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Final Grant Proposal

LSTA Literacy & Lifelong Learning Grant Proposal

Proposed Project: Comprehensive Services for the Visually Impaired

in Guilford County, North Carolina

Submitted to: State Library of North Carolina

Submitted by: The Greensboro Public Library, Central Library Branch

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I. LIBRARY USERS AND NEED

a. Target Audience

In 2014 the state of North Carolina, as a whole, had a total of 252,522 individuals with vision loss (American Foundation, 2014). Age breakdowns for this population are as follows: <5 = 4,143; 5-17 = 14,386; 18-34= 25,755; 35-64= 109,087; 65-74= 42,335; 75+ = 56,816. Public libraries aim to serve every member of the community by providing resources for the young, the old, and every age in between. The proposed project, *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative*, is for individuals of all ages in Guilford County who are visually impaired or blind. 7.2% of residents under the age of 65 in Guilford County are living with a disability (QuickFacts, 2014) and this project aims to assist those who fit anywhere on the visual impairment, VI, spectrum.

The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative will serve all visually impaired patrons in Guilford County by providing them with a library that caters to their specific needs. The city of Greensboro, NC is located centrally in Guilford County, making it a prime location to make it as easily accessible as possible to the most residents. The project will be located at Central Library, a branch of the Greensboro Public Library System, which is situated in a densely populated area of disabled residents. This makes Central Library an ideal location to focus services for visually impaired patrons (Geographic Research, Inc., 2000).

b. Determined Need & Extent of Current Problem

Currently, patrons in Greensboro with a visual impairment are unable to visit and utilize a public library to its full potential. Central Library currently provides a Special Collection

pertaining to visually impaired patrons, which includes large print books, braille books, and audiobooks. They also provide a books-by-mail service which allows patrons to request materials be sent to his or her home. Despite these offerings, visually impaired patrons are unable to take advantage of any of the other services Central Library offers. The library offers 100 computers with internet access, a computer lab with 12 workstations, and even free computer training, however, none of these are usable by visually impaired patrons.

Access to technology is a fantastic resource freely provided to patrons by public libraries. It is therefore inequitable that visually impaired patrons are not provided with the tools and services to make use of such resources: an added disadvantage to the disability with which they already live.

II. INTENDED OUTCOME

Information Access

The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative will allow for visually impaired patrons of the Central Public Library in Greensboro, NC to have a library experience which resembles that of a sighted individual as closely as possible. Information access will be at the forefront of the project's goals, and will allow for improvement of patrons to both discover information within the library and obtain information resources beyond the library's walls.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Through *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative*, Central Library plans to enhance and expand the current library offerings for visually impaired patrons. Through the

addition of specific technology, the Central Public Library will better serve the area's visually impaired and blind population in their information seeking needs. Screen reader software will be added for computer stations for Windows operating systems. Macintosh operating systems come with screen reader software built in, VoiceOver. Screen and video magnifiers will also be implemented for those with low visual acuity. Refreshable braille displays will be added to one or two computers to allow for patrons who are legally blind, as well as those who have both a visual and hearing impairment to have computer access. The acquisition of a 3D printer will allow visually impaired library patrons to tactilely explore book illustrations, art, and more.

An estimated 8.1% of the Guilford County population suffers from some degree of visual impairment (American FactFinder, 2014). However, as stated by the National Federation of the Blind, "almost all statistics on blindness are estimated, which means that the numbers found in a sample are extrapolated to the entire population (National Foundation, 2014)." Therefore, only educated conjectures can be made on increased usage of Central Library's resources. With this in mind, *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative* could increase the population of visually impaired/blind patrons using Central Library up to approximately 7.8%-8% (American FactFinder, 2014).

As stated above, Central Library already has materials in its collection which aid the visually impaired members of the community. The plan to further assist these patrons with the addition of specific technologies expands the library's existing services. It also provides services which meet the needs of an evolving technology driven world.

Staff training will accompany the implementation of technology to better assist visually impaired and blind patrons use library resources. Training will consist of technology support

specific to the new instruments, as well as disability awareness and sensitivity to ensure that all patrons are treated with equality, and have their needs met. This training will be conducted using services provided by the North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind, NC DSB. The NC DSB will provide Assistive Technology Training, which Central Library will receive through the Winston-Salem District Office, which serves Guilford County (NC DSB, 2016). The Central Library will receive Disability Awareness/Sensitivity Training using resources provided by The City of Greensboro's Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities (City of Greensboro, 2014).

