N.J.A.C. 15:24-1.1

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-1.1 Purpose and scope

(a) All people of New Jersey should have equitable access to New Jersey public library facilities, collections, technological resources, and services regardless of age, color, race, religion or creed, gender or sexual preference, socioeconomic level, or disability.

1. This chapter describes a physical space, a public library, and the development of materials (collections and resources) and activities (services) that are integral to the use of that space. The kinds of services offered within that space are critical to the people of New Jersey. The library might provide the technology to help residents bridge the digital divide by utilizing computers and electronic resources. It might provide the space for public forums on important civic topics, art shows, or musical entertainment, or for lectures on topics of community interest. A public library might also foster participation in the joys of reading for each member of a family.

(b) The purpose of this chapter is to improve New Jersey's public library facilities to ensure the well-being and success of New Jersey's residents. Today's public libraries offer the residents of New Jersey critical education, training, and civic services, which are more cost-effectively provided through modern, technologically current buildings with flexible spaces adaptable to many types of programs and services.

1. To support this need, the State is distributing funding to communities seeking to improve and expand their access to resources, including technology. This subsection describes the procedures and criteria for communities to apply for and receive funding. Broadly speaking, the State's priorities for this funding are:

i. Construction and rehabilitation to further access to library services with an emphasis on equal access for all people to easily use library resources and services;

ii. Enhancement of public libraries to serve as public spaces and community centers in which people engage and interact for civic, educational, informational, and recreational purposes;

iii. Optimization of the technological infrastructure to promote access to the Internet, electronic resources, and instruction in their use(s) helping all people to bridge the digital divide; and

iv. Growth in critical public library services available to the citizens of New Jersey (including those that support education, employment, welfare, job training, career assistance, college preparation, securing government assistance, and civic services).

(c) Applicants are invited to submit applications that address one or more of these Statewide priorities. Project applications will be evaluated on the means by which the projects are aligned with the Statewide priorities listed in this section and the "primary criteria," which articulate basic eligibility for funding pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.7(a).

(d) Given the past decade of disinvestment in the State's libraries, and the two decades since the State's last program investing in public library construction, 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 and dedicate bond resources accordingly.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-1.2

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-1.2 Authority

This chapter implements the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act, P.L. 2017, c. 149, an act authorizing the issuance of$ 125 million in general obligation bonds for the construction, reconstruction, development, extension, improvement, and furnishing of New Jersey's public libraries.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-1.3

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-1.3 Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. Additional definitions that apply to this chapter can be found at P.L. 2017, c. 149.

"Act" or "Bond Act" means the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act, P.L. 2017, c. 149.

"Applicant" or "eligible applicant" means a municipal, county, or joint library established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:33-1 et seq., or 40:54-1 et seq., or a library established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 15A:1-1 et seq., and receiving public funds pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:54-35. "Applicant" shall also mean a municipality, in the case in which a library facility is to be constructed by a municipality with the provision that it be equipped, stocked, staffed, or supported by a county or other public library system.

"Construct" and "construction" means the planning, erecting, altering, expanding, repairing, purchasing, acquiring, improving, developing, constructing, reconstructing, extending, rehabilitating, renovating, upgrading, demolishing, and equipping of public libraries.

"Costs" means the expenses incurred in connection with the project. This includes the acquisition by purchase, lease, or otherwise, the development, and the construction of any project authorized by the Act; the acquisition by purchase, lease, or otherwise, and the development of any real or personal property for use in connection with a project authorized by the Act, including any rights of interest therein; the execution of any agreements and franchises deemed by the President of Thomas Edison State University to be necessary or useful and convenient in connection with any project; the procurement of engineering, inspection, planning, legal, financial, or other professional services, estimates, studies, reports, or advice, including the services of a bond registrar or an authenticating agent; feasibility studies; the issuance of bonds, or any interest or discount thereon; the administrative, organizational, operating, or other expenses incident to the financing and completion of any project authorized by the Act.

"Matching funds" means cash, local governmental appropriations, grants, and other funds from any private or Federal source, and the proceeds from the sale of municipal bonds. Matching funds must equal the grant amount dollar-for-dollar. Grants from State of New Jersey sources may not be used to satisfy the matching requirement.

