately measure and report effectiveness. How will you document before and after “outputs,” the countable products?
  - How will you determine whether the project reached or moved toward the project goal? How will you document the “outcomes”; the changes brought about, in part, because of the project, in the target audience’s behavior, attitudes, skills,
knowledge, status, or life condition? Documentation methods may include pre- and post-assessments, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observations.

- **Sustainability:**
  - Will your project build capacity for outcomes beyond the end of the project period?
  - If your project will build capacity, describe how the project will be sustained beyond the end of the grant period.

- **Budget Justification:**
  - Provide a detailed explanation and justification of the requested funds, based on the categories listed on FORM B, the Budget Summary Form. Detail all necessary, reasonable and allocable expenditures anticipated during the grant period of September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022 that align with the project goals. Quotes, estimates, mileage, and other methods of calculating budget items should be detailed in the budget justification. Budget estimates for employee and proposed contractor services should correspond with reasonable approximations for the activities to be performed. Cost share contributions from the applicant and project partners may be included, but are not required.

**Application Checklist**

- **Required documents:**
  - □ FORM A: Certification
  - □ FORM B: Budget Summary Form
  - □ FORM C: Certifications for LSTA Grantees*
  - □ FORM D: Assurances Non-Construction Programs*
  - □ FORM E: CIPA Compliance*
  - □ FORM F: Resolution to Apply
  - □ for Mini-Grant Applicants only: FORM G: Mini-Grant Narrative Form
  - □ for Major Grant Applicants only: Major Grant Narrative document

- **Fillable fields required in the online portal**

*Applicants who have previously submitted FORMS C, D, and E to NJSL in 2021 do not need to resubmit them.
Additional Federal Regulations and Assurances

Limited English Proficiency Guidelines
Federal regulations require that grant recipients take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information, programs, and services they provide to people with limited English proficiency. Please consider language assistance services, if appropriate, when planning and implementing your project.

Certifications Regarding Compliance with Federal Regulations for LSTA Grantees
All recipients of Federal awards made from IMLS Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds must make further certifications regarding lobbying, debarment and suspension, drug-free workplace, federal debt status and conflicts of interest, among others, as set forth in the Certifications Regarding Compliance with Federal Regulations of Library Services and Technology Act Grantees form. A signed Form C – Certifications Regarding Compliance with Federal Regulations for Library Services and Technology Act Grantees is a required application document.

Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
All recipients of Federal awards and subawards are subject to agree to abide by the terms set forth in Form D Assurances – Non-Construction Programs. A signed Form D is a required application document.

CIPA Internet Safety Certification
The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted by Congress in 2000 to address concerns about children’s access to obscene or harmful content over the Internet. CIPA imposes requirements on libraries that receive discounts for Internet access or internal connections through the FCC’s E-rate program. IMLS further requires certification that libraries are CIPA compliant or that CIPA requirements do not apply because no funds made available from IMLS are being used to purchase computers to access the Internet or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet. A signed Form E - the CIPA Internet Safety Certification, is a required application document.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act
The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires NJSL to comply with Federal law pertaining to reporting subawards and executive compensation information. NJSL will be required to file a FFATA subaward report by the end of the month following the month in which NJSL makes any subaward of $30,000 or more. The FFATA report will include details on the subrecipients including the amount of the award and the names and total compensation of the top five executives of the subrecipient. If awarded a grant for $30,000 or more, NJSL will reach out for additional information to meet FFATA reporting requirements.
Single Audit Requirements
Audit requirements for recipients of federal aid are established according to 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F, which requires that a grantee have a Single Audit performed when Federal Funds expended equal or exceed $750,000 in a fiscal year. Auditors should be informed that payments received from LSTA subgrants, including ARPA funds, are 100% federal funds, subject to the Single Audit Act.