Central Library intends to advertise *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative* through multiple sources. The first will be through the contact at the NC DSB office in Winston-Salem, NC. Flyers will be printed up describing the project, and sent to NC DSB. Upon request from Central Library, they will be distributed to NC DSB employees who will then pass the information onto their clients.

The second method will be to publish an announcement about the project in the North Carolina Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired NCAERolina Newsletter. The process is free, and will reach a large number of the VI community as a PDF that is in a screen reader friendly format.

The third method of dissemination will be through the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Publishing in their newsletter, Tar Heel Talk, is free. The newsletter is, "published quarterly by The Friends of the Library. It brings you news you can use about what's happening in the library, helpful tips, and information to make your

experience better. Every registered active patron receives a copy at no charge in their choice of braille, audio, or large print (NCLBPH, 2015).”

The final manner in which *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative* will be advertised is by contacting Dr. Alicia Tate and Paul Perrotta, the Executive Director and Director of Exceptional Children in Guilford County Schools. Dr. Tate and Mr. Perrotta will pass on the information to VI students who are transitioning into the work world or college as they will no longer receive services from the school they attend upon graduation.

The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative will continue after the funding period has ended. The funding period is to allow for setup and implementation of the new services outlined above. The project will continue insofar as Central Library will continue to promote its services to the visually impaired/blind community and maintain the quality of said services. The library will sustain the new services by providing in house assistive technology training to new staff as well as provide refresher sessions to seasoned staff members. Central library staff will also be required to perform an annual refresher course on disability awareness and sensitivity. Central library plans to adjust budget allocations to include maintenance and update fees for the VI assistive technology into the library technology fund.

IV. PROJECT PARTNERS

This project is eligible for a 10% match because it has a partner that will contribute specific deliverables to the project in a new or expanded way.

Yes.

Partners

1.) North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind: The NC DBS will provide Assistive Technology training for Central Library Staff as well as be a source of advertisement for *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative*. To do this, representatives will come to Central Library on set dates to train all staff on the new technology, e.g. Screen readers and magnifiers, refreshable braille displays, and 3D printer. Central Library will create flyers advertising the project to send to the NC DBS contact in Winston-Salem, NC. The flyers will be distributed to the NC DBS staff and passed by word of mouth to clients.

2.) City of Greensboro, NC - Mayor's Committee for Person with Disabilities: The Mayor's Committee will provide training to Central Library Staff in Disability Awareness/Sensitivity. To do this, Central Library Staff will be required to watch the training video on the Mayor's Committee's web page. Members of the Mayor's Committee will also become a contact for Central Library in case further training, assistance, or clarification is needed by staff.

V. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Task Descriptions

Upon receipt of funding for the proposal, implementation of *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative* will begin with placing orders for one JAWS Screen Reader software pack--to be installed on all computers, five Focus 80 Blue Braille Displays, five Prodigy Desktop Electronic Magnifiers, 1 Ultimaker 2 3D Printer, and 50 Dolphin SuperNova Magnifier software downloads. Additionally, one staff member from the library will be appointed as project

manager to oversee other staff and to ensure the project remains on schedule. Concurrently, design for the flyers advertising the project will begin so that they are ready for distribution upon arrival of the ordered supplies. The announcements for the NCAERolina and Tar Heel Talk newsletters will be written and sent so that they can be published in anticipation of the project's completion. Installation of the technology will begin upon its arrival, including installing the physical machines as well as installing screen reader/magnifier software on computers.

Once the new technology is in place, staff training will be conducted through the grant partners to ensure that library staff can troubleshoot issues that may arise as well as be able to answer any patron questions. All staff will also attend sensitivity training so that they are well equipped with knowledge on how to interact with visually impaired patrons who come to the library. Both sensitivity and tech support training will be conducted annually following the start of the project.

Once technology installation and staff training are complete, the flyers will be produced and distributed to advertise the implementation of the new resources. Staff will monitor the effectiveness of the new resources and collaborate on how to adjust as needed.