"President" means the President of Thomas Edison State University.

"Project" means the acquisition of land for construction of a new building(s) or expansion of an existing building(s) to be used as a public library; the establishment and construction of public libraries; the rehabilitation and repair of public libraries; and the acquisition of additional and upgraded furniture, fixtures, and/or information technology equipment.

"Project grant" or "grant" means a grant of monies from bonds issued under the Act to fund a project approved pursuant to P.L. 2017, c. 149, and for which a project-specific appropriation has been made.

"Public library" means a library that serves, free of charge, all residents of an area as 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 receiving public funds pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:54-35. "Public library" does not include any special-purpose library, such as a law, medical, or academic library, which is organized to serve a special clientele or purpose.

"Rehabilitation" means the renovation, alteration, or reconstruction of any building or structure.

"Repair" means the restoration to a good or sound condition of materials, systems, and/or components of a public library building that are worn, deteriorated, or broken, using materials or components identical to, or closely similar to, the existing materials.

"Substantial changes" means 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.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.1

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.1 Allocation of funds; match requirement

(a) Grants from the Bond Act shall be used only to fund approved projects for public libraries.

(b) For any grant for a project approved by the State Librarian and the President, which is financed by Bond Act funds, the grant shall support no more than 50 percent of the cost of the project and the applicant shall provide matching funds to support 50 percent of the cost of the project.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.2

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.2 Types of eligible and ineligible projects

(a) The President and the State Librarian shall consider project(s) or combinations of projects for approval of a grant from Bond Act funds available, or expected to become available, pursuant to the Act. Projects include, but are not limited to:

1. Construction of a new building to be used as a public library;

2. Construction of an addition to an existing building to be used as a public library;

3. 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;

4. Acquisition of a building to be used as a public library;

5. Rehabilitation of an existing building to be used as a public library, which may include, but is not limited to, energy conservation, the creation of innovative and collaborative space for library and community activities, and upgrading or modernizing a facility for compliance with applicable and current local, State, and Federal health and safety standards; and

6. Repair of public library building(s) or designated mechanical system(s), or component(s) within such buildings that are worn, deteriorated, or broken. Repair projects are intended to extend the useful life of a library facility and may include, but are not limited to, roofing, flooring, lighting, plumbing, heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems, and other necessary work to keep the building in efficient operating condition. Simple custodial repair work is not eligible for funding, unless the repair is a part of a larger rehabilitation or expansion project.

(b) The following projects, which are not defined in the Act, are ineligible for a grant:

1. Refurbishing of an existing building (carpeting, painting, etc.) when not part of a rehabilitation project;

2. Simple custodial building maintenance, such as preventative maintenance (inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms, etc.) and minor repairs (for damaged plumbing, wiring, windows, equipment, paint, etc.); and

3. Construction costs relating to non-public library use areas, in cases where a portion of the proposed construction is for use other than for a public library, such as municipal offices or a general municipal meeting room.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.3

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.3 Funding priorities

(a) To ensure equitable distribution of grant monies across the library system and to meet the goals specified in N.J.A.C. 15:24-1.1(b) and the Act, projects will be evaluated to determine whether they further the following State priorities. For each project, applicants should indicate which priorities will be promoted by such project and support such assertions using the means by which priority alignment will be determined as specified in N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.4. The State priorities are as follows:

1. Construction and rehabilitation to further access to library services with an emphasis on equal access for all people to easily use library resources and services;

2. Enhancement of public libraries to serve as public spaces and community centers in which people engage and interact for civic, educational, informational, and recreational purposes;

3. Optimization of the technological infrastructure to promote access to the Internet, electronic resources, and instruction in their use(s), helping all people to bridge the digital divide; and

4. Growth in critical public library services available to the citizens of New Jersey (including those that support education, employment, welfare, job training, career assistance, college preparation, securing government assistance, and civic services).

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.4

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.4 Means by which priority alignment will be determined and evaluated

(a) Project alignment with the State priorities, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.3, will be determined and evaluated using the following criteria:

1. The extent to which barrier-free improvements do not exist in the public library building. The applicant must address what general improvements will be required in order to be barrier-free.

2. Socioeconomic profile. Public libraries provide an economic lift for residents, particularly in communities in which education, support services, and the social safety net are less robust. Measures of the socioeconomic need of the community should be included and cited.

3. Current needs. Articulation of the basic services the current library lacks, particularly in the absence of the expansion, repair, rehabilitation, or acquisition of an existing building. This may include, but is not limited to, evidence that the existing facility is no longer able to support the delivery of services to a community with diverse needs, limited shelf space or storage for books or audiovisual materials, and/or limited seating for customers.

4. Digital divide. Assess the extent of the current digital divide in the community, such as, high demand for public access computers, high percentages of customers with no Internet access at home, or limited access to electrical and data lines that makes it difficult to increase the number of computers at the public library.

5. Future projected needs. Assess the anticipated library service needs of residents through the year 2030, particularly as they are related to core library services, as stated in N.J.A.C. 15:24-1.1. This analysis may include, but is not limited to, projections of future community demographics, review of current and projected library use statistics, and an examination of city planning documents.

6. Resiliency. Address the need for resiliency improvements to public library buildings so that public libraries may function as community resources in times of emergency and disaster. For example, the public library building can be the one building in the community to provide cell phone charging for all in a time of emergency.

7. Extent to which current public library standards are met. Evaluate the extent to which the current facility meets the criteria for receipt of State Aid (as set forth in this subchapter) in the calendar year prior to the submission of an application. Should the minimum criteria not be met, provide an explanation or justification as to why minimum criteria have not been met.

8. Extent to which current building standards are met. Evaluation of the extent to which the current facility meets, or fails to meet, code standards for lighting, seismic, water infrastructure, and other design standards for health, safety, and energy efficiency.

9. Functionality of the public library building. Evaluate how well the building works as a library, how it is consistent with the library's mission, how it is consistent with the building program, flexibility of the building design in adapting to future needs, and overall functionality of the building for the ease of the customer.

10. How the investment furthers existing functions. Describe how the project will enhance functions of the existing facility through augmentation of collections management, technology, dedicated space, programming/meeting space, and services, among others. This may include, but is not limited to, projects fostering energy efficiency using green design principles and targeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications; addressing collection preservation as part of building and rehabilitation design, such as the inclusion of climate control systems, where necessary, and ambient lighting; promoting healthy internal building environments that protect human health and well-being according to WELL Building Standards, as promoted by the International WELL Building Institute; laptop plug-in and lab areas; WiFi enhancements; age-specific collaboration spaces; workforce training/job searching equipment; consortium and delivery operations; and reconfiguration in anticipation of projected future growth.

11. How the project provides new services. Illustration of how the proposed project will contribute new or enhanced services for the broader communities it serves, including how the opportunities enabled by the project will complement other social services and programs within the community.

12. Degree of community support/partnerships. A description of the formal partners, both traditional and non-traditional, that support the library and/or the specified project, as well as the partners' respective roles dedicated to bolster the library's mission as it relates to the community it serves.

13. Effects of staffing, maintaining, and operating the proposed facility. Plans for how the proposed project will draw on future resources and how the applicant plans to support functions of the library once the proposed project reaches full functionality.

14. Cost-effectiveness of the project. Feasibility of the costs; are they reasonable, accurate, a good value, do they support increased efficiency of the building, and/or have an environmental impact.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.5

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.5 Computation of square footage costs

(a) The maximum per square foot costs for computation of the project grant funding of construction, rehabilitation, and repair have been set at $ 500.00 per square foot for new construction and $ 350.00 per square foot for rehabilitation and repair. For the rehabilitation and repair of a building registered as a New Jersey or Federal historic site, the maximum cost per square foot has been set at $ 500.00. If the grant program is administered in a phased-solicitation process, these costs will be adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), Northeast Region, All Items, not seasonally adjusted.