Activities Table

Time Frame	Activity	Parties Involved
July, 2016	Order technology	Project Manager
July, 2016	Design flyers	Library Staff
July, 2016	Write/send newsletter announcements	Library Staff

August, 2016	Install hardware/software	Project Manager/Vendor
August, 2016	Staff technology support training	Library Staff/Project Partner
August, 2016	Staff sensitivity training	Library Staff/Project Partner
September, 2016	Distribute flyers	Library Staff
September, 2016	Launch full program	Library Staff
October, 2016	Evaluate usage, re-advertise as needed	Library Staff
November, 2016	Develop patron evaluation surveys	Project Manager
November, 2016	Distribute patron evaluation surveys	Library Staff
December, 2016	Evaluate patron surveys	Project Manager/Library Director
January , 2017	Staff meeting based on patron satisfaction results	Library Staff/Project Manager
February, 2017	Adjust program as determined in staff meeting	Library Staff
March, 2017	Create Library Staff evaluation surveys	Project Manager
April, 2017	Distribute Library Staff surveys	Project Manager

May, 2017	Evaluate Staff Surveys	Project Manager/Library Director
May, 2017	Staff Meeting based on staff survey analysis	Library Staff
June, 2017	Adjust program as determined by staff meeting	Library Staff

VI. EVALUATION

Evaluation of Success

In order to determine the success of *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative*, evaluation procedures will be conducted to evaluate user satisfaction as well as assess to what extent the services are reaching patrons. Two months after project implementation, surveys will be created which ask patrons whether they use the visually impaired services. If so demographic questions will be asked to determine how far reaching the program is in the community. The survey will also include questions designed to determine the satisfaction level of services provided, and the sensitivity and knowledge of the library staff. These surveys will be distributed through email so that they can be read aloud with screen readers. A place for suggestions for improvement will also be included in the survey.

To ensure that the program is sustainable and successful from a staff perspective, surveys will also be distributed to all library staff. Staff will be asked to respond to questions asking if they feel they are provided with adequate services to support the project, and what questions

and/or issues patrons approach them with the most to gauge if changes to the program could be made to address them.

VII. GOALS

a. Mission and Goals

The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative aids Central Library in its mission to “provide free and equal access to information” by equipping a specific group of the community with technology that enhances their use of services to that of non-disabled individuals.

b. Goal #3 of NC LSTA 5-Year Plan

The introduction of assistive technology in Central Library supports Goal #3 of North Carolina’s LSTA Five-Year Plan by providing visually impaired/blind individuals with free services that will assist in research, personal inquiry, reading, and entertainment for the rest of their lives.

VIII. BUDGET TABLE

	Budget Category – see descriptions below	Page #	Quantity of Items	Cost per Item	Total
A	Supplies/Materials				
	Dolphin SuperNova Magnifier Downloadable Software		50	\$400.00	\$20,000.00
	Focus 80 Blue Braille Display		5	\$1,300.00	\$6,500.00
	JAWS Professional Screen Reader Software		1	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00
	Prolog Desktop Electronic Magnifier		5	\$2,500.00	\$12,500.00
	Ultimaker 2 3D Printer		1	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
B	Services				

	Assistive Technology Training (NC DSB)		2	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
C	Subtotal				
					\$43,800.00
D	Indirect Costs, applicants must choose one				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The library chooses not to include Indirect Costs.				N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/> The library chooses a rate not to exceed 10% of modified total Direct Costs AND declares it is eligible for the 10% rate.				
	<input type="checkbox"/> The library has a rate of _____ % that has been negotiated with a federal agency.				
	Project Total (C + D)				
	Minus Matching Funds			10%	\$4,380.00
E	Total LSTA Funds Requested, up to \$50,000 Round up to nearest dollar Use this total to enter in Online Signature Page				\$40,000.00

IX. MATCHING FUNDS/LOCAL COMMITMENT

- Grant request amount \$40,000 X 10% = \$4,380 required match. Central Library qualifies for the 10% match with the aid of two project partners. Each partner's completed and signed LSTA Partner Statement is included with *The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative* proposal.
- The source of matching funds will be the library budget. The Greensboro Public Library has approved the Central Library branch to allocate technology funds to meet the 10% of Direct Costs of the grant.

X. ABSTRACT

The Central Public Library Visual Impairment Initiative intends to provide residents of Guilford County who are visually impaired or blind with a library experience as close as possible to those without impairment. Through improved technological and staff resources, VI and blind patrons will have unfettered access to information and be able to interact with staff trained to provide sensitive and appropriate customer service.

References

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