1. The State Librarian may, at any time during the administration of the grant program, adjust the maximum per square foot costs for documented increases in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, Northeast Region, All Items, whenever such adjustment would ensure the implementation of the grant program and fulfillment of its purpose. The adjusted maximum allowable square foot cost shall be calculated based on the most recent 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, Northeast Region, All Items.

(b) In cases where a portion of the proposed construction is for use other than for a public library, such space may not be included in the computation of available square feet of space in the computation of the State share of funding. The applicant shall clearly designate the non-public library use areas and the related costs; grant awards shall be reduced by the amount of the non-public library uses and related costs.

(c) The cost of any shared space submitted for grant funding shall be prorated on the basis of the percentage of public library use.

(d) Public library floor space must be measured to include total square footage of space to be used as a public library, including outer walls, areas provided for mechanical equipment and maintenance

requirements, and storage. These areas shall have heat, light, and ventilation and square footage commensurate with their purposes.

(e) The reasonableness of land purchase costs also will be considered. See N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.7(a)4.

History

HISTORY:

Amended by R.2023 d.116, effective October 2, 2023.

See: 55 N.J.R. 1322(a), 55 N.J.R. 2142(b).

In (a), substituted a comma for the first occurrence of "and"; inserted ", and repair" following "rehabilitation", and substituted the third occurrence of "and repair" for "or renovation"; and added (a)1.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.6

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-2.6 Eligible and ineligible project costs

(a) In connection with each eligible project, the following are eligible project costs:

1. Construction of new buildings and expansion, repairs, rehabilitation, or acquisition of existing buildings to be used as a public library;

2. Expenses incurred after the effective date of contracts for approved grant awards related to the acquisition of land on which there is to be construction of a new building(s) or expansion of an existing building(s) or acquisition of an existing building(s) to be used as a public library, provided the expenses constitute an actual cost or a transfer of public funds;

3. Site grading and improvement of land on which buildings used as a public library are located or are to be located;

4. Architectural, engineering, consulting, and inspection services related to the specific project for which application for grant funding is made;

5. Costs relating to the acquisition and installation of equipment to be located in public library facilities, including all necessary building fixtures and utilities, furniture, and equipment, such as library shelving, and filing equipment, catalogs, cabinets, circulation desks, reading tables, study carrels, computers, computer software, and all video, voice, and data telecommunications equipment and linkages necessary for Internet access with a useful life of five years or more based on the life cycle of the equipment as specified by the manufacturer, but not including books or other library materials. Only equipment to be used in eligible projects funded under this chapter are eligible. In no case, shall costs for furniture and equipment that are in excess of 30 percent of the total costs of the project be considered an eligible project cost;

6. Expenses for moving to and from a temporary public library facility, when the existing facility is under construction and is no longer safe to inhabit as determined by the architect, and rent thereof for up to 18 months;

7. Expenses for off-site storage and related moving costs, when necessary, for up to 18 months;

8. Expenses for moving from the current location to a new or purchased building to be used as a public library and/or an addition to a purchased building; and

9. A request for extension(s) of the time period for incurring expenses as listed in (a)6 and 7 above, may be made to the President, or his or her designee, and State Librarian if the project has been proceeding forward in a timely manner but experiences delays beyond its control and not caused by any fault or negligence of the library.

(b) The following are ineligible project costs:

1. Applicants may not use as matching funds, and grant funds may not be used to reimburse, any expenditures incurred before the issuance of an official notice of a grant award from the President, or his or her designee, and the State Librarian;

2. Expenses for moving to and from a temporary library facility and rent thereof as incurred by the applicant after 18 months;

3. Expenses for off-site storage and related moving costs, when necessary, after 18 months; and

4. Debt service and other costs associated with the issuance of bonds by counties and municipalities.

History

HISTORY:

Amended by R.2023 d.116, effective October 2, 2023.

See: 55 N.J.R. 1322(a), 55 N.J.R. 2142(b).

In (b)3, inserted "and" at the end; deleted former (b)4; and recodified former (b)5 as (b)4.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.7

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§ 15:24-2.7 Primary criteria for eligible projects

(a) All applications shall meet the following criteria:

1. Barrier-free access improvements, such as ramps, restrooms, and other necessary improvements to bring the public library building in compliance with State and Federal minimum standards for providing accessibility for individuals with disabilities must be integrated in all new construction, repair, and rehabilitation projects.

2. Equitable public access to current technology and the adaptability of the public library building to future uses of technology for all public library customers must be integrated into all project proposals.

3. The applicant shall be in possession of a fee simple title or such other estate or interest in the project site, including access thereto, as is sufficient to assure undisturbed use and possession of the facility(ies) for not less than 20 years, or shall have met the criteria set forth at (a)4 and (b) and (c) below. Ownership of the site by the applicant includes ownership of the land by the municipality(ies) in which the applicant is located, or the county(ies,) in the case of a county or regional public library application, provided that such land has been formally dedicated to public library use.

4. In cases where an applicant is proposing to acquire 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, the applicant shall submit a letter of intent to purchase such land.

i. 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.

ii. The appraisal shall be prepared by an independent appraiser licensed by the State of New Jersey.

iii. The intent to acquire land may be in the form of a resolution of the governing body(ies) of the municipality(ies) of the applicant or the county(ies), in the case of a county or regional public library, a letter of intent to purchase land; a contract for the purchase of land; and/or other legal documents as determined by the applicant's attorney to be proof of intent to purchase land and as acceptable to the President and State Librarian. When the purchase of land is complete, the applicant must adhere to the requirements of (a)3 above. The land must be formally dedicated to public library use.

(b) If land and/or structures purchased with grant funds are sold within 20 years of the grant award notification, the applicant will be required to reimburse funds equal to the amount of grant funds received for such purpose to the Department of the Treasury.

(c) New public library buildings or buildings purchased to be public libraries may be part of, or located in, a mixed-use commercial, residential, municipal, county, State, or Federal project, if the applicable local codes allow. Only the costs attributed to the use of the public library building are eligible costs of the Bond Act. Any non-public library use area or shared space must be prorated by the architect and may not be funded by a grant.

(d) For each rehabilitation and/or building acquisition project, a building analysis shall be prepared by an architect licensed in the State of New Jersey and shall be submitted as part of the application. The architect or a building consultant shall prepare a building program and such program shall be submitted as part of the application. The architect shall certify that the rehabilitated structure and all its component parts shall have a life expectancy of 20 years or more from completion of the project. Analyses made by the architect regarding the following shall be submitted in substantiation of the suitability and practicality of the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, or repair:

1. The architect's certification that the building is structurally sound;

2. A determination that the building is suitable for acquisition or rehabilitation and upon completion will require no more than normal, annual maintenance;

3. The evaluation of the space requirements and allocation of space demonstrating that the structure, as acquired or rehabilitated, will serve the specific needs of the applicant and its community as defined in the library building program submitted as part of the grant application; and

4. An analysis of all mechanical aspects of existing construction to determine the need for replacement or improvement.

(e) Certification by the applicant that it has, or will have, local matching funds for the project, including a detailed listing of the matching funds. The applicant shall support 50 percent of the cost of the project. The local governing entity in the area served by the public library may solicit and receive grants and other funds from any private or Federal source to support its required share of the project.

(f) All structures must comply with the State Uniform Construction Code Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-119 et seq., and the rules promulgated thereunder, N.J.A.C. 5:23.

(g) In advance of submission of a grant application, the applicant must apply for any necessary approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, including the Historic Preservation Office, and other agencies, as applicable, and should provide evidence that application(s) have been made. A grant award is contingent upon the receipt of approvals from the above agencies, as appropriate.

(h) Certification by the applicant that the public library project will comply with all State and Federal laws, codes, statutes, rules, and government guidelines, including prevailing wage and labor laws, and the principles of affirmative action and equal opportunity, where applicable. All New Jersey labor laws and rules shall be adhered to, when applicable.

(i) All contracts shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder on the basis of open competitive bidding, as specified in the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40:11-1 et seq., unless exempt from the public bidding process under that law.

(j) Building plans shall be prepared by an architect licensed by the State of New Jersey.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-3.1

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-3.1 Applicant priorities for the receipt of grants for multiple and single projects

(a) Applicant priorities for the receipt of construction grants shall include the following:

1. In order for a project to be considered, the application must be complete. Where an applicant has filed applications for more than one project, only those applications that are complete will be considered.

2. Applicants submitting an application for more than one project shall rank each project in order of priority and importance to the applicant.

3. The applicant's own ranking of its projects will be reviewed in compiling the list of eligible projects to be recommended for approval.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-3.2

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-3.2 Amount of grant and method of allocation

(a) A grant shall support no more than 50 percent of the cost of the project and the applicant shall provide matching funds to support 50 percent of the cost of the project.

(b) When actual costs are less than the amount approved, the grant award shall be reduced proportionally, pursuant to (a) above, to reflect actual amounts.

(c) The State Librarian may determine the maximum and minimum grants to be awarded under this chapter. Projects that provide accessibility for individuals with disabilities may be funded, even if they do not meet the minimum dollar requirement.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-4.1

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-4.1 Application procedures

(a) An application for a construction, rehabilitation, or renovation grant under this chapter shall be on the official form, available from the New Jersey State Library and shall include the following:

1. A complete description of the project to be financed with a grant;

2. A cost estimate and cost data for the project, along with identification of all sources of funding to be used for any cost not funded by the grant and a statement of proration of eligible costs, if applicable;

3. The estimated schedule for construction and completion of the project, including cash flow requirements;

4. The useful life of any project, including equipment, as determined either by reference to the Internal Revenue Service's Class Life Asset Depreciation Range System set forth in Revenue Procedure 87-56, as amended, supplemented, or superseded or by appraisal of any independent engineer or accounting firm licensed in the State of New Jersey, as appropriate;

5. Requisite resolutions, including a bond ordinance or resolution of intent to provide funding pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-5.2(b);

6. A building program and community analysis pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.4(a);

7. Project schematic plans, which include a site plan, elevations, and floor plans;

8. A legal description of the project site and a copy of the deed or, if the application includes acquisition of property, evidence of intent to purchase real property pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.7(a)4;

9. The applicant's certification of compliance with minimum criteria for receipt of State Library Aid pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2 or a justification for not meeting the minimum criteria;

10. Certification, from an architect, as to the project's suitability for the rehabilitation or purchase of a library building pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.7(e);

11. A statement of intent from an architect that the project design aspires to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver level or higher certification, when applicable, or a listing of Green design elements in the proposed project;

12. A statement of intent from an architect that states the project design intends to meet WELL certification standards for improving human health and well-being in buildings, when applicable;

13. A statement of compliance with State and Federal rules regarding State and Federal minimums for providing barrier-free access;

14. A certification by the applicant that the project will comply with all applicable laws, rules, codes, and government guidelines; including the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, where applicable, and mandatory New Jersey labor laws, the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq., and the State Uniform Construction Code Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-119 et seq., and the rules promulgated thereunder; and

15. Proof of submission for any necessary approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, including the Historic Preservation Office, and other agencies, as applicable.

(b) An application for the repair of a public library building shall be on the official form, available from the New Jersey State Library. The application will consist of an explanation of the need for the repair(s), a full description of the repair(s) and a drawing or schematic, a proposed timeline for the completion of the repair(s), and a cost estimate.

(c) All applicants will certify that they have, or will have, the necessary required matching funds pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-2.1(c).

(d) An application shall be made by the governing body charged with the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of the public library (board of trustees or county library commission, or county board of chosen freeholders, as appropriate).

(e) If a public library facility is to be constructed by a municipality with the provision that it be equipped, stocked, staffed, or supported by a public library outside of that municipality (for example, a municipally constructed building that will be operated by a county library as a branch library), the application shall be in

the name of the municipality. The application shall be signed by the mayor or chief financial officer and cosigned by an officer of the governing body of the library that is providing services.

(f) For applications not submitted under (e) above, the person authorized to submit the application shall be an officer of the governing body named as the applicant, preferably the president or chairperson of this body. A statement to be signed and completed by the responsible officer of the applicant, for example, secretary of a board of trustees, shall certify this authorization.

(g) Any substantial changes or revisions affecting the application, after the application is submitted, including any structural changes in the building plans, shall be submitted, on the appropriate forms, to the State Librarian and the President for approval. Should the request for substantial change or revision receive approval, the application shall continue in the review process. Should the request for approval of the substantial change or revision be denied, the applicant's original submission shall stand unless withdrawn by the applicant.

(h) Any substantial changes to a project after a grant is made shall be submitted, by a method as prescribed by the State Librarian, to the State Librarian and the President. The initial substantial changes to a project request form will be made available on the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act page of the New Jersey State Library website, and such additional forms as the State Librarian requires the applicant to complete will be provided to the applicant individually. The State Librarian and the President may request meeting(s) with the applicant, the architect, and others associated with the project, as necessary. The State Librarian and the President shall approve or deny the proposed substantial change(s), in part or in whole, following review and analysis of the materials submitted by the grant recipient; provided, however, that where the proposed substantial changes require the reallocation of any funds appropriated by the Legislature and allocated to the projects, the approval of the Joint Budget Oversight Committee shall also be required in accordance with the Bond Act. Approval of the substantial changes to a project or changes to the amount of a project grant are necessary in order for the grant recipient to proceed.

(i) Approval of the project must be given by the President and funds appropriated by the New Jersey Legislature before any funds are allocated to the project.

(j) If the bonds issued to fund a grant are issued on a tax-advantaged basis, including tax-exempt bonds, then in order to receive project grant funding for expenses incurred before such bonds are issued, such expenses must be "reimbursable" from bond proceeds under applicable Federal tax law.

History

HISTORY:

Amended by R.2023 d.116, effective October 2, 2023.

See: 55 N.J.R. 1322(a), 55 N.J.R. 2142(b).

Rewrote (h).

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-4.2

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-4.2 Review of applications and approval process

(a) Funds awarded under this chapter may be split over priority areas deemed by the State Librarian to be of greatest importance in meeting the needs of New Jersey's communities. Funding may be available in more than one round.

(b) Application(s) shall be reviewed for completeness and compliance with this chapter. Additional information or clarification may be requested, as applicable.

(c) Any applications deemed incomplete will be ineligible for a grant.

(d) Completed applications will be reviewed based on a competitive application process, whereby applications will be submitted by a certain date and will be evaluated to determine which applications are eligible for funding and are the most qualified to receive funding.

(e) The applications shall be evaluated by a review committee established by the State Librarian.

(f) The State Librarian shall prepare a list of projects that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in this chapter for the review and approval of the President. Pursuant to the Bond Act, the President shall review and approve the grants.

(g) The President shall approve a list of projects and grant amounts for submission to the New Jersey Legislature for funding through project-specific appropriations.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-5.1

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-5.1 State Librarian reporting requirements

(a) The State Librarian, with the approval of the President, shall submit to the State Treasurer and the New Jersey Commission on Capital Budget and Planning, with the annual budget request, a plan for the New Jersey Library Construction Fund for the upcoming fiscal year. This plan shall include the following information: a performance evaluation of the expenditures made from the funds to date, a description of programs planned during the upcoming fiscal year, a copy of the rules in force governing the operation of programs that are financed, in part or in whole, by funds from the New Jersey Library Construction Fund, and an estimate of expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year.

(b) Immediately following the submission to the Legislature of the Governor's annual budget message, the State Librarian, with the approval of the President, shall submit to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L. 1991, c. 164 (N.J.S.A. 52:14-19.1), as amended, and to the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, or its successor, copies of the plan required pursuant to (a) above, together with such changes as may have been required by the Governor's budget message.

(c) All appropriations from the New Jersey Library Construction Fund shall be by specific allocation for each project and any transfer of any funds so appropriated shall require the approval of the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, or its successor.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-5.2

This file includes all Regulations adopted and published through the New Jersey Register, Vol. 58 No. 8, April 20, 2026

§ 15:24-5.2 Applicant/grant recipient reporting requirements

(a) Upon authorization of a grant pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:24-4, the applicant shall enter into a grant agreement with the New Jersey State Library. The person authorized to sign the grant agreement shall be an officer of the body named as the applicant. Funding of the project grant shall be contingent upon the public library's continued compliance with the grant agreement.

(b) Within three months following notification of eligibility for a grant award, the applicant shall submit evidence that funds have been appropriated or bonds or debt have been authorized for financing of the project. Such evidence shall include copies of the ordinance of appropriation passed on final reading and approved. Other evidence of funding, such as resolutions, bank statements, and grant award notifications shall be deemed acceptable at the discretion of the President and State Librarian.

(c) Notwithstanding the useful life or life expectancy certified by the applicant for the proposed project, or a portion thereof for which funding is being sought under the Act, any debt issued by a local government entity as local matching funds shall be subject to the useful life provisions of the Local Bond Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:2-1 et seq.) or, under any other statute where the Local Finance Board may review useful life, the useful life determined by the Local Finance Board.

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N.J.A.C. 15:24-6.1

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§ 15:24-6.1 Grant administration

(a) The State Librarian may execute any agreements deemed to be necessary or useful and convenient in connection with any project. The State Librarian may determine any costs deemed to be necessary or useful and convenient in connection with any project. Such costs may include expenses incurred in connection with the administration, organization, or operations incident to this Act, its financing, and the completion of any project authorized by the Act.

(b) Each grant agreement shall include provisions as may be necessary to ensure that the applicant provides the required matching funds for the project.

1. If the required matching funds are not paid by the applicant as set forth in the grant agreement, the State Librarian may terminate the grant agreement and no additional grant funds will be provided to the applicant for this project.

(c) Architectural or engineering supervision and inspection shall be provided by the applicant at the construction site to ensure that the completed work conforms to the approved plans. For the purpose of inspection, representatives of the State Librarian shall have access, at all reasonable times, to all construction work being funded by the Bond Act. The applicant and contractor shall be required to facilitate such access and inspection.

(d) Construction shall be initiated and completed according to the proposed timeline specified in the grant application. The time limit for completion of the construction shall be measured from the date of execution of the grant agreement.

(e) The grant shall be paid to the applicant in four installments as set forth in this subsection, but only upon receipt of satisfactory evidence upon completion of each phase, including the certification by the architect as to compliance with the maximum per square foot costs.

1. Twenty-five percent upon approval of the award of the construction contract(s). Satisfactory evidence of the award may be minutes of the governing body approving the award of construction contracts, copies of title pages of contracts with necessary signatures, letters of award, or other proofs of award of contract;

2. Fifty percent when the project is 50 percent complete and upon submission of the architect's certification;

3. Twenty percent when the project is substantially complete and upon submission of the architect's certification; and

4. Five percent upon receipt of a temporary certificate of occupancy and final project expenditure report.

(f) If the construction period exceeds the timeline by more than 12 months, a request for an extension must be made to the State Librarian no less than three months prior to the original completion date on an approved form. The State Librarian, in consultation with the President, will grant an extension for good cause with documentable reasons.

(g) In the event that construction is not substantially completed according to the approved timeline, or within reasonable extensions as granted by the State Librarian, the State Librarian has the authority to rescind the balance of the approved grant.

(h) Each recipient of a project grant shall provide such information as the State Librarian or President may request regarding the use of grant funds and the progress of the project. Construction progress status reports and up-to-date spend-down timelines may be requested as necessary.

(i) Failure to comply with any of the rules set forth in this chapter shall make an applicant ineligible for funding not yet disbursed.

(j) The President, with the approval of the Joint Budget Oversight Commission, may, in a manner consistent with the allocations provided in the Bond Act, allocate any balance in an approved grant to another eligible library; a new solicitation for grant applications; an amended application; or toward a library's larger project, if the approved project was only for a portion of a larger library construction project.

1. If an applicant determines not to undertake an approved project for which a grant was awarded;

2. To adjust for actual project expenses in a manner consistent with the approved grant; or

3. If an applicant fails to comply with the provisions of the grant.

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